



TALKS TO YOUNG MEN

BY ✓

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TALKS TO YOUNG MEN



TALKS TO YOUNG MEN

I

THE STUFF THAT MAKES YOUNG MANHOOD

THE most important thing a young man ever does is to get ready. The key-note lasts to the end of the tune, and the foundation reaches clear to the finial. Beginnings are autocratic. No matter how long a man lives, he will never get away from his youth. My initial inquiry, therefore, will concern itself with the matter of stuff. What is in a man at the commencement has almost as much to say as to what he will finish with as the chestnut has to say about the kind of tree that will grow out of it. There is

good authority for the fact that thistles do not evolve figs. Every live kernel, whether botanical or human, is stamped with its destiny. An acorn can never grow into anything but an oak. I shall have considerable to say before I am through about a young man's power to shape his own future. It is all the more necessary to begin, therefore, by understanding that that is true only within limits. It has ceased to be a current theory that every mother's boy is liable to become President of the United States. All men are not run in the same mold, and a man is handicapped by his mold. It is not likely that Colonel Smith could have become Napoleon, even if he had lived south of the Channel in the days of the French Revolution. There is a quality in some men that is in them before they begin to do anything, and that cannot be earned by perspiration. Putting a buttercup to school will not graduate it a butterfly, even if it is a very good school. Its only wholesome ambition will be to be as good as it can as a buttercup. Born differences are incorrigible and are a good deal in the nature of fate.

* * *

MY intention in emphasizing stuff is to discredit the stress that is in so many quarters laid on circumstance. A good many young men

excuse themselves from ever becoming anything or doing anything by the fact that they always live where it is low tide. Perhaps that is because it is always low tide where they live. At any rate, the more I learn of the history of the men who have succeeded the more apparent it becomes that if they were born in low water they patched up their tattered circumstances and beat out to sea on a tide of their own making. Dr. Roswell D. Hitchcock once wrote: "How many 'mute, inglorious Miltons' die in their mothers' arms nobody knows; but the grown-up Miltons all get heard from." I have watched a good many brooding hens, but I never saw one facilitate the hatching process by pecking the shell. The chick on the inside will get out if he is worth it. Circumstances are only remotely related to the marrow of the matter. Success means, all the way through to the finish, a victory over difficulties, and if the young aspirant lacks the grit to face and down the difficulty that happens to confront him at the start, there is little reason to expect that his valor will show to any better advantage in his encounter with enemies that get in his way later. Thirty years ago if a young man made up his mind to go to college the first question he asked of himself was, "How can I earn the money?" The first question he is likely to ask himself to-day is, "Whom can I look to to

give me the money?" Removing difficulties is often nothing more nor less than putting a premium on incompetency. More men are injured by having things made easy for them than by having their path beset with difficulties, for it encourages them to stay themselves on circumstances, whereas their supreme reliance needs to be on their own personal stuff. We therefore rarely expect that the son of a successful man will be himself a success. Abraham's son was nothing but Isaac, hardly more than a hyphen to connect Abraham with Jacob. It is a big mistake to have too great a father. Sir William Grove says: "An estate in Somersetshire, of which I once took charge temporarily, was on the slope of the Mendip Hills. The rabbits on one part of it, viz., that on the hillside, were in perfect condition, not too fat nor too thin, sleek, active, vigorous, and yielding excellent food. Those in the valley, where the pasturage was rich and luxuriant, were all diseased, most of them unfit for human food, and many lying dead on the fields. They had not had to struggle for life; their short life was miserable and their death early." Which is as true of boys as of rabbits. We are more likely to find a good destiny by going afoot than by riding.

THE personal stuff just mentioned is primarily composed of two factors—intelligence and passion, the power to know a thing and the power to feel it. The degree to which these two possibilities are combinedly developed will measure pretty accurately the reach of their possessor's effectiveness and influence. Whatever contributes to that result is education in the best and broadest sense of the term. This is the only thorough way of approaching the educational problem. I am assuming in all this that the young man whom I am addressing is disposed to take matters seriously, and that nothing contents him short of the reality in the case. I come back to it again, then, that his own personality, trained in the two mentioned directions of thought and feeling, is certain to constitute the capital with which he is to make himself a personal factor in the world's life. Young men are constantly worrying lest they be failures and nonentities. Every man will count for all he is worth. There is as steady and constant a ratio between what a man is and what he can accomplish as there is between what a ton of dynamite is and what it can accomplish. There is as much a science of success as there is a science of hydraulics. And it all comes back in the first instance to the matter of laying in supplies, accumulating primary stuff. A lad is never too young to have that fact put

before him, and never too old to have it rehearsed. He will understand and appreciate the truth of it before he gets through life, and it is a great pity for him not to have at least a little appreciation of it near the beginning, so as to frame his initial years in consonance with it. The point at which so many of our young men go wrong is in thinking that qualification for life consists in being able to do certain particular things. This would be like saying, for example, that a man is physically equipped because, as the result of a good deal of specialized gymnastic training, he has learned to stand on his head or to walk on his hands. Such tricks may be both interesting and remunerative, but the ability to perform them tells us nothing as to the athlete's general physical condition, or as to his bodily ability to sustain the pressure that will be put upon him, or to render the service that will be required of him. The first thing that a man needs as an animal is to have a body that is all-round healthy, and as much of it as possible. Everybody understands that, but there are a great many who are not understanding that a similarly thorough and harmonious accumulation of supplies is just as much a necessary preliminary to large and effective work along personal lines. That accounts for the ambition that so many young men have to get at their life-work early, and for their anxiety to con-

fine themselves to narrow lines of preparation. Such a mode of procedure will doubtless qualify them to perform certain intellectual, artistic, or mechanical tricks, and to perform them cleverly and in a manner that will have in it some promise of bread and butter.

* * *

BUT I have little interest in addressing myself to young men who have no other ambition than to play upon the stage of personal life the same rôle that an equilibrist plays upon a tight rope, or that a trick mule plays in a circus. A man does not begin to fulfil his functions as a man by any number of specific things which he can do as an expert. The world cares very little for experts, and the course of events is only infinitesimally determined by them. It is not so much any one thing which a man can do ingeniously that makes him a power as it is the tremendous amount of interior capital that he has to do with, giving him thus a kind of imperial grasp upon any situation that he may happen to be called on to face. Young men do not realize that, and perhaps it is hardly to be expected that they should; but they will realize it before they get through, and it is a terrific pity that they cannot so far be brought to respect and defer to the experimentally acquired judgment of their

elders as to save themselves the misfortune of regretting by and by that they had not laid at the bottom a foundation broad enough to carry all that they had the ambition to build upon it. Just at this point I want to reiterate a statement already made, that there is nothing haphazard in these matters. The less a young man talks about luck, and untowardness of circumstances, and the coquettishness of popular favor, and the like, the better for him and for the world, to which he owes himself. Every man will have all the power he earns, and the power that he has will tell, not because people like it or like him, but because it is power, and as such can keep itself erect without having a cricket put under its feet, and keep itself dry without having an umbrella spread over its head.

* * *

PERSONAL pressure can no more be hooted down or voted down or argued out of existence than can the push of the wind or the pull of the moon. If you weigh a ton you will exert a ton's pressure. It is well to emphasize this, because in this way life loses a good deal of that lottery aspect with which sluggishness and poltroonery are so prone to clothe it. Likewise, a good deal of what is said about genius is similarly foolish. There is probably such a thing as genius,

although ninety-nine hundredths of it is doubtless the name which lazy people give to results which others have earned by hard work in those hours when the lazy people themselves were either sleeping or wishing they could gain it without toiling for it. The word is a tribute which sloth pays to industry in order that sloth may not have the general reputation of being slothful. Of the remaining one per cent. a considerable fraction is certainly a type of insanity, by which I mean that the majority of such men's faculties are pauperized in order to the subsidizing of the minority. There is faculty enough in almost anybody to become genius if only all that faculty were lumped at one spot. No doubt there are geniuses in the technical sense of the term ; so there are physical giants ; but a great deal more than nine hundred and ninety-nine thousandths of the solid work of the world is done by men who measure under six feet, and any man marking five feet ten would be set down as a compound of coward and idiot who should offer it as the lachrymose apology for his own do-nothingness that he was undersized, and that there was no use in trying to compete with Goliath and the Anakims.

The power to know and the power to feel I have mentioned as being the warp and the woof of an equipped manhood. A thought multiplied into a passion is the enginery of human effect.

To know a truth, and then to have our heart throb in warm appreciation of it and strong commitment to it, makes power—always makes power. Those are the two parallel railway irons, then, upon which the train of the young man's individual discipline will have to run.

I do not care just now to amplify this point, except to say that truth is what creates within us our material of effect, and that, while it is intellect that gives us access to the truth and makes us master of it, it is by the agency of feeling that truth turns about and masters us; and it is the latter mastery, really, that makes us puissant. It is on that account that so much of what we know as intellectual discipline is fruitless so far as relates to filling the student with capacity for effects. He has learned his lesson, which, however, lies in him only as so much combustible material, but to which as yet no torch has been applied. On the contrary, the man whose entire capital is one of enthusiasm will be conspicuous for his abundance of torch, at the same time lacking the timber which the torch exists primarily to enkindle.

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I AM saying nothing in this article as to the means by which this twinship of effect will best be accomplished. That will come further on. I shall be amply satisfied if at the close of

these paragraphs my young reader shall feel that "getting ready" to be a man and to do a man's work consists in having solid deposit made exactly at the core of his own personal life; that success is not going to mean anything which he can cleverly append to the branches, but something which he is going to have worked into the stock. Truth is the only nutriment I know of that will become in us the substance of manhood and the material of effect—truth digested till it has become stout fiber in our muscles and warm blood in our hearts. We can become an excellent human machine simply by doing things, and doing them so many times that the performance becomes automatic and unconscious; but that sort of dexterity is hardly even tangent to our main matter. The first great desideratum is not to train our energies of action; it is to get them. It is comparatively an easy thing to conduct the water on to the paddles and run your mill after once you have captured the water-supply and secured it in the reservoir. If it is claimed that this way of handling the matter is impracticable and has not enough to say about the return it will yield in the shape of money, bread, and preferment, I can only rejoin that it is quite as practicable as the work of laying foundation ever is; it is quite as practicable as the process of making investment ever is. Dividends form, of course, a

more congenial theme than investments, but the latter of these logically takes precedence. Sowing still antedates reaping, and the amount sowed determines pretty closely the size of the harvest. Whether it be young men or wheat-fields, the interest can be depended upon to keep up with the capital, and empty barns in October are the logical sequence of empty furrows in spring. The young man may as well understand that there are no gratuities in this life, and that success is never reached "across lots."



II

THE BODY THE FOUNDATION OF THE MAN

NO thorough handling of the matter with which we are at present concerned can afford either to ignore the body or to treat it with mere cavalier regard. There is what might be called an intellectual superciliousness, that prides itself on its disdain of what is physical, and that affects to maximize the personal element in our make-up by minimizing the dignity and authority of the body. The fundamental thing to be said about all this matter is that, so far from the material part of our nature being an accident, or even a necessary evil, it is a substantial ingredient of our manhood. When God wanted to make the best thing he knew how to make, he composed it of one part spirit and one part matter—one grain of deity to one of dust. There is nothing in the history of that transaction to indicate that

man without body is man, any more than man without spirit is man. All such reference to the body as that it is a casket for the occupancy of the jewel, or a cage for the temporary retention of the imprisoned spirit, is sheer gratuity, and is like the language that the more favored classes sometimes use of those less favored, who forget that those who are at the top are so in considerable degree because those who are underneath furnish the foundation and make the opportunity. Animalism is an ingrained factor, and we shall be a great deal more sensible and far better off if we accept the situation with serenity. The whole doctrine of the resurrection is a way that Scripture and the church have taken to record the importance they attach to the body as an inalienable element of our being.

* * *

THE body is so framed in with the other elements of our being that they will not be at their best unless it is at its best, which will not be the case except as consequence of the respect we show it and the dignity we accord to it. Any man who regards his corporeal self as a mere accident, and an awkward appurtenance that has to be temporarily endured, will consider indifference to its requirements as almost a religious duty, and physical excesses as scarcely savoring

of the immoral. Asceticism and debauchery are companion branches sprung from one stalk. It is interesting to notice how, with characteristic thoroughness, Scripture comprehends the entire matter when it says, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" The body is the fundamental thing in manhood; and it is one of the facts that ought to arrest and fasten attention that the apostle who did more than any other to build men up was the one who held the regard of his followers to the physical basis upon which such upbuilding could securely rest.

My main contention is, then, that the body is the groundwork upon which the edifice proper has to be reared, and that, as in the case of structures in general, that which is laid at the bottom determines and conditions whatever is afterward put upon it. It is a fact to which it behooves every earnest reader to give heed, that, however far the process of mental or spiritual development may be carried, there is little likelihood of its escaping the limitations imposed by the physical premise. So that a sound body is the first prerequisite to a vigorous intellect, a pure heart, and general wealth and ennoblement of spirit. In manhood, as much as in house-building, the foundation keeps asserting itself all the way from the first floor to the roof. The stones laid in the underpinning may be coarse and in-

elegant, but, even so, each such stone perpetuates itself in silent echo clear up through to the finial. The body is in that respect like an old Stradivarius violin, the ineffable sweetness of whose music is outcome and quotation from the coarse fiber of the case upon which its strings are strung. It is a very pleasant delusion that what we call the higher qualities and energies of a person maintain that self-centered kind of existence that enables them to discard and condemn all dependence upon what is lower and less refined than themselves, but it is a delusion that always wilts in an atmosphere of fact. Climb high as we like, our ladder will still require to rest on the ground; and it is probable that the keenest intellectual intuition and the most delicate throb of passion would, if analysis could be carried so far, be discovered to have their connections with the rather material affair that we know as the body.

