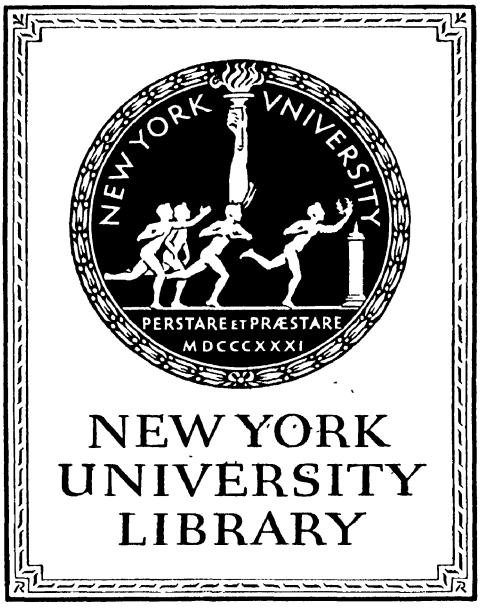
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# COLLEGE READER

COLLEGE READER

# BIOGRAPHY *and* EXPOSITION

HOMER A. WATT
*and*
OSCAR CARGILL

*New York University*

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# PREFACE

A good wine needs no bush, and perhaps a miscellany of readings the general plan and purpose of which are indicated in the title and the tables of contents needs no foreword. However, since there are many kinds of anthologies, the editors of the present collection feel justified in stating their objective and their plan so that their book may be judged for what they meant it to be and not for something different.

Perhaps it may be well to say first just what the present anthology is *not*. It was not designed for an historical survey of literature, either English or American; it does not attempt to present its grouped material in either a chronological or a logical sequence. Although the various divisions bear the familiar labels of rhetoric and literature—biography, poetry, drama, familiar essay, short story, exposition, narrative, and so forth—these terms have been employed principally for purposes of convenient and orderly classification and reference. There is no reason at all why any one using the book may not shuffle the sections to suit his own purposes, as he might shuffle a deck of cards.

Again, this collection is not a "great books" anthology and was never intended to be. It is, indeed, dubious if such materials should, or perhaps even could, be anthologized.

The *College Reader* was designed primarily to present literary expressions of various ideas, moods, and forms for college students who are learning to write. As a supplement to practice in composition, practice in reading—in the sense of intelligent comprehending—is a *sine qua non*. Indeed, one of the basic elements in a course in writing must be that expanding and liberalizing of the mind that comes from the reading and digesting of ideas. The mark of an educated man is partly in his possession of a fund of information from which he can draw at will and in his power to express his opinions readily, accurately, clearly, and logically. We all belong, wrote Robert Louis Stevenson, to that great parliament of talkers that is in continual session everywhere. It is not only in the halls of Congress, the town meeting-houses of Vermont, and the broadcasting stations of New York that men exchange opinions freely, but in homes and clubs, and on the streets. "Expression," said Emerson wisely, "is necessary to evolution," and the man who would grow is not the one who is muted by ignorance, indifference, and timidity but he who has a body of knowledge and sound opinion and the skill to express himself effectively. Such growth should be promoted by the reading and the writing of the college composition class, and the present anthology was designed to assist toward that end.

It will be noted that the *College Reader* is not a collection of "modern" readings but that it has much "old" material mixed with much that is "new." This combination was intentional and deliberate. Strictly speaking there is no such thing as "modern" thinking and feeling; a so-called "modern reader" contains only the

current expressions of universal human themes. What John Livingston Lowes, in his brilliant definition of originality (p. 268) says of poetry is basically true also of all human expression: "Poetry may never with safety cut loose from the old, because the old is always new. The tide of generations flows on unceasingly, and for each the old experiences have their pristine freshness. That is why the old themes are perennial."

This truth of the "eternally familiar" in basic human experiences and interests is amply demonstrated in the present collection. To give a single example, the universal theme of the defence of a livelihood against invasion appears—strangely enough—in St. Luke's vivid account of the attack of the silversmiths of Ephesus on Paul (p. 561), written in the first century, and in Joseph Buchanan's reminiscences of the early railroad workers' strikes in America in the nineteenth century (p. 24). Nor are these expressions of human ideas and moods influenced by the literary or rhetorical form which the writer chooses to adopt. Again, a single illustration may suffice. Sidney Lanier's *The Symphony* (p. 763) and William Rose Benét's *Men on Strike* (p. 773) are poems, but they deal with the same theme of industrial dissension as does John Galsworthy's *Strife* (p. 879), which is a drama, and John Ruskin's *The Nature of Theft by Unjust Profits* (p. 85), which is in form a letter but in fact a bit of economic comment. Although the single theme of economic relations has been used here as an illustration of the universality of human ideas and moods in literature, *any* universal human concern in living or dying—social and domestic relations, education and religion, science and art—might just as well have been chosen.

It must have been noted already that the rhetorical and literary labels under which the selections in this anthology are grouped are more convenient than fundamental. Indeed, many of the selections might very well have been listed under more than one heading. St. Luke's story of Paul and the silversmiths, which has been already referred to, might very well have been listed under "Letters," inasmuch as it is a single episode from an epistle addressed by "the beloved physician" to the Roman governor, "most excellent Theophilus"; or it might have been put under "Reminiscences," if Luke was an eye-witness of the events which he narrates, as seems rather more than possible. Similarly, the label "Letters," used because the audience addressed by the writer is either an individual or at least a specified group of persons, is a term that covers a number of literary forms: scientific article (Professor Urey's *Bomb Control Not Impossible,* p. 112); political comment (Thomas Jefferson's *One Generation Hath No Right to Bind Another,* p. 73 and *Natural Aristocracy,* p. 76); educational treatise (Henry Adams's *Preparation for Teaching History,* p. 96); and political and social analysis and comment (Sir Osbert Sitwell's *A Letter to My Son,* p. 116). It would seem, then, that a "letter" need not be a "person to person call," but might be put under any one of many other headings if it were not for its form of direct address. Similarly, biography and history overlap, as Thomas Carlyle made clear a century ago. John Addington Symonds's *The Death of Sir Philip Sidney* (p. 37) might properly have been entered under "History," whereas Carl Van Doren's *The Treachery of General Charles Lee* (p. 709) and Vernon Louis Parrington's *General Grant* (p. 717) might just as naturally have been listed under "Biography." The editors of *Col-*

*lege Reader* are not in the least disturbed by these facts. They know that writers are impelled in their expression primarily by the theme, content, and mood, and not by the particular ticket which literary historians and rhetoricians may attach to their work later. Similarly, the reader who is more concerned with labels than with contents, ideas, and literary art is preferring the husk to the kernel.

But the announcers have stood too long before the microphone, and with a final suggestion and a *caveat* they will retire. The suggestion is that although this anthology was confessedly designed primarily for college students practicing composition, such students are adults, selected for their general intelligence and assembled in a forum for the purpose of reading, digesting ideas, and expressing themselves on many subjects. What is good for a group of adults engaged in taking a formal "course" is also good for other adults, in college or out, who would broaden their intelligence and increase their power to think and to talk and to write.

And now for the *caveat.* All themes of human interest—social, industrial, political, educational, religious, or artistic—discussed in the parliament of talkers are not just two-sided but have many facets. This polylateral quality of *all* discussion is represented in the *College Reader,* and the editors have emphatically made no effort to direct ideas and moods into a single channel. Let it be known, therefore, in the current familiar phrase, that opinions expressed in any broadcast over this station do not necessarily represent those of the sponsors or the producers.

And with that *caveat* the announcers turn the microphone hopefully over to the hundred and fifty odd speakers on the program, who have been pressing eagerly to be heard.

April, 1948

H. A. W.
O. C.

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# COLLEGE READER

# Part I

# Biography and Exposition

# I. . .

# PROFILE AND BIOGRAPHY

# EDITORS OF TIME

## *Average Man*

MILLIONS of Americans know Caspar Milquetoast as well as they know Tom Sawyer and Andrew Jackson, better than they know George F. Babbitt, and any amount better than they know such world figures as Mr. Micawber and Don Quixote. They know him, in fact, almost as well as they know their own weaknesses.

If the creator of *The Timid Soul* had done nothing but invent Milquetoast—the quavering quintessence of the Little Man at his least manly—he would have earned his modest place in the nation's pantheon. Harold Tucker Webster has done a great deal besides, in the 15,000-odd panels he has drawn in the past 43 years. Last week Webster's fourth collection of cartoons (*Webster Unabridged;* McBride; $2) appeared.

Caspar Milquetoast is the only character Cartoonist Webster has ever given a name to—and Caspar,* with appropriate shyness, sneaked into the strip as a space filler. The rest of Webster's bald-headed bores, thin, puzzled wives, and freckle-faced kids need no name; they are, when they hit the mark—as they often do—Everyman.

H. T. Webster has learned to slice and serve his generous chunks of U.S. life methodically. Caspar (*The Timid Soul*) appears Sundays and Mondays. The pitilessly fanatic and bad-mannered bridge players run Fridays. Boyhood's lovingly elaborated triumphs (*The Thrill That Comes Once in a Lifetime*) and defeats (*Life's Darkest Moment*) appear on Saturdays and Tuesdays. Thursdays bring *How to Torture Your Husband* (or *Wife*). On Wednesdays, in *The Unseen Audience,* he pokes a sharp-pointed stick at radio—which of all mixed blessings most needs satirizing, and gets it least. Webster, in fact, is possibly radio's most effective critic.

Webster is one of the few journalists of his troubled time who has managed consistently to remind people of the news that they are human beings, and that that news is not as bad as it is generally made out.

RIGHT TO LEFT. H. T. Webster insists that Milquetoast is a self-portrait. Short of perhaps Joseph Stalin, it would be difficult to think of any man who looks less like Milquetoast than his creator. Webster carries all of his 6 ft. 3 in. without either the cringing or the exaggerated erectness of the man who is uneasy in this world. His face is handsome, ruddy and unlined, his blue eyes are direct and uncomplicated.

He combines a still faintly rural quietude of speech and motion with a kind of suavity which can come only of many years of assured performance and comfortable living. Such troubles as he has encountered he has taken tranquilly; in 1927, when overwork permanently

Reprinted from *Time,* November 26, 1945. Courtesy of *Time,* copyright Time Inc., 1945.

* Webster once wrote to his friend Franklin P. Adams, who had misspelled it Casper in his column: "Mr. Milquetoast has spoken to me about your spelling of his name. He says that his family has always spelled it with an *a,* but that they are notoriously bad spellers and you are probably right."

ruined his drawing hand, he learned in four months to draw with his left. At 60, he suggests a prematurely grey ex-athlete who has not had to work very anxiously to keep in good shape.

A Happy Boyhood. As any reader of *The Thrill That Comes Once in a Lifetime* might guess, H. T. Webster had a happy boyhood. He spent it in Tomahawk, Wis. (pop. 3,365) where his dad ran the drugstore. Tomahawk (the way Webster remembers it) was a little town afloat in a forest where deer and small game were plentiful, the lakes and streams were stiff with fish, you could run onto the tracks of bear often enough almost to believe you had seen them and killed them, and school was no more interesting than it is in most other places. Webbie used to hide a .38 in his pocket going to school, and fire it off during recess.

From seven on, he liked to draw. He was not an artist; he was a cartoonist from the start. He liked best to draw Weary Willie tramps with baggy clothes so "you could conceal your lack of knowledge of anatomy." By the time he was 15 or so, Webster subscribed to a mail-order cartooning course, and was the only student to finish the course—the school folded shortly afterwards. That was the end of his formal training.

$7 to $70. He dreamed of some day becoming Charles Dana Gibson's office boy, and cartooned for the Chicago *Daily News* in 1903 at little more than office boy's pay: $7 a week.

For three years he drew front-page political cartoons for the Chicago *Inter-Ocean*—a fellow toiler with another famed U.S. humorist, Ring Lardner. And for two years more, at a phenomenal $70 a week, he drew for the Cincinnati *Post*.

He had saved up enough money by 1911 ($700) to realize a childhood desire: a trip around the world. With George A. (*Why We Behave Like Human Beings*) Dorsey he made the second steamboat trip in history up the Yangtze Gorges to the then inconspicuous city of Chungking. The Chinese along the rim knocked off work and crowded the banks, in a friendly way, "to watch us drown." The Chinese also liked to line up, at a courteous distance, to watch the foreigners handle knives & forks. One suppertime a missionary's wife, annoyed at their staring, slung a glass of water in their faces. Webster, a gentle man, still colors up when he remembers it: "I had to control myself as hard as I ever did in my life, not to give her a piece of my mind."

The round-the-world trip ended in New York, and Webster ended—in time—on that Parnassus of Midwestern newspapermen, the New York *World*. Webster, along with any number of employes and readers, still remembers the death of Pulitzer's *World* in 1931 as nothing short of tragic. Since then he has worked for the *Herald Tribune*, and through the *Tribune* Syndicate his daily cartoons are published in some 60 papers, his Sunday Milquetoast strip in 20. Their combined circulation is around ten million, not counting uncountable millions who read their papers at second hand. Webster's probable income: about $80,000 a year.

Mugwump. Webster always wanted and meant to be a political cartoonist. He shifted to such relatively universal phenomena as a boy's fondness for a dog, or a wife's inability to be gracious when her husband wants a stag vacation, because they syndicated more easily, raised fewer quarrels (of a sort that involved furious letters-to-the-editor) and made more money than cartoons

which took a strong stand on the tariff. As for taking a weak stand on the tariff, or on any other political issue, that was for Webster out of the question. Good political cartoons have to be simple, and the only sure way to be simple, without also being vapid, is to be very firm in your convictions. Webster calls himself a Mugwump, but the mug and wump usually lean over the conservative side of the fence, as is perhaps natural in a man who spent his most formative years, very happily, in much the sort of pre-industrial American background which had produced his gods, Lincoln and Mark Twain.

Now Webster dips his pen only rarely into politics. For Lincoln's Birthday 1940, Webster drew a forlorn, storm-whipped, benighted, wilderness cabin, a light in its window like the fever of birth. The caption: Ill-Fed—Ill-Clothed—Ill-Housed. During the war he drew a cartoon showing soldiers, under fire in the Pacific, listening to a radio's soapy-voiced report on the progress of a strike. But mostly he is content to give the U.S. newspaper public a much needed, and not too loaded, laugh for its three or five cents' worth.

Moldy Homiletics. Comedy is about as inconspicuous an item in so-called comic strips today as drugs in drugstores. *Krazy Kat* died with its creator, the late George Herrimann. *The Gumps,* which in the days of the late Sidney Smith had a modest resemblance to middle-class U.S. life, has little now. Harold Gray's *Little Orphan Annie,* never any too real or too funny, has sunk so deep into moldy homiletics that it is now trying to make Tory a nice word by proving that only rabble revolted in 1776. Fantasy, outside of Crockett Johnson's *Barnaby* and Al Capp's *Li'l Abner,* is so fouled up in gamma rays, cloaks of invisibility, space ships, and brutal omnipotence, that it has little time for fantasy's ancient, essential job of fusing the creatures of earth and heaven. The best of the rest, like Chester Gould's resourceful, bloodthirsty *Dick Tracy,* are like entertaining gangster movies that no one would confuse with truth or comedy, or—like Milton Caniff's extraordinarily proficient and accurate *Terry and the Pirates*—rattling good straight adventure strips.

Only a few, like Webster, still try to stick to the comic strip's old and worthy function: holding a mirror to a recognizable U.S. life. The late Clare Briggs's *Mr. and Mrs.,* as an appreciation of marriage, made books like *Cass Timberlane* look as naive as Daisy Ashford. Harry J. Tuthill's remarkable *Bungle Family,* almost alone among comics, dared to gaze steadily at the plain, awful ugliness and clumsiness to which the domesticated human animal is liable. When you have counted these —and Frank King's mild, wholesome *Gasoline Alley,* Chic Young's *Blondie,* J. R. Williams' homely cowhands and mechanics in *Out Our Way,* and Gluyas Williams' middle-aged suburbanites—you have about exhausted the field. Yet, characteristically, Webster disagrees with the critics who think today's sexed-up, thrill-happy comics are a menace to adolescent morals. Says he: "I used to hide my dime novels. Eventually I made the discovery that good books were better. I don't think it matters a hoot."

The Quiet Life. During the 1920s Webster was a member in good standing of that ultra-American generation of writers and actors and cartoonists and illustrators which focused around the offices of the *World* and The Players and The Dutch Treat Clubs. He has long

since receded to the blander pleasures of upper-middle-class suburbia in Stamford, Conn. and—with a mild sheepishness about the stylish address, and sincere enough murmurs about the Websters' susceptibility to colds—winters in Palm Beach. For years the Websters were enthusiastic theater-goers; now they wonder whether anything is as much worth coming into town for as the last show they saw, *Oklahoma!*

Webster used to play poker every Friday night through Sunday morning, in a room in the old Waldorf-Astoria. The concentration was such that once, when food was sent up, and he chomped a mouthful of broken glass in his lettuce, Webster spat it out without a murmur rather than interrupt the game.

After giving the matter "profound thought," he got married in 1916 (all of two weeks after meeting pretty Ethel Worts) and gave up poker for bridge. "The thought of life without poker," he remembers, seemed fantastic, "but when I gave it up it was like recovering from leprosy." He is a skillful bridge player —though it is safe to say he has taken in more money drawing cartoons about it.

He lives like a man who wants his thrills to come oftener than once in a lifetime. He feels about fly fishing a good deal the way Lucius Beebe feels about trains, always keeps well ahead in his work in order to be free to accept a banker friend's annual invitation to fish his private stream in Canada.

Next to becoming a cartoonist, he always wanted most to be a clown. When he was grown and married, he got his wish. He made several tours with Ringling Bros., one with his wife and the late cartoonist Clare Briggs. (Even now, when the circus comes to Bridgeport, the Websters dress up and ride in the parade.) Ethel Webster became a good enough bareback rider to receive, and reluctantly turn down, a professional offer. She is also pretty certainly the only non-professional woman ever to ride down Manhattan's Fifth Avenue on the nape of an elephant (on the occasion of Mrs. Hearst's Milk Fund Drive, in 1921).

Webster has always admired and often drawn circus people. He particularly liked one clown who, making him up with all the sweeping care of a Renaissance Master, swiped a smile-line down his cheek, stepped critically back and asked, anxiously, "How do you like it?" The amateur consulted the mirror and said it looked fine. The clown glowed. "That line's my own," he said.

Critic, with Six Radios. Webster gets up fairly late in the morning, breakfasts lightly except when the cook irresistibly serves up hamburger & onions, gets to work around 2 p.m., is through by 6. Most of the time he works in a room at the rear of the house, its walls thick with signed originals of such old friends or idols as A. B. Frost (who illustrated *Uncle Remus*), "Zim" (Eugene Zimmerman) of the old *Judge*, John T. McCutcheon, Thomas Nast, George Bellows.

Ideas, on the whole, are the hardest part of his job. Fans mail in quite a few, for which he is grateful, but only rarely is one usable. In a sense, like Einstein, Webster is at work all the time: listening to the radio (the Websters have six in the house, though only three work) and, even more relaxedly, keeping an eye & ear open around the house and the neighborhood, and the bridge tables of his gregarious evenings. By the time he is done with each day's work, it looks pretty good to Webster. When he sees his cartoons in print, how-

ever, he suffers the reaction of most conscientious workmen: "They look filthy after they're made. I can't understand how I could do such dreadful work. The idea is all right but the execution is painful."

A Trifle Apologetic. Even when Webster's figures are meant to be solid, rather than insecure, they often have an air of being a trifle apologetic; and this mitigative, tentative quality shows as clearly in their personalities as in their stance and overall shape. Even Webster's most crashing bores never suggest their real-life brutality; the wives are always at least trying to understand the jokes even if they never will; the bridge players are, in their own curious ways, so genuinely enjoying themselves that the fact outbalances all censure.

In all Webster's years of preoccupation with the psychology of timidity he seldom points up, even gently, the littleness, meanness and guile which timidity so often develops, and almost never touches on the propensity for bullying. You have to go back at least 15 years to find Milquetoast rampant. This might be merely the shrewdness of a man who makes his living through comedy. But in Webster's case it is the innocence of a man whose powers of observation are limited by his kindness.

Not Practicing Moralist. H. T. Webster, gently gifted, is somewhere near an average man, working, in a way never quite possible to the extraordinarily gifted, for somewhere near average people. He had done them no average service, merely in amusing them; a greater one still, very likely, as the kind of moralist who almost never moralizes.

This is sometimes said to be the Century of the Common Man. Webster was the first to recognize that it is certainly, by some cruel coincidence, the Era of the Timid One.

1945

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# JOHN R. TUNIS

## *First Gentleman of Philadelphia*

You may not be especially interested in baseball, but if you are interested in human beings and human values he would interest you. By his looks he might be a retired manufacturer and former Sunday School Superintendent, one of the thousands each winter in those havens of refuge for the aged along the West Coast of Florida. The sort of man who sits on a sidewalk in the morning sunshine, enjoys his daily game of shuffleboard, and hears Dr. William Lyon Phelps at the weekly meeting of the Iowa Club. After all, at eighty-five a man has a right to take things easy.

Reprinted from the *Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1940, by permission of the author. The title in the *Atlantic* was "Cornelius McGillicuddy"; it has been altered and the text revised by Mr. Tunis for this book.

But at eighty-five Mr. Cornelius McGillicuddy is still in the thick of life —in the thick of a young man's game. Back in 1900 when the American League was founded, he managed the Milwaukee team, and the next year hustled over to Philadelphia where he interested a rich man named Benjamin F. Shibe in founding a club in the new organization, and set forth to collect a team. He's been in Philadelphia ever since.

In 1902, before the majority of modern baseball fans were born, he won his first pennant. In 1905 he lost his first World Series to the Giants. In the 1910 Series he defeated Chance and the Cubs; in the 1911 and 1913 Series, McGraw and the Giants. Unexpectedly he lost to Stallings and the Braves in 1914. (We must ask him to explain that one.) He beat Joe McCarthy and the Cubs in the 1929 Series, conquered Gabby Street and the Cards in 1930, and lost to them in the 1931 Series. Nine pennants and five Series triumphs are his record in forty years of baseball.

Most of his contemporaries are no more. Stallings is gone, McGraw is gone. Of the men he helped to found the American League, Ban Johnson, the first president, is gone; Shibe, the owner of the Athletics, is gone; Comiskey of Chicago is gone. Except for Clark Griffith, only Connie Mack remains, still sitting each afternoon in summer on the bench, and looking almost the same as that tall, gaunt figure of 1900. But he isn't merely the manager of a baseball team. The fans say, 'Let's go watch Connie this afternoon.' He's an institution. He's the first citizen of Philadelphia today.

It was as a mittless catcher that he caught for East Brookfield in the Central Massachusetts League in 1883, the year he was first able to vote. Later that summer he signed with Meriden for the astounding sum of $90 a month, payable whenever he could collect. Then to Hartford, and in 1886 he was sent with four other players to Washington in the National League for the total sum of $3500. Connie was still catching them on the first bounce, still catching them meat-handed.

In 1890 he played with Buffalo's Brotherhood Club in the Players' League one season; in 1891 he was a member of the Pittsburgh Nationals, becoming manager of the club in 1894 and through the summer of 1896. In 1897 he went as catcher-manager to Milwaukee, where he stayed until the American League was formed. Now at eighty-five he's the greatest living example of the fact that a man is as old as his arteries, or that anyone who has a consuming interest in some phase of existence stays young despite the years. Connie Mack loves baseball. An old-time player said, 'He'd like to die out on that-there bench.' He probably will.

Watch him at work in the morning behind the long glass-topped table in the Athletics' office in Shibe Park. He looks—well, sixty-five at the most. With a quick gesture he snatches a letter from the table, or jumps up with the reflexes of a young man, stalking rapidly across to the door. He's tall, six feet one, straight, with blue eyes, lots of gray hair parted in the middle, and a kind, mobile face. Unlike most catchers, he has long, strong fingers with few knobs or bumps on them. Even today his handshake is firm and warm. That's really the amazing thing about this amazing man; not his youthfulness, but his warmth. You feel it in his handshake, see it in his smile—a wonderful smile that lights up his clear blue eyes.

You can understand immediately the old-timer who said, 'If a man won't play for Connie Mack he won't play for anyone.'

By what magic has this gentle, warmhearted individual taken nine clubs to the top? How has he kept discipline for over forty years among those wild-eyed individualists, professional ballplayers? Because even in his younger days he was never tough or hard-boiled. How did he do it? Speaking of several of his youngsters recently, he complained of their failure to assume responsibilities. Then hastily he caught himself: 'I wouldn't have them any different. They're young, and worries will come all too soon.'

Yes, but how has he maintained discipline? Not by force, but by commanding the respect of his players—'My boys,' as he likes to call them. Not by being hard-boiled, but by being human. All ballplayers like Connie Mack. Some managers enjoy slapping a fine on a recalcitrant star; Connie has other and possibly subtler methods. A player jumps from a taxi before the hotel, nods good-night to Mack, who is standing at the entrance, and goes up in the elevator. But Connie knows youth like the master of a boarding school. He merely walks round to the back entrance in time to catch the player scuttling out like a bad boy. Lots of managers would seize the moment to burst into a lecture, winding up with a fine. Connie doesn't need to. The man sees him, turns round, and goes back to his room and bed.

Moreover, Mack plays no favorites. On the A's, nobody 'sits in the manager's lap,' as ballplayers like to put it. Once a very fine star made so much trouble that although he played heads-up baseball, and was of great value to the team, Connie thoroughly disliked him. After the season Connie asked him into the clubhouse. The player came, expecting to be sold up the river. Instead he was met with a contract for a raise. There was no more trouble with that gentleman.

Lucky man, Mr. Mack. He likes people and people like him. How did he build up pennant winners? By giving players his confidence; they in turn gave him their respect. That's why he can handle those temperamental prima donnas. The hardest of the lot to manage? 'Oh . . . there wasn't any of 'em really hard. You could always talk with 'em and reason with 'em. Even Rube Waddell. Yes sir, though most of my gray hairs can be traced to wondering where he was when his bed was empty. And when he was right we've never had another could touch him!'

The easiest to manage in forty years? 'All my great players, every one.' He speaks with emphasis. 'Eddie Collins, especially.'

His 1910 team, with the famous $100,000 infield of Baker, Barry, Collins, and Davis, is his favorite. He doesn't say so, but you can see he thinks so. What was his greatest infield? 'That 1910 bunch. You see, they could rise to heights in critical moments of a Series. You just couldn't improve on those lads. My greatest outfield? Well, I guess that '29 bunch with Haas, Miller, and Simmons. They had power—they were hitters, those boys.'

Connie, himself a catcher, has had some great catchers: Ralphy (Cy) Perkins, Ossie Schreckengost, Wally Schang, Ira Thomas, Doc Powers, Jack Lapp, and the star of them all, Mickey Cochrane. But there's a soft spot for Ossie. 'Schreck was the Harpo Marx of his time. He was the fizz powder in the

pinwheel that made Waddell great. He was colorful, unpredictable, eccentric, erratic, and filled with baseball genius.' The blue eyes twinkled. 'Why, he used his gloved hand like a shortstop. Schreck could do more with his glove than any catcher that ever stood behind the plate. I remember he roomed with Waddell. They used to sleep in one bed, to save money. One year, when I sent him his contract, Schreck wrote back: 'The contract is all right, but before I sign it you got to put in a clause that if I have to room with Waddell he can't eat animal crackers in bed.' The clause was inserted.

No manager has had more great pitchers than Connie Mack—starting with Waddell, Coakley, and Bender, Jack Coombs, Eddie Plank, Bush, George Earnshaw, Lefty Grove, and Waite Hoyt. The greatest of the lot? 'Everyone has his own "greatest." I don't like to use superlatives. But I think Chief Bender is the greatest one-game pitcher, the greatest money pitcher, that baseball ever had. He wasn't a Rube Waddell, no, but he was the best money pitcher in the game.'

Yet it was Bender, with Plank, who was the disappointment of the 1914 Series which the Boston Braves won in four straight games from the A's. According to Connie, there was a split in the club. The newly formed Federal League was out for players and naturally raided the Athletics, who had more than their share of stars. Some members of the club wanted to leave, others to stand by Mack. 'The loyalists and rebels were engaged in a bitter fight. Players to whom I'd given a scouting assignment never left Philadelphia. Our players were more bitter against each other than interested in a baseball Series. We lacked the spirit to win. Stallings accomplished a baseball miracle by coming from last place on July Fourth to win the pennant and take the Series that fall; but I sincerely believe a team isn't great unless it repeats. The Braves didn't repeat in 1915.'

Why wasn't he able to meet the prices offered to his men by the Federal League? 'We simply couldn't afford to. As it was, we were paying the highest salaries in the circuit. We had no Sunday ball, and a large number of cheap seats in our park. When Bender and Plank signed up with the Federals, I decided to try to save something. So I sent out word my players were for sale, and the offers rolled in.'

Had he refused to sell his players, it would have hurt those who stayed. 'The boys who were left felt we'd be down in the cellar, and they wanted to go where the future was brighter.' Some managers never think about the players when they leave a club. Still others take good care to see that a star doesn't go to a serious contender. Not Connie. He thinks of the players. Mickey Cochrane, for instance, was sold to Detroit and won a pennant for them.

To Mack's annoyance, people still ask him what happened to his 1914 and 1932 teams. Why did he break them up? No mystery, for Connie never sells players unless he needs cash. The story runs round Philadelphia that he has invariably made money with tail-enders and lost with pennant winners. He almost admits the truth of this.

'Yes, I've made money coming up, and lost with world champions. When your club is fighting to the top, the fans take an interest and come to the park. Philadelphia's a right good ball town; folks now are loyal and turning out when we are in last place, but pennant winners get to be an old story. With a

fifth-place club this year we're doing real good. When the club is behind, salaries are low; so are expenses. Champions cost money. In boxing, a manager has one champion; in baseball, twenty-five. We had almost the highest-priced club in history in 1932, not barring the Yanks with Babe Ruth's $80,000 salary. I had five men who together drew more than $100,000. Yet attendance fell away that year. When you win, you have a general rise in all expenses; more gatemen, ticket takers, ushers, and so on, are necessary.'

Yet the fans in Philadelphia say there's a reason he sold those men which Connie won't ever mention. They believe that when the A's were winning one man connected with the club took out large profits for other business ventures. The rumor also persists that Connie, in common with several others, got pretty well clipped in the market in 1929 and 1930. One fact is true: whenever he sold players he needed money. 'You don't make money by selling players in baseball. Half my 1932 team cost me more than I got by selling my entire 1914 team. If I hadn't sold some of my players I should have had to leave baseball.'

He won't leave baseball. Baseball is his love and his life. Save for indispositions such as the gallstone attack which benched him in the summer of 1937, he appears each day at the park. At eighty-five he still runs the team, still travels on the road, still climbs into the dugout every afternoon in his blue suit and high choker collar, a handkerchief wrapped round his neck if it's very hot. Removing his coat, he hangs it on a peg in the dugout, puts the team on the field, takes his scorecard in hand, places his outfield, and proceeds to run his show.

Does he ever make mistakes?

'Yep, I've made hundreds. Make 'em almost daily. Every manager does. The worst mistake of all? Let me see . . . well, to my way of thinking the worst mistake I ever made was back in 1907 when we were running nip and tuck with Detroit. I had a pitcher, name of Jimmy Dygert, who could beat anyone for seven innings. Then he was finished. I could have pitched him seven innings any day in the week. If I'd a found this out in time, I could have won that pennant. Instead, I didn't realize it until after the season. We finished second, and Detroit won the League.

'Another time we were playing the Yanks and Ruth came to bat. I waved my outfield round and they moved where I motioned, but still I wasn't satisfied, and finally had to climb out of the dugout to place them and direct the defense. Meanwhile the pitcher was waiting in the box and Babe was standing at the plate. After about three minutes' wigwagging, I got everyone set. You can guess what happened. Babe hit the first pitch over the fence.

'Fortunately for a manager it doesn't always work out that way. I'll never forget the first game Ty Cobb played for us after twenty-two years with Detroit. He'd been manager six years with the Tigers and knew the weak and strong points of all players in every club. One of the first batters was a man I knew would hit the ball I signaled my pitcher to feed him, to Ty's left. I stood up in the dugout and waved him over with my scorecard. Even the pitcher turned in the box to look. What'd he do? He saluted, like the good sport he was, and trotted over to the new position. Believe me, I felt relieved a few seconds later when the batter lined a drive so

close he hardly had to move a step to grab it.'

Ask him how Cobb and the old-timers compare with the modern player, and watch his straight back in the stiff chair grow more erect. 'Oh, the old-timers were wonderful. Wonderful. They didn't have the advantages the player has nowadays. The equipment is so much better, the gloves and the bat. He has material to work with that Cobb and Schreck and those boys never had. Then, too, they've got another asset today—they have the experience of those old-timers to assist them. They're making plays a little easier because they know how to do it. But they aren't any smarter, no sirree.'

He believes the great difference between baseball today and baseball forty years ago lies in two things. 'First, this improvement in all the equipment used. Second, the change in batting and pitching. In the old days we used to throw in four or five balls a game. Nowadays they use a couple of dozen. The pitcher has been handicapped and the hitter has a great advantage. That's the chief change in baseball to my way of thinking.

'Yes, the most important position on a club was always the pitcher, still is. But, outside the battery, short and second have become vital in recent years. A club that has a double-play combination that can pull them out of hot spots has a big advantage in a close race. By the way, the Cleveland club has a dandy pair, those boys Boudreau and Joe Gordon. They can throw, and throw hard and straight, from any position. You watch 'em.'

Since the death of Charles J. Comiskey in Chicago, the Mack family is the last dynasty left in baseball. One son, Roy F., is vice president and secretary of the club, while Earle, another son, is due some day to succeed his father on the bench. Connie could retire right now to his Germantown home if he so desired. But, as one of his former stars put it, 'He'd die if you took him away from Shibe Park.'

Some major-league clubs have had twenty to twenty-five different managers in their existence, and the average number in the forty years of the American League is about fifteen per club. But Philadelphia has had only one man, Connie Mack. Today he's an institution—not merely in the game, where he was one of the five men named as Builders of Baseball in the Baseball Museum in Cooperstown, New York, but in his home town, where he was presented the Bok Award of $10,000 in 1929. The fans talk about the A's, but they turn out to see Connie Mack. In fifteen minutes while I was sitting in the outer office at Shibe Park recently, a dozen telephone calls came reserving seats for the next day's game. The club may be in last place, but Connie is an institution.

Since 1933 he hasn't finished in the first division, but it's unlikely that this worries him much. For he's been in the game a long while and has plenty of patience. He waited from 1902 until 1905 for another pennant winner, then started to climb again until he was victorious in 1910. From 1915 to 1921 he was in eighth place, waiting and building for the future. By 1929 he had his championship club once more. In 1932 he sold them to raise cash, and at the age of seventy started the long slow road to the top for the fourth time in his life. Some day he'll win another pennant.

You'll hear it whispered round that he pays poor salaries. Yet he gave $45,-

000 bonus for signing young McCoy of Detroit, who was declared a free agent, and pays Johnson, his outfielder, $18,000. Today he has a team of youngsters, a team with possibilities. Lacking first-class pitching, he has nevertheless the nucleus of a good ball club. 'I think next year we'll make trouble for any of them,' he declares.

You have to know Connie—to know his life, to see him, watch him on the bench, and talk with fans in Shibe Park—to appreciate what a character he is. There he sits before you, erect and straight, arms folded, discoursing in his slow, kindly way about baseball, life, or anything you like. 'Roosevelt?' His face lights up, the wrinkles in his forehead vanish in his smile. 'Say, did you hear him last night? He was wonderful. A wonderful American.' Yes, and so is Mr. Cornelius McGillicuddy.

1940

# M. M. MUSSELMAN

## *Wheels in His Head*

EVERYBODY, including Grandma, said A.J. would never amount to anything because he just wouldn't stick to a good job when he had one. In more or less chronological order he was a bicycle racer, hardware buyer, sporting-goods dealer, bicycle salesman, assistant manager of a mail-order house, tire salesman, manufacturer of golf clubs, real-estate subdivider, country-club promoter, research engineer, and gentleman farmer.

In my adolescent days I was always sorry A.J. had not realized his earliest ambition: he wanted to be an acrobat in a circus. He would have been a good one, too. Silk tights and bangles would have suited A.J. It started after Grandma took the boys over to Newton to a little one-ring circus. When they got home to the farm, A.J. tried walking on his hands. After one try he yelled for Grandma to come out and watch him.

"Hey, Ma! Look at me! Look at me!"

Grandma, who was ninety-five pounds of dynamic devotion, came to the screen door to watch A.J. demonstrate on the front porch. He flipped over on his hands and walked right across the porch.

"Careful!" warned Grandma. "You'll break your neck." And at that moment A.J. walked right off the railless porch and almost did break his neck.

But A.J. was not the least bit discouraged by his first acrobatic misstep. He practiced for weeks until he could stand on his hands, turn handsprings, and do back flips. Then he grew ambitious and wanted to turn somersaults in the air. Not by jumping from a beam in the hayloft; anybody could do that. He

From *Wheels in His Head* by M. M. Musselman, published by Whittlesey House, copyright 1945 by M. M. Musselman.

wanted to do it just the way the circus acrobats did it: right off the hard ground, with a leap, a cat-like flip, and back on his feet again, finishing with a graceful bow.

He broached the subject to Grandma one morning at breakfast. "Ma," he asked with a speculative gleam in his eye, "how do those circus acrobats learn to turn them somersaults in the air?"

"I don't know," Grandma replied, cutting an apple pie into four sections for her ravenous brood. "But if you dare to try any tomfoolery like that I'll tan your hide. I don't want you abed with broken bones just at haying time."

Grandma should have known better. Any time you dared A.J. to do something, it was as good as done. He went right out behind the barn to give that backward somersault a whirl, feeling somehow that because Grandma had forbidden him to try it, it would be easy as rolling off a log.

He clenched his teeth, leaped into the air, and landed flat on his back. When he regained his breath, he sat up and meditated for several minutes. He had no intention of repeating his experiment. It had been too painful. But he intended to figure out a way to turn somersaults with some degree of safety. All that day, as he took the cows out to pasture, fed the pigs, worked in the hayfield, and helped with the milking, he pondered the safety factor in a backward somersault. At last he solved the problem with a simple but ingenious "invention."

Grandma's clothesline was always stretched between the privy and an old apple tree. A.J. let out enough slack in the line so that it hung down just about waist high. With a short length of rope, he tied himself to the clothesline and tried a back somersault. To his delight it worked.

He practiced prodigiously for several weeks until he was sure that he was ready to attempt a somersault without the clothesline for a safety belt. Then he went out behind the barn to try it, but to his chagrin he discovered that he lacked the nerve. The memory of that first painful effort still haunted him, and he realized that he had become a slave to his safety belt. In later years A.J. told me this story many times and always pointed out the obvious moral.

"Some people go through life wearing a safety belt," he would say. "Never get up nerve enough to take a chance; stick to the same job all their life; live in the same little one-horse town; wear rubbers on rainy days; never eat oysters out of season; never kiss anybody but their wife; vote the straight Republican ticket; and then discover it's all over but the flowers and the funeral and they never had any fun out of life."

But A.J. was not long a slave to his safety belt. One morning, trudging back from the pasture, he determined to take just one more practice somersault, tied to the clothesline; and then, come what might, he would give it a whirl on his own.

Hurrying to the clothesline, he tied himself firmly in position and gave a confident leap into the air. For some reason he turned only halfway over. Fortunately the clothesline caught the weight of his body and saved his neck. But the weatherbeaten privy, to which the line was attached, could not take it. With a wooden groan it collapsed. Simultaneously, there was a scream from Grandma, who at that moment was occupying the second hole.

For an instant she sat frozen amid the ruins, her Scotch Presbyterian blood

horrified by this intrusion on her privacy. Then, with fire in her eye, she dropped her skirts and started for A.J. This was one time when he could not escape Grandma's wrath, for he was still tied to the clothesline.

But A.J. was not to be deterred from his career as an acrobat. He kept on turning cartwheels and back flips and somersaults. He built a horizontal bar out behind the barn, on which to try new tricks. His three brothers were satisfied when they could chin themselves a few times and "skin the cat." Not A.J. He kept fooling around on that bar until he was as much at home on it as a monkey.

Some years later, A.J. became a Y.M.C.A. physical director on the strength of a couple of back flips and a giant swing, which was the closest he ever came to being a bona fide acrobat. But I used to brag to the neighbor kids that Pop was a circus performer—the man on the flying trapeze. If they doubted it, I would yell for him to come out and show them. A.J. would come out in the yard and turn somersaults and back flips till the other kids were popeyed. They thought a circus acrobat was about the greatest kind of dad any boy could have. I would not have told them the truth for a million dollars —that he was really an inventor.

Grandma had been left a widow with a farm to run and four sons to rear, the eldest twelve years old, all of whom, it was whispered among the neighbors, were slightly tetched. But Grandma thought they were just plain lazy. She'd send them out to pick the cherries in the orchard and they'd come in that evening and declare the trees were stripped. But next morning, when Grandma would go out to see for herself, she'd find the boys had lied to her; they hadn't picked half the cherries. The same thing would happen when they'd go out to pick apples.

"Never would pick 'em all," Grandma used to declare. "And then lie about it like little heathens!"

A.J. was the worst. He used to argue back at Grandma. Downright sass her. Then Grandma would get angry, grab her hickory switch, and chase them up into those trees again. But it never did any good.

It was not till thirty years later that Grandma heard about color-blindness. All four of her boys had it—couldn't tell red from green.

"Probably a good thing," Grandma philosophized when she found out why the boys never picked all the cherries. "They needed a certain amount of lickin' anyway."

Even as a boy, back on the farm, A.J. had a passion for things that went round and round. Wheels! Anything with wheels attached to it started him off on a mental tangent. An unattached wheel would leave him in a state of suspended animation, while he gawked at it with a dreamy, speculative expression.

A.J.'s first invention was inspired by a huge wheel from an old high-wheeled bicycle. He purloined it from a junk heap behind the village blacksmith shop, brought it home, and went to work on it. In the barn he found a long axle and a couple of old buggy shafts. These he attached in their proper places; then he hung a homemade seat on either side of the wheel.

This uni-sulky, as A.J. has always called it, had several remarkable features. In the first place, it could operate only if there were two occupants of about the same weight, and they had to

jump into their seats at the same time in order to keep the contraption balanced. Secondly, the occupants had to crouch low in their seats to keep from bumping their heads against the axle, from which the seats were suspended. Third, it required two drivers—one to hold the left rein, the other to hold the right. Any difference of judgment between them was likely to result in trouble.

A.J. and his brother Joe chose a Sunday morning, about an hour before church time, to try out the wonderful uni-sulky. Dressed in their best, they led old Bill, the work mule, out of the barn and backed him between the shafts. Then, with youthful nimbleness and enthusiasm, they jumped into their seats and urged Bill out onto the road, in order to get out of Grandma's sight as quickly as possible.

It was probably the most amazing vehicle ever seen on a Kansas highway. And remarkably enough, everything went well for about half a mile, until they came to the main road into town. There, A.J. chose to turn right while his brother Joe preferred to go left. Both being of a stubborn nature, neither would compromise.

Now it happened that Bill was a precocious animal. A.J. has always claimed that he was smarter than most human beings and meaner than Simon Legree. Anyway, Bill became annoyed at the difference of opinion behind him, gave a jerk of his head, and craned his neck around to see what in hell was going on. One look at the contraption to which he was hitched convinced him that he was pulling the devil's own chariot. He gave a snort and set out across country at top speed.

There has always been a difference of opinion between A.J. and Uncle Joe as to exactly what happened. But it seems that as Bill dragged the uni-sulky through the ditch at the side of the road, each boy dropped his rein and grabbed his seat. After that Bill was on his own. He went through Ed Beem's cornfield like Greyhound out to break all records at Goshen. Then he turned south and leaped a barbed-wire fence into Ham Turner's watermelon patch. It was at this fence that Uncle Joe was unseated and hung up by his breeches.

Without Uncle Joe, the wonderful uni-sulky veered to starboard like a catboat in a high wind, causing Bill to run in circles. A.J. held on for dear life, bouncing over green watermelons so fast he felt he was riding the Santa Fe ties to Wichita.

Somewhere in the backstretch, the sulky seat broke from its moorings and took a hop, skip, and jump which landed A.J. amid a tangle of vines. By the time he had freed himself, caught his breath, and stood up to look around, Bill was just vaulting another fence, with what was left of the uni-sulky still dragging along behind him. He disappeared in the general direction of California.

Long-suffering Grandma, dressed in her black dress and bonnet, was rocking grimly on the front porch when the boys finally hove into view. She took one look at their tattered Sunday best and reached for her hickory switch.

It was late afternoon before they found Bill, grazing peacefully, down by the river. The uni-sulky was no longer attached to him. A.J. spent many days searching for the remains, but he never found them.

A man who invents a novel and useful device or process may apply for and be granted a patent from the United States government giving him a mo-

nopoly of his invention for seventeen years. Inventors sometimes become very wealthy, but more often they go bankrupt. For many years A.J. danced a jig between the two, but in the end, to everyone's amazement, he did all right.

The first invention on which he was granted a patent was a game, called "Parlor Golf," which he sold to Parker Brothers for one hundred dollars, spot cash. When he invented it, A.J. had never seen a game of golf. But apparently neither had Parker Brothers, for the game resembled golf about as much as Paris, Illinois, resembles that other and more famous Paris.

The idea of the game was to flick a marble, with thumb and forefinger, up a series of nine grooved and undulated inclines, into nine little holes. In all Wichita, where A.J. by this time owned a bicycle repair shop, he was the only person who had the patience or skill to accomplish this feat in less than par. Everyone else grew infuriated at the damned thing and gave up, leaving A.J. the first undisputed Western Open Golf Champion (Parlor Division).

There followed a number of remarkable inventions, all of which, for one reason or another, failed to produce quick riches. Many of them were contrived while he was operating a bicycle shop in Wichita.

The Tearless Onion Peeler was a gadget that should have been a welcome addition to every kitchen. It was an affair of wheels and knives with a crank to operate it. For large consumers of onions, such as hotels and restaurants, A.J. devised a model which had a foot treadle for motive power. With this super-gadget one man (or woman) could peel, A.J. estimated roughly, seven bushels of onions per hour, without shedding a single tear. And by a simple adjustment, the machine could be converted to a potato, apple, peach, turnip, or rutabaga peeler. In those days, however, labor was plentiful and cheap; consequently, manufacturers of kitchen implements were of the unanimous opinion that A.J.'s Tearless Onion Peeler was no substitute for a ten-cent paring knife.

"It was a good invention," A.J. once told me, "but nobody wanted to buy it. That's always been the trouble with the world. People are suspicious of new ideas. If you spend one year inventing something new, you have to spend two years cramming it down people's throats. There are lots of easier ways to get rich."

After the Tearless Onion Peeler, A.J. invented his Wind-Proof Umbrella. "It Can't Blow Inside Out," read the prospectus. A.J. was sure he had a winner. Every household needed an umbrella, more especially one that would not collapse at the first gust of wind. And certainly rain was usually accompanied by wind; at least it was in Kansas. He figured that if he could collect a royalty of five cents on each umbrella, he ought to make a million dollars in five years.

At the time he perfected the new umbrella, he was enamored of a girl in Wichita, whose name, according to Aunt Ora, was Bertha. A.J. told Bertha about his newest invention. She listened with round-eyed admiration and assured him, breathlessly, that he must be the cleverest man in Wichita. And would he, pretty please, give her one of his patent umbrellas when he became a famous millionaire?

A.J. didn't wait to become a millionaire. He rushed right down to Innes's Department Store and bought a lady's silk umbrella, priced at three dollars. Then he took it to his shop and rebuilt

it, with the cross-bracing, truss arrangement which was the feature of his Wind-Proof Umbrella.

On Bertha's birthday he presented it to her. For a week or so, Bertha displayed her umbrella proudly, and A.J. was elevated to the position of chief swain in her retinue of admirers. And then the rains came.

It happened while Bertha was on her way downtown, clad in a new spring outfit. The sky was slightly overcast, so she was carrying her Patented Wind-Proof Umbrella. When the first drops fell, Bertha struggled with the mechanism of the Wind-Proof Umbrella and finally opened it. Then she slipped her hand through the umbrella's stout wrist-loop, grasped the handle, and quickened her pace, feeling completely secure beneath her Wind-Proof Umbrella.

Suddenly the rain began to slant; overhead, tree branches bent and groaned as a rush of wind struck them; and the sky turned a threatening yellowish gray. Bertha stopped in her tracks. She had lived in Kansas all her life and she knew what was coming: a Kansas tornado. The wind filled her umbrella and tried to tear it from her grasp. The loop tightened about her wrist. She and the umbrella were swept along like two chips on a torrent. By the time she piled up against the Onderdonks' picket fence, bruised, battered, and humiliated, the romance between Bertha and the inventor of the Patented Wind-Proof Umbrella was forever ended.

All A.J.'s most successful inventions seemed to stem from that huge wheel which was the inspiration for his unisulky: they were things that went round and round. The invention of which he is proudest is his method for making the tires now used on airplanes, farm tractors, and other vehicles. This invention created a new principle in tire construction, by means of which the cross-section could be nearly as great as one-half the diameter, resulting in very low air pressures. These tires make it possible for planes to land or take off on rough or muddy fields; they also reduced ground looping and eliminated crack-ups due to wheel failure. Unfortunately, he sold his patent before anyone could foresee the enormous production of planes that World War II would bring. The invention which has brought him the greatest financial return is his bicycle coaster brake.

"I got the idea for my bicycle coaster brake back in 1894," A.J. always begins one of his best stories. "It was while I was traveling about ninety miles an hour down the slopes of the Rockies on a bicycle."

As A.J. tells the story, he unlocked his bicycle shop one July morning and discovered that the window on the alley was standing wide open. Then he noticed that his pride and joy, a red and white Peerless bicycle, the latest thing in cycledom, was missing. It was the most expensive one in the store—priced at $125. The plush-lined case, for shipping via railroad, was undisturbed, so A.J. knew that the thief had ridden his loot away.

He hurried over to the police station, where inquiry revealed that a stranger, who had skipped out of the local hotel without paying his bill, had been seen the night before, by Patrolman Murphy, high-tailing toward Hutchinson on the Peerless.

A.J. was fit to be tied. "Why didn't Murphy pinch the fellow?" he demanded. "That was the only red and

white Peerless bike in Wichita and everybody knew it belonged to me."

The Chief of Police shrugged. "Maybe Murphy thought the guy had bought it."

A.J. hurried over to the bank and drew out twenty dollars for expense money, then dashed back to his store, shouted to Aunt Ora that he was on the trail of a bicycle thief, and climbed on his Ariel road-racer.

As A.J. likes to point out, he was pretty sharp on a bicycle in those days—an amateur circuit racer and one of the best riders west of the Mississippi. He thought he could overtake the bike-rustler before nightfall, because the red and white Peerless was bound to attract attention.

But he soon discovered that his quarry was a fast rider himself. For when he arrived at Great Bend, about nine o'clock that night, the Peerless had been there and gone. A.J. started out next morning at daybreak, hoping to overtake the bike-snatcher before he lost the trail. He was at a disadvantage, of course, because he had to stop at every crossroad and make inquiries; but the trail stayed hot—as A.J. says, "hotter'n an iron pump handle in August."

The second afternoon, he arrived at a fly-infested lunchroom, where he ordered a sandwich and inquired about the man on the Peerless.

"Yeah," answered the proprietor. "There was a fellow come through here on a bike like that."

"How long ago?"

"Couple hours. Told me he was headin' fer Colorado Springs. Purty long ride, if you ask me."

A.J. didn't wait to finish his sandwich. He hit the road and settled down to ride his fox to earth. He claims this was the best race he ever pedaled in his life, but somehow the thief evaded him. He thinks the man may have bribed a brakeman on a freight train to give him and the Peerless a lift in an empty boxcar.

A.J. reached Colorado Springs early one morning. As soon as the stores were open he canvassed every bicycle shop in town, but nobody had seen the Peerless. As a last resort he went to the police station.

"Saw a fellow ridin' a bike toward Cripple Creek this morning," one of the cops told him.

"Was it a red and white Peerless?"

"Didn't notice."

A.J. took a chance and headed for Cripple Creek. He had never seen mountains before and hadn't the vaguest idea what he was in for. The last ten miles into the little mining town were so steep he had to get off and push. As he plugged up those weary miles, he had an uncomfortable feeling that he had been sent on a wild-goose chase. Sure enough, nobody in Cripple Creek had seen the Peerless.

A.J. was a very unhappy man—tired, defeated, six hundred miles from home, and with only six dollars left. His one consoling thought was that he would be able to coast all the way back to Colorado Springs and a bed.

So he climbed on his bicycle and started, with never a thought of more trouble ahead. But before he was half a mile out of town he realized that he was traveling too fast. For although the Cripple Creek road didn't look so steep, it was something like the first dip on a roller coaster. He tried to slow down by throwing his weight against the pedals, but he kept gaining speed and was heading down that road faster than a hound dog with a hive of bees on his tail.

In those days a cyclist used to brake his bicycle by slipping one toe under the frame and pressing on the front tire with the sole of his shoe. A.J. tried that. For a moment it worked; then friction made the sole of his shoe fiery hot. He let out a startled yell and jerked his foot from beneath the frame.

Then gravity took charge once more and away he went. It was time to think of something ingenious. But the only idea he could contrive was to fall off. He hit the dirt with a thud that knocked the wind out of him; in one bounce he was off the road and rolling down the mountainside. He fetched up against a scrub pine fifty feet from the road.

For a minute or two he just lay there regaining his wind and wondering if he was all in one piece. Then he got up groggily and shook his head until the world came back into focus. He scrambled up to the road and looked about for the bicycle. It was not in sight.

After an extensive search, he found his bicycle with eight spokes broken and the frame bent. When it would run again, he sat down to think.

His pondering resulted in the invention of his first brake. He cut several pine branches and tied them into a bundle with a piece of rope from his tool kit. The end of the rope was then attached to his saddle post so that the pine branches dragged behind on the road.

It worked like a charm. The bundle of branches was just enough brake to keep things under control. He went down the mountain road throwing up a dust cloud big enough for thirty head of cattle.

For about six miles A.J. was mighty proud of his invention; then, to his dismay, he discovered that it was an infringement. He was informed of this fact by a deputy sheriff who halted him with a forty-four and a vocabulary of four-letter words.

Using a drag for a brake was old stuff in those parts. Wagon freighters had invented the device years before. The trouble was that it ruined good roads, so the state had passed a law against that invention. A.J. had to wire back to Wichita for money to pay his fine.

"And that's one reason," A.J. has often told me, "that I conceived the idea of putting a coaster brake on a bicycle."

The idea was a long time hatching. It was thirteen years before he applied for a patent. But since 1908 five million bicycles have been equipped with A.J.'s coaster brake. Even Grandma had to admit, before she died, that somehow "one of Alvey's fool inventions turned out purty good."

1945

# JOHN DOS PASSOS

## *The American Plan*

### From THE BIG MONEY

FREDERICK WINSLOW TAYLOR (they called him Speedy Taylor in the shop) was born in Germantown, Pennsylvania, the year of Buchanan's election. His father was a lawyer, his mother came from a family of New Bedford whalers; she was a great reader of Emerson, belonged to the Unitarian Church and the Browning Society. She was a fervent abolitionist and believed in democratic manners; she was a housekeeper of the old school, kept everybody busy from dawn till dark. She laid down the rules of conduct:

selfrespect, selfreliance, selfcontrol
and a cold long head for figures.

But she wanted her children to appreciate the finer things so she took them abroad for three years on the Continent, showed them cathedrals, grand opera, Roman pediments, the old masters under their brown varnish in their great frames of tarnished gilt.

Later Fred Taylor was impatient of these wasted years, stamped out of the room when people talked about the finer things; he was a testy youngster, fond of practical jokes and a great hand at rigging up contraptions and devices.

At Exeter he was head of his class and captain of the ballteam, the first man to pitch overhand. (When umpires complained that overhand pitching wasn't in the rules of the game, he answered that it got results.)

As a boy he had nightmares, going to bed was horrible for him; he thought they came from sleeping on his back. He made himself a leather harness with wooden pegs that stuck into his flesh when he turned over. When he was grown he slept in a chair or in bed in a sitting position propped up with pillows. All his life he suffered from sleeplessness.

He was a crackerjack tennisplayer. In 1881, with his friend Clark, he won the National Doubles Championship. (He used a spoonshaped racket of his own design.)

At school he broke down from overwork, his eyes went back on him. The doctor suggested manual labor. So instead of going to Harvard he went into the machineshop of a small pumpmanufacturing concern, owned by a friend of the family's, to learn the trade of patternmaker and machinist. He learned to handle a lathe and to dress and cuss like a workingman.

Fred Taylor never smoked tobacco or drank liquor or used tea or coffee; he couldn't understand why his fellowmechanics wanted to go on sprees and get drunk and raise Cain Saturday nights. He lived at home, when he wasn't reading technical books he'd play parts in amateur theatricals or step up to the piano in the evening and sing a good tenor in *A Warrior Bold* or *A Spanish Cavalier*.

He served his first year's apprenticeship in the machineshop without pay;

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the next two years he made a dollar and a half a week, the last year two dollars.

Pennsylvania was getting rich off iron and coal. When he was twenty-two, Fred Taylor went to work at the Midvale Iron Works. At first he had to take a clerical job, but he hated that and went to work with a shovel. At last he got them to put him on a lathe. He was a good machinist, he worked ten hours a day and in the evenings followed an engineering course at Stevens. In six years he rose from machinist's helper to keeper of toolcribs to gangboss to foreman to master mechanic in charge of repairs to chief draftsman and director of research to chief engineer of the Midvale Plant.

The early years he was a machinist with the other machinists in the shop, cussed and joked and worked with the rest of them, soldiered on the job when they did. Mustn't give the boss more than his money's worth. But when he got to be foreman he was on the management's side of the fence, *gathering in on the part of those on the management's side all the great mass of traditional knowledge which in the past has been in the heads of the workmen and in the physical skill and knack of the workman.* He couldn't stand to see an idle lathe or an idle man.

Production went to his head and thrilled his sleepless nerves like liquor or women on a Saturday night. He never loafed and he'd be damned if anybody else would. Production was an itch under his skin.

He lost his friends in the shop; they called him niggerdriver. He was a stockily built man with a temper and a short tongue.

*I was a young man in years but I give you my word I was a great deal older than I am now, what with the worry, meanness and contemptibleness of the whole damn thing. It's a horrid life for any man to live not being able to look any workman in the face without seeing hostility there, and a feeling that every man around you is your virtual enemy.*

That was the beginning of the Taylor System of Scientific Management.

He was impatient of explanations, he didn't care whose hide he took off in enforcing the laws he believed inherent in the industrial process.

*When starting an experiment in any field question everything, question the very foundations upon which the art rests, question the simplest, the most selfevident, the most universally accepted facts; prove everything,* except the dominant Quaker Yankee (the New Bedford skippers were the greatest niggerdrivers on the whaling seas) rules of conduct. He boasted he'd never ask a workman to do anything he couldn't do.

He devised an improved steamhammer; he standardized tools and equipment, he filled the shop with college students with stopwatches and diagrams, tabulating, standardizing. *There's the right way of doing a thing and the wrong way of doing it; the right way means increased production, lower costs, higher wages, bigger profits:* the American plan.

He broke up the foreman's job into separate functions, speedbosses, gangbosses, timestudy men, orderofwork men.

The skilled mechanics were too stubborn for him, what he wanted was a plain handyman who'd do what he was told. If he was a firstclass man and did firstclass work Taylor was willing to let

him have firstclass pay; that's where he began to get into trouble with the owners.

At thirtyfour he married and left Midvale and took a flyer for the big money in connection with a pulpmill started in Maine by some admirals and political friends of Grover Cleveland's;

the panic of '93 made hash of that enterprise,

so Taylor invented for himself the job of Consulting Engineer in Management and began to build up a fortune by careful investments.

The first paper he read before the American Society of Mechanical Engineers was anything but a success, they said he was crazy. *I have found,* he wrote in 1909, *that any improvement is not only opposed but aggressively and bitterly opposed by the majority of men.*

He was called in by Bethlehem Steel. It was in Bethlehem he made his famous experiments with handling pigiron; he taught a Dutchman named Schmidt to handle fortyseven tons instead of twelve and a half tons of pigiron a day and got Schmidt to admit he was as good as ever at the end of the day.

He was a crank about shovels, every job had to have a shovel of the right weight and size for that job alone; every job had to have a man of the right weight and size for that job alone; but when he began to pay his men in proportion to the increased efficiency of their work,

the owners who were a lot of greedy smalleyed Dutchmen began to raise Hail Columbia; when Schwab bought Bethlehem Steel in 1901

Fred Taylor

inventor of efficiency

who had doubled the production of the stampingmill by speeding up the main lines of shafting from ninetysix to twohundred and twentyfive revolutions a minute

was unceremoniously fired.

After that Fred Taylor always said he couldn't afford to work for money.

He took to playing golf (using golfclubs of his own design), doping out methods for transplanting huge boxtrees into the garden of his home.

At Boxly in Germantown he kept open house for engineers, factory-managers, industrialists;

he wrote papers,

lectured in colleges,

appeared before a congressional committee,

everywhere preached the virtues of scientific management and the Barth slide rule, the cutting down of waste and idleness, the substitution for skilled mechanics of the plain handyman (like Schmidt the pigiron handler) who'd move as he was told

and work by the piece:

production;

more steel rails more bicycles more spools of thread more armorplate for battleships more bedpans more barbedwire more needles more lightningrods more ballbearings more dollarbills;

(the old Quaker families of Germantown were growing rich, the Pennsylvania millionaires were breeding billionaires out of iron and coal)

production would make every firstclass American rich who was willing to work at piecework and not drink or raise Cain or think or stand mooning at his lathe.

Thrifty Schmidt the pigiron handler can invest his money and get to be an owner like Schwab and the rest of the greedy smalleyed Dutchmen and cultivate a taste for Bach and have hundred-

yearold boxtrees in his garden at Bethlehem or Germantown or Chestnut Hill,
and lay down the rules of conduct;
the American plan.
But Fred Taylor never saw the working of the American plan;
in 1915 he went to the hospital in Philadelphia suffering from a breakdown.
Pneumonia developed; the nightnurse heard him winding his watch;
on the morning of his fiftyninth birthday, when the nurse went into his room to look at him at fourthirty,
he was dead with his watch in his hand.

1936

# JOSEPH R. BUCHANAN

## *The Trials of a Labor Editor*

From The Story of a Labor Agitator

"One swallow maketh not summer," and one strike does not make a labor agitator. Indeed, strikes contribute but slightly to the equipment of the successful labor agitator. The agitator must be thoroughly acquainted with the history of the labor movement, and be capable of presenting its aims and aspirations in an attractive and convincing manner. He must possess the ability to think rapidly and to express his views and opinions clearly and forcibly. But, withal, he must inspire those whom he would lead with absolute faith in his honesty. The agitator isn't always an advocate of strikes. He has sometimes to exert his influence to prevent a strike which his judgment tells him would be unwise. It may sound like mixing terms to say so, but it is a truth that the most difficult tasks performed by the labor agitators are their "agitations" in the interest of peace—their efforts to prevent strikes. The man who is always in favor of a strike as soon as one is suggested, or who is constantly on the search for a *casus belli,* soon finds his influence as a leader gone, and thereafter he may go off and agitate by himself.

I make this explanation as a sort of preface to the chapter in which I am to tell something about my education in the labor movement.

When I took the field in the Leadville strike I was but an untrained neophyte, rushing in at the dictates of a sentimental, sympathetic nature. My heart, and not my head, was my guide. Had I known then what I knew later, I would have tried rather to prevent or compromise the strike than to aggravate it. I was not familiar with the iron law of wages. I didn't realize that labor was subject, like any other commodity, to the law of supply and demand, when it is deficient in organized strength sufficient to prevent the operation of that law. These and many other things I learned in the two years that followed the year of the Leadville strike. I had taken a climax without working up to

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it, but after one short and interesting campaign on the firing line, I fell back to the rear for a course in tactics beginning at "hayfoot, strawfoot."

In the spring of 1881 I again took up my residence in Denver, and went to work in the composing-room of "The Rocky Mountain News." "The News" was an "open office." In trade-union parlance there are three recognized kinds of employing establishments. The "fair" shop employs union men, pays the scale, and recognizes the union's rules, one of which is that no non-union man shall be employed. The "scab" or "rat" shop refuses to countenance the union in any manner, and, as a general thing, would not employ union men if they were willing themselves or were permitted by their union to take situations. The "opens" are conducted under compromises between the proprietors and the union. In such shops union men are permitted to work, but non-union men may also be employed, and there is no obligation upon the employer's part to conform to the union's rules, except in the matter of the scale of wages; in most cases, though not in all, the union scale is paid in the "open" shops. There is, or was at the time of which I write, besides this general classification, another condition under which union men worked for unfriendly employers. In the interest of succinctness and clearness, I will describe this system as it worked in my own trade. It was sometimes the custom of the union, in an effort to unionize a "rat" office, to allow members to work "under cover." Trustworthy men would be selected by the officers of the union to try for situations in a "rat" office. Sometimes the men so selected would secure the employment under assumed names, but usually the better plan of removing their names from the roll of the union to a "secret list" was adopted. The men working "under cover" reported secretly as occasion required to the union's officers and received such instructions as were necessary in the same way. Of course the object of this whole proceeding was to get as many union men as possible into the "rat" office, and, as soon as the number was deemed sufficient to promise successful issue, to demand that the office be unionized. In most of the cases of this kind that have come under my personal observation, strikes have followed the unmasking and the demand for union recognition; but the union has generally improved its position, securing an "open" office where it has failed to thoroughly unionize the establishment. "The Rocky Mountain News" had been advanced from a "rat" to an "open" office by this process a short time before I secured employment on the paper.

In union offices the journeymen in each department are upon an equal footing as to wages and other conditions. Under the piece system, which, happily, has been almost entirely displaced by the day system, there were many opportunities for the practice of favoritism. In "rat" and "open" offices some workmen were frequently enabled, through favors shown them by foremen, to make larger bills than men greatly their superiors as compositors. In union offices it was difficult, under the watchful eye of the union chapel, for any one to secure, and impossible to long maintain, an unfair advantage, even though one were the pet of the owners, the editors, the foreman, or all of these together. An appeal to the union against a case of favoritism always brought prompt action, a sort of protection to fair dealing that

has been an element of strength to unions.

When I entered "The News" office, ten members of the force of sixteen compositors were union men, three were non-unionists and three were "rats," having once been members. When I had been in the office about six months, the three non-unionists, under the influence of the union men on the force, made application to the union for membership and were received. Pardon was granted to two of the "rats" and they were reinstated. The remaining "rat" was refused a pardon, and when the office was declared a full union office, after a little argument with the proprietors, he went into other business. The discussion over that man's case was very animated. I wanted his name included in the pardoning resolution, and I believed the union's treatment of him was cruel and uncalled for; but men older than I in the union said that his offense could not be condoned, and it may have been they were right. That was my first contest with fellow-unionists over questions of principle and policy.

In June, 1882, the annual session of the International Typographical Union was held in St. Louis. I was elected the delegate from Denver Union No. 49. My principal opponent was Robert Higgins, fellow victim of the "Committee of 100." In that election I received my introduction to trade-union politics, a game in which I frequently took a hand in the years that followed; a game at which I received several severe drubbings and achieved some victories.

The union made a liberal appropriation to defray the expenses of the delegate, but it was suggested to me that I might secure railway passes through the influence of "The News." I mentioned the matter to the managing editor, Mr. William Stapleton, and received a flat refusal. A few days later Mr. Stapleton came to me and said that he had been talking the subject over with Mr. Arkins, the senior owner of the paper, and that they had concluded to get me passes as far as Kansas City, but they wanted it understood that they did so out of consideration for me personally and not on account of the union, for which they had no love. I relate this apparently trifling incident because in later chapters I shall tell how those two men turned upon me and not only tried to drive me out of Denver, but publicly threatened to take my life.

The convention of the International Union was a revelation to me. The average ability of the delegates was greatly superior to what I had expected to find in an assemblage of workingmen. I discovered then what I have seen many times since: that the national and international unions of labor in this country conduct their meetings in a manner that the average legislature could copy with profit.

The subject of greatest importance considered at the International Union Convention was the "sub list." Substitute compositors, who are put on to work when regulars want a day or night off, are called "subs." These men are, of course, members of the union in union offices, and the regular is responsible for the "sub" he puts on his cases. In some of the offices the foremen in those days kept lists made up of the names of the "subs" they would allow to work in their respective rooms. It can be seen that this system furnished opportunities for the exercise of favoritism by foremen, and was, of course, open to suspicion. Great injustice was done in some cases to good union men who had not the "pull" necessary to get their

names on the "sub list." An effort was made at the St. Louis convention to legislate the "sub lists" out of existence, and I joined the movement with enthusiasm. The zeal I displayed in that parliamentary struggle won me a pair of nicknames that clung to me in all my years of activity in the labor movement. They were "Kicker" and "Riproarer of the Rockies." While I brought down upon my head the wrath of the mossbacks in the convention because of the fight I made for the "subs" at that time, I had my reward in the thanks of the tramp printers, which have been laid at my feet in cities and on the road from one coast to the other.

The abolitionists lost that battle, but one year later, at Cincinnati, fought it over, and won. The defeat at St. Louis was due to a trick played upon us by the administration party. After the convention twenty-one delegates met and adopted a set of resolutions denouncing the methods employed to defeat the will of the majority and the known desires of a majority of the union men throughout the country. These resolutions we signed and made public. For this action we were published in the semi-official organ of the International Typographical Union as traitors. Frank K. Foster, of Boston, was one of the "traitors" with me, and out of that association grew a friendship between that eloquent and fearless champion of labor and myself that stood the test of many hard battles for the principles of trades-unions in the Knights of Labor and elsewhere in after years. The charge of "treason" was not pressed, and, as has been said, our principles triumphed one year later.

Back to my cases on "The News" I went after the St. Louis convention; but I was dissatisfied and uneasy. For two years I had been reading everything dealing with social conditions that I could get hold of. I had devoured the writings of the leading political economists and had formed opinions of a just and equitable social and industrial system. My theories of right would not harmonize with conditions as I knew them to exist. At Leadville I had witnessed the flash of lances, and at St. Louis I had seen what I believed to be a latent force in the workers which, if aroused and properly directed, would overthrow industrial wrong and elevate the toiler to a position commensurate with his services to society.

There was one assembly of the Knights of Labor in Denver. In November, 1882, another assembly was instituted. I was one of the charter members. John B. Lennon, subsequently prominent in the labor movement nationally as secretary of the Journeymen Tailors' Union and as treasurer of the American Federation of Labor, was also a charter member of the new assembly. All of the members at the beginning of the assembly, and indeed for some months thereafter, were trades-unionists, and for that reason the name "Union" was given to the assembly; its number was 2327. Two clergymen of national prominence, Gilbert De La Matyr, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and Myron W. Reed, Congregationalist, became members of Union Assembly during the second year of its existence.

The principles of the Knights of Labor and the opportunities presented by the organization for educational work in the field of labor reform were irresistibly attractive to progressive and liberal trades-unionists. The sentiment among unionists of that kind, of which the organization of Union Assembly

was a manifestation, was widespread at that time, and union men were forming assemblies or joining those already organized in all parts of the country. The phenomenal growth of the Knights of Labor, which culminated in 1886, was in great measure due to the affiliation of trained, able, and active trades-unionists, which began in 1882.

As a famished plant drinks the dew after a heated day, so I, burning with the desire to do something for the working-people, welcomed the principles of the Knights of Labor and the opportunity the organization presented. Its exhortation, "Agitate, Educate, Organize!" I adopted as my shibboleth, and I was foolish enough to think that I could blow a blast that would rouse the sleeping giant of labor. Others have made the same mistake.

Naturally I sought the printing-press as a means of carrying my message to the oppressed of earth. In conjunction with S. H. Laverty, a fellow-compositor, I started "The Labor Enquirer," of Denver, the first number of which was issued December 16, 1882. With little other capital than our knowledge of newspaper work, Laverty and I embarked upon a sea in whose fathomless depths lie the battered hulks of unnumbered barks whose cargoes were unmarketable "human rights" and whose logbooks were records of foul weather and short rations.

There were in "The Labor Enquirer" eight pages of five columns each. It was issued weekly. While the paper was pronounced in its advocacy of the principles of trades-unionism and of the Knights of Labor, it was conservative —at the start. The motto was,—

"We will renew the times of truth and justice,
Condensing in a free, fair commonwealth—
Not rash equality, but equal rights."

It was soon evident that our news and correspondence didn't interest, nor did our editorials inspire a very large proportion of the workingmen of the community. Subscriptions came in slowly. Expenses were light, Laverty and myself, with the help of an apprentice boy, doing all the mechanical work upon the paper excepting the presswork. Our savings were soon exhausted. Laverty, who was unmarried, reduced his living expenses to the lowest possible notch. During the last three weeks he was with me he lodged in the office and ate most of his meals from the imposing-stone. There was a little fellow in my family now, and it was pretty hard picking for the three of us sometimes. Many times our rations would have been scantier had my partner accepted a fair share of what strayed into "The Enquirer's" till. He was a generous and self-sacrificing fellow—one of the kind of men that made the great labor movement that came in later years a possibility. He was brave, too, for it took courage to give up his interest in the paper, and to abandon the hopes that had soared so high. With the tenth issue of "The Enquirer" he surrendered his interest to me and retired, announcing that there wasn't enough in the paper for the support of two proprietors, and that he could better serve the cause by withdrawing than by remaining.

For four and a half years I published "The Denver Labor Enquirer," and during nearly all of that time I was in charge personally and edited the paper. I shall have occasion to refer frequently to the paper in relating the stirring events in the labor world in which I bore

a part, but to me it seems fit that I should here tell those experiences which were mine simply through ownership of "The Enquirer." It was ups and downs during those four and a half years, with the down side of the score crowding the pages to the margins. Soon after Laverty left me, I was compelled to reduce the paper's size, which I did by just halving it. Then the time came when I wasn't able to pay the apprentice boy's wages, and he had to go. What a struggle it was to continue the poor little champion of the workers, which few of the workers themselves ever lifted a finger to assist! It is true "The Enquirer" wasn't a great paper; it was hardly as large as a patent medicine folder or a circus programme; but that was not my fault. The only limit to size and character I recognized was measured by the income. Although I labored from sixteen to twenty hours a day—Sundays included—I could set no more type than was required to fill the little paper and have time sufficient to attend to other matters which had claims upon me. If nature had varied her rule in my case and favored me with four instead of two hands, "The Enquirer" would have been a larger paper, because all I was and all I had went into it.

Yes, I was an enthusiast—fanatic, if you please.

And my wife? Ah, loyal soul; she battled and suffered with me. She never complained on her own account, even when we were reduced to one little room in the rear of the office, and to subsisting upon scant and uncertain fare. Sometimes she urged me to give up a fight which she saw would, sooner or later, undermine my health, but she never upbraided me because of my failure to provide a better living for my wife and child.

I remember one stormy night in December, 1883. I had been at work since early morning, pegging away at the case. I was weary, oh, so weary, and I was hungry too; but the day after tomorrow was press-day and there were several columns yet to set. The only light in the room where I worked was supplied by a pair of candles, set in tin holders fastened to the lower edge of the "cap" case. On the first of the month the gas company had removed my meter because two months' bills remained unpaid. Since then I had been working by candlelight at night. The insufficient light made my work harder, but I couldn't blame the candles for that, and probably gas companies know their business. The blame rested elsewhere. I never spoke of it and tried not to think of it. I was hanging to my hope by a very frail cord; the little blaze of one of those candles would have parted that cord in an instant, and so I kept them apart. It was near midnight when my wife entered the room.

"My dear, it is very late, and you must be almost worn out," she said. "Stop now and go to bed. You will kill yourself if you continue as you have been going on for the past three months. How I wish you could realize what has been clear to me for a long time. Those for whom you are battling care nothing for your sacrifices. They would allow you to starve at your post. Give it up, dear, give it up!"

"If we are going to talk, Lou, I must blow out the candles," I said. "I have only two besides these that are burning, and I need them for my work. It will take every cent of coin I have to buy the white paper and pay for the presswork on this issue."

"Well, come into the other room. We can open the stove door and get light enough for talking," she said.

We sat in our little parlor-bedroom-kitchen and in the faint glow of a dying fire talked for more than an hour. I returned no more to my cases that night, and ere I laid my head upon my pillow it had been decided that "The Labor Enquirer" would issue that week's number, and then quietly give up the ghost. Although the struggle which ended in that decision was comparatively short, it was fierce while it lasted, for it was myself battling with myself. My wife said little, and that little was a plea for my health, physical and mental. But I was thinking all the time about my wife and child and how I had neglected them.

Though my decision to quit was reversed within twenty-four hours, I have always felt better because I decided on the side of my little family when the test was clearly before me.

About midway of the following morning there was a rap upon the door of our living-room. The caller was the wife of a superannuated compositor, who was then living upon a little farm a few miles out from Denver. The good woman (God love her, I believe she is an angel now—she belongs in that goodly company) handed my wife a covered basket, and, with a few words of comfort and cheer, took her departure. The basket contained a dressed duck, nine eggs, and about a half peck of potatoes.

Charlie Semper and his wife were poor, very poor. They never built a library nor endowed a university; but they loved their fellow-creatures, and they believed "The Enquirer" was capable of doing some good for humanity if its editor and his family could only be kept from starving. Whether or not they wasted their provisions it is not for me to say, but if the duck, the eggs, and the potatoes were donated to an unworthy object that morning, so were the other good things that came to the office once a week thereafter from that little farm until there was no longer necessity for such help.

At 11 o'clock that same night, as I was making up the forms so that they would be ready to send to the press-room early the following morning, the door opened and a man entered my work-room. Though visitors were not often seen in my establishment, this man's entrance did not surprise me. He was one of the faithful few, and I should have felt almost entirely deserted and poor indeed had he not called to see me at least once in every forty-eight hours. His name was Charles Machette. He was a clerk in a notion store, at the princely salary of nine dollars a week. He had seen better days, and I always felt a lump rise in my throat when he gave me of his scanty income to help the paper, which he had done on several occasions.

When I saw who my visitor was, I remembered my decision to shut down the paper, and the thought that it would be rather a hard task to tell him about it flashed across my mind. He walked directly up to the stone where I was engaged and, without uttering a word, deposited a twenty-dollar gold-piece on the form in front of me. At first I thought it was a brass medal or an advertisement, but when I picked it up and turned it over I recognized an old familiar face. I had once (it seemed years ago) known the family of "yellow boys."

"Well, Charlie?" was all I could say.

"It's for you," he responded.

"Where did you get it?" I asked.

"Sold my old watch."

"I can't take it," and I tried to place the piece of money in his hand.

Shoving his hands into his pockets he stepped away from me. "Yes, you can take it; and you've got to take it. I can't set type nor do any of the other work on the paper, and so I've got to help pay for the things you have to buy, including the presswork."

"But," I said, "you've done that so often before."

"Yes, and I'll do it again whenever it's necessary, if I have to take the shirt off my back. You needn't think you are going to monopolize the sacrificing business. You write and preach against monopolies; I am doing a little practicing along that line."

And I kept the money.

If any of the publishers of the great papers of to-day read this they will smile at so much ado over so small a sum. They think nothing of giving as much, and more, for a short special. To me that twenty dollars meant white paper and presswork for two issues.

I hope the reader who pursues this volume to the end will turn back when he finishes the account given in a later chapter of the part another watch played in an attempt to succor a dying labor paper, and read again this simple little story of which Charlie Machette is the hero.

I had one friend during those dark days who, though he helped me with a cash donation occasionally, tried hard to persuade me to abandon the effort to establish a paper. He would come into the office every few weeks, and after giving me a lecture on the unworthiness and ingratitude of the workingman in general and the Denver workingman in particular, and after scolding me roundly, would always close each visit by taking five or ten dollars from his pocket and laying it down in front of me would say:—

"Well, you're a fool; but fools have to eat just like other people."

If any of the "Old Guard" of Denver read the foregoing, they will have no difficulty in recognizing O. L. ("Yank") Smith in the gentleman just described.

My friend Smith tried to get me to go into politics; for, singular as it may seem, I was apparently very popular with the workingmen, who seemed willing to do almost anything for me but support the paper. They would pack a hall to hear me talk, but few of them were willing to spend a dollar and a half a year to read the lectures I was delivering through "The Enquirer" once a week.

The Republican county committee offered me a place on the legislative ticket for Arapahoe County, and the chairman of the committee personally urged me to accept the offer. Such a nomination at that time was equivalent to election, but I refused it, and my friend Smith dressed me down in good style when he heard of what I had done.

"What in Heaven's name do you want?" he asked. "You are always howling about the wrongs of the workingmen. Here is a chance for you to help make laws in their interest and you refuse it. What's the matter with you?"

I recognized the pertinency of the question and admitted his right to ask it, despite the severity of his manner. My answer was:—

"About all I have left in this world is the love and confidence of some thousands of workingmen, and—"

"Yes, and you'll starve to death on a diet of love and confidence!"

"Never mind that, now. They believe in me, whatever they may do or not do. If I accepted that nomination, there are jealous and weak ones among them who would say I had played into the hands of the politicians by becoming a party to a sham recognition of labor; that I had sold myself for a seat in the legislature. After my election, I would be on the defensive with my own people all the time, because, strive as I might, it would be impossible for one labor man to accomplish anything of consequence in the legislature. At the end of my term I would have to choose between remaining in the political camp, with submission to the party machine, and a return to my work of agitation in the labor world, with diminished following and lessened influence. You know which I would choose. I am not willing to make a breach in the ranks for a little cheap glory and the salary of a legislator."

"I should call it good riddance to be freed from such friends as would desert you because you accepted an opportunity to agitate their cause in the legislature, though nothing practical came of it at once," said Smith.

Smith's argument looks stronger than mine, I know, and yet I refused to reconsider my decision. I leave the reader to decide whether I was short-sighted, selfish, egotistical, or cowardly. I had stated the truth to my friend: I was afraid to take the chance, just then, of weakening my influence with the workingmen, who were beginning to organize and to think as they had never organized and thought before.

My displeased friend had occasion at a later period to recall one of the reasons I had advanced to him for refusing the nomination for a political office, and I will digress sufficiently to tell the story: He was nominated as a member of the city council, indorsed by the labor party, and elected. The night of election day was the regular meeting-time of Union Assembly, of which Smith was a member. Just before the close of the assembly that night, about ten o'clock, one of the brothers who had gone out to get the election results, returned with the information that our brother Smith was elected. I was on the floor at the time, making a general talk, but especially urging the members to stand together in all things which concerned the interests of labor. I didn't have to swing very far out of the line of my discourse, when the victory of Smith was announced, to say,—

"Now, here is one of our brothers who has just been elected to an honorable position. We all love and respect him. As he passes out across yon threshold to-night he will carry our esteem and good wishes, but it will be for the last time. Before our next meeting, two weeks hence, there will be Knights who, because Brother Smith will not be guided by them in the discharge of his public duties, and because he will not be able to secure appointments for those who ask him for positions, will charge him with betrayal, disloyalty, treachery, dishonesty, and everything else that is bad, short of murder."

My prediction was fulfilled to the letter. Bad feeling was engendered between some of the members of the assembly, and the trouble spread to other labor organizations in the city. Smith quickly dropped out of the labor movement. Before the next election day came around labor as an organized factor in politics was again at the ebb tide. And yet there are many intelligent friends of the workingman who are unable to understand why labor is not

more of an organized political power in the land.

To return to "The Enquirer." There were others besides those I have mentioned who made sacrifices from their meager means to keep the paper going; there was a little band of them who, with no deserters and rarely a recruit, always rallied when the situation was most discouraging. That little band of fanatics held the paper back many times when it was hanging over the black chasm of failure. It is not necessary that I should tell of all these critical periods; they would appear very much alike to the reader, though to me each was a distinct and separate tragedy. And yet there was one more experience in that line that I think I should relate.

One evening, while I was at work, the door of my office opened and ten of my friends filed into the room. Their formal proceedings and serious aspect frightened me at first, but I soon learned that their mission was one of friendship. Quietly they formed a circle around me, and John Lennon stepped up to my side and placed in my hands a package containing a suit of clothes, made in his own shop, accompanying the gift with a few words of kindness and encouragement. I had use for that suit; labor editors in those days usually had room in their closets for things of that kind.

I had another partner in the paper for a while, not a printer, as my first one had been. Stephen Vinot, a man of considerable property,—too much, for he was "land poor,"—sympathized with the efforts of the workingmen to improve their condition. He was a Frenchman, and was full of the spirit of '93. How he sometimes made the little office shake with the thrilling strains of the Marseillaise hymn, which he rendered in French with a heavy baritone voice! Vinot's hobby was the Chinese question. He believed that if the Chinese were allowed unrestricted entrance to this country they would in time dominate the white people in every walk of life, and that American workingmen would be degraded to a coolie level. That was the prevailing belief in the West in those days,—and it has never changed,—but all were not so outspoken and radical as Stephen Vinot. I won his friendship by printing his anti-Chinese writings in "The Enquirer." He soon learned of the struggle I was engaged in to keep the paper alive, and to help me out he took a half interest in the paper, putting $200 in the cash-box. He advanced other sums at various times, but in about five months he had had enough of labor journalism. When he learned that he couldn't induce me to shut down the paper, he drew out, and once more I was the sole owner of "The Enquirer's" plant, subscription list and good will. There wasn't a great quantity of either of these, nor of all together, but I became round-shouldered from carrying the load.

It will not surprise the thoughtful reader, especially if he be a student of human nature, to be told that disappointment and discouragement reduced me at times to a very pessimistic frame of mind. More than once I lost hope that the wrongs of labor would ever be righted by peaceable means. The workingmen could not be made to appreciate the power the ballot gave them; they were, it seemed to me, slow to take advantage of the opportunities opened to them by the labor organizations, and I sometimes thought the majority of them were not only too stupid to raise themselves, but too weak to stand if

raised by others. I became so discouraged over the failures of the peace measures of the trades-unions that, while I never ceased to do all in my power to strengthen those organizations, because they furnished the most available rallying-ground, I came very close to the line that divided reform from revolution. The apathy of the workingmen made me sick at heart, the indifference of the middle class discouraged me, and the cruel selfishness of the rich angered me. The grievances of the workingmen received scant courtesy and no support from the influential press. The daily papers were interested, as most of them have always been, in the affairs of the rich; business, and not humanity, concerned them. Vexed at the course of the big papers, I did one thing that my most charitable critics were kind enough to call a piece of foolishness. The Denver dailies each carried a line at the top of the first editorial column quoting the current price of silver bullion. My readers were not, I thought, interested in the bullion market, and so I gave the post of honor on my editorial page to dynamite, changing the price each week. For instance, this would be the line:—

"Dynamite is strong to-day at 47c."

Indiscreet? Well, probably it was; but it was more foolish than dangerous. If harm was done by the dynamite quotation I was the greatest sufferer, and as that bit of deviltry was the only fun I indulged in during eighteen months of sacrifice, hardship, and hunger, it isn't likely I will have to answer for it on the other side.

In after years my revolutionary views gave place to a belief in the doctrine of social evolution through the practical channel of opportunism. But I have never relinquished the theory of socialism, nor the hope of its complete adoption by mankind ultimately, which grew into and became a part of me during the thoughtful days of "The Labor Enquirer's" struggle for existence.

Why didn't the labor people support the paper? I know the reader is asking. There is but one answer to that question: They didn't think it was of any benefit to them. And now, here's something peculiar: During the first eighteen months of "The Enquirer's" existence there was comparative peace between labor and its employers in and around Denver. Not that labor was satisfied with its condition, but the dissatisfaction hadn't manifested itself in an open protest; there hadn't been a strike. While the men were at work and drawing their pay regularly, they were not disposed to spend a dollar and a half a year for a subscription to the paper. When a strike came, and wages stopped, there were busy times for the subscription agents. "A friend in need is a friend indeed," and there's the whole story. A temptation to the editor to "foment discontent!" as the enemies of the labor agitators express it. I can honestly answer "Not guilty." The discontent, in armor arrayed, came to my lonely little den and dragged me forth.

At ten o'clock on the morning of Thursday, May 4, 1884, I stood at the case setting the week's editorials, which, to save time, I had learned to put into type without writing. The door opened and five men entered. Four of them were unknown to me; the fifth, Mr. George Stuart, was an acquaintance, but I met him rarely. Stuart presented the gentlemen who were with him and then said:—

"The Union Pacific Railway shopmen have gone on strike, and, as they

haven't any organization, we have come to see if you can't help them a little."

"Are all of you Union Pacific men?" I asked.

"We are, and we represent five departments," was Stuart's reply.

"When did you strike?"

"About two hours ago."

"Why did you strike?" was my next question.

"When we went to work this morning we found notices stuck up all over the shops and yards, announcing that wages would be reduced in accordance with a scale printed with the notice. The reduction hits every employee excepting the engineers and firemen, and the cut ranges from ten to twenty-five per cent., according to the wages received. In the shops, which we represent, the reduction is ten and fifteen per cent."

"How came you to strike without organization?" I asked.

"Well, after working a few minutes, one of the machinists put down his tools and said he would throw up his job before he would stand such a cut on such short notice. Some of the others gathered about him and said they wouldn't stand it either. Word passed through the other departments that the machinists were going to protest against the order, and, to make a long story short, in half an hour every man and boy had quit the shops, about five hundred in all."

"And now you want me to advise you?" I asked.

"I read your paper sometimes, and it occurred to me that you might be able and willing to tell us how to proceed," answered Stuart.

"Can you secure a convenient hall that will hold all of your men?" I asked.

"We have one now, and most of the men are up there."

"Where is it?"

"Washington Hall, on Larimer Street, near Twentieth."

"I know the place. I'll be there in half an hour. Meet me at the door, Mr. Stuart, please."

And I picked up my stick and rule, read over a few lines, rounded out my sentence, and in ten minutes was in a horse-car en route to assume for the first time leadership in a labor strike. When I reached the hall, Stuart informed me that every one of the strikers was there, and I wasn't inclined to question his statement when I got inside and saw the crowd.

I have been in many meetings of strikers since that day, but they have been of organized workingmen. I have seen union men in meetings of strikers laboring under a sense of injustice practiced by employers, and have heard some pretty strong speeches; but no gathering of union men can compete with a crowd of unorganized strikers when it comes to radicalism, denunciation of employers, threats, and incendiarism. Organization results in training, discipline, knowledge, and conservatism.

I listened to the spokesmen and newly fledged leaders of the various departments represented in the strike until I had satisfied myself as to the temper of the meeting; then I had my say. As a result of the discussion the following resolution, preceded by an appropriate preamble, was adopted, and every man present was required to sign it:—

"Resolved, That we, employees of said Union Pacific Railroad Company, in mass meeting assembled, do obligate ourselves, individually and collectively, to refuse to do any work under the jurisdiction or upon the premises of said Union Pacific Company until such time as the notice of a reduction in wages is withdrawn by the

proper officials, and the old scale is reinstated."

Considerable time was required to secure the signatures of all those present; and while this was being done, some necessary committees and twenty-five pickets were selected. About the middle of the afternoon two hundred men from the shops of the South Park Division filed into the room. They had not received notice of the reduction until 1 P. M. They were also unorganized, but they had walked out in a body, and learning of the meeting that was being held by the men of the main shop, had marched three miles through the principal streets of the city, for the purpose of joining in any protest that was to be made. They were soon informed as to what we had done and were given an opportunity to vote upon the resolution. They voted solidly for the resolution, and two hundred more names were ready for the document.

We were in almost constant session all that day and half of the night. The next day we met in the City Hall and there organized the "Union Pacific Employees' Protective Association." Thursday night and Friday telegrams were received announcing that the shopmen over the entire Union Pacific system had struck against the reduction.

There is no record of another such strike in the whole history of the labor movement in this country. Not a shop on the system was organized when the notice of reduction was posted, and yet, inside of thirty-six hours, every shop from Omaha to Ogden and upon all the branch lines was on strike. The peculiarity of this strike is further emphasized by the knowledge that before the cut the Union Pacific was paying higher wages to its shopmen than was paid by any other railroad west of the Missouri River. The company counted upon this latter fact to help make the reduction successful, evidently not realizing that by paying the best wages it had secured the best mechanics and, as a consequence, the most independent men in the trades concerned.

There was another illustration of spontaneous unanimity in that strike. On Friday telegrams came from the officials of the temporary organizations of the men at all points on the system requesting the committee appointed at our Denver meeting to act for the whole system in dealing with the company. Ellis, Kansas, started that movement; and the others followed in quick order. The Denver committee accepted the responsibility, and at once notified the general manager of the road, at Omaha, to that effect, at the same time wiring him a copy of the resolution adopted at Denver, the substance of which was approved by the men at all other points.

Saturday afternoon the company recalled the order reducing wages, and announced that on Monday work would be resumed at the old scale of prices,—a complete victory for the men in four days.

As soon as the order was recalled, some of the men were for abandoning further steps in the line of organization. They said they had gotten along all right without organization before the cut, and had shown that it was a simple matter to secure united action when necessary. They were told by myself and others that they were sadly mistaken if they believed that the company had abandoned its purpose of reducing wages; that it would try again when the outlook was favorable, and that never again would a wholesale cut be undertaken; one experience of that character

would be sufficient. We predicted that in future the company would select one department or one shop at a time, and would give no intimation that the intention was eventually to reduce all. Therefore the men should perfect their organizations and form a federation that would put them in a position to act all together at the first sign of danger, no matter which branch was threatened or attacked. We urged upon them the adoption of the motto of the Knights of Labor, "An injury to one is the concern of all."

When the situation was fully explained, the advice given by the union men who were taking an active interest in the matter was acted upon, and several organizers were put upon the road within a week from the close of the strike. The Knights of Labor was the organization chosen, and within thirty days we had a healthy assembly at each important point on the system. I organized assemblies in all the shop towns on the line from Omaha to Cheyenne, inclusive.

1903

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# J. A. SYMONDS

## *The Death of Sir Philip Sidney*

### From Life of Sir Philip Sidney

Sidney's achievements in the Netherlands, except as forming part of his short life, claim no particular attention. He was welcomed by Count Maurice of Nassau, the eldest son of William, Prince of Orange; and gleanings from letters of the time show that folk expected much from his activity and probity. But he enjoyed narrow scope for the employment of his abilities. Rammekins, the fortress which commanded Flushing, was inadequately furnished and badly garrisoned. The troops were insufficient, and so ill-paid that mutinies were always imminent. In one of his dispatches, urgently demanding fresh supplies, he says: "I am in a garrison as much able to command Flushing as the Tower is to answer for London." The Dutch government did not please him: he found "the people far more careful than the government in all things touching the public welfare." With the plain speech that was habitual to him he demanded more expenditure of English money. This irritated the Queen, and gave his enemies at Court occasion to condemn him in his absence as ambitious and proud. He began to show signs of impatience with Elizabeth. "If her Majesty were the fountain, I would fear, considering what I daily find, that we should wax dry." This bitter taunt he vented in a letter to Sir Francis Walsingham. Meanwhile the Earl of Leicester arrived upon the 10th of December, and made matters worse. He laid himself out for honors of all sorts,

From *Life of Sir Philip Sidney*, English Men of Letters, edited by John Morley. Harper and Brothers, 1894.

accepting the title of Governor-General over the United Provinces, and coquetting with some vague scheme of being chosen for their sovereign. Imposing but impotent, Leicester had no genius for military affairs. The winter of 1585-86 dragged through, with nothing memorable to relate.

The following season, however, was marked by several important incidents in Philip Sidney's private life. First, Lady Sidney joined her husband at Flushing. Then on the 5th of May Sir Henry Sidney died in the bishop's palace at Worcester. His body was embalmed and sent to Penshurst. His heart was buried at Ludlow; his entrails in the precincts of Worcester Cathedral. So passed from life Elizabeth's sturdy servant in Ireland and Wales—a man, as I conceive him, of somewhat limited capacity and stubborn temper, but true as steel, and honest in the discharge of very trying duties. Later in the same year, upon the 9th of August, Lady Mary Sidney yielded up her gentle spirit. Of her there is nothing to be written but the purest panegyric. Born of the noblest blood, surviving ambitious relatives who reached at royalty and perished, losing health and beauty in the service of an exacting queen, suffering poverty at Court, supporting husband and children through all trials with wise counsel and sweet hopeful temper, she emerges with pale luster from all the actors of that time to represent the perfect wife and mother in a lady of unpretending, but heroic, dignity. Sidney would have been the poorer for the loss of these parents, if his own life had been spared. As it was, he survived his mother but two months.

In July he distinguished himself by the surprise and capture of the little town of Axel. Leicester rewarded him for this service with the commission of colonel. Elizabeth resented his promotion. She wished the colonelcy for Count Hohenlohe, or Hollock, a brave but drunken soldier. Walsingham wrote upon the occasion: "She layeth the blame upon Sir Philip, as a thing by him ambitiously sought. I see her Majesty very apt upon every light occasion to find fault with him." Ambition, not of the vaulting kind, which "overleaps itself," but of a steady, persistent, intellectual stamp, was, indeed, I think, the leading quality in Sidney's nature. From the courtiers of the period, the Leicesters, Oxfords, Ormonds, Hattons, and so forth, this mark of character honorably distinguished him. And, if he had but lived, Elizabeth, who judged her servants with some accuracy, might by judicious curbing and parsimonious encouragement have tempered the fine steel of his frailty into a blade of trenchant edge. There was nothing ignoble, nothing frivolous, in his ambition. It was rather of such mettle as made the heroes of the commonwealth: pure and un-self-seeking, but somewhat acrid. And now he fretted himself too much because of evildoers, impatiently demanded men and munitions from England, vented his bile in private letters against Leicester. Sidney was justified by events. The campaign dragged negligently on, and the Commander of the Forces paid more attention to banquets and diplomatic intrigues than to the rough work of war. But the tone adopted by him in his irritation was hardly prudent for so young and so comparatively needy a gentleman.

Whatever he found to blame in Leicester's conduct of affairs, Sidney did not keep aloof, but used every effort to inspire his uncle with some of his own spirit. At the end of August they were

both engaged in reducing the little fort of Doesburg on the Yssel, which had importance as the key to Zutphen. It fell upon the 2d of September; and on the 13th Zutphen was invested—Lewis William of Nassau, Sir John Norris, and Sir Philip Sidney commanding the land forces, and Leicester blockading the approach by water. The Duke of Parma, acting for Spain, did all he could to reinforce the garrison with men and provisions. News came upon the 21st to Leicester that a considerable convoy was at Deventer waiting an opportunity to enter the town. He resolved to cut off these supplies, and fixed an early hour of the 22d, which was a Thursday, for this operation. We have a letter, the last which Sidney penned before his fatal wound, dated from the camp at Zutphen upon the morning of the engagement. It recommends Richard Smyth, "her Majesty's old servant," to Sir Francis Walsingham, and is one among several writings of the kind which show how mindful Sidney was of humble friends and people in distress. The 22d of September opened gloomily. So thick a mist covered the Flemish lowlands that a man could not see farther than ten paces. Sidney, leading a troop of two hundred horsemen, pushed his way up to the walls of Zutphen. Chivalrous punctilio caused him to be ill-defended, for meeting Sir William Pelham in light armor, he threw off his cuisses, and thus exposed himself to unnecessary danger. The autumn fog, which covered every object, suddenly dispersed; and the English now found themselves confronted by a thousand horsemen of the enemy, and exposed to the guns of the town. They charged, and Sidney's horse was killed under him. He mounted another, and joined in the second charge. Reinforcements came up, and a third charge was made, during which he received a wound in the left leg. The bullet, which some supposed to have been poisoned, entered above the knee, broke the bone, and lodged itself high up in the thigh. His horse took fright and carried him at a gallop from the field. He kept his seat, however, and when the animal was brought to order, had himself carried to Leicester's station. On the way occurred the incident so well-known to everyone who is acquainted with his name. "Being thirsty with excess of bleeding, he called for drink, which was presently brought him; but as he was putting the bottle to his mouth, he saw a poor soldier carried along, who had eaten his last at the same feast, ghastly casting up his eyes at the bottle, which Sir Philip perceiving, took it from his head before he drank, and delivered it to the poor man, with these words, *Thy necessity is yet greater than mine.* And when he had pledged this poor soldier, he was presently carried to Arnheim."

At Arnheim he lay twenty-five days in the house of a lady named Gruitthueisens. At first the surgeons who attended him had good hopes of his recovery. Ten days after the event Leicester wrote to Walsingham: "All the worst days be passed, and he amends as well as possible in this time." Friends were around him—his wife, his brothers Robert and Thomas, and the excellent minister, George Gifford, whom he sent for on the 30th. The treatment of the wound exposed him to long and painful operations, which he bore with a sweet fortitude that moved the surgeons to admiration. With Gifford and other godly men he held discourses upon religion and the future of the soul. He told Gifford that "he had walked in a vague course; and these words he spake

with great vehemence both of speech and gesture, and doubled it to the intent that it might be manifest how unfeignedly he meant to turn more thoughts unto God than ever." It is said that he amused some hours of tedious leisure by composing a poem on *La Cuisse Rompue,* which was afterwards sung to soothe him. He also contrived to write "a large epistle in very pure and eloquent Latin" to his friend Belarius the divine. Both of these are lost.

As time wore on it appeared that the cure was not advancing. After the sixteenth day, says Greville, "the very shoulder-bones of this delicate patient were worn through his skin." He suffered from sharp pangs which "stang him by fits," and felt internally that his case was desperate. "One morning, lifting up the clothes for change and ease of his body, he smelt some extraordinary noisome savor about him, differing from oils and salves, as he conceived." This he judged, and judged rightly, to be the sign of "inward mortification, and a welcome messenger of death." Thereupon he called the ministers into his presence, "and before them made such a confession of Christian faith as no book but the heart can truly and feelingly deliver." Death had its terrors for his soul, but he withstood them manfully, seeking peace and courage in the sacrifice of all earthly affections. "There came to my mind," he said to Gifford, "a vanity in which I delighted, whereof I had not rid myself. I rid myself of it, and presently my joy and comfort returned." Soon he was able to declare: "I would not change my joy for the empire of the world." Yet up to the very last he did not entirely despair of life. This is proved by the very touching letter he wrote to John Wier, a famous physician and a friend of his. It runs thus in Latin: "Mi Wiere, veni, veni. De vita periclitor et te cupio. Nec vivus, nec mortuus, ero ingratus. Plura non possum, sed obnixe oro ut festines. Vale. Tuus Ph. Sidney." "My dear friend Wier, come, come. I am in peril of my life, and long for you. Neither living nor dead shall I be ungrateful. I cannot write more, but beg you urgently to hurry. Farewell. Your Ph. Sidney." In this way several days passed slowly on. He had made his will upon the 30th of September. This he now revised, adding a codicil in which he remembered many friends and servants. The document may be read in Collins' *Sidney Papers.* Much of it is occupied with provisions for the child, with which his wife was pregnant at this time, and of which she was afterwards delivered stillborn. But the thoughtful tenor of the whole justifies Greville in saying that it "will ever remain for a witness to the world that those sweet and large affections in him could no more be contracted with the narrowness of pain, grief, or sickness than any sparkle of our immortality can be privately buried in the shadow of death."

Reflecting upon the past he exclaimed: "All things in my former life have been vain, vain, vain." In this mood he bade one of his friends burn the *Arcadia;* but we know not whether he expressed the same wish about *Astrophel and Stella.* On the morning of the 17th of October it was clear that he had but a few hours to live. His brother Robert gave way to passionate grief in his presence, which Philip gently stayed, taking farewell of him in these memorable words: "Love my memory, cherish my friends; their faith to me may assure you they are honest. But above all, govern your will and

affections by the will and word of your Creator, in me beholding the end of this world with all her vanities." Shortly afterwards he sank into speechlessness, and the bystanders thought that what he had greatly dreaded—namely, death without consciousness—would befall him. Yet when they prayed him for some sign of his "inward joy and consolation in God," he held his hand up and stretched it forward for a little while. About two o'clock in the afternoon he again responded to a similar appeal by setting his hands together in the attitude of prayer upon his breast, and thus he expired.

Sidney's death sent a thrill through Europe. Leicester, who truly loved him, wrote upon the 25th, in words of passionate grief, to Walsingham. Elizabeth declared that she had lost her mainstay in the struggle with Spain. Duplessis Mornay bewailed his loss "not for England only, but for all Christendom." Mendoza, the Spanish secretary, said that though he could not but rejoice at the loss to his master of such a foe, he yet lamented to see Christendom deprived of so great a light, and bewailed poor widowed England. The Netherlanders begged to be allowed to keep his body, and promised to erect a royal monument to his memory, "yea, though the same should cost half-a-ton of gold in the building." But this petition was rejected, and the corpse, after embalmment, was removed to Flushing. There it lay eight days, and on the 1st of November the English troops accompanied it with military honors to the *Black Prince,* a vessel which had belonged to Sidney. On the 5th it reached Tower Hill, and on the 16th of February it was buried with pomp in St. Paul's. This long delay between the landing in London and the interment arose from certain legal complications, which rendered the discharge of Sidney's debts difficult. Walsingham told Leicester that he would have to "pay for him about six thousand pounds, which I do assure your Lordship hath brought me into a most desperate and hard state, which I weigh nothing in respect of the loss of the gentleman who was my chief worldly comfort." Lest this should seem to reflect ill upon Sidney's character, it must be added that he had furnished Walsingham with a power of attorney to sell land, and had expressly considered all his creditors in his will. But his own death happened so close upon his father's, and the will was so imperfect touching the sale of land, that his wishes could not be carried into effect. This, added Walsingham, "doth greatly afflict me, that a gentleman that hath lived so unspotted in reputation, and had so great care to see all men satisfied, should be so exposed to the outcry of his creditors." When the obstacles had been surmounted the funeral was splendid and public. And the whole nation went into mourning. "It was accounted a sin," says the author of *The Life and Death of Sir Philip Sidney,* "for any gentleman of quality, for many months after, to appear at Court or City in any light or gaudy apparel."

I have told the story of Sidney's last days briefly, using the testimony of those who knew him best, or who were present at his deathbed. Comment would be superfluous. There is a singular beauty in the uncomplaining, thoughtful, manly sweetness of the young hero cut off in his prime. Numberless minute touches, of necessity omitted here, confirm the opinion that Sidney possessed unique charm and exercised a spell over those who came in contact with him. All the letters and

reports which deal with that long agony breathe a heartfelt tenderness, which proves how amiable and how admirable he was. The character must have been well-nigh perfect which inspired persons so different as the Earl of Leicester, George Gifford, and Fulke Greville with the same devoted love. We have not to deal merely with the record of an edifying end, but with the longing retrospect of men whose best qualities had been drawn forth by sympathy with his incomparable goodness.

1886

# HARVEY O'HIGGINS

## *Alias Walt Whitman*

In 1841, the editor of *The Daily Aurora* of New York City was a rather debonair young man from Brooklyn, a Mr. Walter Whitman, twenty-two years old, who "usually wore a frock coat and a high hat, carried a small cane" and had "the lapel of his coat almost invariably ornamented with a boutonnière." A contemporary described him as "tall and graceful in appearance, neat in attire, and possessed of a very pleasing and impressive eye and a cheerful and happy-looking countenance." It is also recorded that he was a success with the blue-stockings of the day. "I have been with him often in the society of ladies," a friend wrote, "and I never knew of any woman young or old but thought him a most agreeable gentleman of great culture."

It was a brave day for blue-stockings and gentlemen of great culture. A diarist of the time observes, "Walked down Broadway with all the fashion, and met the pretty blue-stocking, Miss Julia Ward. . . . She had on a blue satin cloak and a white muslin dress. I looked to see if she had on blue stockings, but I think not. I suspect that her stockings were pink, and she wore low slippers. They say that she dreams in Italian and quotes French verses." She was the same age as the editor of *The Daily Aurora,* having been born, like him, in May, 1819. And walking down Broadway, "with all the fashion," she may have seen him—tall and graceful, in his high hat and his frock coat, swinging his small cane—since he promenaded on Broadway, in those days, as devotedly as Thoreau roamed his woods.

He was more professional in literature than she; he was trying to make his living by writing, and she did not need to; but they both produced the same kind of verse—the kind that was fashionable in the literary journals of the moment. He was about to announce in print:

Not in a gorgeous hall of pride,
  Where tears fall thick and loved ones sigh,
Wished he, when the dark hour approach'd,
  To drop his veil of flesh and die.

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In spite of his buttonhole bouquet and his high hat, he really much preferred to end

Amid the thunder-clash of strife,
Where hovers War's ensanguined cloud,
And bright swords flash and banners fly
Above the wounds and groans and blood.

As elegant sad verse, this would seem to compare favorably with Julia Ward's stanza from her poem "On Looking Over a Diary Kept While I Was Under Serious Impressions":

Oh! Happy days, gone, never to return,
At which fond memory will ever burn,
Oh! Joyous hours, with peace and gladness blest,
When hope and joy dwelt in this careworn breast.

which she had written, seven years before, at the careworn age of fifteen.

Although they were both made famous, twenty years later, by their poems about the Civil War—he by his "O Captain! My Captain!" and she by her "Battle Hymn of the Republic"—I do not know of any record that they ever met. Certainly not in the 1840's. They were worlds apart socially. As the daughter of Mr. Samuel Ward, the rich New York banker, she was "a frequenter of fashionable society," to quote her own subsequent description of herself, "a musical amateur, a dilettante in literature." He, in spite of his fashionable appearance, was the son of a Long Island farmer-carpenter, and he had worked his way up to the office of *The Daily Aurora* as a lawyer's errand boy, a doctor's office boy, a typesetter, and a country school-teacher. He had a rather meager education, and if any lady mistook him for "a gentleman of great culture" she must have been hypnotized by his pleasing and impressive eye. In the 1860's and 70's he could still write to his mother, from Washington, "I wish you was here," and to his brother, "I was very sorry you wasn't able to come on to see the Review."

All he had of the fashionable gentleman were the clothes and the taste for idleness. The proprietor of the *Aurora* thought him "the laziest fellow who ever undertook to edit a city paper." It was his habit to arrive at his office "between eleven and twelve o'clock in the morning," according to one of his editorial associates, and after looking over "the daily and exchange papers," he always strolled down Broadway to the Battery, spent "an hour or two amid the trees, enjoying the water view," and returned "to the office location at about two or three o'clock in the afternoon." Apparently, these leisurely habits lost him his position on the *Aurora,* and he became what is called a free-lance.

As a free-lance, he wrote a quantity of verse and prose that was mostly worse than mediocre. The prose especially was falsely done, without conviction, without the faintest glint of artistic conscience, and faked in imitation chiefly of Edgar Allan Poe and James Fenimore Cooper. In November, 1842, he put out an anonymous novel, *Franklin Evans; or The Inebriate,* dedicated to the Temperance Societies of the day. It was published in a weekly story paper called *The New World,* and ballyhooed as written "expressly for *The New World* by one of the best novelists in this country, with a view to aid the great work of reform and rescue young men from the demon of Intemperance." It was really written, one of his friends records, "mostly in the reading room of Tammany Hall, which was a sort of Bohemian resort, and he afterwards told me that he frequently indulged in gin cocktails, while writing it, at the 'Pew-

ter Mug,' another resort for Bohemians around the corner in Spruce Street."

Copies of *Franklin Evans* are now so extremely rare that it is not easy to confirm the adverse judgment of his biographers upon it as "chaotic," "ill-told," "rambling," and "difficult to treat seriously." But much of his other free-lance work of the period has been collected and reprinted, and most of it deserves the epithets that have been used on *Franklin Evans.* Among these fugitive pieces is an article called "Richard Parker's Widow" from a monthly magazine, *The Aristidean,* published in New York in 1845. It begins, "When I was in London some years since," and it describes how Whitman saw the widow of Richard Parker, a once famous mutineer, applying for "parish assistance" from a "magistrate" in a "police office." A friend, he says, pointed her out to him secretly and then "went on to give me the particulars of this celebrated mutiny." Whitman, of course, was never in London, and the story of the mutiny, as he tells it, is taken almost word for word from Pelham's *Chronicles of Crime* or *The New Newgate Calendar* (London, 1841). The only considerable change that he makes in Pelham's narrative is this: according to Pelham, the convicted mutineer, before he was hanged at the yard-arm, was given a glass of white wine which he drank "to the salvation of his soul and the forgiveness of all his enemies"; Whitman makes it "a glass of water."

*The Aristidean* printed also, in March 1845, a long story by Walter Whitman, called "The Arrow-Tip"; and Whitman subsequently reprinted it anonymously as "The Half-Breed," an "original novelette by a Brooklynite," in *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle,* June 1846, when he was editing that newspaper. In spite of his apparent pride in the story, it is as dull and pretentious an imitation of Fenimore Cooper as any high-school boy ever wrote. It may have been founded on some true anecdote which Whitman had heard, but there is scarcely an incident in it that has any near relation to reality. No character has any life. The plot is awkward and improbable. There is not an accent of sincerity in any line of it—from the "merry peals of laughter" among the "young elves" of school-children in the opening paragraph, down to the closing sentences in which one of the children (after the tragedy of the story has been concluded) becomes a "young political aspirant" for "a respectable legislative office"—quite irrelevantly and pathetically.

I doubt whether anyone can read these magazine contributions by Walter Whitman without concluding that he was not only a lazy young man but a stupid and insincere one. Here is a specimen of his writing when he is imitating Fenimore Cooper:

> Just out from the village when the hunting party started that morning, they had been joined by Arrow-Tip's brother, the Deer. He, accompanied by a favorite dog, was watching the evolutions of a large bird that lazily skimmed near the surface of a cascade near by—a charming spot, that, were it in the neighborhood of our eastern cities, would be visited by thousands for its beauty. "Call the dog from me, brother," said the Deer, "he frightens the bird." Arrow-Tip did as he was desired. The party had passed on, bidding the two Indians to follow. And the chief sat himself down a moment, at the foot of a large tree, and waited till the successful aim of the Deer should bring the bird to the ground. One hand grasped his hunting-bow, and with the other he caressed the dog. The plot of the narrative makes it

preferable not to detail minutely here all the events that took place during the day. One of these events—a startling and bloody one—has already been intimated to the reader, at the conclusion of the last chapter.

And here is a paragraph when he is imitating Poe:

> And there is one, childlike, with helpless and unsteady movements, but a countenance of immortal bloom, whose long-lashed eyes droop downward. The name of the Shape is Dai. When he comes near, the angels are silent, and gaze upon him with pity and affection. And the fair eyes of the Shape roll, but fix upon no object; while his lips move, but in a plaintive tone only is heard the speaking of a single name. Wandering in the confines of earth, or restlessly amid the streets of the beautiful land, goes Dai, earnestly calling on one he loves. Wherefore is there no response?

Although his more enthusiastic biographers exult that his contributions were printed in the same literary journals as the work of Hawthorne, Bryant, Longfellow, Lowell, Thoreau, Whittier, and Poe, it must be credited to the good taste of the magazine editors and readers of the period that Walter Whitman failed as a free-lance and returned to newspaper work. In 1846, he was editing the Booklyn *Eagle.* A number of his editorials are given in Emory Holloway's *Whitman,* and they deserve Bliss Perry's complaint, in his life of Whitman, that "the style is slovenly and the thought quite without distinction." In 1848, having lost his place on the *Eagle,* he was offered, as he says, "a good chance to go down to New Orleans on the staff of the *Crescent,* a daily to be started there with plenty of capital behind it, in opposition to the *Picayune.*" He went to the *Crescent* and worked for it for three months. Holloway reprints several of his "easy-going, whimsical, sometimes puerile sketches" from the *Crescent* and concludes that he lost his position "possibly" because the proprietors saw "that his slovenly writing . . . would add distinction to no paper."

When he returned to Brooklyn he founded a free-soil journal, *The Brooklyn Daily Freeman,* and earned this contemporary notice: "Mr. Whitman is an ardent politician of the radical democratic school, and lately established the *Daily Freeman* in Brooklyn, to promulgate his favorite 'Free Soil' and other reformatory doctrines." He withdrew from the *Freeman* about a year later, and so ended his career as a newspaper man, for the time. In 1850, he wrote some articles anonymously for the New York *Advertiser* and the *Evening Post,* but they were chiefly critical articles on art and music. "I guess it was about those years," says his brother George, "he had an idea he could lecture. He wrote what mother calls barrels of lectures. We did not know what he was writing. He did not seem more abstracted than usual. He would lie abed late, and after getting up would write a few hours if he took the notion—perhaps would go off the rest of the day. We were all at work—all except Walt."

Only one of these lectures seems to have been delivered—a lecture before the art students of the Brooklyn Art Union, March 31, 1851. In his first paragraph, Walter Whitman turned his back on much of his past. "Among such a people as the Americans," he began, "viewing most things with an eye to pecuniary profit—more for acquiring than enjoying or well developing what they acquire—ambitious of the physical rather than the intellectual; a race to whom matter-of-fact is everything and

the ideal nothing—a nation of whom the steam-engine is no bad symbol—he does a good work who, pausing in the way, calls to the feverish crowd that in the life we live upon this beautiful earth there may after all be something vaster and better than dress and the table, business and politics." To utter this call was "the glorious province of arts and of all artists worthy of the name." As an æsthete, contemptuous of dress and the table and business and politics, he reprobated the clothes of "fashionable tailordom"—the clothes which he had worn as editor of *The Aurora*—and especially "the fashionable hat, before which language has nothing to say because sight is the only thing that can begin to do it justice." And with characteristic sincerity, he included in his lecture, as Bliss Perry points out, "a description of the death-bed of Rousseau quite unwarranted by any historical evidence."

He had given up the costume of the *Aurora* editor and also the "neat frock coat" which he had worn as a schoolteacher. He had become progressively Bohemian in his attire as a free-lance writer. Now, suddenly, he began to dress in the rough clothes of a workingman, belted trousers, a shirt open at the neck to show his undershirt, high boots, and a soft felt hat. He had decided to become the Walt Whitman of the *Leaves of Grass,* and he went to work for his father, the carpenter, while he wrote his book.

If anyone doubts that this "Walt Whitman" was only a new alias for the Walter Whitman of *Franklin Evans* and the imitations of Poe and Cooper, I recommend him to read the anonymous reviews which Walter Whitman wrote of Walt Whitman's poems. One of the earliest of the series appeared in the Brooklyn *Times,* Sept. 29, 1855, some two months after the printing of the first edition of *Leaves of Grass.* He introduces himself, "Very devilish to some, and very divine to some, will appear the poet of these new poems, the *Leaves of Grass;* an attempt, as they are, of a naïve, masculine, affectionate, contemplative, sensual, imperious person, to cast into literature not only his own grit and arrogance, but his own flesh and form, undraped, regardless of models, regardless of modesty or law, and ignorant or silently scornful, as at first appears, of all except his own presence and experience, and all outside the fiercely loved land of his birth, and the birth of his parents, and their parents for several generations before him."

Can anybody imagine that the Walter Whitman who wrote that sentence was really the naïve, masculine, sensual, imperious, undraped, arrogant, and silently scornful person which Walt Whitman pretended to be? Is it possible that his advertisement of his devotion to "the fiercely loved land of his birth, and the birth of his parents, and their parents for several generations before him" arose out of a true patriotism and not out of a blurb-writer's desire to sell his volume to the hundred-per-centers of his day? Could Walter Whitman have been unaware of the sexual exhibitionism in his poems when he came out before his literary side-show to promise that if you paid the entrance fee you would see Walt Whitman, on the inside, "undraped," in "his own flesh and form," "regardless of modesty or law"?

Or consider the following sentence: "Of pure American breed, large and lusty—age thirty-six years—never once using medicine—never dressed in black, always dressed freshly and clean in

strong clothes—neck open, shirt-collar flat and broad, countenance tawny transparent red, beard well-mottled with white, hair like hay after it has been mowed in the field and lies tossed and streaked—his physiology corroborating a rugged phrenology—a person singularly beloved and looked toward, especially by young men and the illiterate—one who has firm attachments here and associates there—one who does not associate with literary people—a man never called upon to make speeches at public dinners—never on platforms amid the crowds of clergymen, or professors, or aldermen, or congressmen—rather down in the bay with pilots in their pilot-boat—or off on a cruise with fishers in their fishing-smack—or riding on a Broadway omnibus, side by side with the driver—or with a band of loungers over the open grounds of the country—fond of New York and Brooklyn—fond of the life of the great ferries—one whom, if you should meet, you need not expect to meet an extraordinary person—one in whom you will see the singularity which consists in no singularity—whose contact is no dazzle or fascination, nor requires any deference, but has the easy fascination of what is homely and accustomed—as of something you knew before, and was waiting for—there you have Walt Whitman, the begetter of a new offspring out of literature, taking with easy nonchalance the chances of its present reception, and, through all misunderstandings and distrusts, the chances of its future reception—preferring always to speak for himself rather than have others speak for him."

And consider that the man who "never dressed in black" is the Walter Whitman of the frock coat, the high hat, and the boutonnière. He is the roughly clothed and rugged workingman "who does not associate with literary people." The Democratic politician of the *Freeman* and the public lecturer on art is "never on platforms amid the crowds of clergymen, or professors, or aldermen, or congressmen." This anxious barker for his own book is "taking with easy nonchalance the chances of its present reception," "preferring always to speak for himself"—in his poems, of course—"rather than have others speak for him," as his anonymous reviewer is supposed to be speaking.

He continues, in his false whiskers, to advertise his Walt: "A rude child of the people!—No imitation—No foreigner—but a growth and idiom of America. Not discontented—a careless slouch, enjoying to-day. No dilettante democrat—a man who is art-and-part with the commonalty, and with immediate life—loves the streets—loves the docks—loves the free rasping talk of men—likes to be called by his given name, and nobody at all need Mr. him—can laugh with laughers—likes the ungenteel ways of laborers—is not prejudiced one mite against the Irish—talks readily with them—talks readily with niggers—does not make a stand on being a gentleman, nor on learning nor manners"—and so on, down to the end of the paragraph: "You may feel the unconscious teaching of a fine brute, but you will never feel the artificial teaching of a fine writer or speaker."

In other words, the dilettante democrat, Walter Whitman, announces that he is now nothing of the sort; that he is a "careless slouch"; that he is no longer "a fine writer or speaker" but "a fine brute" who is "unconscious" of the teaching of which he is here so conscious. He is such an astonishing radical that he even "likes the ungenteel

ways of laborers," and he feels so little prejudice against the Irish that he "talks readily with them." Most miraculous of all, he now likes to be called by his given name "and nobody at all need Mr. him." And this last is a proof of his utter democracy which he repeats with unction in his later self-advertisements.

He ballyhooed himself, anonymously, in the *American Phrenological Journal* as the "haughtiest of writers that has ever yet written and printed a book." And in the *United States and Democratic Review,* for the same month of September, 1855, he hailed himself, anonymously, as "One of the roughs, large, proud, affectionate, eating, drinking and breeding, his costume manly and free, his face sunburnt and bearded, his postures strong and erect." No longer the fashionable gentleman of great culture, he announced, rather incoherently: "self-restraint, with haughty eyes, assuming to himself all the attributes of his country, steps Walt Whitman into literature, talking like a man unaware that there was ever hitherto such a production as a book, or such a being as a writer." As if he were afraid that some contemporary Comstock might fail to advertise his poems by attempting to suppress them, he goes on: "Nature he proclaims inherently clean. Sex will not be put aside; it is the great ordination of the universe. He works the muscle of the male and the teeming fibre of the female, throughout his writings, as wholesome realities, impure only by deliberate intention and effort. . . . If health were not his distinguishing attribute, this poet would be the very harlot of persons. Right and left he flings his arms, drawing men and women with undeniable love to his close embrace, loving the clasp of their hands, the touch of their necks and breasts, and the sound of their voices. All else seems to burn up under his fierce affection for persons." And he printed these three personal advertisements of himself as favorable press notices in the second edition of his poems.

As late as 1876, he was still writing of himself, anonymously: "This Walt Whitman—this queer one whom most of us have watched, with more or less amusement, walking by—this goer and comer, for years, about New York and Washington—good natured with everybody, like some farmer, or mate of some coasting vessel, familiarly accosted by all, hardly any one of us stopping to Mr. him—this man of many characters, among the rest that of volunteer help in the army hospitals and on the field during the whole of the late war, carefully tending all the wounded he could, southern or northern—if it should turn out that in this plain unsuspected old customer, dressed in gray & wearing no necktie, America and her republican institutions are possessing that *rara avis* a real national poet, chanting, putting in form, in her own proud spirit, in first-class style, for present and future time, her democratic shapes even as the bards of Judah put in song, for all time to come, the Hebrew spirit, and Homer the war-life of prehistoric Greece, and Shakespeare the feudal shapes of Europe's kings and lords!"

But perhaps his most extraordinary effort in establishing his alias is the one reported by Fred P. Hill, Jr., in the *American Mercury* of June 1924. Here it appears that Whitman wrote the greater part of the volume *Notes on Walt Whitman* by John Burroughs, published in 1867 as Burroughs' first book and since dropped from the list of his collected works. The style is clearly Whitman's; and Burroughs, shortly be-

fore his death, admitted in a letter to Hill that about one-half the book was written by Whitman and that the whole volume had been edited and revised by Whitman. The personal sketch of Whitman was supplied by Whitman himself. It is in the same tone as his anonymous reviews. "There probably lives not another man," he writes of himself, "so genuinely and utterly indifferent to literary abuse or to 'public opinion,' either when favorable or unfavorable. He has never used the usual means to defend his reputation." He describes himself as "seeking not the least conquest or display," but as "making the impression on any unsuspecting stranger of a good-willed, healthy character, without the least ostensible mark of the philosopher or poet; but all the while, though thus passive and receptive, yet evidently the most masculine of beings." And so forth, to the same end as always—to the end of having Burroughs, like the anonymous newspaper reviewers, certify to the truth of the pose which he had assumed in his poetry.

Obviously, Walter Whitman was no such person as he thus proclaimed himself to be. He could not be truly such a person and be aware of it. But what was he? What was the real Walter Whitman who adopted this alias of Walt Whitman, and put on this disguise of the "careless slouch," and pretended to all this rough and rugged democracy and sensuality and haughty-eyed contempt?

The answer is written plainly enough in every real biography of him that I have ever seen, as well as by implication in his poems. He was neither sensual, nor rough and rugged, nor truly healthy, nor lusty, nor even very masculine. He was what is nowadays called a Narcissan, in love with himself, introverted, and so wrapped up in his own ego that he got no free delivery of energy except in his exhibitionism. Hence his constitutional laziness. He was arrested in his sexual development very near the homosexual level, as several of his poems show; and like many another case of arrested development he was always "a man's man." He speaks of the "fiercely loved land of his birth" in one of his anonymous blurbs, and in another he assumes "to himself all the attributes of his country"; but when the Civil War broke out on April 12, 1861, he disappeared for eighteen months from the sight of his biographers; and the only entry in his notebook, for that period, is the following, dated April 16, 1861, four days after the beginning of hostilities: "I have this day, this hour, resolved to inaugurate for myself a pure, perfect, sweet, clean-blooded robust body, by ignoring all drinks but water and pure milk, and all fat meats, late suppers—a great body, a purged, cleansed, spiritualized, invigorated body."

This is not the vow of a patriot worrying about the fiercely-loved land of his birth. It is the resolve of a Narcissan thinking only of his fiercely-loved physique. Here is the impulse which dressed him up as a fashionable gentleman of great culture during one phase of his life, and as a rough and rugged workman during another period, and finally as the conspicuous "good, gray poet" in gray cape and wide-awake during his later years. This is the impulse that made him begin his *Leaves of Grass* with the line "I celebrate myself." It is the impulse that drove him to celebrate himself in his "own flesh and form, undraped, regardless of modesty or law." The same impulse moves humorously

in a letter to two friends, written from Washington during the war, on March 19, 1863: "My health, strength, personal beauty, etc., are, I am happy to inform you, without diminution, but on the contrary quite the reverse. I weigh full 220 pounds avoirdupois, yet still retain my usual perfect shape—a regular model." It is an impulse to exhibitionism that is neither sensual nor healthy, but morbid, introverted, and very near perversion.

Narcissism is apparently produced by an adoring mother in a mother-fixated boy. Whitman loved his mother "with a sort of mariolatry" as Holloway says. He broke down, during her final illness, with a partial paralysis. At the age of fifty-six, he wrote of himself, "I occupy myself, arranging these pages for publication, still enveloped in thoughts of the death, two years since, of my dear Mother, the most perfect and magnetic character, the rarest combination of practical, moral and spiritual, and the least selfish of all and any I have ever known—and by me O so much the most deeply loved." He never married. As a young school-teacher he was "diffident with women." One of his pupils records, "The girls did not attract him. He did not especially go anywhere with them or show any extra fondness for their society. Before and after school, he was a boy among boys." A few years later, at the age of about twenty, as the editor of *The Long Islander,* he wrote of himself, "I would carefully avoid saying anything of women; because it behooves a modest personage like myself not to speak upon a class of beings whose nature, habits, notions and ways he has not been able to gather any knowledge, either by experience or observation." During his mature years in Washington, from the age of forty-seven to fifty-four, his most intimate companion was a young street-car conductor named Peter Doyle; and Doyle has said of him, "I never knew a case of Walt's being bothered up by a woman. Woman in that sense never entered his head. Walt was too clean. No trace of any kind of dissipation in him. I ought to know about him those years—we were awful close together."

The appearance of sensuality in Whitman's verse—and in his ballyhoos—is good evidence to a modern psychiatrist that Whitman never experienced the dissoluteness which he celebrates. The sexuality in his poems is a compensation, in phantasy, for his lack of potency in experience. Much of this sexual expression is dangerously near the homosexual level—which is to be expected where the sexual impulse is anchored by a mother-fixation and unable to achieve a heterosexual goal.

When an English critic, J. A. Symonds, read the homosexual poems in "Calamus," he wrote to ask Whitman the truth about himself, and Whitman, at the age of seventy-two, replied: "My life, young manhood, mid-age, times South, etc., have been jolly bodily and doubtless open to criticism. Though unmarried, I have had six children—two are dead—one living Southern grandchild, fine boy, writes to me occasionally —circumstance (connected with their fortune and benefit) have separated me from intimate relations." But that statement, written to allay the suspicion of homosexuality, is no more to be trusted than Whitman's anonymous advertisement of himself as "a lusty breeder." He wrote of himself, by the hand of John Burroughs, in Burroughs' *Notes on Walt Whitman:* "Throughout this period (1840-1855) without entering into particulars, it is enough to say

that he sounded all experiences of life, with all their passions, pleasures, and abandonments. He was young, in perfect bodily condition, and had the city of New York and its ample opportunities around him. I trace this period in some of the poems of 'Children of Adam' and occasionally in other parts of his book, including 'Calamus.'" But this testimony from John Burroughs has now been wiped out by Burroughs' own confession that Whitman wrote it. He and Whitman did not meet until 1861 in Washington, and Burroughs knew nothing of Whitman's life in the years 1840-1855, except what Whitman told him.

The truth in all this elaborate deception about "passions, pleasures, and abandonments" seems to be—as Holloway suggests in his *Whitman* — that Walter Whitman, in 1848, had some sort of love-affair in New Orleans "with a Creole octoroon," when he was working on the New Orleans *Crescent*. And it also seems probable that he ran away from that affair and never had another. Horace Traubel says, "During Walt's last sickness his grandson came to the house. I was not there at the time. When Whitman mentioned the occurrence to me, I expressed the regret that I had missed him. 'I wish I might see him.' 'God forbid!' said Whitman." Henry Bryan Binns in his *Life of Whitman* supposes that the lady in New Orleans "was of higher social rank than his own—a lady of the South where social rank is of the first consideration." And Binns asks, "Why did he leave her? Why did he allow the foulest of reproaches to blacken that whitest of reputations, a Southern lady's virtue?" The answer might seem to be that perhaps the lady was not so white as all that. And Whitman's "God forbid!" to Traubel may mean that the grandson, if he really existed at all, was also somewhat colored.

No one ever saw that grandson, or any of the "six children," or any woman with whom Walt Whitman appeared to be having a love-affair. In his relations with the women who were emotionally attracted by him—like Mrs. Gilchrist, Mrs. Berenson, and his housekeeper, Mrs. Davis—he was coolly affectionate and detached. Says Perry, "A daily companion of Whitman in Washington tells me that he never heard him utter a word that could not have been used to his mother. There is overwhelming testimony that for thirty years thereafter his conversation, though often blunt enough, was scrupulously chaste. There is also abundant evidence that from 1862 onward his life was stainless so far as sexual relations were concerned." I do not see how anyone can doubt that previous to 1862 it had been equally "stainless," except for his adventure in New Orleans. I see no evidence that he ever gave way to "passions, pleasures, and abandonments." I do not believe his story that he wrote *Franklin Evans* on gin cocktails from the "Pewter Mug." Just previous to the period of 1840-1855, "he neither smoked nor drank nor swore," says Binns. And the impulse under which he wrote *Franklin Evans* was the same impulse that made him take the glass of white wine out of the hands of the dying mutineer and let him drink to the salvation of his soul in a glass of water. Any form of dissipation is a danger to the "pure, perfect, sweet, clean-blooded, robust body" of a Narcissan. And any real "abandonment" to love is impossible for the introvert who is in love with himself.

There remains to consider Whitman's pose as the true poet of democracy, "chanting, putting in form, in her own proud spirit, in first class style, for present & future time, her democratic shapes." And, in the first place, one must admit that, from his earliest days, Walter Whitman was a militant democrat in the sense that he was opposed to aristocracy, class rule, slavery, blue laws, or anything else that threatened or interfered with the freedom of the common American. As a newspaper man and a free-lance writer, he did valiant service in the paper wars that were fought for liberty and the free-soil doctrines before the firing on Fort Sumter. It is no disparagement of this service to point out that it was inspired by his own colossal egotism. He was an advocate of freedom and equality because it was necessary for him to feel himself the equal in freedom of any man. "I never yet knew," he wrote in his notes, "how it felt to think I stood in the presence of my superior." And in describing the "true, noble, expanded American character" he wrote, "It is to be illimitably proud, independent, self-possessed, generous and gentle. It is to accept nothing except what is equally free and eligible to anybody else. It is to be poor rather than rich—but to prefer death rather than any mean dependence."

But with his failure as an editor, a free-lance writer, an art critic, and a lecturer, he receded into a purer egotism than ever—and he accepted financial dependence, at least, without any apparent qualms. Encouraged by his reading of Emerson's famous address, "The American Scholar"—America's "intellectual Declaration of Independence," as Oliver Wendell Holmes has called it—he undertook to be a new sort of poet, the poet of the New World, "with the feeling or ambition," as he wrote, "to articulate and faithfully express in literary or poetic form, and uncompromisingly, my own physical, emotional, moral, intellectual, and æsthetic Personality, in the midst of, and tallying, the momentous spirit and facts of its immediate days, and of current America—and to exploit that personality, identified with place and date, in a far more comprehensive sense than any hitherto poem or book." That is to say, instead of any longer identifying himself with his country and expressing its aspirations, he was now to identify his country with himself, "assuming to himself all its attributes," and expressing his own ego as "tallying the momentous spirit" of "current America."

He turned his back, at once, on the economic aspirations of the democracy. In the preface to the first edition of his poems, he wrote, "Beyond the independence of a little sum laid aside for burial money, and of a few clapboards around and shingles overhead on a lot of American soil owned, and the easy dollars that supply the year's plain clothing and meals, the melancholy prudence of the abandonment of such a great being as man is, to the toll and pallor of years of money-making, with all their scorching days and icy nights and all their stifling deceits and underhand dodging, or infinitesimals of parlors and shameless stuffing while others starve . . . and the issuing sickness and desperate revolt of a life without elevation of naïveté, and the ghastly chatter of a death without serenity or majesty, is the great fraud upon modern civilization." The average American, he declared, cheated by that fraud, suffered "all the loss of the bloom and odor of the earth and of the taste of women and men you pass or have to do with in

youth or middle age." And Walt Whitman was to sing, rather, a sort of hobo democracy of the Open Road.

Being himself far from normal, he gave voice to few of the normal emotions of America. "The home, the fireside, the domestic allurements are not in him," says John Burroughs. "Love, as we find it in other poets, is not in him." They are not in his poetry and they were not in him. He neither felt them, appreciated them, nor understood them. What he chiefly voiced was his own egotism—swollen to the dimensions of his country—his own morbidity, his own introversion. These are not typically American nor democratic, and the democracy has never accepted him.

1929

# DEEMS TAYLOR

## *The Monster*

He was an undersized little man, with a head too big for his body—a sickly little man. His nerves were bad. He had skin trouble. It was agony for him to wear anything next to his skin coarser than silk. And he had delusions of grandeur.

He was a monster of conceit. Never for one minute did he look at the world or at people, except in relation to himself. He was not only the most important person in the world, to himself; in his own eyes he was the only person who existed. He believed himself to be one of the greatest dramatists in the world, one of the greatest thinkers, and one of the greatest composers. To hear him talk, he was Shakespeare, Beethoven, and Plato, rolled into one. And you would have had no difficulty in hearing him talk. He was one of the most exhausting conversationalists who ever lived. An evening with him was an evening spent in listening to a monologue. Sometimes he was brilliant; sometimes he was maddeningly tiresome. But whether he was being brilliant or dull, he had one sole topic of conversation: *himself*. What *he* thought and what *he* did.

He had a mania for being in the right. The slightest hint of disagreement, from anyone, on the most trivial point, was enough to set him off on a harangue that might last for hours, in which he proved himself right in so many ways, and with such exhausting volubility, that in the end his hearer, stunned and deafened, would agree with him, for the sake of peace.

It never occurred to him that he and his doing were not of the most intense and fascinating interest to anyone with whom he came in contact. He had theories about almost any subject under the sun, including vegetarianism, the drama, politics, and music; and in support of these theories he wrote pamphlets, letters, books . . . thousands upon thousands of words, hundreds and hun-

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dreds of pages. He not only wrote these things, and published them—usually at somebody else's expense—but he would sit and read them aloud, for hours, to his friends and his family.

He wrote operas; and no sooner did he have the synopsis of a story, than he would invite—or rather summon—a crowd of his friends to his house and read it aloud to them. Not for criticism. For applause. When the complete poem was written, the friends had to come again, and hear *that* read aloud. Then he would publish the poem, sometimes years before the music that went with it was written. He played the piano like a composer, in the worst sense of what that implies, and he would sit down at the piano before parties that included some of the finest pianists of his time, and play for them, by the hour, his own music, needless to say. He had a composer's voice. And he would invite eminent vocalists to his house, and sing them his operas, taking all the parts.

He had the emotional stability of a six-year-old child. When he felt out of sorts, he would rave and stamp, or sink into suicidal gloom and talk darkly of going to the East to end his days as a Buddhist monk. Ten minutes later, when something pleased him, he would rush out of doors and run around the garden, or jump up and down on the sofa, or stand on his head. He could be grief-stricken over the death of a pet dog, and he could be callous and heartless to a degree that would have made a Roman emperor shudder.

He was almost innocent of any sense of responsibility. Not only did he seem incapable of supporting himself, but it never occurred to him that he was under any obligation to do so. He was convinced that the world owed him a living. In support of this belief, he borrowed money from everybody who was good for a loan—men, women, friends, or strangers. He wrote begging letters by the score, sometimes groveling without shame, at others loftily offering his intended benefactor the privilege of contributing to his support, and being mortally offended if the recipient declined the honor. I have found no record of his ever paying or repaying money to anyone who did not have a legal claim upon it.

What money he could lay his hands on he spent like an Indian rajah. The mere prospect of a performance of one of his operas was enough to set him to running up bills amounting to ten times the amount of his prospective royalties. On an income that would reduce a more scrupulous man to doing his own laundry, he would keep two servants. Without enough money in his pocket to pay his rent, he would have the walls and ceiling of his study lined with pink silk. No one will ever know—certainly he never knew—how much money he owed. We do know that his greatest benefactor gave him $6,000 to pay the most pressing of his debts in one city, and a year later had to give him $16,000 to enable him to live in another city without being thrown into jail for debt.

He was equally unscrupulous in other ways. An endless procession of women marches through his life. His first wife spent twenty years enduring and forgiving his infidelities. His second wife had been the wife of his most devoted friend and admirer, from whom he stole her. And even while he was trying to persuade her to leave her first husband he was writing to a friend to inquire whether he could suggest some wealthy woman—*any* wealthy woman—whom he could marry for her money.

He was completely selfish in his other personal relationships. His liking for his friends was measured solely by the completeness of their devotion to him, or by their usefulness to him whether financial or artistic. The minute they failed him—even by so much as refusing a dinner invitation—or began to lessen in usefulness, he cast them off without a second thought. At the end of his life he had exactly one friend left whom he had known even in middle age.

He had a genius for making enemies. He would insult a man who disagreed with him about the weather. He would pull endless wires in order to meet some man who admired his work, and was able and anxious to be of use to him—and would proceed to make a mortal enemy of him with some idiotic and wholly uncalled-for exhibition of arrogance and bad manners. A character in one of his operas was a caricature of one of the most powerful music critics of his day. Not content with burlesquing him, he invited the critic to his house and read him the libretto aloud in front of his friends.

The name of this monster was Richard Wagner. Everything that I have said about him you can find on record—in newspapers, in police reports, in the testimony of people who knew him, in his own letters, between the lines of his autobiography. And the curious thing about this record is that it doesn't matter in the least.

Because this undersized, sickly, disagreeable, fascinating little man was right all the time. The joke was on us. He *was* one of the world's great dramatists; he *was* a great thinker; he *was* one of the most stupendous musical geniuses that, up to now, the world has ever seen. The world did owe him a living. People couldn't know those things at the time, I suppose; and yet to us, who know his music, it does seem as though they should have known. What if he did talk about himself all the time? If he had talked about himself for twenty-four hours every day for the span of his life, he would not have uttered half the number of words that other men have spoken and written about him since his death.

When you consider what he wrote—thirteen operas and music dramas, eleven of them still holding the stage, eight of them unquestionably worth ranking among the world's great musico-dramatic masterpieces—when you listen to what he wrote, the debts and heartaches that people had to endure from him do not seem much of a price. Eduard Hanslick, the critic whom he caricatured in *Die Meistersinger* and who hated him ever after, now lives only because he was caricatured in *Die Meistersinger*. The women whose hearts he broke are long since dead; and the man who could never love anyone but himself has made them deathless atonement, I think, with *Tristan und Isolde*. Think of the luxury with which for a time, at least, fate rewarded Napoleon, the man who ruined France and looted Europe; and then perhaps you will agree that a few thousand dollars' worth of debts were not too heavy a price to pay for the *Ring* trilogy.

What if he was faithless to his friends and to his wives? He had one mistress to whom he was faithful to the day of his death: Music. Not for a single moment did he ever compromise with what he believed, with what he dreamed. There is not a line of his music that could have been conceived by a little mind. Even when he is dull, or downright bad, he is dull in the

grand manner. There is greatness about his worst mistakes. Listening to his music, one does not forgive him for what he may or may not have been. It is not a matter of forgiveness. It is a matter of being dumb with wonder that his poor brain and body didn't burst under the torment of the demon of creative energy that lived inside him, struggling, clawing, scratching to be released; tearing, shrieking at him to write the music that was in him. The miracle is that what he did in the little space of seventy years could have been done at all, even by a great genius. Is it any wonder that he had no time to be a man?

1937

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# EDITORS OF TIME

## *In Egypt Land*

*Go tell it on the mountain,*
*Over the hills and everywheah;*
*Go tell it on the mountain,*
*That Jesus Christ is aborn.*

At Salzburg, backdropped by magical mountains, where Austria's great musical festivals were held before the war, and where he first heard Marian Anderson sing, Arturo Toscanini cried: "Yours is a voice such as one hears once in a hundred years."

