POINTS OF DEPARTURE
Essays and Stories for College English
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Essays and Stories for College English

EDITED BY

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TO J. W. AND C. F. H.
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Preface

In collecting essays and stories for this book, we have been guided by a number of considerations, too empirical to be called principles, which arise from our experience in teaching and helping to administer Freshman English courses. Our first postulate is a familiar one: that the analytical study of expository prose is a basic discipline for developing the power to make clear distinctions among facts and opinions, personal impressions, and reasoned judgments. Further, such study combined with practice in writing is directly useful in bringing out a student's command of language, his ability to appreciate his own experience, and his need to handle ideas responsibly.

We are also persuaded that an effective anthology of "reading to write by" must be accessible to the college student who is only just emerging from high school. Yet it should also draw him forward to a balanced view of the realms of knowledge and toward some command of complex and general concepts. To meet both these requirements we stress the importance of concrete writing, to exemplify one of the indispensable qualities of decent prose and to encourage the student to value the resource most available to him, if he can be brought to see it—his own experience. Each subdivision of the anthology contains both a good deal of writing from direct observation and more general discussions. Sometimes a wise and stimulating essay is beyond the grasp of the beginning student, not because the ideas are too profound or rarefied but because the vocabulary and syntax are academic and its frame of reference is abstract. We have not hesitated to include some such essays (for example, Becker's "Some Generalities That Still Glitter"). We have also tried to make it possible for the instructor to follow a somewhat winding ascent, from concrete writing to abstract, by which the student may gradually gain the steeper slopes of general concepts.

Accordingly, we have also tried for variety in degrees of formality, rhetorical forms, and subject matter. Particularly we have sought variety in the tone and treatment of similar topics within each of the subject matter divisions. We hope in this way to reckon with the levels of interest and ability at which students are ready to begin and yet to reward the accrual of skill and knowledge. In each division the last one or two selections demand of the reader more sustained attention and greater sophistication, and these selections might well be approached late in the course, or in classes of especially able students, or in a second term or
semester. The order of selections in each division is not otherwise patterned, except that closely connected or sharply contrasting selections are often juxtaposed.

Although the selections have been put under generally appropriate subject matter headings, it is obvious that the categories are not sealed, and that Frank O'Connor's "The Idealist" might as readily appear under "Experience and Observation" as under "Education," and that Whicher's tribute to Robert Frost, in "Out for Stars," is relevant to the category of "Personal Values and Achievements" as well as to "Open Questions." In other words, the categories are orderly but flexible, and the thematic and rhetorical indexes at the end of the book indicate other patterns of organization and sequences of assignments.

The Aids to Study, following each selection, are meant to be of practical use to the student in relating his reading to his own fund of experience, in sharpening his awareness of rhetorical and stylistic features that he may be able to apply in his own writing, and in aiding him to judge in some degree the relative value of the selections. For they are certainly not all of equal merit and equal seriousness, and we would wish, as teachers, to quicken the student's consciousness of such distinctions. The Aids to Study of course reflect our own classroom procedures, and in shaping them we do not mean to infringe upon other instructors' prerogative to dismiss, or, for that matter, to challenge them. Nor have we tried to touch on every important point.

A considerable number of Suggestions for Writing, of various degrees of difficulty, will be found, with an explanatory note, at the back of the book.

The size and range of the anthology make it adaptable, we think, for use in more than a single term or semester. For example, although the first two divisions are particularly rich in writing from observation, all sections contain stories or descriptive sketches which introduce concepts that are handled more discursively in other essays. So, it is feasible and might be preferable to assign relatively early such selections as "Two Kinds of Knowledge," "Scholarly Style, or the Lack Thereof," and "Ida M'Toy," and to reserve "The Door," "Definition of Language," and "My Belief" for later stages. Generally, the stories are more accessible to the student than is formal discourse, but not all the stories are easy—viz., "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg," which might be read more than once, at different times for different reasons. We also like to imagine that some students will enjoy reading selections that the instructor does not assign or even, explicitly, recommend.

No doubt it is a reflection of our time and place that we have drawn strongly upon American literature and history, that—to us—some of the most interesting pieces concern the difficulties and rewards of crossing
the barriers between cultures and races, and that many essays and stories raise the issues of permanence and change in the basis of society.

Our debts of gratitude to our teachers, colleagues, and especially to our students, are so vast and of such longstanding that to acknowledge them would be to write a pair of autobiographies. But may the debts increase! The faults are all our own.

A. J. C.
W. S.

January, 1960
Part 4

EXPERIENCE AND OBSERVATION
One night, the night of my arrival home after a long absence, I was introduced to Joey. It was the first time I had ever looked straight at a large owl, desiring friendship, but wondering whether or not I was going to get it. That owl, sitting on the table, was not a bird. I should call it a gnome. The other members of the family sat round, and laughed. They knew the creature. Evidently he was on intimate terms with them, though there was no laughter in his direct and impish stare at me. His flat face, with its enlarged and challenging eyes, was odd. He stared at me briefly, then turned his head away wearily, as if he had seen all he wanted. I was dismissed. He began larking with those he knew. He walked about with a jaunty and rolling gait, like a sailor who knows what he is expected to do to make people happy. He made them happy. His conduct, in a guise of the utmost gravity, was ridiculous. Presently I tried to join the party. He gave me another stare, and its meaning was plain: You still here? Without warning he flew at me, his grappling hooks in front of him. I drew back, to more laughter; for it appeared that this was his fun.

Joey's plumage is beautiful, though at first you might not notice it. The beauty of a shadow, with its tones, needs more than a careless glance. This soft swarthiness has regular markings of hazel and buff. When he sits within a greater shadow, his eyes may blaze like orange glow lamps. Now that he and I know each other he will sit on the back of a chair near me when I am writing. He shakes his feathers loose, half closes his eyes, and at times makes a contented noise, if spoken to. Or

From Out of Soundings, Gerald Duckworth & Co., Ltd., 1931. Reprinted by permission of The Society of Authors as the literary representative of the Estate of the late H. M. Tomlinson.
he will come to one's shoulder to sit there, occasionally nibbling round one's ear with his sickle-like beak. But there is no need to worry about that. He knows what his beak can do, but he is a perfect gentleman. His claws can close like a vice, but not on us. It is certain that a bird cannot be a Christian, but the simple truth is that Joey is more like the real thing than most of us try to be. If you offend his dignity certainly he resents it, but he never retaliates, and he never harbours resentment. He is magnanimous without knowing what that means.

In fact, I think I would sooner write about that owl than about ships or anything else that I may happen to understand in a small measure. He fascinates me because, beyond Freud or Jung, he appears to hint that life is a riddle which we had better give up. No good even dreaming about it? Besides, like the Sphinx, he gives no help, but merely sits looking to futurity with those awful eyes of his.

We have been told W. H. Hudson was afflicted by letters from numerous correspondents who were moved, not so much by the order of his prose, as by the inexplicable behaviour of their pets. They supposed that Hudson could guess hidden springs, not mentioned in the manuals, which actuated most animals. Their faith in Hudson's gift of insight is not surprising. I myself once interrupted his meditations with just such a problem; but he was a sceptical man, who well knew the poverty of common observation, and the vanity of human desire which so readily recognises what naturally it prefers to believe is there. Hudson always coldly directed reason on those pets, and reason is not invariably fair to poor instinct. Yet what he himself could make of the twitching ears of a deer we learned from his enchanted *Hind in Richmond Park.* Let us not marvel over the magic carpet. That would be Axminster, or what not, compared with those ears. They got Hudson to South America and elsewhere, they reminded him of music he had heard as a boy, of inexplicable premonitions he had felt as a man; indeed, those ears persuaded a reader, who watched their nervousness with Hudson's eyes, to believe that their extraordinary movements would presently waft apart the black curtain which hangs between this world and whatever may be on the hither side of it. That is fairly remarkable for a deer in Richmond Park.

We enjoy good stories about animals, but we rarely believe them unless they are our own. Luckily, there is no need to believe a good story before we enjoy it. Those yarns by our neighbours which would have us believe that good morality, noble conduct, subtle intelligence, which are our prerogatives, are at least nascent in humble creatures, are very pleasant, and that is as much as we ought to expect of them. We doubtless conceded more to animals, for reasons we forgot long ago, while we still used totems, than we do now, when natural history is the lesson most
enjoyed in the elementary schools of the cities. We knew more about animals before we stuffed them for museums, and even before we had a settled Government. The settled Government it was, perhaps, that settled it. Our fear of the wilderness diminished. It was no longer necessary for us to watch the outside dark in apprehension when we had quite forgotten what could come out of it. It may not be of much importance that we have grown deaf and blind to the finer communications from the night, for we get along very well without them now we have our wireless installations. But there, anyhow, the communications are for such as Hudson, and for primitives who still live beside the wild, and even in it, and who may neglect its signs at their peril. It gave me a chill once when I spoke at night innocently, but without restraint, of Rimau, the tiger, to some forest Malays, and saw the embarrassment caused by my careless ignorance. They did not like it. His name may not be mentioned. I but wanted some information, yet it was certain then that they knew more than they were going to give.

Since then I have enjoyed the good fortune of a close friendship with this fellow Joey, who is but a Wood, or English Brown Owl. I do not propose to tell any tall stories about him, because as there are not any I should have to make them up; nor to pursue, biologically, the problems of memory, joy, love, sorrow, fear, and so on, to their remote physiological springs in a bird, for I am ignorant of the way. I could not put that owl’s mind, should it exist, under the microscope. But at least he has caused me to put my own there for a brief examination, with what result I need not confess. After all, ignorance, like everything else, is relative. It is possible that our confidence in our scientific understanding of this broad matter of life cannot be fully justified. Joey is a warning. My assurance fails me under that inscrutable contemplation of his; which is beautiful to see, though there is an element of terror in it, if you dare his glance long enough. It occurs to me, while observing him, that there may be a ridiculous side to our science, when we are explaining what we know of these lower creatures; creatures quite incapable of forming a systematic and orderly government. An orderly government? We had better be careful, because even with our unique gifts, by which we form complex communities, we should ponder afresh in the neighbourhood of an ant-hill or a beehive.

As for this bird Joey, we have examined diligently all the evidence about the Brown Owl in the ornithological text books; but I must say that, except for his coloration, and his language—or some of it—and the length of his primaries, and his weight and dimensions, he is still outside those books. He sits above and beyond, beautifully meditative, quietly interested in our strange behaviour, not altogether unwilling to assist us in the careful measuring of his primaries—for we grow more and more
concerned with the need to establish beyond cavil his ordinary owlsip; but he is outside. He is beyond us. If he knows no more of us than we know of him then he knows very little.

We at home have seen in him the reason why the ancients chose him as the symbol of learning and wisdom. The reason is obvious enough. It is not because his eyes are deep with shadows, and are better to look at than most eyes; they certainly give, in repose, a hint of mild but unusual wisdom. But they seem to tell him, without fail, all he wants to know about anything which takes his interest, and his interest is constant and alert. He has an inspection which begins with an instant and piercing glance, while his body is motionless, and thus he may remain for a full minute, meditating whatever it may be, with a stern fixity which would draw out the innermost secret of a diplomatic note. Satisfied at last that it is worthless, he turns away his head with an expression of tedium, and the object is thus contemptuously dismissed. But that first challenging glance, that night stare of his, though I am used to it, and know that Joey is incapable of treachery, is still somewhat startling when he fixes it on me. You feel like a sinner whose very thoughts are manifest. He sees through you; and thereupon he relaxes, puffs his feathers, and languidly half closes with bluish veils those dark and luminous orbs. But let anything stir in the shadows—I think he can hear a shadow move—and he becomes as tense as a taut spring, and his eyes are judgment itself.

When he sees a matter quite novel to him he has a curious habit of moving his face in a circle; and if the object really astonishes him, as when he saw his first aeroplane, then his whole body sways to enlarge the radius of the circle. It is a comic spectacle of eager curiosity, altogether different from his still glance of doom when a mouse is present though unperceived by our crude senses. I used to think that rotary performance of his head was a foolishness of his till once I caught myself shifting my head about to get a name to something nondescript on the floor which glanced in the lamplight. So now I know that when Joey plays that caper he is but obtaining evidence of an object from different angles; he is trying to give it solidity. He could teach any young writer a point or two at that game.

That he reasons things out there can be no doubt. I should rate his intelligence as high as that of a good cat, and his manners and morality much higher. He has a sense of fun. He is very good-natured. Even when badly irritated he never strikes with his full force, but appears to remember in his extreme annoyance just how far his sickle beak may be struck into a hand without drawing blood. Yet it can execute a rat with a single swift puncture through the skull between the ears. The rat has no chance at all. Joey looks very satisfied with himself when he has nailed so big a victim, and evidently expects that we will admire him. He lifts his flat intelligent face to us with a new expression of languid
and fatuous good-humour; but one foot has the rat's middle in a vice of steel; it would be useless for the unlucky creature to struggle, and it does not. But Joey, I must say, shows no cruel enjoyment, as would a cat, in fooling with his prey. He stoops down and very early dispatches it.

He has never yet shown anger, but only a kind of fierce resentment, which he expresses with a sound which mixes a whistle and a warble, in a high key, his wings outspread and his head held low. And he will do what most cats will not. If he is out after dark, and you call quietly his name into the night, then presently a great noiseless shadow sweeps swiftly at you; and you may be used to him, but control is necessary or you will dodge; and so he alights on your shoulder, nibbles your ear in salutation, and questions you in friendly little undertones. It is amusing to watch a strange cat in its prowl come upon Joey where he is hunched in deep thought on the garden border. The cat sees at once that this is a bird. So near, too. A bird? What a bird! The cat's mingling of desire and fear is plain in its attitude. It would attack, but dare not. Joey does not move, but looks at the trespasser as a constable would at a loafer. The cat slinks off, Joey's haughty glance following it.

One curious trick he has, which, so far as I know, the natural history books do not record; perhaps because, in the wild, the trick is invariably successful. It is not always easy, by daylight, to pick him out of the shadows of a tree, even when you know he is somewhere there. But if a noisy stranger comes into the garden that owl instantly understudies a dead stump. He elongates stiffly and shuts his eyes; he might be aware that it is his eyes you see first, when looking for him. When he has become a stump of dead wood then he is nothing but that. You may even push him, but he does not relax, nor open his eyes. He is a stump. There is no owl.

He is fond of a bit of fun, but only after dark. Like a cat, he will pounce on small moving objects. Suppose that you secrete a matchbox, tied to a length of string, under the table cloth, Joey will spy its first effort to get slyly away. However, he looks elsewhere. He pretends that he has been unobservant. He looks everywhere but at the suspicious movement. Then, with his odd walk, that curious rolling gait, like that of a stout and light-hearted seaman, he strides not directly towards the movement, but only obliquely, as though he had just thought of something more important than play. Yet as soon as he is beside the object he is on it so quickly with his talons that there is no getting used to his suddenness. We used to play this game by moving our hands under the table cloth. Now we prefer a matchbox and string.

There was a time when we thought he had had enough of us, and was about to choose a home in alien trees. But he remains, and he seems to have lost his desire for the wild. He keeps close to the household. He
seems to prefer to stay within sight of the place he knows; for he is a sociable creature, and at times comes to the window to intimate that he wishes to sit, for a spell, within the family circle. When admitted he becomes maudlin with his demonstrations of affection, though never servile, like a dog. He stands no nonsense even when most maudlin. It should be added that he was found, two years ago, an orphaned fledgling. He would have died of starvation but that a youth of the house, who had a way of his own with animals, got a blow pipe, filled his mouth with milk, and blew it into Joey. The dodge worked. Joey has never forgotten, by the look of it, the one who gave that first kindly attention with a blow pipe. For the youth has gone overseas, and now Joey sits humped and not at all playful, contemplative, friendly, but by no means inclined to accept me as a substitute for his companion. His particular friend used to be the first to greet him in the morning. Joey came eagerly to the opening of the door. He comes eagerly now, but it is odd to see his sudden relapse into indifference, when the familiar sound of that opening door is no longer followed by a sight of the one he most favoured. I thought, once upon a time, that I would like to try my hand at a novel; but that blessed owl is a salutary warning. I know next to nothing even about him, and his share of life’s mystery does not amount to much.

There was a memorable occasion when we were visited by Thomas Hardy. I believe that great man had a special regard for owls; the author of *The Dynasts*, we may fairly suppose, would know why the owl is Athene’s familiar. In any case, the venerable poet and Joey unexpectedly confronted each other. It was a strange experience for the rest of us, who stood and watched them. They did not speak; they regarded each other intently, but I do not know what passed between them. Presently the poet turned sadly away; and the owl directed his gaze elsewhere as though entirely satisfied.

I had written all that, and I think I had an intention to continue it, perhaps as an attempt at a purely ornithological study. But a day came when Joey’s young friend returned from overseas. Joey looked at him, and understood, but did not move. He was not demonstrative, but he began to watch for the coming and going of his old friend. He regained his humourous spirit. Then, with surprising suddenness, he deprived me of my one chance to contribute to ornithology. We stood round him one morning while he stared at us from the ground; he was on his back, and that had never happened before. He stared at us with what appeared to be bright and haughty knowledge. His young friend, so recently returned, knelt to lift his head. The brown owl nibbled his fingers in greeting. Then he shut his eyes and returned to Athene.
AIDS TO STUDY

1. At first reading this "familiar essay" may seem either quite straightforward or somewhat rambling. The first two paragraphs support the first of these impressions. How? The next four differ markedly. In what ways?

2. Near the end of the essay Tomlinson tells how the owl was tamed. Would this incident have made a better beginning than the one that is used? If the essay had begun with the taming of Joey, how would the rest of the essay have been affected?

3. What else is Tomlinson interested in besides the character sketch of Joey? How does he connect his more general subject with the sketch of the owl?

4. Near the end of the essay are two references to Athene. Who is she? An earlier paragraph has prepared for this reference but without naming Athene. Which is the paragraph, and how does it add to the effectiveness of Tomlinson's description of the encounter between Joey and Thomas Hardy?

5. Many readers will admire the restraint of the last paragraph. Others may think it faintly sentimental. What is your view? Can you justify the final sentence?

6. Tomlinson is a conscious stylist whose sentences will repay close attention. Consider the second paragraph, for example. Are the sentences long or short? Are they much varied in length? Several in fact repeat the same pattern of clauses. Do they escape monotony? If so, how? Does Tomlinson use words exactly? (Consider resents, retaliates, harbours resentment.)
First of all, there is one faculty which a pilot must incessantly cultivate until he has brought it to absolute perfection. Nothing short of perfection will do. That faculty is memory. He cannot stop with merely thinking a thing is so and so; he must know it; for this is eminently one of the 'exact' sciences. With what scorn a pilot was looked upon, in the old times, if he ever ventured to deal in that feeble phrase 'I think,' instead of the vigorous one 'I know!' One cannot easily realize what a tremendous thing it is to know every trivial detail of twelve hundred miles of river and know it with absolute exactness. If you will take the longest street in New York, and travel up and down it, conning its features patiently until you know every house and window and door and lamp-post and big and little sign by heart, and know them so accurately that you can instantly name the one you are abreast of when you are set down at random in that street in the middle of an inky black night, you will then have a tolerable notion of the amount and the exactness of a pilot's knowledge who carries the Mississippi River in his head. And then if you will go on until you know every street crossing, the character, size, and position of the crossing-stones, and the varying depth of mud in each of those numberless places, you will have some idea of what the pilot must know in order to keep a Mississippi steamer out of trouble. Next, if you will take half of the signs in that long street, and change their places once a month, and still manage to know their positions accurately on dark nights, and keep up with these repeated changes without making any mistakes, you will understand what is required of a pilot's peerless memory by the fickle Mississippi.

I think a pilot's memory is about the most wonderful thing in the world. To know the Old and New Testaments by heart, and be able to
recite them glibly, forward or backward, or begin at random anywhere in the book and recite both ways and never trip or make a mistake, is no extravagant mass of knowledge, and no marvelous facility, compared to a pilot's massed knowledge of the Mississippi and his marvelous facility in the handling of it. I make this comparison deliberately, and I believe I am not expanding the truth when I do it. Many will think my figure too strong, but pilots will not.

And how easily and comfortably the pilot's memory does its work; how placidly effortless is its way! how unconsciously it lays up its vast stores, hour by hour, day by day, and never loses or mislays a single valuable package of them all! Take an instance. Let a leadsman cry, 'Half twain! half twain! half twain! half twain! half twain!' until it becomes as monotonous as the ticking of a clock; let conversation be going on all the time, and the pilot be doing his share of the talking, and no longer listening to the leadsman; and in the midst of this endless string of half twains let a single 'quarter twain!' be interjected, without emphasis, and then the half twain cry go on again, just as before: two or three weeks later that pilot can describe with precision the boat's position in the river when that quarter twain was uttered, and give you such a lot of head-marks, stern-marks, and side-marks to guide you, that you ought to be able to take the boat there and put her in that same spot again yourself! The cry of quarter twain did not really take his mind from his talk, but his trained faculties instantly photographed the bearings, noted the change of depth, and laid up the important details for future reference without requiring any assistance from him in the matter. If you were walking and talking with a friend, and another friend at your side kept up a monotonous repetition of the vowel sound A, for a couple of blocks, and then in the midst interjected an R, thus, A, A, A, A, R, A, A, A, etc., and gave the R no emphasis, you would not be able to state, two or three weeks afterward, that the R had been put in, nor be able to tell what objects you were passing at the moment it was done. But you could if your memory had been patiently and laboriously trained to do that sort of thing mechanically.

Give a man a tolerably fair memory to start with, and piloting will develop it into a very colossus of capability. But only in the matters it is daily drilled in. A time would come when the man's faculties could not help noticing landmarks and soundings, and his memory could not help holding on to them with the grip of a vice; but if you asked that same man at noon what he had had for breakfast, it would be ten chances to one that he could not tell you. Astonishing things can be done with the human memory if you will devote it faithfully to one particular line of business.

At the time that wages soared so high on the Missouri River, my chief, Mr. Bixby, went up there and learned more than a thousand miles of
that stream with an ease and rapidity that were astonishing. When he had seen each division once in the daytime and once at night, his education was so nearly complete that he took out a 'daylight' license; a few trips later he took out a full license, and went to piloting day and night—and he ranked A 1, too.

Mr. Bixby placed me as steersman for a while under a pilot whose feats of memory were a constant marvel to me. However, his memory was born in him, I think, not built. For instance, somebody would mention a name. Instantly Mr. Brown would break in:—

'Oh, I knew him. Sallow-faced, red-headed fellow, with a little scar on the side of his throat like a splinter under the flesh. He was only in the Southern trade six months. That was thirteen years ago. I made a trip with him. There was five feet in the upper river then; the Henry Blake grounded at the foot of Tower Island, drawing four and a half; the George Elliott unshipped her rudder on the wreck of the Sunflower'—

'Why, the Sunflower didn't sink until'—

'I know when she sunk; it was three years before that, on the 2d of December; Asa Hardy was captain of her, and his brother John was first clerk; and it was his first trip in her, too; Tom Jones told me these things a week afterward in New Orleans; he was first mate of the Sunflower. Captain Hardy stuck a nail in his foot the 6th of July of the next year, and died of the lockjaw on the 15th. His brother John died two years after,—3d of March,—erysipelas. I never saw either of the Hardys,—they were Alleghany River men,—but people who knew them told me all these things. And they said Captain Hardy wore yarn socks winter and summer just the same, and his first wife's name was Jane Shook,—she was from New England,—and his second one died in a lunatic asylum. It was in the blood. She was from Lexington, Kentucky. Name was Horton before she was married.'

And so on, by the hour, the man's tongue would go. He could not forget anything. It was simply impossible. The most trivial details remained as distinct and luminous in his head, after they had lain there for years, as the most memorable events. His was not simply a pilot's memory; its grasp was universal. If he were talking about a trifling letter he had received seven years before, he was pretty sure to deliver you the entire screed from memory. And then, without observing that he was departing from the true line of his talk, he was more than likely to hurl in a long-drawn parenthetical biography of the writer of that letter; and you were lucky indeed if he did not take up that writer's relatives, one by one, and give you their biographies, too.

Such a memory as that is a great misfortune. To it, all occurrences are of the same size. Its possessor cannot distinguish an interesting circumstance from an uninteresting one. As a talker, he is bound to clog his
narrative with tiresome details and make himself an insufferable bore. Moreover, he cannot stick to his subject. He picks up every little grain of memory he discerns in his way, and so is led aside. Mr. Brown would start out with the honest intention of telling you a vastly funny anecdote about a dog. He would be 'so full of laugh' that he could hardly begin; then his memory would start with the dog's breed and personal appearance; drift into a history of his owner; of his owner's family, with descriptions of weddings and burials that had occurred in it, together with recitals of congratulatory verses and obituary poetry provoked by the same; then this memory would recollect that one of these events occurred during the celebrated 'hard winter' of such and such a year, and a minute description of that winter would follow, along with the names of people who were frozen to death, and statistics showing the high figures which pork and hay went up to. Pork and hay would suggest corn and fodder; corn and fodder would suggest cows and horses; the latter would suggest the circus and certain celebrated bare-back riders; the transition from the circus to the menagerie was easy and natural; from the elephant to equatorial Africa was but a step; then of course the heathen savages would suggest religion; and at the end of three or four hours' tedious jaw, the watch would change and Brown would go out of the pilot-house muttering extracts from sermons he had heard years before about the efficacy of prayer as a means of grace. And the original first mention would be all you had learned about that dog, after all this waiting and hungering.

A pilot must have a memory; but there are two higher qualities which he must also have. He must have good and quick judgment and decision, and a cool, calm courage that no peril can shake. Give a man the merest trifle of pluck to start with, and by the time he has become a pilot he cannot be unmanned by any danger a steamboat can get into; but one cannot quite say the same for judgment. Judgment is a matter of brains, and a man must start with a good stock of that article or he will never succeed as a pilot.

The growth of courage in the pilot-house is steady all the time, but it does not reach a high and satisfactory condition until some time after the young pilot has been 'standing his own watch,' alone and under the staggering weight of all the responsibilities connected with the position. When an apprentice has become pretty thoroughly acquainted with the river, he goes clattering along so fearlessly with his steamboat, night or day, that he presently begins to imagine that it is his courage that animates him; but the first time the pilot steps out and leaves him to his own devices he finds out it was the other man's. He discovers that the article has been left out of his own cargo altogether. The whole river is bristling with exigencies in a moment; he is not prepared for them; he does not know how to meet them; all his knowledge forsakes him; and
within fifteen minutes he is as white as a sheet and scared almost to death. Therefore pilots wisely train these cubs by various strategic tricks to look danger in the face a little more calmly. A favorite way of theirs is to play a friendly swindle upon the candidate.

Mr. Bixby served me in this fashion once, and for years afterward I used to blush even in my sleep when I thought of it. I had become a good steersman; so good, indeed, that I had all the work to do on our watch, night and day; Mr. Bixby seldom made a suggestion to me; all he ever did was to take the wheel on particularly bad nights or in particularly bad crossings, land the boat when she needed to be landed, play gentleman of leisure nine tenths of the watch, and collect the wages. The lower river was about bank-full, and if anybody had questioned my ability to run any crossing between Cairo and New Orleans without help or instruction, I should have felt irreparably hurt. The idea of being afraid of any crossing in the lot, in the day-time, was a thing too preposterous for contemplation. Well, one matchless summer's day I was bowling down the bend above island 66, brim full of self-conceit and carrying my nose as high as a giraffe's, when Mr. Bixby said,—

'I am going below a while. I suppose you know the next crossing?'

This was almost an affront. It was about the plainest and simplest crossing in the whole river. One couldn't come to any harm, whether he ran it right or not; and as for depth, there never had been any bottom there. I knew all this, perfectly well.

'Know how to run it? Why, I can run it with my eyes shut.'

'How much water is there in it?'

'Well, that is an odd question. I couldn't get bottom there with a church steeple.'

'You think so, do you?'

The very tone of the question shook my confidence. That was what Mr. Bixby was expecting. He left, without saying anything more. I began to imagine all sorts of things. Mr. Bixby, unknown to me, of course, sent somebody down to the forecastle with some mysterious instructions to the leadsman, another messenger was sent to whisper among the officers, and then Mr. Bixby went into hiding behind a smoke-stack where he could observe results. Presently the captain stepped out on the hurricane deck; next the chief mate appeared; then a clerk. Every moment or two a straggler was added to my audience; and before I got to the head of the island I had fifteen or twenty people assembled down there under my nose. I began to wonder what the trouble was. As I started across, the captain glanced aloft at me and said, with a sham uneasiness in his voice,—

'Where is Mr. Bixby?'

'Gone below, sir.'
But that did the business for me. My imagination began to construct dangers out of nothing, and they multiplied faster than I could keep the run of them. All at once I imagined I saw shoal water ahead! The wave of coward agony that surged through me then came near dislocating every joint in me. All my confidence in that crossing vanished. I seized the bell-ropes; dropped it, ashamed; seized it again; dropped it once more; clutched it tremulously once again, and pulled it so feebly that I could hardly hear the stroke myself. Captain and mate sang out instantly, and both together,—

‘Starboard lead there! and quick about it!’

This was another shock. I began to climb the wheel like a squirrel; but I would hardly get the boat started to port before I would see new dangers on that side, and away I would spin to the other; only to find perils accumulating to starboard, and be crazy to get to port again. Then came the leadsman’s sepulchral cry:—

‘D-e-e-p four!’

Deep four in a bottomless crossing! The terror of it took my breath away.

‘M-a-r-k three! M-a-r-k three! Quarter less three! Half twain!’

This was frightful! I seized the bell-ropes and stopped the engines.

‘Quarter twain! Quarter twain! Mark twain!’

I was helpless. I did not know what in the world to do. I was quaking from head to foot, and I could have hung my hat on my eyes, they stuck out so far.

‘Quarter less twain! Nine and a half?’

We were drawing nine! My hands were in a nerveless flutter. I could not ring a bell intelligibly with them. I flew to the speaking-tube and shouted to the engineer,—

‘Oh, Ben, if you love me, back her! Quick, Ben! Oh, back the immortal soul out of her!’

I heard the door close gently. I looked around, and there stood Mr. Bixby, smiling a bland, sweet smile. Then the audience on the hurricane deck sent up a shout of humiliating laughter. I saw it all, now, and I felt meaner than the meanest man in human history. I laid in the lead, set the boat in her marks, came ahead on the engines, and said,—

‘It was a fine trick to play on an orphan, wasn’t it? I suppose I’ll never hear the last of how I was ass enough to heave the lead at the head of 66.’

‘Well, no, you won’t, maybe. In fact I hope you won’t; for I want you to learn something by that experience. Didn’t you know there was no bottom in that crossing?’

‘Yes, sir, I did.’

‘Very well, then. You shouldn’t have allowed me or anybody else to shake your confidence in that knowledge. Try to remember that. And
another thing: when you get into a dangerous place, don’t turn coward. That isn’t going to help matters any.’

It was a good enough lesson, but pretty hardly learned. Yet about the hardest part of it was that for months I so often had to hear a phrase which I had conceived a particular distaste for. It was, ‘Oh, Ben, if you love me, back her!’

AIDS TO STUDY

1. Twain says that a good pilot is distinguished by three qualities. What are these? Which receives the most emphasis in this selection?

2. What rhetorical principle is illustrated by Twain’s account of Mr. Brown, the pilot who remembered everything? What application does Twain make of this principle in his writing here?

3. Twain compares in detail knowing a river and knowing the appearance of a long street; he also speaks of “carrying my nose as high as a giraffe’s.” Both comparisons help Twain make his points vividly. As an exercise, write down four or five striking and unusual comparisons of your own invention.

4. Comment on Mr. Bixby’s method of teaching his pupil to be courageous and to have confidence in his own judgment.
Although we had seen men walking barefoot on burning embers twice before, we were not prepared for the mass fire walk at Kataragama. The first time, on a pleasant summer afternoon, surrounded by playing children and laughing family groups, we watched four men walk quickly through a twelve-foot fire pit. The occasion was a Hindu festival, and the atmosphere was similar to that of a state fair in the United States. The second time we had been among the guests of a Ceylonese planter who included in the evening's entertainment a fire-walking exhibition by six men.

But at the temple of Kataragama everything was different. There, on the night of the full moon in August, fire walking climaxes a week's ceremonies in honor of the Hindu god Kataragama. From all over the island, worshipers and spectators (Buddhist as well as Hindu, although theoretically Buddhists do not believe in gods) had been converging on the little settlement in the jungle of southeastern Ceylon. During the early part of the week, devotees had paid tribute to Kataragama by hanging colored papers on trees near the temple or by breaking sacrificial coconuts on a rock provided for that purpose. Toward the week's end, the nature of the sacrifices was intensified, and zealous worshipers perforated their cheeks with pins, or walked on nails, or imbedded into their naked shoulders meathooks with which they pulled heavy carts along a pitted dirt road.

By midnight the crowd was feverishly tense. Since the logs in the twenty-by-six-foot pit had been burning for four hours, the fire walking

would presumably take place about 4 A.M. But the tradition against
making any sort of prediction about the immediate future is so strong at
Kataragama that the local priest, asked by an American tourist when the
fire walking would begin, replied that there probably would not be any
walking at all. The crowd surged away from the pit slowly and steadily
—slowly because every inch of the temple grounds had been packed for
hours, and steadily because the heat from the pit was becoming un-
bearable. The men and women nearest the pit had held their places for
days, eating and sleeping in one spot. The Ceylonese are ordinarily very
clean, but the activity at Kataragama is more important than sanitation,
and as the hours passed everything intensified: the heat, the tension, the
odors of sweat and urine and incense. A wave of malevolent expectation
permeated the air, a powerful undercurrent of suppressed sadism that
made intruders like ourselves feel dilettantish, uncomfortable, and
slightly ashamed. Fire walking is far more than just a spectacle to most
of these people; it is a concrete symbol of intimate identification with
a supernatural power. From time to time men would shout “Hora Hora,”
an Oriental form of “Amen” in honor of the god whose power tran-
scends the science of the West.

About 2 A.M. people near us suddenly scurried to make room for a
young woman carrying in her bare hands a clay pot full of burning
cocoanut husks. She did not seem to be feeling any pain, but she was
abnormally excited as she staggered to the outer sanctum of the temple.
There she threw the pot down, exultantly showed the crowd her
hands—they were gray, but not burned—and began knocking on the
temple door. She apparently wanted to demonstrate to the priest, or the
god, what she had accomplished, but no one was being admitted that
night, and she was still pounding frantically at the massive door when
the attention of the crowd shifted to another woman. This one too had
a red-hot pot full of burning husks, but she carried it in the conventional
Ceylonese fashion—on top of her head. And when she removed the pot,
neither her hair nor her hands showed any sign of scorching.

Shortly before four o’clock an ominous grumbling swept through
the crowd. Then angry shouts, threatening arms, protests. By climbing a
stone wall I was able to see what the trouble was. A row of chairs had
been reserved for several wealthy Ceylonese from Colombo and their
European guests. But when they arrived they found that a group of
Buddhist monks had occupied the seats and refused to move. (For more
than a year, as a calculated technique of growing nationalism, monks
had been usurping reserved seats at public gatherings.) The police
officer tried to persuade the monks to give up the seats, but the yellow-
robed figures leaned placidly on their umbrellas and pretended that he
did not exist. There was no question where the sympathy of the mob
lay, and when their protests became loud the police officer shrugged his shoulders and motioned to the legal holders of the seats. They dispersed to the edges of the standing mob, far away from the pit.

At four in the morning wailing flutes and pounding drums announced the arrival of the walkers. The long procession was led by white-robed priests, their faces streaked with red and yellow and white ash. By this time the flames had stopped spurring and the pit consisted of a red-hot mass of burning wood, which attendants were leveling with long branches. The heat of the fire was still intense; within ten feet of the pit it was difficult to breathe. Then the priests muttered incantations, the drums built up to a crescendo, and the fire walking began.

Among the eighty persons who walked the fire that night there were ten women. But in the mad excitement of the crowd's cheers, the drumbeats, the odors, the tension, it was difficult to identify individuals. Some men skipped lightly through the fire, as if doing a restrained version of the hop, skip, and jump in three or four steps. Some raced through, determined, somber. Some ran through exultantly, waving spears. One man danced gaily into the center of the pit, turned, did a kind of wild jig for a few moments, then turned again and danced on through. Another man stumbled suddenly and the crowd gasped; he fell forward, hung for a ghastly moment on the coals, then straightened and stumbled on. The crowd sighed. Two women ran through, close together, holding hands, taking five or six steps. In the phantasmagoric blur of roars, screams, and incantations, the fire walkers looked less like human beings than grotesque puppets in a macabre shadow play. For a long moment one person stood out in the hectic cavalcade of charging, gyrating figures: a short, slim man in a white sarong strolled slowly and serenely through the fire, stepping on the solid earth at the end of the pit as gently as he had stepped on the embers.

After going through the fire, the walkers, some shuffling, some running, a few helped or led by attendants, proceeded to a spot beside the temple where the head priest placed a smear of saffron ash on the forehead of each participant. The ash had been taken from the pit and blessed, and the fire walkers strode off proudly.

There are two types of fire walking, on stones (usually of volcanic origin) in Polynesia, and on embers in Asia and Africa. Theories which try to explain the secret of fire walking fall into three categories: physical, psychological, and religious. The most publicized attempts of scientists to find the solution took place in 1935 and 1936, when the London Council for Psychical Investigation arranged two series of fire walks at Surrey, England. The council took charge of building the pit and burning the logs, it provided a number of physicians, chemists, physicists,
and Oxford professors to examine every stage of the proceedings, and it published an official report of its conclusions. Some of the scientists published individual reports, in general agreeing that fire walking can be explained in terms of certain physical facts, but they did not agree on precisely what those physical facts were.

At the first series of Surrey tests, an Indian named Kuda Bux walked uninjured through a fire pit the surface temperature of which was 430° C., the interior temperature 1400° C. In the 1936 test, for Ahmed Hussain, the surface temperature was over 500° C. Both Bux and Hussain insisted that the secret was "faith," and Hussain claimed that he could convey immunity to anyone who would walk the fire with him. A half-dozen English amateurs, who had answered the council's advertisement for volunteers, did walk the fire behind Hussain and were "slightly burned." One of these amateurs managed, a few days later, to walk through the fire pit alone, in three steps, without suffering the slightest injury.

In brief, the official report of the council stated that fire walking is a gymnastic feat operating on this principle: a limited number of quick and even steps on a poor conductor of heat does not result in burning of the flesh. "The secret of fire-walking," the report said, "lies in the low thermal conductivity of the burning wood. . . . The quantity of heat transferred may remain small if . . . the time of contact is very short. . . . The time of contact is not above half a second in normal quick walking." To put it another way, it is safe to take three even steps, limiting each contact to half a second, on wood embers ("The thermal conductivity of copper . . . is about 1,000 times greater than that of wood"). The report conceded that "successive contacts . . . cause an accumulation of heat sufficient to cause injury, and . . . with fires whose temperature is 500° C. or more, only two contacts can be made with each foot without erythema or blistering."