* * *

IT is, I believe, conceded that those various anomalies of intellect classed under the general term of "insanity" have their grounds in some abnormal condition of the physical organism. It is presumable that there is no such thing as mental derangement apart from some correlative derangement of the physical factor. Now, that which holds in cases of extreme anomaly, it is safe

to suppose, holds as accurately and fixedly where the intellectual aberration is slight or even infinitesimal, and that every mental idiosyncrasy is the reflection of some probably unsuspected derangement having its seat in the body proper. In all this I am seeking only to set forth in a way to be appreciated the delicacy and intimacy of connection subsisting between what we are as animals and what we are as persons, the dependence of the latter upon the former, and the distinct necessity we are therefore under of making the body the prime and persistent object of regard if we have any ambition of a sort that looks higher than the body and transcends it.

Not only is there a recognition of this dependence of intellect upon physical conditions, but considerable of what used to be known as wickedness pure and simple is coming to be referred to the body and recognized as bodily defect or bodily degeneracy. Without trespassing in any dangerous way upon the domain of ethics, it is still prudent to say that there is a very true and serious sense in which alcoholism, for instance, is a disease, and in which sensuality in all its varieties is a good deal more matter of the body than it is of the heart. I am not in this apologizing for sensuality, and am going no further than seems warranted by the plain interpretation of the seventh chapter of Romans. My only

purpose in all these references is to have it felt that whatever is distinctive of man in the higher range of his possibilities is bound back into material grounds and largely limited by those grounds. That is true here which is true in architecture, that the character of the foundation decides both the horizontal and the vertical dimensions of what can be put upon it. Wherever we look, delicacy in the finish has to stay itself upon something corporeal in the start. Camilla Urso and Ole Bull could melt an audience to tears because the wooden case upon which they strung the vibrating catgut was made of Alpine pine. The object I have in this is not to intimate that musical sensibility is any the less fine for being stirred into passion by coarse implements, or that a man's intellectual action or esthetic or religious enthusiasm means any less because depending for its support upon the foundation of animal body. My only concern is that those who are thinking about the superstructure of earnest intelligence and an elevated and vigorous personality should never forget the fact of such dependence, but should, with sagacious and conscientious fidelity, devote themselves to bone, flesh, muscle, and blood as measuring the possibilities of personal power which human animalism is appointed to support.

IF we needed any further illustration of this principle, it would be furnished by the familiar fact that physical conditions are continually asserting themselves, and sometimes very imperiously, in the complexion which the world wears to our eyes, and the aspect under which realities, particularly of the finer sort, address themselves to our thoughts, tastes, and consciences. Hardly more does the condition of the body determine the quality and strength of our appetite for food than does that same condition determine the zest with which we appropriate the bestowments that reach us from the realms of the beautiful, the true, and the good. The body is a kind of sleeping partner in every act of cognition, appreciation, and faith. It is an interesting fact that all of those to whom Christ made his revelations were out-of-door men—men, therefore, presumably, whose anatomy and physiology were not of a kind to interfere confusingly or becloudingly with their apprehension of the realities tendered to them. Temperament is almost as important a factor in opinion as is the mind itself, and temperament is an affair of the body. Any man who is himself in any degree the subject of tidal oscillation knows that his own little world is liable to have its day marked off from its night by a transition almost as sharp as that which cuts in two the twenty-four hours of the terrestrial day.

I am not saying that this latter is a natural or a necessary order of things, but that it is a common order, and that it is only one of the many ways in which mind's dependence upon body asserts itself. For a man to be told under such circumstances that he ought to break loose from the body's domination would be a good deal like telling a man who wears blue glasses that he ought to mutiny against the domination of his spectacles and have the indigo eliminated from his perceptions.

* * *

IT is a little singular, moreover, that the higher the range which thought takes the more dependent upon physical conditions its action seems oftentimes to be, something as the higher a house is carried the more evident becomes any deviation which the foundation makes from the line of horizontal. Whether a man has a sanguine or a melancholic temperament will make little difference with his apprehension of the multiplication table, but will make a world of difference with his appreciation of Isaiah and St. John. What we know as old-schoolism and new-schoolism have their roots neither in piety nor in mentality, but in physiology. It will be interesting to discover what effect will be produced upon doctrinal divergences by fitting out the saints at the resur-

rection with a new set of bodies. It is almost comical to imagine what the effect would be in the next world if those who are radical here should be furnished with conservative resurrection bodies and *vice versa*. Doctrinal contractedness and sour piety are principally a matter of the liver; they are another and more euphonious name for biliousness that has struck up into the region of doctrine and experience.

Now, there is only one conclusion that can be reached from all this illustrative preliminary, which is that the body is the key to the entire situation. I do not mean that taking care of the body is itself the promise of intelligence, or of personal vigor and proportion, any more than any other substructure guarantees an appropriate superstructure; but it is the one only thing that makes such educated, vigorous, and wholesome personality perfectly possible. Fidelity to physical conditions is the first thing for a man to think of who has any ambition to be a personal success, and not only the first thing for him to think of, but the thing for him seriously to continue thinking of.

* * *

IT is, therefore, encouraging that our schools and colleges are making physical culture obligatory; and the encouragement lies less in what

such institutions have already done in the way of cultivating the body than it does in their making it part of academic confession of faith that a man can never altogether get over being an animal, that there is no inconsistency between intelligence and dust, and that the more a man wants to make of himself in the upper strata of human possibility the more careful he must be to keep in wholesome condition of repair the platform of tissue and blood-corpuscle, into which, as so much bud into so much stock, later unfoldings are inseparably knit. I should be sorry to have this interpreted as an approval of all or nearly all of what passes under the name of college athletics. It is one thing to train the body for the sake of the man, and it is another thing to train the body for the sake of the body. I regret that there is so much tendency among college authorities to shape the physical curriculum to the end of producing physical experts—foot-ball, base-ball, rowing-match professionals. That kind of thing is a craze at present, and it is a pity that among our college presidents, trustees, and professors so many have so far succumbed to the mania as to be willing to indorse it as a form of advertisement and as a drawing card. Venerable institutions of learning ought not in this way to go into the catering business. Any emphasis given to academic gymnastics that goes

beyond the point of developing a man's animalism for other purposes than to give support to his enlargement as a rational and moral possibility is a perversion of the purpose of human discipline, and to that degree blocks the wheels of all proper college intention. Nevertheless, the real animus of the athletic tendency is wholesome, marks progress, and is an encouraging augury of a better breed of men.

I have not attempted to prepare a schedule of hygienic rules. I am both indisposed and incompetent to prescribe a system of diet, exercise, or rest. My only purpose has been to crowd home to the practical regard of young men the truth that, whether they do or do not relish the idea of being fundamentally animal, that is their condition and is probably their destiny, and that how much they will be able to become over and above that will in very serious measure be determined by the amount of dignity they accord to the animal factor, and the virtuous respect they show it as basis of those more distinguished capacities and faculties which the body is ordained to sustain.



III

THE YOUNG MAN ENTERING LIFE

A YOUNG man needs to enter life equipped for rough weather. However much of calm may prevail on land, it usually blows out at sea. The most serious question the novitiate can ask of himself is how he is going to keep from being a castaway. I am not using that term with any reference to his being lost hereafter, but with reference to his being wrecked here. I am not preaching, but only stating a commonplace, when I say that a man who submits to the current always goes down-stream. Nobody ever drifts up-stream. Running water never stops till it gets to the bottom, unless something dams it. Likewise, a drifting boat never stops till it reaches the sea, unless it founders, runs aground, or drops anchor. A considerable part of a young man's preliminary interest will, therefore, need to con-

cern itself with anchorages. If he lived in a world where everything was fixed, and if his life brought him into no connection with drafts and currents, then he would have only to remain languidly and unconcernedly where he is, sublimely reliant upon his own *vis inertiae*. On the contrary, everything is afloat. We are all loaded with responsiveness and harnessed up with gravitations. Everything is magnetic needle, and everything else magnetic pole endlessly plucking at that needle. Life without this arrangement would be death, but life with it is all the time on the edge of disaster and continually getting over the edge. If we could decide that certain currents should produce no pressure upon us, and if, then, result would wait on our decision, the problem would be freed from a good many of its uncomfortable elements. But the captain at sea has to take things just as they come. Deciding not to have his boat retarded by the Gulf Stream when he is coming down the coast does not expedite him, nor does a decision not to be obstructed by the northeast wind when he is sailing up the coast. And resolutions on land are just as useless as they are at sea. Resolution is facing in a certain direction, but it is not getting there, and does not necessarily imply any ability to get there.

* * *

ONE of the most expensive and disastrous mistakes a young man ever makes is in supposing that a decision, a resolution, contains in itself the means of working its own execution, and that something besides power will suffice to overcome power. I am not moralizing at all, but simply handling one or two of the facts of personal life in the same blunt way in which I would talk about the working of a water-wheel or of a steam-engine. The art of living is not a matter of resolution, but it is a genius for playing off successfully favorable energies against those which are adverse, meeting energies with energies, only with energies that are a little bigger, very much as the engineer beats the gravity of the train by the push at the piston. So that the man who is anxious not to be taken off his feet must make it an important part of his equipment to get in the range of opposite forces that will hold him erect and keep him in safe water. Young men of parts often conclude that the principle just stated does not apply to themselves, for the reason that they are personally so weighty as to be inherently equal to any emergency. Perhaps, on the contrary, their weightiness only aggravates the difficulty. Increasing the weight of a rolling boulder does not diminish, but accelerates, the speed of its descent. One needs to be a great man in order to be able to become a great wreck.

It requires a great deal more counter-energy to recover a rowboat that is sliding down the Niagara rapids than it does to recover a cockleshell. The more there is in a man the more substance there is for untoward attractions to fasten themselves upon. One needs only to know something about the laws and forces that prevail in the physical world to appreciate this, for in these matters the physical and the personal kingdoms are only opposite sides of the same thing; and, whether it is a man or a steamship, the bigger the bulk the greater the momentum of the drift downward. It requires no great amount of thinking, then, to understand that if we are under the pull of one set of influences, operating to drag us on to shallows or breakers, our only refuge is in getting in under the mastery of another set, and, if possible, a stronger set.

* * *

WHEN calculating the prospects of a young man, and the likelihood of his being able to go through life without being taken off his feet, I always want to know whether he stands for anything in particular. A written sentence may be mere words or it may mean something. So a young man may be only a mixture of body

and soul or he may mean something: that combination of body and soul may stand as the expression of an idea. He may be some truth incarnate, so that when you meet him you feel that you are encountering that truth, and when he talks to you you have somehow the notion that truth is addressing you and arguing itself out with you. We none of us have to look far to find such men. There may be a certain stringency and aggressiveness about them sometimes that makes them uncomfortable, a kind of directness about them that makes them inevitable, but there is no mistaking their meaning. They are an idea become flesh—a doctrine, a theory, dressed in human apparel. The feature in the case of interest to us just now is that a man so conditioned is not likely to lose his way nor to founder. The point is not that he has mastered the idea, but that the idea has mastered him and in that way counteracts the influences operating to pull him in other ways. All of that is illustrated in the case of a young man in my congregation, in regard to whom his father said to me the other day, "John is perfectly possessed with the prohibition idea; I cannot tell whether he will make anything out of it or not, but I have the satisfaction of knowing that so long as that idea keeps its hold upon him he will never go astray nor get into any mischief." That gives

the whole philosophy of the matter in a single sentence.

* * *

THERE are a great many meaningless men in the community, and what that means is that, while they have the intelligence to understand an idea and the heart to feel it, yet the idea never gets so close to them as to have its reality tremendously experienced by them. We do not win our strength and stability by mastering ideas, but by being mastered by them—held in their grip. A man never really knows what there is in him, how much he can do, or how much he can withstand, till he gets fairly in under just such governance. I am convinced that there is nowhere nearly the amount of difference between people in point of personal caliber that is ordinarily supposed. It is not so much a difference in personal capacities and energies as it is a difference in the degree in which those energies become packed upon one another and reduced to solidity. Even on a cold day one can pick up a sunbeam and burn a hole through white oak with it if the lens with which the beam is focused is in good order. It is second only to the power of Pentecost to come so close to a truth or to a situation as to have that situation actually touch us and burn its way down into the sensitive

nerve of our being. The trouble with people, nine out of ten of them, is that they stand on insulators and watch the play of the lightning through drawn shutters, and never stand out and let the electric storm play in their own bosoms. It is by an inward experience of the storm that men can be held fast in the midst of the storm. Nerve varies inversely as the square of the distance that there is between us and the reality we are handling.

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STILL more apparent does the working of this principle become when for the word "idea" I substitute the word "purpose." Purpose at once suggests the notion that the person whom it actuates is in motion toward an end; and a person moving toward an end, like a rifle-ball toward a target, is less easily managed and directed than when he is standing still. Indeed, the more rapid its motion the more difficult it is to change its direction, and the less effect influences that happen to lie along its route will have upon it. Now, what momentum is in the rifle-ball purpose is in a man: it tends to hold him steadily to the track he is on; and the more vigorous the rush of intention with which he is following that track, the more it will take to retard him or derail him. Hence the more intense and engrossing a man's purpose—if it is a pur-

pose of good—the safer he is, and if he has no purpose of the kind he is not safe at all. Without it he is spoil for any and every diverting influence that may happen to light upon him, and of such diverting influences the air is all the time full.