Toscanini was hailing a great artist, but that voice was more than a magnificent personal talent. It was the religious voice of a whole religious people —probably the most God-obsessed (and man-despised) people since the ancient Hebrews.

White Americans had withheld from Negro Americans practically everything but God. In return the Negroes had enriched American culture with an incomparable religious poetry and music, and its only truly great religious art —the spiritual.

This religious and esthetic achievement of Negro Americans has found profound expression in Marian Anderson. She is not only the world's greatest contralto and one of the very great voices of all time, she is also a dedicated character, devoutly simple, calm, religious. Manifest in the tranquil architecture of her face is her constant submission to the "Spirit, that dost prefer before all temples the upright heart and pure."

UP FROM PHILADELPHIA. Thanks to the ostracism into which they are born, Negro Americans live very deeply to themselves. They look out upon, and shrewdly observe, the life around them, are rarely observed by it. They are not evasive about their lives; many are simply incapable of discussing them.

The known facts about Marian Anderson's personal life are few. She was born (in Philadelphia) some 40 years ago (she will not tell her age). Her mother had been a schoolteacher in Virginia. Her father was a coal & ice dealer. There were two younger sisters.

When she was twelve, her father died.

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To keep the home together, Mrs. Anderson went to work. Miss Anderson says that the happiest moment of her life came the day that she was able to tell her mother to stop working. Later she bought her mother a two-story brick house on Philadelphia's South Martin Street. She bought the house next door for one of her sisters.

Miss Anderson's childhood seems to have been as untroubled as is possible to Negro Americans. In part, this was due to the circumstances of her birth, family, and natural gift. In part, it was due to the calm with which she surmounts all unpleasantness. If there were shadows, she never mentions them. Perhaps the most characteristic fact about her childhood is that Marian disliked bright colors and gay dresses as much as her sisters loved them.

Shortly after her father's death, Marian Anderson was "converted." Her mother is a Methodist. But Marian was converted in her father's Union Baptist Church, largely because the late Rev. Wesley G. Parks was deeply interested in music, loved his choirs and encouraged any outstanding singer in them. At 13, Marian was singing in the church's adult choir. She took home the scores, and sang all the parts (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) over & over to her family until she had learned them. Since work is also a religion to her, Miss Anderson considers this one of the most important experiences of her life. She could then sing high C like a soprano.

At 15, she took her first formal music lesson. At 16, she gave her first important concert, at a Negro school in Atlanta. From then on, her life almost ceases to be personal. It is an individual achievement, but, as with every Negro, it is inseparable from the general achievement of her people. It was the congregation of the Union Baptist Church that gave Miss Anderson her start. Then a group of interested music lovers gave a concert at her church, collected about $500 to pay for training her voice under the late Philadelphia singing teacher, Giuseppe Boghetti.

In 1924 she won the New York Stadium contest (prize: the right to appear with the New York Symphony Orchestra). In 1930, she decided that she must study in Germany. When she had perfected her lieder, songs by Schubert, Brahms, Wolf, she gave her first concert on the Continent. It cost her $500 (the Germans explained that it was customary for Americans to pay for their own concerts). She never paid again.

Applause followed her through Norway and Sweden. In Finland, Composer Jean Sibelius offered her coffee, but after hearing her sing, cried: "Champagne!" In Paris, her first house was "papered." From her second concert, enthusiasts were turned away in droves. She swept through South America.

THE TROUBLE I'VE SEEN. In the U.S. the ovation continued. Only one notably ugly incident marred her triumph. In Washington, the management of Constitution Hall, owned by the Daughters of the American Revolution, announced that it would be unable to lease the hall on the date which Sol Hurok, Miss Anderson's manager, had asked for. The refusal resulted in Eleanor Roosevelt's resignation from the D.A.R. and an enormous ground swell of sympathy for Miss Anderson and her people. Miss Anderson, who has carefully kept herself and her art from being used for political purposes, said nothing.

But Washington heard her. She sang, first in the open air in front of the Lincoln Memorial. Later the D.A.R. leased her Constitution Hall, and she sang to a brilliant white and Negro audience. She had insisted only that there should be no segregation in the seating. Nobody knows the trouble that an incident like this one causes to a spirit like Marian Anderson's. No doubt such things are in her mind when she says, with typical understatement: "Religion, the treasure of religion helps one, I think, to face the difficulties one sometimes meets."

For this greatly gifted American, pouring out the riches of her art to houses that are sold out weeks in advance, could not for a long time travel about her country like her fellow citizens. She has given concerts in the South, where her voice is greatly admired (and where she avoids Jim Crow by traveling in drawing rooms on night trains). Even in the North, she could not until fairly recently stay at most good hotels. In the South, she must still stay with friends. In New York City, she used to leave frantically applauding audiences to sleep at the Harlem Y.W.C.A. Then Manhattan's Hotel Algonquin, longtime rendezvous of U.S. literati, received her. Now most other Northern hotels have also opened their doors.

Usually, Miss Anderson travels with six pieces of luggage, one of which contains her electric iron (she presses her own gowns before a concert), and cooking utensils (she likes to prepare snacks for herself and she has had some unpleasant experiences with hotel dining rooms).

AGRARIAN PROBLEMS. In 1943 Miss Anderson married Orpheus Fisher, an architect who works in Danbury, Conn. Now they live, not far from Danbury, on a beautiful, 105-acre farm, "Marianna." Inside, the handsome, white frame, hillside house has been remodeled by Architect Fisher. He also designed the big, good-looking studio in which Miss Anderson practices.

When not on tour or practicing, Miss Anderson dabbles in farming. She sells grade-A vegetables to the local market, regrets that Marianna, like many farms run by hired help, costs more than it brings in. And there are other problems in the agrarian life. This year, Miss Anderson was much puzzled when the big (but unbred) daughter of her registered Guernsey cow did not give milk. "Heifers have to be freshened before you can milk them," she explains with some astonishment. "Did you know that?"

The question measures the very real distance she has traveled from the peasant roots of her people. But, as she has traveled, she has taken to new heights the best that Negro Americans are. For the Deep River of her life and theirs runs in the same religious channel. In her life, as in the spiritual, the Big Wheel moves by faith. With a naturalness impossible to most people, she says: "I do a good deal of praying."

GIFT FROM GOD. For to her, her voice is directly a gift from God, her singing a religious experience. This is true of all her singing (she is preeminently a singer of classical music). It is especially true of her singing of Negro spirituals. She does not sing many, and only those which she feels are suited to her voice or which, like *Crucifixion,* her favorite, move her deeply.

There are lovers of spirituals who do not care for the highly arranged versions that Miss Anderson sings, or the finished artistry with which she sings

them. But if something has been lost in freshness and authenticity, much has been gained by the assimilation of these great religious songs to the body of great music. For they are the soul of the Negro people, and she has taken that soul as far as art can take it.

As the thousands who have heard her can testify, Miss Anderson's singing of spirituals is unforgettable. She stands simply, but with impressive presence, beside the piano. She closes her eyes (she always sings with her eyes closed). Her voice pours out, soft, vast, enveloping:

*They crucified my Lord,*
*An' He never said a mumblin' word;*
*They crucified my Lord,*
*An' He never said a mumblin' word.*
*Not a word, not a word, not a word.*

*They pierced Him in the side,*
*An' He never said a mumblin' word;*
*They pierced Him in the side,*
*An' He never said a mumblin' word.*
*Not a word, not a word, not a word.*

*He bowed His head an' died,*
*An' He never said a mumblin' word;*
*He bowed His head an' died,*
*An' He never said a mumblin' word.*
*Not a word, not a word, not a word.*

Audiences who have heard Miss Anderson sing *Crucifixion* have sometimes been too awed to applaud. They have sensed that they are participants in an act of creation—the moment at which religion informs art, and makes it greater than itself.

Birth of the Soul. The theme of the greatest music is always the birth of the soul. Words can describe, painting can suggest, but music alone enables the listener to participate, beyond conscious thought, in this act. Beethoven's *Violin Concerto* is a work secular beyond question. But when, in the first movement, the simple theme subtly changes, the mind is lifted and rent—not because the strings have zipped to another key, but by a tone of divinity conveyed through the composer's growing deafness by an inspiration inexplicable to the mind. The spirituals are perhaps the greatest single burst of such inspiration, communicated, not through deafness, but through the darkness of minds which knew nothing of formal music and very little of the language they were singing.

Professional musicians and musicologists are still locked in hot debate about the musical origins of the spirituals and the manner of their creation. One simple fact is clear—they were created in direct answer to the Psalmist's question: *How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?* For the land in which the slaves found themselves was strange beyond the fact that it was foreign. It was a nocturnal land of vast, shadowy pine woods, vast fields of cotton whose endless rows converged sometimes on a solitary cabin, vast swamps reptilian and furtive—a land alive with all the elements of lonely beauty, except compassion. In this deep night of land and man, the singers saw visions; grief, like a tuning fork, gave the tone, and the Sorrow Songs were uttered.

Perhaps, in little unpainted churches or in turpentine clearings, the preacher, who soon became the pastor and social leader of his wretched people, gave the lead:

*Way over yonder in the harvest fiel'—*

The flock caught the vision too:

*Way up in the middle of the air,*
*The angel shovin' at the chariot wheel,*

*Way up in the middle of the air.*
*O, yes, Ezekiel saw the wheel,*
*Way up in the middle of the air,*
*Ezekiel saw the wheel,*
*Up in the middle of the air.*
*The Big Wheel moved by faith,*
*The Little Wheel moved by the grace of God,*
*A wheel in a wheel,*
*Up in the middle of the air.*

SOUGHING WIND. It was a theological image splendid beyond any ever conceived on this continent. For a great wind of the spirit soughed through the night of slavery and, as in Ezekiel's vision, on the field of dead hope the dry bones stirred with life.

They kept stirring as, through the dismal years, the great hymnal testimonies moaned forth. Sometimes they were lyric visions of deliverance:

*Swing low, sweet chariot,*
*Comin' for to carry me home;*
*I look'd over Jordan,*
*And what did I see,*
*Comin' for to carry me home,*
*A band of angels comin' after me,*
*Comin' for to carry me home.*

Sometimes they were statements of bottomless sorrow:

*Nobody knows de trouble I've seen,*
*Nobody knows but Jesus.*

Sometimes they were rumbling adjurations:

*Go down, Moses,*
*Way down in Egypt land,*
*Tell ol' Pharaoh*
*To let my people go.*

Sometimes they were simple longings:

*Deep River, my home is over Jordan,*
*Deep River, Lord,*
*I want to cross over into camp ground.*

1946

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# GAMALIEL BRADFORD

## *God's Vagabond: Saint Francis of Assisi*

IN THIS developing twentieth century the immediate world of space and time has become so ample, so rich, so varied, in its hurrying, crowding luxury of interest and splendor, that it seems to absorb and engross us altogether, especially as the sense of any other world has grown more and more obscure and dim. It is, then, surely curious and perhaps profitable to turn back seven hundred years to a man like Francis of Assisi, to whom the things of the other world, eternal things, were so vivid and so real that he literally cast the joy and the splendor and the glory of this world under his feet and trod them in the dust.

Francis Bernardone, born about 1182, was the son of a well-to-do traveling merchant of Assisi. He was

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brought up in ease and luxury and seemed at first disposed to dissipation and riotous companionship. But he had a tender heart and a vivid imagination. These things soon made him sensitive to human misery, and above all keenly alive to the injustice of his having the good things of the world while so many others were wholly without them. Since his mind was as logical as his heart was sympathetic, the next step was to discard his own advantages utterly, and to stride right out into the empty world with the spirit of Christ as his only possession. Rich in this, he preached Christ, he practiced Christ, he lived Christ, and with the aid of the Church and of those in authority, he established an order of followers, whom he sent out from his little chapel in Assisi to preach the gospel as he saw it, all over the world. He himself, after two unsuccessful attempts, got as far as the Orient, in 1219, in the track of the Crusaders, and preached the gospel to the heathen and even to the Sultan, though without converting him or attaining the ideal of martyrdom which seemed so desirable. When Francis returned to Italy, the aura of sainthood had already gathered about him, and his death in 1226 is enveloped in the usual cloud of unprofitable miracles, culminating in the mysterious Stigmata, or impress of Christ's wounds upon the saint's body, a cloud of myth and legend from which it is almost as difficult to disentangle the real man as in the case of Jesus himself. Yet Francis, like Jesus, was so vividly and intensely human that even the adoration of seven centuries is not enough to obscure him entirely.

The first principle of Francis's religion was that of absolute, complete, uncompromising poverty. It seemed to him that not only the possession of money, but the desire for money and what it brings, was the root of all evil. And it is difficult not to agree with him that if you could get rid of that desire, most social and economic evils would settle themselves. Modern society, all human society, is composed of a few people who have a great deal, and who incidentally always want more than they have, and a vast number who violently, passionately want what belongs to, or, at any rate, is in the possession of, the others. If you could once thoroughly eradicate the fatal wanting, all the economic problems would be settled. Get rid of it, want nothing but Christ, said Francis. Seven hundred years later Tolstoy adopted much the same attitude. But Tolstoy hardly attempted to get beyond this world, while Francis had the immense compensating possibilities of the other world to support him. Naturally the abolition of wanting involves all sorts of contradictions and inconsistencies. Life would appear to be wanting and the abolition of wanting would come perilously close to death. Furthermore, if nobody has anything, who is to give to others, and how is the world to go on? But Francis had a practical and concrete mind. He did not foresee the slightest danger that the world in general would adopt his principles, and if it did, the world must take care of itself. He saw what was right for him, and he was going to do it, if the heavens fell.

When I was twenty and was engaged to be married, my love and I came to see the world for the time something as Saint Francis saw it. We, too, felt that we should give up luxury and wanting, should discard the comforting equipment of material life, to which we were accustomed, but of which so many mil-

lions were destitute, and adopt voluntary poverty for the good of the world and our own souls. As a letter of that time expresses it: 'We should give up everything, live not only simply, but in poverty, with the poorest of clothes and the simplest of food, giving up everything material, everything tending to outward things, not because we want to be ascetic, but because we will have nothing to draw us from the life within and because we want to set an example of forgetting all the luxuries and comforts of the body. We want to build a little house somewhere, perfectly plain and poor, and live there in every way just as peasants would live.'

We were twenty, and simple, and foolish. Our parents and relatives and friends ridiculed us and scolded us and reasoned with us, and in the end forced us to let our ideals go—for better, for worse?—I wonder. The only point of importance is that Francis of Assisi did not let his ideals go; he let father and mother and home and wealth and friends all go hang, and followed God. When his father argued with him and bullied him and finally dragged him before the bishop to be rebuked for taking what did not belong to him, Francis came quietly into the assembled throng, tore off even every rag of clothing and threw it down at his father's feet, declaring that from that day on he had a father in heaven who would provide for him. There are times when I wish I had behaved as Francis did.

He had no doubts or hesitations or difficulties. Or if he had them he overcame them by the goodness of God. As for money, he spurned it, rejected it, cast it from him, from the beginning, to the end. As the *Speculum Perfectionis* has it, 'Francis, the true friend and imitator of Christ, despising all things which are of this world, above all detested money and by word and example led his followers to flee it as if it were the Devil.' They were to subsist by God's loving support, and if they relied upon it, it would not fail them. This does not mean that Francis advocated direct beggary as the entire means of livelihood. On the contrary, he was always insistent upon honest labor. Those who followed him should work as they had been accustomed to do and should receive proper reward for it. Only the reward should not go beyond the bare means of subsistence, and, if there was any superfluity, it should be immediately passed on to those who were in greater need.

For Francis not only condemned and contemned money in its immediate form. He was still more hostile to the accumulation of it in possessions of any kind. No radical of the present day could be more bitter in his denunciations of capital, not only in its far-reaching aspects of vaster ownership, but even, perhaps still more, in the petty grasp on small visible holdings to which men cling with a madder grip than they extend to airy claims which they cannot see but only imagine. The owner of a cottage or a cow is a capitalist just as much as is a Rockefeller or a Ford, and he hates to have the cow or the cottage taken away from him, just as they would hate to lose their millions. All wrong, says Francis, and he speaks right out about the whole business: 'I don't want to be a thief, and to have what others lack is to be a sheer thief and nothing else.' Those who followed him were to count nothing as belonging to them except the clothes on their backs, and even those were often to be turned over to any who might be more greatly in need of them.

Evidently Francis was starting the greatest fight in the world, the one that all fundamental reformers have undertaken, the fight against human nature. Even before his death he saw the huge forces of greed and avarice, the desire for gain and the desire for power, breaking in on the Rule he sought to establish. Over and over he enjoined upon his disciples that they must keep the simple principles before them—love, quiet, faithful labor, persistent self-sacrifice, above all the fundamental idea of not wanting, not wanting the things of this world, rooting them out of your spirit altogether. Poverty, living without money, and all the accursed things which money brings, which cannot be had without it and are of no real profit when you get them, that was the lesson that he tried to teach, by preaching and by example. And with the high-wrought, lyrical, imaginative touch that makes so much of his charm, he breaks out into a hymn of rapture to his spiritual bride, our Holy Lady Poverty: 'To trample under foot is to condemn, and Poverty tramples all things under foot, therefore she is queen of all things. But, oh, my holy Lord Jesus Christ, pity me and my Lady Poverty, for I am tortured with the love of her, nor without her can I find repose. . . . Oh, who would not love this Lady Poverty above all others? Of thee, dear Jesus of the Poor, I ask to be honored with this privilege, to be enriched with this treasure, that it may be the eternal distinction of me and mine in thy name to possess nothing whatever under heaven of our own, but to be sustained always by the scanty use of others' benefits, so long as this miserable flesh endures.'

Undeniably in these raptures and vehement assertions and injunctions of Francis there is the touch of extravagance and excess which sometimes repels and estranges. There is the mediaeval quaintness of expression, there is the ascetic forcing, which makes you feel the ideal to be elevated beyond human reach. What tempers and sweetens all this in Francis is the peculiar flavor and relish of sympathy and tenderness. When his demands seem most impossible, you feel that his penetrating eyes look right down into your heart and see the weakness as well as the strength. Does not the whole depth of the tenderness shine out in this lovely sentence from a letter of his later years? 'And I shall know whether you love God and me, his servant and yours, if you do this: see to it that there shall be no brother in the world, no matter how much he has sinned, who if he has once met your eyes, shall go away without your pity. And if he does not ask pity of you, do you ask it of him.' No harsh injunction about poverty could ever chill the infinite loving-kindness of that.

The second great fundamental principle of Francis's religion was the principle of obedience, and it seems hardly likely that this would be any more to the taste of the twentieth century than the principle of poverty. The vast individualism that has developed during the last hundred years does not greatly relish the notion of blind obedience to anyone for any purpose. Yet it must be admitted that the ideal of obedience is a very restful thing. When one has struggled long with doubtful courses, anxious above all things to do the right, but utterly unable to see where the right lies; when one has come to have a hopeless mistrust of one's reason for guiding one anywhere and to feel that the responsibility for action is the most terrible burden in the world, the dream of

obedience to someone who will take all the responsibility and all the burden, to someone who knows, to someone who even thinks he knows, is an exceedingly alluring one. Moreover, obedience is one of the greatest agents in the world for getting things done. The supreme organizing saints, Dominic, Ignatius, understood this perfectly, and built their world-power upon it. Also, obedience is the very best training for command, and those who have formed the habit of taking orders quickly, intelligently, unquestioningly, are often the ones who end by giving the most effective orders themselves.

It may appear that what is apt to be the earliest phase of obedience, the submission to paternal authority, was not very conspicuous in the case of Saint Francis. But as he went on with his life and work, he came to feel that obedience was a most essential virtue, not only for others, but for himself. Great heretics in the religious sphere, like great radicals in the political, are apt to have the instinct of rebellion, even of destruction. They have often the blind impulse to root up and overthrow existing institutions to get rid of their defects, with a secure confidence that the dynamic creative force of mankind will provide something better in their places. The history of Francis's forerunners in that turbulent twelfth century, so effectively told by Miss Davison and Miss Richards, is a history of rebellion at many points. But Saint Francis was by no manner of means a rebel, either by instinct or by practice. Like Abraham Lincoln, he was essentially constructive rather than destructive. He wanted to make over the world, but he wanted to make it over by love, and love does not destroy.

From the beginning of his career he showed his profound respect and submission to the authority of the Church. There might be errors, there might be defects, but such a magnificent power in the world was to be used, not to be battled with. Therefore he approached Pope Innocent III, and Pope Honorius III, and his intimate friend Cardinal Hugolino, who afterwards became Pope Gregory IX, with an inimitable combination of reverent tact and straightforward simplicity, which repeatedly secured for him the permissions and the authorizations he required.

Nor was the obedience or the submission confined to the higher powers or to those whose exalted rank necessarily imposed it. Francis enjoined upon all who loved him at all times the profoundest respect for even humble representatives of the Church. They were to be honored and heeded for their office, independent of what they might be in themselves. Even when the hand that ministered at the altar was corrupt and unclean, you were to kiss it, not for what it was, but for what it did. And in the most authentic and undisputed of all his written words, his final Testament, Francis expressly records his feeling on the subject: 'If I had the wisdom of Solomon and should come into contact with the poor parish priests of today, dwelling in their parishes, I would not preach against their wishes. And I would reverence, love, and honor them, and all like them, as if they were my lords and masters.'

Never did Francis miss an opportunity to impress this duty of obedience and submission upon all who followed him. In one of his letters to the faithful he writes: 'We should never desire to be above others, but should rather be submissive and subject to every human creature for the sake of God.' It cannot

be denied that here, as in other things, there are elements of the fantastic, of extravagance and excess. Such, for example, is his likening of complete and implicit obedience to death, since a dead body at least does absolutely what is required of it. And the story runs that he ordered an erring brother to be buried up to the neck, till death seemed immediately imminent, then asked him if he was dead, and on his agreeing, let him go with the injunction to obey his superiors as a dead man would: 'I want my followers to be dead, not living.' But here again it is not the extreme illustration but the principle that counts.

To Francis there were two roots of the supreme, self-resigning obedience. The first root was intellectual. You were to give up, to eschew, to rid yourself utterly of, the pride and exaltation of your intelligence. There has been endless controversy on this point. It has sometimes been urged that Francis was quite ignorant, even of the Scriptures, that he rejected human learning altogether. On the other side it is answered, with good appearance of reason, that he lived with the Bible and that no one could have so perfectly practiced it who was not intimately familiar with its precepts. As later scholarship inevitably made its way into Franciscan pulpits, as into all others, innumerable pleas and explanations have been offered for departing from the Founder's uncompromising attitude. But that attitude is really simple enough. Francis knew what the pride of the intellect is, knew also its abysmal weakness: he had probably had example in himself of both. Learning and scholarship have their place, and he appreciated that place. But learning and scholarship are always too ready to exalt themselves, and they are of no account when once they are placed in competition with the light and the power of the spirit. Francis lived by the spirit, and he wanted others to do the same.

And as the first root of obedience is the humility of the intellect, the obliteration of intellectual pride, so the second root is the abasement of the will. It is the determination to do things simply because you want to do them that kills. This is what you must root out and tear up and overcome. You are told to go and do things. Go and do them, no matter whether every impulse of poor, fragile human nature rebels or not. You are to face ridicule and scorn and discomfort and torture and death, simply because you are ordered to do so, without debate or dispute or discussion or delay.

After which, even for saints like Francis, or rather supremely for the saints, there remains the qualification that when human obedience grows too distasteful, you can fall back upon the will of God, beside which all human command is dwarfed and insignificant. Thus, when the highest authority of the Church suggested that he should make some alteration in his Rule, Francis gently but absolutely declined to comply: 'I, most Holy Father, did not place those precepts or words in the Rule, but Christ. . . . Therefore I must not and I cannot change or remove the words of Christ in any way whatever.' For there is degree in obedience as in other things.

Yet all the time I confess that what most appeals to me in Francis's gospel of obedience is the getting rid of responsibility, throwing the burden of settling life upon someone else. It seems to me that this is what I have always longed for, and yet I wonder if, after fifty years of erratic independence, I should really relish it. So, alas, of all Francis's vir-

tues. In him they appear exquisite, but an old and weary body, saturated with this world, might find them onerous in practice. The marvel of Francis is that he practiced what he preached. But then he believed in God and in a future life, and perhaps that makes all the difference.

The third great principle of Francis's religion was that of chastity, symbolizing in its most vehement form the conflict between the baser, more animal instincts, and the obedience to the higher, spiritual self, an obedience even more difficult and even more significant than the submission to the external will and commands of others.

As with Francis's other principles, there is something about this one also strange, if not quite repellent, to the whole intellectual attitude of the present day. The growing tendency of the later nineteenth and opening twentieth century is to establish a unified human nature, to recognize all the natural instincts as not only respectable but normal and desirable, not to be fought with and repressed and restrained into unnatural fury and turbulence, but to be directed and guided and developed to their fullest satisfaction, limited only by the simple dictates of expediency and common-sense. It is needless to say that the view of Francis and of his age was totally different from this. The animal elements in our nature were the province of the Devil, at any rate the Devil was given power over us by means of them. It was our duty, our highest religious function and divine privilege, to control and subdue these elements by the power of God working through conscience to a higher, remote, future end, an end conforming to God's will and leading to our own supreme final happiness, beside which the mere immediate gratification of the animal instincts seemed ineffably tame and poor.

At any rate, such self-conquest meant everything to Saint Francis of Assisi. And from the hour of his first conversion his effort was to subdue and overcome the weaknesses of the flesh in every possible way. As to the grosser temptations of sex, there is the strange legend, so much associated with other saints that it is difficult to give it more than a legendary character, of his rushing out naked and burying himself in snow-banks to teach the rebellious passions the indispensable lesson of frigidity. Much more valid and significant are the general comments and warnings as to the danger of association with the opposite sex: 'Dear brethren, we ought to avoid the intimacy, the conversation, even the sight of women, which are the occasion of ruin to so many, all the more zealously when we realize how such things disturb the weak and weaken the strong.'

Yet it is interesting to find that, for all these general injunctions, which no doubt were rigidly applied and acted upon, women played a considerable part in the Saint's life, as was only natural with a temperament so sensitive and so quickly and obviously responsive to all the more delicate emotions. There was the somewhat shadowy Roman lady, Madame Jacopa di Settesoli, to whom Francis seems to have turned for comfort and advice when he was in the Capital and who was opportunely present with him in almost his very last moments. Still more, there was the exquisite Saint Clara, who in her youth cast aside wealth and worldly happiness as Francis did and made it her glory to establish an order of feminine piety in intimate association and affiliation with

his. And to Clara even more than to Jacopa, Francis turned for encouragement and inspiration in some of the darkest moments of his career. As Sabatier puts it, in one such moment, 'Clara, by urging him to persevere, instilled into him a new enthusiasm. One word of hers sufficed to restore to him all his energy, and from that time on we find in his life more poetry and more love than ever before.'

But Francis's subdual of the lower instincts extended far beyond any contest of sex. All immediate fleshly pleasures and indulgences were to be rooted out and got rid of, for the mere power of overcoming them, if for nothing else. There were the temptations of good living, warm housing, luxurious habitations, delicate food. Francis's scheme of holiness allowed for none of these things. Others could not have them, and why should you? If by any chance any little rag or shred of comfort came your way, what better could you do with it than dispose of it to someone who needed it more? The body, this wretched body, which must so soon be food for worms, why cater to it, why pamper it, why caress it? And in his strange, quaint fashion, he sometimes abused it familiarly, chiding it as 'Brother Body'; sometimes he spoke of it as 'the ass,' to be whipped and bullied and made to travel and bear burdens just exactly as its spirit owner might desire.

Doubtless this abuse of the body went to the usual excesses. It was not only denied, it was tormented. Doubtless there were extravagances of penance and self-humiliation which seem almost childish, as when the Saint ate a bit of chicken for the good of his health and then, in an agony of remorse, had one of his followers hale him into church with a rope around his neck to do penance for his weakness. And the abstinence and the privations were destructive to a physique which was never of the best, so that Francis's last years were a story of physical suffering which would be painful to read about if the sufferings were not borne with such complete spiritual tranquillity even to his final death on the bare ground with nothing beneath him but one poor garment.

But the acme and climax of Francis's self-struggle was undoubtedly his experience with the lepers. These unhappy creatures were at that time to be found in Italy in considerable numbers, and of course collected in the usual colonies. Francis had always regarded them with the peculiar horror of a sensitive nature, had pitied them, had been ready to aid them as he could—from a distance—but had shunned all intimate contact with them in instinctive disgust. Then one day, about the time of his conversion, he was riding in the country when a leper came in his way. His first, natural, impulse was to throw the man a gratuity, give him his blessing, and pass by on the other side. But the whole power of the new life that had come upon him said no. Here was the opportunity to show the stuff that was in him at its fullest and richest. He went right up to the leper, not only gave him what he had about him, but embraced him, and treated him in every respect as a brother and a friend. From that hour he felt that he had fought the great fight and won, and ever after the lepers were an object of peculiar tenderness and respect and of his constant injunctions to those who followed him. For the lepers merely symbolized the highest victory that a man can win in this world, the victory summed up in the exquisite phrase of the *Fioretti*, *'per-*

*fettaletizia . . . vincere se medesimo,'* the victory over self, which, alas, some of us never achieve at all. . . .

But the freshest and most delightful of all the elements of Francis's character is unquestionably the impulse of wandering, of joyous, untiring, inexhaustible, vagrant peregrination. It is one of the basic impulses of human nature, perhaps the basic impulse, the desire of new things and fresh experiences, of turning perpetually from one phase of life to another. It is the splendid impulse of youth. Only in most of us the swift flight of years, the clouding conventions of civilized life, the involving burden of social prejudice, numb and kill the original impulse in this case as in so many others. But the sweet, sunny, vagrant ardor crops out at least in the aspirations of the poets, as in the lovely spring cry of Catullus,

Jam mens praetrepidans avet vagari,

or the wilder murmur of the rash hero of the old dramatist,

Let rogues be staid that have no habitation;
A gentleman may wander.

And again there is the musical travel sentence of old Burton, 'For peregrination hath such an infinite and sweet variety that some call him unhappy who never traveled, but beholdeth from his cradle to his old age the same, still, still the same.' Only Burton traveled but in spirit, like so many of us. Francis's restless limbs wanted to waft his spirit all over the world. When he was young, he was fascinated by the wandering dreams of chivalry and knight errantry, and again by the vagrant music of the troubadours, and in later years he used to call his proselyting followers the chivalry of God and used to pour out his religious ecstasies in the troubadour's form.

With this instinct of sweet general vagrancy, with the pleasure of letting one's feet stray whither they will, there is the further delight of varied human contact, of seeing endless human faces, and exploring endless human souls. There was once a social-minded lady who said, 'I should like to meet everybody in the world.' In the same way we feel with the great human poets, the Chaucers and the Shakespeares, the wide love of human nature and human beings, just because they are human. Saint and sinner, doer and dreamer, all are interesting, all are acceptable, because we find something of all of them in our own hearts. The essential elements of this far-traveling human interest are, first, a limitless, inexhaustible curiosity and, second, a considerable indifference to one's own personal comfort; in other words, a constant tendency to forget one's self in the lives of others. And both these elements are undyingly conspicuous in Saint Francis. He had the vast curiosity, the interest in all human souls, where they came from, what their nature was, where they were going to. And he had the instinct, the formed habit of making himself comfortable wherever he might be. To be sure, in later years, he seemed to show a growing attachment to the home center, the Portiuncula at Assisi, and he enjoined upon his followers that they should never forget or desert it. But in the vigorous and active portion of his life, when 'for the space of eighteen years his body never had rest, circulating through varied and far-flung regions,' his principle seems to have been that which he loudly proclaimed, *'Nam ubicumque sumus et ambulamus, habemus semper cellam nobiscum';* or, in

the words of the old poet Donne, holding up the snail as an example,

Be thou thine own home and in thyself dwell;
Inn anywhere; continuance maketh hell.

Also, besides the pure pleasure of vagrancy in itself and the interest in humanity, there is the infinite delight in out-of-doors, and this is always evident in Saint Francis. He was willing to meet the crowds in cities, he did not shrink from lepers in body or from lepers in spirit, but what he above all loved was wandering in the fields and woods, the bright air, the broad sky, the sun, the wind, the clouds, and the living creatures inhabiting all this. There is a sunny sweet old play of Richard Brome, called *The Merry Beggars,* which breathes all through it the delicious spirit of vagrancy. The central figure has the charming name Springlove. He is a steward, and a faithful servant, and spends his winter hours over his master's accounts and the tedious minutiae of daily care. But when spring comes, and the blossoms burst, and the nightingale and the cuckoo begin calling, calling, the blood in Springlove calls too, and he must up and away, leaving master and duty behind him, and follow the cuckoo and the nightingale.

Saint Francis had something of Springlove in his soul, and he too heard the cuckoo and the nightingale when they began their calling. He too felt the charm of the spring flowers and the lure of narrow, winding paths leading perhaps nowhere, or perhaps anywhere. When the call came, he was ready to arise and follow. And he loved all the living creatures and even the creatures that might appear not to have life. With his usual quaint exaggeration, he cherished and reverenced even the stones on which he trod and the water he had to use for washing. He loved the flowers and the birds and the cicadas. In that strange, unearthly canticle in which he poured out his lyrical, poetical aspiration, he hailed all the works of God with exuberant praise: 'Praised be my Lord God with all his creatures; and specially our brother the sun, who brings us the day, and who brings us the light; fair is he, and shining with a very great splendour: O Lord, he signifies to us Thee!' And there is the delicious story of his preaching to the birds, which appears in so many different forms. When Francis was preparing to discourse one evening out-of-doors, he was interrupted by the mad twitter of the swallows, who gathered in clouds all about him. And at first he smiled and let them twitter. But finally he remonstrated: 'Sister swallows, you might let me have my turn.' And the swallows were suddenly silent, there was not one single twitter, while the Saint held forth to them on the goodness of God.

For all this out-of-doors of Francis is penetrated, permeated with God. It reminds me always of the sweet story of the two young lovers, sitting on an open hillside, watching the light grasses bent all one way in the light south wind, like a group of Fra Angelico angels. And the lady murmured, 'You know, my soul also is swayed gently, like the grasses, in the wind of your love. Only that would make me the flower and you the wind. And I had rather we should both be flowers and God the wind. What could be more exquisite than to be swayed forever hither and thither in the wind of His love?'

It is this pervading presence of God that gives Francis's spirit of vagrancy the final and crowning touch. It is per-

haps delicious enough to roam and wander for the pure joy and revel of it. But how much of depth and delicacy and grandeur is added when you feel that it is your duty to wander, that you are called by God to travel over the wide earth, seeing all things, and visiting all men, so that you may enlarge the boundaries of God's kingdom. This is what Francis felt. He lived all his life in the intoxication of it. He imparted the intoxication to thousands who have followed him. Go forth, and do my bidding, and bear my message to the whole wide world. That was Saint Francis of Assisi, God's Vagabond, and prouder in that title than in the glory of kings or the resonant splendor of conquerors. And because the charm of inexhaustible itinerance, physical and spiritual, was blended with the God-impulse, inextricably, the religion of Francis and his preaching have always a singular and delightful touch of joy. There was no gloom about him, no pressure of misery or hell, no touch of asceticism in the tortured sense. As Renan puts it, admirably, 'Note well that Francis forbids us to possess, he does not forbid us to enjoy'; and the experience of humanity, even without Francis, has long ago taught us that possession and enjoyment are by no means identical. Francis wanted his followers to find endless joy in their religion, in their God, and in all the delightful things that their God had scattered about them in such abundant profusion. He was even ready to carry joy to the point of a sweet and sacred merriment, and when Brother Juniper made his careless and trivial jests, Brother Juniper, who is stamped with the magnificent phrase, *'egregius Domini joculator,'* the egregious jester of God, Francis smiled and sympathized, for, he said, 'What are the servants of God but as it were merry-makers who should stir the hearts of men and impel them to spiritual joy?'

So this illimitable roamer and dreamer went on wandering and wondering and loving. With such an inborn tendency, is it not hard to imagine that the wandering should ever stop? Rather you feel that he would go on eternally, traveling, soaring, adventuring, through the vast unplumbed depths of the spiritual universe, always, always, always, touching, enjoying, engrossing —and dominating souls.

1932

# II. . .

# LETTERS

# THOMAS JEFFERSON

## *One Generation Hath No Right to Bind Another*

To JAMES MADISON

Paris,
September 6, 1789.

*Dear Sir,*

I sit down to write to you without knowing by what occasion I shall send my letter. I do it, because a subject comes into my head, which I would wish to develop a little more than is practicable in the hurry of the moment of making up general despatches.

The question, whether one generation of men has a right to bind another, seems never to have been started either on this or our side of the water. Yet it is a question of such consequences as not only to merit decision, but place also among the fundamental principles of every government. The course of reflection in which we are immersed here, on the elementary principles of society, has presented this question to my mind; and that no such obligation can be transmitted, I think very capable of proof. I set out on this ground, which I suppose to be self-evident, that the *earth belongs in usufruct to the living;* that the dead have neither powers nor rights over it. The portion occupied by any individual ceases to be his when himself ceases to be, and reverts to the society. If the society has formed no rules for the appropriation of its lands in severality, it will be taken by the first occupants, and these will generally be the wife and children of the decedent. If they have formed rules of appropriation, those rules may give it to the wife and children, or to some one of them, or to the legatee of the deceased. So they may give it to its creditor. But the child, the legatee or creditor, takes it, not by natural right, but by a law of the society of which he is a member, and to which he is subject. Then, no man can, by *natural right,* oblige the lands he occupied, or the persons who succeed him in that occupation, to the payment of debts contracted by him. For if he could, he might during his own life, eat up the usufruct of the lands for several generations to come; and then the lands would belong to the dead, and not to the living, which is the reverse of our principle.

What is true of every member of the society, individually, is true of them all collectively; since the rights of the whole can be no more than the sum of the rights of the individuals. To keep our ideas clear when applying them to a multitude, let us suppose a whole generation of men to be born on the same day, to attain mature age on the same day, and to die on the same day, leaving a succeeding generation in the moment of attaining their mature age, all together. Let the ripe age be supposed of twenty-one years, and their period of life thirty-four years more, that being the average term given by the bills of mortality to persons of twenty-one years of age. Each successive generation would, in this way, come and go off the stage at a fixed moment, as individuals do now. Then I say, the earth belongs to each of these generations during its course, fully and in its own right. The

second generation receives it clear of the debts and incumbrances of the first, the third of the second, and so on. For if the first could charge it with a debt, then the earth would belong to the dead and not to the living generation. Then, no generation can contract debts greater than may be paid during the course of its own existence. At twenty-one years of age, they may bind themselves and their lands for thirty-four years to come; at twenty-two, for thirty-three; at twenty-three, for thirty-two; and at fifty-four, for one year only; because these are the terms of life which remain to them at the respective epochs. But a material difference must be noted, between the succession of an individual and that of a whole generation. Individuals are parts only of a society, subject to the laws of a whole. These laws may appropriate the portion of land occupied by a decedent, to his creditor, rather than to any other, or to his child, on condition he satisfies the creditor. But when a whole generation, that is, the whole society, dies, as in the case we have supposed, and another generation or society succeeds, this forms a whole, and there is no superior who can give their territory to a third society, who may have lent money to their predecessors beyond their faculties of paying.

What is true of generations succeeding one another at fixed epochs, as has been supposed for clearer conception, is true for those renewed daily, as in the actual course of nature. As a majority of the contracting generation will continue in being thirty-four years, and a new majority will then come into possession, the former may extend their engagement to that term, and no longer. The conclusion then, is, that neither the representatives of a nation, nor the whole nation itself assembled, can validly engage debts beyond what they may pay in their own time, that is to say, within thirty-four years of the date of the engagement.

To render this conclusion palpable, suppose that Louis the XIV. and XV. had contracted debts in the name of the French nation, to the amount of ten thousand milliards, and that the whole had been contracted in Holland. The interest of this sum would be five hundred milliards, which is the whole rent-roll or net proceeds of the territory of France. Must the present generation of men have retired from the territory in which nature produces them, and ceded it to the Dutch creditors? No; they have the same rights over the soil on which they were produced, as the preceding generations had. They derive these rights not from them, but from nature. They, then, and their soil are, by nature, clear of the debts of their predecessors. To present this in another point of view, suppose Louis XV. and his contemporary generation, had said to the money lenders of Holland, give us money, that we may eat, drink, and be merry in our day; and on condition you will demand no interest till the end of thirty-four years, you shall then, forever after, receive an annual interest of fifteen per cent. The money is lent on these conditions, is divided among the people, eaten, drunk, and squandered. Would the present generation be obliged to apply the produce of the earth and of their labor, to replace their dissipations? Not at all.

I suppose that the received opinion, that the public debts of one generation devolve on the next, has been suggested by our seeing, habitually, in private life, that he who succeeds to lands is required to pay the debts of his predeces-

sor; without considering that this requisition is municipal only, not moral, flowing from the will of the society, which has found it convenient to appropriate the lands of a decedent on the condition of a payment of his debts; but that between society and society, or generation and generation, there is no municipal obligation, no umpire but the law of nature.

The interest of the national debt of France being, in fact, but a two thousandth part of its rent-roll, the payment of it is practicable enough; and so becomes a question merely of honor or of expediency. But with respect to future debts, would it not be wise and just for that nation to declare in the constitution they are forming, that neither the legislature nor the nation itself, can validly contract more debt than they may pay within their own age, or within the term of thirty-four years? And that all future contracts shall be deemed void, as to what shall remain unpaid at the end of thirty-four years from their date? This would put the lenders, and the borrowers also, on their guard. By reducing, too, the faculty of borrowing within its natural limits, it would bridle the spirit of war, to which too free a course has been procured by the inattention of money lenders to this law of nature, that succeeding generations are not responsible for the preceding.

On similar ground it may be proved, that no society can make a perpetual constitution, or even a perpetual law. The earth belongs always to the living generation: they may manage it, then, and what proceeds from it, as they please, during their usufruct. They are masters, too, of their own persons, and consequently may govern them as they please. But persons and property make the sum of the objects of government. The constitution and the laws of their predecessors are extinguished then, in their natural course, with those whose will gave them being. This could preserve that being, till it ceased to be itself, and no longer. Every constitution, then, and every law, naturally expires at the end of thirty-four years. If it be enforced longer, it is an act of force, and not of right. It may be said, that the succeeding generation exercising, in fact, the power of repeal, this leaves them as free as if the constitution or law had been expressly limited to thirty-four years only. In the first place, this objection admits the right, in proposing any equivalent. But the power of repeal is not an equivalent. It might be, indeed, if every form of government were so perfectly contrived, that the will of the majority could always be obtained, fairly and without impediment. But this is true of no form. The people cannot assemble themselves; their representation is unequal and vicious. Various checks are opposed to every legislative proposition. Factions get possession of the public councils, bribery corrupts them, personal interests lead them astray from the general interests of their constituents; and other impediments arise, so as to prove to every practical man, that a law of limited duration is much more manageable than one which needs a repeal.

This principle, that the earth belongs to the living and not to the dead, is of very extensive application and consequences in every country, and most especially in France. It enters into the resolution of the questions, whether the nation may change the descent of lands holden in tail; whether they may change the appropriation of lands given anciently to the church, to hospitals,

colleges, orders of chivalry, and otherwise in perpetuity; whether they may abolish the charges and privileges attached on lands, including the whole catalogue, ecclesiastical and feudal; it goes to hereditary offices, authorities and jurisdictions, to hereditary orders, distinctions and appellations, to perpetual monopolies in commerce, the arts or sciences, with a long train of *et ceteras;* renders the question of reimbursement, a question of generosity and not of right. In all these cases, the legislature of the day could authorize such appropriations and establishments for their own time, but no longer; and the present holders, even where they or their ancestors have purchased, are in the case of *bona fide* purchasers of what the seller had no right to convey.

Turn this subject in your mind, my dear Sir, and particularly as to the power of contracting debts, and develop it with that cogent logic which is so peculiarly yours. Your station in the councils of our country gives you an opportunity of producing it to public consideration, of forcing it into discussion. At first blush it may be laughed at, as the dream of a theorist; but examination will prove it to be solid and salutary. It would furnish matter for a fine preamble to our first law for appropriating the public revenue; and it will exclude, at the threshold of our new government, the ruinous and contagious errors of this quarter of the globe, which have armed despots with means which nature does not sanction, for binding in chains their fellow-men. We have already given, in example, one effectual check to the dog of war, by transferring the power of declaring war from the executive to the legislative body, from those who are to spend, to those who are to pay. I should be pleased to see this second obstacle held out by us also, in the first instance. No nation can make a declaration against the validity of long-contracted debts, so disinterestedly as we, since we do not owe a shilling which will not be paid, principal and interest, by the measures you have taken, within the time of our own lives. I write you no news, because when an occasion occurs, I shall write a separate letter for that.

I am always, with great and sincere esteem, dear Sir,

your affectionate friend and servant.

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# THOMAS JEFFERSON

## *Natural Aristocracy*

To JOHN ADAMS

Monticello,
October 28, 1813.

*Dear Sir,*

According to the reservation between us, of taking up one of the subjects of our correspondence at a time, I turn to your letters of August the 16th and September the 2d.

The passage you quote from Theognis, I think has an ethical rather than a political object. The whole piece is a moral *exhortation,* παραινεσις, and this passage particularly seems to be a re-

proof to man, who, while with his domestic animals he is curious to improve the race, by employing always the finest male, pays no attention to the improvement of his own race, but intermarries with the vicious, the ugly, or the old, for considerations of wealth or ambition. It is in conformity with the principle adopted afterwards by the Pythagoreans, and expressed by Ocellus in another form; περι δε τῆς 'εκ τῶν αλληλων ανθρωπων γενεσεως etc.,—ουχ ηδονης ενεκα η μιξις· which, as literally as intelligibility will admit, may be thus translated: "concerning the interprocreation of men, how, and of whom it shall be, in a perfect manner, and according to the laws of modesty and sanctity, conjointly, this is what I think right. First to lay it down that we do not commix for the sake of pleasure, but of the procreation of children. For the powers, the organs and desires for coition have not been given by God to man for the sake of pleasure, but for the procreation of the race. For as it were incongruous, for a mortal born to partake of divine life, the immortality of the race being taken away, God fulfilled the purpose by making the generations uninterrupted and continuous. This, therefore, we are especially to lay down as a principle, that coition is not for the sake of pleasure." But nature, not trusting to this moral and abstract motive, seems to have provided more securely for the perpetuation of the species, by making it the effect of the *oestrum* implanted in the constitution of both sexes. And not only has the commerce of love been indulged on this unhallowed impulse, but made subservient also to wealth and ambition by marriage, without regard to the beauty, the healthiness, the understanding, or virtue of the subject from which we are to breed. The selecting the best male for a harem of well-chosen females also, which Theognis seems to recommend from the example of our sheep and asses, would doubtless improve the human, as it does the brute animal, and produce a race of veritable αριστοι. For experience proves, that the moral and physical qualities of man, whether good or evil, are transmissible in a certain degree from father to son. But I suspect that the equal rights of men will rise up against this privileged Solomon and his harem, and oblige us to continue acquiescence under the "Αμαυρωσις γενεος αστων" which Theognis complains of, and to content ourselves with the accidental aristoi produced by the fortuitous concourse of breeders. For I agree with you that there is a natural aristocracy among men. The grounds of this are virtue and talents. Formerly, bodily powers gave place among the aristoi. But since the invention of gunpowder has armed the weak as well as the strong with missile death, bodily strength, like beauty, good humor, politeness and other accomplishments, has become but an auxiliary ground of distinction. There is also an artificial aristocracy, founded on wealth and birth, without either virtue or talents; for with these it would belong to the first class. The natural aristocracy I consider as the most precious gift of nature, for the instruction, the trusts, and government of society. And indeed, it would have been inconsistent in creation to have formed man for the social state, and not to have provided virtue and wisdom enough to manage the concerns of the society. May we not even say, that that form of government is the best, which provides the most effectually for a pure selection of these natural aristoi into the offices of government? The arti-

ficial aristocracy is a mischievous ingredient in government, and provision should be made to prevent its ascendency. On the question, what is the best provision, you and I differ; but we differ as rational friends, using the free exercise of our own reason, and mutually indulging its errors. You think it best to put the pseudo-aristoi into a separate chamber of legislation, where they may be hindered from doing mischief by their co-ordinate branches, and where, also, they may be a protection to wealth against the agrarian and plundering enterprises of the majority of the people. I think that to give them power in order to prevent them from doing mischief, is arming them for it, and increasing instead of remedying the evil. For if the co-ordinate branches can arrest their action, so may they that of the co-ordinates. Mischief may be done negatively as well as positively. Of this, a cabal in the Senate of the United States has furnished many proofs. Nor do I believe them necessary to protect the wealthy; because enough of these will find their way into every branch of the legislation, to protect themselves. From fifteen to twenty legislatures of our own, in action for thirty years past, have proved that no fears of an equalization of property are to be apprehended from them. I think the best remedy is exactly that provided by all our constitutions, to leave to the citizens the free election and separation of the aristoi from the pseudo-aristoi, of the wheat from the chaff. In general they will elect the really good and wise. In some instances, wealth may corrupt, and birth blind them; but not in sufficient degree to endanger the society.

It is probable that our difference of opinion may, in some measure, be produced by a difference of character in those among whom we live. From what I have seen of Massachusetts and Connecticut myself, and still more from what I have heard, and the character given of the former by yourself, who know them so much better, there seems to be in those two States a traditionary reverence for certain families, which has rendered the offices of the government nearly hereditary in those families. I presume that from an early period of your history, members of those families happening to possess virtue and talents, have honestly exercised them for the good of the people, and by their services have endeared their names to them. In coupling Connecticut with you, I mean it politically only, not morally. For having made the Bible the common law of their land, they seem to have modeled their morality on the story of Jacob and Laban. But although this hereditary succession to office with you, may, in some degree, be founded in real family merit, yet in a much higher degree, it has proceeded from your strict alliance of Church and State. These families are canonized in the eyes of the people on common principles, "you tickle me, and I will tickle you." In Virginia we have nothing of this. Our clergy, before the revolution, having been secured against rivalship by fixed salaries, did not give themselves the trouble of acquiring influence over the people. Of wealth, there were great accumulations in particular families, handed down from generation to generation, under the English law of entails. But the only object of ambition for the wealthy was a seat in the King's Council. All their court then was paid to the crown and its creatures; and they Philipized in all collisions between the King and the people. Hence they were unpopular; and

that unpopularity continues attached to their names. A Randolph, a Carter, or a Burwell must have great personal superiority over a common competitor to be elected by the people even at this day. At the first session of our legislature after the Declaration of Independence, we passed a law abolishing entails. And this was followed by one abolishing the privilege of primogeniture, and dividing the lands of intestates equally among all their children, or other representatives. These laws, drawn by myself, laid the axe to the foot of pseudo-aristocracy. And had another which I prepared been adopted by the legislature, our work would have been complete. It was a bill for the more general diffusion of learning. This proposed to divide every county into wards of five or six miles square, like your townships; to establish in each ward a free school for reading, writing and common arithmetic; to provide for the annual selection of the best subjects from these schools, who might receive, at the public expense, a higher degree of education at a district school; and from these district schools to select a certain number of the most promising subjects, to be completed at an university, where all the useful sciences should be taught. Worth and genius would thus have been sought out from every condition of life, and completely prepared by education for defeating the competition of wealth and birth for public trusts. My proposition had, for a further object, to impart to these wards those portions of self-government for which they are best qualified, by confiding to them the care of their poor, their roads, police, elections, the nomination of jurors, administration of justice in small cases, elementary exercises of militia; in short, to have made them little republics, with a warden at the head of each, for all those concerns which, being under their eye, they would better manage than the larger republics of the county or State. A general call of ward meetings by their wardens on the same day through the State, would at any time produce the genuine sense of the people on any required point, and would enable the State to act in mass, as your people have so often done, and with so much effect by their town meetings. The law for religious freedom, which made a part of this system, having put down the aristocracy of the clergy, and restored to the citizen the freedom of the mind, and those of entails and descents nurturing an equality of condition among them, this on education would have raised the mass of the people to the high ground of moral respectability necessary to their own safety, and to orderly government; and would have completed the great object of qualifying them to select the veritable aristoi, for the trusts of government, to the exclusion of the pseudalists; and the same Theognis who has furnished the epigraphs of your two letters, assures us that "Ουδεμιαν πω, Κυρν', αγαθοι πολιν ωλεσαν ανδρες." Although this law has not yet been acted on but in a small and inefficient degree, it is still considered as before the legislature, with other bills of the revised code, not yet taken up, and I have great hope that some patriotic spirit will, at a favorable moment, call it up, and make it the keystone of the arch of our government.

With respect to aristocracy, we should further consider, that before the establishment of the American States, nothing was known to history but the man of the old world, crowded within limits either small or overcharged, and steeped in the vices which that situation gener-

ates. A government adapted to such men would be one thing; but a very different one, that for the man of these States. Here every one may have land to labor for himself, if he chooses; or, preferring the exercise of any other industry, may exact for it such compensation as not only to afford a comfortable subsistence, but wherewith to provide for a cessation from labor in old age. Every one, by his property, or by his satisfactory situation, is interested in the support of law and order. And such men may safely and advantageously reserve to themselves a wholesome control over their public affairs, and a degree of freedom, which, in the hands of the *canaille* of the cities of Europe, would be instantly perverted to the demolition and destruction of everything public and private. The history of the last twenty-five years of France, and of the last forty years in America, nay of its last two hundred years, proves the truth of both parts of this observation.

But even in Europe a change has sensibly taken place in the mind of man. Science had liberated the ideas of those who read and reflect, and the American example had kindled feelings of right in the people. An insurrection has consequently begun, of science, talents, and courage, against rank and birth, which have fallen into contempt. It has failed in its first effort, because the mobs of the cities, the instrument used for its accomplishment, debased by ignorance, poverty, and vice, could not be restrained to rational action. But the world will recover from the panic of this first catastrophe. Science is progressive, and talents and enterprise on the alert. Resort may be had to the people of the country, a more governable power from their principles and subordination; and rank, and birth, and tinsel-aristocracy will finally shrink into insignificance, even there. This, however, we have no right to meddle with. It suffices for us, if the moral and physical condition of our own citizens qualifies them to select the able and good for the direction of their government, with a recurrence of elections at such short periods as will enable them to displace an unfaithful servant, before the mischief he meditates may be irremediable.

I have thus stated my opinion on a point on which we differ, not with a view to controversy, for we are both too old to change opinions which are the result of a long life of inquiry and reflection; but on the suggestions of a former letter of yours, that we ought not to die before we have explained ourselves to each other. We acted in perfect harmony, through a long and perilous contest for our liberty and independence. A constitution has been acquired, which, though neither of us thinks perfect, yet both consider as competent to render our fellow citizens the happiest and the securest on whom the sun has ever shone. If we do not think exactly alike as to its imperfections, it matters little to our country, which, after devoting to it long lives of disinterested labor, we have delivered over to our successors in life, who will be able to take care of it and of themselves.

Of the pamphlet on aristocracy which has been sent to you, or who may be its author, I have heard nothing but through your letter. If the person you suspect, it may be known from the quaint, mystical, and hyperbolical ideas, involved in affected, new-fangled and pedantic terms which stamp his writings. Whatever it be, I hope your quiet is not to be affected at this day by the rudeness or intemperance of scribblers:

but that you may continue in tranquillity to live and to rejoice in the prosperity of our country, until it shall be your own wish to take your seat among the aristoi who have gone before you.

Ever and affectionately yours.

# ABRAHAM LINCOLN

## *You Do Not Work Much*

To JOHN D. JOHNSTON

January 2, 1851.

*Dear Johnston:*

Your request for eighty dollars I do not think it best to comply with now. At the various times when I have helped you a little you have said to me, "We can get along very well now"; but in a very short time I find you in the same difficulty again. Now, this can only happen by some defect in your conduct. What that defect is, I think I know. You are not lazy, and still you are an idler. I doubt whether, since I saw you, you have done a good whole day's work in any one day. You do not very much dislike to work, and still you do not work much, merely because it does not seem to you that you could get much for it. This habit of uselessly wasting time is the whole difficulty; it is vastly important to you, and still more so to your children, that you should break the habit. It is more important to them, because they have longer to live, and can keep out of an idle habit before they are in it, easier than they can get out after they are in.

You are now in need of some money; and what I propose is, that you shall go to work, "tooth and nail," for somebody who will give you money for it. Let father and your boys take charge of your things at home, prepare for a crop, and make the crop, and you go to work for the best money wages, or in discharge of any debt you owe, that you can get; and, to secure you a fair reward for your labor, I now promise you, that for every dollar you will, between this and the first of May, get for your own labor, either in money or as your own indebtedness, I will then give you one other dollar. By this, if you hire yourself at ten dollars a month, from me you will get ten more, making twenty dollars a month for your work. In this I do not mean you shall go off to St. Louis, or the lead mines, or the gold mines in California, but I mean for you to go at it for the best wages you can get close to home in Coles County. Now, if you will do this, you will be soon out of debt, and, what is better, you will have a habit that will keep you from getting in debt again. But, if I should now clear you out of debt, next year you would be just as deep in as ever. You say you would almost give your place in heaven for seventy or eighty dollars. Then you value your place in heaven very cheap, for I am sure you can, with the offer I make, get the seventy or eighty dollars for four or five months' work. You say if I will furnish you the money you will deed me the land, and, if you don't pay the money back, you will deliver possession. Nonsense! If you can't now live

with the land, how will you then live without it? You have always been kind to me, and I do not mean to be unkind to you. On the contrary, if you will but follow my advice, you will find it worth more than eighty times eighty dollars to you.

Affectionately your brother,

# ABRAHAM LINCOLN

## *I Dislike Slavery*

To JOSHUA F. SPEED.

SPRINGFIELD,
August 24, 1855.

*Dear Speed:*

You know what a poor correspondent I am. Ever since I received your very agreeable letter of the 22d of May I have been intending to write you an answer to it. You suggest that in political action, now, you and I would differ. I suppose we would; not quite as much, however, as you may think. You know I dislike slavery, and you fully admit the abstract wrong of it. So far there is no cause of difference. But you say that sooner than yield your legal right to the slave, especially at the bidding of those who are not themselves interested, you would see the Union dissolved. I am not aware that any one is bidding you yield that right; very certainly I am not. I leave that matter entirely to yourself. I also acknowledge your rights and my obligations under the Constitution in regard to your slaves. I confess I hate to see the poor creatures hunted down and caught and carried back to their stripes and unrequited toil; but I bite my lips and keep quiet. In 1841 you and I had together a tedious low-water trip on a steamboat from Louisville to St. Louis. You may remember, as I well do, that from Louisville to the mouth of the Ohio there were on board ten or a dozen slaves shackled together with irons. That sight was a continued torment to me, and I see something like it every time I touch the Ohio or any other slave border. It is not fair for you to assume that I have no interest in a thing which has, and continually exercises, the power of making me miserable. You ought rather to appreciate how much the great body of the Northern people do crucify their feelings, in order to maintain their loyalty to the Constitution and the Union. I do oppose the extension of slavery because my judgment and feeling so prompt me, and I am under no obligations to the contrary. If for this you and I must differ, differ we must. You say, if you were President, you would send an army and hang the leaders of the Missouri outrages upon the Kansas elections; still, if Kansas fairly votes herself a slave State she must be admitted, or the Union must be dissolved. But how if she votes herself a slave State unfairly, that is, by the very means for which you say you would hang men? Must she still be admitted, or the Union dissolved? That will be the phase of the question when it first becomes a practical one. In your assumption that there may be a fair decision of the slavery question in

Kansas, I plainly see you and I would differ about the Nebraska law. I look upon that enactment not as a law, but as a violence from the beginning. It was conceived in violence, is maintained in violence, and is being executed in violence. I say it was conceived in violence, because the destruction of the Missouri Compromise, under the circumstances, was nothing less than violence. It was passed in violence, because it could not have passed at all but for the votes of many members in violence of the known will of their constituents. It is maintained in violence, because the elections since clearly demand its repeal; and the demand is openly disregarded.

You say men ought to be hung for the way they are executing the law; I say the way it is being executed is quite as good as any of its antecedents. It is being executed in the precise way which was intended from the first, else why does no Nebraska man express astonishment or condemnation? Poor Reeder is the only public man who has been silly enough to believe that anything like fairness was ever intended, and he has been bravely undeceived.

That Kansas will form a slave constitution, and with it will ask to be admitted into the Union, I take to be already a settled question, and so settled by the very means you so pointedly condemn. By every principle of law ever held by any court North or South, every Negro taken to Kansas is free; yet, in utter disregard of this,—in the spirit of violence merely,—that beautiful legislature gravely passes a law to hang any man who shall venture to inform a Negro of his legal rights. This is the subject and real object of the law. If, like Haman, they should hang upon the gallows of their own building, I shall not be among the mourners for their fate. In my humble sphere, I shall advocate the restoration of the Missouri Compromise so long as Kansas remains a Territory, and when, by all these foul means, it seeks to come into the Union as a slave State, I shall oppose it. I am very loath in any case to withhold my assent to the enjoyment of property acquired or located in good faith; but I do not admit that good faith in taking a Negro to Kansas to be held in slavery is a probability with any man. Any man who has sense enough to be the controller of his own property has too much sense to misunderstand the outrageous character of the whole Nebraska business. But I digress. In my opposition to the admission of Kansas I shall have some company, but we may be beaten. If we are, I shall not on that account attempt to dissolve the Union. I think it probable, however, we shall be beaten. Standing as a unit among yourselves, you can, directly and indirectly, bribe enough of our men to carry the day, as you could on the open proposition to establish a monarchy. Get hold of some man in the North whose position and ability is such that he can make the support of your measure, whatever it may be, a Democratic party necessity, and the thing is done. Apropos of this, let me tell you an anecdote. Douglas introduced the Nebraska bill in January. In February afterward there was a called session of the Illinois legislature. Of the one hundred members composing the two branches of that body, about seventy were Democrats. These latter held a caucus, in which the Nebraska bill was talked of, if not formally discussed. It was thereby discovered that just three, and no more, were in favor of the measure. In a day or two Douglas's orders came on to have resolutions passed approving the bill; and they were

passed by large majorities!!! The truth of this is vouched for by a bolting Democratic member. The masses, too, Democratic as well as Whig, were even nearer unanimous against it; but, as soon as the party necessity of supporting it became apparent, the way the Democrats began to see the wisdom and justice of it was perfectly astonishing.

You say that if Kansas fairly votes herself a free State, as a Christian you will rejoice at it. All decent slaveholders talk that way, and I do not doubt their candor. But they never vote that way. Although in a private letter or conversation you will express your preference that Kansas shall be free, you would vote for no man for Congress who would say the same thing publicly. No such man could be elected from any district in a slave State. You think Stringfellow and company ought to be hung; and yet at the next presidential election you will vote for the exact type and representative of Stringfellow. The slave-breeders and slave-traders are a small, odious, and detested class among you; and yet in politics they dictate the course of all of you, and are as completely your masters as you are the master of your own Negroes. You inquire where I now stand. That is a disputed point. I think I am a Whig; but others say there are no Whigs, and that I am an Abolitionist. When I was at Washington, I voted for the Wilmot proviso as good as forty times; and I never heard of any one attempting to unwhig me for that. I now do no more than oppose the extension of slavery. I am not a Know-nothing; that is certain. How could I be? How can any one who abhors the oppression of Negroes be in favor of degrading classes of white people? Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid. As a nation we began by declaring that "all men are created equal." We now practically read it "all men are created equal, except Negroes." When the Know-nothings get control, it will read "all men are created equal, except Negroes and foreigners and Catholics." When it comes to this, I shall prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty,—to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocrisy.

Mary will probably pass a day or two in Louisville in October. My kindest regards to Mrs. Speed. On the leading subject of this letter, I have more of her sympathy than I have of yours; and yet let me say I am

Your friend forever,

# ABRAHAM LINCOLN

## *I Will Risk the Dictatorship*

To General J. Hooker.

Executive Mansion, Washington, D. C., January 26, 1863.

Major-General Hooker.

*General:* I have placed you at the head of the Army of the Potomac. Of course I have done this upon what appear to me to be sufficient reasons, and yet I think it best for you to know that there are some things in regard to which

I am not quite satisfied with you. I believe you to be a brave and skilful soldier, which of course I like. I also believe you do not mix politics with your profession, in which you are right. You have confidence in yourself, which is a valuable if not an indispensable quality. You are ambitious, which, within reasonable bounds, does good rather than harm; but I think that during General Burnside's command of the army you have taken counsel of your ambition and thwarted him as much as you could, in which you did a great wrong to the country and to a most meritorious and honorable brother officer. I have heard, in such a way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the army and the government needed a dictator. Of course it was not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you the command. Only those generals who gain successes can set up dictators. What I now ask of you is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship. The government will support you to the utmost of its ability, which is neither more nor less than it has done and will do for all commanders. I much fear that the spirit which you have aided to infuse into the army, of criticizing their commander and withholding confidence from him, will now turn upon you. I shall assist you as far as I can to put it down. Neither you nor Napoleon, if he were alive again, could get any good out of an army while such a spirit prevails in it; and now beware of rashness. Beware of rashness, but with energy and sleepless vigilance go forward and give us victories.

Yours very truly,

# JOHN RUSKIN

## *The Nature of Theft by Unjust Profits*

From TIME AND TIDE

THE FIRST methods of polite robbery, by dishonest manufacture, and by debt, of which we have been hitherto speaking, are easily enough to be dealt with and ended, when once men have a mind to end them. But the third method of polite robbery, by dishonest acquisition, has many branches, and is involved among honest arts of acquisition, so that it is difficult to repress the one without restraining the other.

Observe, first, large fortunes cannot honestly be made by the work of *one* man's hands or head. If his work benefits multitudes, and involves position of high trust, it may be (I do not say that it *is*) expedient to reward him with great wealth or estate; but fortune of this kind is freely given in gratitude for benefit, not as repayment for labor. Also, men of peculiar genius in any art, if the public can enjoy the product of their genius, may set it at almost any price they choose; but this, I will show you when I come to speak of art, is unlawful on their part, and ruinous to their own powers. Genius must not be sold; the sale of it involves, in a transcendental, but perfectly true sense, the guilt both of simony and prostitution. Your la-

bor only may be sold; your soul must not.

Now, by fair pay for fair labor, according to the rank of it, a man can obtain means of comfortable, or if he needs it, refined life. But he cannot obtain large fortune. Such fortunes as are now the prizes of commerce can be made only in one of three ways:—

1. By obtaining command over the labor of multitudes of other men, and taxing it for our own profit.

2. By treasure-trove,—as of mines, useful vegetable products, and the like, —in circumstances putting them under our own exclusive control.

3. By speculation (commercial gambling). The first two of these means of obtaining riches are, in some forms and within certain limits, lawful, and advantageous to the State. The third is entirely detrimental to it; for in all cases of profit derived from speculation, at best, what one man gains another loses; and the net result to the State is zero (pecuniarily), with the loss of time and ingenuity spent in the transaction; besides the disadvantage involved in the discouragement of the losing party, and the corrupted moral natures of both. This is the result of speculation at its best. At its worst, not only B. loses what A. gains (having taken his fair risk of such loss for his fair chance of gain), but C. and D., who never had any chance at all, are drawn in by B.'s fall, and the final result is that A. sets up his carriage on the collected sum which was once a means of living to a dozen families.

Nor is this all. For while real commerce is founded on real necessities or uses, and limited by these, speculation, of which the object is merely gain, seeks to excite imaginary necessities and popular desires, in order to gain its temporary profit from the supply of them. So that not only the persons who lend their money to it will be finally robbed, but the work done with their money will be for the most part useless, and thus the entire body of the public injured as well as the persons concerned in the transaction. Take, for instance, the architectural decorations of railways throughout the kingdom,—representing many millions of money for which no farthing of dividend can ever be forth-coming. The public will not be induced to pay the smallest fraction of higher fare to Rochester or Dover because the iron-work of the bridge which carries them over the Thames is covered with floral cockades, and the piers of it edged with ornamental cornices. All that work is simply put there by the builders that they may put the percentage upon it into their own pockets; and the rest of the money being thrown into that floral form, there is an end of it, as far as the shareholders are concerned. Millions upon millions have thus been spent, within the last twenty years, on ornamental arrangements of zigzag bricks, black and blue tiles, cast-iron foliage, and the like; of which millions, as I said, not a penny can ever return into the shareholders' pockets, nor contribute to public speed or safety on the line. It is all sunk forever in ornamental architecture, and (trust me for this!) *all that architecture is bad.* As such, it had incomparably better not have been built. Its only result will be to corrupt what capacity of taste or right pleasure in such work we have yet left to us! And consider a little, what other kind of result than that might have been attained if all those millions had been spent usefully: say, in buying land for the people, or building good houses for them, or (if it had been imperatively required to be

spent decoratively) in laying out gardens and parks for them,—or buying noble works of art for their permanent possession,—or, best of all, establishing frequent public schools and libraries! Count what those lost millions would have so accomplished for you! But you left the affair to "supply and demand," and the British public had not brains enough to "demand" land, or lodging, or books. It "demanded" cast-iron cockades and zigzag cornices, and is "supplied" with them, to its beatitude for evermore.

Now, the theft we first spoke of, by falsity of workmanship or material, is indeed, so far worse than these thefts by dishonest acquisition, that there is no possible excuse for it on the ground of self-deception; while many speculative thefts are committed by persons who mean really to do no harm, but think the system on the whole a fair one, and do the best they can in it for themselves. But in the real fact of the crime, when consciously committed, in the numbers reached by its injury, in the degree of suffering it causes to those whom it ruins, in the baseness of its calculated betrayal of implicit trust, in the yet more perfect vileness of the obtaining such trust by misrepresentation, only that it *may* be betrayed, and in the impossibility that the crime should be at all committed, except by persons of good disposition and large knowledge of the world,—what manner of theft is so wholly unpardonable, so inhuman, so contrary to every law and instinct which binds and animates society?

And then consider farther, how many of the carriages that glitter in our streets are driven, and how many of the stately houses that gleam among our English fields are inhabited, by this kind of thief!

I happened to be reading this morning (29th March) some portions of the Lent services, and I came to a pause over the familiar words, "And with Him they crucified two thieves." Have you ever considered (I speak to you now as a professing Christian) why, in the accomplishment of the "numbering among transgressors," the transgressors chosen should have been especially thieves—not murderers, nor, as far as we know, sinners by any gross violence? Do you observe how the sin of theft is again and again indicated as the chiefly antagonistic one to the law of Christ? "This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag" (of Judas). And again, though Barabbas was a leader of sedition and a murderer besides—(that the popular election might be in all respects perfect)—yet St. John, in curt and conclusive account of him, fastens again on the theft. "Then cried they all again saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber." I believe myself the reason to be that theft is indeed, in its subtle forms, the most complete and excuseless of human crimes. Sins of violence usually have passion to excuse them: they may be the madness of moments; or they may be apparently the only means of extrication from calamity. In other cases, they are the diseased habits of lower and brutified natures. But theft involving deliberative intellect, and absence of passion, is the purest type of wilful iniquity, in persons capable of doing right. Which being so, it seems to be fast becoming the practice of modern society to crucify its Christ indeed, as willingly as ever, in the persons of His poor; but by no means now to crucify its thieves beside Him! It elevates its thieves after another fashion; sets them upon an hill, that their

light may shine before men, and that all may see their good works, and glorify their Father in—the Opposite of Heaven.

I think your trade parliament will have to put an end to this kind of business somehow! But it cannot be done by laws merely, where the interests and circumstances are so extended and complex. Nay, even as regards lower and more defined crimes, the assigned punishment is not to be thought of as a preventive means; but only as the seal of opinion set by society on the fact. Crime cannot be hindered by punishment; it will always find some shape and outlet, unpunishable or unclosed. Crime can only be truly hindered by letting no man grow up a criminal—by taking away the *will* to commit sin; not by mere punishment of its commission. Crime, small and great, can only be truly stayed by education—not the education of the intellect only, which is, on some men, wasted, and for others mischievous; but education of the heart, which is alike good and necessary for all.

*1867*

# THOMAS CARLYLE

## *The "Rape" of Alsace-Lorraine*

To The London *Times*

Chelsea

18 November 1870.

*Sir,*

It is probably an amiable trait of human nature, this cheap pity and newspaper lamentation over fallen and afflicted France; but it seems to me a very idle, dangerous, and misguided feeling, as applied to the cession of Alsace and Lorraine by France to her German conquerors; and argues, on the part of England, a most profound ignorance as to the mutual history of France and Germany, and the conduct of France towards that Country, for long centuries back. The question for the Germans, in this crisis, is not one of "magnanimity," of "heroic pity and forgiveness to a fallen foe," but of solid prudence, and practical consideration what the fallen foe will, in all likelihood, do when once on his feet again. Written on her memory, in a dismally instructive manner, Germany has an experience of four hundred years on this point; of which on the English memory, if it ever was recorded there, there is now little or no trace visible. . . . No nation ever had so bad a neighbor as Germany has had in France for the last four hundred years; bad in all manner of ways; insolent, rapacious, insatiable, unappeasable, continually aggressive.

And now, furthermore, in all History there is no insolent, unjust neighbor that ever got so complete, instantaneous, and ignominious a smashing down as France has now got from Germany. Germany, after four hundred years of ill-usage, and generally of ill-fortune, from that neighbor, has had at last the great happiness to see its enemy fairly down in this manner:—and Germany, I do clearly believe, would be a foolish nation not to think of raising up some

secure boundary-fence between herself and such a neighbor, now that she has the chance.

There is no law of Nature that I know of, no Heaven's Act of Parliament, whereby France, alone of terrestrial beings, shall not restore any portion of her plundered goods when the owners they were wrenched from have an opportunity upon them. To nobody, except to France herself for the moment, can it be credible that there is such a law of Nature. Alsace and Lorraine were not got, either of them, in so divine a manner as to render that a probability. The cunning of Richelieu, the grandiose longsword of Louis XIV., these are the only titles of France to those German countries. Richelieu screwed them loose (and, by happy accident, there was a Turenne, as General, got screwed along with them;—Turenne, I think, was mainly German by blood and temper, had not Francis I. egged on his ancestor, the little Duke of Bouillon, . . . and gradually *made* him French); Louis le Grand, with his Turenne as supreme of modern Generals, managed the rest of the operation,—except indeed, I should say, the burning of the Palatinate, from Heidelberg Palace steadily downwards, into black ruin; which Turenne would not do sufficiently, and which Louis had to get done by another. There was also a good deal of extortionate law-practice, what we may call violently-sharp attorneyism, put in use. The great Louis's *"Chambres de Réunion,"* Metz Chamber, Brissac Chamber, were once of high infamy, and much complained of, here in England, and everywhere else beyond the Rhine. The Grand Louis, except by sublime gesture, ironically polite, made no answer. He styled himself, on his very coins (*écu* of 1687, say the Medallists), *Excelsus super omnes gentes Dominus,* but it is certain attorneyism of the worst sort was one of his instruments in this conquest of Alsace. Nay, as to Strasburg, it was not even attorneyism, much less a longsword, that did the feat; it was a housebreaker's *jemmy* on the part of the *Grand Monarque.* Strasburg was got in time of profound peace by bribing of the magistrates to do treason, on his part, and admit his garrison one night.

Nor as to Metz la Pucelle, nor any of these Three Bishoprics, was it force of war that brought them over to France; rather it was force of fraudulent pawnbroking. King Henry II. (year 1552) got these places—Protestants applying to him in their extreme need—as we may say, in the way of pledge. Henri entered there with banners spread and drums beating, "solely in defence of German liberty, as God shall witness"; did nothing for Protestantism or German liberty (German liberty managing rapidly to help itself in this instance); and then, like a brazen-faced, unjust pawn-broker, refused to give the places back,—"had ancient rights over them," extremely indubitable to him, and could not give them back. And never yet, by any pressure of persuasion, would. The great Charles V., Protestantism itself now supporting, endeavoured, with his utmost energy and to the very cracking of his heart, to compel him, but could not. The present Hohenzollern King, a modest and pacific man in comparison, could and has. I believe it to be perfectly just, rational and wise that Germany should take these countries home with her from her unexampled campaign; and, by well fortifying her own old *Wasgau* ("Vosges"), *Hundsrück* (Dog's-back), Three Bishoprics, and other military strengths, secure

herself in time coming against French visits.

The French complain dreadfully of threatened "loss of honour"; and lamentable bystanders plead earnestly, "Don't dishonour France; leave poor France's honour bright." But will it save the *honour* of France to refuse paying for the glass she has voluntarily broken in her neighbour's windows? The attack upon the windows was her dishonour. Signally disgraceful to any nation was her late assault on Germany; equally signal has been the ignominy of its execution on the part of France. The honour of France can be saved only by the deep repentance of France; and by the serious determination never to do so again,—to do the reverse of so forever henceforth. In that way may the honour of France again gradually brighten to the height of its old splendour,—far beyond the *First* Napoleonic, much more than the *Third,* or any recent sort, —and offer again to our voluntary love and grateful estimation all the fine and graceful qualities Nature has implanted in the French. . . .

A hundred years ago there was in England the liveliest desire, and at one time an actual effort and hope, to recover Alsace and Lorraine from the French. Lord Carteret, called afterwards Lord Granville (no ancestor, in any sense of his now Honourable Synonym), thought by some to be, with the one exception of Lord Chatham, the wisest Foreign Secretary we ever had, and especially the "one Secretary that ever spoke German or understood German matters at all," had set his heart on this very object; and had fair prospects of achieving it,—had not our poor dear Duke of Newcastle suddenly peddled him out of it; and even out of office altogether, into sullen disgust (and too much of *wine* withal, says Walpole), and into total oblivion by his Nation, which, except Chatham, has none such to remember. That Bismarck, and Germany along with him, should now at this propitious juncture make a like demand is no surprise to me. After such provocation, and after such a victory, the resolution does seem rational, just and even modest. And considering all that has occurred since that memorable cataclysm at Sedan, I could reckon it creditable to the sense and moderation of Count Bismarck that he stands steadily by this; demanding nothing more, resolute to take nothing less, and advancing with slow calmness towards it by the eligiblest roads. The "Siege of Paris," which looks like the hugest and most hideous farce-tragedy ever played under this sun, Bismarck evidently hopes will never need to come to uttermost bombardment, to million-fold death by hunger, or the kindling of Paris and its carpentries and asphalt streets by shells and red-hot balls into a sea of fire. Diligent, day by day, seem those Prussians, never resting nor too much hasting; well knowing the proverb, "Slow fire makes sweet malt." I believe Bismarck will get his Alsace and what he wants of Lorraine; and likewise that it will do him, and us, and all the world, and even France itself by and by, a great deal of good. Anarchic France gets her first stern lesson there,—a terribly drastic dose of physic to sick France!—and well will it be for her if she can learn her lesson honestly. If she cannot, she will get another, and ever another; learnt the lesson must be.

Considerable misconception as to Herr von Bismarck is still prevalent in England. The English newspapers, nearly all of them, seem to me to be only getting towards a true knowledge

of Bismarck, but not yet got to it. The standing likeness, circulating everywhere ten years ago, of demented Bismarck and his ditto King to Strafford and Charles I. *versus* our Long Parliament (*as* like as Macedon to Monmouth, and not liker) has now vanished from the earth, no whisper of it ever to be heard more. That pathetic Niobe of Denmark, reft violently of her children (which were stolen children, and were dreadfully ill-nursed by Niobe-Denmark), is also nearly gone; and will go altogether as soon as knowledge of the matter is had. Bismarck, as I read him, is not a person of "Napoleonic" ideas, but of ideas quite superior to Napoleonic; shows no invincible "lust of territory," nor is tormented with "vulgar ambition," etc.; but has aims very far beyond that sphere; and in fact seems to me to be striving with strong faculty, by patient, grand and successful steps, towards an object beneficial to Germans and to all other men. That noble, patient, deep, pious and solid Germany should be at length welded into a Nation, and became Queen of the Continent, instead of vapouring, vain-glorious, gesticulating, quarrelsome, restless and over-sensitive France, seems to me the hopefulest public fact that has occurred in my time.

I remain, Sir, yours truly,

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# GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

## *The Communist Future*

To Robert Bridges

Stonyhurst,
Whalley, Lancashire,
August 2, 1871.

*My dear Bridges,*

Our holidays have begun, so I will write again. I feel inclined to begin by asking whether you are secretary to the International as you seem to mean me to think nothing too bad for you but then I remember that you never relished 'the intelligent artisan'. I must tell you I am always thinking of the Communist future. The too intelligent artisan is master of the situation I believe. Perhaps it is what everyone believes, I do not see the papers or hear strangers often enough to know. It is what Carlyle has long threatened and foretold. But his writings are, as he might himself say, 'most inefficacious-strenuous heaven-protestations, caterwaul, and Cassandra-wailings'. He preaches obedience but I do not think he has done much except to ridicule instead of strengthening the hands of the powers that be. Some years ago when he published his *Shooting Niagara* he did make some practical suggestions but so vague that they should rather be called *'too* dubious moonstone-grindings and on the whole impracticable-practical unveracities'. However I am afraid some great revolution is not far off. Horrible to say, in a manner I am a Communist. Their ideal bating some

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things is nobler than that professed by any secular statesman I know of (I must own I live in bat-light and shoot at a venture). Besides it is just.—I do not mean the means of getting to it are. But it is a dreadful thing for the greatest and most necessary part of a very rich nation to live a hard life without dignity, knowledge, comforts, delight, or hopes in the midst of plenty—which plenty they make. They profess that they do not care what they wreck and burn, the old civilisation and order must be destroyed. This is a dreadful look out but what has the old civilisation done for them? As it at present stands in England it is itself in great measure founded on wrecking. But they got none of the spoils, they came in for nothing but harm from it then and thereafter. England has grown hugely wealthy but this wealth has not reached the working classes; I expect it has made their condition worse. Besides this iniquitous order the old civilisation embodies another order mostly old and what is new in direct entail from the old, the old religion, learning, law, art, etc and all the history that is preserved in standing monuments. But as the working classes have not been educated they know next to nothing of all this and cannot be expected to care if they destroy it. The more I look the more black and deservedly black the future looks, so I will write no more.

I can hardly believe that this is August and your letter dated May. True there has been here and I believe elsewhere no summer between. There seems some chance now. In a fortnight we are going, also for a fortnight, to Inellan in Argyleshire on the Clyde. After that I expect to pay my people a short visit down near Southampton, where they have taken a cottage. None of them are turned Catholics: I do not expect it.

Believe me your affectionate friend

# GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

## *Sprung Rhythm*

To Robert Bridges

St. Beuno's, St. Asaph.
Aug. 21, 1877.

*Dearest Bridges,*

Your letter cannot amuse Father Provincial, for he is on the unfathering deeps outward bound to Jamaica: I shd. not think of telling you anything about his reverence's goings and comings if it were not that I know this fact has been chronicled in the Catholic papers.

Enough that it amuses me, especially the story about Wooldridge and the Wagnerite, wh. is very good.

Your parody reassures me about your understanding the metre. Only remark, as you say that there is no conceivable licence I shd. not be able to justify, that with all my licences, or rather laws, I am stricter than you and I might say than anybody I know. With the exception of the *Bremen* stanza, which

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was, I think, the first written after 10 years' interval of silence, and before I had fixed my principles, my rhymes are rigidly good—to the ear—and such rhymes as *love* and *prove* I scout utterly. And my quantity is not like 'Fĭftўtwō Bĕdfŏrd Squāre', where *fĭftў* might pass but *Bĕdfŏrd* I should never admit. Not only so but Swinburne's dactyls and anapaests are halting to my ear: I never allow e.g. *I* or *my* (that is diphthongs, for $I = a + i$ and $my = ma + i$) in the short or weak syllables of those feet, excepting before vowels, semi-vowels, or *r,* and rarely then, or when the measure becomes (what is the word?) molossic —thus: ⏑ – – | ⏑ – – | ⏑ – ⏑, for then the first short is almost long. If you look again you will see. So that I may say my apparent licences are counterbalanced, and more, by my strictness. In fact all English verse, except Milton's, almost, offends me as 'licentious'. Remember this.

I do not of course claim to have invented *sprung rhythms* but only *sprung rhythm;* I mean that single lines and single instances of it are not uncommon in English and I have pointed them out in lecturing—e.g. 'why should this : desert be?'—which the editors have variously amended; 'There to meet : with Macbeth' or 'There to meet with Mac : beth'; Campbell has some throughout the *Battle of the Baltic*—'and their fleet along the deep: proudly shone'—and *Ye Mariners*—'as ye sweep : through the deep' etc; Moore has some which I cannot recall; there is one in *Grongar Hill;* and, not to speak of *Pom pom,* in Nursery Rhymes, Weather Saws, and Refrains they are very common—but what I do in the *Deutschland* etc is to enfranchise them as a regular and permanent principle of scansion.

There are no outriding feet in the *Deutschland.* An outriding foot is, by a sort of contradiction, a recognized extra-metrical effect; it is and it is not part of the metre; not part of it, not being counted, but part of it by producing a calculated effect which tells in the general success. But the long, e.g. seven-syllabled, feet of the *Deutschland,* are strictly metrical. Outriding feet belong to counterpointed verse, which supposes a well-known and unmistakeable or unforgettable standard rhythm: the *Deutschland* is not counterpointed; counterpoint is excluded by sprung rhythm. But in some of my sonnets I have mingled the two systems: this is the most delicate and difficult business of all.

The choruses in *Samson Agonistes* are intermediate between counterpointed and sprung rhythm. In reality they are sprung, but Milton keeps up a fiction of counterpointing the heard rhythm (which is the same as the mounted rhythm) upon a standard rhythm which is never heard but only counted and therefore really does not exist. The want of a metrical notation and the fear of being thought to write mere rhythmic or (who knows what the critics might not have said?) even unrhythmic prose drove him to this. Such rhythm as French and Welsh poetry has is sprung, counterpointed upon a counted rhythm, but it differs from Milton's in being little calculated, not more perhaps than prose consciously written rhythmically, like orations for instance; it is in fact the *native rhythm* of the words used bodily imported into verse; whereas Milton's mounted rhythm is a real poetical rhythm, having its own laws and recurrence, but further embarrassed by having to count.

Why do I employ sprung rhythm at all? Because it is the nearest to the

rhythm of prose, that is the native and natural rhythm of speech, the least forced, the most rhetorical and emphatic of all possible rhythms, combining, as it seems to me, opposite and, one wd. have thought, incompatible excellences, markedness of rhythm — that is rhythm's self—and naturalness of expression—for why, if it is forcible in prose to say 'lashed : rod', am I obliged to weaken this in verse, which ought to be stronger, not weaker, into 'láshed birch-ród' or something?

My verse is less to be read than heard, as I have told you before; it is oratorical, that is the rhythm is so. I think if you will study what I have here said you will be much more pleased with it and may I say? converted to it.

You ask may you call it 'presumptious jugglery'. No, but only for this reason, that *presumptious* is not English.

I cannot think of altering anything. Why shd. I? I do not write for the public. You are my public and I hope to convert you.

You say you wd. not for any money read my poem again. Nevertheless I beg you will. Besides money, you know, there is love. If it is obscure do not bother yourself with the meaning but pay attention to the best and most intelligible stanzas, as the two last of each part and the narrative of the wreck. If you had done this you wd. have liked it better and sent me some serviceable criticisms, but now your criticism is of no use, being only a protest memorialising me against my whole policy and proceedings.

I may add for your greater interest and edification that what refers to myself in the poem is all strictly and literally true and did all occur; nothing is added for poetical padding.

Believe me your affectionate friend

---

# BILL NYE

## *My Thanks for the Same*

To The Postmaster General

Office of Daily Boomerang,
Laramie City, Wy.,
August 9, 1882

*My Dear General:*

I have received by telegraph the news of my nomination by the President and my confirmation by the Senate, as postmaster at Laramie, and wish to extend my thanks for the same.

I have ordered an entirely new set of boxes and post office outfit, including new corrugated cuspidors for the lady clerks.

I look upon the appointment, myself, as a great triumph of eternal truth over error and wrong. It is one of the epochs, I may say, in the Nation's onward march toward political purity and perfection. I do not know when I have noticed any stride in the affairs of state which so thoroughly impressed me with its wisdom.

Now that we are co-workers in the

same department, I trust that you will not feel shy or backward in consulting me at any time relative to matters concerning post office affairs. Be perfectly frank with me, and feel perfectly free to just bring anything of that kind right to me. Do not feel reluctant because I may at times appear haughty and indifferent, cold or reserved. Perhaps you do not think I know the difference between a general delivery window and a three-m quad, but that is a mistake. My general information is far beyond my years.

With profoundest regard, and a hearty endorsement of the policy of the President and the Senate, whatever it may be,

I remain, sincerely yours,

BILL NYE, P.M.

Gen. Frank Hatton, Washington, D.C.

# MARK TWAIN

## *How to Lecture Impromptu*

To W. D. HOWELLS

SANNA, SWEDEN,
*Sept. 26, '99.*

*Dear Howells,*

Get your lecture by heart—it will pay you. I learned a trick in Vienna—by accident—which I wish I had learned years ago. I meant to read from a Tauchnitz, because I knew I hadn't well memorized the pieces; and I came on with the book and read a few sentences, then remembered that the sketch needed a few words of explanatory introduction; and so, lowering the book and now and then unconsciously using it to gesture with, I talked the introduction, and it happened to carry me into the sketch *itself,* and then I went on, pretending that I was merely talking extraneous matter and would come to the sketch *presently.* It was a beautiful success. I knew the substance of the sketch and the telling phrases of it; and so, the throwing of the rest of it into informal talk as I went along limbered it up and gave it the snap and go and freshness of an impromptu. I was to read several pieces, and I played the same game with all of them, and always the audience thought I was being reminded of outside things and throwing them in, and was going to hold up the book and begin on the sketch presently —and so I always got through the sketch before they were entirely sure that it had begun. I did the same thing in Budapest and had the same good time over again. It's a new dodge, and the best one that was ever invented. Try it. You'll never lose your audience—not even for a moment. Their attention is fixed, and never wavers. And that is not the case where one reads from book or MS., or where he stands up without a note and frankly exposes the fact, by his confident manner and smooth phrasing, that he is not improvising, but reciting from memory. And in the heat

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of telling a thing that is memorised in substance only, one flashes out the happiest suddenly-begotten phrases every now and then! Try it. Such a phrase has a life and sparkle about it that twice as good a one could not exhibit if prepared beforehand, and it "fetches" an audience in such an enthusing and inspiring and uplifting way that that lucky phrase breeds another one, sure.

Your September instalment was delicious—every word of it. You haven't lost any of your splendid art. Callers have arrived.

With love

# HENRY ADAMS

## *Preparation for Teaching History*

To Henry Cabot Lodge

Luxor,
*2 January, 1873.*

I received your letter of November 3d just as I was leaving Cairo, and as I have been busily reading myself, I delayed answering till I knew what I had to say. So far as I can see, you are acting on such good advice and working in such good company that I can add very little to your means of getting ahead. Perhaps to a critical eye, the field you have entered may seem rather wide. I doubt whether a man can profitably spread his reading over a very large range unless he has some definite object clearly fixed in his head. My wish is to lead you gradually up to your definite object, but what it must be will depend on the bent of your own tastes. I can only tell you the style of thing that seems to me best.

The first step seems to me to be to familiarise one's mind with thoroughly good work, to master the scientific method, and to adopt the rigid principle of subordinating everything to perfect thoroughness of study. I have therefore advised your learning German, because I think the German method so sound. I am glad you are reading Sohm. But Sohm's work is on too large a scale to imitate. I would like to have you take up some of the smaller works, which have broken the way for him. Read as most kin to your interests, von Maurer's *Einleitung,* Thudichum's *Gau und Markverfassung,* Brunner's *Entstehung der Schwurgerichte.* Study these, not merely for their matter but as literary work. See how the men go at it, and then take an English work, Mayne if you like, or Freeman, and see how they reach their results. I do not mean to set up the Germans as exclusive models at all. But they have the great merit of a very high standard of knowledge. An ignorant, or a superficial work could hardly come from any distinguished German student. I can't say the same for other countries. Great as is Mr. Freeman's parade of knowledge, he has never written anything really solid, and Mr.—or rather Sir

The selections from *The Letters of Henry Adams,* edited by W. C. Ford, are used by permission of the publishers, Houghton Mifflin Company.

Henry—Mayne's book is precisely such a one as I like to give to students to admire and to criticise. I know of no writer who generalises more brilliantly. But everyone of his generalisations requires a lifetime of work to prove it.

I propose no more to the fellows who are kind enough to think my teaching worth their listening to—those of them I mean who take the thing in the spirit I offer it in—than to teach them how to do their work. The College chose to make me Professor of History—I don't know why, for I knew no more history than my neighbors. And it pitchforked me into mediæval history, of which I knew nothing. But it makes little difference what one teaches; the great thing is to train scholars for work, and for that purpose there is no better field than mediæval history to future historians. The mere wish to give a practical turn to my men has almost necessarily led me to give a strong legal bent to the study. Starting from this point, I found that at the outset the Family was the centre of early law. To study the Family therefore in its different relations, was the natural course to follow. From this point we must follow down the different lines of development. The organisation of the Family, the law of inheritance, of testaments, of land tenure, of evidence and legal procedure, the relations of the Family to the community, in its different forms of village, county and state, as well as many other parallel lines of study lay open before me and I have only to indicate them to true students whether of law or of history, and let them go to work and develop them. Of course I don't pretend to have mastered these subjects myself. No one has yet done so. But men like you and Ames can win a reputation by following up any one line of investigation, and the occupation is as good as mathematics for the logical faculty, while it leads ultimately to all the nearer subjects of historical study.

Of course our own law and institutions are what we aim at, and we only take German institutions so far as they throw light on English affairs. I think you would do well to keep this in mind and to take some special line of work so soon as you have become tolerably acquainted with the general bearings of things. Of course you will choose whatever you think best suits your tastes. It does not follow that preliminary legal reading is to make you a historian of law, any more than preliminary grammar reading would result in making you a historian of philology. It matters very little what line you take provided you can catch the tail of an idea to develope with solid reasoning and thorough knowledge. America or Europe, our own century or prehistoric time, are all alike to the historian if he can only find out what men are and have been driving at, consciously or unconsciously. So much is this the case that I myself am now strongly impelled to write an Essay on Egyptian Law, for I have a sort of notion that I could draw out of that queer subject some rather surprising deductions, perhaps I could fix a legal landmark in history, but I have too much on my hands and must let the Cheopses and the Ramses alone.

The Nile is not a bad place for study, and I have run through a library of books here. I want to write to Ames, but until I have got some sort of order into my ideas I shall have nothing to say. But I would be very glad to have a line from him to know how he gets on and whether he has struck any new vein. There are many points I want to

discuss with him but they will keep. Meanwhile pray continue to write to me how things are going with you and at Cambridge. Send for a copy of Schmid's *Gesetze der Angel-Sachsen;* it may be useful to you next year, as I want to go hard to early English law. I have got to learn to read Anglo-Saxon, but that is too much to expect from you or anyone not obliged to do it.

Pray give my best regards to your wife.

# HENRY ADAMS

## *The Tendency of History*

To HERBERT B. ADAMS

Guadalajara,
*December 12, 1894*

*Dear Sir:*

I regret extremely that constant absence has prevented me from attending the meetings of the Historical Association. On the date which your letter mentions as that of its first decennial I shall not be within reach. I have to ask you to offer my apology to the members, and the assurance that at that moment I am believed to be somewhere beyond the Isthmus of Panama. Perhaps this absence runs in some of the mysterious ways of nature's law, for you will not forget that when you did me the honor to make me your president I was still farther away—in Tahiti or Fiji, I believe—and never even had an opportunity to thank you. Evidently I am fitted only to be an absent president, and you will pardon a defect which is clearly not official, but a condition of the man.

I regret this fault the more because I would have liked to be of service, and perhaps there is service that might usefully be performed. Even the effort to hold together the persons interested in history is worth making. That we should ever act on public opinion with the weight of one compact and one energetic conviction is hardly to be expected, but that one day or another we shall be compelled to act individually or in groups I cannot doubt. With more anxiety than confidence, I should have liked to do something, however trifling, to hold the association together and unite it on some common ground, with a full understanding of the course which history seems destined to take and with a good-natured willingness to accept or reject the result, but in any case not to quarrel over it.

No one who has watched the course of history during the last generation can have felt doubt of its tendency. Those of us who read Buckle's first volume when it appeared in 1857 and almost immediately afterwards, in 1859, read the *Origin of the Species* and felt the violent impulse which Darwin gave to the study of natural laws, never doubted that historians would follow until they had exhausted every possible hypothesis to create a science of history. Year after year passed, and little progress has

From Henry Adams, *The Degradation of Democratic Dogma.* By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

been made. Perhaps the mass of students are more skeptical now than they were thirty years ago of the possibility that such a science can be created. Yet almost every successful historian has been busy with it, adding here a new analysis, a new generalization there; a clear and definite connection where before the rupture of idea was absolute; and, above all, extending the field of study until it shall include all races, all countries, and all times. Like other branches of science, history is now encumbered and hampered by its own mass, but its tendency is always the same, and cannot be other than what it is. That the effort to make history a science may fail is possible, and perhaps probable; but that it should cease, is not within the range of experience. Historians will not, and even if they would they cannot, abandon the attempt. Science itself would admit its own failure if it admitted that man, the most important of all its subjects, could not be brought within its range.

You may be sure that four out of five serious students of history who are living today have, in the course of their work, felt that they stood on the brink of a great generalization that would reduce all history under a law as clear as the laws which govern the material world. As the great writers of our time have touched one by one the separate fragments of admitted law by which society betrays its character as a subject for science, not one of them can have failed to feel an instant's hope that he might find the secret which would transform these odds and ends of philosophy into one self-evident, harmonious, and complete system. He has seemed to have it, as the Spanish say, in his inkstand. Scores of times he must have dropped his pen to think how one short step, one sudden inspiration, would show all human knowledge; how, in these thickset forests of history, one corner turned, one faint trail struck, would bring him on the highroad of science. Every professor who has tried to teach the doubtful facts which we now call history must have felt that sooner or later he or another would put order in chaos and bring light into darkness. Not so much genius or favor was needed as patience and good luck. The law was certainly there, and as certainly was in places actually visible, to be touched and handled, as though it were a law of chemistry or physics. No teacher with a spark of imagination or with an idea of scientific method can have helped dreaming of the immortality that would be achieved by the man who should successfully apply Darwin's method to the facts of human history.

Those of us who have had occasion to keep abreast of the rapid progress which has been made in history during the last fifty years must be convinced that the same rate of progress during another half century would necessarily raise history to the rank of a science. Our only doubt is whether the same rate can possibly be maintained. If not, our situation is simple. In that case, we shall remain more or less where we are. But we have reached a point where we ought to face the possibility of a great and perhaps a sudden change in the importance of our profession. We cannot help asking ourselves what would happen if some new Darwin were to demonstrate the laws of historical evolution.

I admit that the mere idea of such an event fills my mind with anxiety. When I remember the astonishing influence exerted by a mere theorist like Rousseau; by a reasoner like Adam

Smith; by a philosopher, beyond contact with material interests, like Darwin, I cannot imagine the limits of the shock that might follow the establishment of a fixed science of history. Hitherto our profession has been encouraged, or, at all events, tolerated by governments and by society as an amusing or instructive and, at any rate, a safe and harmless branch of inquiry. But what will be the attitude of government or of society toward any conceivable science of history? We know what followed Rousseau; what industrial and political struggles have resulted from the teachings of Adam Smith; what a revolution and what vehement opposition has been and still is caused by the ideas of Darwin. Can we imagine any science of history that would not be vastly more violent in its effects than the dissension roused by any one or by all three of these great men?

I ask myself, what shape can be given to any science of history that will not shake to its foundations some prodigious interest? The world is made up of a few immense forces, each with an organization that corresponds with its strength. The church stands first; and at the outset we must assume that the church will not and cannot accept any science of history, because science, by its definition, must exclude the idea of a personal and active providence. The state stands next; and the hostility of the state would be assured toward any system or science that might not strengthen its arm. Property is growing more and more timid and looks with extreme jealousy on any new idea that may weaken vested rights. Labor is growing more and more self-confident and looks with contempt on all theories that do not support its own. Yet we cannot conceive of a science of history that would not, directly or indirectly, affect all these vast social forces.

Any science assumes a necessary sequence of cause and effect, a force resulting in motion which cannot be other than what it is. Any science of history must be absolute, like other sciences, and must fix with mathematical certainty the path which human society has got to follow. That path can hardly lead toward the interests of all the great social organizations. We cannot conceive that it should help at the same time the church and the state, property and communism, capital and poverty, science and religion, trade and art. Whatever may be its orbit it must, at least for a time, point away from some of these forces toward others which are regarded as hostile. Conceivably, it might lead off in eccentric lines away from them all, but by no power of our imagination can we conceive that it should lead toward them all.

Although I distrust my own judgment and look earnestly for guidance to those who are younger than I and closer to the movement of the time, I cannot be wholly wrong in thinking that a change has come over the tendency of liberal thought since the middle of the century. Darwin led an intellectual revival much more hopeful than any movement that can now be seen in Europe, except among the socialists. Had history been converted into a science at that time, it would perhaps have taken the form of cheerful optimism which gave to Darwin's conclusions the charm of possible human perfectibility. Of late years the tone of European thought has been distinctly despondent among the classes which were formerly most hopeful. If a science of history were established to-day

on the lines of its recent development, I greatly fear it would take its tone from the pessimism of Paris, Berlin, London, and St. Petersburg, unless it brought into sight some new and hitherto unsuspected path for civilization to pursue.

If it pointed to socialistic triumph it would place us in an attitude of hostility toward existing institutions. Even supposing that our universities would permit their professors in this country to announce the scientific certainty of communistic triumphs, could Europe be equally liberal? Would property, on which the universities depend, allow such freedom of instruction? Would the state suffer its foundation to be destroyed? Would society as now constituted tolerate the open assertion of a necessity which should affirm its approaching overthrow?

If, on the other hand, the new science required us to announce that the present evils of the world—its huge armaments, its vast accumulations of capital, its advancing materialism, and declining arts—were to be continued, exaggerated, over another thousand years, no one would listen to us with satisfaction. Society would shut its eyes and ears. If we proved the certainty of our results we should prove it without a sympathetic audience and without good effect. No one except artists and socialists would listen, and the conviction we should produce on them could lead only to despair and attempts at anarchy in art, in thought, and in society.

If, finally, the science should prove that society must at a given time revert to the church and recover its old foundation of absolute faith in a personal providence and a revealed religion, it commits suicide.

In whatever direction we look we can see no possibility of converting history into a science without bringing it into hostility toward one or more of the most powerful organizations of the era. If the world is to continue moving toward the point which it has so energetically pursued during the last fifty years, it will destroy the hopes of the vast organizations of labor. If it is to change its course and become communistic, it places us in direct hostility to the entire fabric of our social and political system. If it goes on, we must preach despair. If it goes back, it must deny and repudiate science. If it goes forward, round a circle which leads through communism, we must declare ourselves hostile to the property that pays us and the institutions we are bound in duty to support.

A science cannot be played with. If an hypothesis is advanced that obviously brings into direct sequence of cause and effect all the phenomena of human history, we must accept it, and if we accept, we must teach it. The mere fact that it overthrows social organizations cannot affect our attitude. The rest of society can reject or ignore, but we must follow the new light no matter where it leads. Only about two hundred and fifty years ago the common sense of mankind, supported by the authority of revealed religion, affirmed the undoubted and self-evident fact that the sun moved round the earth. Galileo suddenly asserted and proved that the earth moved round the sun. You know what followed, and the famous *"É pur si muove."* Even if we, like Galileo, should be obliged by the religious or secular authority to recant and repudiate our science, we should still have to say as he did in secret, if not in public, *"É pur si muove."*

Those of us who have reached or

passed middle age need not trouble ourselves very much about the future. We have seen one or two great revolutions in thought and we have had enough. We are not likely to accept any new theory that shall threaten to disturb our repose. We should reject at once, and probably by a large majority, a hypothetical science that must obviously be incapable of proof. We should take the attitude that our fathers took toward the theories and hypotheses of Darwin. We may meantime reply to such conundrums by the formula that has smoothed our path in life over many disasters and cataclysms: "Perhaps the crisis will never occur; and even if it does occur, we shall probably be dead." To us who have already gone as far as we set out to go, this answer is good and sufficient, but those who are to be the professors and historians of the future have got duties and responsibilities of a heavier kind than we older ones ever have had to carry. They cannot afford to deal with such a question in such a spirit. They would have to rejoin in Heine's word:

*Also fragen wir beständig,*
*Bis man uns mit einer Handvoll*
*Erde endlich stopft die Mäuler,*
*Aber ist das eine Antwort?*

They may at any time in the next fifty years be compelled to find an answer, "Yes" or "No," under the pressure of the most powerful organizations the world has ever known for the suppression of influences hostile to its safety. If this association should be gifted with the length of life that we all wish for it, a span of a century at least, it can hardly fail to be torn by some such dilemma. Our universities, at all events, must be prepared to meet it. If such a crisis should come, the universities throughout the world will have done the most to create it, and are under most obligation to find a solution for it. I will not deny that the shadow of this coming event has cast itself upon me, both as a teacher and a writer; or that, in the last ten years, it has often kept me silent where I should once have spoken with confidence, or has caused me to think long and anxiously before expressing in public any opinion at all. Beyond a doubt, silence is best. In these remarks, which are only casual and offered in the paradoxical spirit of private conversation, I have not ventured to express an opinion of my own; or, if I have expressed it, pray consider it as withdrawn. The situation seems to call for no opinion, unless we have some scientific theory to offer; but to me it seems so interesting that, in taking leave of the association, I feel inclined to invite them, as individuals, to consider the matter in a spirit that will enable us, should the crisis arise, to deal with it in a kindly temper, and a full understanding of its serious dangers and responsibilities.

Ever truly yours,

# THOMAS WOLFE

## *A Writer's Creation and Vision of Life*

To His Mother

Harvard Club
27 West 44th Street
New York, November 6, 1929

*Dear Mama:*

I have been very busy grading papers and making up work at the University, where I fell behind somewhat after my book came out.

Mabel has written me a couple of letters, and I have also heard from others in Asheville, including George McCoy. I also read the reviews of the book in the Asheville papers. The one in the *Citizen* I thought splendid but it seemed to me the *Times* was unfairly personal. George McCoy in his letter said that the *Times* and some of the Asheville people "read the book from the local angle." This is no way to read a book: it was not written from any "local angle," and none of the reviewers in New York, or any where else besides Asheville, have mentioned any "local angle"! Instead, they have read the book as it should be read—as a writer's creation and vision of life—and they have found it a very honest and moving piece of work. I hope you read the reviews in the *New York Times* and the *New York Herald Tribune*.

I have not lived in Asheville for ten years, but I have always believed that if I ever wrote a book I could expect at least as much kindness and fairness in the town of my birth as I would get from strangers. I am very grateful to all those people, like the people at the *Citizen*, who have judged my work fairly and generously, but I am not grateful to people who try to make of my book a diary of family and town history. In the introduction to the book I stated very plainly that it was made from human experience—as all serious fiction is—but that the book was fiction and represented the writer's own picture of life—that he had taken experience and shaped it into a world of his own making. The *Times* reporter in his review accused me of evading the question "by clever twists of phrases"—there is no evasion there or elsewhere: only a very simple and direct statement of what fiction is.

In short, the characters and scenes in my book are of my own imagining and my own making—they have their roots in human experience, but what life and being they have, I gave to them. There is no scene in my book that is supposed to be literal, and I will not talk to damned fools who ask me if so-and-so in the book is meant to be such and such a person living in Asheville. What the book is about is stated on the very first page, in the opening paragraph: it says that we are born alone—all of us who ever lived or will live—that we live alone, and die alone, and that we are strangers to one another, and never come to know one another. That is not written about people in Asheville—it is written about people everywhere, North, South, East, and West.

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Finally, I do not know what any one protests about in my book. The people are like people everywhere all over the world—and it seems to me, and to Scribners, and to the people who have read the book up here that on the whole they are pretty fine—People: they are not infallible and they make mistakes, but since I am writing about people and confess that I know very little about saints and angels, I shall let the reporter on the *Times* and any other people who want Gods, rather than men in their fiction do the job I am unable to do. There is not a single leading figure in my book who, when faced by a crisis, does not rise up and show a heroic spirit —they can go over the book page by page and find this true.

I have only two serious regrets—one, that I did not do a better piece of work, but I *will* next time; and two, that my book may have caused pain or distress to any person. But I will also say that if it has caused pain or distress, they are the result not of what is really in the book, but of a misunderstanding of the book's purpose.

I can not write more at present. I am tired from excitement and from having to do my work at N. Y. U. at the same time. I will write you more later. My book has had, I understand, the best reviews any first novel has had in several years, and we are now hopeful of success. The book is already in its second edition. I will send you some of the reviews as they come out—I think you will see what the world in general thinks of the book, and I don't think you will find anything in them that will cause you or anyone worry or confusion of the slightest sort. In my future work, as in this first one, I know you want me to do what I want to do myself: as good, as honest, and as conscientious work as I can. If I do that, most people of intelligence will see what I'm after, and none of us need worry about the opinions of unfair and unreasonable people.

I send you my best wishes for your health, happiness, and prosperity. Write me when you can.

Your son,

TOM

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# ALEXANDER WOOLLCOTT

## *The Town-Crier Begs to Differ*

TO PAUL HARPER

New York City
*November* 22, 1935

*My dear Harper:*

This is an answer to your official letter of November 22nd in which you announced that:

*"The Cream of Wheat Corporation is unwilling to continue the broadcasts after December 29th unless you will agree to refrain from including in your broadcasts material of a controversial nature which, in our opinion, would be offensive to individuals or groups in the radio audience."*

This paragraph would be unintelligi-

From *The Portable Alexander Woollcott,* edited by Joseph Hennessey. Copyright 1944, 1946 by The Viking Press, Inc., N. Y.

ble to anyone who has not previously read your letter of November 14th in which you transmitted this message from Mr. Thomson and Mr. Clifford of the Cream of Wheat Corporation:

*"They went on to say that they preferred that you didn't make any more caustic references to people like Hitler and Mussolini as there are large racial groups who are apt to be antagonized by these references."*

Now, in these broadcasts the Town-Crier has for several years been freely reporting his likes and dislikes on the books, plays, pictures, prejudices, manners and customs of the day. In undertaking such an oral column, he could not with self-respect agree in advance never to take pot shots at such targets as Hitler or Mussolini. Or, for that matter, at any other bully, lyncher or jingo whose head happened to come within shooting distance. If he did embark upon a series thus hamstrung in advance, his own interest in the broadcasts would so dwindle that they would deteriorate in short order.

I am entirely in sympathy with the viewpoint of Mr. Bull and his Cream of Wheat associates. If they think an occasional glancing blow antagonizes old customers or drives away new ones, it would be folly for them to address their advertising to such an audience as I might assemble. It is my own guess that the allusions complained of have no such effect. It would seem to me as reasonable to expect every crack at Hitler to send all the Jews in America rushing to the grocery stores to stock up with Cream of Wheat. It would be as reasonable to assume that the [Sir John] Buchan broadcast (which Mr. Bull so highly approved) with its hands - across - the - sea, England - and - America shoulder - to - shoulder theme, alienated from Cream of Wheat every Irish listener and all those whom Mr. Hearst and Father Coughlin have industriously filled with a distrust of the English. It would be as reasonable to fear that the November 10th broadcast, which you yourself loudly applauded, may have so infuriated the Scotch that they all reverted to oatmeal in a body. I have said enough to make clear what a blank check I would be signing if I recklessly promised to omit all controversial material. Before each broadcast, you see, there would be so much honest disagreement as to what material was controversial. The irony of this impasse lies in my own suspicion that it is these very elements which most promote interest in the series. The only reason I don't indulge in them oftener is because I believe they are more effective when infrequently used. They lend the series salt, provoke discussion, whip up attendance and enlarge the audience. The sponsor is therefore most worried by the broadcast which serves him best. At least, that is my guess, which may be as good as Mr. Bull's but need not be any better. And after all, it is his business and not mine.

I have overheard enough of the experiences of other broadcasters to suspect that it would be difficult to find anywhere among the big national advertisers a sponsor who would be as considerate, liberal and agreeable as the Cream of Wheat people have been throughout all our dealings. This would seem to indicate that the Town-Crier is unlikely to find any other sponsor willing to meet the terms he must insist on so long as he uses the now established formula which inevitably represents him as one citizen leaning over the fence and talking freely to his

neighbors. And since all the good time on the great networks has been preempted by advertisers, that in turn would mean I must drop out of national broadcasting altogether, which, as you know, would be a solution entirely acceptable to me. I would merely be driven back to the comparative privacy of the printed page where, in my own opinion, I belong and where, at long last, I might get some writing done.

Yours sincerely,

Alexander Woollcott

P. S. By the way, in your final paragraph you say that I have "declined to accept any restrictions made by the sponsor" in my choice of material. When you wrote that sentence you must have been either absent-minded or disingenuous. I told you yesterday that I had no objection whatever to letting your representative cut out of my script any joke, anecdote or phrase which, in his opinion, was either coarse or suggestive. If you still do not recall this promise, [Leggett] Brown may be able to refresh your memory.

One other point. You yourself asked why I should ever need to introduce controversial matter into a broadcast since I could so easily let off steam in the various publications to which I can always contribute. Unfortunately, this suggestion is impractical. I find the weekly preparation of the next broadcast and the consequences of the preceding one so time-consuming that when I am broadcasting I am unable to do any other kind of work. I haven't even time left to write a post card to the folks.

A. W.

## BRADLEY BURCH

### *Where Is the Humor?*

September 21, 1944

Have the readers in the United States ever wondered why there have been no humorous articles about their men in troopships? They have read funny stories about American soldiers everywhere else, a G. I. encountering a sacred cow in India, a kid from Brooklyn being kissed by a French girl, the invasion of Yankee bluntness into England, Ernie Pyle telling about the New Yorker and the fellow from Arkansas splitting a can of Spam with him in a Normandy café. This is the spirit of fun, calming nerves, and making the most of unbloody moments, reassuring the folks back home that they haven't forgotten how to laugh. But somehow they seem to have forgotten, when they are on a ship going to the places where the stories come from.

There is a tenseness on a ship filled with soldiers. A soldier is used to being crowded out, shoved around, squeezed into corners. But he can never really become used to waiting, because even if it is just a food line or a latrine line, it becomes more than the

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few minutes, the half hours. It becomes the waiting out of the whole war, the whole thing, with the uncertain and distant return home only vaguely visible through the sadness and confusion of being alone with a thousand men.

And this is a troopship. Seven days, or twenty days, or forty days, of waiting. Waiting for breakfast before the blackout regulations are lifted in the morning. Waiting until noon on deck for the inspections below to end, so that you can go below and become stifling hot and run back to the sprawling mass on deck. Waiting for Charlie and Arnie and H. F. Brown to finish reading a pocket book, so you can read it and pass it on. Watching the flat sea bubble and foam away from the boat and miles out to the horizon.

"Sure they thought the darn thing was flat. Look at it. It's like a big plate of soup slopping off at the edges. The dopes thought it was flat because it *is* flat. Poor jerks. How could they know? Columbus was a great guy."

One of the crew of the ship, a scrawny greasy member of the crew of the great grey ship, climbs up a rope ladder towards the top of a great grey mast, with a pail of grey paint in his hand. He is going to paint over a rust spot in the mast. Then he will grease a bit of the snarl of cable stretching like tendons from its sides down to the deck. Everyone looks up. They watch him now, watch him intently as if this is the climax they have been waiting for, the height of their great adventure into nowhere. The member of the crew paints his rust spot and greases his cable and comes down the way he went up, with the little pail in his hand swinging like a potted geranium.

No, they think. That was not it. That was interesting, but that was not it. And they turn their necks level again, towards the sea, or towards a book, and continue waiting.

Where is the humor? Where is the laughter that the American soldier is so famous for? It's not on the deck. It's not below. Where is it? Maybe it is at that card game on the landing of the stairs at A Deck. Yes, of course. They are laughing at something now. The card game on A Deck is poker. There are dollar bills burning holes in pockets on the ship. Hour after hour they change hands and pockets, the cards come up in every combination in every player's hand, and a sudden bit of luck brings a spurt of laughter from a part time winner. Here is your laughter. Here it is, pure and simple. But you won't read of it in a magazine article by your all-seeing correspondent. What does it matter if a kid who never played before loses his whole pay? He wonders if he would have had the chance to spend it where he is going anyhow. He'll never play again, he says. Just wanted to get the feel of it, remembers how his Ma would slap his face if she knew, tells his buddy about his Ma, and they laugh.

There isn't much bitterness yet. There can't be much bitterness yet because the men haven't seen anything to make them bitter. This is just an adventure. "Don't sit home and wait for him. Be with him, sharing his greatest adventure now. Join the WAC and be a part of the things he is a part of." If the American soldier thought that he was really just entering an adventure, then maybe he would laugh his head off on a troopship.

"Who are they kidding? Adventure, hell. We know they need the women, just like they need every bit of effort to win the war. But why make such a

stink about it? Let them know what is their duty, and then shut up." Robert Brown spits into the Atlantic Ocean.

They're not telling funny stories. Not now. This is a bit of the gnarled tightness of war. It's just too crowded or too hot to think or talk or do anything but wait. They haven't seen real hardship yet, but don't hold that against them. They are holding up under a new strain on the ships that will take them to the places where they will get their share of the hardships. When they get there, they will have their humor again, but not now. It's too crowded. Wait a little. Everybody wait. It's easy, once you get the place that itched all scratched, and get over the idea that there is anything amusing on a troopship.

## BRADLEY BURCH

### *Eve of Battle*

October 27, 1944

I have been assigned to an outfit, as a rifleman. I knew it would be that, though I had hoped a million things. But I am an infantryman and my outfit is in combat now; I will join the first battalion when they come back to the rest area. It's Company C again. Maybe there will be a sergeant as dear (groan) to me as Sergeant Culva was.

For quite a while I wondered whether or not I should tell you that I am in combat now. But, darling, if I didn't tell you, I should be stopped cold in writing. This way you will know that when I say the going is rough it will mean just that, and when I say I am resting and have a break and everything is okay, then you will know it is true. I thought you'd like it better that way than if I talked about French peasants until they came out of your ears.

Please do not worry. I will be all right. And by all right I mean capable of coming home and picking you up, and swinging you around and around.

"On my eve of battle" the kid writes home. This could be called that, but I am not calling it that. Because there are no names to describe this thing which is between us. It may not look it, but everything I do now has become a personal matter between us. The number of my division is secret, as well as my army and corps number. In a week or two I may be able to tell you so that you can know approximately where I am. My regiment is the 101st. They say it is a good regiment. They will say it is the best. I may think so myself, later.

There is a part of this war, a tiny part I guess, that is ours and that we understand. The rest of it is too big. I am not going to tell my parents that I am fighting, specifically. If you think they know, and they do not become too nervous about it, then tell me and I will know what to write home.

Please do not think about me when

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you are studying. You will be using the things you learn from school for a long time.

I sent a money order as I was leaving the last replacement area. I saved it. Twenty dollars, and maybe you could have some fun with it, like buying books you like, or lending it to someone who can't pay it back. I love you.

I got Jacky a pair of wooden shoes in a little village called Neufchateau, which I visited. Hope they're big enough.

Now I'm going to build a fire and heat my C ration for supper. Be good, wife.

# BRADLEY BURCH

## *Don't Leave Me Here*

November 3, 1944

When this war is over, we will read many stories about the men who fought at the German front. Some of them we will believe, but many of them will be pure tripe. Sometimes I wish that I could be able to tell a few of the stories as they really were, and then I know I will not be the one who will tell them. If only you could see some of it. There are so many things that may never be said, and should be.

On Broadway and 50th Street there is a penny arcade. In the center there is one game that Charles and I always spent our pennies on. Two dummy figures made of metal, standing in a ring. By working a handle in and out, you can make the dummies move and you can make them hit each other with their fists. When one is hit just right, he falls backwards and the other is left standing, and wins.

But a war is fought with a man's delicate flesh which is susceptible to a pin prick and infection, and a man's mind which is susceptible to thoughts of fear and pain and fury. Against these intricacies are thrown such powerful metals and explosives that the only way a human body can compete with them is to be present in reserve in even more overwhelming numbers. It is complete inequality.

So why couldn't they operate metal robots with wires and radios and sensitized metallic skins, against each other until one is knocked down and the other is left standing. There's no reason why the more ingenious brains behind the robots shouldn't be able to win through to a satisfying end.

But it couldn't be done. And the reason is only that what wins a war is the amount of suffering and torture the bodies and minds of the men who are fighting can stand.

So the men lie under the surface of the ground while the metal tears over their heads, and into the mud and rock. They lie in the earth for protection, they stink, they sweat, they shiver. They defecate in their helmets and cover it with soil, they quake with fear, they are enraged to heroism and to death, they eat and smoke and attack—fling their

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fear before them up a hill and attack in the slippery wetness of earth and men. They attack, and they lie down again, and dig in . . .

And the almighty god, the man of stone behind them, fights his fight in the same way. Only with him the discomfort is all mental. He thinks "How many men did I lose? How many men are weakening? Where is my next hill? What will be my enemy's next move? How soon will I win?" It is hard for everyone.

And the thing that puts it into a story, is a boy hurt, shouting "Don't leave me here!"

You will read stories with that title. It could be used as a battlecry or as an epitaph. It is everything. Don't leave me here to wait, to die, to be alone, to be away. Don't leave me here.

* * *

WAR DEPARTMENT
TELEGRAM

MRS CLAIRE BURCH
1048-75 ST BROOKLYN NY
REGRET TO INFORM YOU YOUR HUSBAND WAS SERIOUSLY WOUNDED IN ACTION IN FRANCE ELEVEN NOVEMBER UNTIL NEW ADDRESS IS RECEIVED ADDRESS MAIL FOR HIM QUOTE PRIVATE BRADLEY A BURCH SERIAL NUMBER (HOSPITALIZED) CENTRAL POSTAL DIRECTORY APO 640 CARE POSTMASTER NEW YORK UNQUOTE YOU WILL BE ADVISED AS REPORTS OF CONDITION ARE RECEIVED

WITSELL ACTING THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

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# BRADLEY BURCH

## *Glory Is a Word for Kings*

March 13, 1945

I want to have nothing to do with significant days of our generation. I do not want to be even a small part of the things that will become history for our children to read and study. Because I know now that the recorders of history do not know how to record the truth. The truth is always too hard to understand. Glory is a word for kings, and kings have no place in the world I understand. We have lost this war, in all truth. We lost it when we lost our first soldier in our first battle and we have been struggling to redeem ourselves ever since. And if I rejoice when it is over, it will be because I have waited so long. I am no different from anyone else here in wanting what I already have. So much and so beautiful.

Bitterness is inevitable when such an over-all wrong is run with the efficiency and power that our greatest men have to give. Money becomes meaningless, the dollar too small a unit. Reward does not exist. Only what we feel exists. We are uninterested in staggering figures or in the magazine articles that tell all about how General so-and-so said, "It's impossible, but we'll do it."

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Why should even language become incongruous? Does it make good reading to subtly exaggerate?

Things become so basic to a soldier in action that he strips himself completely of all hampering civilized accumulations, and goes about like an instinctive animal, to remain alive. Sometimes if he stops thinking, it is better for his ability to exist. The will for living is strong. It will do clever things for the body, necessary things. Perhaps once in a person's life he should react completely with his body, instead of with his mind. Perhaps it is a good lesson, that is if lessons will mean anything in helping him to understand why truth is truth.

I say truth, which is a word. It is too big. I only mean that it becomes more and more difficult for a person to be fooled once he has experienced basic existence.

I am neither tying myself in knots nor spouting meaningless nonsense. This is coming out of me from the base of my brain, clear and calm, so that I hardly know I am writing.

Love is a stronger instinct than life. Without something to love, there is no real life. And I not only have something, but a warm tangible beautiful thing to love. I love you, Claire. That is why I will continue, because it is stronger than the earth's hardest piece of steel.

Could it be that veterans are pretty well soured because they have become too hard to feel, and yet they are still trying to be fooled by the same old Camel ads? When a German soldier after the last war wrote *The Road Back* he was trying to bring together the people who were groping on both sides to understand each other again. And it's not impossible to do, to understand that way.

You and I never had the problem at all, and will never have it. Maybe that is why I will not be soured. We are so much of one person that we never needed words to understand. But since we do see what there is to see, couldn't we explain it understandably to people who do not? All it needs is to make people happy by really being happy about something real.

So that we won't write a book called *The Road Back* or one called *All Quiet on the Western Front* . . .

It is strange to realize, darling, that there are periods as long as a half hour when it is as quiet as a library on the western front right now. Many times we have looked up at the quietness thinking, is the war over? How long will it take for them to get the word to us from Supreme Headquarters? And then we hear the noises again and we sigh back into the attitude that makes us go on every day; without hoping in our minds what we know is in our hearts, without ever making the type of jokes that end with "April Fool," without the too trying reactions of human beings used to shock (for shock is our breakfast and our supper and our afternoon tea), and without forgetting that it *will* end, but not tomorrow. There is no creed and there are no slogans. There are no cowards and every man is afraid. There are many heroes but only a few are recognized. There are thoughts of what is good, and this is not it. And we never argue or quibble or fight among ourselves unless we are drunk. And we are never drunk unless we drink to blot out the sight of blood that was shed to capture the winery. . . .

# HAROLD UREY

## *Bomb Control Not Impossible*

Columbia University
November 19, 1945

To the NEW YORK *Herald Tribune:*

All attempts to analyze dispassionately the situation created by the advent of the atomic bomb lead to the conclusion that without international control of nuclear explosives the world will find itself engaged in a desperate armament race, whose probable outcome will be an all-destructive atomic war. Because of the advantages which atomic bombs will bestow upon a ruthless aggressor and because of the vulnerability of the large industrial centers in the United States to an atomic bomb attack, our country has a particularly great interest in the establishment of controls which would prevent all nations from accumulating stocks of atomic bombs.

In absence of world government, is an effective international control of atomic explosives at all possible? It has been suggested that the scientists of the world band together and exercise this control independently of their governments. I do not believe this possible. Scientists are good citizens, loyal to their countries. Rather, the task lies squarely on the shoulders of the responsible political leaders of the world.

* * *

What I suggest to these political leaders as the best possible solution is the agreement between all countries that no individual nation should produce or stock atomic bombs, and the creation of an international control board—perhaps under the auspices of the United Nations Security Council—to supervise the observance of the agreement. This international control board should include scientists and employ scientifically trained inspectors representing all nations.

Is a simple method for regular supervision of the production of nuclear explosives feasible? The answer is yes. Since (at present, at least) all atomic explosives originate in uranium, international supervision of uranium mining could provide a sufficient basis for control of all such explosives. Uranium mining could be concentrated in a few mines administered or supervised by the international control board.

The uranium obtained in this manner could be allocated to individual countries for research purposes. The quantities would be so small as to make large-scale military use impossible; if larger quantities were to be allocated for peace-time power purposes, strict accounting could be required over all movements of the allocated materials.

* * *

Agents of the international board could then easily keep a complete up-to-date inventory of the nuclear explosives in every country. The preparation and checking of such an inventory, I believe, will not strongly interfere with the economic sovereignty of the individual nations, since the checks will extend only

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to a small number of laboratories or industrial plants registered as legitimate users of fissionable materials.

Obviously this system can be expected to work efficiently only if agreed upon by all nations wholeheartedly and without mental reservation. Despite the tenseness of the international situation and the deep mistrust existing at present between various nations, the presumption of universal goodwill in this particular undertaking is not unrealistic. There can be no doubt that each nation in the world, whatever its political system may be, shudders at the prospect of total destruction of its cities in a future atomic war and is genuinely interested in the elimination of this threat.

* * *

The danger to peace lies not so much in a nation making deliberate preparations for world conquest by atomic weapons, as in all nations drifting toward an atomic war which nobody wants, in the wake of an armament race. It is therefore not at all unlikely that all nations will be genuinely eager to make the controls work and that their establishment will bring considerable relief of international tension.

On the other hand, it is obviously impossible to eliminate all suspicions of evasion, even if the international mechanism of supervised mining, allocation and inventory of atomic explosives begins functioning in an atmosphere of goodwill. Therefore the international control board will have to be equipped with the power to conduct inspections at various industrial and scientific key points in any country.

Numerous such points exist, and the larger the number and variety of checks and surveys, the smaller will be the probability of successful evasion. These industrial and laboratory checks could be applied to essential production materials, to installations of certain types and to key scientific or engineering personnel. Investigation of suspicious mining activities could certainly bring to light any "illicit" uranium mining and heavy production of other materials used in atomic-bomb development, graphite, for example, would also call for an immediate investigation.

The same could be done with certain types of instruments (radiation detectors, for example) and machinery whose large-scale production is required only for atomic explosive plants—provided inspectors are guaranteed the right to travel freely and to enter any suspicious building. The same freedom should also be granted in connection with research laboratories.

* * *

Finally, checks can be made on the activities of individuals known to be experts in the field. During the war the most obvious indication of our atomic bomb development was the disappearance of key scientists in the field from their peace-time laboratories.

The impression which has been created in the public mind that our entire development was a secret to everybody in the world except a few top scientists and military leaders should be corrected. Actually, all scientists in the country and throughout the world knew that all the major belligerents were working feverishly on the release of atomic power for military purposes. Any intelligent spy could find out the magnitude of our experimental developments.

For this information he merely would have to consult an official government

publication — the Metals Year Book, which stated in its 1943 edition that practically all uranium imported into or produced in the United States was being used for secret atomic power research. And by observing some of our campuses and following some of our prominent scientists, he could easily have put his finger on the exact location of our main experimental laboratories.

Let me emphasize that no scientific "secret" exists as to the production of the present atomic bombs. The fundamental discoveries have all been published in the 1939 and 1940 scientific journals all over the world. New fundamental discoveries, however, are certain to be made—uranium might well cease to be the only source of atomic power—and unless freedom of inspection and free exchange of information among scientists of the world is guaranteed there will be no certainty that the established controls will remain sufficient.

Therefore, the right of all scientists to publish freely the results of their investigations should be an essential part of the international control agreement.

* * *

Undoubtedly, no single or combined method of checks can provide complete safety against evasion. No police force has as yet succeeded in making all crime in a city impossible. However, well organized police can make crime unprofitable—by making the probability of detection and punishment too high. Similarly, a well organized system of checks can make the probability of discovery high enough to discourage any nation from attempting to evade the controls. Even with a 50 per cent probability of detection, no nation will be likely to embark on a program of clandestine production of atomic bombs because the consequences of discovery will be too dangerous. For compelling reasons of self-preservation, other nations cannot and will not tolerate such an evasion in the same way as they tolerated the manifest violations by Germany of the disarmament clauses after World War I.

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# NORBERT WIENER

## *A Scientist Rebels*

(The letter which follows was addressed by one of our ranking mathematicians to a research scientist of a great aircraft corporation, who had asked him for the technical account of a certain line of research he had conducted in the war.) [Editor of the *Atlantic.*]

*Sir:*

I have received from you a note in which you state that you are engaged in a project concerning controlled missiles, and in which you request a copy of a paper which I wrote for the National Defense Research Committee during the war.

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As the paper is the property of a government organization, you are of course at complete liberty to turn to that government organization for such information as I could give you. If it is out of print as you say, and they desire to make it available to you, there are doubtless proper avenues of approach to them.

When, however, you turn to me for information concerning controlled missiles, there are several considerations which determine my reply. In the past, the comity of scholars has made it a custom to furnish scientific information to any person seriously seeking it. However, we must face these facts: The policy of the government itself during and after the war, say in the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, has made it clear that to provide scientific information is not a necessarily innocent act, and may entail the gravest consequences. One therefore cannot escape reconsidering the established custom of the scientist to give information to every person who may inquire of him. The interchange of ideas which is one of the great traditions of science must of course receive certain limitations when the scientist becomes an arbiter of life and death.

For the sake, however, of the scientist and the public, these limitations should be as intelligent as possible. The measures taken during the war by our military agencies, in restricting the free intercourse among scientists on related projects or even on the same project, have gone so far that it is clear that if continued in time of peace this policy will lead to the total irresponsibility of the scientist, and ultimately to the death of science. Both of these are disastrous for our civilization, and entail grave and immediate peril for the public.

I realize, of course, that I am acting as the censor of my own ideas, and it may sound arbitrary, but I will not accept a censorship in which I do not participate. The experience of the scientists who have worked on the atomic bomb has indicated that in any investigation of this kind the scientist ends by putting unlimited powers in the hands of the people whom he is least inclined to trust with their use. It is perfectly clear also that to disseminate information about a weapon in the present state of our civilization is to make it practically certain that that weapon will be used. In that respect the controlled missile represents the still imperfect supplement to the atom bomb and to bacterial warfare.

The practical use of guided missiles can only be to kill foreign civilians indiscriminately, and they furnish no protection whatsoever to civilians in this country. I cannot conceive a situation in which such weapons can produce any effect other than extending the kamikaze way of fighting to whole nations. Their possession can do nothing but endanger us by encouraging the tragic insolence of the military mind.

If therefore I do not desire to participate in the bombing or poisoning of defenseless peoples—and I most certainly do not—I must take a serious responsibility as to those to whom I disclose my scientific ideas. Since it is obvious that with sufficient effort you can obtain my material, even though it is out of print, I can only protest *pro forma* in refusing to give you any information concerning my past work. However, I rejoice at the fact that my material is not readily available, inasmuch as it gives me the opportunity to raise this serious moral issue. I do not expect to publish any future work of mine which may do damage in the hands of irresponsible militarists.

I am taking the liberty of calling this

letter to the attention of other people in scientific work. I believe it is only proper that they should know of it in order to make their own independent decisions, if similar situations should confront them.

Norbert Wiener
1947

# SIR OSBERT SITWELL

## *A Letter to My Son*

*My Dear Boy:—*

One thing at any rate we share in common—an uncommon laziness. We both of us, I know, hate writing letters —especially long letters. You will, therefore, when you receive this, and count its pages, at once comprehend how much energy it required for me to take the decision and make the effort to overcome in this single instance that mutual diffidence upon which, I fully realize, a sound father-and-son relationship must rest. But some apology from me is surely due to you for the condition of the world in which you find yourself—more especially because, before you were born, I foresaw the probability that the present conflict would ensue.

And, above all, I feel that you should know what I *really* think upon a number of matters, for, when we meet, the joy of discussing family affairs, and what we have each of us been seeing and doing, is likely to banish talk of more serious things, even if our relationship did not make us dubious of approaching too near to them. It is true, of course, that being a generation older I can give you little direct help in your career, but, since we are both artists—and here I may pause to congratulate myself, for I expected a butcher, a house-agent, a general, as a son, but never another writer—I can, nevertheless, tell you, out of a long, tedious, and at the same time enlivening experience, how to save yourself trouble in pursuit of your goal. Because it is vital to both of us that we should realize that the war is only the Great Interruption, and that your career *must* continue.

The last war—the First War to End Wars—broke out when I was twenty-one; the present war—the Sequel—when you were twenty. Formerly there were only the ordeals of the private and public school to be endured—concentration camps that were certainly vile enough (there I have seen bullying —and in one instance upon a Jew—which would have taxed the ingenuity of German storm-troopers). But the men of your generation have never for a moment been free; and unless you conquer in the battle for the hours, there will be no liberty left. The embryonic writer of after-the-war will have, not only the schoolmaster and the captain of the games, as you say, for his enemies, but the drill sergeant, the gym instructor, the leader of the fire squad, the civil defense expert, the inspirer of the youth movement, and afterwards, when

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he grows up, the official of the Labor Exchange and the shop steward, as well as the politician and the critic.

Such an existence is death to the artist; because, to be able to work at his best, it is necessary for him to have an endless vista of hours and days, within the space of which he can write or paint without any interruption except those which are casual or that he makes for himself. But the modern development of "healthy citizenship," as it is called, under which every man is obliged to take a hand to repel the attacks from land, sea, and air brought upon him by his incompetence as a voter, sterilizes all talent. To be able to exist, you will have to give up twenty-two hours out of every twenty-four. Men are no longer wanted, but only numbers; a man today —and if you are not careful, tomorrow as well—is only valuable to the extent that he can supply man-hours—or ant-hours—of labor to the politicians, and at the end a death with which to crown their policy.

As an inducement to this kind of life and a reward for leading it, the voter, the little man, is flattered morning and evening by the press, and fawned upon by his slave-masters. He is told he is World Champion No. 1, that no one can compare with him. In each country he believes himself to be absolute lord. Moreover the mental food fed to him renders him unduly excitable in the realm of gross ideas, while, too, the people of every nation are profoundly xenophobic. These last facts, unless they can be modified through education (of which development there is no sign), make popular government in the present sense of that term impossible; but they also enable any government, however bad and incompetent, in every country, to achieve an easy and invariable popularity by abuse of foreign countries, or, in more rational cases, by a governessy upbraiding of them.

Hitler, for example, may not have truly represented his people in everything; but he does—and did—truly represent them when he denounced foreign nations. Alas, the feeling of innate racial superiority which inhabits the mind of the common man in every country, and is to be examined in its most blatant form in Nazi doctrines, equally must in every country be encouraged, in order to persuade him to consent willingly to the eventual loss of life and fortune. Yet "Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself" remains the only foundation stone of sound, peaceful relations with foreign countries.

Thus are men persuaded to yield money, career, freedom, health, life itself, to the boundless folly or iniquitous ambition of the demagogues, autocrats, and politicians—men who in England, during the last twenty years, have scarcely produced a leader. Churchill was the last, but by origin, as by ability, he was out of the ordinary run, half aristocrat, half American, and in no way derived from the middle classes who govern both here and in France, and who, by their lack of intuition and energy, except in the realm of finance, have proved so great a blight upon their countries.

It is only fair, however, to admit that where, as in Italy and Germany, the middle classes *have* yielded and the lower classes have taken over, the leaders who have arisen are, if less purely incompetent, far madder, more unbridled, violent with the violence of the turbulent mob from which they spring. Yet they are merely a reflection of those whose energies they sap and whose lives they ruin.

What can *our* politicians say in their own and our defense? They can say that here, as opposed to the enemy countries, all that has been done to render war probable was done by mistake, and not on purpose—but to an unprejudiced mind, does not this make their responsibility worse? The strangulation of your life, the chief calamity that involves every man and woman, befalls you because war is total. But remember, it is only total because the politicians have allowed it to be so. Indeed, whereas in former ages of barbarism the whole populations of whole countries were uprooted and enslaved *after* a war by a victorious foe, now every government uproots and enslaves its own people *during* a war. Only thus can a country survive in total war. This is total war. It is therefore the chief job of your generation to see that the kind of men who deceived themselves and us, and led us into total war, shall never again be returned to Parliament.

If, in states vowed to death and to fights without a finish, the lot of every man is, of course, hard, that of the artist is especially abominable. Here, unless some special status is allowed him, it will mean, in fact, that he becomes a helot. Had Mozart been a modern Englishman—or, for that, a modern Austrian—he would have spent the last four years training to fight, fighting, or engaged in forced labor; and since he died at thirty-six, this would have constituted a large slice of his art life. Conceive the loss to the world had conscription been in force! Imagine, too, how greatly a modern government would relish wasting several years of Shelley's brief span by making him a fireman, or enjoy sending Keats, with his weak lungs, upon a gas course.

Yet our governors are humane; they prefer muzzling an artist to his downright destruction. "Give the creature a safe job; make him write what *we* like." Can you imagine Shelley or Blake at a desk in the Ministry of Information, or Byron flitting in and out of the studios of the BBC? You are, alas, destined to live in an age in which no painter will be supplied with paints without a permit from the Director of the National Gallery, no writer with paper save by grace of the Paper Controller. For, in a democracy, the artist, first smeared with his own honey, is then staked down upon the ant heap. In the end, however, the artist and the thinker win. Even starvation cannot prevail against them: it has been tried before. Nevertheless, for your own sake, think the matter out, sum up your position.

It is wise not to underrate the difficulties, the cruel difficulties, before you. It will be harder for you than ever it was for your father. The true artist has always had to fight, but it is, and will be, a more ferocious struggle for you, and the artists of your generation, than ever before. The workingman, this time, will be better looked after—he will be flattered by the press and bribed with Beveridge schemes—because he possesses a plurality of votes. But who will care for you or your fate? Who will trouble to defend the cause of the young writer, painter, sculptor, musician? And what inspiration will you be offered when theater, ballet, concert hall lie in ruins and, owing to the break in training, there are no great executant artists for several decades?

Above all, do not underestimate the amount and intensity of the genuine ill-will that people will feel for you; not the workingman, for though not highly educated he has a mild respect for the

arts and no preconceived notions; not the few remaining patricians; but the vast army between them, the fat middle classes and the little men. And here I must first make special mention of the civil servant as enemy. Throughout your career your liveliness will provoke his particular attention, and so you will suffer the continued passive obstruction that his resistant softness opposes to the will of the artist, towards whom he bears an inborn loathing. He envies the artist's liberty of disposition and path of enjoyment, although officially he rates the gummy persistence of the limpet above all other virtues, above the wind-swift speeding of the greyhound or any species of conscious thought.

At best, you will be ground down between the small but powerful authoritarian minority of art directors, museum racketeers, the chic, giggling modistes who write on art and literature, publishers, journalists, and dons (who will, to do them justice, try to help you, if you will write as they tell you), and the enormous remainder, who would not mind—who would indeed be pleased—if they saw you starve.

For we English are unique in that, albeit an art-producing nation, we are not an art-loving one. In the past the arts depended on a small number of very rich patrons. The enclave they formed has never been re-established. The very name "art lover" stinks. The small army of art lovers that still exist, trailing round the smashed and empty galleries, belongs to the Victorian Age. When it moves, the rattle of camphor balls sounds like a rain of bullets in the echoing scagliola halls of houses thrown open to members of the art-loving congregations. Decrepit it may be, but it still retains its power to injure. It cares only for old masters, and you will be surprised at the vigor and satisfaction with which it will always trample on the new.

The privileges you hold today, then, as an artist, are those of Ishmael: the hand of every man is against you. Remember, therefore, that outcasts must never be afraid, and that to a writer courage should, before physical courage, signify moral courage—during wars a quality often at a discount, whatever the packs of journalists may bleat to the contrary. As an artist, the only crimes you can commit are to fail to support and uphold your peers, to agree in your heart with the herd, and, above all, to be *afraid* of ideas, *afraid* of beauty. You must never take heed for the morrow, never be afraid of the morning, for you have no more to lose than you brought with you.

Yet cultivate guile; be not, as I have been, too outspoken. Invent several manners and try them on those who like them. Consider everything upon its merits, for you need not give your own conclusions until tempers are cooler—and heads, I may add, clearer. When I was a boy of your age, in the Brigade of Guards before the last war, we young officers were taught never to argue with a drunken man. See him the next day, and interrogate him then. Similarly I counsel *you* never to argue; join in, and after the hysteria has vanished, remember to administer splashes of cold water over a long period against a recurrence. (For there will be a morning after.) But, in whatever fashion you may act, do not appear "cynical"; Swift and Pope and Shaw were "cynical," and it lessened their authority.

On the contrary, join in, as I say; accept the situation and rejoice. We live

in an age of world-wide hysteria—and not without reason—when not to believe as many atrocity stories as your neighbor believes, puts you not only in danger of hell-fire, but, if he has his way, exposes you to the rigors of persecution. You would rank as a heretic, as one who refuses to place credence in the Thirty-nine Articles, or who, by declining to take part in a witch hunt, numbers himself openly among the witches.