The weight of the walker makes a difference, the report suggested, each of the Indians weighing less than 126 pounds and sinking into the embers to a lesser degree, and for a shorter time, than the heavier English amateurs. An expert also has the advantage of walking steadily and distributing his weight evenly, whereas the inexperience and undue haste of the beginner make it difficult for him to avoid resting a part of his foot more heavily than he should. When the amateur walker took an uneven number of steps, the foot which had taken more steps suffered more burns.

Other observers of fire walking have offered various explanations, the most popular being that Orientals have very tough soles. They walk barefoot all their lives, often on hot surfaces. Sometimes they put out cigarette butts with their toes and, when marching in parades, step on
burning husks which have fallen out of torchbearers' fires. This is true. But the English physicians who examined Bux and Hussain described their feet as very soft, not at all callused.

Another familiar conjecture is that fire walkers use chemical preparations to protect their feet. An American magician believes that a paste of alum and salt is applied, and other experts have speculated that soda, or soap, or juice of mysterious plants, or an anesthetic of some sort is used. But the physician and the chemist who examined Bux and Hussain at Surrey were positive that nothing had been applied to the feet; for control purposes, they washed one of Bux's feet and dried it carefully before he walked.

The "water-vapor protection" theory has a number of supporters. An American chemist recently wrote, in a popular magazine, that he could walk comfortably on burning coals and apply his tongue painlessly to a red-hot iron bar by utilizing this principle: at a certain range of high temperature, a thin film of water acts as absolute protection against heat. The trouble with this theory, as the Surrey tests showed, is 1) the fire walkers' feet were dry, 2) it would be difficult, under any conditions, to supply a uniform amount of water to the soles during a fire walk, and 3) moisture is not advisable, because embers are likely to stick to wet soles and cause blisters.

Still another explanation was offered by Joseph Dunninger. He asserts that the trick used by fire-walking Shinto priests in Japan consisted of making the fuel in the trench shallow in the center and deep on the sides, and starting the fire in the center. By the time the walking begins, the fire has burned out in the center, is still blazing at the edges, and the priests step on the cool ashes of the center. That may be the secret of the Shinto priests, but the pit at Surrey was filled evenly under the supervision of scientists. And an English planter in the Marquesas Islands, who was once teased by a local chief into fire walking, reported that the fire was hottest in the center.

These are the physical explanations. The psychological theories are more difficult to test. Having watched fire walking in Japan some years ago, Percival Lowell of Harvard concluded that the feat was made possible by the less sensitive nervous organism of the Oriental and the ecstasy of the walker (as well as the extremely tough calluses on his soles). A variation on the "ecstasy" theory is the suggestion of one psychologist that hypnosis is the secret. The fire walker, he says, has been hypnotized and provided with the same immunity to pain that can be observed even in a classroom demonstration of hypnosis. The fire walker may not know that he is hypnotized, but hypnosis is what the priest is actually practicing when he gives the walker his last-minute instructions. After the performance, while ostensibly putting a mark of
holy ash on the fire walker's forehead, the priest breaks the hypnosis. Most psychologists, however, reject this explanation on the grounds that hypnosis may lessen the subjective feeling of pain but cannot prevent skin from burning.

It is well known in the East that yogi and fakirs can attain so profound a state of concentration on a single object that nothing else distracts them. In this state, the practitioner may lie on a bed of nails, keep a hand outstretched for days, remain motionless for a week, or perform other feats whose practical value is limited but which do demonstrate a control over the body that most human beings are unable to achieve. According to some yogi, he who masters concentration can separate the soul from the body, so that the vacant shell does not feel pain. But since even a dead body will burn, this explanation is not satisfactory.

As far as the devout Ceylonese believer is concerned, the secret is simple: complete faith in Kataragama. Kataragama is a very powerful god. If, in desperation—at a time of serious illness, near-bankruptcy, dangerous competition from a hated rival—a man or woman vows to walk the fire in exchange for Kataragama's help, Kataragama may give that help. The amateur walker, then, is either a petitioner for supernatural assistance or a grateful recipient of it. His preparation may begin as early as May, when he arrives at Kataragama and puts himself under the direction of the chief priest. For three months he lives ascetically, abstaining from all sensual pleasures, eating only vegetables, drinking only water, bathing in the holy river near the temple, and going through religious rituals conducted by the priest. If he does all this, and if he has absolute, unquestioning, complete faith in Kataragama's power, he walks the fire unafraid and unharmed.

On the night we watched the fire walking at Kataragama, twelve people were burned badly enough to go to the hospital, and one of them died. These people, the devout believer will tell you, lacked either faith or preparation. Another man who lacked at least one of these ingredients was a young English clergyman who visited Ceylon a few years ago. This Protestant minister reasoned that the faith of a Christian was at least as strong as that of a Hindu, and he volunteered to walk the fire with the others. He did, and spent the next six months in a hospital, where doctors barely managed to save his life.

It is believed by the Ceylonese that Kataragama exercises absolute and somewhat whimsical control of the area within a fourteen-mile radius of his temple. His portrait, presumably life-size, shows a handsome, seven-foot-tall, six-headed and twelve-armed god, with two women and a blue peacock for companionship and transportation. Although he is technically a Hindu god, many Buddhists also worship him, or at least ask
for his help when they are in trouble. Officially the god of war and revenge, he is probably more fervently worshiped and more genuinely feared than any other god in Ceylon. He has an A-1 reputation for protecting his congregation and, according to numerous legends, exhibits a genial playfulness in devising disconcerting mishaps for those who violate his minor taboos.

Most Ceylonese try to make at least one visit a year to his temple, not necessarily during the August ceremonies, but at some other time of the year when the settlement in the jungle is sparse, quiet, and suitable for meditation. Everyone manages to get to Kataragama sooner or later, it seems. My Hindu friend in the police department went one week, my wife’s Muslim jeweler another, my Buddhist tailor a third. It is considered especially commendable to walk all the way to Kataragama, and many Ceylonese do walk there, sometimes carrying a large, colorful, paper-and-wood contraption in the form of an arch, which indicates that they are fulfilling a vow.

Our driver on the trip to Kataragama was a young Singhalese who told us that his name was Elvis. (He told Englishmen that his name was Winston.) His driving got a little erratic as the day wore on, and he finally admitted that, though a Buddhist, he was taking no chances with Kataragama and had been fasting all day. While we were eating, he warned our friends and us about certain taboos that visitors to the Kataragama territory were supposed to observe. One local rule forbade announcing an expected arrival time; that, said Elvis, was an infallible way of being delayed. Another dangerous thing to do was to speak disrespectfully of Kataragama. A Buddhist in a Renault immediately remarked that, the weather being ideal, we ought to arrive at Kataragama by six o’clock. And a Christian woman in a Vauxhall said that all this fear of Kataragama was nonsense; she had been there the previous year and had ridiculed the entire procedure, but nothing had happened.

When we finished eating we got into our Volkswagen and followed the other two cars. Suddenly it began to rain. It rained only for five minutes and, we learned later, only within a few hundred yards. As we carefully rounded a curve on the slick road we saw that the two other cars were now facing us. The Renault’s hood was stuck halfway into a rock fence, and the Vauxhall was resting its side on the same fence. It turned out that the Renault had skidded and started turning in the road, and to avoid hitting it the driver of the Vauxhall put on her brakes. By the time the cars stopped skidding they had smashed into the fence. No one was injured except the scoffing woman, who had a painful but not serious bruise on the spot where an irritated parent might have been expected to spank his child. It took a long time to improvise pulling cables, disengage the cars, and tow them to a garage. We eventually reached the
temple, just before midnight, and although all of these coincidences and superstitions can be logically accounted for, no one in our party made any more jeering remarks about Kataragama.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. Each of the sections of this essay has a particular subject and purpose. What are they? Has the essay as a whole any principle of unity except, broadly, the topic of fire walking? If so, what is it?
2. How would you define the author's point of view—as scientific, detached, sympathetic, romantic, skeptical? Is there more than one point of view? Explain.
3. Do you think that Feinberg is a reliable observer? Explain.
4. In the second section Feinberg presents several explanations of how fire walking is accomplished. Does he accept any of them? How does the explanation of the "devout Ceylonese believer" differ from the other explanations?
5. After reading the description of the experiments in Surrey, re-read the description of the walk at Kataragama. Did it have any features that were not covered by the Surrey experiments?
6. What purpose is served by the last section of the essay? Since it recounts events that happened before the fire walking, should this section have been put first? Why does Feinberg mention the kinds of automobiles that different people were driving? How would the point of view of the essay be shifted if the third section were omitted?
From SPECIMEN DAYS

THE CIVIL WAR

OPENING OF THE SECESSION WAR

News of the attack on Fort Sumter and the flag at Charleston harbor, S.C., was receiv'd in New York city late at night (13th April, 1861), and was immediately sent out in extras of the newspapers. I had been to the opera in Fourteenth street that night, and after the performance was walking down Broadway toward twelve o'clock, on my way to Brooklyn, when I heard in the distance the loud cries of the newsboys, who came presently tearing and yelling up the street, rushing from side to side even more furiously than usual. I bought an extra and cross'd to the Metropolitan hotel (Niblo's) where the great lamps were still brightly blazing, and, with a crowd of others, who gather'd impromptu, read the news, which was evidently authentic. For the benefit of some who had no papers, one of us read the telegram aloud, while all listen'd silently and attentively. No remark was made by any of the crowd, which had increas'd to thirty or forty, but all stood a minute or two, I remember, before they dispers'd. I can almost see them there now, under the lamps at midnight again.

THE WHITE HOUSE BY MOONLIGHT

February 24 [1863]. A spell of fine soft weather. I wander about a good deal, sometimes at night under the moon. Tonight took a long look at the President's house. The white portico—the palace-like, tall, round columns, spotless as snow—the walls also—the tender and soft moonlight, flooding the pale marble, and making peculiar faint languishing shades, not shadows—everywhere a soft transparent hazy, thin, blue moon-lace, hanging in the air—the brilliant and extra-plentiful clusters of gas, on and around the façade, columns, portico, etc.—everything so white, so marbly pure and dazzling, yet soft—the White House of future poems,
and of dreams and dramas, there in the soft and copious moon—the
gorgeous front, in the trees, under the lustrous flooding moon, full of
reality, full of illusion—the forms of the trees, leafless, silent, in trunk
and myriad-angles of branches, under the stars and sky—the White
House of the land, and of beauty and night—sentries at the gates, and by
the portico, silent, pacing there in blue overcoats—stopping you not at
all, but eyeing you with sharp eyes, whichever way you move.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

August 12 [1863]. I see the President almost every day, as I happen to
live where he passes to or from his lodgings out of town. He never
sleeps at the White House during the hot season, but has quarters at a
healthy location some three miles north of the city, the Soldiers’ Home,
a United States military establishment. I saw him this morning about
8½ coming in to business, riding on Vermont avenue, near L street. He
always has a company of twenty-five or thirty cavalry, with sabers
drawn and held upright over their shoulders. They say this guard was
against his personal wish, but he let his counselors have their way. The
party makes no great show in uniform or horses. Mr. Lincoln on the
saddle generally rides a good-sized, easygoing gray horse, is dress’d in
plain black, somewhat rusty and dusty, wears a black stiff hat, and looks
about as ordinary in attire, etc., as the commonest man. A lieutenant,
with yellow straps, rides at his left, and following behind, two by two,
come the cavalry men, in their yellow-striped jackets. They are gen-
erally going at a slow trot, as that is the pace set them by the one they
wait upon. The sabers and accouterments clank, and the entirely un-
ornamental cortège as it trots toward Lafayette square arouses no sensa-
tion, only some curious stranger stops and gazes. I see very plainly
Abraham Lincoln’s dark brown face, with the deep-cut lines, the eyes,
always to me with a deep latent sadness in the expression. We have got
so that we exchange bows, and very cordial ones. Sometimes the Presi-
dent goes and comes in an open barouche. The cavalry always accom-
pany him, with drawn sabers. Often I notice as he goes out evenings—
and sometimes in the mornings, when he returns early—he turns off and
halts at the large and handsome residence of the Secretary of War, on
K street, and holds conference there. If in his barouche, I can see from
my window he does not alight, but sits in his vehicle, and Mr. Stanton
comes out to attend him. Sometimes one of his sons, a boy of ten or
twelve, accompanies him, riding at his right on a pony. Earlier in the
summer I occasionally saw the President and his wife, toward the latter
part of the afternoon, out in a barouche, on a pleasure ride through the
city. Mrs. Lincoln was dress’d in complete black, with a long crape veil.
The equipage is of the plainest kind, only two horses, and they nothing
extra. They pass’d me once very close, and I saw the President in the


face fully, as they were moving slowly, and his look, though abstracted, happen'd to be directed steadily in my eye. He bow'd and smiled, but far beneath his smile I noticed well the expression I have alluded to. None of the artists or pictures has caught the deep, though subtle and indirect expression of this man's face. There is something else there. One of the great portrait painters of two or three centuries ago is needed.

**THE SECOND INAUGURATION**

March 4 [1865]. The President very quietly rode down to the capitol in his own carriage, by himself, on a sharp trot, about noon, either because he wish'd to be on hand to sign bills, or to get rid of marching in line with the absurd procession, the muslin temple of liberty, and paste-board monitor. I saw him on his return, at three o'clock, after the performance was over. He was in his plain two-horse barouche, and look'd very much worn and tired; the lines, indeed, of vast responsibilities, intricate questions, and demands of life and death, cut deeper than ever upon his dark brown face; yet all the old goodness, tenderness, sadness, and canny shrewdness, underneath the furrows. (I never see that man without feeling that he is one to become personally attach'd to, for his combination of purest, heartiest tenderness, and native western form of manliness.) By his side sat his little boy, of ten years. There were no soldiers, only a lot of civilians on horseback, with huge yellow scarfs over their shoulders, riding around the carriage. (At the inauguration four years ago, he rode down and back again surrounded by a dense mass of arm'd cavalrmen eight deep, with drawn sabers; and there were sharpshooters station'd at every corner on the route.) I ought to make mention of the closing levée of Saturday night last. Never before was such a compact jam in front of the White House—all the grounds fill'd, and away out to the spacious sidewalks. I was there, as I took a notion to go—was in the rush inside with the crowd—surged along the passage-ways, the blue and other rooms, and through the great east room. Crowds of country people, some very funny. Fine music from the Marine band, off in a side place. I saw Mr. Lincoln, dress'd all in black, with white kid gloves and a claw-hammer coat, receiving, as in duty bound, shaking hands, looking very disconsolate, and as if he would give anything to be somewhere else.

**THE WEATHER—DOES IT SYMPATHIZE WITH THESE TIMES?**

Whether the rains, the heat and cold, and what underlies them all, are affected with what affects man in masses, and follow his play of passionate action, strain'd stronger than usual, and on a larger scale than usual—whether this, or no, it is certain that there is now, and has been for twenty months or more, on this North American continent many a remarkable, many an unprecedented expression of the subtile world of
air above us and around us. There, since this war, and the wide and deep national agitation, strange analogies, different combinations, a different sunlight, or absence of it; different products even out of the ground. After every great battle, a great storm. Even civic events the same. On Saturday last, a forenoon like whirling demons dark, with slanting rain, full of rage; and then the afternoon, so calm, so bathed with flooding splendor from heaven's most excellent sun, with atmosphere of sweetness; so clear, it show'd the stars, long, long before they were due. As the President came out on the capitol portico, a curious little white cloud, the only one in that part of the sky, appear'd like a hovering bird, right over him.

Indeed, the heavens, the elements, all the meteorological influences, have run riot for weeks past. Such caprices, abruptest alternation of frowns and beauty, I never knew. It is a common remark that (as last summer was different in its spells of intense heat from any preceding it,) the winter just completed has been without parallel. It has remain'd so down to the hour I am writing. Much of the daytime of the past month was sulky, with leaden heaviness, fog, interstices of bitter cold, and some insane storms. But there have been samples of another description. Nor earth nor sky ever knew spectacles of superb beauty than some of the nights lately here. The western star, Venus, in the earlier hours of evening, has never been so large, so clear; it seems as if it told something, as if it held rapport indulgent with humanity, with us Americans. Five or six nights since, it hung close by the moon, then a little past its first quarter. The star was wonderful, the moon like a young mother. The sky, dark blue, the transparent night, the planets, the moderate west wind, the elastic temperature, the miracle of that great star, and the young and swelling moon swimming in the west, suffused the soul. Then I heard, slow and clear, the deliberate notes of a bugle come up out of the silence, sounding so good through the night's mystery, no hurry, but firm and faithful, floating along, rising, falling leisurely, with here and there a long-drawn note; the bugle, well play'd, sounding tattoo, in one of the army hospitals near here, where the wounded (some of them personally so dear to me,) are lying in their cots, and many a sick boy come down to the war from Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, and the rest.

SCENE AT THE CAPITOL

I must mention a strange scene at the capitol, the Hall of Representa-
tives, the morning of Saturday last, (March 4). The day just dawn'd, but in half-darkness, everything dim, leaden, and soaking. In that dim light, the members nervous from long-drawn duty, exhausted, some asleep, and many half asleep. The gaslight, mix'd with the dingy day-
break, produced an unearthly effect. The poor little sleepy, stumbling
pages, the smell of the hall, the members with heads leaning on their
desk, the sounds of the voices speaking, with unusual intonations—the
general moral atmosphere also of the close of this important session—the
strong hope that the war is approaching its close—the tantalizing dread
lest the hope may be a false one—the grandeur of the hall itself, with its
effect of vast shadows up toward the panels and spaces over the
galleries—all made a mark’d combination.

In the midst of this, with the suddenness of a thunderbolt, burst one
of the most angry and crashing storms of rain and hail ever heard. It
beat like a deluge on the heavy glass roof of the hall, and the wind
literally howl’d and roar’d. For a moment, (and no wonder,) the nervous
and sleeping Representatives were thrown into confusion. The slumber-
ers awakened with fear, some started for the doors, some look’d up with
blanch’d cheeks and lips to the roof, and the little pages began to cry;
it was a scene. But it was over almost as soon as the drowsied men were
actually awake. They recover’d themselves; the storm raged on, beating,
dashing, and with loud noises at times. But the House went ahead with
its business then, I think, as calmly and with as much deliberation as at
any time in its career. Perhaps the shock did it good. (One is not without
impression, after all, amid these members of Congress, of both the
Houses, that if the flat routine of their duties should ever be broken in
upon by some great emergency involving real danger, and calling for
first-class personal qualities, those qualities would be found generally
forthcoming, and from men not now credited with them.)

WOUNDS AND DISEASES

The war is over, but the hospitals are fuller than ever, from former
and current cases. A large majority of the wounds are in the arms and
legs. But there is every kind of wound, in every part of the body. I
should say of the sick, from my observation, that the prevailing maladies
are typhoid fever and the camp fevers generally, diarrhea, catarrhal
affections and bronchitis, rheumatism and pneumonia. These forms of
sickness lead; all the rest follow. There are twice as many sick as there
are wounded. The deaths range from seven to ten per cent of those
under treatment.1

DEATH OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN

April 16, ’65. I find in my notes of the time, this passage on the death
of Abraham Lincoln: He leaves for America’s history and biography,
so far, not only its most dramatic reminiscence—he leaves, in my opin-
ion, the greatest, best, most characteristic, artistic, moral personality.

1 In the U.S. Surgeon-General’s office since, there is a formal record and treatment
of 253,142 cases of wounds by government surgeons. What must have been the num-
ber unofficial, indirect—to say nothing of the Southern armies?
Not but that he had faults, and show'd them in the Presidency; but honesty, goodness, shrewdness, conscience, and (a new virtue, unknown to other lands, and hardly yet really known here, but the foundation and tie of all, as the future will grandly develop,) Unionism, in its truest and amallest sense, form'd the hard-pan of his character. These he seal'd with his life. The tragic splendor of his death, purging, illuminating all, throws round his form, his head, an aureole that will remain and will grow brighter through time, while history lives, and love of country lasts. By many has this Union been help'd; but if one name, one man, must be pick'd out, he, most of all, is the conservator of it, to the future. He was assassinated—but the Union is not assassinated—Ça ira! One falls, and another falls. The soldier drops, sinks like a wave—but the ranks of the ocean eternally press on. Death does its work, obliterates a hundred, a thousand—President, general, captain, private—but the Nation is immortal.

NO GOOD PORTRAIT OF LINCOLN

Probably the reader has seen physiognomies (often old farmers, sea captains, and such) that, behind their homeliness, or even ugliness, held superior points so subtle, yet so palpable, making the real life of their faces almost as impossible to depict as a wild perfume or fruit taste, or a passionate tone of the living voice—and such was Lincoln's face, the peculiar color, the lines of it, the eyes, mouth, expression. Of technical beauty it had nothing—but to the eye of a great artist it furnished a rare study, a feast and fascination. The current portraits are all failures—most of them caricatures.

A SOLDIER ON LINCOLN

May 28 [1865]. As I sat by the bedside of a sick Michigan soldier in hospital today, a convalescent from the adjoining bed rose and came to me, and presently we began talking. He was a middle-aged man, belonged to the 2nd Virginia regiment, but lived in Racine, Ohio, and had a family there. He spoke of President Lincoln, and said: "The war is over, and many are lost. And now we have lost the best, the fairest, the truest man in America. Take him altogether, he was the best man this country ever produced. It was quite a while I thought very different; but some time before the murder, that's the way I have seen it." There was deep earnestness in the soldier. (I found upon further talk he had known Mr. Lincoln personally, and quite closely, years before.) He was a veteran; was now in the fifth year of his service; was a cavalry man, and had been in a good deal of hard fighting.

"CONVULSIVENESS"

As I have look'd over the proof-sheets of the preceding pages, I have once or twice fear'd that my diary would prove, at best, but a batch of
convulsively written reminiscences. Well, be it so. They are but parts of the actual distraction, heat, smoke and excitement of those times. The war itself, with the temper of society preceding it, can indeed be best described by that very word *convulsiveness*.

**THREE YEARS SUMM'D UP**

During those three years [1862–1865] in hospital, camp or field, I made over six hundred visits or tours, and went, as I estimate, counting all, among from eighty thousand to a hundred thousand of the wounded and sick, as sustainer of spirit and body in some degree, in time of need. These visits varied from an hour or two, to all day or night; for with dear or critical cases I generally watch’d all night. Sometimes I took up my quarters in the hospital, and slept or watch’d there several nights in succession. Those three years I consider the greatest privilege and satisfaction, (with all their feverish excitements and physical deprivations and lamentable sights) and, of course, the most profound lesson of my life. I can say that in my ministerings I comprehended all, whoever came in my way, northern or southern, and slighted none. It arous’d and brought out and decided undreamt-of depths of emotion. It has given me my most fervent views of the true ensemble and extent of the States. While I was with wounded and sick in thousands of cases from the New England States, and from New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, and from Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and all the Western States, I was with more or less from all the States, North and South, without exception. I was with many from the border States, especially from Maryland and Virginia, and found, during those lurid years 1862–63, far more Union southerners, especially Tennesseans, than is supposed. I was with many rebel officers and men among our wounded, and gave them always what I had, and tried to cheer them the same as any. I was among the army teamsters considerably, and, indeed, always found myself drawn to them. Among the black soldiers, wounded or sick, and in the contraband camps, I also took my way whenever in their neighborhood, and did what I could for them.

**THE MILLION DEAD, TOO, SUMM'D UP**

The dead in this war—there they lie, strewing the fields and woods and valleys and battlefields of the south—Virginia, the Peninsula—Malvern hill and Fair Oaks—the banks of the Chickahominy—the terraces of Fredericksburg—Antietam bridge—the grisly ravines of Manassas—the bloody promenade of the Wilderness—the varieties of the strayed dead, (the estimate of the War department is 25,000 national soldiers kill’d in battle and never buried at all, 5000 drown’d—15,000 inhumed by strangers, or on the march in haste, in hitherto unfound localities—2000 graves cover’d by sand and mud by Mississippi freshets, 3000 carried away by
caving-in of banks, etc.)—Gettysburg, the West, Southwest, Vicksburg—Chattanooga—the trenches of Petersburg—the numberless battles, camps, hospitals everywhere—the crop reap’d by the mighty reapers, typhoid, dysentery, inflammations and blackest and loathsomest of all, the dead and living, burial pits, the prison pens of Andersonville, Salisbury, Belle Isle, etc., (not Dante’s pictured hell and all its woes, its degradations, filthy torments, excell’d those prisons—the dead, the dead, the dead—our dead—or South or North, ours all, (all, all, all, finally dear to me)—or East or West—Atlantic coast or Mississippi valley—somewhere they crawl’d to die, alone, in bushes, low gullies, or on the sides of hills—(there, in secluded spots, their skeletons, bleach’d bones, tufts of hair, buttons, fragments of clothing, are occasionally found yet)—our young men once so handsome and so joyous taken from us—the son from the mother, the husband from the wife, the dear friend from the dear friend—the clusters of camp graves, in Georgia, the Carolinas, and in Tennessee—the single graves left in the woods or by the roadside, (hundreds, thousands, obliterated)—the corpses floated down the rivers, and caught and lodged, (dozens, scores, floated down the upper Potomac, after the cavalry engagements, the pursuit of Lee, following Gettysburg) —some lie at the bottom of the sea—the general million, and the special cemeteries in almost all the States—the infinite dead—(the land entire saturated, perfumed with their impalpable ashes’ exhalation in Nature’s chemistry distill’d, and shall be so forever, in every future grain of wheat and ear of corn, and every flower that grows, and every breath we draw)—not only Northern leavening Southern soil—thousands, aye tens of thousands, of Southerners, crumble today in Northern earth.

And everywhere among these countless graves—everywhere in the many soldier cemeteries of the nation, (there are now, I believe, over seventy of them)—as at the time in the vast trenches, the depositories of slain, Northern and Southern, after the great battles—not only where the scathing trail passed those years, but radiating since in all the peaceful quarters of the land—we see, and ages yet may see, on monuments and gravestones, singly or in masses to thousands or tens of thousands, the significant word Unknown.

(In some of the cemeteries nearly all the dead are unknown. At Salisbury, N. C., for instance, the known are only 85, while the unknown are 12,027, and 11,700 of these are buried in trenches. A national monument has been put up here, by order of Congress to mark the spot—but what visible, material monument can ever fittingly commemorate that spot?)

**THE REAL WAR WILL NEVER GET IN THE BOOKS**

And so good-by to the war. I know not how it may have been, or may be, to others—to me the main interest I found, (and still, on recollection, find) in the rank and file of the armies, both sides, and in those specimens
amid the hospitals, and even the dead on the field. To me the points illustrating the latent personal character and eligibilities of these States, in the two or three millions of American young and middle-aged men, North and South, embodied in those armies—and especially the one-third or one-fourth of their number, stricken by wounds or disease at some time in the course of the contest—were of more significance even than the political interests involved. (As so much of a race depends on how it faces death, and how it stands personal anguish and sickness. As, in the glints of emotions under emergencies, and the indirect trait and asides in Plutarch, we get far profounder clues to the antique world than all its more formal history.)

Future years will never know the seething hell and the black infernal background of countless minor scenes and interiors, (not the official surface-courteousness of the Generals, not the few great battles) of the Secession War; and it is best they should not—the real war will never get in the books. In the mushy influences of current times, too, the fervid atmosphere and typical events of those years are in danger of being totally forgotten. I have at night watch’d by the side of a sick man in the hospital, one who could not live many hours. I have seen his eyes flash and burn as he raised himself and recur’d to the cruelties on his surrender’d brother, and mutilations of the corpse afterward. . . .

Such was the war. It was not a quadrille in a ballroom. Its interior history will not only never be written—its practicality, minutiae of deeds and passions will never be even suggested. The actual soldier of 1862-'65, North and South, with all his ways, his incredible dauntlessness, habits, practices, tastes, language, his fierce friendship, his appetite, rankness, his superb strength and animality, lawless gait, and a hundred unnamed lights and shades of camp, I say, will never be written—perhaps must not and should not be.

The preceding notes may furnish a few stray glimpses into that life, and into those lurid interiors, never to be fully convey’d to the future. The hospital part of the drama from ’61 to ’65, deserves indeed to be recorded. Of that many-threaded drama, with its sudden and strange surprises, its confounding of prophecies, its moments of despair, the dread of foreign interference, the interminable campaigns, the bloody battles, the mighty and cumbrous and green armies, the drafts and bounties—the immense money expenditure, like a heavy-pouring constant rain—with, over the whole land, the last three years of the struggle an unending, universal mourning-wail of women, parents, orphans—the narrow of the tragedy concentrated in those army hospitals—(it seem’d sometimes as if the whole interest of the land, North and South, was one vast central hospital, and all the rest of the affair but flanges)—those forming the untold and unwritten history of the war—ininitely greater (like life’s) than the few scraps and distortions that are ever told or written.
Think how much, and of importance, will be—how much, civic and military, has already been—buried in the grave in eternal darkness.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. Carefully compare the sentence structure of the paragraphs on “The Opening of the War” and on “The White House by Moonlight.” (Whitman had been a newspaper reporter and editor. Which of the two paragraphs resembles a newsstory? How?)

2. The comment on “The Weather—Does It Sympathize with These Times?” shows a mixture of both kinds of writing noted in the first question. Find sentences which illustrate clearly each different kind. The second paragraph of this comment, especially from “Nor earth nor sky . . .” onwards, is much more than workmanlike description. By what means does Whitman produce a unity of feeling that surrounds the individual details of star, moon, bugle, hospitals, and the names of the states?

3. Compare the comments entitled “Abraham Lincoln” and “The Second Inauguration” with those on the “Death of President Lincoln,” “No Good Portrait of Lincoln,” and “A Soldier on Lincoln.” Note carefully the nouns and adjectives used to characterize Lincoln in both sets of comments. How do they differ? To what extent do they coincide? Would you agree that it was only after Lincoln’s death that Whitman found something ideal and heroic in him? Base your answer on evidence.

4. After considering Whitman’s final comments on the Civil War, how would you characterize his interest in the conflict—as military, political, historical—or what? Why does Whitman say that “The real war will never get in the books?”
When I departed from Harvard for Stanford University last December, almost the last good-by I got was that of my old Californian friend B: "I hope they’ll give you a touch of earthquake while you’re there, so that you may also become acquainted with that Californian institution."

Accordingly, when, lying awake at about half past five on the morning of April 18 in my little "flat" on the campus of Stanford, I felt the bed begin to waggle, my first consciousness was one of gleeful recognition of the nature of the movement. "By Jove," I said to myself, "here’s B’s old earthquake, after all!" And then, as it went crescendo, "And a jolly good one it is, too!" I said.

Sitting up involuntarily, and taking a kneeling position, I was thrown down on my face as it went fortior shaking the room exactly as a terrier shakes a rat. Then everything that was on anything else slid off to the floor, over went bureau and chiffonier with a crash, as the fortissimo was reached; plaster cracked, an awful roaring noise seemed to fill the outer air, and in an instant all was still again, save the soft babble of human voices from far and near that soon began to make itself heard, as the inhabitants in costumes negligés in various degrees sought the greater safety of the street and yielded to the passionate desire for sympathetic communication.


1 At the time of the San Francisco earthquake the author was at Leland Stanford University nearby. He succeeded in getting into San Francisco on the morning of the earthquake, and spent the remainder of the day in the city. These observations appeared in the Youth's Companion for June 7, 1906. [Author's note.]
The thing was over, as I understand the Lick Observatory to have declared, in forty-eight seconds. To me it felt as if about that length of time, although I have heard others say that it seemed to them longer. In my case, sensation and emotion were so strong that little thought, and no reflection or volition, were possible in the short time consumed by the phenomenon.

The emotion consisted wholly of glee and admiration; glee at the vividness which such an abstract idea or verbal term as "earthquake" could put on when translated into sensible reality and verified concretely; and admiration at the way in which the frail little wooden house could hold itself together in spite of such a shaking. I felt no trace whatever of fear; it was pure delight and welcome.

"Go it," I almost cried aloud, "and go it stronger!"

I ran into my wife's room, and found that she, although awakened from sound sleep, had felt no fear, either. Of all the persons whom I later interrogated, very few had felt any fear while the shaking lasted, although many had had a "turn," as they realized their narrow escapes from bookcases or bricks from chimney-breasts falling on their beds and pillows an instant after they had left them.

As soon as I could think, I discerned retrospectively certain peculiar ways in which my consciousness had taken in the phenomenon. These ways were quite spontaneous, and, so to speak, inevitable and irresistible.

First, I personified the earthquake as a permanent individual entity. It was the earthquake of my friend B's augury, which had been lying low and holding itself back during all the intervening months, in order, on that lustrous April morning, to invade my room, and energize the more intensely and triumphantly. It came, moreover, directly to me. It stole in behind my back, and once inside the room, had me all to itself, and could manifest itself convincingly. Animus and intent were never more present in any human action, nor did any human activity ever more definitely point back to a living agent as its source and origin.

All whom I consulted on the point agreed as to this feature in their experience. "It expressed intention," "It was vicious," "It was bent on destruction," "It wanted to show its power," or what not. To me, it wanted simply to manifest the full meaning of its name. But what was this "It?" To some, apparently, a vague demonic power; to me an individualized being, B's earthquake, namely.

One informant interpreted it as the end of the world and the beginning of the final judgment. This was a lady in a San Francisco hotel, who did not think of its being an earthquake till after she had got into the street and some one had explained it to her. She told me that the theological interpretation had kept fear from her mind, and made her take the shaking calmly. For "science," when the tensions in the earth's
crust reach the breaking-point, and strata fall into an altered equilibrium, earthquake is simply the collective name of all the cracks and shakings and disturbances that happen. They are the earthquake. But for me the earthquake was the cause of the disturbances, and the perception of it as a living agent was irresistible. It had an overpowering dramatic convincingness.

I realize now better than ever how inevitable were men’s earlier mythologic versions of such catastrophes, and how artificial and against the grain of our spontaneous perceiving are the later habits into which science educates us. It was simply impossible for untutored men to take earthquakes into their minds as anything but supernatural warnings or retributions.

A good instance of the way in which the tremendousness of a catastrophe may banish fear was given me by a Stanford student. He was in the fourth story of Encina Hall, an immense stone dormitory building. Awakened from sleep, he recognized what the disturbance was, and sprang from the bed, but was thrown off his feet in a moment, while his books and furniture fell round him. Then, with an awful, sinister, grinding roar, everything gave way, and with chimneys, floor-beams, walls and all, he descended through the three lower stories of the building into the basement. “This is my end, this is my death,” he felt; but all the while no trace of fear. The experience was too overwhelming for anything but passive surrender to it. (Certain heavy chimneys had fallen in, carrying the whole centre of the building with them.)

Arrived at the bottom, he found himself with rafters and débris round him, but not pinned in or crushed. He saw daylight, and crept toward it through the obstacles. Then, realizing that he was in his nightgown, and feeling no pain anywhere, his first thought was to get back to his room and find some more presentable clothing. The stairways at Encina Hall are at the ends of the building. He made his way to one of them, and went up the four flights, only to find his room no longer extant. Then he noticed pain in his feet, which had been injured, and came down the stairs with difficulty. When he talked with me ten days later he had been in hospital a week, was very thin and pale, and went on crutches, and was dressed in borrowed clothing.

So much for Stanford, where all our experiences seem to have been very similar. Nearly all our chimneys went down, some of them disintegrating from top to bottom; parlor floors were covered with bricks; plaster strewed the floors; furniture was everywhere upset and dislocated; but the wooden dwellings sprang back to their original position, and in house after house not a window stuck or a door scraped at top or bottom. Wood architecture was triumphant! Everybody was excited, but the excitement at first, at any rate, seemed to be almost joyous. Here at
last was a real earthquake after so many years of harmless waggle! Above all, there was an irresistible desire to talk about it, and exchange experiences.

Most people slept outdoors for several subsequent nights, partly to be safer in case of a recurrence, but also to work off their emotion, and get the full unusualness out of the experience. The vocal babble of early-waking girls and boys from the gardens of the campus, mingling with the birds' songs and the exquisite weather, was for three or four days a delightful sunrise phenomenon.

Now turn to San Francisco, thirty-five miles distant, from which an automobile ere long brought us the dire news of a city in ruins, with fires beginning at various points, and the water-supply interrupted. I was fortunate enough to board the only train of cars—a very small one—that got up to the city; fortunate enough also to escape in the evening by the only train that left it. This gave me and my valiant feminine escort some four hours of observation. My business is with "subjective" phenomena exclusively; so I will say nothing of the material ruin that greeted us on every hand—the daily papers and the weekly journals have done full justice to that topic. By midday, when we reached the city, the pall of smoke was vast and the dynamite detonations had begun, but the troops, the police and the firemen seemed to have established order, dangerous neighborhoods were roped off everywhere and picketed, saloons closed, vehicles impressed, and every one at work who could work.

It was indeed a strange sight to see an entire population in the streets, busy as ants in an uncovered ant-hill scurrying to save their eggs and larvae. Every horse, and everything on wheels in the city, from hucksters' wagons to automobiles, was being loaded with what effects could be scraped together from houses which the advancing flames were threatening. The sidewalks were covered with well-dressed men and women, carrying baskets, bundles, valises, or dragging trunks to spots of greater temporary safety, soon to be dragged farther, as the fire kept spreading!

In the safer quarters, every doorstep was covered with the dwelling's tenants, sitting surrounded with their more indispensable chattels, and ready to flee at a minute's notice. I think every one must have fasted on that day, for I saw no one eating. There was no appearance of general dismay, and little of chatter or of inco-ordinated excitement.

Every one seemed doggedly bent on achieving the job which he had set himself to perform; and the faces, although somewhat tense and set and grave, were inexpressive of emotion. I noticed only three persons overcome, two Italian women, very poor, embracing an aged fellow countrywoman, and all weeping. Physical fatigue and seriousness were
the only inner states that one could read on countenances.

With lights forbidden in the houses, and the streets lighted only by
the conflagration, it was apprehended that the criminals of San Fran-
cisco would hold high carnival on the ensuing night. But whether they
feared the disciplinary methods of the United States troops, who were
visible everywhere, or whether they were themselves solemnized by
the immensity of the disaster, they lay low and did not “manifest,”
either then or subsequently.

The only very discreditable thing to human nature that occurred
was later, when hundreds of lazy “bummers” found that they could
keep camping in the parks, and make alimentary storage-batteries of
their stomachs, even in some cases getting enough of the free rations in
their huts or tents to last them well into the summer. This charm of
pauperized vagabondage seems all along to have been Satan’s most serious
bait to human nature. There was theft from the outset, but confined, I
believe, to petty pilfering.

Cash in hand was the only money, and millionaires and their families
were no better off in this respect than any one. Whoever got a vehicle
could have the use of it; but the richest often went without, and spent
the first two nights on rugs on the bare ground, with nothing but
what their own arms had rescued. Fortunately, those nights were
dry and comparatively warm, and Californians are accustomed to
camping conditions in the summer, so suffering from exposure was less
great than it would have been elsewhere. By the fourth night, which
was rainy, tents and huts had brought most campers under cover.