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IT seems to me very much as though our moral and religious teachers are not as cognizant of the peculiarity of human nature in this particular as they ought to be and as would be much to the advantage of young people. I urge upon such ones the necessity of forsaking their evil ways and being good. There is an ethical flavor about all such mode of representation that passes easy muster with the conscience, but without interesting much the people to whom it is addressed and without doing much for them. If you appeal to a man to jump the Hudson River, he will listen to you with a show of respect if your appeal is cleverly put, but, nevertheless, you will not get him across the river. No one ever gets anywhere except as he avails of some means of transport. So, if our young people are to be drawn out from the midst of the clutch of small and tainted passions and motives, it will have to be done by their being lassoed by the noose of a large and dominating intention. To have a magnificent

purpose, and to be thoroughly wedded to that purpose, is three quarters of salvation. It is sad to reflect how much motiveless insipidity there is among us that is steadily resolving itself into ethical rot, for no other reason than that it has never been awakened into vigor and electrified into effect by the touch of a supreme purpose. The capabilities of these people are equal to the capabilities of other people, but no living nerve of keen design perforates those capabilities in a way to save them from relaxing into moral putrefaction. Set over against these the cases of Moses seeking the emancipation of the Hebrews, and so monopolized by his scheme that he said he was willing to be blotted out of God's book of remembrance if his dear countrymen could not be delivered; or the case of St. Paul, so devoted to the cause of saving his people that he declared he would rather be damned than not have his efforts succeed. How much effect would the small temptations, that existed in those old days just as plentifully and divertingly as they do in our days, have to swing either the prophet of Sinai or the apostle of Tarsus and Damascus out into the petty and tainted world of selfish and mean desire? I have not illustrated by Moses and St. Paul because they are Bible characters, but because every one knows enough of them to feel the cogency of the illustration. It would

have been morally impossible for either of those heroes of faith and of service to have become in any way degenerate, because they were held fast under the inspiration of a sublime endeavor.

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AND there is one other influence essential to the maintenance in a young man of an erect life, and that is the stimulus and governance that come from the personal inspirations of a life that is larger than his own. As already seen, we get a great deal from an idea and still more from a purpose, but real inspiration never proceeds from anything that is of the neuter gender, and St. Paul stated it in a way that the world has never forgotten when he said: "I know whom [not what, but *whom*] I have believed." I do not quote him here because the fact he was expressing was a religious one, but because he states in so terse a way that it was personal pressure, and not something impersonal, that made out the material of his own strength and fixity. John Stuart Blackie uttered the same truth at a different level of experience when he wrote: "To have felt the thrill of a fervid humanity shoot through your veins at the touch of a Chalmers, a Macleod, or a Bunsen is to a young man of fine susceptibility worth more than all the wisdom of the Greeks, all the learning of the Germans, and all

the sagacity of the Scotch." Any young man is not only unfortunate, but in danger, who is not related to some great overshadowing soul in something the same way in which the original apostles were related to the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Such souls are to us in the nature of a personal baptism. They not only fill us, they sweeten us and steady us. They become life and impulse within us. They lift us into ranges of experience and possibilities of effect that are otherwise denied us. That was all expressed in the famous tribute that Garfield paid to Mark Hopkins. It is not what such kingly spirits say to us, nor what they do before us, but what by some sort of pentecostal process they are able to become within us, that constitutes the real service they render. I had a good many professors in college who taught me things, but hardly more than one that so made himself over to me as to leave me richer and safer than he found me. The others may have done something toward making me a mathematical or a linguistic expert, but there was one who was to me a personal inspiration, and who did for me and for my classmates on human ground what was done for Spirit-baptized disciples in the olden time, when they were able to think with a wisdom and walk with a steadfastness begotten in them by the powers above.



IV

SHALL WE SEND OUR BOY TO COLLEGE?

THAT depends a great deal on the boy. It might not be best for him to go to college; it might not be best for the community that he should. College can fit a man for life, and, also, it can unfit him. There are styles of education that disqualify the student for doing what he is competent to do, without qualifying him to do that which he might like to do, but for which he lacks, and always will lack, the prerequisites. Agriculturalists tell us that there are soils which, if left mostly to themselves, will bear a very respectable crop of a certain order, but which, if considerably cultivated, will neither bear a crop of that order nor of any other. Soil and brain are not so widely differenced as not to be subject, within certain limits, to the same laws. As a general principle, the more a man knows the

better ; but so long as the present order of things continues a great amount of very ordinary work will require to be done ; and ordinary people will do ordinary work better than extraordinary people will, and be a great deal more comfortable while doing it. Hordes of both sexes are entering college for the reason that they do not enjoy doing commonplace things. The result is that commonplace things are left undone, and uncommonplace things fare still worse.

* * *

AGRICULTURE is the material basis of a nation's strength and prosperity. We could dispense with either lawyers, doctors, or ministers better than we could with farmers. Probably we should not quarrel so much if there were fewer students of the law, should not be sick so much if there were fewer students of medicine, and should not be so wicked if there were fewer students of theology. All of these could contribute liberally to the ranks of the agriculturalists with advantage to the professions and to the grain and vegetable markets. I am not disparaging anybody ; neither am I saying that it would not be a good thing, in itself considered, if every one, however material or menial his occupation, could receive all that the finest school or college training could confer ; but that is not practicable at

present, and never will be till people get over thinking that there is a disgrace attaching to the doing of ordinary things. I am often called upon by those who are not ashamed to beg, but who would blow out their brains or jump into the North River before they would soil their hands by shoveling gravel. They are frequently college graduates, who got just enough Greek and Latin to think that manual labor was degrading, but not enough Greek and Latin to guarantee them against the poorhouse. They illustrate the point, already made, that colleges unfit men as well as fit them. This is one matter, then, that parents need to think over when considering the question of giving their boys a college education.

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I BELIEVE thoroughly in the college, and it is significant that very few college graduates feel otherwise. The disparagement of such institutions emanates, almost without exception, from those who have not experienced their benefits, and are not, therefore, in a situation to reach an intelligent judgment. It is not safe to claim, however, that every kind of success, even of legitimate success, will be promoted by a college training. There are two classes of result toward which men strive, and two sorts of problem that the engagements of their life will require them to

solve. One of these classes could be illustrated by the money-getter. If I had a boy for whom it was my supreme ambition that he should become rich, I should not send him to college. So far from helping his prospects in that direction, it would probably damage them. Broad-mindedness cannot be counted upon to yoke up easily with monetary shrewdness. Money-making is a trick. The easy acquisition of it is a knack. It involves the condensation of interest and faculty along a particular line, and that a narrow line. There is nothing to hinder a very small man from being a very wealthy one. Some men, whose names will instantly occur, probably, to the reader of this article, could hardly have become greater except at the expense of becoming poorer.

* * *

SHREWDNESS does not imply big-mindedness. I might say with a good deal of assurance that it implies the contrary. And shrewdness has more than anything else to do with the acquisition of gain. I am not defining words here, but trying to use them in the sense usually accepted. Shrewdness among men is a good deal the same thing that sharpness is among knives, razors, and scissors, and is less suggestive of largeness than it is of blade thinned down to

an edge. This is not disparaging the quality of the material. The sharpest razors can be drawn down only from the best steel, but nevertheless the reason they can cut is because there is so little to them at the point where they take hold. Much the same thing can be asserted of other experts as well as of the money expert. There are a great many things that can be best done by the man who does not know too much, or at least by the man whose intelligence is concentrated at a single point or along a single line. The mechanic who has come to be known among us as the "wizard" would perhaps have been more of a man if he had gone to Harvard, but it would probably have spoiled him as a "wizard." Genius is presumably always a species of mania, and liable, therefore, to become something very ordinary if successfully subjected to the processes of the asylum. They had better be kept away from college if the design is to make them experts. College will be able to give them a character of "all-roundness"; but a knife cannot be round and sharp at the same time; neither can a boy. It is true that there are what are called business colleges, where the monopolizing purpose is to make the students into business experts, money-making experts. It is unfortunate that such schools are called "colleges," for to the degree in which they fulfil their advertised pur-

pose they cease to embody the college idea. Such "colleges" do not aim to deepen and expand their students, but to sharpen them for business life, and perform, therefore, only the same part that the grindstone and the hone do in preparing the razor for the cutlery shop.

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THIS leads up directly to the second class of results toward which men strive, and for which any of what are called the learned professions would suffice as example. We are now on ground quite distinct from that occupied by the expert. We are quite out of the region of shrewdness, crankiness, and mania. In dealing with our physician, our lawyer, or our clergyman, we want a man with trained powers and with balanced powers. In that I have combined in a single sentence the two purposes of the college. The object of such an institution is not to fit a man for any specific occupation or calling. College is not a grindstone nor a whetstone. In its true intention it stands in the same relation to mind that the gymnasium does to body. Men do not practise in a gymnasium in order that they may learn how to perform any specific variety of physical labor, but in order that they may be in muscular condition to do anything that may come to them to be done, or, still better,

that their body may be at its completest and its best. So, if we are going to do large, intelligent work, the prime condition is the possession of an intellect trained and stocked in the same general and comprehensive way. College training is simply the process of intellectually getting ready; not getting ready for this, that, or the other specific mental service, but simply getting ready—planting down a broad foundation of preliminary, big enough to support any breadth or height of superstructure that there may be need or opportunity to put upon it.

There are two criticisms which ardent and practical young men are likely to pass upon the purpose of college training as thus stated, one of which is that it involves an infeasible expenditure of time. Graduates are themselves the best judges upon this matter. The college course and the requisite preparatory training cost about seven years of the best and most possible period of a man's life. There may be circumstances in the case that forbid such expenditure. Considerations of health, means, dependencies, may necessitate a different mode of life and a pecuniarily remunerative one; but if a young man hopes to do a large, solid work in the world, a work in which intelligence of a broad kind is to play any considerable part, and there is no antecedent obstacle in the way, he makes an irreversible

mistake if he considers seven years too much to pay for a liberal education.

* * *

IF the practical youngster considers such an expenditure of ten per cent. of his lifetime impracticable, it needs to be said that there is nothing more misleading than the "practical" conclusions arrived at by inexperience. The time a man spends in getting ready is never wasted time. The value of a man's work is not determined nearly as much by its quantity as by its quality, and quality is the correlate of preparation. If I may refer to myself, I commenced what may be called my life's work when I was thirty-three. Up to that time I was simply finishing the preliminaries and had no definite purpose for the future. More men scrimp the effects of their life by beginning too early than by beginning too late. If they die young it makes little difference how much time they spend in apprenticeship, and if they live to a ripe age it makes a great deal of difference. It is rather a suggestive fact that nine tenths of our Lord's life he spent in preparation.

* * *

I AM only dealing just now with the general proposition that because it takes seven years to reach the end of a college course is no kind

of reason at all why a man should not take a college course. So far from its not being practical, it is the most severely practical thing he can do, just as the most practical thing an architect can first do in putting up a building is, not to build, but to excavate ; and the higher he expects to build up the more time he will use in digging down. It is safe to say that ninety-five out of a hundred college graduates would take no exception to my statement.

Another criticism prompted by the utilitarian spirit, particularly if inexperienced, will be that the college occupies itself so much with what has no direct bearing upon the ordinary questions of life. To any one who has yielded himself vigorously to the discipline of the college curriculum such a criticism appears just about as reasonable as it would for a man to object to certain dishes placed before him at table on the ground that he was unable to follow each crumb and drop to the particular function it discharges in the anatomy and physiology of the body. It is a sad pity that our college authorities are to such a degree succumbing to this shallow skepticism, and that they are so largely allowing the idea that a college is an institution for the comprehensive upbuilding of a man to be replaced by the idea that it is a sort of whetting-shop where dull steel can be ground to an edge, or a kind of cabinet shop

where unshaped timber can be worked down and fitted to a particular niche in the business of life. In this way, instead of being the fosterer of intelligence pure and simple, the college is coming to be utilized to a considerable degree as a contrivance for teaching mind to do specific things and play particular tricks. Still, the old idea is deeply rooted, and there is conservatism enough, I hope, to insure its maintenance. The question to be settled is not what particular studies will be the means of securing the graduate quickest admission to the activities of life, but what are the studies that are best fitted to make his mind distinct and vigorous in every direction, so that he will be soundly intelligent and equipped even for uncalculated emergencies.

I can say, for myself, that those studies which seemed to me when in college least prolific in probable practical result have in the issue shown themselves to be just the ones that have been most practical and prolific in their yield. Those powers of mind which are the most necessary are in many a student the very ones that are most feebly present, and the ones, therefore, to which the most attention needs to be given rather than the least. A student's fondness for a particular branch, and his ability to appreciate in advance the advantages of a particular branch, suggest absolutely nothing as to the desirability of prose-

cutting that branch. The trouble with hosts of people is that they want to get results without earning them. Young men fix their eyes upon those who have attained a measure of success, and conceive that there is a possibility of their attaining to the same success without squarely and honestly paying for it. We never obtain what we have not, except by the laborious exertion of what we have. There are no royal roads; there are no short cuts which do not in the end demonstrate themselves to be the longest and most circuitous routes in existence. College life is long and laborious. It costs money, and other things that are still more expensive than money. But it is the best expedient yet devised for securing in a man that completeness of equipment which will enable him to win his way in the world, where so immense a proportion of the problems have to be solved by intelligence that is trained, balanced, and on the alert.

In my next article (in response to a request received from one of my readers) I want to say something as to the means by which one who for any reason is not able to go to college can best make up to himself the loss which he thereby suffers.



V

SUBSTITUTES FOR A COLLEGE TRAINING

OUR previous article stated some of the advantages of a college training. Some go to college who would have been better off at home. Some, who would have been benefited by such discipline, have the opportunity closed against them by circumstances that are beyond their control. To many of the latter the deprivation is a bitter disappointment, and the earnestness of their own temperament and purpose of life puts them upon inquiring how the loss which they thus sustain can, in a measure, be made up to them by some sort of substitute for college training. The aim of the present chapter is to answer, as far as possible, this inquiry.