No, adopt the homeopathic system, but prescribe large doses. Be inventive. Use your creative gift. Pretend to believe and then go one better. Enjoy yourself. Sicken them with the blatant nonsense you pour out. Tell them you know their stories are true, and repeat everything you have ever heard in the same line, however improbable. Pile it on, until *they* begin to argue against *you*. *Insist* on believing everything with a firmer belief than they do; go a hundred times better. Whenever the crowd mentions Italians, shout "Wops!" "Dagos!" "Ice-creamers!" It may prove difficult for you, since you lived in Italy as a child, but you must persist. Tell them that Raphael, Michelangelo and Leonardo, Titian and Veronese, were all really Englishmen with American mothers; and declare that Noel Coward is worth all Dante. (Point out that Dante never wrote the music for his "lyrics.")

But, at the end of all this, when a reaction has set in, you must let them know this much of the truth: that you abhor brutality, from wherever it comes, and whether shown to Jew or Christian, and that you know, and have long known, the Germans to be a brutal race; that you had been brought up to believe it, even at the time people were praising them, saying they preferred them to the French, and that "they are just like us." (What a curious, recurrent, dangerous hallucination is that!) Otherwise, unless you emphasize this idea, you will leave them in the right to the point that their hysteria may have arisen from a hatred of oppression.

When you have satiated and disgusted them with your atrocity stories, agree with them that *perhaps* they *are* right not to believe everything they are told. And add, quickly, before leaving them, that perhaps the ability *not* to be taken in by superstitions, not to bow the knee to Mumbo-Jumbo, whether in West Africa or South Kensington, whether outside a kraal or a town hall decorated with flags, may be, after all, the test of a civilized man. Remember, for your own comfort, that you are only exaggerating for the sake of moderation; because you must ever pursue the golden mean, the most difficult of all ideals for the artist, with the clashes inherent in his temperament and his need for expression, to follow.

And after the war, for it will end one day,—when a silly woman once asked Chekov, apropos of some contemporary fracas, "How do *you* think the war will end?" he replied, after some thought, "In peace, I should say,"—after the war, then, when we may relapse to easy ways, it will become your duty once more to remind people of the brutality of the German race. For, no doubt, we shall revert to type. The hysteria will pass, for we are not, like the Germans, a feminine, emotional race, but a tolerant, masculine-minded people, who can only be worked up by outrageous events and the wickedness of the press.

You must do more, however, than recall the nature of the Germans, in case we forget it: for that would be a purely negative contribution. You must har-

ness your vivid sense of fantasy to the cause of reality. Be practical—practical in the way the Chinese were when they used to recruit their prostitutes from among the blind. You realize, I know, that a certain proportion of Germans are born into the world with an especial love of fighting, and you must see that they get it, before they can inflict their will, first upon the stupid and slavish majority of their own countrymen, and then upon the world.

Ask yourself what can be done to obtain the correct solution: namely, to kill off this ruffianly minority at regular intervals, and before it attains power, and if possible to satisfy its deep urge to kill and be killed in such a manner as to enable it gradually to feel a certain self-respect. Thus, though you cannot cure snakes of their bite, you can deprive them of their venom and, by manufacturing a serum from it, use it for the good of humanity, as a cure for certain diseases.

Now the solution that I propose, and recommend to you most seriously, is derived from the instinctive and traditional treatment of the same problem in other epochs, and I believe it would prove successful and at the same time solve another and even more acute difficulty. During the eighteenth century, the British people had little trouble from the Germans, because they hired German troops to fight their battles, and so procured the death of the most naturally ferocious of the German race. (Indeed, because these were slaughtered in this fashion, the leftover German, with his beer and pipe and dirty mustache, became the very emblem of peace.) Unfortunately in the nineteenth century the idea spread that it was immoral to obtain the death in battle on your behalf of any but your own people—and soon, in consequence, Germany was unleashing her hordes of trained killers upon France.

The League of Nations failed because it possessed no armed force to back up its authority. Well, then, restore the League and recruit the army necessary for the enforcement of its laws from among the German people. Those who love fighting will volunteer, and, by being made to serve an ideal, and at the same time a useful purpose, the tone of them will gradually be raised; they will feel that the future of civilization depends on them, and will respond. The fact of being dressed in a uniform will quiet many of them. And, of course, we must see to it that they are, in the interests of the whole world, decimated every few years in border clashes and in fracases in Thibet and Central Africa. This is the sole solution that will de-totalize war: for within a generation all the Germans who would most *like* war will have been given a taste of it, have become its victims without involving the rest of their race and the rest of the five continents.

The worst of conscription is that, unlike the system adumbrated above, it involves and kills off those who hate war as much as those who love it. For this reason, and also because I think that, in spite of the efforts of envenomed fanatics who find in these tragic years their happy hour, we shall return to the purely English methods of life that we have through the centuries evolved, I find it difficult to believe that we shall continue to enforce conscription forever after the war. Directly a war—for which we are always unprepared—descends upon us, the nation demands compulsion as a measure of sacrifice, equivalent to lethal dust and ashes; we do not examine whether it is judicious.

Yet conscription should never be more than a matter of convenience or its reverse; it should never be a question of religious principle or a measure of self-immolation.

And it is doubtful whether military conscription has ever suited this country, with its tremendous naval tradition and its industrial power; it is doubtful, indeed, how far it has helped any country, for it only enables the old, pre-the-last-war militarism to continue until the next outbreak. In France, it was in force up till 1870; after that Germany adopted it for the whole Reich, and was defeated in 1914. Then France and England forbade Germany to have a conscripted army, and the French was the largest and, by old standards, "the best in the world"—as *all* our politicians reiterated. The result was that, after the German Army had been reconstituted by Hitler, the French were defeated.

The two greatest and most successful military organizations of modern times, Russian and German, have been built up *since* the last war, and after a clean sweep. A triumphant nation should always celebrate peace by the destruction of the War Office—then, at the right time, and if our politicians *must* continue to make us these presents of wars, a suitable organization and army could take shape.

The Englishman, when of sound mind, recognizes the truth of these facts by instinct, more fully than would a Continental; he recognizes the wickedness and, above all, the folly of megalomaniac conceptions. He wants no youth movements, no Balillas and black-handed gangs of tub-thumping tots and thugs in miniature, no great organizations to cripple and pervert the minds of the young. And if, during real peace, an English government proposes to continue conscription, then the English people, unless they have altered their character, will tell it to go.

You asked me, when I last saw you, what were my politics, and I find it a question difficult, even now, to answer. I belong to the balance of the body politic, and have at one moment felt, and acted, in one mood; at another, in another. I believe in trying to achieve the fullest liberty for the individual within the bounds of human and political conscience.

With the late D. H. Lawrence, it is my opinion that, where finance and economics are concerned, it is man's chief misfortune that at present those who are most active and eager in these fields,—that is, in the pursuit of money or in planning to take it away,—and whose ideas are therefore the most likely to prevail, unless we can marshal the disinterested, are the most unpleasant, the most material-minded, of all men—either the most greedy, the most anxious to exploit their fellows, or the most dry, kill-joy doctrinaires.

In any case, money is a convenience we have ourselves created for our own use, not a god or a religion. And it should remain so—that is to say, money is made to be spent. But so long as the money world is ruled by the beaked and bloated tribes of the great capitalists, whose fortunes must be considered as a kind of elephantiasis, or threatened by the dour, sour looks of our old enemies, the Puritans, what can you expect?

I should not like to see—though no doubt I shall—hereditary wealth abolished. Today men seem afraid to defend it. American ideas of ant labor prevail. But, in all truth, the only kind of wealth worth having is the kind you

do not earn: it is unassociated with the mean and slavish virtue of thrift. You have time to learn how to spend your money, and time in which to spend it. Obversely, I should like to see the possession and privileges of inherited wealth extended universally.

To abolish hereditary possessions today, instead of insisting on them for everyone, would be equivalent to the action of the Elizabethans, had they decreed the abolition of glass in all windows, because it was only to be found in the houses of the rich, and had thereby prevented its use from becoming general. Samuel Butler maintained, in *The Way of All Flesh* and in his *Notebooks,* that one day it would be as anomalous to be born without an annual income attached to you of three or four hundred, to come to you when you had reached the age of twenty-five or so years, as it is today to be born without arms or legs. Evolution should provide each of us with a fortune, as with a face. I think he was right.

I was told lately, by an American who had been in Paris at the time the Germans entered that city, that German officers could be seen sitting in the fashionable teashops, gnawing huge lumps of butter, or sometimes with twenty or thirty cakes piled on the plate in front of them; this was, of course, the ugly result of underfeeding. A gross fortune is, similarly, the result—and as indecent a result—of poverty, the most degrading of human afflictions. But the stupidity and financial fecklessness of successive governments in Britain have at least accomplished this much, that we can say that any man who today sets out to make a great fortune must be either a great fool or a great philanthropist—and, if he succeeds, a great knave; for he pays 19s. 6d. in the pound as income tax, and at least two thirds of his possessions must go to the state when he dies.

For though governments in the past feared to overtax the people they ruled, or pretended to represent, they have now made what must be to them a most joyful discovery; that, so long as overtaxing arises through sheer muddle, lack of foresight, and incompetence, and not through intention, they can squander the national income up to any limit (and this is of benefit to them—at least indirectly—by increasing their importance). If, that is to say, they take your money, not because they believe in doing so, not because they are advocates of socialism, but because, on the contrary, having continually opposed it, they yet have floundered, of their own accord, into a position so tragic and untenable that socialism becomes their sole chance of rescue, nothing else remains to be done except to cling to an expedient in which they have no faith. But you and I would surely, even though we are not socialists, prefer to live in a state that was socialist by principle rather than by virtue of the amazing ineptitude of its politicians.

Yet it is not, perhaps, for a writer to complain. If an artist, it is scarcely probable that he will make a great fortune in a capitalist state, though it is true that he occupies, at any rate financially, a special place in it. For one thing, the proceeds of a book, which may have taken him five years to write, are liable to income tax and supertax—though a great portion of the money should surely be regarded as capital; for another, it has long been recognized that a writer's particular form of property, the copyright of the books he has created, is on a different footing from all other property, is not inalienable, and should, in fact, be snatched from his

family or heirs as soon as this can be accomplished without an appearance of indecent haste.

So much for the writer's financial status. What the artist should do for his own sake, I think, is not to advocate that money be taken away from its present owners, but to support a policy which will undermine its attraction for the material-minded by diminishing the value they can set upon it. Rationing, for example, already accomplishes this. It soon becomes plain that there is little object in making too much money, if there is little or nothing to buy with it. Confine the rich to the pastures of a restricted Fortnum & Mason's. Advocate heavy permanent taxes on jewelry and old masters and decorative objects, and then you will be able to say to the rich, in the continual effort you make to educate those of them who need it, "Look! Modern pictures and books remain; their value *may* increase, while that of investments is bound to sink." Plug that over, every time.

Money, though, is not so important to you as liberty; I recur to that. You must carry out a continual campaign against civil servants, dons, masters of hounds, schoolmasters, professional football players, and all friends of national sclerosis everywhere. Use once again your sense of fantasy and of fun. Hit them where they least expect it.

If, for example, it should prove—which I do not believe—that the character of the English people has changed, should it develop that the young are to be enslaved, and the artists subjected to continual domination by pinheads, then charge the foe. If you find that it has been planned for the intelligent, the intellectual, above all, the creative and those who live for things of the spirit, to spend a large portion of their lives after the war in undergoing, one after another, courses in gas and bomb-throwing, then loudly, and on every occasion, you must demand in the name of Sacred English Fair Play that the Philistines who hate art and literature and love to handle and throw bombs and to fire guns and, generally, to be as noisy and destructive as possible, and to live with a continual BBC program from opening to close, should, as compensation, be obliged to suffer six-weeks-long compulsory courses in Dutch painting or Persian textiles, and to pass endurance tests in the Art Element in Chinese Caligraphy and in English Romantic Poetry.

Torn from their peacetime occupations of golf, darts, and reading the papers, they must be made, during these courses, to live under, for them, the most uncomfortable circumstances possible; they must be forced to sleep on planks, eighty in a hut (unless they show a liking for dormitory life, when they should be placed in the solitary confinement of a comfortable bedroom). No radio should be allowed in any hut or mess. At mealtimes, they must listen in silence to Beethoven quartets, and after dinner attend orchestral concerts of Mahler and Stravinsky. The examinations in Byzantine jewelry and Turkish tiles should be conducted to the appropriated music of the countries concerned. During the Netherlands School of Painting course, they should be taken by train, starting from London at midnight, to that flat part of East Anglia which somewhat resembles Holland in configuration, and there be made to lie for hours in a damp ditch, so as to observe the sun rise over the river from the correct angle. During the daytime they should be made to

adopt the proper physical attitudes of Teniers boors, one foot in the air, an arm extended, and later to dance in the same jolly and abandoned style.

The unsuccessful candidates for promotion, the recalcitrant and stubborn, could be ordered to take further courses in French Symbolist Poetry, as well as English Romantic, and be examined minutely on the works of Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Rimbaud. Those who showed any symptom of being refractory could even be commanded to attend a lecture on the latest art movement by Group-Dupe Herbert Read. But you should be humane as well as stern, and first aid should be ready on all occasions for the mind as well as the body.

I implore you to take what I say seriously, even when I put it in a form to amuse you. You are a cavalier by type, and not a roundhead, and you will need all the fun you can make for yourself and others, as well as all the fighting spirit you can muster, if you are, as I hope, to carry on a long one-man campaign against stupidity and priggishness wherever you see it. Never allow yourself to be discouraged, however hopeless at any one moment the struggle may appear.

I must end now, for my letter is long, and at present you have not much time for reading; but there still remain several subjects on which I must talk to you in my next letter. Take care of yourself.

Your affectionate father,

1945

# III. . .

# FAMILIAR ESSAY

# THOMAS DEKKER

## *Of Winter*

WINTER, the sworne enemie to summer, the friend to none but colliers and woodmongers: the frostbitten churl that hangs his nose still over the fire: the dog that bites fruits, and the devil that cuts down trees, the unconscionable binder up of vintners' faggots, and the only consumer of burnt sack and sugar: This cousin to Death, father to sickness, and brother to old age, shall not show his hoary bald-pate in this climate of ours (according to our usual computation) upon the twelfth day of December, at the first entering of the sun into the first minute of the sign Capricorn, when the said Sun shall be at his greatest south declination from the equinoctial line, and so forth, with much more such stuff than any mere Englishman can understand—no, my countrymen, never beat the bush so long to find out Winter, where he lies, like a beggar shivering with cold, but take these from me as certain and most infallible rules, know when Winter plums are ripe and ready to be gathered.

When Charity blows her nails and is ready to starve, yet not so much as a watchman will lend her a flap of his frieze gown to keep her warm: when tradesmen shut up shops, by reason their frozen-hearted creditors go about to nip them with beggary: when the price of sea-coal riseth, and the price of men's labour falleth: when every chimney casts out smoke, but scarce any door opens to cast so much as a maribone to a dog to gnaw; when beasts die for want of fodder in the field, and men are ready to famish for want of food in the city; when the first word that a wench speaks at your coming into the room in a morning is, "Prithee send for some faggots," and the best comfort a sawyer beats you withal is to say, "What will you give me?"; when gluttons blow their pottage to cool them; and Prentices blow their nails to heat them; and lastly when the Thames is covered over with ice and men's hearts caked over and crusted with cruelty: Then mayest thou or any man be bold to swear it is winter.

1603

# HAL BORLAND

## *February Winds*

From THE *New York Times*

THE winds of February clear the way for Windy March. They may huff and puff and bluster mightily, but they still can't muster the authority of a wind of late December or January. Their fang is dulled, somewhat, and they come late in the season. Either that or we are used to being buffeted and refuse to bow to anything less than a zero gale.

For the most part, though, a late February wind is more likely to fade away into a gusty precursor of March than to rise into a freezing snowstorm. And even should it bring snow, it will, like as not, turn around the next day and thaw the bottom out from under it.

In the woods, of course, the February winds whistle and scream and tug at the persistent oak leaves and whip dead branches from the ash trees. But that has been going on all winter long, and the cold creak of frozen branch on branch is lacking now. This is simply wind whooping through the valleys and over the ridges, boisterous wind whipping across the land.

It is tempered somewhat by the sun, which no longer scoots from southeast to southwest in nine hours, horizon to horizon, but rises nearer east and sets nearer west and remains in sight nearly eleven full hours. That extra span of sunlight takes the edge off the chill and lessens the depth to which the cold can drop through the night. Give us another month and we shall have a vernal equinox and we can look for crocuses. Hope, too, tempers the wind as February nears its end. March is just outside the door.

1946

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# HAL BORLAND

## *A Day in March*

From THE *New York Times*

GO FORTH on a spring day in March —more rare, by the way, than the proverbial day in June—and you can sense the cleanliness of change, a fresh integrity that stirs the human heart. Winter's drab debris may still litter the roadside and murk the valley stream, but the clean brightness of spring is close at hand. The ambering plumes of the weeping willow show it. Black

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birch catkins are all a-tassel. Grass tufts are green in the south-sloping bogs. And here in the dooryard daffodils are thrusting up their rounded tips, and white-veined crocus lancelets clasp tissue-sheathed buds.

Day sky and night sky are bright with the frank promise of new and better days ahead. The air has a new warmth to it, a friendliness that was not there in February. The wind seems to come from the Carolina valleys rather than the frozen hills of Canada.

If there is integrity in the soul of man surely spring is the time when it will reveal itself. He may fuss and fume and delude even himself all winter long, but come spring and he must face his own truth, if there is truth within him. He must know that there is a faith which transcends creed. He must believe in eternal things, the innate dignity of man and his capacity for understanding, the love of mother and child and the cord that binds them, the instinct of all sane men for right and justice.

And he must understand anew the flow of time, which renews itself, and the inevitability of change. Unnumbered times spring has come to this earth, and unnumbered times man has watched it come and known somehow that he was a better man for its return.

1946

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# ANONYMOUS

## *Voice of Spring*

From THE *Newark Evening News*

IT IS pleasant to believe that the first voice ever lifted on earth in praise of Spring was the voice of the peeper. Certainly the frogs and other amphibians, who came into existence after the silent fishes, were the first creatures to possess vocal powers. And perhaps among these ancient frogs the peepers were the first to greet the Spring, even as they are now.

Call him peeper, tree frog, hyla—his is the very voice of Spring. It rings from marshy hollows when the ice has barely gone; it vibrates in vast choruses through misty nights of March; it is as synonymous of Spring as pussy willows and red-winged blackbirds.

Every one knows the peeper's song, but few have ever seen the singer. He is so small that he can hide under a quarter-dollar, and he has the chameleon's ability to change color to match his surroundings. Normally a light brown, he can readily assume other shades of brown and gray. New Jersey's species has dark markings resembling a St. Andrew's cross on its back, hence its name, Hyla crucifer.

The resonant "pe-ep, pe-ep, pe-ep, pe-ep," sung while the throat is expanding like a large bubble, helps the frogs to find their mates. Eggs are laid in the water in April; in seven days they hatch into tadpoles, and in seven times seven

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days the tadpoles change into frogs. By June the borders of marshes are squirming with hordes of the little creatures, intent upon finding gnats, ants, mosquitoes. Usually they pass the Summer close to the ground, but can climb agilely, assisted by adhesive pads on toes and fingers. Singing ends in May, is resumed in early Fall.

The peeper is a steadfast fellow. He begins to sing of Spring when most of us can see only calendar indications of its approach. He sings until November robins are flown and even the witch hazel's flower is withered. Then he burrows into moss and leaves to sleep while snows are high, resting only until the first warm days of March tell him another Spring has come.

1946

# HAL BORLAND

## *Lilacs*

From THE *New York Times*

THE haunting fragrance of lilacs creeps across the countryside. Purple, and blue, and white, the generous blossoms are opening there in the dooryard, gleaming in the May sunlight and bowing gracefully in the cool May rain. And along the back fence they are opening, and beside the garden wall, and out along the country roads where farmhouses once stood but have long vanished, reminders of some countrywoman whose stone may be lilac-shaded in the near-by burying ground.

All across the land lilacs are perfuming the air, for we Americans took this beautiful shrub to our hearts long ago and have kept it there through the years. In this latitude it is practically symbolic of May. With the gentler fragrance of violets, the bold sweetness of the lilac might be called the breath of our springtime.

The lilac is said to have come originally from the north of Persia, and was first brought to Vienna, the story goes, late in the sixteenth century by Ferdinand I's Ambassador, Busbecq. From Vienna it spread throughout Europe and, eventually, to this side of the Atlantic. New England is full of lilacs, and when New Englanders went west they took lilac roots and cuttings with them. The lilac somehow spelled home, wherever they might stop and put down their own roots, and they would have memories of stone walls and rolling hills here beside the Atlantic each spring when lilacs came to bloom.

They bloom now, great heads of bloom nodding in the hesitant warmth of May, and long-remembered sweetness fills the air.

1946

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# HAL BORLAND

## *Green Hills*

From THE *New York Times*

THE sun stands far to the south these mid-June days, and gleams on the green hills of America, hills green with the grass and the field crops and the broad-leafed green of oak and elm and maple and cottonwood and live oak. Deep green and bright green, and the lush, thin-bladed green of pasture land. Greens not yet tired or dusty with summer, still fresh with growth and eager for the sun.

The early season of bloom is past. Fruit trees have settled down to the task of growing apples and plums and cherries and peaches, and the maple keys, which hung in red and orange tufts so recently, are spiraling down to replenish their own kind. Bush berries still bloom, but in the general picture they are pretty well lost in the green shadows that lie over the land.

The fields are lined with the green of young corn and matted with the young brightness of oats and rye and wheat and barley. There is a harvest in the making, on the hills of America, and the June sun and the June rains are putting their sustenance and strength into the upshooting grain. Look out across a thousand hills and you can see new life and new hope for a hungering world.

A thousand hills lie green in the sun, and you can start from this Atlantic seaboard and follow the sun across those hills nearly three thousand miles before you see and smell salt water again. So doing, you will see this America in its magnificent strength, the strength of the fields that know no horizon. Here it lies, in the beauty of June, hill upon hill, with the waters of the land flowing between and all the towns and cities clinging to the green hills whence comes their strength.

1946

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# HAL BORLAND

## *Live Waters*

From THE *New York Times*

SPRINGS are the live waters of this earth, full of cool sweetness and bubbling with the pent-up energy of elemental forces. They ooze or flow or gush from the stony hillsides, following an earth-fault to its open end and emerging to form a rivulet or a brook. They water the land, and the course of

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their flow is marked by the greenest green that grows. Brookside grass achieves a peculiar lushness, and a brookside meadow is something to look upon, particularly when the heat of summer has begun to crisp the springless hillsides.

Springs feed the rivers of the land and keep them flowing. Follow them to their beginnings and you climb to the source of the brooks. You come at last to the springs where the reservoirs of the earth dole out their waters. The snows, the glaciers and the periodic rains fill and flood the channels, but the steady flow is from those sweet earth-waters that wash the rocks and hesitate in leisurely pools before leaping down the hillsides toward the distant seas.

A spring marked a home site, in the days when man was making the land his own. Spring waters quenched his thirst and served his flocks and turned his mill, and in the valleys where springs turned brooks to streams there was good soil for his crops. He could contend with stones and stumps, but unless he had water, live water, he faced odds too great to master.

The springs still flow, and their waters are still sweet. The grass stands lush beside their pools, and in the evening there is still the song of live waters making their beneficent way to the sea.

1946

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# LORUS J. MILNE

## *The Water's Skin*

WHEN you sit by a pond or a winding stream, the city's hurry drains away, and from the corners of the mind thoughts come out and sun themselves. Before you on the water, bugs and beetles skip about. They stay afloat because the surface tension of the water acts as a skin, elastic and smooth, that prevents them from sinking.

Two kinds of air-breathing insects are the most familiar users of the water's skin. The shiny, black whirligig beetles zigzagging in groups on streams, ponds, and small lakes draw attention to themselves by their hurried movements. They fascinate the small boy standing dry-shod on the bank. He wants to catch one, but the beetles are safe from cupped hands as they dart and spin. If alarmed beyond their gyrating system of escape, the whirligigs tip their tail ends up to grasp a bubble of air as they dive to the bottom. There they swim around and later surface like a submarine, some distance off, their glossy backs shedding water. The front pair of their six legs are long and slender; the other four are short paddles which whip the insect through the water.

The whirligigs often climb out on floating logs or lily pads to bask in the sun, but are off into the surface film at the slightest movement within sight.

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The beetles have a water line, below which they are really wet. This line passes through their compound eyes, which are divided actually into two, the upper half for vision into air, the other for watching the water's depths. In winter the whirligigs crawl under fallen leaves along the banks or in near-by woods, and come out on warm spring days to seek their fellows on little pools or in quiet bays along the river. The female beetle lays her eggs on plants just above the water's surface; there they hatch into aquatic larvae, which hunt for smaller animals within the pond.

The other commonly seen inhabitants of the surface film are the water-striders, known in Texas as "Jesus bugs," in Canada as "skaters." These insects are suspended in the same way that a clean needle can be made to "float" on water in a tumbler. They rest their weight on the short front pair of legs and on the outer third of the long hind pair, and use their middle legs as oars to push themselves along. Their waxy-haired feet press the water surface downward without breaking the film, and form elongate dimples which support them. Actually they ride the water as a result of a combination of surface tension forces pulling upward in the slanting sides of the dimples, and of the buoyant force of water displaced from these depressions in the surface.

It is very striking to watch one of these insects cleaning its legs a pair at a time, rubbing them together in the same way that a housefly does. First it cleans the front pair, the body being held unusually high above the water on the remaining four legs. Next it rubs a middle leg against a front one, lying down on the opposite side to elevate the appendages being cleaned. Finally it cleans the back pair; its head is almost in the water, the chin pressing into the surface, and the middle legs are brought far back to allow the abdomen to be raised up as far as possible.

Toilet completed, antennae brushed, the insect rows forth alertly to seek its fortune. This may be another strider or some floating carcass into which the bug's slender beak may be thrust and food obtained. Many of their dashes over the pond surface are rewarded with a struggling leafhopper or other small insect which has fallen onto the water and is supported by the surface film. Water-striders dive upon occasion, but only under threat of serious danger. Afterwards they crawl out, wet and obviously miserable, to dry and comb themselves into respectability. All active stages in a water-strider's life cycle are spent on the water surface, but for winter they fly or crawl (some are wingless even as adults) under leaves much as do the whirligig beetles.

Every so often a water-strider is noticed with a few bright red specks attached to it. On closer inspection, these are found to be the parasitic immature stages of the red water mite. The young mites suck nutritious juices from inside the water-strider. They weaken it a little but do not kill it. After a few weeks the mites drop off and shed their six-legged skins to become proper eight-legged relatives of the spiders. Then as adults, they run nimbly over the water surface, mate, and lay eggs on floating plants, where the young hatch and wait for water-striders or other pond insects. The mature water mites are very handsome with their bright, rich-red bodies. Their swimming is distinctive, for their eight short, hair-fringed legs move so rapidly that the globular red body glides along smoothly, in contrast to the jerky

movements of the pond insects and crustaceans.

Perhaps the largest walker on the water is the Dolomedes spider, which could straddle a silver dollar without touching it. These are tan-colored, with dark stripes, and are members of the wolf-spider family. They are seen often around boathouses on small lakes and rivers. They run out on the water surface mainly when traveling across some small bay or when driven from the shore by the approach of danger. Fish often snap them up if they hesitate —retribution in kind since these same spiders creep down into the water and snatch small fish in their murderous jaws. The female Dolomedes, like others of her family, does not trust her precious eggs out of her sight. She wraps them up in a creamy white ball of silk and drags the spherical bundle after her through the woods, out on the water, everywhere she goes.

A more frequent spider on the water's skin is a smaller member of the same wolf-spider family. This is a very active, running spider, which nimbly skips and rushes from lily pad to shore and weed to weed, picking up food as it goes. Dead insects or live, it makes no difference, but the actual eating of the catch is reserved for the safety of some plant stem or the shelter of the bank. Like the Dolomedes, the small water spider drags her ball of eggs, and when the young have hatched, carries them upon her back and legs until they gain confidence to leave her.

Among the more spectacular yet seldom noticed inhabitants of the water film are the springtails, a group of minute insects which have a most unusual means of locomotion. Beneath the hinder end of the body, they have a long appendage, sometimes forked, which reaches forward to engage a catch between their legs. In use, the body is tensed so as to strain the appendage against its catch. Letting go of the catch allows the appendage to strike violently against the water surface on which the insect stands, throwing the tiny body high in the air, to fall somewhere else. For a creature so minute, air has an excellent cushioning effect, so that it lands without damage, often on its feet.

Ever since someone first dropped a piece of camphor into a dish of water, people have been amused to see the chip of waxy white gum dash here and there over the water surface. The explanation was far less interesting—the camphor chip dissolved non-uniformly, and reduced the water surface tension as it dissolved. The side where most was dissolving at any one time was the side where the water surface tension was most reduced momentarily, and the water opposite yanked the chip away. The same experiment may be performed with two toothpicks or wooden matches floated in a dish of water. After a few moments they will cling together in the center of their pond. If a slender, pointed stick of soap is pushed down to touch the water surface between the two toothpicks, the surface tension there is reduced and the water film beyond the toothpicks jerks them apart. If you have a cube of sugar to spend on the experiment, dip it into the water between the spread picks. Back together they come, since the sugar solution has a higher surface tension than the pure water, whereas the soap solution has a lower tension.

All this is entertaining parlor magic, but there is a little rove beetle, Stenus by name, which actually uses this trick. Stenus, like its close relatives, is a hun-

gry little fellow with short wings, and flies around a great deal trying to find food. Often it makes a mistake and falls into water. But it merely expels from its anal glands a substance which lowers the surface tension at its hinder end, so that the water ahead of it can draw it forward rapidly like a toy boat, often causing the beetle to reach a dry object from which it can fly on again.

Even vertebrate animals may cross the water surface if they are quick about it. Barbour tells of small lizards in Central America, the basilisks, which are common around streams and ponds. When disturbed they rush across the water surface on their hind legs, with the fore feet folded against their sides and the tail raised to counterbalance them. Related lizards in Cuba do this too, but instead of hurrying to the opposite bank or some solid refuge, they run over the water merely to some quiet spot, where they stop, sink quickly to the bottom, and remain until they believe the danger has passed. Some of our native salamanders and newts can scamper across the water's skin in much the same way, although they use all four feet and must touch the water along their bellies too. In all of these, the animal is kept from sinking by its nimble action, feet pressing down on the water and away again so quickly that the water cannot flow around, its own inertia no match for the speed of the animal.

1946

# STEPHEN LEACOCK

## *My Fishing Pond*

It lies embowered in a little cup of the hills, my fishing pond. I made a last trip to it just as the season ended, when the autumn leaves of its great trees were turning color and rustling down to rest upon the still black water. So steep are the banks, so old and high the trees, that scarcely a puff of wind ever ruffles the surface of the pond. All around, it is as if the world were stilled into silence, and time blended into eternity.

I realized again as I looked at the pond what a beautiful, secluded spot it was, how natural its appeal to the heart of the angler. You turn off a country road, go sideways across a meadow and over a hill, and there it lies—a sheet of still water, with high, high banks, grown with great trees. Long years ago someone built a sawmill, all gone now, at the foot of the valley and threw back the water to make a pond, perhaps a quarter of a mile long. At the widest it must be nearly two hundred feet—the most skillful fisherman may make a full cast both ways. At the top end, where it runs narrow among stumps and rushes, there is no room to cast except with direction and great skill.

Let me say at once, so as to keep no

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mystery about it, that there are no fish in my pond. So far as I know there never have been. But I have never found that to make any difference. Certainly none to the men I bring there —my chance visitors from the outside world—for an afternoon of casting.

If there are no fish in the pond, at least they never know it. They never doubt it; they never ask, and I let it go at that.

It is well known hereabouts that I do not take anybody and everybody out to my fishpond. I only care to invite people who can really fish, who can cast a line—experts, and especially people from a distance to whom the whole neighborhood is new and attractive, the pond seen for the first time. If I took out ordinary men, especially men near home, they would very likely notice that they got no fish. The expert doesn't. He knows trout fishing too well. He knows that even in a really fine pond, such as he sees mine is, there are days when not a trout will rise. He'll explain it to you himself; and, having explained it, he is all the better pleased if he turns out to be right and they don't rise.

Trout, as everyone knows who is an angler, never rise after a rain, nor before one; it is impossible to get them to rise in the heat; and any chill in the air keeps them down. The absolutely right day is a still, cloudy day, but even then there are certain kinds of clouds that prevent a rising of the trout. Indeed, I have only to say to one of my expert friends, "Queer, they didn't bite!" and he's off to a good start with an explanation. There is such a tremendous lot to know about trout fishing that men who are keen on it can discuss theories of fishing by the hour.

Such theories we generally talk over—my guest of the occasion and I—as we make our preparations at the pond. You see, I keep there all the apparatus that goes with fishing—a punt, with lockers in the sides of it, a neat little dock built out of cedar (cedar attracts the trout), and, best of all, a little shelter house, a quaint little place like a pagoda, close beside the water and yet under the trees. Inside is tackle, all sorts of tackle, hanging round the walls in a mixture of carelessness and order.

"Look, old man," I say, "if you like to try a running paternoster, take this one," or, "Have you ever seen these Japanese leads? No, they're not a gut; they're a sort of floss."

"I doubt if I can land one with that," he says.

"Perhaps not," I answer. In fact, I'm sure he couldn't; there isn't any to land.

On pegs in the pagoda hangs a waterproof mackintosh or two, for you never know—you may be caught in a shower just when the trout are starting to rise. Then, of course, a sort of cellarette cupboard with decanters and bottles, and gingersnaps, and perhaps an odd pot of anchovy paste—no one wants to quit good fishing for mere hunger. Nor does any real angler care to begin fishing without taking just a drop (Just a touch—be careful! Whoa! Whoa!) of something to keep out the cold, or to wish good luck for the chances of the day.

I always find, when I bring out one of my friends, that these mere preparatives or preparations, these preliminaries of angling, are the best part of it. Often they take half an hour. There is so much to discuss—the question of weights of tackle, the color of the fly to use, and broad general questions of theory, such as whether it matters what kind of hat a man wears. It seems that

trout will rise for some hats, and for others not. One of my best guests, who has written a whole book on fly fishing, is particularly strong on hats and color. "I don't think I'd wear that hat, old man," he says, "much too dark for a day like this." "I wore it all last month," I said. "So you might, but that was August. I wouldn't wear a dark hat in September; and that tie is too dark a blue, old man."

So I knew that that made it all right. I kept the hat on. We had a grand afternoon; we got no fish.

I admit that the lack of fish in my pond requires sometimes a little tact in management. The guest gets a little restless. So I say to him, "You certainly have the knack of casting!"—and he gets so absorbed in casting farther and farther that he forgets the fish. Or I take him toward the upper end and he gets his line caught on bulrush—that might be a bite. Or, if he still keeps restless, I say suddenly, "Hush! Was that a fish jumped?" That will silence any true angler instantly. "You stand in the bow," I whisper, "and I'll paddle gently in that direction." It's the *whispering* that does it. We are still a hundred yards away from any trout that could hear us even if a trout were there. But that makes no difference. Some of the men I take out begin to whisper a mile away from the pond and come home whispering.

You see, after all, what with frogs jumping, and catching the line in bulrushes, or pulling up a water-logged chip nearly to the top, they don't really know—my guests don't—whether they have hooked something or not. Indeed, after a little lapse of time, they think they did: they talk of the "big one they lost"—a thing over which any angler gets sentimental in retrospect. "Do you remember," they say to me months later at our club in the city, "that big trout I lost up on your fish-pond last summer?" "Indeed I do," I say. "Did you ever get him later on?" "No, never," I answer. (Neither him nor any other.)

Yet the illusion holds good. And besides, you never can tell: there *might* be trout in the pond. Why not? After all, why shouldn't there be a trout in the pond? You take a pond like that and there ought to be trout in it!

Whenever the sight of the pond bursts on the eyes of a new guest he stands entranced. "What a wonderful place for trout!" he exclaims. "Isn't it?" I answer. "No wonder you'd get trout in a pond like that." "No wonder at all." "You don't need to stock it at all, I suppose?" "Stock it!" I laughed at the idea. Stock a pond like that! Well, I guess not!

Perhaps one of the best and most alluring touches is fishing out of season—just a day or two after the season has closed. Any fisherman knows how keen is the regret at each expiring season—swallowed up and lost in the glory of the fading autumn. So if a guest turns up just then I say, "I know it's out of season, but I thought you might care to take a run out to the pond anyway and have a look at it." He can't resist. By the time he's in the pagoda and has a couple of small drinks (Careful, not too much! Whoa! Whoa!) he decides there can be no harm in making a cast or two. "I suppose," he says, "you never have any trouble with the inspectors?" "Oh, no," I answer; "they never think of troubling me." And with that we settle down to an afternoon of it. "I'm glad," says the guest at the end, "that they weren't rising. After all, we had just the same fun as if they were."

That's it: illusion! How much of life is like that! It's the *idea* of the thing that counts, not the reality. You don't need fish for fishing, any more than you need partridge for partridge shooting, or gold for gold mining. Just the illusion or expectation.

So I am going back now to the city and to my club, where we shall fish all winter, hooking up big ones, but losing the ones bigger still, hooking two trout at one throw,—three at a throw!—and for me, behind it all, the memory of my fishing pond darkening under the falling leaves. . . . At least it has made my friends happy.

1936

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# JOHN STEINBECK

and

# EDWARD F. RICKETTS

## *The Sea-Cow*

From Sea of Cortez

We come now to a piece of equipment which still brings anger to our hearts and, we hope, some venom to our pen. Perhaps in self-defense against suit, we should say, "The outboard motor mentioned in this book is purely fictitious and any resemblance to outboard motors living or dead is coincidental." We shall call this contraption, for the sake of secrecy, a Hansen Sea-Cow—a dazzling little piece of machinery, all aluminum paint and touched here and there with spots of red. The Sea-Cow was built to sell, to dazzle the eyes, to splutter its way into the unwary heart. We took it along for the skiff. It was intended that it should push us ashore and back, should drive our boat into estuaries and along the borders of little coves. But we had not reckoned with one thing. Recently, industrial civilization has reached its peak of reality and has lunged forward into something that approaches mysticism. In the Sea-Cow factory where steel fingers tighten screws, bend and mold, measure and divide, some curious mathematick has occurred. And that secret so long sought has accidentally been found. Life has been created. The machine is at last stirred. A soul and a malignant mind have been born. Our Hansen Sea-Cow was not only a living thing but a mean, irritable, contemptible, vengeful, mischievous, hateful living thing. In the six weeks of our association we observed it, at first mechanically and then, as its living reactions became more and more apparent, psychologically. And we determined one

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thing to our satisfaction. When and if these ghoulish little motors learn to reproduce themselves the human species is doomed. For their hatred of us is so great that they will wait and plan and organize and one night, in a roar of little exhausts, they will wipe us out. We do not think that Mr. Hansen, inventor of the Sea-Cow, father of the outboard motor, knew what he was doing. We think the monster he created was as accidental and arbitrary as the beginning of any other life. Only one thing differentiates the Sea-Cow from the life that we know. Whereas the forms that are familiar to us are the results of billions of years of mutation and complication, life and intelligence emerged simultaneously in the Sea-Cow. It is more than a species. It is a whole new re-definition of life. We observed the following traits in it and we were able to check them again and again:

1. Incredibly lazy, the Sea-Cow loved to ride on the back of a boat, trailing its propeller daintily in the water while we rowed.

2. It required the same amount of gasoline whether it ran or not, apparently being able to absorb this fluid through its body walls without recourse to explosion. It had always to be filled at the beginning of every trip.

3. It had apparently some clairvoyant powers, and was able to read our minds, particularly when they were inflamed with emotion. Thus, on every occasion when we were driven to the point of destroying it, it started and ran with a great noise and excitement. This served the double purpose of saving its life and of resurrecting in our minds a false confidence in it.

4. It had many cleavage points, and when attacked with a screwdriver, fell apart in simulated death, a trait it had in common with opossums, armadillos, and several members of the sloth family, which also fall apart in simulated death when attacked with a screwdriver.

5. It hated Tex, sensing perhaps that his knowledge of mechanics was capable of diagnosing its shortcomings.

6. It completely refused to run: (a) when the waves were high, (b) when the wind blew, (c) at night, early morning, and evening, (d) in rain, dew, or fog, (e) when the distance to be covered was more than two hundred yards. But on warm, sunny days when the weather was calm and the white beach close by—in a word, on days when it would have been a pleasure to row—the Sea-Cow started at a touch and would not stop.

7. It loved no one, trusted no one. It had no friends.

Perhaps toward the end, our observations were a little warped by emotion. Time and again as it sat on the stern with its pretty little propeller lying idly in the water, it was very close to death. And in the end, even we were infected with its malignancy and its dishonesty. We should have destroyed it, but we did not. Arriving home, we gave it a new coat of aluminum paint, spotted it at points with new red enamel, and sold it. And we might have rid the world of this mechanical cancer!

1941

# EDWARD WEEKS

## *Notes on an Old Friend*

OVERHEAD the oak leaves stir against the cloudless blue, and the shadow in which I am reading ripples like running water. At my feet on the borderline between the sunny and the cool grass lies Mickey dozing, gray muzzle pointed toward the driveway up which the family will return from their expedition. Periodically he rouses himself, shakes the catkins from his black curls, and moves closer to the sun. His movement renews the scolding of the mother robin in the bittersweet and interrupts my intake of print. I watch him, and through the forming impressions of the book in my lap, memory thrusts its feeling.

This is probably our last summer together. Mickey is sixteen and that is a great age for a cocker spaniel given to eating any old thing; indeed a great age for any dog. Implicit in every friendship is the trust that it will never break. Mick has no reason to doubt us, but we who note his fading hearing and his inability to spot us at any distance on the beach live with the warning to make these months good.

I remember William Morton Wheeler's remarking on the silent communication between dogs, and how, when he had taken one of his for a walk through the Arboretum, the others would gather about the traveler instantly on his return and by scent and emanation have all the news in a matter of seconds. On the Common with other dogs Mick is eager, quivering, and gregarious when I am along, and hair-on-end belligerent when accompanying his mistress. In canine years he is now well past the century mark, so it is small wonder that dogs in their prime have only a passing curiosity in what he has to say. They pause, there is the usual tail-wagging introduction. Then, while he is still standing on his dignity, they suddenly lope off. Mick will start after and then resign himself to his own grass, which he scratches up with a "What the hell." For ladies he has, I gather, the charm of an aging colonel. There is a honey-colored spaniel who, after the nosing, will describe mad circles about him as he stands immovable on the moonlit Common. But if she pushes him too roughly he loses his balance and shows his lip, and so they part.

At home his expressions are stressed for our benefit. His humor, as when with jaws open and tongue half a yard out he stands there grinning; his sneeze of expectation; his mutter—a kind of controlled yip—of annoyance; his jumping recognition of those most important words in a city dog's vocabulary, "going out" and "down country" (is it the special note that colors our voices as we say them?); his sharp demanding bark when his water dish is empty or when brownies, his passion, are cooking—these are a language no one could miss. So too his boredom when, after a decent interval in our friend's house, he fetches his leash and stands obdurate with it in his jaws. And his play: in his youth he would mouth a grape, Concord or Malaga, and then lie staring at us until sud-

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denly it would be popped over his shoulder and retrieved in a scramble. This he did untaught, and the mystery of how the grape emerged uncrushed again and again was his own invention. Now the car is his pleasure: head out the window and ears streaming, he challenges every passing dog with horrid words.

I remember other times when he spoke my language, once when in his puppyhood he was sick from the distemper injection. He began vomiting at midnight and at four I got the car and drove him to the vet's. He was so weak that he leaned limply against the corner of seat and door, but in answer to my hand his eyes said, "I'm sorry to be such a mess. But I *am* sick." And again, years later when he had to apologize for his hunting. It was summer and our little cottage adjoined the orchard and vegetable garden of our big neighbor. At sundown rabbits would make free with the tender lettuce and carrots, and their scent—when Mickey got it—drove him wild. One evening from our screened porch I spotted a cottontail in the green. Mick was asleep, but quietly opening the door I pointed him at the quarry and he got the idea. Rabbit and spaniel disappeared over the horizon with yips marking every second bound. Two hours went by, and then in darkness there was Mick scratching at the screen. "No luck," he said, and in his mouth was the half-eaten carrot the rabbit had dropped in his haste. "No luck."

Mickey is by his nature a hunter and a retriever. But now, with his teeth gone, his retrieving is limited to fishermen's corks as they curve ahead of him on the beach, and to apples in the orchard. As a hunter he fancied himself and for years he nourished a grudge against squirrels. I used to tease him about this. Walking close to one of our oaks I would peer up into the leaves and touch the bark significantly; whereupon Mick would leave the ground jumping and scrabbling as high as my arm.

The squirrels, for their part, enjoyed the feud: they knew he could never catch them. I remember one summer day when Mickey was lying on the open porch soaking up the sun which radiated from the warm boards. Close to the house stood an old apple tree, one of whose branches reached over the porch. Along this bridge, as Mickey slept, stole one of his bushy-tailed enemies. With mathematical precision the squirrel nipped clean a hard green apple, which hit the porch with a thump an inch from Mickey's nose. It was as nice a piece of natural comedy as I have ever witnessed; and the aftermath was noisy.

That dogs remember, we know from their habits and from their twitching dreams when they are so palpably reliving some activity. But how far back does their memory reach, and do those little half-uttered cries indicate that, like man, they are long haunted by old fears? If so, then Mick may still feel the most painful terror of domesticated animals—the fear of desertion. The autumn of his second year my wife and I had to answer a sudden call to New York. We closed the cottage, packed up the daughter, and to save time left the pup with the maid. She took him to her home in Watertown, and from it he naturally escaped in search of us. That was on Friday afternoon. They saw him for an instant at the garbage pail Saturday morning, and then he was gone for good.

By our return on Monday there wasn't a clue. We drove the unfamiliar streets and we put our appeal in the

newspapers and on the air. In twenty-four hours we had heard from seventeen spaniel owners, fifteen of whom had lost their own dogs. But one of them gave us a tip. In their search they had seen a small black dog in the vast reaches of the Watertown Arsenal. So with the Governor's permission we drove through the gates—this was long before the war—to explore the cement strips which led between the huge closed buildings. A sergeant's son gave us hope. "Sure," he said, "a little black dog. He's here all right, only you can't get close to him." "Don't scare him," I said. "Find him if you can." Whistling and calling, we went to point after point, and once on the knoll above a huge oil tank I thought I heard the short familiar bark, but nothing moved. Three hours later we came back to the same spot, and there was the boy lying full-length on the cement wall aiming an imaginary gun. "The buffalo is down here," he called. Ten yards farther and I saw Mick's nest and his unmistakable head. "Mickey!" I shouted. Then up the slope he came on the dead run, his ears brown pancakes of burr.

Is it the fear of our leaving him that so troubles him when he can now no longer hear us as we move about the house? The sight of an open suitcase makes him more doleful than does a thunderstorm. When we pack for the country, there is no way to tell him that he will surely come too. In his heart of hearts Mick knows that he is dependent upon four people, and no comfort of maid or sitter can distract his vigil when we are gone for the evening. Our woods are his woods. The squirrels who used to scold him he no longer hears. But we shall hear him long after he is gone.

1947

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# HEYWOOD BROUN

## *The Fifty-First Dragon*

OF ALL the pupils at the knight school Gawaine le Cœur-Hardy was among the least promising. He was tall and sturdy, but his instructors soon discovered that he lacked spirit. He would hide in the woods when the jousting class was called, although his companions and members of the faculty sought to appeal to his better nature by shouting to him to come out and break his neck like a man. Even when they told him that the lances were padded, the horses no more than ponies and the field unusually soft for late autumn, Gawaine refused to grow enthusiastic. The Headmaster and the Assistant Professor of Pleasaunce were discussing the case one spring afternoon and the Assistant Professor could see no remedy but expulsion.

"No," said the Headmaster, as he looked out at the purple hills which ringed the school, "I think I'll train him to slay dragons."

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"He might be killed," objected the Assistant Professor.

"So he might," replied the Headmaster brightly, "but," he added, more soberly, "we must consider the greater good. We are responsible for the formation of this lad's character."

"Are the dragons particularly bad this year?" interrupted the Assistant Professor. This was characteristic. He always seemed restive when the head of the school began to talk ethics and the ideals of the institution.

"I've never known them worse," replied the Headmaster. "Up in the hills to the south last week they killed a number of peasants, two cows and a prize pig. And if this dry spell holds there's no telling when they may start a forest fire simply by breathing around indiscriminately."

"Would any refund on the tuition fee be necessary in case of an accident to young Cœur-Hardy?"

"No," the principal answered, judicially, "that's all covered in the contract. But as a matter of fact he won't be killed. Before I send him up in the hills I'm going to give him a magic word."

"That's a good idea," said the Professor. "Sometimes they work wonders."

From that day on Gawaine specialized in dragons. His course included both theory and practice. In the morning there were long lectures on the history, anatomy, manners and customs of dragons. Gawaine did not distinguish himself in these studies. He had a marvelously versatile gift for forgetting things. In the afternoon he showed to better advantage, for then he would go down to the South Meadow and practice with a battle-ax. In this exercise he was truly impressive, for he had enormous strength as well as speed and grace. He even developed a deceptive display of ferocity. Old alumni say that it was a thrilling sight to see Gawaine charging across the field toward the dummy paper dragon which had been set up for his practice. As he ran he would brandish his ax and shout "A murrain on thee!" or some other vivid bit of campus slang. It never took him more than one stroke to behead the dummy dragon.

Gradually his task was made more difficult. Paper gave way to papier-mâché and finally to wood, but even the toughest of these dummy dragons had no terrors for Gawaine. One sweep of the ax always did the business. There were those who said that when the practice was protracted until dusk and the dragons threw long, fantastic shadows across the meadow Gawaine did not charge so impetuously nor shout so loudly. It is possible there was malice in this charge. At any rate, the Headmaster decided by the end of June that it was time for the test. Only the night before a dragon had come close to the school grounds and had eaten some of the lettuce from the garden. The faculty decided that Gawaine was ready. They gave him a diploma and a new battle-ax and the Headmaster summoned him to a private conference.

"Sit down," said the Headmaster. "Have a cigarette."

Gawaine hesitated.

"Oh, I know it's against the rules," said the Headmaster. "But after all, you have received your preliminary degree. You are no longer a boy. You are a man. To-morrow you will go out into the world, the great world of achievement."

Gawaine took a cigarette. The Headmaster offered him a match, but he produced one of his own and began

to puff away with a dexterity which quite amazed the principal.

"Here you have learned the theories of life," continued the Headmaster, resuming the thread of his discourse, "but after all, life is not a matter of theories. Life is a matter of facts. It calls on the young and the old alike to face these facts, even though they are hard and sometimes unpleasant. Your problem, for example, is to slay dragons."

"They say that those dragons down in the south wood are five hundred feet long," ventured Gawaine, timorously.

"Stuff and nonsense!" said the Headmaster. "The curate saw one last week from the top of Arthur's Hill. The dragon was sunning himself down in the valley. The curate didn't have an opportunity to look at him very long because he felt it was his duty to hurry back to make a report to me. He said the monster, or shall I say, the big lizard?—wasn't an inch over two hundred feet. But the size has nothing at all to do with it. You'll find the big ones even easier than the little ones. They're far slower on their feet and less aggressive, I'm told. Besides, before you go I'm going to equip you in such fashion that you need have no fear of all the dragons in the world."

"I'd like an enchanted cap," said Gawaine.

"What's that?" answered the Headmaster, testily.

"A cap to make me disappear," explained Gawaine.

The Headmaster laughed indulgently. "You mustn't believe all those old wives' stories," he said. "There isn't any such thing. A cap to make you disappear, indeed! What would you do with it? You haven't even appeared yet. Why, my boy, you could walk from here to London, and nobody would so much as look at you. You're nobody. You couldn't be more invisible than that."

Gawaine seemed dangerously close to a relapse into his old habit of whimpering. The Headmaster reassured him: "Don't worry; I'll give you something much better than an enchanted cap. I'm going to give you a magic word. All you have to do is to repeat this magic charm once and no dragon can possibly harm a hair of your head. You can cut off his head at your leisure."

He took a heavy book from the shelf behind his desk and began to run through it. "Sometimes," he said, "the charm is a whole phrase or even a sentence. I might, for instance, give you 'To make the'—No, that might not do. I think a single word would be best for dragons."

"A short word," suggested Gawaine.

"It can't be too short or it wouldn't be potent. There isn't so much hurry as all that. Here's a splendid magic word: 'Rumplesnitz.' Do you think you can learn that?"

Gawaine tried and in an hour or so he seemed to have the word well in hand. Again and again he interrupted the lesson to inquire, "And if I say 'Rumplesnitz' the dragon can't possibly hurt me?" And always the Headmaster replied, "If you only say 'Rumplesnitz,' you are perfectly safe."

Toward morning Gawaine seemed resigned to his career. At daybreak the Headmaster saw him to the edge of the forest and pointed him to the direction in which he should proceed. About a mile away to the southwest a cloud of steam hovered over an open meadow in the woods and the Headmaster assured Gawaine that under the steam he would find a dragon. Gawaine went forward

slowly. He wondered whether it would be best to approach the dragon on the run as he did in his practice in the South Meadow or to walk slowly toward him, shouting "Rumplesnitz" all the way.

The problem was decided for him. No sooner had he come to the fringe of the meadow than the dragon spied him and began to charge. It was a large dragon and yet it seemed decidedly aggressive in spite of the Headmaster's statement to the contrary. As the dragon charged it released huge clouds of hissing steam through its nostrils. It was almost as if a gigantic teapot had gone mad. The dragon came forward so fast and Gawaine was so frightened that he had time to say "Rumplesnitz" only once. As he said it, he swung his battle-ax and off popped the head of the dragon. Gawaine had to admit that it was even easier to kill a real dragon than a wooden one if only you said "Rumplesnitz."

Gawaine brought the ears home and a small section of the tail. His school mates and the faculty made much of him, but the Headmaster wisely kept him from being spoiled by insisting that he go on with his work. Every clear day Gawaine rose at dawn and went out to kill dragons. The Headmaster kept him at home when it rained, because he said the woods were damp and unhealthy at such times and that he didn't want the boy to run needless risks. Few good days passed in which Gawaine failed to get a dragon. On one particularly fortunate day he killed three, a husband and wife and a visiting relative. Gradually he developed a technique. Pupils who sometimes watched him from the hill-tops a long way off said that he often allowed the dragon to come within a few feet before he said "Rumplesnitz." He came to say it with a mocking sneer. Occasionally he did stunts. Once when an excursion party from London was watching him he went into action with his right hand tied behind his back. The dragon's head came off just as easily.

As Gawaine's record of killings mounted higher the Headmaster found it impossible to keep him completely in hand. He fell into the habit of stealing out at night and engaging in long drinking bouts at the village tavern. It was after such a debauch that he rose a little before dawn one fine August morning and started out after his fiftieth dragon. His head was heavy and his mind sluggish. He was heavy in other respects as well, for he had adopted the somewhat vulgar practice of wearing his medals, ribbons and all, when he went out dragon hunting. The decorations began on his chest and ran all the way down to his abdomen. They must have weighed at least eight pounds.

Gawaine found a dragon in the same meadow where he had killed the first one. It was a fair-sized dragon, but evidently an old one. Its face was wrinkled and Gawaine thought he had never seen so hideous a countenance. Much to the lad's disgust, the monster refused to charge and Gawaine was obliged to walk toward him. He whistled as he went. The dragon regarded him hopelessly, but craftily. Of course it had heard of Gawaine. Even when the lad raised his battle-ax the dragon made no move. It knew that there was no salvation in the quickest thrust of the head, for it had been informed that this hunter was protected by an enchantment. It merely waited, hoping something would turn up. Gawaine raised the battle-ax and suddenly lowered it again. He had grown very pale and he trembled violently. The dragon sus-

pected a trick. "What's the matter?" it asked, with false solicitude.

"I've forgotten the magic word," stammered Gawaine.

"What a pity," said the dragon. "So that was the secret. It doesn't seem quite sporting to me, all this magic stuff, you know. Not cricket, as we used to say when I was a little dragon; but after all, that's a matter of opinion."

Gawaine was so helpless with terror that the dragon's confidence rose immeasurably and it could not resist the temptation to show off a bit.

"Could I possibly be of any assistance?" it asked. "What's the first letter of the magic word?"

"It begins with an 'r,' " said Gawaine weakly.

"Let's see," mused the dragon, "that doesn't tell us much, does it? What sort of a word is this? Is it an epithet, do you think?"

Gawaine could do no more than nod.

"Why, of course," exclaimed the dragon, "reactionary Republican."

Gawaine shook his head.

"Well, then," said the dragon, "we'd better get down to business. Will you surrender?"

With the suggestion of a compromise Gawaine mustered up enough courage to speak.

"What will you do if I surrender?" he asked.

"Why, I'll eat you," said the dragon.

"And if I don't surrender?"

"I'll eat you just the same."

"Then it doesn't make any difference, does it?" moaned Gawaine.

"It does to me," said the dragon with a smile. "I'd rather you didn't surrender. You'd taste much better if you didn't."

The dragon waited for a long time for Gawaine to ask "Why?" but the boy was too frightened to speak. At last the dragon had to give the explanation without his cue line. "You see," he said, "if you don't surrender you'll taste better because you'll die game."

This was an old and ancient trick of the dragon's. By means of some such quip he was accustomed to paralyze his victims with laughter and then to destroy them. Gawaine was sufficiently paralyzed as it was, but laughter had no part in his helplessness. With the last word of the joke the dragon drew back his head and struck. In that second there flashed into the mind of Gawaine the magic word "Rumplesnitz," but there was no time to say it. There was time only to strike and, without a word, Gawaine met the onrush of the dragon with a full swing. He put all his back and shoulders into it. The impact was terrific and the head of the dragon flew away almost a hundred yards and landed in a thicket.

Gawaine did not remain frightened very long after the death of the dragon. His mood was one of wonder. He was enormously puzzled. He cut off the ears of the monster almost in a trance. Again and again he thought to himself, "I didn't say 'Rumplesnitz'!" He was sure of that and yet there was no question that he had killed the dragon. In fact, he had never killed one so utterly. Never before had he driven a head for anything like the same distance. Twenty-five yards was perhaps his best previous record. All the way back to the knight school he kept rumbling about in his mind seeking an explanation for what had occurred. He went to the Headmaster immediately and after closing the door told him what had happened. "I didn't say 'Rumplesnitz,' " he explained with great earnestness.

The Headmaster laughed. "I'm glad you've found out," he said. "It makes you ever so much more of a hero. Don't you see that? Now you know that it was you who killed all these dragons and not that foolish little word 'Rumplesnitz.'"

Gawaine frowned. "Then it wasn't a magic word after all?" he asked.

"Of course not," said the Headmaster, "you ought to be too old for such foolishness. There isn't any such thing as a magic word."

"But you told me it was magic," protested Gawaine. "You said it was magic and now you say it isn't."

"It wasn't magic in a literal sense," answered the Headmaster, "but it was much more wonderful than that. The word gave you confidence. It took away your fears. If I hadn't told you that you might have been killed the very first time. It was your battle-ax did the trick."

Gawaine surprised the Headmaster by his attitude. He was obviously distressed by the explanation. He interrupted a long philosophic and ethical discourse by the Headmaster with, "If I hadn't of hit 'em all mighty hard and fast any one of 'em might have crushed me like a, like a—" He fumbled for a word.

"Egg shell," suggested the Headmaster.

"Like a egg shell," assented Gawaine, and he said it many times. All through the evening meal people who sat near him heard him muttering, "Like a egg shell, like a egg shell."

The next day was clear, but Gawaine did not get up at dawn. Indeed, it was almost noon when the Headmaster found him cowering in bed, with the clothes pulled over his head. The principal called the Assistant Professor of Pleasaunce, and together they dragged the boy toward the forest.

"He'll be all right as soon as he gets a couple more dragons under his belt," explained the Headmaster.

The Assistant Professor of Pleasaunce agreed. "It would be a shame to stop such a fine run," he said. "Why, counting that one yesterday, he's killed fifty dragons."

They pushed the boy into a thicket above which hung a meager cloud of steam. It was obviously quite a small dragon. But Gawaine did not come back that night or the next. In fact, he never came back. Some weeks afterward brave spirits from the school explored the thicket, but they could find nothing to remind them of Gawaine except the metal parts of his medals. Even the ribbons had been devoured.

The Headmaster and the Assistant Professor of Pleasaunce agreed that it would be just as well not to tell the school how Gawaine had achieved his record and still less how he came to die. They held that it might have a bad effect on school spirit. Accordingly, Gawaine has lived in the memory of the school as its greatest hero. No visitor succeeds in leaving the building to-day without seeing a great shield which hangs on the wall of the dining hall. Fifty pairs of dragons' ears are mounted upon the shield and underneath in gilt letters is "Gawaine le Cœur-Hardy," followed by the simple inscription, "He killed fifty dragons." The record has never been equaled.

1922

# CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

## *On Time*

THIS WAS a little ceremony dedicated to Time; and as I came into the Grand Central Station the early afternoon sun slanted in bright diagonal from those high windows, exactly transecting the clock on the Information Desk in a clear swath of light.

Not less decorously than a bride made ready for her groom is the Century inaugurated for departure. A strip of wedding carpet leads you down into the cathedral twilight of that long crypt. Like a bouquet of flowers her name shines in white bulbs on the observation platform. In the diner waiters' coats are laundered like surplices. Mr. Welch, the veteran conductor, carrying his little box of official sancta, has the serene benignant gravity of some high cleric. And as you walk by that long perspective of windows, you are aware they are not just a string of ten Pullman cars. They are fused by something even subtler than the liaison of airy pressure that holds them safe. They are merged into personality, become a creature loved, honored, and obeyed. This is a rite, you read it in every member of her crew. The blessed, the rich, the ultimate human faculty of Rising to the Occasion! And you can see them, porter just as gravely as Conductor, making obeisance to the little private deity each carries in his pocket. When railroad men compare notes on the time, they don't say (as you or I would) "two-forty," meaning forty minutes after two. They know the hour and take it for granted. It's minutes and seconds that concern them. Ask Mr. Brady, engineer of the electric that takes out the First Section, what he "makes it," he'll reply, "forty-fifteen." There was a severity on Mr. Brady's face as he sat studying his watch while Paul Hesse, the photographer, was trying to get a shot inside the engine—which was not planned for pictorial convenience. The time was close. It was 44-30, it was 44-45, it was 45. . . . No more of this nonsense. . . . Let's go!

Gently she steals out along a corridor of that dusty underground forest where colored lights gleam like tropic birds. "Green!" "Green!" you hear Brady and his helper saying aloud to each other, checking up each signal as soon as it comes in view. The electric engine has fascination and efficiency of its own, but in this ceremony one is bound to regard it as the father who takes the bride up the aisle on his arm. The father may be (I dare say usually is) more of a man than the groom; but the groom gets the romantic applause. So the electric is not a personality: just a miracle, smooth and swift it toles you past those upper reaches of the city. Looking out you see the Second Section spinning along, just abaft your stern, on the adjoining track. There's a little boy, perhaps four years old, who comes down to Spuyten Duyvil station every fair afternoon, with his nurse, to see the Century spin by. It's a part of an engineer's job to know his roadside clients and salute

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them. When Brady waves, the nursemaid can set her watch. It's 3:05. The bell chimes musically overhead, and again one feels that there is some sort of religion in all this. And I suppose (come to think of it) that isn't a bad sort of religion either: Getting There when you said you were Going To.

But what a moment, when you glide into Harmon and see waiting for you . . . what you came to see: one of the 5200's. Of course all that talk about the groom is nonsense, for at once you adore her as She. There's only one phrase adequate for her: Some Baby! Sharp work here: it must have been a couple of minutes, but in memory it seems only a few seconds of golden excitement. They can grin as they like at your borrowed overalls, *you're* the one that's going to ride that roaring child for 110 miles. Have you seen the Central's 5200's? This was 5217 and I shan't forget her. She seems as big as an ocean liner when you're in the cab.

They hand up a slip of paper to George Tully, the engineer. If you're the engineer of the Twentieth Century they don't tell you to get anywhere by a certain time. They tell you *not* to get there *before* such and such. The message, signed with 2 sets of initials, was "Do not arrive Albany before 5:38." George Tully consults his watch (a nice fat old Hamilton, he's carried it 24 years). It's 3:36 and we're off.

I suppose the greatest moments in life are those when you don't believe its yourself. It *can't* be you, in that holy of holies of small-boy imagination, the cab of an engine—and such an engine. More than that, made so welcome and at home by George Tully and Tom Cavanagh that you feel you belong there. Perhaps the simple truth is that if men have something they're enormously proud of, it's pure joy to show her off. And they are never so lovable as in their honest rivalries. "Well," Tom roared in my ear, as he explained the automatic stoking, "I wonder if Pennsy's got anything better than this?" For the first thing that puzzles you is two big canted cylinders in the cab. They revolve in spasms. These feed the coal into the firebox. A man couldn't shovel fast enough by hand to keep the pressure she needs (she eats up four tons between Harmon and Albany). The fireman sits comfortably, with his eye on the steam gauge, and regulates the coal feed by turning a handle. I could tell you a lot about the marvel of that firebox, and the "butterfly door" that opens in two wings to show you her fierce heart, full of flame and hardly anything else. The coal is practically consumed by the time it reaches the floor of the furnace. I fed her myself for quite a way. "Keep the gauge at 220," Tom said. "No black smoke, and don't let the safety valve lift. Every time she lifts that means twenty gallons of water wasted—costs 3 cents." "Keep her hot," George Tully shouted to me, grinning. "We've got five minutes to make up."

That was part of the fun of this ride: I had a chance to see how things go when the breaks are against you. For there's a lot of work doing along the line: four-trackage being put in, the new tunnel at Storm King, and unavoidable slow-downs. "We'll be knocked out 6 minutes before we reach Beacon," Tully said. "We'll get it back."

Astonishing how soon one adjusts one's judgments. Leaning from the cab window, watching the flash of her great pistons, watching the 2500-ton train come creaming along so obediently behind us, one soon began to

think anything less than 60 mere loitering. All the imaginations that the cab might be uncomfortable riding were bosh. There is hardly—at any rate in those heavy 5200's—any more sway or movement than in the Pullmans themselves. The one thing a constant automobile driver finds disconcerting is the lack of steering. As you come rocketing toward a curve you wonder why the devil George doesn't turn a wheel to prevent her going clean off. And then you see her great gorgeous body meet the arc in that queer straight way—a constant shifting tangent—and—well, you wish you could lay your hand on her somehow so she'd know how you feel. When George began to let her out a bit beyond Beacon, I just had to go over and yell at him that I thought this 5217 of his was a good girl. With the grave pleasure of the expert he said, "They're right there when you need 'em." He let me blow the whistle, which makes one feel an absolute part of her. Yes, if you were listening (about 4:48) that was me.

Alive, shouting, fluttering her little flags, she divided the clear cool afternoon. Looking out into that stream of space I could have lapsed into dream. I came closer than ever before to the actual texture of Time whereof our minds are made. This was not just air or earth that we flew upon, this was the seamless reality of Now. We were abreast of the Instant. It was Time that we fed into the flaming furnace, it was Time that flickered in the giant wheels. This was the everlasting Now, we kept even pace with it and so the mind was (literally) in its own element, motionless and at ease. Terribly great, senseless, ecstatic, mad with her single destiny, yet with queer pathos in her whole great mass, so much at our command. Her cab looked like a clock-shop, so many gauges and dials. But there is no clock in an engine cab. She makes her litany to one god only—the intent man who sits leaning forward so gravely. And he verifies himself by the other little god—the tiny one in his pocket. As you watch him you understand what he said—"There's no two trips alike. They're always on your nerve."

Green! Green! they kept repeating to one another across the cab. Tom and I sat on the port side where I could see the whole panorama of the Hudson, and far down a curve of the river a white plume where the Second Section came merrily behind us, keeping her three mile distance. And, with Tom, I waved to the regular clients—the "Pig-Woman"; the two priests in cassocks and birettas, near Poughkeepsie; the Cleary Girls in Hyde Park, whose husband and father is the flagman at that crossing; and many more. And then Tom said suddenly, after a glance at his watch, "We've got the dope on 'em now —49 minutes to do 45 miles." I began to see that when chance works against him, the engineman instinctively personifies the unforgiving minutes into mysterious enemies who are trying to spoil things. These mischievous divinities had been hovering about us, making us scoop up water (you have to slow down to 45 for that) or what not; but now we had the dope on them. And the engineer has some very subtle inward correlation of the feel of things; so that even before he verifies his instinct by minutes and seconds, he knows how he's getting on. These men live with Time in a way we rarely dream of. Time is not their merry wanton, as she is to some of us. She's their wife, for better or worse. There was a truly hus-

bandly grievance in George's eye when, just outside Albany, we had to slow almost to a standstill. Number 7—which left Grand Central 45 minutes earlier—was right ahead of us. There was the accent of King Tamburlaine in 5217's whistle as she shouted a blasphemy in steam. We came to a stop in Albany at 5:42. And as she wasn't due to leave there till 5:49, everything was jake. But I saw Tom, who is young and proud, taking a last look at his watch as he pulled his little black satchel out of the locker. There was about fifty seconds just outside Albany that "they" had put over on us.

We all, I hope and believe, have some little private feathers for our cap. I have mine: George Tully said I could ride with him again any time I wanted to. Well, George, I am going to take you up on that.

1928

# H. M. TOMLINSON

## *Bed-Books and Night-Lights*

THE RAIN flashed across the midnight window with a myriad feet. There was a groan in outer darkness, the voice of all nameless dreads. The nervous candle-flame shuddered by my bedside. The groaning rose to a shriek, and the little flame jumped in a panic, and nearly left its white column. Out of the corners of the room swarmed the released shadows. Black specters danced in ecstasy over my bed. I love fresh air, but I cannot allow it to slay the shining and delicate body of my little friend the candle-flame, the comrade who ventures with me into the solitudes beyond midnight. I shut the window.

They talk of the candle-power of an electric bulb. What do they mean? It cannot have the faintest glimmer of the real power of my candle. It would be as right to express, in the same inverted and foolish comparison, the worth of "those delicate sisters, the Pleiades." That pinch of star dust, the Pleiades, exquisitely remote in deepest night, in the profound where light all but fails, has not the power of a sulphur match; yet, still apprehensive to the mind though tremulous on the limit of vision, and sometimes even vanishing, it brings into distinction those distant and difficult hints—hidden far behind all our verified thoughts—which we rarely properly view. I should like to know of any great arc-lamp which could do that. So the star-like candle for me. No other light follows so intimately an author's most ghostly suggestion. We sit, the candle and I, in the midst of the shades we are conquering, and sometimes look up from the lucent page to contemplate the dark hosts of the enemy with a smile before they overwhelm us; as they will, of course. Like me, the candle is mortal; it will burn out.

As the bed-book itself should be a sort

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of night-light, to assist its illumination, coarse lamps are useless. They would douse the book. The light for such a book must accord with it. It must be, like the book, a limited, personal, mellow, and companionable glow; the solitary taper beside the only worshiper in a sanctuary. That is why nothing can compare with the intimacy of candle-light for a bed-book. It is a living heart, bright and warm in central night, burning for us alone, holding the gaunt and towering shadows at bay. There the monstrous specters stand in our midnight room, the advance guard of the darkness of the world, held off by our valiant little glim, but ready to flood instantly and founder us in original gloom.

The wind moans without; ancient evils are at large and wandering in torment. The rain shrieks across the window. For a moment, for just a moment, the sentinel candle is shaken, and burns blue with terror. The shadows leap out instantly. The little flame recovers, and merely looks at its foe, the darkness, and back to its own place goes the old enemy of light and man. The candle for me, tiny, mortal, warm, and brave, a golden lily on a silver stem!

"Almost any book does for a bed-book," a woman once said to me. I nearly replied in a hurry that almost any woman would do for a wife; but that is not the way to bring people to conviction of sin. Her idea was that the bed-book is soporific, and for that reason she even advocated the reading of political speeches. That would be a dissolute act. Certainly you would go to sleep; but in what a frame of mind! You would enter into sleep with your eyes shut. It would be like dying, not only unshriven, but in the act of guilt.

What book shall it shine upon? Think of Plato, or Dante, or Tolstoy, or a Blue Book for such an occasion! I cannot. They will not do—they are no good to me. I am not writing about you. I know those men I have named are transcendent, the greater lights. But I am bound to confess at times they bore me. Though their feet are clay and on earth, just as ours, their stellar brows are sometimes dim in remote clouds. For my part, they are too big for bed-fellows. I cannot see myself, carrying my feeble and restricted glim, following (in pajamas) the statuesque figure of the Florentine where it stalks, aloof in its garb of austere pity, the sonorous deeps of Hades. Hades! Not for me; not after midnight! Let those go who like it.

As for the Russian, vast and disquieting, I refuse to leave all, including the blankets and the pillow, to follow him into the gelid tranquillity of the upper air, where even the colors are prismatic spicules of ice, to brood upon the erratic orbit of the poor mud-ball below called earth. I know it is my world also; but I cannot help that. It is too late, after a busy day, and at that hour, to begin overtime on fashioning a new and better planet out of cosmic dust. By breakfast-time, nothing useful would have been accomplished. We should all be where we were the night before. The job is far too long, once the pillow is nicely set.

For the truth is, there are times when we are too weary to remain attentive and thankful under the improving eye, kindly but severe, of the seers. There are times when we do not wish to be any better than we are. We do not wish to be elevated and improved. At midnight, away with such books! As for the literary pundits, the high priests of the Temple of Letters, it is interest-

ing and helpful occasionally for an acolyte to swinge them a good hard one with an incense-burner, and cut and run, for a change, to something outside the rubrics. Midnight is the time when one can recall, with ribald delight, the names of all the Great Works which every gentleman ought to have read, but which some of us have not. For there is almost as much clotted nonsense written about literature as there is about theology.

There are few books which go with midnight, solitude, and a candle. It is much easier to say what does not please us then than what is exactly right. The book must be, anyhow, something benedictory by a sinning fellow-man. Cleverness would be repellent at such an hour. Cleverness, anyhow, is the level of mediocrity to-day; we are all too infernally clever. The first witty and perverse paradox blows out the candle. Only the sick in mind crave cleverness, as a morbid body turns to drink. The late candle throws its beams a great distance; and its rays make transparent much that seemed massy and important. The mind at rest beside that light, when the house is asleep, and the consequential affairs of the urgent world have diminished to their right proportions because we see them distantly from another and a more tranquil place in the heavens where duty, honor, witty arguments, controversial logic on great questions, appear such as will leave hardly a trace of fossil in the indurated mud which presently will cover them—the mind then certainly smiles at cleverness.

For though at that hour the body may be dog-tired, the mind is white and lucid, like that of a man from whom a fever has abated. It is bare of illusions. It has a sharp focus, small and star-like, as a clear and lonely flame left burning by the altar of a shrine from which all have gone but one. A book which approaches that light in the privacy of that place must come, as it were, with honest and open pages.

I like Heine then, though. His mockery of the grave and great, in those sentences which are as brave as pennants in a breeze, is comfortable and sedative. One's own secret and awkward convictions, never expressed because not lawful and because it is hard to get words to bear them lightly, seem then to be heard aloud in the mild, easy, and confident diction of an immortal whose voice has the blitheness of one who has watched, amused and irreverent, the high gods in eager and secret debate on the best way to keep the gilt and trappings on the body of the evil they have created.

That first-rate explorer, Gulliver, is also fine in the light of the intimate candle. Have you read lately again his "Voyage to the Houyhnhnms"? Try it alone again in quiet. Swift knew all about our contemporary troubles. He has got it all down. Why was he called a misanthrope? Reading that last voyage of Gulliver in the select intimacy of midnight I am forced to wonder, not at Swift's hatred of mankind, not at his satire of his fellows, not at the strange and terrible nature of this genius who thought that much of us, but how it is that after such a wise and sorrowful revealing of the things we insist on doing, and our reasons for doing them, and what happens after we have done them, men do not change. It does seem impossible that society could remain unaltered, after the surprise its appearance should have caused it as it saw its face in that ruthless mirror. We point instead to the fact that Swift lost his mind in

the end. Well, that is not a matter for surprise.

Such books, and France's "Isle of Penguins," are not disturbing as bed-books. They resolve one's agitated and outraged soul, relieving it with some free expression for the accusing and questioning thoughts engendered by the day's affairs. But they do not rest immediately to hand in the book-shelf by the bed. They depend on the kind of day one has had. Sterne is closer. One would rather be transported as far as possible from all the disturbances of earth's envelope of clouds, and "Tristram Shandy" is sure to be found in the sun.

But best of all books for midnight are travel books. Once I was lost every night for months with Doughty in the "Arabia Deserta." He is a craggy author. A long course of the ordinary facile stuff, such as one gets in the Press every day, thinking it is English, sends one thoughtless and headlong among the bitter herbs and stark boulders of Doughty's burning and spacious expanse; only to get bewildered, and the shins broken, and a great fatigue at first, in a strange land of fierce sun, hunger, glittering spar, ancient plutonic rock, and very Adam himself. But once you are acclimatized, and know the language—it takes time—there is no more London after dark, till, a wanderer returned from a forgotten land, you emerge from the interior of Arabia on the Red Sea coast again, feeling as though you had lost touch with the world you used to know. And if that doesn't mean good writing I know of no other test.

Because once there was a father whose habit it was to read with his boys nightly some chapters of the Bible—and cordially they hated that habit of his—I have that Book too; though I fear I have it for no reason that he, the rigid old faithful, would be pleased to hear about. He thought of the future when he read the Bible; I read it for the past. The familiar names, the familiar rhythm of its words, its wonderful well-remembered stories of things long past—like that of Esther, one of the best in English—the eloquent anger of the prophets for the people then who looked as though they were alive, but were really dead at heart, all is solace and home to me. And now I think of it, it is our home and solace that we want in a bed-book.

1920

# JAMES THURBER

## *The Macbeth Murder Mystery*

"IT WAS a stupid mistake to make," said the American woman I had met at my hotel in the English lake country, "but it was on the counter with the other Penguin books—the little sixpenny ones, you know, with the paper covers—and I supposed of course it was a detective story. All the others were

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detective stories. I'd read all the others, so I bought this one without really looking at it carefully. You can imagine how mad I was when I found it was Shakespeare." I murmured something sympathetically. "I don't see why the Penguin-books people had to get out Shakespeare plays in the same size and everything as the detective stories," went on my companion. "I think they have different-colored jackets," I said. "Well, I didn't notice that," she said. "Anyway, I got real comfy in bed that night and all ready to read a good mystery story and here I had 'The Tragedy of Macbeth'—a book for high-school students. Like 'Ivanhoe,'" "Or 'Lorna Doone,'" I said. "Exactly," said the American lady. "And I was just crazy for a good Agatha Christie, or something. Hercule Poirot is my favorite detective." "Is he the rabbity one?" I asked. "Oh, no," said my crime-fiction expert. "He's the Belgian one. You're thinking of Mr. Pinkerton, the one that helps Inspector Bull. He's good, too."

Over her second cup of tea my companion began to tell the plot of a detective story that had fooled her completely —it seems it was the old family doctor all the time. But I cut in on her. "Tell me," I said. "Did you read 'Macbeth'?" "I *had* to read it," she said. "There wasn't a scrap of anything else to read in the whole room." "Did you like it?" I asked. "No, I did not," she said, decisively. "In the first place, I don't think for a moment that Macbeth did it." I looked at her blankly. "Did what?" I asked. "I don't think for a moment that he killed the King," she said. "I don't think the Macbeth woman was mixed up in it, either. You suspect them the most, of course, but those are the ones that are never guilty—or shouldn't be, anyway." "I'm afraid," I began, "that I—" "But don't you see?" said the American lady. "It would spoil everything if you could figure out right away who did it. Shakespeare was too smart for that. I've read that people never *have* figured out 'Hamlet,' so it isn't likely Shakespeare would have made 'Macbeth' as simple as it seems." I thought this over while I filled my pipe. "Who do you suspect?" I asked, suddenly. "Macduff," she said, promptly. "Good God!" I whispered, softly.

"Oh Macduff did it, all right," said the murder specialist. "Hercule Poirot would have got him easily." "How did you figure it out?" I demanded. "Well," she said, "I didn't right away. At first I suspected Banquo. And then, of course, he was the second person killed. That was good right in there, that part. The person you suspect of the first murder should always be the second victim." "Is that so?" I murmured. "Oh, yes," said my informant. "They have to keep surprising you. Well, after the second murder I didn't know *who* the killer was for a while." "How about Malcolm and Donalbain, the King's sons?" I asked. "As I remember it, they fled right after the first murder. That looks suspicious." "Too suspicious," said the American lady. "Much too suspicious. When they flee, they're never guilty. You can count on that." "I believe," I said, "I'll have a brandy," and I summoned the waiter. My companion leaned toward me, her eyes bright, her teacup quivering. "Do you know who discovered Duncan's body?" she demanded. I said I was sorry, but I had forgotten. "Macduff discovers it," she said, slipping into the historical present. "Then he comes running downstairs and shouts, 'Confusion has broke open the Lord's anointed temple' and 'Sacrile-

gious murder has made his masterpiece' and on and on like that." The good lady tapped me on the knee. "All that stuff was rehearsed," she said. "You wouldn't say a lot of stuff like that, off-hand, would you—if you had found a body?" She fixed me with a glittering eye. "I—" I began. "You're right!" she said. "You wouldn't! Unless you had practiced it in advance. 'My God, there's a body in here!' is what an innocent man would say." She sat back with a confident glare.

I thought for a while. "But what do you make of the Third Murderer?" I asked. "You know, the Third Murderer has puzzled 'Macbeth' scholars for three hundred years." "That's because they never thought of Macduff," said the American lady. "It was Macduff, I'm certain. You couldn't have one of the victims murdered by two ordinary thugs—the murderer always has to be somebody important." "But what about the banquet scene?" I asked, after a moment. "How do you account for Macbeth's guilty actions there, when Banquo's ghost came in and sat in his chair?" The lady leaned forward and tapped me on the knee again. "There wasn't any ghost," she said. "A big, strong man like that doesn't go around seeing ghosts—especially in a brightly lighted banquet hall with dozens of people around. Macbeth was *shielding somebody!*" "Who was he shielding?" I asked. "Mrs. Macbeth, of course," she said. "He thought she did it and he was going to take the rap himself. The husband always does that when the wife is suspected." "But what," I demanded, "about the sleepwalking scene, then?" "The same thing, only the other way around," said my companion. "That time *she* was shielding *him*. She wasn't asleep at all. Do you remember where it says, 'Enter Lady Macbeth with a taper'? "Yes," I said. "Well, people who walk in their sleep *never carry lights!*" said my fellow-traveler. "They have a second sight. Did you ever hear of a sleepwalker carrying a light?" "No," I said, "I never did." "Well, then, she wasn't asleep. She was acting guilty to shield Macbeth." "I think," I said, "I'll have another brandy," and I called the waiter. When he brought it, I drank it rapidly and rose to go. "I believe," I said, "that you have got hold of something. Would you lend me that 'Macbeth'? I'd like to look it over tonight. I don't feel, somehow, as if I'd ever really read it." "I'll get it for you," she said. "But you'll find that I am right."

I read the play over carefully that night, and the next morning, after breakfast, I sought out the American woman. She was on the putting green, and I came up behind her silently and took her arm. She gave an exclamation. "Could I see you alone?" I asked, in a low voice. She nodded cautiously and followed me to a secluded spot. "You've found out something?" she breathed. "I've found out," I said, triumphantly, "the name of the murderer!" "You mean it wasn't Macduff?" she said. "Macduff is as innocent of those murders," I said, "as Macbeth and the Macbeth woman." I opened the copy of the play, which I had with me, and turned to Act II, Scene 2. "Here," I said, "you will see where Lady Macbeth says, 'I laid their daggers ready. He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled my father as he slept, I had done it.' Do you see?" "No," said the American woman, bluntly, "I don't." "But it's simple!" I exclaimed. "I wonder I didn't see it years ago. The rea-

son Duncan resembled Lady Macbeth's father as he slept is that *it actually was her father!"* "Good God!" breathed my companion, softly. "Lady Macbeth's father killed the King," I said, "and, hearing someone coming, thrust the body under the bed and crawled into the bed himself." "But," said the lady, "you can't have a murderer who only appears in the story once. You can't have that." "I know that," I said, and I turned to Act II, Scene 4. "It says here, 'Enter Ross with an old Man.' Now, that old man is never identified and it is my contention he was old Mr. Macbeth, whose ambition it was to make his daughter Queen. There you have your motive." "But even then," cried the American lady, "he's still a minor character!" "Not," I said, gleefully, "when you realize that he was also *one of the weird sisters in disguise!"* "You mean one of the three witches?" "Precisely," I said. "Listen to this speech of the old man's. 'On Tuesday last, a falcon towering in her pride of place, was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd.' Who does that sound like?" "It sounds like the way the three witches talk," said my companion, reluctantly. "Precisely!" I said again. "Well," said the American woman, "maybe you're right, but—" "I'm sure I am," I said. "And do you know what I'm going to do now?" "No," she said. "What?" "Buy a copy of 'Hamlet,'" I said, "and solve *that!"* My companion's eye brightened. "Then," she said, "you don't think Hamlet did it?" "I am," I said, "absolutely positive he didn't." "But who," she demanded, "do you suspect?" I looked at her cryptically. "Everybody," I said, and disappeared into a small grove of trees as silently as I had come.

1945

# WILLIAM SAROYAN

## *Love, Death, Sacrifice and So Forth*

TOM GARNER, in the movie, on the screen, a big broadshouldered man, a builder of railroads, President of the Chicago & Southwestern, staggers, does not walk, into his room and closes the door.

You know he is going to commit suicide because he has staggered, and it is a movie, and already a long while has passed since the picture began, and something's got to happen real soon, something big, gigantic, as they say in Hollywood, a suicide or a kiss.

You are sitting in the theatre waiting for what you know is going to happen.

Poor Tom has just learned that the male offspring of his second wife is the product of his grown son by his first wife. Tom's first wife committed suicide when she learned that Tom had fallen in love with the young woman who finally became his second wife. This young woman was the daughter of the President of the Santa Clara Railroad. She made Tom fall in love with

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her so that her father would go on being President of the Santa Clara. Tom had bought the Santa Clara for nine million dollars. Tom's first wife threw herself beneath a streetcar when she found out about Tom's infatuation. She did it by acting, with her face, her eyes, and lips and the way she walked. You didn't get to see anything sickening, you saw only the motorman's frantic expression while he tried to bring the car to a stop. You heard and saw the steel wheel grinding, the wheel that killed her. You heard people screaming the way they do about violent things, and you got the idea. The worst had happened. Tom's wife Sally had gone to her Maker.

Sally met Tom when he was a trackwalker and she a teacher in a small country school. Tom confessed to her one day that he did not know how to read, write or do arithmetic. Sally taught Tom to read, write, add, subtract, divide and multiply. One evening after they were married she asked him if he wanted to be a trackwalker all his life, and he said that he did. Sally asked him if he didn't have at least a little ambition, and Tom said he was satisfied, trackwalking was easy work, they had their little home, and Tom got in a lot of fishing on the side. This hurt Sally, and she began to act. Tom saw that it would mean a lot to Sally if he became ambitious. Sitting at the supper table, he said that he would. A strange look came into his eyes, his face acquired great character. You could almost see him forging ahead in life.

Sally sent Tom to school in Chicago, and she did Tom's work as a trackwalker in order to have money with which to pay for his tuition, a great woman, an heroic wife. You saw her one winter night walking along a railroad track, packing tools and oil cans, snow and desolation all around her. It was sad. It was meant to be sad. She was doing it for Tom, so that he would be able to become a great man. The day Tom announced that he had been made foreman of the construction of the Missouri Bridge, Sally announced she was with child, and Tom said now they could never stop him. With Sally and his baby to inspire him Tom would reach the heights.

Sally gave birth to a son, and while Tom was walking to her bedside you heard symphonic music, and you knew that this was a great moment in Tom's life. You saw Tom enter the dimly lighted room and kneel beside his wife and baby son, and you heard him pray. You heard him say, Our Father which art in heaven, thine the glory and the power, forever and forever. You heard two people in the theatre blowing their noses.

Sally made Tom. She took him from the track and sent him to the president's chair. Then Tom became infatuated with this younger and lovelier woman, and Sally threw herself beneath the streetcar. It was because of what she had done for Tom that the suicide was so touching. It was because of this that tears came to the eyes of so many people in the theatre when Sally destroyed herself.

But Sally's suicide did not have any effect on Tom's infatuation for the younger woman, and after a short while he married the girl, being a practical man part of the time, being practical as long as Hollywood wanted him to be practical. Tom's son, a young man just expelled from college for drunkenness, moved into Tom's house, and had an affair with Tom's second wife.

The result was the baby, a good healthy baby, born of the son instead of the father. Tom's son Tommy is an irresponsible but serious and well-dressed young man, and he really didn't mean to do it. Nature did it. You know how nature is, even in the movies. Tom had been away from home so much, attending to business, and his second wife had been so lonely that she had turned to her husband's son, and he had become her dancing partner.

You saw her holding her hand out to the young irresponsible boy, and you heard her ask him significantly if he would like to dance with her. It took him so long to take her hand that you understand the frightening implication instantly. And she was so maddeningly beautiful, extending her hand to him, that you knew you yourself would never have been able to resist her challenge, even under similar circumstances. There was something irresistible about the perfection of her face and figure, lips so kissable, stance so elegant, body so lovely, soul so needful.

It simply had to happen. Man is flesh, and all that.

So the big railroad builder, the man who always had his way, the man who broke the strike and had forty of his men killed in a riot, and a fire, has staggered into his room and closed the door.

And you know the picture is about to end.

The atmosphere of the theatre is becoming electrical with the apprehension of middle-aged ladies who have spent the better parts of their lives in the movies, loving, dying, sacrificing themselves to noble ideals, etc. They've come again to the dark theatre, and a moment of great living is again upon them.

You can feel the spiritual tenseness of all of these ladies, and if you are listening carefully you can actually hear them living fully.

Poor Tom is in there with a terrific problem and a ghastly obligation.

For his honor's sake, for the sake of Hollywood ethics, for the sake of the industry (the third largest in America, I understand), for God's sake, for your sake and my sake, Tom has got to commit suicide. If he doesn't, it will simply mean we have been deceiving ourselves all these years, Shakespeare and the rest of us. We know he'll be man enough to do it, but for an instant we hope he won't, just to see what will happen, just to see if the world we have made will actually smash.

A long while back we made the rules, and now, after all these years, we wonder if they are the genuine ones, or if, maybe, we didn't make a mistake at the outset. We know it's art, and it even looks a little like life, but we know it isn't life, being much too precise.

We would like to know if our greatness must necessarily go on forever being melodramatic.

The camera rests on the bewildered face of Tom's old and faithful secretary, a man who knew Tom as a boy. This is to give you the full implication of Tom's predicament and to create a powerful suspense in your mind.

Then, at a trot, with the same object in view, time hurrying, culminations, ultimates, inevitabilities, Tom's son Tommy comes to the old and faithful secretary and exclaims that he has heard Tom, his father, is ill. He does not know that his father knows. It is a Hollywood moment. You hear appropriate music.

He rushes to the door, to go to his father, this boy who upset the natural order of the universe by having a sexual

affair with his father's young wife, and then, bang, the pistol shot.

You know it is all over with the President of the Chicago & Southwestern. His honor is saved. He remains a great man. Once again the industry triumphs. The dignity of life is preserved. Everything is hotsytotsy. It will be possible for Hollywood to go on making pictures for the public for another century.

Everything is precise, for effect. Halt. Symphonic music, Tommy's hand frozen on the door-knob.

The old and faithful secretary knows what has happened, Tommy knows, you know and I know, but there is nothing like seeing. The old and faithful secretary allows the stark reality of the pistol shot to penetrate his old, faithful and orderly mind. Then, since Tommy is too frightened to do so, he forces himself to open the door.

All of us are waiting to see how it happened.

The door opens and we go in, fifty million of us in America and millions more all over the earth.

Poor Tom. He is sinking to his knees, and somehow, even though it is happening swiftly, it seems that this little action, being the last one of a great man, will go on forever, this sinking to the knees. The room is dim, the music eloquent. There is no blood, no disorder. Tom is sinking to his knees, dying nobly. I myself hear two ladies weeping. They know it's a movie, they know it must be fake, still, they are weeping. Tom is man. He is life. It makes them weep to see life sinking to its knees. The movie will be over in a minute and they will get up and go home, and get down to the regular business of their lives, but now, in the pious darkness of the theatre, they are weeping.

All I know is this: that a suicide is not an orderly occurrence with symphonic music. There was a man once who lived in the house next door to my house when I was a boy of nine or ten. One afternoon he committed suicide, but it took him an hour to do it. He shot himself through the chest, missed his heart, then shot himself through the stomach. I heard both shots. There was an interval of about forty seconds between the shots. I thought afterwards that during the interval he was probably trying to decide if he ought to go on wanting to be dead or if he ought to try to get well.

Then he started to holler. The whole thing was a mess, materially and spiritually, this man hollering, people running, shouting, wanting to do something and not knowing what to do. He hollered so loud half the town heard him.

This is all I know about regular suicides. I haven't seen a woman throw herself under a streetcar, so I can't say about that. This is the only suicide I have any definite information about. The way this man hollered wouldn't please anyone in a movie. It wouldn't make anyone weep with joy.

I think it comes to this: we've got to stop committing suicide in the movies.

1934

# IV. . .

# ARTICLE

# FRANZ BOAS

## *Racial Prejudices*

### From The Mind of Primitive Man

Proud of his wonderful achievements, civilized man looks down upon the humbler members of mankind. He has conquered the forces of nature and compelled them to serve him. He has transformed inhospitable forests into fertile fields. The mountain fastnesses are yielding their treasures to his demands. The fierce animals which are obstructing his progress are being exterminated, while others which are useful to him are made to increase a thousand-fold. The waves of the ocean carry him from land to land, and towering mountain-ranges set him no bounds. His genius has moulded inert matter into powerful machines which await a touch of his hand to serve his manifold demands.

With pity he looks down upon those members of the human race who have not succeeded in subduing nature; who labor to eke a meagre existence out of the products of the wilderness; who hear with trembling the roar of the wild animals, and see the products of their toil destroyed by them; who remain restricted by ocean, river, or mountains; who strive to obtain the necessities of life with the help of few and simple instruments.

Such is the contrast that presents itself to the observer. What wonder if civilized man considers himself a being of higher order as compared to primitive man, if he claims that the white race represents a type higher than all others!

Before accepting this conclusion which places the stamp of eternal inferiority upon whole races of man, we may well pause, and subject the basis of our opinions regarding the aptitude of different peoples and races to a searching analysis. The naïve assumption of the superiority of the European nations and their descendants is obviously based upon their wonderful achievements. We conclude that, as the civilization is higher, the aptitude for civilization is also higher; and, as the aptitude for civilization presumably depends upon the perfection of the mechanism of body and mind, the inference is drawn that the white race represents the highest type of perfection. In this conclusion, which is reached through a comparison of the social status of civilized man with that of primitive man, the tacit assumption is made that achievement depends solely, or at least primarily, upon the aptitude for an achievement.

The assertion of a higher aptitude of the European nations leads at once to a second inference relating to the significance of difference in type between the European race and the races of other continents, or even of differences between various European types. The line of thought which we unconsciously pursue is about as follows. Since the

From Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man.* By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

aptitude of the European is highest, his physical and mental type is also highest, and every deviation from the white type necessarily represents a characteristic feature of a lower type.

That this unproved assumption underlies our judgments of races, appears from the fact that, other conditions being equal, a race is commonly described as the lower, the more fundamentally it differs from the white race. Its effect may also be noticed in the long-continued discussions of the occurrence of anatomical peculiarities in primitive man which would characterize him as a being of lower order in the zoölogical series, and in the emphasis laid upon the non-occurrence of such traits in primitive man and their occurrence in the European race.

The subject and form of these discussions show that the idea dwells in the minds of investigators that we should expect to find in the white race the highest type of man.

In drawing inferences from social distinctions, the same point of view is frequently held. It is assumed that, as the mental development of the white race is the highest, it also has the highest aptitude in this direction, and therefore its mind is supposed to have the most subtile organization. As the ultimate psychical causes are not so apparent as anatomical characteristics, the judgment of the mental status of a people is generally guided by the difference between its social status and our own: the greater the difference between their intellectual, emotional, and moral processes and those which are found in our civilization, the harsher the judgment on the people. It is only when a Tacitus finds the virtues of past stages of the life of his own people among foreign tribes that their example is held up to the gaze of his fellow-citizens, who probably had a pitying smile for the dreamer who clung to the ideas of a time which they had left far behind.

In order to understand clearly the relations between race and civilization, the two unproved assumptions to which I have referred must be subjected to a searching analysis. We must investigate in how far we are justified in assuming that achievement is primarily due to exceptional aptitude, and in how far we are justified in assuming that the European type—or, taking the notion in its extreme form, that the North European type—represents the highest development of mankind. It will be advantageous to clear up these points before we take up the detailed inquiry.

In regard to the former point, it might be said that, although achievement is not necessarily a measure of aptitude, it seems admissible to judge the one by the other. Have not most races had the same chances for development? Why, then, did the white race alone develop a civilization which is sweeping the whole world, and compared to which all other civilizations appear as feeble beginnings cut short in early childhood, or arrested and petrified in an early stage of development? Is it not, to say the least, probable that the race which attained the highest stage of civilization was the most gifted one, and that those races which remained at the bottom of the scale were not capable of rising to higher levels?

In order to find an answer to these questions, let us consider briefly the general outlines of the history of civilization; let our minds go back a few thousand years, until we reach the time when the civilizations of eastern and of western Asia were in their infancy. As time passed on, these civilizations were

transferred from one people to another; some of those who had represented the highest type of culture sinking back into obscurity, while others took their places. During the dawn of history we see civilization cling to certain districts, in which it is taken up, now by one people, now by another. In the numerous conflicts of these times the more civilized people were often vanquished. The conqueror, however, learned the arts of life from the conquered, and carried on the work of civilization. Thus the centres of civilization were shifting to and fro over a limited area, and progress was slow and halting. At the same period the ancestors of the races that are now among the most highly civilized were in no way superior to primitive man as we find him now in regions that have not come into contact with modern civilization.

Was the civilization attained by these ancient people of such character as to allow us to claim for them a genius superior to that of any other race?

First of all, we must bear in mind that none of these civilizations was the product of the genius of a single people. Ideas and inventions were carried from one to the other; and, although intercommunication was slow, each people which participated in the ancient development contributed its share to the general progress. Proofs without number have been forthcoming which show that ideas have been disseminated as long as people have come into contact with one another, and that neither race nor language nor distance limits their diffusion. As all have worked together in the development of the ancient civilizations, we must bow to the genius of all, whatever group of mankind they may represent,—Hamitic, Semitic, Aryan, or Mongol.

We may now ask, Did no other races develop a culture of equal value? It would seem that the civilizations of ancient Peru and of Central America may well be compared with the ancient civilizations of the Old World. In both we find a high stage of political organization: we find division of labor and an elaborate ecclesiastical organization. Great architectural works were undertaken, requiring the co-operation of many individuals. Animals and plants were domesticated, and the art of writing had been invented. The inventions and knowledge of the peoples of the Old World seem to have been somewhat more numerous and extended than those of the races of the New World, but there can be no doubt that the general status of their civilization was nearly equally high. This will suffice for our consideration.

What, then, is the difference between the civilization of the Old World and that of the New World? It is essentially a difference in time. The one reached a certain stage three thousand or four thousand years sooner than the other.

Although much stress has been laid upon this greater rapidity of development in the Old World, I think that it is not by any means proof of greater ability of the races of the Old World, but that it is adequately explained by the laws of chance. When two bodies run through the same course with variable rapidity, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly, their relative position will be more likely to show accidental differences, the longer the course which they run. Thus two infants a few months old will be much alike in their physiological and psychical development; two youths of equal age will differ much more; and two old men of equal

age may, the one still be in full possession of his powers, the other on the decline, due mainly to the accidental acceleration or retardation of their development. The difference in period of development does not signify that the one is by heredity structurally inferior to the others.

Applying the same reasoning to the history of mankind, we may say that the difference of a few thousand years is insignificant as compared to the age of the human race. The time required to develop the existing races is entirely a matter of conjecture, but we may be sure that it is long. We also know that man existed in the Eastern and Western Hemispheres at a time that can be measured by geological standards only. Penck's recent investigations on the glacial age in the Alps have led him to the conclusion that the age of man must be measured by a span of time exceeding one hundred thousand years, and that the highly specialized civilization of the Magdalenian is not less than twenty thousand years old. There is no reason to believe that this stage was reached by mankind the world over at the same period, but we must assume as the initial point the remotest times in which we find traces of man. What does it mean then, if one group of mankind reached the same stage at the age of a hundred thousand years as was reached by the other at the age of a hundred and four thousand years? Would not the life-history of the people, and the vicissitudes of its history, be fully sufficient to explain a delay of this character, without necessitating us to assume a difference in their aptitude to social development? (See Waitz.) This retardation would be significant only if it could be shown that it occurs independently over and over again in the same race, while in other races greater rapidity of development was found repeatedly in independent cases.

The fact deserves attention, however, that at present practically all the members of the white race participate to a greater or less degree in the advance of civilization, while in none of the other races has the civilization that has been attained at one time or another been able to reach all the tribes or peoples of the same race. This does not necessarily mean that all the members of the white race had the power of originating and developing the germs of civilization with equal rapidity; for there is no evidence that the cognate tribes which have all developed under the influence of a civilization originated by a few members of the race, would not, without this help, have required a much longer time to reach the high level which they now occupy. It seems to show, however, a remarkable power of assimilation, which has not manifested itself to an equal degree in any other race.

Thus the problem presents itself of discovering the reason why the tribes of ancient Europe readily assimilated the civilization that was offered to them, while at present we see primitive people dwindle away and become degraded before the approach of civilization, instead of being elevated by it. Is not this a proof of a higher organization of the inhabitants of Europe?

I believe the reasons for this fact are not far to seek, and do not necessarily lie in a greater ability of the races of Europe and Asia. First of all, in appearance these people were alike to civilized man of their times. Therefore the fundamental difficulty for the rise of primitive people—namely, that an individual who has risen to the level of the higher civilization is still looked upon as be-

longing to an inferior race—did not prevail. Thus it was possible that in the colonies of ancient times society could grow by accretion from among the more primitive people.

Furthermore, the devastating influences of diseases which nowadays begin to ravage the inhabitants of territories newly opened to the whites were not so strong, on account of the permanent contiguity of the people of the Old World, who were always in contact with one another, and therefore subject to the same influences. The invasion of America and Polynesia, on the other hand, was accompanied by the introduction of new diseases among the natives of these countries. The suffering and devastation wrought by epidemics which followed the discovery are too well known to be described in full. In all cases in which a material reduction in numbers occurs in a thinly settled area, the economic life, as well as the social structure, is almost completely destroyed.

In addition to this, it may be said that the contrast between the culture represented by the modern white and that of primitive man is far more fundamental than that between the ancients and the people with whom they came in contact. Particularly, the methods of manufacture have developed so enormously, that the industries of the primitive people of our times are exterminated by the cheapness and large quantity of the products imported by the white trader, because primitive man is unable to compete with the power of production of the machines of the whites, while in olden times the superior hand-product rivalled the hand-product of a lower type. When a day's work suffices for obtaining efficient tools or fabrics from the trader, while the manufacture of the corresponding implement or material by the native himself would have required weeks, it is but natural that the slower and more laborious process should be given up speedily. It must also be considered that in several regions, particularly in America and in parts of Siberia, the primitive tribes are swamped by the numbers of the immigrating race, which is crowding them so rapidly out of their old haunts that no time for gradual assimilation is given. In olden times there was certainly no such immense inequality in numbers as we observe in many regions nowadays.

We conclude, therefore, that the conditions for assimilation in ancient Europe were much more favorable than in those countries where in our times primitive people come into contact with civilization. Therefore we do not need to assume that the ancient Europeans were more gifted than other races which have not become exposed to the influences of civilization until recent times (Gerland, Ratzel).

This conclusion may be corroborated by other facts. In the middle ages the civilization of the Arabs had reached a stage which was undoubtedly superior to that of many European nations of that period. Both civilizations had sprung largely from the same sources, and must be considered branches of one tree. The Arabs who were the carriers of civilization were by no means members of the same race as the Europeans, but nobody will dispute their high merits. It is of interest to see in what manner they influenced the Negro races of the Soudan. At an early time, principally between the second half of the eighth century and the eleventh century of our era, the Soudan was invaded by Hamitic tribes, and Mohammedanism was spreading rapidly through the Sa-

hara and the western Soudan. We see that since that time large empires have been formed, and have disappeared again in struggles with neighboring states, and that a relatively high degree of culture has been attained. The invaders intermarried with the natives; and the mixed races, some of which are almost purely Negro, have risen high above the level of other African Negroes. The history of Bornu is perhaps one of the best examples of this kind. Barth and Nachtigal have made us acquainted with the history of this state, which has played a most important part in the history of North Africa.

Why, then, have the Mohammedans been able to civilize these tribes, and to raise them to nearly the same standard which they had attained, while the whites have not been capable of influencing the Negro in Africa to any considerable extent? Evidently on account of the different method of introduction of culture. While the Mohammedans influence the people in the same manner in which the ancients civilized the tribes of Europe, the whites send only the products of their manufactures and a few of their representatives into the Negro country. A real amalgamation between the more highly educated whites and the Negroes has never taken place. The amalgamation of the Negroes by the Mohammedans is facilitated particularly by the institution of polygamy, the conquerors taking native wives, and raising their children as members of their own family.

The spread of the Chinese civilization in eastern Asia may be likened to that of the ancient civilization in Europe. Colonization and amalgamation of kindred tribes, and in some cases extermination of rebellious subjects, with subsequent colonization, have led to a remarkable uniformity of culture over a large area.

When, finally, we consider the inferior position held by the Negro race of the United States, although the Negro lives in the closest contact with modern civilization, we must not forget that the old race feeling of the inferiority of the colored race is as potent as ever, and is a formidable obstacle to its advance and progress, notwithstanding that schools and universities are open to them. We might rather wonder how much has been accomplished in a short period against heavy odds. It is hardly possible to say what would become of the Negro if he were able to live with the whites on absolutely equal terms. Miss Ovington's discussion of the opportunities of the Negro in the United States is a convincing proof of the inequality of the conditions of economic advance of the Negro and of the white, even after the abolition of legal inequality.

Our conclusion drawn from the foregoing considerations is the following: Several races have developed a civilization of a type similar to the one from which our own had its origin. A number of favorable conditions facilitated the rapid spread of this civilization in Europe. Among these, common physical appearance, contiguity of habitat, and moderate difference in modes of manufacture, were the most potent. When, later on, civilization began to spread over other continents, the races with which modern civilization came into contact were not equally favorably situated. Striking differences of racial types, the preceding isolation which caused devastating epidemics in the newly discovered countries, and the greater advance in civilization, made assimilation much more difficult. The rapid dissemination of Europeans over the whole world destroyed all promising

beginnings which had arisen in various regions. Thus no race except that of eastern Asia was given a chance to develop an independent civilization. The spread of the European race cut short the growth of the existing independent germs without regard to the mental aptitude of the people among whom it was developing. On the other hand, we have seen that no great weight can be attributed to the earlier rise of civilization in the Old World, which is satisfactorily explained as a chance. In short, historical events appear to have been much more potent in leading races to civilization than their faculty, and it follows that achievements of races do not warrant us in assuming that one race is more highly gifted than the other.

After having thus found an answer to our first problem, we turn to the second one: In how far are we justified in considering those anatomical traits in regard to which foreign races differ from the white race as marks of inferiority? In one respect the answer to this question is easier than that to the former. We have recognized that achievement alone does not justify us in assuming greater mental ability for the white race than for others, unless we can sustain our claim by other proofs. It follows from this, that differences between the white race and other races must not be interpreted to mean superiority of the former, inferiority of the latter, unless this relation can be proved by anatomical or physiological considerations.

It may not be amiss to illustrate by an example the logical error which is committed with great ease and great frequency. In a painstaking investigation made a few years ago, Mr. R. B. Bean demonstrated certain characteristic differences between the form of the whole and of the parts of the brain of the Baltimore Negro and of the Baltimore white, —differences which consist in the form and relative size of the frontal and occipital lobes and in the size of the *corpus callosum*. The interpretation of the difference is, that the smaller size of the anterior lobes and of the *callosum* indicates a lower mental development, a conclusion which has been refuted by Franklin P. Mall. It may suffice here, where we are interested chiefly in the logical fallacy of such conclusions, to call attention to the fact that a comparison of long-headed and short-headed individuals of the same race—or, let us say, of long-headed North French and of short-headed Central French—would result in similar differences, but that in a case of this kind the inference regarding greater or lesser ability would not be made with the same readiness.

There is, of course, no doubt that great differences exist in the physical characteristics of the races of man. The color of the skin, the form of the hair, and the configuration of lips and nose, distinguish the African clearly from the European. The question to decide is, What relations have these features to the mental aptitude of a race? Two points of view may be brought forward in relation to this question. First, we may claim that a race in which peculiarities are found that are characteristic of lower stages in the animal series will be in all respects of an inferior type. Secondly, we may direct our attention primarily to the central nervous system, and investigate whether the anatomical structure in one race is superior to that found in another race.

To illustrate the former viewpoint, I will mention a few of the formations in man which have been described as characterizing lower races, because they are found as typical developments in ani-

mals. One of these is a variation in the form of the temporal bone, which in man is ordinarily separated from the frontal bone by the sphenoid and parietal bones. It has been found that in some individuals the temporal bone encroaches upon the sphenoid and parietal, and comes into contact with the frontal bone. This formation is the prevalent one among the apes. It has been proved that this variation is found among all races, but with unequal frequency.

The peculiar formation of the tibia known as platycnemism (lateral flatness) has been observed in skeletons of the oldest remains of man in Europe, and also in the skeletons of various races. Other characteristics which remind us of lower forms are peculiarities in the formation of the articular surfaces of tibia and femur, which have been found in a number of human types; the *os Incæ,* or interparietal bone, which occurs among all races, but most frequently among the Peruvians and the inhabitants of the ancient pueblos; the smallness of the nasal bones and their synostosis with the maxilla; the so-called pre-nasal fossæ; and certain variations in the arrangement of arteries and of muscles. All these variable features are found among all races, but the degree of variability is not everywhere the same. Presumably such variations may be considered human characteristics which have not yet had time to become stable, and which in this sense may be considered as still in process of evolution. If this interpretation be correct, it might seem that we can consider those races in which the characteristic human features are more stable as those which are more highly organized.

It is also possible to arrange the races according to various typical features in such a manner that one appears farthest removed from the types of higher animals, others less so. In all these arrangements the gap between man and animal is a wide one, and the variations between the races are slight as compared to it. Thus we find that, in comparison to the skull, the face of the Negro is larger than that of the American, whose face is, in turn, larger than that of the white. The lower portion of his face has larger dimensions. The alveolar arch is pushed forward, and thus gains an appearance which reminds us of the higher apes. There is no denying that this feature is a most constant character of the black races, and that it represents a type slightly nearer the animal than the European type. The same may be said of the broadness and flatness of the noses of the Negro and the Mongol.

If we accept the general theories of Klaatsch, Stratz, and Schoetensack, who consider the Australian as the oldest and most generalized type of man, we might also call attention to the slenderness of the vertebræ, the undeveloped curvature of the vertebral column, to which Cunningham first called attention, and the traits of the foot, which recall the needs of an animal living in trees, and whose feet had to serve the purpose of climbing from branch to branch.

In relation to the interpretation of all these observations, it must be strongly emphasized that the races which we are accustomed to call "higher races" do not by any means stand in all respects at the end of the series, and are farthest removed from the animal. The European and the Mongol have the largest brains; the European has a small face and a high nose;—all features farther removed from the probable animal an-

cestor of man than the corresponding features of other races. On the other hand, the European shares lower characteristics with the Australian, both retaining in the strongest degree the hairiness of the animal ancestor, while the specifically human development of the red lip is developed most markedly in the Negro. The proportions of the limbs of the Negro are also more markedly distinct from the corresponding proportions in the higher apes than are those of the European.

When we interpret these data in the light of modern biological concepts, we may say that the specifically human features appear with varying intensity in various races, and that the divergence from the animal ancestor has developed in varying directions.

When all these differences between races are given, the question arises, whether they have any significance in regard to mental faculty. I may be permitted to disregard for the moment differences in the size and structural development of the nervous system, and confine myself to the mental significance of other traits. The general analogy of mental development of animals and of man prompts us to associate lower mental traits with theromorphic features. In our naïve, every-day parlance, brutish features and brutality are closely connected. We must distinguish here, however, between the anatomical characteristics of which we have been speaking and the muscular development of the face, trunk, and limbs, due to habitual activity. The hand, which is never employed in activities requiring those refined adjustments which are characteristic of psychologically complex actions, will lack the modelling brought about by the development of each muscle. The face whose muscles have not responded to the innervations accompanying deep thought and refined sentiment will lack in individuality and refinement. The neck that has supported heavy loads, and has not responded to the varied requirements of delicate changes of position of head and body, will appear massive and clumsy. These physiognomic differences must not mislead us in our interpretations. But even without them, we are inclined to draw inferences in regard to mentality from a receding forehead, a heavy jaw, large and heavy teeth, perhaps even from an inordinate length of arms or an unusual development of hairiness.

From a strictly scientific point of view, these inferences seem to be open to the most serious doubt. Only a few investigations have been made in relation to these problems, but their results have been entirely negative. Most important among them is the elaborate attempt made by Karl Pearson to investigate the relationship of intelligence to size and shape of the head. His conclusions are so significant that I will repeat them here: "The onus of proof that other measurements and more subtle psychological observations would lead to more definite results may now, I think, be left to those who *a priori* regard such an association as probable. Personally, the result of the present inquiry has convinced me that there is little relationship between the external physical and the psychical character in man." I think all the investigations that have been made up to the present time compel us to assume that the characteristics of the osseous, muscular, visceral, or circulatory system, have practically no direct relation to the mental ability of man (Manouvrier).

We will now turn to the important subject of the size of the brain, which

seems to be the one anatomical feature which bears directly upon the question at issue. It seems plausible that the greater the central nervous system, the higher the faculty of the race, and the greater its aptitude to mental achievements. Let us review the known facts. Two methods are open for ascertaining the size of the central nervous system,—the determination of the weight of the brain and that of the capacity of the cranial cavity. The first of these methods is the one which promises the most accurate results. Naturally, the number of Europeans whose brain-weights have been taken is much larger than that of individuals of other races. There are, however, sufficient data available to establish beyond a doubt the fact that the brain-weight of the whites is larger than that of most other races, particularly larger than that of the Negroes. That of the white male is about 1360 grams. The investigations of cranial capacities are quite in accord with these results. According to Topinard, the capacity of the skull of males of the neolithic period in Europe is about 1560 cc. (44 cases); that of modern Europeans is the same (347 cases); of the Mongoloid race, 1510 cc. (68 cases); of African Negroes, 1405 cc. (83 cases); and of Negroes of the Pacific Ocean, 1460 cc. (46 cases). Here we have, therefore, a decided difference in favor of the white race.

In interpreting these facts, we must ask, Does the increase in the size of the brain prove an increase in faculty? This would seem highly probable, and facts may be adduced which speak in favor of this assumption. First among these is the relatively large size of the brain among the higher animals, and the still larger size in man. Furthermore, Manouvrier has measured the capacity of the skulls of thirty-five eminent men. He found that they averaged 1665 cc. as compared to 1560 cc. general average, which was derived from 110 individuals. On the other hand, he found that the cranial capacity of forty-five murderers was 1580 cc., also superior to the general average. The same result has been obtained through weighings of brains of eminent men. The brains of thirty-four of these showed an average increase of 93 grams over the average brain-weight of 1357 grams. Another fact which may be adduced in favor of the theory that greater brains are accompanied by higher faculty is that the heads of the best English students are larger than those of the average class of students (Galton). The force of the arguments furnished by these observations must, however, not be overestimated.

First of all, the brains of not all eminent men are unusually large. On the contrary, a few unusually small brains have been found in the series. Furthermore, most of the brain-weights constituting the general series are obtained in anatomical institutes; and the individuals who find their way there are poorly developed, on account of malnutrition and of life under unfavorable circumstances, while the eminent men represent a much better nourished class. As poor nourishment reduces the weight and size of the whole body, it will also reduce the size and weight of the brain. It is not certain, therefore, that the observed difference is entirely due to the higher ability of the eminent men. This may also explain the larger size of the brains of the professional classes as compared to those of unskilled laborers (Ferraira). An additional number of restricting facts must be enumerated. The most important among these is the difference in brain-weight between men

and women. When men and women of the same stature are compared, it is found that the brain of woman is much lighter than that of man. Nevertheless the faculty of woman while perhaps qualitatively different from that of man, cannot be deemed to be of an inferior character. This is therefore a case in which smaller brain-weight is accompanied throughout by equal faculty. We conclude from this fact that it is not impossible that the smaller brains of males of other races should do the same work as is done by the larger brain of the white race. But this comparison is not quite on equal terms, as we may assume that there is a certain structural difference between male and female, which causes the difference in size between the sexes; so that comparison between male and female is not the same as comparison between male and male.

Notwithstanding these restrictions, the increase of the size of the brain in the higher animals, and the lack of development in microcephalic individuals, are fundamental facts which make it more than probable that increased size of the brain causes increased faculty, although the relation is not quite as immediate as is often assumed.

The reason for a lack of close correlation between brain-weight and mental faculties is not far to seek. The functioning of the brain depends upon the nerve cells and fibres, which do not constitute, by any means, the whole mass of the brain. A brain with many cells and complex connections between the cells may contain less connective tissue than another one of simpler nervous structure. In other words, if there is a close relation between form and ability, it must be looked for rather in the morphological traits of the brain than in its size. A correlation exists between size of brain and number of cells and fibres, but the correlation is weak (Donaldson).

Notwithstanding the numerous attempts that have been made to find structural differences between the brains of different races of man that could be directly interpreted in psychological terms, no conclusive results of any kind have been attained. The status of our present knowledge has been well summed up by Franklin P. Mall, to whose investigation I referred before. He holds that, on account of the great variability of the individuals constituting each race, racial differences are exceedingly difficult to discover, and that up to the present time none have been found that will endure serious criticism.

We may now sum up the results of our preliminary inquiry. We have found that the unproved assumption of identity of cultural achievement and of mental ability is founded on an error of judgment; that the variations in cultural development can as well be explained by a consideration of the general course of historical events without recourse to the theory of material differences of mental faculty in different races. We have found, furthermore, that a similar error underlies the common assumption that the white race represents physically the highest type of man, but that anatomical and physiological considerations do not support these views.

1911

# JAMES HARVEY ROBINSON

## *On Various Kinds of Thinking*

### From The Mind in the Making

We do not think enough about thinking, and much of our confusion is the result of current illusions in regard to it. Let us forget for the moment any impressions we may have derived from the philosophers, and see what seems to happen in ourselves. The first thing that we notice is that our thought moves with such incredible rapidity that it is almost impossible to arrest any specimen of it long enough to have a look at it. When we are offered a penny for our thoughts we always find that we have recently had so many things in mind that we can easily make a selection which will not compromise us too nakedly. On inspection we shall find that even if we are not downright ashamed of a great part of our spontaneous thinking it is far too intimate, personal, ignoble, or trivial to permit us to reveal more than a small part of it. I believe this must be true of everyone. We do not, of course, know what goes on in other people's heads. They tell us very little and we tell them very little. The spigot of speech, rarely fully opened, could never emit more than driblets of the ever renewed hogshead of thought—*noch grösser wie's Heidelberger Fass.* We find it hard to believe that other people's thoughts are as silly as our own, but they probably are.

We all appear to ourselves to be thinking all the time during our waking hours, and most of us are aware that we go on thinking while we are asleep, even more foolishly than when awake. When uninterrupted by some practical issue, we are engaged in what is now known as a *reverie.* This is our spontaneous and favorite kind of thinking. We allow our ideas to take their own course, and this course is determined by our hopes and fears, our spontaneous desires, their fulfillment or frustration; by our likes and dislikes, our loves and hates and resentments. There is nothing else anything like so interesting to ourselves as ourselves. All thought that is not more or less laboriously controlled and directed will inevitably circle about the beloved Ego. It is amusing and pathetic to observe this tendency in ourselves and in others. We learn politely and generously to overlook this truth, but if we dare to think of it, it blazes forth like the noontide sun.

The reverie or "free association of ideas" has of late become the subject of scientific research. While investigators are not yet agreed on the results, or at least on the proper interpretation to be given to them, there can be no doubt that our reveries form the chief index to our fundamental character. They are a reflection of our nature as modified by often hidden and forgotten experiences. We need not go into the matter further here, for it is only necessary to observe that the reverie is at all times a potent and in many cases an omnipotent rival to every other kind of thinking. It

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doubtless influences all our speculations in its persistent tendency to self-magnification and self-justification, which are its chief preoccupations, but it is the last thing to make directly or indirectly for honest increase of knowledge.[1] Philosophers usually talk as if such thinking did not exist or were in some way negligible. This is what makes their speculations so unreal and often worthless.

The reverie, as any of us can see for himself, is frequently broken and interrupted by the necessity of a second kind of thinking. We have to make practical decisions. Shall we write a letter or no? Shall we take the subway or a bus? Shall we have dinner at seven or half past? Shall we buy U. S. Rubber or a Liberty Bond? Decisions are easily distinguishable from the free flow of the reverie. Sometimes they demand a good deal of careful pondering and the recollection of pertinent facts; often, however, they are made impulsively. They are a more difficult and laborious thing than the reverie, and we resent having to "make up our mind" when we are tired or absorbed in a congenial reverie. Weighing a decision, it should be noted, does not necessarily add anything to our knowledge, although we may, of course, seek further information before making it.

## Rationalizing

A third kind of thinking is stimulated when anyone questions our belief and opinions. We sometimes find ourselves changing our minds without any resistance or heavy emotion, but if we are told that we are wrong we resent the imputation and harden our hearts. We are incredibly heedless in the formation of our beliefs, but find ourselves filled with an illicit passion for them when anyone proposes to rob us of their companionship. It is obviously not the ideas themselves that are dear to us, but our self-esteem, which is threatened. We are by nature stubbornly pledged to defend our own from attack, whether it be our person, our family, our property, or our opinion. A United States Senator once remarked to a friend of mine that God Almighty could not make him change his mind on our Latin America policy. We may surrender, but rarely confess ourselves vanquished. In the intellectual world, at least, peace is without victory.

Few of us take the pains to study the origin of our cherished convictions; indeed, we have a natural repugnance to so doing. We like to continue to believe what we have been accustomed to accept as true, and the resentment aroused when doubt is cast upon any of our assumptions leads us to seek every manner of excuse for clinging to them. *The result is that most of our so-called reasoning consists in finding arguments for going on believing as we already do.*

I remember years ago attending a public dinner to which the Governor of the state was bidden. The chairman explained that His Excellency could not

[1] The poet-clergyman, John Donne, who lived in the time of James I, has given a beautifully honest picture of the doings of a saint's mind: "I throw myself down in my chamber and call in and invite God and His angels thither, and when they are there I neglect God and His angels for the noise of a fly, for the rattling of a coach, for the whining of a door. I talk on in the same posture of praying, eyes lifted up, knees bowed down, as though I prayed to God, and if God or His angels should ask me when I thought last of God in that prayer I cannot tell. Sometimes I find that I had forgot what I was about, but when I began to forget it I cannot tell. A memory of yesterday's pleasures, a fear of tomorrow's dangers, a straw under my knee, a noise in mine ear, a light in mine eye, an anything, a nothing, a fancy, a chimera in my brain troubles me in my prayer."—Quoted by Robert Lynd, *The Art of Letters,* pp. 46-47.

be present for certain "good" reasons; what the "real" reasons were the presiding officer said he would leave us to conjecture. This distinction between "good" and "real" reasons is one of the most clarifying and essential in the whole realm of thought. We can readily give what seem to us "good" reasons for being a Catholic or a Mason, a Republican or a Democrat, an adherent or opponent of the League of Nations. But the "real" reasons are usually on quite a different plane. Of course the importance of this distinction is popularly, if somewhat obscurely, recognized. The Baptist missionary is ready enough to see that the Buddhist is not such because his doctrines would bear careful inspection, but because he happened to be born in a Buddhist family in Tokio. But it would be treason to his faith to acknowledge that his own partiality for certain doctrines is due to the fact that his mother was a member of the First Baptist Church of Oak Ridge. A savage can give all sorts of reasons for his belief that it is dangerous to step on a man's shadow, and a newspaper editor can advance plenty of arguments against the Bolsheviki. But neither of them may realize why he happens to be defending his particular opinion.

The "real" reasons for our beliefs are concealed from ourselves as well as from others. As we grow up we simply adopt the ideas presented to us in regard to such matters as religion, family relations, property, business, our country, and the state. We unconsciously absorb them from our environment. They are persistently whispered in our ear by the group in which we happen to live. Moreover, as Mr. Trotter has pointed out, these judgments, being the product of suggestion and not of reasoning, have the quality of perfect obviousness, so that to question them

> . . . is to the believer to carry skepticism to an insane degree, and will be met by contempt, disapproval, or condemnation, according to the nature of the belief in question. When, therefore, we find ourselves entertaining an opinion about the basis of which there is a quality of feeling which tells us that to inquire into it would be absurd, obviously unnecessary, unprofitable, undesirable, bad form, or wicked, we may know that that opinion is a non-rational one, and probably, therefore, founded upon inadequate evidence.[2]

Opinions, on the other hand, which are the result of experience or of honest reasoning do not have this quality of "primary certitude." I remember when as a youth I heard a group of business men discussing the question of the immortality of the soul, I was outraged by the sentiment of doubt expressed by one of the party. As I look back now I see that I had at the time no interest in the matter, and certainly no least argument to urge in favor of the belief in which I had been reared. But neither my personal indifference to the issue, nor the fact that I had previously given it no attention, served to prevent an angry resentment when I heard *my* ideas questioned.

This spontaneous and loyal support of our preconceptions—this process of finding "good" reasons to justify our routine beliefs—is known to modern psychologists as "rationalizing"—clearly only a new name for a very ancient thing. Our "good" reasons ordinarily have no value in promoting honest enlightenment, because, no matter how solemnly they may be marshaled, they are at bottom the result of personal preference or prejudice, and not of an

[2] *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*, p. 44.

honest desire to seek or accept new knowledge.

In our reveries we are frequently engaged in self-justification, for we cannot bear to think ourselves wrong, and yet have constant illustrations of our weaknesses and mistakes. So we spend much time finding fault with circumstances and the conduct of others, and shifting on to them with great ingenuity the onus of our own failures and disappointments. *Rationalizing is the self-exculpation which occurs when we feel ourselves, or our group, accused of misapprehension or error.*

The little word *my* is the most important one in all human affairs, and properly to reckon with it is the beginning of wisdom. It has the same force whether it is *my* dinner, *my* dog, and *my* house, or *my* faith, *my* country, and *my* God. We not only resent the imputation that our watch is wrong, or our car shabby, but that our conceptions of the canals of Mars, of the pronunciation of "Epictetus," of the medicinal value of salicine, or the date of Sargon I, are subject to revision.

Philosophers, scholars, and men of science exhibit a common sensitiveness in all decisions in which their *amour propre* is involved. Thousands of argumentative works have been written to vent a grudge. However stately their reasoning, it may be nothing but rationalizing, stimulated by the most commonplace of all motives. A history of philosophy and theology could be written in terms of grouches, wounded pride, and aversions, and it would be far more instructive than the usual treatments of these themes. Sometimes, under Providence, the lowly impulse of resentment leads to great achievements. Milton wrote his treatise on divorce as a result of his troubles with his seventeen-year-old wife, and when he was accused of being the leading spirit in a new sect, the Divorcers, he wrote his noble *Areopagitica* to prove his right to say what he thought fit, and incidentally to establish the advantage of a free press in the promotion of truth.

All mankind, high and low, thinks in all the ways which have been described. The reverie goes on all the time not only in the mind of the mill hand and the Broadway flapper, but equally in weighty judges and godly bishops. It has gone on in all the philosophers, scientists, poets, and theologians that have ever lived. Aristotle's most abstruse speculations were doubtless tempered by highly irrelevant reflections. He is reported to have had very thin legs and small eyes, for which he doubtless had to find excuses, and he was wont to indulge in very conspicuous dress and rings and was accustomed to arrange his hair carefully.[3] Diogenes the Cynic exhibited the impudence of a touchy soul. His tub was his distinction. Tennyson in beginning his "Maud" could not forget his chagrin over losing his patrimony years before as the result of an unhappy investment in the Patent Decorative Carving Company. These facts are not recalled here as a gratuitous disparagement of the truly great, but to insure a full realization of the tremendous competition which all really exacting thought has to face, even in the minds of the most highly endowed mortals.

And now the astonishing and perturbing suspicion emerges that perhaps almost all that had passed for social science, political economy, politics, and ethics in the past may be brushed aside by future generations as mainly rationalizing. John Dewey has already

[3] Diogenes Lærtius, Book V.

reached this conclusion in regard to philosophy.[4] Veblen[5] and other writers have revealed the various unperceived presuppositions of the traditional political economy, and now comes an Italian sociologist, Vilfredo Pareto, who, in his huge treatise on general sociology, devotes hundreds of pages to substantiating a similar thesis affecting all the social sciences.[6] This conclusion may be ranked by students of a hundred years hence as one of the several great discoveries of our age. It is by no means fully worked out, and it is so opposed to nature that it will be very slowly accepted by the great mass of those who consider themselves thoughtful. As an historical student I am personally fully reconciled to this newer view. Indeed, it seems to me inevitable that just as the various sciences of nature were, before the opening of the seventeenth century, largely masses of rationalizations to suit the religious sentiments of the period, so the social sciences have continued even to our own day to be rationalizations of uncritically accepted beliefs and customs.

*It will become apparent as we proceed that the fact that an idea is ancient and that it has been widely received is no argument in its favor, but should immediately suggest the necessity of carefully testing it as a probable instance of rationalization.*

## How Creative Thought Transforms the World

This brings us to another kind of thought which can fairly easily be distinguished from the three kinds described above. It has not the usual qualities of the reverie, for it does not hover about our personal complacencies and humiliations. It is not made up of the homely decisions forced upon us by everyday needs, when we review our little stock of existing information, consult our conventional preferences and obligations, and make a choice of action. It is not the defense of our own cherished beliefs and prejudices just because they are our own—mere plausible excuses for remaining of the same mind. On the contrary, it is that peculiar species of thought which leads us to *change* our mind.

It is this kind of thought that has raised man from his pristine, subsavage ignorance and squalor to the degree of knowledge and comfort which he now possesses. On his capacity to continue and greatly extend this kind of thinking depends his chance of groping his way out of the plight in which the most highly civilized peoples of the world now find themselves. In the past this type of thinking has been called reason. But so many misapprehensions have grown up around the word that some of us have become very suspicious of it. I suggest, therefore, that we substitute a recent name and speak of "creative thought" rather than of reason. *For this kind of meditation begets knowledge, and knowledge is really creative inasmuch as it makes things look different from what they seemed before and may indeed work for their reconstruction.*

[4] *Reconstruction in Philosophy.*

[5] *The Place of Science in Modern Civilization.*

[6] *Traité de Sociologie Générale, passim.* The author's term *derivations* seems to be his precise way of expressing what we have called the "good" reasons, and his *residus* correspond to the "real" reasons. He well says, *"L'homme éprouve le besoin de raisonner, et en outre d'étendre un voile sur ses instincts et sur ses sentiments"*—hence, rationalization. (P. 788.) His aim is to reduce sociology to the "real" reasons. (P. 791.)

In certain moods some of us realize that we are observing things or making reflections with a seeming disregard of our personal preoccupations. We are not preening or defending ourselves; we are not faced by the necessity of any practical decision, nor are we apologizing for believing this or that. We are just wondering and looking and mayhap seeing what we never perceived before.

Curiosity is as clear and definite as any of our urges. We wonder what is in a sealed telegram or in a letter in which someone else is absorbed, or what is being said in the telephone booth or in low conversation. This inquisitiveness is vastly stimulated by jealousy, suspicion, or any hint that we ourselves are directly or indirectly involved. But there appears to be a fair amount of personal interest in other people's affairs even when they do not concern us except as a mystery to be unraveled or a tale to be told. The reports of a divorce suit will have "news value" for many weeks. They constitute a story, like a novel or play or moving picture. This is not an example of pure curiosity, however, since we readily identify ourselves with others, and their joys and despair then become our own.

We also take note of, or "observe," as Sherlock Holmes says, things which have nothing to do with our personal interests and make no personal appeal either direct or by way of sympathy. This is what Veblen so well calls "idle curiosity." And it is usually idle enough. Some of us when we face the line of people opposite us in a subway train impulsively consider them in detail and engage in rapid inferences and form theories in regard to them. On entering a room there are those who will perceive at a glance the degree of preciousness of the rugs, the character of the pictures, and the personality revealed by the books. But there are many, it would seem, who are so absorbed in their personal reverie or in some definite purpose that they have no bright-eyed energy for idle curiosity. The tendency to miscellaneous observation we come by honestly enough, for we note it in many of our animal relatives.

Veblen, however, uses the term "idle curiosity" somewhat ironically, as is his wont. It is idle only to those who fail to realize that it may be a very rare and indispensable thing from which almost all distinguished human achievement proceeds, since it may lead to systematic examination and seeking for things hitherto undiscovered. For research is but diligent search which enjoys the high flavor of primitive hunting. Occasionally and fitfully idle curiosity thus leads to creative thought, which alters and broadens our own views and aspirations and may in turn, under highly favorable circumstances, affect the views and lives of others, even for generations to follow. An example or two will make this unique human process clear.

Galileo was a thoughtful youth and doubtless carried on a rich and varied reverie. He had artistic ability and might have turned out to be a musician or painter. When he had dwelt among the monks at Vallombrosa he had been tempted to lead the life of a religious. As a boy he busied himself with toy machines and he inherited a fondness for mathematics. All these facts are of record. We may safely assume also that, along with many other subjects of contemplation, the Pisan maidens found a vivid place in his thoughts.

One day when seventeen years old he wandered into the cathedral of his na-

tive town. In the midst of his reverie he looked up at the lamps hanging by long chains from the high ceiling of the church. Then something very difficult to explain occurred. He found himself no longer thinking of the building, worshipers, or the services; of his artistic or religious interests; of his reluctance to become a physician as his father wished. He forgot the question of a career and even the *graziosissime donne.* As he watched the swinging lamps he was suddenly wondering if mayhap their oscillations, whether long or short, did not occupy the same time. Then he tested this hypothesis by counting his pulse, for that was the only timepiece he had with him.

This observation, however remarkable in itself, was not enough to produce a really creative thought. Others may have noticed the same thing and yet nothing came of it. Most of our observations have no assignable results. Galileo may have seen that the warts on a peasant's face formed a perfect isosceles triangle, or he may have noticed with boyish glee that just as the officiating priest was uttering the solemn words, *ecce agnus Dei,* a fly lit on the end of his nose. To be really creative, ideas have to be worked up and then "put over," so that they become a part of man's social heritage. The highly accurate pendulum clock was one of the later results of Galileo's discovery. He himself was led to reconsider and successfully to refute the old notions of falling bodies. It remained for Newton to prove that the moon was falling, and presumably all the heavenly bodies. This quite upset all the consecrated views of the heavens as managed by angelic engineers. The universality of the laws of gravitation stimulated the attempt to seek other and equally important natural laws and cast grave doubts on the miracles in which mankind had hitherto believed. In short, those who dared to include in their thought the discoveries of Galileo and his successors found themselves in a new earth surrounded by new heavens.

On the 28th of October, 1831, three hundred and fifty years after Galileo had noticed the isochronous vibrations of the lamps, creative thought and its currency had so far increased that Faraday was wondering what would happen if he mounted a disk of copper between the poles of a horseshoe magnet. As the disk revolved an electric current was produced. This would doubtless have seemed the idlest kind of experiment to the staunch business men of the time, who, it happened, were just then denouncing the child labor bills in their anxiety to avail themselves to the full of the results of earlier idle curiosity. But should the dynamos and motors which have come into being as the outcome of Faraday's experiment be stopped this evening, the business man of today, agitated over labor troubles, might, as he trudged home past lines of "dead" cars, through dark streets to an unlighted house, engage in a little creative thought of his own and perceive that he and his laborers would have no modern factories and mines to quarrel about had it not been for the strange practical effects of the idle curiosity of scientists, inventors, and engineers.

The examples of creative intelligence given above belong to the realm of modern scientific achievement, which furnishes the most striking instances of the effects of scrupulous, objective thinking. But there are, of course, other great realms in which the recording and embodiment of acute observation and insight have wrought them-

selves into the higher life of man. The great poets and dramatists and our modern storytellers have found themselves engaged in productive reveries, noting and artistically presenting their discoveries for the delight and instruction of those who have the ability to appreciate them.

The process by which a fresh and original poem or drama comes into being is doubtless analogous to that which originates and elaborates so-called scientific discoveries; but there is clearly a temperamental difference. The genesis and advance of painting, sculpture, and music offer still other problems. We really as yet know shockingly little about these matters, and indeed very few people have the least curiosity about them.[7] Nevertheless, creative intelligence in its various forms and activities is what makes man. Were it not for its slow, painful, and constantly discouraged operations through the ages man would be no more than a species of primate living on seeds, fruit, roots, and uncooked flesh, and wandering naked through the woods and over the plains like a chimpanzee.

The origin and progress and future promotion of civilization are ill-understood and misconceived. These should be made the chief theme of education, but much hard work is necessary before we can reconstruct our ideas of man and his capacities and free ourselves from innumerable persistent misapprehensions. There have been obstructionists in all times, not merely the lethargic masses, but the moralists, the rationalizing theologians, and most of the philosophers, all busily if unconsciously engaged in ratifying existing ignorance and mistakes and discouraging creative thought. Naturally, those who reassure us seem worthy of honor and respect. Equally naturally those who puzzle us with disturbing criticisms and invite us to change our ways are objects of suspicion and readily discredited. Our personal discontent does not ordinarily extend to any critical questioning of the general situation in which we find ourselves. In every age the prevailing conditions of civilization have appeared quite natural and inevitable to those who grew up in them. The cow asks no questions as to how it happens to have a dry stall and a supply of hay. The kitten laps its warm milk from a china saucer, without knowing anything about porcelain; the dog nestles in the corner of a divan with no sense of obligation to the inventors of upholstery and the manufacturers of down pillows. So we humans accept our breakfasts, our trains and telephones and orchestras and movies, our national Constitution, or moral code and standards of manners, with the simplicity and innocence of a pet rabbit. We have absolutely inexhaustible capacities for appropriating what others do for us with no thought of a "thank you." We do not feel called upon to make any least contribution to the merry game ourselves. Indeed, we are usually quite unaware that a game is being played at all.

We have now examined the various classes of thinking which we can readily observe in ourselves and which we have plenty of reasons to believe go on, and always have been going on, in our fel-

[7] Recently a reëxamination of creative thought has begun as a result of new knowledge which discredits many of the notions formerly held about "reason." See, for example, *Creative Intelligence*, by a group of American philosophic thinkers; John Dewey, *Essays in Experimental Logic* (both pretty hard books); and Veblen, *The Place of Science in Modern Civilization*. Easier than these and very stimulating are Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, and Woodworth, *Dynamic Psychology*.

low men. We can sometimes get quite pure and sparkling examples of all four kinds, but commonly they are so confused and intermingled in our reverie as not to be readily distinguishable. The reverie is a reflection of our longings, exultations, and complacencies, our fears, suspicions, and disappointments. We are chiefly engaged in struggling to maintain our self-respect and in asserting that supremacy which we all crave and which seems to us our natural prerogative. It is not strange, but rather quite inevitable, that our beliefs about what is true and false, good and bad, right and wrong, should be mixed up with the reverie and be influenced by the same considerations which determine its character and course. We resent criticisms of our views exactly as we do of anything else connected with ourselves. Our notions of life and its ideals seem to us to be *our own* and as such necessarily true and right, to be defended at all costs.

*We very rarely consider, however, the process by which we gained our convictions.* If we did so, we could hardly fail to see that there was usually little ground for our confidence in them. Here and there, in this department of knowledge or that, some one of us might make a fair claim to have taken some trouble to get correct ideas of, let us say, the situation in Russia, the sources of our food supply, the origin of the Constitution, the revision of the tariff, the policy of the Holy Roman Apostolic Church, modern business organization, trade unions, birth control, socialism, the League of Nations, the excess profits tax, preparedness, advertising in its social bearings; but only a very exceptional person would be entitled to opinions on all of even these few matters. And yet most of us have opinions on all these, and on many other questions of equal importance, of which we may know even less. We feel compelled, as self-respecting persons, to take sides when they come up for discussion. We even surprise ourselves by our omniscience. Without taking thought we see in a flash that it is most righteous and expedient to discourage birth control by legislative enactment, or that one who decries intervention in Mexico is clearly wrong, or that big advertising is essential to big business and that big business is the pride of the land. As godlike beings why should we not rejoice in our omniscience?

It is clear, in any case, that our convictions on important matters are not the result of knowledge or critical thought, nor, it may be added, are they often dictated by supposed self-interest. Most of them are *pure prejudices* in the proper sense of that word. We do not form them ourselves. They are the whisperings of "the voice of the herd." We have in the last analysis no responsibility for them and need assume none. They are not really our own ideas, but those of others no more well-informed or inspired than ourselves, who have got them in the same careless and humiliating manner as we. It should be our pride to revise our ideas and not to adhere to what passes for respectable opinion, for such opinion can frequently be shown to be not respectable at all. We should, in view of the considerations that have been mentioned, resent our supine credulity. As an English writer has remarked:

> If we feared the entertaining of an unverifiable opinion with the warmth with which we fear using the wrong implement at the dinner table, if the thought of holding a prejudice disgusted us as does a foul

disease, then the dangers of man's suggestibility would be turned into advantages.[8]

The purpose of this essay is to set forth briefly the way in which the notions of the herd have been accumulated. This seems to me the best, easiest, and least invidious educational device for cultivating a proper distrust for the older notions on which we still continue to rely.

The "real" reasons, which explain how it is we happen to hold a particular belief, are chiefly historical. Our most important opinions—those, for example, having to do with traditional, religious, and moral convictions, property rights, patriotism, national honor, the state, and indeed all the assumed foundations of society—are, as I have already suggested, rarely the result of reasoned consideration, but of unthinking absorption from the social environment in which we live. Consequently, they have about them a quality of "elemental certitude," and we especially resent doubt or criticism cast upon them. So long, however, as we revere the whisperings of the herd, we are obviously unable to examine them dispassionately and to consider to what extent they are suited to the novel conditions and social exigencies in which we find ourselves today.

The "real" reasons for our beliefs, by making clear their origins and history, can do much to dissipate this emotional blockade and rid us of our prejudices and preconceptions. Once this is done and we come critically to examine our traditional beliefs, we may well find some of them sustained by experience and honest reasoning, while others must be revised to meet new conditions and our more extended knowledge. But only after we have undertaken such a critical examination in the light of experience and modern knowledge, freed from any feelings of "primary certitude," can we claim that the "good" are also the "real" reasons for our opinions.

I do not flatter myself that this general show-up of man's thought through the ages will cure myself or others of carelessness in adopting ideas, or of unseemly heat in defending them just because we have adopted them. But if the considerations which I propose to recall are really incorporated into our thinking and are permitted to establish our general outlook on human affairs, they will do much to relieve the imaginary obligation we feel in regard to traditional sentiments and ideals. Few of us are capable of engaging in creative thought, but some of us can at least come to distinguish it from other and inferior kinds of thought and accord to it the esteem that it merits as the greatest treasure of the past and the only hope of the future.

1921

[8] Trotter, *op. cit.*, p. 45. The first part of this little volume is excellent.