I went through the city again eight days later. The fire was out, and
about a quarter of the area stood unconsommed. Intact skyscrapers
dominated the smoking level majestically and superbly—they and a few
walls that had survived the overthrow. Thus has the courage of our
architects and builders received triumphant vindication!

The inert elements of the population had mostly got away, and those
that remained seemed what Mr. H. G. Wells calls “efficients.” Sheds
were already going up as temporary starting-points of business. Every
one looked cheerful, in spite of the awful discontinuity of past and
future, with every familiar association with material things dissevered;
and the discipline and order were practically perfect.

As these notes of mine must be short, I had better turn to my more
generalized reflections.

Two things in retrospect strike me especially, and are the most
emphatic of all my impressions. Both are reassuring as to human nature.

The first of these was the rapidity of the improvisation of order out of
chaos. It is clear that just as in every thousand human beings there
will be statistically so many artists, so many athletes, so many thinkers,
and so many potentially good soldiers, so there will be so many potential organizers in times of emergency. In point of fact, not only in the great city, but in the outlying towns, these natural ordermakers, whether amateurs or officials, came to the front immediately. There seemed to be no possibility which there was not some one there to think of, or which within twenty-four hours was not in some way provided for.

A good illustration is this: Mr. Keith is the great landscape-painter of the Pacific slope, and his pictures, which are many, are artistically and pecuniarily precious. Two citizens, lovers of his work, early in the day diverted their attention from all other interests, their own private ones included, and made it their duty to visit every place which they knew to contain a Keith painting. They cut them from their frames, rolled them up, and in this way got all the more important ones into a place of safety.

When they then sought Mr. Keith, to convey the joyous news to him, they found him still in his studio, which was remote from the fire, beginning a new painting. Having given up his previous work for lost, he had resolved to lose no time in making what amends he could for the disaster.

The completeness of organization at Palo Alto, a town of ten thousand inhabitants close to Stanford University, was almost comical. People feared exodus on a large scale of the rowdy elements of San Francisco. In point of fact, very few refugees came to Palo Alto. But within twenty-four hours, rations, clothing, hospital, quarantine, disinfection, washing, police, military, quarters in camp and in houses, printed information, employment, all were provided for under the care of so many volunteer committees.

Much of this readiness was American, much of it Californian; but I believe that every country in a similar crisis would have displayed it in a way to astonish the spectators. Like soldiering, it lies always latent in human nature.

The second thing that struck me was the universal equanimity. We soon got letters from the East, ringing with anxiety and pathos; but I now know fully what I have always believed, that the pathetic way of feeling great disasters belongs rather to the point of view of people at a distance than to the immediate victims. I heard not a single really pathetic or sentimental word in California expressed by any one.

The terms "awful," "dreadful" fell often enough from people's lips, but always with a sort of abstract meaning, and with a face that seemed to admire the vastness of the catastrophe as much as it bewailed its cuttingness. When talk was not directly practical, I might almost say that it expressed (at any rate in the nine days I was there) a tendency more toward nervous excitement than toward grief. The hearts concealed private bitterness enough, no doubt, but the tongues disliked to
dwell on the misfortunes of self, when almost everybody one spoke to had suffered equally.

Surely the cutting edge of all our usual misfortunes comes from their character of loneliness. We lose our health, our wife or children die, our house burns down, or our money is made way with, and the world goes on rejoicing, leaving us on one side and counting us out from all its business. In California every one, to some degree, was suffering, and one's private miseries were merged in the vast general sum of privation and in the all-absorbing practical problem of general recuperation. The cheerfulness, or, at any rate, the steadfastness of tone, was universal. Not a single whine or plaintive word did I hear from the hundred losers whom I spoke to. Instead of that there was a temper of helpfulness beyond the counting.

It is easy to glorify this as something characteristically American, or especially Californian. Californian education has, of course, made the thought of all possible recuperations easy. In an exhausted country, with no marginal resources, the outlook on the future would be much darker. But I like to think that what I write of is a normal and universal trait of human nature. In our drawing-rooms and offices we wonder how people ever do go through battles, sieges and shipwrecks. We quiver and sicken in imagination, and think those heroes superhuman. Physical pain, whether suffered alone or in company, is always more or less unnerving and intolerable. But mental pathos and anguish, I fancy, are usually effects of distance. At the place of action, where all are concerned together, healthy animal insensitivity and heartiness take their place. At San Francisco the need will continue to be awful, and there will doubtless be a crop of nervous wrecks before the weeks and months are over, but meanwhile the commonest men, simply because they are men, will go on, singly and collectively, showing this admirable fortitude of temper.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. What does James mean by calling the earthquake "an individualized being, B's earthquake, namely"?

2. What advantage does James gain, in describing the earthquake, by having been in Palo Alto rather than in San Francisco? What reason does he give for not describing "the material ruin" in San Francisco? Suppose that he had devoted a page to a vivid account of the ruin; would such an account distinctly alter the tone of his essay?

3. What two conclusions does James reach that "are reassuring as to human nature"?

4. How does James explain the cheerfulness and absence of complaining among the victims of the earthquake?

5. Why does he believe that "mental pathos and anguish . . . are usually
effects of distance”? Does he show himself insensitive to the suffering of the victims of the disaster?

6. William James was a philosopher, a mountain climber, a psychologist, a traveler, and an impressive teacher. What qualities of his mind and temperament does this essay reveal?
From ALLEGASH AND EAST BRANCH

THE INDIAN GUIDE

About four o'clock the next morning (July 24), though it was quite cloudy, accompanied by the landlord to the water's edge, in the twilight, we launched our canoe from a rock on the Moosehead Lake. When I was there four years before, we had a rather small canoe for three persons, and I had thought that this time I would get a larger one, but the present one was even smaller than that. It was 18¼ feet long by 2 feet 6½ inches wide in the middle, and one foot deep within, so I found by measurement, and I judged that it would weigh not far from eighty pounds. The Indian had recently made it himself, and its smallness was partly compensated for by its newness, as well as stanchness and solidity, it being made of very thick bark and ribs. Our baggage weighed about 166 pounds, so that the canoe carried about 600 pounds in all, or the weight of four men. The principal part of the baggage was, as usual, placed in the middle of the broadest part, while we stowed ourselves in the chinks and crannies that were left before and behind it, where there was no room to extend our legs, the loose articles being tucked into the ends. The canoe was thus as closely packed as a market-basket, and might possibly have been upset without spilling any of its contents. The Indian sat on a cross-bar in the stern, but we flat on the bottom, with a splint or chip behind our backs, to protect them from the cross-bar, and one of us commonly paddled with the Indian. He foresaw that we should not want a pole till we reached the Umbazookskus River, it being either dead water or down stream so far, and he was prepared to make a sail of his blanket in the bows if the wind should be fair; but we never used it.

When we got to the camp, the canoe was taken out and turned over, and a log laid across it to prevent its being blown away. The Indian cut some large logs of damp and rotten hard wood to smoulder and keep
fire through the night. The trout was fried for supper. Our tent was of thin cotton cloth and quite small, forming with the ground a triangular prism closed at the rear end, six feet long, seven wide, and four high, so that we could barely sit up in the middle. It required two forked stakes, a smooth ridge-pole, and a dozen or more pins to pitch it. It kept off dew and wind, and an ordinary rain, and answered our purpose well enough. We reclined within it till bedtime, each with his baggage at his head, or else sat about the fire, having hung our wet clothes on a pole before the fire for the night.

As we sat there, just before night, looking out through the dusky wood, the Indian heard a noise which he said was made by a snake. He imitated it at my request, making a low whistling note,—pheet—pheet,—two or three times repeated, somewhat like the peep of the hyloides, but not so loud. In answer to my inquiries, he said that he had never seen them while making it, but going to the spot he finds the snake. This, he said on another occasion, was a sign of rain. When I had selected this place for our camp, he had remarked that there were snakes there,—he saw them. But they won't do any hurt, I said. "Oh, no," he answered, "just as you say, it makes no difference to me."

He lay on the right side of the tent, because, as he said, he was partly deaf in one ear, and he wanted to lie with his good ear up. As we lay there, he inquired if I ever heard "Indian sing." I replied that I had not often, and asked him if he would not favor us with a song. He readily assented, and lying on his back, with his blanket wrapped around him, he commenced a slow, somewhat nasal, yet musical chant, in his own language, which probably was taught his tribe long ago by the Catholic missionaries. He translated it to us, sentence by sentence, afterward, wishing to see if we could remember it. It proved to be a very simple religious exercise or hymn, the burden of which was, that there was only one God who ruled all the world. This was hammered (or sung) out very thin, so that some stanzas wellnigh meant nothing at all, merely keeping up the idea. He then said that he would sing us a Latin song; but we did not detect any Latin, only one or two Greek words in it,—the rest may have been Latin with the Indian pronunciation.

His singing carried me back to the period of the discovery of America, to San Salvador and the Incas, when Europeans first encountered the simple faith of the Indian. There was, indeed, a beautiful simplicity about it; nothing of the dark and savage, only the mild and infantile. The sentiments of humility and reverence chiefly were expressed.

It was a dense and damp spruce and fir wood in which we lay, and, except for our fire, perfectly dark; and when I awoke in the night, I either heard an owl from deeper in the forest behind us, or a loon from a distance over the lake. Getting up some time after midnight to collect the scattered brands together, while my companions were sound asleep,
I observed, partly in the fire, which had ceased to blaze, a perfectly regular elliptical ring of light, about five inches in its shortest diameter, six or seven in its longer, and from one eighth to one quarter of an inch wide. It was fully as bright as the fire, but not reddish or scarlet, like a coal, but a white and slumbering light, like the glowworm's. I could tell it from the fire only by its whiteness. I saw at once that it must be phosphorescent wood, which I had so often heard of, but never chanced to see. Putting my finger on it, with a little hesitation, I found that it was a piece of dead moose-wood (Acer striatum) which the Indian had cut off in a slanting direction the evening before. Using my knife, I discovered that the light proceeded from that portion of the sap-wood immediately under the bark, and thus presented a regular ring at the end, which, indeed, appeared raised above the level of the wood, and when I pared off the bark and cut into the sap, it was all aglow along the log. I was surprised to find the wood quite hard and apparently sound, though probably decay had commenced in the sap, and I cut out some little triangular chips, and, placing them in the hollow of my hand, carried them into the camp, waked my companion, and showed them to him. They lit up the inside of my hand, revealing the lines and wrinkles, and appearing exactly like coals of fire raised to a white heat, and I saw at once how, probably, the Indian jugglers had imposed on their people and on travelers, pretending to hold coals of fire in their mouths.

I also noticed that part of a decayed stump within four or five feet of the fire, an inch wide and six inches long, soft and shaking wood, shone with equal brightness.

I neglected to ascertain whether our fire had anything to do with this, but the previous day's rain and long-continued wet weather undoubtedly had.

I was exceedingly interested by this phenomenon, and already felt paid for my journey. It could hardly have thrilled me more if it had taken the form of letters, or of the human face. If I had met with this ring of light while groping in this forest alone, away from any fire, I should have been still more surprised. I little thought that there was such a light shining in the darkness of the wilderness for me.

The next day the Indian told me their name for this light,—Artoosoqu', —and on my inquiring concerning the will-o'-the-wisp, and the like phenomena, he said that his "folks" sometimes saw fires passing along at various heights, even as high as the trees, and making a noise. I was prepared after this to hear of the most startling and unimagined phenomena, witnessed by "his folks"; they are abroad at all hours and seasons in scenes so unfrequented by white men. Nature must have made a thousand revelations to them which are still secrets to us.

I did not regret my not having seen this before, since I now saw it under circumstances so favorable. I was in just the frame of mind to see
something wonderful, and this was a phenomenon adequate to my cir-
cumstances and expectation, and it put me on the alert to see more like it.
I exulted like "a pagan suckled in a creed" that had never been worn at
all, but was bran new, and adequate to the occasion. I let science slide,
and rejoiced in that light as if it had been a fellow-creature. I saw that
it was excellent, and was very glad to know that it was so cheap. A
scientific explanation, as it is called, would have been altogether out of
place there. That is for pale daylight. Science with its retorts would have
put me to sleep; it was the opportunity to be ignorant that I improved.
It suggested to me that there was something to be seen if one had eyes.
It made a believer of me more than before. I believed that the woods
were not tenantless, but choke-full of honest spirits as good as myself any
day,—not an empty chamber, in which chemistry was left to work alone,
but an inhabited house,—and for a few moments I enjoyed fellowship
with them. Your so-called wise man goes trying to persuade himself that
there is no entity there but himself and his traps, but it is a great deal
easier to believe the truth. It suggested, too, that the same experience al-
ways gives birth to the same sort of belief or religion. One revelation has
been made to the Indian, another to the white man. I have much to learn
of the Indian, nothing of the missionary. I am not sure but all that would
tempt me to teach the Indian my religion would be his promise to teach
me his. Long enough I had heard of irrelevant things; now at length I
was glad to make acquaintance with the light that dwells in rotten wood.
Where is all your knowledge gone to? It evaporates completely, for it
has no depth.

I kept those little chips and wet them again the next night, but they
emitted no light.

Saturday, July 25.

At breakfast this Saturday morning, the Indian, evidently curious to
know what would be expected of him the next day, whether we should
go along or not, asked me how I spent the Sunday when at home. I told
him that I commonly sat in my chamber reading, etc., in the forenoon,
and went to walk in the afternoon. At which he shook his head and
said, "Er, that is ver bad." "How do you spend it?" I asked. He said
that he did no work, that he went to church at Oldtown when he was
at home; in short, he did as he had been taught by the whites. This led
to a discussion in which I found myself in the minority. He stated that
he was a Protestant, and asked me if I was. I did not at first know what
to say, but I thought that I could answer with truth that I was.

When we were washing the dishes in the lake, many fishes, apparently
chivin, came close up to us to get the particles of grease.

The weather seemed to be more settled this morning, and we set out
eyearly in order to finish our voyage up the lake before the wind arose.
Soon after starting, the Indian directed our attention to the northeast carry, which we could plainly see, about thirteen miles distant in that direction as measured on the map, though it is called much farther. This carry is a rude wooden railroad, running north and south about two miles, perfectly straight, from the lake to the Penobscot, through a low tract, with a clearing three or four rods wide; but low as it is, it passes over the height of land there. This opening appeared as a clear bright, or light point in the horizon, resting on the edge of the lake, whose breadth a hair could have covered at a considerable distance from the eye, and of no appreciable height. We should not have suspected it to be visible if the Indian had not drawn our attention to it. It was a remarkable kind of light to steer for,—daylight seen through a vista in the forest,—but visible as far as an ordinary beacon at night.

We crossed a deep and wide bay which makes eastward north of Kineo, leaving an island on our left, and keeping up the eastern side of the lake. This way or that led to some Tomhegan or Socataric stream, up which the Indian had hunted, and whither I longed to go. The last name, however, had a bogus sound, too much like sectarian for me, as if a missionary had tampered with it; but I knew that the Indians were very liberal. I think I should have inclined to the Tomhegan first.

We then crossed another broad bay, which, as we could no longer observe the shore particularly, afforded ample time for conversation. The Indian said that he had got his money by hunting, mostly high up the west branch of the Penobscot, and toward the head of the St. John; he had hunted there from a boy, and knew all about that region. His game had been beaver, otter, black cat (or fisher), sable, moose, etc. Loup cervier (or Canada lynx) were plenty yet in burnt grounds. For food in the woods, he uses partridges, ducks, dried moose meat, hedgehog, etc. Loons, too, were good, only "bile 'em good." He told us at some length how he had suffered from starvation when a mere lad, being overtaken by winter when hunting with two grown Indians in the northern part of Maine, and obliged to leave their canoe on account of ice.

Pointing into the bay, he said that it was the way to various lakes which he knew. Only solemn bear-haunted mountains, with their great wooded slopes, were visible; where, as man is not, we suppose some other power to be. My imagination personified the slopes themselves, as if by their very length they would waylay you, and compel you to camp again on them before night. Some invisible glutton would seem to drop from the trees and gnaw at the heart of the solitary hunter who threaded those woods; and yet I was tempted to walk there. The Indian said that he had been along there several times.

I asked him how he guided himself in the woods. "Oh," said he, "I can tell good many ways." When I pressed him further, he answered,
“Sometimes I lookum side-hill,” and he glanced toward a high hill or mountain on the eastern shore, “great difference between the north and south, see where the sun has shone most. So trees,—the large limbs bend toward south. Sometimes I lookum locks” (rocks). I asked what he saw on the rocks, but he did not describe anything in particular, answering vaguely, in a mysterious or drawling tone, “Bare locks on lake shore,—great difference between N. S. E. W. side,—can tell what the sun has shone on.” “Suppose,” said I, “that I should take you in a dark night, right up here into the middle of the woods a hundred miles, set you down, and turn you round quickly twenty times, could you steer straight to Oldtown?” “Oh, yer,” said he, “have done pretty much same thing. I will tell you. Some years ago I met an old white hunter at Millinocket; very good hunter. He said he could go anywhere in the woods. He wanted to hunt with me that day, so we start. We chase a moose all the forenoon, round and round, till middle of afternoon, when we kill him. Then I said to him, now you go straight to camp. Don’t go round and round where we’ve been, but go straight. He said, I can’t do that, I don’t know where I am. Where you think camp? I asked. He pointed so. Then I laugh at him. I take the lead and go right off the other way, cross our tracks many times, straight camp.” “How do you do that?” asked I. “Oh, I can’t tell you,” he replied. “Great difference between me and white man.”

It appeared as if the sources of information were so various that he did not give a distinct, conscious attention to any one, and so could not readily refer to any when questioned about it, but he found his way very much as an animal does. Perhaps what is commonly called instinct in the animal, in this case is merely a sharpened and educated sense. Often, when an Indian says, “I don’t know,” in regard to the route he is to take, he does not mean what a white man would by those words, for his Indian instinct may tell him still as much as the most confident white man knows. He does not carry things in his head, nor remember the route exactly, like a white man, but relies on himself at the moment. Not having experienced the need of the other sort of knowledge, all labeled and arranged, he has not acquired it.

The white hunter with whom I talked in the stage knew some of the resources of the Indian. He said that he steered by the wind, or by the limbs of the hemlocks, which were largest on the south side; also sometimes, when he knew that there was a lake near, by firing his gun and listening to hear the direction and distance of the echo from over it.

The course we took over this lake, and others afterward, was rarely direct, but a succession of curves from point to point, digressing considerably into each of the bays; and this was not merely on account of the wind, for the Indian, looking toward the middle of the lake, said it was hard to go there, easier to keep near the shore, because he thus got
over it by successive reaches and saw by the shore how he got along.

The following will suffice for a common experience in crossing lakes in a canoe. As the forenoon advanced, the wind increased. The last bay which we crossed before reaching the desolate pier at the northeast carry was two or three miles over, and the wind was southwesterly. After going a third of the way, the waves had increased so as occasionally to wash into the canoe, and we saw that it was worse and worse ahead. At first we might have turned about, but were not willing to. It would have been of no use to follow the course of the shore, for not only the distance would have been much greater, but the waves ran still higher there on account of the greater sweep the wind had. At any rate it would have been dangerous now to alter our course, because the waves would have struck us at an advantage. It will not do to meet them at right angles, for then they will wash in both sides, but you must take them quartering. So the Indian stood up in the canoe, and exerted all his skill and strength for a mile or two, while I paddled right along in order to give him more steerage-way. For more than a mile he did not allow a single wave to strike the canoe as it would, but turned it quickly from this side to that, so that it would always be on or near the crest of a wave when it broke, where all its force was spent, and we merely settled down with it. At length I jumped out on to the end of the pier, against which the waves were dashing violently, in order to lighten the canoe, and catch it at the landing, which was not much sheltered; but just as I jumped we took in two or three gallons of water. I remarked to the Indian, “You managed that well,” to which he replied, “Ver few men do that. Great many waves; when I look out for one, another come quick.”

While the Indian went to get cedar-bark, etc., to carry his canoe with, we cooked the dinner on the shore, at this end of the carry, in the midst of a sprinkling rain.

He prepared his canoe for carrying in this wise. He took a cedar shingle or splint eighteen inches long and four or five wide, rounded at one end, that the corners might not be in the way, and tied it with cedar-bark by two holes made midway, near the edge on each side, to the middle cross-bar of the canoe. When the canoe was lifted upon his head bottom up, this shingle, with its rounded end uppermost, distributed the weight over his shoulders and head, while a band of cedar-bark, tied to the cross-bar on each side of the shingle, passed round his breast, and another longer one, outside of the last, round his forehead; also a hand on each side-rail served to steer the canoe and keep it from rocking. He thus carried it with his shoulders, head, breast, forehead, and both hands, as if the upper part of his body were all one hand to clasp and hold it. If you know of a better way, I should like to hear of it. A cedar-tree furnished all the gear in this case, as it had the woodwork of the canoe.
One of the paddles rested on the cross-bars in the bows. I took the canoe upon my head and found that I could carry it with ease, though the straps were not fitted to my shoulders; but I let him carry it, not caring to establish a different precedent, though he said that if I would carry the canoe, he would take all the rest of the baggage, except my companion's. This shingle remained tied to the cross-bar throughout the voyage, was always ready for the carries, and also served to protect the back of one passenger.

We were obliged to go over this carry twice, our load was so great. But the carries were an agreeable variety, and we improved the opportunity to gather the rare plants which we had seen, when we returned empty handed.

We reached the Penobscot about four o'clock, and found there some St. Francis Indians encamped on the bank, in the same place where I camped with four Indians four years before. They were making a canoe, and, as then, drying moose meat. The meat looked very suitable to make a black broth at least. Our Indian said it was not good. Their camp was covered with spruce-bark. They had got a young moose, taken in the river a fortnight before, confined in a sort of cage of logs piled up cob-fashion, seven or eight feet high. It was quite tame, about four feet high, and covered with mooseflies. There was a large quantity of cornel (C. stolonifera), red maple, and also willow and aspen boughs, stuck through between the logs on all sides, butt-ends out, and on their leaves it was browsing. It looked at first as if it were in a bower rather than a pen.

Our Indian said that he used black spruce roots to sew canoes with, obtaining it from high lands or mountains. The St. Francis Indian thought that white spruce roots might be best. But the former said, "No good, break, can't split 'em"; also that they were hard to get, deep in ground, but the black were near the surface, on higher land, as well as tougher. He said that the white spruce was subekoondark, black, skusk. I told him I thought that I could make a canoe, but he expressed great doubt of it; at any rate, he thought that my work would not be "neat" the first time. An Indian at Greenville had told me that the winter bark, that is, bark taken off before the sap flows in May, was harder and much better than summer bark.

Having reloaded, we paddled down the Penobscot, which, as the Indian remarked, and even I detected, remembering how it looked before, was uncommonly full. We soon after saw a splendid yellow lily (Lilium Canadense) by the shore, which I plucked. It was six feet high, and had twelve flowers, in two whorls, forming a pyramid, such as I have seen in Concord. We afterward saw many more thus tall along this stream, and also still more numerous on the East Branch, and, on the latter, one
which I thought approached yet nearer to the *Lilium superbam*. The Indian asked what we called it, and said that the “loots” (roots) were good for soup, that is, to cook with meat, to thicken it, taking the place of flour. They get them in the fall. I dug some, and found a mass of bulbs pretty deep in the earth, two inches in diameter, looking, and even tasting, somewhat like raw green corn on the ear.

When we had gone about three miles down the Penobscot, we saw through the tree-tops a thunder-shower coming up in the west, and we looked out a camping-place in good season, about five o’clock, on the west side, not far below the mouth of what Joe Aitton, in ’53, called Lobster Stream, coming from Lobster Pond. Our present Indian, however, did not admit this name, nor even that of Matahunkeag, which is on the map, but called the lake Beskabekuk.

I will describe, once for all, the routine of camping at this season. We generally told the Indian that we would stop at the first suitable place, so that he might be on the lookout for it. Having observed a clear, hard, and flat beach to land on, free from mud, and from stones which would injure the canoe, one would run up the bank to see if there were open and level space enough for the camp between the trees, or if it could be easily cleared, preferring at the same time a cool place, on account of insects. Sometimes we paddled a mile or more before finding one to our minds, for where the shore was suitable, the bank would often be too steep, or else too low and grassy, and therefore mosquitoey. We then took out the baggage and drew up the canoe, sometimes turning it over on shore for safety. The Indian cut a path to the spot we had selected, which was usually within two or three rods of the water, and we carried up our baggage. One, perhaps, takes canoe-birch bark, always at hand, and dead dry wood or bark, and kindles a fire five or six feet in front of where we intend to lie. It matters not, commonly, on which side this is, because there is little or no wind in so dense a wood at that season; and then he gets a kettle of water from the river, and takes out the pork, bread, coffee, etc., from their several packages.

Another, meanwhile, having the axe, cuts down the nearest dead rock-maple or other dry hard wood, collecting several large logs to last through the night, also a green stake, with a notch or fork to it, which is slanted over the fire, perhaps resting on a rock or forked stake, to hang the kettle on, and two forked stakes and a pole for the tent.

The third man pitches the tent, cuts a dozen or more pins with his knife, usually of moosewood, the common underwood, to fasten it down with, and then collects an armful or two of fir-twigs, arbor-vite, spruce, or hemlock, whichever is at hand, and makes the bed, beginning at either end, and laying the twigs wrong side up, in regular rows, covering the stub ends of the last row; first, however, filling the hollows, if there are
any, with coarser material. Wrangel says that his guides in Siberia first strewed a quantity of dry brushwood on the ground, and then cedar twigs on that.

Commonly, by the time the bed is made, or within fifteen or twenty minutes, the water boils, the pork is fried, and supper is ready. We eat this sitting on the ground, or a stump if there is any, around a large piece of birch-bark for a table, each holding a dipper in one hand and a piece of ship-bread or fried pork in the other, frequently making a pass with his hand, or thrusting his head into the smoke, to avoid the mosquitoes.

Next, pipes are lit by those who smoke, and veils are donned by those who have them, and we hastily examine and dry our plants, anoint our faces and hands, and go to bed,—and—the mosquitoes.

Though you have nothing to do but see the country, there's rarely any time to spare, hardly enough to examine a plant, before the night or drowsiness is upon you.

Such was the ordinary experience, but this evening we had camped earlier on account of the rain, and had more time.

AIDS TO STUDY

The Thoreau who appears in these journal entries is not the wit and poet-philosopher of Walden or the high prophet of nonviolent revolution who wrote "On Civil Disobedience." Here is the woodsman, the botanist, the observant traveler, who—with his friend Edward Hoar—made a summer journey in 1857 through northern Maine to collect plants and refresh his health.

What one sees in these entries is Thoreau's deceptively simple power to make things seem real. They are "there." Be alert to this, in the description of the canoe, of making camp on the first night, in the gradually developing sketch of the Indian guide (for Thoreau a glamorous figure), and in the incident of finding the phosphorescent wood.

1. In commenting upon the Indian's singing, Thoreau mentions the "simple faith of the Indian" before the coming of the Europeans. Does his reference to the Incas entirely accord with this view of Indian religion?

2. After describing the phosphorescent wood, Thoreau comments that "a scientific explanation" would have been out of place. But look carefully at his description of the wood. Would you call that scientific? If not, what would you call it?

3. Later in the last long paragraph for July 24, Thoreau contrasts the Indian's wisdom with that of the "so-called wise man." Why is he dissatisfied with the "so-called wise man"?

4. The final sentence in this section is a statement of fact, but as often happens with Thoreau, the stated fact has overtones of further significance. What connection, then, can you make between the topic that Thoreau has been meditating and the fact that the next night the chips did not glow?

5. At several points Thoreau shows his antagonism toward missionaries and
formal religion. Find those passages. How far does Thoreau reveal the reasons for his antagonism? Does the context of these antagonistic references give further clues to his reasons? How does Thoreau spend his Sundays?

6. How does Thoreau explain the Indian’s “instinct” for finding his way in the wilderness? What does he mean by saying that the Indian “relies on himself at the moment”? How does this “instinct” contrast with the white man’s “knowledge”? Connect Thoreau’s ideas on this subject with his remarks about the “so-called wise man.”

7. Although the ostensible purpose of Thoreau’s trip was mildly scientific, his description of the routine of making camp suggests some of the deeper satisfactions that he found. What are they?

8. Thoreau is rather generally regarded as “a nature lover.” What are the usual connotations of this phrase? Draw evidence from the last nine or ten paragraphs to show that the phrase as commonly accepted falls short of describing Thoreau’s interests.
To have reached the age of forty without ever handling a brush or fiddling with a pencil, to have regarded with mature eye the painting of pictures of any kind as a mystery, to have stood agape before the chalk of the pavement artist, and then suddenly to find oneself plunged in the middle of a new and intense form of interest and action with paints and palettes and canvases, and not to be discouraged by results, is an astonishing and enriching experience. I hope it may be shared by others. I should be glad if these lines induced others to try the experiment which I have tried, and if some at least were to find themselves dowered with an absorbing new amusement delightful to themselves, and at any rate not violently harmful to man or beast.

I hope this is modest enough: because there is no subject on which I feel more humble or yet at the same time more natural. I do not presume to explain how to paint, but only how to get enjoyment. Do not turn the superior eye of critical passivity upon these efforts. Buy a paint-box and have a try. If you need something to occupy your leisure, to divert your mind from the daily round, to illuminate your holidays, do not be too ready to believe that you cannot find what you want here. Even at the advanced age of forty! It would be a sad pity to shuffle or scramble along through one’s playtime with golf and bridge, pottering, loitering, shifting from one heel to the other, wondering what on earth to do—as perhaps is the fate of some unhappy beings—when all the while, if you only knew, there is close at hand a wonderful new world of thought and craft, a sunlit garden gleaming with light and colour of which you have the key in your waistcoat-pocket. Inexpensive independence, a mobile
and perennial pleasure apparatus, new mental food and exercise, the old harmonies and symmetries in an entirely different language, an added interest to every common scene, an occupation for every idle hour, an unceasing voyage of entrancing discovery—these are high prizes. Make quite sure they are not yours. After all, if you try, and fail, there is not much harm done. The nursery will grab what the studio has rejected. And then you can always go out and kill some animal, humiliate some rival on the links, or despoil some friend across the green table. You will not be worse off in any way. In fact you will be better off. You will know ‘beyond a peradventure,’ to quote a phrase disagreeably reminiscent, that that is really what you were meant to do in your hours of relaxation.

But if, on the contrary, you are inclined—late in life though it be—to reconnoitre a foreign sphere of limitless extent, then be persuaded that the first quality that is needed is Audacity. There really is no time for the deliberate approach. Two years of drawing-lessons, three years of copying woodcuts, five years of plaster casts—these are for the young. They have enough to bear. And this thorough grounding is for those who, hearing the call in the morning of their days, are able to make painting their paramount lifelong vocation. The truth and beauty of line and form which by the slightest touch or twist of the brush a real artist imparts to every feature of his design must be founded on long, hard, persevering apprenticeship and a practice so habitual that it has become instinctive. We must not be too ambitious. We cannot aspire to masterpieces. We may content ourselves with a joy ride in a paint-box. And for this Audacity is the only ticket.

I shall now relate my personal experience. When I left the Admiralty at the end of May, 1915, I still remained a member of the Cabinet and of the War Council. In this position I knew everything and could do nothing. The change from the intense executive activities of each day’s work at the Admiralty to the narrowly-measured duties of a counsellor left me gasping. Like a sea-beast fished up from the depths, or a diver too suddenly hoisted, my veins threatened to burst from the fall in pressure. I had great anxiety and no means of relieving it; I had vehement convictions and small power to give effect to them. I had to watch the unhappy casting-away of great opportunities, and the feeble execution of plans which I had launched and in which I heartily believed. I had long hours of utterly unwonted leisure in which to contemplate the frightful unfolding of the War. At a moment when every fibre of my being was inflamed to action, I was forced to remain a spectator of the tragedy, placed cruelly in a front seat. And then it was that the Muse of Painting came to my rescue—out of charity and out of chivalry, because after all she had nothing to do with me—and said, ‘Are these toys any good to you? They amuse some people.’
Some experiments one Sunday in the country with the children’s paint-box led me to procure the next morning a complete outfit for painting in oils.

Having bought the colours, an easel, and a canvas, the next step was to begin. But what a step to take! The palette gleamed with beads of colour; fair and white rose the canvas; the empty brush hung poised, heavy with destiny, irresolute in the air. My hand seemed arrested by a silent veto. But after all the sky on this occasion was unquestionably blue, and a pale blue at that. There could be no doubt that blue paint mixed with white should be put on the top part of the canvas. One really does not need to have had an artist’s training to see that. It is a starting-point open to all. So very gingerly I mixed a little blue paint on the palette with a very small brush, and then with infinite precaution made a mark about as big as a bean upon the affronted snow-white shield. It was a challenge, a deliberate challenge; but so subdued, so halting, indeed so cataleptic, that it deserved no response. At that moment the loud approaching sound of a motor-car was heard in the drive. From this chariot there stepped swiftly and lightly none other than the gifted wife of Sir John Lavery. ‘Painting! But what are you hesitating about? Let me have a brush—the big one.’ Splash into the turpentine, wallop into the blue and the white, frantic flourish on the palette—clean no longer—and then several large, fierce strokes and slashes of blue on the absolutely cowering canvas. Anyone could see that it could not hit back. No evil fate avenged the jaunty violence. The canvas grinned in helplessness before me. The spell was broken. The sickly inhibitions rolled away. I seized the largest brush and fell upon my victim with Berserk fury. I have never felt any awe of a canvas since.

Everyone knows the feelings with which one stands shivering on a spring-board, the shock when a friendly foe steals up behind and hurls you into the flood, and the ardent glow which thrills you as you emerge breathless from the plunge.

This beginning with Audacity, or being thrown into the middle of it, is already a very great part of the art of painting. But there is more in it than that.

La peinture à l’huile
Est bien difficile,
Mais c’est beaucoup plus beau
Que la peinture à l’eau.

I write no word in disparagement of water-colours. But there really is nothing like oils. You have a medium at your disposal which offers real power, if you only can find out how to use it. Moreover, it is easier to get a certain distance along the road by its means than by water-colour.
First of all, you can correct mistakes much more easily. One sweep of the palette-knife 'lifts' the blood and tears of a morning from the canvas and enables a fresh start to be made; indeed the canvas is all the better for past impressions. Secondly, you can approach your problem from any direction. You need not build downwards awkwardly from white paper to your darkest dark. You may strike where you please, beginning if you will with a moderate central arrangement of middle tones, and then hurling in the extremes when the psychological moment comes. Lastly, the pigment itself is such nice stuff to handle (if it does not retaliate). You can build it on layer after layer if you like. You can keep on experimenting. You can change your plan to meet the exigencies of time or weather. And always remember you can scrape it all away.

Just to paint is great fun. The colours are lovely to look at and delicious to squeeze out. Matching them, however crudely, with what you see is fascinating and absolutely absorbing. Try it if you have not done so—before you die. As one slowly begins to escape from the difficulties of choosing the right colours and laying them in the right places and in the right way, wider considerations come into view. One begins to see, for instance, that painting a picture is like fighting a battle; and trying to paint a picture is, I suppose, like trying to fight a battle. It is, if anything, more exciting than fighting it successfully. But the principle is the same. It is the same kind of problem, as unfolding a long, sustained, interlocked argument. It is a proposition which, whether of few or numberless parts, is commanded by a single unity of conception. And we think—though I cannot tell—that painting a great picture must require an intellect on the grand scale. There must be that all-embracing view which presents the beginning and the end, the whole and each part, as one instantaneous impression retentively and untiringly held in the mind. When we look at the larger Turners—canvases yards wide and tall—and observe that they are all done in one piece and represent one single second of time, and that every innumerable detail, however small, however distant, however subordinate, is set forth naturally and in its true proportion and relation, without effort, without failure, we must feel in presence of an intellectual manifestation the equal in quality and intensity of the finest achievements of warlike action, of forensic argument, or of scientific or philosophical adjudication.

In all battles two things are usually required of the Commander-in-Chief: to make a good plan for his army and, secondly, to keep a strong reserve. Both these are also obligatory upon the painter. To make a plan, thorough reconnaissance of the country where the battle is to be fought is needed. Its fields, its mountains, its rivers, its bridges, its trees, its flowers, its atmosphere—all require and repay attentive observation from a special point of view. One is quite astonished to find how many things there are in the landscape, and in every object in it, one never noticed
before. And this is a tremendous new pleasure and interest which invests every walk or drive with an added object. So many colours on the hillside, each different in shadow and in sunlight; such brilliant reflections in the pool, each a key lower than what they repeat; such lovely lights gilding or silverying surface or outline, all tinted exquisitely with pale colour, rose, orange, green, or violet. I found myself instinctively as I walked noting the tint and character of a leaf, the dreamy purple shades of mountains, the exquisite lacery of winter branches, the dim pale silhouettes of far horizons. And I had lived for over forty years without ever noticing any of them except in a general way, as one might look at a crowd and say, ‘What a lot of people!’

I think this heightened sense of observation of Nature is one of the chief delights that have come to me through trying to paint. No doubt many people who are lovers of art have acquired it in a high degree without actually practising. But I expect that nothing will make one observe more quickly or more thoroughly than having to face the difficulty of representing the thing observed. And mind you, if you do observe accurately and with refinement, and if you do record what you have seen with tolerable correspondence, the result follows on the canvas with startling obedience. Even if only four or five main features are seized and truly recorded, these by themselves will carry a lot of ill-success or half-success. Answer five big questions out of all the hundreds in the examination paper correctly and well, and though you may not win a prize, at any rate you will not be absolutely ploughed.

But in order to make his plan, the General must not only reconnoitre the battle-ground, he must also study the achievements of the great Captains of the past. He must bring the observations he has collected in the field into comparison with the treatment of similar incidents by famous chiefs. Then the galleries of Europe take on a new—and to me at least a severely practical—interest. ‘This, then, is how—— painted a cataract. Exactly, and there is that same light I noticed last week in the waterfall at——.’ And so on. You see the difficulty that baffled you yesterday; and you see how easily it has been overcome by a great or even by a skilful painter. Not only is your observation of Nature sensibly improved and developed, but you look at the masterpieces of art with an analysing and a comprehending eye.

The whole world is open with all its treasures. The simplest objects have their beauty. Every garden presents innumerable fascinating problems. Every land, every parish, has its own tale to tell. And there are many lands differing from each other in countless ways, and each presenting delicious variants of colour, light, form, and definition. Obviously, then, armed with a paint-box, one cannot be bored, one cannot be left at a loose end, one cannot ‘have several days on one’s hands.’ Good gracious! what there is to admire and how little time there is to
see it in! For the first time one begins to envy Methuselah. No doubt he made a very indifferent use of his opportunities.