* * *

THE first thing of which we need to remind ourselves is that the particular studies which

are taken up in college are not prosecuted for their own sake, but for the sake of the interior discipline which their prosecution is presumed to afford. Let me cite, as example, the Greek and Latin languages. If, now, those languages were studied in order that upon graduation the student might be in a condition to read classic authors with facility and intelligence, it would be difficult to solve my inquirer's perplexity. Nothing but the study of Greek and Latin will acquaint men with Greek and Latin, and there is nothing that will perfectly take the place of a college as an expedient for pursuing those studies. The instant it is allowed that the final object of a college course is to acquaint students with the branches taught in that course, there is no longer anything that can be offered as a substitute for such a course. But that, as I have already attempted to show, is not the object of the college. A student may think it is before he goes, but he understands better after he has been out a few years. I studied Greek faithfully when I was in college and read considerable of Homer, but I do not suppose I could read a line of him to-day without a grammar and a dictionary. If anybody says I ought to be ashamed of it, all I can reply is that I am not ashamed of it at all. When a traveler comes to a river he looks about to find a bridge by which he can cross it, and when he

gets to the other end of the bridge he leaves it for the next man, without it ever occurring to him to take it along with him. So, when a mountaineer is scaling a sharp spur, and finds a ladder spiked in for the convenience of climbers, he puts his foot upon it, scrambles up over it, and then leaves it behind him, never expecting to encounter any one who is so much of a fool as to rebuke him for not having trundled the ladder up with him, and for not having capped the summit with all his mountaineering paraphernalia. What I mean by this is that Greek, Latin, physics, and mathematics are primarily not the goal of pursuit, but are the bridges, ladders, and other apparatus of locomotion by which the goal is to be reached ; so that, whether we do or do not know how to read Plato and Livy six years after we are out of college, or how to analyze flowers and calculate eclipses, we are still at the apex if we are possessed of the mental keenness and vigor which it is the supreme office of those studies to produce.

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UNDERSTANDING, then, that mental keenness and vigor are the final objects proper to be aimed at by a college course, it becomes a very natural and suitable question to ask whether those objects are not such that other than college

means will suffice to compass them. Because a gymnasium affords opportunity for systematized bodily training hardly to be obtained otherwise, it does not follow that a gymnasium is necessary to health, and that there are no other means of physical culture that will not answer every essential purpose. If health depended on the swinging of dumb-bells, or the ability to vault, or to exploit parallel bars, then a gymnasium would be an indispensable, and all idea of substituting for it a vagary; but what one man gets in a gymnasium another may get just as well in a rowboat, or on a mountain climb or a bicycle, or even in the common exertion of every-day exercise. The question in physical matters is not how the discipline comes, but whether it comes. So it is in the matter we are considering now. When a man has reached the age of thirty, the question to ask is how much intellectual vigor he is possessed of, not how he obtained it.

I can take another step forward now and say that everything that taxes the mind is in the nature of mental discipline. In every department of acquisition we make progress by trying to be to the utmost the thing that we already are. If our object is to lengthen the reach of our vision, we do it by requiring our eyes from time to time to form a distinct image of objects so far removed that it is done only by a little exertion.

That is why sailors have a better eye for distant objects than a landsman has. The gymnast who is intent upon adding to his muscle raises a dumb-bell that demands of him distinct outlay of effort. He becomes stronger by being as strong as he can with the fund of strength he already possesses. The same principle, familiarized to us by the more commonplace acquirements of life, is really the fundamental factor in all processes of mental discipline. The mind also gains in vigor by the taxed exercise of its vigor. As soon as any particular variety of mental exercise has been practised so long that it ceases to cost us effort its value as a means of mental training has come to an end. Any employment, therefore, that tends to keep the intellectual powers strained is to a degree working the same kind of educational effect that is produced by training in college.

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HOW much all this means has been brought very closely home to me by my intimate personal acquaintance with two communities, one of which is devoted to agricultural, the other to manufacturing, interests. One of these two is filled up with machines, and the men and women who tend them become almost as mechanical in their mental processes as are the machines themselves. The efforts required by such employment

may be physically exhaustive, but the intellectual activity involved sinks almost to the level of the automatic. The other town mentioned is distinctly agricultural. It is largely in the hands of independent farmers, who work with their own hands, but who form their own plans of work, study the soil, observe climatic conditions, familiarize themselves with the whole matter of the relation and adaptedness of crops, and are well at home with the requirements of the markets. Any man who has undertaken to be either a teacher or a preacher in two communities thus differenced in their occupations understands very well the unlikeness between the two in point of intelligence. It is not simply that it takes less brain to run a loom than it does to raise a crop, but that there is nothing in the former to strain the brain and stimulate it to become larger. Closely consistent with all of this is the increased attention which is coming to be paid to manual training, and that, too, not simply with the intention of providing the student with a means of livelihood, but for the purpose of the intellectual training which it involves. Neither a boy nor a man can do difficult and painstaking work with his hands without his energies of attention and thought becoming enlisted and strained, and that, so far forth, means education—education in the same sense in which college intends it, viz., the

knitting of the mental fiber together in closer compactness. Such a process will not make a man either a linguist or a mathematician, but if wisely selected and maintained will at least work in the direction of the results aimed at by the discipline of the college.

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IT will be still further in the same direction, and a more pronounced step in that direction, to say that systems of instruction by correspondence have been developed in a very remarkable degree during the past few years; and while they do not take the place of the college, they go quite a way toward it. Probably almost any man who has an earnest purpose to equip himself for effective service would be able to devote an hour a day to quiet and concentrated study. He will lack the stimulus that comes from the rivalries and personal contacts of college, but that will be mostly supplied by his own ambition. The college, too, gives that carefully considered direction to studious endeavor such as could certainly not be expected from a student who was undertaking to work out his own course unaided and alone. Anything like a balanced education implies a system of discipline whose administration is in the hands of a master who thoroughly comprehends that system. The great fault of private

attempts at an education is that the learner is a blind leader of the blind, and therefore runs great risk of never getting anywhere in particular. It is at this point that the scheme of education by correspondence just mentioned comes to the rescue. It lacks the element of direct personal touch between teacher and pupil, but secures the very important feature of intellectual governance. A personal friend of mine recently took up the study of Hebrew in this way. His report of the case is that, though his teacher and he were hundreds of miles apart, and the intercourse of question and answer had to be maintained entirely by mail, yet he considered that the progress he made was nearly as great and satisfactory as though the course had been conducted in a college or seminary class-room. And even if he did not in a given time acquire the same amount of Hebrew that might have been possible in the ordinary method of personal instruction, yet it is presumable that the intellectual tax upon him was just as severe, if not more so, and that, after all, as already intimated, is the chief desideratum. If a man cannot go to college, the college can in this way, in a very wide and true sense of the term, come to him. This is not the place to go into the details of this matter of correspondence schools. My only object in this allusion has been to show that to any man who has a little

time, a fair amount of brain, and a large store of energy and patience, there are the means at hand, without much pecuniary expense, of securing a near equivalent of the mental discipline obtainable in college, and an interior equipment, therefore, qualifying for good and effective service. The man who fails of doing large work in the world because he has not spent four years in Harvard or Yale, Amherst or Columbia, has himself to blame for it.

* * *

IT involves no abandonment of practical ground to say that an additional means of mental discipline is involved in the laborious contemplation of the great truths of our Christian religion. In making this reference I am not speaking at all in the interests either of morality or of piety. The position here assumed simply tallies with the statement attributed to Rufus Choate that he recommended to his law students a familiarity with the Westminster Assembly's Shorter Catechism. No one will imagine that his suggestion was made in the interests of evangelization; neither is mine. The authors of that catechism may have said a great deal more than they know, but the lines of thought which they laid down feel their way out into the vastnesses of religious reality in such a way that no mind can follow

them, or even attempt to follow them, without feeling itself to be developing intellectual nerve and robustness in the process. It is a great thing to think about large matters, even if the accuracy of the thinking cannot be absolutely guaranteed, for it creates intellectual width and strains the mental tissues in a way that makes over to them push and resolution. It may be well said of the hardy intelligence of the Scotch that it is due to generations of oatmeal and Calvinism. In reading recently the biography of a prominent statesman, it was interesting to observe that his training was conducted along distinctly biblical lines, and that, while he did not have the advantage of a college education, the loss was in no small measure made up to him by the thoroughness with which he was taught in the truths of our religion. Contact with great truths, whether of the astronomical or of the theological heavens, gets the mind into a large way of working, and the stuff that is in an idea becomes stuff in the mental caliber of the mind that digests and assimilates that idea. It is easy and rather good form to depreciate the tough indoctrination that used to be administered on Sunday to the olden congregations of New England; but a good deal of New England sturdiness of thought was built out of exactly that tough indoctrination, and to-day there would be less mushiness in what laymen

think six days in the week if there were more sinew in what we preachers teach them the other one day.

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ONLY sufficient space remains to me to say that there is a certain keenness and vigor of discipline that can come to a man only as he lives out in the midst of things and becomes himself a part of the world and of the events with which the world is so solidly packed. Those to whom my words are particularly addressed are young men who are anxious to make themselves felt in the world, and to such it needs to be said that we best learn how to do by doing. A sense of opportunity, a feeling of being a part, even a minute part, of the machinery by which the threads of current event are being woven in, works upon us with the power of a fine discipline and a strong inspiration. The solidity of the burden that is carried helps to solidify the man who carries it. Problems tumble easily apart in the field that refuse to give up their secret in the study or even in the closet. Reality is what educates us, and reality never comes so close to us, with all its powers of discipline, as when we encounter it in action. In books we find truth in black and white, but in the onrush of event we see truth at work; and it is only when truth

is busy, and when we are ourselves personally mixed up in its activities, that we learn to know of how much we are capable, or win the power by which those capabilities can be made over into effect. Let no young man, then, of spirit and purpose be dismayed by his inability to attend either college or university. Life is itself the oldest and best-endowed university in the world, and will guarantee to its pupils all in the way of vigor, keenness, and grasp that they have in them the grace and persistency to acquire.



VI

A YOUNG MAN'S RELIGIOUS LIFE

MY attempt in these articles is to bring together as many matters as I can that bear upon a young man's life practically. Religion it will be my purpose to discuss in pursuance of the same utilitarian idea. I recommend to a young man to take good care of his body because it pays. I recommend to him to go to school or to college because it pays. I recommend to him to interest himself in religion because it pays, because it helps to make actual in him that which is possible, and puts him in the way of accomplishing here upon the earth the true purposes of his being. It seems to me well to antagonize thus at the start any such idea as that religion is one of the dispensables, or that it occupies much the same position in our personal belongings that bric-à-brac does in household furnish-

ings—a commodity that it is well enough to be possessed of, but that stands in no immediate relation to the substantial necessities of every-day life.

* * *

IN anything like a complete handling of this question, the first thing to be stated is that man is by nature a religious being. He is a religious being in the same sense in which it may be said of him that he is an intellectual being or an esthetic being. This is not affirming of him that he is instinctively good or instinctively pious, but that he is endowed by birth with impulses that respond to the presentation of the divine idea. Just as it is true that a man enjoys music because he is naturally endowed with sensibilities that music appeals to and excites, exactly so man is religiously affected because natively endowed with sensibilities that are touched by suggestions and manifestations of God. They are not the product of education, for they precede education, and unless they did precede it, it would be as impossible to produce in a child a religious appreciation as it would be impossible without a prior musical instinct to create in a child anything like musical appreciation. This, then, gives us a starting-point. It authenticates religion by showing that its foundations are laid in human nature,

and that to be unreligious is to that extent a denial of our personal constitution.

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RELIGION, as so understood, carries with it a sense of divine things and a certain appreciation of God's righteous authority and governance. There is as much difference among men in the distinctness of their religious discernments as in that of their intellectual or artistic discernments. John and Charles may differ in the facility with which they appreciate the cardinal principles of arithmetic, and there may be the same amount of difference in the readiness with which they lay hold upon the class of realities covered by the term "religion." It would be stupid in a student to conclude that, because astronomy means less to him than it does to his classmate, therefore astronomy is a myth, and the finer the astronomer the greater the fool. Young men reason in that way about religion, and with no less of discredit to their sagacity.

Religion, as I have just intimated, carries with it a sense of God's active presence in the affairs of nature and history, and a certain appreciation of his righteous authority and governance. I mention these particulars because of their direct and practical bearing upon the tone of a man's mind and the quality of his life; for, as stated

at the outset, it is only with religion as a practical and concrete affair that we have at present to do. The sense of God's working presence in nature renders material service by affording the foundation back to which a man's thoughts, when hard pressed and wearied, can easily retreat. It works in us solidity of conviction by uncovering to us a basis of infinite intelligence down upon which everything rests. For instance, in the study of the heavens it recruits our minds from the tiring quest of astronomic details and lets us feel the support of a mind older and wider than the heavens, down into which all such details enter as ground of permanence and coherency. And between constructing a godless science and a science religiously architected there is all the difference in its effect upon the personal quality and fiber of the builder that there is between erecting castles in the air and founding them upon the ground.

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THE religious sense exerts, also, just as direct a pressure in all the mind's dealing with the progress of event and the course and destiny of history. Without a recognized God of history there is no rational inducement for laboring to improve the general condition. A man goes aboard a boat on the Mississippi at Cairo because

he supposes that that river will conduct him to the sea. All our encouragement in enterprises of amelioration lies in the fact of our confidence that the threads of human endeavor are tied in a hard knot of divine intention. If I may be permitted to speak for myself, I will say that I would not have taken the first step toward overthrowing the Tammany government in New York city if I had not believed in God and in his intended power to make man's efforts available for beneficent and divine results. I suppose I have heard it said a hundred times during the past four years that the only men who can be counted upon to stand by the cause of civic regeneration unflinchingly and untiringly to the end are the men with religious convictions and religious faith. My object in referring to this is to substantiate the position, already taken, that religion is not at all one of those things in regard to which it can be said that it is merely a question of taste. It is an essential.