# JOHN DEWEY

## *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy*

THAT the publication of the "Origin of Species" marked an epoch in the development of the natural sciences is well known to the layman. That the combination of the very words origin and species embodied an intellectual revolt and introduced a new intellectual temper is easily overlooked by the expert. The conceptions that had reigned in the philosophy of nature and knowledge for two thousand years, the conceptions that had become the familiar furniture of the mind, rested on the assumption of the superiority of the fixed and final; they rested upon treating change and origin as signs of defect and unreality. In laying hands upon the sacred ark of absolute permanency, in treating the forms that had been regarded as types of fixity and perfection as originating and passing away, the "Origin of Species" introduced a mode of thinking that in the end was bound to transform the logic of knowledge, and hence the treatment of morals, politics, and religion.

No wonder, then, that the publication of Darwin's book, a half century ago, precipitated a crisis. The true nature of the controversy is easily concealed from us, however, by the theological clamor that attended it. The vivid and popular features of the anti-Darwinian row tended to leave the impression that the issue was between science on one side and theology on the other. Such was not the case—the issue lay primarily within science itself, as Darwin himself early recognized. The theological outcry he discounted from the start, hardly noticing it save as it bore upon the "feelings of his female relatives." But for two decades before final publication he contemplated the possibility of being put down by his scientific peers as a fool or as crazy; and he set, as the measure of his success, the degree in which he should affect three men of science: Lyell in geology, Hooker in botany, and Huxley in zoology.

Religious considerations lent fervor to the controversy, but they did not provoke it. Intellectually, religious emotions are not creative but conservative. They attach themselves readily to the current view of the world and consecrate it. They steep and dye intellectual fabrics in the seething vat of emotions; they do not form their warp and woof. There is not, I think, an instance of any large idea about the world being independently generated by religion. Although the ideas that rose up like armed men against Darwinism owed their intensity to religious associations, their origin and meaning are to be sought in science and philosophy, not in religion.

Few words in our language foreshorten intellectual history as much as does the word species. The Greeks, in initiating the intellectual life of Europe, were impressed by characteristic traits of the life of plants and animals; so impressed indeed that they made these

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traits the key to defining nature and to explaining mind and society. And truly, life is so wonderful that a seemingly successful reading of its mystery might well lead men to believe that the key to the secrets of heaven and earth was in their hands. The Greek rendering of this mystery, the Greek formulation of the aim and standard of knowledge, was in the course of time embodied in the word species, and it controlled philosophy for two thousand years. To understand the intellectual face-about expressed in the phrase "Origin of Species," we must, then, understand the long dominant idea against which it is a protest.

Consider how men were impressed by the facts of life. Their eyes fell upon certain things slight in bulk, and frail in structure. To every appearance, these perceived things were inert and passive. Suddenly, under certain circumstances, these things — henceforth known as seeds or eggs or germs — begin to change, to change rapidly in size, form, and qualities. Rapid and extensive changes occur, however, in many things —as when wood is touched by fire. But the changes in the living thing are orderly; they are cumulative; they tend constantly in one direction; they do not, like other changes, destroy or consume, or pass fruitless into wandering flux; they realize and fulfil. Each successive stage, no matter how unlike its predecessor, preserves its net effect and also prepares the way for a fuller activity on the part of its successor. In living beings, changes do not happen as they seem to happen elsewhere, any which way; the earlier changes are regulated in view of later results. This progressive organization does not cease till there is achieved a true final term, a τελὸς, a completed, perfected end. This final form exercises in turn a plenitude of functions, not the least noteworthy of which is production of germs like those from which it took its own origin, germs capable of the same cycle of self-fulfilling activity.

But the whole miraculous tale is not yet told. The same drama is enacted to the same destiny in countless myriads of individuals so sundered in time, so severed in space, that they have no opportunity for mutual consultation and no means of interaction. As an old writer quaintly said, "things of the same kind go through the same formalities"—celebrate, as it were, the same ceremonial rites.

This formal activity which operates throughout a series of changes and holds them to a single course; which subordinates their aimless flux to its own perfect manifestation; which, leaping the boundaries of space and time, keeps individuals distant in space and remote in time to a uniform type of structure and function: this principle seemed to give insight into the very nature of reality itself. To it Aristotle gave the name, εἶδος. This term the scholastics translated as *species*.

The force of this term was deepened by its application to everything in the universe that observes order in flux and manifests constancy through change. From the casual drift of daily weather, through the uneven recurrence of seasons and unequal return of seed time and harvest, up to the majestic sweep of the heavens—the image of eternity in time—and from this to the unchanging pure and contemplative intelligence beyond nature lies one unbroken fulfilment of ends. Nature as a whole is a progressive realization of purpose strictly comparable to the realization of purpose in any single plant or animal.

The conception of εἶδος, species, a fixed form and final cause, was the central principle of knowledge as well as of nature. Upon it rested the logic of science. Change as change is mere flux and lapse; it insults intelligence. Genuinely to know is to grasp a permanent end that realizes itself through changes, holding them thereby within the metes and bounds of fixed truth. Completely to know is to relate all special forms to their one single end and good: pure contemplative intelligence. Since, however, the scene of nature which directly confronts us is in change, nature as directly and practically experienced does not satisfy the conditions of knowledge. Human experience is in flux, and hence the instrumentalities of sense-perception and of inference based upon observation are condemned in advance. Science is compelled to aim at realities lying behind and beyond the processes of nature, and to carry on its search for these realities by means of rational forms transcending ordinary modes of perception and inference.

There are, indeed, but two alternative courses. We must either find the appropriate objects and organs of knowledge in the mutual interactions of changing things; or else, to escape the infection of change, we *must* seek them in some transcendent and supernal region. The human mind, deliberately as it were, exhausted the logic of the changeless, the final, and the transcendent, before it essayed adventure on the pathless wastes of generation and transformation. We dispose all too easily of the efforts of the schoolmen to interpret nature and mind in terms of real essences, hidden forms, and occult faculties, forgetful of the seriousness and dignity of the ideas that lay behind. We dispose of them by laughing at the famous gentleman who accounted for the fact that opium put people to sleep on the ground it had a dormitive faculty. But the doctrine, held in our own day, that knowledge of the plant that yields the poppy consists in referring the peculiarities of an individual to a type, to a universal form, a doctrine so firmly established that any other method of knowing was conceived to be unphilosophical and unscientific, is a survival of precisely the same logic. This identity of conception in the scholastic and anti-Darwinian theory may well suggest greater sympathy for what has become unfamiliar as well as greater humility regarding the further unfamiliarities that history has in store.

Darwin was not, of course, the first to question the classic philosophy of nature and of knowledge. The beginnings of the revolution are in the physical science of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. When Galileo said: "It is my opinion that the earth is very noble and admirable by reason of so many and so different alterations and generations which are incessantly made therein," he expressed the changed temper that was coming over the world; the transfer of interest from the permanent to the changing. When Descartes said: "The nature of physical things is much more easily conceived when they are beheld coming gradually into existence, than when they are only considered as produced at once in a finished and perfect state," the modern world became self-conscious of the logic that was henceforth to control it, the logic of which Darwin's "Origin of Species" is the latest scientific achievement. Without the methods of Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, and their successors in astronomy, physics, and chemistry, Darwin would have been helpless in the organic

sciences. But prior to Darwin the impact of the new scientific method upon life, mind, and politics had been arrested, because between these ideal or moral interests and the inorganic world intervened the kingdom of plants and animals. The gates of the garden of life were barred to the new ideas; and only through this garden was there access to mind and politics. The influence of Darwin upon philosophy resides in his having conquered the phenomena of life for the principle of transition, and thereby freed the new logic for application to mind and morals and life. When he said of species what Galileo had said of the earth, *e pur se muove,* he emancipated, once for all, genetic and experimental ideas as an organon of asking questions and looking for explanations.

The exact bearings upon philosophy of the new logical outlook are, of course, as yet, uncertain and inchoate. We live in the twilight of intellectual transition. One must add the rashness of the prophet to the stubbornness of the partizan to venture a systematic exposition of the influence upon philosophy of the Darwinian method. At best, we can but inquire as to its general bearing—the effect upon mental temper and complexion, upon that body of half-conscious, half-instinctive intellectual aversions and preferences which determine, after all, our more deliberate intellectual enterprises. In this vague inquiry there happens to exist as a kind of touchstone a problem of long historic currency that has also been much discussed in Darwinian literature. I refer to the old problem of design *versus* chance, mind *versus* matter, as the causal explanation, first or final, of things.

As we have already seen, the classic notion of species carried with it the idea of purpose. In all living forms, a specific type is present directing the earlier stages of growth to the realization of its own perfection. Since this purposive regulative principle is not visible to the senses, it follows that it must be an ideal or rational force. Since, however, the perfect form is gradually approximated through the sensible changes, it also follows that in and through a sensible realm a rational ideal force is working out of its own ultimate manifestation. These inferences were extended to nature: (*a*) She does nothing in vain; but all for an ulterior purpose. (*b*) Within natural sensible events there is therefore contained a spiritual causal force, which as spiritual escapes perception, but is apprehended by an enlightened reason. (*c*) The manifestation of this principle brings about a subordination of matter and sense to its own realization, and this ultimate fulfilment is the goal of nature and of man. The design argument thus operated in two directions. Purposefulness accounted for the intelligibility of nature and the possibility of science, while the absolute or cosmic character of this purposefulness gave sanction and worth to the moral and religious endeavors of man. Science was underpinned and morals authorized by one and the same principle, and their mutual agreement was eternally guaranteed.

This philosophy remained, in spite of sceptical and polemic outbursts, the official and the regnant philosophy of Europe for over two thousand years. The expulsion of fixed first and final causes from astronomy, physics, and chemistry had indeed given the doctrine something of a shock. But, on the other hand, increased acquaintance with the

details of plant and animal life operated as a counterbalance and perhaps even strengthened the argument from design. The marvelous adaptations of organisms to their environment, of organs to the organism, of unlike parts of a complex organ—like the eye—to the organ itself; the foreshadowing by lower forms of the higher; the preparation in earlier stages of growth for organs that only later had their functioning—these things were increasingly recognized with the progress of botany, zoology, paleontology, and embryology. Together, they added such prestige to the design argument that by the late eighteenth century it was, as approved by the sciences of organic life, the central point of theistic and idealistic philosophy.

The Darwinian principle of natural selection cut straight under this philosophy. If all organic adaptations are due simply to constant variation and the elimination of those variations which are harmful in the struggle for existence that is brought about by excessive reproduction, there is no call for a prior intelligent causal force to plan and preordain them. Hostile critics charged Darwin with materialism and with making chance the cause of the universe.

Some naturalists, like Asa Gray, favored the Darwinian principle and attempted to reconcile it with design. Gray held to what may be called design on the installment plan. If we conceive the "stream of variations" to be itself intended, we may suppose that each successive variation was designed from the first to be selected. In that case, variation, struggle, and selection simply define the mechanism of "secondary causes" through which the "first cause" acts; and the doctrine of design is none the worse off because we know more of its *modus operandi*.

Darwin could not accept this mediating proposal. He admits or rather he asserts that it is "impossible to conceive this immense and wonderful universe including man with his capacity of looking far backwards and far into futurity as the result of blind chance or necessity." [1] But nevertheless he holds that since variations are in useless as well as useful directions, and since the latter are sifted out simply by the stress of the conditions of struggle for existence, the design argument as applied to living beings is unjustifiable; and its lack of support there deprives it of scientific value as applied to nature in general. If the variations of the pigeon, which under artificial selection give the pouter pigeon, are not preordained for the sake of the breeder, by what logic do we argue that variations resulting in natural species are pre-designed? [2]

So much for some of the more obvious facts of the discussion of design *versus* chance, as causal principles of nature and of life as a whole. We brought up this discussion, you recall, as a crucial instance. What does our touchstone indicate as to the bearing of Darwinian ideas upon philosophy? In the first place, the new logic outlaws, flanks, dismisses—what you will—one type of problems and substitutes for it another type. Philosophy forswears inquiry after absolute origins and absolute finalities in order to explore specific values

[1] "Life and Letters," Vol. I., p. 282; cf. 285.

[2] "Life and Letters," Vol. II., pp. 146, 170, 245; Vol. I., pp. 283-84. See also the closing portion of his "Variations of Animals and Plants under Domestication."

and the specific conditions that generate them.

Darwin concluded that the impossibility of assigning the world to chance as a whole and to design in its parts indicated the insolubility of the question. Two radically different reasons, however, may be given as to why a problem is insoluble. One reason is that the problem is too high for intelligence; the other is that the question in its very asking makes assumptions that render the question meaningless. The latter alternative is unerringly pointed to in the celebrated case of design *versus* chance. Once admit that the sole verifiable or fruitful object of knowledge is the particular set of changes that generate the object of study together with the consequences that then flow from it, and no intelligible question can be asked about what, by assumption, lies outside. To assert—as is often asserted—that specific values of particular truth, social bonds and forms of beauty, if they can be shown to be generated by concretely knowable conditions, are meaningless and in vain; to assert that they are justified only when they and their particular causes and effects have all at once been gathered up into some inclusive first cause and some exhaustive final goal, is intellectual atavism. Such argumentation is reversion to the logic that explained the extinction of fire by water through the formal essence of aqueousness and the quenching of thirst by water through the final cause of aqueousness. Whether used in the case of the special event or that of life as a whole, such logic only abstracts some aspect of the existing course of events in order to reduplicate it as a petrified eternal principle by which to explain the very changes of which it is the formalization.

When Henry Sidgwick casually remarked in a letter that as he grew older his interest in what or who made the world was altered into interest in what kind of a world it is anyway, his voicing of a common experience of our own day illustrates also the nature of that intellectual transformation effected by the Darwinian logic. Interest shifts from the wholesale essence back of special changes to the question of how special changes serve and defeat concrete purposes; shifts from an intelligence that shaped things once for all to the particular intelligences which things are even now shaping; shifts from an ultimate goal of good to the direct increments of justice and happiness that intelligent administration of existent conditions may beget and that present carelessness or stupidity will destroy or forego.

In the second place, the classic type of logic inevitably set philosophy upon proving that life *must* have certain qualities and values—no matter how experience presents the matter—because of some remote cause and eventual goal. The duty of wholesale justification inevitably accompanies all thinking that makes the meaning of special occurrences depend upon something that once and for all lies behind them. The habit of derogating from present meanings and uses prevents our looking the facts of experience in the face; it prevents serious acknowledgment of the evils they present and serious concern with the goods they promise but do not as yet fulfil. It turns thought to the business of finding a wholesale transcendent remedy for the one and guarantee for the other. One is reminded of the way many moralists and theologians greeted Herbert Spencer's recognition of an unknowable energy from which welled up the phenomenal physical processes without and the conscious op-

erations within. Merely because Spencer labeled his unknowable energy "God," this faded piece of metaphysical goods was greeted as an important and grateful concession to the reality of the spiritual realm. Were it not for the deep hold of the habit of seeking justification for ideal values in the remote and transcendent, surely this reference of them to an unknowable absolute would be despised in comparison with the demonstrations of experience that knowable energies are daily generating about us precious values.

The displacing of this wholesale type of philosophy will doubtless not arrive by sheer logical disproof, but rather by growing recognition of its futility. Were it a thousand times true that opium produces sleep because of its dormitive energy, yet the inducing of sleep in the tired, and the recovery to waking life of the poisoned, would not be thereby one least step forwarded. And were it a thousand times dialectically demonstrated that life as a whole is regulated by a transcendent principle to a final inclusive goal, none the less truth and error, health and disease, good and evil, hope and fear in the concrete, would remain just what and where they now are. To improve our education, to ameliorate our manners, to advance our politics, we must have recourse to specific conditions of generation.

Finally, the new logic introduces responsibility into the intellectual life. To idealize and rationalize the universe at large is after all a confession of inability to master the courses of things that specifically concern us. As long as mankind suffered from this impotency, it naturally shifted a burden of responsibility that it could not carry over to the more competent shoulders of the transcendent cause. But if insight into specific conditions of value and into specific consequences of ideas is possible, philosophy must in time become a method of locating and interpreting the more serious of the conflicts that occur in life, and a method of projecting ways for dealing with them: a method of moral and political diagnosis and prognosis.

The claim to formulate *a priori* the legislative constitution of the universe is by its nature a claim that may lead to elaborate dialectic developments. But it is also one that removes these very conclusions from subjection to experimental test, for, by definition, these results make no differences in the detailed course of events. But a philosophy that humbles its pretensions to the work of projecting hypotheses for the education and conduct of mind, individual and social, is thereby subjected to test by the way in which the ideas it propounds work out in practice. In having modesty forced upon it, philosophy also acquires responsibility.

Doubtless I seem to have violated the implied promise of my earlier remarks and to have turned both prophet and partizan. But in anticipating the direction of the transformations in philosophy to be wrought by the Darwinian genetic and experimental logic, I do not profess to speak for any save those who yield themselves consciously or unconsciously to this logic. No one can fairly deny that at present there are two effects of the Darwinian mode of thinking. On the one hand, there are in the making many sincere and vital efforts to revise our traditional philosophic conceptions in accordance with its demands. On the other hand, there is as definitely a recrudescence of absolutistic philosophies; an assertion of a type of philosophic knowing distinct from that of the

sciences, one which opens to us another kind of reality from that to which the sciences give access; an appeal through experience to something that essentially goes beyond experience. This reaction affects popular creeds and religious movements as well as technical philosophies. The very conquest of the biological sciences by the new ideas has led many to proclaim an explicit and rigid separation of philosophy from science.

Old ideas give way slowly; for they are more than abstract logical forms and categories. They are habits, predispositions, deeply engrained attitudes of aversion and preference. Moreover, the conviction persists—though history shows it to be a hallucination—that all the questions that the human mind has asked are questions that can be answered in terms of the alternatives that the questions themselves present. But in fact intellectual progress usually occurs through sheer abandonment of questions together with both of the alternatives they assume—an abandonment that results from their decreasing vitality and a change of urgent interest. We do not solve them: we get over them. Old questions are solved by disappearing, evaporating, while new questions corresponding to the changed attitude of endeavor and preference take their place. Doubtless the greatest dissolvent in contemporary thought of old questions, the greatest precipitant of new methods, new intentions, new problems is the one effected by the scientific revolution that found its climax in the "Origin of Species."

1909

# WILLIAM BEEBE

## *Elephants of the Sea*

From Book of Bays

That you and I and our children should begin to reacquire functional tails is extremely improbable but not at all impossible. If these useful appendages were only distant arboreal memories, such a thing could not occur, but tails are very real things in our individual lives. They share with Faith in being "evidence of things not seen."

When we are three weeks old (referring to the tri-hebdomades of actual existence) we are the possessors of an amazing tail, in length about a fourth of our entire being, and in substance and musculature of greater importance than any of our budding, paddle-shaped limbs. It bears no resemblance to the slender objects trailed about by mice and monkeys, but is a tail comparable rather to that of a powerful shark. Our neck at the same instant shows four pairs of most excellent gill-clefts, aligned, clear-cut, unmistakable; transiently present throughout all the ages as if for possible prospect or eventuality.

Our tail does not degenerate in size as

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the weeks pass, but becomes gradually embedded in our body, and when we change our first shelter for an isolated life on the planet it has usually disappeared. I say usually because occasionally a child is born with a well-developed tail, twelve inches or more of skin, muscle and bone.

Most exciting and most personal is the fact that every one of us carries about four vertebrae or backbones which are useless except to remind us of the tails of yore—very yore. Attached to these bones are sometimes as many as twelve pairs of muscles, and with these the television of past ages has left the fish far behind and advanced to reflected life within olden jungles.

These muscles are irregularly distributed, and you—for all you know—may possess all the wagging or curling muscles well developed, while your closest friend must be content with only the depressors, and your great aunt goes through life unconsciously flaunting the elevators. Science, so far, is silent concerning the possibility of correlation of these three with characteristics of friendliness, timidity or spiritedness. A bad fall may make us painfully or dangerously aware of this inner tail, but aside from this, its vital interest is a reminder or a throwback to aquatic or arboreal ancestors.

I am endeavouring with considerable sincerity to escape from the subject of human tails, for I meant it as only an introduction to the consideration of sea-elephants, but having established my premise I am led by my pencil to one or two obvious but brief elaborations. Having redeveloped a tail how should we treat it? It is difficult to understand any feeling of shame in connection with our new appendage which would represent merely the nadir of our spinal column, with our head as the zenith. Only members of the Ku Klux Klan, occasional burglars and married women of certain benighted tribes endeavour to conceal their heads. If we search far enough back in our evolutionary closet we will discover skeletons of ancestors whose heads were little more than negative tails. Even today there persists a little creature in the sands of our shores who is unbelievably close to the beginnings of fish, and consequently ourselves. Its name is Amphioxus, which significantly means sharp-ender, and it presents no evidence of swelled head as yet developed. Yet it can see, feel and swallow to its complete satisfaction. Even in our embryonic selves evidences are only too plain that our head and brain were originally fashioned from a string of vertebrae—say eight or ten. With too many of our fellow mortals the result of the toss of life—heads or tails—seems inconsequential; their cranium appears to fulfill the primary definition of Faith—"the substance of things hoped for."

The point toward which all this tail-talk is heading is the actual comparison of tail and gills. Like the brief period of totality of a solar eclipse when time itself seems halted for a moment, so for an appreciable duration of existence we seem to swim and breathe and have our minute being—an inchling shadow of ancient eons—submerged in the diminutive sea of a womb. Although tail and gills are both present at this moment, they differ radically in the possibility of persistence. Once a tail, always a tail. Our gills, however, momentarily bridging the years—say a matter of five hundred millenniums—even while we recognize them for what they are, begin to shift and bend and dissolve. We go to the trouble of develop-

ing four pairs of gills with skeletons and blood vessels ready to be nourished by a two-chambered fishy heart, all adumbrating a life beneath the water. Then swiftly, within the space of a few days we find the gills gone, transformed into a string of ear-bones, a lower jaw, larynx and tongue cartilages. In a fraction of time we have exchanged the possibility of breathing water in the silences of the sea, for a throat and tongue muscles which will not only admit the life-giving air but enable us to play upon it as it passes, to fret it into audibility—to talk, pray, curse, sing, laugh, which no fish can do. It behooves us, occasionally, to stop, listen and consider the daily worth we extract from this swap in mid-evolution. Also thanks to the idiosyncrasy of a little gill, we can or must listen to the vocal efforts of our human associates. Finally, as a life-long reminder of an auld lang syne, we retain one last gill throughout our life, the tube which extends from our ear into the throat. This is just to make good science out of the good poetry beginning:

When you were a tadpole and I was a fish
In the Paleozoic time.

Through the activity of certain hormones we might reacquire tails but we can never recapture the activity of gills; they are too evanescent and predestined. Which has brought me a step nearer to sea-elephants, which in turn stimulate thoughts of raccoons and whales.

The change from water breathing creatures into air breathing land animals is almost the greatest wonder of evolution of animal life on this whirling, lonely planet. That from a four-legged, scaly runner to a two-legged feathered flyer is less momentous; fish fly through the water in three dimensions, and besides, there are flyingfishes. But the marvel of marvels, utterly unexpected and inexplicable, is the deliberate regression from a fully adapted life on land back again to that in water.

Early on the morning of a November eighth I struggled through the surf, and landed on a narrow beach of the island of Guadalupe off the west coast of Mexico. There before me was a herd, or more appropriately, a snoring, of sea-elephants. They might all have been dead were it not for the snoring. Enormous grubs came to mind as an immediate simile. Then all thoughts of their shapelessness, their eternal sloth, passed and I saw them in sudden realization as Halfways, embodying all the drama and romance of evolution; I remembered those other Halfways in *Outward Bound.*

Only from occasional fossil skeletons can we imperfectly reconstruct the changes in past ages, but here in these Central American jungles we have links of living creatures which form a chain of *as ifs,* of remarkable continuity.

If we paddle along the inland creeks of the distant mainland we will be certain to see in the mud the five-toed tracks of raccoons. These familiar animals are excellent climbers and make their diurnal home in hollow trees, but they have a habit or a vice which is so pronounced that Linnaeus named them *lotor*—the washer. A coon may dig up a muddy bulb, or may capture a perfectly clean, shining beetle or a young bird. Soiled or not, every bit of food must be lugged to the nearest water's edge and thoroughly scrubbed before being eaten. In itself this has no special significance, but I like to think of it as a symbol of some creature of ages long past—a dainty dipping of fingers into the edge of a brook, which would end

in complete submersion in the open sea.

A close cousin is the crab-eating raccoon which is built along more svelte lines, and possesses an uncontrollable passion for crabs in the live shell which draws it to water like a magnet, where it scoops up the crustaceans with its paws or actually dives after them. When day comes, it scurries back to land and the trees.

Unless it be a sloth, no animal would seem less a potential explorer than an opossum. Throw an ordinary opossum into the middle of a pond and after a few miserable squirms it will probably drown. But do the same with a yapock or tropical water opossum and it will dive and swim to shore with its well-webbed hind feet, probably catching some aquatic creature on the way. As a marsupial and kin to kangaroos it is far from the direct ancestral line of sea-elephants, but as an aquatic backslider it is of vital interest. Only when its pouch is filled with unweaned babies does it have to give up its search for shrimps and fish.

Equally apart from direct lineage are three vegetarians of these jungles which have deserted the traditions of their near relatives and gone waterwards. The capybara is a giant guinea-pig which seeks safety and food in the marshes and streams, and the tapir, while calling horses and rhinoceroses cousins, has shaken off the dust of their hooves and with wide-spreading splay feet, goes squelching through the mud and swimming through the nights. Our third and last deviation is the manatee or sea-cow. To find this being we must go across to the Atlantic side of middle America, and to believe it when seen, it must be touched. This is not very difficult, for when found in a shallow ditch, it can be rolled up on the bank, examined and returned, with no more opposition than would be shown by an iron-hooped barrel of excellent rum. It were better not to mention the face of the manatee, but if we must we can only say that it has the largest harelip in existence, its nostrils are often mistaken for its eyes, and it would resemble a sloth in expression had it any humour, or a pig had it any charm. Withal it has been given the name *Sirenia*. This unquestionably is due to its rounded head and its habit of holding its baby in its flipper while nursing it, which has led early myopic explorers to detect a resemblance to a mermaid or siren. It holds the extreme place in aquatic adaptations among shore or jungle animals, for its hands are flippers, its feet have disappeared and its tailflukes are useful only for swimming or for sitting upon.

Changes in habit, haunt, activity, structure are brought about more often than we realize by what might be called vacuums of opportunity. In our mid-American jungles we have plant-eating tapirs along the river banks, opossums diving after crayfish. But the more open water with its abundance of larger fish is an inviting no-man's land, to use the least apt phrase in the English language. And into this particular vacuum of opportunity otters evolved—developing into strong, swift swimmers and fishers. Crocodiles gave them healthful competition, but the field in general was theirs.

We may suppose that they increased and that young ones sought fresh fields, or rather salt waters, and found life possible and pleasant along the shore of the Pacific. As they spent more and more time in the water they developed thick, warm fur, shorter necks, with heavier bones for easier diving, and today we find the sea-otter one of the most inter-

esting of all Halfways. Any hope of easy life in the open sea was probably rudely shattered by killer whales and sharks. So the sea-otters kept to the shallow water, where amid the kelp and offshore rocks they found ideal sanctuary. With unconscious wisdom they developed an insatiable craving for sea-urchins which no other creature could masticate or stomach. So with haunts and food all their own, sea-otters prospered and remained sea-otters.

It is most fortunate that they have not been forced ashore again, for they have burned almost all their otterian land bridges behind them. When they haul out on a rock they can no longer walk but progress by awkward hops and springs, due to their over-developed hind limbs, with long, slender, backwardly directed, webbed toes. These great feet have but one desire and function, which is eternally to seize and push backward a webful of water. The front legs are small, and the hands are made for prying off urchins from the bottom, or crabs or shellfish. Then the otter swims to the surface, turns over, and devours its fistful of food. To crush the urchins the little hands smack them together. When a baby otter demands nourishment the same paws hold it conveniently.

Neighbors but not competitors of the sea-otters are herds of sea-lions, another animal link in aquatic advance, or terrestrial retreat, whichever way we care to consider it. We are now among a very vortex of characters which pulls both ways. Sea-lions have four real flippers—hands and feet become mittened paddles. Their ears are minute, their heads pointed, their very eyes flush —every inch is stream-lined and sinuous to a degree which induces death from despair in designers of submarines and planes. No fish is safe from them and yet they are held in thrall by the land. The young sea-lions must be born ashore and there suckled from two to five months. They still can raise their voice in loud vociferation although harmony has been lost in competition with the crash of breakers, and their efforts compare favourably with the acclaim of a peacock and the fanfare of a donkey. In spite of their dominant ocean life sea-lions can still walk, amble and gallop on dry land, although the latter gait is invariably towards the water, speed indicating prospective joy of submergence.

This node in our Pacific hegira brings us to the sea-elephants of Guadalupe which, by the way, judging by the size of their proboscises, deserve rather the name of sea-tapirs. To these we shall return when we have reached the end of the oceanic chain of life. The succeeding link is the little seal proper, whose hold upon the dry land of its forefathers is most tenuous. The young seal is born upon the shore, but sometimes even before birth it sheds its long-haired, porous coat and may be led by its mother into the water before the sun sets on the very day of its entrance into the world.

Although terrestrial ancestry is unquestionable both in the infant seal, whose primary need of land is less than a day, and any dolphin or whale, the psychological gap is significant and profound. Whether a four-foot pygmy dolphin or a hundred-foot blue whale, all have parted with their hind limbs and trust for progress to vertical sculling with the powerful tail. The hairs of these creatures are numbered and the number is exceedingly small. Never, by any chance, can they ever clamber ashore, or sun themselves on rock or sand. A Nazi, by some incredible form

of self-hypnosis, endeavours to believe that the raising of the right hand indicates some cryptic proof of Aryan ancestry, but a whale, within the mittened web of his flipper, possesses indisputable proof of the five-fingered hand of his far distant, land forebear.

We lean on the rail and look out over the wonderful Pacific. A dolphin curves into view near at hand, expels a cloud of air with a long-drawn sigh, and vanishes. Farther out, the fin of a shark moves slowly along but the creature itself does not break the surface. The course of evolution has run full circle—fish, amphibian, reptile, mammal; then the reverse, the actual links wholly unknown, but illustrated well enough by raccoon, otter, sea-otter, sea-lion, sea-elephant, seal, whale and dolphin.

Even the brief glimpse we had of the latter recalls our own developmental possibilities. The dolphin has redeveloped a swimming tail, although its rhythm is now vertically north and south, not east and west; but gills are gone forever. It need never touch dry land but it must ever rise, and rise again, to breathe air.

Whales are not Halfways. They have arrived at the last station in Waterworld and have used up their round-trip ticket. As for any future evolution, any turning again back to the land (a feat which the leatherback turtle has successfully achieved) there is no chance or possibility for whales: Man has seen to that. They can hope only barely to exist for a while longer: "That's all there is; there isn't any more."

And now let us return to Guadalupe, the home and the last stand of the sea-elephants of our northern hemisphere—the most fearless and tragic, the hugest, ugliest, sleepiest, and most helpless and hopeless links in all our chain of life.

On Templeton Crocker's yacht *Zaca* on the said eighth of November, we moved slowly through the calm waters of the Pacific about two hundred miles southwest of San Diego. A rounded bit of mist disturbed the horizon in mid-ocean. Although we had a comfortable mile and a half of water beneath our keel, the mist soon changed to the definite cloud which, at a distance, is every island in the world except Barbuda—which is nothing until you hit it.

The outline of the cloud hardened into a lofty ridge whose barrenness was only partly softened by the thin mist along the top. A little nearer and the human eye cut through the cloudy grayness and distinguished colour—a great red and olive cliff shot across with enormous seams of golden-yellow, while here and there a petrified glacier of pale volcanic ash strove forever to pour itself through unclimbable gullies.

It must have been a grand sight when this volcano first broke through the ocean floor a mile and more below the surface and sizzled and roared its way upward. The fish and the squid which were boiled alive in the process were very different from those swimming today about the *Zaca,* while mankind was early in the making, still down on all fours, perhaps not yet free from scales. At any rate the crater nosed itself above the surface and on up and up into the air until it finally cooled off, a mile above the water. Whether storm-driven Melanesians ever sighted it, or strange men drifting down from cold northern regions, or if by some chance a Toltec fisherman dared the trip from the mainland, one hundred and sixty miles to the east, we shall never know.

Back on the deck of the *Zaca,* as I approached closer, the island became more and more barren to the eye. The time

of volcanic activity might well have been a dozen years ago instead of millions.

So sheer fell the cliffs that there seemed to be no beaches whatever. Our engines slowed down and for minutes our fallible eyes told us nothing more, so I resorted to high-power glasses. As I focused, the blur cleared, distance dissolved. I left the *Zaca* two miles behind and a vertical hillside crystallized into perfect detail. It seemed accessible only to creatures such as flies and geckos, yet within my field of vision was a score of quadrupeds, twenty-two creamy white goats dotted about at absurdly equal distances from one another. They did not move, they stood or grazed stiffly, and I could almost smell the paint, so much did they remind me of my old Noah's Ark animals. In this case, however, they were placed in such impossible situations that even a very small child would not have arranged them thus.

Not until our launch drew close to the breakers did the beaches become visible—narrow slopes of black lava sand. The first two were vacant. On the third I made out many elongate objects, rocks perhaps which had fallen from the steep overhead cliffs. But one of them bent upward and gazed at us, which is more than rocks can do, and we turned inshore and landed close to the first sea-elephants I had ever seen.

I walked up to the nearest great beast, an elongate mound of smooth fur, a half-grown male about ten feet over all. I sat down close in front of him and waited. He lay on his side apparently sound asleep, with small, helpless flippers dangling. His profile was like some weird cartoon or mask, impossibly and yet completely Hebraic, and he was having a nightmare. He snorted and snored and his muscles quivered as, in his dream, he twisted and turned to escape from some implacable killer whale. He heaved an asthmatic sigh like escaping steam, which vibrated throughout his entire eight hundred-odd pounds of flesh and blubber. His nose badly needed wiping and tears had formed large dark patches on the fur of his cheeks. More tears now appeared. Carroll must have seen one of these lachrymose beings before he could have evolved the Mock Turtle.

Thus far, his breathing had been through the left nostril alone and now, in line with this conservation of energy, he opened a single eye, the right, and gazed at me. The orb was large, wistful, dim with tears and for a moment registered nothing. Then my sea-elephant perceived that something was amiss. It was not a killer whale which sat cross-legged so close to him, nor even a misshapen member of his own kind. His dull brain just registered an awful something.

He reared up on high, stretching up and up until his flippers hung in mid-air and he balanced on the posterior third of his body. Sphinx caterpillars draw themselves up into exactly this defense pose, but sphinx caterpillars do not open cavernous mouths lined with coral pink and expose four stubby white fangs; nor can any other creature in the world command the horrid jumble of sounds that emanated from his throat. It sounded like some noise-producing instrument which leaked at every rivet; snorts, double bellows, quivering snarls with hints of falsetto notes between. Then the beast curved himself into a crescent, elevating his tail end, spun around on the central axis and started for the water. He laboured along for perhaps twenty feet when he was over-

come by languor, exhaustion or forgetfulness and collapsed into his former imitation of a fallen rock.

After a full minute, something of memory stirred in his brain and he again reared and looked back at me. To heave eight hundred pounds about on its pivot a second time was too much even to consider, so he simply bent back and back until his head almost touched his hind flippers, and gazed with uncomprehending wistfulness full into my face. Whether I appeared more attractive or less fearsome wrongway up, or whether—well, just whether—his head slowly sank down again on the sand. With a gargantuan sigh he cleaned out a deep hollow and erased me from his memory. Again my sea-elephant slept.

I glanced back along the beach whose smooth black sand was marked by a solitary great boulder at the water's edge. As I looked, this was rolled over by an incoming surge and I went toward it at once. It proved to be a gigantic male sea-elephant and this time death, not sleep, held it quiescent. It must have been dead several days but as it rolled back and forth I could see no sign of a wound. Its flippers waved dismally as it turned and the great proboscis flopped gruesomely about. When a wave left it stranded for a moment I stepped it off hastily and estimated its length as seventeen feet, which is not far from the maximum. Two young females and a male swam in as I watched, and almost touched its hide with their snouts before they turned and fled at high speed in the direction of the rookery.

At the south end of the bay near the water, in the partial shelter of a majestic promontory, was a closely packed mass of fifteen immature sea-elephants. Higher up was a gathering of twelve females and scattered about were fourteen others, six of which, including my first acquaintance, were males. Most of them awoke as we came near, moving their heads unsteadily and eternally yawning. The high-pitched snoring and roaring gargles almost obliterated the calls of gulls and the cheerful songs of rock wrens. But another sound soon drew my attention. It was strangely like the beat of a tom-tom, now seeming to come from a great distance like the voodoo drums in Haitian mountains, and again resounding among the very rocks around us. It was mellow and vibrant. I climbed to the summit of the tumbled pile and in a pool beyond I discovered the source of the reverberations —a male quite as large as the one lying dead in the distance.

It was partly submerged, in the favorite crescent pose, with head and dilated trunk, and widespread hind flippers well out of water. The deep reiterated bellowing roars continued. At every utterance the proboscis rhythmically rose above and fell almost into the open mouth. Finally the beat died away with a few short, abrupt grunts like the finale of the nocturne of a howling monkey. For minutes the giant floated and watched me. Its hind flippers showed the elongate first and fifth toes which made the general webbed outline exactly like the half-moon tail of a swift-swimming fish.

Here, on this beach, were two and forty living sea-elephants. November was evidently the low tide of the year, between births, matings, and molts. Others would doubtless arrive in the course of the coming months, for a more seasonable census a few years ago listed many more.

I put out of mind that they were "sea-elephants" or *"Macrorhinus angustiros-*

*tris*" or even "members of the order *Pinnipedia*." I tried to become aware of them more directly as creatures of their environment. I thought of them again as Halfways, and suddenly realized that they were rather Four-fifths. A small group of well-grown males returned from the sea, letting wave after wave lift them through the surf like sentient stranded logs. As they came slowly up the sand they appeared more than ever veritable creatures of the deep rather than transient immigrants to ancestral haunts. On shore, in all except bust measurement and comeliness, they fulfilled the definition of a mermaid—terrestrial forward, aquatic aft. The front flippers made fairly good crutches on which to rest, while the hind limbs dragged uselessly over the sand. Progress was by inchworming or humping along, and looking down from a high rock I seemed to be viewing a galaxy of mighty maggots speeding on their normal occasions. Nostrils could be closed to a slit camelwise, or opened wide and round as a dolphin's blowhole. But no mermaid or terrestrial being would hold each breath regularly for a half a minute between exhalations. I timed two sleeping animals and got sixteen, twenty-three and thirty-five seconds.

No sooner were the sea-elephants well up on the beach than they began to show slight but distinct symptoms of discomfort. Nostrils and eyes endeavoured to alleviate the heat, dryness or light by pouring forth a copious supply of mucus and tears. As I was passing one animal I received a shower of gravel in the face, which drew my attention to the fact that all those higher up on the beach had covered themselves with protective flipperfuls of sand.

Now and then some atavistic habit would obtrude itself unexpectedly through blubber-bound inhibitions, as when a half-dozing elephant lifted its fore flipper, bent back the terminal joints and with the projecting, rather well-shaped nails delicately scratched its cheek, or with the back of the same mittened hand gracefully wiped away a stream of tears.

As I watched these great beasts I thought of myself as I was seven hundred and forty months ago—a being headed for a life on land, but fully equipped with gills, paddle limbs and tail. Could I have gone into reverse as had these sea-elephants, the gills would have dissolved into other structures, but the paddles and tail might have recouped their former usefulness. The Guadalupian giants, like myself, had passed, each of them, through a gilled stage but to no effect. Their paddles were grand paddles, hand made, but they had perforce to make shift in the water with lungs. Tails they had exchanged for sculling feet, while dolphins, their aquatic superiors, had discarded feet for consummate flukes. So are we all enmeshed in the glorious pattern woven of earthly evolution.

Sea-elephants are indeed caught in the maelstrom of Halfways. Their present home, for which they are dominantly moulded, and the squids and fish which form all their food, are beneath the surface. Yet each female must struggle ashore to give birth to her offspring, which suckles or sleeps or just lies six weeks or more on land. Mating takes place soon after the birth of the pup, and eleven months later the succeeding generation appears. Another necessary haul-out occurs at molting time when whole plaques of skin and hair peel off and are shed together.

Where the elephants go when they leave no one knows. Two things of

which I am convinced are that they are more nocturnal than is usually thought, and that their speed in the water and power of deep descent are very great. On shore, sleeping sickness seems to be their chronic manifestation of abounding health; in competition for the least common denominator of activity they challenge sloths and turtles and win easily. But this phase of their life is deceiving. When the mighty webbed feet are widespread and held tightly sole to sole, they form a sculling apparatus second only to the flukes of a dolphin. Twice, as we went from shore to ship I saw shadowy forms passing with incredible swiftness beneath the launch, and I am certain they were not sharks, but sea-elephants.

The general size, shape and appearance of the females and young males are seal-like, but the huge masters of harems are three times as large as their mates, reaching, it is said, twenty feet in length and a maximum weight of perhaps four tons. They have developed a thick, tough breastplate of rough hide, a cuirass of corrugated leather which protects them in their jealous battles with rivals. The contests are seldom fatal and consist chiefly of much roaring and rearing, and hurling of themselves at each other, striking downward with their short canines. The objectives are the tender proboscis and the eyes, and I saw two half-grown welterweight amateurs each of whom had lost an eye in precocious encounters. When cornered, even the young males would rush at us for a few feet, but the sortie would invariably end in a doze of exhaustion. With sea-elephants on land the dream is mightier than the reality.

Let us leave the somnolent herd for a while and glance up and along the thousands of feet of steep cliffs. All Guadalupe seemed barren and dry and only along the very summit was there a line of ancient trees, pines and oaks of species reported to be found only on this isolated crest. Three decades ago Edward Palmer, the botanist, visited the island and found it a paradise of birds and plants. One out of every four of the latter was peculiar to the island, while the Guadalupe caracaras, juncos, finches, flickers, petrels, towhees, rock and house wrens were also found nowhere else in the world.

In the course of years, cats, rats and mice escaped ashore from ships, and finally someone with more faith than brains turned loose a few goats. The pelts of the latter proved valueless and their numbers are now estimated at sixty to eighty thousand. Every growing thing, green or brown, leaf, sprout, seed, root or bark within reach of these acrobatic capricorns has vanished. The trees on the summit are fighting desperately in spite of shredded bark, and their lessened foliage still gleans moisture from the swirling clouds and vitalizes a few small springs. But every cone or acorn which falls to the ground is instantly devoured by mouse or goat, and the end of all plants and water cannot be far away.

The cats have blotted out one species of bird after another until only the rock wrens, as far as I could see, were left in any abundance. Some trick of nest building must have baffled the felines. Curiously enough, the mice are reported as very common, the cats evidently preferring birds at present, with eyes on the rodents for a future change of diet.

I clambered for some distance up two canyons, dry arroyos without a single living sprig, and came across two carcasses of cats and three half-eaten goats. When about a hundred feet above the

water I saw at one side a patch of bright green grass and other more succulent growths. I got as near as I could, following a well-worn goat trail. At the end, by standing on tip-toe, I could just reach a few leaves. I examined the weedy refuge and saw that even a goat could not climb up nor leap down within nibbling distance. Thousands of little hooves had stamped where I stood, the face of the rock in front was worn smooth with the search for foothold, while safe in the overhung cranny the botanical tantalus flourished. In their fight for life, goats have been observed drinking salt water and at low tide feeding eagerly on exposed beds of kelp. This is the terrible struggle for existence which has been brought about by the casual impulse of one unknown man.

I saw nothing of the mice, but at the south tip of the island while I was crawling over a pile of rocks, I surprised a cat feeding on a large crab. She was a horrid creature, yellow and gray fur all awry, eyes gleaming. She snarled silently at me and fled slinking along the shadows, finally to vanish into an inaccessible crevice. The something of paradise which Edward Palmer saw has evolved into something of a hell. Only the rock wrens seemed wholly happy. They hopped and ran over the sleeping mounds of sea-elephants, snapping up a fly now and then and giving thanks in explosive bursts of song.

The two score of sleepers or near-sleepers scattered about the beach seemed to have never a worry in the world. Throughout thousands of past generations their half-and-half lives must have found natural enemies few in number. During their evolution sea-elephants seemed hardly to have had healthful competition. Newborn pups, to be sure, had to be careful lest three or four tons of father land unexpectedly and fatally upon them, and the battling males must have won their fights and yet kept muzzles and eyes from harm. Occasional serried marks of teeth have been found on the hide of sea-elephants showing that sharks are not wholly negligible dangers, and killer whales are an ever-haunting fear, if not in nightmares on shore then at least amid the waste of waters far out at sea.

When I was watching a pair of wrens well up on the beach, a few falling bits of rock attracted my attention and I saw a diminutive landslide emanating from the hooves of a scrambling goat. On the shore we had seen evidences of recent rock slips of serious extent. A single earthquake might loose an avalanche which could conceivably wipe out the whole herd of sea-elephants.

In ages past as various land animals worked their way seaward, a most important adaptation was the counteracting of the cold of prolonged submersion. This was easy to accomplish and a dense, thick undercoat of fur in otters and fur-seals, or the development of blubber in sea-elephants and cetaceans, answered every requirement. In these north Pacific waters all was well with the world until the arrival of a race of tissue-skinned, hairless beings. They could not really swim, but had to move about in floating affairs more or less at the mercy of the winds. If sea-elephants could talk they could have applied this description equally to jelly-fish and human beings. The shivering newcomers began to wrap themselves in thick fur coats and to light and warm themselves with blubber oil, and the end of an era came clearly into view.

Seals have been seals for at least fifty million years, but the slaughter here-

abouts began only a short hundred and forty years ago. Today the Guadalupe fur-seal has almost gone, for the last observer who visited this island saw only three at the entrance of a cave. Two hundred thousand fur-seals were slaughtered on Guadalupe. On one beach which I visited, the stones were as smooth as if a glacier had worked upon them, but in reality they had been polished by the eternal passing and repassing of eons of generations of seal flippers. Doubtless the legions of slain seals helped to protect our grandmothers from chilblains, but today nothing remains of the Guadalupe fur-seal but a few fragments of old skulls in museums and perhaps an ancient, moth-eaten cloak in some forgotten attic chest.

All the northern sea-elephants left alive on the planet Earth are the pitiful handful which seeks sanctuary on these narrow beaches. It was a terrible thought that, were we the kind of human beings who worked havoc here in the past, we could have slain every one of the trusting, stupid creatures around and over which we stepped. Fortunately the Mexican government has been persuaded to pass a law protecting this forlorn hope, and it seems as if the creatures were, for a time, holding their own. In the southern hemisphere the related species has been afforded protection in time, and is thriving.

The unexpected onslaught of mankind, the steel spear heads, the powder and shot all seem so manifestly unfair; the ghastly rapid invention of murderous tools appears so anti-climactic to the slow, thorough march of evolution through all the ages.

I looked about at the helpless elephants of the sea and became aware of them in a new light. Platinum and radium and certain Old Masters are not necessarily of supreme beauty, but rarity enshrines them in a false glamour of sorts. And so in the light of tragedy, the phocine pogrom of the past, the voice and the figure of these native Guadalupians assumed a dignity and a charm, as a peacock's scream is softened by distance, and mitigation of a grotesque figure comes with approaching dusk. I felt a certain responsibility and concern as a member of the race of men who had brought them to this critical pass. I would have liked to have them understand my horror and regret.

Such sentimental emotions were not lessened by the apparent pathos of wistful, limpid eyes and streaming tears, but at this point my scientific acumen intervened and banished bathos. So I turned my mind to other matters.

1942

# GEORGE W. GRAY

## *Deeper Into the Atom*

From The Advancing Front of Science

When the full story of our times is critically appraised, perhaps a century hence, many occurrences will assume an order of importance quite different from that assigned by our contemporary historians. Just as the obscure invention of gunpowder was an event more truly momentous than the Battle of Waterloo, so there are little-known happenings of to-day that the sifting of the years will bring to the fore. They will become less obscure as time advances and their fundamental nature is more generally understood and their uses become manifest. For they mark permanent gains in man's ceaseless march and countermarch. Whatever the future of governments and individuals may be, the victories of the laboratories will stand as lasting assets of the race.

Among the recent victories is a discovery made in 1936 at Washington, D. C., at the high-voltage laboratory of the Carnegie Institution's Department of Research in Terrestrial Magnetism. It brought to knowledge an unknown force of the Universe, subjected the force to tests of measurement and analysis, and defined the law by which the force operates.

For an approximate analogy, to suggest the significance of this American discovery, one must go back to the seventeenth-century contribution of Sir Isaac Newton—his discovery of the law of gravitation. As the Newtonian discovery brought a new and clarifying interpretation to certain mysterious behavior of planets that seemed to violate Galileo's rules of motion, so does this American discovery brilliantly illuminate certain perverse behavior of atoms that seemed to violate the established rules of electricity. The former discovery provided a force and a law that gave scientific meaning to celestial mechanics; the latter has provided a force and a law that give scientific meaning to atomic mechanics. Since it seems certain that in atomic mechanics are the sources and repositories of the world's energy, the consequences of this recent discovery appear to be of the highest promise to mankind.

If the world is built of atoms, as we believe, we must know atoms before we can expect to comprehend the physical reality. Nothing seems nearer, more conveniently at hand for investigation, than atoms. They are the air we breathe, the water we drink, the soil and rocks and trees and leaves; they are our physical bodies. And yet, perhaps nothing else is so hidden, so alien to our accustomed techniques, so beyond our reach. Instead of being the round hard solid particles that our fathers imagined, the atom is an abyss. Its depths are more remote in our scale of dimensions than the dim galaxies. The darkness beyond the faintest nebula is not more

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tantalizing to our limited organs of vision than is the blackness of the chasm within the atom.

In these atomic depths, energy breeds other energy. Here the strange eruptions of radium are initiated and controlled. There is a suspicion that here cosmic rays are born. The nature of substances, that which makes oxygen gregarious and helium a hermit, which gives iron sensitivity to magnetism and caesium a responsiveness to light, which implants in the carbon atom such capacities as a "joiner" that the huge molecules of living substances are enabled to form and to hold together—all these and other distinguishing properties of elements, although apparently "external" attributes, are determined here in the innermost depths. In the atomic nucleus—and not in some far center of galactic rotation—is the power house of the Universe, multiplied endlessly, repeated in each of the innumerable hidden microcosmic systems. Are they the "mills of the gods"? the "looms of destiny"? the "mighty workings" that somehow spin our mortality? Physicists, as scientists, cannot answer, though some in their more metaphysical moods may venture to pronounce on such questions. As scientists they believe that in the nucleus is the mechanism of matter stripped to its prime mover; hence the preoccupation of experimental physicists to-day with this field. The nucleus is the battlefront for a score of brilliant strategists in America, Europe, and Asia. Against it the artillerylike discharge tubes, the mighty cyclotrons, and other atom-smashing devices are aimed. And it was along this front that the Washington experimenters won their 1936 victory.

The story of the discovery can be simply told. And I shall make the telling very simple, beginning with familiar concepts, recalling elementary features that are common knowledge, ignoring complications such as "wave behavior" and other items of quantum theory that are so important and indeed indispensable to the technician but not necessary to the present résumé, and shall focus attention only on features primary to our picture. Admit that we are imagists. All word pictures of atoms must necessarily be in the nature of parables, of moral tales, with the whites all white, and the blacks completely black. We understand among ourselves, of course, that white shades into black along gray no-man's lands; but these defy precise picturization, and attempts to include all details in one parable result only in confusion. So let us be realistic and, therefore, imaginative. Our parable is frankly an approximation devised to illuminate one facet of truth. If it does that it will have performed its intended function, and proved itself a useful parable.

A drop of water contains about 200 million million million molecules. No one has made an actual count of course —there are not enough years in which to count that number of objects—but we know how much a drop of water weighs, we know how much a molecule of water weighs, and the rest is simple division. I mention the number to suggest the smallness of the scale of dimensions that we must accept in approaching the realm of the elementary particles. A drop of ordinary water weighs about 3,600,000,000,000,000,000,000 atomic units. A molecule of water weighs about 18 units. The molecule is far beyond the limit of visibility even with the ultramicroscope, but we have

chemical and physical ways of isolating it, measuring it, dealing with it quite objectively. Let us enter this molecular world.

Send a current of electricity through the water. The molecules begin to break up into three pieces each: one piece of oxygen and two pieces of hydrogen. These are the atoms. And by further manipulation with electricity we can break the atoms into yet more fundamental units—hydrogen into a certain number and arrangement of particles, oxygen into a different number and arrangement.

This hydrogen is highly interesting. Apparently it is the most abundant element in the Universe. Its atom is the simplest material system we know—an arrangement of two charged particles, one massive and electrically positive, the other lighter and more diffuse and electrically negative. The negative charge is the electron, and it revolves as a swiftly moving satellite round the positive charge, the proton.

And now we have reached the solid land we seek, the nucleus. For the proton is the hydrogen nucleus. If we could magnify the hydrogen atom so that its proton became just barely visible, the encircling path of the spinning electron would be about six feet from that center. Both particles barely enough to be seen, and yet the revolving system outlines a sphere twelve feet in diameter? You can see why we think of the atom as an abyss, mostly empty space, its members relatively farther apart than the Earth is from the Sun.

The proton is the simplest nucleus known. Apparently it is a single particle. Physicists find no difficulty in breaking hydrogen atoms, stripping off of each its revolving electron, and leaving the proton naked. Then they subject this unprotected proton to concentrated bombardments, using projectiles even more massive than the target, and shooting them at velocities of thousands of miles a second. But somehow the proton holds together. No one yet has been able to break one—at least, we have no clear evidence of such breakage. And so we assume that the proton is an indivisible unit. It is extremely massive. If you could lay a single proton in one pan of the scales of an infinitesimal balance, you would need to pile 1835 electrons in the opposite pan to bring the weight to equilibrium. Protons represent a tremendous amount of energy concentrated in small space. And the stuff of this matter appears to be electricity.

Apparently the proton is nothing but electricity—electricity of a peculiar behavior which we label positive. Similarly, the electron is pure electricity, but negative. A curious unexplained fact of nature is that the two particles exactly balance each other in electrical characteristics. That is to say, a piece of positive electricity, which is equal to 1835 pieces of negative electricity in quantity of *mass,* is equal to only 1 negative particle in quantity of *charge.* And so we find that despite its relatively enormous weight, the proton is never attended by more than one electron. You may surround the atom with electrons, penetrate its depths with speeding electrons, but none of them will stick.

Sometimes we find a hydrogen atom of double weight. But the extra weight is entirely within the nucleus, for only a single revolving electron is found in these as in all other hydrogen atoms. Examine the double-weight nucleus and we see why this is so: the

nucleus is a two-particle affair, made of one proton and one neutron. The proton is our familiar positively-charged particle. But the neutron is a curiously neutral thing; for it has no charge, and, although its mass is about the same as that of the proton, it shows no electrical characteristics, neither attracts electrons nor repels them. More recently the atomic explorers have turned up a hydrogen of triple weight; the nucleus here contains one proton and two neutrons; but even these swing only the single orbital electron. Apparently a nucleus, no matter how massive it is, can control only one electron with one proton.

With more protons, however, it can control more electrons. This we may demonstrate by examining that other partner in the water molecule, the atom of oxygen. Its nucleus is a complex of protons and neutrons. Some oxygen atoms contain eight neutrons, a few contain nine, and a still smaller proportion of the world's oxygen contains ten neutrons; but every last one of them contains eight protons, *and only eight.* And every last one of the oxygen atoms swings eight orbital electrons, *and only eight.* This arrangement of matching one orbital electron against each nuclear proton appears to be one of nature's immutable principles of architecture; for as we go up the scale of atoms the rule holds without an exception.

There is another rule of electrical behavior which we supposed held imperiously. This is the rule that if a body is positively charged and another body is negatively charged they will mutually attract each other; but contrarily, two bodies carrying the same kind of charge will be mutually repellent. Just before the upheaval of the French Revolution the Parisian scientist Charles Augustin Coulomb made very careful measurements of these electrical forces of attraction and repulsion and discovered the law by which they operate. The nearer together the bodies are, the stronger are the forces; and the forces increase inversely with the square of the distance. This is Coulomb's law.

To illustrate its operation by a very obvious example, recall our enlarged model of the hydrogen atom, with the proton just visible at the center and the electron revolving round it at a radius of 6 feet. Suppose we measure the electrostatic force of attraction between proton and electron at that distance. Then, if we bring the electron nearer, so that it is only half as far, or 3 feet, the force of attraction will not be two times; it will be the square of two, or four times as great. If we bring the electron still nearer, so that it is only a third of the original distance, the attraction will be magnified by the square of three, or nine times. It is easy to see from this why electrons in orbits closer to the nucleus move more rapidly. Just as the velocity of the Earth in its circuit generates centrifugal force to counterbalance the gravitational influence of the Sun, so does the velocity of the electron in its curving path engender such an effect to offset the attraction of the nucleus. Hydrogen atoms would collapse were it not that the electron moves so swiftly. A velocity of 1350 miles a second has been calculated for the innermost orbit of ordinary hydrogen.

These mutual relations between the positively charged nucleus and the negatively charged satellite appear to conform strictly to Coulomb's law. This is true not only for the hydrogen atom; it has been observed also in the behavior of more complicated atoms. The eight electrons of the oxygen atom, for exam-

ple, move in their orbits at velocities proportional to their distances from the eight protons in the oxygen nucleus.

Eight protons in a nucleus? The reader who has followed the parable thus far may reasonably object. How can the oxygen nucleus hold together?

This indeed is our dilemma. The nucleus of oxygen is very small, not much larger than the nucleus of hydrogen. But the primary objection is not that so many particles should exist in a space not much larger than one of them, but that the particles of positive electricity should stay together at all.

Coulomb's law insists that positive particles repel one another in the same degree that they attract negative particles. Abundant experience confirms the law. There are electric motors activated by this force of repulsion; it operates in telephone and telegraph circuits; it is used in other industrial applications. No behavior of electricity is better known among the large-scale phenomena of electrical engineering. Engineers only occasionally deal with pure charges of electricity; most of their work is with gross bodies carrying charges. But the chemist Frederick Soddy, after measuring the force of repulsion that exists between two free protons, made an interesting calculation.

A gram is a small quantity in our everyday world; it rates about the twenty-eighth part of an ounce. But Dr. Soddy's figures show that if it were possible to accumulate a gram of protons at one pole on the Earth's surface and another gram at the opposite pole on the other side of our globe, the mutually repellent force of these two small quantities of positive electricity would be equivalent to a pressure of 26 tons, even at that distance of about 8,000 miles. Try to imagine then what should be the repulsion of proton against proton within the narrow zone of the atomic nucleus, where dimensions are reckoned in tenths of million-millionths of an inch.

On the logic of Coulomb's law one could expect to find no atoms in the Universe except those of hydrogen, since it should be impossible for more than one proton to occupy a nucleus. And if by chance two or more high-speed protons collide and find themselves accidentally associated in close quarters, Coulomb's law required that they instantly fly apart at terrific speeds of repulsion. Instead of this, the searchers found that the physical world includes a complete sequence of "impossible" structures—the helium atom with 2 protons in its nucleus, the lithium with 3, beryllium with 4, boron with 5, carbon with 6, and so on up the scale to the heaviest, uranium, with its gigantic family of 92 protons housed with 146 neutrons in the diminutive confines of nuclear space.

This uranium atom, to be sure, is a wobbly structure. Every now and then one ejects a cluster of protons and neutrons from the center, to leave a less crowded residue. This residue we call radium, and its nucleus in turn also explodes with a series of ejections, breaking down to form the simpler polonium. Finally polonium, after ridding itself of a cluster of 2 protons and 2 neutrons, settles into the stable structure we call lead. But why should lead be stable? Its nucleus, even after the successive explosions, still contains 82 protons, and each of them should waste no time in getting away from the hated presence of its fellows.

Such is the anomaly that for more

than twenty years defied explanation.[1] Coulomb's law, which ruled precisely in the atomic environs and within the spaces between nucleus and orbits, did not apply to bodies in the central core. Why was it flouted there? By what supreme court, by what more powerful ordinance, was it overruled?

The Washington experiments of 1936 brought the first answer to that question. They penetrated the inner fortress to demonstrate directly the existence of a mighty force which is operative only within the small dimensions of the nuclear zone—a force more powerful than the Coulomb force of repulsion, more attractive than the Newtonian force of gravitation: a sort of central traffic control which dominates and directs the other material forces. Apparently it is responsible for the wide variety of atomic forms that matter may assume. Also we are to think of it as a unifying agency which underlies all physical reality. Without it there could be no metal, no carbon, no living cell, no Earth, no Sun, no Galaxy, no manifold Universe—there could be nothing more complex than hydrogen, and the Whole would be only a vast cloud of diffuse hydrogen gas interspersed or combined with free neutrons. At least, such is the picture we infer from the facts we know. Our new-found force is the medium that holds the world together. It is the invisible tie that binds.

Many of the great discoveries were accidental finds, but this binding force of the nucleus was not chanced upon by accident. Its detection is the culmination of ten years of experiments aimed directly at this mystery.

When the Carnegie Institution of Washington established a Department of Research in Terrestrial Magnetism in 1904, the specialists in charge realized that their studies must lead eventually to atomic physics. At that time no one dreamed of massive central nuclei surrounded by revolving electrons. But no one doubted that the secret of the earth's magnetism, of whose reality the quivering compass needle is perpetual witness, must be sought not only in the Earth and its atmosphere but also in the invisible molecules and atoms of the needle itself. Matter must be minutely explored for the magnetic mechanism within it. The early studies were directed at large-scale phenomena, magnetic surveys of the continents and seas, and mapping. But in 1926 a definite program of subatomic research was initiated.

By this time considerable data on the intimate behavior of atomic parts had been accumulated by laboratories in Europe, Canada, and the United States. Conspicuous among the anomalies thus brought to view was this curious inexplicable behavior of protons within the nucleus. The Coulomb forces are so fundamental to our idea of the response of the compass needle that any variation or suspension of their action in any region of the Universe must be a cause of concern to explorers of magnetism.

[1] Until the discovery of the neutron (1932) atomic nuclei were thought to contain protons and a smaller number of electrons, but the nature and binding force of such a structure were a complete puzzle, outside all conception of theory. The neutron helped the situation but little, although it conceivably could act as the intermediary for binding protons together in spite of their repulsive forces. In fact, a whole theory of nuclear structure, now abandoned, was built up on this hypothesis as soon as specific forces, assumed to be attractive, were demonstrated by neutron-scattering experiments to exist between neutrons and protons. These forces, it is now known, assist the proton-proton and neutron-neutron forces in binding the nuclear particles together.

And so, among the problems outlined for investigation by the department was that of the nature of the nuclear mechanism. A special laboratory was built to house the research. Special apparatus was designed and installed: first a high-voltage discharge tube capable of delivering momentary blows with a pressure of about 1,000,000 volts; then an electrostatic machine and tube continuously energized by 500,000 volts; and finally the present towering atom smasher of 1,200,000 volts capacity, with which the great detection was achieved.

The detectives in this search were led by Merle A. Tuve, and the group included L. R. Hafstad, O. Dahl, and N. P. Heydenberg, physicists all. At various times during the ten years other men were on the staff, and each contributed some spark of illumination to the slow plugging through the darkness. But I am naming above the fortunate four who were working with the big-atom gun that cold January day early in 1936 when the first rumors of the new result began to trickle in. Months were to pass before the discoverers made any public announcement of what they had done—for an effect so apparently exaggerated must be tested, checked and rechecked, and submitted to the penetrating eye of mathematical analysis before it could be announced as a certainty. Indeed, nearly as important as the observations themselves, which by direct inspection only showed the failure of the Coulomb law, was this mathematical analysis of the observations in terms of the "wave mechanics," a service performed by Gregory Breit and two associates. All these tests and calculations, the checkings and rechecks, were concluded successfully, and the full story of the discovery was reported to the international group of scientists assembled at Cambridge in September of 1936 for the Harvard Tercentenary Conference.

The thing sought in the experiments was a definite measurement. We may outline the logic of the campaign in three steps. Observation had shown (1) that protons dwell together within a nucleus, and (2) that protons outside a nucleus are repelled; therefore, reasoned Tuve and Breit and their associates, there must be (3) a critical distance at which the force of repulsion is overcome and within which the protons become reconciled to one another's presence. To find that critical distance became the first objective.

The means used were those of bombardment. Suppose you have a vessel full of pure hydrogen gas of a measured density. And suppose you fire a stream of protons into this atmosphere of hydrogen. Each hydrogen atom, remember, has a proton in its core; so what you are doing is a bombardment of protons with protons. Some of the bombarding protons will approach the nuclear protons head on, others may pass close by on either side, and in every case the mutual forces of repulsion will act to rebuff the particles. They will never touch; the collisions will be only approaches and the nearer the approach the more powerful will be the repulsion. Since targets and projectiles are of equal mass, the effect will be a scattering. But the scattering will not be heterogeneous; it will be quite systematic in its directions. Just as it is possible to predict the behavior of billiard balls from the angle at which the projectile ball strikes the target ball, so it is possible to predict the behavior of the protons. Some years ago the British physicist N. F. Mott made a careful mathe-

matical study of this phenomenon, and predicted the relative number of protons that would be scattered from each angle of approach in obedience to Coulomb's law.

All these data of the ratios and numbers of particles that would be turned back at each angle were available for Dr. Tuve and his laboratory crew. They provided a sort of bench mark, a measurement of the norm of behavior to be expected of protons acting according to Coulomb's law of repulsion. Any departures from this norm might be regarded as evidence of the breakdown of the law. And what the Washington experimenters proposed was to bombard hydrogen gas with faster and still faster protons until they got a scattering different from that predicted by Mott's calculations. The greater the velocity of the protons, the greater would be their momentum, and therefore the greater would be their ability to overcome the repulsion and approach closer to the nucleus.

This game of aerial billiards with ultrascopic particles seems very simple in principle, but it proved almost infinitely difficult in execution. The measurement of the angles could mean nothing specific unless there were an equally accurate measurement of the purity of the particles, of the density of the particles in the hydrogen at the target end of the apparatus, and of the velocity of the stream of projectiles. Very precise control was required in each of these items. Without going into details of the successive steps, I can say that many expedients, many variations, many skills were tried before the actual scattering experiment was even attempted and before the present apparatus with its remarkably exact control was attained.

The atomic artillery-piece looks its part — a sort of super machine gun mounted on its sprawling tripod, towering twenty feet above the floor, with its muzzle pointing straight down and passing through the floor into the basement room below. At its top is an aluminum sphere of six feet diameter—the loading device. Descending from the sphere is a vacuum tube of sturdy glass, the aforesaid muzzle. Charges of positive electricity from a generator are fed by a traveling belt to the aluminum sphere and there are allowed to accumulate on the metal surface to build up a pressure as high as 1,200,000 volts, under conditions of accurate control and precise measurement. This pressure discharges steadily through the long vacuum tube; and by releasing protons into the tube at the top, the gunner provides projectiles for the voltage to work on. The protons may be speeded to any desired velocity, depending on the voltage applied; and, what is equally important, the installation includes clever focusing devices to concentrate the stream, and an analyzing magnet at the bottom to pull out stray particles, unwanted molecules, and stragglers along the fringes of the stream. Thus the instrument is able to deliver to the target chamber at the bottom of the tube a finely focused stream of homogeneous protons all moving in parallel lines and at the same velocity.

In effect, it is as though you had generated a continuous lightning bolt, had harnessed it within the confines of the vacuum, had sifted out all heterogeneous and diffuse elements, and concentrated its missiles into a steady beam narrowed for a measured attack on anything you choose to place as a target in its path.

The target chamber in which the scattering takes place is in the basement

room, at the focus of the tube. This chamber is a small cylindrical compartment about six inches in diameter, into which highly purified hydrogen gas is released. And built into the compartment is an ion detector mounted on an axis so that it may be pointed toward the incoming stream of projectiles at any angle, ranging from zero to ninety degrees. Here is the final link in the chain of stratagems. For, by knowing precisely the original number of particles in the beam, and the number of particles (hydrogen gas) in the chamber, and then by counting the actual number of rebounding or swerving particles which strike the detector at each of its angular positions, you can tell whether or not the projectiles are being scattered according to Mott's calculations—i. e., according to Coulomb's law.

When the thing is operating there is an awesome hum, the drone of the generating mechanism. Occasionally, when affairs are not well adjusted, a spark will flash with a lively crackling from the charged belt to the ceiling above the sphere. And to stand on the floor of this room is to place oneself in the presence of invisible influences which curve through space along the mysterious lines of force which radiate from charged bodies. Indeed, one becomes a charged body. My finger put out toward another person sprayed sparks.

But the workers spend most of their time in the basement room where the targets are manipulated. Lead salts fused in the glass of the tube protects them from random X-rays and other stray radiations that might be generated by chance collisions of the proton stream passing down the tube. Very accurate is the detector device which measures the number of protons scattered at each angle. Each of the bounced protons gives a signal, the signal is amplified by a powerful device, and thereby these infinitely small movements of infinitely small objects are brought within the range of man's perception.

Tuve and his associates began the bombardment with a stream energized by a pressure of 600,000 volts, which means that the protons had velocities of 6,720 miles a second. The detector registered the scattering for each angle, and found that Mott's calculations held, that Coulomb's law of repulsion was operating quite normally. Then the bombarders increased their artillery fire; the pressure was increased to 700,000 volts, speeding the particles to 7,200 miles a second—and Coulomb's law still held. They quickened the attack to 800,000 volts, producing velocities of 7,700 miles a second—and the ancient law began to show evidence of failure. Then the electrical potential was raised on up to 900,000 volts, the stream of protons moved with the momentum imparted by velocities of 8,200 miles a second, and now—something new began to happen!

Instead of recoiling or swerving as before, the projectiles moved in toward their nuclear targets. The change in the number of scatterings from certain significant angles said so—and spoke unmistakably. The inertia of the fast-moving protons carried them headlong through the zone of rapidly increasing force of repulsion until at last the critical distance had been attained by sheer brute momentum, the long, steeply ascending barrier of the nucleus had been mounted, and the invading proton was admitted to the citadel.

Hundreds of experiments of this kind were performed. There could be no

doubt that the Coulomb law had failed —but why?

The records of all the observations were forwarded to Gregory Breit for further analysis. Dr. Breit is a mathematical physicist, was long on the staff of the Department of Research in Terrestrial Magnetism—indeed, he was the leader of this atom-smashing crew at the beginning of the campaign back in 1926—and is still connected with the Washington laboratory as a research associate. But he is now professor at the University of Wisconsin, and in the winter of 1936, when this body of observational data reached him, chanced to be in Princeton attending the Institute for Advanced Study. Right in the neighborhood, across the corridor in Palmer Physical Laboratory, was Edward U. Condon, whose mathematical explorations of atomic behavior have given him wide experience with these technicalities. Dr. Breit called Dr. Condon into consultation, and together they began to dissect the batch of plotted curves and numerical tabulations. Certain details of the problem made it expedient to consult another expert, and R. D. Present of Purdue University made the third member of this mathematical team. By applying the highly complex calculations of "wave mechanics" to the experimental observations, Breit and his associates showed that beyond all doubt the observed failure was not attributable to a possible added repulsion (for a sudden sharp increase of repulsion might also distort the predicted scattering), but was actually a result of encountering for the first time the long-suspected *attractive* force which binds particle to particle within the nucleus.

The results of the mathematical analysis of these experiments may be conveniently summarized as four findings.

1. The critical distance at which the Coulomb force of repulsion between protons breaks down is about 1/12,000,000,000,000 of an inch.

2. The sudden change which occurs in the relations between two protons separated by this critical distance can be explained if we assume the existence of a superior force of attraction which at that and lesser distances dominates the two particles.

3. The binding power of this force, as it operates between two protons at the critical distance, is approximately $10^{36}$ times more powerful than the Newtonian force of gravitation between the two protons.

4. Not only protons, but also neutrons are subject to this powerful force. The attractive force between a proton and a neutron or between two neutrons is the same as that between two protons, except for the absence of the Coulomb repulsion when the chargeless neutrons are involved. These conclusions regarding neutrons are derived indirectly from other data, but the evidence seems to indicate that the nuclear force of attraction is somehow intimately associated with the mass of these primary particles, and depends little, if at all, on whether or not they are electrically charged.

To grasp some concrete idea of the enormity of this force we must resort to a comparison. Remember that the proton is inconceivably small. Its weight is less than this almost infinitesimal fraction of a gram:

1/600,000,000,000,000,000,000,000

And a gram is 1/454th part of a pound.

Now the measurements show that the pull of proton for proton within the re-

gion of the nucleus is so great that the two tiny particles move toward each other as though impelled by a pressure of from 10 to 50 pounds. If the Newtonian force of gravitation operated on the same scale, a feather on the earth's surface would weigh billions of tons.

When free protons or neutrons are captured and incorporated into a nucleus, a certain proportion of the original mass of the particles is converted into energy. The nuclear force, by its bringing of the particles together, seems to take a toll out of their substance, and the whole nucleus becomes lighter than the sum of its separate parts. Thus if we weigh a single proton the scales show a mass of 1.0081; if we weigh a single neutron, 1.0091. The total weight of the two particles therefore is 2.0172. But when they unite to form the nucleus of a heavy hydrogen atom, the mass of the resulting nucleus is only 2.0147 in weight. The difference, .0025, represents the energy of the binding force which holds the two particles together. By computation we find that .0025 of mass is equivalent to 2,200,000 volts of energy. And experiment shows that to crack a heavy hydrogen nucleus and separate its neutron from its proton requires the blow of a projectile moving with an energy exceeding 2,200,000 volts.

By these means, and in other ways as well, the new-found phenomena check. There dwells within the centers of atoms —atoms of the rocks, atoms of the air, atoms of flesh and blood—this titan of forces, this indefinable dryad, if you will, which pulls masses together, expends tremendous energy to bind them into nuclear systems, and in the process makes the masses less massive.

Various names have been proposed for the new entity. One suggestion is that it be called the force of "levity," since the effect is to reduce the masses of the bound particles and, therefore, to make them lighter; but surely levity is not the most fundamental aspect of this tie that binds. Another suggestion is "supergravitation"; but the new-found force is so superlatively super that this title sounds makeshift. The thing has also been referred to as the force of "nucleation," suggesting its effect in causing elementary particles to consolidate their influences, to nucleate into atomic cores. Since the force manifests itself as the central force of all physical nature it deserves an unequivocal name.

We may surmise that gravitation, magnetism, and the electrical properties of attraction and repulsion are only special cases, or conditioned reflections, reactions, or interactions, of this mighty central Something that holds the world together.

And what shall we say of atomic power—that dream of the modern alchemists who have said that energy sufficient to propel an ocean liner across the Atlantic is locked within a teaspoon of water? Surely its secret lies here. Reckon the billions of billions of protons and neutrons contained in water, remember that each is bound to its neighbor with a force of millions of electron-volts, that proton is linked to proton as if with a pressure of many pounds, and sum up the total. If it were possible to treat a teaspoon of water expeditiously, to cause the protons of its hydrogen atoms to combine into more complex nuclear patterns and thus form atoms of heavier elements, the energy released in binding these interior particles together would total several hundred thousand kilowatt-hours — quite sufficient, if harnessed, to drive a steamship from New York to Havre. But

we must admit that we know no means of harnessing the forces even if we were able to release them economically; and the plain fact is that our present methods of separating and synthesizing nuclear structures require more energy in the bombardment than we get back from the transmutations. The utilization of atomic energy is a goal for the future—as far as we can see to-day, for the very distant future—but a beginning has been made in the Washington experiments. The discovery and measurement of the forces provide a firmer basis for our dreamers and, let us hope, for our future engineers.

Dr. Tuve and his associates are planning deeper forays. In 1937 they began the construction of a new electrostatic generator and discharge tube designed to operate at potentials above 5,000,000 volts. Protons accelerated by this electrical pressure will hit the target with a velocity of 19,300 miles a second. The resulting momentum should carry the projectiles into the nuclear zones of massive atoms, such as those of the metals, whose inner cores present complexities in striking contrast with the simplicity of hydrogen. The problem is a peculiarly enticing one, and various laboratories in Europe and America are now engaged in a strong attack upon it. The frontiers have been crossed, but a vast hiddenness still awaits exploration. The nature of the internal structure, how the interior particles move and interact within their narrowly bounded zone, their degrees of freedom and compulsion—such questions beg for answers. There are inklings of news from within, fragmentary flashes of this and that, and theorists are never idle with their charming mathematical symbolism. But the ultimate battle must be won by the experimentalist. Theory must be tested and proved by experience before we can go in and possess the new land.

1937

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# MARGARET SCHLAUCH

## *Semantics: Vocabulary in Motion*

From THE GIFT OF TONGUES

### Extending the Use of Words

Among the words first taught to children by their doting parents are the terms for the parts of the human body. Pressing down the diminutive button-like protuberance which shows signs of one day becoming a full-blown human nose, mama asks beguilingly: "What is this?" The child, shrewd and skilled already in the enormous task of humoring grown-ups, but nevertheless somewhat confused by the rain of new terminology about him, looks up cooperatively and suggests with hope but little conviction: "Baby's ear." "Oh, no!" the mellifluous voice proceeds, while the pressure is still maintained, "Baby's nose. *Nose!*" And so the baffling epithet is learned, presumably for a lifetime.

From *The Gift of Tongues* by Margaret Schlauch. Copyright 1942 by The Viking Press, Inc., N. Y.

Now "nose" is a concrete term which will cause the child little trouble once he learns it, especially so long as he limits it to this bodily member of himself and his fellow human beings. He can even apply it to the corresponding members of familiar animals without being involved in confusion of meaning. This is also true of other members, such as eyes, ears, hands, elbows, knees, feet, and the rest. These elementary physiological identifications must give him a comfortable sense that things mean what they say. If we wish to amuse ourselves by speculating on the kinds of words which originated first in human speech, there is some reason for surmising that names for our bodily parts were among them.

But very soon in the life of a child comes the experience of metaphoric use. He is watching his mother peeling potatoes, and begins to be aware of their shape and texture. Pointing to the buds visible on the surface of the brown tuber he asks: "Mama, what are these?" She replies: "The eyes of the potato." This designation is unhesitatingly accepted. In the first place, the elliptical depressions surrounding potato buds actually resemble human eye-sockets in shape. There is enough physical similarity to make the poetic image acceptable in place of a name. Besides, the child is in no position—as yet—to observe the difference in functioning between vegetables and animals which would cause him to challenge the existence of eyes in a potato: real eyes, that is, with a potential power of vision. He can hardly ask: "But has the potato a nervous system?!" He still lives in the mysterious, animistic world of fairy-tales, in which sticks and stones, knives and forks, tables and chairs possess souls. In such a world inanimate objects may confidently be expected to see and hear, to bless and curse, and in general to take definite attitudes of friendliness or hostility to little boys and girls. So it is not surprising if he pursues the subject of the potato-sprouts further and poses the (for him) quite logical question: "Then the Potato-man can *see* me?" This very plausible deduction is probably hailed by the mother with inner exultant glee. And aloud she may even go so far as to say: "Yes, if you're not good, the Potato-man will see you, *even in the dark* and at night he'll come for you, and *take you away. . . .*"

Thus metaphor is elevated into mythology. Fortunately for most children, these transparent lies are recognized at an early date. The slight change of tone that betrays them only complicates a bit more the day-long task of placating grown-ups. If the demonology of potatoes is taken too seriously, however, the results may be very serious. Those who have dealt with nervously maladjusted children are no doubt aware of the precise dangers involved. Considering the crude animism of the language surrounding children, it is a wonder that any of us escape undamaged!

### Metaphoric Extension

When the bud of a potato is called an "eye," the designation is a metaphor. Physical similarity causes a transfer of an epithet originally clear, limited, and concrete in its application. A *semantic shift* has occurred, known as a simple transfer of meaning. It is useless to debate whether "eye" in the new context is a *new* word (in which case it should have been discussed under vocabulary and the creation of words) or not. In any event the application of the physical sound-symbol [ai] has widened. This is the extension of words to include

new referents somehow resembling the original ones. Metaphor implies the perception of such resemblances. By means of this process meanings of words are constantly broadening and shifting. Here are some everyday examples:

*Parts of the body* are further used in references to many things which are themselves concrete and familiar. We speak of the "lip" and the "ears" of a cup, the "teeth" of a saw or a comb, the "legs" of tables and other immobile articles of furniture, the "elbows" of pipes and macaroni, the "hands" of a clock, the "tongue" of a balance or a bell, the "eye" of a needle, and the "head" of a hammer. When we travel we encounter the "foot" of a mountain, the "mouth" of a river, a "head"-land, the "shoulders" —even the "soft shoulders"—of a road, the "brow" of a hill, and the "neck" of the woods. The German speaks eloquently of a *Meeresbusen* ("bosom" of the sea or gulf). Slightly disguised from us today are the "core" (heart) of an apple—a Romance word; and "axle" (shoulder) of a wheel—cognate with German *Achsel.* In politics we hear of a "rump" session of parliament and a "head" of the state. Perhaps "ward-heeler" may be included here, though it is actually a compound.

*Animal names and animal members* appear in many of the least regarded units of our discourse. We have "wing" chairs and collars, clothes "horses," darning "eggs" and also "egg"-plants, the "fangs" of a machine, "goose-neck" lamps, "hare" lips, "rats" of hair. The last is, to be sure, dated; it was current only in the days when women wore pads of artificial hair to eke out what nature had given them. We refer ambiguously enough to the "cock" of a water-tap, the "beak" of a vessel, and the "crest" of a hill or wave. "Catspaw" is more than a descriptive designation of an object similar to something else, and so presumably is "monkey wrench." Value judgments are tied up with both of these.

*Plants* and their parts give us the "nut" of a screw, a shoe "tree," the "stem" of a glass, and the "root" of a tooth or a cancerous growth. When we talk of the "root of the matter" we are already moving on a higher level of abstraction.

*Tools* and simple inventions have long supplied names for similar objects elsewhere. Carpentry and engineering use "pin" for very solid joiners; "table"-land (Spanish *mesa*) refers to plateaus; valleys have "cups"; roads and trees have "forks"; the arid section of the United States is called the "Dust Bowl." The parts of the human body are often described by simple figures taken from engineering. Thus we have the "bridge" of the nose, the "arch" of the foot, the "roof" of the mouth, the "canal" of a tooth. In addition there are vocal "cords," eye "lids," and "club" feet. Simple metaphor even furnished the names of three small bones in the middle ear: "hammer," "anvil," and "stirrup," and the ear "drum" itself. Parts of musical instruments are described in terms of simpler tools: pianos have "hammers" and "keys," violins have "bridges" and "bows" in a sense unknown to primitive warriors.

All workers in special crafts can surely augment this list. What has happened is of course that an elementary similarity in external aspect has caused a shift of the word to a new function.

Other shifts occur when words having to do with time relations are applied to space, or the reverse. Sometimes it is hard to tell which came first. We say "The tree stands *before* my house" and

also "I did this *before* the spring house cleaning." Presumably one is a metaphoric application of the other. We transfer words describing impressions from one of the five senses, to make them apply to others. So it is quite usual to talk of a "sharp" tone, a "flat" taste, a "shrill" color, a "smooth" sensation of any sort. Finally, any of these physical terms can readily be applied to psychological states. "Bitter" grief is the kind that *bites* ("how sharper than a serpent's tooth . . ."); "anguish" is the kind that strangles, for the word is cognate with German *eng* and Latin *angustus* meaning "narrow, constricted." "Dreary" once meant "falling" or "dripping." Colors are taken to designate attributes of character: "He's *yellow*," or "That's mighty *white* of you" (regional U.S.A. dialect) in English. German has an expression *einem grün sein* meaning to be favorable or devoted to someone else; and Russian uses derivatives of the word *krasnyi* (red) for adjectives to express pleasure and approbation. (This, by the way, has nothing to do with politics. It is an old semantic shift no doubt connected with that preference for bright colors evinced in peasant embroideries and woodwork.)

When these rather elemental shifts occur it is easy to trace their course and to understand their cause. Some, however, are the result of more intricate psychological readjustments.

## Communication and Misunderstanding

Two human beings who talk together are accomplishing an act of "communication," as we defined it in the first chapter. Since the effort succeeds so well in most cases, we are apt to forget that the act is and must always be an approximation. To each of his friends, even to his closest *alter ego*, a man talks out of a private world of his own: the sum total of his memories and experiences. Persons strongly attracted to each other by the emotions are prone to attempt a more intimate approaching of the two worlds, so that by some kind of magic extension of personality each one may reach back into the early days of the other and build the same structure of experience. But despite the torrents of eloquence with which the miracle is sometimes attempted, the isolation remains a dreary fact.

The reason is simple. It is impossible for any two persons ever to have learned the same word under precisely the same circumstances; occupying, as it were, the same space in time, and apprehending the new term with precisely the same background. Therefore each will take it into his consciousness ringed about with a special context of associations, differing from the associations of everyone else hearing it. This is what Hermann Paul means when he says that each linguistic creation—and re-creation—is and remains the work of an individual. Yet procedures repeat themselves and approximations of understanding do occur. Our speech is a compromise between the ultimate incommunicability of one person with another and the conventional communication values attached to certain symbols.

## Words and References

Let us pause a moment to analyze what happens to us in normal conversation when we employ terms for things. Suppose the subject talked about is a spider. When the word is pronounced the sounds will call up in the mind of the listener a general background of experience, not always very vivid, and not always involving a sharp photographic

image of remembered spiders. The background of experience in the listener's mind is called by some writers the *reference,* as distinguished from the *referent,* or the real spider existing in the world outside ourselves. It is important to keep the three elements in the situation quite distinct:

The *word,* which is merely a symbol made up of sounds, like ['spaidə(ɹ)];
The *referent,* or concrete object (a living animal);
The *reference,* or recalled experience of past spiders evoked in the mind of the listener.

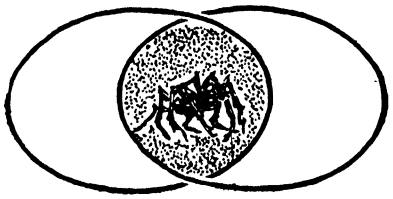
Under certain circumstances, however, an extremely vivid image is recalled in connection with a given word. The reference is sharpened. This happens especially when the referent is associated with a strong emotion like love or fear. But the same stimulus, the spoken word ['spaidə(ɹ)], may produce nothing but a vague reference in one listener while it evokes a sharp one in another. Their experiences are by no means identical.

### Emotional Associations

For instance: when I first learned the word "spider," the circumstances were apparently tranquil. I had no cause for alarm, and my attention, so far as I recall, was chiefly captivated by the spinning activities of the creature. The word had no sinister connotations for me. A playmate of mine in those early days, however, must have learned the word under terrifying circumstances. She was never able to recall them or convey them to me in any way; but the mere pronunciation of the word (not to speak of the sight of an actual arachnidan creature) was enough to induce symptoms of panic amounting almost to a fit. If emotions may strongly color the reference of "spider," they may do so to some slight degree with less concrete terms such as "isosceles triangle." There is the illuminating story of a little girl who, having recently learned to read, was spelling out a political article in the newspaper. "Father," she asked, "what is Tammany Hall?" And father replied in the voice usually reserved for the taboos of social communication, "You'll understand that when you grow up, my dear." Acceding to this adult whim of evasion, she desisted from her inquiries; but something in Daddy's tone had convinced her that Tammany Hall must be connected with illicit *amour,* and for many years she could not hear this political institution mentioned without experiencing a secret non-political thrill. Another high school girl reports that the phrase "plane geometry" was first introduced to her in a context of deprecation, as applying to a science much less exciting and esoteric than something else (presumably "solid" geometry). So for a long time she understood "plane" in the sense of "plain" —a semantic confusion heightened by the homonyms of identical origin—appropriate for an unadorned Cinderella among the mathematical sisters; and it was only much later that she realized with a shock that the key word applied quite colorlessly to (imaginary) surfaces, having nothing to do with beauty or complexity.

With such varieties of individual experience in relation to words, there arise all sorts of *connotations,* as they are called, or nuances of association around the accepted factual definition. Some connotations (like the erotic aura around Tammany Hall for the little girl of our anecdote) remain strictly private and individual, the results of special acci-

dents; others are coincidental for many persons and hence become currently attached to the word. If the sound-symbol is "spider," the situation can be thus represented:



The unshaded sections in the ellipse of associations represent the special and private associations of the word due to the accidents of individual experience; the shaded portion represents a common store of connotations (tactile impressions approximately the same for anyone who has ever felt an arachnid crawl over his shin, generally current anecdotes or superstitions about spiders, etc.). In the heart of the overlapping associations is the word in its scientific sense: a designation of a biological type by (so far as possible) a colorless, unemotional scientific label. Even the label is a mere approximation of completely scientific denotation. The connotations cannot be kept away entirely, even from the abstract terms.

## Changes in Meaning

The shaded matter of our diagram differs in all experiences of speaking and listening. The shifts and instabilities may be great or little, but they exist. When repeated experiences tend to push the territory of common connotations generally in the same directions, a change in meaning will occur. The semantic development is often gradual, but it may end in a great transformation of meaning eventually. The general direction of the change will be determined by the prejudices, preoccupations, and interests prevailing over others in the community of speakers. Social tendencies appear more clearly in semantic than in phonetic change. This will be demonstrated more than once in the special types of change cited.

*Pejorative* change is one of the commonest and most readily observed. It means a degeneration in meaning from a comparatively noble and exalted significance to one of lower, if not downright contemptible or obscene, connotation. It has been suggested that there must be something groveling about human nature, since it has so often caused the besmirching of otherwise estimable terms. However, we must remember that here too the opposite of each tendency is perceptible concomitantly with it, and we must not despair too easily of any of the far-famed tendencies of human nature.

It is particularly words connected with sexual taboo and class snobbishness which tend to degenerate. Many words designating intimate articles of clothing have been shifted so often for this reason that it is difficult to keep abreast of them. So the homely "shirt" falls into disrepute and is replaced by "chemise." Speakers of the English language have often hidden behind an imported French word in order to spare their extremely delicate feelings. "Chemise" in its turn is either replaced by others still more vague, like "combination," or is eliminated entirely, together with the garment itself. The nether habiliments of gentlemen were at one time generally called "breeches"; later a sense of prudery caused this to be replaced by a loan word *pantaloons;* the new word was abbreviated to "pants," which quickly sank in the social scale and was superseded by "trousers." The corresponding diminutive garment of the ladies, formerly

"pantalettes" or "panties" has shrunk to "step-ins," "scanties," and (adapting still another word from the masculine attire) "shorts."

In modern times many languages have witnessed a certain pejorative change in titles of class. "Sir," "lady," *monsieur, madame, Herr, Frau, señor, señora,* and the rest have lost their feudal connotations and are currently used for ordinary persons like you and me. "Bourgeois" too is by way of becoming a term of reproach after serving proudly the aspirations of a proud new class. In England, I am told, a wealthy club-*woman* speaks of her "char*lady*." The reverse was formerly true. Malodorous and sinister subjects quickly cast a pejorative pall over their vocabulary. "Slaughter-house" is avoided for *abattoir;* "undertaker" was originally adopted as a euphemism, but has itself been replaced by "funeral director." An endless source of examples is to be found in the shamefaced phrases by which civilized human beings try to gloss over "natural needs" while alluding to them obliquely. "Toilet," which at one time referred to the entire process of gowning and beautifying oneself for appearance in public, fell into disrepute because of one aspect of that preparation; it is now disappearing before various evasive expressions like "rest-room" (but who "rests" in such a place?), "powder room," "lounge," "lavatory" (a British term), and others due to the jocular originality of individual tavern keepers. Further examples of this sort of thing will be found in a later chapter. The reader may amuse himself by extending the list. Names for underlings, for inhabitants of the country (as opposed to the sophisticated city), for foreigners, for death and certain types of sickness, are particularly prone to degenerate. At certain periods of history when the dominant culture happened to be in the hands of a cynical and dissipated group, many of the most innocent words have suffered degeneration. Allardyce Nicoll reports that the society comedies of the Restoration period in England tended to vilify any and all words applied to woman, even the most sacred and dignified. To us innocents it must appear an incredible situation to find the words "sister" and even "mother" degenerated to pornographic significance as they were in the seventeenth century. In our day such pejorative modifications are more strictly confined to the underworld; they do not appear so baldly in our accepted literature.

*Ameliorative* change is an elevation in meaning. Here too some of the clearest examples are connected with social levels and class distinctions. A "marshal" once meant a lad who looked after mares —that is, a stable boy; a "bishop" was one who had the job of looking (Greek *skopein*) things over (*epi*)—that is, a humble "overseer." An "angel" was merely a messenger, no more exalted than one of our gray-clad postmen before the theologians took the term and exalted it by using it to designate intermediaries between divine intelligence and man's intelligence. A *cathedra* (from the Greek) was once an ordinary chair; now it is associated only with exalted dignitaries. The bishop's seat was his cathedral town. The papal "see," from Latin *sedes,* has made the original word too sacrosanct for ordinary use.

With the development of a modern mercantile culture, some adjectives not originally laudatory have assumed meliorative connotation. A "shrewd" person was once "wicked, rascally"; now he's admired because he can beat his neighbors in the game of competition.

A "smart" man, etymologically, is one to cause pain (think of German *Schmerz*); now we take our hats off to him. "Nimble" (from a verb *niman*) used to mean "good at taking things" as a pickpocket might be, but is now a synonym for general dexterity; "keen" meant "sharp," and both words have become terms of approval in the non-physical sphere; even "slick" contains overtones of admiration (albeit grudging), especially in America.

*Narrowing* or *restriction* of meaning occurs when a term that once applied to a general class of things is limited to special cases. This process often accompanies borrowing from one language to another. In Russian, *dog* doesn't mean the entire canine breed but only a great Dane; Russian *shtraf* (obviously taken from German) has narrowed from the sense of "punishment in general" to "money fine." Our word "corpse" is in origin identical with Latin *corpus,* meaning any sort of body, human or otherwise, alive or dead. Now it can only mean a cadaver or, as medical students would say, "a stiff." "Garage," a more recent loan word, comes from a French verbal noun originally meaning "place for storing anything," not exclusively automobiles. "Undertaker," already cited, shows narrowing as well as pejorative change. "See" as in "papal see" (quoted above) shows narrowing as well as ameliorative change.

Many words which were once abstract designations for a quality or a class have narrowed in the special direction of *concretization.* Latin *fructus* was once "the act of enjoying oneself"; now we limit "fruit" to the apples, pears, and oranges which help us to that desirable end in one definite form. Our word "city," designating a very tangible, visible, and in spots solid gathering of human beings, meant "quality of citizenship" when it was first created as Latin *civitas.* "Faculty," which for academicians evokes a group of learned gentlemen—with a few ladies sprinkled in—robed in scholastic cap and gown, once had only the vaguer sense of "the possibility of doing (*facere*) something." We still use the word in this earlier sense when we speak of a man's "faculty" of concentration, or other talent. The word "faction," too, could have been applied to any sort of "act of doing" (*facere*). Now it is restricted to political groups within a larger body. This specialized and concretized use appears quite early. On the walls of Pompeii there are inscriptions using the verb form of *facere* in a narrow, political sense which has been interpreted as "unite, get together." Thus *Caupones, facite! Pomari, facite! Lignari, facite! Unguentari, facite!* would mean: "Tradesmen, unite! Dealers in apples, wood, and perfumes, get together!" It all sounds very familiar.

*Expansion* is of course the opposite of restriction. A term for an individual is adopted for a class. This is exemplified, for instance, whenever a proper name or a patented trade name is extended to cover a whole group. Soon after the phonograph was invented, one particular make, the "victrola," was popularly universalized for all. "Lynch" and "dunce," as your dictionary will tell you, come from the names of individual persons now forgotten in the larger idea. A "barn" formerly meant a "barley-place"; now it refers to a place of storage for all kinds of grain and for other things as well. "Box," once designating only receptacles made of *buxum* or boxwood, can now apply to all. "Manuscript" is often extended to cover material more accurately called "typescript."

Bréal records a curious instance from the Sanskrit. Here *go-shtha* meant "cow-place" literally, but was universalized for any kind of stable, so that it was later possible to speak of an *açva-go-shtha* or "horse-cow-place." (*Açva,* nominative *açvas,* is cognate with Latin *equus.*)

Within the general field of metaphorical change which we have already briefly discussed, it is possible to distinguish a number of special types. The shift may occur in the direction of *hyperbole,* or deliberate exaggeration, causing expressions of great strength to diminish toward feebleness. Most of our intensive words go this way. "Awfully," "enormously," "tremendously" are adverbs used for quite trivial matters now. The tendency is still more marked with the more transitory expressions of disapproval which never achieve the dignity of accepted usage. "Stinking," "lousy," "vile," "putrid" are a few of those which have been recently current on both sides of the Atlantic. Naturally one's ears become jaded by these excessive stimulants, and they are quickly discounted as hyperbolic exaggerations. On the other hand *litotes,* or understatement, occurs when a weak or colorless word assumes strength from special uses. Some recent examples are: "protective custody" (which sounds reassuring on the face of it); to "co-ordinate" (*gleichschalten*), which under certain circumstances means quite ruthless elimination of opposition; to "strafe," from German *strafen,* a simple word for "to punish," now assuming connotations of bombed cities and civilian terror.

### Shift to Opposite Meanings

When words are falling into disuse they sometimes take on new meanings because of association with the few stereotyped phrases in which they survive. "Desultory reading" means "disjointed, skipping" sort of reading. It might in fact be quite feverish in tempo. But since the phrase is now felt to be primarily an opposite of "continuous, orderly, *purposeful* reading," it has assumed connotations of "lazy, relaxed," which were once foreign to it. Apparently it is natural for us to think of qualities in pairs —each one together with its opposite. When I say "bright" I am unconsciously thinking "not dark." As Jost Trier, a German scholar, expresses it concisely in a recent study: "Every word spoken evokes its own opposite meaning." We exclude the opposite while at the same time we are aware of it as a kind of negative definition. But one word may have a whole series of opposites, due to the accidents of association. It is thus that "desultory" comes to mean "lazy"—by negation of an opposite not originally associated with it. So a person who had only encountered "otiose" in the single phrase of disapproval, "otiose epithet," might assume it meant "not decent, not polite," whereas it means only "not accurate; not needed; lazy, superfluous, functionless."

By such elimination "egregious" has become petrified in a few phrases which not only limit but essentially change its earlier sense. It is a vivid compound in its origin, from Latin *ē, ex,* "out of," and *grex, gregis,* "a flock." A sheep that stood out from the rest of the flock was, literally, an "outstanding" sheep, equally so, whether for good or ill. But words in English with the sense of "outstanding, conspicuous" readily assume the sense of "immodest, blatant, ungentlemanly." (A gentleman observes a well-bred conformity with the herd.) In this particular word the pejorative tendency is strengthened by the limitation of

its use to a few obsolescent phrases like "an egregious error" and "an egregious ass." Who has ever heard denizens of a conservative club (where the word is most apt to be used) speak of one with "egregious talent" or "egregious virtues"? No; a gentleman's chief virtue is to have nothing in excess. Thus the accidents of association surrounding a word rarely used have modified it so that it is now felt to describe qualities with which it originally had no concern. Another instructive example is the semantic shift in the word "meat." The archaic use, found in the phrases "bread and meat" and "meat and drink," shows that the word once had a more general scope than now. But by new associations, especially new ideas about the foods it was meant to *exclude,* it became the equivalent of "non-vegetable" as well as "non-liquid" nourishment. This in turn caused a displacement of "flesh," which had been commonly used for food in expressions like "flesh meat," but is now used alone for the muscular part of any animal body apart from (*excluding*) connotations of edibility. In Spanish *carne* means both "meat" and "flesh."

### Meaning and Grammatical Use

Some of the processes here cited are sure to have an effect on syntax, as we shall see. For the moment let it suffice to point out that the key words we use to express grammatical relations have often reached their present function by some of the semantic changes here indicated. A single word with a restricted application may have its scope widened so that it does the work for a whole class. Our verb "do" substitutes for many others in allusive sentences. ("Does she play?" "No, she *doesn't.*") The English "more," once a designation for an increased amount of some physical quantity, is now widely employed as a mere device to make other adjectives comparative: "*more* beautiful," "*more* radiant," "*more* despicable." Its function has widened with its semantic widening. The same thing happened with the Romance languages, which took specific words like *magis* and *plus* and universalized them as signs of the comparative (Spanish *más,* French *plus*). Thus also do adverbs take on special functions as prepositions. In French, the grammatical form for negation has led to a curious transformation of positive terms into their opposites. There were expressions meaning "not a bit, not a step" (*ne . . . pas*), "not a thing" (*ne . . . rien*) and "not a person" (*ne . . . personne*). When part of a phrase or compound is suppressed and the remainder still has the meaning of the whole, we may call the process "shortening." But in abbreviated form, the very word meaning "not" (*ne*) might be suppressed, and the positive words for "thing" or "person" would still be felt to have negative significance. It is as if we changed "nobody" into ("body") and still felt it to be negative. That is why you say *personne* (literally "a person") in French if you wish to say "No one" in reply to a question like "Who is there?"

### Semantic Archaisms

One special aspect of semantic change throws light on our earlier cultural history. When we invent new instruments we are apt to name them from something already known, thus continuing the elementary metaphors encountered by a child learning about "legs" of tables or "eyes" of potatoes. Or we name the new tool for materials long since superseded in the course of invention. This type of *substitution,* as it has

been called, is a semantic change caused by changes in the outside world, not primarily by psychological factors. Yet it is impossible to separate the external and internal factors. Conservatism and inertia operate to keep our technological vocabulary archaic. We "sail" on boats which are innocent of sails. Little boys play with "marbles" which came from no quarries at all, since they are made of artificial compositions. Our "books" are so named from the "beech" tree, whose bark and branches once served for the scratching of early runes. Our "manuscripts" are no longer written by hand (*manus*) but by machine, as our "*manu*factured" products are made. Our "paper" is turned out from wood pulp, not from the papyrus reed for which it was once named. Our "pens" are no longer feathers (*pennae*). Our "pins" have little resemblance now to the primitive thorns (*spinae, spinulae;* cf. French *épingles*) once used to hold together the earliest garments of man. Yet the development from thorn to pin is clear. Some of the brooches of the early Irish, beautifully executed and elaborately designed as they were, show unmistakably the imitation of the original natural thorn.

Thus a little etymology helps us to go back quickly, by way of palpable semantic change, to the very dawn of history, to the cave dwellings of primitive man. You can try your own hand at some of this semantic paleontology by looking up a few key words in any good etymological dictionary. The German word *Wand,* for "wall," will show you that woven or wattled buildings persisted in Germanic territory into historical times. *Wand* is related to our verb "to wind" (German *winden*) by a change in the root vowel. It is still used to apply to walls of stone, brick and mortar, with steel frames as skeletons—as far removed as possible from primitive wattles!

## The Study of Meanings

Fascinating as the study of semantics is, it is one of the branches of language most recently explored. Long after the details of sound change and sound correspondence had been elaborately catalogued, scholars were still comparatively indifferent to the problems of meaning. The pioneer study was made by Michel Bréal in his *Essai de Sémantique* (1897). At this late date it was actually necessary for Bréal to *create* the word he used to designate his study! His principles were almost exclusively derived from a study of the classical languages (Greek, Latin, Sanskrit), and he appeared to regard the principles as abstract characteristics of "the mind" such as "need for clearness." At first the study of semantics was in fact limited to historical etymology, and the attempts at elucidation were limited to some rather unsatisfactory phrases like Bréal's. The "tendencies" were deduced from etymologies in an abstract way at first, with little regard for social and other aspects of the human situations in which change occurred.

Since this pioneer work, increasing curiosity has been manifest about the external circumstances favoring change. There must be something in the cultural history of a people which will help us understand why *fertig,* which in German once meant "ready for a journey," now means "ready for anything"; or why Anglo-Saxon *ceorl,* which once meant a freeborn husbandman, later degenerated to "churl." Hans Sperber has recently stressed the affective or emotional aura surrounding words as used by individual speakers: the coloring

which, it will be remembered, was so very strong when one child heard or used "spider," and so slight when others did. If this aura of emotional connotation happened to coincide with the general preoccupations of a group in a certain age, it tended to spread. An example would be the connotations of nobility and admiration which gathered around the figure of a man on horseback in the Middle Ages. Men elevated the Vulgar Latin word for a "nag" or "old horse," *caballus,* into a progenitor of words like *chivalry, cavalier, caballero.* The emotional aura did correspond with a dominant prejudice—at least as felt by the feudal rulers themselves. It is easy to imagine the aura of affective associations which led to the sad decline in the word "quean" (cognate with "queen"). A still more glaring example is the enormous shift from the Spanish word *negro,* referring to the color "black," to the Southern American "Nigger," with its connotations of contempt (whether good- or bad-natured), intimidation, and even terror. Here the aura of associations due to the ruling group has gathered so thickly that it has darkened the literal blackness of the original meaning still more—clearly in coincidence with the attitudes of a very definite ruling group, in a ruling age.

Other recent work has stressed the need of including the field of associations and related meanings in dealing with the history and significance of words. By discussing the semantics of groups taken together we can more readily see how the overlappings, gaps, and duplications within the field cause some words to expand in application, others to contract, and still others to vanish. Jost Trier (to whose work we have already referred) has done this for words relating to the field of intelligence in Old and Middle High German texts. Another German scholar, W. Héraucourt, has recently made a semantic study of words for moral and ethical values in Chaucer. Such studies are more illuminating in many ways than an artificial isolation of individual words when their history is being discussed.

## Popular Studies in Semantics

There has been, of late, a rather general flurry of popular interest in semantics, particularly in America. Many situations in the world about us have made people poignantly aware that they fail completely to understand each other even when they talk together volubly in the same language. The realization creates a sense of hurt loneliness, strongest in the least experienced persons. A moment's reflection shows that the counters of conversation most glibly employed, for instance in talk about politics, are the most ambiguous. The spheres of individual connotations (see the spider diagram) may overlap very slightly when terms like "dictatorship" are used. An optimist, struck by this fact, will quickly recover his good spirits and cry: "Very well, then; all we need is to get together and *define our terms.* Semantics—that's what we need!"

The solution, so expressed, sounds agreeably painless. The most obtuse observer will have guessed by now that there is something wrong with human affairs as we manage them, when they cause us to endure frequent major calamities like war, disease, and unemployment. How pleasant if it were only a matter of definitions!

For this reason, perhaps, one can understand the great popularity which has greeted a number of recent books on semantics written for the general public.

By implication at least they promise general solutions for social ills, and so their current success is quite understandable. They have created a certain interest in language problems which linguists may find gratifying; but on the other hand they leave the ordinary reader with an inaccurate impression that semantics—only a single aspect of linguistics, after all—is the *Open Sesame* of otherwise impenetrable problems in both language and sociology.

## Non-Linguists on the Need for Semantic Clarity

The current interest was stimulated to a large degree by *The Meaning of Meaning,* published by C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards in 1923. This book served the very useful function of indicating clearly the complicated nature of the general problem. Others have been impelled as a consequence to approach it from different special points of view. Professor P. W. Bridgman, for instance, has explained for the layman in his *Logic of Modern Physics* just what semantic changes are involved when a specialist in his field uses ordinary words like "time," "space," "identity," and the like. For him these terms have a significance quite different from that which we attach to them in our daily speech. The problem in meanings leads Professor Bridgman to propose a new technique in definitions, which he calls "operationalism." He draws certain sociological deductions from his method of definition in a second book, *The Intelligent Individual and Society.* His thesis is: "The concept is synonymous with the operations by which you test for it," as you test for weight in the laboratory. When he applies the method to social concepts his results are discouraging. If you cannot test concepts like "democracy" or "duty" or "morality" by operations, he tells us, then they are "footless" (that is, meaningless) concepts, and should be abandoned. In the end nothing is left but the egocentric drives of the individuals constituting society.

The linguist and the sociologist alike may charge Bridgman with over-simplification. He has ignored the two-sided nature of a man's relation to the group, which is demonstrated afresh every time he learns and uses a new word. A speaker serves himself as well as the auditor both while he is listening and while he is speaking. The ability to talk withers and tends to die unless it is exercised in society. An equilibrium is desirable; the right degree of independence, the right degree of subordination, for linguistic fluency and presumably for health and social welfare also. It is true in particular of the creation of meanings by the collaboration of individual and group. When he talks about semantics, Bridgman overstresses the ego and understresses its necessary collaboration with others.

Thurman Arnold is another widely read non-linguist who deals with problems in semantics. Writing as a specialist in government and law, he discusses the problem of symbols, including words, and their power over us. In *The Folklore of Capitalism* he submits to sardonic and witty analysis the almost magic power of certain spell-binding references like "the founders of this country," "The Constitution," and "government interference in business." His thesis is that we are ruled by the manipulators of our symbols; and he leaves us with the uneasy sense that very little can be done about the frequent abuse of power by them, except tonic exercises in definition.

### Semantic Study No Panacea

One of the most influential of non-linguists to write on semantics is Alfred Korzybski, perhaps because he has made the most extravagant promises in behalf of semantics as a panacea for human ills. Stripped of elaborate verbalization and repetition, his exhortations in *Science and Sanity* amount to a few salutary if not very original reminders: that the word—a symbol—is *not* the thing (that is, the referent); that we must distinguish sharply the levels of abstraction in the terms we use; that most of our social problems center around ambiguous "multiordinal" terms so interwoven with the emotions that our semantic reactions become tragically confused. Personal, national, and international maladjustments are reduced by Korzybski to "neuro-semantic" reactions needing re-education. "In our lives," he says, "most of our miseries do not originate in the field where the terms 'true' and 'false' apply, but in the field where they *do not apply;* namely, in the immense region of proportional function and meaninglessness, where agreement must fail." Symbols (like money, for instance) are described by Korzybski as high-power abstractions that rule our lives through the people who manipulate them. Like Arnold, Korzybski suggests that our problem is to find the right manipulators, but he throws little light on the burning question: How can we choose them, and how will they go to work on such important symbols as money?

A number of more recent writers depend directly on Korzybski and acknowledge their indebtedness to him. Stuart Chase, for instance, has undertaken to popularize the ideas of *Science and Sanity* in his *Tyranny of Words.* His enthusiasm for semantic exercise as a panacea is even more vocal than that of his predecessor. He repeatedly skirts the danger (when he does not fall headlong into it) of trying to exorcise critical practical issues by linguistic operations. His examples of the need for clarifying references and referents in law, economics, government, and sociology are most edifying, to be sure. But he also promises us too much in the way of automatic solutions to non-linguistic problems when once we have clarified the definitions and eliminated the meaningless terms.

Other disciples of Korzybski are more cautious in their promises. S. I. Hayakawa and Irving J. Lee both present useful popular texts explaining the principles of "neuro-semantics" for the layman. Their books give stimulating exercises to be worked out by the reader. The illustrations, taken from everyday life, are most instructive. The principles themselves, however, are less original than the authors appear to think. Exercises in denotative and connotative meaning have long been a part of college textbooks in rhetoric. Writers of Korzybski's school have made some contribution towards the techniques of definition by exploring some of the psychological aspects hitherto neglected. It is worth while to practice the techniques in their newer forms. Popular interest in them may be regarded as a gratifying sign of intellectual curiosity and alertness in the reading public. But readers at large may feel a corresponding disappointment, even despair, when they finally discover that semantic analysis will not solve their social problems for them after all.

### Value of Semantic Studies

A student of language is apt to be more modest in his expectations and there-

fore less subject to disappointment than are the amateurs of popular semantics. There is no need to quit the subject on a note of complete skepticism. Even when we have discounted the exaggerated claims of the Korzybski school we may still concede the great importance and use of the study of meanings. Once the results of such study are before us, we naturally pose the question: What next? If irresponsible journalism, for instance, furnishes examples of deliberate confusion, deception by implication and connotation, and so on, what shall we do about it? Obviously it is not enough to point out the semantic malpractices.

The answer, says the linguist, lies outside my field. I do not offer solutions in my capacity as linguist. But I am glad to help my colleagues in journalism, economics, and sociology when they deal with linguistic material. And I may even act with them after the study has been made; but in that event we shall all be acting together as citizens anxious to correct an abuse. We shall have left our studies and laboratories to participate in the affairs of the market place.

In the end, linguists will gain and give most in this field when they unite the traditional scrupulous regard for scientific method with vivid and realistic awareness of social milieu and its challenging problems. To do this they will have to receive help from, as well as give it to, other disciplines such as sociology and psychology. Teachers of language can fructify their material by availing themselves of pertinent discoveries in the adjacent territories. No part of language study, indeed, offers better occasion for scientific collaboration than the investigation of meanings against a social background. The practical effectiveness of this study will be increased rather than diminished when the popular writers limit their claims to the real advantages to be derived from it, without promising social panaceas in addition.

1942

# MORTIMER J. ADLER

## *The Reading of "Reading"*

### From How to Read a Book

One of the primary rules for reading anything is to spot the most important words the author uses. Spotting them is not enough, however. You have to know how they are being used. Finding an important word merely begins the more difficult search for the meanings, one or more, common or special, which the word is used to convey as it appears here and there in the text.

You already know that "reading" is one of the most important words in this book. But, as I have already suggested, it is a word of many meanings. If you

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take for granted that you know what I mean by the word, we are likely to get into difficulties before we proceed much further.

This business of using language to talk about language—especially if one is campaigning against its abuse—is risky. Recently Mr. Stuart Chase wrote a book which he should have called *Words About Words.* He might then have avoided the barb of the critics who so quickly pointed out that Mr. Chase himself was subject to the tyranny of words. Mr. Chase recognized the peril when he said, "I shall frequently be caught in my own trap by using bad language in a plea for better."

Can I avoid such pitfalls? I am writing about reading, and so it would appear that I do not have to obey the rules of reading but of writing. My escape may be more apparent than real, if it turns out that a writer should keep in mind the rules which govern reading. You, however, are reading about reading. You cannot escape. If the rules of reading I am going to suggest are sound, you must follow them in reading this book.

But, you will say, how can we follow the rules until we learn and understand them? To do that we shall have to read some part of this book without knowing what the rules are. The only way I know to help you out of this dilemma is by making you reading-conscious readers as we proceed. Let us start at once by applying the rule about *finding and interpreting the important words.*

When you set out to investigate the various senses of a word, it is usually wise to begin with a dictionary and your own knowledge of common usage. If you looked up "read" in the large Oxford Dictionary, you would find, first, that the same four letters constituted an obsolete noun referring to the fourth stomach of a ruminant, and the commonly used verb which refers to a mental activity involving words or symbols of some sort. You would know at once that we need not bother with the obsolete noun except, perhaps, to note that reading has something to do with rumination. You would discover next that the verb has twenty-one more or less closely related meanings, more or less common.

One uncommon meaning of "to read" is to think or suppose. This meaning passes into the more usual one of conjecturing or predicting, as when we speak of reading the stars, one's palm, or one's future. That leads eventually to the meaning of the word in which it refers to perusing books or other written documents. There are many other meanings, such as verbal utterance (when an actress reads her lines for the director); such as detecting what is not perceptible from what is (when we say we can read a person's character in his face); such as instruction, academic or personal (when we have someone read us a lecture).

The slight variations in usage seem endless: a singer reads music; a scientist reads nature; an engineer reads his instruments; a printer reads proof; we read between the lines; we read something into a situation, or someone out of the party.

We can simplify matters by noting what is common to many of these senses; namely, that mental activity is involved and that, in one way or another, symbols are being interpreted. That imposes a first limitation on our use of the word. We are not concerned with a part of the intestinal tract, nor are we concerned with enunciation, with

speaking something out loud. A second limitation is needed, because we shall not consider—except for some points of comparison—the interpretation, clairvoyant or otherwise, of natural signs such as stars, hands, or faces. We shall limit ourselves to one kind of readable symbol, the kind which men invent for the purposes of communication—the words of human language. This eliminates the reading of other artificial signs such as the pointers on dials of physical apparatus, thermometers, gauges, speedometers, and so forth.

Henceforth, then, you must read the word "reading," as it occurs in this text, to refer to the process of interpreting or understanding what presents itself to the senses in the form of words or other sensible marks. This is not arbitrary legislation about what the word "reading" *really* means. It is simply a matter of defining our problem, which is reading in the sense of receiving communication.

Unfortunately, that is not simple to do, as you would realize at once if someone asked: "What about listening? Isn't that receiving communication, too?" I shall subsequently discuss the relation of reading and listening, for the rules of good reading are for the most part the rules of good listening, though perhaps harder to apply in the latter case. Suffice it for the present to distinguish reading from listening by restricting the communication being received to what is written or printed rather than spoken.

I shall try to use the word "reading" in the limited and special sense noted. But I know that I will not succeed without exception. It will be impossible to avoid using the word in some of its other senses. Sometimes I shall be thoughtful enough to mention explicitly that I am shifting the meaning. Other times I may suppose that the context is sufficient warning to you. Infrequently (I hope) I may shift the meaning without being aware of it myself.

Be stout, gentle reader, for you are just beginning. What has gone before is just preliminary to finding out the even *narrower* sense in which the word "reading" will be used. We must now face the problem which the first chapter indicated. We must distinguish between the sense in which you can read this book, for instance, and are now doing so, and the sense in which you may learn from it to read better or differently than you now can.

Notice that I said "better" *or* "differently." The one word points to a difference in *degrees* of ability, the other to a distinction in *kinds*. I suspect we shall find that the better reader can also do a different *kind* of reading. The poorer can probably do only one kind—the simplest kind. Let us first examine the range of ability in reading to determine what we mean by "better" and "poorer."

One obvious fact shows the existence of a wide range of degrees in ability to read. It is that reading begins in the primary grades and runs through every level of the educational system. Reading is the first of the three R's. It is first because we have to learn to read in order to learn by reading. Since what we have to learn, as we ascend in our education, becomes more difficult or complex, we must improve our ability to read proportionately.

Literacy is everywhere the primary mark of education, but it has many degrees, from grammar-school diploma, or even less, up to a bachelor's degree or a Ph.D. But, in his recent commentary

on American democracy, called *Of Human Freedom,* Jacques Barzun cautions us not to be misled by the boast that we have the most literate population in the world. "Literacy in this sense is not education; it is not even 'knowing how to read' in the sense of taking in quickly and correctly the message of the printed page, to say nothing of exercising a critical judgment upon it."

Supposedly, *gradations* in reading go along with *graduations* from one educational level to another. In the light of what we know about American education today, that supposition is not well founded. In France it is still true that the candidate for the doctor's degree must show an ability to read sufficient to admit him to that higher circle of literacy. What the French call *explication de texte* is an art which must be practiced at every educational level and in which improvement must be made before one moves up the scale. But in this country there is often little discernible difference between the *explication* which a high-school student would give and one by a college senior or even a doctoral candidate. When the task is to read a book, the high-school students and college freshmen are often better, if only because they are less thoroughly spoiled by bad habits.

The fact that there is something wrong with American education, so far as reading is concerned, means only that the gradations have become obscure for us, not that they do not exist. Our task is to remove that obscurity. To make the distinction in grades of reading sharper, we must define the criteria of better and worse.

What are the criteria? I think I have already suggested what they are, in the previous chapter. Thus, we say that one man is a better reader than another if he can read more difficult material. Anyone would agree, if Jones is able to read only such things as newspapers and magazines, whereas Brown can read the best current nonfiction books, such as Einstein and Infeld's *Evolution of Physics* or Hogben's *Mathematics for the Millions,* that Brown has more ability than Jones. Among readers at the Jones level, further discrimination may be made between those who cannot rise above the tabloids and those who can master *The New York Times.* Between the Jones group and the Brown group, there are still others measured by the better and worse magazines, better and worse current fiction, or by nonfiction books of a more popular nature than Einstein or Hogben, such as Gunther's *Inside Europe* or Heiser's *An American Doctor's Odyssey.* And better than Brown is the man who can read Euclid and Descartes as well as Hogben, or Galileo and Newton as well as Einstein and Infeld's discussion of them.

The first criterion is an obvious one. In many fields we measure a man's skill by the difficulty of the task he can perform. The accuracy of such measurement depends, of course, on the independent precision with which we can grade the tasks in difficulty. We would be moving in circles if we said, for instance, that the more difficult book is one which only the better reader can master. That is true, but not helpful. In order to understand what makes some books more difficult to read than others, we would have to know what demands they make on the skill of the reader. If we knew that, we would know what distinguishes better and worse readers. In other words, the difficulty of the reading matter is a convenient, objective sign of degrees of reading ability, but it does not tell us

what the difference is in the reader, so far as his skill is concerned.

The first criterion has some use, nevertheless, to whatever extent it is true that the more difficult a book is the fewer readers it will have at any given time. There is some truth in this, because it is generally the case that, as one mounts the scale of excellence in any skill, the number of practitioners diminishes: the higher, the fewer. Counting noses, therefore, gives us some independent indication of whether one thing is more difficult to read than another. We can construct a crude scale and measure men accordingly. In a sense, that is the way all the scales, which employ reading tests made by the educational psychologists, are constructed.

The second criterion takes us further, but is harder to state. I have already suggested the distinction between active and passive reading. Strictly, all reading is active. What we call passive is simply less active. Reading is better or worse according as it is more or less active. And one reader is better than another in proportion as he is capable of a greater range of activity in reading. In order to explain this point, I must first be sure that you understand why I say that, strictly speaking, there is no absolutely passive reading. It only seems that way in contrast to more active reading.

No one doubts that writing and speaking are active undertakings, in which the writer or speaker is clearly doing something. Many people seem to think, however, that reading and listening are entirely passive. No work need be done. They think of reading and listening as *receiving* communication from someone who is actively *giving* it. So far they are right, but then they make the error of supposing that receiving communication is like receiving a blow, or a legacy, or a judgment from the court.

Let me use the example of baseball. Catching the ball is just as much an activity as pitching or hitting it. The pitcher or batter is the *giver* here in the sense that his activity initiates the motion of the ball. The catcher or fielder is the *receiver* in the sense that his activity terminates it. Both are equally active, though the activities are distinctly different. If anything is passive here, it is the ball: it is pitched and caught. It is the inert thing which is put in motion or stopped, whereas the living men are active, moving to pitch, hit, or catch. The analogy with writing and reading is almost perfect. The thing which is written and read, like the ball, is the passive object in some way common to the two activities which begin and terminate the process.

We can go a step further with this analogy. A good catcher is one who stops the ball which has been hit or pitched. The art of catching is the skill of knowing how to do this as well as possible in every situation. So the art of reading is the skill of catching every sort of communication as well as possible. But the reader as "catcher" is more like the fielder than the man behind the plate. The catcher signals for a particular pitch. He knows what to expect. In a sense, the pitcher and catcher are like two men with but a single thought before the ball is thrown. Not so, however, in the case of the batter and fielder. Fielders may wish that batters would obey signals from them, but that isn't the way the game is played. So readers may sometimes wish that writers would submit completely to their desires for reading matter, but the facts are usually otherwise. The reader has to go after what comes out into the field.

The analogy breaks down at two points, both of which are instructive. In the first place, the batter and the fielder, being on opposite sides, do not have the same end in view. Each thinks of himself as successful only if he frustrates the other. In contrast, pitcher and catcher are successful only to the extent that they co-operate. Here the relation of writer and reader is more like that between the men on the battery. The writer certainly isn't trying *not to be caught,* although the reader may often think so. Successful communication occurs in any case where what the writer wanted to have received finds its way into the reader's possession. The writer's and the reader's skill converge upon a common end.

In the second place, the ball is a simple unit. It is either *completely* caught or not. A piece of writing, however, is a complex object. It can be received more or less completely, all the way from very little of what the writer intended to the whole thing. The amount the reader gets will usually depend on the amount of activity he puts into the process, as well as upon the skill with which he executes the different mental acts that are involved.

Now we can define the second criterion for judging reading ability. Given the same thing to read, one man reads it better than another, first, by reading it more actively, and second, by performing each of the acts involved more successfully. These two things are related. Reading is a complex activity, just as writing is. It consists of a large number of separate acts, all of which must be performed in a good reading. Hence, the man who can perform more of these various acts is better able to read.

I have not really told you what good and bad reading are. I have talked about the differences only in a vague and general way. Nothing else is possible here. Until you know the rules which a good reader must follow, you will not be able to understand what is involved.

I know of no short cut by which you can be shown *now,* clearly and in detail, what I hope you will see before you have finished. You may not see it even then. Reading a book on how to play tennis may not be sufficient to make you perceive *from the side lines* the various shades of skill in playing. If you stay on the side lines, you will never know how it feels to play better or worse. Similarly, you have to put the rules of reading into practice before you are really able to understand them and competent to judge your own accomplishment or that of others.

But I can do one thing more here which may help you get the feel of what reading is. I can distinguish different types of reading for you.

I discovered this way of talking about reading under the dire necessity which a lecture platform sometimes imposes. I was lecturing about education to three thousand schoolteachers. I had reached the point where I was bemoaning the fact that college students couldn't read and that nothing was being done about it. I could see from their faces that they didn't know what I was talking about. Weren't they teaching the children how to read? In fact, that was being done in the very lowest grades. Why should I be asking that four years of college be spent primarily in learning to read and in reading great books?

Under the provocation of their general incredulity, and their growing impatience with my nonsense, I went further. I said that most people could not read,

that many university professors I knew could not, that probably my audience could not read either. The exaggeration only made matters worse. They knew they could read. They did it every day. What in the world was this idiot on the platform raving about? Then it was that I figured out how to explain. In doing so, I distinguished two *kinds* of reading.

The explanation went something like this. Here is a book, I said, and here is your mind. The book consists of language written by someone for the sake of communicating something to you. Your success in reading is determined by the extent to which you get all that the writer intended to communicate.

Now, as you go through the pages, either you understand perfectly everything the author has to say or you do not. If you do, you may have gained information, but you could not have increased your understanding. If, upon effortless inspection, a book is completely intelligible to you, then the author and you are as two minds in the same mold. The symbols on the page merely express the common understanding you had before you met.

Let us take the second alternative. You do not understand the book *perfectly at once.* Let us even assume—what unhappily is not always true—that you understand enough to know that you do not understand it all. You know there is more in the book than you understand and, hence, that the book contains something which can increase your understanding.

What do you do then? You can do a number of things. You can take the book to someone else who, you think, can read better than you, and have him explain the parts that troubled you. Or you can get him to recommend a textbook or commentary which will make it all plain by telling you what the author meant. Or you may decide, as many students do, that what's over your head isn't worth bothering about, that you understand enough, and the rest doesn't matter. If you do any of these things, you are not doing the job of reading which the book requires.

That is done in one way only. Without external help, you take the book into your study and work on it. With nothing but the power of your own mind, you operate on the symbols before you in such a way that you gradually lift yourself from a state of understanding less to one of understanding more. Such elevation, accomplished by the mind working on a book, is reading, the kind of reading that a book which challenges your understanding deserves.

Thus I roughly defined what I meant by reading: the process whereby a mind, with nothing to operate on but the symbols of the readable matter, and with no help from outside, elevates itself by the power of its own operations. The mind passes from understanding less to understanding more. The operations which cause this to happen are the various acts which constitute the art of reading. "How many of these acts do you know?" I asked the three thousand teachers. "What things would you do by yourself if your life depended on understanding something readable which at first perusal left you somewhat in the dark?"

Now their faces frankly told a different story. They plainly confessed that they wouldn't know what to do. They signified, moreover, that they would be willing to admit there was such an art and that some people must possess it.

Clearly not all reading is of the sort

I have just described. We do a great deal of reading by which we are in no way *elevated,* though we may be informed, amused, or irritated. There would appear to be several types of reading: for information, for entertainment, for understanding. This sounds at first as if it were only a difference in the purpose with which we read. That is only partly so. In part, also, it depends on a difference in the thing to be read and the way of reading it. You cannot gain much information from the funny sheet or much intellectual elevation from an almanac. As the things to be read have different values, we must use them accordingly. We must satisfy each of our different purposes by going to the right sort of material for each. More than that, we must know how to satisfy our purposes by being able to read each sort of material appropriately.

Omitting, for the present, reading for amusement, I wish to examine here the other two main types: reading for information and reading to understand more. I think you will see the relation between these two types of reading and the degrees of reading ability. The poorer reader is usually able to do only the first sort of reading: for information. The better reader can do that, of course, and more. He can increase his understanding as well as his store of facts.

To pass from understanding less to understanding more, by your own intellectual effort in reading, is something like pulling yourself up by your bootstraps. It certainly feels that way. It is a major exertion. Obviously, it would be a more active kind of reading, entailing not only more varied activity but more skill in the performance of the various acts required. Obviously, too, the things which are usually regarded as more difficult to read, and hence only for the better reader, are those which are most likely to deserve and demand this type of reading.

Things you can comprehend without effort, such as magazines and newspapers, require a minimum of reading. You need very little art. You can read in a relatively passive way. For everyone who can read at all, there is some material of this sort, though it may be different for different individuals. What for one man requires no or little effort may demand genuine exertion from another. How far any man may get by expending every effort will depend on how much skill he has or is able to acquire, and that is somehow relative to his native intelligence.

The point, however, is not to distinguish good and bad readers according to the favors or deprivations of birth. The point is that for each individual there exist two sorts of readable matter: on the one hand, something which he can read effortlessly to be informed, because it communicates nothing which he cannot immediately comprehend; on the other, something which is above him, in the sense of challenging him to make the effort to understand. It may, of course, be too far above him, forever beyond his grasp. But this he cannot tell until he tries, and he cannot try until he develops the art of reading—the skill to make the effort.

Most of us do not know what the limits of our comprehension are. We have never tried our powers to the full. It is my honest belief that *almost all of the great books in every field are within the grasp of all normally intelligent men,* on the condition, of course, that they acquire the skill necessary for read-

ing them and make the effort. Of course, those more favored by birth will reach the goal more readily, but the race is not always to the swift.

There are several minor points here which you must observe. It is possible to be mistaken in your judgment of something you are reading. You may think you understand it, and be content with what you get from an effortless reading, whereas in fact much may have escaped you. The first maxim of sound practice is an old one: the beginning of wisdom is a just appraisal of one's ignorance. So the beginning of reading as a conscious effort to understand is an accurate perception of the line between what is intelligible and what is not.

I have seen many students read a difficult book just as if they were reading the sports page. Sometimes I would ask at the beginning of a class if they had any questions about the text, if there was anything they did not understand. Their silence answered in the negative. At the end of two hours, during which they could not answer the simplest questions leading to an interpretation of the book, they would admit their deficiency in a puzzled way. They were puzzled because they were quite honest in their belief that they had read the text. They had, indeed, but not in the right way.

If they had allowed themselves to be puzzled *while* reading, instead of after the class was over; if they had encouraged themselves to note the things they did not understand, instead of putting such matters immediately out of mind, almost in shame and embarrassment, they might have discovered that the book in front of them was different from their usual diet.

Let me summarize now the distinction between these two types of reading. We shall have to consider both because the line between what is readable in one way and what must be read in the other is often hazy. To whatever extent we can keep the two kinds of reading distinct, we can use the word "reading" in two distinct senses.

The first sense is the one in which we speak of ourselves as reading newspapers, magazines, or anything else which, according to our skill and talents, is at once thoroughly intelligible to us. Such things may increase the store of information we remember, but they cannot improve our understanding, for our understanding was equal to them before we started. Otherwise, we would have felt the shock of puzzlement and perplexity which comes from getting in over our depth—that is, if we were both alert and honest.

The second sense is the one in which I would say a man has to read something that at first he does not completely understand. Here the thing to be read is initially better than the reader. The writer is communicating something which can increase the reader's understanding. Such communication between unequals must be possible, or else one man could never learn from another, either through speech or writing. Here by "learning" I mean understanding more, not remembering more information which has the same degree of intelligibility as other information you already possess.

There is clearly no difficulty about getting new information in the course of reading if, as I say, the novel facts are of the same sort as those you already know, so far as their intelligibility goes. Thus, a man who knows some of the facts of American history and understands them in a certain light can readily acquire by reading, in the first sense, more such facts and understand them in

the same light. But suppose he is reading a history which seeks not merely to give him some more facts but to throw a new and, perhaps, more profound light on all the facts he knows. Suppose there is greater understanding here than he possesses before he starts to read. If he can manage to acquire that greater understanding, he is reading in the second sense. He has literally elevated himself by his own activity, though indirectly, of course, this was made possible by the writer who had something to teach him.

What are the conditions under which this kind of reading takes place? There are two. In the first place, there is initial inequality in understanding. The writer must be superior to the reader, and his book must convey in readable form the insights he possesses and his potential readers lack. In the second place, the reader must be able to overcome this inequality in some degree, seldom perhaps fully, but always approaching equality with the writer. To the extent that equality is approached, the communication is perfectly consummated.

In short, we can learn only from our betters. We must know who they are and how to learn from them. The man who has this sort of knowledge possesses the art of reading in the sense with which I am especially concerned. Everyone probably has some ability to read in this way. But all of us, without exception, can learn to read better and gradually gain more by our efforts through applying them to more rewarding materials.

1940

# ARNOLD BENNETT

## *Why a Classic Is a Classic*

### From Literary Taste: How to Form It

The large majority of our fellow-citizens care as much about literature as they care about aeroplanes or the programme of the Legislature. They do not ignore it; they are not quite indifferent to it. But their interest in it is faint and perfunctory; or, if their interest happens to be violent, it is spasmodic. Ask the two hundred thousand persons whose enthusiasm made the vogue of a popular novel ten years ago what they think of that novel now, and you will gather that they have utterly forgotten it, and that they would no more dream of reading it again than of reading Bishop Stubbs's *Select Charters*. Probably if they did read it again they would not enjoy it—not because the said novel is a whit worse now than it was ten years ago; not because their taste has improved—but because they have not had sufficient practice to be able to rely on their taste as a means of permanent pleasure. They simply don't know

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from one day to the next what will please them.

In the face of this one may ask: Why does the great and universal fame of classical authors continue? The answer is that the fame of classical authors is entirely independent of the majority. Do you suppose that if the fame of Shakespeare depended on the man in the street it would survive a fortnight? The fame of classical authors is originally made, and it is maintained, by a passionate few. Even when a first-class author has enjoyed immense success during his lifetime, the majority have never appreciated him so sincerely as they have appreciated second-rate men. He has always been reinforced by the ardour of the passionate few. And in the case of an author who has emerged into glory after his death the happy sequel has been due solely to the obstinate perseverance of the few. They could not leave him alone; they would not. They kept on savouring him, and talking about him, and buying him, and they generally behaved with such eager zeal, and they were so authoritative and sure of themselves, that at last the majority grew accustomed to the sound of his name and placidly agreed to the proposition that he was a genius; the majority really did not care very much either way.

And it is by the passionate few that the renown of genius is kept alive from one generation to another. These few are always at work. They are always rediscovering genius. Their curiosity and enthusiasm are exhaustless, so that there is little chance of genius being ignored. And, moreover, they are always working either for or against the verdicts of the majority. The majority can make a reputation, but it is too careless to maintain it. If, by accident, the passionate few agree with the majority in a particular instance, they will frequently remind the majority that such and such a reputation has been made, and the majority will idly concur: "Ah, yes. By the way, we must not forget that such and such a reputation exists." Without that persistent memory-jogging the reputation would quickly fall into the oblivion which is death. The passionate few only have their way by reason of the fact that they are genuinely interested in literature, that literature matters to them. They conquer by their obstinacy alone, by their eternal repetition of the same statements. Do you suppose they could prove to the man in the street that Shakespeare was a great artist? The said man would not even understand the terms they employed. But when he is told ten thousand times, and generation after generation, that Shakespeare was a great artist, the said man believes—not by reason, but by faith. And he too repeats that Shakespeare was a great artist, and he buys the complete works of Shakespeare and puts them on his shelves, and he goes to see the marvellous stage-effects which accompany *King Lear* or *Hamlet,* and comes back religiously convinced that Shakespeare was a great artist. All because the passionate few could not keep their admiration of Shakespeare to themselves. This is not cynicism; but truth. And it is important that those who wish to form their literary taste should grasp it.

What causes the passionate few to make such a fuss about literature? There can be only one reply. They find a keen and lasting pleasure in literature. They enjoy literature as some men enjoy

beer. The recurrence of this pleasure naturally keeps their interest in literature very much alive. They are for ever making new researches, for ever practising on themselves. They learn to understand themselves. They learn to know what they want. Their taste becomes surer and surer as their experience lengthens. They do not enjoy to-day what will seem tedious to them tomorrow. When they find a book tedious, no amount of popular clatter will persuade them that it is pleasurable; and when they find it pleasurable no chill silence of the street-crowds will affect their conviction that the book is good and permanent. They have faith in themselves. What are the qualities in a book which give keen and lasting pleasure to the passionate few? This is a question so difficult that it has never yet been completely answered. You may talk lightly about truth, insight, knowledge, wisdom, humour, and beauty. But these comfortable words do not really carry you very far, for each of them has to be defined, especially the first and last. It is all very well for Keats in his airy manner to assert that beauty is truth, truth beauty, and that that is all he knows or needs to know. I, for one, need to know a lot more. And I never shall know. Nobody, not even Hazlitt nor Sainte-Beuve, has ever finally explained why he thought a book beautiful. I take the first fine lines that come to hand—

> The woods of Arcady are dead,
> And over is their antique joy—

and I say that those lines are beautiful because they give me pleasure. But why? No answer! I only know that the passionate few will, broadly, agree with me in deriving this mysterious pleasure from those lines. I am only convinced that the liveliness of our pleasure in those and many other lines by the same author will ultimately cause the majority to believe, by faith, that W. B. Yeats is a genius. The one reassuring aspect of the literary affair is that the passionate few are passionate about the same things. A continuance of interest does, in actual practice, lead ultimately to the same judgments. There is only the difference in width of interest. Some of the passionate few lack catholicity, or, rather, the whole of their interest is confined to one narrow channel; they have none left over. These men help specially to vitalise the reputations of the narrower geniuses: such as Crashaw. But their active predilections never contradict the general verdict of the passionate few; rather they reinforce it.

A classic is a work which gives pleasure to the minority which is intensely and permanently interested in literature. It lives on because the minority, eager to renew the sensation of pleasure, is eternally curious and is therefore engaged in an eternal process of rediscovery. A classic does not survive for any ethical reason. It does not survive because it conforms to certain canons, or because neglect would not kill it. It survives because it is a source of pleasure, and because the passionate few can no more neglect it than a bee can neglect a flower. The passionate few do not read "the right things" because they are right. That is to put the cart before the horse. "The right things" are the right things solely because the passionate few *like* reading them. Hence—and I now arrive at my point—the one primary essential to literary taste is a hot interest in literature. If you have that, all the rest will come. It matters nothing that

at present you fail to find pleasure in certain classics. The driving impulse of your interest will force you to acquire experience, and experience will teach you the use of the means of pleasure. You do not know the secret ways of yourself: that is all. A continuance of interest must inevitably bring you to the keenest joys. But, of course, experience may be acquired judiciously or injudiciously, just as Putney may be reached *via* Walham Green or *via* St. Petersburg.

1909

# ROBERT GRAVES AND ALAN HODGE

## *Recent Prose*

### From The Reader Over Your Shoulder

Middle-class family life was the subject of most early and middle-nineteenth century novels that were not Gothic tales of mystery and horror, or calmer, historical novels of the Sir Walter Scott, Harrison Ainsworth school. Though the novelists often introduced moral teaching and pleas for social reform into their stories, they were chiefly concerned with the delineation of character and the development of plot. This realism was a safeguard against over-elaborate writing, although the plain style was now regarded as 'low' even by the village constable. It was a heavily emotional realism, however, because a new emphasis upon the duty of showing mercy and charity toward the unfortunate had made pathos as highly esteemed as wit had formerly been.

There had been no sudden revolution in England as there had been in France, but successive agitations in favour of particular reforms; and these were usually prompted as much by humanitarian as by political feelings. The new industrial middle classes were enjoying a prudently guarded opulence, and at the same time, in manufacturing districts there was poverty and misery on a scale that had not been known in England since the Black Death. The middle classes felt collectively, though not individually, responsible for this state of affairs, and from their guilty humanitarianism grew numerous movements for piece-meal social reform and numerous minor philanthropic institutions. The equalitarian arguments that had brought about the French Revolution were used, in a modified form, to bring about such reforms as the abolition of slavery under the British flag; but the feelings which made them possible derived rather from the Christian charity insisted on by the Methodists, and other evangelical reformers of the period, than from equalitarianism.

The severity shown by the new religious spirit against idle and lascivious reading, especially on a Sunday, compelled popular novelists to turn humanitarian; and besides the naturally poor and oppressed, their pity had to take in

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all those who came to moral or financial grief. The strict and sedate code of behaviour that had supervened on the lax and reckless Regency code was two-sided: public opinion first struck down all who failed to meet their social obligations, then pitied them as they lay bleeding. All personal and social problems were seen through a haze of sympathy, which was, however, not allowed to obscure the harshness of moral censure. Women, children and the poor were weaker vessels, particularly liable to sin and misfortune; when they fell, and were hurried away into charitable quarantine, the blame for their miserable fate was conscientiously laid on the defects of social circumstances.

In Thackeray's novels, pathos is usually an undertone, only occasionally rising to a loud throb, as in this passage from *Vanity Fair,* 1848:

'She was wrapped in a white morning dress, her hair falling on her shoulders and her large eyes fixed and without light. By way of helping on the preparations for the departure, and showing that she too could be useful at a moment so critical, this poor soul had taken up a sash of George's from the drawers whereon it lay and followed him to and fro, with the sash in her hand, looking on mutely while the packing proceeded. She came out and stood leaning at the wall, holding this sash against her bosom, from which the heavy net of crimson dropped like a large stain of blood.'

Several devices here raise the tone of the passage from sadness to pathos. 'Large eyes fixed and without light' is a sentimental overstatement; 'mutely' instead of 'silently' carries a further suggestion of suffering; with 'this poor soul' Thackeray enters personally on the scene to intercede for the reader's pity; and in the last sentence the simile of the bloodstain is shocking in its poignancy. Similar devices for moving the emotions of their readers, most of whom lived dull and sheltered lives, were used by all the well-known novelists and magazine writers of this period, including George Eliot, George Borrow, Charles Kingsley, Charles Dickens, and the Americans, Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Washington Irving. Dickens's stories are never allowed to tell themselves: he forcibly obtrudes his own emotions, often raising the pitch of the style to hysteria. He also tries to heighten the effect of his pathetic passages by a foil of robust facetiousness; as Elizabethan dramatists had heightened their tragic effects by comic relief. Here is a quotation from his *Old Curiosity Shop:*

'She was dead. Dear, patient, gentle, noble Nell was dead. Her little bird—a poor slight thing the pressure of a finger would have crushed—was stirring nimbly in its cage; and the strong heart of its child mistress was mute and motionless for ever.

Where were the traces of her early cares, her sufferings, and fatigues? All gone. Sorrow was dead indeed in her, but peace and perfect happiness were born; imaged in her tranquil beauty and profound repose.

And still her former self lay there, unaltered in this change. Yes. The old fireside had smiled upon that same sweet face; it had passed, like a dream, through haunts of misery and care; at the door of the poor schoolmaster on the summer evening, before the furnace fire on the cold wet night, at the still bedside of the dying boy, there had been the same mild lovely look. So shall we know the angels in their majesty, after death.

The old man held one languid arm in his, and had the small hand tight folded to his breast, for warmth. It was the hand she had stretched out to him with her last smile—the hand that had led him on,

through all their wanderings. Ever and anon he pressed it to his lips; then hugged it to his breast again, murmuring that it was warmer now; and, as he said it, he looked, in agony, to those who stood around, as if imploring them to help her.'