But it is in the use and withholding of their reserves that the great commanders have generally excelled. After all, when once the last reserve has been thrown in, the commander's part is played. If that does not win the battle, he has nothing else to give. The event must be left to luck and to the fighting troops. But these last, in the absence of high direction, are apt to get into sad confusion, all mixed together in a nasty mess, without order or plan—and consequently without effect. Mere masses count no more. The largest brush, the brightest colours cannot even make an impression. The pictorial battlefield becomes a sea of mud mercifully veiled by the fog of war. It is evident there has been a serious defeat. Even though the General plunges in himself and emerges bespattered, as he sometimes does, he will not retrieve the day.

In painting, the reserves consist in Proportion or Relation. And it is here that the art of the painter marches along the road which is traversed by all the greatest harmonies in thought. At one side of the palette there is white, at the other black; and neither is ever used 'neat.' Between these two rigid limits all the action must lie, all the power required must be generated. Black and white themselves placed in juxtaposition make no great impression; and yet they are the most that you can do in pure contrast. It is wonderful—after one has tried and failed often—to see how easily and surely the true artist is able to produce every effect of light and shade, of sunshine and shadow, of distance or nearness, simply by expressing justly the relations between the different planes and surfaces with which he is dealing. We think that this is founded upon a sense of proportion, trained no doubt by practice, but which in its essence is a frigid manifestation of mental power and size. We think that the same mind's eye that can justly survey and appraise and prescribe beforehand the values of a truly great picture in one all-embracing regard, in one flash of simultaneous and homogeneous comprehension, would also with a certain acquaintance with the special technique be able to pronounce with sureness upon any other high activity of the human intellect. This was certainly true of the great Italians.

I have written in this way to show how varied are the delights which may be gained by those who enter hopefully and thoughtfully upon the pathway of painting; how enriched they will be in their daily vision, how fortified in their independence, how happy in their leisure. Whether you feel that your soul is pleased by the conception or contemplation of harmonies, or that your mind is stimulated by the aspect of magnificent problems, or whether you are content to find fun in trying to observe and depict the jolly things you see, the vistas of possibility are limited only by the shortness of life. Every day you may make progress. Every step may be fruitful. Yet there will stretch out before you an ever-
lengthening, ever-ascending, ever-improving path. You know you will never get to the end of the journey. But this, so far from discouraging, only adds to the joy and glory of the climb.

Try it, then, before it is too late and before you mock at me. Try it while there is time to overcome the preliminary difficulties. Learn enough of the language in your prime to open this new literature to your age. Plant a garden in which you can sit when digging days are done. It may be only a small garden, but you will see it grow. Year by year it will bloom and ripen. Year by year it will be better cultivated. The weeds will be cast out. The fruit-trees will be pruned and trained. The flowers will bloom in more beautiful combinations. There will be sunshine there even in the winter-time, and cool shade, and the play of shadow on the pathway in the shining days of June.

I must say I like bright colours. I agree with Ruskin in his denunciation of that school of painting who 'eat slate-pencil and chalk, and assure everybody that they are nicer and purer than strawberries and plums.' I cannot pretend to feel impartial about the colours. I rejoice with the brilliant ones, and am genuinely sorry for the poor browns. When I get to heaven I mean to spend a considerable portion of my first million years in painting, and so get to the bottom of the subject. But then I shall require a still gayer palette than I get here below. I expect orange and vermilion will be the darkest, dullest colours upon it, and beyond them there will be a whole range of wonderful new colours which will delight the celestial eye.

Chance led me one autumn to a secluded nook on the Côte d'Azur, between Marseilles and Toulon, and there I fell in with one or two painters who revelled in the methods of the modern French school. These were disciples of Cézanne. They view Nature as a mass of shimmering light in which forms and surfaces are comparatively unimportant, indeed hardly visible, but which gleams and glows with beautiful harmonies and contrasts of colour. Certainly it was of great interest to me to come suddenly in contact with this entirely different way of looking at things. I had hitherto painted the sea flat, with long, smooth strokes of mixed pigment in which the tints varied only by gradations. Now I must try to represent it by innumerable small separate lozenge-shaped points and patches of colour—often pure colour—so that it looked more like a tessellated pavement than a marine picture. It sounds curious. All the same, do not be in a hurry to reject the method. Go back a few yards and survey the result. Each of these little points of colour is now playing its part in the general effect. Individually invisible, he sets up a strong radiation, of which the eye is conscious without detecting the cause. Look also at the blue of the Mediterranean. How can you depict and record it? Certainly not by any single colour that was ever manufactured. The only way in which that luminous intensity of blue can be
simulated is by this multitude of tiny points of varied colour all in true relation to the rest of the scheme. Difficult? Fascinating!

Nature presents itself to the eye through the agency of these individual points of light, each of which sets up the vibrations peculiar to its colour. The brilliancy of a picture must therefore depend partly upon the frequency with which these points are found on any given area of the canvas, and partly on their just relation to one another. Ruskin says in his *Elements of Drawing*, from which I have already quoted, 'You will not, in Turner's largest oil pictures, perhaps six or seven feet long by four or five high, find one spot of colour as large as a grain of wheat ungradated.' But the gradations of Turner differ from those of the modern French school by being gently and almost imperceptibly evolved one from another instead of being bodily and even roughly separated; and the brush of Turner followed the form of the objects he depicted, while our French friends often seem to take a pride in directly opposing it. For instance, they would prefer to paint a sea with up and down strokes rather than with horizontal; or a tree-trunk from right to left rather than up and down. This, I expect, is due to falling in love with one's theories, and making sacrifices of truth to them in order to demonstrate fidelity and admiration.

But surely we owe a debt to those who have so wonderfully vivified, brightened, and illuminated modern landscape painting. Have not Manet and Monet, Cézanne and Matisse, rendered to painting something of the same service which Keats and Shelley gave to poetry after the solemn and ceremonial literary perfections of the eighteenth century? They have brought back to the pictorial art a new draught of *joie de vivre*; and the beauty of their work is instinct with gaiety, and floats in sparkling air.

I do not expect these masters would particularly appreciate my defence, but I must avow an increasing attraction to their work. Lucid and exact expression is one of the characteristics of the French mind. The French language has been made the instrument of the admirable gift. Frenchmen talk and write just as well about painting as they have done about love, about war, about diplomacy, or cooking. Their terminology is precise and complete. They are therefore admirably equipped to be teachers in the theory of any of these arts. Their critical faculty is so powerfully developed that it is perhaps some restraint upon achievement. But it is a wonderful corrective to others as well as to themselves.

My French friend, for instance, after looking at some of my daubs, took me round the galleries of Paris, pausing here and there. Wherever he paused I found myself before a picture which I particularly admired. He then explained that it was quite easy to tell, from the kind of things I had been trying to do, what were the things I liked. Never having taken any interest in pictures till I tried to paint, I had no preconceived
opinions. I just felt, for reasons I could not fathom, that I liked some much more than others. I was astonished that anyone else should, on the most cursory observation of my work, be able so surely to divine a taste which I had never consciously formed. My friend said that it is not a bad thing to know nothing at all about pictures, but to have a matured mind trained in other things and a new strong interest for painting. The elements are there from which a true taste in art can be formed with time and guidance, and there are no obstacles or imperfect conceptions in the way. I hope this is true. Certainly the last part is true.

Once you begin to study it, all Nature is equally interesting and equally charged with beauty. I was shown a picture by Cézanne of a blank wall of a house, which he had made instinct with the most delicate lights and colours. Now I often amuse myself when I am looking at a wall or a flat surface of any kind by trying to distinguish all the different colours and tints which can be discerned upon it, and considering whether these arise from reflections or from natural hue. You would be astonished the first time you tried this to see how many and what beautiful colours there are even in the most commonplace objects, and the more carefully and frequently you look the more variations do you perceive.

But these are no reasons for limiting oneself to the plainest and most ordinary objects and scenes. Mere prettiness of scene, to be sure, is not needed for a beautiful picture. In fact, artificially-made pretty places are very often a hindrance to a good picture. Nature will hardly stand a double process of beautification: one layer of idealism on top of another is too much of a good thing. But a vivid scene, a brilliant atmosphere, novel and charming lights, impressive contrasts, if they strike the eye all at once, arouse an interest and an ardour which will certainly be reflected in the work which you try to do, and will make it seem easier.

It would be interesting if some real authority investigated carefully the part which memory plays in painting. We look at the object with an intent regard, then at the palette, and thirdly at the canvas. The canvas receives a message dispatched usually a few seconds before from the natural object. But it has come through a post-office en route. It has been transmitted in code. It has been turned from light into paint. It reaches the canvas a cryptogram. Not until it has been placed in its correct relation to everything else that is on the canvas can it be deciphered, is its meaning apparent, is it translated once again from mere pigment into light. And the light this time is not of Nature but of Art. The whole of this considerable process is carried through on the wings or the wheels of memory. In most cases we think it is the wings—airy and quick like a butterfly from flower to flower. But all heavy traffic and all that has to go a long journey must travel on wheels.

In painting in the open air the sequence of actions is so rapid that
the process of translation into and out of pigment may seem to be unconscious. But all the greatest landscapes have been painted indoors, and often long after the first impressions were gathered. In a dim cellar the Dutch or Italian master recreated the gleaming ice of a Netherlands carnival or the lustrous sunshine of Venice or the Campagna. Here, then, is required a formidable memory of the visual kind. Not only do we develop our powers of observation, but also those of carrying the record—of carrying it through an extraneous medium and of reproducing it, hours, days, or even months after the scene has vanished or the sunlight died.

I was told by a friend that when Whistler guided a school in Paris he made his pupils observe their model on the ground floor, and then run upstairs and paint their picture piece by piece on the floor above. As they became more proficient he put their easels up a storey higher, till at last the élite were scampering with their decision up six flights into the attic—praying it would not evaporate on the way. This is, perhaps, only a tale. But it shows effectively of what enormous importance a trained, accurate, retentive memory must be to an artist; and conversely what a useful exercise painting may be for the development of an accurate and retentive memory.

There is no better exercise for the would-be artist than to study and devour a picture, and then, without looking at it again, to attempt the next day to reproduce it. Nothing can more exactly measure the progress both of observation and memory. It is still harder to compose out of many separate, well-retained impressions, aided though they be by sketches and colour notes, a new complete conception. But this is the only way in which great landscapes have been painted—or can be painted. The size of the canvas alone precludes its being handled out of doors. The fleeting light imposes a rigid time-limit. The same light never returns. One cannot go back day after day without the picture getting stale. The painter must choose between a rapid impression, fresh and warm and living, but probably deserving only of a short life, and the cold, profound, intense effort of memory, knowledge, and will-power, prolonged perhaps for weeks, from which a masterpiece can alone result. It is much better not to fret too much about the latter. Leave to the masters of art trained by a lifetime of devotion the wonderful process of picture-building and picture-creation. Go out into the sunlight and be happy with what you see.

Painting is complete as a distraction. I know of nothing which, without exhausting the body, more entirely absorbs the mind. Whatever the worries of the hour or the threats of the future, once the picture has begun to flow along, there is no room for them in the mental screen. They pass out into shadow and darkness. All one's mental light, such as it is, becomes concentrated on the task. Time stands respectfully aside,
and it is only after many hesitations that luncheon knocks gruffly at the door. When I have had to stand up on parade, or even, I regret to say, in church, for half an hour at a time, I have always felt that the erect position is not natural to man, has only been painfully acquired, and is only with fatigue and difficulty maintained. But no one who is fond of painting finds the slightest inconvenience, as long as the interest holds, in standing to paint for three or four hours at a stretch.

Lastly, let me say a word on painting as a spur to travel. There is really nothing like it. Every day and all day is provided with its expedition and its occupation—cheap, attainable, innocent, absorbing, recuperative. The vain racket of the tourist gives place to the calm enjoyment of the philosopher intensified by an entralling sense of action and endeavour. Every country where the sun shines and every district in it has a theme of its own. The lights, atmosphere, the aspect, the spirit, are all different; but each has its native charm. Even if you are only a poor painter you can feel the influence of the scene, guiding your brush, selecting the tubes you squeeze on to the palette. Even if you cannot portray it as you see it, you feel it, you know it, and you admire it for ever. When people rush about Europe in the train from one glittering centre of work or pleasure to another, passing—at enormous expense—through a series of mammoth hotels and blatant carnivals, they little know what they are missing, and how cheaply priceless things can be obtained. The painter wanders and loiters contentedly from place to place, always on the look out for some brilliant butterfly of a picture which can be caught and set up and carried safely home.

Now I am learning to like painting even on dull days. But in my hot youth I demanded sunshine. Sir William Orpen advised me to visit Avignon on account of its wonderful light, and certainly there is no more delightful centre for a would-be painter's activities: then Egypt, fierce and brilliant, presenting in infinite variety the single triplex theme of the Nile, the desert, and the sun; or Palestine, a land of rare beauty—the beauty of the turquoise and the opal—which well deserves the attention of some real artist, and has never been portrayed to the extent that is its due. And what of India? Who has ever interpreted its lurid splendours? But after all, if only the sun will shine, one does not need to go beyond one's own country. There is nothing more intense than the burnished steel and gold of a Highland stream; and at the beginning and close of almost every day the Thames displays to the citizens of London glories and delights which one must travel far to rival.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. What is Churchill's expressed purpose in writing this essay?
2. Throughout this essay Churchill makes frequent use of metaphors, both
brief ones and extended ones. Note them all. Which are particularly effective—or ineffective?

3. The sixth paragraph "Having bought the colours . . ." is a short story in miniature. Is it too long? Too short? The variety of sentence structure in this paragraph will reward your analysis.

4. What pleasure apart from painting itself does Churchill derive from his pastime?

5. Note the points at which Churchill says, in effect, "Try painting for yourself." What function does this repetition have besides emphasizing his main point?

6. What interest does Churchill find in the methods of "the modern French school"? What differences does he note between the French painters and Turner?

7. After emphasizing the importance of memory, why does Churchill advise, "Go out into the sunlight and be happy with what you see"?
Everything (he kept saying) is something it isn’t. And everybody is always somewhere else. Maybe it was the city, being in the city, that made him feel how queer everything was and that it was something else. Maybe (he kept thinking) it was the names of the things. The names were tex and frequently koid. Or they were flex and oid or they were duroid (sani) or flexsan (duro), but everything was glass (but not quite glass) and the thing that you touched (the surface, washable, crease-resistant) was rubber, only it wasn’t quite rubber and you didn’t quite touch it but almost. The wall, which was glass but thrutex, turned out on being approached not to be a wall, it was something else, it was an opening or doorway—and the doorway (through which he saw himself approaching) turned out to be something else, it was a wall. And what he had eaten not having agreed with him.

He was in a washable house, but he wasn’t sure. Now about those rats, he kept saying to himself. He meant the rats that the Professor had driven crazy by forcing them to deal with problems which were beyond the scope of rats, the insoluble problems. He meant the rats that had been trained to jump at the square card with the circle in the middle, and the card (because it was something it wasn’t) would give way and let the rat into a place where the food was, but then one day it would be a trick played on the rat, and the card would be changed, and the rat would jump but the card wouldn’t give way, and it was an impossible situation (for a rat) and the rat would go insane and into its eyes would come the unspeakably bright imploring look of the frustrated, and after the convulsions were over and the frantic racing

around, then the passive stage would set in and the willingness to let anything be done to it, even if it was something else.

He didn’t know which door (or wall) or opening in the house to jump at, to get through, because one was an opening that wasn’t a door (it was a void, or koid) and the other was a wall that wasn’t an opening, it was a sanitary cupboard of the same color. He caught a glimpse of his eyes staring into his eyes, in the thrutex, and in them was the expression he had seen in the picture of the rats—weary after convulsions and the frantic racing around, when they were willing and did not mind having anything done to them. More and more (he kept saying) I am confronted by a problem which is incapable of solution (for this time even if he chose the right door, there would be no food behind it) and that is what madness is, and things seeming different from what they are. He heard, in the house where he was, in the city to which he had gone (as toward a door which might, or might not, give way), a noise—not a loud noise but more of a low prefabricated humming. It came from a place in the base of the wall (or stat) where the flue carrying the filterable air was, and not far from the Minipiano, which was made of the same material nailbrushes are made of, and which was under the stairs. “This, too, has been tested,” she said, pointing, but not at it, “and found viable.” It wasn’t a loud noise, he kept thinking, sorry that he had seen his eyes, even though it was through his own eyes that he had seen them.

First will come the convulsions (he said), then the exhaustion, then the willingness to let anything be done. “And you better believe it will be.”

All his life he had been confronted by situations which were incapable of being solved, and there was a deliberateness behind all this, behind this changing of the card (or door), because they would always wait till you had learned to jump at the certain card (or door)—the one with the circle—and then they would change it on you. There have been so many doors changed on me, he said, in the last twenty years, but it is now becoming clear that it is an impossible situation, and the question is whether to jump again, even though they ruffle you in the rump with a blast of air—to make you jump. He wished he wasn’t standing by the Minipiano. First they would teach you the prayers and the Psalms, and that would be the right door (the one with the circle), and the long sweet words with the holy sound, and that would be the one to jump at to get where the food was. Then one day you jumped and it didn’t give way, so that all you got was the bump on the nose, and the first bewilderment, the first young bewilderment.

I don’t know whether to tell her about the door they substituted or not, he said, the one with the equation on it and the picture of the amoeba reproducing itself by division. Or the one with the photostatic
copy of the check for thirty-two dollars and fifty cents. But the jump-
ing was so long ago, although the bump is . . . how those old wounds hurt! Being crazy this way wouldn't be so bad if only, if only. If only when you put your foot forward to take a step, the ground wouldn't come up to meet your foot the way it does. And the same way in the street (only I may never get back to the street unless I jump at the right door), the curb coming up to meet your foot, anticipating ever so delicately the weight of the body, which is somewhere else. "We could take your name," she said, "and send it to you." And it wouldn't be so bad if only you could read a sentence all the way through without jumping (your eye) to something else on the same page; and then (he kept thinking) there was that man out in Jersey, the one who started to chop his trees down, one by one, the man who began talking about how he would take his house to pieces, brick by brick, because he faced a problem incapable of solution, probably, so he began to hack at the trees in the yard, began to pluck with trembling fingers at the bricks in the house. Even if a house is not washable, it is worth taking down. It is not till later that the exhaustion sets in.

But it is inevitable that they will keep changing the doors on you, he said, because that is what they are for; and the thing is to get used to it and not let it unsettle the mind. But that would mean not jumping, and you can't. Nobody cannot jump. There will be no not-jumping. Among rats, perhaps, but among people never. Everybody has to keep jumping at a door (the one with the circle on it) because that is the way everybody is, specially some people. You wouldn't want me, standing here, to tell you, would you, about my friend the poet (deceased) who said, "My heart has followed all my days something I cannot name"? (It had the circle on it.) And like many poets, although few so beloved, he is gone. It killed him, the jumping. First, of course, there were the pre-
liminary bouts, the convulsions, and the calm and the willingness.

I remember the door with the picture of the girl on it (only it was spring), her arms outstretched in loveliness, her dress (it was the one with the circle on it) uncaught, beginning the slow, clear, blinding cascade—and I guess we would all like to try that door again, for it seemed like the way and for a while it was the way, the door would open and you would go through winged and exalted (like any rat) and the food would be there, the way the Professor had it arranged, every-
thing O.K., and you had chosen the right door for the world was young. The time they changed that door on me, my nose bled for a hundred hours—how do you like that, Madam? Or would you prefer to show me further through this so strange house, or you could take my name and send it to me, for although my heart has followed all my days something I cannot name, I am tired of the jumping and I do not know which way to go, Madam, and I am not even sure that I am not
tried beyond the endurance of man (rat, if you will) and have taken
leave of sanity. What are you following these days, old friend, after
your recovery from the last bump? What is the name, or is it something
you cannot name? The rats have a name for it by this time, perhaps, but
I don’t know what they call it. I call it plexikoid and it comes in sheets,
something like insulating board, unattainable and ugli-proof.

And there was the man out in Jersey, because I keep thinking about
his terrible necessity and the passion and trouble he had gone to all those
years in the indescribable abundance of a householder’s detail, building
the estate and the planting of the trees and in spring the lawn-dressing
and in fall the bulbs for the spring burgeoning, and the watering of the
grass on the long light evenings in summer and the gravel for the drive-
way (all had to be thought out, planned) and the decorative borders,
probably, the perennials and the bug spray, and the building of the
house from plans of the architect, first the sills, then the studs, then the
full corn in the ear, the floors laid on the floor timbers, smoothed, and
then the carpets upon the smooth floors and the curtains and the rods
therefor. And then, almost without warning, he would be jumping at
the same old door and it wouldn’t give: they had changed it on him,
making life no longer supportable under the elms in the elm shade, un-
der the maples in the maple shade.

“Here you have the maximum of openness in a small room.”

It was impossible to say (maybe it was the city) what made him feel
the way he did, and I am not the only one either, he kept thinking—ask
any doctor if I am. The doctors, they know how many there are, they
even know where the trouble is only they don’t like to tell you about
the prefrontal lobe because that means making a hole in your skull and
removing the work of centuries. It took so long coming, this lobe, so
many, many years. (Is it something you read in the paper, perhaps?)
And now, the strain being so great, the door having been changed by
the Professor once too often . . . but it only means a whiff of ether, a
few deft strokes, and the higher animal becomes a little easier in his
mind and more like the lower one. From now on, you see, that’s the way
it will be, the ones with the small prefrontal lobes will win because the
other ones are hurt too much by this incessant bumping. They can stand
just so much, eh, Doctor? (And what is that, pray, that you have in
your hand?) Still, you never can tell, eh, Madam?

He crossed (carefully) the room, the thick carpet under him softly,
and went toward the door carefully, which was glass and he could see
himself in it, and which, at his approach, opened to allow him to pass
through; and beyond he half expected to find one of the old doors that
he had known, perhaps the one with the circle, the one with the girl her
arms outstretched in loveliness and beauty before him. But he saw in-
stead a moving stairway, and descended in light (he kept thinking) to
the street below and to the other people. As he stepped off, the ground came up slightly, to meet his foot.

**AIDS TO STUDY**

1. Throughout this essay, White compares modern man to rats being experimented on by "the Professor." Describe what the Professor did to the rats. What was the outcome of his experiment?
2. What are some of the points of comparison between the man speaking here and the rats in the experiment? Where is this man? What is he doing?
3. The first sentence establishes this man's state of mind. What details corroborate and explain this state of mind? Why is he so uncertain?
4. What is the significance of the references to the "man out in Jersey"? Why is he destroying his house and the trees he has planted?
5. Explain what is meant by, "Nobody cannot jump. There will be no not-jumping. Among rats, perhaps, but among people never." When did the rats refuse to jump? Why can't human beings refuse also?
6. What does White mean by the reference to the prefrontal lobe? How is it "the work of centuries"? How will its removal help the "higher animal" become "a little easier in his mind"?
7. The comparison between the rats and modern man is clear enough and (provided you share temporarily the writer's view) appropriate. It is not so immediately clear what the significance of the houses (both the washable house and the one built and destroyed by the "man out in Jersey") is and why the house symbol is also appropriate. If this essay is about the disorientation of modern man, why does White find houses to be suitable means of making his point?
Part 2

PERSONAL VALUES AND ACHIEVEMENTS
The difference between "an historical event" and "a dramatic event" is well illustrated by the stories of the Stevens Party and the Donner Party. The former is historically important, and the pioneers who composed it brought the first wagons to California and discovered the pass across the Sierra Nevada that serves still as the chief route for railroad, highway, telephone, and airlines. The Donner Party, however, is of negligible importance historically, but the story has been told and retold, published and republished, because of its dramatic details of starvation, cannibalism, murder, heroism, and disaster. Against every American who knows of the one, a thousand must know of the other. As a kind of final irony, the pass discovered by the Stevens Party has come to be known as Donner Pass.

Yet actually the two parties had much in common. They were groups of Middle Westerners, native and foreign-born, migrating to California. Both included women and children, and traveled overland in ox-drawn covered wagons. Over much of the way they followed the same route. Both were overtaken by winter, and faced their chief difficulties because of snow. Some of the Donner Party spent the winter in a cabin built by three members of the Stevens Party. One individual, Caleb Greenwood, actually figures in both stories.

The difference in the significance, however, springs from two differences in actuality. First, the Stevens Party set out in 1844, two years before the Donner Party; they were the trail breakers. Second, the Stevens Party was efficiently run, used good sense, had fairly good luck.

—in a word, was so successful that it got through without the loss of a single life. The Donner Party, roughly speaking, was just the opposite, and the upshot was that the casualty list piled up to 42, almost half of the total roster and nearly equaling the whole number of persons in the Stevens Party. The latter, incidentally, arrived in California more numerous by two than at the start because of babies born on the road.

The contrast between the parties is shown even in the nature of the sources of material available on them. No one bothered to record much about the non-dramatic Stevens Party, and we should have scarcely any details if it had not been for Moses Schallenberger, a lad of seventeen at the time of the actual events, who forty years later dictated to his schoolmarm daughter his memories of the journey. On the other hand, the story of the Donner Party is possibly the best documented incident of any in the early history of the West. Its dramatic quality was such that everyone and his brother rushed in to tell what he knew about it or thought he knew about it, either at first or second-hand, and publishers took it all.

Of course, this is still the everyday tale. Drive efficiently about your business, and no one ever hears of you. Scatter broken glass and blood over the highway, and a picture of the twisted wreck makes the front page . . .

The Donner Party—to summarize briefly—was formed from family groups of other emigrant parties in July, 1846, and set out by themselves from Little Sandy Creek, in what is now Wyoming, to reach California by the so-called Hastings Route. They lost much time, found the gateway to California blocked by snow, built cabins to winter it out, and ran short of food. Soon they were snowed in deeply, and began to die of starvation. A few escaped across the mountains on improvised snowshoes. Others were saved by the heroic work of rescue parties from the settlements in California. As the result of hardships the morale of the party degenerated to the point of inhumanity, cannibalism, and possibly murder. Of 89 people—men, women, and children—involved with the misfortunes of the party, 47 survived, and 42 perished.

The Stevens Party left Council Bluffs on May 18, 1844. Before doing so, they performed what may well have been the act that contributed most to their final success—they elected Elisha Stevens to be their captain.

He was an unusual enough sort of fellow, that Stevens—about forty years old with a big hawk nose and a peaked head; strange-acting, too. He seemed friendly enough, but he was solitary, having his own wagon but neither chick nor child. Born in South Carolina, raised in Georgia, he had trapped in the Rockies for some years, then spent a while in
Louisiana, and now finally he was off for California, though no one knows why.

How such a man came to be elected captain is more than can be easily figured out. How did he get more votes than big-talking Dr. John Townsend, the only member of the party with professional status and of some education? Or more than Martin Murphy, Jr., who could muster kinsmen and fellow Irishmen numerous enough to make up a majority of votes? Perhaps Stevens was a compromise candidate between the native American and the Irish contingents that split the party and might well have brought quarrels and disaster. He had good experience behind him, indeed. And perhaps there was something about him that marked him for the natural leader of men that he apparently was. His election seems to me one of those events giving rise to the exclamation, "It makes you believe in democracy!"

Yes, he took the wagons through. If there were justice in history, his name would stand on the pass he found and conquered, and not merely on a little creek that runs into San Francisco Bay.

So they pushed off from the Missouri River that spring day, numbering 26 men, eight women, and about seventeen children. During the first part of the journey they traveled in company with a larger party bound for Oregon. The swollen Elkhorn River blocked the way, but they emptied the wagons, ferried everything across in a waterproofed wagon bed, swam the cattle, and kept ahead. They chased buffalo, saw their first wild Indians at Fort Laramie. At Independence Rock they halted a week to rest the oxen, "make meat" by hunting buffalo, and allow Helen Independence Miller to be born. They were the first to take wagons across the Green River Desert by what was later known as Sublette's (or Greenwood's) cutoff. On the cutoff they suffered from thirst, had their cattle stampede (but got them back), were scared by a Sioux war party (but had no real trouble). All this, of course, is mere routine for a covered wagon journey, nothing to make copy of.

At Fort Hall they separated from the Oregon party. At Raft River, eleven wagons in the line, they left the Oregon Trail, and headed south and west, following the wheel tracks of an emigrant party that Joe Walker, the famous mountain man, had tried to take to California the year before. Whether the people in the Stevens Party knew of his failure—the people got through, but the wagons were abandoned—is only one of the many details we do not know. Uneventfully and monotonously they followed his trail all the way to Humboldt Sink, a matter of 500 miles. Then, after careful scouting and on the advice of an intelligent Paiute chief, whom they called Truckee, they decided to quit following Walker and strike west.

From that point they were on their own, making history by breaking
trail for the forty-niners, the Central Pacific, and U.S. 40. They made it across the Forty-Mile Desert with less trouble than might have been expected, considering that they were the first. Even so, the crossing took 48 hours, and the oxen were thirst-crazed by the time they approached the cottonwoods marking the line of a stream. The men of the party, with their usual good sense, unyoked the oxen some distance from the stream to prevent them from scenting water while still attached to the wagons and stampeding toward it. Thankful to their guide, the emigrants named the stream the Truckee, and prudently camped two days among its cottonwoods for rest and recuperation.

They knew no route, except to follow the river. The canyon got tighter and tighter until in places they merely took their wagons upstream like river boats. The oxen began to give out, hoofs softening because of being in the water so much. Now it came November, and a foot of snow fell. The oxen would have starved except for some tall rushes growing along the water.

Finally they came to where the river forked. Which way to go? They held "a consultation," which must have been close to a council of desperation. It was past the middle of November—snow two feet deep now, high mountain crags in view ahead, oxen footsore and gaunt, food low, womenfolks getting scared. But they were good men and staunch. They must have been—or we would have had the Donner story two years earlier.

Yes, there must have been some good men, and we know the names, if not much else about them. Old Caleb Greenwood the trapper was there, and he would have been heard with respect, though personally I do not cast him for the hero's part, as some do. Neither do I have much confidence in "Doc" Townsend, though his name is sometimes used to identify the whole party; he was full of wild ideas. But "Young" Martin Murphy, Irish as his name, was probably a good man, and so, I think, was Dennis Martin, Irish too. Then there was Hitchcock, whose Christian name has been lost because everyone has referred to him just as "Old Man" Hitchcock; he should have been valuable in the council, having been a mountain man in his day. But the one on whom I put my money is Stevens himself, who had taken them all the way, so far, without losing a man.

He or some other, or all of them together, worked out the plan, and it came out in the end as what we would call today a calculated risk, with a certain hedging of the bets. Leave five wagons below the pass at what is now called Donner Lake, and three young men with them, volunteers, to build a cabin and guard the wagons and goods through the winter. Take six wagons ahead over the pass, and with them the main body including all the mothers and children. Up the other fork of the river, send a party of two women and four men, all young, well-
mounted and well-armed, prepared to travel light and fast and live off
the country. Unencumbered they can certainly make it through some-
where; when they get to Sutter’s Fort, they can have help sent back, if
necessary.

So Captain Stevens and the main body took the six wagons ahead to
the west, and with a heave and a ho, in spite of sheer granite ledges and
ever-deepening snow, they hoisted those wagons up the pass, which is
really not a pass so much as the face of a mountain. Even today, when
you view those granite slopes, close to precipices, and imagine taking
wagons up through the snow, it seems incredible.

Beyond the pass, some days’ journey, they got snowed in, but by that
time they were over the worst. On Yuba River they built a cabin to
winter it out, and Elizabeth Yuba Murphy was born there. Eventually
all of them, including E. Y. M., together with the wagons, got safely
through to Sutter’s.

As for the light-cavalry unit that took the other fork, they went up the
stream, were the first white people on record to stand on the shore of
Lake Tahoe, then turned west across the mountains. They suffered hard-
ship, but got through.

That brings everybody in except the three young men who were with
the wagons at the lake. They had built themselves a cabin, and were just
settling down to enjoy a pleasant winter of hunting in the woods when
snow started falling. Before long the cabin was up to the eaves, all game
had disappeared, no man could walk. The three were left with two
starving cows that they slaughtered, but they themselves were soon close
to starving. They decided to get out of there fast, and so manufactured
themselves crude snowshoes of the hickory strips that held up the can-
vases on the covered wagons.

One morning they set out—each with ten pounds of dried beef, rifle
and ammunition, and two blankets. The snow was light and powdery,
ten feet deep. The improvised snowshoes were heavy and clumsy, and
exhausting to use. By evening the three had reached the summit of the
pass, but young Moses Schallenberger, a mere gawky lad of seventeen,
was sick and exhausted.

In the morning he realized that he could not make it through. Rather
than impede his companions, he said good-by and turned back—with no
expectation but death. The two others went on, and reached Sutter’s
Fort

All in now but Moses Schallenberger! He had barely managed to make
it back, collapsing at the very cabin and having to drag himself over the
doorsill. He felt a little better the next day, forced himself to go out
hunting on his snowshoes, saw nothing except fox tracks. Back at the
cabin, “discouraged and sick at heart,” he happened to notice some traps
that Captain Stevens had left behind.
Next day he set traps, and during the night caught a coyote. He tried eating it, but found the flesh revolting, no matter how cooked. Still, he managed to live on that meat for three days, and then found two foxes in the traps. To his delight, the fox meat was delicious. This was about the middle of December. From then on, he managed to trap foxes and coyotes. He lived on the former, and hung the latter up to freeze, always fearing that he would have to eat another one, but keeping them as a reserve.

Alone in the snow-buried cabin, through the dim days and long nights of midwinter, week after week, assailed by fierce storms, often despairing of his life, he suffered from deep depression. As he put it later, "My life was more miserable than I can describe," but he never lost the will to live. Fortunately he found some books that "Doc" Townsend had been taking to California, and reading became his solace. The two works that he later mentioned as having pored over were the poems of Byron, and (God save the Mark!) the letters of Lord Chesterfield.

Thus the boy lived on, despondent but resolute, eating his foxes and hanging up his coyotes until he had a line of eleven of them. The weeks dragged along until it was the end of February, and still the snow was deep and the mountain winter showed no sign of breaking. Then, one evening a little before sunset, he was standing near the cabin, and suddenly saw someone approaching. At first he imagined it to be an Indian, but then he recognized his old comrade Dennis Martin!

Martin had traveled a long road since he went over the pass with the main body, in the middle of November. He had been picked up in the swirl of a California revolution and marched south almost to Los Angeles. Returning, he had heard of Schallenberger's being left behind, and had come across the pass on snowshoes to see if he were still alive to be rescued.

Martin had lived for some years in Canada, and was an expert on snowshoes. He made a good pair for Schallenberger, and taught him their use. Thus aided, the lad made it over the pass without great difficulty. The last one was through!

The men of the party even went back the next summer, and brought out the wagons that had been left east of the pass. The only loss was their contents, taken by wandering Indians, except for the firearms, which the Indians considered bad medicine...

If we return to the story that offers natural comparison with that of the Stevens Party, we must admit that the historical significance of the Donner Party is negligible. The road that the Donners cut through the Wasatch Mountains was useful to the Mormons when they settled by Great Salt Lake, but they would have got through without it. The Donners served as a kind of horrible example to later emigrants, and so may have helped to prevent other such covered wagon disasters. That
is about all that can be totaled up.

There is, of course, no use arguing. The Donner Party has what it takes for a good story, even a dog—everything, you might say, except young love. So, when I drive past the massive bronze statue of the Donner Memorial and up over the pass, I think of these folk who endured and struggled, and died or lived to produce what may be called the story of stories of the American frontier.

But as I drive over the pass, fighting the summer traffic of U.S. 40 or the winter blizzard, I also like to remember those earlier ones, to think of hawk-nosed Elisha Stevens; of Caleb Greenwood and “Old Man” Hitchcock; or gawky Moses Schallenberger, letting his comrades go on and facing death; of Mrs. Townsend, Moses’ sister, riding her Indian pony with the horseback party; of Martin Murphy and fantastic “Doc” Townsend; of Dennis Martin who knew about snowshoes.

These are the ones who discovered the pass and took the wagons over, who kept out of emergencies or had the wit and strength to overcome them, who did not make a good story by getting into trouble, but made history by keeping out of trouble.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. If you are not already acquainted with the geography of the region described in this essay, locate on a map of western Nevada and northern California the Donner Pass, the present route of U.S. 40, the Truckee River, and Lake Tahoe. What are the effect and the purpose of introducing references to the modern highway in the last paragraphs of the essay?

2. What is the method of development used in the first four paragraphs? In method, how does the second paragraph differ from the third? What is the basic source of the author’s information concerning the Stevens Party?

3. By what means does Stewart make the tone of this essay colloquial, vivid, and rapid? Point to particular devices of sentence structure, choice of words, and tense in the three paragraphs beginning, “Finally they came to where the river forked.” Is the tone consistently sustained throughout the essay? Does it seem to you to be at any point too sober or too breezy?

4. Stewart says that the Donner Party had “what it takes for a good story.” What “good story” in particular does the author find in the chronicle of the Stevens Party? Why does he tell it? Does it support his central point?

5. On the basis of the evidence that Stewart offers, can you justify the fame which has attached to the Donner Party?
Having mentioned a great and extensive project which I had conceiv'd, it seems proper that some account should be here given of that project and its object. Its first rise in my mind appears in the following little paper, accidentally preserv'd, viz.:

Observations on my reading history, in Library, May 19th, 1731.

"That the great affairs of the world, the wars, revolutions, etc., are carried on and affected by parties.

"That the view of these parties is their present general interest, or what they take to be such.

"That the different views of these different parties occasion all confusion.

"That while a party is carrying on a general design, each man has his particular private interest in view.

"That as soon as a party has gain'd its general point, each member becomes intent upon his particular interest; which, thwarting others, breaks that party into divisions, and occasions more confusion.

"That few in public affairs act from a mere view of the good of their country, whatever they may pretend; and, tho' their actings bring real good to their country, yet men primarily considered that their own and their country's interest was united, and did not act from a principle of benevolence.

"That fewer still, in public affairs, act with a view to the good of mankind.

"There seems to me at present to be great occasion for raising a United Party for Virtue, by forming the virtuous and good men of all nations into a regular body, to be govern'd by suitable good and wise rules, which good and wise men may probably be more unanimous in their obedience to, than common people are to common laws."
“I at present think that whoever attempts this aright, and is well qualified, can not fail of pleasing God, and of meeting with success.  

B. F.”

Revolving this project in my mind, as to be undertaken hereafter, when my circumstances should afford me the necessary leisure, I put down from time to time, on pieces of paper, such thoughts as occurr’d to me respecting it. Most of these are lost; but I find one purporting to be the substance of an intended creed, containing, as I thought, the essentials of every known religion, and being free of every thing that might shock the professors of any religion. It is express’d in these words, viz.:

“That there is one God, who made all things.

“That he governs the world by his providence.

“That he ought to be worshiped by adoration, prayer, and thanksgiving.

“But that the most acceptable service of God is doing good to man.

“That the soul is immortal.

“And that God will certainly reward virtue and punish vice, either here or hereafter.”