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ALL of this denotes, if possible, still more when it is carried over into the field of God's righteous authority and governance. Right needs to mean all that a belief in God can make it mean before a man can be permanently trusted to do right. The ten commandments never would have

proved so great a deterrent against criminality had not the opinion prevailed that in some way or other they were the expression of the divine will. It may be otherwise with angels, but with men some other motive for right-doing has to be adduced than the mere fact that it is right to do right. I may be honest because it pays to be honest, or because in the neighborhood where I happen to live the majority are honest people, or because I have been taught to be honest and cannot easily break with the habit; but if I should make up my mind in any given instance that dishonesty would pay better, or if I should migrate into a community where it was popular to steal, or if, notwithstanding my habit of honesty, the apparent advantage of theft should be strong enough to overcome my habit of letting other people's goods alone, I should steal, and I should be a fool not to, provided I had no religious conviction that the law against theft was something more than a human conventionalism. A man may lose his moral convictions, and still the moral training he has had may suffice temporarily to restrain him from plunging into an immoral life; but the time is exceedingly likely to come when passion of some kind will prove more than a match for the inertia of ethical training, and then he will fall. He may still have a kind of instinctive respect for what is right, but not a

respect with capital enough in it for him to bank upon after once there has died in him the conviction that the right is an eternal reality, in some intimate way bound up with the being and personality of God.

* * *

NOW in all of this nothing has been said about creeds. That is not because there can be such a thing as a religious life without a creed, but because the creed itself constitutes no essential ingredient of the religious life. Creed is outgrowth, not ingrowth. What is intended by this can be explained by saying that a man will hardly walk abroad in a world illuminated by the sun without having some sort of conception of the sun, from which the illumination comes. That conception of his may not enable him to see any better, and yet, whether it does or does not, the conception will almost necessarily shape itself from the experience which he has of the sun's illuminating power. Or I might illustrate in another way by saying that a man cannot be in the exercise of bodily powers for any considerable time without having some notion of the working and relation of those powers. He may not have studied physiology, but a certain style of physiology will have developed itself in his own mind as the outcome of his own physical experience.

And, however advantageous it may be to him in certain ways to have an accurate and thorough knowledge of the parts that compose his body and of the machinery of his body, yet by far the most important thing for him is that he be himself thoroughly alive and in the healthy exercise of all the functions that combine to compose his body.

* * *

IN anything like a genuine religious life creeds are an accident, not an essential. The main matter has to do with each man's own personal and independent responsiveness to divine idea and experience of divine influence, and, with that secured, secondary interests can be in a large measure left to care for themselves. All the church creeds in existence began in experience, and were not formed into words, probably, till experience began to cool, just as it rarely occurs to any one to anatomize the human body till the life is well out of it. It was not till the enthusiasm of the early church had somewhat abated that men began to substitute doctrinal paragraphs for personal love to God and loyalty to his service. This is not said with any intention of denying that every religion will have its form of faith, but it is not religion for any man to assent to a credal form, except as that form expresses

what he personally believes and is the outcome of what he personally experiences.

* * *

I HAVE taken pains in all this discussion to keep my feet firmly planted on the essentials of the matter, not only because that is the only method of treatment commensurate with the dignity of the subject, but also because it obviates the necessity of dwelling upon certain subordinate questions that are always likely to intrude. One of these questions has to do with the matter of church-going. Things are quite different from what they were in the old days and in the small country towns, where attending church on Sunday, and perhaps going to the prayer-meeting in the middle of the week, came the nearest to dissipation of anything that the humdrum of ordinary life had to offer. Under those circumstances the Sabbath services were considerably in the nature of a relaxation. They made a break with the prevailing monotony, and were usually welcomed, at least by the older members of the family. Life now, however, is a good deal more intense than it used to be, the conditions under which work is done less natural; even the circumstances of our abiding-place, particularly in the cities and larger towns, into which population is so rapidly condensing, more straitened and wearisome. Add

to this that, whereas the church used to be almost the only opportunity for obtaining anything like intellectual stimulus, the whole week now is crowded with such opportunities ; lectures, magazines, and newspapers are almost a gratuity, and, so far as the latter are concerned, on no day so abundantly as on the Sabbath. To Sunday newspapers undoubtedly is chargeable a very considerable amount of current church absenteeism.

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I N dealing with young men in their relation to church-going, all this changed situation requires to be frankly faced. I cannot do justly by them unless I can put myself in their places and appreciate with them the altered conditions. I meet them, then, on their own ground, and, without any disposition to belittle such reasons for absenting themselves from church as they may adduce, I nevertheless say to them, frankly and confidently, that abstinence from the place of public worship is for them a mistake, and that they are thereby suffering a loss that cannot easily be made up to them. I have already shown that the religious is an ingredient in our constitution, and that we are by nature gifted with certain tendencies whose strengthening and enlargement mean the development within us of religious fiber and the establishment within us of religious

character. Now, I know of no means—with the single exception of parental precept and contact—by which these tendencies are so likely to be addressed and moved upon with effect as the associations, influences, and services that combine in the house of God. I am assuming—which, to be sure, is not always the case—that the pulpit so shapes the service as to make it a steady and intelligent appeal to the religious sensibilities. The pulpit can stupidly allow the music of the sanctuary to be of a character fitted only to amuse the fancy, and the result will probably be that music-lovers will go where the renderings of more talented performers will please the fancy more. Or the same pulpit can even more stupidly allow the preaching to take the shape of a disquisition or of a doctrinal discussion, and those who have a taste for that kind of thing will be excusable if they prefer for the purpose the paragraphs of a professional essayist or the syllogisms of a theological expert. But the peculiar province of the preacher is to make hymns, prayers, and sermon bear in tender directness upon that spot within us where we keep our sense of the unseen and the divine; and from a service so shaped and so inspired a young man with religious possibilities in him cannot afford to absent himself. He is by the means drying up by innutrition those fac-

ulties of experience and power that are the distinction of our humanity, and is, in all likelihood, hiding in the napkin of disuse that talent of tender intimacy with the divine that makes it most worth his while to be a man.



VII

SELECTING A CAREER

IT is unfortunate that our most important decisions have to be made at a time when we are least qualified to make them. Almost any man could be a success if, in laying out the plan of his life, he could make use of the experience that will be his by the time his life is finished. A man needs to live once in order to know how to live. Mistakes make good building material, but they take time. No man learns anything except by experience, and that experience must be his own.

Next to the matter of selecting a wife,—which in the majority of cases is little more than a leap in the dark,—the most important problem which a young man has to confront is that of deciding upon his trade, business, or profession. It is a matter in regard to which he cannot afford to

blunder, but in regard to which the probabilities are that he will blunder. Such a decision implies that the young man knows himself and that he knows the world, neither of which is the case. Success in matters of this sort is primarily an affair of adaptation, but how can there be adaptation when the man has only a sophomoric knowledge of himself, and no more than an amateurish understanding of the field to which he is proposing to adjust himself?

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INASMUCH, then, as the difficulty of selecting a career is occasioned largely by one's ignorance of himself and of the conditions under which his work is to be done, it is important that the decision be deferred to the latest possible date. The case will very often be that bread-and-butter necessities will forbid postponement, and deliberation and option be peremptorily excluded. Such cases will, however, be no refutation of the principle here insisted upon. The fact will still remain that the likelihood of a man's doing the best work that it is in him to do will be enhanced by every wider understanding of what the world has to offer in the way of opportunity, and by each added development within himself of power to meet opportunity. Undoubtedly, if we are doomed to have our lives run in a groove and

are destined to a career of small occupation, in which breadth of preparation will play no necessary part, then it may be that the earlier the career is selected and entered upon the better. As was stated in a previous article, if a man is going to do only small work, the work will be better work of its kind if the man who does it is kept small. The smaller the occupation the smaller will need to be the man, if he is to remain contented and effective within the limits of his occupation. But there is probably no man who is proposing to doom himself to any such diminutiveness of character or of employment, or who will be disposed strenuously to except to the idea that the more completely a man is master of himself and the firmer the grasp he has upon the general situation, the greater the probability that the choice of his own sphere of operations will be a felicitous one, and one that will redound to the largest advantage of himself and of the world.

* * *

THE misleading and narrowing effects of a premature decision of the question of employment can be illustrated in this way: I will suppose a man to have conceived an early fancy for some branch of physical science, say geology. As soon as that is fixed upon as a life-interest he will probably count as wasted time and effort any

expenditure which he may be asked to make in the direction of any other branch of knowledge, and the younger he is when this geological whim seizes him the greater the obstinacy with which he will protest against all studies which in his judgment have no geological bearing. And the embarrassment in the case is that he is not in a situation to judge what branches do have a geological bearing and what branches do not. If he makes out his own curriculum—as he probably will, in these days when parents defer to their children, and teachers and professors stuff the course with optionals—he will be influenced only by considerations of the most superficial kind, and the more intense his desire to become a geologist the less the likelihood of his being disciplined in a way to make him such. The fact is, a man must know everything in order to know anything as it ought to be known.

* * *

ALMOST any young man's decision as to what he is going to do will mean the narrowing of his preparation, whereas all success that is fairly worthy of the name means breadth of preparation. A man needs to get a great mass of foundation under him if he is going to put either a high or a wide structure on the top of it; and if he knows too soon exactly what it

is he is going to do, that mass of foundation will not be forthcoming. In all cases where it is possible it is a great deal better for a man to get the knowledge first, and then let that decide what the vocation shall be, than to decide the vocation first, and let that determine what sort of knowledge he shall accumulate.

If a man is in earnest to do the best that is in him, it will be much to his advantage to get over the feeling that there is any hurry about actually settling down to his life-work. I used sometimes to wonder along what particular line my energies would be employed, but I had been for a number of years out of college before things took any definite shape, and although I am in the ministry, I never decided to go into the ministry; I rather drifted there than decided to go there. I appreciate how imperfectly qualified I am for the work I am doing in that capacity, but understand very well how vastly more imperfect my qualifications would have been had I entered college with the ministry distinctly in view and then narrowed all my equipment and engagement to that one particular end. There are circumstances where the policy here recommended would not be practicable, but at the same time it is a great deal wiser to drift, and to do almost anything that offers as a temporary arrangement, than to make up one's mind finally and irretrievably to an employment

that may possibly be a misfit, and that will involve, therefore, a certain amount of failure. We can safely depend upon it that in the case of a man who has a strenuous purpose there is a certain gravitating tendency between him and the work he is best fitted to do, and if that gravitating tendency is not hurried too much it will assert itself, and the man, without any excessively painful searchings of heart, will find himself where he belongs. Along this line the only safe decisions are the decisions that shape themselves and that we settle into without being very distinctly conscious at any time that a conclusion is being reached.

* * *

ANY man is unfortunate who devotes himself to an occupation that is vetoed by his own tastes and preferences. The scriptural injunction, "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily," is one to be respected quite independently of the moral consideration that was weighed by St. Paul when he wrote it. What a man does not do heartily he never quite does, which is to say, what a man does not do with his heart he never quite does. There are touches of excellence to which an effort does not attain, except as it is the outcome of a certain amount of enthusiasm. Work is doing a thing because we have to ; play is doing

a thing because we like to ; and there is a great deal more of one's true self in what he does because he likes to. Only a part, and that the driest part, of any workman is enlisted till his endeavors emanate from a spot deeper down than the level at which he keeps his intelligence and his skill, and begin to flow out from the fresher and juicier regions of the heart. So that in settling this question of a vocation it is a matter of prime importance for a young man to decide what that particular business or profession is into which he can go without a remainder, into which he can throw himself in unreserved investment.

The problem I am just now considering is sometimes complicated by considerations of conscience. There are cases, known to us all probably, where some line of occupation has been adopted from a sense of duty. For instance, it is not infrequently the case that a man enters the ministry because he thinks he shall never be happy unless he does, although not much expecting that he shall ever be happy if he does. In all the world there is nothing that, in order to its success, stands in such urgent need of being done heartily, and with every fiber of resource that is in a man, as preaching the gospel, and it is peculiarly pathetic, therefore, to see one enter upon such service at the slavish compulsion of an "ought." There is in such devotement an ele-

ment of grim heroism and frozen consecration that compels a certain kind of admiration, something as we are affected by the cold glitter of an icicle ; but it was fire, and not frost, that baptized the original apostles.

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WHAT has already been said upon the matter of selecting a career would hardly be worth while did I not supplement it by one consideration of a still more earnest character. I should have no particular interest in advising young men as to the means by which they could attain the largest success, in the ordinary sense of that term, did I not assume that those to whom the advice is being given were motivated by larger impulses than those of mere aggrandizement. The largest preliminary question that a man at the threshold of his adult life ever asks is not, "In what business can I best succeed?" but, "Am I going to regard my business or my profession as being primarily a means of mortgaging the world to myself, or as a means of mortgaging myself to the world?" We are living in a Christian era, and no man with a head and a heart can be true to that era without propounding to himself, and definitely answering, the question just proposed. It was this question precisely that our Lord answered in the struggle of his forty days of

temptation. Just prior to that experience it is related how he became for the first time distinctly conscious of the exceptional power which he possessed, and that consciousness of power led on immediately to the inquiry: "What am I going to do with that power? I can make bread out of stones; I can make the energies of air, earth, and sea the servants of my bidding; I can set up again among the kingdoms of the earth the throne of a Cyrus or of an Alexander. I hold in my hands the power of God. Now what am I going to do with it?" That was the crisis in our Lord's life, the pivotal ridge, the watershed of the Lord's destiny.

* * *

AND in the life of each one of us, when we reach a certain stage in our history, there comes a moment that is the thrilling counterpart of that, a moment when we become strangely conscious of resource, and when the fibers of body, mind, and spirit knit themselves into a kind of rigid consciousness of power, and when that power is felt with bewildering distinctness in its relations to the times in which we are living and to the years that we are facing. And the same overwhelming question comes to us as came to Jesus when he heard God's voice, as came to Moses when he beheld the burning bush, as came

to Paul amid the dazzling light by Damascus: "What am I going to do with it all? I can make myself great by means of it, or I can make the world great by means of it. Now which?" It is a big question, and you cannot answer a big question in a small way. It strikes to the very root of the whole business of life, and you cannot possibly grasp the root by chewing the twigs on the branches. It is one of those crises in a man's life that, for success or failure, reaches clear out to the end of the years. The entire genius of the whole Christian business lies right in there.