And here is another passage from the same book, with death treated facetiously:

'"Then we have nothing for it but resignation," said Mr. Brass; "nothing but resignation, and expectation. It would be a comfort to have his body; it would be a dreary comfort."

"Oh, beyond a doubt," assented Mrs. Jiniwin hastily; "if we once had that, we should be quiet sure."

"With regard to the descriptive advertisement," said Sampson Brass, taking up his pen. "It is a melancholy pleasure to recall his traits. Respecting his legs now—?"

"Crooked, certainly," said Mrs. Jiniwin.

"Do you think they *were* crooked?" said Brass, in an insinuating tone. "I think I see them now coming up the street very wide apart, in nankeen pantaloons a little shrunk and without straps. Ah! What a vale of tears we live in. Do we say crooked?"

"I think they were a little so," observed Mrs. Quilp with a sob.

"Legs crooked," said Brass, writing as he spoke. "Large head, short body, legs crooked—"

"Very crooked," suggested Mrs. Jiniwin.

"We'll not say very crooked, ma'am," said Brass piously. "Let us not bear hard upon the weaknesses of the deceased. He is gone, ma'am, to where his legs will never come in question.—We will content ourselves with crooked, Mrs. Jiniwin."

"I thought you wanted the truth," said the old lady. "That's all."'

This is melodrama in novel-form. Versions of most of Dickens's novels were staged during his lifetime. He was a natural orator and actor. He seems to have spoken over to himself, under his breath, every sentence that he wrote; and he toured Britain and the United States, giving public readings from his works. This accounts for much of his popularity in Victorian times, when the example set by the Queen popularized domesticity—the father of the family, instead of spending his evenings drinking and singing at the club as his own father had done, was supposed to stay at home and join a family reading circle. In the *Old Curiosity Shop,* as in all Dickens's novels, each chapter begins with an obvious cue to the reader: 'This should be read by Paterfamilias, in his manly, jolly voice,' or 'This is for the gentle, womanly voice of Materfamilias,' or 'Master John may be trusted with this.'

The popular Victorian novel (which was usually published in fortnightly parts, so that no member of a family could read on to the end, ahead of the rest) cannot be judged by modern solo-reading standards: its pictorial qualities, its frequent changes in atmosphere, the crowdedness that now make it such difficult going, explain themselves if it is read aloud dramatically to a roomful of leisured people of various ages in mid-Victorian costume. The practice of home-reading gradually lapsed at the turn of the century, and virtually ended with the First World War.

Pictorial styles were also used by John Ruskin and Walter Pater, who were not novelists but literary preachers and therefore indulged in even greater complexity of language. When Ruskin confined himself to expounding moral or aesthetic theory his style was fairly straightforward, but this was rare: his elaborate word-painting usually crowded out the precepts it was supposed to illustrate. The following sentence, describ-

ing the front of St Mark's Cathedral, is taken from the *Stones of Venice,* 1851-1853:

'And well may they fall back, for beyond those troops of ordered arches there rises a vision out of the earth, and all the great square seems to have opened out of it in a kind of awe, that we may see it far away; —a multitude of pillars and white domes, clustered into a low pyramid of coloured light, a treasure-heap, it seems, partly of gold, and partly of opal and mother-of-pearl, hollowed beneath into five great vaulted porches, ceiled with fair mosaic, and beset with sculpture of alabaster, clear as amber, and delicate as ivory, sculpture fantastic and involved, of palm leaves and lilies, and grapes and pomegranates, and birds clinging and fluttering among the branches, all twined together into an endless network of buds and plumes; and, in the midst of it, the solemn forms of angels, sceptred, and robed to the feet, and leaning to each other across the gates, their figures indistinct among the gleaming of the golden ground through the leaves beside them, interrupted and dim like the morning light as it faded back among the branches of Eden, when first its gates were angel-guarded long ago.'

A luxuriant mass of details is given, but with little sense of relation between them. The majestic sweep of the rhythm carries the reader over the details before he has time to assemble them in his mind. Ruskin himself must have formed a general impression of St Mark's and then carefully studied particulars, but does not here present them in such proportion as to explain his impression. It will be noticed how frequently the word 'among' occurs in the last few lines—birds among the branches, figures among the gleaming gold, light among the branches of Eden —all entrancing items in the decoration, but with no precise or essential places in it. This is a misrepresentation of the solid design of St Mark's.

Pater was much more Classical in spirit than Ruskin, in the sense that he was clear and not luxuriant, elaborate and not profuse. But he, too, was trying to convey impressions of indescribable feelings: he wanted to catch and record in print the aesthetic *frissons,* or thrills, which he considered the highest rewards of a cultured existence. This could only be done indirectly by suggestion and parable. His novel, *Marius the Epicurean,* is one long historical parable, and his other works purely suggestive sketches.

Just as Ruskin, in a final effort to communicate his impression of St Mark's, makes use of a conceit about dawn breaking in the Garden of Eden, so Pater has recourse to fancy in trying to describe the feelings with which Leonardo da Vinci's *La Gioconda* inspired him. He imagines the mood of the painter on the day that he added the famous smile. The paragraph is taken from *Studies in the History of the Renaissance,* published in 1873; it was written at Oxford, where Pater was a college tutor, at a time when Ruskin was also lecturing there.

'On this day truly no mysterious light, no irresistibly leading hand from afar, reached him; only, the peculiarly tranquil influence of its first hour increased steadily upon him in a manner with which, as he conceived, the aspects of the place he was then visiting had something to do. The air there, air supposed to possess the singular property of restoring the whiteness of ivory, was pure and thin. An even veil of lawn-like white cloud had now drawn over the sky; and under its broad, shadowless light every hue and tone of time came out upon the yellow old temples, the elegant

pillared circle of the shrine of the pastoral Sybil, the houses seemingly of a piece with the ancient fundamental rock.'

Pater calculated the pictorial suggestiveness of each word, subordinating its sense to the emotional, vocal and rhythmical context. He did this more precisely than Ruskin because his emotions had greater precision and he was better able to isolate and analyse them. Nevertheless, the repeated rhyme of 'air there, air' reads somewhat affectedly.

Among the exceptional writers who avoided both the pathetic and the pictorial styles were Anthony Trollope and Samuel Butler. Trollope escaped a formal education because of the poverty of his family; but his mother, author of *Domestic Manners of the Americans,* was a shrewd and vigorous writer and he seems to have learnt much from her. He spent most of his life as a Post Office official and hunting man. He published more than twenty long novels, all dealing with middle-class family life, plainly told and with few emotional digressions. Conversation and pure narrative make up the greater part of them, and there is far less descriptive writing than in most nineteenth-century novels from Sir Walter Scott's onwards. The following is a passage from the first chapter of *Orley Farm,* published in 1862:

'The whole stood in one line fronting on to a large lawn which fell steeply away from the house into an orchard at the bottom. The lawn was cut in terraces, and here and there upon it there stood apple trees of ancient growth; for here had been the garden of the old farmhouse. They were large, straggling trees, such as do not delight the eyes of modern gardeners; but they produced fruit by the bushel, very sweet to the palate, though probably not so perfectly round, and large, and handsome as those which the horticultural skill of the present day requires.'

Trollope does not refrain from making general comments—for example, this comment on the modern taste in apples —but they are always short and relevant. He does not draw an elaborate 'atmosphere' out of them; the story distills its own atmosphere as it unfolds. Here he has given a brief and factual setting before breaking into the story proper.

Samuel Butler was not primarily a novelist: most of his works were treatises on art, literature, psychology and science; but he wrote a Utopian fantasy in novel form, *Erewhon,* 1872, and twenty years later a sequel, *Erewhon Revisited,* and one domestic novel, *The Way of All Flesh,* written between 1872 and 1884 but not published until after his death in 1903. He is usually described as a satirist, because these novels expose many of the shams of contemporary life, but his satire is very different from Swift's: it is more analytical and more understanding, less witty, more humorous and more original. His style is plain and unemotional, but sharper than Trollope's because his judgements are less conventionally formed. This is from *The Way of All Flesh:*

'Some people say that their schooldays were the happiest in their lives. They may be right, but I look with suspicion upon those whom I hear saying this. It is hard enough to know whether one is happy or unhappy now, and still harder to compare the relative happiness or unhappiness of different times of one's life; the utmost that can be said is that we are fairly happy so long as we are not distinctly aware of being miserable. As I was talking with Ernest one day not so long since about this, he said he was so happy now that he was sure he had never been happier, and did not wish to be so, but that Cambridge was the

first place where he had ever been consciously and continuously happy.'

Butler has not let this piece of analysis get out of hand: his style is equal to it. Excesses and shortcomings in Victorian prose, and in modern prose which derives from it, are usually due to the writer's not knowing just how to reconcile the sense of what he wishes to say with the various literary devices which pride of craftsmanship has impelled him to use. Butler's style is as free from these devices as it is from fanciful emotional colouring. He lived on a small income; published all his books, except *Erewhon,* at a loss; and was generally regarded as a crank because of his refusal to conform with literary and scientific fashions.

Butler died when the twentieth century was just beginning; his own century had bequeathed it no general prose tradition. There were conventions of pathetic writing, of pictorial writing, of ornate historical and political writing, but these were suited only to certain subjects and the achievement of certain effects. Most famous writers of the late nineteenth century had worked out eccentrically individual styles. William Morris revived the mediaeval narrative manner, with a mixture of devices taken from Thomas Malory and the authors of Norse sagas. George Meredith used a complex metaphorical language, the obscure implications of which were a fascinating study for his admirers. There was also the precious and witty style of Oscar Wilde, based on Ruskin and Pater; and, based on French models, the 'sensitive' and lucid style of George Moore. Here is a painfully sensitive passage from George Moore's *Confessions of a Young Man,* 1886:

'Then there is a failure—I can do nothing, nothing; my novel I know is worthless; my life is a leaf, it will flutter out of sight. I am weary of everything and wish I were back in Paris. I am weary of reading, there is nothing to read, Flaubert bores me. What nonsense has been talked about him! Impersonal! He is the most personal writer. But his odious pessimism! How weary I am of it, it never ceases, it is lugged in *à tout propos* and the little lyrical phrase with which he winds up every paragraph, how boring it is! Happily, I have "A Rebours" to read, that prodigious book, that beautiful mosaic. Huysmans is quite right, ideas are well enough until you are twenty, afterwards only words are bearable . . . a new idea, what can be more insipid—fit for Members of Parliament. Shall I go to bed? No. I would that I had a volume of Verlaine, or something of Mallarmé's to read—Mallarmé for preference. Huysmans speaks of Mallarmé in "A Rebours," and in hours like these a page of Huysmans is as a dose of opium, a glass of something exquisite and spirituous.'

In 1878 the rugged-minded Charles Doughty, a poet and physician, went travelling in the deserts of Arabia, disguising neither his Christian distaste for Moslem superstition nor his English dislike for thievish and temperamental Arabs, and wrote a monumental account of his experiences in *Arabia Deserta,* 1888. He had not gone for adventure or for geographical or ethnological reasons, but (as he later told T. E. Lawrence) to 'redeem English from the slough into which it has fallen since the time of Spenser.' Here is an illustration of the way in which he redeemed English from neologisms:

'We journeyed in the beaten path towards Gofar; and after going a mile, "Let us wait, quoth Eyâd, and see if this Merjân be not coming." At length we saw it was he who approached with a bundle on his head,—he brought temmn

and dates, which his sister (wedded in the town) had given him. Eyâd drew out a leathern budget, in which was some victual for the way that he had received from the Mothîf, (without my knowledge): it was but a little barley meal and dates of ill kind, in all to the value of about one shilling. We sat down, Merjàn spread out his good dates, and we breakfasted; thus eating together I hoped they might yet be friendly, though only misfortunes could be before me with such unlucky rafîks. . . .

"Nay, said Eyàd, beginning to swagger, the returning shall not be as our coming; I will ride myself." I said no more; and cast thus again into the wilderness I must give them line.'

And Doughty's contemporary, the complex-minded Henry James, an American with strong English sympathies, invented a new way of teasing the sentence with carefully contrived parentheses that delayed but did not confuse the rhythm as it meandered towards a comfortable close. This is from one of his later novels, *The Golden Bowl,* 1905:

'Charlotte throned, as who should say, between her hostess and her host, the whole scene having crystallized as soon as she took her place, to the right quiet lustre; the harmony was not less sustained for being superficial, and the only approach to a break in it was while Amerigo remained standing long enough for his father-in-law, vaguely wondering, to appeal to him, invite or address him, and then, in default of any such word, selected for presentation to the other visitor a plate of *petits fours.* Maggie watched her husband—if it now could be called watching —offer this refreshment; she noted the consummate way—for "consummate" was the term she privately applied—in which Charlotte cleared her acceptance, cleared her impersonal smile, of any betrayal, of any slightest value, of consciousness; and then felt the slow surge of a vision that, at the end of another minute or two, had floated her across the room to where her father stood, looking at a picture, an early Florentine sacred subject, that he had given her on her marriage.'

Many more styles were invented as the twentieth century advanced and since there was keen competition among writers as to who should be 'great' and since it was admitted that 'greatness' was achieved only by a highly individual style, new tricks and new devices multiplied. In this plurality of styles little writers grew confused: they imitated one Master after another—Pater, Morris, James, Moore, Wilde—in the hope of suddenly finding themselves great men in their own right. It did not occur to them that unless they had something to say there was no need to write: most of them expected the ritual of writing to produce the subject.

Robert Louis Stevenson in an essay on literary style recommended imitation. He admitted that:

'Whenever I read a book or a passage that particularly pleased me, in which a thing was said or an effect rendered with propriety, in which there was either some conspicuous force or some happy distinction in the style, I must sit down at once and set myself to ape that quality. In these vain bouts, I got some practice in rhythm, in harmony, in construction, and the co-ordination of parts. I have thus played the sedulous ape to Hazlitt, to Lamb, to Wordsworth, to Sir Thomas Browne, to Defoe, to Hawthorne, to Montaigne, to Baudelaire and to Obermann.'

The effect of this sedulous imitation was to make Stevenson's works seem rather unreal: the negative virtue of faultlessness in an artificial prose style, especially where the writer's chief object is 'to render an effect,' can be very disagreeable. A reader feels that he is being

written at, not written for. Other writers were neither so industrious nor so expert as Stevenson in their imitations of 'The Masters,' and so the Edwardian pudding-stone style began. It is still used by young writers who feel that they cannot be taken seriously until they have read the chief books of ancient and advanced contemporary literature in at least six languages and mastered all the styles and devices. Naturally they do not really read these books, or know the languages; but use crammer-school methods for learning just enough to pass muster. The literary result recalls the old Scottish nonsense story of Sir Gammer Vance who had a famous collection of curiosities and 'lived in a little thumb-bottle just outside his own front door.'

Typical pudding-stone is Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch's style, though he was not a young writer when he adopted it. In his unpretentious popular novels of the 'Eighties and 'Nineties he had been at his best: with simple humorous tales of the West Country and, though avoiding any suspicion of illiteracy, with no thought of setting himself up as an authority on English. He later took up style as a simple evangelist might take up ritual; and was appointed King Edward VII Professor of English Literature at Cambridge University. The following is a quotation from his *On the Art of Writing,* 1916. It is a concoction of styles which the contemporary reader was perhaps expected to taste critically with: 'Ah! a savour of Morris! Ah! a smack of Bunyan! Ah! a touch of Henry James! Ah, oh, ah! a tang, taste, suspicion, whiff, of Burke, Hazlitt, Jeremy Taylor, Washington Irving!'

'Seeing that in human discourse, infinitely varied as it is, so much must ever depend on *who* speaks, and to *whom,* in what mood and upon what occasion; and seeing that Literature must needs take account of all manner of writers, audiences, moods, occasions; I hold it a sin against the light to put up a warning against any word that comes to us in the fair way of use and wont (as "wire," for instance, for telegram), even as surely we should warn off hybrids or deliberately pedantic impostors, such as "anti-body" and "picture-drome," and that, generally, it is better to err on the side of liberty than on the side of the censor: since by the manumitting of new words we infuse new blood into a tongue of which (or we have learnt nothing from Shakespeare's audacity) our first pride should be that it is flexible, alive, capable of responding to new demands of man's untiring quest after knowledge and experience.'

In this passage we see the first clear signs of the breakdown of prose logic that has become so evident since the end of the First World War. Even in late Victorian times, no person of Sir A. Quiller-Couch's eminence would have dared to publish a sentence so plainly grotesque as 'By the manumitting of new words we infuse new blood into a tongue which is flexible, alive, capable of responding to new demands of man's untiring quest after knowledge and experience.' When the test of translation into Latin is applied, it fails at every point. No Latin orator would have figured new words as slaves to be manumitted: he would have seen them as barbarians applying for citizenship. Nor would he have figured the act of manumission as infusing new blood into anything: he would have put in the step here left out, namely, that after manumission the former slaves would be permitted to marry into their masters' families. Nor would he have mixed metaphor and realism in the phrase 'infuse new blood

into a tongue': for blood is usually infused into the veins of the arm or leg and never into a tongue. Nor would he have written of a *tongue* as 'flexible and alive': he would have known that any human tongue, unless its owner happens to be paralysed, poisoned, or frozen stiff, is flexible and alive. He would therefore have avoided the word *lingua* (which means 'tongue' in the senses both of speech and of the organ of speech) and used instead *'modus loquendi,'* a 'manner of speaking.' Nor would he have admitted that a tongue into which new blood has been infused could 'respond to man's demands' as if it were a separate person or animal. Nor would he have mixed his vocabularies—Ennius with Petronius—as is done here: the Elizabethan phrase 'I hold it a sin against the light to put up a warning against any word that comes to us in the fair way of use and wont' mixed with the late-Victorian devotional-scientific phrase 'capable of responding to new demands of man's untiring quest.'

In Victorian times there was a clean separation, in the popular mind, of journalism from literature: journalism was considered vulgar, however well the journalist worked. The favourite debating theme—'Will Kipling *live?*'—was based on a doubt whether anyone whose writing had been formed by journalistic practice could possibly be 'great,' rather than on a doubt of Kipling's integrity as an observer and a moralist. It did not occur to anyone that O. Henry, Kipling's American counterpart, could 'live'; he was a mere reporter of the language of the bar and lodging house and had a prison record. Yet it was felt that Kipling and O. Henry had some quality that Meredith and Henry James lacked; and gradually popular novelists began to simplify their style in imitation. This made a cleavage between popular and literary writers, or, as they became known shortly after the First World War, 'Low-brows and High-brows.' If this had meant a cleavage between the writers who wrote stylistically and those who wrote plainly, it would have been excellent: but journalism then implied grammatical and verbal looseness and, as the influence of American journalism grew, a gradual weakening of logic under self-induced emotional stress. Whether to range oneself with the Low-brows or with the High-brows was a difficult choice.

As the twentieth century advanced, the competition in style became a competition in being modern rather than in being great. Writers in Britain, however, were less affected by the modernist obsession than American writers, especially those who had visited France. Throughout the Victorian era the Americans had looked to Britain to set the literary standard for all departments of writing except the humorous, in which they took the lead under Mark Twain, Artemus Ward, and Gelett Burgess. In other departments they emulated their British contemporaries, and very often surpassed them in grace and clarity of language: for example, Victorian England could not boast of two essayists so judicious and correct as Ralph W. Emerson and James Russell Lowell. But at the end of the First World War the Americans knew themselves to be the strongest and richest nation of the world, and therefore felt that this cultural dependence on Britain derogated from their national dignity. As in the War of Independence, when British political and military influence had to be shaken off, they turned for help to Paris. Paris had for long been

the world-centre of literary, philosophical and artistic fashion. American writers, as would-be spokesmen of the most modern country in the world, needed the most modern of styles to express this feeling adequately; naturally, they went to Paris. For ten years Paris teemed with American literary experimentalists—the franc was low, life was free, there was no Prohibition. They returned finally to the United States in 1930, when the Great Depression deprived them of their incomes, having all served their apprenticeships in one or other of the schools of modernist writing.

The most celebrated American writer in Paris was Gertrude Stein. She had settled there several years before the tide of experimentalists flowed, and stayed for several years after it had ebbed—witnessing the defeat of France in 1940. She had been trained as a neurologist and philosopher and her experiments in writing derived from an assumption that Time and Progress, as nineteenth-century scientists and theologians had understood them, were now irrelevant concepts: in the modern world they were replaced by the simple casual relationships which arise out of mere continuous existence. This assumption was given weight by the findings of the new school of relativity-physicists, published after the First World War.

Gertrude Stein's method consisted in turning to a literary purpose the unreasoned relations of words in people's minds and the disconnection and repetition which are normal in modern conversation. She thus abandoned the tradition of orderly prose narrative—the old kind of story about the things that happened to people, arising out of some given situation and in turn giving rise to further happenings and new situations. For the most part her prose was a simple succession and repetition of words, phrases and sentences, without historical beginning or ending and without logical meaning. It was humorous and exciting, to those interested in new uses of words, but difficult to read. Solemn literary critics and newspaper comedians derided it; but in Paris in the 'Twenties she had a great following among the young American émigrés—who learnt from her how to use the simplest words and the most conversational idioms in new rhythmical movements which would give their work a characteristically American pace.

In the 'Thirties, when she had become an accepted literary figure, Gertrude Stein was invited to make important lecture-tours in the United States. She then explained what her 'nonsense' meant. Here is a paragraph from a lecture on *Narration,* delivered in 1934. If it is read over with conversational emphasis it makes plain sense, although the thought is most complicated:

'When I first began writing really just began writing, I was tremendously impressed by anything by everything having a beginning a middle and an ending. I think one naturally is impressed by anything having a beginning a middle and an ending when one is beginning writing and that is a natural thing because when one is emerging from adolescence, which is really when one first begins writing, one feels that one would not have been one emerging from adolescence if there had not been a beginning and a middle and an ending to anything. So paragraphing is a thing that anyone is enjoying and sentences are less fascinating, but then gradually well if you are an American gradually you find that it is not really necessary that anything that everything has a beginning a middle and an ending and so you struggling with anything as anything has begun and be-

gun does not really mean that begun and thing does not really mean beginning or begun.'

Gertrude Stein solved the logical problem of Time, which she speaks about here, by frequent use of the timeless present participle.

Only one other writer in English carried his experiments in prose so far as Gertrude Stein; and he went in a totally different direction. This was James Joyce, an Irishman, whose Dublin upbringing and Jesuit education provide the constant background to his work. Like the American experimentalists, he spent the greater part of his life on the Continent, in Switzerland, France and Italy. Being out of contact with the mass of his compatriots has always helped the literary innovator. Joyce's first books, *Dubliners* and *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* were straightforward stories in the realistic style of the French-influenced Anglo-Irish school. His next book, *Ulysses,* a long novel describing twenty-four hours in the lives of a group of Dublin people, is made up chiefly of their inconsequential talk and ruminations. Woven into these, by means of word-associations, are recurring Greek and Latin themes—particularly the theme of Ulysses the Wanderer which gives the book its title. *Ulysses* became famous partly because it was banned as obscene by the British and American Customs authorities, partly because it was the most ambitious attempt yet made to use 'the stream of consciousness' in writing: that is, to reveal the private thoughts of characters in all their natural confusion. This manner of writing was founded on psychological researches which had been intended to show that consciousness was a turbid stream of mixed desires and memories: it was thus a psychological assumption rather than a prose style. Many other writers made use of it, with many varying styles.

*Ulysses* begins in a straightforward manner but soon becomes more complicated, passing, like Harriette Wilson's *Memoirs,* through a series of imitations or parodies of all previous English styles. It is as if Joyce was testing each of them in order and finding all wanting. In his last book, *Finnegan's Wake,* published in 1940, after he had been working on it for fifteen years, he finally invented a comically composite style and language which he could call his own: a super-pudding-stone. In it, ordinary English words are portmanteau'd and deliberately misspelt, others are introduced from many foreign languages, including Hebrew and Sanskrit, and the result is an almost indecipherable system of interlacing puns and verbal associations imposed upon the familiar Irish background. Here is a comparatively easy passage:

'What wouldn't I poach—the rent in my riverside my otther shoes, my beavery honest!—for a dace feast of grannom with the finny ones, flashing down the swansway, leaps ahead of the swift mac Eels and the pursewinded carpers, rearin antis rood perches astench of me, or, when I'd like own company best, with the help of a norange and bear, to be reclined by the lasher on my logansome, my g.b.d. in my f.a.c.e., solfanelly in my shellyholders and lov'd latakia the benuvolent, for my nosethrills with jealosomines wilting away to their heart's deelight and the king of saptimber letting down his humely odours for my consternation, dapping my griffen, burning water in the spearlight, or catching trophies of the king's royal college of sturgeons for to bake pike and pie while, O twined me abower in l'Alouette's Tower, all Adelaide's naughtingerls, juckjucking

benighth me, I'd tonic my twittynice Dorian blackbudds off my singasongasong-apiccolo to pipe musicall airs on numberous fairyaciodes.'

This is a fisherman's idyll spoken by an Irish priest: if it is read aloud, the Irish rhythm can be easily felt, and many familiar Irish properties recognized. If it is studied closely, more and more linguistic detail can be interpreted. This appeals to the reader's vanity of general knowledge and guessing power—'Ah,' he says, 'by the *naughtingerls* he means also *nightingales*—because the German for nightingale is *Nachtigall* and *nachte* is old English for *naughty,* and 'gal' is 'girl,' which in the Middle Ages was also spelt 'gerl'; and *nosethrills* are *nostrils*—the mediaeval spelling was *nosthrils;* and *jealosomines* are *jessamines* because of the old English term *jelsomine* from the Italian *gelsomino.* And *norange* recalls the derivation of 'orange' from the Spanish word *maranja.* And surely *'swansway,'* besides meaning the river Liffey, contains a glancing reference to Proust's long, indolent novel, Englished as *Swann's Way?* And *logansome* is a mixture of *lonesome* and *logan-stone,* or rocking stone. . . . etc., etc. In order to understand the whole book the reader would have to disentangle patiently as much more of the snarled detail as he could (a part depends on private associations of Joyce's); then he would have to put together a new book, working out the relations between the details and trying to see what Joyce intended to signify. No writer could, or need, carry stylistic or linguistic experiment further than this.

When Joyce died, shortly after the publication of this book, it was time for writers in search of literary novelty and complex styles of their own to realize that the game was played out. Joyce had caught 'all the trophies of the king's royal college of sturgeons.' Meanwhile, too, Gertrude Stein had analysed conversational speech, taking it to pieces and gradually building it up again with successive studies of the word, the phrase, the sentence, the paragraph; so there was now little more to be learned about conversation. At last writers were at liberty to use prose for simple prose purposes—and not feel behind the times in doing so.

1943

# JOHN LIVINGSTON LOWES

## *Originality and the Moulding of Conventions*

### From Convention and Revolt in Poetry

I AM FREE as the air to-day to coin a vocabulary of my very own, and speak to you in its fresh-minted words. I should be thereby, I take it, "original" in the sense in which many of us seem to understand the term. Only one thing stands in my way: I most potently and powerfully desire to be understood

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by you. You exercise no compulsion whatsoever. If you don't understand, you simply cease to listen. And I, who am here to communicate, conform. Obviously, then, the individual is not the only factor to be reckoned with in what we call originality, so far as expression is concerned. We express in order to communicate; to communicate, we must be understood; in order to be understood, we must employ the language of those to whom we speak. That is a fact so obvious that we sometimes forego the desideratum of putting it on its inferences.

As a matter of fact, we are all of us original in our expression until our wings are clipped. I know a three-year-old boy who calls an automobile a "cadeúga." It is, both to him and in point of fact, an excellently descriptive term, based, like many a word in the pristine days of speech, on the sound the thing makes. But you can't go to the telephone and ask for a "cadeúga" with any valid hope of seeing it appear. And since the world with which the young adventurer must communicate prefers to call the affair a motor, or a car, or a machine (incomparably less exact and fitting terms), he will infallibly drop his own fresh and vivid coinage, and conform. The tangential energy of the individual beats its wings in vain against the centripetal force of the community, and every infant anarchist in speech yields at last to the usage of that world by which, if he is to live, he must be understood.

All this, of course, has larger implications. Expression in art can no more escape the demands of *intelligibility,* than expression in every-day speech. The poet writes in order to communicate, and to communicate he, too, must be understood. And the language of poetry in the broader sense, poetic forms and conventions of whatever sort, is established by long usage, like speech itself. It may, from the point of view of either rhyme or reason, be irrational, even absurd. So are words. But there it is. And though the poet is free as air to create a new poetic language, he takes, if he does, the chances of the youthful coiner of "cadeúga." His own immediate poetic family may understand and marvel, but the world goes on unmoved. What he *can* do is to use the common language with a new distinction, a fresh vividness, a more compelling power. And that offers to originality its richest field.

There are two deep-rooted idiosyncrasies of human nature that bear on our acceptance or rejection of what is offered us. We have, in the first place, an innate bias for the familiar. Whatever we're thoroughly unfamiliar with is apt to seem to us odd, or queer, or curious, or bizarre. For it is no mere trick of speech, but one of those appallingly veracious records of human nature and experience in which the history of words abounds, through which "outlandish" and "uncouth" attained their present meaning. For "outlandish" meant in the beginning only what does n't belong to our own land, and "uncouth" was simply "unknown." The change in meaning registers a universal trait. Whatever is alien to our own ways—the costume, manners, modes of speech of another race or of other times—is strange; and "strange" itself, which started out by meaning merely "foreign," is only another record of the same idiosyncrasy. That is one thing.

But there is still another trait that is no less broadly human. Whatever is too familiar wearies us. Incessant recurrence without variety breeds tedium;

the overiterated becomes the monotonous, and the monotonous irks and bores. And there we are. Neither that which we do not know at all, nor that which we know too well, is to our taste. We're averse to shocks, and we go to sleep under narcotics.

Now both the shock and the narcotic have, I grant, at times their fascination. But they are apt to be forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting. The source of more or less abiding satisfaction for most normal human beings lies in a happy merging of the two—in the twofold delight in an old friend recognized as new, or a new friend recognized as old. The experience and the pleasure are universal. All the lovers who have ever lived have made experiment of it; a face that you've passed a hundred times, nor cared to see, remains the face you've always known, but becomes all at once the most beautiful and thrilling object in the world; the person you've never known before, you find all at once you've known from all eternity. Now art, like love, sends its roots deep into what we are. And our most permanent aesthetic satisfaction arises as a rule from things familiar enough to give the pleasure of recognition, yet not so trite as to rob us of the other pleasure of surprise. We are keen for the new, but we insist that it establish some connection with what is friendly and our own; we want the old, but we want it to seem somehow new. Things may recur as often as they please, so long as they surprise us—like the Ghost in "Hamlet"—each time they appear.

Let me illustrate what I mean from a single device of poetry. What is it that charms us in these stanzas from a fifteenth-century carol?

He came al so still.
  There his mother was,
As dew in April
  That falleth on the grass.

He came al so still
  To his mother's bour,
As dew in April
  That falleth on the flour.

He came al so still
  There his mother lay,
As dew in April
  That falleth on the spray.

The balance between recurrence and variation is so delicately kept that monotony itself becomes the signal for a fresh surprise. And Poe's consummate and deliberate technique, no less than the limpid simplicity of the carol, secures its almost magical effects by the same means:

The skies they were ashen and sober;
  The leaves they were crispèd and sere,
    The leaves they were withering and sere;
It was night in the lonesome October,
  Of my most immemorial year;
It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,
  In the misty mid region of Weir:
It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,
  In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

That is but one way out of a thousand in which the familiar merges with the strange. And when a poet, through whatever secret of his art, gives to the expected the thrill of a discovery, he need have no fears for his originality.

What we call originality, then, does not so much consist in the creation of something wholly new, as in this *repristination* (to use Browning's word) of something old. That is not, of course, quite the whole story. But the other side may securely wait.

Let us begin with one or two conventions. And though we start out with the elder poets, we shall arrive, in the end, at the year of our Lord that we date

by. We have glanced at the dreary and wire-drawn inventories of feminine charms in the poetry of courtly love. We should have to search far to find anything more nearly in the article of death, and it is worth a moment to see what could be done towards vivifying it. Here is a part of Chaucer's description of Alisoun, the racy young person who helps give zest to the "Miller's Tale." All the familiar paraphernalia of the stock catalogue are there intact. You begin with resignation (unless you happen to remember that it's Chaucer you are reading), prepared for the inevitable —whiteness of *fleur de lis,* redness of roses, smoothness of ivory, clearness of crystal, grayness of glass; and you find— the slimness of the weasel, the softness of the wool of a wether, the shrilling of the swallow's song, the blackness of the sloe, the fragrance of apples, the fairness of the pear tree in the spring. The correct and courtly formulas have gone playing truant in the fields!

Fair was this yonge wyf, and ther-with-al
As any wesele hir body gent and smal. . . .
Ful smale y-pulled were hir browes two,
And tho were bent, and blake as any sloo.
She was ful more blisful on to see
Than is the newe pere-jonette tree;
And softer than the wolle is of a wether. . . .
But of hir song, it was as loude and yerne
As any swalwe sittinge on a berne.
Ther-to she coude skippe and make game,
As any kide or calf folwinge his dame.
Hir mouth was swete as bragot or the meeth,
Or hord of apples leyd in hey or heeth.
Winsinge she was, as is a joly colt,
Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.

The hackneyed convention has become vivid as a branch of hawthorn leaves, and racy of good English soil. Let us see what happened to another.

One of the most notorious instances of the mediæval trick of listing things is the so-called *Ubi sunt* formula. It is a comprehensive and detailed interrogation, on the order of "Where, oh, where are the Hebrew children?" as to the whereabouts of all the ancient worthies:

Dic, ubi Salomon, olim tam nobilis,
Vel ubi Samson est, dux invincibilis—

and so on through an interminable list. That happens to be from a mediæval hymn, but the thing is everywhere. I shall give at once the most terrible example that I know. Where, asks Deschamps in one of his twelve hundred *balades*—where are David and Solomon, Methuselah, Joshua, Maccabæus, Holofernes, Alexander and Samson, Julius Cæsar and Hector and Pompey; Crœsus, King Arthur, Godfrey, Charlemagne, Darius the Great, Hercules, Ptolemy; where is Denis the felon king, Job the courteous, Tobias, Aristotle, Hippocrates and Plato, Judas, Hester, the good Penelope, Queen Dido, Pallas, Juno, Guinevere, Iseult, and Helen, fairest of all; where is Jason, Romulus, Saladin; where he who conquered Aragon, or he who built Avignon, Paris, Rheims, and Rouen? That is a list from a single *balade* only; I spare you two others in a similar strain. The old convention came to life again only the other day, in Illinois:

Where are Elmer, Herman, Bert, Tom, and Charley . . .
Where are Ella, Kate, Mag, Lizzie, and Edith,
The tender heart, the simple soul, the loud, the proud, the happy one?—
All, all, are sleeping on the hill. . . .

Where are Uncle Isaac and Aunt Emily,
And old Towny Kincaid and Sevigne Houghton,
And Major Walker who had talked
With venerable men of the revolution?—
All, all, are sleeping on the hill.

Herman and Holofernes, Elmer and Aristotle, Methuselah and Major Walker, Aunt Emily and Dido—whether it hails from Beauté-sur-Marne or from Spoon River, the *Ubi sunt* is catholic, and holds all, quietly inurned. But modern instances aside, the thing with its appalling fecundity dogs one down the Middle Ages in unrelieved monotony. All at once, in France, a supremely gifted poet took it up. He took it up and kept it; but he added one thing—the penetrating beauty of a refrain which fused the dead list into one of the most haunting symbols of human transitoriness:

Tell me now in what hidden way is
  Lady Flora the lovely Roman?
Where's Hipparchia, and where is Thaïs,
  Neither of them the fairer woman?
  Where is Echo, beheld of no man,
Only heard on river and mere,—
  She whose beauty was more than human? . . .
*But where are the snows of yester-year?*

Sainte-Beuve long ago pointed out that Villon's poignant refrain—his "Mais où sont les neiges d'antan!"—transformed by the alchemy of genius the hackneyed formula. It did. The one compelling phrase became a solvent, through which the hoary banalities of the convention were merged in the fleeting evanescence of all things that are.

Moreover, what Villon did with the *balade* in general is a no less illuminating case in point. He found it more dead than any modern poet has ever thought he found the chrysalids from which the spirits of Tennyson and Arnold and Swinburne have flown. It was a garment walking about with nobody in it. Deschamps in particular had used it as a catch-all for the multifarious sheddings of his mind. His military campaigns, his maledictions on the toothache, his *Weltanschauung* in general, his dislike of tripe, his resentment against England, his observations on different ways of eating, his counsels of perfection addressed to kings and princes, his profound distaste for truffles, his lament for the misfortunes of the church, his views on the seven liberal arts, his lucubrations on the Seven Deadly Sins—all, all, are poured indiscriminately into the *balade* receptacle. It was trite, hackneyed, shop-worn, traditional, bookish, second-hand, ready-made, stereotyped, artificial, rigid—a list of epithets which I have culled from a recent pronouncement of the newer poetry upon the only less new, which has already stiffened, it would seem, in death. The *balade* could cry *peccavi* to these stern indictments all and some. And so Villon found it. The thing he should have done, of course, was to discard it utterly, as fit only for the scrap-heap. He did n't, by the grace of Heaven, and everybody knows what happened. The dead awoke, and not only the "Balade des dames du temps jadis," but "La belle Heaulmière," and a dozen others stand, with vivid and imperishable freshness, among the supreme achievements of poetry.

We might dwell with no less profit upon the progressive desiccation, a little later, of the sonnet. Nobody ever put the reason for what happened better than Sidney himself, who, showing the steep and thorny way to Heaven, on occasion recked not his own rede.

You that do search for every purling spring
Which from the ribs of old Parnassus flows,
And every flower, not sweet perhaps, which grows
Near thereabouts, into your poesie wring;
Ye that do dictionary's method bring
Into your rimes, running in rattling rows;

You that poor Petrarch's long-deceased
woes
With new-born sighs and denizen'd wit do
sing;
You take wrong ways; these far-fet helps
be such
As do bewray a want of inward touch.

And through these far-fetched helps the sonnet became, in the hands of innumerable practitioners, a thing of frigid conceits worn bare by iteration; of servile borrowings; of artificial sentiment, flat as the lees and dregs of wine. One has only to read *seriatim* the Elizabethan sonnet cycles (with their glorious islets rising here and there out of the general haze) to find every earmark of the incorrigibly case-hardened convention. Well, Shakespeare responded to the vogue, and made of the sonnet, with lapses here and there, the vehicle of the very quintessence of poetry. "And, when a damp Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand The Thing became a trumpet."

But, we are told—and not by recent protestants alone—the sonnet's day is at last done. Keats wrote that he was "endeavoring to discover a better sonnet stanza than we have"—but it is worth observing that he left as his legacy the realms of gold in the lines: "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer." "I will never write another," Byron declared; "they are the most puling, petrifying, stupidly platonic compositions." Fitzgerald thought sonnets were fit only to "serve as little shapes in which a man may mould very mechanically any single thought which comes into his head, which thought is not lyrical enough in itself to exhale in a more lyrical measure," and that its metre was "a good excuse for the dull didactic thoughts which naturally incline towards it." And he also expresses the pious wish "to tie old Wordsworth's volume about his neck and pitch him into one of the deepest holes of his dear Duddon." But through it all the sonnet holds its way. And Rupert Brooke, like Villon, comes along and writes this —of the dead, too, but not "du temps jadis":

These hearts were woven of human joys
and cares,
Washed marvellously with sorrow, swift
to mirth.
The years had given them kindness.
Dawn was theirs,
And sunset, and the colours of the earth.
These had seen movement, and heard music; known
Slumber and waking; loved; gone
proudly friended;
Felt the quick stir of wonder; sat alone;
Touched flowers and furs and cheeks.
All this is ended.

There are waters blown by changing winds
to laughter
And lit by the rich skies, all day. And
after,
Frost, with a gesture, stays the waves that
dance
And wandering loveliness. He leaves a
white
Unbroken glory, a gathered radiance,
A width, a shining peace, under the
night.

The new comes and takes its place beside the old, and we welcome it. But it is not wise to give up too soon the old for dead. The ways of genius with supposedly cast-off and lifeless forms have to be reckoned with. For the touch of genius is like the miracle of Spring.

Let us return, for a moment, to our thesis. Neither familiar things grown trite, nor things so new as still to be remote and alien, ever grip us as do those things which are at the same time old enough to touch the chords of memory,

and yet fresh (if I may use a poet's phrase) with some unspent beauty of surprise. And the supreme test of originality is its power to give us the sense of a footing on trodden and familiar ground, which all at once is recognized as unexplored. That is what Chaucer does times without number. That is what Villon does in the *balade*. For originality, rightly understood, seldom concerns itself with minting a new and particular medium of its own. And genius of the highest order is far more apt to disclose the unexpected resources of whatever vehicle of expression it falls heir to, than to spend itself upon the fabrication of a new.

I know that this is not the doctrine of the hour. And I know, too, that the hour, within due limits, is not without a valid case. "I holde," says that peerless natural philosopher, the Wife of Bath, "I holde a mouses herte nat worth a leek, That hath but oon hole for to sterte to." And originality undoubtedly fulfils itself in many ways. But precisely because the way of creative acceptance is just now more or less anathema, I am doubly anxious, not to defend, but to establish it. The way of constructive rejection shall have full hearing by and by. Meantime, there are certain fundamental and (I believe) still fruitful and operative principles to reckon with.

The current notion that *invention* is a mark of high originality is one of the vulgar errors that die hard. If it were true, "The House of a Thousand Candles" or the "Filigree Ball" would bear away the palm from many a masterpiece. But it is not the case. None of the great poets has ever troubled himself particularly to invent. That is especially true, of course, of narrative and dramatic poetry, and in spite of the fact that both narrative and the drama have now been largely commandeered by prose, the usage of Sophocles, and Dante, and Chaucer, and Shakespeare, and Goethe (although I am far from wishing to conjure with great names) is not without relevance still. They took, then, for the most part, materials that had come down to them—themes that had grown and developed through a selective instinct working, often, through long generations. And instead of inventing, they *discovered*. If that sounds cryptic, let us start with a modern instance that is n't poetry at all.

Dickens, as everybody knows, took over in "Pickwick Papers" a farcical series of sporting sketches, already begun, and intended to centre about a mythical Nimrod Club. In these earlier sketches Mr. Pickwick appeared (*absit omen!*) as a tall, thin man. But before he reached Dickens's hands, by one of those changes on which immortal issues turn, he had become short and fat. And so Dickens found him, and proceeded with his book. And now I quote Mr. Chesterton, lest I be suspected of building up a parallel *ad hoc*. "He made," says Chesterton of Dickens, "in the midst of this book a great discovery. . . . And that discovery constituted . . . the outstanding and arresting original feature in 'The Pickwick Papers.' . . . He had chosen (or somebody else had chosen) that corpulent old simpleton as a person peculiarly fitted to fall down trapdoors, to shoot over butter slides, to struggle with apple-pie beds, to be tipped out of carts and dipped into horse-ponds. But Dickens, and Dickens only, discovered as he went on how fitted the fat old man was to rescue ladies, to defy tyrants, to dance, to leap, to experiment with life, to be a *deus ex machinâ*, and even a knight errant. Dickens made this discovery. Dickens

went into the Pickwick Club to scoff, and Dickens remained to pray." So Mr. Chesterton, and in this fashion Samuel Pickwick joined the company of the immortals. And I need not remind you, in passing, that one Sir John Falstaff, despite his own veracious rehearsal of the circumstances of his birth, had a not dissimilar pedigree.

Dickens, then, did n't invent Mr. Pickwick; he discovered him underneath his disguising habiliments. And out of his discovery grew a unique book. There is another unique performance that grew out of a similar flash of insight. Chaucer did over into English the story of Troilus and Cressida as it came to him, particularly through Boccaccio. He found it an Italianate romantic epic; he left it the first great English novel. "Nothing like it," as has been recently said, "was ever in the world before." How does he do it?

He starts out in pretty close dependence upon Boccaccio. And he reaches Cressida herself, and Pandar. Then all at once something happens, and you can see it happening before your eyes, if you read the two narratives together. Some of you will recall what Stevenson says of "Kidnapped": "In one of my books, and one only, the characters took the bit in their teeth; all at once they became detached from the flat paper; and they turned their backs on me and walked off bodily, and from that time my task was stenographic." Well, that is what happened to Chaucer. There before him was Boccaccio's Cressida, the conventionally fickle woman. "I came like water, and like wind I go," she might have said, in Omar's words. And the facility with which she went is rivalled only by the fatal ease with which she came. But something else in her seized upon Chaucer, and lifted him, and Cressida with him, bodily out of Boccaccio. And as a result of that flash of vision, a conventional treatment of the hackneyed theme of a woman lightly won and quickly lost, turns into a penetrating and profoundly sympathetic portrayal of the shifting, fluctuating impulses of a woman yielding both against and with her will. And I know no character outside Shakespeare that is at once so human, and so hauntingly elusive in its complexity, or so tragically implicated in the defects of noble qualities, as the Cressida of Chaucer's discovery. What he discovered in Boccaccio's Pandaro, and the matchless figure that he made of it, time fails to tell. But through his fresh conception of what he found in the materials that came to him, he created a new and amazing literary form, and did something that was never done again until Fielding and Thackeray and Meredith appeared.

But Chaucer had the habit of discovering astounding possibilities in things that appear to have incurably gone stale. Let us take another instance. The Middle Ages had a passion for collecting. Jacobus de Voragine, in the "Golden Legend," collected saints; Boccaccio, in the "De Casibus," collected tragedies; in the "De Claris Mulieribus" he collected famous women; the mediæval preachers were indefatigable collectors of *exempla*. Story collections, then, were a stock convention. Chaucer himself had tried his hand at them more than once. He had done it in the "Legend of Good Women," and he had done it in what later came to be the "Monk's Tale." Indeed, the Monk cheerfully stated, before he launched into his string of tragedies, that he had a hundred of them in his cell! Such collections, however, were merely collections—stories strung together, or confined within

some stationary framework; tales lifted from their native soil, and mounted, classified, and pressed in an herbarium. But stories *grow*. They spring from the fillip of some suggestion, and one begets another, and they smack of the qualities of their narrators. A group of men (and I am not forgetting Chaucer for a moment) are gathered in the smoking compartment of a Pullman car. The cigars burn freely, and the bars come down. The captain of industry lets himself be known by stories of big business; the soldier has tales of the trenches; the Californian sings the glories of his State in dazzling anecdote; the college professor strives to seem unacademic, but the damned spot will not out; the commercial traveller tells the story of his life, and the clergyman discreetly seeks his berth. Recall, moreover (for you find Chaucer everywhere), your transatlantic voyages, when such things were. A body of people whose paths have never crossed before are thrown together for a week or so without the possibility of respite or escape. And an act of the Human Comedy promptly takes the stage. The boat is scarcely out of sight of land till attractions and repulsions are weaving back and forth. Like gravitates to like, and propinquity has its perfect work, to make or mar; total strangers leave the boat betrothed, and friends of years no longer speak. Journeys are both fertile soil for stories, and swift reagents upon human nature.

Now Chaucer knew no Pullman cars nor transatlantic liners, but he did know something that combined the merits of them both, the pilgrimage. And pilgrims, like their modern counterparts, had their scrips chock-full of news interspersed with lies: "pilgrymes, With scrippes bret-ful of lesinges, Entremedled with tydinges." Moreover, pilgrimages threw together, willy-nilly, every sort of person in the world—"a companye Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle In felaweshipe." And they told their tales each after his kind, and as they rode they developed antipathies and disclosed affinities. And Chaucer made the great discovery. *Journeys are where stories live when they're at home.* Why leave them stranded in a collection, "lyk a fish that is waterlees"? And by a stroke of genius he turned a static into a dynamic thing, and out of a hackneyed literary type the Human Comedy itself unfolds before our eyes. For if ever the Spirit of Comedy, with its sage's brows and its slim feasting smile, was luminous and watchful overhead, it was when the "nyne and twenty in a companye" set out from Southwerk at the Tabard, on the road to Canterbury. And there, like Cressida, "I take my leve." "Who-so wol here it in a lenger wyse," says the Monk when he has told the Tale of Ugolino, "Redeth the grete poete of Itaille, That highte Dant, for he can al devyse Fro point to point; nat o word wol he faille." And what Chaucer says Dante did for Ugolino, Professor Kittredge has recently done for Chaucer himself. And the supreme originality of the "Canterbury Tales"—the matchless give-and-take along the Canterbury road, the self-revelations, the breaking into life of hackneyed narrative forms, when they fall from the racy, or stately, or ribald lips of the pilgrims—all that has been, once for all, devised from point to point, and I shall not retell what has been so luminously told.

I said I should drop the "Canterbury Tales" with that. But I must cast just one more longing, lingering look behind to those warm precincts of the cheerful day. Some of you will remember the

incomparable lines in which the Wife of Bath breaks in upon her retrospect:

But, lord Crist! whan that it remembreth me
Upon my yowthe, and on my jolitee,
It tikleth me aboute myn herte rote.
Unto this day it dooth myn herte bote
*That I have had my world as in my tyme.*

Well, that is Chaucer's own savoring of life. And that is the secret of his originality. He was original because he could n't be anything else to save his soul. For he was alive to his finger tips, and nothing that he really touched could remain dead. And it is this invincible zest of his, this keen and intimate relish of the Human Comedy—his own rôle with the rest—through which he vitalizes everything he lays his hands on. He is everlastingly discovering that dead things are n't dead at all. He dares to begin the immortal Prologue to the "Canterbury Tales" itself with a device that had been worn to the bone in the swarming vision poems of the day. It was always Spring when the dreamer fell asleep. And the same conventional birds, trees, and breezes repeat each other, till almost one's spirit dies "for wo and wery of that companye." How deadly they were you can only know if, like Chaucer,

Thou gost hoom to thy hous anoon;
And, also domb as any stoon,
Thou sittest at [boke after] boke,
Till fully daswed is thy loke,
And livest thus as an hermyte.

But Chaucer as usual saw what others had n't seen. And he struck through the shell of the trite springtime convention to the heart of Spring itself. Spring is the time of the irrepressible *Wanderlust,* of longings for the open road, over the hills and far away: *"than* longen folk to goon on pilgrimages." And so:

Whan that Aprille with his shoures sote
The droghte of Marche hath perced to the rote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour,
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,
And smale fowles maken melodye,
That slepen al the night with open yë,
(So priketh hem nature in hir corages):
Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages
(And palmers for to seken straunge strondes)
To ferne halwes, couthe in sondry londes;
And specially, from every shires ende
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,
The holy blisful martir for to seke.

And the pilgrimage is on. And a spirited turn to a jaded commonplace has achieved an opening that is flawlessly organic—and, incidentally, has given to English poetry the lines whose familiarity has kept its April freshness through five hundred years.

Originality, then, is independent of invention. It is rather the gift of seeing and seizing the latent possibilities of familiar things. We accept that formulation without demur when the familiar things are the appearances of earth, and air, and sea, and sky—effects of light and shade, *nuances* of color, aspects of mass and line, sound, fragrance, movement—all the bewildering, iridescent throng of old impressions that all at once flash into new, when the eye is quickened and alert. What we fail, perhaps, to realize is this: that the old and well-worn forms of art, the familiar treatments of traditional themes, stand to the poet in precisely the same relation as the world of eye and ear. And they too may flash into life under the same compelling vision that at rare moments pierces the husks of *things,* and discloses beauty.

For art is tradition, and what is handed down is itself material for the alembic. It may prove to be utterly intractable, its pristine ductility vanished forever. Well and good; that is a malady incident to art no less than to manners and costume and speech. But that is the other half of the truth—the half that is turned towards us to-day. What we are concerned with at the moment is the half that has suffered temporary eclipse: the fact that old forms and old themes have always remained, and in large measure still remain, malleable under creative energy. And what we call originality has always found rich stuff for its transmutation there.

I shall not summon Shakespeare as a witness. It is all or nothing with him. One thing only I shall say. If you wish a complete compendium of the essentials and the quintessentials of originality, in all their conceivable manifestations, go on a voyage of discovery of your own, and begin by reading Lodge's "Rosalynde," and Brooke's "Romeus and Juliet," and the old "King Leir and his Three Daughters," and North's noble translation of Plutarch's "Life of Antony," page by page, and sometimes word by word, with the plays that Shakespeare built on them. That is neither a counsel of perfection, nor an injunction to settle Hoti's business; it is a practicable and supremely illuminating enterprise. And forty thousand lectures could not, with all their quantity of lore, make up its sum. For in the first-hand comparison of what Shakespeare found and took with the astounding thing he made of it, lies the touchstone of all originality whatsoever.

There is, however, another question about originality, the answer to which is not without importance. What are the limits of originality, in its sovereign dealing with other men's work?

The problem has been rather hopelessly muddled in our minds through a failure to remember that originality in its narrower sense, as a mere antonym for plagiarism, has always been itself a pure matter of convention. The metes and bounds between "mine" and "thine" in literary property have never remained fixed. They have been, for any given period, determined solely by the current literary usage. And the ethics of the question need concern us only so far as it is a matter of the evolution of conventions. Concern us it must, however, because we persist in judging in accordance with the conventions of to-day older practices, that were subject to a wholly different usage.

The Middle Ages, for example, had practically no sense whatever of literary property, as we conceive it. Rights of possession in other men's work were "free as the road, as large as store." Froissart's words about another matter are applicable here: "there was nothing of which one could say 'It is mine,' for everything was common as the sun and moon." Short of wholesale and servile cribbing, A was as free to incorporate what B had written, as he was to levy on the blessed sun of heaven, for his poetic needs. And it was as little incumbent upon him to state that he had done so, as it is even yet for me to announce that I lifted "the blessed sun of heaven" from Shakespeare. The works of other men, in fact, stood on practically the same footing, to a writer, as the works of God. Chaucer fuses the results of his reading into a new thing, precisely as he fuses his keen and infallible observations of life. And usually he combines the two. The Wife of Bath—who should have lived long enough hereafter to have met in Falstaff

her only peer and her only match—the Wife of Bath herself is simply Chaucer's multifarious and vivid reading of books, and his alert and omnivorous reading of life, poured together *con amore* into the mould of a superbly vital imaginative conception. Now one of the Wife's chief components happens to be St. Jerome—the most amazing metamorphosis that ever a saint has undergone. St. Jerome, however, I suspect would be the first to waive acknowledgment of such a borrowing. But the Wife of Bath is no less a debtor without acknowledgment to one of Chaucer's contemporaries, Eustache Deschamps. What is to be said of that? Let Deschamps answer for himself. Long before the Wife's *apologia pro vita sua* was written, Deschamps sent across the Channel to Chaucer, by a common friend, a remarkable *balade,* the refrain of which is this: "Grand translateur, noble Geffroy Chaucier"—Geoffrey Chaucer, *the great translator.* That, to Deschamps, is Chaucer's distinction; he has, as it happens, sowed the flowers (it is the *balade* speaking, and not I) and planted the rosebush of the "Roman de la Rose" for those who are ignorant of French. But those who are ignorant of French are also deprived of Deschamps. And so, in the *envoy,* Deschamps proffers a suggestion. In Chaucer's garden, he modestly protests, he would be, to be sure, but a nettle—"En ton jardin ne seroye qu'ortie"—but he makes it unmistakably clear that he was anxious to be transplanted there, if only Chaucer would. And the sequel is this. Chaucer did find in Deschamps, as we now know, stuff for his loom, and wove it into his own tapestry. But it is only within the last dozen years that the discovery was made that he had actually done so. For, in entire accordance with the usage of his day, which Deschamps followed with the rest, Chaucer made no acknowledgment. It would have been a work of pure supererogation if he had. For among that happy breed of men to whom all things were theirs, to take over another's "goodly words" into one's own "douce melodie" was in itself a compliment as acceptable and courtly as any that one could pay. Acknowledgment might or might not be made, precisely as one pleased. And there, indeed, lies the crux of the whole matter. Barring the single point of acknowledgment, originality meant in Chaucer's day substantially what it means now—the transmutation of what is taken over, into something that is essentially one's own. And the difference with reference to acknowledgment grew directly out of the absence of any such active sense as ours of literary property—an absence which, in turn, was the result of causes rooted deep in mediæval life. Our modern sensitiveness to any infringement of our property rights in the children of our brain is merely a stage a trifle farther on in the evolution of a convention.

I am not wholly sure, however, that our ethical gain through the development has not been offset by an æsthetic loss. At all events, our robust elders in poetry exercised the same imperial rights of eminent domain over beauty to their liking in a book, that they exerted over beauty of their finding in earth, sea, or sky. And the stipulation of their holding was in either case the same—they must improve the property. The simile in Virgil of the souls that fell from the banks of the Styx like leaves, becomes Dante's property when he enriches Virgil's lines from his own creative observation; precisely as, no more, no less, the greenness of new grass becomes inalien-

ably his when the same penetrating observation confers on it the vividness of fresh emerald the instant it is split. Virgil and the meadow were alike priceless, and alike legitimate, treasure-trove. And all this meant, in the end, a splendid and *cumulative* bodying forth in poetry of the life of men and things. For poets like Dante, and Chaucer, and Shakespeare recognized far more clearly and surely than we the perennial vitality latent in *tradition*. And one of their glories is the interpenetration, in their work, of books and life. There they both were; and the creative energy in those more spacious days struck as straight and true for the one as for the other, to find its stuff. And this richness of assimilation of what tradition furnishes gives to the older poetry a body, a fulness of habit, of which we often feel the lack these days, when we all too seldom catch in verse that sense of a rich and varied background flashing into expression in a single poem, or pouring its profusion into the compass of one master work—the sense that sometimes in a single phrase throws windows open upon endless vistas. And qualities like those we can ill afford to miss.

For originality is more than the saying of something never said before about something now for the first time perceived. That has its own high value, we may grant at once; but it has its limitations too. For however exciting it might well be to play a second Adam, and have the Lord God bring to each of us, all new, every beast of the field and fowl of the air to see what we would call them—however thrilling that might be to each happy individual, the universe would not thereby get far. Fresh beginnings are excellent stimulants to a jaded world, but a defective method of progression. The great constructive element in both life and art is the dealings of genius with the continuity of tradition. And poetry becomes original by breaking with tradition at its peril. Cut the connection with the great reservoir of past achievement, and the stream runs shallow, and the substance of poetry becomes tenuous and thin.

This is not an *apologia* for bookishness in poetry. The bookish, the erudite, the academic, are worlds away from what I mean. Cut connection with the other reservoir—"the mighty world of eye and ear"—and the stream again runs shallow, and the substance of poetry becomes this time not merely tenuous and thin, but hard and dead. The vitality of tradition and the quickening impulse of immediate contact with reality—it is the fructifying influence of each of these upon the other that makes for life in poetry. Either without the other means sterility.

Originality, then, is in the main independent of derivation. Its specific quality is the individual stamp: the pervasion of thought and expression, whencesoever derived, by something that gives distinction, freshness, individuality. Take a line and a half of Wordsworth's:

> . . . that uncertain heaven received
> Into the bosom of the steady lake.

When Coleridge read that, he sat down and wrote in a letter: "had I met these lines running wild in the deserts of Arabia, I should have instantly screamed out 'Wordsworth!'" Of course he would; they are saturated through and through with him,—as

> For lo! the New-moon winter bright!
> And overspread with phantom light
> (With swimming phantom light o'erspread
> But rimmed and circled by a silver thread)—

as these lines are permeated with the very quintessence of Coleridge. But,

An ampler ether, a diviner air,

also bears Wordsworth's unequivocal image and superscription, though this time the gold is the gold of Virgil.

For although in life "the rank is but the guinea stamp, The man's the gowd for a' that," in art, where form and content are as indissolubly one as body and spirit, the distinction fails to hold. It is the cutting of the intaglio that gives its value to the gem. And "Drink to me only with thine eyes" is as inalienably Ben Jonson's, by virtue of its chiselled terseness, as if almost every phrase of it were n't buried in the letters of a Greek rhetorician; and "Still to be neat, still to be dressed" is incomparably more original than a thousand poems that are n't, like it, the transmutation of the dross of a dozen old Latin lines into a finished bit of goldsmith's work. Read some day, when your stomach is strong, the old song which Burns took over in "John Anderson my jo, John," and remember, as you read, that the soaring melody of the rondo in the Waldstein sonata is Beethoven's similar transfiguration of the air of a ribald folk-song about fleas in straw. For that matter, recall Beethoven's transformations of the conventional minuet of Haydn and Mozart into that vehicle of rollicking gaiety, and grim mystery, and tragic portent, the scherzo of the Third, Fifth, Seventh, and Ninth Symphonies. And in Miss Lowell's "Guns as Keys: and the Great Gate Swings"—to come down with a leap to the most modern of the modern—the daring constructive device is no less original because it gives a brilliant new turn to what is as old, on the one side, as the "Odyssey" (in the constant juxtaposition of its great sweep forward and its waiting goal), and, on another, of as long date as "Aucassin and Nicolete" (in its alternation of verse and—with apologies!—prose); while from a third angle it's a superb appropriation and translation into words of the methods of the cinematograph. None of these things move us, whether in Wordsworth, or Ben Jonson, or Burns, or Beethoven, or Miss Lowell. They are stuff for the loom, clay for the potter, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble—it matters not what in the slightest degree. We know what they are, but we know not what they may be, when the poet is done with them. For it is n't by the materials you use that your claim to originality will stand justified or condemned; it is solely by the thing you do with them.

There is one other question that will certainly and properly be asked. Where does *inspiration* come in? Is n't it that which, after all, is the true criterion and touchstone of originality? Is it not when, as Goethe put it, "the good ideas stand suddenly before us like free children of God, and cry out: 'Here we are!' "—is n't it then that we are most authentically original? What, too, of that larger aspect of Goethe's doctrine, which comes so near expressing, once for all, what we each of us would say, if we could, of genius:

> Every productivity of the highest type, every significant *aperçu*, every invention, every great idea that bears fruit and achieves results, stands in no man's power, and is exalted above all earthly might. Things that so come we must regard as unlooked-for gifts from above, as veritable children of God, to be received with reverence and with joyful gratitude. They are akin to the dæmonic, which does resistlessly with us as it will, and to which we unwittingly yield ourselves, even while

we think we are acting on our own initiative.

Is n't that what we really mean by originality? you will surely ask. Let us see, in the first place, what is not involved.

The ways of genius are as manifold as the mercies of the Lord. Inspiration may spring from what Tennyson calls "unseen germination"; it may come on the spirit, as Keats once wrote, "with a fine suddenness." It may arrive through brooding over an idea and waiting patiently until it shines, as Buffon enjoined. Or it may come in the amazing way in which it came to Mozart: "When I am riding in a carriage, or in a walk after a good meal, or in a sleepless night, then the thoughts come to me in a rush, and best of all. . . . Then [the thing] goes on growing . . . and however long it be, becomes indeed almost finished in my head, so that I afterwards survey it at a glance, like a goodly picture or handsome man; and in my imagination do not hear it at all in succession . . . but as a simultaneous whole. That is indeed a feast! All the finding and making goes on in me as in a very vivid dream." Inspiration may seize on one as "Tam o'Shanter" seized on Burns, when he walked all day by the riverside, "crooning to himsel," and "in such ecstasy that the tears were happing down his cheeks," as he wrote his verses on the top of his sod-dyke along the stream. Or it may weary one, as it wearied Wordsworth: "William tired himself with seeking an epithet for the cuckoo . . . William very nervous. After he was in bed, haunted with altering 'The Rainbow.' . . . William tired himself with hammering at a passage." It may come as to Goethe, in his bare little anchorite's cell of a study, from which (he says) he scarcely stepped the whole winter through, except into the still more Spartan bedroom opening out of it; or it may come as it used to come to Scott, while he galloped on horseback over the moors. It may descend as it descended upon Gautier, working imperturbably in the midst of the clatter of printing presses; or it may respond only to cloistral isolation, as with Flaubert: "I'm like a bowl of cream: if the cream is to form, the bowl must sit immobile." One may write of pastoral scenery, as Lodge did in "Rosalynde," "in the ocean when every line was wet with a surge"; or one may write of the sea, as Tennyson made "Break, break, break," "in a Lincolnshire lane, at five o'clock in the morning, between blossoming hedges." For inspiration is like the wind, that bloweth when and where and how it listeth. And the modes of its workings are utterly irrelevant to our concern. For Wordsworth tiring himself for an epithet, or Flaubert "afflicting his soul over some dubious word," is as original as Burns gesticulating by the riverside in an ungovernable access of joy, or as Byron dashing off verses after a ball.

But what is it that *sets the winds of inspiration blowing?* That is absolutely the only question that concerns us here. For what we call inspiration, in whatever wondrous ways it may behave once started, always starts. And its starting-point is some concrete suggestion, and that suggestion may be anything. It may be a stubble-field under the autumn light, that all at once touches the springs of inspiration; it may be a visit with one's sister to the River Wye, or the bugle music of the boatmen on Lake Killarney, or the nest of a field mouse turned up by a plough. And it may equally well be a line of Virgil, or

some phrase of Horace, itself "the birth of some chance morning or evening . . . among the Sabine hills," that in a flash gives wings to the imagination; or a page of "Purchas His Pilgrimes," or an old yellow book picked up in a Florentine book stall. The titanic sweep of inspiration through "King Lear," and the thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls in "Hamlet," were stirred to life by two old plays. We are back where we started. What we call inspiration is the dynamic factor in originality—that is all.

Let us end orderly as we began. Poetry may never with safety cut loose from the old, because the old is always new. The tide of generations flows on unceasingly, and for each the old experiences have their pristine freshness. That is why the old themes are perennial. Love is as dazzling a miracle to every lover who loves to-day as if unnumbered millions had n't loved since time began. Death is n't trite to you and me because it's been the common lot since life first was; nor have the moon and stars grown old because uncounted centuries ago, beside the rivers of Babylon and Egypt, or among the hills and pasture lands of Israel, or in the wide stillness of Arabia, men saw them, and brooded, and wondered, and dreamed. The oldest things in the world are the things that also have been new as many times as human beings have been born. I happened one day this summer to look across at an adjoining cottage. There on the porch was a group of urchins absorbed in constructing a fleet of whittled ships, and on the path below, two little girls, heads close together, each with an arm about the other's waist, oblivious of all but their own secrets. And there, too, was the eternal sea. And each was as old as the other—and as new.

Now that is what the greatest poetry has always built on. Its roots strike deep into the eternally familiar. But the gift of the gods to genius is the power to catch and fix that familiar in the recurrent act of becoming new. That is originality.

1919

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# HERBERT READ

## The Politics of the Unpolitical

*If certain writers feel emancipated enough from all that is human—they would say* intellectual *enough—to continue to fulfil, under any circumstances whatever, the strange functions of purely abstract thought, good luck to them. But those who can only conceive their rôle as writers to be a means of experiencing more deeply and of establishing more fully a mode of existence which they want to be human, those who only* write *in order to feel themselves* living *integrally—such people no longer have the right to be disinterested. The trend of events, and the evolution of ideas, if they run out their course, will lead straight to an unparalleled deforma-*

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*tion of the individual human being. Whoever gazes into the future which is being forged for us, and can there perceive the monstrous and denatured brother whom one will necessarily resemble, cannot react except by a revolt into extreme egoism. It is this egoism which must now be rehabilitated. To-day the problem of the person effaces all others. The intelligence is placed in such circumstances that for it disinterestedness and resignation come to the same thing.*

THIERRY MAULNIER,
*La Crise est dans l'homme*
(Paris, 1932).

THE politics of the unpolitical—these are the politics of those who desire to be pure in heart: the politics of men without personal ambition; of those who have not desired wealth or an unequal share of worldly possessions; of those who have always striven, whatever their race or condition, for human values and not for national or sectional interests.

For our Western world, Christ is the supreme example of this unselfish devotion to the good of humanity, and the Sermon on the Mount is the source of all the politics of the unpolitical. But others who came before Christ and who may have influenced him elaborated their political ideals in pureness of heart —Lao-Tsŭ and Zeno, for example; and among Christ's direct disciples we must include several philosophers and prophets nearer to our time, whose message is still insistent, and directly applicable to our present condition—Ruskin and Kropotkin, Morris and Tolstoy, Gandhi and Eric Gill. These modern representatives of what we might well call an ancient tradition form a closely interrelated body of thought: Gandhi, for example, has declared his debt to Ruskin and Tolstoy; Gill is a disciple of Morris, who was himself a disciple of Ruskin; Kropotkin was closely associated with Morris. Ruskin, in this succession, has a certain pre-eminence and originality: the vitality and transforming power[1] of his writings seem to come straight from his deep study of the Bible and from his prolonged meditation on the words of Christ; though he had in himself that rare power which Gandhi recognized as the specifically poetic power—his power "to call forth the good latent in the human breast." We are still far from estimating the full extent of this great man's influence, but we can describe it as ethical and aesthetic rather than as religious or political. Ruskin's eloquence did not bring into being either a new sect or a new party: his power is emotive and not calculative, and in this as in other respects he is nearly related to Rousseau, having for our own revolutionary period almost exactly the same significance as Rousseau had for the French Revolutionary period. We may still come to regard *Unto this Last* as the *Contrat Social* of a new society—as the Manifesto of those communists who renounce political action in their efforts to establish a new society.

Of the six names mentioned, Morris was the only one who compromised on this political issue, but he never, to the end of his life, reconciled himself to the political methods advocated by his friends. His lecture on "The Policy of Abstention" (1887) is the best statement of the case against parliamentary action ever made in English, and it is a pity that it is so entirely forgotten by socialists to-day, and that it is only available

[1] "The one book that brought about an instantaneous and practical transformation in my life was *Unto This Last.*"—*Mahatma Gandhi: His Own Story* (London, 1930), p. 163.

in a limited and expensive publication.[2] Towards the end of his life Gandhi also, it might be said, has made a tactical compromise of some kind with the politically minded leaders of the Congress Party. With them he has worked in close association since 1921, but always in a relationship which he himself has described as "experimental." For the whole of Gandhi's life and teaching has been directed against parliamentary action: the doctrine of *ahimsa,* or non-violence, rejects the violence of majority government no less decisively than the violence of military oppression. But before accusing Gandhi of political compromise, it would be necessary to know in much more detail the motives which have determined his recent activities; we must wait for the outcome of his final attempt to liberate India.

It is characteristic of these six teachers that although they would be included among the most revolutionary figures of the past hundred years, we do not spontaneously associate the word "democracy" with any of them. Democracy is a very ambiguous word, and its meanings vary from a sentimental sympathy for the poor and oppressed such as we get in Christian Socialism, to a ruthless dogma of proletarian dictatorship such as we have seen established in Russia. Our Six were all democrats in the former sense; none of them was a democrat in the latter sense. But it is an important distinction, and if in the name of democracy we are more and more inevitably compelled to commit ourselves to the political machinery of the state—to the nationalization of industry, to the bureaucratic control of all spheres of life and to the doctrine of the infallibility of the People (divinely invested in a unique Party)—then it is time to renounce the democratic label and seek a less equivocal name. My use of the word "democracy" in the pages which follow is always subject to this consideration.

A complete renunciation of the word is not easy: indeed, it has been deliberately made difficult for us, not only by the common usage of many ardent seekers after the truth, but also by the deliberate propaganda of the enemies of liberty. A common form of this Machiavellian sophistry consists in presenting your opponent with an apparently inescapable alternative—an "either/or" which you accept as covering all the known facts. In our own time, in the sphere of world politics, this either/or is *either* democracy *or* fascism. Such an alternative seems to leave communism out of account, but not in reality. If you question people about the relation of communism to democracy, the communists among them will tell you that communism is the extreme form of democracy, and the anti-communists will say that communism as it exists in Russia is merely another form of totalitarianism.

Both these views are right. Communism is an extreme form of democracy, and it is totalitarian: but equally the totalitarian state in the form of fascism is an extreme form of democracy. All forms of socialism, whether state socialism of the Russian kind, or national socialism of the German kind, or democratic socialism of the British kind, are professedly democratic: that is to say, they all obtain popular assent by the manipulation of mass psychology. All are actually majority governments. It has often been pointed out that in some

[2] *William Morris: Artist, Writer, Socialist,* by May Morris (2 vols. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1936), vol. ii, pp. 434-53.

ways the organization of society in Nazi Germany is much more thoroughly democratic than the organization of society in Great Britain or the United States. The German army is more democratic than the British army; the German industrial system is more democratic than the capitalist industrial system; German finance is more democratically controlled than finance in a plutocracy like ours. In Germany power and responsibility are not the prerogatives of birth or wealth, but are delegated to the holders of office in a party organization; and though such a system is strongly oppressive of individual freedom and therefore not democratic in the libertarian sense of the word, it is at least as democratic as a system which delegates the symbols of authority to a parliament and leaves the real power in the hands of those who control the financial system. National Socialism relates justice to service and group loyalty, which may not be defensible from an abstract ethical point of view; but it is at least an improvement on a system which confuses justice with the competitive struggles of the jungle. It is mere hypocrisy on the part of democratic propagandists to pretend that Great Britain or the United States enjoy some mythical happiness or freedom which is denied to the Germans, the Russians, or the Italians. We "enjoy" chaos just as they "enjoy" order; we "enjoy" licence, they "discipline"; the choice is in each case equally democratic.

I am not suggesting that the democracies of Great Britain and Germany are identical. I am only pointing out that fascism in Germany is a form of democracy, even if an arbitrary one; it is only its extremism which accounts for its intolerance. It is to be observed, however, that political democracy even in Great Britain grows more intolerant day by day, and not merely under the pressure of war. The pressure of an economic system which inevitably proceeds towards monopoly—that is to say, towards a unified control designed to maintain the security of profits and wages—brings about a form of government which, however democratic in appearance, is essentially totalitarian.

The weaknesses of democracy have been exposed by every political philosopher since Plato and Aristotle. Even Rousseau, the so-called Father of Democracy, rejected it as a system practicable for any society larger than a city state. The philosophers, being men of intelligence, have never been able to suggest anything better than a dictatorship of the intelligentsia; but knowing how unlikely it is that such a dictatorship would be long tolerated by the ignorant masses, they have tried to disguise the inevitability of some alternative form of dictatorship under a picturesque formula. Historically the most effective of these is constitutional monarchy. It has always been recognized that a king might easily degenerate into a tyrant, but his natural life is limited and can at a pinch be artificially shortened; whereas the reign of an aristocracy, which is the next best possibility, has no mensurable limit: it can only be brought to an end by a civil war with all its miseries.

The plain fact about democracy is that it is a physical impossibility. In an aggregation of millions of individuals such as we always have in modern society, we may get government *of* the people and even government *for* the people, but never for a moment government *by* the people. But that is the essential test, for if a people does not govern itself, it is governed by some-

body else; *ipso facto* it is no longer a democracy. This is not merely a logical quibble: democracy never has in fact existed in modern times. In our own country, for example, the monarchical system was overthrown by an oligarchy, and since the "Great" Revolution of 1688 we have been governed by a succession of oligarchies, which might be Whig or might be Tory, might represent the landed interests or the moneyed interests, but never for a moment represented the people as a whole. In our own time a new oligarchy, the oligarchy of the trade unions, as exclusive a caste as ever aspired to power, has competed, luckily in vain, for the control of the state. It is now openly merging itself with the ascendant oligarchy of monopoly capitalism, to form what James Burnham has called "the managerial class."

All this is such an obvious interpretation of the historical facts that no one but a fool can deceive himself in the belief that democracy has ever been, or is ever likely to be, a reality in a modern industrial community. A constitutional monarchy as a cloak to competing sectional interests, as a symbol of unity in a society which would otherwise disintegrate from ruthless class warfare—that is the definition of the British constitution. The French Third Republic, the United States of America, and the Third Reich are all constitutions of the same character: they only differ in nomenclature and the trimming on their uniforms.

Nevertheless this must be said (if only in justification of the lip service which so many of us have paid to democracy at various times): the political doctrine known as democracy has implied an important principle which, if it were not systematically misinterpreted and misunderstood, would still justify us in using the word. This is the *principle of equality*—an ethical doctrine, even a religious dogma. The equality of man implies many things, but never its literal meaning. No one believes that all men are equal in capacity or talent: they are in fact outrageously diverse. But nevertheless, in Christian phraseology, they are all equal in the sight of God; and to affirm our common humanity is the first article of freedom. Whatever government we establish, whatever way of life we follow, all our faith is built on error unless we respect the rights of the person —that is to say, his right to be a person, a unique entity, "human left, from human free."

This is the fundamental doctrine of a Christian community and of all other types of essential communism. It is even fundamental to the communism of Marx and Engels. But the equality acknowledged by democracy has in practice been something very different. God has been eliminated from the formula and we are left with a mere equalization or levelling of man with man. The spiritual measure has been discarded, and man is left to dangle in material scales; and for centuries the counter-weight has been a piece of silver. The only way in which democracy has been able to assess equality is in the terms of money, and it is the inability of the trade union movement, especially in Great Britain and Germany, to break away from this cash valuation of humanity which has, more than any other single factor, made the democratic working-class movement a futile diversion of revolutionary effort.[3]

[3] Chiefly because it has prevented the workers from concentrating on the enhancement of their human dignity by the acquisition of responsibility for the direction and control of industry. But also because,

By what values a man shall be judged absolutely we will not discuss here, but socially, as a man among his fellow-men, he should be judged by his creative ability, by his power to add to the common stock of goods. The value of a man is the value of the art he practises—whether it is the art of healing or the art of making music, the art of road-mending or the art of cooking. We might place first of all the art of making children, because on that the continuance of the human race depends. Procreation is perhaps the only art which is literally creative: the rest of the arts are merely inventive.

For this and for reasons more strictly sociological, our social philosophy must begin with the family. The Pope is right, the Archbishop of Canterbury is right, Pétain is right; the psychoanalysts and the anthropologists are right. The Stalinists are wrong, the Nazis are wrong, our own democratic socialists and public school fascists are wrong, for they all exalt the state above the family. From whatever realistic angle we approach the problems of human life, the family is seen as the integral unit, without which there is no social organization, no social progress, no social order or human happiness. But we must insist that this is a sociological problem, and we must dissociate ourselves from those who think it can be solved by moral persuasion. Families are encouraged and sustained by security of life and property, decent housing, and an environment in which nurture and education can be natural and serene. Morality and religion may give their sanction to the social unit thus established: it is the fascist way of thinking to imagine that such sanctions are a substitute for economic action.

The next essential group is the guild—the association of men and women according to their calling or practical function. (I obstinately retain the word "guild," in spite of its medieval and sentimental associations, because it is more human, and euphonious, than such expressions as "collective," "co-operative," "soviet," etc.). The guild is a vertical and not a horizontal organization: it includes all persons associated together in the production of a particular commodity. The agricultural guild, for example, would include the drivers and mechanics who run the tractors: the engineers' guild would include the men who make the tractors. But the vertical organization will be divided into regional and district units, and the main business of the guilds will always take place in the district units; decisions will arise out of personal contacts and not from the abstract and legalistic conclaves of a central bureau.

Decentralization is thus also of the essence of this alternative to democracy. "Real politics are local politics," and power and authority should be devolved and segmented to the utmost limit of practicability. Only in such a way can the person—every person in society—be assured of an adequate sense of responsibility and human dignity. These qualities for the average person only emerge in his actual sphere of work and in his regional environment.

The trend to centralization is a disease of democracy, and not, as is so often assumed, of the machine. It arises inevi-

as Franz Borkenau has shown so effectively, it has prevented the development of international solidarity among the workers, for the wage-rate is directly dependent on the international market, not only of labour, but of commodities. For this reason the workers have been forced to realize that their interests are bound up, not only with the interests of their employers, but also with the competitive expansion of the national capital. Cf. F. Borkenau, *Socialism, National or International* (Routledge, 1942).

tably from the concentration of power in parliament, from the separation made between responsibility and creative activity, from the massing of production for greater profits and higher wages. The evolution of democracy is parallel to the growth of centralization, and centralization is in no sense an inevitable process. The present war has revealed its extraordinary inefficiency. Have not the guerillas of Jugoslavia shown more initiative than the bureaucrats of Whitehall? The centralization of control in a democratic state is clumsy, inhuman and inert. Incapable of thought, originality or enterprise, it can only act under the dictatorship of a Hitler or a Churchill—even the shrill voices of an exasperated Press have no effect on it.

The health and happiness of society depend on the labour and science of its members; but neither health nor happiness is possible unless that work and science are directed and controlled by the workers themselves. A guild is by definition autonomous and self-governing. Every man who is a master of his craft acquires thereby the right to a voice in the direction of his workshop. He also acquires security of tenure and of income. Indeed, his income and his tenure should depend on his qualifications rather than on the tally of his labours. He should begin to receive an income from the moment he has chosen a calling and been admitted as an apprentice to a trade or profession—which will be long before he has left school. His income will rise with his qualifications, and will depend entirely on his qualifications. Any rational society will naturally make use of the services of a qualified worker, because it thereby increases the general well-being. If it fails to do so, that society is restricting production; and if such restriction is in the general interest, then society should pay the worker for his qualifications until they can be used, or otherwise pay the worker to train and acquire more immediately useful qualifications. The talents and acquired skill of a person are his property: his contribution to the common wealth. Society should be organized to secure the maximum utilization of its inherent wealth, and the productive organizations themselves will then decide how this common wealth is best increased—by machinery or handicraft, by large factories or small workshops, in towns or villages. The human values involved, and not an abstract and numerical profit, will be the criterion.

Education, in such a society, is initiation. It is the revelation of innate capacities, the training of these capacities in socially useful activities, the disciplining of these activities to aesthetic and moral ends.

Such a natural organization of society leaves little activity to the state as such. The state remains merely as the arbiter, to decide in the interests of the whole the conflicts which emerge in the parts. Such a function is already exercised by an independent judiciary, which might well extend its functions to cover the rights of the citizen as consumer. An Economic Council, constituted by much the same means as the Bench, would be necessary to safeguard society as a whole against a policy of restrictionism in any particular guild, to direct the general volume of production and to maintain a balanced output among its tributary guilds. It is difficult to see the necessity for any other central authority. The Board of Education, for example, would be in fact as well as in name a board of education—an autonomous body charged with the task of educating the nation's children, governed and directed

by those responsible for this task. The Bankers' Guild would carry out the functions of the Treasury and the Banks, in so far as these functions are necessary in a society whose production is organized for use and not for profit. And so for all the economic functions of society.

All this may seem to amount to a programme far more definite and dogmatic than the title of my essay promised, but to be unpolitical does not mean to be without politics: every attitude that is more than egoistic is to that extent social, and a social attitude is a political attitude. But it is one thing to have politics, and another thing to pursue them. It is one thing to have a faith, and another thing to trade on the credulity of the faithful. It is not the substance of politics we should object to, but the methods of the politician. We should refuse to invest our private interests in a public policy, for we know that what cannot be won by a change of heart, which is also a revolution of reason, is only won by cheats and impostors. Above all, we should realize by now that a new order will never be won by old pensioners, among whom are to be numbered the six hundred and fifteen pawns of our party system.

Let me summarize the essential feature of a natural society:

I. The liberty of the person.
II. The integrity of the family.
III. The reward of qualifications.
IV. The self-government of the guilds.
V. The abolition of parliament and centralized government.
VI. The institution of arbitrament.
VII. The delegation of authority.
VIII. The humanization of industry.

The social order thus envisaged is international because it is essentially pacific: it is pacific because it is essentially international. It aims at the production of world-wide plenty, at the humanization of work, and at the eradication of all economic conflicts. It may be, as some philosophers hold, that an aggressive instinct is innate in man, and that no organization of society can guard against its expression. In that case the world can only be made tolerable in the degree that this instinct can be controlled by reason. Reason has no chance if men are starving, or even if they have undue cause for envy. But granted an economy which is no longer competitive, in which the highest yield of production is wisely and evenly distributed among all mankind, then reason will have a chance. Instincts are not immutable: they can be transformed, sublimated, diverted into creative channels. Energy itself is not evil: it only becomes evil by being applied to evil ends.

The world is waiting for a new faith —especially the youth of the world is waiting for a new faith. The old institutions, the old parties, are dead at the roots: they receive no refreshment. The young men and women stand apart, indifferent, inactive. But do not let us mistake their indifference for apathy, their inactivity for laziness. Intellectually, they are very wide awake. But they have rejected our abstract slogans and the hollow institutions in which old men gibber about freedom, democracy and culture. They don't want freedom if it means the freedom to exploit their fellow-men: they don't want democracy if it means the ridiculous bagmen of Westminster; they don't want culture if it means the intellectual dope of our academies and universities. They want to get rid of the profiteers and the advertising men, the petty tyrannical bureau-

crats and the screaming journalists, the clubmen and the still too numerous flock of rentiers for ever cackling over their threatened nest-eggs. They want a world that is morally clean and socially just, naturally productive and aesthetically beautiful. And they know they won't get it from any of the existing parties, from any of the existing political systems. They hate fascism, they recoil from communism, and they despise democracy. They are groping towards a new faith, a new order, a new world. They are not a party and never will be a party: they have no name and will perhaps never have a name. But they will act, and onto the ruins of war they will cast the tarnished baubles and stale furnishings of those parliaments which brought death and despair to two successive generations of young men.

1943

# THEODORE ROOSEVELT

## *The New Nationalism*

WE COME here to-day to commemorate one of the epoch-making events of the long struggle for the rights of man—the long struggle for the uplift of humanity. Our country—this great Republic—means nothing unless it means the triumph of a real democracy, the triumph of popular government, and, in the long run, of an economic system under which each man shall be guaranteed the opportunity to show the best that there is in him. That is why the history of America is now the central feature of the history of the world; for the world has set its face hopefully toward our democracy; and, O my fellow citizens, each one of you carries on your shoulders not only the burden of doing well for the sake of your own country, but the burden of doing well and of seeing that this nation does well for the sake of mankind.

There have been two great crises in our country's history: first, when it was formed, and then, again, when it was perpetuated; and, in the second of these great crises—in the time of stress and strain which culminated in the Civil War, on the outcome of which depended the justification of what had been done earlier, you men of the Grand Army, you men who fought through the Civil War, not only did you justify your generation, not only did you render life worth living for our generation, but you justified the wisdom of Washington and Washington's colleagues. If this Republic had been founded by them only to be split asunder into fragments when the strain came, then the judgment of the world would have been that Washington's work was not worth doing. It was you who crowned Washington's work, as you carried to achievement the high purpose of Abraham Lincoln.

Now, with this second period of our history the name of John Brown will be

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forever associated; and Kansas was the theatre upon which the first act of the second of our great national life dramas was played. It was the result of the struggle in Kansas which determined that our country should be in deed as well as in name devoted to both union and freedom; that the great experiment of democratic government on a national scale should succeed and not fail. In name we had the Declaration of Independence in 1776; but we gave the lie by our acts to the words of the Declaration of Independence until 1865; and words count for nothing except in so far as they represent acts. This is true everywhere; but, O my friends, it should be truest of all in political life. A broken promise is bad enough in private life. It is worse in the field of politics. No man is worth his salt in public life who makes on the stump a pledge which he does not keep after election; and, if he makes such a pledge and does not keep it, hunt him out of public life. I care for the great deeds of the past chiefly as spurs to drive us onward in the present. I speak of the men of the past partly that they may be honored by our praise of them, but more that they may serve as examples for the future.

It was a heroic struggle; and, as is inevitable with all such struggles, it had also a dark and terrible side. Very much was done of good, and much also of evil; and, as was inevitable in such a period of revolution, often the same man did both good and evil. For our great good fortune as a nation, we, the people of the United States as a whole, can now afford to forget the evil, or, at least, to remember it without bitterness, and to fix our eyes with pride only on the good that was accomplished. Even in ordinary times there are very few of us who do not see the problems of life as through a glass, darkly; and when the glass is clouded by the murk of furious popular passion, the vision of the best and the bravest is dimmed. Looking back, we are all of us now able to do justice to the valor and the disinterestedness and the love of the right, as to each it was given to see the right, shown both by the men of the North and the men of the South in that contest which was finally decided by the attitude of the West. We can admire the heroic valor, the sincerity, the self-devotion shown alike by the men who wore the blue and the men who wore the gray; and our sadness that such men should have had to fight one another is tempered by the glad knowledge that ever hereafter their descendants shall be found fighting side by side, struggling in peace as well as in war for the uplift of their common country, all alike resolute to raise to the highest pitch of honor and usefulness the nation to which they all belong. As for the veterans of the Grand Army of the Republic, they deserve honor and recognition such as is paid to no other citizens of the Republic; for to them the republic owes its all; for to them it owes its very existence. It is because of what you and your comrades did in the dark years that we of to-day walk, each of us, head erect, and proud that we belong, not to one of a dozen little squabbling contemptible commonwealths, but to the mightiest nation upon which the sun shines.

I do not speak of this struggle of the past merely from the historic standpoint. Our interest is primarily in the application to-day of the lessons taught by the contest of half a century ago. It is of little use for us to pay lip-loyalty to the mighty men of the past unless we sincerely endeavor to apply to the problems of the present precisely the qualities

which in other crises enabled the men of that day to meet those crises. It is half melancholy and half amusing to see the way in which well-meaning people gather to do honor to the men who, in company with John Brown, and under the lead of Abraham Lincoln, faced and solved the great problems of the nineteenth century, while, at the same time, these same good people nervously shrink from, or frantically denounce, those who are trying to meet the problems of the twentieth century in the spirit which was accountable for the successful solution of the problems of Lincoln's time.

Of that generation of men to whom we owe so much, the man to whom we owe most is, of course, Lincoln. Part of our debt to him is because he forecast our present struggle and saw the way out. He said:

"I hold that while man exists it is his duty to improve not only his own condition, but to assist in ameliorating mankind."

And again:

"Labor is prior to, and independent of, capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital, and deserves much the higher consideration."

If that remark was original with me, I should be even more strongly denounced as a Communist agitator than I shall be anyhow. It is Lincoln's. I am only quoting it; and that is one side; that is the side the capitalist should hear. Now, let the working man hear his side.

"Capital has its rights, which are as worthy of protection as any other rights. . . . Nor should this lead to a war upon the owners of property. Property is the fruit of labor; . . . property is desirable; is a positive good in the world."

And then comes a thoroughly Lincolnlike sentence:

"Let not him who is houseless pull down the house of another, but let him work diligently and build one for himself, thus by example assuring that his own shall be safe from violence when built."

It seems to me that, in these words, Lincoln took substantially the attitude that we ought to take; he showed the proper sense of proportion in his relative estimates of capital and labor, of human rights and property rights. Above all, in this speech, as in many others, he taught a lesson in wise kindliness and charity; an indispensable lesson to us of to-day. But this wise kindliness and charity never weakened his arm or numbed his heart. We cannot afford weakly to blind ourselves to the actual conflict which faces us to-day. The issue is joined, and we must fight or fail.

In every wise struggle for human betterment one of the main objects, and often the only object, has been to achieve in large measure equality of opportunity. In the struggle for this great end, nations rise from barbarism to civilization, and through it people press forward from one stage of enlightenment to the next. One of the chief factors in progress is the destruction of special privilege. The essence of any struggle for healthy liberty has always been, and must always be, to take from some one man or class of men the right to enjoy power, or wealth, or position, or immunity, which has not been earned by service to his or their fellows. That is what you fought for in the Civil War, and that is what we strive for now.

At many stages in the advance of humanity, this conflict between the men who possess more than they have earned and the men who have earned more

than they possess is the central condition of progress. In our day it appears as the struggle of freemen to gain and hold the right of self-government as against the special interests, who twist the methods of free government into machinery for defeating the popular will. At every stage, and under all circumstances, the essence of the struggle is to equalize opportunity, destroy privilege, and give to the life and citizenship of every individual the highest possible value both to himself and to the commonwealth. That is nothing new. All I ask in civil life is what you fought for in the Civil War. I ask that civil life be carried on according to the spirit in which the army was carried on. You never get perfect justice, but the effort in handling the army was to bring to the front the men who could do the job. Nobody grudged promotion to Grant, or Sherman, or Thomas, or Sheridan, because they earned it. The only complaint was when a man got promotion which he did not earn.

Practical equality of opportunity for all citizens, when we achieve it, will have two great results. First, every man will have a fair chance to make of himself all that in him lies; to reach the highest point to which his capacities, unassisted by special privilege of his own and unhampered by the special privilege of others, can carry him, and to get for himself and his family substantially what he has earned. Second, equality of opportunity means that the commonwealth will get from every citizen the highest service of which he is capable. No man who carries the burden of the special privileges of another can give to the commonwealth that service to which it is fairly entitled.

I stand for the square deal. But when I say that I am for the square deal, I mean not merely that I stand for fair play under the present rules of the game, but that I stand for having those rules changed so as to work for a more substantial equality of opportunity and of reward for equally good service. One word of warning, which, I think, is hardly necessary in Kansas. When I say I want a square deal for the poor man, I do not mean that I want a square deal for the man who remains poor because he has not got the energy to work for himself. If a man who has had a chance will not make good, then he has got to quit. And you men of the Grand Army, you want justice for the brave man who fought, and punishment for the coward who shirked his work. Is not that so?

Now, this means that our government, National and State, must be freed from the sinister influence or control of special interests. Exactly as the special interests of cotton and slavery threatened our political integrity before the Civil War, so now the great special business interests too often control and corrupt the men and methods of government for their own profit. We must drive the special interests out of politics. That is one of our tasks to-day. Every special interest is entitled to justice—full, fair, and complete—and, now, mind you, if there were any attempt by mob-violence to plunder and work harm to the special interest, whatever it may be, that I most dislike, and the wealthy man, whomsoever he may be, for whom I have the greatest contempt, I would fight for him, and you would if you were worth your salt. He should have justice. For every special interest is entitled to justice, but not one is entitled to a vote in Congress, to a voice on the bench, or to representation in any public office. The Constitution guarantees protection to

property, and we must make that promise good. But it does not give the right of suffrage to any corporation.

The true friend of property, the true conservative, is he who insists that property shall be the servant and not the master of the commonwealth; who insists that the creature of man's making shall be the servant and not the master of the man who made it. The citizens of the United States must effectively control the mighty commercial forces which they have themselves called into being.

There can be no effective control of corporations while their political activity remains. To put an end to it will be neither a short nor an easy task, but it can be done.

We must have complete and effective publicity of corporate affairs, so that the people may know beyond peradventure whether the corporations obey the law and whether their management entitles them to the confidence of the public. It is necessary that laws should be passed to prohibit the use of corporate funds directly or indirectly for political purposes; it is still more necessary that such laws should be thoroughly enforced. Corporate expenditures for political purposes, and especially such expenditures by public-service corporations, have supplied one of the principal sources of corruption in our political affairs.

It has become entirely clear that we must have government supervision of the capitalization, not only of public-service corporations, including, particularly, railways, but of all corporations doing an interstate business. I do not wish to see the nation forced into the ownership of the railways if it can possibly be avoided, and the only alternative is thoroughgoing and effective regulation, which shall be based on a full knowledge of all the facts, including a physical valuation of property. This physical valuation is not needed, or, at least, is very rarely needed, for fixing rates; but it is needed as the basis of honest capitalization.

We have come to recognize that franchises should never be granted except for a limited time, and never without proper provision for compensation to the public. It is my personal belief that the same kind and degree of control and supervision which should be exercised over public-service corporations should be extended also to combinations which control necessaries of life, such as meat, oil, and coal, or which deal in them on an important scale. I have no doubt that the ordinary man who has control of them is much like ourselves. I have no doubt he would like to do well, but I want to have enough supervision to help him realize that desire to do well.

I believe that the officers, and, especially, the directors, of corporations should be held personally responsible when any corporation breaks the law.

Combinations in industry are the result of an imperative economic law which cannot be repealed by political legislation. The effort at prohibiting all combination has substantially failed. The way out lies, not in attempting to prevent such combinations, but in completely controlling them in the interest of the public welfare. For that purpose the Federal Bureau of Corporations is an agency of first importance. Its powers, and, therefore, its efficiency, as well as that of the Interstate Commerce Commission, should be largely increased. We have a right to expect from the Bureau of Corporations and from the Interstate Commerce Commission a very high grade of public service. We should be as sure of the proper conduct of the interstate railways and the proper man-

agement of interstate business as we are now sure of the conduct and management of the national banks, and we should have as effective supervision in one case as in the other. The Hepburn Act, and the amendment to the act in the shape in which it finally passed Congress at the last session, represent a long step in advance, and we must go yet further.

There is a wide-spread belief among our people that, under the methods of making tariffs which have hitherto obtained, the special interests are too influential. Probably this is true of both the big special interests and the little special interests. These methods have put a premium on selfishness, and, naturally, the selfish big interests have gotten more than their smaller, though equally selfish, brothers. The duty of Congress is to provide a method by which the interest of the whole people shall be all that receives consideration. To this end there must be an expert tariff commission, wholly removed from the possibility of political pressure or of improper business influence. Such a commission can find the real difference between cost of production, which is mainly the difference of labor cost here and abroad. As fast as its recommendations are made, I believe in revising one schedule at a time. A general revision of the tariff almost inevitably leads to log-rolling and the subordination of the general public interest to local and special interests.

The absence of effective State, and, especially, National, restraint upon unfair money-getting has tended to create a small class of enormously wealthy and economically powerful men, whose chief object is to hold and increase their power. The prime need is to change the conditions which enable these men to accumulate power which it is not for the general welfare that they should hold or exercise. We grudge no man a fortune which represents his own power and sagacity, when exercised with entire regard to the welfare of his fellows. Again, comrades over there, take the lesson from your own experience. Not only did you not grudge, but you gloried in the promotion of the great generals who gained their promotion by leading the army to victory. So it is with us. We grudge no man a fortune in civil life if it is honorably obtained and well used. It is not even enough that it should have been gained without doing damage to the community. We should permit it to be gained only so long as the gaining represents benefit to the community. This, I know, implies a policy of a far more active governmental interference with social and economic conditions in this country than we have yet had, but I think we have got to face the fact that such an increase in governmental control is now necessary.

No man should receive a dollar unless that dollar has been fairly earned. Every dollar received should represent a dollar's worth of service rendered—not gambling in stocks, but service rendered. The really big fortune, the swollen fortune, by the mere fact of its size acquires qualities which differentiate it in kind as well as in degree from what is possessed by men of relatively small means. Therefore, I believe in a graduated income tax on big fortunes, and in another tax which is far more easily collected and far more effective—a graduated inheritance tax on big fortunes, properly safeguarded against evasion and increasing rapidly in amount with the size of the estate.

The people of the United States suffer from periodical financial panics to a degree substantially unknown among the

other nations which approach us in financial strength. There is no reason why we should suffer what they escape. It is of profound importance that our financial system should be promptly investigated, and so thoroughly and effectively revised as to make it certain that hereafter our currency will no longer fail at critical times to meet our needs.

It is hardly necessary for me to repeat that I believe in an efficient army and a navy large enough to secure for us abroad that respect which is the surest guaranty of peace. A word of special warning to my fellow citizens who are as progressive as I hope I am. I want them to keep up their interest in our internal affairs; and I want them also continually to remember Uncle Sam's interests abroad. Justice and fair dealing among nations rest upon principles identical with those which control justice and fair dealing among the individuals of which nations are composed, with the vital exception that each nation must do its own part in international police work. If you get into trouble here, you can call for the police; but if Uncle Sam gets into trouble, he has got to be his own policeman, and I want to see him strong enough to encourage the peaceful aspirations of other peoples in connection with us. I believe in national friendships and heartiest goodwill to all nations; but national friendships, like those between men, must be founded on respect as well as on liking, on forbearance as well as upon trust. I should be heartily ashamed of any American who did not try to make the American Government act as justly toward the other nations in international relations as he himself would act toward any individual in private relations. I should be heartily ashamed to see us wrong a weaker power, and I should hang my head forever if we tamely suffered wrong from a stronger power.

Of conservation I shall speak more at length elsewhere. Conservation means development as much as it does protection. I recognize the right and duty of this generation to develop and use the natural resources of our land; but I do not recognize the right to waste them, or to rob, by wasteful use, the generations that come after us. I ask nothing of the nation except that it so behave as each farmer here behaves with reference to his own children. That farmer is a poor creature who skins the land and leaves it worthless to his children. The farmer is a good farmer who, having enabled the land to support himself and to provide for the education of his children, leaves it to them a little better than he found it himself. I believe the same thing of a nation.

Moreover, I believe that the natural resources must be used for the benefit of all our people, and not monopolized for the benefit of the few, and here again is another case in which I am accused of taking a revolutionary attitude. People forget now that one hundred years ago there were public men of good character who advocated the nation selling its public lands in great quantities, so that the nation could get the most money out of it, and giving it to the men who could cultivate it for their own uses. We took the proper democratic ground that the land should be granted in small sections to the men who were actually to till it and live on it. Now, with the waterpower, with the forests, with the mines, we are brought face to face with the fact that there are many people who will go with us in conserving the resources only if they are to be allowed to exploit them for their benefit. That is one of the fundamental reasons why the special in-

terests should be driven out of politics. Of all the questions which can come before this nation, short of the actual preservation of its existence in a great war, there is none which compares in importance with the great central task of leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us, and training them into a better race to inhabit the land and pass it on. Conservation is a great moral issue, for it involves the patriotic duty of insuring the safety and continuance of the nation. Let me add that the health and vitality of our people are at least as well worth conserving as their forests, waters, lands, and minerals, and in this great work the national government must bear a most important part.

I have spoken elsewhere also of the great task which lies before the farmers of the country to get for themselves and their wives and children not only the benefits of better farming, but also those of better business methods and better conditions of life on the farm. The burden of this great task will fall, as it should, mainly upon the great organizations of the farmers themselves. I am glad it will, for I believe they are all well able to handle it. In particular, there are strong reasons why the Departments of Agriculture of the various States, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the agricultural colleges and experiment stations should extend their work to cover all phases of farm life, instead of limiting themselves, as they have far too often limited themselves in the past, solely to the question of the production of crops. And now a special word to the farmer. I want to see him make the farm as fine a farm as it can be made; and let him remember to see that the improvement goes on indoors as well as out; let him remember that the farmer's wife should have her share of thought and attention just as much as the farmer himself.

Nothing is more true than that excess of every kind is followed by reaction; a fact which should be pondered by reformer and reactionary alike. We are face to face with new conceptions of the relations of property to human welfare, chiefly because certain advocates of the rights of property as against the rights of men have been pushing their claims too far. The man who wrongly holds that every human right is secondary to his profit must now give way to the advocate of human welfare, who rightly maintains that every man holds his property subject to the general right of the community to regulate its use to whatever degree the public welfare may require it.

But I think we may go still further. The right to regulate the use of wealth in the public interest is universally admitted. Let us admit also the right to regulate the terms and conditions of labor, which is the chief element of wealth, directly in the interest of the common good. The fundamental thing to do for every man is to give him a chance to reach a place in which he will make the greatest possible contribution to the public welfare. Understand what I say there. Give him a chance, not push him up if he will not be pushed. Help any man who stumbles; if he lies down, it is a poor job to try to carry him; but if he is a worthy man, try your best to see that he gets a chance to show the worth that is in him. No man can be a good citizen unless he has a wage more than sufficient to cover the bare cost of living, and hours of labor short enough so that after his day's work is done he will have time and energy to bear his share in the management of the

community, to help in carrying the general load. We keep countless men from being good citizens by the conditions of life with which we surround them. We need comprehensive workmen's compensation acts, both State and National laws to regulate child labor and work for women, and, especially, we need in our common schools not merely education in book-learning, but also practical training for daily life and work. We need to enforce better sanitary conditions for our workers and to extend the use of safety appliances for our workers in industry and commerce, both within and between the States. Also, friends, in the interest of the working man himself we need to set our faces like flint against mob-violence just as against corporate greed; against violence and injustice and lawlessness by wage-workers just as much as against lawless cunning and greed and selfish arrogance of employers. If I could ask but one thing of my fellow countrymen, my request would be that, whenever they go in for reform, they remember the two sides, and that they always exact justice from one side as much as from the other. I have small use for the public servant who can always see and denounce the corruption of the capitalist, but who cannot persuade himself, especially before election, to say a word about lawless mob-violence. And I have equally small use for the man, be he a judge on the bench, or editor of a great paper, or wealthy and influential private citizen, who can see clearly enough and denounce the lawlessness of mob-violence, but whose eyes are closed so that he is blind when the question is one of corruption in business on a gigantic scale. Also remember what I said about excess in reformer and reactionary alike. If the reactionary man, who thinks of nothing but the rights of property, could have his way, he would bring about a revolution; and one of my chief fears in connection with progress comes because I do not want to see our people, for lack of proper leadership, compelled to follow men whose intentions are excellent, but whose eyes are a little too wild to make it really safe to trust them. Here in Kansas there is one paper which habitually denounces me as the tool of Wall Street, and at the same time frantically repudiates the statement that I am a Socialist on the ground that that is an unwarranted slander of the Socialists.

National efficiency has many factors. It is a necessary result of the principle of conservation widely applied. In the end it will determine our failure or success as a nation. National efficiency has to do, not only with natural resources and with men, but it is equally concerned with institutions. The State must be made efficient for the work which concerns only the people of the State; and the nation for that which concerns all the people. There must remain no neutral ground to serve as a refuge for lawbreakers, and especially for lawbreakers of great wealth, who can hire the vulpine legal cunning which will teach them how to avoid both jurisdictions. It is a misfortune when the national legislature fails to do its duty in providing a national remedy, so that the only national activity is the purely negative activity of the judiciary in forbidding the State to exercise power in the premises.

I do not ask for overcentralization; but I do ask that we work in a spirit of broad and far-reaching nationalism when we work for what concerns our people as a whole. We are all Americans. Our common interests are as broad as the continent. I speak to you

here in Kansas exactly as I would speak in New York or Georgia, for the most vital problems are those which affect us all alike. The National Government belongs to the whole American people, and where the whole American people are interested, that interest can be guarded effectively only by the National Government. The betterment which we seek must be accomplished, I believe, mainly through the National Government.

The American people are right in demanding that New Nationalism, without which we cannot hope to deal with new problems. The New Nationalism puts the national need before sectional or personal advantage. It is impatient of the utter confusion that results from local legislatures attempting to treat national issues as local issues. It is still more impatient of the impotence which springs from overdivision of governmental powers, the impotence which makes it possible for local selfishness or for legal cunning, hired by wealthy special interests, to bring national activities to a deadlock. This New Nationalism regards the executive power as the steward of the public welfare. It demands of the judiciary that it shall be interested primarily in human welfare rather than in property, just as it demands that the representative body shall represent all the people rather than any one class or section of the people.

I believe in shaping the ends of government to protect property as well as human welfare. Normally, and in the long run, the ends are the same; but whenever the alternative must be faced, I am for men and not for property, as you were in the Civil War. I am far from underestimating the importance of dividends; but I rank dividends below human character. Again, I do not have any sympathy with the reformer who says he does not care for dividends. Of course, economic welfare is necessary, for a man must pull his own weight and be able to support his family. I know well that the reformers must not bring upon the people economic ruin, or the reforms themselves will go down in the ruin. But we must be ready to face temporary disaster, whether or not brought on by those who will war against us to the knife. Those who oppose all reform will do well to remember that ruin in its worst form is inevitable if our national life brings us nothing better than swollen fortunes for the few and the triumph in both politics and business of a sordid and selfish materialism.

If our political institutions were perfect, they would absolutely prevent the political domination of money in any part of our affairs. We need to make our political representatives more quickly and sensitively responsive to the people whose servants they are. More direct action by the people in their own affairs under proper safeguards is vitally necessary. The direct primary is a step in this direction, if it is associated with a corrupt-practices act effective to prevent the advantage of the man willing recklessly and unscrupulously to spend money over his more honest competitor. It is particularly important that all moneys received or expended for campaign purposes should be publicly accounted for, not only after election, but before election as well. Political action must be made simpler, easier, and freer from confusion for every citizen. I believe that the prompt removal of unfaithful or incompetent public servants should be made easy and sure in whatever way experience shall show to be most expedient in any given class of cases.

One of the fundamental necessities in

a representative government such as ours is to make certain that the men to whom the people delegate their power shall serve the people by whom they are elected, and not the special interests. I believe that every national officer, elected or appointed, should be forbidden to perform any service or receive any compensation, directly or indirectly, from interstate corporations; and a similar provision could not fail to be useful within the States.

The object of government is the welfare of the people. The material progress and prosperity of a nation are desirable chiefly so far as they lead to the moral and material welfare of all good citizens. Just in proportion as the average man and woman are honest, capable of sound judgment and high ideals, active in public affairs—but, first of all, sound in their home life, and the father and mother of healthy children whom they bring up well—just so far, and no farther, we may count our civilization a success. We must have—I believe we have already—a genuine and permanent moral awakening, without which no wisdom of legislation or administration really means anything; and, on the other hand, we must try to secure the social and economic legislation without which any improvement due to purely moral agitation is necessarily evanescent. Let me again illustrate by a reference to the Grand Army. You could not have won simply as a disorderly and disorganized mob. You needed generals; you needed careful administration of the most advanced type; and a good commissary—the cracker line. You well remember that success was necessary in many different lines in order to bring about general success. You had to have the administration at Washington good, just as you had to have the administration in the field; and you had to have the work of the generals good. You could not have triumphed without that administration and leadership; but it would all have been worthless if the average soldier had not had the right stuff in him. He had to have the right stuff in him, or you could not get it out of him. In the last analysis, therefore, vitally necessary though it was to have the right kind of organization and the right kind of generalship, it was even more vitally necessary that the average soldier should have the fighting edge, the right character. So it is in our civil life. No matter how honest and decent we are in our private lives, if we do not have the right kind of law and the right kind of administration of the law, we cannot go forward as a nation. That is imperative; but it must be an addition to, and not a substitution for, the qualities that make us good citizens. In the last analysis, the most important elements in any man's career must be the sum of those qualities which, in the aggregate, we speak of as character. If he has not got it, then no law that the wit of man can devise, no administration of the law by the boldest and strongest executive, will avail to help him. We must have the right kind of character—character that makes a man, first of all, a good man in the home, a good father, a good husband—that makes a man a good neighbor. You must have that, and, then, in addition, you must have the kind of law and the kind of administration of the law which will give to those qualities in the private citizen the best possible chance for development. The prime problem of our nation is to get the right type of good citizenship, and, to get it, we must have progress, and our public men must be genuinely progressive. 1910

# FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

## *First Inaugural Address*

I AM CERTAIN that my fellow Americans expect that on my induction into the Presidency I will address them with a candor and a decision which the present situation of our Nation impels. This is preeminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly. Nor need we shrink from honestly facing conditions in our country today. This great Nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance. In every dark hour of our national life a leadership of frankness and vigor has met with that understanding and support of the people themselves which is essential to victory. I am convinced that you will again give that support to leadership in these critical days.

In such a spirit on my part and on yours we face our common difficulties. They concern, thank God, only material things. Values have shrunken to fantastic levels; taxes have risen; our ability to pay has fallen; government of all kinds is faced by serious curtailment of income; the means of exchange are frozen in the currents of trade; the withered leaves of industrial enterprise lie on every side; farmers find no markets for their produce; the savings of many years in thousands of families are gone.

More important, a host of unemployed citizens face the grim problem of existence, and an equally great number toil with little return. Only a foolish optimist can deny the dark realities of the moment.

Yet our distress comes from no failure of substance. We are stricken by no plague of locusts. Compared with the perils which our forefathers conquered because they believed and were not afraid, we have still much to be thankful for. Nature still offers her bounty and human efforts have multiplied it. Plenty is at our doorstep, but a generous use of it languishes in the very sight of the supply. Primarily this is because rulers of the exchange of mankind's goods have failed through their own stubbornness and their own incompetence, have admitted their failure, and have abdicated. Practices of the unscrupulous money changers stand indicted in the court of public opinion, rejected by the hearts and minds of men.

True they have tried, but their efforts have been cast in the pattern of an outworn tradition. Faced by failure of credit they have proposed only the lending of more money. Stripped of the lure of profit by which to induce our people to follow their false leadership, they have resorted to exhortations, pleading tearfully for restored confidence. They know only the rules of a generation of self-seekers. They have no vision, and when there is no vision the people perish.

The money changers have fled from their high seats in the temple of our civilization. We may now restore that temple to the ancient truths. The meas-

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ure of the restoration lies in the extent to which we apply social values more noble than mere monetary profit.

Happiness lies not in the mere possession of money; it lies in the joy of achievement, in the thrill of creative effort. The joy and moral stimulation of work no longer must be forgotten in the mad chase of evanescent profits. These dark days will be worth all they cost us if they teach us that our true destiny is not to be ministered unto but to minister to ourselves and to our fellow men.

Recognition of the falsity of material wealth as the standard of success goes hand in hand with the abandonment of the false belief that public office and high political position are to be valued only by the standards of pride of place and personal profit; and there must be an end to a conduct in banking and in business which too often has given to a sacred trust the likeness of callous and selfish wrongdoing. Small wonder that confidence languishes, for it thrives only on honesty, on honor, on the sacredness of obligations, on faithful protection, on unselfish performance; without them it cannot live.

Restoration calls, however, not for changes in ethics alone. This Nation asks for action, and action now.

Our greatest primary task is to put people to work. This is no unsolvable problem if we face it wisely and courageously. It can be accomplished in part by direct recruiting by the Government itself, treating the task as we would treat the emergency of a war, but at the same time, through this employment, accomplishing greatly needed projects to stimulate and reorganize the use of our natural resources.

Hand in hand with this we must frankly recognize the overbalance of population in our industrial centers and, by engaging on a national scale in a redistribution, endeavor to provide a better use of the land for those best fitted for the land. The task can be helped by definite efforts to raise the values of agricultural products and with this the power to purchase the output of our cities. It can be helped by preventing realistically the tragedy of the growing loss through foreclosure of our small homes and our farms. It can be helped by insistence that the Federal, State, and local governments act forthwith on the demand that their cost be drastically reduced. It can be helped by the unifying of relief activities which today are often scattered, uneconomical, and unequal. It can be helped by national planning for and supervision of all forms of transportation and of communications and other utilities which have a definitely public character. There are many ways in which it can be helped, but it can never be helped merely by talking about it. We must act and act quickly.

Finally, in our progress toward a resumption of work we require two safeguards against a return of the evils of the old order: there must be a strict supervision of all banking and credits and investments, so that there will be an end to speculation with other people's money; and there must be provision for an adequate but sound currency.

These are the lines of attack. I shall presently urge upon a new Congress, in special session, detailed measures for their fulfillment, and I shall seek the immediate assistance of the several States.

Through this program of action we address ourselves to putting our own national house in order and making income balance outgo. Our international trade relations, though vastly important,

are in point of time and necessity secondary to the establishment of a sound national economy. I favor as a practical policy the putting of first things first. I shall spare no effort to restore world trade by international economic readjustment, but the emergency at home cannot wait on that accomplishment.

The basic thought that guides these specific means of national recovery is not narrowly nationalistic. It is the insistence, as a first consideration, upon the interdependence of the various elements in and parts of the United States —a recognition of the old and permanently important manifestation of the American spirit of the pioneer. It is the way to recovery. It is the immediate way. It is the strongest assurance that the recovery will endure.

In the field of world policy I would dedicate this Nation to the policy of the good neighbor—the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others—the neighbor who respects his obligations and respects the sanctity of his agreements in and with a world of neighbors.

If I read the temper of our people correctly, we now realize as we have never realized before our interdependence on each other; that we cannot merely take but we must give as well; that if we are to go forward, we must move as a trained and loyal army willing to sacrifice for the good of a common discipline, because without such discipline no progress is made, no leadership becomes effective. We are, I know, ready and willing to submit our lives and property to such discipline, because it makes possible a leadership which aims at a larger good. This I propose to offer, pledging that the larger purposes will bind upon us all as a sacred obligation with a unity of duty hitherto evoked only in time of armed strife.

With this pledge taken, I assume unhesitatingly the leadership of this great army of our people dedicated to a disciplined attack upon our common problems.

Action in this image and to this end is feasible under the form of government which we have inherited from our ancestors. Our Constitution is so simple and practical that it is possible always to meet extraordinary needs by changes in emphasis and arrangement without loss of essential form. That is why our constitutional system has proved itself the most superbly enduring political mechanism the modern world has produced. It has met every stress of vast expansion of territory, of foreign wars, of bitter internal strife, of world relations.

It is to be hoped that the normal balance of Executive and legislative authority may be wholly adequate to meet the unprecedented task before us. But it may be that an unprecedented demand and need for undelayed action may call for temporary departure from that normal balance of public procedure.

I am prepared under my constitutional duty to recommend the measures that a stricken Nation in the midst of a stricken world may require. These measures, or such other measures as the Congress may build out of its experience and wisdom, I shall seek, within my constitutional authority, to bring to speedy adoption.

But in the event that the Congress shall fail to take one of these two courses, and in the event that the national emergency is still critical, I shall not evade the clear course of duty that will then confront me. I shall ask the

Congress for the one remaining instrument to meet the crisis—broad Executive power to wage a war against the emergency, as great as the power that would be given to me if we were in fact invaded by a foreign foe.

For the trust reposed in me I will return the courage and the devotion that befit the time. I can do no less.

We face the arduous days that lie before us in the warm courage of national unity; with the clear consciousness of seeking old and precious moral values; with the clean satisfaction that comes from the stern performance of duty by old and young alike. We aim at the assurance of a rounded and permanent national life.

We do not distrust the future of essential democracy. The people of the United States have not failed. In their need they have registered a mandate that they want direct, vigorous action. They have asked for discipline and direction under leadership. They have made me the present instrument of their wishes. In the spirit of the gift I take it.

In this dedication of a Nation we humbly ask the blessing of God. May He protect each and every one of us. May He guide me in the days to come.

1933

# WOODROW WILSON

## *The Lawyer and the Community*

THE WHOLE history of society has been the history of a struggle for law, for the definite establishment and continuance of such relationships as seemed to those who had the choice to be best suited to the support of their own influence and for the maintenance of the community over which they presided. Law is simply that part of the established thought and habit which has been accorded general acceptance and which is backed and sanctioned by the force and authority of the regularly constituted government of the body politic. The whole history of liberty, that history which so quickens our pulses as we look back upon it and which so sustains our confidence in the power of righteousness and of all the handsomer, nobler impulses of humanity, has been a struggle for the recognition of rights not only, but for the embodiment of rights in law, in courts and magistrates and assemblies. Such must always be the form of every high endeavour made in the interest of men and of the ideals of political life.

We do not fight to establish theses. We do not pour our blood out to vindicate a philosophy of politics. There are two great empires of human feeling, the realm of religion and the realm of political aspiration. In the one realm we work spiritually, our liberty is of the thought; in the other we work structurally, our liberty abides in institutions, is real only when it is tangible, a thing that can be put into operation,—not in our own souls merely, but in the world

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of action outside of us as well. A right in the field of politics is a power to command the action of others in our own behoof; and that is also a right in law. Religions are mighty forces of belief, and the church, when it has its genuine and entire liberty, lies outside the state; but political liberty lives and moves and has its being in the structure and practice of society. The two fields are not, indeed, sharply separated: religious freedom must be safeguarded by institutional arrangements; but religious freedom is the right to be ungoverned, political freedom the right to be governed justly and with equity as between man and man. We fight for law as well as for faith because we fight not only for the right to think but also for the right to be and to do what we will within the limits of a just and equal order.

I remind you of these things at the beginning of my discourse because I wish to say a good deal about our present struggle for law. The old order changeth,—changeth under our very eyes, not quietly and equably, but swiftly and with the noise and heat and tumult of reconstruction. The forces of society contend openly with one another, avow their antagonisms, marshal and discipline their hosts, and are keen to win, not very willing to accommodate their differences and come to a common understanding which will be for the common advantage.

I suppose that all struggle for law has been conscious, that very little of it has been blind or merely instinctive. It is the fashion, too, to say, as if with a superior knowledge of affairs and of human weakness, that every age has been an age of transition and that no age is more full of change than another; but in very few ages of the world has the struggle for change been so widespread, so deliberate, or upon so great a scale as this which we are taking part in. The transition we are witnessing is no equable transition of growth and normal alteration, no silent, unconscious unfolding of one age into another, its natural heir and successor. Society is looking itself over, in our day, from top to bottom, is making fresh and critical analysis of its very elements, is questioning its oldest practices as freely as its newest, scrutinizing every arrangement and motive of its life, and stands ready to attempt nothing less than a radical reconstruction, which only frank and honest counsels and the forces of generous cooperation can hold back from becoming a revolution. We are in a temper to reconstruct economic society as we were once in a temper to reconstruct political society, and political society may itself undergo a radical modification in the process. I doubt if any age was ever more conscious of its task or more unanimously desirous of radical and extended changes in its economic and political practice.

I do not speak of these things in apprehension, because all is open and above board. This is not a day in which great forces rally in secret. The whole stupendous programme is planned and canvassed in the open, and we have learned the rules of the game of change. Good temper, the wisdom that comes of sober counsel, the energy of thoughtful and unselfish men, the habit of coöperation and of compromise which has been bred in us by long years of free government, in which reason rather than passion has been made to prevail by the sheer virtue of candid and universal debate, will enable us to win through still another great age without revolution. I speak in plain terms of the real character of what is now patent to every man merely

in order to fix your thought upon the fact that this thing that is going on about us is not a mere warfare of opinion. It has an object, a definite and concrete object, and that object is Law, the alteration of institutions upon an extended plan of change.

We are lawyers. This is the field of our knowledge. We are servants of society, officers of the courts of justice. Our duty is a much larger thing than the mere advice of private clients. In every deliberate struggle for law we ought to be the guides, not too critical and unwilling, not too tenacious of the familiar technicalities in which we have been schooled, not too much in love with precedents and the easy maxims which have saved us the trouble of thinking, but ready to give expert and disinterested advice to those who purpose progress and the readjustment of the frontiers of justice.

You cannot but have marked the recent changes in the relation of lawyers to affairs in this country; and, if you feel as I do about the great profession to which we belong, you cannot but have been made uneasy by the change. Lawyers constructed the fabric of our state governments and of the government of the United States, and throughout the earlier periods of our national development presided over all the larger processes of politics. Our political conscience as a nation was embedded in our written fundamental law. Every question of public policy seemed sooner or later to become a question of law, upon which trained lawyers must be consulted. In all our legislative halls debate thundered in the phrases of the written enactments under which our legislators and our governors exercised authority. Public life was a lawyer's forum. Laymen lent their invaluable counsel, but lawyers guided, and lawyers framed the law.

I am not speaking of the dependence of our political movement upon the judgments of courts. That has not been altered, and cannot be. So long as we have written constitutions courts must interpret them for us, and must be the final tribunals of interpretation. I am speaking of the prominence and ascendency of lawyers in the practical political processes which precede the judgments of the courts. Until the civil war came and the more debatable portions of our fundamental law were cut away by the sword, the very platform of parties centred upon questions of legal interpretation and lawyers were our guiding statesmen. I suppose a more intensely legal polity never existed.

So long as passion was excluded it was a tonic way of life. Statesmanship necessitated precise thinking. Every policy that was proposed had to be explicitly grounded upon precedent. At every step there was a reëxamination of the fundamental principles which were alleged to justify or sustain it. Thought of the long history of English constitutional practice and of the avowed purpose with which government had been set up in America constituted the atmosphere in which everything was done. Every ancient, every recent contest for liberty threw its light forward upon the debates of Congress and of state legislatures. The newest state shared with the oldest the long tradition, and all alike were thoughtful of what had been designed and hoped for by the men whose sacrifices had given life to our freedom. No doubt it stiffened the action of government. No doubt there was a formality and a scrupulous regard for the letter in the conduct of legislation better suited to a young country

just finding itself and face to face only with large problems of simple and obvious character than to an older country, whose life has grown complex and confused and whose questions of exigency square with no plain precedents of constitutional practice. Lawyers will construct for you a very definite polity, and construct it to admiration; they have not often shown themselves equally fitted to liberalize it or facilitate the processes of change. But the leadership of lawyers at least meant a repeated reëxamination of principle and precedent, and was very instructive even when it was least enlightened. It prevented fluidity. A reason had to be given for every step taken, —a reason which would commend itself to the courts after it had commended itself to statesmen. The statesman and the lawyer were clients and consorts, and the legal conscience of the people was constantly refreshed and strengthened. These are great influences. They make for character and for the solidity of institutions.

But they are gone. You have only to recall the many extraordinary interpretations of the interstate commerce clause of the Constitution upon which serious debate has been wasted in Congress in recent years to be convinced of it. Our lawyers themselves are not carefully trained as they used to be in the principles of our constitutional law. It does not stand in the foreground of their study or practice, but in the background, very vague and general, a thing to be resorted to only upon rare occasion. Our legislatures now listen to debates upon constitutional questions with ill-concealed impatience, as tedious and academic. The nation has grown keen after certain practical objects and will not willingly brook the impediments set up by constitutions. The temper of the age is very nearly summed up in a feeling which you may put into words like these: "There are certain things we must do. Our life as a nation must be rectified in certain all-important particulars. If there be no law for the change, it must be found or made. We will not be argued into impotency by lawyers. We are not interested in the structure of our governments so much as in the exigencies of our life."

There are many reasons why this change of temper and of point of view has occurred. I will venture to mention one or two of the more obvious. It is not by chance that statesmanship has grown bigger than the bounds of mere legal precedent.

In the first place, the debates and constitutional struggles of the first seventy years of our political history settled most of the fundamental questions of our constitutional law. Solid lines of decided cases carry the definite outlines of the structure and make clear the methods of its action. We seemed after the civil war to be released from the demands of formal definition. The life of the nation running upon normal lines, has grown infinitely varied. It does not centre now upon questions of governmental structure or of the distribution of governmental powers. It centres upon economic questions, questions of the very structure and operation of society itself, of which government is only the instrument. Our development has run so fast and so far along the lines sketched in the earlier day of constitutional definition, has so crossed and interlaced those lines, has piled upon them such novel structures of trust and combination, has elaborated within them a life so manifold, so full of forces which transcend the boundaries of the country itself and fill the eyes of the world, that

a new nation seems to have been created which the old formulas do not fit or afford a vital interpretation of itself. The confusion has clearly come about without intention. We have been engaged in enterprises which the law as we formerly looked at it was clearly not meant to prevent or embarrass. We pushed them forward, therefore, without thinking of the effect they might have upon older conceptions of our legal processes. They seemed to spring out of the normal and necessary uses of the great continent whose riches we have been exploiting. We did not think of the legal consequences one way or the other, and therefore did not need or seek the advice of constitutional lawyers.

Constitutional lawyers have fallen into the background. We have relegated them to the Supreme Court, without asking ourselves where we are to find them when vacancies occur in that great tribunal. A new type of lawyers has been created; and that new type has come to be the prevailing type. Lawyers have been sucked into the maelstrom of the new business system of the country. That system is highly technical and highly specialized. It is divided into distinct sections and provinces, each with particular legal problems of its own. Lawyers, therefore, everywhere that business has thickened and had a large development, have become experts in some special technical field. They do not practise law. They do not handle the general, miscellaneous interests of society. They are not general counsellors of right and obligation. They do not bear the relation to the business of their neighbourhoods that the family doctor bears to the health of the community in which he lives. They do not concern themselves with the universal aspects of society. The family doctor is himself giving place to a score of specialists; and so is also what one might call the family solicitor. Lawyers are specialists, like all other men around them. The general, broad, universal field of law grows dim and yet more dim to their apprehension as they spend year after year in minute examination and analysis of a particular part of it; not a small part, it may be, perhaps the part which the courts are for the time most concerned with, but a part which has undergone a high degree of development, which is very technical and many-sided, and which requires the study and practice of years for its mastery; and yet a province apart, whose conquest necessarily absorbs them and necessarily separates them from the dwindling body of general practitioners who used to be our statesmen.

And so society has lost something, or is losing it,—something which it is very serious to lose in an age of law, when society depends more than ever before upon the lawgiver and the courts for its structural steel, the harmony and coördination of its parts, its convenience, its permanency, and its facility. In gaining new functions, in being drawn into modern business instead of standing outside of it, in becoming identified with particular interests instead of holding aloof and impartially advising all interests, the lawyer has lost his old function, is looked askance at in politics, must disavow special engagements if he would have his counsel heeded in matters of common concern. Society has suffered a corresponding loss,—at least American society has. It has lost its one-time feeling for law as the basis of its peace, its progress, its prosperity. Lawyers are not now regarded as the mediators of progress. Society was always ready to

be prejudiced against them; now it finds its prejudice confirmed.

Meanwhile, look what legal questions are to be settled, how stupendous they are, how far-reaching, and how impossible it will be to settle them without the advice of learned and experienced lawyers! The country must find lawyers of the right sort and of the old spirit to advise it, or it must stumble through a very chaos of blind experiment. It never needed lawyers who are also statesmen more than it needs them now,—needs them in its courts, in its legislatures, in its seats of executive authority,—lawyers who can think in the terms of society itself, mediate between interests, accommodate right to right, establish equity, and bring the peace that will come with genuine hearty coöperation, and will come in no other way.

The specialization of business and the extraordinary development of corporate organization and administration have led to consequences well worth the lawyer's consideration. Everyone else is considering them, and considering them with deep concern. We have witnessed in modern business the submergence of the individual within the organization, and yet the increase to an extraordinary degree of the power of the individual, of the individual who happens to control the organization. Most men are individuals no longer so far as their business, its activities or its moralities, is concerned. They are not units, but fractions; with their individuality and independence of choice in matters of business they have lost also their individual choice within the field of morals. They must do what they are told to do or lose their connection with modern affairs. They are not at liberty to ask whether what they are told to do is right or wrong. They cannot get at the men who ordered it,—have no access to them. They have no voice of counsel or of protest. They are mere cogs in a machine which has men for its parts. And yet there are men here and there with whom the whole choice lies. There are men who control the machine as a whole and the men who compose it. There are men who use it with an imperial freedom of design, whose power and whose individuality overtop whole communities. There is more individual power than ever, but those who exercise it are few and formidable, and the mass of men are mere pawns in the game.

The present task of the law is nothing less than to rehabilitate the individual, —not to make the subordinate independent of the superior, not to turn corporations into debating societies, not to disintegrate what we have been at such pains to piece together in the organization of modern industrial enterprise, but to undo enough of what we have done in the development of our law of corporations to give the law direct access again to the individual,—to every individual in all his functions.

Corporations do not do wrong. Individuals do wrong, the individuals who direct and use them for selfish and illegitimate purposes, to the injury of society and the serious curtailment of private rights. Guilt, as has been very truly said, is always personal. You cannot punish corporations. Fines fall upon the wrong persons, more heavily upon the innocent than upon the guilty, as much upon those who knew nothing whatever of the transactions for which the fine is imposed as upon those who originated and carried them through,—upon the stockholders and the customers rather than upon the men who direct the policy of the business. If you dis-

solve the offending corporation, you throw great undertakings out of gear. You merely drive what you are seeking to check into other forms or temporarily disorganize some important business altogether, to the infinite loss of thousands of entirely innocent persons and to the great inconvenience of society as a whole. Law can never accomplish its objects in that way. It can never bring peace or command respect by such futilities.

I regard the corporation as indispensable to modern business enterprise. I am not jealous of its size or might, if you will but abandon at the right points the fatuous, antiquated, and quite unnecessary fiction which treats it as a legal person; if you will but cease to deal with it by means of your law as if it were a single individual not only, but also,—what every child may perceive it is not,—a responsible individual. Such fictions and analogies were innocent and convenient enough so long as corporations were comparatively small and only one of many quite as important instrumentalities used in business, only a minor item in the economic order of society. But it is another matter now. They span society, and the responsibilities involved in their complex organization and action must be analyzed by the law as the responsibilities of society itself, in all its other aspects, have been.

The corporation now overshadows partnerships altogether. Still more does it overshadow all individuals engaged in business on their own capital and separate responsibility. It is an arrangement by which hundreds of thousands of men who would in days gone by have set up in business for themselves put their money into a single huge accumulation and place the entire direction of its employment in the hands of men they have never seen, with whom they never confer. These men, these quite autocratic managers, are thereby made, as it were, multiple individuals. In them are concentrated the resources, the choices, the opportunities, in brief the power, of thousands. They could never of themselves, of their own effort and sagacity, have accumulated the vast capital they employ, and employ as if it were their own; and yet they have not the full legal responsibilities of those who supplied them with it. Because they have the power of thousands they have not the responsibility common to those whose power they use! It is an extraordinary anomaly!

A modern corporation is an economic society, a little economic state,—and not always little, even as compared with states. Many modern corporations wield revenues and command resources which no ancient state possessed, and which some modern bodies politic show no approach to in their budgets. The economic power of society itself is concentrated in them for the conduct of this, that, or the other sort of business. The functions of business are differentiated and divided amongst them, but the power for each function is massed. In some instances even the functions are not separated. Railroad companies have been known to buy coal mines. Manufacturing combinations have been observed to develop a score of subsidiary industries, to spread a network of organization over related enterprises, and sometimes even over enterprises whose relation to their main undertakings it is difficult for the lay mind to perceive. Society, in short, has discovered a new way of massing its resources and its power of enterprise, is building up bodies economic outside its bodies politic which may, if we do not find the means to prevent them, the means of

disclosing the responsibilities of the men who compose them, dominate bodies politic themselves.

And these huge industrial organizations we continue to treat as legal persons, as individuals, which we must not think of as consisting of persons, within which we despair of enabling the law to pick out anybody in particular to put either its restraint or its command upon! It is childish, it is futile, it is ridiculous [author's copy illegible]. As well treat society itself as a unit; insist that it impose a fine upon itself for every wrong done, no matter how notorious it may be who did it; suggest that it embarrass all its processes of action and even break itself up into its constituent parts and begin all over again when the persons whom it has trusted prove depraved or selfish. It is not even interesting to continue such an experiment. Society cannot afford to have individuals wield the power of thousands without personal responsibility. It cannot afford to let its strongest men be the only men who are inaccessible to the law. Modern democratic society, in particular, cannot afford to constitute its economic undertakings upon the monarchical or aristocratic principle and adopt the fiction that the kings and great men thus set up can do no wrong which will make them personally amenable to the law which restrains smaller men: that their kingdoms, not themselves, must suffer for their blindness, their follies, and their transgressions of right.

It does not redeem the situation that these kings and chiefs of industry are not chosen upon the hereditary principle (sometimes, alas! they are) but are men who have risen by their own capacity, sometimes from utter obscurity, with the freedom of self-assertion which should characterize a free society. Their power is none the less arbitrary and irresponsible when obtained. That a peasant may become king does not render the kingdom democratic.

I would not have you think that I am speaking with a feeling of hostility towards the men who have in our day given the nation its extraordinary material power and prosperity by an exercise of genius such as in days gone by was used, in each great age, to build empires and alter the boundaries of states. I am drawing no indictment; no indictment that I could draw would be just. No indictment that has been drawn has been just, but only exaggerated and disquieting. The time for hostilities has gone by. The time for accommodations, for common understandings, for a surcease of economic warfare and the inauguration of the peace that will come only by common sacrifices and concessions, has come. I am simply trying to analyze the existing constitution of business in blunt words of truth, without animus or passion of any kind, and with a single, clear purpose.

That purpose is to recall you to the service of the nation as a whole, from which you have been drifting away; to remind you that, no matter what the exactions of modern legal business, no matter what or how great the necessity for specialization in your practice of the law, you are not the servants of special interests, the mere expert counsellors of this, that, or the other group of business men; but guardians of the general peace, the guides of those who seek to realize by some best accommodation the rights of men. With that purpose in view, I am asking you to look again at the corporation.

It is an indispensable convenience; but is it a necessary burden? Modern business is no doubt best conducted

upon a great scale, for which the resources of the single individual are manifestly insufficient. Money and men must be massed in order to do the things that must be done for the support and facilitation of modern life. Whether energy or economy be your standard, it is plain enough that we cannot go back to the old competitive system under which individuals were the competitors. Wide organization and coöperation have made the modern world possible and must maintain it. They have developed genius as well as wealth. The nations are richer in capacity and in gifts comparable to the higher gifts of statesmanship because of them and the opportunities they have afforded exceptional men. But we have done things in pursuit of them, and have nursed notions regarding them, which are no necessary part of what we seek. We can have corporations, can retain them in unimpaired efficiency, without depriving law of its ancient searching efficiency, its inexorable mandate that men, not societies, must suffer for wrongs done. The major promise of all law is moral responsibility, the moral responsibility of individuals for their acts and conspiracies; and no other foundation can any man lay upon which a stable fabric of equitable justice can be reared.

I call your attention to the fact, therefore, that it is perfectly possible to have corporations and serve all the necessities and conveniences of modern society by means of the great combinations of wealth and energy which we have found to be so excellent, and yet dispense with a large part of the quite outworn and now in many respects deeply demoralizing fiction that a corporation is an indivisible person. Of course we must continue to regard it as an artificial person so far as is necessary to enable it to hold such property as may be proper for the execution of its charter purposes, to sue and be sued, and to conduct its business through officers who speak for it as a whole, and whose signatures and orders are, under its by-laws and resolutions, binding upon it. It must act and live as a person, and must be capable of enjoying, what individuals cannot enjoy, a certain perpetuity of power and authority, though individual men within it come and go, live, die, resign, or are translated. But there its unity should stop.

In respect of the responsibility which the law imposes in order to protect society itself, in order to protect men and communities against wrongs which are not breaches of contract but offences against the public interest, the common welfare, it is imperative that we should regard corporations as merely groups of individuals, from which it may, perhaps, be harder to pick out particular persons for punishment than it is to pick them out of the general body of unassociated men, but from which it is, nevertheless, possible to pick them out,—possible not only, but absolutely necessary if business is ever again to be moralized. Corporations must continue to be used as a convenience in the transaction of business, but they must cease to be used as a covert for wrong-doers.

The managers of corporations themselves always know the men who originated the acts charged against them as done in contravention of the law; is there no means by which their names may be disclosed to the officers of justice? Every act, every policy in the conduct of the affairs of a corporation originates with some particular officer, committee, or board. The officer, the committee, the board which orders an

act or originates a policy contrary to the law of the land or intended to neutralize or contravene it is an insurgent against society: the man or men who originate any such act or policy should be punished, and they alone. It is not necessary that the corporation should be broken up. It is not fair that the stockholders should be mulcted in damages. If there are damages to be paid they should be paid out of the private means of the persons who are really guilty. An analysis of the guilt is perfectly feasible. It is the duty of lawyers, of all lawyers, to assist the makers of law and the reformers of abuses by pointing out the best and most effective way to make it.

It seems to me absurd, for example (let me say by way of parenthesis), to extend the law of libel to corporations, to suffer one publishing corporation to sue another for defamation. Somebody in particular has uttered the libel, somebody in particular has been libeled. Character cannot be incorporated; writing cannot be corporately done. Are lawyers so incapable of ascertaining the facts that they cannot find out who it is that did the thing or who it is that has been injured in his reputation?

I know that the matter is not as simple as it sounds. I know that some corporations are in fact controlled from the outside, not from the inside: that it often happens that some man or some small group of men who are not even in its directorate dictate its policy, its individual acts, its attitude towards law and society, and that the men who act within it are little better than automata. But are they really beyond discovery? On the contrary, is it not generally a matter of common knowledge who they are? Would it take extraordinary acumen and intelligence to devise laws which would reach them also? What we are after, of course, is to obtain laws which will prevent the use of corporations to the public hurt and disadvantage. We know that the man who shoots his enemy was not in the gun, that he simply used it, and that no part of the mechanism of the gun itself is criminally liable. We can generally discover who used the gun and how he used it, whatever his cunning and secrecy. We can also find out who uses the corporations against the public interest; and we can punish him, or them, if we will, whether they belong to the actual nominal organization of the corporation or not. Our processes of evidence may have to be considerably altered, but we can alter them; our formal conception of parties in interest may have to be extended, but it is easy to extend them; our make-believe that we can see nobody in the transaction but those who are avowed and formal members of the organization may have to be discarded, but that ought to be a relief to our consciences. We have allowed ourselves to be ridiculously limited and embarrassed by the theory that a corporation is an indivisible person not only, but that nobody outside of it, no matter how intimate his use and control, may be brought into the suit by any genteel lawyer bred in the orthodox schools of law. A corporation is merely a convenient instrument of business and we may regulate its use as we please, and those who use it. Here is merely an artificial, a fictitious person, whom God did not make or endow, which we ourselves have made with our own hands and can alter as we will. I see no law of nature in our way, but only some laws of evidence and of corporate theory which we have outgrown.

You will say that in many instances it is not fair to pick out for punishment

the particular officer who ordered a thing done, because he really had no freedom in the matter: that he is himself under orders, exercises no individual liberty of choice, is a dummy manipulated from without. I reply that society should permit no man to carry out orders which are against law and public policy, and that, if you will but put one or two conspicuous dummies in the penitentiary, there will be no more dummies for hire. You can stop the traffic in dummies, and then, when the idea has taken root in the corporate mind that dummies will be confiscated, pardon the one or two innocent men who may happen to have got into jail. There will not be many, and the custom of the trade will change!

There are other corporate matters worthy of your attention, but they do not intimately concern my present theme. I think you must admit, for example, that the position of the minority stockholder is, in most of our States, extremely unsatisfactory. I do not wonder that he sometimes doubts whether corporate stocks are property at all or not. He does not seem to enjoy any of the substantial rights of property in connection with them. He is merely contributing money for the conduct of a business which other men run as they please. If he does not approve of what they do, there seems nothing for it but to sell the stock (though their acts may have depreciated its value immensely). He cannot even inquire or protest without being told to mind his own business, —the very thing he was innocently trying to do! There are many things which are not satisfactory about this putting the money of many men into one pile for the use of a board of directors, and to my mind it is clearly your task as counsellors of society to make them satisfactory. It is the duty of our profession to see to it that no man's powers exceed or lie outside of his legal and personal responsibilities,—that the corporation be made a mere convenience of business and not a means of irresponsible mastery: its interior and all men within it as accessible to the law as its exterior and the scattered individuals who have no corporate ambush from which to work their will.

I have used the corporation merely as an illustration. It stands in the foreground of all modern economic questions, so far as the United States are concerned. It is society's present means of effective life in the field of industry. Society must get complete control of its instrument or fail. But I have used it only as an illustration of a great theme, a theme greater than any single illustration could compass,—namely, the responsibility of the lawyer to the community he professes to serve.

You are not a mere body of expert business advisers in the fields of civil law or a mere body of expert advocates for those who get entangled in the meshes of the criminal law. You are servants of the public, of the state itself. You are under bonds to serve the general interest, the integrity and enlightenment of law itself, in the advice you give individuals. It is your duty also to advise those who make the laws,—to advise them in the general interest, with a view to the amelioration of every undesirable condition that the law can reach, the removal of every obstacle to progress and fair dealing that the law can remove, the lightening of every burden the law can lift and the righting of every wrong the law can rectify. The services of the lawyer are indispensable not only in the application of the accepted processes of the law, the

interpretation of existing rules in the daily operations of life and business. His services are indispensable also in keeping, and in making, the law clear with regard to responsibility, to organization, to liability, and, above all, to the relation of private rights to the public interest.

The structure of modern society is a structure of law rather than of custom. The lawyer's advice is more than ever necessary to the state, therefore. Communities as well as individuals stand in constant need of his guidance. This used to be commonplace doctrine amongst us; why does it now need to be preached again? Is it mere accident that the relation of the legal profession to affairs has changed? Is it merely because the greater constitutional questions seemed for a time to be settled and legal debates gave place to industrial enterprise, a great age of material following a great age of political development? Has it been merely a change of circumstances, or has it been a change of attitude and spirit as well on the part of the profession itself? Has not the lawyer allowed himself to become part of the industrial development, has he not been sucked into the channels of business, has he not changed his connections and become part of the mercantile structure rather than part of the general social structure of our commonwealths as he used to be? Has he not turned away from his former interests and duties and become narrowed to a technical function?

Whatever may be the cause, it is evident that he now regards himself as the counsel of individuals exclusively, and not of communities. He may plead this new organization of politics, which seems to exclude all counsel except that of party success and personal control; he may argue that public questions have changed, have drifted away from his field, and that his advice is no longer asked; but, whatever his explanation or excuse, the fact is the same. He does not play the part he used to play; he does not show the spirit in affairs he used to show. He does not do what he ought to do.