My ideas at that time were, that the sect should be begun and spread at first among young and single men only; that each person to be initiated should not only declare his assent to such creed, but should have exercised himself with the thirteen weeks’ examination and practice of the virtues, as in the before-mention’d model; that the existence of such a society should be kept a secret, till it was become considerable, to prevent solicitations for the admission of improper persons, but that the members should each of them search among his acquaintance for ingenuous, well-disposed youths, to whom, with prudent caution, the scheme should be gradually communicated; that the members should engage to afford their advice, assistance, and support to each other in promoting one another’s interests, business, and advancement in life; that, for distinction, we should be call’d The Society of the Free and Easy: free, as being, by the general practice and habit of the virtues, free from the dominion of vice; and particularly by the practice of industry and frugality, free from debt, which exposes a man to confinement, and a species of slavery to his creditors.

This is as much as I can now recollect of the project, except that I communicated it in part to two young men, who adopted it with some enthusiasm; but my then narrow circumstances, and the necessity I was under of sticking close to my business, occasion’d my postponing the further prosecution of it at that time; and my multifarious occupations, public and private, induc’d me to continue postponing, so that it has been omitted till I have no longer strength or activity left sufficient for such an enterprise; tho’ I am still of opinion that it was a practicable
scheme, and might have been very useful, by forming a great number of good citizens; and I was not discourag'd by the seeming magnitude of the undertaking, as I have always thought that one man of tolerable abilities may work great changes, and accomplish great affairs among mankind, if he first forms a good plan, and, cutting off all amusements or other employments that would divert his attention, makes the execution of that same plan his sole study and business.

In 1732 I first publish'd my Almanack, under the name of Richard Saunders; it was continu'd by me about twenty-five years, commonly call'd Poor Richard's Almanack. I endeavor'd to make it both entertaining and useful, and it accordingly came to be in such demand, that I reap'd considerable profit from it, vending annually near ten thousand. And observing that it was generally read, scarce any neighborhood in the province being without it, I consider'd it as a proper vehicle for conveying instruction among the common people, who bought scarcely any other books; I therefore filled all the little spaces that occur'd between the remarkable days in the calendar with proverbial sentences, chiefly such as inculcated industry and frugality, as the means of procuring wealth, and thereby securing virtue; it being more difficult for a man in want, to act always honestly, as, to use here one of those proverbs, *it is hard for an empty sack to stand upright.*

These proverbs, which contained the wisdom of many ages and nations, I assembled and form'd into a connected discourse prefix'd to the Almanack of 1757, as the harangue of a wise old man to the people attending an auction. The bringing all these scatter'd counsels thus into a focus enabled them to make greater impression. The piece, being universally approved, was copied in all the newspapers of the Continent; reprinted in Britain on a broad side, to be stuck up in houses; two translations were made of it in French, and great numbers bought by the clergy and gentry, to distribute gratis among their poor parishioners and tenants. In Pennsylvania, as it discouraged useless expense in foreign superfluities, some thought it had its share of influence in producing that growing plenty of money which was observable for several years after its publication.

I considered my newspaper, also, as another means of communicating instruction, and in that view frequently reprinted in it extracts from the Spectator, and other moral writers; and sometimes publish'd little pieces of my own, which had been first compos'd for reading in our Junto. Of these are a Socratic dialogue, tending to prove that, whatever might be his parts and abilities, a vicious man could not properly be called a man of sense; and a discourse on self-denial, showing that virtue was not secure till its practice became a habitute, and was free from the opposition of contrary inclinations. These may be found in the papers about the beginning of 1735.
In the conduct of my newspaper, I carefully excluded all libelling and personal abuse, which is of late years become so disgraceful to our country. Whenever I was solicited to insert any thing of that kind, and the writers pleaded, as they generally did, the liberty of the press, and that a newspaper was like a stage-coach, in which any one who would pay had a right to a place, my answer was, that I would print the piece separately if desired, and the author might have as many copies as he pleased to distribute himself, but that I would not take upon me to spread his de- traction; and that, having contracted with my subscribers to furnish them with what might be either useful or entertaining, I could not fill their papers with private altercation, in which they had no concern, without doing them manifest injustice. Now, many of our printers make no scruple of gratifying the malice of individuals by false accusations of the fairest characters among ourselves, augmenting animosity even to the producing of duels; and are, moreover, so indiscreet as to print scurrilous reflections on the government of neighboring states, and even on the conduct of our best national allies, which may be attended with the most pernicious consequences. These things I mention as a caution to young printers, and that they may be encouraged not to pollute their presses and disgrace their profession by such infamous practices, but refuse steadily, as they may see by my example that such a course of conduct will not, on the whole, be injurious to their interests.

In 1733 I sent one of my journeymen to Charleston, South Carolina, where a printer was wanting. I furnish’d him with a press and letters, on an agreement of partnership, by which I was to receive one-third of the profits of the business, paying one-third of the expense. He was a man of learning, and honest but ignorant in matters of account; and, tho’ he sometimes made me remittances, I could get no account from him, nor any satisfactory state of our partnership while he lived. On his decease, the business was continued by his widow, who, being born and bred in Holland, where, as I have been inform’d, the knowledge of accounts makes a part of female education, she not only sent me as clear a state as she could find of the transactions past, but continued to account with the greatest regularity and exactness every quarter afterwards, and managed the business with such success, that she not only brought up reputedly a family of children, but, at the expiration of the term, was able to purchase of me the printing-house, and establish her son in it.

I mention this affair chiefly for the sake of recommending that branch of education for our young females, as likely to be of more use to them and their children, in case of widowhood, than either music or dancing, by preserving them from losses by imposition of crafty men, and enabling them to continue, perhaps, a profitable mercantile house, with establish’d correspondence, till a son is grown up fit to undertake and go on with it, to the lasting advantage and enriching of the family.
About the year 1734 there arrived among us from Ireland a young Presbyterian preacher, named Hemphill, who delivered with a good voice, and apparently extempore, most excellent discourses, which drew together considerable numbers of different persuasions, who join'd in admiring them. Among the rest, I became one of his constant hearers, his sermons pleasing me, as they had little of the dogmatical kind, but inculcated strongly the practice of virtue, or what in the religious style are called good works. Those, however, of our congregation, who considered themselves as orthodox Presbyterians, disapprov'd his doctrine, and were join'd by most of the old clergy, who arraign'd him of heterodoxy before the synod, in order to have him silenc'd. I became his zealous partisan, and contributed all I could to raise a party in his favour, and we combated for him a while with some hopes of success. There was much scribbling pro and con upon the occasion; and finding that, tho' an elegant preacher, he was but a poor writer, I lent him my pen and wrote for him two or three pamphlets, and one piece in the Gazette of April, 1735. These pamphlets, as is generally the case with controversial writings, tho' eagerly read at the time, were soon out of vogue, and I question whether a single copy of them now exists.

During the contest an unlucky occurrence hurt his cause exceedingly. One of our adversaries having heard him preach a sermon that was much admired, thought he had somewhere read the sermon before, or at least a part of it. On search, he found that part quoted at length, in one of the British Reviews, from a discourse of Dr. Foster's. This detection gave many of our party disgust, who accordingly abandoned his cause, and occasion'd our more speedy discomfiture in the synod. I stuck by him, however, as I rather approv'd his giving us good sermons compos'd by others, than bad ones of his own manufacture, tho' the latter was the practice of our common teachers. He afterward acknowledg'd to me that none of those he preach'd were his own; adding, that his memory was such as enabled him to retain and repeat any sermon after one reading only. On our defeat, he left us in search elsewhere of better fortune, and I quitted the congregation, never joining it after, tho' I continu'd many years my subscription for the support of its ministers.

I had begun in 1733 to study languages; I soon made myself so much a master of the French as to be able to read the books with ease. I then undertook the Italian. An acquaintance, who was also learning it, us'd often to tempt me to play chess with him. Finding this took up too much of the time I had to spare for study, I at length refus'd to play any more, unless on this condition, that the victor in every game should have a right to impose a task, either in parts of the grammar to be got by heart, or in translations, etc., which tasks the vanquish'd was to perform upon honour, before our next meeting. As we play'd pretty equally, we thus beat one another into that language. I afterwards with a little painstak-
ing, acquir'd as much of the Spanish as to read their books also.

I have already mention'd that I had only one year's instruction in a Latin school, and that when very young, after which I neglected that language entirely. But, when I had attained an acquaintance with the French, Italian, and Spanish, I was surpriz'd to find, on looking over a Latin Testament, that I understood so much more of that language than I had imagined, which encouraged me to apply myself again to the study of it, and I met with more success, as those preceding languages had greatly smooth'd my way.

From these circumstances, I have thought that there is some inconsist-

ency in our common mode of teaching languages. We are told that it is proper to begin first with the Latin, and, having acquir'd that, it will be more easy to attain those modern languages which are deriv'd from it; and yet we do not begin with the Greek, in order more easily to acquire the Latin. It is true that, if you can clamber and get to the top of a staircase without using the steps, you will more easily gain them in descending; but certainly, if you begin with the lowest you will with more ease ascend to the top; and I would therefore offer it to the con-

sideration of those who superintend the education of our youth, whether, since many of those who begin with the Latin quit the same after spend-
ing some years without having made any great proficiency, and what they have learnt becomes almost useless, so that their time has been lost, it would not have been better to have begun with the French, proceed-
ing to the Italian, etc.; for, tho', after spending the same time, they should quit the study of languages and never arrive at the Latin, they would, however, have acquired another tongue or two, that, being in modern use, might be serviceable to them in common life.

After ten years' absence from Boston, and having become easy in my circumstances, I made a journey thither to visit my relations, which I could not sooner well afford. In returning, I call'd at Newport to see my brother, then settled there with his printing-house. Our former differ-

ences were forgotten, and our meeting was very cordial and affectionate. He was fast declining in his health, and requested of me that, in case of his death, which he apprehended not far distant, I would take home his son, then but ten years of age, and bring him up to the printing business. This I accordingly perform'd, sending him a few years to school before I took him into the office. His mother carried on the business till he was grown up, when I assisted him with an assortment of new types, those of his father being in a manner worn out. Thus it was that I made my brother ample amends for the service I had depriv'd him of by leaving him so early.

In 1736 I lost one of my sons, a fine boy of four years old, by the small-pox, taken in the common way. I long regretted bitterly, and still regret that I had not given it to him by inoculation. This I mention for
the sake of parents who omit that operation, on the supposition that they should never forgive themselves if a child died under it; my example showing that the regret may be the same either way, and that, therefore, the safer should be chosen.

Our club, the Junto, was found so useful, and afforded such satisfaction to the members, that several were desirous of introducing their friends, which could not well be done without exceeding what we had settled as a convenient number, viz., twelve. We had from the beginning made it a rule to keep our institution a secret, which was pretty well observ’d; the intention was to avoid applications of improper persons for admittance, some of whom, perhaps, we might find it difficult to refuse. I was one of those who were against any addition to our number, but, instead of it, made in writing a proposal, that every member separately should endeavor to form a subordinate club, with the same rules respecting queries, etc., and without informing them of the connection with the Junto. The advantages proposed were, the improvement of so many more young citizens by the use of our institutions; our better acquaintance with the general sentiments of the inhabitants on any occasion, as the Junto member might propose what queries we should desire, and was to report to the Junto what pass’d in his separate club; the promotion of our particular interests in business by more extensive recommendation, and the increase of our influence in public affairs, and our power of doing good by spreading thro’ the several clubs the sentiments of the Junto.

The project was approv’d, and every member undertook to form his club, but they did not all succeed. Five or six only were compleated, which were called by different names, as the Vine, the Union, the Band, etc. They were useful to themselves, and afforded us a good deal of amusement, information, and instruction, besides answering, in some considerable degree, our views of influencing the public opinion on particular occasions, of which I shall give some instances in course of time as they happened.

My first promotion was my being chosen, in 1736, clerk of the General Assembly. The choice was made that year without opposition; but the year following, when I was again propos’d (the choice, like that of the members, being annual), a new member made a long speech against me, in order to favour some other candidate. I was, however, chosen, which was the more agreeable to me, as, besides the pay for the immediate service as clerk, the place gave me a better opportunity of keeping up an interest among the members, which secure’d to me the business of printing the votes, laws, paper money, and other occasional jobs for the public, that, on the whole, were very profitable.

I therefore did not like the opposition of this new member, who was a gentleman of fortune and education, with talents that were likely to
give him, in time, great influence in the House, which, indeed, afterwards happened. I did not, however, aim at gaining his favour by paying any servile respect to him, but, after some time, took this other method. Having heard that he had in his library a certain very scarce and curious book, I wrote a note to him, expressing my desire of perusing that book, and requesting he would do me the favour of lending it to me for a few days. He sent it immediately, and I return'd it in about a week with another note, expressing strongly my sense of the favour. When we next met in the House, he spoke to me (which he had never done before), and with great civility; and he ever after manifested a readiness to serve me on all occasions, so that we became friends, and our friendship continued to his death. This is another instance of the truth of an old maxim I had learned, which says, "He that has once done you a kindness will be more ready to do you another, than he whom you yourself have obliged." And it shows how much more profitable it is prudently to remove, than to resent, return, and continue inimical proceedings.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. Franklin was a man of genius who (unlike D. H. Lawrence, whose essay on Franklin follows this selection) thought it best to coöperate with society rather than to oppose it.
   a. What forms did Franklin's coöperation take?
   b. What virtues did Franklin try to practice? What attitude is expressed, for example, in his cultivation of the friendship of the man who opposed his election as clerk of the General Assembly?
   c. An unfriendly critic might call Franklin a "joiner" or an "organizer." What benefits did Franklin see in joining and organizing? Were his motives selfish?

2. Franklin sought to "improve" and "educate" the general public. What forms did his efforts take? Are his motives questionable? What ideal does Franklin appear to be aiming at?

3. On several occasions Franklin tries to avoid controversy. Why does Lawrence criticize him for doing so? Was Franklin smothering his own personality or expressing it?

4. What evidences of Franklin's outlook and personality do you find in his style?
The Perfectibility of Man! Ah heaven, what a dreary theme! The perfectibility of the Ford car! The perfectibility of which man? I am many men. Which of them are you going to perfect? I am not a mechanical contrivance.

Education! Which of the various me's do you propose to educate, and which do you propose to suppress?

Anyhow I defy you. I defy you, oh society, to educate me or to suppress me, according to your dummy standards.

The ideal man! And which is he, if you please? Benjamin Franklin or Abraham Lincoln? The ideal man! Roosevelt or Porfirio Diaz?

There are other men in me, besides this patient ass who sits here in a tweed jacket. What am I doing, playing the patient ass in a tweed jacket? Who am I talking to? Who are you, at the other end of this patience?

Who are you? How many selves have you? And which of these selves do you want to be?

Is Yale College going to educate the self that is in the dark of you, or Harvard College?

The ideal self! Oh, but I have a strange and fugitive self shut out and howling like a wolf or a coyote under the ideal windows. See his red eyes in the dark? This is the self who is coming into his own.

The perfectibility of man, dear God! When every man as long as he remains alive is in himself a multitude of conflicting men. Which of these do you choose to perfect, at the expense of every other?

Old Daddy Franklin will tell you. He'll rig him up for you, the pattern American. Oh, Franklin was the first downright American. He knew what he was about, the sharp little man. He set up the first dummy American.

At the beginning of his career, this cunning little Benjamin drew up for himself a creed that should "satisfy the professors of every religion, but shock none."

Now wasn't that a real American thing to do?

"That there is One God, who made all things."

(But Benjamin made Him.)

"That He governs the world by His Providence."

(Benjamin knowing all about Providence.)

"That He ought to be worshiped with adoration, prayer, and thanksgiving."

(Which cost nothing.)

"But— But me no buts, Benjamin, saith the Lord.

"But that the most acceptable service of God is doing good to men."

(God having no choice in the matter.)

"That the soul is immortal."

(You'll see why, in the next clause.)

"And that God will certainly reward virtue and punish vice, either here or hereafter."

Now if Mr. Andrew Carnegie, or any other millionaire, had wished to invent a God to suit his ends, he could not have done better. Benjamin did it for him in the eighteenth century. God is the supreme servant of men who want to get on, to produce. Providence. The provider. The heavenly storekeeper. The everlasting Wanamaker.

And this is all the God the grandsons of the Pilgrim Fathers had left. Aloft on a pillar of dollars.

"That the soul is immortal."

The trite way Benjamin says it!

But man has a soul, though you can't locate it either in his purse or his pocketbook or his heart or his stomach or his head. The wholeness of a man is his soul. Not merely that nice little comfortable bit which Benjamin marks out.

It's a queer thing, is a man's soul. It is the whole of him. Which means it is the unknown him, as well as the known. It seems to me just funny, professors and Benjamins fixing the functions of the soul. Why the soul of man is a vast forest, and all Benjamin intended was a neat back garden. And we've all got to fit in to his kitchen garden scheme of things. Hail Columbia!

The soul of man is a dark forest. The Hercynian Wood\(^1\) that scared

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\(^1\) The forests of northern Europe, especially Germany. [Ed.]
the Romans so, and out of which came the white-skinned hordes of the next civilization.

Who knows what will come out of the soul of man? The soul of man is a dark vast forest, with wild life in it. Think of Benjamin fencing it off!

Oh, but Benjamin fenced a little tract that he called the soul of man, and proceeded to get it into cultivation. Providence, forsooth! And they think that bit of barbed wire is going to keep us in pound forever? More fools them.

This is Benjamin’s barbed wire fence. He made himself a list of virtues, which he trotted inside like a grey nag in a paddock.

1 temperance Eat not to fullness; drink not to elevation.
2 silence Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.
3 order Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.
4 resolution Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.
5 frugality Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself—i.e., waste nothing.
6 industry Lose no time, be always employed in something useful; cut off all unnecessary action.
7 sincerity Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly, and, if you speak, speak accordingly.
8 justice Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty.
9 moderation Avoid extremes, forbear resenting injuries as much as you think they deserve.
10 cleanliness Tolerate no uncleanness in body, clothes, or habitation.
11 tranquillity Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.
12 chastity Rarely use venery but for health and offspring, never to dullness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another’s peace or reputation.
13 humility Imitate Jesus and Socrates.

A Quaker friend told Franklin that he, Benjamin, was generally considered proud, so Benjamin put in the Humility touch as an afterthought. The amusing part is the sort of humility it displays. “Imitate Jesus and Socrates,” and mind you don’t outshine either of these two. One can just imagine Socrates and Alcibiades roaring in their cups over Philadelphian Benjamin, and Jesus looking at him a little puzzled, and mur-
muring: "Aren't you wise in your own conceit, Ben?"

"Henceforth be masterless," retorts Ben. "Be ye each one his own master unto himself, and don't let even the Lord put his spoke in." "Each man his own master" is but a puffing up of masterlessness.

Well, the first of Americans practiced this enticing list with assiduity, setting a national example. He had the virtues in columns, and gave himself good and bad marks according as he thought his behavior deserved. Pity these conduct charts are lost to us. He only remarks that Order was his stumbling block. He could not learn to be neat and tidy.

Isn't it nice to have nothing worse to confess?

He was a little model, was Benjamin. Doctor Franklin. Snuff-colored little man! Immortal soul and all!

The immortal soul part was a sort of cheap insurance policy.

Benjamin had no concern, really, with the immortal soul. He was too busy with social man.

1. He swept and lighted the streets of young Philadelphia.
2. He invented electrical appliances.
3. He was the center of a moralizing club in Philadelphia, and he wrote the moral humorisms of Poor Richard.
4. He was a member of all the important councils of Philadelphia, and then of the American colonies.
5. He won the cause of American Independence at the French Court, and was the economic father of the United States.

Now what more can you want of a man? And yet he is infra dig, even in Philadelphia.

I admire him. I admire his sturdy courage first of all, then his sagacity, then his glimpsing into the thunders of electricity, then his common-sense humor. All the qualities of a great man, and never more than a great citizen. Middle-sized, sturdy, snuff-colored Doctor Franklin, one of the soundest citizens that ever trod or "used venery."

I do not like him.

And, by the way, I always thought books of Venery were about hunting deer.

There is a certain earnest naïveté about him. Like a child. And like a little old man. He has again become as a little child, always as wise as his grandfather, or wiser.

Perhaps, as I say, the most complete citizen that ever "used venery."

Printer, philosopher, scientist, author and patriot, impeccable husband and citizen, why isn't he an archetype?

Pioneer, Oh Pioneers! Benjamin was one of the greatest pioneers of the United States. Yet we just can't do with him.

What's wrong with him then? Or what's wrong with us?
I can remember, when I was a little boy, my father used to buy a
scrubby yearly almanack with the sun and moon and stars on the cover.
And it used to prophesy bloodshed and famine. But also crammed in
corners it had little anecdotes and humorisms, with a moral tag. And I
used to have my little priggish laugh at the woman who counted her
chickens before they were hatched, and so forth, and I was convinced
that honesty was the best policy, also a little priggishly. The author of
these bits was Poor Richard, and Poor Richard was Benjamin Franklin,
writing in Philadelphia well over a hundred years before.

And probably I haven’t got over those Poor Richard tags yet. I rankle
still with them. They are thorns in young flesh.

Because although I still believe that honesty is the best policy, I dis-
like policy altogether; though it is just as well not to count your chick-
rens before they are hatched, it’s still more hateful to count them with
gloating when they are hatched. It has taken me many years and count-
less smarts to get out of that barbed wire moral enclosure that Poor
Richard rigged up. Here am I now in tatters and scratched to ribbons,
sitting in the middle of Benjamin’s America looking at the barbed wire,
and the fat sheep crawling under the fence to get fat outside and the
watchdogs yelling at the gate lest by chance anyone should get out by
the proper exit. Oh America! Oh Benjamin! And I just utter a long
louder curse against Benjamin and the American corral.

Moral America! Most moral Benjamin. Sound, satisfied Ben!

He had to go to the frontiers of his State to settle some disturbance
among the Indians. On this occasion he writes:

We found that they had made a great bonfire in the middle of the square;
they were all drunk, men and women quarreling and fighting. Their dark-
colored bodies, half naked, seen only by the gloomy light of the bonfire, run-
ning after and beating one another with fire-brands, accompanied by their hor-
rid yellings, formed a scene the most resembling our ideas of hell that could
well be imagined. There was no appeasing the tumult, and we retired to our
lodging. At midnight a number of them came thundering at our door, demand-
ing more rum, of which we took no notice.

The next day, sensible they had misbehaved in giving us that disturbance,
they sent three of their counselors to make their apology. The orator acknowl-
dged the fault, but laid it upon the rum, and then endeavored to excuse the
rum by saying: “The Great Spirit, who made all things, made everything for
some use; and whatever he designed anything for, that use it should always be
put to. Now, when he had made rum, he said: ‘Let this be for the Indians to
get drunk with.’ And it must be so.”

And, indeed, if it be the design of Providence to extirpate these savages in
order to make room for the cultivators of the earth, it seems not improbable
that rum may be the appointed means. It has already annihilated all the tribes
who formerly inhabited all the seacoast. . . .
This, from the good doctor, with such suave complacency is a little disenchating. Almost too good to be true.

But there you are! The barbed wire fence. “Extirpate these savages in order to make room for the cultivators of the earth.” Oh, Benjamin Franklin! He even “used venery” as a cultivator of seed.

Cultivate the earth, ye gods! The Indians did that, as much as they needed. And they left off there. Who built Chicago? Who cultivated the earth until it spawned Pittsburgh, Pa.?

The moral issue! Just look at it! Cultivation included. If it’s a mere choice of Kultur or cultivation, I give it up.

Which brings us right back to our question, what’s wrong with Benjamin, that we can’t stand him? Or else, what’s wrong with us, that we find fault with such a paragon?

Man is a moral animal. All right. I am a moral animal. And I’m going to remain such. I’m not going to be turned into a virtuous little automaton as Benjamin would have me. “This is good, that is bad. Turn the little handle and let the good tap flow,” saith Benjamin and all America with him. “But first of all extirpate those savages who are always turning on the bad tap.”

I am a moral animal. But I am not a moral machine. I don’t work with a little set of handles or levers. The Temperance-silence-order-resolution-frugality-industry-sincerity-justice-moderation-cleanliness-tranquility-chastity-humility keyboard is not going to get me going. I’m really not just an automatic piano with a moral Benjamin getting tunes out of me.

Here’s my creed, against Benjamin’s. This is what I believe:

“That I am I.”
“That my soul is a dark forest.”
“That my known self will never be more than a little clearing in the forest.”
“That gods, strange gods, come forth from the forest into the clearing of my known self, and then go back.”
“That I must have the courage to let them come and go.”
“That I will never let mankind put anything over me, but that I will try always to recognize and submit to the gods in me and the gods in other men and women.”

There is my creed. He who runs may read. He who prefers to crawl, or to go by gasoline, can call it rot.

Then for a “list.” It is rather fun to play at Benjamin.

1. Temperance. Eat and carouse with Bacchus, or munch dry bread with Jesus, but don’t sit down without one of the gods.

2. Silence. Be still when you have nothing to say; when genuine passion moves you, say what you’ve got to say, and say it hot.
3 order Know that you are responsible to the gods inside you and to the men in whom the gods are manifest. Recognize your superiors and your inferiors, according to the gods. This is the root of all order.

4 resolution Resolve to abide by your own deepest promptings, and to sacrifice the smaller thing to the greater. Kill when you must, and be killed the same: the must coming from the gods inside you, or from the men in whom you recognize the Holy Ghost.

5 frugality Demand nothing; accept what you see fit. Don't waste your pride or squander your emotion.

6 industry Lose no time with ideals; serve the Holy Ghost; never serve mankind.

7 sincerity To be sincere is to remember that I am I, and that the other man is not me.

8 justice The only justice is to follow the sincere intuition of the soul, angry or gentle. Anger is just, and pity is just, but judgment is never just.

9 moderation Beware of absolutes. There are many gods.

10 cleanliness Don't be too clean. It impoverishes the blood.

11 tranquility The soul has many motions, many gods come and go. Try and find your deepest issue, in every confusion, and abide by that. Obey the man in whom you recognize the Holy Ghost; command when your honor comes to command.

12 chastity Never "use" venery at all. Follow your passion less impulse, if it be answered in the other being; but never have any motive in mind, neither off-spring nor health nor even pleasure, nor even service. Only know that "venery" is of the great gods. An offering-up of yourself to the very great gods, the dark ones, and nothing else.

13 humility See all men and women according to the Holy Ghost that is within them. Never yield before the barren.

There's my list. I have been trying dimly to realize it for a long time, and only America and old Benjamin have at last goaded me into trying to formulate it.

And now I, at least, know why I can't stand Benjamin. He tries to take away my wholeness and my dark forest, my freedom. For how can any man be free, without an illimitable background? And Benjamin tries to shove me into a barbed-wire paddock and make me grow potatoes or Chicagoes.

And how can I be free, without gods that come and go? But Benjamin won't let anything exist except my useful fellow-men, and I'm sick of
them; as for his Godhead, his Providence, He is Head of nothing except a vast heavenly store that keeps every imaginable line of goods, from victrolas to cat-o-nine tails.

And how can any man be free without a soul of his own, that he believes in and won’t sell at any price? But Benjamin doesn’t let me have a soul of my own. He says I am nothing but a servant of mankind—galley-slave I call it—and if I don’t get my wages here below—that is, if Mr. Pierpont Morgan or Mr. Nosey Hebrew or the grand United States Government, the great us, us or some of us, manages to scoop in my bit along with their lump—why, never mind, I shall get my wages hereafter.

Oh Benjamin! Oh Binjum! You do not suck me in any longer.

And why oh why should the snuff-colored little trap have wanted to take us all in? Why did he do it?

Out of sheer human cussedness, in the first place. We do all like to get things inside a barbed-wire corral. Especially our fellow-men. We love to round them up inside the barbed-wire enclosure of freedom, and make ’em work. “Work, you free jewel, work!” shouts the liberator, cracking his whip. Benjamin, I will not work. I do not choose to be a free democrat. I am absolutely a servant of my own Holy Ghost.

Sheer cussedness! But there was as well the salt of a subtler purpose. Benjamin was just in his eyeholes—to use an English vulgarism meaning he was just delighted—when he was at Paris judiciously milking money out of the French monarchy for the overthrow of all monarchy. If you want to ride your horse to somewhere you must put a bit in his mouth. And Benjamin wanted to ride his horse so that it would upset the whole apple-cart of the old masters. He wanted the whole European apple-cart upset. So he had to put a strong bit in the mouth of his ass.

“Henceforth be masterless.”

That is, he had to break-in the human ass completely, so that much more might be broken, in the long run. For the moment it was the British Government that had to have a hole knocked in it. The first real hole it ever had; the breach of the American rebellion.

Benjamin, in his sagacity, knew that the breaking of the old world was a long process. In the depths of his own under-consciousness he hated England, he hated Europe, he hated the whole corpus of the European being. He wanted to be American. But you can’t change your nature and mode of consciousness like changing your shoes. It is a gradual shedding. Years must go by, and centuries must elapse before you have finished. Like a son escaping from the domination of his parents. The escape is not just one rupture. It is a long and half-secret process.

So with the American. He was a European when he first went over the Atlantic. He is in the main a recreant European still. From Benjamin Franklin to Woodrow Wilson may be a long stride, but it is a stride
along the same road. There is no new road. The same old road, become dreary and futile. Theoretic and materialistic.

Why then did Benjamin set up this dummy of a perfect citizen as a pattern to America? Of course he did it in perfect good faith, as far as he knew. He thought it simply was the true ideal. But what we think we do is not very important. We never really know what we are doing. Either we are materialistic instruments, like Benjamin or we move in the gesture of creation, from our deepest self, usually unconscious. We are only the actors, we are never wholly the authors of our own deeds or works. It is the author, the unknown inside us or outside us. The best we can do is to try to hold ourselves in unison with the deeps which are inside us. And the worst we can do is to try to have things our own way, when we run counter to it, and in the long run get our knuckles rapped for our presumption.

So Benjamin contriving money out of the Court of France. He was contriving the first steps of the overthrow of all Europe, France included. You can never have a new thing without breaking an old. Europe happens to be the old thing. America, unless the people in America assert themselves too much in opposition to the inner gods, should be the new thing. The new thing is the death of the old. But you can't cut the throat of an epoch. You've got to steal the life from it through several centuries.

And Benjamin worked for this both directly and indirectly. Directly, at the Court of France, making a small but very dangerous hole in the side of England, through which hole Europe has by now almost bled to death. And indirectly in Philadelphia, setting up this unlovely, snuff-colored little ideal, or automaton, of a pattern American. The pattern American, this dry, moral, utilitarian little democrat, has done more to ruin the old Europe than any Russian nihilist. He has done it by slow attrition, like a son who has stayed at home and obeyed his parents, all the while silently hating their authority, and silently, in his soul, destroying not only their authority but their whole existence. For the American spiritually stayed at home in Europe. The spiritual home of America was and still is Europe. This is the galling bondage, in spite of several billions of heaped-up gold. Your heaps of gold are only so many muck-heaps, America, and will remain so till you become a reality to yourselves.

All this Americanizing and mechanizing has been for the purpose of overthrowing the past. And now look at America, tangled in her own barbed wire, and mastered by her own machines. Absolutely got down by her own barbed wire of shalt-nots, and shut up fast in her own "productive" machines like millions of squirrels running in millions of cages. It is just a farce.

Now is your chance, Europe. Now let Hell loose and get your own back, and paddle your own canoe on a new sea, while clever America
lies on her muck-heaps of gold, strangled in her own barbed-wire of shalt-not ideals and shalt-not moralisms. While she goes out to work like millions of squirrels in millions of cages. Production!

Let Hell loose, and get your own back, Europe!

AIDS TO STUDY

1. Lawrence was a man of genius who placed himself in opposition to contemporary society. What defects in society does Lawrence oppose?
   a. In the third paragraph, Lawrence refers to society's "dummy standards." According to Lawrence, what are these standards?
   b. In what ways does Franklin exemplify those features of society against which Lawrence rebels?
   c. What does Lawrence mean when he speaks of the fence which Franklin tried to construct around the soul of man? Why does he say it is a barbed wire fence? Are there any later references to the fence?

2. Lawrence says of Franklin that he admires him but that he does not like him. Explain this seeming paradox.

3. What does Lawrence find wrong with the list of virtues that Franklin made? Contrast Lawrence's list of virtues with Franklin's. What does the contrast indicate about Lawrence's scheme of values?

4. Lawrence's style is very personal. He uses himself as an example often, and his angry tone suggests that he is personally concerned in this argument with Franklin and society. Why is he angry and personal? Would he not be more persuasive if he were calmer and more objective?

5. Toward the end of the essay, Lawrence appeals to Europe to "get its own back" from America. What is Europe supposed to get back? How is it to do so?
Anthony Trollope

From AUTOBIOGRAPHY

MY MOTHER

Though I do not wish in these pages to go back to the origin of all the Trollopes, I must say a few words of my mother,—partly because filial duty will not allow me to be silent as to a parent who made for herself a considerable name in the literature of her day, and partly because there were circumstances in her career well worthy of notice. She was the daughter of the Rev. William Milton, vicar of Heckfield, who, as well as my father, had been a fellow of New College. She was nearly thirty when, in 1809, she married my father. Six or seven years ago a bundle of love-letters from her to him fell into my hand in a very singular way, having been found in the house of a stranger, who, with much courtesy, sent them to me. They were then about sixty years old, and had been written some before and some after her marriage, over the space of perhaps a year. In no novel of Richardson’s or Miss Burney’s have I seen a correspondence at the same time so sweet, so graceful, and so well expressed. But the marvel of these letters was in the strange difference they bore to the love-letters of the present day. They are, all of them, on square paper, folded and sealed, and addressed to my father on circuit; but the language in each, though it almost borders on the romantic, is beautifully chosen, and fit, without change of a syllable, for the most critical eye. What girl now studies the words with which she shall address her lover, or seeks to charm him with grace of diction? She dearly likes a little slang, and revels in the luxury of entire familiarity with a new and strange being. There is something in that, too, pleasant to our thoughts, but I fear that this phase of life does not conduce to a taste for poetry among our girls. Though my mother was a writer of prose, and revelled in satire, the poetic feeling clung to her to the last.

In the first ten years of her married life she became the mother of six
children, four of whom died of consumption at different ages. My elder sister married, and had children, of whom one still lives; but she was one of the four who followed each other at intervals during my mother's lifetime. Then my brother Tom and I were left to her,—with the destiny before us three of writing more books than were probably ever before produced by a single family. My married sister added to the number by one little anonymous high-church story, called Chollerton.

From the date of their marriage up to 1827, when my mother went to America, my father's affairs had always been going down in the world. She had loved society, affecting a somewhat liberal rôle, and professing an emotional dislike to tyrants, which sprung from the wrongs of would-be regicides and the poverty of patriot exiles. An Italian marquis who had escaped with only a second shirt from the clutches of some archduke whom he had wished to exterminate, or a French prolétaire with distant ideas of sacrificing himself to the cause of liberty, were always welcome to the modest hospitality of her house. In after years, when marquises of another caste had been gracious to her, she became a strong Tory, and thought that archduchesses were sweet. But, with her, politics were always an affair of the heart,—as, indeed, were all her convictions. Of reasoning from causes, I think that she knew nothing. Her heart was in every way so perfect, her desire to do good to all around her so thorough, and her power of self-sacrifice so complete, that she generally got herself right in spite of her want of logic; but it must be acknowledged that she was emotional. I can remember now her books, and can see her at her pursuits. The poets she loved best were Dante and Spenser. But she raved also of him of whom all such ladies were raving then, and rejoiced in the popularity and wept over the persecution of Lord Byron. She was among those who seized with avidity on the novels, as they came out, of the unknown Scott, and who could still talk of the triumphs of Miss Edgeworth. With the literature of the day she was familiar, and with the poets of the past. Of other reading I do not think she had mastered much. Her life, I take it, though latterly clouded by money troubles, was easy, luxurious, and idle, till my father's affairs and her own aspirations sent her to America. She had dear friends among literary people, of whom I remember Mathias, Henry Milman, and Miss Landon; but till long after middle life she never herself wrote a line for publication.

In 1827 she went to America, having been partly instigated by the social and communistic ideas of a lady whom I well remember,—a certain

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1 The family of Estienne, the great French printers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, of whom there were at least nine or ten, did more perhaps for the production of literature than any other family. But they, though they edited, and not unfrequently translated the works which they published, were not authors in the ordinary sense. [Author's note.]
Miss Wright,—who was, I think, the first of the American female lecturers. Her chief desire, however, was to establish my brother Henry;—and perhaps joined with that was the additional object of breaking up her English home without pleading broken fortunes to all the world. At Cincinnati, in the State of Ohio, she built a bazaar, and I fancy lost all the money which may have been embarked in that speculation. It could not have been much, and I think that others also must have suffered. But she looked about her, at her American cousins, and resolved to write a book about them. This book she brought back with her in 1831, and published early in 1832. When she did this she was already fifty. When doing this she was aware that unless she could so succeed in making money, there was no money for any of the family. She had never before earned a shilling. She almost immediately received a considerable sum from the publishers,—if I remember rightly, amounting to two sums of £400 each within a few months; and from that moment till nearly the time of her death, at any rate for more than twenty years, she was in the receipt of a considerable income from her writings. It was a late age at which to begin such a career.

*The Domestic Manners of the Americans* was the first of a series of books of travels, of which it was probably the best, and was certainly the best known. It will not be too much to say of it that it had a material effect upon the manners of the Americans of the day, and that that effect has fully been appreciated by them. No observer was certainly ever less qualified to judge of the prospects or even of the happiness of a young people. No one could have been worse adapted by nature for the task of learning whether a nation was in a way to thrive. Whatever she saw she judged, as most women do, from her own standing-point. If a thing were ugly to her eyes, it ought to be ugly to all eyes,—and if ugly, it must be bad. What though people had plenty to eat and clothes to wear, if they put their feet up on the tables and did not reverence their betters? The Americans were to her rough, uncouth, and vulgar,—and she told them so. Those communitistic and social ideas, which had been so pretty in a drawing-room, were scattered to the winds. Her volumes were very bitter;—but they were very clever, and they saved the family from ruin.

Book followed book immediately,—first two novels, and then a work on Belgium and Western Germany. She refurnished the house which I have called Orley Farm, and surrounded us again with moderate comforts. Of the mixture of joviality and industry which formed her character, it is almost impossible to speak with exaggeration. The industry was a thing apart, kept to herself. It was not necessary that any one who lived with her should see it. She was at her table at four in the morning, and had finished her work before the world had begun to be aroused. But the joviality was all for others. She could dance with other people's legs, eat and drink with other people's palates, be proud with the lustre
of other people's finery. Every mother can do that for her own daughters; but she could do it for any girl whose look, and voice, and manners pleased her. Even when she was at work, the laughter of those she loved was a pleasure to her. She had much, very much, to suffer. Work sometimes came hard to her, so much being required,—for she was extravagant, and liked to have money to spend; but of all people I have known she was the most joyous, or, at any rate, the most capable of joy.