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IT is a matter of throwing one's self for all he is worth into the scale of the world's necessities, and the process of choosing a career is simply the way in which one meets the question as to the particular channel along which the world's necessities can best be reached and supplied by his own personal resources. The young man who says, "I have given my heart to the Lord, and therefore I am going to study for the ministry," misses the entire point. There is no "therefore" about it. That is a pettifogging way of meeting a great situation. I quote from a letter that I received recently from a young lawyer in Ohio: "In my daily life about the criminal courts I have seen many a sad scene, and at last it has

come to that point that I am almost decided to cast aside my bright future in law and enter the service of the Lord." I answered him that he was writing nonsense. What he meant by "the service of the Lord" was the Christian ministry, and that is no more a service of the Lord than any other reputable calling. It is not what a man does that makes his service Christian; it is putting his career under contribution to the public weal, instead of mortgaging it to his own preferment, that makes his service Christian. There is a great lot of small thinking about these matters, and well-meaning imbecility, that works damagingly all around. My correspondent furthermore wrote that he had "learned to distrust the law." All the more reason, then, why he should stay in the law. We cannot improve a thing by standing off and "distrusting" it, but by jumping in and converting it. If all the consecration is put into the ministry and all the brains into the other professions, neither the pulpit nor the world will profit. The sum and substance of all of which is that when a young man has come out on to the distinct Christian ground of putting himself under contribution to the public weal, the selection of a career best suited to himself and to the needs of humanity is simply a matter of studying adaptations, and deciding by what art, trade, business, or profession he can subserve that weal the best.



VIII

THE YOUNG MAN AS A CITIZEN

CHRISTIANITY is an impulse lodged in the heart, but asserting itself in all the relations of life and in all life's activities. Whether or not it is becoming more intense as an interior impulse this is not the place to consider, but there is no doubt of its being held in closer and closer connection with the transactions of the community and with the events of our every-day world. Meditation, worship, and orthodoxy have, through most of the centuries of church history, constituted the area within which Christianity has confined its interests and its endeavors. It has been thought of as a commodity that best fulfils its purposes, not by mixing itself with the affairs and events of the world we now live in, but by isolating itself from all such concerns and concentrating its ambitions upon the world we hope to live in

by and by. In this way its votaries have tacitly confessed the devil's kingship over the earth, and have reconciled themselves to the disgrace of leaving him to his own devices by transferring their anticipations to some new Jerusalem, where they hope to secure comfortable citizenship without the inconvenience of being obliged heroically to fight for it. What the world has commonly designated as "going into a nunnery or a monastery" is only a disguised form of "running to cover," and is a confession of indisposition or inability to cope with the devil on even ground. And the same stripe of unsanctified cowardliness is manifested whenever a man declines combat with the evil that is at work about him.

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AS already intimated, however, this way of looking at the situation is being gradually exchanged for one that is more valorous and wholesome. It is coming to be considered that candidacy for a heaven that has no Satan in it can best be shown by making at least the attempt to clear the earth of him. It is even surmised in some quarters that earth with the devil exterminated would be heaven, and that destroying the devil and his works is the only direct means of answer to our frequent petition, "Thy kingdom come." Without entering into the doctrinal

niceties of the matter, the fact remains that earnest Christians are becoming increasingly confident that Christianity of the sterling type takes a very lively and devout interest in what is transpiring to-day on our own globe, and that the Christian spirit is one that asserts itself and makes a way for itself in all the stations in which men are placed.

The sentiment which I have just mentioned as being on the increase is one, probably, with which the laity are becoming more rapidly imbued than the clergy. Perhaps it is because the clergy are so holy. A man may have his eyes so focused to the stars as to forget how to look at his own dooryard.

It may not be too disrespectful to the cloth to say that it is safer to deal with the abstract than it is to deal with the concrete, and to declaim against sin in general or against historic sin than it is to pay one's homiletical respects to sin in particular and sin that is up to date. Besides that, also, it is a great deal easier for a preacher to address himself to a hearer when such hearer is thought of as being complete in himself and dissociated from the world and its relations, duties, and situations, than it is for the preacher to have sufficient knowledge of the world to be able to shape his address in a manner to take cognizance of all the way in which the hearer stands complicated with the world. Whatever may be the

reason for clerical backwardness, the pulpit always has to follow when the pew gets its face intelligently to the front, and we may be certain that the times are on the way when the church and the promoters of the church will become a paramount factor not only in shaping men's religious views, but in fixing the relation in which men shall stand to their own day, and in communicating to the events of the times their direction and pressure.

What I have now stated furnishes the requisite groundwork for what I have to say of the Christian obligation of citizenship. It is necessary to have it felt that a man's proper relation to the State or city and to his fellow-citizens has its foundations in the Christian fitness of things. The duties and privileges of citizenship have pertaining to them no flavor of option. The State is one particular aspect of human brotherhood, and cannot, therefore, be considered and treated according to one's own particular whim, any more than human brotherhood in any other one of its aspects can be so considered and treated.

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A CITIZEN has no more right to be neglectful of the interests of the civic whole in which he is a member than a parent or child has

to be neglectful of the interests of the domestic whole in which he is a member. There is the same quality of unchristian disregard involved in both cases, and whether a man lets his State or city shift for itself, or whether he lets his family shift for itself, in the one instance as well as in the other he is false to his corporate duty and is a despicable shirk.

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THE doctrine just enunciated needs to be preached and pushed. A great deal of our political misery is due to the fact that men who are fairly faithful in most of the relations in which they are placed do not hesitate and are not ashamed to be drones and renegades in their relations to the town or nation that they belong to. They would consider themselves reprobates were they to allow a neighbor to suffer abuse without an attempt at intervention, but would see their entire city, with all its machinery of government, go to the dogs and the harpies without one definite effort at rescue or one distinct thought that such inaction was wicked and inhuman. Nothing will correct this evil but the creation of a sentiment so energetic and pervasive that decent people will not have the cowardly audacity to neglect the primary duties that pertain to them in their civic capacity. Citizens will attend the

primaries, register and vote when the prevalent sentiment of attachment to our institutions is so pronounced and compelling that failure to discharge the functions of a citizen will be branded as contemptible. Mr. Cleveland said something recently about the decadence of the patriotic spirit, and of course his utterance was greeted with an outburst of clamorous indignation by that class of mind that bases its estimate of any opinion, not on the merits of what is said, but on the personal favor or disfavor with which it regards the person by whom it is said. The appearance is that when Mr. Cleveland spoke in the way just mentioned he had at least a measure of truth on his side. Patriotism has come rather generally to be interpreted as a willingness to fight and die for one's country and its institutions. That answers very well for a definition of patriotism during times of war, but is generally deficient in that it allows no room for patriotism in times of peace. We should consider that a very cheap specimen of conjugal fidelity which put a man upon caring for his wife and devoting himself to her necessities only on occasions when she was threatened by ruffians. A husband's love has its sphere of service at all times and in all situations. So has patriotism. If a man loves his country, and is true to her institutions and affectionately concerned for their quality and

permanence, there will be something which he will be all the time doing in her behalf. Shooting our national enemies is only a small and accidental part of the matter. What our country needs most is men who will love her and, not die for her, but live for her while there is no shooting going on.

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IN what I have just stated lies the most insuperable difficulty of the present situation, and young men who have brains enough to take the measure of the situation, and heart enough keenly to realize it, ought to have civic virtue equal to meeting it. The thing we have the most to fear is not the depravity and the criminality that are rampant, but the decency that is languid and the respectability that is indifferent, and that will go junketing when a State is on the edge of a crisis, or go fishing on a day when the city is having its destiny determined for it at the polls. Would that there could be some legislative enactment by which every reputable traitor of the sort could be denaturalized, and branded with some stigma of civic outlawry that should extinguish him as an American and cancel his kinship with Columbus, Fourth of July, and "My country, 't is of thee." I speak with full assurance when I say, for instance, in regard to the city of New York,

that there is no single moral issue capable of being raised in regard to its administration where the great preponderance of sentiment would not be found to be on the side of honesty as against corruption, provided only that sentiment were sufficiently resolute and alert to come forward and declare itself. The purpose of a campaign under such circumstances is not to convince people of what is right, but to stimulate to the point of action those who are already convinced. That was the entire scope of the rather notable campaign in New York city in 1894.

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NEW YORK was no more virtuous in November of 1894 than it had been in February of 1892, but the course of events had enabled it to discover itself, to become conscious of itself, and in that way to develop into a working factor. What I would like in this connection to say to the young man is this: What is the use in being a young man, with warm blood in your veins and live brains in your skull, if in matters of such vast import as those I am now considering you have to be wound up every year or two years in order to make you strike when the hour comes around, and to be held over a slow fire of campaign agitation every election in order to make you hot enough to be passionately interested in the wel-

fare of your country or town, and speak and act with a fiery decision that shall help secure that welfare? When a man is eighty or one hundred years old we do not expect him to be tropically enthusiastic the year through, however virtuous he may be and however devoted to his city. We are prepared to keep such a one in fuel on occasion, to tend his fires, to put him in touch with the issues of the campaign, and to furnish him a carriage that will convey him to the polling-place on election day without too much of a jolt to his old bones. But the annual or biennial coddling of men who are on the sunny side of eighty is a permanent insult to young blood, and ought to make the juniors among us ashamed that what was meant to be fluid, and hot and palpitating at that, will so soon coagulate into tepid jelly.

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UNDOUBTEDLY the proper meeting of our civic obligations involves a certain expenditure of time and energy. It presupposes on our part a degree of familiarity with public concerns and with the details of a situation that is constantly fluctuating. All such familiarity, along with the activity in which it is bound to issue, necessarily costs us something. We could sublet our responsibilities to that breed of public tricksters popularly known as the politicians, to the

relief of our own shoulders and to the delectation of the tricksters; but every such evasion is a direct stab at the heart of our American institutions, which, if they mean anything, mean the personal participation of each citizen in the determination and the maintenance of the government. There is springing up among us a class of men, unauthorized and irresponsible, who are insinuatingly coaxing governmental responsibility into their own hands. A year or so ago there was held in New York city a convention composed of some hundreds of members, supposedly possessed, each of them, of a measure of autonomy; and yet the general and even the detailed results of that convention were accurately published in all the papers before the convention had transpired! And the deluded fools who went through the show of organizing, resolving, electing, and adjourning went home presumably congratulating themselves on the constructive part they were privileged to play in shaping the destiny of the State and nation, notwithstanding the fact that the same results would have been reached, and reached just as well and a good deal more economically, if, instead of the six hundred men gathering themselves together from all over the State, the one man who held the whip-hand over them had gathered himself together, organized himself, resolved himself, and

adjourned himself. Every such performance is solid comedy, and so solid as to be tragic. The point is reached where it has ceased to be funny. If there is any young man, appreciating the real intent of our institutions, familiar with the proper function of the people, and of every man of the people, as voiced in the famous dictum of Lincoln, who yet can survey the scene just described without his heart burning within him to the point of outraged indignation, may God have mercy upon his colorless and desiccated soul.

* * *

THERE is nothing in all this present situation, however, that need work disheartenment. It is not infrequently the case that even deterioration contains within itself the seeds of its own recovery. It is a lesson that has many times been taught in the course of history, that decadence has to reach a certain point before its symptoms are sufficient to arrest effective attention. That attention is now, to all appearances, being arrested. Notwithstanding all the wily manœuvering that is being practised by our political tricksters, there is growing up among our young men an amount of serious thinking and of quiet observation that contains the possibilities of large effect. Personally, I have never known the like of it. The politicians may love their

country for what they can wring out of it, but there are thousands of young men in our cities, and hundreds of thousands of young men in the country at large, who have souls as well as pockets, and who, if wisely directed and felicitously united, can, as a very easy thing, wrest our institutions from the hands of the spoilers and devote them to the behests of the people.



IX

THE YOUNG MAN AT PLAY

IT may be objected that my talks to young men have thus far been overtinged with seriousness. So much of the character and fruit of a man's after life depends on the way he starts that it is difficult to handle the subject thoroughly without giving to it a decided inflection of earnestness. The jocular treatment of a great matter is always an offense against both religion and taste.

We should be interested to know how much of what we each of us do we do because we have to, and how much we do because we like to. The first of these is work ; the second, play. It is rather necessary to suppose that the finest order of activity is always that in which we act with the will instead of against it, and that life will never become quite perfect till all our exertions

are put forth in gladness and unconstraint. Looking upon play in this way helps to rescue it from suspicion of indignity and foolishness. Play is far more in the order of nature than work is. It is in that key that the music of a child's life is regularly composed, and a child whose early years are not largely play-spell not only misses one of the sweetest possible experiences of life, but is thereby put under a blight which will by and by betray itself in the dried juices and faded colors of manhood; and this easy, generous, and uncalculating swing of feeling and action, so essential to the child, never ceases to be indispensable as the years of our life go on multiplying. It is rarely the case that a man can retain a free spirit when all his actions are dominated by compulsion. Some of my readers, at any rate, will be interested in recalling the fact that the Bible has nothing to say about work till after sin had entered into the world. Primeval paradise is scripturally represented as a kind of beatific play-room, in which our first parents were doubtless more or less busy and put forth a measure of effort, but not effort that was a cutting across the grain, or that had in it the spur of requirement or the lash of necessity. They may have accomplished as much in the way of horticulture before they were cast out among the thorns and the thistles as they did after, but it ceased to be

paradise when spontaneity was exchanged for compulsion. In paradise they played; out of paradise they drudged and perspired. Perspiration is the point at which doing a thing because one likes to becomes doing a thing because one has to.