For there never was a time, in fact, when his advice, his disinterested and earnest advice, was more needed than it is now in the exigent processes of reform, in the busy processes of legislation through which we are passing, with so singular a mixture of hope and apprehension. I hear a great many lawyers join the cry of the business men, that it is time legislators left business alone, allowed it to recover from the confusion and distraction of regulative statutes, altered tariffs, and supervising commissions, find its natural methods again, and go forward upon a way of prosperity which will not be beset by fear and uncertainty. But the cry is futile, the impatience which gives rise to it is selfish and ignorant. Nothing is settled or can be let alone when it is known to be wrong until it is set right. We have settled nothing in our recent reform legislation. That is the reason it is so unsatisfactory, and why some prudent and thoughtful men grow tired of it. But that is only another reason for seeking out and finding what will be the happy and successful way of setting our economic interests in order. There has been no satisfactory settlement, but there must be one. Public opinion is wider awake about these matters than it has been within the memory of any man living, and it is not going to turn away from them until satisfactory reforms of the law are found. There will be no peace until a happy

and honourable basis of peace has been hit upon. Lawyers may come into the settlement or stay out of it, as they please, but a settlement there must be. For one, I hope that they will not stay out. I fear that it would be disastrous for them to do so,—disastrous to them and to society. I covet for them their old and honourable leadership in public counsel.

Just because they have so buried themselves in modern business, just because they have been so intimate a part of it, they know better than any one else knows what legal adjustments have and have not been made,—know the practices that circumvent the law, even the existing law, and the provisions of statute and court procedure that might put a stop to them or square them with what the interests of the whole community demand, theirs is the special responsibility to advise remedies. Theirs has been the part of intimate counsel in all that has been going on. The country holds them largely responsible for it. It distrusts every "corporation lawyer." It supposes him in league with persons whom it has learned to dread, to whom it ascribes a degree of selfishness which in effect makes them public enemies, whatever their motives or their private character may be. And the lawyer,—what does he do? He stands stoutly on the defensive. He advises his client how he may make shift, no matter how the law runs. He declares that business would go very well and every man get his due if only legislators would keep their hands off! He keeps his expert advice for private persons and criticises those who struggle without his countenance or assistance along the difficult road of reform. It is not a promising situation.

Our reforms must be legal reforms. It is a pity they should go forward without the aid of those who have studied the law in its habit as it lives, those who know what is practicable and what is not, those who know, or should know, if anybody does, the history of liberty.

The history of liberty is a history of law. Men are not free when they have merely conceived what their rights should be. They are not set free by philosophies of right. Their theories of the rights of man may even lead them astray, may make them break their hearts in pursuit of hopes they can never realize, objects they can never grasp, ideals that will forever elude them. Nothing is more practical than the actual body of liberty. It consists of definitions based upon experience, or, rather, of practices that are the very essence of experience. A right is worth fighting for only when it can be put into operation. It can be put into operation only when its scope and limitation can be accurately defined in terms of legal procedure; and even then it may amount to nothing if the legal procedure be difficult, costly, or complicated. Liberty of speech is defined in the law of slander and of libel, and becomes mere license against which there is no protection if the law of slander or of libel be difficult or costly or uncertain to apply. Liberty of the person is defined only when the law has carefully enumerated the circumstances in which it may be violated, the circumstances in which arrests and imprisonments and army drafts, and all the other limitations upon which society may insist for its protection or convenience, will be lawful. Its reality, its solidity consists in the definiteness of the exceptions, in the practicality of the actual arrangements.

And it is part of its definiteness and reality that liberty is always personal,

never aggregate; always a thing inhering in individuals taken singly, never in groups or corporations or communities. The indivisible unit of society is the individual. He is also the indigestible unit. He cannot be merged or put into combination without being lost to liberty, because lost to independence. Make of him a fraction instead of an integer, and you have broken his spirit, cut off the sources of his life. That is why I plead so earnestly for the individualization of responsibility within the corporation, for the establishment of the principle by law that a man has no more right to do a wrong as a member of a corporation than as an individual. Establish that principle, cut away the undergrowth of law that has sprung up so rankly about the corporation and made of it an ambush and covert, and it will give every man the right to say No again, to refuse to do wrong, no matter who orders him to do it. It will make a man of him. It is in his interest no less than in the interest of society, which must see to it that wrong-doing is put a stop to.

We are upon the eve, gentlemen, of a great reconstruction. It calls for creative statesmanship as no age has done since that great age in which we set up the government under which we live, that government which was the admiration of the world until it suffered wrongs to grow up under it which have made many of our own compatriots question the freedom of our institutions and preach revolution against them. I do not fear revolution. I do not fear it even if it comes. I have unshaken faith in the power of America to keep its self-possession. If revolution comes, it will come in peaceful guise, as it came when we put aside the crude government of the Confederation and created the great federal state, which governed individuals, not corporations, and which has been these hundred and thirty years our vehicle of progress. And it need not come. I do not believe for a moment that it will come. Some radical changes we must make in our law and practice. Some reconstructions we must push forward which a new age and new circumstances impose upon us. But we can do it all in calm and sober fashion, like statesmen and patriots. Let us do it also like lawyers. Let us lend a hand to make the structure symmetrical, well proportioned, solid, perfect. Let no future generation have cause to accuse us of having stood aloof, indifferent, half hostile, or of having impeded the realization of right. Let us make sure that liberty shall never repudiate us as its friends and guides. We are the servants of society, the bond-servants of justice.

1910

# ROBERT R. R. BROOKS

## *The N.L.R.B. and Democracy*

### From Unions of Their Own Choosing

Contemporary European developments have compelled Americans to reëxamine their faith in democracy. Much of this reëxamination has been of the Fourth of July variety. From a pyrotechnical point of view it has been magnificent, although somewhat lacking in novelty. It has consisted chiefly of condemning all departures from the norms of our forefathers as Fascistic or Communistic.[1]

While the rockets of investigators and the indignant bombs of editors cast a red glare over the political landscape, thousands of other citizens, however, are moving toward a different conclusion. The danger to democracy does not lie in change. It lies in the failure of social institutions to adjust themselves to changes which have already taken place.[2]

The whole surge of economic development has been in the direction of centralization of power, interdependence of all parts upon each other, increasing complexity, and the inability of the individual to control his economic destiny. The individual worker cannot assure himself of employment, of freedom from industrial accident and disease, or of old-age independence.[3] The individual consumer cannot assure himself of decent quality or of a reasonable price of the goods he buys.[4] The individual investor cannot assure himself of the proper care of his funds.[5] The utmost expenditure of energy and initiative by the individual farmer or small businessman cannot assure him of a livelihood.[6] The years of training of professional specialists—engineers, doctors, lawyers, teachers—do not assure them of employment or freedom to follow their professions where their faiths may lead.[7] To just the degree that economic life becomes vast, interdependent, complex, and centrally controlled, the average

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[1] Cf. the activities of Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer twenty years ago; the continuing policies of the Daughters of the American Revolution and large sections of the American Legion; the perennial appearance of new crops of "patriotic" organizations rallying to the defense of the much-beleaguered Constitution; and the contemporary efforts of the Dies Committee to expose "un-American" activities in the C.I.O. and the New Deal.

[2] For an able exposition of this thesis consult Soule, George, *The Coming American Revolution* (New York, Macmillan, 1934).

[3] Cf. Epstein, Abraham, *Insecurity: A Challenge to America* (3d [revised] ed. New York, Random House, 1936).

[4] Cf. Harding, T. Swan, *The Popular Practice of Fraud* (New York, Longmans, Green, 1935). Lamb, Ruth de F., *The American Chamber of Horrors* (New York, Farrar & Rinehart, 1936).

[5] Cf. Brandeis, Louis D., *Other People's Money* (New York, Stokes, 1932). Flynn, John T., *Security Speculation* (New York, Harcourt Brace, 1934), and *Graft in Business* (New York, Vanguard, 1931). Lowenthal, M., *The Investor Pays* (New York, Knopf, 1933). Winkler, M., *Foreign Bonds, an Autopsy* (Philadelphia, Roland Swain, 1932).

[6] Ezekial, M., and Bean, L. H., *Economic Bases for the Agricultural Adjustment Act*, U. S. Department of Agriculture, 1933.

[7] Corey, Louis, *The Crisis of the Middle Class* (New York, Covici Friede, 1935).

citizen loses his individual power to secure a livelihood.

Under these conditions, a good living can be assured only by concerted action toward such common goals as employment, health, old-age independence, opportunity, and professional freedom. If these objectives are to be reached, however, the political institutions through which individuals attempt to control their economic lives must conform to the new economic society. One change which is thus forced upon political institutions, not by conspiring politicians of any particular party but by basic economic evolution, is the growth of federal power at the expense of state and local authority.

Wages, hours, and working conditions which are determined by interstate forces not only cannot be influenced by the individual but are beyond the control of the state except in limited fields. The prices and quality of goods made and advertised by the peoples of a dozen states cannot be controlled by the people of any one state. The safety of investments and savings affected by nationwide business conditions cannot be guaranteed by individual wisdom or state authority. Unemployment and old-age dependence whose origin may lie thousands of miles from the scene of their incidence are not only beyond prevention by the state but frequently beyond its powers of adequate relief. A whole section of the national community may be so impoverished by forces beyond its control that nothing short of a helping federal hand can relieve it from its futile efforts to raise itself by its own bootstraps.[8]

Over a period of fifty years the federal government has been compelled by the force of economic developments to take over problems of railroading, the sale and advertising of goods, banking, trade practices, agriculture, unemployment, old-age dependence, investment, public-utility control, industrial relations, housing assistance, and wage and hour regulation. Each problem has usually not been taken over until the necessity for federal aid has been apparent for many years. Political adjustments have lagged behind economic change. This lag has been the result of the inertia of traditional thinking, the intense resistance of vested interests, and the honest fears of those who found greater potential danger in centralized federal power than in the present helplessness of the groups whose protection was sought.

The inertia of traditional thinking is to be expected and accepted—both as an obstacle to change and a medium through which change may be effected.[9] The resistance of vested interests is also to be expected. Sometimes these interests can be shown to be no more than apparent. Those who fight change frequently discover that they are better off after the change than before. In other cases, however, the majority is compelled to override the minority. But in the centralization of political power there lies a danger that the effort of the people to improve their economic lot through the instruments of government will itself destroy democracy. The immense weight of the federal administrative machinery may crush the people who brought it into being.[10]

[8] United States National Emergency Council, Report on *Economic Conditions of the South* (Government Printing Office, 1938).

[9] ARNOLD, THURMAN W., *The Folklore of Capitalism* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1937).

[10] This point of view has been extensively developed by Walter Lippmann and Dorothy Thompson. Cf. LIPPMANN, WALTER, *The Good Society* (Boston, Little, Brown, 1937).

Power granted by the mass of people to federal agencies may be turned against the people either by minority interests which capture the government or by the administrators themselves. Administrators tend to become bureaucrats. That is, they become interested in their own power and perquisites. These may frequently be at variance with the interests of the mass of people. What is to prevent bureaucrats from using the means of power against the people? Or what is to prevent those whose regulation is sought—bankers, utility magnates, industrialists, financiers, stockbrokers—from taking over the means of power and turning it against the people? [11] Or what is to prevent a combination of these two groups, supported by discontented masses, from accomplishing the same end?

The more complex, technical, and remote from the ordinary citizen that government becomes, the more difficult it is for the people to compel it to aid in improving the conditions of their economic life. Every step from the town meeting to the state legislature, from the state legislature to the federal Congress, and from Congress to federal administrative agencies is a step away from direct popular control. The defenses of the people against the possible tyranny of a remote federal administrator may become as weak as the defense of a worker against a remote employer, or a consumer against the massed power of advertising,[12] or a shareholder against a corporate holding company,[13] or the farmer against a starvation price, or all of us against unemployment and old-age dependence. Is the move toward federal regulation of economic life anything more than a leap from an unbearable frying pan into a consuming flame?

There are at least three logical courses of action which present themselves in response to this question. One is to go backward. Another is to sit down and hang on tight. The third is to take courage in hand and proceed as cautiously as possible.

Going backward may be a logical possibility, but it is scarcely a social and economic possibility. To reverse more than forty years of federal regulative evolution and at the same time meet the problems that compel this evolution would require the reversal of the more than forty years of economic development which created the problems. The automatic protection of workers, consumers, investors, depositors, farmers, small businessmen, and professionals requires a very simple economic society. Free competition among small units of production, investment in local concerns, production for a local market, easy access to the land or to industrial opportunity, the possibility of self-employment with inexpensive tools or machines, simple commodities limited in quantity, the self-sufficiency of each community—these are some of the prerequisites of a society in which conscious social protection of individuals and groups is relatively unnecessary.

But this is scarcely an accurate picture of modern economic society. To recapture this older society would involve the surrender of geographical specialization, the breaking up of business combinations, and the abandonment of much of

[11] The mechanics of this process have been best observed and reported by LINCOLN STEFFENS in his *Autobiography* (New York, Harcourt Brace, 1931).

[12] RORTY, JAMES, *Our Master's Voice: Advertising* (New York, John Day, 1934).

[13] BERLE, A. A., and MEANS, G. C., *The Modern Corporation and Private Property* (New York, Macmillan, 1934).

our specialized machinery. The result would be a heavy loss in the variety, quality, and quantity of commodities as well as of the population which creates and is sustained by these commodities. Railroads, telegraph, telephone and radio, electric power transmission, automobiles, steel bridges, modern cities, and super-highways are a few of the things which cannot be made without large-scale and specialized production. Even if the surrender of these things is considered by some to be a good idea, the possibility of reversing the rise of modern industry is slight.[14]

If economic evolution cannot be turned backward, the problems which it creates cannot be solved by thinking about the good old days. Perhaps, then, we should just sit still, try not to think about anything, close our eyes and ears to the sufferings of others, and yelp a little when the frying pan becomes warm in our corner. This program has its attractions, but the comfort of the frying pan and the perils of climbing out should not be overdone.

Millions of people are unemployed. Other millions, though employed, remain chronically at the verge of destitution.[15] Millions of people face the expectation of old-age dependence. Other millions are badly housed, under-schooled, or victims of accident and disease.[16] Thousands of people have lost their savings and investments through irresponsible corporate trusteeship. Thousands of people live in communities in which economic democracy is non-existent and political democracy is a farce.[17] These are some of the characteristics of the frying pan.

How stable is a democracy whose prestige is being undermined by the suffering and discontent of millions of people? Antidemocratic totalitarian states are not merely imposed from the top by greedy economic interests and grasping bureaucrats. They require mass support. They find it among the millions whose physical suffering, loss of hope, and distortion of judgment make them willing followers of anyone with a quick tongue and a messianic urge.[18] The difference between "thirty dollars every Thursday" and "the superiority of the Aryan race" is one of degree. People asking for bread are given a slogan. In exchange, they begin or complete the surrender of their democratic power to control their real well-being. There are as great dangers to democracy in federal inaction as there are in federal expansion.

Moreover, the threat to democracy comes from below in another sense. All over this country there are diseased spots in which dominant economic interests operating through corrupt political machines have effectively destroyed the civil liberties of speech, writing, assembly, and education upon which a democratic society is dependent for its existence. The danger that democracy will be destroyed by the encroachments of the federal government is at the moment far less than that these malignant spots will break into a rash. The

[14] CHAMBERLAIN, JOHN, *Farewell to Reform* (New York, Liveright, 1932). STRACHEY, JOHN, *The Coming Struggle for Power* (New York, Covici Friede, 1933).

[15] United States National Resources Committee, *Consumer Incomes in the United States: Their Distribution in 1935-36* (Government Printing Office, 1938).

[16] *Ibid.* POST, LANGSON W., *The Challenge of Housing* (New York, Farrar & Rinehart, 1938). EPSTEIN, A., *op. cit.*

[17] Cf. the La Follette Committee Reports cited in full in earlier chapters.

[18] Cf. SCHUMAN, FREDERICK L., *The Nazi Dictatorship* (revised ed. New York, Knopf, 1936).

federal government offers the means whereby the democratic pressures of some communities can be exerted for the protection of democracy in others. This pressure is exerted not only through the Supreme Court and such legislative bodies as the La Follette Committee, but also by federal administrative agencies. The combined action of the Department of Justice and the N.L.R.B., for example, has recently broken through the medieval defenses of Harlan County, Kentucky, and allowed a pale light of industrial democracy, at least, to fall upon its citizens.[19]

The frying pan, then, *is* a frying pan. And the alternative may not be the fire.

How can protection be assured against the possibility that federal administrators will fall a prey to powerful minority groups or to their own delusions of grandeur? There are in general two possible answers. First, that groups of people organize around their respective economic interests to obtain control over them outside political channels. Second, that when there are conflicts of group interests or problems beyond the scope of group control, these economic organizations actively participate in political government.

The most powerful economic interests are those of producers. Consumers, it is true, are interested in the price and quality of the goods they buy. But these interests are generally overshadowed by a more intense interest in the amount of income and the conditions under which it is earned. Most people think of themselves as consumers secondarily. They think and act primarily as wage earners, professionals, farmers, businessmen, and investors. People may and should organize to protect consumer interests. Much can be accomplished through consumers' coöperatives and advisory services. But within these consumers' organizations, the more powerful producer interests constantly assert themselves and conflicts of policy frequently result which are difficult to resolve within the consumer organization.[20]

Among producer groups, somewhat the same thing is true of investors. They may and do organize to protect themselves. But a very small minority of people has investments great enough to produce income equal to its wages or salaries. This small minority whose income from investments is greater than from salaries is already powerfully organized through corporate and banking devices. Their problem is not acute, to put it mildly.[21] The great majority of investors, however, is incapable of organization around investment interests and must organize, if at all, as wage or salary earners.

Farmers are an extremely important producer group which has a long tradition of collective action alongside its tradition of individualism. This collective action has been chiefly directed in the past toward general political objectives such as railroad regulation and tariff reduction. In the last ten years, however, growing farmers' organizations have directed their attention toward such particular economic ends as collective purchase of materials and sale of products. In the meantime, as a result of organized farmers' political pressure, the federal government has come

[19] *The C.I.O. News*, Sept. 3, 1938.

[20] WARBASSE, J. P., *Coöperative Democracy* (New York, Harper, 1936). WEBB, SIDNEY and BEATRICE, *The Consumers' Coöperative Movement* (New York, Longmans, Green, 1921).

[21] LUNDBERG, FERDINAND, *America's Sixty Families* (New York, Vanguard, 1937).

to the farmers' aid to an unprecedented extent. This does not mean that the farmers have become dangerously dependent upon the federal government. Because of the virility of farmers' political organizations, the federal government has become dependent, to a large degree, upon the farmers.[22]

The farmers are acting through the federal machinery of government for the protection of their economic status. They are also acting directly through their buying and selling coöperatives. In both policies the farmers are being encouraged by the federal government. This advance of federal regulatory activity at the insistence of the farmers can hardly be described as authoritarian, destructive of democracy, or even paternalistic. On the contrary, it may be said that because the farmers are organizing to protect their economic interests both directly and through political channels, they are creating a democracy which conforms to modern economic life.

Small businessmen, also, have organized to protect themselves. Their most important organizations are concerned with immediate ends such as coöperative purchase of goods, common credit resources, local taxation or civic obligations, common advertising, exchange of technical information, trade practices, and price control. These organizations, of which there are scores of different types, have given to small business many of the advantages which could otherwise be enjoyed only by big business.[23] They are far more important than the efforts of small business to organize for political objectives. Such political organizations of small business as have appeared have tended to parrot the slogans and policies of big business whose interests in many respects are dissimilar.[24] But the pressure of small businessmen's organization is already a factor to be taken into account by federal legislators and administrators. Small businessmen also are adjusting the forms of democracy to the conditions of modern economic life.

Professionals—lawyers, doctors, teachers, among others—have long since been organized in an effort to regulate their working conditions. They don't call them working conditions, but professional training requirements, ethics, and freedom are the equivalent of union apprenticeship regulations, standards of production speed, and sanitary conditions. These organizations are rapidly spreading into such fields as engineering, technical service, insurance agencies, banking, and government. All of these professional organizations, from the lawyers down or up, are becoming more and more interested in exercising some control over the amount of their income, the standards of their work, the tenure of their jobs, and the conditions under which they work. Their efforts at control over these matters are being exerted both through bargaining on the job and through political pressures.[25]

[22] There are at present six strong farmers' organizations whose activities are great enough to influence governmental policy. Consult Labor Research Association, *Labor Fact Book III* (New York, International, 1936), chap. 7.

[23] FRAIN, H. L., *An Introduction to Economics* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1937), pp. 254-256.

[24] Cf. newspaper accounts of the convention of "small" businessmen called by President Roosevelt in February, 1938. For accounts of subsequent activities of this group see the *New York Times Index*, 1938, under "Businessmen's Ass'n., National Small, Inc."

[25] There are at present five professional unions affiliated with the C.I.O., five affiliated with the A. F. of L., and one independent which are on a strictly trade-union basis. In addition to these unions there are more than a score of professional organizations whose interests lead them increasingly toward

Many doctors are interested in federally subsidized medicine both for the sake of the people's health and for the sake of their own economic skins. Engineers are interested in federal public works for similar reasons. Teachers are concerned with not only adequate education and academic freedom, but the regularity of pay day. Government workers are interested in hours and salaries as well as efficient public service. All of these groups are new forms of democracy. They attempt both to improve the economic lot of their members directly and to compel the federal government to do what the groups cannot themselves accomplish. Not only are they propelling the federal government forward into new fields but they constitute a democratic check upon possible authoritarian tyranny.

Fully two-thirds of our population is composed of wage workers and their dependents. Among them there are twenty-five to thirty million potential union members. There are perhaps eight million already in unions.[26] In their broadest aspect, these unions also represent an adjustment of democratic forms to modern economic life. Every local union is a miniature political society just as every town meeting used to be, and in some places still is. Many of the problems facing union members can be settled right in the local meeting. Others are so broad in scope that they have to be referred upward to the regional or national officers or conventions.

Just as the local and state governments have had to refer an increasing share of their problems upward to the federal government, so the local unions are compelled to delegate the handling of industry-wide bargaining, organizing, and strike control to national officers. The democratic control of union members over their officers is more direct, however, than is the control of the average citizen over his federal officials.

First, since unions are concerned with the most immediate and primary interests of their members, frequent and relatively well-attended meetings are possible. Town or other local political meetings, on the contrary, cover such a diversity of economic interests that it is difficult, if not impossible, to arouse interest in the issues before the meeting. Consequently people don't come. There is little direct and continuous check by the people upon their representatives. Such checks as exist are indirectly applied through letter writing and unofficial polls. Frequent and active union meetings (usually every two weeks) provide a continuous check upon the officers.

Second, since unions usually cover only one industry or occupation, the issues are relatively simple and the members are united upon general ends which the officers may serve. Failure to serve these ends is soon apparent and results in dispensing with the officers' services. Selectmen, governors, Congressmen, and Presidents, on the contrary, serve geographical units including a great variety of economic interests, many of which are in conflict. Under these conditions it is often impossible for the politician to stand for anything without incurring the wrath of some group powerful in votes or funds. To be elected

the assumption of national political functions as well as the democratic method of handling many of their own economic affairs.

[26] Exact figures of dues-paying membership are difficult to obtain. There are probably about ten million workers under strong union influence of whom somewhat less than eight million are in good standing.

from such a constituency, free cigars, political favors, and Delphic utterances must be substituted for intelligent discussion of issues and objectives. Once elected, a representative has few definite commitments. He may, therefore, either do nothing at all or succumb to the pressures of group interests which are brought directly to bear upon him through channels not provided for in the constitution. Such pressure groups may represent small minorities of power and wealth whose interests are directly opposed to those of the great majority. Unless the majority is organized well enough to prevent representatives from giving in to the pressure of minorities, there is little to prevent the politician from doing so. The next election day is far away and simply repeats the free-cigar–baby-kissing–Delphic-utterance pattern.

Unions, therefore, are democracy adapted to industrial life. They make possible both the continuous, direct scrutiny of leaders' actions and the simplification of issues in a complex society. They take their place with organizations of farmers, businessmen, and professionals as efforts to apply group power to the solution of individual problems.

But none of these organizations, including wage workers' unions, can expect to deal with problems which lie outside its jurisdiction. Organized economic groups therefore turn to local, state, and federal governments for aid. Local civil liberties, state unemployment relief, federal old-age annuities, housing assistance, health insurance, and abolition of sweatshop wages and hours are all questions in which organized labor is interested but which to varying degrees lie beyond its powers of direct control. To secure these objectives, labor turns toward the government, and particularly the federal government.

It is true that the existence of the National Labor Relations Board serves to strengthen the influence of the federal government over the economic life of the nation. But the reason for the existence of the board is to encourage the development of unionism by removing the anti-union obstacles in its path. To just the extent that unionism is encouraged, the means of democratic control over the federal government are enhanced. Although the board is a federal agency, its task is to hasten the advance of local industrial democracy and democratic political checks upon federal power. Through the N.L.R.A., the federal government is atoning for its concentration of power by assisting the progress of a check upon itself.

This policy is a flat contradiction of the policies of authoritarian governments abroad. One of the first steps of a totalitarian government is to crush the independent labor movement out of existence. The obvious reason for this is that an independent labor movement, as well as independent religious, fraternal, and political groups, challenges the dominance of the totalitarian authority. It is difficult to imagine a policy more completely at variance with despotic ambitions than the encouragement provided by the N.L.R.A. to an independent labor movement.

The existence of a strong labor movement not only acts as a check upon the bureaucratic ambitions of administrative officers but also serves to forestall the capture of governmental machinery by organized economic minorities.[27] As has been suggested, the confusion of

[27] If it be urged that the labor movement is itself a minority which "captures governmental machinery" it can only be replied that the labor movement is by far the largest organized minority group in the

economic issues which arises within territorial political units increasingly tends to transfer the formation of governmental policy from the ballot box to the arena of pressure politics.[28] In legislative lobbies and administrative offices the representatives of economic groups attempt to secure the adoption and enforcement of policies which serve the interests of their constituencies. The forms of territorial democracy remain. The content, however, becomes increasingly economic. Political representatives tend to become the mouthpieces of economic representatives who stand at their shoulder.

This process is so nearly universal that it cannot be dismissed or condemned as a corruption of democracy. It is, rather, an adjustment of democracy to modern specialized economic life. It might be more logical to abandon territorial representation in favor of a guild congress composed of representatives of various economic interests.[29] This, however, is neither likely, necessary, nor, perhaps, desirable. It is not likely because traditional methods of doing things have so powerful a hold upon public thinking and action that nothing short of revolution can bring about the great symbolic changes involved in a reorganization of the forms of government. It is not necessary as long as group-pressure politics can give modern economic content to ancient political forms. It is perhaps not desirable since the territorial units of town, county, district, and state continue to provide representation to citizens who do not easily or quickly fall into organized economic groups.

The chief danger of group-pressure politics is that the better-organized minority groups may exercise greater pressure upon government policy than the looser organizations of majority interests. In extreme form this superior pressure of minority groups might result in their complete domination of the machinery of government and the suppression of the organizations of opposed economic interests. Organized pressure groups of bankers, public-utility managements, stock traders, and large taxpayers, for example, although representing a small minority of the total population, may outweigh the pressures of workers, farmers, professionals, and small businessmen.

Protection against this danger lies in spreading the economic and political organization of the groups which compose the vast majority of citizens. The progress of such organization has already been noted. To just the extent that the National Labor Relations Act promotes the organization of workers, it serves to prevent the capture of governmental machinery by minority interests.

To the original question, "What can be done to prevent the centralization of federal power from destroying effective democracy?" these possible answers were given: to reverse the trend of economic change, to stand still and do nothing, and to proceed with caution. The first of these answers was dismissed as impossible. The second was thrown out as being more dangerous to the

country, that the larger the minority the more likely its interests are to coincide with those of the community as a whole, that the labor movement is at present trying as hard as its funds, energies, and leadership capacities will allow to become a majority, and that the election of 1936 suggests that the labor movement is already a powerful force supporting political movements which are strongly opposed to the influence of economic minorities upon governmental policy.

[28] Cf. THOMPSON, C. D., *Confessions of the Power Trust* (New York, Dutton, 1932).

[29] Cf. COLE, G. D. H., *Guild Socialism, a Plan for Economic Democracy* (New York, Stokes, 1921).

stability of democracy than further centralization of federal power. The third has been discussed in terms of the kind of caution which the federal government now displays in proceeding toward further centralization of administrative control.

It has been indicated that by strengthening the economic organizations of workers and farmers the federal government is broadening the path of democracy in its rear before blazing a trail farther into the wilderness. This suggests a rough definition of "caution" in the extension of federal power. In military terms, the federal government should not advance beyond the point of maintaining adequate support from the democratic reinforcements at the rear. If it does, it may be cut off by the raiding parties of minority interests on its flanks. In engineering terms, the federal government should not erect a superstructure of control upon an inadequate democratic foundation. If it does, the superstructure may fall and obliterate the foundation. In terms of industry, the federal government should not proceed further in the regulation of relations between management and labor than the progress of industrial democracy will allow.

The National Labor Relations Act is concerned almost exclusively with the progress of industrial democracy. Should the federal government now go further in the direction of centralized control by substituting compulsory regulation of wages, hours, and working conditions for the settlement of these matters through collective bargaining? Curiously enough, those who view with the greatest alarm the advance of federal power as exemplified in the N.L.R.A. are often those who are most insistent in urging that labor and (occasionally) management be shorn of their economic power to settle matters of industrial relations. To propose that labor's right to strike or use other forms of economic pressure against management be legally limited, and that management's right to close down its plants or use other forms of economic pressure against labor be similarly restricted, would solve no problems of industrial relations unless something else were substituted for these economic weapons. The obvious substitute is compulsory arbitration. Since the great bulk of modern business is interstate in character, the task of carrying out compulsory arbitration would fall chiefly to the federal government. The assumption of this task would involve an extension of federal regulatory power far greater in scope and significance than any single previous advance.

The National Labor Relations Board cannot be condemned, therefore, simply because it represents an extension of federal power if at the same time it is proposed further to extend federal control over wages, hours, and working conditions. If the National Labor Relations Act and compulsory federal arbitration are to be discussed in relation to each other, they must both be recognized as extensions of federal power, but with very different objectives. The major objective of the N.L.R.A. is to increase the democratic control by workers and management through collective bargaining over industrial life. An indirect effect is to enhance the political power of labor over matters in which it is interested but which do not fall within the scope of particular organizations. The main objective of compulsory arbitration, on the contrary, is to reduce the importance of industrial self-government by turning over to federal administrators powers which would otherwise be ex-

ercised by organized management and labor. In some respects, therefore, the two objectives are flatly opposed. The N.L.R.A. encourages the assumption of industrial problems by the organizations of labor and management. Compulsory arbitration surrenders the solution of these problems to a relatively remote federal authority.

Having recognized that limitations upon the use of the economic power of labor and management to bring about industrial settlements are a move in the direction of compulsory arbitration, and having recognized that this would involve a vast increase in federal regulatory power, it must be said that compulsory arbitration has its attractions. There is nothing particularly inviting about strikes and lockouts, however sacred the right to strike and lock out may be. There is little that is scientific about resort to economic force even though a prohibition of its use may be said to result in involuntary servitude for workers or the denial of employers' right to go out of business.

Compulsory arbitration might, indeed, become a very scientific instrument of national economic planning. By reference to living standards, prices, industrial earnings, profits, salaries, and industrial trends, government arbitrators not only might arrive at more equitable solutions of industrial conflicts, but also might be able to fit the plans of one industry into those of the nation as a whole.

Against this view of compulsory arbitration, however, objections must be urged. The first is that centralized control tends toward rigidity of policy. The dynamic quality of industry demands flexibility.[80] Such flexibility can be achieved only by encouraging initiative and responsibility on the part of representatives of management and labor who are in the field. Some uniformity of policy is, of course, essential. Uniformity is beginning to develop as a result of collective bargaining, first on a local, and then on an industry-wide basis. Wherever collective bargaining has been practiced, industrial policies tend to become uniform over larger and larger economic areas, but at the same time a balance is worked out between uniformity in general policies and flexibility in their application. Such a balance is best developed slowly by the people who are intimately concerned. The ultimate outcome of collective bargaining may be the development and acceptance of industrial policies so uniform and widespread in scope as to approach the kind of economic planning involved in compulsory arbitration.

But collective bargaining is in its infancy in this country. Management and labor are just beginning to develop methods of dealing with each other. They are far from the adoption of uniform policies leading toward industrial equity and peace. To propose to leap from the present stage of industrial relations to their probable ultimate conclusion is to impose regulations from above without adequate preparation from be-

[80] One aspect of the Australian experience with compulsory arbitration has been that wage rates set by arbitration awards tend to remain rigidly fixed over long periods of time during which both the general productivity of an industry and the relationship among the different classes of workers within it may undergo marked alterations. Although this is also true of wage rates fixed by custom or by trade agreements, both the degree and the duration of rigidity are likely to be less than when control is relatively remote from the scene of action. This objection does not apply with equal force against *minimum* wage fixation by federal authority since wide latitude for differentials and for variation is allowed above the relatively rigid minimum.

low. Such regulation is likely to be arbitrary, rigid, and unenforceable. Compulsory arbitration can do little more than clarify and apply the policies and decisions toward which the principals are themselves moving and which they are willing to accept. When collective bargaining on a democratic basis has developed sufficiently to render compulsory arbitration relatively unnecessary, that may be the time to invoke compulsory arbitration! Some American industries, such as the railroads, and to a less degree clothing and mining, are approaching this situation.[31] Others are years or decades removed from the logical end of present developments.

The second objection to compulsory arbitration is suggested by the first. Unless compulsory arbitration takes place against a well-developed background of democratic collective bargaining, the *source* of conflict is not likely to be removed. The conflict itself is simply transferred from the industrial to the political arena. In order to win the fight, management and labor are compelled to enter politics to select or influence the arbitrators. Industrial struggles simply become political struggles. Victory in politics is little more likely to produce economic justice and peace than victory in economic warfare. No real believer in the processes of democracy can be enthusiastic about compulsory arbitration until collective bargaining in industry and organized action by labor in politics have developed sufficiently to prevent government regulation of industrial relations from being merely an arbitrary imposition of the policies of powerful economic and political minorities.

The reverse of this is that those who are opposed to democratic methods and majority rule in industry should work for the repeal of the National Labor Relations Act, the imposition of compulsory arbitration (under the guise of shearing labor of its powers to strike and picket), and the placing of obstacles in the path of political action by labor.

Labor politics now takes the form of direct lobbying by labor representatives in the legislatures, efforts in party primaries to influence the selection of party nominees, the swinging of votes from one party to another to affect the outcome of elections, and the formation of independent labor parties or farmer-labor parties which give their support either to their own candidates or to preferred nominees of other parties. These forms of labor politics represent varying degrees of adjustment of political action to economic change. The development of independent labor politics marks a somewhat more clear-cut formulation of group economic interests than is occurring in the gradual reshuffling of the older parties into liberal and conservative alignments. It is a thoroughly democratic development in the sense that political action by wage workers covers the largest single economic group interest in the country—one which contains an overwhelming potential majority of all voters.

The advance of democratic action by workers in politics is being as bitterly opposed as has been the guarantee of industrial democracy through collective bargaining under the N.L.R.A. When, for example, John L. Lewis visited the Speaker of the House in an effort to dislodge the Wages and Hours Bill from the Rules Committee, his action was denounced as "dictatorship," "an invasion," "effrontery," and so on. This

[31] Cf. "Report of the President's Commission of Industrial Relations in Great Britain," *New York Times*, Sept. 2, 1938, p. 8.

condemnation was offered in spite of the fact that the similar and frequently more effective comings and goings of lobbyists for all sorts of minority interests[32] usually attract little attention, and in spite of the fact that a very small minority of the House occupying a strategic position in the Rules Committee was blocking action desired by the administration, by large majorities in both houses of Congress, and by millions of citizens who abhor the sweatshop conditions which the Wages and Hours Act is designed to eliminate.

More important than this disapproval of labor lobbying is the demand that the N.L.R.A. be amended to prohibit contributions by unions for political purposes.[33] Such a proposal is designed to hamstring labor parties or restrict the support given by labor to the party it favors in a particular area. Hands were raised in horror at the fact that the United Mine Workers contributed approximately $500,000 to the 1936 campaign of the Democratic party and that the American Labor party in New York state raised about $85,000 for the support of its candidates. Little attention was directed toward the fact that the average contribution of a member of the miner's union was less than a dollar, and the average contribution of American Labor party supporters was twenty-six cents. As between contributions of this size and contributions of thousands or tens of thousands of dollars by wealthy individuals or families, the greater degree of democracy would appear to rest with the former rather than with the latter, as long as union members retain democratic control over union expenditures.

This and other similar efforts to use the N.L.R.A. as a weapon against labor politics are an attack upon the adjustment of democratic forms to fit modern industrial society. In whatever guise they may be cloaked, such attacks represent the effort of minority interests to stem the rising political power of a labor movement which is moving toward a majority status. The immediate objective of the National Labor Relations Act is the encouragement of collective bargaining as a means toward industrial peace. Its more remote objectives include the improvement of the lot of American workers not only through collective bargaining in industry but also through encouragement to industrial and political democracy in local and national life.[34] In the contemporary conflict between democracy and dictatorship, whether political or industrial, the National Labor Relations Board is in the center of the struggle. Its influence and power are wholly on the side of democracy.

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[32] *Time*, Aug. 20, 1938, p. 3, col. 1.

[33] Cf. Amendments to the N.L.R.A., proposed by Senator Vandenberg, Senate Bill 2712, 75th Congress, 1st Sess., p. 3, ll. 10-12.

[34] For an excellent statement of the board's own conception of its relation to the labor movement and to political and economic democracy, see *The National Labor Relations Act: Guardian of Democracy*, a speech by Edwin S. Smith, member of the N.L.R.B., before the Carolina Political Union, Durham, N. C., March 30, 1938, N.L.R.B. Press Release No. R-755.

# DOROTHY CANFIELD

## *Supply and Demand*

### From Raw Material

The thoughtful intellectual people around the fire were talking with animation and conviction, and I hoped the one business-man present, a relative of mine, was appreciating his privileges. It was not often that you could collect before your fire so many brilliant people representing so many important varieties of human activity; and when you had collected them it was not often that the talk fell on a subject big enough to draw out of each one his most hotly held conviction.

The subject was big enough in all conscience: nothing more or less than what is the matter with the world in general and with our country in particular. They all had different ideas about what the trouble is and about the best cure for it. The head nurse of the big City Hospital had started the ball rolling by some of her usual scornful remarks about the idiocy with which most people run their physical lives, and the superidiocy, as she put it, "which makes them think that doctors and nurses can put scrambled eggs back into the shell."

"We'll never have any health as a nation till we have health as individuals," she said. "See that the babies have clean milk; give the children plenty of space and time for out-door play; keep the young folks busy with athletic sports; run down all the diphtheria carriers and make it a misdemeanor not to be both vaccinated for small-pox and inoculated against typhoid . . . and we'd be a nation such as the world never saw before."

The political reformer was sincerely shocked by the narrowness of her views, and took her down in a long description of our villainously mismanaged government. "Much good mere physical health would do against our insane tolerance of such political ineptness and corruption!" he ended. "What we need is an awakening to the importance of government as every man's personal business."

Mrs. Maynard, the tragic-faced, eloquent Scotch expert on birth-control, now said in that low, bitter voice of hers which always makes every one stop to listen, "I would be obliged if you would point out to me how either physical health or the very best of municipal governments should alleviate in the slightest, the hideous ulcers of our so-called respectable married homes. When the very foundation of every-day human life is cemented in such unthinkable cruelty and suffering to defenseless women, I don't see how human beings with hearts in their bosoms can stop for an instant to consider such puerile non-essentials as athletics and party politics!"

The two or three happily married women in the group, startled by her fierce acrimony, were silent, feeling abashed by the grossly comfortable way we had managed to escape even a

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knowledge of the horrors which she so urgently assured us were universal. But Mr. Sharpless, the efficiency engineer, shook his head pityingly. "No, no, my dear lady, you can't cure anything by going at it with the hammer and tongs of direct action. The economic key is the only one that fits all locks, opens all doors. The women of what we call the 'upper classes' do not suffer as you describe. You know they don't. Now why do we *call* them the 'upper classes'? Because they have money. You know it! Hence, if everybody had money . . . ! I tell you the thing to do is to reorganize our wretched old producing machinery till ever so much more is produced, ever so much more easily; and then invent distributing machinery that will ensure everybody's getting his share. You may not think home life is much affected by the chemist in his laboratory, devising a way to get nitrogen chiefly from the air, or by the engineer struggling with the problem of free power out of the tides or the sun. But it is. Just once put *all* women in the comfortable upper classes. . . ."

He was interrupted here by a number of protesting voices, all speaking at once, the loudest of which, Professor Oleny's, finally drowned out the others, ". . . money without intelligence is the most fatal combination conceivable to man! Economic prosperity would spell speedy destruction without an overhauling of education." He spun like a pinwheel for a moment, in a sparkling, devastating characterization of American schools, and of their deadening effect on the brains which passed through them, and began on a description of what schools should be.

But I had heard him lecture on that only the day before and, looking away from him, sought out the face of my cousin, the business-man. He had sat through it all, and now continued to sit through the free-for-all debate which followed, without opening his mouth except to emit an occasional thoughtful puff of cigar-smoke. His thoughts seemed to be with the billowing smoke-rings, which he sent towards the ceiling rather than with the great sweep of the subjects being discussed. I knew well enough that his silence did not come in the least from any inability to follow the pyrotechnics about him, and I felt in his absent preoccupation something of the disdain, traditionally felt for talkers and reformers by men of action—when in the twentieth century and in the United States, you say "man of action" you mean of course, "business-man."

It nettled me a little, and after the others had gone and he was finishing the end of his cigar, I said challengingly, "I suppose you think they are all off! I suppose you think that you know what is the matter with the world and that it is something quite different."

He considered the end of his cigar meditatively and answered mildly, "I don't *think* I know, I *know* I know."

"Oh, you do, do you?" I said, amused and ironic. "Would you mind telling me what it is?"

He shucked further down in his chair, tipped his head back and looked up at the ceiling. "Well, if you really want to know, I'll tell you a story that happened just lately in one of the biggest mail-order houses in this country. Of course, I know that you don't fully appreciate the importance of mail-order houses, not being in business. And they're too through and through American a growth for people like your friends to-night to know about or talk about. But some of the best brains and

real sure-enough genius in the United States have gone into creating the mail-order house idea. Maybe you might allow that to be a good enough reason for considering for a moment what goes on inside one of them . . . what?

"As a matter of fact, the story isn't just about a mail-order house, but about what is the matter with the world . . . the very same subject your friends were debating. My story won't have so many long words in it as they use, nor so many abstract ideas . . . at least on the surface; but it won't do you any harm to soak it away and think it over. I'll tell you what, *I've* been thinking it over this evening, as I listened to the talk. I only heard the story this morning, and it's stuck in my head all day . . . and especially this evening, as they were all talking about how to hit on some organization of society that would really fix things up, once and for all."

He paused for a moment, stretched his legs out straight before him and put his hands into his pockets. "If I really told you all you ought to know, to understand the background and setting of the story, I'd be sitting here to-morrow morning still talking. So I won't try, I'll just tell you the plain story as it happened. You try to imagine the background: an organization as big, as complicated, with as many chances for waste motion, or overorganization, or poor organization as society itself. And not only power and glory, but *cash,* plenty of hard cash as immediate reward for the successful use of brains.

"Well now, into that arrives a smart youngster full of enthusiasm for making things run better, just like your friends to-night; dead sure just like them that *he* has the key; with lots of pep and brains and interest in his job, pushing his way right up from the stenographer's desk, with his eye on the Manager's. Do you get him? Well, he's laid awake nights, thinking how to improve the organization, partly because he wanted to improve it, partly because he wanted to get the credit for it . . . just like your friends again. And because he is a smart young fellow as keen as a razor, he soon figured out a way to increase business, to increase it like a house afire, and to handle it once it was increased.

"He went to the big man of the concern and laid out his plans. Now, you'd better believe the big men in any organization always have a glad hand out for anybody in the concern who'll show interest and brains; and the boy got treated like a king. Sure, he could try out his plan! On a small scale at first, to see how it would work. Let him take a county out of each of six selected states, and concentrate on them. And, sure, yes, indeed, he could have anything in the organization he wanted, to make his try with.

"So the boy went away bounding like a rubber-ball and planned his campaign. I won't bother you by trying to tell you what it was. . . . It wouldn't interest you, and anyhow you couldn't understand the business details. It was a mixture of intensive publicity, special attention paid to detail, a follow-up system that meant personal care and personal acquaintance with the tastes of customers, and intimate knowledge of what past orders from customers had been. To get the right kind of assistants he went through the various departments of that big organization and hand-picked his staff; the very best of the publicity men, the smartest of the order-clerks, the brightest of the stenographers. And then they just tore in and ate up the territory they were practising

on! They plowed it with publicity, and sowed it with personal service, they reaped, by George, a harvest that would put your eye out! Business increased by a twenty-five per cent, by a fifty per cent! At the end of a year, the boy, too big for his skin, paraded into the Manager-in-chief's office with statistics to prove a seventy-five per cent increase over any business ever done there before! Well, that was simply grand, wasn't it? Yes, the Manager would certainly sit up and take some notice of a system that had accomplished *that!"*

My cousin had finished his cigar, now threw the butt into the fire-place, and sat looking at the embers with a somber expression. I couldn't see anything to look somber about. Indeed I found myself stifling a yawn. What did I care how much business a mail-order house did or how they did it?

My cousin answered my thought, "Don't you see that the story is all about the same general idea you were all discussing this evening? It is about getting things done more intelligently, more efficiently, about avoiding fool mistakes, about rising to big opportunities, about learning how to scramble over the obstacles that prevent human beings from being intelligent and efficient and effective. Now, then, at the first take-off, the boy had soared right over those obstacles, hadn't he? But the Manager-in-chief knew a thing or two about them, too. In fact he had grown bald and gray trying to climb over those very same obstacles. But you can be sure the boy didn't once think that his chief might be just as anxious as he was to have things done better. Boys never do. . . ." There was a pause, while my cousin considered the embers moodily.

"So, by and by, after the boy had fizzed the place all foamy with his wonderful statistics, the bald-headed, gray-haired Manager began to come down to brass tacks, and to inquire just how the thing had been done. The boy was crazy to tell him, went into every detail; and the Manager listened hard.

"And then he shook his old bald gray head. He said: 'Young fellow, you listen to me. It takes *sense* to run that system of yours. You're counting on everybody, from you right down to the boy that works your mimeograph, paying attention to what he's doing, using his brains and using them every minute. If everybody doesn't, you won't get your results, will you? Now, consider this, how did you get hold of a staff that would have any brains to use and would use them? *You* know how! We let you run a fine tooth comb through our whole organization, thousands and thousands of employees. You took out of every department the very best they had; three or four out of hundreds, and they are the only ones out of thousands who amount to anything after years of training at our expense. And then you put your very best licks into it yourself. Now, who are you? You're the first stenographer we've had in ten years who took enough interest in the business as a whole to have a single idea about it. You tell me something. Suppose we reorganized along your lines, who would I get to run all the other departments and keep up the high-speed efficiency and red-hot ambition you've shown, which is the *only* reason your scheme works? You know as well as I do I can't find another *one,* let alone the eighty or ninety I'd have to have, if we tried to do business on your plan. And if I could—supposing for the sake of argument that an angel from Heaven served such department heads to me on a silver platter, where am I going to find

staffs to work with them. You've *got* all the really efficient employees we've been able to rake in from the whole United States in the past twenty years.

" 'Did you ever have to work with a plain, ordinary six-for-a-quarter stenographer, such as the business colleges turn out, such as you mostly get? You've built your machine so that only brains and sense will run it. How long would it take a couple of hundred of such stenogs to smash your system into splinters? Did you ever have to try and get work out of the average dressy young employee who puts ninety-eight and a half per cent of what gray matter he has on his neckties and the bets he made on the horse-races, and the little flier he took on stocks; and one and a half per cent of his brains on his work when somebody higher up is looking at him? How do you suppose you can persuade a crowd of light-weights like that to care a whoop whether Mrs. Arrowsmith in Cohoes, N. Y., is satisfied with the color of the linoleum rug she bought?' "

My cousin looked at me hard, and again answered an unspoken thought of mine. "Are you wondering why hadn't the boy interrupted long before this, to hold up his end, if he was really so enthusiastic as I've said? This is the reason. Though he hadn't let on to the Manager, he really had had plenty of troubles of his own, already, keeping even his hand-picked crew up to the scratch. Many's the time he'd been ready to murder them! Drive as hard as he might, he couldn't keep them steadily up to the standard he'd set for his work. He'd noticed that. Oh, yes, of course, he'd noticed it all right, and he'd been furious about it. But until that minute, he hadn't thought of it—what it meant; and the minute the Manager spoke, he knew in his bones the old man was right. And he felt things come down with a smash.

"It pretty nearly knocked him silly. He never said a word. And the old bald-head looked at him, and saw that in the last three minutes the boy had grown up . . . he'd grown up! That hurts, hurts more than any visit to the dentist. I know how he felt; probably the Manager knew how he felt. Anybody who's ever tried to get anything done has run his head into that stone wall.

"Well, he was sorry for the kid, and tried to let him down easy. He went on talking, to give the boy time to catch his breath. 'You understand, I'd like, maybe more than you, to reorganize the whole ball o' wax, on any lines that would work better. And there are lots of good points in your plan that we *can* use, plenty of 'em. This invention of yours about cross-indexing orders now, that is a splendid idea. I believe we could install that . . . it looks *almost* foolproof! And maybe we might run a special mailing-list along the lines you've worked out. Lemme look at it again. Well, I guess the mistakes the stenogs would make *might* be more than offset by the extra publicity . . . maybe!'

"But the lad was feeling too cut up to pay any attention to these little poultices. He stood there, and almost fell in pieces, he was thinking so hard. Not very cheerful thoughts, at that. When he could get his breath he leaned over the table and said in a solemn, horrified voice, 'Good God, Mr. Burton, why then . . . why then . . .' He was all but plumb annihilated by the hardness of the fact that had just hit him on the head. He broke out, 'What's the *use* of inventing a better system as long as . . . as long as . . . ?' he got it out

finally. 'Why, Mr. Burton, there just aren't enough folks with sense to go around!'"

My cousin stood up, moved to the hall, secured his hat and looked in at me through the door-way. "Poor kid!" he commented pityingly. "Just think of his never having thought of that before!"

1923

# FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

## *Organic Architecture*

THE TYPICAL American dwelling of 1893 was crowding in upon itself all over the Chicago prairies as I used to go home from my work with Adler and Sullivan in Chicago to Oak Park, a Chicago suburb. That dwelling had somehow become typical American architecture but by any faith in nature implicit or explicit it did not belong anywhere. I was in my sixth year with Adler and Sullivan then, and they had completed the Wainwright Building in St. Louis, the first expression of the skyscraper as a *tall* building. But after building the great Auditorium the firm did not build residences because they got in the way of larger, more important work. I had taken over dwellings, Mr. Sullivan's own house among them, whenever a client came to them for a house. The Charnley house was done in this way. I longed for a chance to build a sensible house and (1893) soon free to build one, I furnished an office in the Schiller Building and began my own practice of architecture. The first real chance came by way of Herman Winslow for client. I was not the only one then sick of hypocrisy and hungry for reality. Winslow was something of an artist himself, sick of it all.

What was the matter with this typical American house? Well just for an honest beginning it lied about everything. It had no sense of unity at all nor any such sense of space as should belong to a free people. It was stuck up in thoughtless fashion. It had no more sense of earth than a "modernistic" house. And it was stuck up on wherever it happened to be. To rake any one of those so-called "homes" away would have improved the landscape and helped to clear the atmosphere. The thing was more a hive than a home just as "modernistic" houses are more boxes than houses. But these "homes" were very like the home Americans were making for themselves elsewhere, all over their new country.

Nor, where the human being was concerned, had this *typical* dwelling any appropriate sense of proportion whatever. It began somewhere way down in the wet and ended as high up as it could get in the high and narrow. All materials looked alike to it or to anything or anybody in it. Essentially, were it wood or brick or stone, this "house" was a bedeviled box with a fussy lid: a complex box that had to be cut up by all kinds of holes made in it to let in light

From *Common Sense*, April, 1941. Reprinted by special permission of *The American Mercury*, with which is combined the magazine, *Common Sense*.

and air, with an especially ugly hole to go in and out of. The holes were all "trimmed"; the doors and windows themselves trimmed; the roofs trimmed; the walls trimmed. Architecture seemed to consist in what was done to these holes. "Joinery" everywhere reigned supreme in the pattern and as the soul of it all. Floors were the only part of the house left plain after "Queen Anne" had swept past. The "joiner" recommended "parquetry" but usually the housewife and the fashionable decorator covered these surfaces down under foot with a tangled rug collection because otherwise the floors would be "bare." They were "bare" only because one could not very well walk on jig-sawing or turned spindles or plaster ornament. This last limitation must have seemed somehow unkind.

### THE ESCAPISTS

It is not too much to say that as a young architect, by inheritance and training a radical, my lot was cast with an inebriate lot of criminals called builders; sinners hardened by habit against every human significance except one, vulgarity. The one touch of nature that makes the whole world kin. And I will venture to say, too, that the aggregation was at the lowest aesthetic level in all history. Steam heat, plumbing, and electric light were the only redeeming features and these new features were hard put to it to function in the circumstances. Bowels, circulation, and nerves were new in buildings. But they had come to stay and a building could no longer remain a mere shell in which life was somehow to make shift as it might.

When I was 11 years old I was sent to a Wisconsin farm to learn how to really work. So all this I saw around me seemed affectation, nonsense, or profane. The first feeling was hunger for reality, for sincerity. A desire for simplicity that would yield a broader, deeper comfort was natural, too, to this first feeling. A growing idea of simplicity as organic, as I had been born into it and trained in it, was new as a quality of thought, able to strengthen and refresh the spirit in any circumstances. Organic simplicity might everywhere be seen producing significant character in the ruthless but harmonious order I was taught to call nature. I was more than familiar with it on the farm. All around me, I, or anyone for that matter, might see beauty in growing things and by a little painstaking, learn how they grew to be "beautiful." None were ever insignificant. I loved the prairie by instinct as itself a great simplicity; the trees, flowers, and sky were thrilling by contrast. And I saw that a little of height on the prairie was enough to look like much more. Notice how every detail as to height becomes intensely significant and how breadths all fall short. Here was a tremendous spaciousness needlessly sacrificed, all cut up crosswise or lengthwise into 50-foot lots, or would you have 25 feet? Reduced to a money-matter, salesmanship kept on parceling out the ground, selling it with no restrictions. Everywhere, in a great new, free country, I could see only this mean tendency to tip everything in the way of a human occupation or habitation up edgewise instead of letting it lie comfortably flatwise with the ground where spaciousness was a virtue. Nor has this changed much since automobilization has made it no genuine economic issue at all but has made it a social crime to crowd in upon one another.

By now I had committed the indiscretion that was eventually to leave me

no peace and keep me from ever finding satisfaction in anything superficial. That indiscretion was a determination to search for the *qualities* in all things.

I had an idea (it still seems to be my own) that the planes parallel to the earth in buildings identify themselves with the ground, do most to make the buildings belong to the ground. (Unluckily they defy the photographer.) At any rate, independently I perceived this fact and put it to work. I had an idea that every house in that low region should begin *on* the ground, and not *in* it as they then began, with damp cellars. This feeling became an idea also; eliminate the "basement." I devised one at ground level. And the feeling that the house should *look* as though it began there *at* the ground, put a protecting base course as a visible edge to this foundation where, as a platform, it was evident preparation for the building itself and welded the structure to the ground.

An idea (probably rooted deep in racial instinct) that *shelter* should be the essential look of any dwelling, put the low spreading roof, flat or hipped, or low-gabled, with generously projecting eaves over the whole. I began to see a building primarily not as a cave but as broad shelter in the open, related to vista; vista without and vista within. You may see in these various feelings all taking the same direction that I was born an American child of the ground and of space, welcoming spaciousness as a modern human need as well as learning to see it as the natural human opportunity. The farm had no negligible share in developing this sense of things in me, I am sure.

Before this, by way of innate sense of comfort, had come the idea that the size of the human figure should fix every proportion of a dwelling or anything in it. Human scale was true building scale. Why not, then, the scale fixing the proportion of all buildings whatsoever? What other scale could I use? This was not a canon taught me by anyone. So I accommodated heights in the new buildings to no exaggerated established order nor to impress the beholder (I hated grandomania then as much as I hate it now) but only to comfort the human being. I knew the house dweller could seldom afford enough freedom to move about in built-in or built-over space, so, perceiving the horizontal line as the earth line of human life (the line of repose), this, as an individual sense of the thing, began to bear fruit. I first extended horizontal spacing without enlarging the building by cutting out all the room partitions that did not serve the kitchen or give needed privacy for sleeping apartments or (as in the day of the parlor) serve to prevent some formal intrusion into the intimacy of the family circle. The small social office I set aside as a necessary evil to receive "callers," for instance. Even this one concession soon disappeared as a relic of the barbarism called "fashion": the "parlor."

To get the house down to the horizontal in appropriate proportion and into quiet relationship with the ground and as a more humane consideration anyway, the servants had to come down out of the complicated attic into a unit of their own.

Freedom of floor space and elimination of useless heights worked a miracle in the new dwelling place. A sense of appropriate freedom had changed its whole aspect. The dwelling became more fit for human habitation on modern terms and far more natural to its site. An entirely new sense of space values in architecture began to come home. It now appears that, self-con-

scious of architectural implications, they first came into the architecture of the modern world. This was about 1893. Certainly something of the kind was due.

A new sense of repose in flat planes and quiet "streamline" effects had thereby and then found its way into building, as we can now see it admirably in steamships, airplanes and motorcars. The age came into its own and the "age" did not know its own. There had been nothing at all from overseas to help in getting this new architecture planted on American soil. From 1893 to 1910 Adler and Sullivan's Wainwright Buildings, the first affirmation of the tall building as *tall*—these prairie houses beginning with the Winslow house which followed the Charnley house, the Larkin Building and Unity Temple had planted it there. No, my dear "Mrs. Gablemore," "Mrs. Platerbilt," and especially, no, "Miss Flattop," nothing from "Japan" had helped at all, except the marvel of Japanese color prints. They were a lesson in elimination of the insignificant and in the beauty of the natural use of materials.

But more important than all, rising to greater dignity as idea, the ideal plasticity was now to be developed and emphasized in the treatment of the building as a whole. Plasticity was a familiar term but something I had seen in no buildings whatsoever. I had seen it in Lieber Meister's ornament only. It had not found its way into his buildings otherwise. It might now be seen creeping into the expressive lines and surfaces of the buildings I was building. You may see the appearance of the thing in the surface of your hand as contrasted with the articulation of the bony skeleton itself. This ideal, profound in its architectural implications, soon took another conscious stride forward in the form of a new aesthetic. I called it *continuity*. (It is easy to see it in the "folded plane.") Continuity in this aesthetic sense appeared to me as the natural means to achieve truly organic architecture by machine technique or by any other natural technique.

Not much yet exists in our country—no, nor in any country outside plans and models—to exemplify steel and glass at its best in the light of the new sense of building. But a new countenance, it is the countenance of principle, has already appeared around the world. A new architectural language is being brokenly, variously, and often falsely spoken by youths, with perspicacity and some breadth of view but with too little depth of knowledge that can only come from continued experience. Unfortunately, academic training and current criticism have no penetration to this inner world. The old academic order is bulging with its own important impotence. Society is cracking under the strain of a sterility education imposes far beyond capacity; exaggerated capitalism has left all this as academic heritage to its own youth. General cultural sterility, the cause of the unrest of this uncreative moment that now stalls the world might be saved and fructified by this ideal of an organic architecture: led from shallow troubled muddy water into deeper clearer pools of thought. Life needs these deeper fresher pools into which youth may plunge to come out refreshed with new creative energy to make the United States for humanity.

1941

# EDWARD GORDON CRAIG

## *Proposals Old and New*

*A Dialogue between a Theatrical Manager and an Artist of the Theatre.*

FOREWORD

In this dialogue, although the Manager says but little, he condescends to say more than most managers. He echoes those two celebrated if slightly worn phrases that "Art does not pay," and that "We give the Public what it demands." He does this, we may be sure, more from habit than from any belief in their worth.

I have purposely kept the Manager from attempting to prove that what he offers the public is either original or beautiful, for I felt that my readers were tired of hearing the old lie over again. So I have kept him as quiet as possible, unwilling that he should destroy any remaining chance of retaining esteem for his methods, or sympathy for his appalling cause. I hope in this way not to have done him any injustice.

MANAGER. That is the finest scene I ever saw. But you can't realize yon drawing upon the stage.

ARTIST. You are right: I cannot.

MANAGER. Then, if you cannot reproduce it, why do you show it to me?

ARTIST. To make an impression on you. Why ask me absurd questions?

MANAGER. Because I wish to be practical; I wish to protect my interests.

ARTIST. But you are not protecting them; you are utterly at my mercy and seem to be trying to ruin them.

MANAGER. Really you look at things in a strange way. Now come down to earth and tell me how we can realize yon design upon the stage.

ARTIST. We cannot; I have told you so repeatedly, but you were so quick with your questions you would not let me tell you something which saves the situation. That design, as I have just said, is made to give you a certain impression. When I make the same scene on the stage it is sure to be quite different in form and colour, but it will create the same impression on you as this design in front of you now.

MANAGER. Two things quite different will create the same impression? Are you joking?

ARTIST. No, I am not joking, but I will do so if you insist upon it.

MANAGER. No, tell me more; explain what you mean.

ARTIST. Well, a design for a scene on paper is one thing; a scene on the stage is another. The two have no connection with each other. Each depends on a hundred different ways and means of creating the same impression. Try to adapt the one to the other, and you get at best only a good translation. You do not understand? I know it; but what would you have? You ought to be content *not* to understand—*never* to understand; if you could comprehend you would have no need to consult me.

MANAGER. Well, it all sounds very risky.

ARTST. It is; terribly risky—for you. That is my point; that is the artist's ever-

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lasting point. He thinks; you risk. If you begin thinking everything is lost. Leave that to your stage manager—to me. You shall have no other risk but me. Risk me, and you stand the chance of gaining all. Avoid that risk, and you run no chance of winning anything.

MANAGER. You terrify me. I think you must be mad.

ARTIST. And you have only one thing to be careful about; you must take care to study the difference between the different types of men the world calls "artists." Sort them out, avoid the commercial fellows and search for the "mad" artist (I think you said mad). If you can find *one* I promise you you've found a fortune. Then risk him; play him first on the Red and then on the Black; throw him where you will, he's sure to bring you luck. But, my dear sir, whatever you do pray gamble like a gentleman; risk enormously, hazard all on this *surety;* risk with decency I beg; do not incessantly alter your mind—and for heaven's sake don't apologize for your method of play!

MANAGER. Upon my word, you are an original being!

ARTIST. I am. I thought that was why you came to me. All artists are "original" to business men and all business men are "original" to artists; both can truthfully be called eccentrics. This is as it should be. The securest foundation for a successful union. The mistake is for either of them to try and understand how the other works. Each should remain ignorant of the other's methods, and they should unite to a common madness called the "concentric." This would be very productive, very economic. Sometimes we get a man who is both artist and business man; Cecil Rhodes was such a man. He used the soil of a continent as a sculptor uses a handful of clay, and from it he fashioned United South Africa—and we shall probably learn in time that he made something even vaster than that. Learn to risk, my friend; and learn also that ideas are rare things, and that most artists are packed full of ideas. Therefore the artist is the finest of all commodities in the market.

MANAGER. But what if an idea does n't pay?

ARTIST. An idea which does n't pay has not yet been discovered. If you don't know *how* to make it pay that is not a matter I can interfere in, for if I interfere I overstep your frontiers. If you cannot make it pay that but reveals your ignorance of how to handle it, and you fail at your own game—but, observe, the idea has not failed. It waits for some one better fitted to develop it.

MANAGER. So you put the whole blame of failure on the manager or business man, not on the artist?

ARTIST. Yes, on the handling, and more especially so in the case of a very original idea. With ordinary ideas it is somewhat different. Ordinary ideas are generally rather weak, and then the only blame which can be attached to the business man is that he wasted too much time and money on working a poor field. Then the whole blame lies with the artist. The rare fields are the valuable ones, and in the realms of art the rarest field is that where the most original idea is buried. Let a shrewd business man stake all he has on that field; with patience and determination it will yield him all he desires.

MANAGER. Yes—but to return to practical matters.

ARTIST. I had never departed from them.

MANAGER. I am speaking of this design for a scene which strikes me as

quite wonderful. How are we to realize that on the stage?

ARTIST. To answer your question I must first ask you another. If we were standing on the edge of a very rich gold field and long veins of pure gold were proved to be lying buried under your very nose, and I were to ask you how to "realize" that gold, would you not answer me that the ore was not of practical commercial value until extracted, washed, removed to the mint and coined? In fact, changed entirely from its present entrancing condition and transformed into another, yet equally valuable, condition and form? Well, I answer you in the same way about this scene. And what is more, I advise you to work the mine from which that design came, and it will yield you all that you desire. But don't attempt the task with one pick and a shovel. Put money into it—all your money—don't be frightened. I happen to be a man with imagination, and in art that is the equivalent of a gold mine; it only needs to be properly worked. You will say I have no false modesty about myself. Certainly not, Sir; the best artists since time immemorial have always known how to value their powers. Fools call it conceit, but wise men know differently.

MANAGER. Why have not business men done as you suggest before now?

ARTIST. They have. They did so in the fifteenth century; the Renaissance could not have happened without them. They did so in Athens; they did so in Egypt; they will do so in England and America. In fact they have always done so except when a wave of timidity has swept over the earth and created a panic. We are just about to emerge from such a wave; it is the psychological moment.

MANAGER. And now you expect to see every one spending money upon works of art?

ARTIST. Certainly I expect to see shrewd business men investing their money in ideas; and as ideas are the property of men of imagination I expect to see these two types of man, artist and business man, combine and place good things before the public instead of worthless things. In many instances good things are already before the public; but in the branch of public service in which we are engaged you must agree with me (knowing what you know), that the public is cheated.

MANAGER. But art does n't pay in this branch of the service.

ARTIST. Again you make the ancient excuse. Art pays no worse, no better than anything else *if you know how to make it pay;* and I have just hinted to you how to make it pay, so I fail to see what other excuse you can make for not serving the public honestly and letting the band strike up at once.

MANAGER. Do you insinuate that I cheat the public?

ARTIST. No—I say it openly.

MANAGER. I give them what they demand.

ARTIST. Another excuse—the same one that I've heard for years. Why can't you invent some more reliable answers than *"It does n't pay,"* and *"I give the public what it demands?"* You probably think that what you are saying is true, but still that does not alter the fact that you are saying what is false.

It is false in many ways. You should know quite well that the Public is so vast, is composed of so many different classes and types, its tastes varying with each type, that it is sheer lunacy to assert that there is no public for works of art. It is as much as to say that the public is incapable of appreciation. If this were

so, you would have to explain how it is that the public knows the difference between a good loaf of bread and a bad one? or explain how it is that the public can discern a good day from a rainy day —how it knows a good song and a good horse from a bad song and horse? Realize that the public knows everything which is good from everything which is bad; in fact the public is as right as rain; let us hear no more criticisms of it. If you choose to criticize *a small section of the public,* that is another matter, especially if you choose that small section which grumbles at the nation's best soldiers, sailors, statesmen, judges, doctors, priests and artists. Yet, far from criticizing this section, *it is the very section you deliberately cater for in the theatre,* for those who form it are always tired after their day's grumbling and need amusement of the dullest kind. And you call that handful of the nation "the Public!"

MANAGER. You do not convince me. I am certain that if the public wanted works of art it would create a demand for them.

ARTIST. My dear Sir, you encourage me. You say the very thing I wanted to say. "To create a demand." You realize that a public demand is CREATED and does not create itself. You realize that the nation entrusts certain of its officers with the different tasks of creating this, that and the other, and amongst these things is the "creating a demand." The public cannot speak for itself; if the whole lot speak at once no one is heard; if one man speaks he is not listened to unless he is elected as spokesman by the whole nation. Now who has the nation elected to speak for it about this matter of art? No one. Therefore until it does elect some representative, how shall we know its wishes?

MANAGER. But two hundred thousand men and women visited the Grand Theatre to see "Julius Cæsar," and thereby—

ARTIST. Two hundred thousand people are not the Public, and the directors of the public taste in theatrical matters are self-elected. A fine state of affairs indeed!

MANAGER. What would you propose doing to discern the tastes of the nation?

ARTIST. I should propose that you should try to go to the people. Send companies round England and America for the purpose of collecting votes for and against certain types of play and certain ways of producing plays. Let these companies play three plays by Shakespeare—"Hamlet," the "Merchant of Venice," and "Henry V"; a play by Sheridan and one by Ibsen; a play by Goldsmith and one by Goldoni; a play by Molière and a modern French problem play; a play by Shaw, one by Strindberg, one by Synge and one by Yeats, and one Pantomime or Dumb-show drama. Let these plays be produced very carefully by the different stage managers keen for the competition. Let this company call at every centre in America, and afterwards at several of the smaller towns, and let the people record their votes for and against the different pieces. Of course the question at issue will have to be laid clearly before them, and their serious consideration of the pieces requested.

The journals all over England and America would take the matter up and would help to make this question clear. The best journals would point out to their readers that the question was one of those affecting the national welfare, and a difficult one to answer, and would help the people to see the difference between a healthy and an unhealthy

drama; between a romantic or poetic treatment and a drab and realistic treatment. The excitement created by this tour of the States would in all probability create a new and serious interest in the theatre, and the whole country would at last be glad to take up the matter of State theatres.

Such a plan as I have sketched out roughly for you is capable of development, and is just the kind of thing that would encourage the theatre. It would cost money, but it would bring in money, and the direct advantages to be derived from such a step are as obvious as they are enormous. Here then is an opportunity for a business man of ability to make his mark. After this test you will probably be surprised to find that the public has all along been opposed to the rubbish which it is forced to accept at the theatre in place of good stuff.

MANAGER. And what do you think the public wishes?

ARTIST. All that is good. It wants good statesmen and good fighters in an emergency, and it gets them. It wants good amusements and good art. The first it sometimes gets; the second is withheld from it. The cinemas, the vaudevilles and the circuses provide admirable amusement. The Theatre should provide for its art. Popular art? Certainly popular art. When certain sections of the public wish for relaxation they find it in the music hall. Excellent! But when another section of the public wants something better than leather, it looks for it and can't find it, and is disappointed. Think how invigorating Shakespeare could be made to that enormous section of the public who work with their brains all day! Think of the doctors, priests, writers, painters, musicians, architects, city men, engineers, army and navy men, politicians, secretaries, editors, journalists and other social men and women to whom a vigorous living theatre might prove *refreshing,* and who are to-day obliged to avoid the place because it is wearisome—a bore.

It is utterly impossible to believe that the failure of the theatre to-day is due to a low standard of public taste. Public taste was never better than it is going to be to-morrow. Test the statement by the method I have suggested and you will be doing a great thing for the nation. But get up early, if you want to be in time.

1910

# THORSTEIN VEBLEN

## *Summary and Trial Balance*

### From THE HIGHER LEARNING

AS IN earlier passages, so here in speaking of profit and loss, the point of view taken is neither that of material advantage, whether of the individuals concerned or of the community at large, nor that of expediency for the common good in respect of prosperity or of morals; nor is the appraisal

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here ventured upon to be taken as an expression of praise or dispraise at large, touching this incursion of business principles into the affairs of learning.

By and large, the intrusion of businesslike ideals, aims and methods into this field, with all the consequences that follow, may be commendable or the reverse. All that is matter for attention and advisement at the hands of such as aim to alter, improve, amend or conserve the run of institutional phenomena that goes to make up the current situation. The present inquiry bears on the higher learning as it comes into this current situation, and on the effect of this recourse to business principles upon the pursuit of learning.

Not that this learning is therefore to be taken as necessarily of higher and more substantial value than that traffic in competitive gain and competitive spending upon which business principles converge, and in which they find their consummate expression,—even though it is broadly to be recognized and taken account of that such is the deliberate appraisal awarded by the common sense of civilized mankind. The profit and loss here spoken for is not profit and loss, to mankind or to any given community, in respect of that inclusive complex of interests that makes up the balanced total of good and ill; it is profit and loss for the cause of learning, simply; and there is here no aspiration to pass on ulterior questions. As required by the exigencies of such an argument, it is therefore assumed, *pro forma,* that profit and loss for the pursuit of learning is profit and loss without reservation; very much as a corporation accountant will audit income and outlay within the affairs of the corporation, whereas, *qua* accountant, he will perforce have nothing to say as to the ulterior expediency of the corporation and its affairs in any other bearing.

Business principles take effect in academic affairs most simply, obviously and avowably in the way of a businesslike administration of the scholastic routine; where they lead immediately to a bureaucratic organization and a system of scholastic accountancy. In one form or another, some such administrative machinery is a necessity in any large school that is to be managed on a centralized plan; as the American schools commonly are, and as, more particularly, they aim to be. This necessity is all the more urgent in a school that takes over the discipline of a large body of pupils that have not reached years of discretion, as is also commonly the case with those American schools that claim rank as universities; and the necessity is all the more evident to men whose ideal of efficiency is the centralized control exercised through a system of accountancy in the modern large business concerns. The larger American schools are primarily undergraduate establishments,—with negligible exceptions; and under these current American conditions, of excessive numbers, such a centralized and bureaucratic administration appears to be indispensable for the adequate control of immature and reluctant students; at the same time, such an organization conduces to an excessive size. The immediate and visible effect of such a large and centralized administrative machinery is, on the whole, detrimental to scholarship, even in the undergraduate work; though it need not be so in all respects and unequivocally, so far as regards that routine training that is embodied in the undergraduate curriculum. But it is at least a necessary evil in any school that is of so considerable a size

as to preclude substantially all close or cordial personal relations between the teachers and each of these immature pupils under their charge, as, again, is commonly the case with these American undergraduate establishments. Such a system of authoritative control, standardization, gradation, accountancy, classification, credits and penalties, will necessarily be drawn on stricter lines the more the school takes on the character of a house of correction or a penal settlement; in which the irresponsible inmates are to be held to a round of distasteful tasks and restrained from (conventionally) excessive irregularities of conduct. At the same time this recourse to such coercive control and standardization of tasks has unavoidably given the schools something of the character of a penal settlement.

As intimated above, the ideal of efficiency by force of which a large-scale centralized organization commends itself in these premises is that pattern of shrewd management whereby a large business concern makes money. The underlying businesslike presumption accordingly appears to be that learning is a merchantable commodity, to be produced on a piece-rate plan, rated, bought and sold by standard units, measured, counted and reduced to staple equivalence by impersonal, mechanical tests. In all its bearings the work is hereby reduced to a mechanistic statistical consistency, with numerical standards and units; which conduces to perfunctory and mediocre work throughout, and acts to deter both students and teachers from a free pursuit of knowledge, as contrasted with the pursuit of academic credits. So far as this mechanistic system goes freely into effect it leads to a substitution of salesmanlike proficiency —a balancing of bargains in staple credits—in the place of scientific capacity and addiction to study.

The salesmanlike abilities and the men of affairs that so are drawn into the academic personnel, are presumably, somewhat under grade in their kind; since the pecuniary inducement offered by the schools is rather low as compared with the remuneration for office work of a similar character in the common run of business occupations, and since businesslike employés of this kind may fairly be presumed to go unreservedly to the highest bidder. Yet these more unscholarly members of the staff will necessarily be assigned the more responsible and discretionary positions in the academic organization; since under such a scheme of standardization, accountancy and control, the school becomes primarily a bureaucratic organization, and the first and unremitting duties of the staff are those of official management and accountancy. The further qualifications requisite in the members of the academic staff will be such as make for vendibility,—volubility, tactful effrontery, conspicuous conformity to the popular taste in all matters of opinion, usage and conventions.

The need of such a businesslike organization asserts itself in somewhat the same degree in which the academic policy is guided by considerations of magnitude and statistical renown; and this in turn is somewhat closely correlated with the extent of discretionary power exercised by the captain of erudition placed in control. At the same time, by provocation of the facilities which it offers for making an impressive demonstration, such bureaucratic organization will lead the university management to bend its energies with somewhat more singleness to the parade of magnitude and statistical gains. It also, and in the

same connection, provokes to a persistent and detailed surveillance and direction of the work and manner of life of the academic staff, and so it acts to shut off initiative of any kind in the work done.

Intimately bound up with this bureaucratic officialism and accountancy, and working consistently to a similar outcome, is the predilection for "practical efficiency"—that is to say, for pecuniary success—prevalent in the American community. This predilection is a matter of settled habit, due, no doubt, to the fact that preoccupation with business interests characterizes this community in an exceptional degree, and that pecuniary habits of thought consequently rule popular thinking in a peculiarly uncritical and prescriptive fashion. This pecuniary animus falls in with and reinforces the movement for academic accountancy, and combines with it to further a so-called "practical" bias in all the work of the schools.

It appears, then, that the intrusion of business principles in the universities goes to weaken and retard the pursuit of learning, and therefore to defeat the ends for which a university is maintained. This result follows, primarily, from the substitution of impersonal, mechanical relations, standards and tests, in the place of personal conference, guidance and association between teachers and students; as also from the imposition of a mechanically standardized routine upon the members of the staff, whereby any disinterested preoccupation with scholarly or scientific inquiry is thrown into the background and falls into abeyance. Few if any who are competent to speak in these premises will question that such has been the outcome. To offset against this work of mutilation and retardation there are certain gains in expedition, and in the volume of traffic that can be carried by any given equipment and corps of employés. Particularly will there be a gain in the statistical showing, both as regards the volume of instruction offered, and probably also as regards the enrolment; since accountancy creates statistics and its absence does not.

Such increased enrolment as may be due to businesslike management and methods is an increase of undergraduate enrolment. The net effect as regards the graduate enrolment—apart from any vocational instruction that may euphemistically be scheduled as "graduate"—is in all probability rather a decrease than an increase. Through indoctrination with utilitarian (pecuniary) ideals of earning and spending, as well as by engendering spendthrift and sportsmanlike habits, such a businesslike management diverts the undergraduate students from going in for the disinterested pursuit of knowledge, and so from entering on what is properly university work; as witness the relatively slight proportion of graduate students—outside of the professional schools—who come up from the excessively large undergraduate departments of the more expansive universities, as contrasted with the number of those who come into university work from the smaller and less businesslike colleges.

The ulterior consequences that follow from such businesslike standardization and bureaucratic efficiency are evident in the current state of the public schools; especially as seen in the larger towns, where the principles of business management have had time and scope to work out in a fair degree of consistency. The resulting abomination of desolation is sufficiently notorious. And there appears to be no reason why a similarly

stale routine of futility should not overtake the universities, and give similarly foolish results, as fast as the system of standardization, accountancy and piecework goes consistently into effect,—except only for the continued enforced employment of a modicum of impracticable scholars and scientists on the academic staff, whose unbusinesslike scholarly proclivities and inability to keep the miner's-inch of scholastic credit always in mind, must in some measure always defeat the perfect working of standardization and accountancy.

As might be expected, this régime of graduated sterility has already made fair headway in the undergraduate work, especially in the larger undergraduate schools; and this in spite of any efforts on the part of the administration to hedge against such an outcome by recourse to an intricate system of electives and a wide diversification of the standard units of erudition so offered.

In the graduate work the like effect is only less visible, because the measures leading to it have come into bearing more recently, and hitherto less unreservedly. But the like results should follow here also, just so fast and so far as the same range of business principles come to be worked into the texture of the university organization in the same efficacious manner as they have already taken effect in the public schools. And, pushed on as it is by the progressive substitution of men imbued with the tastes and habits of practical affairs, in the place of unpractical scholarly ideals, the movement towards a perfunctory routine of mediocrity should logically be expected to go forward at a progressively accelerated rate. The visible drift of things in this respect in the academic pursuit of the social sciences, so-called, is an argument as to what may be hoped for in the domain of academic science at large. It is only that the executive is actuated by a sharper solicitude to keep the academic establishment blameless of anything like innovation or iconoclasm at this point; which reinforces the drift toward a mechanistic routine and a curtailment of inquiry in this field; it is not that these sciences that deal with the phenomena of human life lend themselves more readily to mechanical description and enumeration than the material sciences do, nor is their subject matter intrinsically more inert or less provocative of questions.

1918

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# REINHOLD NIEBUHR

## *Is Religion Counter-Revolutionary?*

THE MARXIAN charge that religion is an opiate and that its general influence upon society is reactionary, contains several specifications which must be taken up in turn. The specification which deserves first consideration is the one which is most unequivocally true. It is that religion creates a reverence for authority and encourages a humble obedience toward and a patient acceptance

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of the exactions of power, thus aggravating the injustices of a social system and retarding their elimination. This charge is broadly true. It is true that in the history of Christianity St. Paul's admonition, recorded in Romans 13, to be obedient to government because all government is an ordinance of God has had a baneful effect upon the relation of Christianity to politics. It made every Christian state a sacerdotal state and bound the Christian religion to monarchial politics, to such a degree that the democratic movement in Europe had to be anti-religious to be effective (except insofar as Calvinism provided a religious authority for rebellion against autocracy and monarchism). The undue emphasis of orthodox Christianity upon the sanctity of government not only tended to supply a particular kind of government, monarchy, with the aura of the sacred; it also gave an undue advantage to whatever prince happened to sit upon the throne, no matter by what means he had usurped it. Once entrenched there he could count upon religion to support him and to intone prayers in the churches for his health. This kind of obedience was further buttressed by the doctrine, dating from Augustine, that evil rulers must also be obeyed because they are to be regarded as punishment sent by God for the sins of men, just as government in general is also a method of holding sinful men in check.

Some of this Christian doctrine leads to such political perversity that one cannot blame the eighteenth century for imagining that perfect justice could be established if only "priests and their hypocritical tools could be eliminated." Yet the liberal and radical rationalist is quite wrong in imagining that the religious sanctification of authority is nothing more than the fruit of priestly hypocrisy and can be overcome merely by destroying either the Christian religion or religion in general. While priests through all the ages have no doubt manipulated the sentiments of religion to maintain either their own power or that of some warrior class to which they were attached they could not create a religious obedience to authority out of whole cloth. They could only manipulate what actually existed in life. The fact is that from the earliest tribal life through all of the glories of great empires, religion has been the chief cement of social cohesion. The early tribe was a sacred brotherhood. The later empire was held together by a sacred ruler. The larger units of cooperation and conflict were not homogeneous. They could not be held together by a religiously colored sense of brotherhood. They could be held together only by a religiously colored obedience to authority. Hence the significance of the priest in the Egyptian and the Babylonian empires. Of course force was as necessary as reverence to hold these early societies together. Either the priest was also a warrior or the authority rested in a partnership of priests and warriors. This proves that force and reverence are the two primary forces of social cohesion. The more modern and rationalistic "consent of the governed" may be a third force; but it will never be as powerful as modern rationalists imagine, for the simple reason that the binding forces in human society are not chiefly rational but emotional.

Religious reverence for authority is therefore something which springs out of a perennially fresh spring of human emotions. It is no doubt dangerous. In it the gratitude of the common man

for the principle of any social order, which sustains his social life, is easily transmuted into an undue reverence for the particular social order in which he stands and the particular authority which manipulates that society. But the dangerous nature of this element in social and religious life is not dealt with successfully by a mere emotional protest against all religion. Christianity did not create this element, even though St. Paul gave it a succinct expression. The priests of old did not fashion it out of their own malevolent souls. The fact is that it is so perennial that the very communist critics who seek to destroy religion in order to eliminate this pious respect for authority have already reestablished it in Russia. What are the Russian oligarchs but priest-kings? They are not even under the necessity of bargaining with other priests and prophets to maintain the sacred aura over their power. Their power is holy of itself. It is hallowed by the religious beliefs of the multitudes over whom they hold sway. For their religion teaches the multitudes that these men of power are not subject to the temptations of other men of power, that they have a mystical identity of interest with the common man and that they are the harbingers of an ultimate society in which there will be no power and no unequal division of function or privilege. Every tenet of this religion inculcates a patient and reverent obedience of the common man toward those who have been set in authority over him. This is truly a power "ordained of God" even though God bears the secular name of "dialectic of history." There will never be an age in which critical intelligence will not be called upon to corrode the undue piety and reverence with which social power is venerated in the imagination of the common man. Perhaps one way of solving the problem is to allow all this emotion to be attached to some symbol of society who does not have any real power, as in the case of British constitutional monarchy.

To a certain degree this particular reactionary tendency of religion has not been as potent and as dangerous in the period of bourgeois democracy as in the feudal period. The bourgeois state is a rationalistic state, conceived in terms of the social contract. It is so lacking in religious sanctity that the gentlemen of the Liberty League are making frantic efforts to construct the constitution into an adequate symbol of this now deficient religious loyalty. It is safe to assume that a Liberty League would emerge in our political situation even if our society were completely secular and non-Christian. On the whole it is very secular, certainly more secular than either Russia or Germany. In Germany a new national religion provides the authority of the state with a more unqualified sanctity than Christianity ever gave any state or any ruler. Yes, we must agree with the Marxians. The religiously sacred state power, hiding its injustices behind its sanctities is a dangerous hazard to justice. But if all historic religions were wiped out tomorrow, that problem would still be with us.

What the Marxian charge against religion completely obscures is that a prophetic religion has its own antidote for the poison of a too conforming piety. It has a force of spirituality which brings all authority under criticism. It believes in a God who "bringeth the princes to nothing" and before whom "all nations are as nothing." The resolute word "we must obey God rather than man" has again and again been the battle cry of men who resisted

political tyranny. Their religion made them more stubborn in their resistance than any merely skeptical attitude toward authority. The pretentious sanctities of politics can be met effectively only by higher sanctities and the too simple loyalties of political man can be challenged only by higher religious loyalties. In these latter days this higher religious loyalty may be an international proletariat. But it is not the only and not the most effective higher loyalty. An international class is something less than God and when it makes itself God we will have the same old problem over again, the problem of giving undue authority to partial historical forces.

It cannot be denied that organized religion produces more piety than spirituality and more conformity to authority than rebellion against it. But that is true of every aspect of organized culture. Organized education inculcates obedience rather than criticism. Will the radical destroy education because it is conservative in its organized expression? On the contrary he will capture it to make it conforming in his new society.

The second specific charge brought against religion in general and Christianity in particular is that it beguiles men from consideration of their mundane problems by the hope of other-worldly bliss. This charge is also broadly true. As far back as the Amon worship of Egypt, religion has offered men other-worldly hopes to assuage their sorrows in this world. Undoubtedly the ruling oligarchies of every society have made good use of this other-worldliness to dampen the spirit of rebellion and to increase the patience with which their vexatious rule was borne by the poor. Yet here too we are not dealing with a reaction to life which can be neatly called "religious" and which can be eliminated by destroying religion. Religion for the poor, declared Karl Marx "is the spirit of their spiritless condition." Translated that means that it is a kind of a desperate hope of hopeless men. No one can deny that this hope is morally deleterious when it persuades men to accept conditions which ought to be altered and which they could alter by their own strength if they had the courage. In that sense other-worldliness is a terrible evil. But just what is this other-worldly hope? Basically it is the feeling that life as is, is not what it ought to be, that therefore when we experience the anarchy and tyranny, the cruelty and injustice in human society we are confronted with a terrible aberration of the essential reality of life. The communist asserts exactly the same faith when he hopes for a day when social conflict will be abolished and perfect brotherhood established. There is almost as much illusion in that hope incidentally as in the other-worldly hopes of religious dreamers. No historic society will ever achieve perfect peace and justice. This does not imply that the social utopianism and the social apocalypticism of social, as against individual types of religion, are not more serviceable to the cause of social justice than the dualism of individualistic religion which places its hope in some pure supernal world. The evil effects of dualistic influences upon Christian thought are apparent everywhere in its history. It is a regrettable fact that Christianity frequently lost its Hebraic heritage in which salvation is promised at the end and not above history, in which, in other words, the only redemption desired is the redemption of this world of nature-history. This Hebraic heritage, neglected in Christianity, is precisely what

Marxism has developed in a secularized and naturalistic form. Nor can it be denied that the other-worldly tendencies in Christianity have either been definitely encouraged or found to be a very convenient tool by the ruling oligarchies of the feudal and the capitalistic period.

Yet this charge against other-worldliness cannot be made against religion in general. It can be made against types of Christianity; perhaps it could even be claimed that Christianity has been prevailingly dualistic. But the charge certainly does not fit the religion of prophets, not the prophetic elements in Christianity. In both America and England some of the most effective spirits of the radical movement have come out of the religious tradition. They have been driven by the religious longing for the establishment of the ideal in history. They have been set upon their way by distinctively religious motives and forces. Only an ignorant or malevolent dogmatism can persist in the convenient evasion that such lives are merely brands that have been plucked from the burning, or exceptions that prove the rule.

A further word needs to be said in qualified defense of traditional other-worldliness. It may be counter-revolutionary and dangerous. But it is also the religious expression of a permanent factor in human life, namely the conflict between the individual and society and the feeling that human destiny and individual worth always transcend and are never completely expressed in the social situation. In this sense it is true that fully developed religions will always have an individualistic motif which purely political religions do not have. Sometimes this individualistic element will be a definite detriment to, and come in opposition with, a socio-religious passion. But the latter can eliminate the former, or dream of the possibility of eliminating it, only in such periods in which men give themselves to the illusion that they can build a society in which the individual can be inserted into a frictionless social harmony and have all his longings, dreams and aspiration fulfilled in it. In such a society all tensions and all possibilities of growth would be eliminated. It would be not the beginning but the end of history. Its realization is a utopian dream. Once it is recognized that the socialist society which we intend to build will not be a perfect society and that it will not be able to save individuals from many frustrations, unfulfilled hopes and unrealized dreams, it must also be conceded that individuals are bound to express themselves not only by setting new goals for a better society but by finding ways of bearing the injustices and frustrations of the moment in terms of a faith which sees life in its essential rather than its existential reality. That is a kind of other-worldliness, even if it dispenses with traditional hopes of immortality. Inasfar as historic religions express this dimension of individual life and do justice to this individual problem, they will be and are bound to be regarded as "counter-revolutionary" from the perspective of a too utopian and a too simply political religion. They may in fact actually be counter-revolutionary in the sense that they will encourage a more qualified devotion to socio-political ends than will seem justified in a moment when all that seems good is pitted against all that is evil in a given social struggle.The truth in the approach of historic religion cannot be proved until it becomes apparent that every political religion has tendencies to absolutize itself. These tendencies have

the roots of social decay in them. It is when this decay sets in that a truly prophetic religion which is not completely committed to any political cause will prove itself to be truly revolutionary, for it will have a perspective from which it can judge, criticize and condemn the partial achievements of any historical movement. It is as important for Christian radicals to defend this ultimate basis of a continual revolution in high religion as to resist the efforts of reactionaries to reduce religion to social impotence by making false use of its individualism.

The final charge brought against religion is that it is the real root of the idealistic philosophies which interpret morals, culture and the spiritual life of man in terms which obscure the relation of economic interest and physical facts to the world of ideals and ideas. This charge is broadly justified but it must be made not only against religion but against the whole rationalistic culture of western civilization and holds more unqualifiedly against a secular culture than against the religious one. It is one of the sinful pretensions of all cultural enterprises to think of themselves as the fruits of pure mind and pure conscience and to interpret their history as the development of a kind of discarnate spirituality. This charge can be levelled not only against idealistic philosophy but even against the secular liberalism of today, with its basis of philosophical empiricism. Even there, though the dependence of mind upon the stuff of nature and history is recognized, there is a foolish confidence in the possibility of developing a rationality which will transcend the social facts which it judges and thus arrive at "objective" and "impartial" judgments. In the modern day the physical and economic basis of all culture is more frequently obscured by empiricists than by the old fashioned philosophical idealists. Whether the metaphysical system is idealistic or empirical, the real weakness of these philosophies lies in their undue confidence in rationality. They do not understand to what degree the human mind is the instrument, the victim and the prisoner of human passions and immediate necessities. The idea, for instance, that nothing but a cultural lag prevents the social sciences from achieving the precision of the physical sciences, is a very modern idea, is derived neither from philosophical idealism nor from religion. It is the product of a completely secular, bourgeois culture. Yet it reveals the weakness, which the Marxian is trying to isolate when he speaks of the idealism of religion, more perfectly than any religious system.

The real fact is that prophetic religion is much too conscious of human finitude and sin to have the confidence in human reason and human goodness which both idealistic and empirical philosophies have betrayed. Sometimes this wholesome sense of sin has been weakened in Christian orthodoxy by the belief that the Christian faith and life lifted men completely out of and redeemed them from their enslavement to the world of nature and necessity. On this issue liberal religion is worse than orthodox religion. Its moralism, and its unwillingness to recognize the facts of nature in human history (the class struggle for instance) is at the present time a greater hazard to the understanding of the socio-moral problem of modern man than all the discredited myths of orthodoxy. But this moralism and sentimentality is not a characteristic fruit of the Christian religion at all. It is the fruit of the Age of Reason which

has been carried into liberal religion.

It is impossible to deal intelligently with the social problem of man if the whole world of culture, secular and religious, liberal and conservative does not give more generous understanding of the truth which Marxism has discovered, or at least rediscovered: The truth that all human ideals and ideas are conditioned by the physical, geographic, economic and political circumstances in which they rise and that the final religious effort to escape this relativity may frequently become no more than the final rationalization and justification of the partial and relative value of class, race and nation. In that sense the ultimate dishonesty of a culture is always a religious one. Yet on the other hand it is precisely in a high religion, which sees the whole world of history as relative to the absolute and final goodness in God, that these dishonesties and deceptions of culture can be best discovered. However badly organized religion has become enmeshed in the immediate interests of class and nation, it has also always generated out of itself a minority of prophetic spirits who placed the pretensions of their culture and civilization under a divine judgment. In that capacity for judging all relative and partial values and in the humility which does not claim to reach an absolutely pure judgment itself, even while it sees what is partial and incomplete in every culture, in these lie the genius of prophetic religion. In them lie also the guarantee of perpetual revolution, protest, rebellion and criticism in human affairs.

It cannot be denied that this prophetic and revolutionary spirit in religion is frequently corrupted and destroyed. But it must also be recognized that the too simple Marxian might regard it as counter-revolutionary at the precise moment when it is functioning most perfectly. For that might be a moment when it calls attention to the fact that proletarian culture can be no more absolute and final than bourgeois culture was and that therefore the working class ought to be content to fulfill a great and fateful task in history without claiming to be a messianic class which will usher in the kingdom of God. A truly prophetic religion ought to turn against the spiritual pretensions of a proletarian culture as well as against preceding cultures. It is one of the tragedies of modern culture that the radical rebel against religious complacency and dishonesty falsifies the real facts and the total situation by condemning religion for its virtues as well as for its vices. Its virtues are of course bound to appear like vices from the perspective of a purely political religion. For those virtues are the ability to see and the courage to say that history relativizes all ideals and that human passions and interests condition all ideologies, including those of the leaders of proletarian rebellion.

It is consequently the business of radical religion to contend equally against the reactionary tendencies of organized religion and against the misunderstandings of the total human situation in the philosophy, and therefore in the strategy of radicalism.

1935

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# CRITICISM

# WILLIAM HAZLITT

## *Mr. Cobbett*

People have about as substantial an idea of Cobbett as they have of Cribb. His blows are as hard, and he himself is as impenetrable. One has no notion of him as making use of a fine pen, but a great mutton-fist; his style stuns his readers, and he "fillips the ear of the public with a three-man beetle." He is too much for any single newspaper antagonist, "lays waste" a city orator or Member of Parliament, and bears hard upon the Government itself. He is a kind of *fourth estate* in the politics of the country. He is not only unquestionably the most powerful political writer of the present day, but one of the best writers in the language. He speaks and thinks plain, broad, downright English. He might be said to have the clearness of Swift, the naturalness of Defoe, and the picturesque satirical description of Mandeville: if all such comparisons were not impertinent. A really great and original writer is like nobody but himself. In one sense, Sterne was not a wit, nor Shakespeare a poet. It is easy to describe second-rate talents, because they fall into a class and enlist under a standard: but first-rate powers defy calculation or comparison, and can be defined only by themselves. They are *sui generis,* and make the class to which they belong. I have tried half-a-dozen times to describe Burke's style without ever succeeding: its severe extravagance, its literal boldness, its matter-of-fact hyperboles, its running away with a subject and from it at the same time; but there is no making it out, for there is no example of the same thing any where else. We have no common measure to refer to; and his qualities contradict even themselves.

Cobbett is not so difficult. He has been compared to Paine; and so far it is true there are no two writers who come more into juxtaposition from the nature of their subjects, from the internal resources on which they draw, and from the popular effect of their writings and their adaptation (though that is a bad word in the present case) to the capacity of every reader. But still, if we turn to a volume of Paine's (his Common Sense or Rights of Man) we are struck (not to say somewhat refreshed) by the difference. Paine is a much more sententious writer than Cobbett. You cannot open a page in any of his best and earlier works without meeting with some maxim, some antithetical and memorable saying, which is a sort of starting-place for the argument, and the goal to which it returns. There is not a single *bon-mot,* a single sentence in Cobbett that has ever been quoted again. If any thing is ever quoted from him, it is an epithet of abuse or a nickname. He is an excellent hand at invention in that way, and has "damnable iteration in him." What could be better than his pestering Erskine year after year with his second title of Baron Clackmannan? He is rather too fond of such phrases as *the Sons and Daughters of Corruption.* Paine affected to reduce things to first principles, to announce self-evident truths. Cobbett

troubles himself about little but the details and local circumstances. The first appeared to have made up his mind beforehand to certain opinions, and to try to find the most compendious and pointed expressions for them: his successor appears to have no clue, no fixed or leading principles, nor ever to have thought on a question till he sits down to write about it. But then there seems no end of his matters of fact and raw materials, which are brought out in all their strength and sharpness from not having been squared or frittered down or vamped up to suit a theory. He goes on with his descriptions and illustrations as if he would never come to a stop; they have all the force of novelty with all the familiarity of old acquaintance. His knowledge grows out of the subject, and his style is that of a man who has an absolute intuition of what he is talking about, and never thinks of any thing else. He deals in premises and speaks to evidence: the coming to a conclusion and summing up (which was Paine's *forte*) lies in a smaller compass. The one could not compose an elementary treatise on politics to become a manual for the popular reader; nor could the other in all probability have kept up a weekly journal for the same number of years with the same spirit, interest, and untired perseverance. Paine's writings are a sort of introduction to political arithmetic on a new plan; Cobbett keeps a day-book, and makes an entry at full of all the occurrences and troublesome questions that start up throughout the year. Cobbett, with vast industry, vast information, and the utmost power of making what he says intelligible, never seems to get at the beginning or come to the end of any question: Paine in a few short sentences seems by his peremptory manner "to clear it from all controversy, past, present, and to come." Paine takes a bird's-eye view of things; Cobbett sticks close to them, inspects the component parts, and keeps fast hold of the smallest advantages they afford him. Or if I might here be indulged in a pastoral allusion, Paine tries to enclose his ideas in a fold for security and repose; Cobbett lets *his* pour out upon the plain like a flock of sheep to feed and batten. Cobbett is a pleasanter writer for those to read who do not agree with him; for he is less dogmatical, goes more into the common grounds of fact and argument to which all appeal, is more desultory and various, and appears less to be driving at a previous conclusion than urged on by the force of present conviction. He is therefore tolerated by all parties, though he has made himself by turns obnoxious to all; and even those he abuses read him. The Reformers read him when he was a Tory, and the Tories read him now that he is a Reformer. He must, I think, however, be *caviare* to the Whigs.[1]

If he is less metaphysical and poetical than his celebrated prototype, he is more picturesque and dramatic. His episodes, which are numerous as they are pertinent, are striking, interesting, full of life and *naïveté,* minute, double measure running over, but never tedious—*nunquam sufflaminandus erat.* He is one of those writers who can never tire us, not even of himself; and the reason is, he is always "full of matter." He never runs to lees, never gives us the vapid leavings of himself, is never "weary, stale, and unprofitable," but always setting out afresh on his journey, clearing away some old nuisance, and

[1] The late Lord Chancellor Thurlow used to say that Cobbett was the only writer that deserved the name of a political reasoner.

turning up new mould. His egotism is delightful, for there is no affectation in it. He does not talk of himself for lack of something to write about, but because some circumstance that has happened to himself is the best possible illustration of the subject; and he is not the man to shrink from giving the best possible illustration of the subject from a squeamish delicacy. He likes both himself and his subject too well. He does not put himself before it, and say "admire me first," but places us in the same situation with himself, and makes us see all that he does. There is no blind man's buff, no conscious hints, no awkward ventriloquism, no testimonies of applause, no abstract, senseless self-complacency, no smuggled admiration of his own person by proxy; it is all plain and above-board. He writes himself plain William Cobbett, strips himself quite as naked as any body could wish: in a word, his egotism is full of individuality, and has room for very little vanity in it. We feel delighted, rub our hands, and draw our chair to the fire, when we come to a passage of this sort: we know it will be something new and good, manly and simple, not the same insipid story of self over again. We sit down at table with the writer, but it is of a course of rich viands—flesh, fish, and wild fowl—and not to a nominal entertainment, like that given by the Barmecide in the Arabian Nights, who put off his visitor with calling for a number of exquisite things that never appeared, and with the honour of his company. Mr. Cobbett is not a *make-believe* writer. His worst enemy cannot say that of him. Still less is he a vulgar one. He must be a puny common-place critic indeed, who thinks him so. How fine were the graphical descriptions he sent us from America: what a transatlantic flavour, what a native *gusto*, what a fine *sauce piquante* of contempt they were seasoned with! If he had sat down to look at himself in the glass, instead of looking about him like Adam in Paradise, he would not have got up these articles in so capital a style. What a noble account of his first breakfast after his arrival in America! It might serve for a month. There is no scene on the stage more amusing. How well he paints the gold and scarlet plumage of the American birds, only to lament more pathetically the want of the wild wood-notes of his native land! The groves of the Ohio that had just fallen beneath the axe's stroke, "live in his description," and the turnips that he transplanted from Botley "look green" in prose! How well at another time he describes the poor sheep that had got the tick, and had tumbled down in the agonies of death! It is a portrait in the manner of Bewick, with the strength, the simplicity, and feeling of that great naturalist. What havoc he makes, when he pleases, of the curls of Dr. Parr's wig and of the Whig consistency of Mr.——! His Grammar, too, is as entertaining as a story-book. He is too hard, however, upon the style of others, and not enough (sometimes) on his own.

As a political partisan, no one can stand against him. With his brandished club, like Giant Despair in the Pilgrim's Progress, he knocks out their brains: and not only no individual, but no corrupt system, could hold out against his powerful and repeated attacks. But with the same weapon, swung round like a flail, with which he levels his antagonists, he lays his friends low, and puts his own party *hors de combat*. This is a bad propensity, and a worse principle in political tactics,

though a common one. If his blows were straightforward and steadily directed to the same object, no unpopular minister could live before him; instead of which he lays about right and left impartially and remorselessly, makes a clear stage, has all the ring to himself, and then runs out of it, just when he should stand his ground. He throws his head into his adversary's stomach, and takes away from him all inclination for the fight, hits fair or foul, strikes at everything, and as you come up to his aid or stand ready to pursue his advantage, trips up your heels or lays you sprawling, and pummels you when down as much to his heart's content as ever the Yanguesian carriers belaboured Rosinante with their pack-staves. *"He has the back-trick simply the best of any man in Illyria."* He pays off both scores of old friendship and new-acquired enmity in a breath, in one perpetual volley, one raking fire of "arrowy sleet" shot from his pen. However his own reputation or the cause may suffer in consequence, he cares not one pin about that, so that he disables all who oppose or who pretend to help him. In fact, he cannot bear success of any kind, not even of his own views or party; and if any principle were likely to become popular, would turn round against it, to show his power in shouldering it on one side. In short, wherever power is, there is he against it: he naturally butts at all obstacles, as unicorns are attracted to oak-trees, and feels his own strength only by resistance to the opinions and wishes of the rest of the world. To sail with the stream, to agree with the company, is not his humour. If he could bring about a Reform in Parliament, the odds are that he would instantly fall foul of and try to mar his own handywork; and he quarrels with his own creatures as soon as he has written them into a little vogue—and a prison. I do not think this is vanity or fickleness so much as a pugnacious disposition, that must have an antagonist power to contend with, and only finds itself at ease in systematic opposition. If it were not for this, the high towers and rotten places of the world would fall before the battering-ram of his hard-headed reasoning: but if he once found them tottering, he would apply his strength to prop them up, and disappoint the expectations of his followers. He cannot agree to any thing established, nor to set up any thing else in its stead. While it is established, he presses hard against it, because it presses upon him, at least in imagination. Let it crumble under his grasp, and the motive to resistance is gone. He then requires some other grievance to set his face against. His principle is repulsion, his nature contradiction: he is made up of mere antipathies; an Ishmaelite indeed, without a fellow. He is always playing at *hunt-the-slipper* in politics. He turns round upon whoever is next to him. The way to wean him from any opinion, and make him conceive an intolerable hatred against it, would be to place somebody near him who was perpetually dinning it in his ears. When he is in England, he does nothing but abuse the Boroughmongers, and laugh at the whole system: when he is in America, he grows impatient of freedom and a republic. If he had stayed there a little longer, he would have become a loyal and a loving subject of his Majesty King George IV. He lampooned the French Revolution when it was hailed as the dawn of liberty by millions; by the time it was brought into almost universal ill-odour by some means or other (partly no doubt by himself) he had turned, with

one or two or three others, staunch Bonapartist. He is always of the militant, not of the triumphant party: so far he bears a gallant show of magnanimity. But his gallantry is hardly of the right stamp: it wants principle. For though he is not servile or mercenary, he is the victim of self-will. He must pull down and pull in pieces: it is not in his disposition to do otherwise. It is a pity; for with his great talents he might do great things, if he would go right forward to any useful object, make thorough-stitch work of any question, or join hand and heart with any principle. He changes his opinions as he does his friends, and much on the same account. He has no comfort in fixed principles: as soon as any thing is settled in his own mind, he quarrels with it. He has no satisfaction but in the chase after truth, runs a question down, worries and kills it, then quits it like vermin, and starts some new game, to lead him a new dance, and give him a fresh breathing through bog and brake, with the rabble yelping at his heels and the leaders perpetually at fault. This he calls sport-royal. He thinks it as good as cudgel-playing or single-stick, or any thing else that has life in it. He likes the cut and thrust, the falls, bruises, and dry blows of an argument: as to any good or useful results that may come of the amicable settling of it, any one is welcome to them for him. The amusement is over, when the matter is once fairly decided.

There is another point of view in which this may be put. I might say that Mr. Cobbett is a very honest man, with a total want of principle; and I might explain this paradox thus. I mean that he is, I think, in downright earnest in what he says, in the part he takes at the time; but in taking that part, he is led entirely by headstrong obstinacy, caprice, novelty, pique or personal motive of some sort, and not by a steadfast regard for truth or habitual anxiety for what is right uppermost in his mind. He is not a feed, time-serving, shuffling advocate (no man could write as he does who did not believe himself sincere)—but his understanding is the dupe and slave of his momentary, violent, and irritable humours. He does not adopt an opinion "deliberately or for money"; yet his conscience is at the mercy of the first provocation he receives, of the first whim he takes in his head. He sees things through the medium of heat and passion, not with reference to any general principles, and his whole system of thinking is deranged by the first object that strikes his fancy or sours his temper. One cause of this phenomenon is perhaps his want of a regular education. He is a self-taught man, and has the faults as well as excellences of that class of persons in their most striking and glaring excess. It must be acknowledged that the Editor of the Political Register (the *two-penny trash,* as it was called, till a Bill passed the House to raise the price to sixpence) is not "the gentleman and scholar," though he has qualities that, with a little better management, would be worth (to the public) both those titles. For want of knowing what has been discovered before him, he has not certain general landmarks to refer to or a general standard of thought to apply to individual cases. He relies on his own acuteness and the immediate evidence, without being acquainted with the comparative anatomy or philosophical structure of opinion. He does not view things on a large scale or at the horizon (dim and airy enough perhaps); but as they affect himself—close, palpable, tangible. Whatever he finds out is his own, and

he only knows what he finds out. He is in the constant hurry and fever of gestation: his brain teems incessantly with some fresh project. Every new light is the birth of a new system, the dawn of a new world to him. He is continually outstripping and overreaching himself. The last opinion is the only true one. He is wiser to-day than he was yesterday. Why should he not be wiser to-morrow than he was to-day? Men of a learned education are not so sharp-witted as clever men without it; but they know the balance of the human intellect better. If they are more stupid, they are more steady, and are less liable to be led astray by their own sagacity and the overweening petulance of hard-earned and late-acquired wisdom. They do not fall in love with every meretricious extravagance at first sight, or mistake an old battered hypothesis for a vestal, because they are new to the ways of this old world. They do not seize upon it as a prize, but are safe from gross imposition by being as wise and no wiser than those who went before them.

Paine said on some occasion, "What I have written, I have written," as rendering any farther declaration of his principles unnecessary. Not so Mr. Cobbett. What he has written is no rule to him what he is to write. He learns something every day, and every week he takes the field to maintain the opinions of the last six days against friend or foe. I doubt whether this outrageous inconsistency, this headstrong fickleness, this understood want of all rule and method, does not enable him to go on with the spirit, vigour, and variety that he does. He is not pledged to repeat himself. Every new Register is a kind of new Prospectus. He blesses himself from all ties and shackles on his understanding; he has no mortgages on his brain; his notions are free and unincumbered. If he was put in trammels, he might become a vile hack like so many more. But he gives himself "ample scope and verge enough." He takes both sides of a question, and maintains one as sturdily as the other. If nobody else can argue against him, he is a very good match for himself. He writes better in favour of reform than any body else; he used to write better against it. Wherever he is, there is the tug of war, the weight of the argument, the strength of abuse. He is not like a man in danger of being *bed-rid* in his faculties: he tosses and tumbles about his unwieldy bulk, and when he is tired of lying on one side, relieves himself by turning on the other. His shifting his point of view from time to time not merely adds variety and greater compass to his topics (so that the Political Register is an armoury and magazine for all the materials and weapons of political warfare), but it gives a greater zest and liveliness to his manner of treating them. Mr. Cobbett takes nothing for granted, as what he has proved before; he does not write a book of reference. We see his ideas in their first concoction, fermenting and overflowing with the ebullitions of a lively conception. We look on at the actual process, and are put in immediate possession of the grounds and materials on which he forms his sanguine, unsettled conclusions. He does not give us samples of reasoning, but the whole solid mass, refuse and all.

"——He pours out all as plain
As downright Shippen or as old Montaigne."

This is one cause of the clearness and force of his writings. An argument does not stop to stagnate and muddle in

his brain, but passes at once to his paper. His ideas are served up, like pancakes, hot and hot. Fresh theories give him fresh courage. He is like a young and lusty bridegroom, that divorces a favourite speculation every morning, and marries a new one every night. He is not wedded to his notions, not he. He has not one Mrs. Cobbett among all his opinions. He makes the most of the last thought that has come in his way, seizes fast hold of it, rumples it about in all directions with rough strong hands, has his wicked will of it, takes a surfeit, and throws it away. Our author's changing his opinions for new ones is not so wonderful; what is more remarkable is his felicity in forgetting his old ones. He does not pretend to consistency (like Mr. Coleridge); he frankly disavows all connection with himself. He feels no personal responsibility in this way, and cuts a friend or principle with the same decided indifference that Antiphoulis of Ephesus cuts Ægeon of Syracuse. It is a hollow thing. The only time he ever grew romantic was in bringing over the relics of Mr. Thomas Paine with him from America, to go a progress with them through the disaffected districts. Scarce had he landed in Liverpool, when he left the bones of a great man to shift for themselves; and no sooner did he arrive in London, than he made a speech to disclaim all participation in the political and theological sentiments of his late idol, and to place the whole stock of his admiration and enthusiasm towards him to the account of his financial speculations, and of his having predicted the fate of paper-money. If he had erected a little gold statue to him, it might have proved the sincerity of this assertion; but to make a martyr and a patron-saint of a man, and to dig up "his canonized bones" in order to expose them as objects of devotion to the rabble's gaze, asks something that has more life and spirit in it, more mind and vivifying soul, than has to do with any calculation of pounds, shillings, and pence! The fact is, he *ratted* from his own project. He found the thing not so ripe as he had expected. His heart failed him; his enthusiasm fled; and he made his retraction. His admiration is short-lived: his contempt only is rooted, and his resentment lasting. The above was only one instance of his building too much on practical *data*. He has an ill habit of prophesying, and goes on, though still deceived. The art of prophesying does not suit Mr. Cobbett's style. He has a knack of fixing names and times and places. According to him, the Reformed Parliament was to meet in March, 1818; it did not, and we heard no more of the matter. When his predictions fail, he takes no farther notice of them, but applies himself to new ones, like the country-people, who turn to see what weather there is in the almanac for the next week, though it has been out in its reckoning every day of the last.

Mr. Cobbett is great in attack, not in defense: he cannot fight an up-hill battle. He will not bear the least punishing. If any one turns upon him (which few people like to do), he immediately turns tail. Like an overgrown schoolboy, he is so used to have it all his own way, that he cannot submit to any thing like competition or a struggle for the mastery: he must lay on all the blows, and take none. He is bullying and cowardly; a Big Ben in politics, who will fall upon others and crush them by his weight, but is not prepared for resistance, and is soon staggered by a few smart blows. Whenever he has been set upon, he has slunk out of the contro-

versy. The Edinburgh Review made (what is called) a dead set at him some years ago, to which he only retorted by an eulogy on the superior neatness of an English kitchen-garden to a Scotch one. I remember going one day into a bookseller's shop in Fleet Street to ask for the Review; and on my expressing my opinion to a young Scotchman, who stood behind the counter, that Mr. Cobbett might hit as hard in his reply, the North Briton said with some alarm—"But you don't think, Sir, Mr. Cobbett will be able to injure the Scottish nation?" I said I could not speak to that point, but I thought he was very well able to defend himself. He however did not, but has borne a grudge to the Edinburgh Review ever since, which he hates worse than the Quarterly. I cannot say I do.[2]

1821

[2] Mr. Cobbett speaks almost as well as he writes. The only time I ever saw him he seemed to me a very pleasant man: easy of access, affable, clear-headed, simple and mild in his manner, deliberate and unruffled in his speech, though some of his expressions were not very qualified. His figure is tall and portly: he has a good sensible face, rather full, with little grey eyes, a hard, square forehead, a ruddy complexion, with hair grey or powdered: and had on a scarlet broadcloth waistcoat, with the flaps of the pockets hanging down, as was the custom for gentlemen-farmers in the last century, or as we see it in the pictures of Members of Parliament in the reign of George I. I certainly did not think less favourably of him for seeing him.

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# ELIZABETH DREW

## *Saki*

Hector Hugh Munro, born in India in 1870, a delicate child who was not expected to live, was brought up from the age of two in a damp, dark country house in Devonshire, surrounded by high walls and hedges. Here he and his brother and sister, placed in the care of two dragonlike aunts, were virtually prisoners, mewed in behind closed windows at night and in all bad weather, and permitted to play only on the front lawn in summer —"the kitchen garden being considered too tempting a place, with its fruit trees." Both the aunts, Miss Munro tells us in her memoir of her brother, "were guilty of mental cruelty." Their methods are described in those of the aunt in "The Lumber Room."

It was her habit, whenever one of the children fell from grace, to improvise something of a festival nature from which the offender would be rigorously debarred; if all the children sinned collectively they were suddenly informed of a circus in a neighbouring town, a circus of unrivalled merit and uncounted elephants, to which, but for their depravity, they would have been taken that very day.

"We often longed for revenge with an intensity I suspect we inherited from our Highland ancestry," says Miss Munro, and Hector "sublimated" that longing in the finest of his sketches in the *macabre*—"Sredni Vashtar." In that story we share all Conradin's feelings of exultant practical triumph over the aunt who made his life a misery, and the

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story itself remains as a symbol of Saki's own spiritual triumph over the Brontosauri rather than Montessori methods of his upbringing. For in his art, as in his life, there is no trace of the repressed or neurotic temperament which might have been expected.

He spent a cosmopolitan youth traveling on the continent with his father, a year in India with the Military Police, several years in Russia, the Balkans, and Paris as a newspaper correspondent, and then settled down as a free-lance journalist in London. At the outbreak of the Great War, when he was forty-four, he at once enlisted in the ranks, and he was killed in the attack on Beaumont-Hamel on November 13, 1916.

Admirers, in their natural wish to do justice to a man they loved, have pointed to passages in Saki's works in which he reveals his personality directly, and from which it is possible to construct the man of flesh and blood behind the mask of mockery he chose to wear. But such criticism does him no service. He deliberately chose a pseudonym for his writings—Sákí, the cupbearer whose "joyous errand" was to serve the guests with wine in the *Rubáiyát* of Omar Khayyám. He never sought intimacy with his readers, or gave them his confidence. He asks nothing from them but lips that can laugh, flesh that can creep, and legs that can be pulled. Saki, in fact, agreed with the eighteenth-century essayist, Shaftesbury:—

> I hold it very indecent for anyone to publish his meditations, reflections and solitary thoughts. Those are the froth and scum of writing, which should be unburdened in private and consigned to oblivion, before the writer comes before the world as good company.

Saki is the most impersonal of artists. His private emotions and enthusiasms, meditations or thoughts, have no place in the world of his art. Saki is not Hector Munro, any more than Elia is Charles Lamb. But the methods of the two writers are completely opposed. Lamb dowered Elia with all his own most lovable characteristics: his warm heart, his genius for friendship, his love of life. Hector Munro, though he was richly endowed with all these qualities, denied them to Saki. That artist, in all his short sketches and stories, is allowed but three strains in his nature: the high spirits and malicious impudence of a precocious child; the cynical wit of the light social satirist; and the Gaelic fantasy of the highlander. We meet these three in turns: the irresponsible imp who invents unlimited extravagant practical jokes to mystify and enrage and outwit the heavy-minded adult world; the ironic mocker who speaks in the quips of Clovis and Reginald and the Duchess; and the Celt who sees the kettle refuse to boil when it has been bewitched by the Evil Eye, or hears Pan's laughter as he tramples to death the doubter of his powers.

Hilaire Belloc once wrote a poem beginning,—

> Matilda told such awful lies
> It made you gasp and stretch your eyes.

Matilda came to a bad end, but Saki's child and adult liars never come to bad ends. Triumphantly they discomfit the forces of dullness and of feeble counter-deception opposed to them, and prove indisputably that fiction is stronger than fact. It must be owned that there are times when we tire of these *enfants terribles* of all ages, just as we can have too much of Mr. P. G. Wodehouse's dithering dukes and prize pigs; but at his best the fiendish capacity for unveracious invention with which Saki endows his

children, and the amazing mendacities with which his young men and women confute the commonplace, are the fine art of lying at its finest. My own favorites are the story spun by the ingenious niece of the house to the nervous caller, with the innocent opening, "You may wonder why we keep that window open on an October afternoon," or the visit of the Bishop to organize a local massacre of the Jews, invented by Clovis to animate a family in need of an "unrest cure." This, since it involved action as well as equivocation, perhaps belongs more truly to the stories dealing with elaborate hoaxes and practical jokes—such as the tale of Leaonard Bilsiter, who liked to hint of his acquaintance with the unseen forces of "Siberian magic" but was somewhat horrified when it appeared that his powers had changed his hostess into a she-wolf; or that of the titled lady who was mistaken for the new governess and plays the part by teaching the children the history of the Sabine Women by the Schartz-Metterklume method of making them act it for themselves.

There is an element of cruelty in a practical joke, and many readers of Saki find themselves repelled by a certain heartlessness in many of his tales. The cruelty is certainly there, but it has nothing perverted or pathological about it. He is not one of those whose motto might be "Our sweetest songs are those that tell of sadist thought." It is the genial heartlessness of the normal child, whose fantasies take no account of adult standards of human behavior, and to whom the eating of a gypsy by a hyena is no more terrible than the eating of Red Ridinghood's grandmother by a wolf. The standards of these gruesome tales are those of the fairy tale; their grimness is the grimness of Grimm.

The other element in Saki's cruelty springs from a certain unsparing consistency of vision which will allow no sentiment to intrude. He speaks of one young man as "one of those people who would be enormously improved by death," and he never hesitates to supply that embellishment himself on suitable occasions. Stories such as "The Easter Egg" and "The Hounds of Fate" are tragedies entirely without pity, but their callousness is consistent with the hard cynical sanity which is behind even his lightest satire, and gives it its strength. His mockery is urbane but ruthless. His wit is in the tradition of Wilde and the lesser creations of E. F. Benson's *Dodo* and Anthony Hope's *Dolly Dialogues,* and in the modern world he has affinities with Noel Coward and the early Aldous Huxley. Like them, he creates an artificial world enclosed in an element outside of which it could no more exist than we could exist outside our envelope of ether. It is embalmed in the element of Wit. To talk about Saki's "characterization" is absurd. His characters are constructed to form a front against which his light satiric artillery can most effectively be deployed. The forces against him are the common social vices of Vanity Fair: humbug and hypocrisy, greed and grab, envy and uncharitableness, sheer dullness and fatuity. Comus Bassington, listening to scraps of conversation at an At Home, comments: "I suppose it's the Prevention of Destitution they're hammering at. What on earth would become of all these dear good people if anyone should start a crusade for the prevention of mediocrity?" The crusade would be a disaster, for it would extinguish Lucas Bassett, the young poet who had the triumphant inspiration of the couplet

Cousin Teresa takes out Cæsar,
Fido, Jock and the big borzoi,

and whom we see at the end of the story docketed for a knighthood under the letter L.

"The letter L," said the secretary, who was new to his job. "Does that stand for Liberalism or liberality?"

"Literature," explained the minister.

And the crusade would probably eliminate all those ardent slum workers and society socialists "whose naturally stagnant souls take infinite pleasure in what are called 'movements'"; those Wodehouse-like moneyed aunts and impecunious and irresponsible nephews; those drones and butterflies "to whom clear soup is a more important factor in life than a clear conscience"; and those odious children whose ghastly pranks turn us into keen supporters of the canonization of good King Herod.

But the situations and characters which, left to themselves, would develop into what Jane Austen called "the elegant stupidity of a private party" develop instead into hilarious gayety and crackling brilliance, and it is Saki's wit and not his satirical material, or any of his other literary material, which will make him live. It is his sheer good fun and good spirits and capacity to be such persistent good company. His power to comment that "so many people who are described as rough diamonds turn out to be only rough paste"; his power to describe the unsophisticated diner-out consulting the wine list "with the blank embarrassment of a schoolboy suddenly called on to locate a Minor Prophet in the tangled hinterland of the Old Testament"; or his impudent morsels of dialogue.

"Such an exquisite rural retreat, and so restful and healing to the nerves. Real country scenery; apple blossom everywhere."

"Surely only on the apple trees?"

"As a companion he was an unfailing antidote to boredom," wrote one of his friends. It is an epitaph anyone might envy.

1940

# THEODORE MORRISON

## *Dover Beach Revisited*

EARLY IN the year 1939 a certain Professor of Educational Psychology, occupying a well-paid chair at a large endowed university, conceived a plot. From his desk in the imposing Hall of the Social Sciences where the Research Institute in Education was housed he had long burned with resentment against teachers of literature, especially against English departments. It seemed to him that the professors of English stood square across the path of his major professional ambition. His great desire in life was to introduce into the study, the teaching, the critical evaluation of literature some of the systematic method,

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some of the "objective procedure" as he liked to call it, some of the certainty of result which he believed to be characteristic of the physical sciences. "You make such a fetish of science," a colleague once said to him, "why aren't you a chemist?"—a question that annoyed him deeply.

If such a poem as Milton's "Lycidas" has a value—and most English teachers, even to-day, would start with that as a cardinal fact—then that value must be measurable and expressible in terms that do not shift and change from moment to moment and person to person with every subjective whim. They would agree, these teachers of literature, these professors of English, that the value of the poem is in some sense objective; they would never agree to undertake any objective procedure to determine what that value is. They would not clearly define what they meant by achievement in the study of literature, and they bridled and snorted when anyone else attempted to define it. He remembered what had happened when he had once been incautious enough to suggest to a professor of English in his own college that it might be possible to establish norms for the appreciation of Milton. The fellow had simply exploded into a peal of histrionic laughter and then had tried to wither him with an equally histrionic look of incredulity and disgust.

He would like to see what would happen if the teachers of English were forced or lured, by some scheme or other, into a public exposure of their position. It would put them in the light of intellectual charlatanism, nothing less . . . and suddenly Professor Chartly (for so he was nicknamed) began to see his way.

It was a simple plan that popped into his head, simple yet bold and practical. It was a challenge that could not be refused. A strategically placed friend in one of the large educational foundations could be counted on: there would be money for clerical expenses, for travel if need be. He took his pipe from his pocket, filled it, and began to puff exultantly. To-morrow he must broach the scheme to one or two colleagues; to-night, over cheese and beer, would not be too soon. He reached for the telephone.

The plan that he unfolded to his associates that evening aroused considerable skepticism at first, but gradually they succumbed to his enthusiasm. A number of well-known professors of literature at representative colleges up and down the land would be asked to write a critical evaluation of a poem prominent enough to form part of the standard reading in all large English courses. They would be asked to state the criteria on which they based their judgment. When all the answers had been received the whole dossier would be sent to a moderator, a trusted elder statesman of education, known everywhere for his dignity, liberality of intelligence, and long experience. He would be asked to make a preliminary examination of all the documents and to determine from the point of view of a teacher of literature whether they provided any basis for a common understanding. The moderator would then forward all the documents to Professor Chartly, who would make what in his own mind he was frank to call a more scientific analysis. Then the jaws of the trap would be ready to spring.

Once the conspirators had agreed on their plot their first difficulty came in the choice of a poem. Suffice it to say that someone eventually hit on Arnold's "Dover Beach," and the suggestion withstood all attack. "Dover Beach" was

universally known, almost universally praised; it was remote enough so that contemporary jealousies and cults were not seriously involved, yet near enough not to call for any special expertness, historical or linguistic, as a prerequisite for judgment; it was generally given credit for skill as a work of art, yet it contained also, in its author's own phrase, a "criticism of life."

Rapidly in the days following the first meeting the representative teachers were chosen and invited to participate in the plan. Professional courtesy seemed to require the inclusion of an Arnold expert. But the one selected excused himself from producing a value judgment of "Dover Beach" on the ground that he was busy investigating a fresh clue to the identity of "Marguerite." He had evidence that the woman in question, after the episode hinted at in the famous poems, had married her deceased sister's husband, thus perhaps affecting Arnold's views on a social question about which he had said a good deal in his prose writings. The expert pointed out that he had been given a half-year's leave of absence and a research grant to pursue the shadow of Marguerite through Europe, wherever it might lead him. If only war did not break out he hoped to complete this research and solve one of the vexing problems that had always confronted Arnold's biographers. His energies would be too much engaged in this special investigation to deal justly with the more general questions raised by Professor Chartly's invitation. But he asked to be kept informed, since the results of the experiment could not fail to be of interest to him.

After a few hitches and delays from other quarters, the scheme was ripe. The requests were mailed out, and the Professor of Educational Psychology sat back in grim confidence to await the outcome.

It chanced that the first of the representative teachers who received and answered Professor Chartly's letter was thought of on his own campus as giving off a distinct though not unpleasant odor of the ivory tower. He would have resented the imputation himself. At forty-five Bradley Dewing was handsome in a somewhat speciously virile style, graying at the temples, but still well-knit and active. He prided himself on being able to beat most of his students at tennis; once a year he would play the third or fourth man on the varsity and go down to creditable defeat with some elegiac phrases on the ravages of time. He thought of himself as a man of the world; it was well for his contentment, which was seldom visibly ruffled, that he never heard the class mimic reproducing at a fraternity house or beer parlor his manner of saying: "After all, gentlemen, it is pure poetry that lasts. We must never forget the staying power of pure art." The class mimic never represents the whole of class opinion but he can usually make everyone within earshot laugh.

Professor Dewing could remember clearly what his own teachers had said about "Dover Beach" in the days when he was a freshman in college himself, phrases rounded with distant professorial unction: faith and doubt in the Victorian era; disturbing influence of Darwin on religious belief; Browning the optimist; Tennyson coming up with firm faith after a long struggle in the waters of doubt; Matthew Arnold, prophet of skepticism. How would "Dover Beach" stack up now as a poem? Pull Arnold down from the shelf and find out.

Ah, yes, how the familiar phrases came back. The sea is calm, the tide is full, the cliffs of England stand. . . . And then the lines he particularly liked:

Come to the window, sweet is the night air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the ebb meets the moon-blanch'd sand,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow . . .

Good poetry, that! No one could mistake it. Onomatopoeia was a relatively cheap effect most of the time. Poe, for instance: "And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain." Anyone could put a string of s's together and make them rustle. But these lines in "Dover Beach" were different. The onomatopoeia was involved in the whole scene, and it in turn involved the whole rhythmical movement of the verse, not the mere noise made by the consonants or vowels as such. The pauses—only, listen, draw back, fling, begin, cease—how they infused a subdued melancholy into the moonlit panorama at the same time that they gave it the utmost physical reality by suggesting the endless iteration of the waves! And then the phrase "With tremulous cadence slow" coming as yet one more touch, one "fine excess," when it seemed that every phrase and pause the scene could bear had already been lavished on it: that was Miltonic, Virgilian.

But the rest of the poem?

The sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd . . .

Of course Arnold had evoked the whole scene only to bring before us this metaphor of faith in its ebb-tide. But that did not save the figure from triteness and from an even more fatal vagueness. Everything in second-rate poetry is compared to the sea: love is as deep, grief as salty, passion as turbulent. The sea may look like a bright girdle sometimes, though Professor Dewing did not think it particularly impressive to say so. And in what sense is *faith* a bright girdle? Is it the function of faith to embrace, to bind, to hold up a petticoat, or what? And what is the faith that Arnold has in mind? The poet evokes no precise concept of it. He throws us the simple, undifferentiated word, unites its loose emotional connotations with those of the sea, and leaves the whole matter there. And the concluding figure of "Dover Beach":

we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Splendid in itself, this memorable image. But the sea had been forgotten now; the darkling plain had displaced the figure from which the whole poem tacitly promised to evolve. It would not have been so if John Donne had been the craftsman. A single bold yet accurate analogy, with constantly developing implications, would have served him for the whole poem.

Thus mused Professor Dewing, the lines of his verdict taking shape in his head. A critic of poetry of course was not at liberty to pass judgment on a poet's thought; he could only judge whether, in treating of the thought or sensibility he had received from his age, the poet had produced a satisfactory work of art. Arnold, Professor Dewing

felt, had not been able to escape from the didactic tone or from a certain commonness and vagueness of expression. With deep personal misgivings about his position in a world both socially and spiritually barbarous, he had sought an image for his emotion, and had found it in the sea—a natural phenomenon still obscured by the drapings of conventional beauty and used by all manner of poets to express all manner of feelings. "Dover Beach" would always remain notable, Professor Dewing decided, as an expression of Victorian sensibility. It contained lines of ever memorable poetic skill. But it could not, he felt, be accepted as a uniformly satisfactory example of poetic art.

It was occasionally a source of wonder to those about him just why Professor Oliver Twitchell spent so much time and eloquence urging that man's lower nature must be repressed, his animal instincts kept in bounds by the exertion of the higher will. To the casual observer, Professor Twitchell himself did not seem to possess much animal nature. It seemed incredible that a desperate struggle with powerful bestial passions might be going on at any moment within his own slight frame, behind his delicate white face in which the most prominent feature was the octagonal glasses that focused his eyes on the outside world. Professor Twitchell was a good deal given to discipleship but not much to friendship. He had himself been a disciple of the great Irving Babbitt, and he attracted a small number of disciples among his own more earnest students. But no one knew him well. Only one of his colleagues, who took a somewhat sardonic interest in the mysteries of human nature, possessed a possible clue to the origin of his efforts to repress man's lower nature and vindicate his higher. This colleague had wormed his way sufficiently into Oliver Twitchell's confidence to learn about his family, which he did not often mention. Professor Twitchell, it turned out, had come of decidedly unacademic stock. One of his brothers was the chief salesman for a company that made domestic fire-alarm appliances. At a moment's notice he would whip out a sample from his bag or pocket, plug it into the nearest electric outlet, and while the bystanders waited in terrified suspense, would explain that in the dead of night, if the house caught fire, the thing would go off with a whoop loud enough to warn the soundest sleeper. Lined up with his whole string of brothers and sisters, all older than he, all abounding in spirits, Professor Twitchell looked like the runt of the litter. His colleague decided that he must have had a very hard childhood, and that it was not his own animal nature that he needed so constantly to repress, but his family's.

Whatever the reasons, Professor Twitchell felt no reality in the teaching of literature except as he could extract from it definitions and illustrations of man's moral struggle in the world. For him recent history had been a history of intellectual confusion and degradation, and hence of social confusion and degradation. Western thought had fallen into a heresy. It had failed to maintain the fundamental grounds of a true humanism. It had blurred the distinction between man, God, and nature. Under the influence of the sciences, it had set up a monism in which the moral as well as the physical constitution of man was included within nature and the laws of nature. It had, therefore, exalted man as naturally good, and exalted the free expression of all his impulses. What

were the results of this heresy? An age, complained Professor Twitchell bitterly, in which young women talked about sexual perversions at the dinner table; an age in which everyone agreed that society was in dissolution and insisted on the privilege of being dissolute; an age without any common standards of value in morals or art; an age, in short, without discipline, without self-restraint in private life or public.

Oliver Twitchell when he received Professor Chartly's envelope sat down with a strong favorable predisposition toward his task. He accepted wholeheartedly Arnold's attitude toward literature: the demand that poetry should be serious, that it should present us with a criticism of life, that it should be measured by standards not merely personal, but in some sense *real*.

"Dover Beach" had become Arnold's best-known poem, admired as his masterpiece. It would surely contain, therefore, a distillation of his attitude. Professor Twitchell pulled down his copy of Arnold and began to read and as he read he felt himself overtaken by surprised misgiving. The poem began well enough. The allusion to Sophocles, who had heard the sound of the retreating tide by the Ægean centuries ago, admirably prepared the groundwork of high seriousness for a poem which would culminate in a real criticism of human experience. But did the poem so culminate? It was true that the world

> Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
> Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain

if one meant the world as the worldling knows it, the man who conducts his life by unreflective natural impulse. Such a man will soon enough encounter the disappointments of ambition, the instability of all bonds and ties founded on nothing firmer than passion or self-interest. But this incertitude of the world, to a true disciple of culture, should become a means of self-discipline. It should lead him to ask how life may be purified and ennobled, how we may by wisdom and self-restraint oppose to the accidents of the world a true human culture based on the exertion of a higher will. No call to such a positive moral will, Professor Twitchell reluctantly discovered, can be heard in "Dover Beach." Man is an ignorant soldier struggling confusedly in a blind battle. Was this the culminating truth that Arnold the poet had given men in his masterpiece? Professor Twitchell sadly revised his value-judgment of the poem. He could not feel that in his most widely admired performance Arnold had seen life steadily or seen it whole; rather he had seen it only on its worldly side, and seen it under an aspect of terror. "Dover Beach" would always be justly respected for its poetic art, but the famous lines on Sophocles better exemplified the poet as a critic of life.

As a novelist still referred to in his late thirties as "young" and "promising," Rudolph Mole found himself in a curious relation toward his academic colleagues. He wrote for the public, not for the learned journals; hence he was spared the necessity of becoming a pedant. At the same time the more lucrative fruits of pedantry were denied to him by his quiet exclusion from the guild. Younger men sweating for promotion, living in shabby genteel poverty on yearly appointments, their childless wives mimicking their academic shoptalk in bluestocking phrases, would look up from the stacks of five-by-three cards on which they were constantly accumulating notes and references, and would

say to him, "You don't realize how lucky you are, teaching composition. You aren't expected to know anything." Sometimes an older colleague, who had passed through several stages of the mysteries of preferment, would belittle professional scholarship to him with an elaborate show of graciousness and envy, "We are all just pedants," he would say. "You teach the students what they really want and need." Rudolph noticed that the self-confessed pedant went busily on publishing monographs and being promoted, while he himself remained, year by year, the English Department's most eminent poor relation.

He was not embittered. His dealings with students were pleasant and interesting. There was a sense of reality and purpose in trying to elicit from them a better expression of their thoughts, trying to increase their understanding of the literary crafts. He could attack their minds on any front he chose, and he could follow his intellectual hobbies as freely as he liked, without being confined to the artificial boundaries of a professional field of learning.

Freud, for example. When Professor Chartly and his accomplices decided that a teacher of creative writing should be included in their scheme and chose Rudolph Mole for the post, they happened to catch him at the height of his enthusiasm for Freud. Not that he expected to psychoanalyze authors through their works; that, he avowed, was not his purpose. You can't deduce the specific secrets of a man's life, he would cheerfully admit, by trying to fit his works into the text-book patterns of complexes and psychoses. The critic, in any case, is interested only in the man to the extent that he is involved in his work. But everyone agrees, Rudolph maintained, that the man is involved in his work. Some part of the psychic constitution of the author finds expression in every line that he writes. We can't understand the work unless we can understand the psychic traits that have gained expression in it. We may never be able to trace back these traits to their ultimate sources and causes, probably buried deep in the author's childhood. But we need to gain as much light on them as we can, since they appear in the work we are trying to apprehend, and determine its character. This is what criticism has always sought to do. Freud simply brings new light to the old task.

Rudolph was fortunate enough at the outset to pick up at the college bookstore a copy of Mr. Lionel Trilling's recent study of Matthew Arnold. In this volume he found much of his work already done for him. A footnote to Mr. Trilling's text, citing evidence from Professors Tinker and Lowry, made it clear that "Dover Beach" may well have been written in 1850, some seventeen years before it was first published. This, for Rudolph's purposes, was a priceless discovery. It meant that all the traditional talk about the poem was largely null and void. The poem was not a repercussion of the bombshell that Darwin dropped on the religious sensibilities of the Victorians. It was far more deeply personal and individual than that. Perhaps when Arnold published it his own sense of what it expressed or how it would be understood had changed. But clearly the poem came into being as an expression of what Arnold felt to be the particular kind of affection and passion he needed from a woman. It was a love poem, and took its place with utmost naturalness, once the clue had been given, in the group of similar and related poems addressed to "Marguerite."

Mr. Trilling summed up in a fine sentence one strain in these poems, and the principal strain in "Dover Beach," when he wrote that for Arnold "fidelity is a word relevant only to those lovers who see the world as a place of sorrow and in their common suffering require the comfort of constancy."

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world . . .
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light . . .

The point was unmistakable. And from the whole group of poems to which "Dover Beach" belonged, a sketch of Arnold as an erotic personality could be derived. The question whether a "real Marguerite" existed was an idle one, for the traits that found expression in the poems were at least "real" enough to produce the poems and to determine their character.

And what an odd spectacle it made, the self-expressed character of Arnold as a lover! The ordinary degree of aggressiveness, the normal joy of conquest and possession, seemed to be wholly absent from him. The love he asked for was essentially a protective love, sisterly or motherly; in its unavoidable ingredient of passion he felt a constant danger, which repelled and unsettled him. He addressed Marguerite as "My sister!" He avowed and deplored his own womanish fits of instability:

I too have wish'd, no woman more,
This starting, feverish heart, away.

He emphasized his nervous anguish and contrary impulses. He was a "teas'd o'erlabour'd heart," "an aimless unallay'd Desire." He could not break through his fundamental isolation and submerge himself in another human soul, and he believed that all men shared this plight:

Yes: in the sea of life enisl'd,
With echoing straits between us thrown,
Dotting the shoreless watery wild,
We mortal millions live *alone*.

He never "without remorse" allowed himself

To haunt the place where passions reign,

yet it was clear that whether he had ever succeeded in giving himself up wholeheartedly to a passion, he had wanted to. There could hardly be a more telltale phrase than "Once-long'd-for storms of love."

In short much more illumination fell on "Dover Beach" from certain other verses of Arnold's than from Darwin and all his commentators:

Truth—what is truth? Two bleeding hearts
Wounded by men, by Fortune tried,
Outwearied with their lonely parts,
Vow to beat henceforth side by side.

The world to them was stern and drear;
Their lot was but to weep and moan.
Ah, let them keep their faith sincere,
For neither could subsist alone!

Here was the nub. "Dover Beach" grew directly from and repeated the same emotion, but no doubt generalized and enlarged this emotion, sweeping into one intense and far-reaching conviction of insecurity not only Arnold's personal fortunes in love, but the social and religious faith of the world he lived in. That much could be said for the traditional interpretation.

Of course, as Mr. Trilling did not fail to mention, anguished love affairs, harassed by mysterious inner incompatibilities, formed a well-established literary convention. But the fundamental sense of insecurity in "Dover Beach" was too genuine, too often repeated in other works, to be written off altogether

to that account. The same sense of insecurity, the same need for some rock of protection, cried out again and again, not merely in Arnold's love poems but in his elegies, reflective pieces, and fragments of epic as well. Whenever Arnold produced a genuine and striking burst of poetry, with the stamp of true self-expression on it, he seemed always to be in the dumps. Everywhere dejection, confusion, weakness, contention of soul. No adequate cause could be found in the events of Arnold's life for such an acute sense of incertitude; it must have been of psychic origin. Only in one line of effort this fundamental insecurity did not hamper, sadden, or depress him, and that was in the free play of his intelligence as a critic of letters and society. Even there, if it did not hamper his efforts, it directed them. Arnold valiantly tried to erect a barrier of culture against the chaos and squalor of society, against the contentiousness of men. What was this barrier but an elaborate protective device?

The origin of the psychic pattern that expressed itself in Arnold's poems could probably never be discovered. No doubt the influence that Arnold's father exercised over his emotions and his thinking, even though Arnold rebelled to the extent at least of casting off his father's religious beliefs, was of great importance. But much more would have to be known to give a definite clue —more than ever could be known. Arnold was secure from any attempt to spy out the heart of his mystery. But if criticism could not discover the cause, it could assess the result, and could do so (thought Rudolph Mole) with greater understanding by an attempt, with up-to-date psychological aid, to delve a little deeper into the essential traits that manifested themselves in that result.

In 1917 Reuben Hale, a young instructor in a Western college, had lost his job and done time in the penitentiary for speaking against conscription and for organizing pacifist demonstrations. In the twenties he had lost two more academic posts for his sympathies with Soviet Russia and his inability to forget his Marxist principles while teaching literature. His contentious, eager, lovable, exasperating temperament tried the patience of one college administration after another. As he advanced into middle age, and his growing family suffered repeated upheavals, his friends began to fear that his robust quarrels with established order would leave him a penniless outcast at fifty. Then he was invited to take a flattering post at a girls' college known for its liberality of views. The connection proved surprisingly durable; in fact it became Professor Hale's turn to be apprehensive. He began to be morally alarmed at his own security, to fear that the bourgeois system which he had attacked so valiantly had somehow outwitted him and betrayed him into allegiance. When the C.I.O. made its initial drive and seemed to be carrying everything before it, he did his best to unseat himself again by rushing joyfully to the nearest picket lines and getting himself photographed by an alert press. Even this expedient failed, and he reconciled himself, not without wonder, to apparent academic permanence.