We continued this renewed life at Harrow for nearly two years, during which I was still at the school, and at the end of which I was nearly nineteen. Then there came a great catastrophe. My father, who, when he was well, lived a sad life among his monks and nuns, still kept a horse and gig. One morning in March 1834, just as it had been decided that I should leave the school then, instead of remaining, as had been intended, till mid-summer, I was summoned, very early in the morning, to drive him up to London. He had been ill, and must still have been very ill indeed when he submitted to be driven by any one. It was not till we had started that he told me that I was to put him on board the Ostend boat. This I did, driving him through the city down to the docks. It was not within his nature to be communicative, and to the last he never told me why he was going to Ostend. Something of a general flitting abroad I had heard before, but why he should have flown the first, and flown so suddenly, I did not in the least know till I returned. When I got back with the gig, the house and furniture were all in the charge of the sheriff's officers.

The gardener who had been with us in former days stopped me as I drove up the road, and with gestures, signs, and whispered words, gave me to understand that the whole affair—horse, gig, and harness—would be made prize of if I went but a few yards farther. Why they should not have been made prize of I do not know. The little piece of dishonest business which I at once took in hand and carried through successfully was of no special service to any of us. I drove the gig into the village, and sold the entire equipage to the ironmonger for £17, the exact sum which he claimed as being due to himself. I was much complimented by the gardener, who seemed to think that so much had been rescued out of the fire. I fancy that the ironmonger was the only gainer by my smartness.

When I got back to the house a scene of devastation was in progress, which still was not without its amusement. My mother, through her various troubles, had contrived to keep a certain number of pretty-pretties which were dear to her heart. They were not much, for in those days the ornamentation of houses was not lavish as it is now; but there was

2 An allusion to the elder Trollope's projected history of all the Christian sects. [Ed.]
some china, and a little glass, a few books, and a very moderate supply of household silver. These things, and things like them, were being carried down surreptitiously, through a gap between the two gardens, on to the premises of our friend Colonel Grant. My two sisters, then sixteen and seventeen, and the Grant girls, who were just younger, were the chief marauders. To such forces I was happy to add myself for any enterprise, and between us we cheated the creditors to the extent of our powers, amidst the anathemas, but good-humoured abstinence from personal violence, of the men in charge of the property. I still own a few books that were thus purloined.

For a few days the whole family bivouacked under the Colonel's hospitable roof, cared for and comforted by that dearest of all women, his wife. Then we followed my father to Belgium, and established ourselves in a large house just outside the walls of Bruges. At this time, and till my father's death, everything was done with money earned by my mother. She now again furnished the house,—this being the third that she had put in order since she came back from America two years and a half ago.

There were six of us went into this new banishment. My brother Henry had left Cambridge and was ill. My younger sister was ill. And though as yet we hardly told each other that it was so, we began to feel that that desolating fiend, consumption, was among us. My father was broken-hearted as well as ill, but whenever he could sit at his table he still worked at his ecclesiastical records. My elder sister and I were in good health, but I was an idle, desolate hanger-on, that most hopeless of human beings, a hobbledehoy of nineteen, without any idea of a career, a profession, or a trade. As well as I can remember I was fairly happy, for there were pretty girls at Bruges with whom I could fancy that I was in love; and I had been removed from the real misery of school. But as to my future life I had not even an aspiration. Now and again there would arise a feeling that it was hard upon my mother that she should have to do so much for us, that we should be idle while she was forced to work so constantly; but we should probably have thought more of that had she not taken to work as though it were the recognised condition of life for an old lady of fifty-five.

Then, by degrees, an established sorrow was at home among us. My brother was an invalid, and the horrid word, which of all words was, for some years after, the most dreadful to us, had been pronounced. It was no longer a delicate chest, and some temporary necessity for peculiar care,—but Consumption! The Bruges doctor had said so, and we knew that he was right. From that time forth my mother's most visible occupation was that of nursing. There were two sick men in the house, and hers were the hands that tended them. The novels went on, of course. We had already learned to know that they would be forth-
coming at stated intervals,—and they always were forthcoming. The doctor's vials and the ink-bottle held equal places in my mother's rooms. I have written many novels under many circumstances; but I doubt much whether I could write one when my whole heart was by the bedside of a dying son. Her power of dividing herself into two parts, and keeping her intellect by itself clear from the troubles of the world, and fit for the duty it had to do, I never saw equalled. I do not think that the writing of a novel is the most difficult task which a man may be called upon to do; but it is a task that may be supposed to demand a spirit fairly at ease. The work of doing it with a troubled spirit killed Sir Walter Scott. My mother went through it unscathed in strength, though she performed all the work of day-nurse and night-nurse to a sick household;—for there were soon three of them dying.

At this time there came from some quarter an offer to me of a commission in an Austrian cavalry regiment; and so it was apparently my destiny to be a soldier. But I must first learn German and French, of which languages I knew almost nothing. For this a year was allowed me, and in order that it might be accomplished without expense, I undertook the duties of a classical usher to a school then kept by William Drury of Brussels. Mr. Drury had been one of the masters of Harrow when I went there at seven years old, and is now, after an interval of fifty-three years, even yet officiating as clergyman at that place. To Brussels I went, and my heart still sinks within me as I reflect that any one should have entrusted to me the tuition of thirty boys. I can only hope that those boys went there to learn French, and that their parents were not particular as to their classical acquirements. I remember that on two occasions I was sent to take the school out for a walk; but that after the second attempt Mrs. Drury declared that the boys' clothes would not stand any further experiments of that kind. I cannot call to mind any learning by me of other languages; but as I only remained in that position for six weeks, perhaps the return lessons had not been as yet commenced. At the end of the six weeks a letter reached me, offering me a clerkship in the General Post Office, and I accepted it. Among my mother's dearest friends she reckoned Mrs. Freeing, the wife of Clayton Freeing, whose father, Sir Francis Freeing, then ruled the Post Office. She had heard of my desolate position, and had begged from her father-in-law the offer of a berth in his own office.

I hurried back from Brussels to Bruges on my way to London, and found that the number of invalids had been increased. My younger sister, Emily, who, when I had left the house, was trembling in the balance,—who had been pronounced to be delicate, but with that false-tongued hope which knows the truth, but will lie lest the heart should faint, had been called delicate, but only delicate,—was now ill. Of course she was doomed. I knew it of both of them, though I had never heard the word
spoken, or had spoken it to any one. And my father was very ill,—ill to
dying, though I did not know it. And my mother had decreed to send
my elder sister away to England, thinking that the vicinity of so much
sickness might be injurious to her. All this happened late in the autumn
of 1834, in the spring of which year we had come to Bruges; and then
my mother was left alone in a big house outside the town, with two
Belgian women-servants, to nurse three dying patients,—the patients be-
ing her husband and children,—and to write novels for the sustenance
of the family! It was about this period of her career that her best novels
were written.

To my own initiation at the Post Office I will return in the next chap-
ter. Just before Christmas my brother died, and was buried at Bruges. In
the following February my father died, and was buried alongside of
him,—and with him died that tedious task of his, which I can only hope
may have solaced many of his latter hours. I sometimes look back,
meditating for hours together, on his adverse fate. He was a man, finely
educated, of great parts, with immense capacity for work, physically
strong very much beyond the average of men, addicted to no vices, car-
ried off by no pleasures, affectionate by nature, most anxious for the wel-
fare of his children, born to fair fortunes,—who, when he started in
the world, may be said to have had everything at his feet. But everything
went wrong with him. The touch of his hand seemed to create failure.
He embarked in one hopeless enterprise after another, spending on each
all the money he could at the time command. But the worse curse to
him of all was a temper so irritable that even those whom he loved the
best could not endure it. We were all estranged from him, and yet I
believe that he would have given his heart's blood for any of us. His
life as I knew it was one long tragedy.

After his death my mother moved to England, and took and furnished
a small house at Hadley, near Barnet. I was then a clerk in the London
Post Office, and I remember well how gay she made the place with
little dinners, little dances, and little picnics, while she herself was at
work every morning long before others had left their beds. But she did
not stay at Hadley much above a year. She went up to London, where
she again took and furnished a house, from which my remaining sister
was married and carried away into Cumberland. My mother soon fol-
lowed her, and on this occasion did more than take a house. She bought
a bit of ground,—a field of three acres near the town,—and built a resi-
dence for herself. This, I think, was in 1841, and she had thus estab-
lished and re-established herself six times in ten years. But in Cumber-
land she found the climate too severe, and in 1844 she moved herself to
Florence, where she remained till her death in 1863. She continued writ-
ing up to 1856, when she was seventy-six years old,—and had at that
time produced 114 volumes, of which the first was not written till she
was fifty. Her career offers great encouragement to those who have not begun early in life, but are still ambitious to do something before they depart hence.

She was an unselfish, affectionate, and most industrious woman, with great capacity for enjoyment and high physical gifts. She was endowed, too, with much creative power, with considerable humour, and a genuine feeling for romance. But she was neither clear-sighted nor accurate; and in her attempts to describe morals, manners, and even facts, was unable to avoid the pitfalls of exaggeration.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. As a writer Trollope is notable for a straightforward clarity of style. Point out some of the features of his diction and sentence structure that serve to produce this clarity.

2. What relation is there between Trollope's style and the way he sees and represents his mother's character? Does he strike a balance between what he sees to praise and blame in her?

3. What is the tone in which Trollope writes about his mother? How does it contrast with a Mother's Day advertisement or with a picture by Norman Rockwell?

4. What impression do you form of Trollope himself from this piece of writing? What aspects of character would he be likely to emphasize and value?

5. Trollope often contrasts his mother's intelligence and her character. Point out some of these contrasts and decide whether Trollope thought intelligence to be more important than character.

6. Trollope speaks briefly here of his father. Does what he says of his father differ in tone from what he says of his mother?

7. Does this sketch of Trollope's mother seem to you honest? On what grounds do you judge? Look especially at the last paragraph and decide whether or not Trollope loved his mother. Are love and honesty compatible?
For one human being to point out another as "unforgettable" seems a trifle condescending, and in the ideal world we would all keep well aware of each other, but there are nevertheless a few persons one meets who are as inescapable of notice as skyrockets, it may be because like skyrockets they are radiant with their own substance and shower it about regardlessly. Ida M'Toy, an old Negro woman, for a long time a midwife in my little Mississippi town and for another long time a dealer in second-hand clothes in the same place, has been a skyrocket as far back as most people remember. Or, rather, she is a kind of meteor (for she is not ephemeral, only sudden and startling). Her ways seem on a path of their own without regard to any course of ours and of a somewhat wider circuit; she will probably leave a glow behind and return in the far future on some other lap of her careening through all our duller and steadier bodies. She herself deals with the rest of us in this mighty and spacious way, calling in allegories and the elements, so it is owing to her nature that I may speak a little grandly.

The slave traders of England and New England, when they went capturing, took away the most royal of Africans along with their own slaves, and I have not much doubt that Ida has come down from a race of tall black queens. I wish I might have seen her when she was young. She has sharp clever features, light-filled black eyes, arched nostrils, and fine thin mobile lips, and her hair, gray now, springs like a wild kind of diadem from the widow's peak over her forehead. Her voice is indescribable but it is a constant part of her presence and is filled with invocation. She never speaks lightly of any person or thing, but she flings out her arm and points at something and begins, "O, precious, I'm

From Accent, Summer, 1942. Reprinted by permission of Russell & Volkening, Inc.
telling you to look at that—*look* at it!” and then she invokes about it, and tolerates no interruptions. I have heard long chants and utterances on the origin and history and destination of the smallest thing, any article or object her eye lights on; a bit of candle stuck on the mantelpiece will set her off, as if its little fire had ignited her whole mind. She invokes what she wishes to invoke and she has in all ways something of the seer about her. She wields a control over great numbers of her race by this power, which has an integrity that I believe nothing could break, and which sets her up, aloof and triumphant, above the rest. She is inspired and they are not. Maybe off by themselves they could be inspired, but nobody else could be inspired in the same room with Ida, it would be too crowded.

Ida is not a poor old woman, she is a rich old woman. She accepts it that she is held in envy as well as respect, but it is only another kind of tribute as far as she is concerned, and she is not at all prouder of being rich or of having been married in the home of a white lady, “in her bay window,” than she is of being very wise. She expects to be gaped at, but she is not vain.

Ida's life has been divided in two (it is, in many ways, eloquent of duality); but there is a thread that runs from one part into the other, and to trace this connection between delivering the child and clothing the man is an interesting speculation. Moreover, it has some excuse, for Ida herself helps it along by a wild and curious kind of talk that sashays from one part to the other and sounds to some of her customers like “ranting and raving.” It is my belief that if Ida had not been a midwife she would not be the same kind of second-hand clothes dealer she is. Midwifery set her off, it gave her a hand in the mysteries, and she will never let go that flying hold merely because she is engaged in something else. An ex-alchemist would run a second-hand clothes business with extra touches—a reminiscence of glitter would cling to the garments he sold, and it is the same with Ida. So it is well when you meet her to think what she was once.

Ida’s memory goes back to her beginnings, when she was, she says, the first practical nurse in Jackson at the age of twenty-one, and she makes the past sound very dark and far back. She thanks God, she says, that today Capitol Street is not just three planks to walk on and is the prettiest place on earth, but that “people white and black is too high and don’t they know Ida seen them when they carried a little tin coal-oil lamp that wasn't any bigger than their little fingers?” Ida speaks of herself in the third person and in indirect discourse often and especially when she says something good of herself or something of herself long ago. She will intone, “Ida say that she was good to the poor white people as she was to the rich, as she made a bargain to nurse a poor white lady in obstetrical case for a peck of peas. Ida said no, she couldn’t see her
suffer, and therefore a peck of blackeyed peas would be sufficient.” She wants all she says to be listened to with the whole attention, and declares she does wish it were all written down. “Let her keep it straight, darling, if she remember Ida’s true words, the angels will know it and be waiting around the throne for her.” But Ida’s true words are many and strange. When she talks about the old days it is almost like a story of combat against evil. “Ida fitted a duel from twenty-one to fifty-six, and then they operated on her right side and she was never able to stoop down to the floor again. She was never like those young devils, that pace around in those white shoes and those white clothes and up and down the streets of an evening while their patient is calling for a drink of water down poor parched throat—though I wore those white shoes and those white clothes. Only, my heart was in another direction.”

Ida said, “I was nursing ever since there was a big road in Jackson. There was only nine doctors, and they were the best in all the world, all nine, right here in Jackson, but they were weak in finance. There wasn’t nary hospital nowhere—there wasn’t nary brick in Jackson, not one brick, no brick walk, no brick store, no brick nothing-else. There wasn’t no Old Ladies’ Home at the end of the street, there wasn’t no stopping place but the country. Town was as black as tar come night, and praise God they finally put some gas in bottles on the corners. There wasn’t no such thing in the world as a nice buggy. Never heard tell of a cotton mattress, but tore up shucks and see the bed, so high, and the hay pillow stand up so beautiful! Now they got all this electric light and other electricity. Can’t do nothing without the clickety-click. And bless God they fly just like buzzards up in the air, but Ida don’t intend to ride till she ride to Glory.”

In those early days when Jackson seems to have been a Slough of Despond with pestilence sticking out its head in the nights as black as tar, I-da was not only a midwife, she nursed all diseases. “It was the yellow fever first, and the next after that was the worst pox that there ever was in this world—it would kill you then, in my girl-days, six or seven a day. They had to stretch a rope across the road to keep the poor sick ones apart and many’s the day I’ve et at the rope and carried the food back to the ones suffering.” Ida remembers epidemics as major combats in which she was a kind of giant-killer. She nursed through influenza “six at a blow, until the doctor told me if I didn’t quit nursing by sixes I would drop dead in the room.” She says the doctors wrote her a recommendation as long as where she will show up her arm, saying that when they called, it never was too cold and it never was too hot for Ida to go, and that the whole town would bow and say Amen, from the Jews on. “Bless my patients,” she says, “nary one ever did die under my nursing, though plenty were sick enough to die. But laugh here,” she directs. “My husband stayed sick on me twenty-one years and cost me
one thousand whole dollars, but you can't nurse the heart to do no good, and in the night he fallen asleep and left me a widow, and I am a widow still."

When Ida found she could no longer stoop to the floor she stopped being a midwife and began selling clothes. She was successful at once in that too, for there is a natural flowering-ground for the second-hand clothes business in the small American community where the richest people are only a little richer than the poor people and the poorest have ways to save pride and not starve or go naked. In Jackson the most respectable matron, if she would like a little extra cash to buy a new camellia bush or take the excursion to New Orleans, can run over to Ida's with her husband's other suit and Ida will sell it to a customer as a bargain at $5 and collect 25% for herself, and everybody except the husband ("Right off my back! Perfectly good suit!") will be satisfied.

It could be a grubby enough little business in actual fact, but Ida is not a grubby person, and in her handling it has become an affair of imagination and, to my notion, an expression of a whole attitude of life as integrated as an art or a philosophy.

Ida's store is her house, a white-painted little house with a porch across the front, a picket-fence around, and the dooryard planted to capacity in big flowers. Inside, it is a phantasmagoria of garments. Every room except the kitchen is hung with dresses or suits (the sexes are segregated) three and four times around the walls, for the turnover is large and unpredictable, though not always rapid—people have to save up or wait for cotton-money. She has assumed all the ceremonies of Business and employs its practices and its terms to a point within sight of madness. She puts on a show of logic and executive order before which the customer is supposed to quail; sometimes I think her customers take on worth with her merely as witnesses of the miracles of her workings, though that is unfair. Her house turns year by year into a better labyrinth, more inescapable, and she delights in its complication of aisles and curtains and its mystery of closed doors with little signs on ruled paper, "Nobody can come in here." Some day some little colored girl is going to get lost in Ida's house. The richer she gets, the more "departments" she builds and adds on to the house, and each one is named for the color of its walls, the pink department, or the blue. Even now her side yard is filled with miscellaneous doors, glass panes, planks, and little stacks of bricks that she is accumulating for a new green department she says she will build in 1943.

Her cupboards and drawers are a progressive series of hiding places, which is her interpretation of the filing system. She hides trinkets of mysterious importance or bits of paper filled with abbreviated information; she does not hide money, however, and she tells how much she has on hand ($660.60 is the latest figure), and her life insurance policy
is nailed up on the wall over the mantel. Everybody knows her to be an old woman living with only a small grandchild to guard her in a house full of cash money, and yet she has not been murdered. She never will be. I have wondered what Ida would do if she saw a burglar coming after her money. I am convinced that she has no axe or gun ready for him, but a flow of words will be unstoppered that will put the fear of God in him for life; and I think the would-be burglars have the same suspicion, and will continue to keep away, not wanting so much fear of God as that.

She keeps as strict and full a ledger of transaction as the Book of Judgment, and in as enthusiastic and exalted a spirit of accuracy as an angel book-keeper should have. The only trouble is, it is almost impossible to find in it what she is looking for—but perhaps there will be confusion on Doomsday too. The book, a great black one, which she now has little William, her grandson, to hold for her while she consults it, (and he will kneel under it like a little mural figure) covers a period of 26 years, concerns hundreds of people, “white and black,” and innumerable transactions, all noted down in a strange code full of flourishes, for Ida properly considers all she does confidential. “You could find anything in the world in this book,” she says reverently, then slamming it shut in your face, “if you turn enough pages and go in the right direction. Nothing in here is wrong,” she says. Loose slips are always flying out of the ledger like notes in the Sibyl’s book, and she sets William flying to chase them and get them inside again.

She writes her own descriptions of the garments brought to her to sell, and a lady giving over her finest white dress of last summer must not be surprised, if she looks over Ida’s shoulder, to see her pen the words, “Rally Day, $2.00” or note down her best spring straw hat as “Tom Boy, 75c.” The customer might be right, but Ida does not ever ask the customer. After a moment of concentration Ida goes and hangs the object for sale on the wall in the room of her choice, and a tag is pinned to the sleeve, saying simply, “Mrs. So-and-So.” Accuracy is a passion with Ida, and so is her belief in her own conscience, and I do not know what it must have cost her to pin a tag on one poor sagging dress that has hung there year in, year out, saying “Don’t know who this is.”

She bears respect to clothes in the same degree as she bears it to the people from whose backs they come; she treats them like these people, until indeed it seems that dignity is in them, shapeless and even ridiculous as they have seemed at first; she gives them the space on the wall and the room in the house that correspond to the honor in which she holds the human beings, and she even speaks in the proper tone of voice when she is in the room with them. They hang at human height from the hangers on the walls, the brighter and more important ones in front and
on top. With the most serene impartiality she makes up her mind about client and clothes, and she has been known to say, "For God's sake take it back. Wouldn't a man white or black wear that suit out of here."

There is a magnificence in Ida's business, an extent and an influence at which she hints without ceasing, that undoubtedly inspire the poorest or idlest customer with almost an anxiety to buy. It is almost like an appeasement, and the one that goes off with nothing must feel mean, foolish, and naked indeed, naked to scorn. "I clothe them," she says, "from Jackson to Vicksburg, Meridian to Jackson, Big Black to 'Azoo, Memphis to New Orleans—Clinton! Bolton! Edwards! Bovina! Pocahontas! Flora! Benton City! 'Azoo City! Everywhere. There ain't nobody hasn't come to Ida, or sooner or later will come."

If no one else had thought of the second-hand clothes business, Ida would have originated it, for she did originate it as far as she is concerned; and likewise I am forced to believe that if there had never been any midwives in the world Ida would have invented midwifery, so ingenious and delicate-handed and wise she is, and sure of her natural right to take charge. She loves transformation and bringing things about, she simply cannot resist it. The Negro midwives of this state have a kind of organization these days and lesser powers, they do certain things in certain book-specified ways, and all memorize and sing at meetings a song about "First we put—Drops in their eyes," but in Ida's day a midwife was a lone person, invested with the whole charge of life; she had to draw upon her own resources and imagination. Ida's constant gestures today still involve a dramatic out-thrust of the right hand, and let any prominent names be mentioned (and she mentions them) and she will fling out her palm and cry into the conversation, "Born in this hand!" "Four hundred little white babies,—or more," she says. "My God, I was bringing them all the time. I got 'em everywhere—doctors, lawyers, school teachers, and preachers, married ladies." She has been in the clothes business for twenty-six years, but she was a midwife for thirty-five.

She herself has been married, twice, and by her first husband she had one son, "the only one I ever did have and I want his name written down: Julius Knight." Her mother (before she died) and her brothers live out in the country, and only one little grandson has lived with her for a long time. Her husband, Braddie M'Toy, whom she called Toy, is remembered collecting and delivering clothes in a wagon when he was young, and was to be seen always on some street if not another, moving very slowly on account of his heart.

Now without Toy, Ida uses a telephone down the road and a kind of de luxe grapevine service to rouse up her clients and customers. Anybody who is asked to by Ida feels a duty to phone any stranger for her and "tell them for God's sake to come get their money and bring the
change.” Strange Negroes call people at dawn, giving news of a sale, white ladies call unknown white ladies, notes on small rolls or scraps of paper folded like doctors’ “powders” are conscientiously delivered, and the whole town contrives in her own spirit of emergency to keep Ida’s messages on their way. Ida takes 25% of the sales price and if she sells your dress for a dollar you have to take her a quarter when you go, or come back another time, for she will not make change for anybody. She will not violate her system of book-keeping any more than she would violate her code of ethics or her belief in God—down to the smallest thing all is absolute in Ida’s sight.

Whether it is due to a savage ancestry or a philosophical turn of mind, Ida finds all Ornament a wonderful and appropriate thing, the proper materializing of the rejoicing or sorrowing soul. I believe she holds Ornament next to birth and somehow kin to it. She despises a drab color and welcomes bright clothes with a queenly and triumphant smile, as if she acknowledges the bold brave heart that chose that. Inferior color means inferior spirit, and an inferior person should not hope to get or spend more than four-bits for an outfit. She dearly loves a dress that is at once identifiable as either rich mourning or “rally-day”—the symbolic and celebrating kind appeal to her inevitably over the warm or the serviceable, and she will ask and (by oratory) get the finest prices for rather useless but splendid garments. “Girl, you buy this spangle-dress,” she says to a customer, and the girl buys it and puts it on and shines. Ida’s scale of prices would make a graph showing precisely the rise from her condemnation of the subdued and nondescript to her acclaim of the bright and glorious. Her customers, poverty-bound little cooks and maids and cotton-choppers, go away feeling that they have turned into queens. Ida has put second-hand clothes on their backs and, with all the abrupt bullying of a busy fairy, wrapped them in some glowing raiment of illusion, set them in a whirl of bedazzlement; and they skitter out with shining eyes and empty hands, with every hoarded penny spent. Ida has put them in inner spangles and she has taken an actual warm moist fifty-cent piece out of their palms, and in that world both items exchanged are precious above price, fifty cents being as miraculous as glory. With something second-hand, worn, yet finer than could ever be bought new, she brings to them a perfection in her own eyes and in theirs. She dresses them up and turns them with a little ceremonial jerk toward the mirror, and a magic must hang over the green cracked glass, for (I have seen it happen a hundred times) the glances that go into its surface begin to shine with a pride that could only be a kind of enchantment. It is nice on Saturdays to pass in front of Ida’s house on the edge of town and see the customers emerge. With some little flash of scarf, some extra glitter of trimming for which they have paid dearly, dressed like some visions in Ida’s speculations on the world, glorious or
menial as befits their birth, merit, and willingness, but all rampant and somehow fulfilled by this last touch of costume as though they have been tapped by a spirit when Ida's thimble rapped them, they float dizzily down the steps and through the flowers out the gate; and you could not help thinking of the phrase "going out into the world," as if Ida had just birthed them anew.

I used to think she must be, a little, the cross between a transcendentalist and a witch, with the happiness and kind of self-wonder that this combination must enjoy. They say that all things we write could be; and sometimes in amazement I wonder if a tiny spark of the wonderful Philosopher of Clothes, Diogenes Teufelsdröckh, could be flashing for an instant, and somewhat barbarically, in the wild and enthusiastic spirit of this old black woman. Her life like his is proudly emblematic—she herself being the first to see her place in the world. It is she literally who clothes her entire world, as far and wide as she knows—a hard-worked midwife grown old, with a memory like a mill turning through it all the lives that were born in her hand or have passed through her door.

When she stalks about, alternately clapping her hand over her forehead and flinging out her palm and muttering "Born in this hand!" as she is likely to do when some lady of the old days comes bringing a dress to sell, you cannot help believing that she sees them all, her children and her customers, in the double way, naked and clothed, young and then old, with love and with contempt, with open arms or with a push to bar the door. She is moody now, if she has not always been, and sees her customers as a procession of sweet supplicant spirits that she has birthed, who have returned to her side, and again sometimes as a bunch of scarecrows or even changelings, that she wishes were well gone out of sight. "They would steal from their own mother," she says, and while she is pinning up some purchase in a newspaper and the customer is still counting out the pennies, she will shout in a deep voice to the grandchild that flutters around like a little blackbird, "Hold the door, William."

I have never caught Ida doing anything except selling clothes or holding forth on her meditations, but she has a fine garden. "If you want to carry me something I really like," she will say, bringing up the subject first, "carry me dallion potatoes (dahlia bulbs) first, and old newspapers second." Ida has the green finger from her mother, and she says, "You're never going to see any flowers prettier than these right here." She adores giving flowers away; under your protest she will cut every one in the garden, every red and white rose on the trellis, which is a wooden sun-set with painted rays, the blossoms with little two-inch stems the way a

1 The hero of Thomas Carlyle's Sartor Resartus. [Ed.]
child cuts them, and distribute them among all present and those passing in the road. She is full of all the wild humors and extravagances of the godlike toward this entire town and its environs. Sometimes, owing to her superior wisdom, she is a little malign, but much oftener she will become excruciatingly tender, holding, as if in some responsibility toward all the little ones of the world, the entire population to her great black cameoed breast. Then she will begin to call people “It.” “It’s all hot and tired, it is, coming so far to see Ida. Ah, take these beautiful flowers Ida grew with her own hand, that’s what it would like. Put ’em in its bedroom,” and she presses forward all the flowers she has cut and then, not content, a bouquet dripping from a vase, one of a kind of everything, all into your arms.

She loves music too, and in her house she has one room, also hung with clothes, called the music room. “I got all the music in the world in here,” she used to say, jabbing a finger at a silent radio and an old gramophone shut up tight, “but what’s the use of letting those contrivances run when you can make your own music?” And ignoring the humble customers waiting she would fling down at the old pump-organ in the corner and tear into a frenzy of chords. “I make my own!” she would shout into the turmoil. She would send for little William, with a voice like a little bird’s, and he knew how to sing with her, though he would give out. “Bass, William!” she would shout, and in his tiny treble he sang bass, bravely.

When Ida speaks of her mother it is in a strange kind of pity, a tender amazement. She says she knew when her mother was going to die, and with her deep feeling for events and commemorations, she gave her a fine big party. Ida would no more shrink from doing anything the grand way than she would shrink from other demands upon her greatness. “Hush now,” she told me, “don’t say a word while I tell you this. All that day long I was cooking dinner between niggers. I had: four turkeys, four hens, four geese, four hams, red cake, white cake, chocolate cake, caramel cake, every color cake known. The table reached from the front door to the ice box. I had all the lights burning up electricity, and all the flowers cut. I had the plates changed seven times, and three waiters from the hotel. I’d got Mama a partner. Mama was eighty years old and I got her another old lady eighty years old to march with. I had everybody come. All her children—one son, the big shot, came all the way from Detroit, riding in a train, to be at Mama’s grand dinner. We had somebody play ‘Silent Night’ and march music to follow later. And there was Mama: look at Mama! Mama loved powder. Mama had on a little old-fashioned hat, but she wouldn’t take it off—had nice hair, too. Mama did all right for the march, she marched all right, and sat down on time at the right place at the head of the table, but she wouldn’t take
off her hat. So the waiters, they served the chicken soup first, and Mama says, 'Where my coffee? Bring on turnip and cornbread. Didn't you make a blackberry pie?' I said, 'Mama, you don't eat coffee first.' But she said, 'Where my coffee? Bring on turnip and cornbread. Didn't you make a blackberry pie? What's the matter with you?' Everything was so fine, you know. It took her two big sons, one on each side, to quiet her, that's the way Mama acted!' And Ida ended the story laughing and crying. It was plain that there was one person who had no recognition of Ida's grandeur and high place in the world, and who had never yielded at all to the glamour as others did. It was a cruelty for Ida, but perhaps all vision has lived in the house with cruelty.

Nowadays, she is carried to such heights of business and power, and its paraphernalia crowds her so, that she is overcome with herself, and suddenly gives way to the magnitude of it all. A kind of chaos comes over her. Now and then she falls down in a trance and stays "dead as that chair for three days." White doctors love her and by a little struggle take care of her. Ida bears with them. "They took my appendix," she will say. "Well, they took my teeth." She says she has a paralyzed heel, though it is hard to see how she can tell—perhaps like Achilles she feels that her end is coming by entering that way. "The doctor told me I got to rest until 1945," she declares, with a lifted hand warding you off. "Rest! Rest! Rest! I must rest." If a step is heard on the front porch she instantly cries warning from within the house, "Don't set your heels down! When you speak to me, whisper!" When a lady that was a stranger came to see her, Ida appeared, but said in haste, "Don't tell me your name, for I'm resting my mind. The doctors don't want me to have any more people in my head than I got already." Now on Saturdays if a dusty battered car full of customers from across the cotton- fields draws up, one by one all the shades in the house are yanked down. Ida wishes to see no one, she wishes to sell nothing.

Perhaps the truth is that she has expended herself to excess and now suffers with a corresponding emptiness that she does not want anyone to see. She can show you the track of the pain it gives her: her finger crosses her two breasts. She is as hard to see as a queen.

And I think she lives today the way she would rather be living, directly in symbols. People are their vestures now. Memories, the great memories of births and marriages and deaths, are nearly the same as the pieces of jewelry ("$147.65 worth") she has bought on anniversary days and wears on her person. "That's Mama's death," she says—a silver watch on a silver chain. She holds out for your admiration the yellow hands that she asserts most of this country was born in, on which now seven signet rings flash. "Don't go to church any longer," she says—"or need to go. I just sit at home and enjoy my fingers."
AIDS TO STUDY

1. The author says that Ida’s life is “proudly emblematic.” Although the sketch describes an individual woman, this phrase suggests that she illustrates forces or qualities which are more or less universal. Taking the comparison with a meteor, in the opening paragraph, list some of the ideas suggested by this image; for example, it is subject to natural, but not man-made laws; it is dazzling, etc.

2. What is the significance of Ida’s two occupations? Of her careful keeping of accounts? Of her lavishness in giving away flowers? Of her contempt for “contrivances” to make music?

3. After analyzing these details would you agree that Ida symbolizes Nature as it is exemplified by the expression “Mother Nature”? What other details support this conclusion or contradict it?

4. What meaning do you find in the last two sentences? Are they more or less effective than if the author had stated her meaning explicitly?

5. Compare the use of colloquial words like “sashay,” “skitter,” and “four bits” with the more literary diction in other passages. Does the incongruity make the style more or less effective? What does it contribute to your idea of the narrator? How does it relate to the author’s purpose of describing a person whom she has known all her life, and at the same time of representing Ida as a symbol?

6. Try to imagine how the ordinary people of Jackson, Mississippi, would describe Ida. What makes Miss Welty’s description distinctive?

7. Is the material presented haphazardly or do you see evidence of a planned progression from one set of facts to the next?
"Our country," Lee had written one of his sons before he left Texas, "requires now everyone to put forth all his ability, regardless of self." That maxim he applied in the bewildering situation he faced when he reached home. On the Virginia side of the Potomac opinion was divided concerning the occasion for secession, but there was almost complete agreement touching the right. North of the river, just half-an-hour's ride from Arlington, cross-currents of sentiment were sweeping. In Congress and at the White House efforts were still being made to avert war; in the departments preparations were under way to face any emergency. President Buchanan was fighting to save states for the Union; General Scott and the politicians interested in the army were angling for individual soldiers whose knowledge would be useful should the conflict come. The atmosphere in which many officers were received by their superiors had suddenly changed. There was unconcealed interest in the probable course that would be followed by captains and colonels the prospect of whose resignation, in ordinary times, would have been heard with rejoicing because promotion would be opened to other men.

Lee was not aware of this change when he called at General Scott's office soon after he reached home. In the outer room he met his friend Lieutenant Colonel Erasmus D. Keyes, associate of his West Point superintendency, and the man whom Scott had named as his military secretary when Lee had declined that post.

The two shook hands. "Lee," said Keyes, "it is reported that you concurred in Twiggs's surrender in Texas. How's that?"


Lee became serious on the instant, but without showing any resentment of the suggestion of disloyalty, he said calmly: “I am here to pay my respects to General Scott; will you be kind enough, Colonel, to show me to his office?”

Keyes said no more, but ushered Lee into Scott’s room. The door was shut, and for three hours the old General and his favorite lieutenant talked together. What they said to each other, in the confidence of long and trustful association, neither ever afterwards revealed. All the evidence regarding their conversation is negative in character or is reported at second-hand. But Scott’s known opinion of secession, his admiration for Lee, and his desire to assure good leadership for the army make it possible to reconstruct the substance of at least a part of what was said. Scott told Lee that he was soon to be made a colonel, and then, probably, he hinted that if he found himself too feeble to take the field he would recommend Lee as his second in command. There can be little doubt that Scott deliberately sought to appeal to Lee’s ambitions, but that, knowing Lee as he did, Scott did not try to buy his allegiance with promises, which, indeed, Scott was not authorized to make. If Lee replied to Scott’s overtures it was to repeat what he had said to Charles Anderson in Texas—that if Virginia seceded, he would follow her because he considered that his first obligation was to her. Scott, of course, was of a temper to argue this and probably ended a lengthy oration with the request that Lee go home, think the subject over, and await further developments. When Lee left, Scott’s manner was “painfully silent.”

2 Keyes, 205-6. Keyes gave no date for this interview, but the circumstances indicate it occurred soon after Lee’s return.

3 The papers (Library of Congress) of Joseph Holt, Secretary of War under Buchanan in 1861, show no correspondence between him and Scott regarding Lee.

4 The evidence on which these conclusions are based is as follows: 1. After the war, Lee wrote Reverdy Johnson (R. E. Lee, Jr., 27): “I never intimated to any one that I desired the command of the United States Army; nor did I ever have a conversation with but one gentleman, Mr. Francis Preston Blair, on the subject, which was at his invitation.” If the only conversation was with Blair, then, obviously, to the best of Lee’s recollection, there had been no discussion of the subject with Scott. 2. An unnamed kinswoman of Mrs. Lee is quoted by Long (op. cit., 92) as stating: “[Mrs. Lee] mentioned that General Scott, in one of their interviews, said that in the event of his resignation, which from his advanced age must soon become a necessity, if Robert had remained with the North he (General Scott) believed he would be given the command of the Union army.” 3. Charles Anderson, Lee’s friend in Texas, said (op. cit., 33) that Scott subsequently told of an interview with Lee after that officer’s return. According to Anderson, Scott said he informed Lee that, in addition to his speedy promotion to the rank of colonel, he, Scott, was authorized to offer Lee the command of the armies, second only to Scott himself. Anderson stated that Lee thanked Scott and then told him precisely what Lee had stated to Anderson as they had walked together to the storage merchant’s in San Antonio.

5 Lee’s orders were that he should report April 1. On that date (Lee to A. G., MS., April 1, 1861, MSS. A. G. O.), Lee duly informed the War Department that he had reported to Scott and was then at Arlington.

6 Keyes, 206.
Lee went home and in agony of spirit watched the course of events. At the time of his interview with Scott, the peace conference had risen and had suggested a constitutional amendment that Congress was in no mood to pass, but a different amendment, preserving slavery in the states that had it, had been approved by the House on February 28, and received a two-thirds vote in the Senate the day after Lee reached home. In Virginia, volunteers were drilling and the fire-eaters were predicting early secession, but the state convention was safely under the control of a conservative majority that was as anxious as Lee himself to preserve the Union. Virtually the only point of agreement between the radical secessionists and the Southern Whigs in the convention was that all of them were determined that Virginia would not be party to the "coercion" of any Southern state for its withdrawal from the Union. The situation in the Old Dominion seemed further stabilized by the fact that no matter what the convention did, the people of the state would be the final judges of secession. Every Virginian, however, held his breath on March 4, when Lincoln delivered his inaugural. His views on many aspects of the crisis were those of Lee. The new President was cautious in the utterances, but his announcement of his purpose to hold government property in the South and to collect taxes there was accepted by Virginians as a threat of force.

All the while Scott probably was quietly at work, seeing if he might not hold Lee to the Union. Keyes thought that Scott did not expect Lee to fight against the South, but that the General believed it possible to put Lee at the head of an army so powerful that war could be prevented. General Twiggs was dismissed from the army on March 1 for his surrender of Texas. Colonel E. V. Sumner of the 1st Cavalry was named brigadier general to succeed him on March 16. Lee was at once made colonel and was given Sumner's regiment. This commission, which was signed by Abraham Lincoln, Lee did not hesitate to accept when, on March 28, it was forwarded to him.