* * *

EVERYTHING is in the nature of play and amusement that we do with a glad unconsciousness of effort, and it is a wise and safe end to pursue to let just as much of our life be so expended as we can consistently with the moral proprieties that need to be observed and the personal duties that require to be discharged. If we were morally and physically perfect, and the world we live in were similarly perfect, then it would be pleasanter and easier to do right than to do wrong, and no duty would be distasteful or burdensome. In that case the play impulse could always be in force, and life would be a permanent season of "good time." For it is not the putting forth of energy that makes us tired. It is the putting of it forth in ways that are repugnant to our abilities and feelings, just as water might be conceived of as running downhill eternally, or the planets be thought of as describing their rounds to all generations, without either the water or the planets suffering fatigue, and only the

attempt of water to flow uphill, or of the planets to make their way through an opposing medium, beginning to suggest the possibility of weariness. A little boy was once set by his father to throw a big pile of stones into the river. He worked a little while, and desisted in sheer exhaustion. The exhaustion was genuine. It was not simply that he did not want to throw any more stones, but that he was so tired he could not. His father at this point hit upon the device of proposing to him to see how many times out of a hundred he could hit a rock that was situated in mid-river. The exertion as thus represented to the boy was thoroughly congenial. It now ceased to be work and began to be play, a state of affairs of an entirely different nature. The stones were soon all of them in the river, with the result that the little fellow was not only not wearied by the fun of throwing in the last half, but was altogether recuperated and refreshed from the work he had done in throwing in the first half.

* * *

ACTION we do not object to, but we none of us like to work, which is to say that the only work that is congenial to us is the work that we can perform without being conscious of the effort we put forth in doing it; and that is only another way of saying that the only thing, after

all, that we like to do is to play. There is no fault to be found with this. It has not been proposed for the sake of being disproved. One of the prettiest utterances which Scripture anywhere makes concerning natural things is that the lilies of the field do not toil. The same impression is made upon us by the energies and processes that appear elsewhere in nature. There is in it everywhere an element of apparent sportiveness. The machinery of nature never creaks as its wheels go around. We should never bring ourselves to speak of the work of the lightning, but only of the lightning's play. Neither the waves of the sea, the rush of the wind, the stirring of the leaves upon the trees, the flying of the birds in the air, nor the revolution of the stars creates in us the feeling that they must be growing tired and need a vacation.

If I have dwelt upon this aspect of the case to considerable length, it is because I want to cultivate an appreciation of the dignity that attaches to play. It is man's normal condition. Work is unnatural. I am not denying that, as things are, work, and a good deal of it, is a necessity, but that is because we and things are out of joint with ourselves and with each other. Children play when they are children, and they could play, and play all the time, after they had become men and women if everything were

as it ought to be and as we expect it sometime will be.

The matter of play and amusement is not, then, one to be considered as though it were something apart from the substance and real meaning of life, but as though it were part and parcel of a man's life.

* * *

SUCH portions of time as we appropriate to ends of this kind are not necessarily to be thought of as relapses into a state of puerility, nor as foretastes of a condition of senility. They are simply breaks in the monotony of a life ordinarily more or less irksome. They are seasons wherein the tired jade slips his harness and takes to the pasture, which is really his more natural abiding-place. It is not to be inferred from this that because play is our normal condition it is therefore an experience to be indulged in without discrimination. Because play is the absence of constraint, a man in his play will be himself, sincerely and unaffectedly. In play there is no affectation. If indulged in without consideration, its character will denote perfectly the character of the player. He will sink or rise in it to his true level. One may do very good work and commit himself to reputable and magnificent purposes, and yet in the intervals of enterprise may fall to

an exceedingly low key—be a grand worker, but a degraded player. That is because work is subject to constraint, and play (so far forth) is not. The only way we can exactly determine our own character is by noticing what it is we do when we are doing exactly what we want to do—that is, what we do when we are at play. There is no criterion of a man's quality so accurate as his amusements, for in them there is the renunciation of disguises. Our real inwardness discloses itself, not in what we do, but in what we perfectly enjoy doing. This test is rather a severe one, and is perhaps calculated to make the average man flinch. The strength of a man's mind cannot be estimated by the books he devotes himself to when he is studiously at work, but by those he is absorbed in when he is reading for the pleasure of it.

What holds of intellectual vigor is equally applicable in matters of moral vigor. The moralist may assert elevated ideals of feeling and action, and under the stress of his vocation as a professional expounder of the doctrines of rectitude may publish on the platform or in the pulpit systems of behavior that will stand well up to the ethical standards of Epictetus, Aurelius, and even of Moses. If, however, when his professional work is done, he respites himself by an indulgence in literature that is equivocal, in conversation

that is off color, or in theatrical entertainment that is tainted, it is the pleasure he takes in his diversion, and not the tone he announces in his occupation, that will have to determine for his acquaintances his moral latitude and longitude.

* * *

ALL of this, also, is as true of the amateur as of the professional. Mention has just been made of the theater. Its quality is something of which I cannot speak from personal knowledge. My acquaintance with the drama in its present condition is derived from statements of theater-goers, from newspaper criticisms, and from the bill-boards. I have also recently had the opportunity to discuss the whole matter thoroughly with one of our most distinguished English actors, who has frequently made professional visits to America. These four authorities, each in its own way, tell substantially the same story, and leave upon my mind the distinct impression that if the American theater were suddenly to omit all its vicious accompaniments, and to come out frankly upon the ground of unequivocal purity, the theater-going world would withdraw in impatient disgust and the whole business go into the hands of a receiver inside of a month. I want to repeat that my estimate is not based on any immediate personal knowledge of my own, but on what theatrical

people have told me. To this I would like to add that I have no natural prepossession as against the theater. The theater I believe in profoundly. As a means of intellectual stimulus and of moral uplift there is nothing, with the possible exception of the pulpit, that could stand alongside of it as an enginery of personal effect, provided only it would maintain itself in its proper character as the dramatized incarnation of strength. Personally, I would like at least once a week to get out from under the incubus of ordinary obligation and to yield myself up intellectually and emotionally to the domination of dramatic power. I could live with a fresher life and could write and speak with a more recuperated vigor, I am sure.

* * *

BUT from all this parenthesis we have to come back again to the characterization just quoted from the theater's own friends. It does not meet the point to say that a considerable percentage of theater-attendants are habitual church-goers. A great many people go to church because they have not the religious courage to stay at home. *Per contra*, out of the thousands that are in attendance upon the theater in our city on a given night, probably not one is there who is not there because he enjoys being there.

According to the testimony above cited, the existing theater is morally tainted, but people enjoy it, taint and all, and the thing they enjoy has to be taken as the measure of their own quality. This is not a plea against the theater, and still less is it a plea against amusements. I only want that it should be understood with what sensitiveness a man's amusements mirror his own moral features, and what a complete "give-away" we practise, therefore, whenever, in the time which we devote to doing just what we enjoy doing, we are found doing that which is flattered from the key of simplicity and purity.

This is not the place either to prescribe or to proscribe specific amusements. It is enough to say that no man can afford to allow himself a diversion which the best that is in him can take exception to. It is not enough to say of such an amusement that there is nothing in it particularly evil. Deterioration grows by that which it feeds upon, and it takes very little coarse nutriment to keep it in good flesh. If we allow ourselves the enjoyment of what is but a little bad, it will be only a short time before we shall need something that is a shade worse in order to produce the same amount of enjoyment. Refined and elegant depravity differs in this respect in no degree from the coarser sort, except that its drapery disguises its animus and so can bring us near to the evil

one without letting us suspect what road we are on.

All of this, however, nowise militates against the principle stated at the outset, that it is play rather than toil that is most germane to our true nature and that lies closest to the divine intention. The care needing to be exercised as to the quality of our amusements must never be construed into a verdict against amusements in themselves considered. With most of us the play impulse stands far more in need of encouragement than it does of restriction. The proverb, "It is better to wear out than to rust out," is true in form, but false in spirit. The flowers do not wear out, but neither do they rust out. One reason why so many people are asking whether life is worth living is that we are teaching ourselves that man's chief end is to struggle and to crucify spontaneity on a cross of drudgery. We are not arguing for indolence. Indolence is as distinct from play as a pool is from a mountain-brook. But we shall be greatly disappointed in heaven if it does not give a great deal of opportunity for energy to issue in activity that takes no thought and is a joy to itself; and an experience that will be saintly in heaven can hardly with reason be criticized as limp and puerile if indulged in before we enter heaven.



X

THE YOUNG MAN AND MARRIAGE

THE present article has to do with a delicate matter, and one which, therefore, needs all the more to be handled firmly and without evasion.

Marriage is a man's normal condition. Plato has a suggestive dialogue in which he represents the individual as having been originally complete in himself, but as having been subsequently slit into sections, so teaching us that the matrimonial impulse is simply the longing with which the fragments go about searching for their disjointed counterparts. This is probably more graphic than it is anatomically accurate, but serves its purpose in emphasizing the ingrainedness of the connubial impulse, and makes marriage an essential ingredient of life. Plato, however, had been anticipated by one who touched still closer to the marrow of the matter,

and who wrote with more of authority. Almost the first move made in Adam's behalf was to supply him with the necessary consort; and this, it is distinctly stated, was not done in exclusive regard to the necessities of Adam, but in pursuance of the wider principle that it is not good for man to be alone—which is, after all, but the biblical statement of the Platonic idea that a man is only a vulgar fraction till he has discovered his correlate.

* * *

THERE is no difficulty in understanding what nature's intention is in this matter. It denotes a great deal in general that she means that a man should adopt a particular course, and it denotes a great deal more in particular that she means that a man should not play the game of life or fight the battle of life alone. Nature's intention is God's law, and as such it is imprudent to ignore it, and as such I would go further and say that it is criminal to disobey it. It is not intended by this to imply that there may not, in particular instances, be insuperable impediments to marriage which would absolve from matrimonial obligation. I am only trying to make distinct the truth that marriage is our normal estate, that God has legislated marriage as a law of life, and that the man who deals with that law either indifferently or contemptuously does so at

his peril, and comes very closely upon the ground of disobedience to divine requirement; for it must always be remembered that the personal ability to do as we like carries with it no slightest guaranty of moral right to do as we like. Nature is a part of the unwritten word of God.

* * *

THE idea that the marriage question is one that a young man can afford to treat with indifference would become possible only on the assumption that each man is in himself a finished unit. But each man is not in himself a finished unit. The individual regularly lacks certain qualities essential to a completed personality. A male taken by himself is simply an attempt, just as a female taken by herself is simply an attempt. An old bachelor is constantly suggestive of what he has just missed of becoming. So is an old maid. It is for this reason that we need to emphasize and foster the qualities which belong exclusively to the two sexes respectively, making manliness to mean the most possible, and making womanliness to mean the most possible, not dragging the distinctive qualities of either over upon the ground of the other.

Every young man knows that it is just the thoroughness and vigor of his own distinctive and manly propensities that create in him the healthi-

est longing for an alliance with the opposite sex. This is on the principle that the larger any half the more conspicuous becomes its need of being completed by some companion half. It is on this account that a young man is almost never matrimonially drawn toward a mannish woman. It adds to what he already has, without supplying that which he lacks. This is not charging woman with characterlessness, but asserting that if she is a woman in the best sense of the term she will have a character of her own, distinct from that of man, and which man will need to draw into association with himself in order that, by the coalition of the two, there may be constituted a single personality that is more than either and the product of both.

* * *

IT is always a question as to how much real use there is in counseling a young man in regard to matrimonial questions. He will probably not take deep interest in such matters till he meets his destiny, and when he does meet it prudential considerations will be likely to weigh about as much with him as logic would with a cyclone. However, the idea that a wife is not bric-à-brac, but a solid utility, is a good one to have planted in a young man's mind, and once well lodged there, it is to be hoped that it will

exert at least a degree of pressure when the critical moment arrives. I do not believe there is a much nicer thing this side of heaven than falling in love, but there is nothing in that to prevent getting into a good, safe and intelligent position from which to let the "fall" come. I was exceedingly interested awhile ago at being approached by a young acquaintance of mine who wanted to consult me on the marriage question. He had completed his college course and was about graduating from the seminary. He was nothing if not sincere and conscientious. "And now," said he, "I suppose I ought to get married." There was a certain grimness in his way of approaching the matter that affected me curiously, although I had a suspicion that he was using his philosophy to disguise a shy shred of sentiment; and the fact that he married within a comparatively short time lets me imagine that he had already been seriously exposed when he came to me for advice. Nevertheless, there was in his bearing toward the question a feature of composedness, and a disposition to take the honest dimensions of the situation, that augured well for his matrimonial future. He married the girl he loved, but the solid sense with which he sized up the real meaning of marriage prevented his making a fool of himself.

A LARGE percentage of what in these connections is ordinarily called love is about as safe a guide in the choice of a companion as a firefly would be trustworthy illumination in the intricacies of a deep forest on a dark night. I am well aware that it is much easier to reason about these things in the abstract than it is to keep one's head cool and one's temperature regulated in a season of severe exposure; but so much of the success or failure of a young man's after life depends on the way in which he gets matrimonially planted that it seems well worth while to preëempt the ground with as much rational consideration as possible. If a man has accustomed himself to canvass the ground with some seriousness before the susceptible moment arrives, there will be more likelihood of his being able to ride the storm when it breaks, without the loss of ship, cargo, and crew.

In this connection it may be apropos to say parenthetically that it is a great pity that fathers and mothers, as a rule, handle these questions with their sons in a manner of so little sense and frankness. A young man is bound to fall in love,—in fact, it is his duty to,—and if his parents are going to do anything for him they will have to get their work in before the blow falls. Trying to stamp out results after the fact is too much like trying to undo a powder-blast after the

fuse has been fired, which not only does not hinder the explosion, but is apt to maim the meddlers.