On winter afternoons his voice could be heard booming out through the closed door of his study to girls who came to consult him on all manner of subjects, from the merits of Plekhanov as a Marxist critic to their own most personal dilemmas. They called him Ben; he called them Smith, Jones, and Robinson. He never relaxed his cheerful bombardment of the milieu into

which they were born, and of the larger social structure which made bourgeois wealth, bourgeois art, morals, and religion possible. But when a sophomore found herself pregnant it was to Professor Hale that she came for advice. Should she have an abortion or go through with it and heroically bear the social stigma? And it was Professor Hale who kept the affair from the Dean's office and the newspapers, sought out the boy, persuaded the young couple that they were desperately in love with each other, and that pending the revolution a respectable marriage would be the most prudent course, not to say the happiest.

James Joyce remarks of one of his characters that she dealt with moral problems as a cleaver deals with meat. Professor Hale's critical methods were comparably simple and direct. Literature, like the other arts, is in form and substance a product of society, and reflects the structure of society. The structure of society is a class structure: it is conditioned by the mode of production of goods, and by the legal conventions of ownership and control by which the ruling class keeps itself in power and endows itself with the necessary freedom to exploit men and materials for profit. A healthy literature, in a society so constituted, can exist only if writers perceive the essential economic problem and ally themselves firmly with the working class.

Anyone could see the trouble with Arnold. His intelligence revealed to him the chaos that disrupted the society about him; the selfishness and brutality of the ruling class; the ugliness of the world which the industrial revolution had created, and which imperialism and "liberalism" were extending. Arnold was at his best in his critical satire of this world and of the ignorance of those who governed it. But his intelligence far outran his will, and his defect of will finally blinded his intelligence. He was too much a child of his class to disown it and fight his way to a workable remedy for social injustice. He caught a true vision of himself and of his times as standing between "two worlds, one dead, one powerless to be born." But he had not courage or stomach enough to lend his own powers to the birth struggle. Had he thrown in his sympathies unreservedly with the working class, and labored for the inescapable revolution, "Dover Beach" would not have ended in pessimism and confusion. It would have ended in a cheerful, strenuous, and hopeful call to action. But Arnold could not divorce himself from the world of polite letters, of education, of culture, into which he had been born. He did his best to purify them, to make them into an instrument for the reform of society. But instinctively he knew that "culture" as he understood the term was not a social force in the world around him. Instinctively he knew that what he loved was doomed to defeat. And so "Dover Beach" ended in a futile plea for protection against the hideousness of the darkling plain and the confused alarms of struggle and flight.

Professor Chartly's envelope brought Reuben Hale his best opportunity since the first C.I.O. picket lines to vindicate his critical and social principles. He plunged into his answer with complete zest.

When Peter Lee Prampton agreed to act as moderator in Professor Chartly's experiment he congratulated himself that this would be his last great academic chore. He had enjoyed his ca-

reer of scholarship and teaching, no man ever more keenly. But now it was drawing to an end. He was loaded with honors from two continents. The universities of Germany, France, and Britain had first laid their formative hands on his learning and cultivation, then given their most coveted recognition to its fruits. But the honor and the glory seemed a little vague on the June morning when the expressman brought into his library the sizable package of papers which Professor Chartly had boxed and shipped to him. He had kept all his life a certain simplicity of heart. At seventy-four he could still tote a pack with an easy endurance that humiliated men of forty. Now he found himself giving in more and more completely to a lust for trout. Half a century of hastily snatched vacations in Cape Breton or the Scottish Highlands had never allowed him really to fill up that hollow craving to find a wild stream and fish it which would sometimes rise in his throat even in the midst of a lecture.

Well, there would be time left before he died. And meanwhile here was this business of "Dover Beach." Matthew Arnold during one of his American lecture tours had been entertained by neighbors of the Pramptons. Peter Lee Prampton's father had dined with the great man, and had repeated his conversation and imitated his accent at the family table. Peter himself, as a boy of nineteen or so, had gone to hear Arnold lecture. That, he thought with a smile, was probably a good deal more than could be said for any of these poor hacks who had taken Professor Chartly's bait.

At the thought of Arnold he could still hear the carriage wheels grate on the pebbly road as he had driven, fifty odd years ago, to the lecture in town, the prospective Mrs. Prampton beside him. His fishing rod lay under the seat. He chuckled out loud as he remembered how a pound-and-a-half trout had jumped in the pool under the clattering planks of a bridge, and how he had pulled up the horse, jumped out, and tried a cast while Miss Osgood sat scolding in the carriage and shivering in the autumn air. They had been just a little late reaching the lecture, but the trout, wrapped in damp leaves, lay safely beside the rod.

It was queer that "Dover Beach" had not come more recently into his mind. Now that he turned his thoughts in that direction the poem was there in its entirety, waiting to be put on again like a coat that one has worn many times with pleasure and accidentally neglected for a while.

The sea of faith was once, too, at the full.

How those old Victorian battles had raged about the Prampton table when he was a boy! How the names of Arnold, Huxley, Darwin, Carlyle, Morris, Ruskin had been pelted back and forth by the excited disputants! *Literature and Dogma, God and the Bible, Culture and Anarchy.* The familiar titles brought an odd image into his mind: the tall figure of his father stretching up to turn on the gas lamps in the evening as the family sat down to dinner; the terrific pop of the pilot light as it exploded into a net of white flame, shaped like a little beehive; the buzz and whine of a jet turned up too high.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain . . .

Peter Lee Prampton shivered in the warmth of his sunny library, shivered with that flash of perception into the past which sometimes enables a man to see how all that has happened in his life, for good or ill, turned on the narrowest edge of chance. He lived again in the world of dreams that his own youth had spread before him, a world truly various, beautiful, and new; full of promise, adventure, and liberty of choice, based on the opportunities which his father's wealth provided, and holding out the prospect of a smooth advance into a distinguished career. Then, within six months, a lavish demonstration that the world has neither certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain: his mother's death by cancer, his father's financial overthrow and suicide, the ruin of his own smooth hopes and the prospect instead of a long, hampered, and obscure fight toward his perhaps impossible ambition. He lived again through the night hours when he had tramped out with himself the youthful question whether he could hold Miss Osgood to her promise in the face of such reversals. And he did not forget how she took his long-sleepless face between her hands, kissed him, and smiled away his anxiety with unsteady lips. Surely everyone discovers at some time or other that the world is not a place of certitude; surely everyone cries out to some other human being for the fidelity which alone can make it so. What more could be asked of a poet than to take so profound and universal an experience and turn it into lines that could still speak long after he and his age were dead?

The best of it was that no one could miss the human feeling, the cry from the heart, in "Dover Beach"; it spoke so clearly and eloquently, in a language everyone could understand, in a form classically pure and simple. Or did it? Who could tell what any job-lot of academicians might be trusted to see or fail to see? And this assortment in Chartly's package might be a queer kettle of fish! Peter Lee Prampton had lived through the *Yellow Book* days of Art for Art's sake; he had read the muckrakers, and watched the rise of the Marxists and the Freudians. Could "Dover Beach" be condemned as unsympathetic with labor? Could a neurosis or a complex be discovered in it? His heart sank at the sharp sudden conviction that indeed these and worse discoveries about the poem might be seriously advanced. Well, he had always tried to go on the principle that every school of criticism should be free to exercise any sincere claim on men's interest and attention which it could win for itself. When he actually applied himself to the contents of Professor Chartly's bale he would be as charitable as he could, as receptive to light from any quarter as he could bring himself to be.

But the task could wait. He felt the need of a period of adjustment before he could approach it with reasonable equanimity. And in the meanwhile he could indulge himself in some long-needed editorial work on his dry-fly book.

1940

# VIRGINIA WOOLF

## *The Art of Biography*

THE ART of biography, we say—but at once go on to ask, Is biography an art? The question is foolish perhaps, and ungenerous certainly, considering the keen pleasure that biographers have given us. But the question asks itself so often that there must be something behind it. There it is, whenever a new biography is opened, casting its shadow on the page; and there would seem to be something deadly in that shadow, for after all, of the multitude of lives that are written, how few survive!

But the reason for this high death rate, the biographer might argue, is that biography, compared with the arts of poetry and fiction, is a young art. Interest in our selves and in other people's selves is a late development of the human mind. Not until the eighteenth century in England did that curiosity express itself in writing the lives of private people. Only in the nineteenth century was biography fully grown and hugely prolific. If it is true that there have been only three great biographers,—Johnson, Boswell, and Lockhart,—the reason, he argues, is that the time was short; and his plea, that the art of biography has had but little time to establish itself and develop itself, is certainly borne out by the textbooks. Tempting as it is to explore the reason,—why, that is, the self that writes a book of prose came into being so many centuries after the self that writes a poem, why Chaucer preceded Henry James,—it is better to leave that insoluble question unasked, and so pass to his next reason for the lack of masterpieces. It is that the art of biography is the most restricted of all the arts. He has his proof ready to hand. Here it is in the preface in which Smith, who has written the life of Jones, takes this opportunity of thanking old friends who have lent letters, and "last but not least" Mrs. Jones, the widow, for that help "without which," as he puts it, "this biography could not have been written." Now the novelist, he points out, simply says in his foreword, "Every character in this book is fictitious." The novelist is free; the biographer is tied.

There, perhaps, we come within hailing distance of that very difficult, again perhaps insoluble, question: What do we mean by calling a book a work of art? At any rate, here is a distinction between biography and fiction—a proof that they differ in the very stuff of which they are made. One is made with the help of friends, of facts; the other is created without any restrictions save those that the artist, for reasons that seem good to him, chooses to obey. That is a distinction; and there is good reason to think that in the past biographers have found it not only a distinction but a very cruel distinction.

The widow and the friends were hard taskmasters. Suppose, for example, that the man of genius was immoral, ill-tempered, and threw the boots at the maid's head. The widow would say, "Still I loved him—he was the father of my children; and the public, who love

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his books, must on no account be disillusioned. Cover up; omit." The biographer obeyed. And thus the majority of Victorian biographies are like the wax figures now preserved in Westminster Abbey that were carried in funeral processions through the streets—effigies that have only a smooth superficial likeness to the body in the coffin.

Then, towards the end of the nineteenth century, there was a change. Again for reasons not easy to discover, widows became broader-minded, the public keener-sighted; the effigy no longer carried conviction or satisfied curiosity. The biographer certainly won a measure of freedom. At least he could hint that there were scars and furrows on the dead man's face. Froude's Carlyle is by no means a wax mask painted rosy red. And following Froude there was Sir Edmund Gosse, who dared to say that his own father was a fallible human being. And following Edmund Gosse in the early years of the present century came Lytton Strachey.

The figure of Lytton Strachey is so important a figure in the history of biography that it compels a pause. For his three famous books, *Eminent Victorians, Queen Victoria,* and *Elizabeth and Essex,* are of a stature to show both what biography can do and what biography cannot do. Thus they suggest many possible answers to the question whether biography is an art, and if not why it fails.

Lytton Strachey came to birth as an author at a lucky moment. In 1918, when he made the first attempt, biography, with its new liberties, was a form that offered great attractions. To a writer like himself, who had wished to write poetry or plays but was doubtful of his creative power, biography seemed to offer a promising alternative. For at last it was possible to tell the truth about the dead; and the Victorian age was rich in remarkable figures many of whom had been grossly deformed by the effigies that had been plastered over them. To recreate them, to show them as they really were, was a task that called for gifts analogous to the poet's or the novelist's, yet did not ask that inventive power in which he found himself lacking.

It was well worth trying. And the anger and the interest that his short studies of Eminent Victorians aroused showed that he was able to make Manning, Florence Nightingale, Gordon, and the rest live as they had not lived since they were actually in the flesh. Once more they were the centre of a buzz of discussion. Did Gordon really drink, or was that an invention? Had Florence Nightingale received the Order of Merit in her bedroom or in her sitting room? He stirred the public, even though a European war was raging, to an astonishing interest in such minute matters. Anger and laughter mixed; and editions multiplied.

But these were short studies with something of the overemphasis and the foreshortening of caricatures. In the lives of the two great Queens, Elizabeth and Victoria, he attempted a far more ambitious task. Biography had never had a fairer chance of showing what it could do. For it was now being put to the test by a writer who was capable of making use of all the liberties that biography had won: he was fearless; he had proved his brilliance; and he had learned his job. The result throws great light upon the nature of biography. For who can doubt after reading the two books again, one after the other, that the *Victoria* is a triumphant success, and that

the *Elizabeth* by comparison is a failure? But it seems too, as we compare them, that it was not Lytton Strachey who failed; it was the art of biography. In the *Victoria* he treated biography as a craft; he submitted to his limitations. In the *Elizabeth* he treated biography as an art; he flouted its limitations.

But we must go on to ask how we have come to this conclusion and what reasons support it. In the first place it is clear that the two Queens present very different problems to their biographer. About Queen Victoria everything was known. Everything she did, almost everything she thought, was a matter of common knowledge. No one has ever been more closely verified and exactly authenticated than Queen Victoria. The biographer could not invent her, because at every moment some document was at hand to check his invention. And, in writing of Victoria, Lytton Strachey submitted to the conditions. He used to the full the biographer's power of selection and relation, but he kept strictly within the world of fact. Every statement was verified; every fact was authenticated. And the result is a life which, very possibly, will do for the old Queen what Boswell did for the old dictionary maker. In time to come Lytton Strachey's Queen Victoria will be Queen Victoria, just as Boswell's Johnson is now Dr. Johnson. The other versions will fade and disappear. It was a prodigious feat, and no doubt, having accomplished it, the author was anxious to press further. There was Queen Victoria, solid, real, palpable. But undoubtedly she was limited. Could not biography produce something of the intensity of poetry, something of the excitement of drama, and yet keep also the peculiar virtue that belongs to fact—its suggestive reality, its own proper creativeness?

Queen Elizabeth seemed to lend herself perfectly to the experiment. Very little was known about her. The society in which she lived was so remote that the habits, the motives, and even the actions of the people of that age were full of strangeness and obscurity. "By what art are we to worm our way into those strange spirits? those even stranger bodies? The more clearly we perceive it, the more remote that singular universe becomes," Lytton Strachey remarked on one of the first pages. Yet there was evidently a "tragic history" lying dormant, half revealed, half concealed, in the story of the Queen and Essex. Everything seemed to lend itself to the making of a book that combined the advantages of both worlds, that gave the artist freedom to invent, but helped his invention with the support of facts—a book that was not only a biography but also a work of art.

Nevertheless, the combination proved unworkable; fact and fiction refused to mix. Elizabeth never became real in the sense that Queen Victoria had been real, yet she never became fictitious in the sense that Cleopatra or Falstaff is fictitious. The reason would seem to be that very little was known—he was urged to invent; yet something was known—his invention was checked. The Queen thus moves in an ambiguous world, between fact and fiction, neither embodied nor disembodied. There is a sense of vacancy and effort, of a tragedy that has no crisis, of characters that meet but do not clash.

If this diagnosis is true we are forced to say that the trouble lies with biography itself. It imposes conditions, and those conditions are that it must be based upon fact. And by fact in biog-

raphy we mean facts that can be verified by other people besides the artist. If he invents facts as an artist invents them—facts that no one else can verify—and tries to combine them with facts of the other sort, they destroy each other.

Lytton Strachey himself seems in the *Queen Victoria* to have realized the necessity of this condition, and to have yielded to it instinctively. "The first forty-two years of the Queen's life," he wrote, "are illuminated by a great and varied quantity of authentic information. With Albert's death a veil descends." And when with Albert's death the veil descended and authentic information failed, he knew that the biographer must follow suit. "We must be content with a brief and summary relation," he wrote; and the last years are briefly disposed of. But the whole of Elizabeth's life was lived behind a far thicker veil than the last years of Victoria. And yet, ignoring his own admission, he went on to write, not a brief and summary relation, but a whole book about those strange spirits and even stranger bodies of whom authentic information was lacking. On his own showing, the attempt was doomed to failure.

It seems, then, that when the biographer complained that he was tied by friends, letters, and documents he was laying his finger upon a necessary element in biography; and that it is also a necessary limitation. For the invented character lives in a free world where the facts are verified by one person only—the artist himself. Their authenticity lies in the truth of his own vision. The world created by that vision is rarer, intenser, and more wholly of a piece than the world that is largely made of authentic information supplied by other people. And because of this difference the two kinds of fact will not mix; if they touch they destroy each other. No one, the conclusion seems to be, can make the best of both worlds; you must choose, and you must abide by your choice.

But though the failure of *Elizabeth and Essex* leads to this conclusion, that failure, because it was the result of a daring experiment carried out with magnificent skill, leads the way to further discoveries. Had he lived, Lytton Strachey would no doubt himself have explored the vein that he had opened. As it is, he has shown us the way in which others may advance. The biographer is bound by facts—that is so; but, if it is so, he has the right to all the facts that are available. If Jones threw boots at the maid's head, had a mistress at Islington, or was found drunk in a ditch after a night's debauch, he must be free to say so—so far at least as the law of libel and human sentiment allow.

But these facts are not like the facts of science—once they are discovered, always the same. They are subject to changes of opinion; opinions change as the times change. What was thought a sin is now known, by the light of facts won for us by the psychologists, to be perhaps a misfortune; perhaps a curiosity; perhaps neither one nor the other, but a trifling foible of no great importance one way or the other. The accent on sex has changed within living memory. This leads to the destruction of a great deal of dead matter still obscuring the true features of the human face. Many of the old chapter headings—life at college, marriage, career—are shown to be very arbitrary and artificial distinctions. The real current of the hero's existence took, very likely, a different course.

Thus the biographer must go ahead of the rest of us, like the miner's canary, testing the atmosphere, detecting falsity, unreality, and the presence of obsolete conventions. His sense of truth must be alive and on tiptoe. Then again, since we live in an age when a thousand cameras are pointed, by newspapers, letters, and diaries, at every character from every angle, he must be prepared to admit contradictory versions of the same face. Biography will enlarge its scope by hanging up looking glasses at odd corners. And yet from all this diversity it will bring out, not a riot of confusion, but a richer unity. And again, since so much is known that used to be unknown, the question now inevitably asks itself, whether the lives of great men only should be recorded. Is not anyone who has lived a life, and left a record of that life, worthy of biography —the failures as well as the successes, the humble as well as the illustrious? And what is greatness? And what smallness? He must revise our standards of merit and set up new heroes for our admiration.

Biography thus is only at the beginning of its career; it has a long and active life before it, we may be sure—a life full of difficulty, danger, and hard work. Nevertheless, we can also be sure that it is a different life from the life of poetry and fiction—a life lived at a lower degree of tension. And for that reason its creations are not destined for the immortality which the artist now and then achieves for his creations.

There would seem to be certain proof of that already. Even Dr. Johnson as created by Boswell will not live as long as Falstaff as created by Shakespeare. Micawber and Miss Bates we may be certain will survive Lockhart's Sir Walter Scott and Lytton Strachey's Queen Victoria. For they are made of more enduring matter. The artist's imagination at its most intense fires out what is perishable in fact; he builds with what is durable; but the biographer must accept the perishable, build with it, imbed it in the very fabric of his work. Much will perish; little will live. And thus we come to the conclusion that he is a craftsman, not an artist; and his work is not a work of art, but something betwixt and between.

Yet on that lower level the work of the biographer is invaluable; we cannot thank him sufficiently for what he does for us. For we are incapable of living wholly in the intense world of the imagination. The imagination is a faculty that soon tires and needs rest and refreshment. But for a tired imagination the proper food is not inferior poetry or minor fiction,—indeed they blunt and debauch it,—but sober fact, that "authentic information" from which, as Lytton Strachey has shown us, good biography is made. When and where did the real man live; how did he look; did he wear laced boots or elastic-sided; who were his aunts, and his friends; how did he blow his nose; whom did he love, and how; and when he came to die did he die in his bed like a Christian, or . . .

By telling us the true facts, by sifting the little from the big, and shaping the whole so that we perceive the outline, the biographer does more to stimulate the imagination than any poet or novelist save the very greatest. For few poets and novelists are capable of that high degree of tension which gives us reality. But almost any biographer, if he respects facts, can give us much more than another fact to add to our collection. He can give us the creative fact; the fertile fact; the fact that suggests and engen-

ders. Of this, too, there is certain proof. For how often, when a biography is read and tossed aside, some scene remains bright, some figure lives on in the depths of the mind, and causes us, when we read a poem or a novel, to feel a start of recognition, as if we remembered something that we had known before.

1939

# ALLAN NEVINS

## *Ideas in History*

### From The Gateway to History

It has often been remarked that the world is ruled by ideas, or as Napoleon put it with the same meaning, by imagination. The ideas that so frequently control society may be divided into two groups, the practical and the philosophical. By the former we mean those concepts which, expressing immediate mundane aims, can actually be realized by an expression of the human will. As we scan the dark backward and abysm of time we can descry a long list of such ideas which have exercised the most powerful sway over human affairs. Among them are the idea of the ecclesiastical or papal supremacy over temporal powers; the idea of the divine right of kings; the idea of nationalism; the idea of toleration; the idea of self-determination, which ruled events so potently during and after the World War; the idea of rugged individualism; the idea of State Socialism; and the idea of collectivism or the abolition of private property. These are practical ideas because they depend primarily upon man's will; because they can usually be made to work if most men agree to promote them; and because they are tested by the question whether they are useful or useless, not true or false. Mussolini's idea of the totalitarian state depends for its validity on the readiness of most Italians to employ it, and that readiness will endure just so long as most Italians believe that its advantages offset its disadvantages.

But mankind is also powerfully swayed at times by philosophical ideas. They are theoretical rather than practical, and are judged not by pragmatic tests but by men's conviction of what is valid and invalid. Society accepts or rejects them not as beneficial or injurious, but as true or false. Such is the idea of personal immortality—and few people realize how profoundly human institutions would be altered if that concept were abandoned by mankind. Such also is the Greek idea of fate, or the Calvinist idea of predestination, with other religious ideas. Such is the idea of Progress, in modern times probably the most important of all human concepts of a philosophical nature.

All historical work which pretends to any elevation or importance is written under the influence of ideas. Much of

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the historical work, though by no means all of it, is important by virtue of its ideas; that is, its interpretation. Consciously or unconsciously, all significant historians are affected by their intellectual environment, whether they evince hostility to some phase of the prevalent thought of the time, or espouse and defend it. And if the historian is a man of intellectual vigor, he assuredly views his task not as the mere recital of a series of facts and events, but as their arrangement in a pattern which illustrates some underlying truth. The effect of this impulse upon the history of ideas has been very great; but we are here concerned primarily with its effect upon the course of historical writing.

While the analysis of historical evidence is an important process in the study or writing of history, it is not the most important. In the highest type of history the synthesis or interpretation is a much more vital element. The task of analysis involves the discovery of the truth about various episodes or events by a combination of industry, ingenuity, judgment, and honesty. The writer collects all the authentic and relevant facts, he assorts and classifies them, he finds the best possible explanation for them, and he rigorously tests this explanation of their significance. This is a minute process. It is essentially a bit of anatomical work. But to arrive at an interpretation, the historian takes a considerable body of problems and events, and so arranges them as to illustrate some dominant idea. That is, he synthesizes his material about some concept which governs the whole of it; he utilizes a series of analyses, which at first may have seemed chaotic and jumbled, and produces a general conclusion which throws them into perspective. This is not anatomy; it is physiology. It breathes the spark of life into dead materials and makes them move as living bodies. Or to change the figure, it lifts the reader above the immediate thicket he is exploring, and shows him the trend of the terrain—the significance of the valley, or the mountain range, of which the thickets are a part.

Thus the *Cambridge Modern History,* or the *Histoire Générale* of Lavisse, offers a huge body of facts upon human events since 1500, caught together merely in a long series of highly factual—and rather badly related—monographs. But Oswald Spengler, in *The Decline of the West,* offers an interpretation of this long period. Discarding the old simple and optimistic view of linear evolution or endless progress, he substituted—as a number of others have done—an interpretation of history as a recurring cycle, a Foucault pendulum swing, placing our own unhappy time in the bleakest part of a spring-summer-autumn-winter succession. To take a more limited example, Channing's book on the Civil War offers a score of analyses of problems, but declines to draw them together upon any interpretive thread. But in *The Rise of American Civilization* Charles and Mary Beard synthesize the Civil War according to an economic pattern. They view it as essentially a conflict between the old rural culture and the new industrial culture of America. Discarding the old concepts of the slavery and State Rights issues as dominating the Civil War period, the Beards make their concept of a sharp collision between a business civilization and an agrarian civilization the vehicle of a fresh and stimulating interpretation of the events of 1860-69.

At the outset it is important to enforce a firm distinction between a general philosophy of history, and a specific inter-

pretation of historical materials. The distinction is mainly one of scope. But it is also related to the distinction which we have just drawn between philosophical ideas, tested by our faith in what is true, and practical ideas, tested by our experience of their workability. General philosophical concepts of history will not bend to pragmatic tests. The dominant idea of Spengler's book is obviously of this nature. No one will ever know —at least for hundreds of centuries to come—whether history does move in regular cycles or not; to read and write history in that way is simply an act of faith. So is the philosophy of history built on the doctrine of evolutionary progress, a creed so popular in the nineteenth century. So is the philosophy, toward which Pareto leans, of history as a pendulum alternating between liberty and authority. But an interpretation like that which the Beards give the Civil War can be subjected to practical tests; the facts within a limited domain either sustain or destroy it—when we learn them. The interpretation may provoke a discussion which drags on through decades, but each student will decide upon its merits by consulting the facts. A philosophy of history springs from a writer's whole view of human destiny, and thus embodies his philosophy of life; an interpretation of historical material is merely a writer's explanation of the significance of a series of events, an epoch, or a movement. The one usually bears a close relation to the thought of the age; the other is usually more personal in origin.

All the principal philosophies of history save two have originated within the past three centuries—a fact which speaks volumes for the close alliance between rationalism and modern history. Greek and Roman writers of history knew but one philosophy, that of Fate. To them the word held a far richer theological significance than it has to us, and from Thucydides to Appian it sufficed to cover their view of human destiny. They made varying allowances for the interposition of the gods, but they never formulated any view of a grand final goal, some far-off, divine event, toward which the gods guided mankind. But early in the Christian era there naturally arose a very different philosophy of history, stamped by the fervors of the new faith; and it held almost undisputed sway for more than thirteen centuries. First enunciated by St. Augustine in *The City of God,* it asserted that the whole record of the world turned upon the overwhelming fact of divine concern for mankind. The decisive event of history was the life of Christ, before which all mankind had been doomed, and after which all of the elect were saved. St. Augustine, donning the mantle of seer, described the birth, growth, and destiny of two cities, one of this world and one of God, culminating in the triumph of the latter. His followers continued to regard the earth simply as the footstool of history; the story of humankind as simply part of the divine comedy. That view, which often had Neo-Platonist elements and which could be given a compelling grandeur, swayed medieval chroniclers no less than Dante and Milton.[1]

This Christian philosophy of history indeed continued to possess the field down to the time of Bossuet's eloquent book, the *Histoire Universelle,* which

[1] For a much more thorough account of the philosophy of history than is here possible, see the articles by Vladimir G. Simkhovitch on "Approaches to History" in the *Political Science Quarterly,* Vols. XLIV, XLV, XLVII, and XLVIII.

largely summed it up. His volume, written from the standpoint of dogmatic theology and the official Catholic hierarchy, was imbued with a belief that the pivotal event of time was the crucifixion, and that the one all-powerful force in human affairs was God's benevolent interposition. He conceived of the changes in history as all slowly tending toward the progress and universality of the true religion—not merely Christianity, but the papal form of Christianity. The book naturally passed Moslem civilization by; it treated Greece and Rome only as part of the *Preparatio Evangelicum*. Voltaire, remarking caustically that "It seems to have been written solely to suggest that everything in the world was made for the Jews," was stung by it and similar productions into an angry reply. His *Essai sur les Moeurs* a generation later wholly rejected the miraculous interposition of Providence in history, asserting instead a rationalistic interpretation of the past. In Voltaire's opinion, the events of history were attributable not to design but to chance or fortuity. His brilliant though vague exposition helped to open the way for other rationalistic philosophies. But the Christian synthesis long persisted, and even in America had its followers. Benjamin Trumbull's *General History of the United States,* of which only one of three proposed volumes appeared (1810), attempted to point out the special interposition of Providence in behalf of the American people.

Since the time of Hegel, whose brilliant *Philosophy of History* appeared in 1830-31, metaphysical analyses of the whole range of human events have become oppressively numerous. They may now be found on every counter, for it is a poor sociologist, economist, or philosopher—not to mention historian—who does not present one. Hegel, whose doctrines have inspired a whole school, attempted to show that every epoch in history was inspired and dominated by some specific idea; for example, he regarded Napoleon, the new Caesar, as "die Weltseele" of his time. He taught that each idea, affirmed as truth, brings with it the idea that is its negation; they do battle, and a new idea emerges. Then the cycle repeats itself. Such recent historians as Kuno Fischer likewise lay emphasis on the "Einheitstendenz" of every period, which permeates all aspects of its life, and by which alone it is to be understood. A quarter century after Hegel's great book the Darwinian theory of natural selection as a key of evolution seized all history in its powerful grasp, which has not yet greatly relaxed; for most historians of the non-esoteric schools still believe in progress, and believe it is attained by evolutionary processes. Indeed, evolutionary ideas long preceded Darwin, who gave them simply a special form and force. Such writers as Lecky, Freeman, Parkman, and McMaster were unconsciously pervaded by the evolutionary philosophy, and such writers as Froude, Bagehot, John Fiske, and Rhodes were very consciously pervaded by it. Challenged by few save the Marxian group, the evolutionary writers for decades ruled history with autocratic sway, and even yet dominate the field. But an increasing band of dissenters, a vigorous group of advanced intellectuals, today assert that simple evolution is nearly as absurd as the old theological view of history.

Two of the ablest statements of the evolutionary philosophy of history are to be found in Walter Bagehot's stimulating *Physics and Politics* and John Fiske's *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy;* both the more typical for having been

written in the very heart of the Victorian era. Of Fiske's views we shall say something later. Bagehot significantly gave his work the subtitle, "Thoughts on the application of the principles of natural selection and inheritance to political science." His book did more than state a theory of history; for in its deep influence upon such future leaders as Woodrow Wilson it made history. Essentially, it was an attempt to show that in social institutions as well as in the animal kingdom the rule of the survival of the fittest applies; and that as an acquired faculty of the parent animal is sometimes distinctly transmitted to its progeny (or so Bagehot believed), so acquired characteristics of society are inherited by succeeding generations. "The continuous force which binds age to age," writes Bagehot, "enables each to begin with some improvement on the last, if the last did not itself improve." This implies a general, though of course not uninterrupted, continuity of progress in the world, under which weak and erroneous institutions are gradually eliminated. Upon this view, if it is valid, a grand systematization of history can be built, and Bagehot asserts as much. "We thus perceive that a science of history is possible—a science to teach the law of tendencies, created by the mind and transmitted by the body—which act upon and incline the mind of man from age to age."

In developing his thesis, Bagehot begins with a "Preliminary Stage" of civilization in which progress was achieved by the triumph of the strong over the weak. Powerful tribes, nations, or peoples always tend to prevail over the feeble, and while Bagehot does not believe that might makes right, he does assert that "in certain marked peculiarities, the strongest tend to be the best." In his section on "Nation Making" he accounts by evolutionary theory for the development of national traits. It has been an innate propensity of man to imitate what is before him; thus the primitive savages imitated their leaders and copied their most striking characteristics, "preserving them as they did their favorite animals." These traits gradually tinged the whole community. "Ages are required, but at last a national character is formed." National character is but the name for a collection of habits, more or less universal, which in the course of long generations have produced vast mental and physical effects. Bagehot then continues his evolutionary exposition by showing how primitive and simple nations have given way to modern and complex nations. In the former "fixity was the invariable ingredient," and the cake of custom held peoples in a mould that was sometimes as viciously static as the old-time framework of Chinese society. But as the Middle Ages ended, various tendencies broke the cake of fixed custom and ushered in the "age of discussion," which is progressive inasmuch as it gives a premium to intelligence. Though Bagehot saw certain dangers in even the modern age of discussion, notably in a tendency toward hasty political action which he calls "a hereditary barbaric impulse," and though like Malthus he feared "a diminished reserve for race maintenance," his outlook upon the future was fundamentally hopeful. All evolutionists are meliorists if not optimists. While the conclusions which flow from his evolutionary concept appear somewhat naïve to many present-day students, even they must admit that in the course of his argument he elucidates many secondary truths with memorable eloquence and force.

The "Marxian interpretation" of his-

tory is of course really a Marxian philosophy, as imposing in scope, despite its materialistic temper, as any other philosophy. It has to be carefully distinguished from the writings of many of Marx's followers, who in his own lifetime so perverted some of his doctrines that he mordantly remarked, "Je ne suis pas Marxiste." Briefly stated, his thesis is that the mode of production in economic life primarily determines the general character of the social, political, and cultural processes of life. With every change in the economic foundation brought about by changes in relationship between man and productive forces, the entire superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. Marx thus became the first to formulate, in explicit fashion, the economic interpretation of history. Unlike some of his disciples, he and Engels never gave this interpretation so narrow a form as to exclude all non-economic factors as contributing causes of events; they merely declared the mode of production to be the dominant factor. Indeed, Marx clearly perceived that society is moulded by spirit and thought as well as material environment, and did not believe that history could be explained by a monistic materialism. Rather, he regarded society as an interacting whole of environment and thought, of objective and subjective conditions, and of activity and its practical goals, in which mode of production was the most important single element. It should also be noted that Marx's general conception of history does not have, for students of historical writing, any connection with his belief that society would be remade by passing through a dictatorship of the proletariat into a classless world. As Dr. E. R. A. Seligman says, "there is nothing in common between the economic interpretation of history and the doctrine of Socialism, except the accidental fact that the originator of both theories happened to be the same man."

This philosophy has been under intensive fire ever since Marx very briefly presented it in his *Critique of Political Economy*—for he never gave it an elaborate statement. The attack upon those of his followers who take an extremely narrow and dogmatic view of the economic interpretation has of course been more effective than the attack upon Marx himself. German Socialists like Kautsky and Hilferding compressed the Marxian theory of history into preposterously strict limits, making human thought and action not so much derivatives as by-products of economic processes. The Russian Communists have gone to equal extremes in their treatment of history. Lenin's reductive materialism in his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism,* Bukharin's emphasis upon a technological interpretation of history, which he falsely ascribed to Marx, and Pokrovsky's monistic materialism, which completely excluded either chance or great men as real determinants of events, were all vulnerable. But the true Marxian philosophy in no way excludes ethical or spiritual forces from history. It simply asserts that the concept of morality is a social product, varying with the state of civilization or with the social class, and as such largely determined, in the last analysis, by economic forces. It does not deny that great men have sometimes exercised a controlling influence upon history. It simply asserts that in general they would never have been great had it not been for certain social conditions which made their rise possible, and that these conditions are in turn governed chiefly by economic factors. But it must be added

that Marx's own brevity and partial obscurity in stating his philosophy left some of its implications vague, and opened the way for such assaults upon it as those of Dr. M. M. Bober and F. R. Salter.

The vast convulsion of the World War and its aftermath, which convinced tens of millions of men that social progress is but an empty word, and that an "evolution" which marched whole nations to death or ruin offered no hope to mankind, could not but have a profound effect upon the philosophy of history. Certain new scientific theories of the universe formulated during the same period exercised an almost equal influence. The universe, which Newton had conceived as infinite in extent and subject to fixed physical laws, was transformed by Einstein into a finite universe governed by relative laws. It was perhaps a universe, as Jeans, Eddington, and others suggested, in which a ceaseless process of destruction and construction went on without assignable object; energy being dissipated into remote space, and there gradually reconstructing new galaxies to dissipate themselves again. The fashion in historical philosophies swung abruptly to exercise in cosmic rhythm. H. G. Wells still believed in evolution, and his *Outline of History* pointed the way to a grand perfection of society through science and education. But a dozen post-war writers, most of whom dipped their pens in earthquake and gloom, explained that history was a series of pulsations; was a swing and counterswing of the pendulum; was a cycle of summer-fall-winter-spring seasons endlessly repeating themselves; was in fact anything except the magnificent upward climb toward a higher and better life which Bossuet had believed to be directed by God, and the Victorians to be directed by Evolution (which after all, in Tennyson's if not in Huxley's view, was little else than another name for God).

Upon the principal recent treatises offering one or another rhythm-philosophy of history—Spengler's *Decline of the West,* Pareto's *Mind and Society,* Arnold Toynbee's *A Study of History,* and most pretentious of all, Pitirim Sorokin's *Culture and Cultural Dynamics*—it is happily unnecessary to speak at any length. Their own length is not a little oppressive: Spengler's two volumes, Pareto's and Sorokin's four, and Toynbee's projected thirteen. These men all differ violently as to the precise form of the rhythmic alternation, just as they differ as to the precise position of the present-day world in the grand repetitive movement. Spengler, with his four seasonal phases of the cycle, and his certainty that Western civilization has been entering a long winter of decay, deeply appealed to the pessimism of a defeated Germany. Pareto is less willing to assume the rôle of a prophet, and more inclined to present sociological evidence for his generalizations. To him history represents past sociology just as surely as to Freeman it represented retrospective politics. He sees in history a repetitive alternation of liberty and authority—the foxes and the lions—and he believes that our own post-bellum period has clearly represented the swing toward authority. Professor Sorokin presents history as a fairly complex cycle which carries it from the Ideational at one extreme to the Sensate at the other, and then back again. These terms can be roughly translated into collectivism and individualism, and Mr. Sorokin believes that Western society is just completing a Sensate (individualist) and beginning an Ideational (collectivist) period. Mr.

Toynbee's general ideas are as yet only partially adumbrated; though they postulate a challenge-and-response rhythm, he seems still to cling to a modicum of faith in evolution.[2]

In direct application, these newer philosophies are not at all helpful to practitioners of history. The Hegelian idea of history has been fruitfully applied by students and writers. So also with the evolutionary concept of history, which stimulated many writers to arrange their data in more interesting and significant patterns. But while Spengler and Pareto offer many stimulating suggestions and present many flashes of insight into detailed historical problems (as does Toynbee), their grandiose concepts of human cycles or curves seem of no practical use. The value of these ambitious philosophies is indirect. They foster a healthy discontent with existing approaches to history, which leads to an effort to obtain a deeper understanding of it. They predispose students to utilize new formulae and new scientific apparatus in an experimental search for truth. They lead to an impatience with the shallower forms of history, a demand for more profound treatments of it. Scornful as we may be of the flatulence and vagueness of some of these philosophies, or pseudo-philosophies, we must agree with Henry Adams—who himself tentatively entered the field—that the impulse behind them is natural:

> You may be sure that four out of five serious students of history who are living today have, in the course of their work, felt that they stood on the brink of a great generalization that would reduce history under a law as clear as the laws which govern the material world. As the great writers of our time have touched one by one the separate fragments of admitted law by which society betrays its character as a subject for science, not one of them can have failed to feel an instant's hope that he might find the secret which would transform these odds and ends of philosophy into one self-evident, harmonious, and complete system. He has seemed to have it, as the Spanish say, in his inkstand. Scores of times he must have dropped his pen to think how one short step, one sudden inspiration, would show all human knowledge; how, in these thickset forests of history, one corner turned, one faint trail struck would bring him on the high-road of science.[3]

Yet it should be added that general agreement upon any philosophy of history is as undesirable as it is impossible. The great unifying law of which Henry Adams speaks will never be found. If men assented to any such law, it would bind history in fetters as adamantine as the old theological formula of Bossuet, and would ultimately render historical scholarship as monotonous and sterile as the work of the monkish chroniclers.

But the ordinary reader of history needs to have little concern with the grandiose conceptions of philosophy. His interest in the application of ideas to history will be confined to the more modest, more practical, more personal form which we term the historical interpretation. One of the distinguishing hallmarks of modern historical writing is its powerful interpretive tendency. While the best ancient and medieval historians had a distinct point of view, only a few of them—among the ancients,

[2] Dr. Simkhovitch, in the fourth article of his "Approaches to History," *Political Science Quarterly*, XLVIII, 23 ff., names and describes still other exponents of a rhythmical philosophy—Scherer, Karl Joel, O. Lorenz, and others. Spengler completed the first version of his *Decline* in 1914.

[3] Henry Adams, *Degradation of the Democratic Dogma*, p. 127.

Thucydides, Polybius, and their disciples—were possessed by that intense desire to revise history ever nearer the truth by arranging it in ever subtler patterns which masters most present-day historians. The element of intellectual *originality* in historical work has become steadily larger since 1750. While the forces which brought this interpretive tendency to its modern vigor are numerous, four may be singled out as particularly important.

The growth of rationalism was of course as indispensable to the unfettered use of ideas in history as it was to their unfettered use in science. It was no accident that the Age of Enlightenment coincided with the first great flowering of modern history. Originally in France, and later in England, the eighteenth century produced a special and extraordinary activity in historical work. And it is significant that this activity was promoted by the very men who were doing most in other spheres to emancipate humanity from the trammels of authority. Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws,* one of the most important books ever written, perhaps the greatest book of eighteenth century France, is largely historical in content, as the subtitle indicates: "du Rapport que les Lois doivent avoir avec la Constitution du Chaque Gouvernement, les Moeurs, le Climat, la Religion, du Commerce, etc." Its third part, consisting of six books which treat at length of the dependence of manners and customs upon climatic conditions, has been especially interesting to historical students. Montesquieu was the first writer to emphasize this relationship as it deserved. But the work should be considered as a whole; so taken, it is one of the foundation-stones of comparative politics, and its novel and brilliant generalizations in this field at once suggested a number of new ways of interpreting history. With it should be considered the work of Voltaire. He realized that when he and other rationalists loosed the grip of the old supernatural versions of history, when they proved that men really made their own world, a new significance instantly enveloped the past. Historians must make use of these thousand new *aperçus.* Casting aside the murky lanterns of the religious chroniclers and churchly recorders, they must reconstruct the past under the brilliant light of reason. The same conviction animated Hume and Gibbon, two mighty assailants of the reigning superstitions, across the Channel. It was no accident that the best secular histories of the period were written by the greatest of the rationalists.

Voltaire has left an exceptionally full record of the circumstances under which he embarked upon his own rationalist interpretations of history. His active-minded friend, Mme. du Chatelet, whose special talent was for mathematics and philosophy, disliked history.[4] "What does it matter to me," she asked, "a Frenchwoman living on my estate, that Egil succeeded Haquin in Sweden, and that Ottoman was the son of Ortogrul? I read with pleasure Greek and Roman history, which offers great pictures which attract me. But I have never yet been able to finish any long history of our modern nations. There seems nothing in them but confusion, a host of minute events without connection or sequence, a thousand battles which settled nothing. I renounced a study which overwhelmed my mind without illuminating it." Voltaire replied that what was needed was simply a

[4] Voltaire, *Essai sur les Moeurs,* pp. 1, 2.

rational interpretation of history, utilizing the ideas forbidden to previous generations. If all the tedious and untrustworthy details of wars, all the pointless negotiations of diplomacy, all the minute incidents which obscured the grand tendencies of history, were shorn away, then a general and well-arranged picture could be made of the significant factors. It would be worth Mme. du Chatelet's time to read *that.* The history of the human mind, remarked Voltaire, was the truly important part of the human record. His word mind, of course, embraced a great deal—law, arts, manners, literature, ideas—which he would make the chief concern of history. But every fact that the historian recorded should lead to something else. "Details which lead to nothing are in history what baggage is to an army, impedimenta, for we must look at things in the large, for the simple reason that the human mind is limited and sinks under the weight of minutiae." [5] Unconnected minutiae he would leave to annalists and encyclopaedia-makers. These conceptions Voltaire illustrated in his *Charles XII* and *Age of Louis XIV.*

The new scientific attitude toward history was strikingly exhibited by Voltaire in his flat refusal to accept Tacitus at face value. He did not have the evidence which later scholars have found for believing Tacitus prejudiced and inaccurate. But relying on internal evidence, he pointed out the improbability of much that Tacitus had written upon Tiberius, Nero, Caligula, and other emperors. How could we accept the word of a man born long after Tiberius's death for the sensational story of how the emperor, after living to nearly eighty with unblemished name and a reputation for austerity, thereafter passed his time in monstrous debaucheries? Voltaire applied this same scientific incredulity to other fables of so-called history, demanding more sensible interpretations. Still another new principle which he helped bring into history was his insistence that persons and personal interests are of secondary importance; that it is the community, not the individual, which counts for most. This in itself was a basis for many new interpretations of the past. As Lord Morley says in his essay on Voltaire:

> Voltaire was always conscious, though not so clearly as writers are now, of the great historical principle that besides the prominent men of a generation there is something at work underneath, a moving current on whose flood they are borne. He never fixed this current by any of the names which now fall so glibly from our lips,—tendency of the times, tenor of public opinion, spirit of the age, and the like, by which we give a collective name to groups of sentiments and forces, all making in what seems to be a single direction. But although unnamed, this singular and invisible concurrence of circumstances was yet a reality to him. The age was something besides its heroes, and something besides its noisiest and most resounding occurrences. His divisions of the great epochs of humanity are undoubtedly open to much criticism, because the principles on which he drew the dividing line have lost their force in new generations. . . . Nevertheless, we are bound to recognize that a new way of regarding human action, as well as a new way of composing history, was being introduced by a writer whose first paragraph declared that he proposed to himself a greater object than an account of the life of Louis XIV; that he designed to paint for the instruction of posterity, not the actions of a single man, but the spirit of men; and that while all periods must be alike to one who only de-

[5] Voltaire, *Ibid.*, p. 9.

sires to fill his memory with facts, discrimination among them cannot be dispensed with for one who thinks.[6]

The temper of the Enlightenment appears quite as clearly in David Hume's *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary,* as in Voltaire's works. His famous disquisition upon miracles, a masterpiece of irony, was a blow at the very padlock of the old fetters upon history. His essay upon the population of ancient cities, highly skeptical in temper, was one of the first suggestions of the importance of statistics in interpreting history. His views on money, trade, and government, marked by intellectual impartiality and critical acuteness in points of detail, carried many historical illustrations and had a clear applicability to history. Despite his allegiance to the Tory party, they pointed a clear road forward to what in the next century was called Liberalism. They had a profound influence in England and France, and it has been said that but for the conservative reaction following the French Revolution they might even have resulted in the parliamentary adoption of free trade and electoral reform before 1800. But Hume's *History of England,* which followed the *Essays,* was his greatest work. He was the first eminent Briton, as Voltaire was the first eminent Frenchman, to see clearly that history should not be a mere record of war and political intrigue, but should concern itself primarily with the mode of life, the morals, the manners, and the mind of the people. Far more than any previous writer, he had an insight into the complex social forces of history. After his six-volume work (1754-61), no Englishman could write history as it had been written before.

[6] Lord Morley, *Collected Works,* VII, 249, 250.

In Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* the Age of Enlightenment produced its principal historical monument. That work still seems, to many acute judges, the greatest piece of interpretive history yet written. To be sure, the interpretation is simple; it is largely summed up in Gibbon's famous sentence, "I have traced the triumph of Christianity and of barbarism." He was animated by a glowing admiration for the empire of Augustus and Trajan as embodying a "solid fabric of human greatness" unmatchable elsewhere; an empire which to him came nearer giving the earth its golden age than had any other régime. Imbued with this admiration, he felt little but distaste for the Christian religion which had done so much to help overthrow the Roman civilization—which had given to him in the eighteenth century the sight of barefooted and superstitious friars chanting vespers in the temple of Jupiter beside the ruins of the Capitol. That so great a work should be written upon a theme so antagonistic to all the tenets of theological historiography was, whatever we think of the validity of his interpretation, the blow of an irresistible battering ram against the old narrow citadels. Their walls collapsed in utter ruin.

The second great constructive influence upon historical interpretation came with the rise of economic science, and was ushered in by Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* in the same year that witnessed the Declaration of Independence and the publication of Gibbon's first volume. Smith had taken not a few of his views from the *Political Discourses* of his close friend Hume. His classic book, usually regarded as the main foundation of economics, was also one of the foundation-stones of modern

historical writing. The Rationalists had dealt a shattering blow at the theory that history revolved exclusively about the facts of Christianity; Adam Smith now dealt a shattering blow at the whole aristocratic theory of history. Up to that time nearly all chroniclers of the past had held to a hierarchal conception of history, regarding the upper ranks of society as those alone worthy of a large place in the record. The king, noble, soldier, priest, and statesman had been the personalities with whom history was concerned; battles, dynastic changes, treaties, and other elements of the contest for power had been the salient events of history. But Adam Smith's ideas let in a new blaze of light. He and other writers showed that the great central currents in the life of any modern nation were economic; that the principal forces which governed that life were those of production, markets, transportation, labor-supply, prices, and raw materials. These, like an irresistible current, bore national affairs forward while kings, priests, and soldiers—with some few exceptions—were tossed like flotsam and jetsam on the surface. Important though wars and battles were, they held their importance, in general, because they grew out of economic forces or interrupted these forces; much as treaties often counted, it was usually because they were the visible outcome of greater factors beneath the surface. It was impossible for well-read men, after *The Wealth of Nations,* to write of nations without proper attention to all that built up wealth. A great new interpretive highway had been driven into the wilderness that bordered the old-fashioned history, and colonists were soon making that wilderness rich with fruitful crops.

One of the first and most influential of these explorers was Arnold H. L. Heeren, long professor at Göttingen, who was sixteen when Adam Smith's book appeared, and who lived until 1842, becoming George Bancroft's master and inspirer in the art of history. Heeren's unforgettable service was that he first fully applied the new interpretive apparatus to the ancient field. In his *Ideen über Politik, den Verkehr und den Handel der vornehmsten Völker der alten Welt,* and in other works, he presented an altogether fresh point of view. He examined ancient agriculture, manufactures, commerce, finance, and in short, the whole economic system of the early world, together with its politics, laws, and constitutions, and was thus enabled to throw a flood of light on the development of the civilizations of antiquity. His vast and varied learning, calm impartiality, and insight helped to make his works notable. Unfortunately Bancroft, while learning much from Heeren in scholarly method and zeal, never acquired his peculiar interest in the economic aspects of history. In England the Benthamite or utilitarian school of historians, like Jeremy Bentham himself, were originally inspired by Adam Smith.

As a third vivifying influence, novel political ideas also contributed to the transformation of history by supplying a number of fresh interpretations; and it need not be said that the most striking of these ideas came with the French Revolution. That event was to half of mankind as the rising of a golden sun. "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive"—to be a young historian, no less than poet, very heaven. Through the lurid flame and smoke of the overwhelming convulsion, the masses of the people came into view. These masses, unknown to the oldtime chroniclers of roy-

alty, military glory, and the church, had been neglected as unimportant, but they now made history with unforgettable vigor. They lifted to power one of their own number, and Napoleon took charge of the destinies of Europe for fifteen years. Thenceforth no historian could slight them. And when the era of the Napoleonic wars ended, it was also seen that history must henceforth be interpreted not merely in terms of the common man, but in terms of a rampant nationalism. Once the monarch had been thought more important than the state—often, as Louis XIV boasted of himself, he *was* the state. But now the people were the state; and the force of national sentiment diffused throughout the people brought a new Germany, a new Spain, in one sense a new Russia, into existence. In the course of another long generation, the growth of nationalism among the masses gave birth to a new Italy and a newer Germany, while still further triumphs lay before it.

Altogether, by 1830 the age of multiform historical interpretations of the past had fully opened. The presentation of the human record had been broadened in a fashion that would have been inconceivable to pious readers of Bossuet. It no longer took account of divine providence at all—or at least not in the ablest writers. Instead, it took account of all that the rationalism of that era had to suggest, for Montesquieu's enlistment of geography had been only one of various utilizations of scientific knowledge; it took account of the cultural and moral history which Voltaire had pointed out to Mme. du Chatelet as central to all understanding of man's past; it took account of economic factors; of democratic factors; and of nationalistic and patriotic factors. A series of radically new outlooks, within seventy-five years, had come in. Every student was at liberty to use one or several of them in his synthesis, his interpretation.

Yet although much had been done, fertile fields of speculation remained to be entered. The fourth great element in the modern growth of history lay in its acquisition of the new scientific tendencies of the nineteenth century. In such writers as Macaulay, Guizot, and Prescott the interpretation is what we nowadays term, with due respect, old-fashioned. Why? Because while they reflected the ideas which had been imported into history by Montesquieu and Voltaire, Hume and Gibbon, Adam Smith and Heeren, the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution, still other ideas arose during and after their lifetimes which have profoundly impressed all subsequent historians. History had in particular to keep up with the march of the various sciences, and some were marching fast. In addition to the development of geography, economics, and biology, wholly new sciences were born—first sociology, and later psychology, both extremely useful in historical interpretation. Professional historians are justly suspicious of sweeping sociological theories as likely to be unsound and useless. But the more exact sciences are of indubitable value.

One important book which partly revealed a shift in the trend of historical interpretation, and which partly caused it, was H. T. Buckle's unfinished *History of Civilization in England,* published in 1857. As everyone knows, this huge fragment—broken off by his untimely death—is part of an introduction in which he intended, first, to state the general laws governing human progress,

and second, to exemplify these laws by the history of certain strongly individualized nations—Spain, Scotland, the United States, and Germany. It is unnecessary to list all of the ten or twelve main principles, some of them largely fallacious, which he laid down. His most important contentions are as follows: (1) Inasmuch as historians have been shortsighted and unreflective, and as the social phenomena of the modern world are extremely complex, little has yet been done to establish a science of history. (2) It is nevertheless proved by scientific inquiry, and particularly by sociological statistics, that human action is controlled by fixed and predictable rules. (3) It is a basic fact of history that the chief causes of intellectual progress are climate, soil, and food, which govern it indirectly by determining the accumulation and distribution of wealth, and the aspect of nature, which touches intellectual development directly by influencing the cast and vigor of thought—for peoples reared in sublime scenery are more imaginative than their fellows, peoples reared in harsh surroundings are tougher-minded, and so on. (4) The huge distinction between European and non-European civilization rests primarily upon the fact that in Europe man has been stronger than nature, subduing it to his objects, while outside Europe nature has been stronger than man and has largely subdued him. (5) The advance of European civilization is characterized by a steady growth in the importance of intellectual laws, and a steady diminution in the influence of physical laws.

Though some of his ideas have never convinced others, and perhaps none of them is wholly true, Buckle's work was nevertheless extremely influential everywhere from Russia to the United States. Particularly was one central thesis of his work important. He taught that written history had been too much a record of individuals or select groups, and not enough of whole societies or nations; he believed that the action of great human masses ought to be traced, especially with the aid of statistical law. He also held that in the natural surroundings of every people—its command of necessary raw materials and luxuries, its conditions of soil and climate—lie the chief moulding influences of its career, and that parliaments have nearly as little as kings and heroes to do with that moulding. In short, Buckle was one of the forerunners of a history built upon sociology, social statistics, and economic geography. His emphasis upon the life of the whole people appears in transmuted form in John Richard Green's *Short History of the English People,* and in John Bach McMaster's *History of the People of the United States.* Both these writers attempt to trace the life of a whole nation, and to deal with the people as an organic body; the people as they lived, worked, prospered, suffered, as they developed moral codes, manners, and arts in city and country. Both writers had to fall back upon description much more heavily than Buckle would have approved, for tables of statistics and other sociological data did not exist in any volume. But both were obviously influenced by his doctrines, while he had helped to prepare a reading public for them. The deep impression made by his insistence upon laws of progress was of course heightened by the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* only two years after his book.

Only less important than the scientific contribution made to historical interpretation by Buckle and the great evolutionists—Darwin, Lyell, Huxley, Wal-

lace, Hooker—was the quasi-scientific contribution made by the founders of sociology. One such founder, August Comte, preceded these men; another, Herbert Spencer, followed them. Neither wrote at any length upon history in itself, but the works of both contain much incidental material upon history. Spencer was of course one of the chief apostles of evolution, who attempted to make universal the principle of evolutionary development and to formulate its law. Comte, whose *Positive Philosophy* was completed in 1843, seventeen years before Darwin's *Origin of Species,* had no connection with evolutionary theory. Nor had he the least sympathy with the desire of Buckle and others to study history by discovering the scientific laws governing society. On the contrary, he maintained that no such laws exist; that while human knowledge has as its objects phenomena in their reciprocal relations, nothing absolute lies at the base of these phenomena. With one exception stated below, the only absolute law is, All is relative. His views represented a development of the rationalistic and skeptical doctrines of Hume and Condillac.

For the purposes of the interpretive historian, the part of Comte's encyclopaedic system which holds the richest interest is the Law of the Three States laid down at the beginning of his Positive Philosophy, and always treated by both disciples and opponents as the key to it. He declared that each branch of human knowledge passes successively through three phases, or three modes in which men explain the phenomena they observe. The first phase is the Theological, in which credulous observers refer phenomena to a supernatural principle, the immediate volition of the object itself or of some supernatural being. The second phase is the Metaphysical, the phenomena being viewed not as an act of volition, but as due to an abstract force residing in, yet apart from, the object. The third is the Positive phase, when phenomena are referred by way of succession or resemblance to some other fact, and so studied. All this has been aptly illustrated by an English follower of Comte: "Take the phenomenon of the sleep produced by opium. The Arabs are content to attribute it to the 'will of God.' Molière's medical student accounts for it by a *soporific principle* contained in the opium. The modern physiologist knows that he cannot account for it at all. He can simply observe, analyze, and experiment upon the phenomena attending the action of the drug, and classify it with other agents analogous in character." The principal object of Comte's Positivistic teachings was to carry the study of social phenomena into the third stage—to remove them from the sphere of theology and metaphysics, and to see that they be given the same scientific examination of their relations and classifications as had already been given to physical and chemical phenomena. To use John Morley's summary:

> While men's minds were in the theological state, political events, for example, were explained by the will of the gods, and political authority based on divine right. In the metaphysical state of mind . . . political authority was based on the will of the people, and social facts were explained by the figment of the falling away from a state of nature. When the positive method has been fully extended to society, as it has been to chemistry and physiology, these social facts will be resolved, as their ultimate analysis, into relations with one another, and instead of seeking causes in the old sense of the word, men will only

examine the conditions of social existence. When that stage has been reached . . . the whole of our knowledge will be impressed with one character, the character, namely, of positivity or scientificalness; and all our conceptions in every part of knowledge will be thoroughly homogeneous. The gains of such a change are enormous.[7]

In addition to this emphasis upon the necessity for a science of society, an emphasis which could not but affect historical work in proportion as Comte's views were accepted and diffused, the Positive Philosophy had another important object. This was to show that the sciences are all branches from a single trunk, parts of one great whole. Comte's special aim was the promotion of sociology, a science never formulated until his advent; but while promoting it he tried to assign it a clear relation to other branches of knowledge. He arranged a hierarchy of sciences, each in his view more specialized than the member just before it, and dependent upon all the preceding sciences: (1) mathematics, (2) astronomy, (3) physics, (4) chemistry, (5) biology, and (6) sociology. Of course he held sociology the greatest of all. If we remember that not a few writers now view history as retrospective sociology, it is at once plain that this doctrine also has had its effect upon historical interpretation.

We have spoken of evolution as giving the world a new philosophy of history; but it also supplied various new interpretations of it, practical and immediate in nature. Until the doctrine was fully introduced to the world by Darwin, Spencer, and others, historians had talked of development rather than evolution. During the Age of Enlightenment advanced thinkers had taken a keen interest in the origin and development of language, of philology, of law, of pictorial art, of legendary and written literature. It was natural that this should be enlarged to include an inquiry into the origin and development of animal life. This investigation, in the hands of men like Darwin, Spencer, and Huxley, soon included an inquiry into the source and means of progress of humankind; and it soon also brought forth a revolutionary conception of development. In the eighteenth century the animal world had been looked upon as a series of species or types, but it had never been supposed that the types evolved into one another; each was thought of as independent. Now it was demonstrated by careful investigation that species or types did change into others. In short, development had become evolution. Though Darwin was by far the greatest scientist to investigate the supposed laws of evolution, Herbert Spencer made the most ambitious effort to apply evolution as a universal interpretive principle, using it to explain the development of human society as well as of the animal kingdom. His doctrine of integration followed by differentiation remains highly suggestive to the historian even today.

The old view of the factors involved in the development of organic life had been childishly naïve, falling back upon a series of cosmic cataclysms to explain what was otherwise inexplicable. Darwin declared that the true factors were increasing complexity, infinite differentiation, adaptation to environment, natural selection by the survival of the fittest, and the transmission of acquired characteristics. Previously an apparently unbridgeable gap had existed between men and dumb animals; now this chasm was filled. Previously no clear alternative

[7] *Encyclopædia Britannica,* Ninth Ed., VI, 234.

had been offered to the theological doctrine of creation; now one was formulated. Previously a huge body of historical facts had seemed trivial and without sequence or relationship; now relationships could be suggested and the significance of nearly all facts demonstrated. A large number of biological analogies suggested themselves to students of history. It is hardly too much to say that most departments of human thought reoriented themselves after the publication of *The Origin of Species,* and history was one.

Within a single generation the range of evolutionary interpretations became extremely wide. It ran from Freeman's work on the evolution of the English Constitution, and Sir Henry Maine's on the evolution of law, both highly scientific in character, to such a book as Winwood Reade's summary of world history called *The Martyrdom of Man* —a book which, first published in 1872, has gone through fully a score of British and American editions. Reade pictures the past of mankind in colors of repellent darkness, and hints at a future of dazzling brightness; finding the bridge between the two in the process of evolutionary betterment. In America the Spencerian interpretation was best applied to history by John Fiske. He interpreted the rise of democracy in this country by analogy from biological evolution, and explained it as analogous to the growth of British democracy from the ancient Teutonic folk moot. The word evolution soon crept into book-titles, and has become so firmly established there that no conceivable force could dislodge it; men write on the Evolution of Congress, the Evolution of Fashions, the Evolution of the Novel, the evolution of every force or social element that has a history. The biological analogy is seldom encountered, and even when met is seldom pushed far. But it is safe to assert that more than half the historians now writing bring insensibly to their interpretation of the facts at least a few fragmentary ideas of the mutation of species or types, of adaptation to environment, and of natural selection by survival of the fittest. Their minds have consciously or unconsciously taken much of the Darwinian mould.

It is impossible to pursue further the various interpretations brought in by new scientific knowledge or theories. Psychology has resulted in the rewriting of a vast deal of history; not merely by furnishing new concepts of great leaders, but by throwing fresh light on mass-emotion, mass-thinking, the behavior of special groups, and the growth and decay of certain states of mind. The newer medical knowledge, as everyone can see by reading Dr. Hans Zinsser's *Rats, Lice, and History* or Dr. C. MacLaurin's works on the pathological record of eminent men and women, has affected the treatment of the past.[8] The progress of economic geography has made possible brilliant new interpretations of history. And this scientific advance goes on along an ever-widening front. Many old views are slowly discarded; few present-day historians would think of citing Buckle or Comte to buttress an interpretation—many do not even know what they taught. But

[8] In *Post Mortem* Dr. MacLaurin deals with the medical history of Joan of Arc, Charles V, Anne Boleyn, Napoleon I, and Cellini; in *Mere Mortals* with the medical record of Ivan the Terrible, Henry VIII, Frederick the Great, James I, and others. He thinks that the true reason for Charles V's retirement lay in arteriosclerosis.

even the exploded and outmoded theories have helped to generate a spirit of unfettered inquiry and discussion, to stimulate men to use new tools fearlessly, and to give historical study a pervading atmosphere of alertness and energy. Believers in history realize that it must be kept in touch with other branches of knowledge, and abreast of them. As a result of the successive injections of new ideas, today we have numerous large schools of historical interpretation, and a great many minor schools or sub-schools.

The oldest of the schools is the still-surviving group of religious-minded historians. While the theological philosophy of history has decayed in the sense that few men would think of making Christianity the central pattern of world-history, nevertheless many writers believe that certain phases of history illuminate God's workings in the world. Sometimes the belief is explicit, more often sub-conscious. Thomas Carlyle wrote of the French Revolution as a gigantic object-lesson in the penalty that quackery, greed, and evil bring upon themselves, a tremendous illustration of God's determination to make crooked ways straight. With theological dogmas Carlyle had no patience whatever; he condemned them as "Hebrew old-clothes," talked of priests as apes chattering by the banks of the Dead Sea, and remarked that Newman had the brains of a moderate-sized rabbit. But he was highly religious in a deeper, more mystical sense, and his histories are the utterances of a religious prophet preaching by pictures of the past—flaming and unforgettable pictures. Often accused of holding that Might makes Right, he protested sternly that he believed the precise opposite; that Right and Might are in the long run identical because Right alone is ultimately enduring. His belief that Right is the expression of the divine will he wrought into every texture of his histories. It was of course a very different type of religious history that John Henry Newman wrote, but it had more force than Carlyle believed. And many later historians have had theological preconceptions. The shallower kind of religious history receives —and deserves—general disregard. We have little patience today with George Bancroft remarking in his eulogy of Lincoln: "That God rules in the affairs of men is as certain as any truth of physical science . . . Kings are lifted up and thrown down, nations come and go . . . but nothing is by chance, though men, in their ignorance of causes, may think so. The deeds of time are governed, as well as judged, by the decrees of eternity." We have little patience with Hilaire Belloc's twaddle about the figure of an Ultramontane and very Bellocian God in all human affairs.[9] But history that discloses a deep pervasive undercurrent of religious conviction may often merit the utmost respect. As Woodrow Wilson declared, the record of nations possesses a spiritual quality, and is fundamentally a product "not of institutions, but of the heart."

An almost equally venerable school of writers still interprets history largely

[9] A famous passage in Newman's *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (Chapter V) shows that even he sometimes lost faith in a divine pattern. He speaks of the unhappy lot of mankind—"their aimless courses, their random achievements and acquirements, the impotent conclusions of long-standing facts, the tokens so faint and broken of a superintending design, the blind evolution of what turn out to be great powers or truths, the progress of things as if from unreasoning elements, not towards final causes . . . all this . . . inflicts upon the mind the sense of a profound mystery, which is utterly beyond human solution."

by the lamp of political science. They hold that the most significant aspect of the human past lies in the effort of men to give objective form to the principles of governmental theory. Of this school Von Ranke remains the great exemplar, for even his studies in church history were essentially studies in statecraft and state-organization. To it belong such English historians as Gardiner and Froude; such French historians as Guizot and Michelet; such American historians as Schouler and Rhodes. It remains strong despite all the inroads of the "new" history. So young a scholar as Mr. Crane Brinton can write: "Not so very long ago, most of us knew what to expect when we encountered the word history. We could count on an orderly narrative of the doings of kings and statesmen, soldiers and priests . . ." [10] It will continue to persist and to show strength. In the hands of this group history is a definite and dignified entity, explaining much that is undeniably of first importance in the past, and offering a fixed and solid discipline to the mind. Its history is narrow and at times a bit arid, but it possesses form and significance. While the record of mankind has become much more than the history of states, state-history remains no mean part of it.

One of the most vigorous schools of all, the school which expounds one form or another of the economic interpretation of history, now boasts of so many departments that it has become difficult to treat it under a single rubric. It has been an extremely fertile school, producing within a century a vast sea of historical literature. For example, Labriola calls the Reformation an economic rebellion of the German nation, and R. H. Tawney has placed the whole Reformative movement on an economic basis. Émile Durkheim (a sociologist rather than historian) asserts that history is essentially the progress of the principle of division of labor.[11] Marxian or pseudo-Marxian historians have interpreted the record of many communities and nations as primarily a history of the division and antagonism of classes—the class conflict. Some historians of the economic school, like Guglielmo Ferrero, have taken a highly pessimistic view of the course of the human race. Some, like H. G. Wells, who has also been greatly influenced by evolutionary doctrine and Marxian ideas, are highly optimistic; they look forward to the rise of society from level to level until it attains a millennial state. The ablest of all the compendious histories of the American people, Charles and Mary Beard's *Rise of American Civilization,* is primarily an economic interpretation. Anyone who looks at a critical bibliography of American history must be struck by the sweeping extent of the present-day movement for rewriting the history of American colonization, American expansion, the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, and the party conflicts, in terms of their economic springs. But this tendency toward economic reinterpretation has gained equal vigor in almost all Western lands.

The school which presents a geographical interpretation of history is by no means a mere subdivision of the preceding school, but maintains a place of its own. It holds that the degree of a people's civilization is determined primarily by its physical surroundings and by climatic influences. One of the most important living exponents of this

[10] *Saturday Review of Literature,* August 14, 1937.
[11] Cf. Émile Durkheim's *De la Division de la Travail Social* (1893).

theory, Ellsworth Huntington, has made particularly notable studies of the influence of climate upon history. To the stimulating effect of certain climates, conjoined with the possession of rich natural resources and other factors, he attributes the rise of great civilizations in a few favored lands—the western part of the European continent, the British Isles, eastern North America. To the lack of such stimulation he attributes the cultural barrenness of other lands, and to changes in the climate he would trace much of the decay of earlier civilizations in Western Asia and the Mediterranean basin. More modest and conventional uses of geography are to be found in the writings of such Americans as Ellen C. Semple and R. H. Brigham. But the whole relation of geography and history must be reserved for fuller treatment later in this volume.

Social history, cultural history, intellectual history—these names are applied to the work of various interpretive groups between which it is hard to draw clear boundary lines; groups which all unite, however, in giving history a wide and loose significance. Cultural history can perhaps be set in a special category. In the strictest sense it is a history of cultural institutions related to underlying currents of national or community life. Leslie Stephen in his *English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century* (1904), an admirable example, not merely furnishes a systematic and satisfactory history of English letters from Addison to Walter Scott. He goes further and shows how the *content* of this literature arose from the social conditions of the time. Not only this, but he goes still further and demonstrates that literary form itself has a vital unity with these social conditions. That is, the lines along which this form—the drama, the epic, the essay, the novel—will develop, depend upon the character, origin, and tastes of the literary class which uses it as a vehicle for its ideas and impulses; upon the constitution of the reading class which offers a market for these ideas; and upon the correspondence between these ideas and the most powerful intellectual tendencies of the time. W. J. Courthope's comprehensive *History of English Poetry* places the development of prosody upon a solid foundation in the developing social conditions of English history. Such a striking little masterpiece of interpretation as Taine's *Art of the Netherlands* does the same. So, also, do the learned, vivid, and beautifully written (though occasionally inaccurate) volumes of John Addington Symonds on the Renaissance, and Burckhardt's single volume on the subject; Georg Brandes's *Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature;* and Parrington's work. Samuel Eliot Morison's history of Harvard presents a cultural history of all early New England, while Van Wyck Brooks deals admirably with a later period in *The Flowering of New England.*

Sociological and social history of course constitute a much larger and vaguer department of scholarship and letters. At the one extreme we find a group which would base history upon the dictum of Franklin H. Giddings: "Sociology is an attempt to account for the origin, growth, structure, and activities of society by the operation of physical, vital, and psychological causes working together in the process of evolution." This group has given us books like Kidd's *Social Evolution,* which is a brilliant interpretation of the function of religion in history, and J. Donald Forrest's *Development of Western Society.* At the other extreme we find a group

devoted to what the Germans long ago called *kulturgeschichte*—that is, writers who attempt to describe the life of a people during a certain period in all its phases. An early example is offered by Karl Biedermann's *Germany in the 18th Century*. Excellent recent examples are offered by the best volumes of *The History of American Life,* edited by Arthur M. Schlesinger and Dixon Ryan Fox, and inspired in part by H. D. Traill's coöperative work, *Social England*. The principal weakness of this type of history is that in undisciplined hands it easily grows into an encyclopaedia of unrelated details, a mountain of petty facts piled loosely together. These facts may be departmentalized by labelling one part of them The Changing Church, another part The Educational Revival, another Home Life, another The Deepening of Culture, another Professions and Business. But an encyclopaedia is not converted into history by departmentalizing it. Carefully pondered principles of selection—principles of high and permanent significance—are necessary before the facts of social history can be properly assayed; and even when this is done, effective presentation of the facts requires an insight that approaches genius. The best specimens of social history in English remain the third chapter of Macaulay's *History of England,* and the first six chapters of Henry Adams's *History of the United States Under Jefferson and Madison.*[12]

As from philosophy we descend to interpretation, so from the latter we descend to thesis or synthesis. Perhaps few works of history are directly touched by philosophy. Many of the best are also quite untouched by any special interpretation; Macaulay and Parkman, for example, rather wrote history according to their individual bent than according to any school of thought, though accepting to some extent the idea of the superior significance of the state. But few histories of any distinction lack a thesis, or if that word is too strong, at least a definite principle of synthesis; the author wishing to demonstrate some view. It may be a commonplace and obvious view. It may be marked by great originality and insight, and in the most brilliant histories it is. But history which lacks a thesis is a body lacking a skeleton—it is invertebrate. It may contain exhaustive research, may be striking in detail, may throw new light into dark places, but its total effect will be limp. Channing's volumes on the colonial period contain no thesis worth mentioning, while those of George Louis Beer contain a sharpcut, novel, and emphatic thesis. The result is that while nobody ever speaks of Channing's ideas, Beer's ideas have been a staple of discussion ever since they were propounded; while we try to remember Channing's facts, we very distinctly remember Beer's views.

More than once a volume enforcing a thesis has changed the views of millions and itself made history. Thus it was with Treitschke's insistence upon the importance of national unity and a powerful central government; his histories altered the attitude of a multitude of Germans toward their national destiny. Some have traced Germany's plunge into the World War to his works, as a generation earlier some students ascribed the War of 1870 to the histories of Thiers. Frederick J. Turner's thesis of the effect of the frontier upon American life and character has colored not only all historical thought

[12] Two political historians!

in this country, but all literary thought, all social thought, and all political thought. Alfred T. Mahan, by the vigorous thesis of his *Influence of Seapower upon History, 1660-1783,* followed by his *Influence of Seapower upon the French Revolution, 1783-1812,* affected the governmental policy of all the great maritime powers. His interpretation threw an entirely new light upon one department of the past, and read from it arresting and convincing lessons for the future. Japan, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States applied these lessons to their naval programs and strategy.

Sometimes a historical thesis may be non-controversial. Students could hardly quarrel over the central thesis of Parkman's *Jesuits in North America,* for example; which is simply that the Jesuits failed because they built their hopes of an American empire on the Hurons and their kindred tribes, and these were ultimately conquered by the hostile Iroquois. Parkman himself spoke of this thesis as "obvious," and drew from it only an elementary inference: "Liberty may thank the Iroquois that, by their insensate fury, the plans of her adversary were brought to nought and a peril and a woe averted from her future." More commonly, however, the thesis is avowedly controversial. Take, for example, any one of the half dozen principal works upon the authorship of Homer. After Friedrich A. Wolf's epochal *Prolegomena to Homer* (an astonishing piece of work for its early date, 1795), which contended that the Iliad and Odyssey in their present-day form have been materially changed from the originals, and are made up of separate poems composed at different times by various authors, it was impossible to write on that subject without some highly argumentative thesis. Andrew Lang in *Homer and His Age* sounded a counterblast to the disintegrationists. He held that the Iliad, far from being the work of four or five centuries, a score of bards, and a medley of old and new ideas, was the product of a single age and a single state of culture, the poet describing his own environment. It was an age which had given up burial and adopted cremation, substituted iron tools for bronze while still retaining bronze weapons, and learned the art of writing, so that it preserved Homer's work on palm leaves, papyrus, or parchment, now perished. Or as examples of controversy, take the innumerable theses applied to the French Revolution. That great event is still current politics as well as past history. Pierre Saro writes of it with a Royalist thesis, and his idealization of the Ancien Règime has gone through some seventy-five editions in France; Prince Kropotkin writes of it with an Anarchist thesis; Albert Mathiez writes with a very radical left-wing, even a Communist, thesis, idealizing the Terror.

Sometimes a thesis rests upon striking new evidence which really puts an entirely different face upon an old problem. Thus several books have now been written, based upon fresh documentary material, to show that the soul of Abolitionism in the years 1835-60 was not found in William Lloyd Garrison and his Boston group, as men long supposed, but in the Tappan brothers of New York, the Grimkés, and Theodore D. Weld, that Garrison was rather an encumbrance than an aid to the progress of Abolition, and gained his prominence partly by accident, partly by rashness, and partly by an insatiable appetite for the spotlight. Some-

times the thesis represents rather a stimulating new study of old material. Henry Osborn Taylor's *The Medieval Mind* affords an example. Most of the evidence he examined was familiar to everybody. But he took the unusual view that the true key to the medieval mind lay not in the vernacular writings, English, French, Spanish, and so on, but in the Latin writings of the period, which he held incomparably more valuable for the study of medieval thought—even Dante being in a sense but a by-road from the main highway of medieval culture. He amplified this thesis by stating that the supreme medieval achievement in thought was the "vital appropriation and emotional humanizing of patristic Christianity," represented by such thinkers as Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas. Or a thesis may combine interesting new material with a novel reworking of old material; see Henri Pirenne's view, in his *Economic and Social History of Medieval Europe,* that it was not the collapse of the Roman Empire but the swift rise of the Moslem empire which in the eighth century cut off Western Europe from its Eastern economic connections.

Sometimes the thesis of a book may carry almost instant conviction. Julius W. Pratt's *Expansionists of 1812,* for example, made so clear the rôle of land-hunger in provoking the second war against Great Britain that at once every student stood ready to accord that factor much greater emphasis than before. Sometimes the thesis may be regarded dubiously. A good example is presented by Owsley's *King Cotton Diplomacy.* Its argument that the blockade of the South was totally ineffective until late in the Civil War—an argument based on figures of captures rather than comparative trade figures—seems worse than dubious to experts on the diplomacy of the period. And sometimes the extravagance of an argument soon puts its maker out of court. Take, for example, the various forms of overstatement in Sydney George Fisher's interesting and provocative *Struggle for American Independence.* He asserts, quite correctly, that the struggle did not arise from British misrule, but from an effort by the British to reorganize their colonial system, and by using the sovereignty recognized as belonging to their government, to modernize it. He goes on to say that this assertion of sovereignty was an absolute necessity after the expulsion of the French from North America—that it was imperative that it be carried through if Great Britain were to retain her control. It was not, he further argued, a policy begun carelessly and stupidly by a corrupt government and arrogant king; it was launched after long deliberation and investigation by capable statesmen who were asserting the only principles upon which, at that time, colonies could be retained and governed. On the part of the Americans, independence was the object in view from the opening hour of the quarrel, and with many even before sharp friction began. The way for it had been paved by economic interests and political ideas which had long made an attempt at independence inevitable. These last assertions all contain some truth—but they also contain a great deal of error.

It is the special glory of history that it touches the realm of ideas at more points than almost any other study. Regarded by many as singularly arid in original thought (and with some reason in view of the multitude of mere factual compilations miscalled history), its greatest

productions are actually shot through with intellectual elements. Written history is in the deepest sense the world of our epistomological construction of reality; as such it draws from and contributes to the profoundest metaphysical thought of the ages. In a more prosaic sense, it responds to every great new current of ideas that flows through the Western World; it has so responded from the time of St. Augustine to that of Darwin, Bergson, and Einstein, and it will continue to respond. In still more practical fashion, it has vital connections with every other social science —economics, sociology, public law, jurisprudence, social psychology, human geography—and relations of importance with the chief physical sciences, from biology to geophysics. As they grow and change, the content and outlook of history, the range of its ideas, grow and change also. Finally, history challenges its disciples to arrange the ever-growing mass of facts in ever-better patterns, and thus offers scope for the keenest insight and the most subtle ingenuity. All in all, success in history is proportioned as exactly to intellectual power as success in pure literature or in pure science. Behind every really great history stands a great man:

> Not from a vein of shallow thought
> His awful Jove young Phidias brought.

With the special glory of its many-sided relation to ideas, history has also a special responsibility. The intellectual element is but one part of history, and its ideas must never be given too loose a rein. As the bounds of history widen, as its outer territories become vague and shadowy, the importance of maintaining precise standards of factual accuracy and a high level of significance increases. History pushed too far toward sociology, like sociology pushed too far toward history, falls into a limbo in which it lacks form and value. Interpretation should be the leaven of the lump; but the result of applying a pound of interpretation to an ounce of fact is disappointing. A balance must be maintained between history as a body of facts, based solidly upon research, and history as an exercise in analysis, interpretation, and generalization.

1938

# NICOLAS NABOKOV

## *The Case of Dmitri Shostakovitch*

My first encounter with the name and music of Dmitri Shostakovitch occurred sometime in 1927 or 1928. Prokofiev had just returned to Paris from one of his seasonal trips to Soviet Russia. I remember hearing him talk of a remarkable graduate of the Leningrad Conservatory whose First Symphony had won great acclaim in Russia. He had either heard or seen the score of this symphony and had met its youthful author. Prokofiev described him as a pale, lean young man with penetrating eyes, a shy and self-centered youth with

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a great love for sports. He spoke of his thorough knowledge of "musical grammar" and of his equally good knowledge of the piano technique—both of them characteristic qualities of most Russian composers of this generation. Included in some new Russian music which Prokofiev had brought back from the U.S.S.R. to Paris were eight preludes for the piano by Shostakovitch and also his piano sonata, which had just then appeared in print.

At this time the art of Soviet Russia was still little known in western Europe. New Russian scores and new Russian books were difficult to obtain in France and there were very few scattered performances of Soviet Russian music abroad. Quite naturally the young musicians of France and Germany were very eager to know what was being done by composers in that unknown land, and the least bit of authentic information, not to speak of such evidence as scores and books, was highly welcome.

I remember distinctly my first impression of these early piano pieces by Shostakovitch. They seemed to me to have been written with remarkable skill and were well conceived for their instrumental medium. However, on the whole, they did not impress me as being particularly new or imaginative, nor did they seem to me to reflect a well-formed musical personality of first rank. They sounded so orthodox, so well-behaved, and so reminiscent of older Russian piano music that it was odd to realize that they had emanated from the most revolutionary land in the world. They lacked completely the audacious experimental spirit which was sweeping through the music of central and western Europe in the nineteen-twenties. I could not understand why this music should be rated so highly and why so much was to be expected from its young author. It did not seem better or worse than most of the other music of Russian composers that Prokofiev had brought back from the Soviet Union.

Some time later, in Poland, where I missed Shostakovitch by only a few weeks (he had come there for one of those international "prize fighting" musical conventions of which there were so many at this time, and this was, as a matter of fact, his only trip abroad up to this day), I had the opportunity of seeing the score of his First Symphony. This was the famous symphony which several years later received great acclaim in the United States.

When I read this score, I felt that I had to correct to a certain extent my former superficially formed opinion of his potentialities. I recognized at once that, despite its many failings, this was a piece of music written by an extremely gifted musician, a man who was not solely interested in showing off the excellency of his training in musical techniques (particularly in orchestration), but knew how to write a long and gracefully lyrical melody and also how to handle a long development section in symphonic form. Nevertheless some of my former objections remained and became even stronger and clearer. I felt that in spite of the many attractive novelties of this symphony—such as its fashionable simplicity of melodic outline or its rhythmical liveliness—there was something old about the music, something essentially conservative and unexperimental. I could not feel any definite personality in it, nor did I see very much authentic invention, musical or technical. Every theme, every rhythmical pattern, every technical device, every harmony, however charming and well written, reminded me of another piece

of music. As Diaghilev would have said, here "slept" Tchaikovsky and Wagner, here Mussorgsky or Prokofiev, and here again Stravinsky or Hindemith. There was no actual plagiarism, of course, but the whole atmosphere of the piece was synthetic and impersonal. It was like a good suit of ready-made clothes, which reminds you longingly of a good London tailor, or like one of those tidy modern cubicles in a Dutch or German workers' settlement—all perfectly built, according to the best-known techniques, very proper and neat yet infinitely impersonal and, in the long run, extremely dull.

Some of my musician friends reproached me for my harsh judgment, saying that the man was still very young, that to be impersonal and imitative was a sign of youthful timidity which Shostakovitch surely would soon outgrow. They contended that this First Symphony was in this sense a very promising work, for its musical sources (or sympathies) were of a superior order. I was ready to admit that my premonitions might be wrong, since many great composers at the beginning of their careers have imitated the masters whom they admired. Beethoven and Schubert and even Bach were guilty of that during their early years.

But I still remained worried over this music, and the reason for my worry was something outside of Shostakovitch himself. It seemed to me then that Shostakovitch might be a symptom of a new era approaching in art, and that certain internal changes in the political and social structure of the Soviet Union, rather than considerations of a purely artistic nature, had been greatly responsible for the rise of this kind of music. This synthetic and retrospective score, although foreign and unacceptable to me, was perhaps the true expression of a new period in which the aim was to establish easily comprehensible, utilitarian, and at the same time contemporaneous art. Perhaps some of the principles which had been the cornerstones of the artistic philosophy of the past two generations would be put aside by the composers of this approaching era; perhaps our demand that music be primarily good in quality, new in spirit and technique, original in outlook would be subordinated to such principles as absolute and immediate comprehensibility to large masses of people and fulfillment of an educational mission, political and social.

I decided therefore to follow Shostakovitch's career as closely as possible in order to discover whether his music and his career would bear out my apprehension.

Now, in 1942, most of the cards are on the table. Shostakovitch, barely thirty-six years old, has become recognized as the prime composer of the Soviet Union, has been given a semi-official position among the political and ideological leaders of his country, has lately gained the admiration and love of his countrymen for his heroic life and work during the siege of Leningrad, and is well on the way to becoming the artistic hero of those nations whose destinies are at present closely tied up with that of the Soviet Union.

He can look back at a career full of dramatic episodes, in which utter misery, almost total eclipse from the public eye, and then sudden soaring fame followed each other within the space of a few years. He has worked incessantly with an exemplary perseverance and courage and has built up for one of his age an unusually long catalogue of

works of all kinds—piano music, operas, ballets, symphonies, and music for the cinema. Since he finished his studies at the Leningrad Conservatory in 1926 he has been a steady teacher of composition there. As a man he has gained the friendship and respect of almost everyone who has ever come into contact with him.

His prestige in the United States at the present time is illustrated by the single fact that his Seventh ("Leningrad") Symphony, despite its cumbersome length, has received more performances here than any other piece of contemporary music in the same length of time. Sometimes these performances have even been simultaneously broadcast from different corners of the country. His First, Fifth, and Sixth symphonies have been recorded by the finest orchestras and some of the scores have been reprinted here. And he has received all this attention while most of the contemporary musical production of American composers and resident foreigners remains unrecorded, unpublished, and unplayed. Shostakovitch is at the present moment the undisputed idol of all "maestros," blond, bald, or gray, who in homage to Russia serve his seven symphonies at regular intervals to their local audiences on the same plate with Brahms, Beethoven, Wagner, and (until recently) Sibelius.

In speeches, public statements, newspaper and magazine articles he is referred to as "the new Beethoven" or "the new Berlioz"; he is discussed more than any other contemporary American or alien composer of the past twenty years; and as the fire-fighting hero-composer whose great symphony circled the world in bombers and transport planes, he has become a familiar figure to every American citizen who sees the newspapers. Seldom in all the history of music has a composer received fame like this, and seldom has there been a career so rapid and so spectacular.

It seems to me that the time has come for a thorough and objective investigation into this most amazing success story. The music of Shostakovitch should be carefully scrutinized, brought into proper focus, and related to the general artistic production of our time so that we may determine to what extent it deserves this tremendous success, and to what extent the success is the result of a propitious political constellation. As yet there have been only scattered evaluations of Shostakovitch, generally connected with some particular episode in his career (like the first performance of his opera "Lady Macbeth from the District of Mzensk" in New York, or the first performance of his Seventh Symphony). Newspaper reporters and critics would describe and denounce or acclaim the single work in question. Lately the articles about Shostakovitch have been on the level of "human interest" stories. Except for a few articles in musical magazines—mostly informational—nothing more complete has been attempted.

First let us have a brief glance at the man's biography. It is commonly known that Shostakovitch was born in St. Petersburg, September 25, 1906; what is perhaps less commonly known is that the family of the future proletarian composer had no affinities with either the worker class or peasant class of old Russia. His father, an engineer by education, was, according to official biographers, an employee of the Department of Weights and Measures—a civil servant of the imperial regime, whose position in the community might be

compared with that of a modest middle-class American business man. However, his professional training and the cultural background and artistic aspirations of his wife provided the family with a more intellectual atmosphere than that of the average bourgeois family of either Russia or America. In Russian terms the Shostakovitch family typified that admirable element in Russian society—the intelligentsia—which comprised in its ranks all that was vital, imaginative, and creative in the nation. Particularly in those dark and dreary years of decay of the imperial regime, the intelligentsia carried a double burden: first, the complex tradition of the cultural past of the people, and second, the responsibility for Russia's future regeneration when liberated from the ossified forms of tzarism.

Of his early days Shostakovitch says: "I became a musician by pure accident. If it had not been for my mother, I should probably never have become one. I had no particular inclination for music. I cannot recall a single instance when I evinced any interest in, or listened to, music when someone was playing at home. My mother was quite anxious that her children . . . at the age of nine should each start studying the piano. . . . After a few months of study I practiced Haydn and Mozart." From other sources we hear that the child showed "extraordinary and perfect memory" and at an early age "knew how to read fairly difficult pieces of music at sight." (Both of Shostakovitch's sisters likewise received a thorough musical training as a result of their mother's enthusiasm and determination, and the elder of the two is now a teacher at the Conservatory.) Clearly the boy's unusual natural musical gift was at first inactive and dormant and needed the insistent encouragement of his mother to bring it to the fore.

Otherwise Shostakovitch's childhood was probably very much like that of any other child of his milieu. He went to school through the milky fogs and drizzly rains of St. Petersburg; he was a pale, frail boy coddled and adored by his parents, and surrounded at home by a studious and serious atmosphere. In the summer, as was customary among the Russian bourgeoisie and intelligentsia, the Shostakovitch family would probably go to a suburban villa, the Russian *datcha,* and there the same industrious and happy life would continue amid the lovely pine forests and quiet lakes surrounding the city of St. Petersburg.

Meanwhile the Russian scene was rapidly changing. First came the war, then the March Revolution of 1917, and its logical outcome (in October, 1917), the assumption of power by Lenin and the establishment of the Soviet government in Russia. It is said that young Dmitri Shostakovitch witnessed the storming of the Winter Palace by the Red Guards on October 23rd—an event which must have made an ineffaceable mark on a youthful, sensitive mind. No one who spent those days in Petrograd can forget them; and they must have played an enormous part in shaping Shostakovitch's convictions and his career.

In 1919 he entered the Petrograd Conservatory. The St. Petersburg-Petrograd-Leningrad Conservatory (founded in 1867 by Anton Rubinstein) has produced a phenomenal crop of great instrumentalists and great composers. It is an exemplary school where excellent technical traditions do not impede the individual development of the student, but supply him with a solid and mani-

fold technical training—a fact which makes most modern Russian music look better "written" than the contemporary music of other countries.

At the Conservatory, under its best teachers, Shostakovitch received a well-balanced training in theory (harmony, composition, counterpoint, fugue, history, orchestration) and piano. When he graduated in 1926 he was already known in the musical circles of Leningrad as *the* promising young composer, and the composition he presented for his graduation was the First Symphony. By this time his political and artistic opinions were well formed, but already he had presumably gone through a series of influences, attractions, and enthusiasms. Like most music-loving Russian youths, he had probably started with a great attachment to the Mozart and Haydn sonatas which he practiced with his mother on the piano; at some point he probably was swept by an ardent passion for the esoteric music of Scriabin (some tendencies in the direction of Scriabin are still detectable in his music, particularly certain inflections of his melodic outline). He began early to love Tchaikovsky with a love often inexplicable to foreigners but natural to every Russian. With approaching maturity he began to understand the great "polyphonic miracle" of Bach and at the same time rejected as evil the Teutonic Wagnerian brew. But the great, the most powerful discovery he made, one which became a deep unshakable devotion with him, was that of Beethoven—Beethoven the revolutionary, the apostle of humanism, the prophet of "things to come."

The developments in the music of "bourgeois" Europe during this period of time were little known to the citizens of the U.S.S.R., but whatever news came from abroad, whatever score or bit of information could be obtained, was avidly read. Shostakovitch's friends and colleagues testify that the works of such men as Stravinsky, Ravel, Hindemith, Bartok, and Milhaud were fairly well known to him, and that he greedily absorbed all musical news arriving from the West. Several years later, speaking at a meeting of the Leningrad association of composers, he urged a closer acquaintance with the scores of contemporary western European composers, whose achievements, he said, "might be very useful to the music of Soviet Russia."

As for his convictions about the nature of his art, the mission of the creative musician, and his relation to politics and the state, these seem to have crystallized around 1927, not without a preceding period of doubt and a kind of creative prostration.

In an autobiographical statement given in 1936 to the *Revue Musicale,* Shostakovitch wrote: "At the Conservatory I absorbed with enthusiasm but without critical judgment all the knowledge and all the kinds of refinement which I was being taught. . . ." But somewhat later, "I understood that music is not only a combination of sounds arranged in this or that order [an idea quite fashionable at that time among several western European composers; see Stravinsky's autobiography] but an art which is *capable of expressing* by its means, *ideas* or sentiments of a most diverse kind. . . . I did not, however, acquire this conviction without pains. It suffices to say that during the whole year 1926 [the year of his graduation from the Conservatory] I did not write a single note, but from 1927 on I have never ceased to compose."

Thus, at the beginning of his career,

the question which has troubled many creative musicians—is music a language capable of expressing *only emotions and feelings* or is it also a vehicle for the expression of *ideas?*—was answered for him. From then on he had unshakable conviction that it could express ideas. From this point it was only a short step to the belief that the composer, like any other intellectual worker, has an educational obligation to fulfill and a political responsibility to bear.

Shostakovitch states it very clearly. "Working without interruption to acquire control over my art," he says, "I applied myself in order to create my own musical style which I sought to render simple and expressive. . . . I cannot conceive of my future creative program outside of our socialist enterprise (*construction socialiste*), and the aim which I assign to my work is that of helping in every way to enlighten our remarkable country." Near the end of this autobiographical statement he completes this idea of the composer's mission in the new socialist state by saying: "There cannot be greater joy for a composer than to be conscious that through his work he contributes to the great impetus of the Soviet musical culture, which is called upon to play a role of the first importance in remolding the human conscience."

From 1927 on and until now, all through the turbulent years of the middle thirties and through the agony of this war, this conviction has grown, become more rooted in him. The repudiation which his work received from the political leaders of his country in 1937, and which seemed for a time to eclipse his career, actually only spurred him on to work harder in order that he might redeem himself in the eyes of these leaders and regain his people's esteem. Any doubt as to the sincerity of this devotion, any suspicion as to the honesty of his intentions, should be definitely put aside.

Thus the little bourgeois boy, Mitya Shostakovitch, has gone through the tough school of the revolution and emerged completely transformed. He has become an "intellectual worker" of the Proletarian Republic, one hundred per cent Stalinist-Communist, whose chief apostolate is to serve his government (and through it his people) according to this government's wishes and advices. He is honored when they praise him; he tries to see his errors when he is rebuffed. Individual, personal feelings matter only in so far as they are part of the people's fortune, their aspirations and their tragedies. "Music," he contends, "cannot help having a political basis, an idea that the bourgeoisie are slow to comprehend. . . . There can be no music without ideology . . ." (meaning of course political ideology). "The old composers whether they knew it or not were upholding a political theory." He goes on to explain that most of the old masters "were bolstering the rule of the upper classes," that Beethoven was "the forerunner of the revolutionary movement," and that Wagner, "the renegade," was "a revolutionary turned reactionary, to whom we listen in the same spirit as when we visit a museum to study the forms of the old regime." All art thus becomes classified according to a Marxian theory of values in which the intrinsic quality of a work of art depends upon its importance to the revolutionary progress of mankind.

The language of music becomes a vehicle for the statement of political ideologies; musical techniques are relegated to a subservient position; they are

important only in so far as they render those ideologies intelligible. Concern with "personal" emotions, "individual" style or technique becomes irrelevant and unacceptable. Even to consider the proposition that transformation of musical techniques or an expression of individualistic emotions could be an end in itself becomes completely heretical. Shostakovitch condemns all such "foolishness" emphatically in his profoundly moving statement published on the eve of the first anniversary of the Russo-German War. "My energies," he writes, "are wholly engaged in the service of my country. Like everything and everyone to-day, my ideas are closely bound up with the emotions born of this war. They must serve with all the power at my command in the cause of *art for victory* over savage Hitlerism, that fiercest and bitterest enemy of human civilization. This is the aim to which I have dedicated my creative work since the morning of June 22, 1941."

Such complete devotion to the just cause of his country and its people necessarily commands respect and admiration. The philosophy upon which it is based is morally far more solid than many other contemporary theories. True enough, the Soviet artistic theory does not leave much room for the independent development of the individual musician; but on the other hand it is free from that pernicious and amoral egocentricism from which so much music of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries suffers. It is strangely akin to the noble morality of the artisan-musician of the Middle Ages, who, like Shostakovitch, worked with zeal and self-sacrifice as a servant of a cause he considered higher than himself and his art. The intention is the same and so is the fervor of the devotion, the difference in this case being that where the medieval musician read the words "glory of God" and "service of His church," Shostakovitch reads "glory of the state" and "service of the people."

Yet as a permanent principle it has its dangers for the artist, as the case of Dmitri Shostakovitch demonstrates.

The musical production of Dmitri Shostakovitch can be conveniently divided into two periods. The first began in 1927, following his graduation from the Conservatory, and lasted until 1936 or, more precisely, January 28, 1936, when the now famous incident concerning his opera, "Lady Macbeth from the District of Mzensk," occurred. Then came a lapse of almost two years when Shostakovitch disappeared from the horizon of Russian artistic life. During these two years he wrote two new symphonies, his Fourth and Fifth, and the latter opened the door back to public favor, and marked the beginning of the second period, when, "reformed" and "rehabilitated," he gradually climbed to his present pinnacle of leadership.

The incident of "Lady Macbeth" has therefore a considerable significance and, although it has already been mentioned in the American press, it cannot be avoided here. Briefly this is what happened. During the years 1930-1932 Shostakovitch wrote an opera on a story by a Russian writer of the nineteenth century, Lesskov, called "Lady Macbeth from the District of Mzensk." It is a naturalistic and lurid story about a provincial, middle-class woman whose lust and boredom drive her to a series of cold-blooded murders and finally land her and her unfaithful lover in Siberia. Shostakovitch tried to give the story a Marxian twist by making the "heroine"

a victim of the "decadent and foul bourgeois milieu."

The music of the opera is neither daring nor particularly new. It sounds very much like many naturalistic Russian operas written in the eighties and now happily forgotten. True enough, it is more lively; it has some (not too successful) attempts at bitter "class satire" and "class tragedy"; it has also a few attractively lyrical melodies both in the choruses and in the arias; but on the whole it is old-fashioned, provincial, and unimaginative. The musical language in which it is written is simple enough, but somehow not quite coherent and totally lacking in unity. Pieces of various styles are strung together rather loosely, and the whole opera gives the impression of hasty and somewhat careless workmanship. Thus, for instance, the satirical passages and some of the polyphonic developments are full of the most obnoxious tricks of the *style moderne* of the twenties (dissonant superimposition of chords, "dislocated joints" in the melodic line, and "rhythmical paranoia," or senseless repetition of a metrical figure—all unhappy products of the "modern" musical mind), while the lyrical arias and choruses reflect either Tchaikovsky or Mussorgsky. The realism or naturalism of the piece goes too far and at times it is plainly vulgar and pornographic. Most of the "class satire" is as unconvincing as the "Wooden Soldiers" of the late "Chauve-Souris."

The opera was duly produced in both Russian capitals in 1934 and was hailed as a "great masterpiece," the "work of a genius," "the first monumental work of Soviet musical culture." As such it was exported abroad and produced in the United States under Artur Rodzinski in Cleveland and New York. In New York it created a minor scandal and stirred up a great deal of discussion (chiefly because of the excessive musical realism of a bedroom love scene) which, coupled with the previous success of the First Symphony, "made" Shostakovitch.

For a time it looked as if the gods were favorably inclined to the young composer. But suddenly the storm broke loose. Messrs. Stalin and Molotov visited a performance of "Lady Macbeth" in Moscow in the middle of January, 1937. As a result of this visit a vitriolic article appeared in the *Pravda* on January 28, 1937, condemning Shostakovitch's opera as "disorder instead of music" and arguing that "mad rhythms" and a "confused flow of sound" competed to produce a baffling effect upon the innocent audience. Shostakovitch was said to be "misled by decadent bourgeois tendencies," and although a "gifted composer," was accused of "intentionally turning everything upside down" and writing "neurotic, hysterical, epileptic music influenced by American jazz." This first attack on Shostakovitch was followed by a second one, which appeared in the same paper a few days later and in which his new ballet, "The Limpid Brook," was taken to task in the same way.

In terms of Russian life all this sounded like an artistic death warrant; and such it was taken to be by the obliging critics and gentlemen of the Soviet press (often the same ones who had previously praised Shostakovitch as the great Russian genius). The slander of Shostakovitch in the press actually became so thick that the same official powers which had ordered the condemnation of his opera had to give a "hands off Shostakovitch" order. Shostakovitch was declared to have been "misled," "corrupted by Western bourgeois tendencies," but to be "gifted enough" to re-

habilitate himself in the future and thus "not past hope." Two years later the "reformed" composer was returned to the Russian public as an officially changed man, one who had seen his faults and corrected them.

The whole story seems quite unreal now, particularly in view of the present circumstances. Yet it throws an interesting light upon the birth pangs of Soviet Russian art, and is especially significant for the development of Shostakovitch as a musician. These two painful years of banishment from public life were years of "inner self-criticism" (as the Soviet press calls it) during which he simplified his art still farther and *all* of his original musical thinking was definitely swallowed up by the "service to the cause."

It is as difficult to describe the music of Shostakovitch as to describe the form and color of an oyster, not because this music is by an means complicated or "inscrutable in its profundity" (as Soviet Russian criticism puts it) but simply because it is shapeless in style and form and impersonal in color. Yet the oyster has a very individual taste of its own which Shostakovitch unfortunately lacks. For one of his chief weaknesses is absolute eclectic impersonality. Even during his first period, when he still felt himself relatively free to choose or invent his own technique, his music was impersonal.

He still borrows other people's technical and stylistic inventions as if they were communal belongings. He still imitates indiscriminately (and I believe quite unconsciously) here Tchaikovsky and Beethoven, there Berlioz and Rimsky-Korsakov; here again he tries out some device he learned from a score of Stravinsky, or Ravel, or Hindemith, or from some minor composer of the twenties. During his first period he wrote a greater variety of kinds of music than later, using tricks, devices, and techniques taken from such different sources that they could not possibly lead to a unified style, and jumping from Tchaikovsky to jazzy rhythms of the *"Mitteleuropa"* variety. His operas are so different from his symphonies, his chamber music from his ballets, that one has a hard time recognizing that the same man wrote them; and it is the defects of the music, rather than its qualities, that are recognizable as his own. Thus, for instance, he writes few melodies in which the augmented fourth does not appear; yet this interval is essentially unmelodic and by association reminds us of very stale "melodies" of the late nineteenth century. His exaggerated liking of march rhythms of 4/4 and 2/4 time leads to a kind of wooden squareness in the fast movements of his music. His long melodic *cantilenas,* in generally not more than two parts, are shapeless and awkwardly built. His "tunes" are often from very ordinary sources (in Soviet Russia they were called "marshy" during the years of his eclipse), imitating very common and uninteresting factory or army songs. One would probably not object to them if they had been treated originally; for Haydn, Beethoven, Stravinsky often used tunes coming from the gutter; but how they ennobled them!

The two positive qualities I find in the music of Shostakovitch are of a rather ambiguous order. The first one is his great versatility and efficiency in Conservatory training, which enables him to solve technical problems of a broad variety in a highly skillful manner. Shostakovitch is undoubtedly an excellent craftsman and most of his in-

ventiveness goes into such branches of musical craft as orchestration and efficient part writing (what the Germans call *"guter tonsatz"*). It is not infrequent among contemporary composers that such technical strength conceals a paucity of original musical ideas.

The second quality of Shostakovitch, to foreigners so surprising, is the inherent optimism of his music. As everybody knows, the common view of Russian music and the Russian character is that they are by nature easily depressed and melancholy or just the reverse, boisterously and wildly gay—without any visible reason. This view, erroneous as it is, is well entrenched in people's minds. Thus when a composer from Russia is neither desperately melancholic nor in a state of frenzy, as in a Ballet-Russe-de-Monte-Carlo finale (with its inherent disorder), the foreigner thinks that something new has happened. No one will deny that a completely new life has been built in Russia, yet this has little to do with the national character of the people and their art, which at times in the past has been just as gay and happy and optimistic as the music of Shostakovitch. Glinka, the father of modern Russian music, Borodin, Mussorgsky, and Tchaikovsky himself have numberless pages of the happiest, lightest, gayest music the nineteenth century produced.

Thus to a Russian there would not be anything particularly surprising in the optimism of Shostakovitch. But it takes a redundant, blatant, and unconvincing form. One always feels a kind of compelling force behind it, a force of an extramusical order. It appears to be based on the official syllogistic formula: before the revolution life was desperate, therefore art was gloomy; now the revolution is victorious, therefore art must be optimistic. It is obvious that this *must* rings like a command of the gods rather than a logical conclusion of a syllogism. The result is that it often forces the composer into a great effort unnatural to his temperament and therefore unsuccessful.

What this *must* tends to do to Russian music in general and to Shostakovich's music in particular is lamentable. It drives the young composer to naïve and dated formulae such as an excessive and very conventional use of major triads, tunes and cadences in major keys, all of them describing the glorious and victorious events of the present in the most emphatic and banal musical language. (Minor modes are used to describe the dark and gloomy days of the past.) It steers the whole music into a verbose and brassy style which soon becomes dreary and monotonous. It produces that wooden 2/4 or 4/4 rhythm to which I have already referred, and which I suppose is considered "manlier" and "more virile" than the "effeminate" 3/4 or 6/8, and fills the thematic material with such commonplace metrical patterns as one eighth note followed by two sixteenth notes (or vice versa), which most good composers use very sparingly.

In Shostakovitch's second period all these unfortunate characteristics come to full bloom. The substance of Shostakovitch's composition now tends to be of such obvious understandability that his music ceases to be an artistic language in which the adventurous human mind discovers new laws and new problems which it endeavors to solve in a new way. Every technique, every melodic line, every development, polyphonic or monophonic, every rhythm, every formal device is reminiscent of either contemporary or nineteenth-century com-

posers, and is used in such an obvious fashion that after a while one begins to wonder if even the most uneducated masses will not soon tire of it. (I often ask myself if this *a priori* decision, so frequent among intellectuals and politicians, that the masses have a naturally low taste for the arts, is not a proof of their own lack of discrimination.)

Simplification of music is in itself a salutary thing, but there is a moment when simplification becomes too obvious and absurd. Eclecticism is often the sturdy backbone of healthy tradition (was not Johann Sebastian Bach an eclectic to a degree?), but when it pervades a man's music or stands in the way of the invention of a personal style it becomes deplorable. Objectivity should not be confused with impersonality, just as romanticism should not necessarily involve grandiloquent sentimentality and formlessness.

Fortunately Shostakovitch possesses the saving graces of excellent craftsmanship, profound honesty, and a fervent belief in the usefulness of what he is doing. Furthermore, at times there is a graceful lyricism in his music when he forgets himself (particularly in his chamber music, which by its very nature is freer from those moral obligations that govern his long descriptive symphonies), and this natural lyricism shows us that somewhere deep behind the screen of impersonality and moral obligation there still lives an individual, a free artist, a man by the name of Dmitri Shostakovitch.

The actual significance of the case of Shostakovitch can be brought home by restating the crucial question that I asked myself in 1929 in Poland: are we going to see the rise of an eclectic collectivistic art which will put the individual at least temporarily in a completely subservient position to the state and society? Are we going to see the birth of an impersonal art written exclusively for the masses and in the fallacious belief that the masses have to be "talked down to"? For the present the music of Shostakovitch seems to answer this question in the affirmative—at any rate in so far as the music of Soviet Russia is concerned.

Is his art great? Is it unique and incomparably better than most modern music? Certainly not. There are many composers who both write better and have more to say than Shostakovitch. American and alien composers in this country have composed music which sees the concert hall less, but says infinitely more than his celebrated Seventh Symphony. Consider the scores of Piston, Copland, William Schuman, compositions by Stravinsky, Hindemith, Milhaud, Rieti—some of which are never played, because our maestros and their managers ordain otherwise.

It is these maestros and managers who are chiefly responsible for all the uproar in this country over one or two composers for one or two seasons. They have learned too well how to exploit a propitious political situation (what has become now of the "beloved" Finn, Sibelius?) and create a bubble reputation to relieve the stagnation of the concert repertory (always the same pieces of the same composers!); and they are now doing Shostakovitch immense disservice by placing him in a position in which he does not belong.

I sincerely hope that Shostakovitch has the power to undergo another complete regeneration and emerge a truly significant composer. But it is a gross misunderstanding of "collectivist" art to accept the popularity of his music now as evidence that he has found a universal

formula. Soon his eclipse may come as swiftly as his leap to fame; this would be just as unfair and would indicate the same disbalance we see at present. Shostakovitch is a young man; he should develop as a solid and respected musician of the great New Russia. He does not now merit the injudicious acclaim he is receiving here; neither will he deserve the inevitable repudiation which will come in its wake. Both extremes are shameful evidence that contemporary music is judged indiscriminately and contemporary composers are used irresponsibly.

1943

# THOMAS CRAVEN

## *Modernism*

### From Men of Art

The world has paid a heavy penalty for Cézanne's genius. The peasants of Aix had hardly sealed the grave of the unloved and misunderstood Master when there appeared in Paris the first of a succession of movements which, under the collective name of Modernism, have mocked the complacency of the orthodox for a quarter of a century. Practically all these movements, or more precisely, cults, have originated, directly or indirectly, from the difficulties and imperfections of the Provençal solitary. In 1906, the year of Cézanne's death, Matisse, Friesz, Braque, Van Dongen, Dufy and Vlaminck, advocating lyrical deformations of nature and the crude rhythms of savages, founded the first Modernist schism in art. They were called, in the spirit of derision, *Fauves,* or wild beasts.

In 1909, Picasso performed his first experiments with congested fractions of geometrical forms, and in the same year, his rival Braque exhibited the first abstract picture. Matisse, with a sneer for his former comrade in crime, tagged the abstract notations with a word of contempt—*Cubism*—and another school was born. Two Americans resident in Paris, Russell and Wright, developing the color-form procedure of Cézanne into an art purporting to combine the properties of architecture and symphonic music, celebrated their day of glory under the banner of Synchronism. Then came Futurism, Orphism, Expressionism, Vorticism, Purism, and a dozen others equally sonorous and Latin. The rivalry was absurdly acrimonious; the distinctions between the sects immaterial. And finally, as a fitting climax to all this school-founding and sciolism, a group of cynical renegades with nothing better to do, contrived, by a campaign of ingenious parody, to burlesque Modernism to death. This flurry which Maurice Raynal wittily described as "sticking a moustache on the smile of Mona Lisa," was called Dada-ism.

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During the winter of 1913, the new, or Modernist art, was officially introduced to the American public. The exhibition was adroitly advertised, and a unique furore arose. One picture, a typical specimen of French Cubism provocatively labelled *Nude Descending a Staircase,* sped the issue from aesthetic circles into the field of popular ridicule, and for a moment the new, or immigrant art, loomed on our eastern coastline as a national menace, a Bolshevik spectre threatening our sacred insularity. Most of us remember those vociferous and ill-mannered times: the orgies of indignation, the bravado of nondescript painters intoxicated with publicity, the protests of dealers and antiquarians, and the piteous bleat of academic retainers trembling for the security of their little jobs. But to some of us it seemed that a new era was beginning. The spirit of art was alive again, and under the stress of French ideas an exhilarating burst of vitality began to sparkle in our musty showrooms. Galleries dedicated to the children of Cézanne were subsidized; French libraries interpreting the Modernist gospel of St. Luke were imported; an exclusively American exhibition, the pictures of which were certified by five experts, added authority to the surging scandal; eccentric magazines containing ferocious manifestoes and infantile illustrations sprang up overnight; and Greenwich Village emerged as the American Bohemia of the new order.

It was easy in those days to be hopeful, to prophesy, if not a renaissance, at least an efflorescence of native genius such as had never before occurred in the Western Hemisphere. But since that memorable uprising of 1913 something has happened. The sensational issues are dead and buried; the lust for battle has dwindled into an ignoble truce with the Academy; the creative stream has run dry; and Modernists, at home and abroad, are wearily sifting and resifting its barren deposits. Let us look into the matter.

First, let us keep in mind the source of the new and militant cults. With the single exception of Futurism, every one of them came out of Paris where art, like professionalized vice, flourishes parasitically in a segregated quarter; where painting is a proliferation of styles and techniques; where any clever schemer with a new bag of tricks may get a following among the café-philosophers. There was some charlatanism in the movements but not a great deal: the majority of painters were sincere men consumed with the desire to be original at any price. Had they been impostors they could never have grown hysterical and blood-thirsty over such childish things. At this point I must correct the common impression that the Modernists had never learned to draw, that is, to draw according to the precepts of the Academy, and that they resorted to subterfuges and preposterous distortions to conceal organic deficiencies in draughtsmanship. Some were prize-winners at the art schools; others respectable teachers; almost all of them had passed through what was known as the "sound training of the best French tradition." It was because of this meaningless training that they repudiated the Academy. They were sick of Impressionism, sick of salon frivolity—of naturalism in all its forms. Painting was either a spiritual force, or it was nothing. They found their redeemer in Cézanne, directly or through his missionaries Van Gogh and Gauguin, and the new movement was on.

Van Gogh is one of the tragic figures of modern art. His fanatic enthusiasms,

his ungovernable debauches of the spirit and the flesh alike, and his abnormal sensitivity drove him to violent insanity and in the end to suicide. Seven times he tried to save himself—by religion, love, and art—and in each trial his excesses, often repulsive and always pathetic, would have destroyed a man of lesser faith. It would be difficult to name an artist whose life exhibits a more complete and impassioned surrender to the torments of the spirit. Others—Leonardo da Vinci, Rembrandt and Cézanne—have yielded as intensely to the creative impulse and have produced a far more profound and influential art; but for the parallel of this mad Dutchman in religious ecstasy and self-sacrifice we must turn back to the audacious convictions of St. Francis. His faith in humanity was simply incredible. Alone among Modernists he believed in the indivisible union of art and religion, and in his fierce internal conflicts sought to reconcile his visions with the hard realities of life, and to find in painting a universal language for the regeneration of mankind. We may say that he was only a lunatic reaching for the unattainable, but let us not forget that he was, despite his obvious and deplorable limitations, extraordinarily open-minded, generous and consistent; that he had the courage to face the world honestly; and that his ideas, when put into practice, brought forth canvases of alarming vitality and convincing spiritual truth.

Van Gogh studied Delacroix, Millet, Monticelli, and Japanese prints; his twisted serpentine brush-strokes were derived from Impressionism; but it was from Cézanne that he learned to press nature into the service of his own agitated feelings. While he was essentially a religious painter, he did not make the mistake of trying to paint ecclesiastical subjects. His convictions were not of that sort, and with the best of critical sense he pointed out the falseness of Gauguin's absurd *Crucifixion*. He desired, like Rembrandt, to approach the common things of life with complete spiritual freedom. But his intellectual powers were short-lived and he was incapable of self-discipline. His contacts with nature, indeed with such ordinary things as a postman, a cluster of sunflowers, or a row of cypresses, threw him into a state of frenzy amounting almost to hallucinations. To convey the dramatic force of those terrible contacts he used a symbolical language of his own invention—smiting colors, accentuated contours, forms flattened into violent silhouettes, distorted forms writhing in pain, the pain of his own soul. If his conception of nature and humanity is that of a disordered mind, it is, nevertheless, the most vivid and trenchant conception in Modernist painting. But his art, I fear, is more singular than enduring. It is too remote from normal experiences to influence the world and too dependent upon the excitement of curious sensations to be useful to students. So far, it has proved to be most useful to the dealers. During his lifetime Van Gogh sold four pictures, one for 400 francs, the highest price. Recently one of his canvases went for the record-breaking sum of $85,000.

Gauguin brought the exotic element into Modernist painting. He was an odd compound of the artist and charlatan, of the gypsy and the Parisian *épateur*. Beneath his cruel cynicism lay a vein of brackish sentimentality which, congealing into a savage loathing of humanity, made him sinister and detestable wherever he wandered. A successful stock-broker, he renounced business for painting, took French leave of

his wife and children, sailed to Martinique and later to Tahiti where he married a Negress. Though he made a grand show of his hatred of "the disease of civilization," his reversion to primitive nakedness was only half-genuine. He was always grumbling for money, always thinking of the effect of his calculated savagery on the effete society of Paris. Returning to Paris for an exhibition of his painting and failing to take the town by storm, he sailed off to the South Seas again and died in the Marquesas in circumstances of unspeakable wretchedness. It is significant that his last painting was a snow scene of the country he had forsaken but could not forget.

He was a man of diversified talents—boxer, fencer, sailor, painter, sculptor, and poet. But it was his sensational subject-matter that won him notoriety. Cunningly he adapted the surface characteristics of Cézanne's art—the planes and distortions—to tropical settings and figures where they seemed to be peculiarly appropriate. The planes expanded into areas of brilliant color, the distortions appeared to be the natural shapes of negroid figures. Thus his pictures, resembling the flat textile patterns of primitive craftsmen, were received as the genuine expression of the barbaric soul, and not the sophisticated borrowings of a malcontent. Cézanne, however, was not taken in. "Gauguin," he said, "has only turned out fantastic figures. He has stolen my little sensation and carted it round in every tramp steamer." Gauguin's exotic magnetism has about run its course. He attracts only the lazy-minded who are tired of life and turn to art for soothing relief, or defeated painters who wander to strange places because there is nothing at home worth painting.

Matisse, the old chief of the Wild Beasts, entered Modernism through the influences of Cézanne and Van Gogh. To these influences he added his own phenomenal sense of color and his gleanings from the study of Negro sculpture and the Asiatic decorators. His aim was a decorative style comparable to that of the orientals, clean flat design in which he carried the means of expression to the irreducible minimum, throwing aside the representational baggage which he believed had stifled the creative impulse in European art. His early pictures, at first glance, seem to be only spontaneous sketches; actually, they are built on the premises of logic. For example, he would destroy the proportions of any one of his forms, say the human figure, for the sake of the linear balance of the whole picture, distorting the contour of the hip or limbs into an enormous curve to offset the opposing curve of another form. This process, while unquestionably producing a balanced ensemble, was not without its ridiculous aspects, and eventually he abandoned it for a more seemly approximation of natural contours.

Everything that Matisse touches bears the imprint of ease and joy, the enthusiasm which springs from health and conviction, the direct contact with the living model and the greatest fluency in expressing that contact. By transferring the ingredients of genre-painting to the field of decoration, he has created an original style of art, a style in which the relations of the parts are determined by the artist's sense of free rhythm as distinguished from the geometrical symmetry of conventional arabesques. He converts the charm of fruits, flowers and buoyant nudes into silhouettes which, adhering to the everyday character of the model, suggest the liveliness and

simplicity of ancient book illuminations. Design of this sort is not the result of the analysis and organization of planes, as in the case of Cézanne, but of the ready shifting of the proportions of silhouettes—of rendering nature in terms of flat pattern. The bulge of a woman's back or hips is expanded or shortened to meet the exigencies of a given space; the natural aspect of a scene—landscape or interior—is not materially altered but skilfully distributed in the interest of a balanced whole. By this method the spontaneity of direct experience is preserved. There is no grim transformation of nature to serve an ideal purpose, no depth of imagination, nothing dramatic—only the joyous responses to nature arranged with exquisite taste. In brief, *le monde visible* of Gautier presented in decorative style.

Matisse's reputation has suffered from his own errors in scale and from the exaggerated claims of his admirers. Having only a faint imagination, he is most impressive in small canvases, but fancying himself a mural designer, he magnifies his still-life patterns and his leaping nudes into large things which dissipate his charm and expose the poverty of his invention as well as the fragility of his bodiless forms. Like Whistler he deals in minor harmonies and subtle arrangements where taste and tact take the place of creative vigor and knowledge. With him Modernism begins to turn back from the strength and substance of Cézanne into the old French tradition of boudoir hangings. He is essentially a light talent, an ornamentalist whose designs are more applicable to silks, cretonnes and ceramics than to pictorial space. His nimble figures are closer to the sprightly nudes of *La Vie Parisienne* than his infatuated followers have ever suspected.

The most famous of the Modernists is that astonishing Spaniard, Picasso, the mainspring, if not the actual founder, of Cubism. Picasso's prominence, however, rests upon his influence, not upon his artistic achievements. If, at any step in his career, he has painted a picture that is more than an experiment, more than an exercise in technical ingenuity, I do not know where he has hidden it. For cleverness alone art has reared no workman more prodigious, but his inventiveness, I submit, would have been more useful in the field of mechanics. By his early contrivances in blue and rose, by his Cubism, his sculpturesque nudes, and his late super-realistic horrors, he has demonstrated that a picture may be perfectly composed, in the narrow or mechanical sense, and yet contain no meaning, and contain no emotional stimulus beyond the temporary shock of surprise or deprecation. He has proved that one cannot create an art by subjecting facts to the tyranny of processes; that true composition is not an extrinsic equation evolved from the styles of others but the final form, the personal tone and order assumed by materials experienced at first-hand. He has attempted to make art out of other art—an academic business; his work is a series of abstractions from the art of his rivals and predecessors. His eclectic searchings are endless: he has imitated Steinlen, Toulouse-Lautrec, Negro sculpture, Cézanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin, the archaic Greeks, El Greco, Ingres and Corot. His paintings are detached studio inventions, laboratory performances destitute of human relationships and all relationships save those pertaining to the sources he has plundered. Picasso is generally credited with having a mighty intellect. I find no evidence to support this opinion. Mighty intellects

do not exhaust themselves playing with trifles.

There is nothing mysterious in a cube or a cone; nor is there anything mysterious in Cubism if taken for what it is—an experiment in structure. All artists, the classic especially, have considered the geometrical formation of objects—that is part of their equipment—and in the studies of Uccello and Dürer, we may discover analyses of structure antedating by centuries the Modernist examples. But Cubism, as a distinct school of painting, owes its origin to Cézanne whose forms were composed of colored planes, one defined against the other. Picasso, in his first phase, enlarged upon the planes and changed the contrasting colors into simple areas of light and dark. This process, carried further, abstracted an object into its nearest geometrical equivalent; that is, a human head, though still recognizable as a head, was reduced to an assemblage of geometrical fractions. In his second phase, Picasso split the head into sections and then arbitrarily shuffled the sections together again so as to bring into a single focus aspects observed from several points of view. Or, as his satellites glibly put it, "moving round an object, he seized several successive appearances which, when fused into a single image, reconstituted it in time." The head is now only an eye, a nose and an ear scattered among a splintered wreckage. In its last phase Cubism paradoxically went flat. The three visible planes of the cube, by a gradual process of extension, were projected beyond the limits of vision—to the frame of the canvas—ceasing to function as indications of solidity and becoming automatically three flat tones. The head, needless to say, disappeared. Representation was annihilated. Art at last was pure, perfect, abstract, absolute—and intolerable.

There is nothing unreasonable in Cubism, and there would have been nothing sensational in it had painters kept their experiments in their studios instead of offering them to the world as the loftiest manifestations of the human soul in a state of ecstasy. The contagion spread for several reasons. It was the strongest possible reaction against the stupidities of Impressionism, the diametrical opposite of imitation; it attacked conventional painting in the most combative terms, and its radicalism, being nonrepresentational, was a tonic to young minds surfeited with the Academy; it was a legitimate effort to increase the reality of objects by emphasizing structure and excluding sentimental attachments. But here the good in the movement ends. It was a transitional measure; like Pragmatism, a method and not a philosophy. To argue that it was an independent growth, an art complete in itself, is frankly absurd; and Picasso's defense of his cubes on this ground is obvious rationalization.

Cubism erroneously presupposes that design is an end and not a means, and that all human attributes are irrelevant. It limits the meaning of art to the perception of the abstract relations of the various parts, and shrouds simple processes in an element of mystery by using such awful terminology as "plastic dynamism," "the integration of the plastic consciousness," "the quality of the form is the incommensurable sum of the affinities perceived between the visible manifestations and the tendency of the mind." It postulates the idea that geometrical parts of design—a cube or a triangle—can be identified with specific factors in our psychic life—an idea that has no foundation in experience. Cubism is the apotheosis of structure. It

strips objects of all the features and characteristics with which the emotional life is inseparably connected, leaving only the denuded concepts of the physicist and mathematician.

All art, to be sure, implies a certain amount of selection—one cannot include everything—but normally the purpose of selection is to set down one's experiences in forms objectively valuable. Such is its biological function—a means to an end. Why then should the Cubists carry the process to its second stage, to abstract the primary selection until nothing remains but dry bones? The answer is that they have no experiences worth communicating, or in plainer speech, nothing to say. Without a teleological basis, art, if sufficiently pursued, leads to insanity. When the means, let us say, of sexual gratification are withdrawn from actual experience, the victim wanders in a world of fantasies and ineffectual visions; when art is removed from experience and intelligible meaning, the deluded painter begins to read arbitrary and subjective values into his work, denies objective achievement, and in the end suffers a complete drying-up of creative energy.

The last of the shockers was Futurism, a cult manufactured in Italy and launched into Paris amid the beating of drums and the dodging of vegetables. On its practical side it borrowed from Cubism the idea of trying to illustrate simultaneous aspects of movement; theoretically it was a derivative of Croce's *Expressionism*. It had propaganda to offer and was bent on driving it home in the most sensational modern style. The argument of its manifesto was as follows. "The language of the old art is dead. We have a new and more exciting idiom, a set of personal symbols composed of anything and everything. We will translate into graphic form live states of the soul; we will jerk your sensibilities into the most acute responses. Without shocking emblems of brilliant color and free line we will make you feel art against your will." The argument captivated beginners and defeated professionals: to break with the past, to abolish tradition, to step out like a child into a world of freedom, to invest life with fresh symbols, to feel and to express—thus to create art. Everything was art so long as it was inspired by true feeling.

The influence of Futurism has been of a cryptic nature. As a school it is extinct, having been absorbed by *Expressionism,* a movement which has played havoc among all the arts. Like the other sects, *Expressionism* has flaunted a far-fetched aesthetic, but at bottom it professes a fairly simple creed: "Our contacts with nature—the facts of the visible world—for creative purposes are more important than any amount of learning or traditional knowledge. Given a genuine insight into the world of everyday experience, it is possible for the artist to dispense with all old forms and to create directly, trusting to the pull of such impulses as follow his sensations. Working thus, new forms are inevitable. The burden of dead learning which stultifies academic production is overthrown by an earnest and truthful expression of experience." Again we have "the purity of direct sensation" —the happy notion that "true feeling makes true art"—the Expressionist slogan which has become the painter's panacea and his silencing answer to the inquiring laymen. This notion lends authority to that brand of self-satisfaction which parades as genius; it allows for every imaginable kind of stupidity, and lack of knowledge; and raises the

scratches of freaks and incompetents into the ranks of the masters. Hence its popularity. But, like many of the ideas of faith-healers, it holds a grain of truth. It states positively that the artist must have a natural and not a forced interest in his subjects, and rules out of court all virtuosity and academic precedent.

*Expressionist* theory ignores the fact that individuality develops through convention and the heritage of accumulated knowledge, and that unless we pass our lives totally isolated from a social milieu —which would result in savage ignorance—we are obliged to see, feel, and act on the basis of established conduct. Our mental habits, on the whole, are conventional, and we are permitted to see and construct only through and by the corpus of these conventions. What is called originality is but a slight addition to the mass of accepted and habitual opinions composing the ego. Hear Havelock Ellis on this point: "The self that he thus expresses is a bundle of inherited tendencies that came the man himself can never entirely know whence."

Such, in brief, are the principal divisions of the Modernist revolt. In retrospect, the movement does not seem to be so revolutionary after all, and now that the excitement has subsided, we may wonder what it was that caused so much controversy. It appears that the good in the movement is no different from the good in the schools of the past, a fact witnessed by virtually all Modernist painters who have never missed an opportunity to link their work with the most ancient traditions and to establish their affinity with the Old Masters. The controversy arose from the pretentious claims of the artists and their backers and from the sensational methods of exploitation.

The Modernists were men of the strongest anti-social propensities. They took pride in their aloofness and gloried in their refusal to traffic in bourgeois sentiments and vulgar emotions. "To hell with the public!" they cried. "There is no such thing as popular art! The public has always demanded trash and we will leave that to the academicians!" But these aristocrats of art, these aesthetic thoroughbreds, were not wholly above commerce with the rabble: they employed the most extraordinary tactics in order to persuade, cajole, and bully the public into buying their pictures. In such an atmosphere art turns inward, feeds upon itself, takes refuge in abstractions. It was only natural that men living in a little world of metaphysical disputations should have produced an art divorced from its human context; it was to be expected that the defence of this art should be the hopeless effort to separate social, moral and sentimental activities from what was snobbishly labelled "pure aesthetics." This critical attitude, propped up by the tenets of an unstable psychology, sprang from two bases, the scientific and the emotional, but the machinery involved was identical.

It consisted in restricting the significant factors in the production and appreciation of art to those whose understanding rested upon special training or unusual experience. Thus technique, essentially a matter for painters and a few specialists, became the whole of art, a field completely isolated from vulgar understanding. Into this exclusive field the thoroughbreds dragged the values belonging to the profoundest art and annexed them to minor technical issues.

Furthermore, by describing technical problems in the terms of physiological mechanics and psychology, painters made the simplest processes enormously impressive. The "purification of painting" was the fine name given to this dehumanizing tendency, and to be looked upon as in the know, one was forced to subscribe to the high-sounding chatter about abstraction, empathy, significant form, dynamic relationships, and so forth.

The purification of painting! An enchanting fallacy indeed! "Pure beauty," as Winckelmann said long ago, "is like pure water—it has no taste." Yet this tasteless art multiplied by leaps and bounds. The various purity cults founded on the technique of line and color organization raised mediocrity to a glorious eminence and provided the initiate with the regalia for personal distinction. Poor old Cézanne's little sensation was father to a thousand perversions. To be "highly sensitive" in the esoteric fashion was the supreme honor, and any painter ingenious enough to erect a precious mythology round a few lines, or daubs of color, was assured of enviable notoriety. A tangle of lines, a swirl of tones, and he had produced a subjective cryptogram entitled *Psychic Portrait, Symphony in Blue-Green,* or *Centripetal Force.* Every little technical operation, every shade and detail, was magnified to epochal proportions. He was willing to die to make a table cloth pictorially interesting, willing to sacrifice his life to a pattern of spots and curves, the sole value of which lay in its "abstract beauty"—a theme for the humorist. He was so self-contained that he esteemed man as less valuable than a bowl of fruit or a congestion of cubes. The growth of humanity did not concern him—he was painting the growth of abstractions or the soul of pots and pans. Eventually he talked more about himself and his strange soul-states than about his art, and consulted the Freudian doctors to ascertain the full import of the psychic orgasms aroused within him by a piece of still-life.

Increasing in purity, painting shrank proportionately in human values until, at last, it appealed to a few souls divinely endowed with the "aesthetic emotion." This emotion by means of which one responds purely to art, that is, to its abstract harmonics, has been regarded with suspicion by eminent investigators unable to separate it from other emotions and unable to admit that man, being what he is, a gross bundle of appetites, memories and experiences all bound together into a single receiving system, can react purely to any stimulus. But the suspicion, I believe, is ill-founded. The aesthetic emotion is the unique property of those who love only art and not life; whose receptive apparatus, through disuse, has so shrivelled that it is no longer capable of responding to anything but abstractions. Painters possessing this peculiar emotion are really convinced that they have symbolized the grace of the human body, and the dynamic power and movement of modern machines, by abstract combinations of lines and masses bearing no discoverable relation to the objects in question. They maintain that an abstract art is the reflex of a machine age, and that its technique is the organic expression of the scientific trend of the times, a theory echoed by many writers. It happens, however, that the Modernists, by their own confession, are aggressively hostile to our machine age, and that they live as far from it as possible, preferably

in the more romantic quarters of Paris. In the ways of contemporary civilization, they are poorly educated, and their pseudo-scientific technique is an arbitrary method deduced from Cézanne, a Provençal recluse for whom the machine age never existed.

Yet, making allowances for all that is excrescential in Modernism, I find the movement vastly more interesting than its sworn enemy, the official art of France. Even in its slightest activities —the child's play of the customs-house officer Rousseau, the consumptive art of Modigliani and the smartness of Dufy— there are evidences of creative ability— of a personality moulding materials into new and arresting forms instead of faithfully recording the dimensions and visual appearances of nature. On certain departments of the crafts—costume-designing, weaving, print-cloths, pottery and kitchen wares—the influence of Modernism has been gay and beneficial; on the wholesale decoration of interiors its effect has been abominable, largely because the Cubist designers, ignoring the animal and spiritual needs of man, have imposed an eccentric pictorial formula upon utilitarian objects. What the movement will lead to I do not know. In France the more intelligent men, following the example of Lhote, are gradually returning to representational art; the others, professing to symbolize sub-conscious nightmares by indecipherable diagrams which they call *Super-Realism,* are beyond redemption. Matisse, growing old, turns out pretty sentiments for the American trade; and Picasso, to judge by his prize-winning exhibit at the Carnegie Institute, is a candidate for the Academy. The present condition of French painting is not one to make the heart rejoice. There is more hope in North America.

1934

# VI. . .

# REVIEW

# EDWARD M. BRECHER

## *The Book America Wrote*

"WHEN we Americans get through with the English language," remarked the celebrated stove-league philosopher Mr. Dooley, "it'll look like it was run over by a musical comedy."

Mr. Dooley was mistaken. We Americans have been manhandling the King's English for more than three centuries, yet it now looks better than ever. American ingenuity and disrespect for hidebound tradition have immeasurably enriched our common tongue. If you doubt it, look at the evidence for yourself.

You'll find all the evidence you want, laid out in alphabetical order, from *abalone* and *absquatulate* through *guyasticutus* and *pixilated* to *wunk* and *Zu-zu,* in a mammoth new work formally titled "A Dictionary of American English on Historical Principles" *—but promptly nicknamed, in good American fashion, the D. A. E. Designed to prove that our American language has beauty, dignity, and precision as well as the musical-comedy touch Mr. Dooley noted, the D. A. E. refutes all charges that American English is a corrupt jargon.

Scholars at the University of Chicago and elsewhere have been at work on the D. A. E. since 1925. So far they have published ten of a proposed twenty parts, surveying the American language from *A* through *Honk*. They expect to reach the end of the alphabet late in 1942.

The D. A. E. is almost wholly unlike the book you use to check pronunciations, definitions, and spellings. You'll find few pronunciation marks in the D. A. E., and some stumblers which the editors frankly confess they do not know how to define. As for spellings, you'll find so many variations you will conclude that the editors, like Mark Twain, have no use for a man who only knows one way to spell a word.

In place of the usual dictionary contents, you will find quotations—thick gobs of quotations illustrating the part each word has played in American life. Instead, for example, of merely defining *democratic* as meaning "of or pertaining to democracy," the D. A. E. quotes the earliest recorded use of the word in this country, from the Rhode Island *Colonial Record* for the year 1647:

> It is agreed . . . that the forme of Government established in Providence Plantations is *Democraticall;* that is to say, a Government held by ye free and voluntarie consent of all, or the greater parte of the free Inhabitants.

By amassing more than 1,000,000 quotations like these from every conceivable American source, and selecting the best of them for publication, the editors of the D. A. E. have made it possible to reconstruct the life history of American words, and of the things to which the words refer. Under *Conestoga wagon,*

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* *Compiled at the University of Chicago under the editorship of Sir William A. Craigie and James R. Hulbert.*

for example, you will find quotations describing how those broad-wheeled *prairie schooners* were built in the Conestoga Valley of Pennsylvania; how they first hauled farm produce to Philadelphia and later ventured far into the West; how in later years they became peddlers' wagons from which Conestoga cigars, now called *stogies,* were hawked.

Like a good novel, the D. A. E. starts off with a bang. Here is the very first quotation, illustrating the letter *A* and taken from the Maine *Province and Court Record* for the year 1651:

> It is ordered that Miss Batcheller for her adultery shall . . . be branded with the letter *A.*

Clearly New England was no place to commit adultery. Actual branding passed, but in 1837 Nathaniel Hawthorne was writing in the Salem (Mass.) *Gazette* how astonished he was to find "a young woman . . . whose doom it was to wear the letter A on the breast of her gown . . . so that the capital A might have been thought to mean Admirable, or any thing rather than Adultress." The theme haunted Hawthorne for many years, until in 1850 he published his best-selling novel *The Scarlet Letter.*

Creation of an American language, the D. A. E. discloses, began as soon as the Mayflower reached Plymouth. Among the first problems which the Pilgrims faced was the parcelling out of land in the first American subdivision. They decided to cast lots for the choice pieces of ground. Thus a man's ground became his *lot.* Most Englishmen will still look puzzled if you say: "I've just bought a couple of lots on Main Street." But Miles Standish or William Bradford would have had a pretty clear notion of what you meant.

Each part of the country similarly added to our common store of words. Pioneers picked up Indian words like wigwam, moccasin, and papoose from a hundred tribes, French words along the Canadian border and in Louisiana, Spanish words in Florida and the Southwest. By degrees these words were carried throughout the land, so that today you can hear in Maine or Minnesota many words which have migrated all the way from Mexico—*bonanza, ranch, siesta, tornado,* and *vigilante,* to name a few. Others journeyed still further—*barbecue* and *hammock* from Haiti, *chinchilla* and *tapioca* from South America. Still other words got into the American language from nowhere; like Topsy, they just grew. Witness *guyasticutus.*

The guyasticutus was—or is, for all we know—the most ferocious, rambunctious, man-eating wild animal ever exhibited under canvas to gullible Americans. For only ten cents, ladeez and gentlemen, a tenth part of a dollar, you can come into the tent and see with your own eyes this horrendous beast which consumes forty-eleven men, women, and tender babes-in-arms at a gulp, then bellows for forty-eleven more.

No one except its proprietor, alas, has ever actually seen the guyasticutus. For just when the crowd around the entrance has bought the last ticket, the proprietor rushes out of the tent and roars, "Run for your lives, ladeez and gentlemen! Escape before you are swallowed alive! *The guyasticutus has busted loose!*"

The late Professor George Philip Krapp of Columbia University collected many such animals, not found in any zoo. A sort of lexicographical Frank

Buck, Professor Krapp penetrated the densest jungles of American prose and brought back, though not alive, rare specimens of the *kickle-snifter,* which lives in old men's beards and circular lakes; the snowshoe-hooved *swamp gahoon;* the *joint snake,* which separates itself into many segments when you chase it, and reassembles itself after the danger is past; and the *prock,* or *side-winder,* or *side-hill badger,* whose legs are shorter on one side than on the other, enabling it to browse comfortably on the steepest mountain-sides. The *prock* is captured by driving it down-hill to a level spot, where its peculiar anatomy causes it to run around in circles until lassoed. Professor Krapp even succeeded in corraling the elusive *wunk,* a mole-like creature which baffles pursuers by pulling its hole in after it. Some of these beasts, now as extinct as the passenger pigeon, are preserved in the D. A. E. to show that when it comes to concocting animals, Americans are as ingenious as Nature herself.

Each episode in American history gave us an opportunity to show our verbal resourcefulness. The discovery of gold in California, for example, produced the phrases *gold rush* and *things panned out swell. Forty-niners* has been traced back as far as 1856.

Collecting quotations has kept a large staff busy for 15 years. In charge of the work is Sir William Alexander Craigie, a short, bearded Scotsman with gold-rimmed spectacles and an Ascot cravat, as scholarly in appearance as in reputation. Sir William won his academic spurs by editing a "Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue from the Twelfth Century to the End of the Seventeenth." He was knighted for bringing to successful completion the monumental "Oxford English Dictionary," by far the greatest dictionary of all time in any language.

Many Americans had suggested an American dictionary of the historical type, but it was the Scotch scholar who aroused sufficient enthusiasm to get the project launched, under the auspices of the University of Chicago, and with financial aid from the Rockefeller-endowed General Education Board.

The appointment of a foreigner to edit an American dictionary was not too well received by those who did not know Sir William. The Chicago *Tribune* greeted him with a headline which puzzled even the learned Oxonian:

MIDWAY SIGNS
LIMEY PROF TO
DOPE YANK TALK

Sir William's colleagues explained to him that Little Egypt had danced on Chicago's Midway during the World's Fair of 1893; thereafter amusement areas elsewhere were called midways. In Chicago, however, Midway became Chicagoese for the University which grew up on the site.

From the beginning Sir William and his American colleagues agreed that the D. A. E. was not to be a dictionary of American slang. Slang words are included only if they became established before 1875. A phrase like *holding the bag* qualifies easily; Thomas Jefferson used it in 1801.

The D. A. E. editors place major emphasis on "those features by which the English of the American colonies and the United States is distinguished from that of England and the rest of the English-speaking world." However, they have included not merely words of American origin but also "every word which has a real connection with the

development of the country and the history of its people."

Preparing such a dictionary is a Herculean labor. Scores of readers must scan tens of thousands of American books, magazines, newspapers, and official records. Promising quotations are copied out on slips of paper, together with the source, page, and date. Slips are sent in from all over the country. They are checked for accuracy, sorted in alphabetical order under their keywords, and filed in cubby-holes. A careful count of slips so far collected would take at least a year—but the editors are confident that they have long since passed the million mark. When he launched the project, Sir William had estimated that 100,000 would be sufficient.

Since Sir William's return to England in 1936, Prof. James R. Hulbert has carried on, but transatlantic clippers carry final proof to the learned Scotsman for review and revision.

Amateur researchers everywhere have aided the regular D. A. E. staff by reading rare American works. Professors at many universities have set their graduate students to work, and have pitched in themselves. A New York civil engineer whose hobby is Americanisms kept himself and his office staff busy throughout the depression spotting rare quotations. The National Youth Administration helped.

A Boston amateur, the late Charles W. Ernst, made important contributions. Ernst had a phenomenal photographic memory which enabled him to call back to mind a visual image of any page he had ever read. If you asked him about such a word as *pixilated*—a word most Americans now believe was coined by a Hollywood gag-writer in 1936 to describe Gary Cooper in "Mr. Deeds Goes to Town"—Ernst would be likely to reply:

"That word has long been used among the fishermen of Marblehead, Mass., I believe. I seem to recall having seen it in print not so many years ago. You might look on page 56 of the 1887 edition of a novel called "Agnes Surriage"—about the middle of the next-to-the-last line of the left-hand page, if my memory doesn't fail me."

Sure enough, that's where you'll find *pixilated*.

Ernst died in 1925; his bulging notebooks now rest in Harvard's Widener Library. Their contents have been repeatedly consulted in preparing the D. A. E.

"The Congressional Record" is one of the most fertile sources of Americanisms. Novels, especially those written in dialect, yield many gems. Frontier newspapers are a happy hunting ground for pioneer material. Among the lushest sources are the books by Mark Twain.

Two scholars who have counted the Americanisms in Twain's voluminous works state that there are more than 12,000 of them, and that Twain was the earliest user of 4342. He used *whoopee* half a century before Walter Winchell re-introduced it, and gave currency to such poker-game phrases as *passing the buck, four-flushing, sitting pretty,* and *new deal.* General Sherman wrote in 1863: "Charleston is not taken, the war is prolonged, and but little chance of its ending until we have a *new deal.*"

For many of Mark Twain's Americanisms his wife deserves part of the credit. Mrs. Clemens permitted no swearing in her home or in her husband's books, so that Sam was reduced from cursing to cussing. Among the Americanisms engendered by Mrs.

Clemens's taboos were *all-fired, Caesar's ghost, Great Guns, Hail Columbia, dad-blame it, dog-gone it, suffering Moses,* and a host of others. The prudery of a still earlier generation of American females gave us *light meat* and *dark meat* to get around mentioning the *breast* of a chicken; and *first and second joints* are so called, to the bafflement of English visitors, because for many years *legs,* even chicken legs, could not be mentioned in polite society.