Between the date he was promoted and the time he received his commission, Lee probably got a letter written him on March 15 by L. P. Walker, Confederate Secretary of War. This was a direct offer of a commission as brigadier general, the highest rank then authorized, in the army the South was raising. "You are requested," the letter read, "to signify your acceptance or nonacceptance of said appointment, and should you accept you will sign before a magistrate the oath of office

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8 3 Rhodes, 318 n.
9 Keyes, 306.
10 O. R., 1, 597; G. O. 5.
herewith and forward the same, with your letter of acceptance to this
office." 13 After the long years of slow promotion the honors were com-
ing fast—a colonelcy in one army and a like offer of a generalship in the
rival service, all in a breath! There is no record of any reply by Lee to
this tender from the new Confederacy. It is probable that he ignored
the offer, and it is certain that he was not lured by the promise of high
position. He owned allegiance to only two governments, that of Vir-
ginia and that of the Union, and there could be no thought of a third
so long as these two did not conflict and Virginia did not throw in her
destiny with the Confederate States.

For a few days it seemed as if the conflict of allegiance might be
avoided. As late as April 3 the expectation was general that Fort Sumter
would be evacuated and a clash avoided. 14 On April 4 a test vote in the
Virginia convention showed a majority of two-to-one against seces-
sion. 15 Lee would not despair of the Union. He was for forbearance to
the last, recognizing no necessity for recourse to arms. 16 The mainte-
nance of slavery meant nothing to him. He felt that if he owned all the
slaves in the South he would cheerfully give them up to preserve the
Union. 17 He would hold to the army and to the flag as long as he could
in honor do so. 18 But during those days of suspense, Lee was confirmed
in his point of view. He had been determined from the outset that he
would adhere to Virginia and defend her from any foe. Now, fully, he
realized that though he considered secession neither more nor less than
revolution, he could not bring himself to fight against the states that re-
garded secession as a right. He could not think of himself as fighting
with the South against the Union, unless Virginia’s defense were in-
volved, but neither, as the possibility seemed to be brought nearer, could
he reconcile himself to fighting with the Union against the South. “That
beautiful feature of our landscape,” he said sadly one day, as he pointed
to the capitol across the Potomac, “has ceased to charm me as much as
formerly. I fear the mischief that is brewing there.” 19

This was Lee’s state of mind when, on April 7, his old comrade of
Mexican days, P. G. T. Beauregard, took a decisive step at Charleston,
S. C., where he was then in command of the Confederate forces. Be-
lieving that Fort Sumter was about to be reinforced, Beauregard or-

13 1V O. R., 1, 165-66.
14 3 Rhodes, 337.
15 Journal of the Committee of the Whole, Virginia Convention, 1861, pp. 31-33.
17 Long, 92-93, quoting one version, probably rhetorical and overdrawn, of the inter-
view with Francis P. Blair.
18 Long, 91, quoting Mrs. Lee.
19 Thomas B. Bryan, to whom he addressed this remark, in Military Essays and
Recollections, 3, 14.
dered supplies of fresh food cut off from the Federal garrison. The next day, April 8, a confidential messenger from President Lincoln announced to Governor Pickens of the Palmetto State that Sumter would be re-victualized by United States ships. On the instant all the passions that had been rising since 1830 in South Carolina suddenly overflowed, and at daylight on April 12 the bombardment of Fort Sumter began. On the 14th Sumter surrendered without the loss of a single life on either side. The next day, to a nation that had gone mad, Lincoln issued his proclamation calling for 75,000 soldiers “to suppress combinations” and “to cause the laws to be duly executed.”

The North and the South were arrayed, and blows had passed, though no blood had yet been shed—what would the border states do? What would be the action of Virginia? For the answer, Lee turned his eyes from Sumter to Richmond, where the convention was still in session. He was at a distance and knew little of the inner workings of that body. All his information was derived from the newspapers, which were too excited to be explicit.

Late on April 16, or on the 17th, he heard that the Virginia convention had gone into secret session. That was the only news from Richmond; but from Washington, on the 17th, there arrived a letter and a message. The letter bore Scott's signature and requested Lee to call at his office on the 18th. The message was conveyed in a note from a Washington cousin, John Lee. It was that Francis P. Blair, Sr., a publicist of Lee's acquaintance, formerly editor of The Congressional Globe, desired Lee to meet him the next morning at his house in Washington.

What was afoot now? Were the two calls related? The answer, in its entirety, Lee did not learn during his lifetime. He never realized how anxious some men high in office and influence had been to save his services to the United States army. In addition to what General Scott had done, Francis P. Blair, Sr., father of Colonel Lee's Missouri friend, Montgomery Blair, had been at work. He had been to President Lincoln, who had authorized him to “ascertain Lee's intentions and feelings.”

Blair had also discussed the subject with Secretary Cameron and had been directed by him to make a proposition to Lee. It was to explain this that Blair had sent the message to Arlington.

Duly on the morning of April 18 Lee rode over the bridge and up to the younger Blair's house on Pennsylvania Avenue, directly opposite the State, War and Navy Building, where he found the old publicist wait-

20 III O. R., 1, 67-68.
21 4 Nicolay and Hay: Abraham Lincoln, 98.
22 Simon Cameron gave two somewhat contradictory versions of the offer to Lee, but there seems no valid reason to criticise the essential accuracy of the statement of 1887, quoted in Jones, L. and L., 130.
23 No. 1651 Pennsylvania Avenue.
ing him. They sat down behind closed doors. Blair promptly and plainly explained his reason for asking Lee to call. A large army, he said, was soon to be called into the field to enforce the Federal law; the President had authorized him to ask Lee if he would accept the command.

Command of an army of 75,000, perhaps 100,000 men; opportunity to apply all he had learned in Mexico; the supreme ambition of a soldier realized; the full support of the government; many of his ablest comrades working with him; rank as a major general—all this may have surged through Lee's mind for an instant, but if so, it was only for an instant. Then his Virginia background and the mental discipline of years asserted themselves. He had said: "If the Union is dissolved and the government disrupted, I shall return to my native state and share the miseries of my people and save in defence will draw my sword on none." There he stood, and in that spirit, after listening to all Blair had to say, he made the fateful reply that is best given in his own simple account of the interview: "I declined the offer he made me to take command of the army that was to be brought into the field, stating as candidly and as courteously as I could, that though opposed to secession and deprecating war, I could take no part in an invasion of the Southern States." That was all, as far as Lee was concerned. He had long before decided, instinctively, what his duty required of him, and the allurement of supreme command, with all that a soldier craved, did not tempt him to equivocate for an instant or to see if there were not some way he could keep his own honor and still have the honor he understood the President had offered him. Blair talked on in a futile hope of converting Lee, but it was to no purpose.

Bidding farewell to Blair, Lee went directly to Scott's office. He sensed Scott's deep interest in his action, and as soon as he arrived he told him what Blair had offered and what he had answered. "Lee," said Scott, deeply moved, "you have made the greatest mistake of your life; but I feared it would be so." Deep as was the difference between the two men on a public question that made personal enemies of many lifelong friends, Scott did not stop with this sad observation, but expressed the belief that if Lee were going to resign he ought not to delay. "There are times," Scott is reported to have said, "when every officer in the United States service should fully determine what course he will pursue and frankly declare it. No one should continue in government employ without being actively employed." And again, "I suppose you will go with the rest. If you pur-

25 For the conflict of testimony on this point, see Appendix I-1.
26 Lee to Reverdy Johnson, loc. cit.
27 Mason, 73, doubtless on the authority of Mrs. Lee.
pose to resign, it is proper that you should do so at once; your present attitude is equivocal."

This added a complication that Lee pondered as he left his old commander for the last time. He loved the army and the Union too well to leave either until he was in honor compelled to do so. Though willing to resign rather than to fight against the South, he had clung to the hope that he would not have to act unless Virginia seceded and the people voted affirma-tively on an ordinance of secession. But Scott had now said that he should not remain in the army if he was unwilling to perform active duty. Those 75,000 soldiers, of whom Blair had talked, would not have been asked of the states if they had not been intended for early service in the field. And if they were so intended, Lee, as an officer of the army, might be called upon immediately for duty he could not conscientiously perform. Then he would have to resign under orders. That was a disgrace to any soldier.

As his brother Smith was on duty in Washington, Lee stopped to discuss this new question with him. They could come to no immediate conclusion on it and parted in the expectation of meeting again before either of them took any action. At length, over the route he had so often travelled, Lee rode out of Washington, across the bridge and up the quiet hills to the home whose white columns he could see for most of the way. He was never again to make that journey in that same fashion. The next time he was to cross the Potomac, it was to be upstream, from the South, with bands playing and a victorious, a cheering army around him.

28 E. D. Townsend: *Anecdotes of the Civil War*, 29. The writer has hesitated to cite Townsend as a witness, because all the internal evidence is against his account of the interview of April 18. He erred in the following particulars: (1) He stated Lee was on leave; (2) he assumed that Scott knew little or nothing of Lee's movements, though Keyes testified that Lee had previously been to Scott's office andMrs. Lee stated, though indirectly, that there were several meetings between them; (3) he gave the wrong date for the interview; (4) he failed to mention what it is hard to see how, if he heard the whole conversation, he could have forgotten, namely, that Lee told Scott he had been offered command of the Federal army and had declined the post. Moreover, after his frank statements of his intentions, Lee would hardly have said at the end of the interview, as Townsend alleged: "The property belonging to my children, all they possess, lies in Virginia. They will be ruined if I do not go with their state. I cannot raise my hand against my children." The italicized sentence does not sound like Lee, though the rest may well have come from his lips. At the same time, what Townsend quoted Scott as saying to Lee is what might have been expected from an old officer to a younger friend. Probability is lent to the substantial accuracy of this part of Townsend's otherwise doubtful account, by the fact that Lee in his letter of April 20 to Scott, said: "Since my interview with you on the 18th inst., I have felt that I ought no longer to retain my commission. . . ." In order that the reader may judge for himself whether it is permissible to accept as authentic these sentences from a document that otherwise is suspect, the full quotation from Townsend is printed in Appendix I-2.

But he did not leave his problem behind him as he turned his back on his country's capital. He carried it with him; he wrestled with it. Was his position equivocal? Ought he to resign at once, regardless of what Virginia did? He felt that Scott was right, but his own mind was so opposed to secession, and his devotion to the Union and to the army proved so strong, now it was put to the test, that he delayed the actual writing of his resignation, hoping against hope.

All this time he had not known what had happened after the Virginia convention had gone into secret session on the 16th. The Washington Star of April 18 contained an unverified report that the Virginia convention had passed an ordinance of secession and had caused three ships to be sunk at the mouth of the Elizabeth River, but The Alexandria Gazette of the same day contained a dispatch from Richmond, dated April 17, 5 P.M., affirming that the convention was still in secret session and that no ordinance withdrawing the state from the Union had been passed.

The next morning, April 19, Lee went into Alexandria on business and there he read the news he had hoped he would never see: Virginia had seceded! To his mind that meant the wreck of the nation, "the beginning of sorrows," the opening of a war that was certain to be long and full of horrors. But of all that he thought and felt in the first realization that his mother state had left the Union, his only recorded observation is one he made to a druggist when he went into a shop to pay a bill. "I must say," he remarked sadly, "that I am one of those dull creatures that cannot see the good of secession."

If Lee had any doubt of the truth of the report in the Alexandria paper that morning, it was soon removed. That afternoon, The Washington Star took the news for granted. By nightfall on the 19th, Lee had no alternative to believing it. When other hopes had failed him before this time, Lee had told himself that secession could not become an accomplished fact until the voters of Virginia had passed on the ordinance of secession, as they had specifically reserved the right to do, but now Lee's judgment told him that war would not wait on a referendum. Virginia would certainly consider that her safety required the seizure of Federal depots within her borders. Had not Texas similarly provided for a referendum on secession, and had not he, with his own eyes, seen how

30 The ordinance had been passed on the afternoon of April 17 in secret session, but had not been announced until shortly before noon the next day (Journal of the Virginia Convention of 1861, p. 164). Every effort was made to keep the state's action from becoming known until troops could seize the Federal navy-yard at Gosport and the arsenal at Harpers Ferry.

31 John S. Mosby: Memoirs, 379. The druggist took pains to write down Lee's words on his journal opposite the entry of the payment.

32 Joseph E. Johnston, in his Narrative of Military Operations (cited hereafter as Johnston's Narrative), 10, stated that April 19 was the earliest date on which the secession of Virginia was known in Washington.
the Texas committee of safety had committed an act of war by seizing
United States property without waiting for the people to confirm or
disavow the ordinance of the convention? The Federal Government, for
its part, would certainly take prompt action since the state just across the
river from its capital had left the Union. As one of the senior field
officers in Washington, he might be summoned at any hour to defend
Washington by invading Virginia—which he could not do. Duty was
plain. There could be no holding back. The time had come. All the Lees
had been Americans, but they had been Virginians first. From Richard
the emigrant onward, the older allegiance had been paramount with each
of them until the Revolution came. Had not his own father called Vir-
ginia “my native country”? In a crisis that seemed in his day to threaten
the Union, had not “Light-Horse Harry” said: “Should my efforts . . .
be unavailing, I shall lament my country’s fate and acquiesce in my coun-
try’s will . . .”? 33 Now revolution and the older allegiance were the
same. The son must be as the sire. Washington, his great model, had em-
braced a revolutionary cause. Dearly as Lee loved the Union, anxious as he
was to see it preserved, he could not bear arms against the South. Virginia
had seceded and doubtless would join the South; her action controlled
his; he could not wait for the uncertain vote of the people when war
was upon him. So after midnight on the 19th he sat down and wrote
this letter, not more than fifteen hours after he had received positive in-
formation that Virginia had seceded:

Arlington, Virginia (Washington City P.O.)
20 April 1861.

Hon. Simon Cameron
Secty of War
Sir:

I have the honor to tender the resignation of my commission as Colonel of
the 1st Regt. of Cavalry.

Very resp’y Your Obedient Servant.

R. E. Lee
Col 1st Cav’y. 34

His resignation was not prompted by passion, nor did it carry with
it resentment against the Union he left. On the contrary, if there was any
resentment, it was against the authors, Northern and Southern, of the
consummate wickedness of bringing about division within the Union.
There was a pang and a heartache at the separation from brother officers
whose patriotism he had seen vindicated in the hardships of campaigning
and in the dangers of battle. He was willing to defend Virginia, whatever
her allegiance, but he did not desire to fight against the flag under which

33 See supra, p. 169.
Arlington, have Macrae, shall there waiting decision if of and had this spirit that he wrote farewell to General Scott, that loyal old friend, who had admired him, taught him, and advanced him. He penned this letter:

Arlington, Va., April 20, 1861.

General:

Since my interview with you on the 18th inst. I have felt that I ought no longer to retain my commission in the Army. I therefore tender my resignation, which I request you will recommend for acceptance. I would have presented it at once, but for the struggle it has cost me to separate myself from a service to which I have devoted all the best years of my life and all the ability I possessed.

During the whole of that time—more than a quarter of a century—I have experienced nothing but kindness from my superiors and a most cordial friendship from my comrades. To no one, General, have I been as much indebted as to yourself for uniform kindness and consideration, and it has always been my ardent desire to meet your approbation. I shall carry to the grave the most grateful recollections of your kind consideration, and your name and fame will always be dear to me.

Save in defence of my native State, I never desire again to draw my sword.

Be pleased to accept my most earnest wishes for the continuance of your happiness and prosperity, and believe me, most truly yours,

R. E. Lee.35

He came downstairs when he had finished the letters. Mrs. Lee was waiting for him. She had heard him pacing in the room above her and had thought she had heard him fall on his knees in prayer. “Well, Mary,” he said calmly, “the question is settled. Here is my letter of resignation and a letter I have written General Scott.”36

She understood. Months later she wrote a friend, “My husband has wept tears of blood over this terrible war, but as a man of honor and a Virginian, he must follow the destiny of his state.”37 The other members of the family understood, also. Arlington became as still and gloomy as if a death had occurred, because as one of his daughters confided to a

35 R. E. Lee, Jr., 24-25. This is a text slightly different from and seemingly superior to that in Jones, 132-33. In the version printed by E. G. Booth (in War Time, 59) there is a final “(all with highest manifestations).”
36 Jones, L. and L., 133, quoting Mrs. Lee’s own account of the incident. There is no foundation for the story (18 S. H. S. P., 143) that he was prompted to his decision by the statement of “an old lady” that “the path of duty is the path of sacrifice.”
37 December, n. d., 1861; quoted in I Macrae, 225.
kinswoman the following Sunday, "the army was to him home and country." Rooney, who hastened to consult his father as soon as the state seceded, was in deep depression as he saw how jubilant the people were. They had lost their senses, he held, and had no conception of what a terrible mistake they were making. Custis was no believer in secession. Had he been able to dictate policy, he said, he would have called the movement revolution and would forthwith have seized and fortified Arlington Heights.  

Lee dispatched his resignation to General Scott that morning, probably by special messenger, and before night it had been forwarded to the Secretary of War.  

After he had sent off the paper, he sat down to explain his act to his sister, Mrs. Marshall, and to his brother Smith. Mrs. Marshall's husband was Unionist in his sympathies. Her son Louis was now a captain in the United States army. She herself sided with her husband and son, though she could not quite forget her Virginia uprearing. Lee took her situation into account and wrote her as tactfully as he could:  

Arlington, Virginia, April 20, 1861.  

My Dear Sister:  

I am grieved at my inability to see you. . . I have been waiting for a "more convenient season," which has brought to many before me deep and lasting regret. Now we are in a state of war which will yield to nothing. The whole south is in a state of revolution, into which Virginia, after a long struggle, has been drawn; and, though I recognize no necessity for this state of things, and would have forborne and pleaded to the end for a redress of grievances, real or supposed, yet in my own person I had to meet the question whether I should take part against my native state.  

With all my devotion to the Union and the feeling of loyalty and duty of an American citizen, I have not been able to make up my mind to raise my hand against my relatives, my children, my home. I have therefore resigned my commission in the Army, and save in defence of my native state, with the sincere hope that my poor services may never be needed, I hope I may never be called on to draw my sword. I know you will blame me; but you must think as kindly of me as you can, and believe that I have endeavored to do what I thought right.


39 Endorsements on Lee to Cameron MS., April 20, 1861 (MS. A. G. O., 691, 61). The bureau chiefs endorsed that all Lee's accounts were clear. The second auditor stated that Lee settled monthly (ibid.). Formal announcement of the resignation was made in S. O. 119, April 27, and the resignation was there stated to have been accepted to take effect as of April 23. This was probably the date when the resignation was reached after it had gone the rounds of the bureaus and had been returned to the office of the adjutant general. Lee was surprised when he learned that acceptance of his resignation was dated April 23, and he explicitly directed that no pay or allowance be accepted for any time after April 20 (Lee to Mrs. Lee, May 2, 1861, R. E. Lee, Jr., 30).
To show you the feeling and struggle it has cost me, I send you a copy of my letter of resignation. I have no time for more. May God guard and protect you and yours and shower upon you everlasting blessings, is the prayer of your devoted brother,

R. E. Lee.40

He had left Smith Lee on the 18th with the understanding that they would confer again regarding their course of action. He therefore wrote to explain why he had resigned before consulting with him further:

Arlington, Virginia, April 20, 1861.

My Dear Brother Smith: The question which was the subject of my earnest consultation with you on the 18th inst., has in my own mind been decided. After the most anxious inquiry as to the correct course for me to pursue, I concluded to resign, and sent in my resignation this morning. I wished to wait till the Ordinance of Secession should be acted on by the people of Virginia; but war seems to have commenced, and I am liable at any time to be ordered on duty, which I could not conscientiously perform. To save me from such a position and to prevent the necessity of resigning under orders, I had to act at once, and before I could see you again on the subject, as I had wished. I am now a private citizen, and have no other ambition than to remain at home. Save in defence of my native state, I have no desire ever again to draw my sword. I send you my warmest love.

Your affectionate brother,

R. E. Lee.41

Lee gave no advice to Smith regarding his own course, nor did he counsel Custis, who was as loath as he to quit the service of the United States. "Tell Custis," he subsequently wrote, "he must consult his own judgment, reason and conscience as to the course he may take. I do not wish him to be guided by my wishes or example. If I have done wrong, let him do better. The present is a momentous question which every man must settle for himself and upon principle."42

When he took up his daily paper, The Alexandria Gazette, it was to discover that others beside himself were interested in the action he had taken. For an editorial article read as follows:

"It is probable that the secession of Virginia will cause an immediate resignation of many officers of the Army and Navy from this State. We do not know, and have no right to speak for or anticipate the course of Colonel

41 R. E. Lee, Jr., 26-27.
42 Lee to Mrs. Lee, May 15, 1861; Fitz Lee, 94. In the summer of 1868, Harper's Weekly charged that Lee had remained on General Scott's "staff" to the last minute in order to learn that officer's plan of operations. Major Sidney Herbert, editor of The Troy Messenger and Advertiser, denied this libel and wrote Lee on the subject. Lee, of course, confirmed the denial and pointed out that except when with the general staff in Mexico he had never been a member of General Scott's military family. See Columbus (Ga.) Inquirer, quoting Lee to Herbert, June 29, 1870; reprinted in The Alexandria Gazette, July 14, 1870.
Robert E. Lee. Whatever he may do, will be conscientious and honorable. But if he should resign his present position in the Army of the United States, we call the immediate attention of our State to him, as an able, brave, experienced officer—no man his superior in all that constitutes the soldier and the gentleman—no man more worthy to head our forces and lead our army. There is no man who would command more of the confidence of the people of Virginia, than this distinguished officer; and no one under whom the volunteers and militia would more gladly rally. His reputation, his acknowledged ability, his chivalric character, his probity, honor, and—may we add. to his eternal praise—his Christian life and conduct—make his very name a ‘tower of strength.’ It is a name surrounded by revolutionary and patriotic associations and reminiscences.”

It was not a pleasant article for a modest man to read, and it was disquieting, besides, with its assurance that some, at least, were looking to him to lead the army of Virginia, against the Union and the old flag, if war came. . . . He could only pray it would not.

During the day Lee saw his neighbor and friend, John B. Daingerfield, and showed him a copy of his letter of resignation. The rest of that fateful 20th of April was doubtless spent at Arlington. Nothing of consequence occurred except the receipt, late in the evening, of a letter from Judge John Robertson, of Richmond. The judge was then in Alexandria and asked for an interview the next day. Lee set 1 o’clock as the hour and offered to meet him in town. Meantime, Lee waited and pondered. Surrounded by objects familiar through thirty years of tender association, and with his invalid wife in her chair, he must have realized that if hostilities came, war and invasion would soon bring Arlington within the lines of the Union army. The Federals could not long permit so commanding a position, so close to the capital, to remain unguarded. But in none of his letters prior to his resignation and in none of his reported conversation is there even a hint that he had any selfish regard for the fate of Arlington, either in delaying his resignation until Virginia’s secession, or in deciding to leave the army when he did.

Sunday morning, April 21, dressed in civilian clothes, Lee went into Alexandria with one of his daughters to attend service at Christ Church. The town was wild. Overwhelmingly Southern in their sentiment, the people rejoiced at the secession of Virginia as if it meant deliverance from bondage. In their enthusiasm they fancied they were repeating the drama of 1776 and that the spirit of a Washington gave its benediction to a new revolution.

In all this rejoicing Lee took no part. His resignation was not gen-

43 The Alexandria Gazette, April 20, 1861.
44 John Robertson to Governor John Letcher, MS., April 23, 1861; MSS. Va, State Library, for an abstract of which document, now missing from its place in the archives, the writer is indebted to Professor Charles W. Ramsdell of the University of Texas.
eraly known as yet, though his neighbors and friends had been waiting to see what he would do.\textsuperscript{45} His sorrow, his sense of the fitness of things, and his knowledge that war would be long and terrible kept him from any statement of his action. In the church, as he prayed, it must have been for his divided country. When the Psalter for the morning of the 21st day was read, he doubtless felt there was more than coincidence in these verses and the responses:

"13 What time as they went from one nation to another: from one king-
dom to another people;
14 He suffered no man to do them wrong; but reproved even kings for
their sakes..."\textsuperscript{46}

At length the service was over. The congregation stopped to talk of
the inevitable theme, and then straggled slowly into the churchyard. When Lee reached the open air he became engaged in serious conversa-
tion with three men, who were unknown to the congregation and whose
identity has never been established. His neighbors and friends thought
the strangers were commissioners from the governor of Virginia,\textsuperscript{47} but
it seems more probable that they were companions of Judge Robertson,
who explained that the judge had gone to Washington and had been
detained there but would soon arrive to keep his appointment. Lee had
not been in communication with the state convention or with the gov-
ernor. He had no information as to the military plans. Perhaps the visitors
acquainted him with what had happened and intimated that his service
was desired by his mother state, but in Judge Robertson’s absence there
could have been nothing official. Lee waited and chatted several hours
and then, concluding that Robertson would not return, rode back to
Arlington.

That evening a messenger arrived at the mansion with a letter from
Robertson. He apologized for his delay and—this was the important item
—invited Lee, in the name of the governor, to repair to Richmond for
conference with the chief executive.\textsuperscript{48} Lee realized, of course, that this
meant participation in the defense of Virginia, but he did not hesitate
an hour. The very reason that had impelled him to resign from the
United States army, his allegiance to Virginia, prompted him to sit
down at once and to write an answer to Robertson. Virginia’s action in

\textsuperscript{45} Mrs. Burton Harrison: \textit{Recollections Grave and Gay} (cited hereafter as \textit{Mrs. Burton Harrison}), 24-25.
\textsuperscript{46} Psalm 105.
\textsuperscript{47} Robertson to Letcher, MS., April 23, 1861, \textit{loc. cit.;} “War Time in Alexandria,” in \textit{South Atlantic Quarterly}, July, 1905, 235; \textit{Mrs. Powell,} 249. It was assumed, subse-
quently, by all Lee’s Alexandria neighbors that the visitors, in Letcher’s name,
formally offered Lee the command of the Virginia forces. The chronology of events,
however, disproves this. For sundry other details, probably in part apocryphal, of
Lee’s movements after church, see \textit{Wedderburn, op. cit.}
\textsuperscript{48} Robertson to Letcher, MS., April 23, 1861, \textit{loc. cit.}
withdrawing from the Union carried him with her, and if she called him now it was his duty to obey. In a few words he notified the governor's representative that he would join him in Alexandria the next day in time to take the train for Richmond. There was no questioning, no holding back, no delay. The road from Arlington, though lit with glory, led straight to Appomattox. But Lee never regretted his action, never even admitted that he had made a choice. With the war behind him, with the South desolate and disfranchised, and with her sons dead on a hundred battlefields, he was to look back with soul unshaken and was to say: "I did only what my duty demanded. I could have taken no other course without dishonor. And if it all were to be done over again, I should act in precisely the same manner."\(^{49}\)

**AIDS TO STUDY**

Freeman, like other historians writing an extensive work in which many sources are mentioned, uses shortened forms for works frequently cited. Here are fuller references to most of the sources cited in the footnotes.

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\begin{align*}
\text{A.G. MS:} & \quad \text{These abbreviations refer to official manuscript records in the} \\
\text{MSS.:} & \quad \text{Adjudant General's Office of the U.S. Department of the Army.} \\
\text{A.G.O.:} & \quad \text{J. William Jones, *Life and Letters of Robert Edward Lee, Soldier} \\
& \quad \text{and Man.} \\
\text{JONES:} & \quad \text{E. D. Keyes, *Fifty Years Observation of Men and Events.} \\
\text{R. E. Lee, Jr.:} & \quad \text{R. E. Lee, Jr., *Recollections and Letters of General Robert} \\
& \quad \text{E. Lee.} \\
\text{LONG:} & \quad \text{A. L. Long, *Memoirs of Robert E. Lee.} \\
\text{MACRAE:} & \quad \text{David Macrae, *The Americans at Home.} \\
\text{MASON:} & \quad \text{Emily V. Mason, *Popular Life of General Robert Edward Lee.} \\
\text{O.R.:} & \quad \text{U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of} \\
& \quad \text{the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies.} \\
\text{RHODES:} & \quad \text{J. F. Rhodes, *History of the United States from the Compromise} \\
& \quad \text{of 1850.}
\end{align*}
\]

1. This is a key chapter in Freeman's biography *R. E. Lee*; it is a summary and a revelation of the fundamentals of Lee's character. What does Freeman show us of Lee's character that justifies the title of the chapter, "The Answer He Was Born to Make"?

2. There are a number of elements at work in the conflict of allegiances that Lee felt. What are these?

3. Freeman says that Lee wrote to his sister, Mrs. Marshall, "as tactfully as he could." Read this letter carefully to confirm or dispute Freeman's opinion.

4. In understanding and evaluating character, the things that a man does not

\(^{49}\) Robertson to Letcher, MS., April 23, 1861, *loc. cit.* For the circumstances of the summons of Lee to Richmond, see Appendix I-3.

\(^{50}\) To Wade Hampton, June, 1868; *Jones*, 142.
do or say are sometimes as important as what he does do or say. Try to imagine the position in which Lee was placed and then point out some of this negative evidence which helps to explain the kind of man Lee was. In this connection, the letter Lee wrote to General Scott will be useful.

5. The quotation which ends this selection might be interpreted to mean that Lee was stubborn and unable to learn from experience. What evidence is there that it is part of "the answer he was born to make" and that Freeman was right in ending his chapter with it?
On the 8th I had followed the Army of the Potomac in rear of Lee. I was suffering very severely with a sick headache, and stopped at a farmhouse on the road some distance in rear of the main body of the army. I spent the night in bathing my feet in hot water and mustard, and putting mustard plasters on my wrists and the back part of my neck, hoping to be cured by morning. During the night I received Lee’s answer to my letter of the 8th, inviting an interview between the lines on the following morning. But it was for a different purpose from that of surrendering his army, and I answered him as follows:

Headquarters Armies of the U.S.,
April 9, 1865.

General R. E. Lee,
Commanding C. S. A.

Your note of yesterday is received. As I have no authority to treat on the subject of peace, the meeting proposed for ten a.m. to-day could lead to no good. I will state, however, General, that I am equally anxious for peace with yourself, and the whole North entertains the same feeling. The terms upon which peace can be had are well understood. By the South laying down their arms they will hasten that most desirable event, save thousands of human lives, and hundreds of millions of property not yet destroyed. Sincerely hoping that all our difficulties may be settled without the loss of another life, I subscribe myself, etc.,

U. S. Grant,
Lieutenant-General.

I proceeded at an early hour in the morning, still suffering with the headache, to get to the head of the column. I was not more than two or three miles from Appomattox Court House at the time, but to go
direct I would have to pass through Lee’s army, or a portion of it. I had therefore to move south in order to get upon a road coming up from another direction.

When the white flag was put out by Lee, as already described, I was in this way moving towards Appomattox Court House, and consequently could not be communicated with immediately, and be informed of what Lee had done. Lee, therefore, sent a flag to the rear to advise Meade and one to the front to Sheridan, saying that he had sent a message to me for the purpose of having a meeting to consult about the surrender of his army, and asked for a suspension of hostilities until I could be communicated with. As they had heard nothing of this until the fighting had got to be severe and all going against Lee, both of these commanders hesitated very considerably about suspending hostilities at all. They were afraid it was not in good faith, and we had the Army of Northern Virginia where it could not escape except by some deception. They, however, finally consented to a suspension of hostilities for two hours to give an opportunity of communicating with me in that time, if possible. It was found that, from the route I had taken, they would probably not be able to communicate with me and get an answer back within the time fixed unless the messenger should pass through the rebel lines.

Lee, therefore, sent an escort with the officer bearing this message through his lines to me.

April 9, 1865.

General:—I received your note of this morning on the picket-line whither I had come to meet you and ascertain definitely what terms were embraced in your proposal of yesterday with reference to the surrender of this army. I now request an interview in accordance with the offer contained in your letter of yesterday for that purpose.

R. E. Lee, General.

Lieutenant-General U. S. Grant,
Commanding U. S. Armies.

When the officer reached me I was still suffering with the sick headache; but the instant I saw the contents of the note I was cured. I wrote the following note in reply and hastened on:

April 9, 1865.

General R. E. Lee,
Commanding C. S. Armies.

Your note of this date is but this moment (11.50 a.m.) received, in consequence of my having passed from the Richmond and Lynchburg road to the Farmville and Lynchburg road. I am at this writing about four miles west of Walker’s Church and will push forward to the front for the purpose of meeting you. Notice sent to me on this road where you wish the interview to take place will meet me.

U. S. Grant,
Lieutenant-General.
I was conducted at once to where Sheridan was located with his troops drawn up in line of battle facing the Confederate army near by. They were very much excited, and expressed their view that this was all a ruse employed to enable the Confederates to get away. They said they believed that Johnston was marching up from North Carolina now, and Lee was moving to join him; and they would whip the rebels where they now were in five minutes if I would only let them go in. But I had no doubt about the good faith of Lee, and pretty soon was conducted to where he was. I found him at the house of a Mr. McLean, at Appomattox Court House, with Colonel Marshall, one of his staff officers, awaiting my arrival. The head of his column was occupying a hill, on a portion of which was an apple orchard, beyond a little valley which separated it from that on the crest of which Sheridan's forces were drawn up in line of battle to the south.

Before stating what took place between General Lee and myself, I will give all there is of the story of the famous apple tree.

Wars produce many stories of fiction, some of which are told until they are believed to be true. The war of the rebellion was no exception to this rule, and the story of the apple tree is one of those fictions based on a slight foundation of fact. As I have said, there was an apple orchard on the side of the hill occupied by the Confederate forces. Running diagonally up the hill was a wagon road, which, at one point, ran very near one of the trees, so that the wheels of vehicles had, on that side, cut off the roots of this tree, leaving a little embankment. General Babcock, of my staff, reported to me that when he first met General Lee he was sitting upon this embankment with his feet in the road below and his back resting against the tree. The story had no other foundation than that. Like many other stories, it would be very good if it was only true.1

I had known General Lee in the old army, and had served with him in the Mexican War; but did not suppose, owing to the difference in our age and rank, that he would remember me; while I would more naturally remember him distinctly, because he was the chief of staff of General Scott in the Mexican War.

When I had left camp that morning I had not expected so soon the result that was then taking place, and consequently was in rough garb. I was without a sword, as I usually was when on horseback on the field, and wore a soldier's blouse for a coat, with the shoulder straps of my rank to indicate to the army who I was. When I went into the house I found General Lee. We greeted each other, and after shaking hands

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1 The story is that Lee, seated under an apple tree, declined to receive Grant in a partly ruined house nearby. Mr. McLean, a resident of Appomattox, offered his house for the meeting. [Ed.]
took our seats. I had my staff with me, a good portion of whom were in the room during the whole of the interview.

What General Lee's feelings were I do not know. As he was a man of much dignity, with an impassible face, it was impossible to say whether he felt inwardly glad that the end had finally come, or felt sad over the result, and was too manly to show it. Whatever his feelings, they were entirely concealed from my observation; but my own feelings, which had been quite jubilant on the receipt of his letter, were sad and depressed. I felt like anything rather than rejoicing at the downfall of a foe who had fought so long and valiantly, and had suffered so much for a cause, though that cause was, I believe, one of the worst for which a people ever fought, and one for which there was the least excuse. I do not question, however, the sincerity of the great mass of those who were opposed to us.

General Lee was dressed in a full uniform which was entirely new, and was wearing a sword of considerable value, very likely the sword which had been presented by the State of Virginia; at all events, it was an entirely different sword from the one that would ordinarily be worn in the field. In my rough traveling suit, the uniform of a private with the straps of a lieutenant-general, I must have contrasted very strangely with a man so handsomely dressed, six feet high and of faultless form. But this was not a matter that I thought of until afterwards.

We soon fell into a conversation about old army times. He remarked that he remembered me very well in the old army; and I told him that as a matter of course I remembered him perfectly, but from the difference in our rank and years (there being about sixteen years' difference in our ages), I had thought it very likely that I had not attracted his attention sufficiently to be remembered by him after such a long interval. Our conversation grew so pleasant that I almost forgot the object of our meeting. After the conversation had run on in this style for some time, General Lee called my attention to the object of our meeting, and said that he had asked for this interview for the purpose of getting from me the terms I proposed to give his army. I said that I meant merely that his army should lay down their arms, not to take them up again during the continuance of the war unless duly and properly exchanged. He said that he had so understood my letter.

Then we gradually fell off again into conversation about matters foreign to the subject which had brought us together. This continued for some little time, when General Lee again interrupted the course of the conversation by suggesting that the terms I proposed to give his army ought to be written out. I called to General Parker, secretary on my staff, for writing materials, and commenced writing out the following terms:
THE SURRENDER AT APPOMATTOX

Appomattox C. H., Va.,
Apl 9th, 1865.

Gen. R. E. Lee,
Comd'g C. S. A.

Gen: In accordance with the substance of my letter to you of the 8th inst., I propose to receive the surrender of the Army of N. Va. on the following terms, to wit: Rolls of all the officers and men to be made in duplicate. One copy to be given to an officer designated by me, the other to be retained by such officer or officers as you may designate. The officers to give their individual paroles not to take up arms against the Government of the United States until properly exchanged, and each company or regimental commander sign a like parole for the men of their commands. The arms, artillery and public property to be parked and stacked, and turned over to the officer appointed by me to receive them. This will not embrace the side-arms of the officers, nor their private horses or baggage. This done, each officer and man will be allowed to return to their homes, not to be disturbed by United States authority so long as they observe their paroles and the laws in force where they may reside.

Very respectfully,
U. S. Grant,
Lt. Gen.

When I put my pen to the paper I did not know the first word that I should make use of in writing the terms. I only knew what was in my mind, and I wished to express it clearly, so that there could be no mistaking it. As I wrote on, the thought occurred to me that the officers had their own private horses and effects, which were important to them, but of no value to us; also that it would be an unnecessary humiliation to call upon them to deliver their side arms.

No conversation, not one word, passed between General Lee and myself, either about private property, side arms, or kindred subjects. He appeared to have no objections to the terms first proposed; or if he had a point to make against them he wished to wait until they were in writing to make it. When he read over that part of the terms about side arms, horses and private property of the officers, he remarked, with some feeling, I thought, that this would have a happy effect upon his army.

Then, after a little further conversation, General Lee remarked to me again that their army was organized a little differently from the army of the United States (still maintaining by implication that we were two countries); that in their army the cavalrmen and artillerists owned their own horses; and he asked if he was to understand that the men who so owned their horses were to be permitted to retain them. I told him that as the terms were written they would not; that only the officers were permitted to take their private property. He then, after reading over the
terms a second time, remarked that that was clear.

I then said to him that I thought this would be about the last battle of
the war—I sincerely hoped so; and I said further I took it that most of
the men in the ranks were small farmers. The whole country had been
so raided by the two armies that it was doubtful whether they would be
able to put in a crop to carry themselves and their families through the
next winter without the aid of the horses they were then riding. The
United States did not want them and I would, therefore, instruct the
officers I left behind to receive the paroles of his troops to let every man
of the Confederate army who claimed to own a horse or mule take the
animal to his home. Lee remarked again that this would have a happy
effect.

He then sat down and wrote out the following letter:

Headquarters Army of Northern Virginia,
April 9, 1865.