For a young man to find his heart becoming mortgaged to some one particular young woman is natural and, in the best sense of the word, rational, and fathers and mothers make a grievous mistake in treating the youth, under these circumstances, in a way to imply that his behavior is half criminal and half idiotic. There is no sin in it, and nothing in the world that is less laughable. Such dealings tend to cut the lines of confidence which in all matters should subsist between parents and children. To the youth himself, or young man, the matter is a very earnest one, and as far removed from criminality as it is from silliness, and anything in the parental attitude that tends to imply that it is either the one or the other is so much done toward driving the love-smitten fellow in upon himself, and giving him over to the sway of a passion that is, perhaps, unguided and unreasoning. It is a singular and lamentable fact that in the greatest two matters of a young man's life—religion and marriage—there is so generally that lack of mutual confidence between fathers and sons that the wisdom, experience, and affection of the former are of no avail to meet the exigencies of the latter.

MARRIAGE, then, to a certain degree, a young man is to look upon from a utilitarian standpoint. A good wife is so much capital. She makes him to be, by a kind of grace, a great deal more than he is by nature. She contributes the qualities needed in order to convert his vigor into a safe as well as productive efficiency. She introduces, for instance, into his intellectual nature that ingredient of sentiment which intellect requires in order to be able to do its best work. Heart and brain need to conspire in order to the attainment of the true; and, without caring to assert that man is naturally heartless, any more than I should wish to assume that woman is by nature brainless, yet heart in its way is just as precious as brain in its way, and woman, so long as she is untainted by the passion of wanting to be a man, will be that member of the connubial corporation that will in particular contribute to the capital stock its affectional element. Some women may resent this, but I would like to caution young men against cherishing matrimonial designs upon any woman who is *likely* to resent it. If what you want is a wife, and not merely a housekeeper, you must keep your eye well open for a warm bundle of femininity, that will be to you in a personal way what the fire on the hearth is to you in a physical way—a fund of tropical comfort, that will keep the stiffness out of your

thinking, the frost out of your feeling, and the general machinery of your life in a condition of pleasurable activity.

* * *

UNFORTUNATELY for the interests of marriage, it is quite too imperfectly realized how much of what men have been able to do in the world has been made possible by the inaudible, and very likely the invisible, coöperation of the wife. No analysis is, perhaps, sufficiently delicate to discriminate perfectly between the elements which the husband and the wife respectively contribute to the sum of a productive and successful life. The man, as being the more conspicuous factor, will probably be credited with pretty nearly all the results which are achieved, but he will always know, if he thinks carefully and considerately, and the public will be able to suspect, if it reads at all between the lines, that his best achievements contain an influential ingredient foreign to his own nature, and native only to the less demonstrative genius of his wife. In this way the more perfect the marriage relation the more distinctly true does the scriptural dictum that it is not good for man to be alone show itself to be, and the more evident and expensive appears the blunder which is being made by men who consider marriage a matter of indifference, and

who leave it to accident to decide whether they shall respect or ignore this original privilege and prime necessity of their being.

* * *

I CANNOT dismiss this matter without deprecating the tendency, so conspicuously operative among us, to degrade marriage to the level of commerce. This is not denying that there are material considerations that in this matter, as in all others, require to be respected. A poor young man marrying a poor young girl, with only the prospect that their life will become more and more complicated as time goes on, is a fool. I have had affectionate couples wait upon me to be married, and then ask me to trust them for the wedding-fee. I think that we who are clergymen ought to refuse to marry applicants who cannot show to our satisfaction that there is no likelihood that either they or their possible offspring will ever come upon the town. Nor, on the other hand, does my objection lie against any amount of contingent assets with which either or both of the contracting parties may chance to be endowed. My only contention is that in every marriage not essentially unholy the basal element is love, and that marriages which are "arranged"—marriages which mean, first of all, an affair of perquisites or a barter in commodities—are a

distinct infraction upon the spirit of the seventh commandment. The voluminous displays with which we know such unions to be sometimes celebrated only aggravate the mischief, and operate to teach our young people in all conditions of life that marriage may be reduced to a species of traffic, differing from the dealings on the stock or produce exchange only in some of the details with which the bargain is consummated. Such examples are distinctly alien to the entire genius of the institution of marriage.

Let me, in conclusion, express it as my most earnest and cordial wish in behalf of every young man who may read this article, that duty and providence may conduct him to the discovery of the girl that is intended for him and best fitted to him, and that he may have fulfilled in his own experience all the possibilities of comfort and strength which a true union is abundantly able to afford.



XI

THE YOUNG MAN ON THE FENCE

THE caption with which I introduce my concluding letter to young men is, perhaps, quite as pictorial as it is rhetorical. A picture, however, is, as a rule, fully as good as an abstraction culled from the dictionary, and will in the present instance serve much better than any one of the half-dozen of long-limbed polysyllables that I have seriously considered calling into service.

When all has been said that admits of being said in regard to a young man's equipment for life, and in regard to what he ought to do and what he ought to eschew, it still remains a fact that his acquisitions and his achievements will depend principally on his way of looking at life and on the spirit with which he takes hold of life. He can deal with it at arm's-length, or he can

grip it at short range. He can treat the world as an article of virtu to be elegantly inspected, or he can handle it as a practical commodity to thrust his hands into. He can approach it with an eye of half-supercilious interrogation, or he can come down upon it with a plump bound that means respect, confidence, and the will to have frank commerce with it. There is enough in almost any young fellow to get a great deal into life if he has the disposition to construe things with a degree of seriousness; and by seriousness I do not mean sourness, but practical earnestness—the spirit, namely, that will prevent his looking upon the world as being little better than an ill-timed joke, awkward enough to make the whole thing uncomfortable, and ludicrous enough to excuse any sophisticated person from concerning himself much with it.

There is a good deal of this sentiment lying around among young men—more in the city, I imagine, than in the country. There is in them an element of intangibleness that puts them beyond the reach of approach. Their nerves they take care not to keep wound up, so that they never quite see anything or hear anything or feel anything. They are cavalier; they have nothing answering to what the ordinary run of men understand as chivalry. With such it does not pass as good form ever to be particularly interested,

or to let it be supposed that, in their estimate, one idea is more true than any other idea, even if it is as much so. There has, indeed, developed among them a class of young men who have carried the *nil admirari* spirit to such a point of refinement as even to discourage in themselves the betrayal of symptoms of intelligence. This polite idiocy is largely an affectation, although with sufficient native genius in that direction to prevent the assumption from proving painful or exhaustive. There is, however, an advantage in having society sprinkled with occasional invertebrates of this sort. They make admirable object-lessons.

* * *

ANY one who has ever undertaken to stir public sentiment and rouse it to action knows, to his sorrow, what an element there is in a community of men who keep themselves so intellectually and morally chloroformed that no stab given at the spot where they are supposed to keep their mental and ethical sensibilities produces response. A person who is instinct with a spirit of self-commitment one can do almost anything with. If he will take the lids off his eyes you can show him something in such a way that his optic nerve will be set twanging. Or if he will take the cotton out of his ears, you can

make yourself audible to him and lodge with him some sort of an impression. But there is no way of bending your musket-barrel at such an angle as to hit the man behind the tree. A man's nerves must be made out of something besides yarn before he will be reached by a pin-prick, and speakers and writers learn, after very little experience, that about nine tenths of all their effectiveness is a matter of the quickness or the numbness of the cuticle men's thoughts and consciences are incased in. It is a great deal as it is in naval gunnery: in computing effects you have to take quite as much account of the thickness of the plating as you do of the size of the charge. There is a great deal abroad in the air, and I always feel like saying to young men: "Get off your sheathing, and come and stand where the sun is shining and the wind blowing, and let every new impulse and latest influence work its own best and fullest work upon you."

The spirit of indifferentism, of which there is so much, works with the power of a moral paralysis. We know that to the degree in which paralysis affects the optic nerve the eye ceases to be able to discriminate between black and white, between light and darkness. The interior paralysis of indifferentism operates in much the same way to confuse the vision with which we survey matters of truth and error, of right and

wrong. There may remain still the consciousness of a certain difference between the two, but not a consciousness that draws any sharp lines between the two. What is true does not seem to it to be impressively true, and what is not true looks to it to be truth, only, perhaps, of a little less pronounced character. In its estimation, what is wrong would be also right, could there only be some little change made in non-essential particulars.

* * *

THE quality of character I am just now dealing with is what, more than anything else, lies in the way of men's succeeding. The appearance is that only a comparatively small number of people ever quite realize what an easy thing success would be if only they made effective the means to it which they have already in hand. Differences among people in respect to efficiency are far less an affair of resources than they are a matter of getting those resources trained upon a particular point, and of getting that point so close to the eye and the heart that it shall be able to draw those energies along convergent lines, like a sun-glass, that will convert ordinary temperature into heat by contracting solar lines to a focus. It is worth a whole fortune to get well stirred up, to get all the

energies of one's being drawn out in warm intensity upon a single object. A good deal of the success of even a man like St. Paul is due to that posture of mind and of life which he expressed when he said, "This one thing I do." He was wholly drawn in under the power of a single purpose. He was aglow with that purpose. Everything within him was combustible material, which he laid upon the crackling bonfire of that purpose. Success was, therefore, easy to him.

I was much interested recently in reading a biographical sketch of Sir William Herschel. It may be a long way from Paul to Herschel, but in the same way that the former of the two succeeded,—because he let himself be monopolized by the power of the spiritual heavens,—so the latter achieved an analogous success by allowing himself to be overwhelmed by the glory of the stellar heavens. It is not clear that either of these two would ever have been known as a great man if he had not given himself utterly away in a single self-consuming service. Either of these two heroes of history might have been politely interested in an amateurish and non-committal way in a thousand significant questions of achievement or of research, and have been inspired by none of them and have been a power in none of them. It is this same indifference to principles involved that keeps men from taking

distinct sides in so many of the great controversies that are fought out on the political arena. The thing about this peculiar phase of political irresolution is not that it indulges in criticism, but that it hangs chronically on the off side of things and anchors itself to negations. The most direct way of getting rid of error is not to vituperate it, or to go off in the corner and sulk over it, but to find something that is true and be tremendously committed to it.

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A GOOD many young men seem to imagine, also, that it shows largeness of mind and width of view to recognize that no party and no sect has the monopoly of the truth, and therefore mildly and generously to take a little stock in every party and in every creed. When I encounter a man who begins by saying that he has never limited himself to any particular creed, for the reason that he considers that the truth has been pretty impartially distributed among all the creeds, I can agree with him that no sect has ever completely "cornered" the truth, but at the same time I shall instantly conclude that the particular person in question withholds adherence from any particular sect, not because he is so devoted to the truth that is in them all, but because he does not much care for the truth that is

in any of them. Breadth of view is exceedingly often simply a euphemism for thinness and indifference of view.

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IT is undoubtedly the case that men who step down from the political or theological fence, and stand upon the ground with all their weight on either one side or the other of the fence, are not always comfortable people to get along with, and they are liable to keep things stirred up in a way that is not conducive to the mental repose of such as unconcernedly and a little superciliously inspect the world from the topmost rail; but they are the ones, nevertheless, who really come in under the power of the truth, and experience the truth, and are the arch-agencies for truth's extension and triumph. The attitude of the divine mind toward all this spirit of intellectual dilettanteism and moral insipidity is rather graphically expressed by the apostle in his letter to the Laodiceans: "I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth."

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THIS same irresolute temper tells seriously against a young man's likelihood of becoming fixed and robust in his moral character and

purpose. Not much is to be expected of one with whom it is the acme of his moral and religious ambition never to be anything or to do anything that is particularly bad. A gentleman once said to me,—and he is a person for whom I have a warm regard, and whose general life I believe to be considerably above the average,—“I am not a Christian, but I am what might be called a pretty tolerably decent sort of a sinner.” He was probably balanced on the fence in such a way as to keep him in easy reach of a good time, and at the same time near enough to what grew on the other side to foster self-respect, save his reputation, and ballast his hopes of eternal life. The trouble with such a mental posture as his is that there is nothing in it to hold a man. There is not that in a negation sufficiently tenacious for a man morally to fluke into with any prospect that he will not drag his anchor. So long as righteousness does not impress us as inimitably magnificent, and unrighteousness as unspeakably abhorrent, we shall be at any moment on the edge of renouncing the first and espousing the second. We shall certainly slide unless we are grounded into something fixed, and when we slide we always slide downhill. The truth I am just now standing for is scripturally illustrated by the case of a man who undertook to become good by the purely negative

process of trying not to be bad—the consequence of which was that the one devil that he expelled was replaced presently by seven fresh recruits, either one of which was a worse devil than the single one he had just parted with. It is well enough to resist the devil and to expect that he will flee in consequence, but unless the room he leaves vacant is filled up by something that is positively and constructively good, the emptiness will be a standing offer to him to return and move in himself and all his housekeeping appurtenances. Satan is in this respect like our common atmosphere, which always occupies every nook and cranny that is not otherwise preëmpted. It is a like personal irresolution which explains a large part of the indecision of young men upon religious questions.

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MORE than half of the time, when I am approached by young inquirers anywhere between the ages of twenty and thirty, the first thing I am treated to is an inventory of their unbeliefs. What they do not believe has nothing immediately to do with the case. The only question germane to the situation is: Is there anything that you do believe, and if so, what is it? Do you believe, for instance, that there is a God? That inquiry I find almost universally

replied to in the affirmative. Now, then, are you carrying yourself in a manner consistent with your belief in a divine Being? In other words, have you so entered into the real meaning of this belief of yours, and have you so put yourself under the power of that belief, as to be swayed and managed by it and to become all that it is qualified to make of you? The question is not, How long is your creed? but, How intense is it, and with what completeness of intellect and heart and life have you committed yourself to it? The meaning of the world, the meaning of truth, and the meaning of God will uncover themselves to you only so fast as you uncover yourself in heroic unreserve to the last revelation in which they stand waiting to commit themselves to you. There is as much on the earth and in the air as we personally put into the eye with which we do our beholding. The man is, indeed, the measure of all things, and the key with which to unlock the treasure-house of truth, goodness, and power is placed in each young man's own purity of vision, sincerity of purpose, and impassioned self-commitment.