When writers explain the words they use, dictionary compilers have an easy time. Often, however, words are used in a way which gives no clue to their meaning; the result is a headache for the D. A. E. editors. Witness *none-so-pretties.*

An advertisement in the Newport (R. I.) *Mercury* for March 17, 1759, announced that Jacob Richardson was having a sale at his store on certain articles called none-so-pretties. Half a century later the journal of the Lewis and Clark expedition recorded that those doughty explorers were taking with them ten none-so-pretties for trading with the Indians. But no one bothered to jot down just what a none-so-pretty was. The D. A. E. editors first guessed that none-so-pretties were "an article of haberdashery," now define them tentatively as "a kind of tape." Readers with more precise information on none-so-pretties are invited to write in. The same goes for those who can identify the *Nicholites,* a group of Southern Baptists. Just who were the Nicholites, what did they believe, and how did they come by their name?

The problem of *ash-gum* has been solved.

Dr. Mitford Mathews, brought up in a district of Alabama where many pioneer customs and folkways still survive, ended a lively debate among D. A. E. scholars. Professor Mathews's aunt, like many others, stored her ashes for soap-making in the hollowed-out trunk of a gum tree, and called it her *ash-gum.* That is how you will find *ash-gum* defined in the D. A. E.

The D. A. E. has many uses. When Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer was filming "Gone with the Wind," the question arose: Did youngsters shoot craps in New Orleans before the Civil War? In 1843, according to the D. A. E., a man named Green had written:

> The Game of Craps . . . is a game lately introduced into New Orleans, and is fully equal to faro in its . . . ruinous effects.

Impressed, M-G-M purchased a D. A. E. of its own. So typically American a word as *baseball,* however, was not invented here at all; Jane Austen used it in "Northanger Abbey" half a century before its first American appearance.

By the time the D. A. E. is completed late in 1942, it will be almost time to start over again. For while the lexicographers have been surveying our language, we ordinary Americans have been busy concocting more of it. Prohibition, the boom, the depression, and now the European war have been steadily enlarging American English; the dictionary compilers will be hard pressed to catch up. A Spanish general invented *fifth column.* Nazi Germany has given us *totalitarian* and *Blitzkrieg.* Attempts have been made to popularize a new name for traitors, *quislings,* and a new verb for treachery, *to quisle,* derived from the name of Vidkun Quisling, Norway's Benedict Arnold.

Grand-daddy among words for spy or traitor, however, is *cowboy.* This was not originally a Western word;

before the days of dude ranches most cattle-herders thought of themselves as *cow-punchers,* or *cowhands,* or *buckaroos* (from the Spanish *vaqueros*). The word *cowboy* was in fact an Eastern word, used to describe George III's fifth column in the American colonies. The cowboys of those days were Tory sympathizers who wandered through the woods at night ringing cowbells. Unsuspecting American patriots, hearing the tinkle, sallied forth with lanterns in search of the straying Bossies and Bessies supposedly attached to the bells, and were promptly Blitzkrieged by enemy blunderbusses.

Words, like hats, readily succumb to changes in style. They become obsolete through the invention of newer and more stylish successors. Take the many words our ancestors used to describe a hurried departure. Our great-grandfathers *absquatulated,* as in the sentence: "I absquatulated away from that vicinity in a hurry, you can bet your bottom dollar." Our grandfathers *skedaddled* or *skidooed.* Many of us in our younger days *vamoosed.* Youngsters today simply *scram.*

*Absquatulate,* incidentally, illustrates our American ability to spell a word in more ways than one. With comparatively solemn faces, the D. A. E. editors list *absquatilate, absquatelate, absquotulate, absquatilize,* and *absquattle,* as in this sentence dated 1848: "Let's likker one more round and then absquattle."

Such obscure words, however, do not constitute the bulk of the D. A. E.'s contents. Many of our commonest words are also Americanisms. As Dr. Mathews has pointed out, when you get up from your *rocking chair,* button your *vest,* put on your *rubbers,* dash for the *elevator,* reach the *sidewalk,* and make a *bee-line* for the automobile which you carelessly *parked* in front of a *hydrant* when you came *downtown,* you are using words of American origin all along the way.

1940

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# MORTON DAUWEN ZABEL

## *Sandburg's Testament*

A review of *The People, Yes* by Carl Sandburg

THE HARDEST part of being a pioneer comes in remaining a contemporary. This is particularly true in modern poetry, where the average life of a "generation" is five years and where the trail-blazing novelty of the pioneers of twenty-five years ago was so exaggerated by public clamor that within a short time they became as much victimized by critical suspicion and boredom as they had once been by the swollen claims of admiring patriots. To pick up any history or anthology of contemporary verse is to be depressed by the high rate of mortality among poetic reputations. No aid is lacking—from

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group politics and cut-throat rivalries to high-pressure salesmanship and journalistic inflation—in speeding the declines already promised by the ephemeral nature of the average literary beliefs and styles. It would hardly have needed the further discouragement of rapidly shifting critical standards or headlong changes in social and political life to turn the optimism of the American revivalists of 1912 into the despair or silence which many of them found to be the only answer to the contempt directed against them by the rising talents of the post-War years.

We know how few poets of the pre-War revival survived this state of affairs. Several did it in spite of persisting in their original aims; more did it by agile changes of face through the rise and fall of new tastes or styles. The first of these forms of survival carries one risk and the second another. One poet becomes more and more personal in his ways, skeptical in his view of the tumult and disorder around him, and so retreats into his own sphere of private irony or eccentricity; this accounts for the predicament of Robinson or Frost. The other remains young at whatever cost of sober judgment or certain craft, mixes in movements and experiments, and becomes more and more difficult to connect with any kind of esthetic or philosophic stability. He keeps his freshness alive, but becomes too mercurial for believers in real values; his energy keeps him on the stretch but exhausts the confidence of his followers; and so he arrives at the ambiguous authority of Ezra Pound. In this age of high-pressure literary promotion and easy public credulity, nothing seems easier for an author than to win a hearing—and nothing harder than to keep it.

Carl Sandburg's new book, *The People, Yes* (Harcourt, Brace & Co.), is impressive at first sight because in it he speaks with exactly the same voice he used in the *Chicago Poems* of 1914 and yet succeeds in making it as eloquent as any American poem of 1936. He risks two extreme hazards of the contemporary writer. He writes on the social problem, and he writes in popular language. It will be suggested immediately that he has simplified them primarily by stopping short of his full responsibilities as a poet. To this one must agree at once that hardly a fifth of this volume is classifiable by any definition as poetry, although any definition of poetry must include the purpose and imagination that run through its pages, even when they contain nothing but inventories of popular speech or long lists of trades and slogans. But no American poet now living could publish with the same authority and completeness a survey of the specifically American issue in twentieth century poetry—how it has emerged and developed, how it diverges from foreign influence and contacts, and what it may expect, in extension or solution, from the coming talents of the humanitarian front. This long document of 286 pages is not only a guidebook on American themes; it is a manual of words and phrases, episodes and characters, conflicts and forces, and in addition it contains a demonstration of how the social idealism of American poetry may be successfully domesticated in the immediate future.

But its first interest comes from the fact that here Sandburg has summarized his purposes of a quarter-century and handed them as a testament to his inheritors. The book forms a remarkable unity with its predecessors. It is true that such consistency has deprived his work of exact points of interest or

decision. His poems as they have appeared in his five volumes have progressively cancelled their predecessors, repeating their themes and dulling their emphasis. Yet Sandburg is one of the few native poets of whom it may be said, with all respect to the priority of Whitman, that he has written no verse, good or bad, but his own. He has sacrificed to his own single-voiced personality—as candidly as Frost or Robinson, but without their irony or close-lipped pessimism —whatever variety or progress might have made him a more forceful character among post-War writers and readers. In this first book since *Good Morning America* eight years ago he shows a purpose not only more serious than it has ever been before, but a talent tuned to uses and broken to duties which many members of the present generation of humanitarian poets, whatever their superior sophistication or craftsmanship, have hardly begun to understand.

In poetry or prose dealing with human causes it is usually a rule that there are no substitutes for thorough practical acquaintance with the matter in hand. Here brilliant technical advantages may display what they are intended to disguise—the writer's failure in immediate knowledge of his materials, or his substitution of journalism or second-hand study for it. Dos Passos' recent novels have given a new weight to the name and labor of Dreiser, and the younger proletarian poets who far outstrip Sandburg in metrical skill or formal rigor—in other words, as artists—throw into fresh relief the ruggedness of his achievement. They show him, by the glibness of their arguments or the abstract condition of their beliefs, to be deeply bred and matured in a cause of which they usually have a keen but merely juvenile understanding, or more often only an academic acquaintance. In other words, Sandburg triumphs on all the scores in which experience counts: in his use of speech and lingoes, in the range and authenticity of his folklore, in the scope of his social familiarity, in the reach of his memory, and in the size and variety of the history he has made of the whole age of industrial labor in America during the past half-century. Compared with these resources the younger talents offer a meagre fare. Their phrases are thin and their colloquialisms synthetic, their data specialized and experiences green, their references as often warped as enriched by literary derivation, and the structure of their poems is held up by rhetoric or the false props of borrowed arguments.

On these grounds *The People, Yes* escapes criticism, even when it does so by casting esthetic claims to the winds. It is a vast retrospect of life and labor in America that suggests an obvious comparison—*Leaves of Grass*. It is prefaced by a poem that announces the casual and miscellaneous nature of its scheme:

Being several stories and psalms nobody
would want to laugh at

interspersed with memoranda variations
worth a second look

along with sayings and yarns traveling on
grief and laughter. . . .

It opens with a spectacle of the "Howdeehow powpow," which is the American nation in its immense dimensions and disorder—a "Tower of Babel job" which now stands

as a skull and a ghost
a memorandum hardly begun,
swaying and sagging in tall hostile winds,
held up by slow friendly winds—

and so proceeds through 107 sections that alternate, on no apparent principle of contrast or structure, between personal episodes and mass movements, local anecdotes and epic generalities, lists of scenes, trades, occupations, and causes, passages of vague symbolic imagery, long catalogues of popular phrases, catchwords, clichés, and proverbs, and intervals of gnomic lyricism. Nothing has apparently been left out, but everything that Sandburg has put into his earlier poems is here again, particularly from previous surveys like *Many Hats* and *Good Morning America.* The prevailing quality of style is "tough and mystical." It derives from the dogged patience of common humanity in being outwitted by keener brains and criminal exploiters, the pathetic endurance of the underdog who waits grimly for the reprisals of time. This style derives from Whitman only in structure. It has as little to do with his rhetorical strain or oracular grandiloquence as it has with Whitman's final lyric and choral mastery. It has even little of the belabored hardboiledness of Hemingway, Dos Passos, or Phelps Putnam. It comes with the laconic ease of talk on streets and farms, from section-gangs, night shifts, pick-and-shovel outfits, and hobo campfires, Union Square soapboxes and grocery-store rag-chewing. From these sources Sandburg has compiled a catalogue of American lore that must astonish anyone. Where he gets it all is beyond telling. Whether all of it is equally authentic or not is beyond present calculation. But it rings true to the American ear far beyond the language of the average "regional" novel or proletarian poem, and one has only to compare any random sample of it with the slang parts of Pound's *Cantos* or MacLeish's *Frescoes* to realize that one is the pure article and the other something like a parody heard from the stage of the London Colosseum.

In other words, Sandburg looks after his facts first, and waits for argument to follow from them. He is empirical in the rough native tradition. If he hears the jeer that "the people is a myth, an abstraction," he asks "What myth would you put in place of the people? And what abstraction would you exchange for this one?" If the cause of social justice has any validity for reformers or poets it must come not from the mind but from "the bowels of that mystic behemoth, the people." The difference between Whitman and Sandburg is primarily a difference between a visionary imagination and a realistic one, between a prophet who deals in the racial and social aspects of humanitarianism and a historian who handles the specific facts of industrial life and labor. Whitman, given his sympathies and cause and with his greater imaginative vision, might have written his book without any immediate contact with its materials, whereas Sandburg, so denied, could have written none of his. The two poets join only at the point which is their common weakness: in the rhapsodic cries and flights that are the diffused and prevalent bane of the one and the merely incidental weakness of the other. Sandburg is saved from this pretension by his plain verbal sanity. He does not discard the lyric imagination; it filters through his pages and produces many short passages of characteristic fancy:

> Alive yet the spillover of last night's moon-
> rise
> brought returns of peculiar cash
> a cash of thin air alive yet.

But it is seldom allowed to develop into vague apostrophe or inflated allegory,

any more than his language is allowed to use the pompous phrases, French or Latin counterfeit, and hollow pedantry of Whitman's style. In the same way his general tendency is to avoid those vague spectres of human ordeal that make up the panoramic symbolism of Perse's *Anabase,* Aragon's *Front Rouge,* or MacLeish's *Conquistador,* and when such effects do appear they immediately strike the eye with their uneasy falseness, as in parts 29 and 107, to select two examples from opposite ends of the poem. Three lines are enough to show how Sandburg on occasion veers into a pompous phraseology from which his cruder humors must rescue him:

While the rootholds of the earth nourish
the majestic people
And the new generations with names never
heard of
Plow deep in broken drums and shoot
craps for old crowns,

but one also runs into longer passages that come with particular inconclusiveness in the book's last pages, when something more than immortal truisms is wanted for force of thought or art, however such temporizations may agree with the skepticism of history:

The people will live on.
The learning and blundering people will
live on.
They will be tricked and sold and
again sold
And go back to the nourishing earth for
rootholds,
The people so peculiar in renewal and
comeback,
You can't laugh off their capacity to
take it.
The mammoth rests between his cyclonic
dramas.

This kind of writing, coming on top of the most brisk and vivid realism, rings with a special shallowness; another poet, stronger in rhetorical powers or symbolic skill, might make poetry of it, but where the general spirit of the poem casts suspicion on matter or ideas untested by hard fact, these references to dreams and mammoths, "cyclonic dramas," "the strength of the winds" and the "constellations of universal law," or to the people as

a polychrome,
a spectrum and a prism
held in a moving monolith,
a console organ of changing themes,
a clavilux of color poems
wherein the sea offers fog
and the fog moves off in rain
and the labrador sunset shortens
to a nocturne of clear stars
serene over the shot spray
of northern lights—

show up as evasions of what either social necessity or poetic strength requires.

In other words, Sandburg, taken in the mass and for the general effect of his detail, is a master without rivals, a poetic realist of great range and authority, a folklorist in the best tradition, and easily the finest reporter of contemporary life that the modern poetic revival has produced, as comparison with Masters, Lindsay, Frost, or their younger successors will show. But taken in the specific poem or argument he offers as unsatisfactory a case to social critics as to literary. He eludes argument and dependability; he seems in the end evasive of responsibility; and his loyal purposes and honesty come to much less than they should. His immense knowledge of human ills and fortunes is too immense; it immerses and engulfs him; he is pulled by so many claims on sympathy and forbearance that nothing survives the prodigious outlay of tolerance and compassion but his inexhaustible

supply of pure human nature. His feeling for the masses marching in the darkness with their great bundle of grief is tempered by ironic pathos for the millionaire suicide of Rochester or Marshall Field who left $25,000 for the upkeep of his grave. The farcical delusions of the rich are balanced against the tragic palliatives by which the poor are duped; the meat of privilege and the poison of oppression become mixed up because both destroy their eaters; moral platitudes are cancelled by a wise-crack; and finally the only conclusion permitted him is a tough confidence in the abstract will of the people to save themselves. The answer to the whole urgent problem of human salvation is thrown back on "the folded and quiet yesterdays, put down in the book of the past," or thrown forward by the unanswered question, "Where do we go from here? Where to? What next?" or allowed to hang between unresolved opposites: "The people, yes, out of what is their change from chaos to order and chaos again?"

Obviously these are among the most difficult questions in the world to answer, but neither a poet nor a reformer would ask them if he had no answer to offer. As its title indicates, *The People, Yes* is written as a great affirmation of man's strength and value, but the practical regeneration of the human lot promised throughout the record finally hangs suspended in the void of love and patience. We knew it all before, even if not in this vivid and familiar language, and we are left wanting to know more. No doubt the avoidance of formulated solutions is dictated as much by common sense as by the plain facts of history, but one expects more than common sense or plain facts from a poet or a philosopher. It soon follows that if Sandburg had worked harder at his social or moral philosophy, he would have been a greater poet. In a book of this kind the test of poetic form is almost beside the point; it would apply in so small a fraction of the content. Yet as soon as one understands what it takes to achieve real form in the construction of language, one sees what it takes to arrive at that form through the structure and integration of thought. If one's thought remains undecided among the evidence at hand, inconclusively empirical or superior to proof, it is likely that the force and authority of the verse will remain scattered and confused among its details, words, and phrases, however abundant and authentic these may be. Sandburg's poetic instrument is exactly fitted to his purposes; it simply happens that those purposes are too vaguely poetic to make the instrument become anything more than the loose, amorphous, copious, semi-prose medium that it still remains after twenty-five years of use. And one may suppose that if he had exerted more labor on the task of filing and concentrating his verse, giving one phrase or anecdote the pith now thinned out over twenty, he would have arrived at something more fixed and specific in his social beliefs. The beliefs might be arbitrary in form; they might not conclude in what communist critics will logically demand and fail to get in the last ten pages of this book; but they would give a coherence and structure to his faith in mankind that would count for more than that faith in its present all-inclusive and unresolved condition. Sandburg himself implies that facts of this kind are beyond such arbitrary mastery:

> these lead to no easy pleasant conversation
> they fall into a dusty disordered poetry.

And his practical conclusions suggest a similar contempt for the formulations of economic socialism. "Always the storm of propaganda blows"; "yet the sleepers toss in sleep and an end comes of sleep and the sleepers wake." But between these prophecies we get the skepticism of an ironic intelligence which knows so much that it no longer trusts itself: "Who knows the answers, the cold inviolable truth?" "What does justice say?" "Where to? What next?" The potentialities of an epic judgment lie in Sandburg's materials, but he has not realized them. It is doubtful if any poet writing on the premises of Whitman could, since that tradition represents an immense exploration and discovery of poetic resources, but not their proof and mastery as poetry. Hart Crane wrote himself down as a disciple of Whitman, but his verse shows how great a poetic rigor he exerted over his materials, and how far he advanced the cause of American poetry by bringing it to terms with the moral and intellectual conflicts inherent in a genuinely poetic vision. The model of *The Bridge* now appears to be a difficult and confusing one for present poets to follow; the formal structure is too derivative and intricate, the style too complex, and the whole poem strives toward those evils of rhetoric and allegory which seem to be the surest way of producing artificial and didactic verse at the present moment. But if Crane's formal vision were combined with Sandburg's exact realism and thorough mastery of detail, it would be hard to find a more profitable combination for study by the rising poet of humanitarian ambitions. Something of that same merging of talents would have produced in these two poets themselves a richer and firmer art. Sandburg's book lacks exactly what makes Crane's a distinguished achievement, including its failure in a major purpose. Where it succeeds it does so in a way that is Sandburg's personal triumph, and gives him a distinction great enough among the men of his time to ensure him a high place among his fellows in oppression and hope.

1936

# HENRY JAMES

## *The Limitations of Dickens*

A review of *Our Mutual Friend* by Charles Dickens

Our Mutual Friend is, to our perception, the poorest of Mr. Dickens's works. And it is poor with the poverty not of momentary embarrassment but of permanent exhaustion. For the last ten years it has seemed to us that Mr. Dickens has been unmistakably forcing himself. *Bleak House* was forced; *Little Dorritt* was labored; the present work is dug out as with a spade and pickax. Of course—to anticipate the usual argument—who but Dickens could have written it? Who, indeed? Who else would have established a lady

in business in a novel on the admirably solid basis of her always putting on gloves and tying a handkerchief round her head in moments of grief, and of her habitually addressing her family with "Peace! hold!" It is needless to say that Mrs. Reginald Wilfer is first and last the occasion of considerable true humor. When, after conducting her daughter to Mrs. Boffin's carriage, in sight of all the envious neighbors, she is described as enjoying her triumph during the next quarter of an hour by airing herself on the doorstep "in a kind of splendidly serene trance," we laugh with as uncritical a laugh as could be desired of us. We pay the same tribute to her assertions, as she narrates the glories of the society she enjoyed at her father's table, that she has known as many as three copper-plate engravers exchanging the most exquisite sallies and retorts there at one time. But when to these we have added a dozen more happy examples of the humor which was exhaled from every line of Mr. Dickens's earlier writings, we shall have closed the list of the merits of the work before us. To say that the conduct of the story, with all its complications, betrays a long-practiced hand, is to pay no compliment worthy of the author. If this were, indeed, a compliment, we should be inclined to carry it further, and congratulate him on his success in what we should call the manufacture of fiction; for in so doing we should express a feeling that has attended us throughout the book. Seldom, we reflected, had we read a book so intensely *written*, so little seen, known, or felt.

In all Mr. Dickens's works the fantastic has been his great resource; and while his fancy was live and vigorous it accomplished great things. But the fantastic, when the fancy is dead, is a very poor business. The movement of Mr. Dickens's fancy in Mrs. Wilfer and Mr. Boffin and Lady Tippins, and the Lammles and Miss Wren, and even in Eugene Wrayburn, is, to our mind, a movement lifeless, forced, mechanical. It is the letter of his old humor without the spirit. It is hardly too much to say that every character here put before us is a mere bundle of eccentricities, animated by no principle of nature whatever. In former days there reigned in Mr. Dickens's extravagances a comparative consistency; they were exaggerated statements of types that really existed. We had, perhaps, never known a Newman Noggs, nor a Pecksniff, nor a Micawber; but we had known persons of whom these figures were but the strictly logical consummation. But among the grotesque creatures who occupy the pages before us, there is not one whom we can refer to as an existing type. In all Mr. Dickens's satires, indeed, the reader has been called upon, and has willingly consented, to accept a certain number of figures or creatures of pure fancy, for this was the author's poetry. He was, moreover, always repaid for his concession by a peculiar beauty or power in these exceptional characters. But he is now expected to make the same concession with a very inadequate reward. What do we get in return for accepting Miss Jenny Wren as a possible person? This young lady is a type of a certain class of characters of which Mr. Dickens has made a speciality, and with which he has been accustomed to draw alternate smiles and tears, according as he pressed one spring or another. But this is very cheap merriment and very cheap pathos. Miss Jenny Wren is a poor little dwarf, afflicted, as she constantly reiterates, with a "bad back," and "queer legs," who makes doll's dresses, and is

for ever pricking at those with whom she converses, in the air, with her needle, and assuring them that she knows their "tricks and their manners." Like all Dickens's pathetic characters, she is a little monster; she is deformed, unhealthy, unnatural; she belongs to the troop of hunchbacks, imbeciles, and precocious children who have carried on the sentimental business in all Mr. Dickens's novels: the little Nells, the Smikes, the Paul Dombeys.

Mr. Dickens goes as far out of the way for his wicked people as he does for his good ones. Rogue Riderhood, indeed, in the present story, is villainous with a sufficient natural villainy; he belongs to that quarter of society in which the author is most at his ease. But was there ever such wickedness as that of the Lammles and Mr. Fledgeby? Not that people have not been as mischievous as they; but was anyone ever mischievous in that singular fashion? Did a couple of elegant swindlers ever take such particular pains to be aggressively inhuman?—for we can find no other word for the gratuitous distortions to which they are subjected. The word "humanity" strikes us as strangely discordant, in the midst of these pages; for, let us boldly declare it, there is no humanity here. Humanity is nearer home than the Boffins, and the Lammles, and the Wilfers, and the Veneerings. It is in what men have in common with each other, and not what they have in distinction. The people just named have nothing in common with mankind at large. What a world were this world if the world of *Our Mutual Friend* were an honest reflection of it! But a community of eccentrics is impossible. Rules alone are consistent with each other; exceptions are inconsistent. Society is maintained by natural sense and natural feeling. We cannot conceive a society in which these principles are not in some manner represented. Where in these pages are the depositaries of that intelligence without which the movement of life would cease? Who represents nature? Accepting half of Mr. Dickens's persons as intentionally grotesque, where are those exemplars who should afford us the proper measure of their companions' variations? We ought not, in justice to the author, to seek them among his weaker—that is, his mere conventional—characters: in John Harmon, Lizzie Hexam, or Mortimer Lightwood; but we assuredly cannot find them among his stronger—that is, his artificial—creations.

Suppose we take Eugene Wrayburn and Bradley Headstone. They occupy a halfway position between the probable of nature and the habitually impossible of Mr. Dickens. A large portion of the story rests upon the enmity borne by Headstone to Wrayburn, both being in love with the same woman. Wrayburn is a gentleman, and Headstone is one of the people. Wrayburn is well-bred, careless, elegant, skeptical, and idle: Headstone is a high-tempered, hard-working, ambitious young schoolmaster. There lay in the opposition of these two characters a very good story. But the prime requisite was that they should *be* characters: Mr. Dickens, according to his usual plan, has made them simply figures, and between them the story that was to be, the story that should have been, has evaporated. Wrayburn lounges about with his hands in his pockets, smoking a cigar and talking nonsense. Headstone strides about, clenching his fists and biting his lips and grasping his stick. There is one scene in which Wrayburn chaffs the schoolmaster with easy insolence, while the latter writhes

impotently under his well-bred sarcasm. This scene is very clever, but it is very insufficient. If the majority of readers were not so very timid in the use of words we should call it vulgar. By this we do not mean to indicate the conventional impropriety of two gentlemen exchanging lively personalities; we mean to emphasize the essentially small character of these personalities. In other words, the moment, dramatically, is great, while the author's conception is weak. The friction of two *men,* of two characters, of two passions, produces stronger sparks than Wrayburn's boyish repartees and Headstone's melodramatic commonplaces.

Such scenes as this are useful in fixing the limits of Mr. Dickens's insight. Insight is, perhaps, too strong a word; for we are convinced that it is one of the chief conditions of his genius not to see beneath the surface of things. If we might hazard a definition of his literary character, we should, accordingly, call him the greatest of the superficial novelists. We are aware that this definition confines him to an inferior rank in the department of letters which he adorns; but we accept this consequence of our proposition. It were, in our opinion, an offense against humanity to place Mr. Dickens among the greatest novelists. For, to repeat what we have already intimated, he has created nothing but figure. He has added nothing to our understanding of human character. He is master of but two alternatives: he reconciles us to what is commonplace, and he reconciles us to what is odd. The value of the former service is questionable; and the manner in which Mr. Dickens performs it sometimes conveys a certain impression of charlatanism. The value of the latter service is incontestable, and here Mr. Dickens is an honest, an admirable artist. But what is the condition of the truly great novelist? For him there are no alternatives, for him there are no oddities, for him there is nothing outside of humanity. He cannot shirk it; it imposes itself upon him. For him alone, therefore, there is a true and a false; for him alone it is possible to be right, because it is possible to be wrong. Mr. Dickens is a great observer and a great humorist, but he is nothing of a philosopher. Some people may hereupon say, so much the better; we say, so much the worse. For a novelist very soon has need of a little philosophy. In treating of Micawber, and Boffin, and Pickwick, *et hoc genus omne,* he can, indeed, dispense with it, for this—we say it with all deference—is not serious writing. But when he comes to tell the story of a passion, a story like that of Headstone and Wrayburn, he becomes a moralist as well as an artist. He must know *man* as well as *men,* and to know man is to be a philosopher. The writer who knows men alone, if he have Mr. Dickens's humor and fancy, will give us figures and pictures for which we cannot be too grateful, for he will enlarge our knowledge of the world, but when he introduces men and women whose interest is preconceived to lie not in the poverty, the weakness, the drollery of their natures, but in their complete and unconscious subjection to ordinary and healthy human emotions, all his humor, all his fancy, will avail him nothing if, out of the fulness of his sympathy, he is unable to prosecute those generalizations in which alone consists the real greatness of a work of art. This may sound like very subtle talk about a very simple matter; it is rather very simple talk about a very subtle matter. A story based upon these elementary passions in which

alone we seek the true and final manifestation of character must be told in a spirit of intellectual superiority to those passions. That is, the author must understand what he is talking about. The perusal of a story so told is one of the most elevating experiences within the reach of the human mind. The perusal of a story which is not so told is infinitely depressing and unprofitable.

1865

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# MARGARET MARSHALL

## "Othello"

A review of Margaret Webster's production of *Othello*

*Othello,* in print, is as careless of the house rules of dramaturgy as it is prolific in bursts of poetry that move like ground swells through the emotions and the mind. Its several characters are believable because they speak with the irresistible energy and authority of the poetry; their relations to one another seem contrived, and the play as play would be stopped at almost any point by one sensible remark, for which the cue is always presenting itself.

Margaret Webster's *Othello* is not only believable; by a *tour de force* of direction she has caused the faulty motivation not to disappear but to seem irrelevant. And only at one point, as I remember, does the unseized cue stand out.

The key to Miss Webster's particular and distinctive solution of a difficult problem lies in her bold use of Iago both as character and as instrument. The hero of this production is not Othello but Iago; the tragedy of the Moor, while it is quite effectively set forth, is, in a sense, the play within the play. Miss Webster might deny this. The audience bears me out. That fact may tell us more about a prevailing attitude toward the clever, sardonic, agile character who has the ruthlessness of his cynicism than about Miss Webster's intentions, but here is, at the very least, an interesting coincidence. (A friend to whom I mentioned this wondered if the sympathy for Iago was an expression of prejudice against a Negro Othello. The answer is no. It was rather the expression of a secret admiration for the man who exercises power—of which every human being secretly feels himself capable—and this admiration includes a kind of contempt for anyone, white or black, yellow or brown, over whom that power is successfully exercised. The ovation given to Paul Robeson at the end of the performance was certainly not simulated. It was just as certainly sentimental in part, and far more self-conscious than the wry sympathy accorded to Iago scene by scene. But cynicism and sentimentality are, after all, two sides of the same coin.)

It happens also that the most accomplished actor in the company is José

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Ferrer, who plays the role of Iago. Where his acting ends and Miss Webster's direction begins it is impossible to tell—their collaboration is complete. I can only record that he plays the role with passion and joy, as if he were creating it. The ostensible and inadequate motivation—Iago's desire to usurp Cassio's place—turns under one's eyes and ears into the far more sinister and exciting desire to play the part of the villain for the part's sake. Yet he remains understandable in human terms.

And what of Othello? Paul Robeson has an imposing figure and a powerful voice. But he performs rather than acts. Under Miss Webster's direction he performs passably well, but he creates no illusion. He speaks—often sings—Othello's lines, but he is not Othello in the sense that Mr. Ferrer is Iago. And Robeson and Miss Webster have tried to prove that Othello is a Negro; they have attempted also to prove that *Othello* is a play about race. Both theories seem to me false and foolish. Fortunately Miss Webster's artistic sense is superior to her ideology, which has been confined to the public prints and does not appear in the play.

In Shakespeare's conception the essential quality of the Moor is his foreignness. He is the exotic character—so exotic as to bewitch, for all his denials, the innocent English—not Venetian—Desdemona. The stress upon his blackness points up his alien, not his racial, character. There is no particular reason why a Negro should not play Othello or, for that matter, why a Negro should. Color aside, Robeson is simply not the type. The exotic quality is missing. Moreover, Shakespeare's Moor was surely a man of movement, as agile in his way as Iago. Robeson is monumental and inert. He makes no use whatever of his body, which becomes a dead weight. His voice does move, and it is fit to declaim such wonderful lines as ". . . when I love not thee, Chaos is come again." But even his voice gets out of character; it is too often reminiscent of Paul Robeson, singer of spirituals. Also its great volume is too often unstopped—some of Othello's "Oh's" are simply rushes of vast and shapeless sound.

Miss Webster's Emilia is interesting and right. The physical attraction which binds this knowing, unromantic woman to Iago is played up. The sense of their frank pleasure in each other provides an irrational yet unchallengeable explanation for Emilia's blindness to her husband's machinations. And this characterization adds greatly to the dramatic power of the last scene, in which it falls to Emilia to express and release the play's emotional impact. Uta Hagen's Desdemona is less enchanted than one's memory of the part, but hers too is a very accomplished performance. The physical appearance of James Monks, who plays the part of Cassio, makes him not quite believable as the second in command. However, he improves upon acquaintance and he acts well. Roderigo, in this production, is almost a caricature of the Dupe, and Jack Manning plays that characterization to the hilt.

The settings are unobtrusive, as they should be. And both the settings and Miss Webster's use of a stage limited in depth point up the character of Iago as the manipulator who takes the audience into his confidence.

The play, as it is here projected, is of course not a tragedy, since Iago runs the show. Only in the case of Emilia, interestingly enough, do we feel that she is the dupe not so much of Iago as of

her own mixed passions. In the last scene she does arouse pity and terror—but mainly for Emilia. Every other character is essentially a puppet dangling on Iago's strings. There is therefore no clash of wills, we do not hate the villain, and virtue is only technically triumphant.

1943

# EDITORS OF *TIME*

## *Disney's Cinesymphony*

A review of *Fantasia* by Walt Disney

STRANGE and wonderful are the premières (pronounced "premeers") of Hollywood: the trappings of publicity; the lights and decorations painting the gaudy lily of the Carthay Circle Theatre (where the big premières are held); the pushing, star-gazing crowds; the troops of real live stars ("I seen him! Didja see her?"). This week Manhattan sees a première stranger and more wonderful than any of Hollywood's. The celebrities present, the publicity, the lights on the marquee, may be lost in the blare and blaze of Broadway. But strangeness and wonder belong to the show itself. It is Walt Disney's latest, called *Fantasia.*

As the audience enters and the theatre fills with the sweet confusion of an orchestra tuning up, there are no musicians in the pit. As the curtains part, a huge symphony orchestra appears hazily, on the screen. Before it steps a thin, grinning, bald-headed man. He introduces himself as Deems Taylor, welcomes the audience, on behalf of Leopold Stokowski and Walt Disney, to "an entirely new form of entertainment." When he finishes, Leopold Stokowski himself, his back to the audience, steps into the picture, raises his arms, and the great orchestra swirls into Bach's *D Minor Toccata and Fugue.*

The music comes not simply from the screen, but from everywhere; it is as if a hearer were in the midst of the music. As the music sweeps to a climax, it froths over the proscenium arch, boils into the rear of the theatre, all but prances up & down the aisles. The hazy orchestra begins to dissolve, and weird, abstract ripples and filaments begin an unearthly ballet in Technicolor.

This is the beginning of a symphony concert—but what a concert! Illustrated by Walt Disney; written by Bach, Beethoven, Stravinsky, Dukas, Tchaikovsky, Mussorgsky, Schubert; conducted by Stokowski; master-of-ceremonied by Deems Taylor; played by the Philadelphia Orchestra. Mickey and Stokowski together put on a brand-new act.

When Stokowski's orchestra swings into Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite,* the ballet on the screen turns into flowers, fairies, fish, falling leaves, mushrooms. Mickey Mouse appears in the

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title role of Paul Dukas' *Sorcerer's Apprentice,* with silent gusto steals the bearded sorcerer's magic cap, commands the broom to fetch water, forgets how to stop it, nearly drowns in the deluge that follows. To Igor Stravinsky's rip-roaring *Rite of Spring,* a primeval world, complete with dinosaurs, bubbles up, parades by, dies down. To Mussorgsky's spooky *Night on Bald Mountain,* hobgoblins and beldams ride their brooms. To Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony,* centaurs and centaurettes, Pegasus, Mrs. Pegasus and a nestful of little Pegasi gambol and fly; Bacchus and his crew get a good drenching when the storm comes up. The whole cinesymphony concert lasts two hours and a half (intermission included).

Containing everything from the Pierian well water of Johann Sebastian Bach to the violet-bordered stream of Schubert's *Ave Maria, Fantasia* is a long succession of very large orders. Some of these orders (the flower, fish and mushroom dances of the *Nutcracker Suite,* the hulking, saurian epic of Stravinsky's *Rite,* the eerie, fantastic *Night on Bald Mountain*) are so beautifully filled that they may leave callous critics whispering incredulously to themselves. Others (Micky's *Sorcerer's Apprentice,* the hilarious ostrich and hippopotamus ballets) set a new high in Disney animal muggery. Others (the wave and cloud sequences of Bach's *Fugue,* and a queer series of explosive music visualizations performed by a worried and disembodied sound track, posing diffidently on the screen like a reluctant wire) recall the abstract cinemovies made about five years ago by New Zealand-born Len Lye, show how musical sensation may be transferred to visual images.

It would have taken a Gustave Doré to do justice to the big beauty of Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony.* No Doré, Disney peoples his classical Olympus with smirking "centaurettes," smirkingly brassiered, with calf-eyed centaurs and kewpie-doll cupids, makes Bacchus' bacchanale look like a nursery lemonade party, leaves his audience wondering whether he is serious, or merely trying to be cute by putting diapers on Olympus.

But, though Disney's toddling cannot keep pace with the giant strides of Ludwig van Beethoven, *Fantasia* as a whole leaves its audience gasping. Critics may deplore Disney's lapses of taste, but he trips, Mickey-like, into an art form that immortals from Aeschylus to Richard Wagner have always dreamed of.

*Mickey Began It.* The idea for *Fantasia* had been germinating in Disney's mild-looking head for several years. Even before he did *Snow White* he had a vague notion of some day doing a serious opera in animovie style. As early as 1929 he raided the highbrow symphonic repertory to make Saint-Saëns' bone rattling *Danse Macabre* into a Silly Symphony. But the idea did not really sprout until early in 1938, when Leopold Stokowski, on a visit to Hollywood, begged Disney to let him conduct the music for *The Sorcerer's Apprentice,* a Mickey Mouse short. Disney didn't know what he was letting himself in for.

By the time Stokowski's recordings were done, and the animation half finished, the *Apprentice* began to look too good for a short, too expensive for anything but a feature. Before it was finished, white-haired Maestro Stokowski had come out with so many other bright ideas for symphonic animovies that Disney's ambition near went past itself. Calling ace Musi-commentator Deems Taylor from Manhattan to help with

advice, Stoky and Disney decided to build around Mickey Mouse's sorcery act a whole program of cinesymphonies.

Keeping his 1,200 artists, animators, sound engineers and helpers mum, Walt Disney started work, soon got the machinery of his new $3,000,000 Burbank, Calif., studio rolling on *Fantasia.* Deciding to go the whole artistic hog, they picked the highest of high-brow classical music. To do right by this music, the old mouse opera comedy was not enough. The Disney studio went high-brow wholesale, and Disney technicians racked their brains for stuff that would startle and awe rather than tickle the audience.

*Dinosaurs and Sound Tracks.* Conductor Stokowski went to work in Philadelphia's mellow and acoustically perfect old Academy of Music, recording his symphonic accompaniments on sound tracks. This time he worked, not with the Hollywood pickup band that had recorded Mickey's *Sorcerer's Apprentice,* but with his own famed, seasoned Philadelphia Orchestra. For this recording job, no ordinary cinema sound equipment would do. So Disney's ace sound engineer, rangy, Brooklyn-born Bill Garity, developed a whole new system of gadgets capable of catching each section of the Philadelphia Orchestra on a separate sound track. By braiding and patching these sound tracks onto a four-ply master track, he could control the faintest breath of every last bassoon. In their recording operations Garity and Stokowski used 430,000 feet of sound track, cut and patched it eventually into 11,953 feet. When the recordings were played back in a specially equipped studio in Hollywood, brother engineers were astounded to hear Soundman Garity's sound follow characters across the screen, roar down from the ceiling, whisper behind their backs. RCA and Disney engineers, having built his equipment at a cost of $85,000, called it "Fantasound," and crowed that it would revolutionize cinema production like nothing since the invention of Technicolor.

Meanwhile the Disney lot rang with the sound of classical music. Patient engineers who had never been to a concert in their lives listened to 35 to 710 performances of each composition, ended up whistling Bach, Beethoven and even Stravinsky at breakfast. Idea men, working on the dulcet strains of Beethoven's *Sixth Symphony,* winced at the bedlam of Stravinsky's *Rite* which other technicians were playing next door. (The *Rite* finally had to be quarantined in a special corner of the lot, where its boom-lay-booms could be studied without disturbing the whole studio.)

Stravinsky's *Rite,* which has caused high-brow audiences to rise, shout and pound on their neighbors' skulls in ecstasy, offered a serious problem. To match its cosmic hullabaloo, nothing less than a planetary cataclysm would do. So Disney men began studying nebulae and comets at California's Mount Wilson Observatory, mugged up on theories of protozoic life, earthquakes and other geologic upheavals, did portraits of every prehistoric monster in Manhattan's American Museum of Natural History.

One of them, studying lightning flashes by reclining on a Los Angeles curbstone in a pouring rain, was rushed to headquarters by suspicious police. Famed paleontologists like Barnum Brown of Manhattan's American Museum of Natural History and Chester Stock of California Institute of Technology were called in for advice. A herd of pet iguanas and a baby alligator

wriggled over the Burbank lot, while animators studied their lizardy movements. By the time a complete cast had been rounded up for the *Rite,* the Disney zoo contained eusthenopterons, brachiosaurs, brontosaurs, plesiosaurs, mesosaurs, diplodocuses, triceratopses, pterodactyls, trachodons, struthiomimuses, stegosaurs, archaeopteryxes, pteranodons, tyrannosaurs and enough plain run-of-the-Jurassic dinosaurs to people a planet. Studio cameras groaned under the burden of the whole story of evolution.

For Mussorgsky's halloweenish *Night on Bald Mountain,* Disney went outside his own studio for talent, got famed Fairy-Tale Illustrator Kay Nielson (*East of the Sun and West of the Moon*) to design graveyards and ghosts, ended with a Walpurgis nightmare calculated to turn little children's hair white. But Illustrator Nielson's jagged scenes, plus a new high in animation technique, made it by far *Fantasia's* best act. As *Fantasia* took shape, a whole new troupe of Disney comic characters appeared: Hop Low, the self-thwarting little mushroom, who tries to do the Chinese Dance from Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite,* but can't keep up with the big mushrooms; Ben Ali Gator, premier danseur of an ostrich ballet set to Ponchielli's corny *Dance of the Hours;* Susan, the hippopotamus ballerina whose blimp-like cavortings in a *pas de deux* with Ben Ali Gator literally bring down the house in a wreck of flying plaster; Bacchus and his donkey Jacchus, who trip and roll through the Grant Woodland scape of Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony.*

Long before *Fantasia* was finished, expenses began to mount, and fellow Hollywoodians began to whisper again about "Disney's Folly." With $200,000 spent on Stokowski's fancy recordings, and a technical bill that overtops *Snow White's,* the total figure for the production amounted to $2,250,000. Because Engineer Garity's new sound mechanism is so complicated and expensive, only twelve theatres at a time will be equipped to show *Fantasia,* and RCA sound-equipment manufacturers figure that it will take several years before small-town cinema houses can get the gadgets to perform it. For the present, *Fantasia* will not be distributed like ordinary films, but will tour the U. S. like twelve road-show companies. But Walt Disney expects *Fantasia* to run for years, "perhaps even after I am gone."

An imposing list of top-flight contemporary composers (Paul Hindemith, Serge Prokofieff, William Grant Still, Deems Taylor, *et al.*) have vowed that they would spend their lives working for Disney if he would give them the chance. Composer Igor Stravinsky himself has signed a contract to do more music with Disney, has blandly averred that Disney's paleontological cataclysm was what he had had in mind all along in his *Rite of Spring.* Musicians and sound engineers who came to hear Soundman Garity's gadgets perform found that such recording had never before been even approached. Music lovers crowed that more ears would be saved for Beethoven by *Fantasia* than by all the symphonic lecture-recitalists in the U. S. The New York Academy of Sciences asked for a private showing of the *Rite of Spring* because they thought its dinosaurs better science than whole museum-loads of fossils and taxidermy.

Meanwhile sharp-faced Cinemartist Disney just crossed his fingers. Said he: "Art is never conscious. Things that have lived were seldom planned that way. If you follow that line, you're

on the wrong track. We don't even let the word 'art' be used around the studio. If anyone begins to get arty, we knock them down. What we strive for is entertainment."

1940

# WALTER LIPPMANN

## H. L. Mencken

A review of *Notes on Democracy* by H. L. Mencken

HERE IN TWO hundred pages is Mr. Mencken's philosophy. Here are the premises of that gargantuan attack upon the habits of the American nation which has made Mr. Mencken the most powerful personal influence on this whole generation of educated people. I say personal influence, for one thing this book makes clear, and that is that the man is bigger than his ideas.

If you subtract from this book the personality of H. L. Mencken, if you attempt to restate his ideas in simple unexcited prose, there remains only a collection of trite and somewhat confused ideas. To discuss it as one might discuss the ideas of first rate thinkers like Russell, Dewey, Whitehead, or Santayana would be to destroy the book and to miss its importance. Though it purports to be the outline of a social philosophy, it is really the highly rhetorical expression of a mood which has often in the past and may again in the future be translated into thought. In the best sense of the word the book is sub-rational: it is addressed to those vital preferences which lie deeper than coherent thinking.

The most important political books are often of this sort. Rousseau's "Social Contract" and Tom Paine's "Rights of Man" were far inferior as works of the mind to the best thought of the eighteenth century, but they exerted an incalculably great influence because they altered men's prejudices. Mr. Mencken's book is of the same sort. The democratic phase which began in the eighteenth century has about run its course. Its assumptions no longer explain the facts of the modern world and its ideals are no longer congenial to modern men. There is now taking place a radical change of attitude not merely towards parliamentary government but towards the whole conception of popular sovereignty and majority rule. This change is as radical in its way as that which took place, say between 1776 and 1848.

In the United States Mr. Mencken is the most powerful voice announcing the change. The effect of his tremendous polemic is to destroy, by rendering it ridiculous and unfashionable, the democratic tradition of the American pioneers. This attack on the divine right of demos is an almost exact equivalent of the earlier attacks on the kings, the nobles, and the priests. He strikes at the sovereign power, which in Amer-

From Walter Lippmann, *Men of Destiny*. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

ica today consists of the evangelical churches in the small communities, the proletarian masses in the cities, and the organized smaller business men everywhere. The Baptist and Methodist sects, the city mobs, and the Chamber of Commerce are in power. They are the villains of the piece. Mr. Mencken does not argue with them. He lays violent hands upon them in the conviction, probably correct, that you accomplish results quicker by making your opponent's back teeth rattle than by laboriously addressing his reason. Mr. Mencken, moreover, being an old newspaper man, has rather strong notions about the capacity of mankind to reason. He knows that the established scheme is not supported by reason but by prejudice, prestige, and reverence, and that a good joke is more devastating than a sound argument. He is an eminently practical journalist, and so he devotes himself to dogmatic and explosive vituperation. The effect is a massacre of sacred cows, a holocaust of idols, and the poor boobs are no longer on their knees.

Mr. Mencken is so effective just because his appeal is not from mind to mind but from viscera to viscera. If you analyze his arguments you destroy their effect. You cannot take them in detail and examine their implications. You have to judge him totally, roughly, approximately, without definition, as you would a barrage of artillery, for the general destruction rather than for the accuracy of the individual shots. He presents an experience, and if he gets you, he gets you not by reasoned conviction, but by a conversion which you may or may not be able to dress up later as a philosophy. If he succeeds with you, he implants in you a sense of sin, and then he revives you with grace, and disposes you to a new pride in excellence and in a non-gregarious excellence.

One example will show what happens if you pause to analyze his ideas. The thesis of this whole book is that we must cease to be governed by "the inferior four-fifths of mankind." Here surely is a concept which a thinker would have paused to define. Mr. Mencken never does define it, and what is more, he quite evidently has no clear idea of what he means. Sometimes he seems to think that the difference between the inferior four-fifths and the superior one-fifth is the difference between the "haves" and the "have nots." At other times he seems to think it is the difference between the swells and the nobodies, between the wellborn and those who come "out of the gutter." At other times he abandons these worldly distinctions and talks and thinks about "free spirits," a spiritual élite, who have no relation either to income or to a family tree. This vagueness as to whether the superior one-fifth are the Prussian Junkers or the Pittsburgh millionaires, or the people who can appreciate Bach and Beethoven, persists throughout the book.

This confusion is due, I think, to the fact that he is an outraged sentimentalist. Fate and his own curiosity have made him a connoisseur of human ignorance. Most educated men are so preoccupied with what they conceive to be the best thought in the field of their interest, that they ignore the follies of uneducated men. A Jacques Loeb would spend very little of his time on biology as taught in an Oklahoma High School. Even William James, who was more interested in the common man than any great philosopher of our time, was looking always for grains of wisdom in the heaps of folly. But Mr. Mencken is

overwhelmingly preoccupied with popular culture. He collects examples of it. He goes into a rage about it. He cares so much about it that he cannot detach himself from it. And he measures it not by relative standards, but by the standards which most educated men reserve for a culture of the first order. He succeeds, of course, in establishing a *reductio ad absurdum* of the shibboleths of liberals. That is worth doing. But it is well to know what you are doing, and when Mr. Mencken measures the culture of the mass by the cultural standards of the élite, he is not throwing any real light on the modern problem. He is merely smashing a delusion by means of an effective rhetorical device.

I doubt, however, if he is aware that he is using a rhetorical device. When he measures the popular culture by the standards of the élite, the humor is all on the surface. The undertone is earnest and intensely sincere. One feels that Mr. Mencken is deeply outraged because he does not live in a world where all men love truth and excellence and honor. I feel it because I detect in this book many signs of yearning for the good old days. When Mr. Mencken refers to feudalism, to kings, to the Prussian aristocracy, to any ordered society of the ancient régime, he adopts a different tone of voice. I don't mean to say that he talks like an *émigré* or like a writer for the *Action Française,* but it is evident to me that his revolt against modern democratic society exhausts his realism, and that the historic alternatives are touched for him with a romantic glamour. The older aristocratic societies exist only in his imagination; they are idealized sufficiently to inhibit that drastic plainness of perception which he applies to the democratic society all about him.

The chief weakness of the book, as a book of ideas, arises out of this naïve contrast in Mr. Mencken's mind between the sordid reality he knows and the splendid society he imagines. He never seems to have grasped the truth that the thing he hates is the direct result of the thing he most admires. This modern democracy meddling in great affairs could not be what it is but for that freedom of thought which Mr. Mencken to his everlasting credit cares more about than about anything else. It is freedom of speech and freedom of thought which have made all questions popular questions. What sense is there then in shouting on one page for a party of "liberty," and on another bewailing the hideous consequences? The old aristocracies which Mr. Mencken admires did not delude themselves with any nonsense about liberty. They reserved what liberty there was for a privileged élite, knowing perfectly well that if you granted liberty to everyone you would have sooner or later everything that Mr. Mencken deplores. But he seems to think that you can have a privileged, ordered, aristocratic society with complete liberty of speech. That is as thorough-going a piece of Utopian sentimentalism as anything could be. You might as well proclaim yourself a Roman Catholic and then ask that excerpts from the *American Mercury* and the works of Charles Darwin be read from the altar on the first Sunday of each month. If Mr. Mencken really wishes an aristocracy he will have to give up liberty as he understands it; and if he wishes liberty he will have to resign himself to hearing *homo boobiens* speak his mind.

What Mr. Mencken desires is in substance the distinction, the sense of honor, the chivalry, and the competence of an

ideal aristocracy combined with the liberty of an ideal democracy. This is an excellent wish, but like most attempts to make the best of both worlds, it results in an evasion of the problem. The main difficulty in democratic society arises out of the increasing practice of liberty. The destruction of authority, of moral values, of cultural standards is the result of using the liberty which has been won during the last three or four centuries. Mr. Mencken is foremost among those who cry for more liberty, and who use that liberty to destroy what is left of the older tradition. I do not quarrel with him for that. But I am amazed that he does not see how fundamentally the spiritual disorder he fights against is the effect of that régime of liberty he fights for. Because he fails to see that, I think he claims too much when he says that he is engaged in a diagnosis of the democratic disease. He has merely described with great emphasis the awful pain it gives him.

In the net result these confusions of thought are a small matter. It is no crime not to be a philosopher. What Mr. Mencken has created is a personal force in American life which has an extraordinarily cleansing and vitalizing effect. How else can you explain the paradox of his popularity, and the certainty that before he dies he will find himself, like Bernard Shaw today, one of the grand old men, one of the beloved patriarchs of his time? How in this land where all politicians, pedagogues, peasants, etc., etc., are preposterous, has Henry L. Mencken, not yet aged fifty, become the pope of popes? The answer is that he has the gift of life. His humor is so full of animal well-being that he acts upon his public like an elixir. The wounds he inflicts heal quickly. His blows have the clean brutality of a natural phenomenon. They are directed by a warm and violent but an unusually healthy mind which is not divided, as most minds are, by envy and fear and ambition and anxiety. When you can explain the heightening effect of a spirited horse, of a swift athlete, of a dancer really in control of his own body, when you can explain why watching them you feel more alive yourself, you can explain the quality of his influence.

For this reason the Mencken manner can be parodied, but the effect is ludicrous when it is imitated. The same prejudices and the same tricks of phrase employed by others are usually cheap and often nasty. I never feel that in Mr. Mencken himself even when he calls quite harmless people cockroaches and lice. I do not care greatly for phrases like that. They seem to me like spitting on the carpet to emphasize an argument. They are signs that Mr. Mencken writes too much and has occasionally to reach for the effect without working for it. I think he is sometimes lazy, and when he is lazy he is often unfair, not in the grand manner but in the small manner. And yet his wounds are clean wounds and they do not fester. I know, because I have fragments of his shellfire in my own skin. The man is admirable. He writes terribly unjust tirades, and yet I know of nobody who writes for his living who will stay up so late or get up so early to untangle an injustice. He often violates not merely good taste according to the genteel tradition, but that superior kind of good taste according to which a man refuses to hurt those who cannot defend themselves.

Nevertheless I feel certain that insofar as he has influenced the tone of public controversy he has elevated it. The

Mencken attack is always a frontal attack. It is always explicit. The charge is all there. He does not leave the worst unsaid. He says it. And when you have encountered him, you do not have to wonder whether you are going to be stabbed in the back when you start to leave and are thinking of something else.

I have not written this as a eulogy, but as an explanation which to me at least answers the question why Henry L. Mencken is as popular as he is in a country in which he professes to dislike most of the population. I lay it to the subtle but none the less sure sense of those who read him that here is nothing sinister that smells of decay, but that on the contrary this Holy Terror from Baltimore is splendidly and exultantly and contagiously alive. He calls you a swine, and an imbecile, and he increases your will to live.

1926

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# DANA B. DURAND

## *Magic and Experimental Science*

A review of *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* by Lynn Thorndike

THE COMPLETION by an American scholar of a monument in a field of European history is, even today, a rather exceptional event. It is true that American-born historians are turning out an ever-increasing flow of articles, monographs, and books which compare favorably with the best that the Old World is producing. We have learned how to comb through archives and manuscript collections with fine professional virtuosity, and our leading scholars make no more mistakes in footnotes than most Europeans. Yet, for the most part, the achievement of the individual American historian has rarely proved sufficiently original to be hailed as "bahnbrechend," nor sufficiently exhaustive to be honored as "magistral." Both of these praises are due, I believe, to the work of LYNN THORNDIKE. The publication of the fifth and sixth volumes of *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* calls for at least a provisional appraisal of his massive achievement.

Even by the test of quantity THORNDIKE's work has few competitors. According to my count, which may not be complete, he has published in book form well over 7000 pages.[1] These include two excellent textbooks, one of which has passed through several editions.[2] I have found references to more than 100 articles—exclusive of reviews—totalling at least 1000 pages. Some of these have been incorporated into chapters of

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[1] Cf. "Bibliography of Lynn Thorndike," in *A Bibliography of the Faculty of Political Science, Columbia University, 1830-1930* (New York, 1931), pp. 285-89.

[2] *The History of Medieval Europe*, revised edition (Boston, 1928). *A Short History of Civilization*, second edition (New York, 1929); "When the world war broke out in 1914, I determined to do what little I could to keep civilization alive. This volume is a contribution in that direction" (Preface).

*Magic and Experimental Science,* but others constitute supplements to material already published in Volumes I to IV. At least one by-product of THORNDIKE's main activity—his *Catalogue of Incipits,*[3] prepared in collaboration with PEARL KIBRE—itself takes rank as a monument, an indispensable tool for future research.[4] Another by-product, THORNDIKE's seminar at Columbia University, has also begun to yield its fruit.[5] Finally, lest anyone should suppose that the happy termination of *Magic and Experimental Science* marks the end of scholarly activity, it should be pointed out that THORNDIKE has promised a number of attractive items for future publication.[6] All of these past and future enterprises, even without *Magic and Experimental Science,* would be sufficient to win a reputation for unusual productivity.

*A History of Magic and Experimental Science* originated—its author tells us—in a suggestion made by JAMES HARVEY ROBINSON in 1902-03. ROBINSON proposed, as the subject for a Master's thesis, the study of magic in medieval universities. The resulting dissertation, which appeared in 1905 under the title *The Place of Magic in the Intellectual History of Europe,*[7] might be described as a prospectus of THORNDIKE's life work. It is noteworthy that at this stage the term "science" did not appear in the title, and indeed it scarcely figured in the book itself. Chronologically *The Place of Magic* was restricted almost entirely to the period of the Roman Empire. Although he was aware that antecedents of magic-in-science might be found in Greek writers (even in ARISTOTLE), THORNDIKE turned his attention immediately to Roman and Greco-Roman authors, and to a large extent, it is the Latin tradition which has continued to monopolize his interest. Greek and Arabic works have been used in his treatment only insofar as they were known to the West in Latin translation.

After completing this preliminary survey of the classical background—which like so many dissertations had turned out to be only a long running start toward the topic originally proposed—THORNDIKE turned to the Middle Ages. Shortly before the outbreak of the last war, he prepared an account of magic and science during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. He decided not to publish this work, since it was based only on printed material available in this country. The next ten years, apart from the war period, marked the beginning of that series of *Studienreisen* which have made LYNN THORNDIKE one of the best known American names in European manuscript rooms. During

[3] Full title, *A Catalogue of Incipits of Mediaeval Scientific Writings in Latin* (*The Mediaeval Academy of America, Publication No. 29:* Cambridge, Mass., 1937). This has been supplemented by "Additional Incipits of Mediaeval Scientific Writings in Latin," *Speculum,* XIV (1939), 93-105.

[4] THORNDIKE also drew up a "Prospectus for a Corpus of Medieval Scientific Literature in Latin," *Isis,* XIV (1930), 363-84, which includes as *desiderata* 164 items from the general field of medieval science and 85 from medicine.

[5] Published works by THORNDIKE's students include: CARL B. BOYER, *The Concepts of the Calculus; A Critical and Historical Discussion of the Derivative and the Integral* (New York, 1939); MARSHALL CLAGETT, *Giovanni Marliani and Late Medieval Physics* (New York, 1941). In preparation is an edition of the *Theorica Planetarum* of CAMPANUS OF NOVARA, based on six MSS.

[6] Notably an edition of the botanical writings of RUFINUS, one of THORNDIKE's most important "finds"; cf. "Rufinus: a Forgotten Botanist of the Thirteenth Century," *Isis,* XVIII (1932), 63-76.

[7] (*Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, Columbia University,* XXIV, 1: New York, 1905).

these years he published a number of articles, from which it was possible to see that a major scholarly project was taking shape.

The first two volumes of *Magic and Experimental Science* appeared in 1923.[8] About half of the first volume consists of an amplification of THORNDIKE's dissertation, *The Place of Magic*. The rest of Volume I carries the story through the Dark Ages to the end of the eleventh century. Volume II covers the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It was not indicated at the end of these volumes that a sequel might be expected, and it seems possible that THORNDIKE himself did not foresee at the time the magnitude of what lay ahead. At any rate the next installment was eleven years in the making. During this period the only major publication was a volume entitled *Science and Thought in the Fifteenth Century*.[9] Despite the broad title, this work consisted largely of special studies, illustrating several important aspects of fifteenth-century intellectual history, but presenting only a limited *vue d'ensemble*.

Volumes III and IV of *Magic and Experimental Science*, covering the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, were published in 1934.[10] The steady increase in scale, which had been apparent as the earlier volumes progressed, was enhanced by the inclusion of extensive Latin quotations in the footnotes, and of a veritable forest of Appendices—62 in all. Reflecting and continuing this increased momentum of THORNDIKE's scholarship, the interval between volumes decreased to seven years, and at the same time the scale of treatment expanded still further. Volumes V and VI, appearing in 1941,[11] devote 1287 pages (exclusive of indexes) to the period from 1500 to 1630. This compares with the 707 pages which had been devoted to the fifteenth century, 771 to the fourteenth, 663 to the thirteenth, 302 to the twelfth, and 743 to the preceding ten centuries.

Since the publication of the sixteenth-century volumes is the occasion of the present article, I shall describe them somewhat more fully than the preceding volumes. Roughly speaking Volume V treats the first half of the sixteenth century, Volume VI the second half, with occasional sallies into the first three decades of the seventeenth century. As in the earlier volumes the organization is not rigorously systematic; some chapters are devoted to individual writers, others to groups, still others to special topics. The first chapter, "Intellectual Characteristics," sets forth a number of generalizations about the background of the period. The most noteworthy of these may be given in the author's own words:

> New facts were appended to outworn systems, with the result for a time of more confusion than enlightenment (V, 10).
>
> Scientific controversy seldom followed religious lines. . . . Natural and occult science, medicine and mathematics, were like the classics in offering a neutral territory and in affording a common meeting ground where religious and political differ-

[8] (New York: Macmillan Co., 1923; second printing with corrections, 1929).

[9] Subtitle: *Studies in the History of Medicine and Surgery, Natural and Mathematical Science, Philosophy and Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929).

[10] (*History of Science Society Publications*, New Series, IV; New York: Columbia University Press, 1934).

[11] Also published by the Columbia University Press with the sponsorship of the History of Science Society: Vol. V, xxii+695 pp.; Vol. VI, xviii+766 pp.; price $10.00 per set.

ences could be ignored and temporarily forgotten (V, 11).

As for nationalist separatism, the sixteenth century had still gone only a little way from medieval Latin unity to the ideatight compartments of modern national languages, where linguistic barriers are even more formidable than tariff walls (V, 12).

It is a surprising and paradoxical fact that, although in the sixteenth century the persecution of witches reached greater proportions than before, and the literature against witchcraft became much more vehement and voluminous, there was less objection to the word magic, and more approving use of it than in the preceding centuries (V, 13).

As the [sixteenth] century wore on, the turning away from ARISTOTLE's natural philosophy and the rise of Paracelsanism encouraged the development of occult philosophy, and a favoring attitude toward natural magic. This tendency continued briskly into the seventeenth century until by its excesses it exhausted and killed itself and was replaced by the sceptical rationalism and enlightenment of the eighteenth century (V, 14).

At the end of Volume VI stands a chapter entitled "Summary and By-Products." In substance this chapter is a sort of semi-statistical autopsy performed by the author on the indexes of all six volumes. An analysis of place and person names brings out, among other points, the continuing frequency in the sixteenth century of citations from Arabic writers in medicine and astrology, despite the humanistic outcry against medieval barbarism; the partial shift of the cultural center of gravity from southern to northern Europe (with the exception of the British Isles which lagged until the end of the century); the continuing importance of Paris as a center of printing and of learning; the wide diffusion of learned medical practice; the beginnings of scientific correspondence and exchange on an international basis; the absolute pre-eminence of Venice as a center of scientific publication.

A topical analysis of the indexes suggests to THORNDIKE that the sixteenth century, with its "close combing of classical books and sources, [was] a sort of catch-all for the previous history of thought" (VI, 585). Although the index of Volumes V and VI contains many terms which had not appeared in any of the earlier volumes, this fact would not seem to indicate that the sixteenth century surpassed the preceding periods in quantity of innovation. THORNDIKE, indeed, gives the palm for originality and richness of intellectual life to the fourteenth century—an interesting and important conclusion which I shall examine in more detail below.

Between these two summaries at the beginning and the end of the sixteenth-century volumes, THORNDIKE has strung a chain of forty-six highly variegated chapters. Nearly every page is based in some measure on new material. Although many familiar figures make their appearance, the reader will find that even these take on the strange aspect which is common to the scores of obscure philosophasters, occultists, doctors, poets, encyclopedists, dabblers, charlatans and honest men of science who are presented to his attention for the first time. A transcription of the chapter headings will give an impression of the wealth of material:

Volume V: 1, Intellectual Conditions and Characteristics of the Sixteenth Century; 2, LEONARDO DA VINCI: "The Magician of the Renaissance"; 3, ACHILLINI, Aristotelian and Anatomist; 4, COCLES and Chiromancy; 5, NIFO and Demons; 6,

Pomponazzi on Incantations; 7, Symphorien Champier; 8, Agrippa and Occult Philosophy; 9, Varied Approaches to Natural Philosophy; 10, Astrology of the Early Century; 11, The Conjunction of 1524; 12, Astrology at Bologna; 13, The Court of Paul III (1543-1549); 14, Astronomy and Astrology at Paris; 15, Astrology Elsewhere; 16, The Aftermath of Regiomontanus; 17, The Circle of Melanchthon; 18, The Copernican Theory; 19, German Medicine; 20, Brasavola and Pharmacy; 21, Poisons, Fascination, and Hydrophobia; 22, Fracastoro (1478-1533); 23, Anatomy from Carpi to Vesalius; 24, Alchemy during the First Half of the Sixteenth Century; 25, Elements and Occult Virtue; 26, Cardan; 27, Three Technologists, Taisnier, Besson, and Palissy; 28, Gratorolo; 29, The Paracelsan Revival; 30, Thomas Erastus.

Volume VI: 31, Post-Copernican Astronomy; 32, The New Stars; 33, Astrology after 1550; 34, The Catholic Reaction: Index, Inquisition and Papal Bulls; 35, Adversaries of Astrology; 36, Medicine after 1550; 37, Libavius and Chemical Controversy; 38, The Sixteenth Century Naturalists; 39, The Lore of Gems; 40, Cesalpino's View of Nature; 41, Efforts toward a Christian Philosophy of Nature; 42, For and against Aristotle; 43, Natural Philosophy and Natural Magic; 44, Mystic Philosophy: Words and Numbers; 45, Divination; 46, The Literature of Magic and Witchcraft after Wier; 47, The Sceptic and the Atheist: Francesco Sanchez and Lucilio Vanini; 48, Summary and By-Products.

Among the general characteristics which impress the reader of these volumes easily the first is their erudition. As a compendium of biographical and bibliographical information they stand almost alone in their field. Thorndike threads his way through the maze of authentic and pirated editions, abridgments and translations with complete assurance. His comprehensive knowledge of earlier writers makes it easy for him to spot the repetitions of threadbare arguments, the adaptations and downright plagiarisms which sprout like weeds in the fertile sixteenth-century soil. And throughout the reader has the comfortable feeling that everything is quite accurate; there is no temptation to waste one's energies trying to catch the author on a misspelled German title or a defective Latin ending.

The formal presentation of the sixteenth, and to some extent of the fourteenth and fifteenth-century volumes, unlike their learning, is not impeccable. It is true that Thorndike can, and frequently does write a clean, precise expository prose. Nevertheless the general impression created by these volumes is one of a certain stylelessness, a stringing together of thousands of notes taken down rapidly and accurately, but without formal polish. Indeed it is sometimes difficult to determine—this was particularly true in Volumes III and IV—what criterion was followed in assigning a given item to footnote, appendix or text. Possibly this defect has resulted solely from the magnitude of the undertaking and from the diversity of the material, rather than from any inherent lack of architectonic sense.

In appraising the essential, as opposed to the accidental qualities of *Magic and Experimental Science*—I speak now of the entire work—the natural starting point is the lengthy review of Volumes I and II, which was written by George Sarton in 1924 (*Isis*, VI, 74-89). Since this criticism remains the most comprehensive which has been directed against *Magic and Experimental Science*, it may be worth while to summarize it at some length.

After conceding that *Magic and Experimental Science* must be recognized as a work of major importance, SARTON proceeds directly to his principal point: the title of the book, he charges, is fundamentally misleading. This is not a history of experimental science. It was conceived originally as a history of magic, and science was added (the author himself confesses it) as an afterthought. Moreover, throughout the work, whenever THORNDIKE talks about the experiments which were actually carried out in ancient or medieval times, he fails to tell us what we most want to know: how was each experiment conceived and executed, and what did it prove? Instead of emphasizing the really important experiments—such as PTOLEMY's studies of refraction or PIERRE DE MARICOURT's work on the magnet—THORNDIKE lingers over the "experimenta" and the "secreta" of the medieval physicians, which were little more than semi-magical collections of remedies and recipes, ostensibly tried by experience. THORNDIKE is, of course, aware of this naive use of the term "experimentum" in antiquity and the Middle Ages, but he has insensibly been beguiled into accepting all references to experiment as valid in the modern sense.

Of magic, SARTON concedes, the author has given an adequate definition, but of true science he has displayed only an imperfect and uncritical notion. The main characteristics of science, SARTON asserts, are "its rationality, its scepticism, its progressiveness, its unlimitedness" (80). It is clear from his development of this contrast that, for SARTON, any work which calls itself a history of experimental science should be the record of a "cumulative, a progressive activity." The history of science is for him, as his whole work shows, identical with the chronicle of human progress. In that progress magic is not, as THORNDIKE claims, a causal influence, a creative contributor. It is rather an impediment, a weed which threatens to choke the flowers in the garden of thought. Magic is to science as vice is to virtue. The coexistence of magic and true science—often in the same mind—cannot be denied, but that is simply evidence of the basic duality of the human spirit. The progressive elimination of this flaw is a chronicle of emancipation, a "tale of conquest, of hope, of joy" (88). THORNDIKE by centering his approach in magic, has given us the "depressing recital of unprogressive and hopeless activities."

SARTON justifies the severity of this indictment by the contention that *Magic and Experimental Science* will actually mislead many of those who read it. Scientifically trained readers without historical knowledge, finding in it nothing but a tale of human aberration, will be confirmed in their erroneous preconception that medieval science was nothing but a waste of time. Non-scientific readers will lack both the technical knowledge to check the author's statements, and the perspective to see that he has not been talking about science at all:

> After reading this elaborate parody of the history of medieval science, they will imagine that they know something of the subject—yet they will know precious little of it, and their understanding of science will be worse than ever. Truly such a prospect makes one shudder (83).

This is strong language, and in a sense I hesitate to recall it. It is well to do so, however, for the acerbity which it—and indeed the whole review—conveys should not be allowed to persist. Even in his original review, SARTON softened the impact of his criticism by admitting that it was primarily the title which was

at fault. In his review of Volumes III and IV (*Isis,* XXIII, 471-75) the tone is distinctly more generous, and I am sure that if SARTON were reviewing the present volumes, he would ungrudgingly acclaim the completion of the only monument of this generation in the history of science worthy to stand with his own *Introduction.*

Any comprehensive judgment must start with the recognition that *Magic and Experimental Science* is not a complete work. THORNDIKE himself says so explicitly. The magnitude of his task imposed a principle of economy, the deliberate avoidance of repeating work satisfactorily accomplished by other scholars. This is particularly true in the case of DUHEM; THORNDIKE rarely cites him except to amplify a point or to correct an error. Though this principle of economy has undoubtedly saved effort to the author, and has cut down the already considerable bulk of the work itself, it is also one of the chief reasons why *Magic and Experimental Science* fails to achieve a rounded synthesis.

But admitting that the avowed partiality of THORNDIKE's aim disarms some of SARTON's criticism, there remains the charge that the title is misleading. This charge also is tacitly admitted by the author, who states that the work might more properly have been called "a history of the relations between magic and experimental science" (III, 22). Perhaps the realization that this was the true subject of the book came too late, or perhaps the title was too cumbersome for the publisher. I find it hard to share SARTON's dismay over this matter. I can hardly believe that many persons would approach *Magic and Experimental Science* under a misapprehension, and come away from it badly disappointed or misled.

Both of these criticisms, then, would seem to be of minor significance. There remains the fundamental question: has THORNDIKE succeeded in demonstrating his central thesis? In his review of 1924 SARTON flatly states that THORNDIKE has failed to prove it in a single instance; he has failed signally to demonstrate a positive, a constructive relation between the history of magic and the history of science. My own examination of the entire work leads me to believe that this judgment calls for modification.

The premises underlying SARTON's contention may be stated as follows: THORNDIKE may understand magic, but he does not understand science. Without an understanding of science, it is *eo ipso* impossible to establish any conclusions as to its relations with magic.

We may agree with SARTON that *Magic and Experimental Science* does present a valid, and perhaps a novel concept of magic. In THORNDIKE's earliest statement, clearly written under the influence of FRAZER's *Golden Bough,* magic is characterized as

> primitive man's philosophy . . . his attitude toward nature. . . . It is any change with characteristics and results which we do not expect nor usually see in changes.

In THORNDIKE's latest statement magic is described as

> a systematized and ordered marvel-believing and marvel-working, a consistent body of error, attained through sense perception, introspection, reflection, and dreaming, influenced by faith, emotion, appetite, and pleasure, marked by unwarranted association of ideas, without adequate means of correcting error and without proper standards of measurement (V, 13).

In its concrete manifestations magic takes innumerable forms. THORNDIKE is not concerned with the whole of

magic, but only with those parts which touch on, or edge toward, science. But even these self-imposed limits still embrace an enormous area, extending from the crudest superstitious folk practices to those disciplines now regarded as pseudo-science, but once regarded as consistent bodies of rational natural knowledge, such as alchemy and astrology. Between these poles lie the areas of black and white magic, of divination with its innumerable weird and often revolting forms of manticism, of fantastic natural philosophies embodying aesthetic, occult, mystical and religious principles.

The conception of science, like that of magic, undergoes clarification as the work proceeds. In the original statement of the thesis, and in the earlier volumes of *Magic and Experimental Science,* science is taken for granted and is not rigorously defined. In Volume V, however, acting perhaps under the sting of SARTON's criticism, THORNDIKE does set forth a positive conception of science which is contrasted, point by point, with the characterization of magic quoted above:

> Science is systematized and ordered knowledge, a consistent body of truth, attained through sense perception, introspection, and reflection, aided by mechanical and mathematical instruments, independently of faith, emotion, prejudice, appetite, pleasure, and the like. . . . In magic the desire to attain ends and satisfy human cravings not primarily intellectual was dominant; in science the urge is to measure and know (V, 12 f.).

Of the authentic sciences (as against the pseudo-sciences of astrology and alchemy) which come within THORNDIKE's scope, the most important is medicine. The persistence of occultism and sympathetic magic in learned, as well as in empirical, medicine can easily be demonstrated throughout the centuries, even into our own day. THORNDIKE's volumes abound in contributions to the history of this strange but fruitful marriage, though they by no means present a complete and justly shaded picture of medical history. Botany is another true science which, through its use in the concoction of remedies is inextricably tangled up with magic. In the penumbra of medicine lie the supposedly empirical study of the properties of poisons, and the lore of amulets and gems. In the field of the physical sciences geological questions, such as the distribution of land and water masses on the earth's surface, or the origins of mountains and fossils, figure prominently in late medieval texts from ALBERTUS MAGNUS to LEONARDO DA VINCI and PALISSY. This subject, indeed, had been opened by PIERRE DUHEM, but THORNDIKE's explorations have extended the field. The mathematical and mechanical disciplines, on the whole, play the least important role in THORNDIKE's discussion, partly because they are least susceptible to magical deformation, partly, again, because they have been so extensively pioneered by DUHEM. Optics, in some respects, the experimental science *par excellence* of the Middle Ages, is not given the attention which it would deserve in a full synthetic account.

Although the treatment of these various fields is somewhat uneven, in nearly every case our understanding of the medieval achievement is sensibly enriched. We see the elaboration of science and pseudo-science, inspired and directed by widely divergent motives, by paranoid megalomania or thaumaturgic ambition, by religious utilitarianism, by curiosity or sheer playfulness, by hunches, by cupidity and lust for power.

It is true that the inner process by which scientific substance is created sometimes eludes us. We see the external juxtaposition of something which is obviously magic and something which looks like, or calls itself, or actually is science, while the internal nexus remains obscure. And yet I cannot agree with SARTON when he implies that what emerges from magic is never science, but is anti-science.

On the other hand, it may well be true that, despite the accumulation of instances in the later volumes of *Magic and Experimental Science,* "experiment" itself never fully achieves that conceptual clarity which SARTON found wanting in the earlier volumes. The nature of the experimental method is indeed difficult to define, and the most modern discussions prove that it is by no means perfectly grasped, even today. It is not surprising, therefore, that the concept should remain somewhat blurred in *Magic and Experimental Science.* There seems to be no clear distinction between such terms as "experience" "empiricism" and "experiment." And within the concept of "experiment" THORNDIKE has not systematically distinguished the quantitative from the qualitative approach, a distinction which has been fundamental from antiquity to our own day. There is also no clear separation between unique, casual, passive noting of phenomena, and repeated, planned, active attempts to reproduce them (the *experientia quaesita* of FRANCIS BACON). Finally it would seem that THORNDIKE has not sufficiently discriminated between the practical or productive and the speculative or theoretical faculties in scientific operation.

The failure to define the term "experiment" may account for another point of uncertainty which occurs to the reader who has reached the end of Volume VI. Is there, or is there not, a radical difference in kind between the experiment of antiquity and the Middle Ages, and its counterpart of the seventeenth century and the modern world? THORNDIKE cannot, of course, be expected to give the answer to this question, since he does not make a serious entry into the latter period. What he has done—and this is also true of DUHEM—has been to extend a standing invitation to the historians of seventeenth-century science to turn their steps backward, instead of restlessly pressing forward along the lines of modern "progress."

This backward march of the historians of modern science has already begun independently on a small scale, and the time may come when they will have joined ranks with the slowly advancing body of medievalists. Separate studies have already made it clear that most, if not all of the great seventeenth-century scientists retained the impress of medieval habits of thought. The tabular scheme of experimentation devised by FRANCIS BACON is qualitative and partially Aristotelian; it bears the stamp of medieval as well as Renaissance pansophistic yearnings. KEPLER was an animist; his three laws of planetary motion were the unexpected pot of gold at the end of a Pythagorean rainbow. GALILEO was nurtured as a student on the *impetus* physics of the fourteenth-century Paris School.[12] DESCARTES, as a result of his Jesuit training, never fully emancipated himself from the scholastic

[12] Cf. A. KOYRÉ, *Études Galiléennes:* I, *À l'aube de la science classique* (Paris, 1939). KOYRÉ points out that this was only the first stage of GALILEO's development; the crucial stage was precipitated by an intensive study of ARCHIMEDES.

Aristotelian yoke.[13] BOYLE was an occultist.[14] LEIBNIZ proposed to edit the *Calculationes* of that subtlest of fourteenth-century speculators, RICHARD SUISETH.

Instances of medieval survivals of this sort could be multiplied indefinitely. THORNDIKE's method of distilling the residues of magic, applied to the great figures of the "Age of Genius," would undoubtedly yield interesting results. I can hardly believe, however, that such an effort would be fully profitable. For fundamentally the seventeenth century marks an epochal change, a full mutation[15] in the intellectual germ plasm of our culture, beyond the genetic stages traversed in the preceding centuries. THORNDIKE himself seems to recognize that fact in a somewhat cryptic valedictory at the beginning of the sixteenth-century volumes:

> . . . it appears that as the Thirty Years War and Treaty of Westphalia make a convenient terminal point for the first political period in modern history since the close of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Reformation, so we may carry on our account to the verge of the days of GALILEO and KEPLER and DESCARTES, to the writings of VANINI and CAMPANELLA. Then investigations based upon telescope and microscope ushered in a new age of science, at whose portal the present volumes stop. Like MOSES we have brought the reader through the wilderness to within sight of the promised land of modern science. It remains to be seen whether we shall enter in or whether we shall content ourselves with viewing the prospect o'er from the other—magical—side of Jordan (V, 15).

The terminus of *Magic and Experimental Science* is well placed at the threshold of the seventeenth century. For prior to that century the history of science is history; subsequent to that century it is science.

Like most really great works of scholarship, *Magic and Experimental Science* displays a certain "ruling passion" in the personality of its author. In the case of THORNDIKE this might be described as a deep antipathy to established but questionable generalizations. Insofar as he has ever permitted himself to generalize about the nature of the historian's task, THORNDIKE has defended the ideal of strict scientific presentation. As far back as 1910 he wrote:

> The scientific historian will see not only that his theme must be developed systematically, but also that every concept which may be implicated in his investigation must be sharply defined and henceforth consistently treated from that one point of view. . . . The historian who has denied the existence of 'facts' will be inclined to look askance also at periods, movements and institutions. He will shake himself free from unjustifiable historical conglomerates as well as from false historical units.[16]

[13] Instances of medieval notions in DESCARTES are adduced by THORNDIKE in "The Survival of Mediaeval Intellectual Interests into Early Modern Times," *Speculum*, II (1927), 147-59. Cf. two recent important studies on DESCARTES: JOHN WILD, "The Cartesian Deformation of the Structure of Change and Its Influence on Modern Thought," *Philosophical Review*, L (1941), 36-51; and ALAN GEWIRTZ, "Experience and the Non-mathematical in the Cartesian Method," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, II (1941), 183-210, which attacks the prevalent notion that DESCARTES did not resort to experience to verify deduced conclusions.

[14] Cf. LOUIS TRENCHARD MORE, "Boyle as Alchemist," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, II (1940), 61-76.

[15] The phrase is used by KOYRÉ to characterize the passage from the Parisian *impetus* physics of the late Middle Ages to the Archimedean physics of the seventeenth century; *supra*, note 12.

[16] "The Scientific Presentation of History," *The Popular Science Monthly*, LXXVI (1910), p. 178.

At the time he wrote these lines, THORNDIKE seems to have had great confidence in the future progress of history as a scientific discipline. Perhaps that confidence reflected the youthful ardor which had been fanned by the inspiration of JAMES HARVEY ROBINSON. THORNDIKE suggested, for instance, that "extensive past literatures teeming with human prejudices, motives and ideas are waiting for accurate measurement and estimation."[17] The content of history will be made up of scientific propositions, and its form of presentation, borrowing from mathematics, will consist of "historical symbols, curves, charts and other graphic means of presenting briefly and accurately what prose could compass only in many pages or fail to express with requisite precision and discrimination."[18] THORNDIKE conceded regretfully that "fewer persons would study the reformed presentation than read histories at present." But, he added, "they would learn more truth of value, gain a deeper insight into the true nature of history and have a greater respect for it."

This was the young scholar's program of 1910, and one would search in vain, I believe, for any methodological statements of comparable sweep in THORNDIKE's later writings. I should not have thought it worth while to dwell on this profession of faith—the author himself may no longer accept it to the letter—were it not for the fact that it helps us to understand the origins of the "ruling passion" which I mentioned above.

Originally THORNDIKE's distrust of generalizations seems to have sprung from a rather abstract and impersonal scientific idealism. As his work progressed, however, this distrust seems to have taken on a more personal cast. A certain animus crept in which was hardly to be detected in the statement of 1910. Gradually a concern developed, not merely to avoid making unfounded generalizations, but to uproot those which were already implanted in the popular mind. This concern has expressed itself throughout THORNDIKE's later work in what might be called a "reverse of the medal approach," a zeal to "parcere subiectis et debellare superbos."

The first notable examples of this approach are to be found in his treatment of certain thirteenth-century figures, especially ROGER BACON, whom THORNDIKE quite properly puts in his place as a man *of* his age, not *ahead* of it. The fifteenth century provided further opportunity for deflationary activities. In *Science and Thought* (1929) two chapters are devoted to a critical scrutiny of the great reputations which have attached themselves to the names of NICHOLAS OF CUSA, GEORGE PEURBACH and REGIOMONTANUS.[19] THORNDIKE asserted that the fame of these men had been unduly magnified by their contemporaries and followers, and that modern historians have been taken in by the "piffle"[20]

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 179; I do not know whether THORNDIKE ever attempted to carry out such a program. The only suggestion of such an attempt is an article—which I have not been able to consult—entitled: "Measuring Euripides," in *Chapter Alpha of Ohio, Phi Beta Kappa, College for Women Section* (Cleveland, 1916).

[18] "Scientific Presentation," p. 181.

[19] Ch. VII, "Nicholas of Cusa and the Triple Motion of the Earth"; Ch. VIII, "Peurbach and Regiomontanus: Their Great Reputation Re-Examined."

[20] The word does not appear in the chapter in *Science in Thought*, but in chapter XVI, Vol. V of *Magic and Experimental Science*, p. 335. This chapter, "The Aftermath of Regiomontanus," together with chapter XXXI, "Post-Copernican Astronomy," constitute the most important recent contribution to the history of sixteenth-century astronomy.

of Renaissance printers and hack encomiasts. The lines of THORNDIKE's attack may be simply stated: most of the scientific work of these men was unoriginal; where it was original, it was either unsatisfactory as science or unimportant. Thus the famous Latin version of PTOLEMY's *Almagest* which PEURBACH began and REGIOMONTANUS completed "was not a complete and exact translation of the Greek text, but an epitome of it, the sort of work that has commonly been held a reproach of the early Middle Ages, but which we here find the classical Renaissance glorying in." REGIOMONTANUS' work in trigonometry, like that of PEURBACH, was far from original, and the praises which it received merely indicated that its medieval forerunners had been forgotten.[21] In the case of NICHOLAS OF CUSA, the rather fantastic anticipations of COPERNICUS which have been read into his cosmological speculations originate, not in astronomical observation, but in pious scepticism and "docta ignorantia." Having effectively demolished some of the extravagant claims made on behalf of the fifteenth-century cardinal by some of his nineteenth-century admirers, THORNDIKE lets himself go for a page and a half of diatribe against that type of scholarship which selects "as the great names in the history of philosophy and science men whose time was largely occupied by other interests, and whose fame should and does depend upon something else. . . . When," he asks, "are we ever going to come out of it?" [22]

The critique of these three fifteenth-century thinkers reveals another insistent animus which has increased steadily as THORNDIKE's work has proceeded—a profound distaste for the movement known as humanism and for the period when it flourished, the Renaissance. It might be possible to account for this antipathy as the bias of a professional medievalist. But its roots seem to lie even deeper, embedded in a personal aversion to the whole humanistic discipline and habit of thought, and indeed to any discipline or convention which places the primary emphasis on *form*.

Combining this distaste with his equally firm opposition to historical generalizations about *Zeitgeist*, THORNDIKE frequently indulges in what can only be described as "cracks" against the period "formerly known as the Renaissance" (V, 53); against " 'the spirit of the Renaissance,' that rare gas which the historical laboratory has never yet succeeded in holding in solution." Renaissance humanism placed its "emphasis on style rather than science, and show rather than substance" (V, 5). Its "amateurish literary interest" was in large measure responsible for the lack of scientific specialization in the sixteenth century, for the popularity of superficial epitomes and compendiums instead of the solid if

[21] THORNDIKE's attempt to deflate Regiomontanus has met with some opposition. The definitive biography by ERNST ZINNER, *Leben und Wirken des Johannes Müller von Königsberg, genannt Regiomontanus* (Munich, 1938), certainly forces us to agree with GEORGE SARTON that REGIOMONTANUS was an admirable man (review of *Science and Thought* in *Isis*, XIV [1930], 238). At the same time it is true that ZINNER's biography provides considerable evidence to support THORNDIKE's charge that REGIOMONTANUS was heavily indebted to medieval predecessors.

[22] My own studies in the history of fifteenth-century cartography confirm THORNDIKE's charge that the solid achievements of obscure scientists have often been unfairly transferred to better known figures. This is particularly true in the case of the so-called Nicholas of Cusa Map which has been mistakenly regarded as the first modern map of Central Europe; cf. D. B. DURAND, *The Vienna-Klosterneuburg Map Corpus of the Fifteenth Century*, 2 Vols. (Leiden, 1940?), I, 252-64. (N. B. Publication of this work appears to have been interrupted in May, 1940. A bound copy of the corrected proof has been deposited in the Harvard College Library where it may be consulted by those who are interested.)

bulky pabulum which the scholastics manfully swallowed; for the flourishing of scientific quacks and charlatans and plagiarists at the expense of a gullible public, for the prevalence of mudslinging controversy, of "one-sided advocacy of a certain theory or point of view," of "unutterably coarse billingsgate and bluster," in contrast with the dispassionate and impersonal "poise" of the schoolmen (V, 9).

This threefold antipathy—against unfounded generalizations, overmagnification of great names, and exaggerated emphasis on Renaissance humanism—receives full expression in THORNDIKE's treatment of the sixteenth century, and especially of its three mightiest geniuses, LEONARDO DA VINCI, COPERNICUS and VESALIUS. These giants, whom our schoolbooks have taught us to venerate as founders of modern science, emerge from the pages of *Magic and Experimental Science* with a notable diminution of stature.

The romantic myth of LEONARDO as a transcendental genius, an intellectual Nova, was exploded more than a quarter century ago by PIERRE DUHEM.[23] DUHEM proved conclusively that the great Florentine was no mysterious cosmic happening, flaring up out of nothing and dying away without influence. DUHEM's *Études* did nothing to diminish our admiration of LEONARDO's amazing genius, and did much to increase our understanding of his creative power. THORNDIKE, unlike DUHEM, seems rather to begrudge the praise that has been lavished on LEONARDO. Of the famous studies and sketches of animal and human anatomy, THORNDIKE notes that they are "excellent," without further specification, and passes immediately to the residues of magical lore and false science which permeate the *Notebooks*. Of LEONARDO's work in the field of technology, he notes only that it continued the tradition of preceding centuries. He fails to credit LEONARDO with his true influence on the later tradition of technology, especially on the *Theatre des Instruments* of JACQUES BESSON, to which a few pages are devoted elsewhere in Volume V.[24] THORNDIKE praises LEONARDO's observation of fossil shells, and quotes without dissent DUHEM's assertion that this fragment in the *Notebooks* "created Palaeontology" (V. 27). But he hastens to remind us that LEONARDO's notions about the earth were vitiated by a curious belief that it was an organism like the human body with a system of respiration and circulation. THORNDIKE upholds the title of his chapter, "The Magician of the Renaissance," by citing LEONARDO's cry "Voglio far miraculi" (V, 32 f.). He admits that LEONARDO was no necromancer, yet contends that his manuscripts continue the medieval tradition of "experiments" and "secrets" which aimed at the performance of *natural* magic.

In his chapter on the "Copernican Theory," (V, xviii) THORNDIKE's first concern is to remind us that the *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* was not totally without antecedents. From the time of CAMPANUS OF NOVARA in the thirteenth century a number of medieval cosmologists and astronomers had sought to overthrow or at least to simplify the Ptolemaic system. Most of these simplifications, however, seem to

[23] *Études sur Léonard de Vinci*, 3 séries (Paris, 1906-1913).

[24] *Magic and Experimental Science*, V, 34 f.; V, 593-96. For the LEONARDO tradition of technological drawings in the later sixteenth century, see, among others, A. WOLF, *History of Science, Technology, and Philosophy in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (London, 1935), pp. 536-40.

have been of a speculative rather than a mathematical order. But even aside from partial medieval anticipations, there were other circumstances which, THORNDIKE feels, should qualify our praise of *De Revolutionibus*. The work was announced under an astrological accompaniment.[25] It reflects a "rather excessive classicism" on the part of its author. It frequently drifts into lyrical, mystical and theosophical rhapsodies, inappropriate to a scientific work.[26] Technically, it failed in its professed aim of eliminating defects in the Ptolemaic calculations. It introduced a new and unnecessary irregularity to account for a non-existent slowing down in the precession of the equinoxes. It was unable to do away entirely with the complex and cumbersome system of eccentrics and epicycles. Indeed, strictly speaking, the Copernican system did not postulate that full heliocentricity which is popularly associated with it today; it placed the center of reference for the planetary motions not in the sun, but in the center of the earth's orbit. It was thus, like the system of PTOLEMY itself, still fundamentally eccentric. Moreover, COPERNICUS himself made very few observations, and these were distinctly inferior to those which underlay such medieval revisions of Ptolemaic calculations as the *Alphonsine Tables*. Finally, the Copernician system involved, a "somewhat incongruous" modification of the traditional Aristotelian arrangement of the elementary spheres.[27]

In the case of VESALIUS, to whom only part of a chapter is devoted,[28] the treatment is again primarily negative. THORNDIKE reminds us that for at least two centuries before the publication of *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* there had been active study of anatomy in the Universities, leading to a wide diffusion of skilled and learned surgical practice. Public dissection of human corpses was common in the Middle Ages. Some of VESALIUS' immediate predecessors, notably BERENGARIO DA CARPI and NICOLAUS MASSA, were sound anatomists, but VESALIUS passes over them in jealous silence. And it was VESALIUS himself who, through his caustic preface, did more than anyone else to establish the myth that all operations in the Middle Ages had been performed by barbers and vulgar uninstructed surgeons—a calumny which has been uncritically accepted by most modern writers. VESALIUS, far from being the demolisher of GALEN which he has usually been painted, "was concerned to restore the text of GALEN to its original form" (V, 525). Although he sneers at scholastic theologians for their controversies as to the nature of the blood and water which flowed from the side of the Crucified, he himself retains many of the occult notions which were current in his age. The entire positive achievement

[25] V, 414; but elsewhere THORNDIKE admits that COPERNICUS published nothing which would support belief in astrology (V, 419).

[26] COPERNICUS' well-known passage in praise of the Sun and of the symmetry and harmony in the divine arrangement of the universe is, THORNDIKE declares, "not only not scientific and seems out of place in *De Revolutionibus* but is shallow and fallacious, not to say a trifle insincere" (V, 424). In the next paragraph, however, THORNDIKE excuses this as a "rhapsodical lapse" and admits that the work is "for the most part solidly mathematical both in tone and content."

[27] V, 428; but THORNDIKE ends the chapter by admitting that "it is to be put to the credit of COPERNICUS that he suggested that the same considerations of gravity and of heavy and light applied to the other planets as spherical bodies as to the earth" (V, 429).

[28] V, 522-29.

on which his great fame is supposed to rest is dismissed with the following sentence:

> The work of VESALIUS of course contains indications, or at least assertions, of discovery of anatomical details unknown to previous writers on and students of the subject, and denials on the basis of personal dissection and observation of previous beliefs and statements which he rejects as figments (V, 525).

THORNDIKE goes so far as to imply that the only really epoch-making feature of *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* lay in its accompaniment of numerous and elaborate plates (V, 519 f.).

This, I think, is a fair summary of the impression which emerges from THORNDIKE's treatment of what are ordinarily regarded as three of the greatest names in the history of scientific genius. "Debunking" may not be the word to apply to this treatment; perhaps "hagiographophobia" might be coined for the purpose.

But the medal has two sides. The systematic presentation of the reverse of the big names is matched by the frequent presentation of the obverse in the case of obscure men. Naturally, not every one of the hundreds of minor writers drawn in by THORNDIKE's far-flung net turns out to be a rare or unique specimen. Yet a surprising proportion of the scientific innovations which THORNDIKE singles out for particular comment are connected with names that the casual reader would not recognize. This is especially the case in his treatment of the fourteenth century which, as we have noted, is credited with the highest degree of originality.

Among the scientific contributions of that fruitful century, one of the most important is the introduction of an ideal of precision in the use and manufacture of various instruments. THORNDIKE, following the lead of DUHEM, emphasizes the fact that astronomers of the later Middle Ages used large, well-constructed instruments, surpassing in some instances those even of the sixteenth century. Thus JEAN DE MURS, while still a student at Paris in 1318, employed a solidly mounted *ḳardaja* of fifteen-foot radius as contrasted with TYCHO BRAHE's "much vaunted" wall-quadrant of only six feet nine inches radius.[29] It is not uncommon, moreover, to find in fourteenth-century manuscripts observations and calculations carried out in fractions as small as minutes and seconds of time or angle, and occasionally these fractions were fantastically extended even to fifths and sixths. It is well to remember, however, as THORNDIKE admits, that these were "paper" refinements, manifestations of an ideal of precision which far outstripped the practically possible.

Precision, in the fourteenth century, was sought in other fields besides astronomy. The design of mechanical clocks, which, as THORNDIKE has recently shown, goes back at least on paper to the third quarter of the thirteenth century,[30] was translated through the painstaking craftsmanship of medieval metal workers into a manufacturing technique. And that technique was the direct ancestor of the infinite ramifications of modern precision machinery. THORNDIKE also reminds us that systematic recording of weather observations began in the fourteenth century with WILLIAM MERLE of Oxford and EVNO of

[29] III, 294 ff.; it seems a little strong, however, to say "apparently it was only in TYCHO BRAHE's day that such large instruments became a rarity."

[30] "Invention of the Mechanical Clock about 1271 A.D.," *Speculum*, XVI (1941), 242-43.

Würzburg.[31] Meteorology, for a long time to come, was to be little more than a frontier province in the great kingdom of magic, yet the introduction of a rudimentary scientific empiricism in the Middle Ages cannot be denied. THORNDIKE notes other instances of quantitative specification in medicine and alchemy,[32] but these are of a crude order; and usually they must be regarded as affectations or fantasies, totally without the possibility of experimental verification. Nevertheless, the evidence provided in the fourteenth-century volume of *Magic and Experimental Science* does support THORNDIKE's contention that "careful measurement of the phenomena" can be credited to some late medieval scientists (IV, 614).

These innovations of an empirical order which THORNDIKE ferrets out in the murky recesses of the fourteenth century are paralleled by advances in speculative thought. Here again the pioneer was PIERRE DUHEM, but THORNDIKE has made important discoveries of his own. To be sure it is difficult to escape the impression that THORNDIKE, *like* DUHEM, has occasionally strained his texts through a porcelain filter to extract a minute residue of modernity. As a rather extreme example of THORNDIKE's method we may cite the chapter (III, XXVIII) on the late fourteenth-century scholastic HENRICUS LANGENSTEIN, known as HENRY OF HESSE. Although HENRY is described by THORNDIKE as inferior in originality to his brilliant contemporary, NICOLE ORESME, he nevertheless emerges from the pages of *Magic and Experimental Science* as the precursor of an astounding number of modern scientific discoveries. Among these are the development of a principle of "common nature" (which, however, had been prefigured by ADELARD OF BATH in the twelfth century and ROGER BACON in the thirteenth) vaguely anticipatory of modern notions of universal force or continuity (III, 476 ff.). In common with his predecessor RICHARD SUISETH, the "Calculator," and with his colleague ORESME, HENRY is credited with "an important first step towards the development of modern mathematical method and its application to scientific questions" (III, 492). THORNDIKE speaks of his improvement "at least in some respects" on the theory of the rainbow, of his "fourteenth century variety of relativity" (III, 492), of his "experiments in surface tension" (IV, 614, and III, Appendix 32) and of his anticipation of DARWIN on the evolution of new species (III, 483).

Our immediate response is naturally to enquire whether all these ideas are really there in the words of the cited texts, and, if they are there, whether they constitute full and valid anticipations. As a test case I select a passage of ten lines in which THORNDIKE adduces three "specimens of HENRY OF HESSE's scientific caliber," all of which apparently he regards as of an "advanced" character:

> We have sometimes been given the impression that the conception of gaseous substances other than air, as well as the word *Geist* or gas, originated in VAN HELMONT's time. But HENRY offers a good illustration of its medieval currency when he states that the exhalations from water are aqueous, those from earth are nothing but earth reduced to a state of vapor, and those from putrefying corpses are merely flesh in a

[31] Vol. III, ch. viii.

[32] Note especially the curious theory of "degrees" in proportion of the elements in mixtures, which was devised by WALTER OF ODINGTON; III, 130 ff.

gaseous condition—*caro subtiliata*. He also, as we have seen, was acquainted with the variation of the magnetic needle near the north pole. He observes that regions become rejuvenated or grow arid and old with climatic change (III, 501).

Fortunately, with the footnote references it is easy to trace these three points to the original text in a modern edition.[33] Concerning the first point the text reads as follows:

Item non solum elevantur ex calefactione inferiorum resolutiones ex terra et aqua, sed eciam ex omnibus corporibus mixtis bone vel male complexionis. Et secundum opinionem probabiliorem exalationes sunt eiusdem speciei cum rebus, a quibus exalant, quia exalatio terre non est nisi terra subtiliata et levificata calefactione, et vapor nisi aqua levificata, et exalatio de carne caro subtiliata.[34]

I leave it to others more expert in seventeenth-century science to determine whether the "levificated" and "subtiliated" "resolutions" of earth, water and flesh are analogous to the different kinds of "Gas" described by VAN HELMONT. It does seem apparent, however, that this interesting and curious passage, when set in its full context, must be regarded as a direct outgrowth of current scholastic discussions of "exhalations" as set forth by ARISTOTLE. THORNDIKE is doubtless right in implying a continuous linkage between this type of discussion and the notions of VAN HELMONT.

The second "advanced" point which THORNDIKE attributes to HENRY OF HESSE is the reference to the "variation" of the magnetic needle "near the north pole." Two pages earlier what is presumably the same point is put somewhat differently:

. . . the planets may act more potently when in certain ratios of proportion or musical consonance or may lose the virtue in one position which they possess in another, like the magnet in some parts of Norway . . . (III, 499).

HENRY OF HESSE's text is as follows:

Ita videtur in proposito, quod planeta in uno situ influat, et in alio non. Item in partibus Norwigie magnes in uno situ trahit ferrum et in alio propinquo non.[35]

It is plain that this passage refers solely to the attraction of iron by the magnet, and not to the declination of the compass needle, albeit the latter was undoubtedly known at this period.

The third of the "advanced" notions—the "rejuvenation" of regions—is derived from the following passage:

Regiones enim quandoque umificantur iuvenescentes ex caliditatis et humiditatis affluencia. Dehinc ad statum veniunt sue virtutis in aquoso permanentes. Deinde autem exsiccantur et senescunt frigiditate et siccitate et inhabitabiles fiunt.[36]

The proper context of this passage is stated explicitly in the opening lines of the chapter in which it occurs:

Regionum eciam varie sunt dispositiones radicales et accidentales, unde ARISTOTELES in fine primi metheororum. . . .[37]

[33] HUBERT PRUCKNER, *Studien zu den astrologischen Schriften des Heinrich von Langenstein* (*Studien der Bibliothek Warburg*, XIV: Leipzig, 1933). All of the three points in question come from HENRY OF HESSE's *Tractatus contra Astrologos Coniunctionistas de Eventibus Futurorum*.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 198.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 163.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 174.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 173; the passage of HENRY OF HESSE is substantially an abridgment of *Meteorologica*, I, 14, lines 351a, 19-351b, 4. The originality of this chapter in the *Contra Astrologos* seems to lie in its application of ARISTOTLE's notion of climatological variation to the critique of astrology.

It may not be going too far to state that the first and third of these instances of HENRY's "scientific caliber" prove an important point which, so far as I am aware, THORNDIKE has not brought out explicitly and which, perhaps, he would not accept. A very considerable portion of the "advanced" notions of HENRY OF HESSE, and for that matter of ORESME and others of this group, are the direct outgrowth of subtle speculative elaboration of the Aristotelian text. A detailed and systematic investigation of the way in which ARISTOTLE was creatively interpreted and transformed by these highly ingenious theorists of the later Middle Ages is one of the major historical projects whose desirability is implied by the work of both THORNDIKE and DUHEM.[38]

THORNDIKE has disclaimed any interest in collecting "precursorships" for their own sake. It would seem, however, that his concern for the "reverse of the medal" has frequently led him to linger with obvious satisfaction over those which have been turned up by his excavations. The problem of the "precursor" is by no means simple. One type of scholar is inclined to dismiss the "precursor" as insignificant and without explicit influence in the cumulative statistical roll of human progress; another type, to credit him with an implicit influence which cannot be traced. The soundest approach for the historian of thought is to commit himself to neither of these extremes, but to report the achievement of the "precursor" for what it actually was, an eddy of individual creativeness in the sluggish drift of tradition, which may have affected the course of the waters far below the point where its own stirring disappeared.

But the problem of the "precursor" resolves itself into the broader theory of the historical process of intellectual change. Naturally we are impelled to ask, has THORNDIKE contributed significantly to our understanding of this process? To this question, I think, we must give an affirmative answer.

We may safely say that few historians today are equipped with a sound theory of intellectual innovation.[39] Whether philosophers and psychologists have achieved such a theory I do not know, but if they have, it is to be hoped that they will show how it can be applied to the study of history. THORNDIKE, sensibly enough, refrains from formulating general theories concerning the operations of the human mind. He does, however, express the hope that his volumes may have "supplied data that may prove of value to philosophers and psychologists in determining the laws of thought and our intellectual processes" (II, 982).

This hope is not extravagant. THORNDIKE's positive achievement—it is an important one—may be stated somewhat as follows: he has accumulated a massive body of material which other writers of different temperament and insight

[38] For a case study in the creative reinterpretation of ARISTOTLE by a fourteenth-century scientist, see my article "Nicole Oresme and the Mediaeval Origins of Modern Science," *Speculum*, XVI (1941), 167-85. This article also contains remarks on both THORNDIKE and DUHEM which I have avoided repeating here, together with some reflections on the problem of the "precursor" which is treated in the following paragraph. Another, and more detailed case study, is the important monograph of CLAGETT on GIOVANNI MARLIANI, cited above, note 5.

[39] Among the more thoughtful historical students of this problem, I would single out Professor A. P. USHER of Harvard University. Apart from a few general remarks in his *History of Mechanical Inventions* (New York, 1929), *passim*, Professor USHER has so far published little on this subject. I am indebted to him for suggestions which helped in formulating these reflections on the problem of the "precursor" and on the nature of historical process.

can use for a great variety of purposes. Moreover, even apart from success or failure in demonstrating his own thesis, THORNDIKE, by the sheer magnitude of his accumulation, and by the principle of selection which he has followed, has given inferential support to a number of major generalizations concerning historical process. The study of nature, it seems hard to deny, springs from a dual, rather than a single principle of the human spirit. This duality may be considered under a number of aspects: knowledge and power, speculation and operation, magic and science. Because of the multiplicity of these inner dualities and of the permutations which they engender, no unitary approach to the history of human thought is feasible. Various non-converging approaches must be followed, and all must take account of the basic fact that the unit of real innovation is always small, when contrasted at any point or in any individual with the persistence of tradition. I am not sure that THORNDIKE would acknowledge all these methodological considerations as his own; some of them, however, he does state explicitly:

> We have seen the same old ideas continually recurring, new ideas appearing with exceeding slowness, men of the same given period holding a common stock of notions and being for the most part in remarkable agreement. Even the most intellectual men seem to have a limited number of ideas, just as humanity has a limited number of domesticated animals. Not only is man unable by taking thought to add one cubit to his stature, he usually equally fails to add one new idea to humanity's small collection. Often men seem to be repeating ideas like parrots. And this is not merely patristic, or scholastic; it is everlastingly human. Yet it has been evident that some of our authors were more original, resourceful, ingenious, inquisitive than others. There is curiosity, occasionally a new question is asked, an old thought put in a novel way, or a new experiment tried (II, 983).

Our final judgment must be that THORNDIKE's primary achievement is not so much the demonstration of a thesis as the illustration of a facet of human activity. But from this vast mass of information certain positive statements and conclusions also emerge and force at least partial assent. THORNDIKE has undoubtedly shown that magic and science co-exist; that co-existence in certain stages of historical development is more than casual, though perhaps less than fully causal in the march of human progress. As a judgment on one aspect of man's complex nature, *Magic and Experimental Science* cannot be denied a measure of finality. That judgment will not please everyone. It may not please the scientifically trained reader, although THORNDIKE has craved his sympathetic attention.[40] It certainly has not pleased SARTON, whose humanistic positivism venerates the creator of a viable truth, the enricher of man's permanent stock of knowledge, as the only true hero. The most sympathetic reader of *Magic and Experimental Science* will be the pure historian, the man who wants to know "wie es eigentlich gewesen." To the historian, the reverse of the medal, even though it may be unattractive, should also be exposed in the museum. It was perhaps with the stric-

[40] Cf. the paper delivered in 1922 before a joint meeting of the History of Science group from the Am. Histor. Association and of Section L, American Association for the Advancement of Science, and published as "The Historical Background of Modern Science," *Scientific Monthly*, XVI (1923), 488-97. THORNDIKE appeals to scientists to study their own past, both in its scientific and its magical aspects, and not to scorn early crude experimentation; pp. 496 f.

tures of SARTON's original review in mind that THORNDIKE wrote the concluding paragraph of his volumes on the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries:

> Frankly, it is not for this contribution towards modernity that we most prize these writings of two remote centuries which we have been at some pains to decipher and to set forth. We have taken them as we found them and we esteem them for what they are in their totality, their fourteenth and their fifteenth century *complexio*—a chapter in the history of human thought. Read it and smile or read it and weep, as you please. We would not credit it with the least particle of modern science that does not belong to it, nor would we deprive it of any of that magic which constitutes in no small measure its peculiar charm. Perhaps it would be well to read it and think of what the future historian may say of the mentality and scholasticism of the present era and with what sympathy or antipathy he would be justified in regarding us (IV, 615).

I see no reason why anyone who has read *Magic and Experimental Science* should weep over the spectacle of human error. The moral and spiritual weakness of man is far more distressing than his intellectual debility.

1942

# WHO'S WHO IN COLLEGE READER

## Biography and Exposition

ADAMS, HENRY (1838-1918)

*Preparation for Teaching History,* 96. *The Tendency of History,* 98.

Easily the most discussed today of all the Adamses, Henry Adams was for a brief time teacher of history in Harvard College and editor of the *North American Review.* His was the first historical seminar at Harvard, and Henry Cabot Lodge, whom he advised on preparation for the teaching of history, was among his first students. His later works are marked by the pessimistic belief that intellectual energy is the same as physical energy and tends to dissipate itself in the universe.

ADLER, MORTIMER J. (1902- )

*The Reading of "Reading,"* 230.

Mortimer J. Adler, teacher at the University of Chicago, has won wide attention by his position in education. "The abolition of the elective system," he has written, "goes to the very heart of the problem. Liberal education is developed only when a curriculum can be devised which is the same for all men . . ." His prescriptive program calls also for discipline in methodology, and his "best seller" *How to Read a Book* is a contribution to prescriptive methodology. Our selection is a representative chapter in this book.

BEEBE, WILLIAM (1877- )

*Elephants of the Sea,* 193.

Born in Brooklyn, William Beebe has wandered far from that borough of New York City, which is supposed to have such a strong hold on its citizens. But his wanderings have been largely on scientific expeditions. He is curator of ornithology for the New York Zoological Society. "Elephants of the Sea" can be matched for interest many times in his writings, since Mr. Beebe is able to endow all his work with a remarkable zest.

BENNETT, ARNOLD (1867-1931)

*Why a Classic Is a Classic,* 239.

Prolific British author of novels, stories, plays, and essays, best known perhaps for *The Old Wives' Tale* (1908), one of the outstanding novels of the twentieth century. His series of essays on literary taste, from which "Why a Classic Is a Classic" has been taken, reveals his persistent interest in the various aspects of writing and reading.

BOAS, FRANZ (1858-1942)

*Racial Prejudices,* 165.

Born in Minden, Westphalia, Franz Boas studied at the Universities of Heidelberg, Bonn, and Kiel, before coming to the New World to make investigations in anthropology in Puerto Rico and Mexico. Appointed first at Clark University, he spent the greater part of his teaching career at Columbia. "Racial Prejudices" is

the first chapter in *The Mind of Primitive Man,* one of the most important contributions by a scientist to liberalism.

BORLAND, HAL (1900- )

*February Winds,* 130. *A Day in March,* 130. *Lilacs,* 132. *Green Hills,* 133. *Live Waters,* 133.

A native of Nebraska, Hal Borland grew up on a Colorado ranch, served in the Navy, turned to engineering and ultimately to writing. This last interest brought him to New York, where he acquired a degree in literature from Columbia in 1923, and subsequently earned a wide reputation as a miscellaneous writer of essays, poetry, fiction, radio and motion picture scripts, and books dealing with American folklore and outdoor life. Readers of the *New York Sunday Times* editorial page have long read and admired his unsigned little essays on the ways of nature in all seasons of the year. It is from these charming vignettes that selections have been made for this anthology. Mr. Borland has a home in the Connecticut hills north of Stamford, but his love of the American countryside everywhere takes him to all points of the compass, and he is constantly on the wing!

BRADFORD, GAMALIEL (1863-1932)

*God's Vagabond: Saint Francis of Assisi,* 60.

Chief American contributor during the twenties to the "new biography," Gamaliel Bradford claimed Saint-Beuve as a master. Hypochondria kept Bradford a lifelong invalid, but after he discovered his true bent, it did not much handicap his productiveness. "God's Vagabond" is one of nearly a hundred "psychographs" (as he called them) that Bradford made after he was fifty.

BRECHER, EDWARD M. (1911- )

*The Book America Wrote,* 417.

Mr. Brecher was educated at Wisconsin, Swarthmore, Minnesota, and Brown. After serving as assistant to the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, and Manager of Radio Station WQQW in Washington, D. C., he became assistant editor of Consumers' Union *Reports* in New York City. He has written for *The Atlantic Monthly, Harper's, The Reader's Digest, Nature,* and other magazines.

BROOKS, ROBERT R. R. (1905- )

*The N.L.R.B. and Democracy,* 304.

Born in Rome, Italy, Robert R. R. Brooks was Rhodes Scholar from Connecticut, 1926-1929, after a notable career as an athlete at Wesleyan. Having overtaxed his heart rowing at Oxford, he was asked to coach the varsity crew there. On his return to America, he did graduate study in economics at Yale, taught at Williams, and became dean of the latter institution. Possibly because he was in England during the general strike, he has taken an especial interest in the relations of capital and labor.

BROUN, HEYWOOD (1888-1939)

*The Fifty-First Dragon,* 144.

A great-hearted journalist, Heywood Broun twice lost his job as columnist for espousing liberal causes, first during the Sacco-Vanzetti trial and second after attacking the *World* and the *Nation* for suppressing the news. He was one of the founders and the first president of the American Newspaper Guild. "The Fifty-First Dragon" appears as a reminder that Heywood Broun once contributed to the sports page.

BUCHANAN, JOSEPH R. (1851-1924)

*The Trials of a Labor Editor,* 24.

*The Story of a Labor Editor,* from which "The Trials of a Labor Editor" is taken, is one of the best autobiographical narratives by a labor organizer. It tells how the author, a native of Hannibal, Mo., migrated to Leadville, Colo., as a printer; became a partisan of labor there; then, as a labor journalist and organizer, had a share in some of the fiercest industrial struggles of the nineteenth century. The book terminates with the trial and execution of the leading Chicago anarchists.

BURCH, BRADLEY (1924- )

*Where Is the Humor?* 106. *Eve of Battle,* 108. *Don't Leave Me Here,* 109. *Glory Is a Word for Kings,* 110.

A young New York idealist whose college career was interrupted by service in the army in Europe, which brought to him a wound in action and to his courageous young wife a series of letters from the front, of which three are here published for the first time.

CANFIELD, DOROTHY (1879- )

*Supply and Demand,* 317.

Something in the blood took Dorothea Canfield Fisher back to Vermont, a family home since colonial days; but the way was round about, for Mrs. Fisher was born in Kansas, studied at Ohio State University, Columbia, and the Sorbonne before she and her husband chose to live on a Vermont farm. "Supply and Demand" contains as much "horse sense," a native would "allow," as if it had been written by a Yankee.

CARLYLE, THOMAS (1795-1881)

*The "Rape" of Alsace-Lorraine,* 88.

The son of a Scottish stonemason, who became one of the most famous of the Victorian philosophers, social critics, historians, and biographers. He condemned the loss of spiritual values in his time, attacked legislative cure-alls, hated democracy, and praised work and hero worship. His *Sartor Resartus* (1833-34) is a spiritual autobiography; his *French Revolution* (1837), a sulphurous and subjective treatment of his theme. The selection reprinted in this anthology reveals the historical qualities of his voluminous literary labors.

CLEMENS, SAMUEL. *See* MARK TWAIN

CRAIG, EDWARD GORDON (1872- )

*Proposals Old and New,* 326.

Notable British actor, stage designer, and producer. He was the son of Ellen Terry, the famous actress, and wrote his mother's biography, *Ellen Terry and Her Secret Self,* in 1931. After acting from 1889 to 1897, he devoted himself entirely to stage designing and to the production of plays, including *Hamlet* for the Moscow Art Theatre in 1905. He is the author of *The Art of the Theatre* (1905), *The Theatre Advancing* (1919), and other books and many articles.

CRAVEN, THOMAS (1889- )

*Modernism,* 405.

Thomas Craven has only Albert S. Barnes, "the Argyrol man," as a serious competitor as America's first critic of art. Both are men of strong convictions which they do not trammel in expression. "Modernism" probably indicates that they would collide if they met. A native of Kansas and a graduate of Kansas Wesleyan,

Mr. Craven had a varied career before he became a free-lance writer in 1914. His best books are *Men of Art* and *Modern Art.*

DEKKER, THOMAS (1572?-1632)

*Of Winter,* 129.

A miscellaneous free-lance writer of the time of Elizabeth and James I who is best known for such realistic comedies as "The Shoemakers' Holiday" and "The Honest Whore," but who also wrote satires on men and manners, like *The Gull's Horn-book,* exposures of roguery, like *The Bellman of London,* and numerous journalistic pamphlets dealing with London life. That he did not confine his shrewd and accurate observation to mere men and women is revealed in his little essay on winter that is reprinted here.

DEWEY, JOHN (1859- )

*The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy,* 186.

The ablest philosopher that America has produced, John Dewey is satisfied to call his thought "experimentalism," and thereby indicate the tentativeness of all his conclusions. In *Experience and Nature,* one of the great books of our time, Dewey destroyed the dichotomy of the world and the self created by the empirical fallacy of sensory ionization. Experience involves, beyond separation, both the world and the self. Less dramatic in effect, "The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy" demonstrates Dewey's ability to see new connections in old concatenations.

DOS PASSOS, JOHN (1896- )

*The American Plan,* 21.

In adopting the "discontinuous" method of narration in his fictional trilogy, *U.S.A.,* in order to represent the chaos of modern times, John Dos Passos was faced with the problem of "timing" his episodes. This he solved by inventing three devices: the "newsreel," the "camera eye," and the "poetic biography." "The American Plan" is representative of the last device. Chicago-born, a graduate of Harvard College, John Dos Passos drove an ambulance in World War I and acquired from this experience material for his first books, *One Man's Initiation* and *Three Soldiers.* Later he became the historian in fiction of the "lost generation."

DREW, ELIZABETH (1887- )

*Saki,* 350.

An English-born literary critic who has keen power of analysis, and flavor and charm of expression. She graduated from Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, with first honors in English Language and Literature, and then lectured at Girton College, Cambridge. For many years she has lived in America, where she has taught at the Bread Loaf School of English and at Smith College, and has lectured extensively elsewhere. She is the author of *Discovering Poetry, Discovering Drama, The Enjoyment of Literature,* and (with John L. Sweeny) *Directions in Modern Poetry.*

DURAND, DANA B. (1905- )

*Magic and Experimental Science,* 442.

Student of medieval history at Harvard and later teacher at Williams College, Dana B. Durand decided, after participating in World War II, "to give up the academic profession and continue in government service." He is at present with the OMGUS in Germany. He writes, "The republication of my article, if it takes place, would be a gratifying finis to my scholarly career." The editors of this book hope publication herein does not mean "finis" to Mr. Durand's scholarly career.

GRAVES, ROBERT (1895- )

*Recent Prose*—with Alan Hodge, 242.

Poet of the First World War who wrote verse that ranged from the whimsical to the metaphysical. In *A Survey of Modernist Poetry* (1927), written with Laura Riding, he emerged as a literary critic; in *Good-bye to All That* (1929) as a rebellious autobiographer; and in *I, Claudius* (1934) as an historical novelist. *The Reader Over Your Shoulder,* done in 1943 with Alan Hodge, is an extremely provocative comment on English prose style; from this handbook the selection in the present anthology has been reproduced.

GRAY, GEORGE W. (1886- )

*Deeper Into the Atom,* 205.

A career may be made out of interpreting the advances of science to the layman. But one needs, like George W. Gray, a scientific training to do a really competent job. "Deeper Into the Atom," one of the essays in *The Advancing Front of Science,* demonstrates the competence of this Texan to explain both theory and process for lay comprehension.

HAZLITT, WILLIAM (1778-1830)

*Mr. Cobbett,* 343.

Essayist, critic, and biographer of the romantic period of the early nineteenth century. He wrote vivid and acute comments on the Elizabethan dramatists and particularly on Shakespeare, and criticisms of the stage of his own time. He is known best, however, for his *Table Talk, or Original Essays on Men and Manners* (1821-22), "talking" essays on miscellaneous themes. His interest in the literary labors of his contemporaries, he revealed in *The Spirit of the Age* (1825) and in such a biographical bit as that reprinted in the present anthology. His style was vigorous and contentious, and extraordinarily rich, varied, and easy.

HODGE, ALAN (1915- )

*Recent Prose*—with Robert Graves, 242.

Born in Scarborough, on the Yorkshire coast of England, Alan Hodge is the son of a Cunard line captain. Mr. Hodge grew up in Liverpool, attended one of the colleges of Oxford, and then became a journalist. He was in Spain during the Civil War and in Warsaw when the Germans invaded Poland. *The Reader Over Your Shoulder* is the second book he has done with Robert Graves, the first being *The Long Week End,* a social history of Great Britain between two world wars.

HOPKINS, GERARD MANLEY (1844-1889)

*The Communist Future,* 91. *Sprung Rhythm,* 92.

A Roman Catholic professor of Greek at the University of Dublin whose poems, although composed between 1870 and 1890, were not published in an absolutely complete collection until 1930. His experiments with verse, and especially his employment of what he called "sprung rhythm," have given him a wide vogue among young contemporary makers of verse.

JAMES, HENRY (1843-1916)

*The Limitations of Dickens,* 428.

The most conscious craftsman that the novel had produced up to his time, Henry James jeopardized his popularity in his native country by long residence abroad and by finally accepting British citizenship. James would be quite astonished at his present vogue in America, but that vogue is the result of much discriminating criticism which has been written since his time. James himself possessed an acute

critical faculty, and his review of Dickens not only assesses correctly the merits and defects of that novelist but also reveals his own deep reflection on the art of the fiction writer.

JEFFERSON, THOMAS (1743-1826)

*One Generation Hath No Right to Bind Another,* 73. *Natural Aristocracy,* 76.

Among the "left wingers" at the outbreak of the American Revolution, Thomas Jefferson compromised in order to bring together radical and conservative elements when he became President of the United States in 1800. Besides shaping the fundamental democratic philosophy of his country, Jefferson doubled its territory, improved its architecture, and gave it its system of state universities. The two letters chosen to reveal his original views are from a correspondence which was the most voluminous of its time and the most distinguished.

LEACOCK, STEPHEN (1869-1944)

*My Fishing Pond,* 137.

An English-born Canadian who became head of the Department of Political Economy at McGill University and one of the Dominion's foremost humorists. His forty-odd volumes display a curious division into college texts and scientific treatises and shrewd, if deliberately satirical and absurd, parodies and nonsense books. Of these last, the most humorous perhaps are *Literary Lapses* (1910), *Nonsense Novels* (1911), and *Frenzied Fiction* (1918). "My Fishing Pond," reprinted here, is one of his many fugitive, short essays on human whims and follies.

LINCOLN, ABRAHAM (1809-1865)

*You Do Not Work Much,* 81. *I Dislike Slavery,* 82. *I Will Risk the Dictatorship,* 84.

The most loved president of the United States was a railroad lawyer of great ability; it is said that he declined to become chief counsel to the New York Central Railroad. A capacity to seize the pertinent thing in a mass of facts and a power to organize a simple but telling argument—traits which developed in his legal career —made him the hardest opponent a man could draw, as Stephen Douglas discovered. Lincoln displayed in his correspondence the same logic which made him irresistible on the platform.

LIPPMANN, WALTER (1889- )

*H. L. Mencken,* 438.

One-time assistant in philosophy at Harvard to George Santayana, Walter Lippmann really derived more from the lectures in psychology and political theory of a visiting Englishman, Graham Wallas. In *A Preface to Politics* he is much indebted to Wallas. But Lippmann outgrew the need of a mentor and became one of America's most independent commentators on politics and morals. "H. L. Mencken" is a neat example of the logician operating on the casuist.

LOWES, JOHN LIVINGSTON (1867-1945)

*Originality and the Moulding of Conventions,* 253.

A scholar who could write, John Livingston Lowes once taught mathematics at Washington and Jefferson College, but after two years of this discipline he turned to teaching English literature, and at the time of his death was one of the most distinguished literary scholars at Harvard. His best known books are *Convention and Revolt in Poetry* (from which the present selection is taken) and *The Road to Xanadu,* an analysis of the technique of Coleridge.

MARSHALL, MARGARET (1900- )
*"Othello,"* 432.
Margaret Marshall began her career as a reviewer of books and plays on a Missoula newspaper while attending the University of Montana. She joined the staff of the *Nation* in 1924 and became that magazine's literary editor in 1937.

MILNE, LORUS J. (1910- )
*The Water's Skin,* 134.
Dr. Milne was born in Toronto, Ontario. He took his B.A. degree at the University of Toronto in 1933, winning both honors in biology and the gold medal of his class. A fellowship at Harvard was followed by a Harvard M.A. in 1934 and Ph.D. in 1936. He has since taught in New York State, Texas, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. Dr. Milne published over fifty scientific papers in a technical style before he came to realize that there is more fun in writing in a popular style. Since then, his short and fascinating articles on natural history have appeared in numerous high-grade magazines. He and his wife both believe that biology and literature go very well together.

MORLEY, CHRISTOPHER (1890- )
*On Time,* 150.
Son of a mathematician, Christopher Morley grew up in Haverford, Pa., and in Baltimore, where his father held, successively, professorships at Haverford College and Johns Hopkins. Morley himself was graduated from the former institution, after which he was a Rhodes Scholar at New College, Oxford. Working first for Doubleday, Page, he was then successively on the staffs of the *Ladies Home Journal,* the Philadelphia *Evening Ledger,* the New York *Evening Post,* and the *Saturday Review of Literature.* The literary flair of his journalism is well illustrated by "On Time."

MORRISON, THEODORE (1901- )
*Dover Beach Revisited,* 353.
Director of "English A" at Harvard (which in most places is called "Freshman English") and teacher at the Bread Loaf School of English for many summers, Theodore Morrison can exemplify the excellencies he would have his students seek in writing. Mr. Morrison is the author of two books of verse, *Serpent in the Cloud* and *Notes of Death and Life,* as well as of many scattered essays. Contributed to *Harper's,* "Dover Beach Revisited" urbanely suggests that an author's meaning might be quite as good as a reader's.

MUSSELMAN, M. M. (1899- )
*Wheels in His Head,* 13.
M. M. Musselman wrote the book about his father "A. J." after seven and a half years of writing motion-picture scripts at Hollywood, the proper preparation, he avers, for the biographer of as "wacky" a genius as the inventor of the mechanical midnight baby-rocker and the coaster brake. But more than Hollywood prepared the son for his major task. Born in Wichita, Kansas, on a Sunday (Feb. 19, 1899), the event keeping "A. J." away from his golf, "M. M." was graduated from the School of Journalism of the University of Illinois and wrote for newspapers, the "pulps," and radio, before undertaking either Hollywood or his father.

NABOKOV (or NABOKOFF), NICOLAS (1903- )
*The Case of Dmitri Shostakovitch,* 393.
A distinguished native of Lubcza, White Russia, who came to America in 1933 with an education obtained in St. Petersburg, Yalta, the Conservatories of Stutt-

gart and Berlin, and the University of Paris. Having completed his studies in 1926, he remained in Paris for seven years as an active member of the music, literary, and artistic colony there. His first service in America was as lecturer at the Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pa. From 1936 to 1941 he was Head of the Department of Music at Wells College, Aurora, New York, and then for four years the Director of Music and Liberal Arts tutor at St. John's College, Annapolis, Md. After serving as First Deputy Chief of Music, Theatre, and Film Control for the United States Military Government overseas, he returned to America in 1947 to act as Head of the Russian Unit of the Voice of America. He is now Professor of Counterpoint, Composition, Formal Analysis, and Music History at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore. "By training," he wrote to the editors, "I am primarily a musician-composer, secondarily, a teacher of composition and writer on musical and general aesthetic topics."

NEVINS, ALLAN (1890- )

*Ideas in History,* 370.

After a career in journalism, highlighted by editorial service on three New York dailies, the *Post,* the *Sun,* and the *World,* Allan Nevins became a professor of history, first at Cornell, then at Columbia. He is the author and editor of many historical studies; his reflections on his profession are found in *The Gateway to History* (1938), from which the present selection has been taken.

NIEBUHR, REINHOLD (1892- )

*Is Religion Counter-Revolutionary?* 334.

Professor of Applied Christianity at Union Theological Seminary since 1930, Reinhold Niebuhr had served a long pastorate in Detroit (1915-1928) before assuming his post. For a time, Dr. Niebuhr sided with those theologians who hoped for a common moral and social program with the political radicals. The essay in this anthology, originally contributed to *Radical Religion,* a quarterly founded by Dr. Niebuhr, no longer represents the author's point of view, but is offered here as one exposition of a position on the left.

NYE, BILL (1850-1896)

*My Thanks for the Same,* 94.

Edgar W. Nye, who was born in Wisconsin but who for a time edited a paper in Wyoming, took his pen name from a poker companion whom Bret Harte had immortalized in "The Heathen Chinee." Comparing Nye with other "Western" humorists, Professor Cairns has written, "He probably had more genius, and certainly more refinement, than either Shaw or Locke, but he had less didactic purpose, and his fame is likely to be even shorter lived than theirs."

O'HIGGINS, HARVEY (1876-1929)

*Alias Walt Whitman,* 42.

A Canadian-born Irish journalist, Harvey O'Higgins became an American citizen during World War I and served as Associate Chairman of George Creel's Committee for Public Information. O'Higgins became very much a convert to the teachings of Freud and interpreted the behavior of both fictional characters in his novels and of celebrated personages from the Freudian standpoint. His study of Whitman, though open to some objections, is almost a classic illustration of the Freudian approach.

READ, HERBERT (1893- )

*The Politics of the Unpolitical,* 268.

English poet, critic, and essayist; Director of the Museum of Modern Art, London. Author of *Naked Warriors* (1919), *Eclogues* (1919), *Phases of English Poetry*

(1928), *The Meaning of Art* (1931), *Poems, 1914-1934* (1935), *Art and Society* (1936), *Poetry and Anarchism; Collected Essays* (1938), and other books.

RICKETTS, EDWARD F. (1897- )

*The Sea-Cow*—with John Steinbeck, 140.

Edward F. Ricketts is Director of the Pacific Biological Laboratories, which supplies marine specimens for college and research laboratories. One of John Steinbeck's oldest friends, he took the novelist with him on a trip to investigate the marine life of the Gulf of California, a trip which resulted also in the book, *The Sea of Cortez,* from which "The Sea-Cow" (hardly a form of marine life) is excerpted.

ROBINSON, JAMES HARVEY (1863-1936)

*On Various Kinds of Thinking,* 176.

A distinguished historian and teacher who, after resigning from Columbia University in protest against faculty dismissals for pacifist views during World War I, helped to found the New School for Social Research. Robinson later wrote *The Mind in the Making* (1921), portions of which have been more anthologized, perhaps, than any other nonfiction work.

ROOSEVELT, FRANKLIN DELANO (1882-1945)

*First Inaugural Address,* 287.

Personality *and* president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt could better instruct his generation that "there is nothing to fear but fear itself" than could any other man, for he had conquered the incapacitating fears engendered by infantile paralysis as well as the physical incapacity conferred by the dreadful disease. In fireside chat and in international conference, he exuded a hope that elevated the hearts of men when their very natures justified depression. He was *Plutarchist* and cosmopolitan. He was so definitely "the New Deal" that with his demise there was little left of that movement.

ROOSEVELT, THEODORE (1858-1919)

*The New Nationalism,* 276.

Student of naval history and of imperialism, Theodore Roosevelt had some of the characteristics of a "jingo." Certainly his seizure of the Panama Canal and his pronouncement of the "Roosevelt Corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine caused more disquiet among our neighbors on this continent than did the acts of any other man save those of James K. Polk. But it is possible to forgive "T. R." his opportunism in international affairs when one considers how he assailed domestic evils. There was no integration between "trust busting," conservation, and forced arbitration of labor disputes save the conscience of Roosevelt. However, when he had time to read and reflect during the years following his retirement, he was able to offer the country in 1912 an integrated program in "The New Nationalism," in which some see suggestions for "the New Deal."

RUSKIN, JOHN (1819-1900)

*The Nature of Theft by Unjust Profits,* 85.

Victorian interpreter of nature, art, and social ethics and economics. His earlier books, *Modern Painters* (1843-1860), *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), and *The Stones of Venice* (1851-1853), although they deal mainly with painting and allied arts, reveal, nevertheless, that fundamental interest in social philosophy which became his consuming passion in his later writings, *Unto This Last* (1862), *Munera Pulveris* (1862-63), *The Crown of Wild Olive* (1866), and the eccentric and violent *Fors Clavigera* (1871-84). The selection from Ruskin reprinted in this anthology is an expression of the ideas of the later Ruskin, the zealous industrial reformer.

It is one of the *Twenty-five Letters to a Working Man of Sunderland on the Laws of Work,* published in a collection that bears the title *Time and Tide.*

SAROYAN, WILLIAM (1908- )

*Love, Death, Sacrifice and So Forth,* 159.

The most exuberant of literary beings, William Saroyan, explaining how he began to write at nine, declares, "I didn't think of writing, I did it." Behind his writing, however, is a rough encounter with the world in which neither took the other's measure. Of Armenian descent, deprived of his father when he was very young, Saroyan sold papers at eight, was a telegraph boy at thirteen, and a vineyard laborer at sixteen. The selection in this anthology is really unclassifiable; its author thinks it is a short story; the editors have arbitrarily made it an essay.

SCHLAUCH, MARGARET (1898- )

*Semantics: Vocabulary in Motion,* 216.

Dr. Schlauch, Professor of English, New York University, and specialist in linguistics, Chaucer, and Middle English literature, has been awarded fellowships by the American Association of University Women and the Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, and has traveled extensively in Europe, Central America, and Mexico. Among her books are *Chaucer's Constance and Accused Queens* (1927), *Medieval Narrative* (1928), *Saga of the Volsungs* (1930), *Romance in Iceland* (1933), and *The Gift of Tongues* (1942), from which the selection in this volume has been taken.

SITWELL, SIR OSBERT (1892- )

*A Letter to My Son,* 116.

The second of a talented family of British poets and prose writers—the others are Edith and Sacheverell—who have done much experimenting in verse. In addition to his poetry, Sir Osbert has written several novels and numerous social essays and critical studies.

STEINBECK, JOHN (1902- )

*The Sea-Cow*—with Edward F. Ricketts, 140.

Of mixed Irish and German stock, John Ernst Steinbeck was born in Salinas, California, took an irregular college course at Stanford, and knocked about America (even laying bricks at Madison Square Garden), before he wrote his first novel, *A Cup of Gold.* Now with ten novels and several books of short stories to his credit, Steinbeck is known to every well-read American. By common consent, his best novels are *In Dubious Battle* and *The Grapes of Wrath,* both dealing with migrant labor in his native state. "The Sea-Cow" comes from a book of nonfiction, *The Sea of Cortez,* which is the ancient name of the Gulf of California, where Steinbeck went with his friend, the marine biologist Edward F. Ricketts, to study the sea life of that great body of water.

SYMONDS, JOHN ADDINGTON (1840-1893)

*The Death of Sir Philip Sidney,* 37.

A British scholar-essayist who spent most of his life in Italy. His most ambitious work is his seven-volume *History of the Renaissance in Italy* (1875-86). He also wrote a notable series of biographies, which includes his *Life of Sir Philip Sidney* (1878); the extract in the present anthology was taken from this study.

TAYLOR, DEEMS (1885- )

*The Monster,* 53.

Composer and musical critic, Joseph Deems Taylor has become one of the best known authorities in his field, not merely through his contributions to newspapers

and encyclopedias but also through his appearances on the radio and on the motion-picture screen.

THURBER, JAMES (1894- )

*The Macbeth Murder Mystery,* 156.

American cartoonist, philosopher, humorist, journalist, and playwright. He has served on the Columbus *Dispatch,* the Chicago *Tribune* (Paris), and the New York *Evening Post,* and has been a contributor to *The New Yorker* since 1926. With Elliott Nugent he wrote "The Male Animal," a successful comedy. He is also the author of *Is Sex Necessary?* (with E. B. White), *The Owl in the Attic, The Seal in the Bedroom, My Life and Hard Times, The Middle Aged Man on the Flying Trapeze, Let Your Mind Alone, The Last Flower, Fables for Our Time,* and *My World—and Welcome to It.*

*Time,* EDITORS OF (1923- )

*Average Man,* 3. *In Egypt Land,* 56. *Disney's Cinesymphony,* 434.

The newsmagazine *Time,* founded by Henry R. Luce and Briton Hadden in 1923, is distinguished by a pungent, but often eccentric, style of clipped phraseology. Notoriously reactionary on political and economic issues, *Time* is broadly liberal in its defense of racial and religious minorities. It reports diversions, inventions, and distractions with the popeyed excitement of a small boy who has just seen his first giraffe.

TOMLINSON, HENRY MAJOR (1873- )

*Bed-Books and Night-Lights,* 153.

A British writer of essays, novels, and travel books of great vividness, originality, and charm. His *London River* (1921) is a collection of essays, his *Gallions Reach* (1927), a story of the sea, his *All Our Yesterdays* (1930), a novel dealing with the period of the First World War, and his *Morning Light* (1947), a magnificent sea-adventure of the nineteenth century.

TUNIS, JOHN R. (1889- )

*First Gentleman of Philadelphia,* 7.

Native of Boston but not of Beacon Street, John R. Tunis became a sports writer after graduating from Harvard and serving in World War I. No other sports writer has attacked with such meritorious vigor the sham of "amateurism" as it is revealed in the great spectacles of "top competition" in this country. Tunis has great respect, however, for the man who makes an honest living out of his countrymen's avid interest in athletics.

TWAIN, MARK (SAMUEL CLEMENS) (1835-1910)

*How to Lecture Impromptu,* 95.

Easily the most successful humorist in our history, Mark Twain desired to be respected as a serious thinker. No one did more to baffle him in that end than his irrepressible self, yet such a book as *Mark Twain in Eruption,* edited by Bernard De Voto out of Twain's manuscripts, shows how seriously he reflected on men and events. And the letter reprinted here shows also that even his humorous effects may have been premeditated.

UREY, HAROLD (1893- )

*Bomb Control Not Impossible,* 112.

Discoverer of the hydrogen atom with the atomic weight of two, and specialist in the "structure of atoms and molecules, thermodynamic properties of gases, absorption spectra, Raman spectra, and Isotopes," Harold Urey is one of the most distin-

guished chemical physicists that America has produced. Drafted from his professorship at Columbia for the "Manhattan Project," he writes about the necessity of atomic control with as full a knowledge as anyone possesses.

VEBLEN, THORSTEIN (1857-1929)

*Summary and Trial Balance,* 330.

America's first "institutional" economist is also her most iconoclastic. Roughly treated by academic administrators after due and full provocation, Veblen vented his wrath on our colleges and universities in *The Higher Learning.* No less provocative are *The Theory of the Leisure Class* and *The Engineers and the Price System.* Veblen studied and taught at Carlton, Johns Hopkins, Yale, Cornell, Chicago, Stanford, Missouri, and the New School for Social Research.

WEEKS, EDWARD (1898- )

*Notes on an Old Friend,* 142.

Occupant of an editorial chair made famous by James Russell Lowell, William Dean Howells, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, and others, Edward Weeks has brought new life to *The Atlantic Monthly,* one of the best magazines published in America today. One year as a manuscript reader and book salesman, after Harvard and Cambridge University, was Mr. Weeks's preparation for his rôle.

WIENER, NORBERT (1894- )

*A Scientist Rebels,* 114.

Son of Leo Wiener, professor of Slavic languages at Harvard, Norbert Wiener, himself a professor of mathematics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is counted today among the world's foremost mathematical analysts. He served at the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland in World War I and did work for the National Defense Research Committee during World War II.

WILSON, WOODROW (1856-1924)

*The Lawyer and the Community,* 290.

The twenty-eighth President of the United States of America was born in Staunton, Virginia, educated at Princeton and Johns Hopkins, and admitted to the bar. He took up college teaching, however, as a profession and taught history, government, economics, and jurisprudence at Bryn Mawr, Wesleyan, and Princeton. His skill in administration brought him to the presidency of Princeton in 1902; he resigned in 1910 to become Governor of New Jersey. From the chief of a state, he became chief of his nation; he was President for two terms, from 1913 to 1921. President Wilson's two terms in the White House were marked by the passage of the Seventeenth Amendment, providing for the direct popular election of Senators, the Eighteenth, establishing national prohibition, and the Nineteenth, bringing votes to women. With his reëlection in 1916, he became a war president. Outstanding in these years were his Fourteen Points for Peace, his heroic fight for the League of Nations Covenant, and his winning of the Nobel peace prize. Opposed by an isolationist Senate, he toured the country to defend stubbornly his plans for the League of Nations, but suffered a stroke as a result of the strain and was invalided until his death five years later. Woodrow Wilson wrote, with brilliancy and clarity, several books, chief of which are his *Congressional Government: A Study in American Politics* (1885); his five-volume *History of the American People* (1902); and his *Constitutional Government in the United States* (1908).

WOLFE, THOMAS C. (1900-1938)

*A Writer's Creation and Vision of Life,* 103.

One of the most remarkable of contemporary American novelists. He was born

in Ashville, N. C., and educated at the University of North Carolina and at Harvard. In 1924 he joined the staff of the Department of English at New York University and taught there until the award of a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1930 made it possible for him to devote all his time to his overmastering ambition to write. Although Wolfe's initial interest was in drama, he turned from this form to the novel, and never did create any full-length play of distinction. His earliest novel, written while he was still instructor at New York University, was *Look Homeward Angel* (1929), an autobiographical narrative that created an immense sensation. It was followed by *Of Time and the River* (1932), and by several novels, stories, and sketches drawn posthumously from the accumulation of Wolfe's ceaseless outpourings: *The Web and the Rock* (1939), *You Can't Go Home Again* (1940), and *The Hills Beyond* (1941). His *Letters to His Mother,* edited by John S. Terry, appeared in 1943.

WOOLF, VIRGINIA (1882-1941)

*The Art of Biography,* 365.

One of the outstanding women novelists, biographers, and critics of modern England. In her novels, from *Jacob's Room* (1922) to *The Years* (1937), she experimented with an impressionistic and intensive style. She wrote many brilliant essays, chiefly in the field of literary criticism. A highly lyrical and sensitive genius, she killed herself early in the Second World War, apparently to escape the terror which it had imposed upon her.

WOOLLCOTT, ALEXANDER (1887-1943)

*The Town-Crier Begs to Differ,* 104.

Immortalized as Sheridan Whiteside in Kaufman and Hart's "The Man Who Came to Dinner," Alexander Woollcott was the great Pooh-Bah of our times; but he was also a person of real integrity, as the letter from "The Town Crier," used in this anthology, indicates. During his lifetime he worked for two Philadelphia and four New York newspapers; he was also on the staff of *Stars and Stripes* and *The New Yorker.* On invitation of the authors of the play, he successfully assumed the rôle of Whiteside himself.

WRIGHT, FRANK LLOYD (1869- )

*Organic Architecture,* 322.

Leading American exponent of functionalism in architecture, Frank Lloyd Wright began his career in Chicago in 1893, the year of the famous Columbia Exposition. Wright has designed both homes and factory buildings, palaces and offices. He has written extensively on his art.

ZABEL, MORTON DAUWEN (1901- )

*Sandburg's Testament,* 422.

Successor to Harriet Munro as editor of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse,* Morton Dauwen Zabel has proved discriminating as both an editor and a critic. He has since edited *Literary Opinion in America* and taught at Loyola (Chicago), where he is head of the English Department.

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