General:—I received your letter of this date containing the terms of the
surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia as proposed by you. As they
are substantially the same as those expressed in your letter of the 8th inst., they
are accepted. I will proceed to designate the proper officers to carry the
stipulations into effect.

R. E. Lee, General.

Lieut.-General U. S. Grant.

While duplicates of the two letters were being made, the Union gen-
erals present were severally presented to General Lee.

The much talked of surrendering of Lee’s sword and my handing it
back, this and much more that has been said about it is the purest ro-
mance. The word sword or side arms was not mentioned by either of us
until I wrote it in the terms. There was no premeditation, and it did not
occur to me until the moment I wrote it down. If I had happened to
omit it, and General Lee had called my attention to it, I should have put
it in the terms precisely as I acceded to the provision about the soldiers
retaining their horses.

General Lee, after all was completed and before taking his leave, re-
marked that his army was in a very bad condition for want of food, and
that they were without forage; that his men had been living for some
days on parched corn exclusively, and that he would have to ask me for
rations and forage. I told him “certainly,” and asked for how many men
he wanted rations. His answer was “about twenty-five thousand”: and I
authorized him to send his own commissary and quartermaster to Ap-
pomattox Station, two or three miles away, where he could have, out of
the trains we had stopped, all the provisions wanted. As for forage, we
had ourselves depended almost entirely upon the country for that.

Generals Gibbon, Griffin and Merritt were designated by me to carry
into effect the paroling of Lee’s troops before they should start for their
homes—General Lee leaving Generals Longstreet, Gordon and Pendleton for them to confer with in order to facilitate this work. Lee and I then separated as cordially as we had met, he returning to his own lines, and all went into bivouac for the night at Appomattox.

Soon after Lee’s departure I telegraphed to Washington as follows:

**HEADQUARTERS APPOMATTOX C. H., VA.,**

**April 9th, 1865, 4.30 P.M.**

**HON. E. M. STANTON, Secretary of War,**

Washington.

General Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia this afternoon on terms proposed by myself. The accompanying additional correspondence will show the conditions fully.

**U. S. GRANT,**

Lieut.-General.

When news of the surrender first reached our lines our men commenced firing a salute of a hundred guns in honor of the victory. I at once sent word, however, to have it stopped. The Confederates were now our prisoners, and we did not want to exult over their downfall.

I determined to return to Washington at once, with a view to putting a stop to the purchase of supplies, and what I now deemed other useless outlay of money. Before leaving, however, I thought I would like to see General Lee again; so next morning I rode out beyond our lines towards his headquarters, preceded by a bugler and a staff-officer carrying a white flag.

Lee soon mounted his horse, seeing who it was, and met me. We had there between the lines, sitting on horseback, a very pleasant conversation of over half an hour, in the course of which Lee said to me that the South was a big country and that we might have to march over it three or four times before the war entirely ended, but that we would now be able to do it as they could no longer resist us. He expressed it as his earnest hope, however, that we would not be called upon to cause more loss and sacrifice of life; but he could not foretell the result. I then suggested to General Lee that there was not a man in the Confederacy whose influence with the soldiery and the whole people was as great as his, and that if he would now advise the surrender of all the armies I had no doubt his advice would be followed with alacrity. But Lee said, that he could not do that without consulting the President first. I knew there was no use to urge him to do anything against his ideas of what was right.

I was accompanied by my staff and other officers, some of whom seemed to have a great desire to go inside the Confederate lines. They finally asked permission of Lee to do so for the purpose of seeing some of their old army friends, and the permission was granted. They went over, had a very pleasant time with their old friends, and brought some
of them back with them when they returned.

When Lee and I separated he went back to his lines and I returned to the house of Mr. McLean. Here the officers of both armies came in great numbers, and seemed to enjoy the meeting as much as though they had been friends separated for a long time while fighting battles under the same flag. For the time being it looked very much as if all thought of the war had escaped their minds. After an hour pleasantly passed in this way I set out on horseback, accompanied by my staff and a small escort, for Burkesville Junction, up to which point the railroad had by this time been repaired.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. What impressions of General Grant and General Lee do you form from reading this selection?
   a. What is Grant's attitude toward Lee? What evidence can you cite that supports your opinion?
   b. By inference we learn something of Lee’s attitude toward himself and toward the war. Try to formulate these attitudes and cite the evidence on which you base your formulations.
   c. Grant tells us that twice in their first interview Lee had to bring him back to the subject of the surrender. What does this fact tell you about the temperament and state of mind of the two men? Was Grant tactless in forgetting “the object of our meeting”?

2. The contrast between the dramatic nature of this meeting and Grant’s account of it is striking. What are some of the characteristics of Grant’s style that produce this contrast?
   a. Grant mentions his “sick headache” and says, “I spent the night bathing my feet in hot water and mustard, and putting mustard plasters on my wrists and the back part of my neck, hoping to be cured by morning.” Are these homely details irrelevant? What effect do they have?
   b. This selection is organized chronologically; in what other way might it have been organized? Would a more analytical arrangement have been better?
   c. Look at Grant's language, his choice of words. How would you characterize this language? Look also at the letters that pass between the two generals; is this the language that you expect to find in the correspondence of two leaders on such an important occasion? What does the language tell you about the men?
   d. Is the style of the last paragraph like that of the rest of the selection? Look up the word understatement and then decide whether or not it could appropriately be applied to this ending.
It was tea time, before the lamps were brought in. The villa overlooked the sea; the sun had set, leaving the whole sky rosy and brushed with golden powder; and the Mediterranean, without a ripple, without a shimmer, smooth and luminous in the light of the dying day, looked like an immense sheet of polished metal.

Far in the distance, on the right, the jagged mountain peaks etched their black profile against the faded crimson of the sunset.

They spoke of love; they discussed this old subject, repeating things that they had already said many times. The gentle melancholy of the twilight made their speech slow, and their hearts were filled with tenderness; the word "love" kept recurring, sometimes spoken by the strong voice of a man, sometimes by the softer voice of a woman; it seemed to fill the little drawing room, fluttering in the air like a bird, hovering like a spirit.

Can love remain constant for many years?

"Yes," some contended.

"No," said others.

They pointed out the facts, made distinctions, cited examples; and all of them, men and women, were filled with disturbing memories which rose to their lips but which were unutterable. They seemed moved; they spoke with profound emotion and intense concern of this commonplace and supreme subject: the tender and mysterious harmony between two human beings.

But suddenly someone gazing into the distance exclaimed:

"Look, out there; what is it?"

1 Le Bonheur, translated by William Steinhoff.
Out of the sea, far away on the horizon, rose a gray mass, huge and indistinct.

The women stood up and watched, but without comprehending, this amazing sight which they had never seen before.

Someone said: "It's the island of Corsica! One sees it thus two or three times a year when atmospheric conditions are unusual, when the air is perfectly clear, and distant objects are no longer hidden by haze."

They could vaguely make out the mountain tops; some thought they saw snow on the peaks. Each of them was surprised, troubled, almost frightened by this sudden appearance of a new world, this phantom rising from the sea. Such strange visions are seen, perhaps, by those who, like Columbus, set out across unexplored oceans.

Then an old gentleman, one who had not yet spoken a word, said to them:

"You know, I once discovered—on that island, which rises before us as if in reply to what we were saying and to remind me of an extraordinary experience—I discovered a wonderful example of constant love, of a love that was unbelievably happy.

"Here is what happened."

Five years ago I made a journey to Corsica. This barbarous island is more unknown to us and farther away than America, even though one can see it sometimes from the coast of France, as we do today.

Imagine a world still in chaos, a jumble of mountains separated by narrow gorges where the rivers rush through; not a level place anywhere, but only huge waves of granite and gigantic folds of earth covered with scrubby brush or grand forests of pine and chestnut trees. It is a virgin soil, untilled, a wilderness, although one sometimes sees a village, like a heap of rocks, at the top of a mountain. No cultivation, no industry, no art. One never sees a bit of wood carving, or a piece of sculptured stone; never a reminder of the taste, primitive or refined, of our ancestors for graceful and beautiful things. That is what strikes one most forcibly in this hard and splendid country: the inherited indifference to the quest for beautiful forms that we call art.

Italy, where each palace, filled with masterpieces, is a masterpiece itself, where marble, wood, bronze, iron, metals, and stones testify to the genius of man; where the humblest objects which have been lying around for generations in old houses reveal this divine care for beauty, is for all of us the sacred homeland which we love because it illustrates and proves to us the striving, the greatness, the strength, and the triumph of creative intelligence.

And yet, just across from Italy, Corsica has remained uncivilized, as it was from the beginning. The Corsican lives there in his rude house, indifferent to everything that does not touch his immediate life or his
Happiness

family feuds. And so he has remained with all the faults and virtues of uncultivated races: violent, full of hate, bloodthirsty by instinct, but hospitable, generous, devoted, simple; opening his door to the wayfarer and giving his faithful friendship in exchange for the least token of fellow feeling.

For a month I wandered across this magnificent island, feeling as if I were at the end of the world. There were no inns, no taverns, no roads. Following mule tracks, one could struggle up to tiny settlements, clinging to the mountain side high above the crooked gorges from which, in the evening, there rose a ceaseless roar, the deep and muffled voice of the mountain torrent. I rapped at the doors of the huts, asking for shelter and food for the night. I sat down at a humble table, slept under a humble roof, and in the morning I clasped the hand of my host, who escorted me to the edge of the village.

One evening, however, after journeying ten hours on foot, I reached a small isolated dwelling deep in a narrow valley which opened out to the sea a league beyond. On either side the steep slopes of the mountain, covered with brush, fallen rocks, and large trees, enclosed this mournfully lonely ravine, like two dark walls.

Around the cottage were some vines and a tiny garden, and, farther off, some large chestnut trees, something to live on; after all they were worth a fortune in that poor country. The woman who received me was old, austere, and unusually neat. The man, who was sitting on a cane chair, rose to greet me, then sat down again without saying a word. His companion said to me:

"Please excuse him; he is deaf now. He is eighty-two."

She spoke the French of the continent. I was surprised. I asked her:

"You are not Corsican?"

She replied:

"No, we are from France, but we have lived here for fifty years."

A feeling of pain and fear seized me at the thought of those fifty years passed in this somber, dark and empty place, so far from the cities where men live. An old shepherd came in, and we all sat down to eat a simple supper of thick soup made of potatoes, bacon, and cabbage.

When our brief meal was over, I sat down before the door, my heart made heavy by the sadness of this gloomy landscape, gripped by that distress which travelers feel sometimes on certain melancholy evenings or in desolate spots. It seems then that everything is near its end, life and the universe. Suddenly one feels the horrible misery of life, the isolation of each man, the emptiness of everything, and the black loneliness of the heart, which lulls and deludes itself with dreams until death.

The old woman joined me at the door and, tortured by the curiosity which always dwells deep in the most resigned souls, she said:

"Do you come from France?"
"Yes, I am traveling for pleasure."
"You are from Paris, perhaps?"
"No, I come from Nancy."
It seemed to me that an unusual excitement stirred in her. How I saw or rather felt that I do not know.
She repeated slowly:
"You are from Nancy?"
The man appeared in the doorway, impassive, as is the way of deaf people.
She continued:
"Pay no attention. He hears nothing."
Then, after a few seconds:
"Do you know many people in Nancy?"
"Yes, nearly everyone."
"The Sainte-Allaize family?"
"Yes, quite well, they were my father's friends."
"What is your name?"
I pronounced my name. She looked at me intently, then said in the low voice of one in whom memories are stirred:
"Yes, yes, I remember well. And the Brisemars. What has become of them?"
"They are all dead."
"Ah! And the Sirmonts, you knew them?"
"Yes, the last one is a general."
Trembling with pain, with one hardly knows what confused feelings, powerful and sacred, she spoke then out of the need to confess, to tell, tell everything. She was moved to communicate those things which she had kept hidden in the depths of her heart, to speak of those people whose names had overwhelmed her.
"Yes, Henri de Sirmont. I know the name. He is my brother."
Surprised and bewildered, I looked up at her. And suddenly I remembered. Long ago there had been a great scandal among the nobility of Lorraine.
A young lady, beautiful and wealthy, Suzanne de Sirmont, had eloped with a noncommissioned officer who belonged to the regiment of hussars commanded by her father.
He was a fine looking young man, the son of peasants, it is true, but he made a handsome figure in his blue jacket, this soldier who had captured the daughter of his colonel. Watching the squadrons riding along, she had, no doubt, seen him, singled him out, loved him. But how had she been able to speak to him? How meet him? How come to an agreement? How had she dared to make him understand that she loved him? No one ever found out.
There was no warning; no one suspected anything. One evening just
after he completed his enlistment he disappeared with her. They were sought everywhere, but never found. There was never any news, and they thought of her as having died.

And I had found her again in this dismal little valley.

It was my turn to speak. I said:

"Yes, I remember very well. You are Mademoiselle Suzanne."

She nodded her head. The tears fell from her eyes. Then, glancing at the old man motionless on the threshold of the hut, she said to me.

"That is he."

And I understood that she loved him still, that in her eyes he was as captivating as ever. I asked:

"At least you have been happy?"

She replied, in a tone that rose from her heart:

"Ah, yes, very happy. He has made me very happy. I have had no regrets."

I looked at her, saddened, surprised, struck dumb by the power of love! This wealthy young woman had followed this man, this peasant. She had become a peasant too. She had grown accustomed to a life without elegance, without luxury, without refinement of any sort; she had accommodated herself to her husband’s plain habits. And she loved him still. She had become a peasant woman in a rustic cap and a coarse linen skirt. She ate her thick soup of cabbage and potatoes from an earthen dish set on a rough wooden table; she sat on a cane chair. She slept beside him on a mattress of straw.

She thought only of him. She had never regretted giving up the jewelry, the fine materials, the fashionable clothes, the comfortable chairs, the perfumed warmth of bedrooms enclosed with hangings, the softness of the down mattress in which the body sinks to slumber. She had needed only him; if he were there, she desired nothing more.

When still a child, really, she had abandoned life in the great world, and those who had reared and loved her. She had come, alone with him, to this wild ravine. And he had been everything to her, everything desired, dreamed, awaited, hoped for unceasingly. And, from the beginning to the end, he had filled her life to overflowing with happiness. She could not have been happier.

All night long, listening to the hoarse breathing of the old soldier stretched out on his rude bed beside the woman who had followed him so far, I thought of this strange, artless love affair, of this happiness made of so little yet so perfect.

And at sunrise, after pressing the hands of the old couple, I went away.

The speaker was silent. A woman said:

“All the same, her ideal was too easily satisfied, her needs too crude, her demands too simple. She must have been a fool.”
But another woman said in a low, gentle voice:
"What does it matter? She was happy."

And far away on the horizon, the island of Corsica sank into the night, returned slowly to the sea, effacing its great shadow as if it had appeared only to tell us of the two humble lovers sheltered by its shores.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. What contrasts in attitude and situation are provided between the people who are listening to the narrator and the man and woman in the story? What is the value of such contrasts? Do they prevent the story from being sentimental? What other significant contrasts are there in the story?

2. The sudden apparition of the island of Corsica out of the bay is symbolic. What aspects of love or happiness does its sudden appearance symbolize?

3. What is the place of the narrator? Does he serve simply as an impersonal viewer? Does he affect the other characters or bring about any events that would change their lives?

4. "Understatement" is a term that might describe the narrator's account of the woman's history and her present situation. What is the effect of this reserve? Is it consistently maintained? Does it give you the impression that the narrator is insensitive?

5. One of the fine qualities in this story is its economy. The author has excluded all material which was not essential to his design; and the details he does supply are powerfully expressive. What is the relation between this careful economy in the writing and the author's purpose?

6. Some action involving conflict or suspense is often thought necessary to a story. How would you characterize "Happiness" in this respect? What other kinds of interest may take the place of suspenseful action?

7. A key word in this story is "simplicity." It applies to the way of life the old couple lead, to the choice the woman made, etc. Does the author mean that happiness is a simple matter? Is the story itself "simple"? What evidence do you find for thinking there is some irony, i.e., contradiction, in the author's emphasis on simplicity?
From AN INVITATION TO AN EASTERN FEAST

A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON INDIA

MY URDU TEACHER

Leaving Nishat Begam's house I went in search of my Urdu teacher, who was at that time still my only real contact with everyday India. He was a tough little chap from the North-West Frontier, by religion a Muslim, and by career an expert loafer who knew how to hang around the right houses, chat with the bearers who had sahibs likely to want to learn Urdu, and later inspire in the sahib himself a kind of confidence malgré lui that here was just the fellow to teach him. He wore white Indian drill trousers and a white open-necked shirt, and when he smiled, which he did often, it implied that although he could not imagine how you managed to enjoy life he knew exactly how he did—and he evidently did enjoy life. Although reasonably quick at languages and with an ability to pronounce them with a fair exactitude, I cannot say my lessons with him were a success. He had taught a decade of military officers, and the first phrases I struggled with were thus rife with tent-pegs, retreats, reveilles and quarters. When I objected to this as politely as I could he assured me that later on military terms would become less used. But this did not happen. I learnt all the names for parts of a horse's harness, and later we even came round to elephants; but when I wanted to know a simple architectural term, the name of a certain style of decoration or of a particularly wonderful stone used in one of the Delhi tombs, my little teacher smiled at me appreciatively that I should know so many strange things and be interested in anything so passionless as a tomb, then he picked up the book again and off we went on another cavalry charge.

His house was another of those mysteries which so baffle the new-

comer to the Orient. Apart from the fact that, like most middle-class Indian homes, it had almost no furniture or decoration inside it, it presented, on the occasions I went there, an appearance of extraordinary emptiness so far as human beings were concerned as well, and there was in it that special kind of silence which in more imaginative moments we are inclined to think is induced by unseen onlookers holding their breath. On enquiry I discovered it was his married sister's house and the family was out. After several visits I concluded the family was often out. Then one evening I turned up unexpectedly—it had been a day of political demonstrations and my teacher had not expected me to stir out—and found eight or nine people in the house, most of them women and girls, who made themselves scarce at once, turning round to examine me as they went with baleful frightened eyes. I then noticed that the room generally used for our lessons was filled with wood-and-rope beds, an old trunk, a battered table and many unwashed utensils where the children had been having an evening meal. My teacher had always told me the room was his bedroom; perhaps indeed one-sixth of it was; perhaps he slept only an occasional night there; perhaps this was not his family at all—they certainly did not seem to treat him as if they were. They were clearly in awe of me, but him they seemed to regard as in England a family might a lodger who was unreliable with the rent. Thus although in some ways I knew my Urdu teacher quite well, in other ways I did not know him at all, and as weeks passed this situation did not alter.

On that evening after leaving Nishat Begam's house I found my teacher in his garden tying up his trousers preparatory to mounting his bicycle. Beside him on the grass was a small basket of provisions from which on my arrival he offered me a pomegranate. He was just going off, he told me, to the prayers in the Jama Mosque; these would be held exactly at sundown, which was now about half an hour off. Would I like to come with him?

Fortunately riding on the backs of other people's bicycles is a common sight in India, and so, without objections raised, we set off for Delhi City, my teacher pedalling, I hanging on aft and trying to enjoy the pomegranate.

The house was situated on the fringe of New Delhi. A little beyond it the tarred road petered out into a small gravel track leading between rough fields where goats rambled and the multitudinous poor had built their shacks. It was an area of small workshops where a tonga-walla\(^1\) could get a cheap new shaft for his tonga and wood-carvers chipped out the designs some inferior instinct seemed to tell them westerners would think oriental. Across the fields ahead of us lay the walled city of Delhi, the heart and core of Upper India, a low mass of roofs crowned by the

\(^1\) Driver of a horse-drawn carriage. [Ed.]
minarets and dome of the Jama Mosque.

Most of the gates have now been chopped down in order to widen the entrances to the city. In some places where there used to be gates there are now large thoroughfares along which trams and buses run, the tonga-wallas chastise their horses, and every now and then a sedate and out-of-date British car chugs patiently by with a load of Indian ladies concealed by saris worn over their heads and shielding them from the inquisitive. But by the route we were taking through the fields we approached the old Turkoman Gate, one of the last to remain the same as it must have been in the days of the Afghan and Mughal dynasties when Delhi, a great fort in the barren valley of the Jumna, stood as the supreme prize tempting century after century of invaders from the North-West. Similar to most fortified gates in that part of the world it stood at the head of sharply mounting ground and seemed thus larger and more intimidating than it in fact was, although with its massive wooden doors and caches around and above it in the stone wall it must have been intimidating enough in former times.

Under its comparatively small archway and beyond the bruised stones of its threshold another world revolved in its own separate orbit. All the pictures I remembered from childhood, in the Children’s Encyclopaedia and in travel books showing eastern cities, fell short of arousing in me any sense of recognition. It was not recognizable except as one of those fragmentary recollections of looking into the dark chamber of a little stereoscope and seeing at the end just such a street as this, only noiseless, motionless, its only odour that of the room in which I had been sitting years ago. Seen thus it had seemed distant and impersonal; seen now with the dust rising from the movement of a flock of goats, with the shouts of animated voices and the jangling of small brass bells, with the sharp odours of Indian cooking borne slowly along amid the dust in the airless twisting corridor of a street, with the bicycle shaking as it crossed the pot-holes in the massive stone paving, with an occasional rat moving furtively yet with a curious absence of haste down the broken runnels some progressive emperor had once designed to cleanse the city walks, with a sense of the lives, the feuds and tragedies that moved along their courses beyond the slits in the wall where entire families came and went to other lanes, other mud dens, balconies and roofs I could not see and might never know about, with the sudden awareness of thousands of men and women living in the ghastly conditions which India alone of all countries on the earth can show—seen with all these things it seemed so close, so violent in its impact that it gave me the impression that I had been struck on the chest by the fist of an unseen wrestler and challenged with ‘You who are interested in the ways of men, look upon these and say what is to be done.’

From the apertures leading off the street I occasionally caught sight of
a pale unhealthy face and a woman's large eyes gazing out at the passing world; uncannily quick at sensing when they were being watched, these women would withdraw their faces behind a fold of the dress and vanish into the shadows; but before they went there was always in their eyes the same look of terror as if should they venture to see too much of the outside world or advance a hair's-breadth ahead of the ignorance in which they lived their God or their jealous husbands would strike them down and drive them back to their windowless homes.

Here too were more of the completely veiled Muslim women than were to be seen in any other part of Delhi. They passed like slender white tents moving, veiled as they were from head to foot in a white shroud. Only the two eye apertures, and in some cases a breathing aperture, revealed for certain that these fantastic sights were not apparitions with no need of light and air. Even the eye-openings were concealed by a little trellis of thin strips of cloth. No part of the face was visible.

One grows accustomed to seeing terrible things in India, from the degrading existences which men and women are obliged to lead in order to keep body and soul together to the cruelty and suffering one person will inflict upon another through ignorance or poverty. It is not a question of which is the worse, the Hindu or the Muslim, the rich or the poor, the Brahmin or the non-Brahmin, the Punjabi or the Bengali. For every ill inflicted by one race, class, caste or province there is another equally bad to be laid at the door of the accuser, and the sectarian rifts in Indian society only delay the day when these ills must be remedied.

Sometimes the white tented figures pause as they pass one another in the street, and from the way one head bends slightly towards the other we realize they are talking; sometimes beneath their white sacking they seem to laugh, although at a sign that men are passing near they often separate and hasten on their respective ways in silence.

They represent in some ways the most awful of all the legacies modern India has inherited from the past. It is impossible to say exactly how this custom started, but it seems to date from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries when Muslim invaders were taking Hindu women as their wives and, taking advantage of the Koran's injunctions that women should wear a veil, carried the practice to the extreme in order to protect their wives from Hindu men who would have considered themselves in honour bound to rescue a woman from being a bondservant of the circumcised adventurer.

This is a personal view. Historically there is very little sound evidence, and ever since the Hindu-Muslim conflict developed politically, that is to say in this century, historians of the rival religions have been at pains to discover reasons for putting the blame on the supporters of the opposing religion until the entire sense of focus on the past has been lost. All that
can be done is to read the bald outline of the period and use common sense if one wishes to trace the origin of the tented veil.

The winding street began to mount slowly. It became more uneven, more crowded, more noisy, more narrow. At the end of it there seemed to be a vast wall of deep pink stone rising as if to block out all view of the sky. As we came to the end of the street the wall receded optically until it reached a new perspective and gained a new reality. The street led into a wide square encircling the great walled edifice, and in front of us step after step of beggar-crowded stone stairs led up to the gate, which seemed as if it were placed high up in the wall. We had arrived at the largest mosque in India.

THE JAMA MOSQUE ON THE FIRST NIGHT OF RAMAZAN

With confidence which I admired but felt it difficult to share my Urdu teacher left the bicycle with one beggar, his shoes with another, and my shoes with yet another. I was wearing socks, which my Urdu teacher was not, and was in two minds whether to put them in my pocket or leave them with the beggar. However, reflecting that if my shoes were stolen the socks would be of little use to me in returning to New Delhi on foot, I consigned the socks to the beggar, along with the shoes. He seemed to appreciate the added confidence reposed in him, and we therefore mounted the steps with composure.

The Jama Mosque only differs from other mosques in being larger. It is built according to the centuries-old pattern of a square court enclosed by four walls in the centre of one of which is the kebla, or point of worship, on the side that faces Mecca. In the centre is a curiously shaped water-tank with stone seats around it where worshippers make their ablutions, and rising tall and strong on either side of the Persian arch of the kebla are the two minarets with the pumpkin-shaped dome between them which form Delhi’s only landmark in the dry plain of Kurukshetra.

The walls, and the mosque’s elevated position above the mass of city streets, shut out from the interior court the sounds of the city, and although there was no roof above except the deepening blue sky the worshippers gathered on the west side of the mosque created by their slight movements the same sound vibrations as in the nave of a Gothic cathedral when in the seemingly distant choir the sacristan and his assistants are laying out hymnbooks for a forthcoming service—small far-reaching sounds in a high but enclosed space.

It was the moment of dusk, and the Imam with his face turned to the western wall and his back towards his fellow-worshippers led the prayers. My teacher hastily left me beside the ablution tank, washed his face and neck in a way that signified unmistakably that he did so as a re-
ligious duty and not because he needed a wash, took his praying-mat, and joined the group of about four long lines of worshippers behind the Imam.

In the distance across the great stone-paved court I could hear the constantly reiterated prayers and phrases which when first heard give an onlooker the impression that Islam is no more than slavish obedience to an old and ruthless discipline. From time to time the worshippers fell on their knees, touched their foreheads to the ground, or else, standing, made strange gestures with their arms, uttered low rhythmic cries, and followed this with silences which had I not had some slight knowledge of what was taking place would have filled me with foreboding as if the mounting passion of these devout brothers in Islam would suddenly break its restraints and plunge the city into violence.

The sunlight gradually withdrew from the cloudless sky, and between the minarets the new moon appeared setting slowly behind the dome whose sickle-moon crest was soon silhouetted beside the real moon of Ramazan. Beyond the walls the city was hushed, waiting for the sign that the day’s fast was over.

The prayers were still being said as along the parapet of the north wall a solitary man walked slowly to a point directly in the centre of the wall, over one of the gates. He paused there for a time, and then, without any apparent sign from the Imam, he turned towards the city beyond the wall and raised his voice in the long wailing cry which in Muslim cities brings the faithful together as bells do in Christian cities. No sooner were the first syllables uttered than the cry was taken up from other mosques in the quarter, and a few seconds later by others farther away, and so on into the distance until it seemed as if a hundred strong independent voices were chanting the call. By the time the more distant cries started the man on the wall of the Jama Mosque had ceased and was descending the stone stairway to the court, the worshippers had left their ordered lines and were rolling up their mats and gathering around the water-tank, and my little teacher was ravenously taking meat-cakes out of his packet of provisions and gulping them down. But beyond the walls the voices cried on, farther and farther away. The nearer mosques became silent again, and the sound, like the expanding ripple on water where a pebble has dropped, spread circularly out across the city until it lost itself in the villages and fields beyond.

The city was seething with noise again, and my teacher, desperately thirsty after his salty meat-cakes, was dragging me off to the gate in search of a drink.

As we left the mosque the moon fell below the dome.

The paving of the mosque floor is entirely composed of thin oblong stones the correct size of a praying-mat and thus marking in a simple and effective way the place each worshipper should take. On each stone
is marked the pattern of a Moorish arch pointing towards Mecca. They resemble gravestones, but in a shop, before the names are carved on them.

**CURD IN THE BAZAAR**

Finding the beggar still had my shoes and socks was the beginning to me of a feeling of confidence in oriental people which has grown with the years. Quite apart from the temptation of running away with a stranger’s shoes and having the delightful amusement of seeing him hobble home over the uneven streets without them there is the question of financial benefit to be had from running off and selling them. A traveller is at the beggars’ mercy; he may not enter the mosque with his shoes on; he can indeed carry them in his hand but this looks conspicuous when everyone else consigns their sandals to the beggars. He will probably never see the beggar again; he has certainly never seen him before. The beggar has far more to gain by selling the shoes than by receiving eight annas for looking after them. Yet when, an hour or so after entering the mosque, we come out and look for our shoes there is our man waiting for us; and if perchance he has had to make a temporary sortie there is some young relative waiting, recognizable to us by the fact that our shoes lie before him.

In point of fact it is not so easy for a dishonest beggar to station himself outside a mosque; in time the honest ones will tell him to clear out, since the rest of them value their daily annas more than the occasional theft of an expensive pair of shoes. But the foreigner is not to know these things, nor are they as important as all that. The opportunity for theft is enormous despite the precautions of whatever trade rules beggars may acknowledge among themselves.

In the East what a man requires in order to serve and like you is for you to trust him. The moment he senses your trust a bond is established which, in great things as in little, it is difficult to break. Many aspects of life in Asia are so haphazard and disorganized compared with Europe that it is difficult for Europeans to believe at first that through the seeming disorder there runs the same thread of orderliness and propriety we rely on in making our bargains and setting our names to the fulfilment of actions. The real difference is that, the machinery of policemen, lawyers and their courts being less effective in Asia than in Europe, far more must be given and taken on trust.

One only needs to be trusting—and moderately sensible—to find out how well the Asiatic method works.

I was so pleased to see my shoes again I was about to give my beggar a rupee until, noticing my teacher only gave two annas to the guardian of our bicycle, I restrained this impulse—more of thankfulness than gratitude—and reduced my tip to a more modest four-anna piece. To my amazement the recipient appeared to be satisfied, the first time such
a thing had ever happened to me in India, where the giving of a tip is generally the cue for a clamour for it to be doubled. I did not realize it on that evening but the lack of this clamour was due to my being with an Indian, before whom, if a fair gratuity is given, no beggar will venture to complain. In a land where mendicants hover around every place with the slightest tourist interest it is useful to remember that the best insurance for quiet and pleasant travel is to make plenty of Indian friends and never go anywhere where tourists may be found unless accompanied by one of them. To ignore this precept is to be surrounded by the whine of contending beggars who increase their cries the longer the tourist remains in their vicinity, ending by pawing him with their fingerless hands or clutching the turn-up of his trousers as they move awkwardly on their hands and knees, having neither feet nor crutches.

In a moment or so we were once again in the narrow street leading through the old city to the Turkoman Gate; but we had not moved more than a few paces into the now thronged street when my teacher stopped at a drink-stall.

"Will you have some too?"

The question, addressed to me, upset me more than anything that had happened so far.

The stall, covered with a piece of gaudily coloured canvas, extended slightly beyond the wall of the shop it was once supposed to have been. The shop-face behind the stall was arched in harmony with the arches of the mosque and had evidently been designed in the same epoch, the spacious days of Shah Jahan. It loomed like a cavern behind the candle-lit stall where its owner presided, a vast bull-like Northerner with small winking eyes and black curly beard, in appearance so like Gustave Doré's portrayal of wicked Babylonian kings that the child who had once pored over huge pulpit Bibles with locks on them could not help quaking slightly inside me at the thought of taking a drink from the hands of a man as terrible as this.

But once I had assured the child that the bearded king of the bazaar was pursuing an honest trade like anyone else this consideration of safety was dwarfed by another consideration even more grave.

From the far recesses of early memory, where retired Indian Army colonels had assured my parents that cricket was the game for me and that schooldays were the happiest days of your life, up to the most recent months when the advice of experienced travellers in Asia had been proffered in an increasing flow, I had heard—as who has not?—the reiterated assurance that to drink anything in an oriental bazaar is as fatal as to eat deadly nightshade or play with the gypsies in the wood. The danger, in fact, of drinking anything even at home in an Asiatic country unless the beverage had either been boiled previously or poured from a bottle bearing an English trade mark had been so impressed upon me
that I had imagined Asiatic travel to be out of the question without the permanent companionship of a kettle and salts. The awful processes through which fruit and vegetables had to pass before they could be permitted to touch the lips were such that I imagined they would either have had all the life crushed out of them or be so impregnated with chemicals as to be an almost certain source of indigestion.

I watched the Babylonian preparing the drink for my little teacher. First he took an old glass which for want of a thorough polishing after being washed had through a period of years lost some of its transparency. Into this he ladled curd from a brass bowl, threw in a stick of brown sugar lying before him on the stall counter where an hour ago a mass of flies had undoubtedly been buzzing and settling, and then turned for some ice. This he took from beneath a piece of wet sacking on a side counter. He took one piece and emptied some water over it from a thin brass pot; this was to wash the sawdust off it. Finally he crushed it with an old knife and put the pieces in the glass with his fat brown fingers.

Undoubtedly, in view of all the advice I had received on this point, the drink amounted to nothing short of hemlock. It seemed extraordinary to me that my teacher could be so blithely about to swig it down. I looked at him and tried to conceal my discomfiture; he was smiling happily at the thought of a drink at last—the same complete and somewhat finalizing smile I received when complaining about lessons with too many matchlocks in them.

I did not want to have to stand on my dignity; having reached Delhi City on the back of his bicycle this would in fact hardly be possible. It seemed absurd, having gone so far in the direction of spending an enjoyable human evening with my teacher, to have to cry halt when it came to touching food or drink. It was in fact the very thing the English were so fond of criticizing the Brahmins for. But in the face of all the advice I had received from people with infinitely more experience of Asia and the tropics than I, including an egyptologist who had lived for nine years in the Valley of the Dead, I had to admit that to drink sweet curds from the hand of this bearded ruffian would just be damned foolish.

"Yes, of course I'll have one with you."

As if listening to someone else's voice I heard myself reply and thought how absurd humanity was that it could walk into the jaws of death for the sake of something so unimportant as a social formality. At the same time I wondered how many hours it would take before death overtook me. Would I see the morning?

The ruffian's eyes gleamed. My assent had won me a friend in him at any rate. A second and equally unsavoury-looking glassful of curd was prepared. The teacher, the ruffian and I were smiling and nodding to one another as our lips touched the glasses.
People looked at us as they passed in the dark street lit with its hundreds of candles perched on ledges and shelves and protected by small cylinders of glass; they called out jovially to the Babylonian as they saw me drinking curd. I found in fact that this single action had made it possible for me to be at will on speaking terms with many people whom I would not before this have expected to answer me had I addressed them in my cumbersome Urdu. The ruffian was wiping his beard with his hands still wet from handling the ice for my drink. I caught his words to one passer-by:

"Ay, he knows what is good."

But to have implied by that that I was enjoying it could not have been further from the truth.

The drink *per se* was not unpleasant. In fact it was far more cooling than some fizzing stuff from a bottle would have been. But that was unfortunately not the point. Poison can no doubt be very refreshing if taken with sufficient quantities of ice and, say, vermouth; but we do not happen to drink it for refreshment's sake. And cooling though the curd was, an infinitely more cooling thought was the water having toxic germs in it and the milk not being pasteurized. This was enough to make me feel cool for the rest of the evening.

I thought of the familiar soft drinks I could now have been taking in Nishat Begam's house, in clean glasses, with ice that has a special respectability about it from being cut into cubes suggestive of the spotless refrigerant from which it has been taken. That house seemed safe and reassuring by comparison with the rough and ready surroundings of the bazaar, and the twilight area between East and West seemed far enough for any sensible traveller to go in search of Asia. For a moment I wondered why I obeyed the impulse to go beyond this area. What difference could it make, to me or to anyone else, whether I learnt or remained ignorant of things Asiatic?

It was a question I could not answer. The shops in the street were really no more than shallow recesses in the walls whose main purpose was evidently to bastion the houses the entrances to which were concealed in labyrinthine side-streets and alleys; and in each recess the glow of a candle or a small kerosene lamp lit up separate interiors, distinguishing them from the surrounding darkness in the same way as the stage is distinguished in a darkened theatre from the ornate columns and boxes that encompass it. In every such small *décor de scène* was a shopkeeper, sometimes a lanky fellow with legs stretched out wearily before him, sometimes a fat old man sitting cross-legged with a long pipe, sometimes a nervous hawk-eyed merchant with a gaggle of cackling children; but in all the scenes the actors were seated, due to the lowness of the proscenium. In fact, only by stepping down from their scenes and coming to our own level in the street could the actors stand up. But of
course in such cases, no longer having the benefit of stage lighting, they had to take their luck with others in the central gloom of the narrow street.

Perhaps they could have remained for ever in my mind as they were when I first saw them, the actors in a foreign street scene. Perhaps all the temples, mosques, pagodas and palaces I was to see in the East could today have been no more than a collection of postcards or photographs in an album. We put into albums the recollections to which we can guarantee no durability. Faced with an unknown cathedral we take out our cameras to assist us to memorize a moment in our lives which we know we may otherwise distort or forget. But in our village, which we know and understand, it does not occur to us to carry a camera; we regard the village as part of us, an integral part of our life and outlook. Our conversation is itself a confession to the man of discernment that we do actually come from this village, whereas to the same man there is no such evidence of our having seen exotic cities; and we ourselves soon begin to forget, imagining for example that we saw Reims when in fact we went to Chartres, until there come those moments when we cannot exactly recall whether we saw either of these places or whether it is just photographs in a magazine we are remembering; and the only thing we precisely recall is at a later date telling a friend how when we were in France we went to Reims, the memory of the visit itself having perished.

At the moment, though, when I had been drinking the curd I had felt, in spite of my fear at disregarding all health precepts, a sudden and quite unexpected affinity with my surroundings. By the quickened response to my presence from the others eating and drinking in the bazaar, by the awakened interest, the quick appreciative smile, I sensed what I had not expected: that this world utterly different from my own could be more to me than the series of photographic memories we preserve of those places and persons we have been unable to integrate in our own character, that these men and women could be more to me than the unknown actors in a picturesque play; this could be as much mine as the city and country of my birth, and these people as familiar as the butchers, bakers and candlestick-makers of home. It is true that seen thus they would lose those qualities which had at first seemed to me bizarre and novel. I would not be able to return home with strange tales of the East, in that what to others would seem strange would for me have lost its strangeness, and it is one of imagination’s most difficult stretches to take stock of the things other people do not know and therefore regard as remarkable.

As we neared the Turkoman Gate once more I knew within myself that if I survived the effects of the curd I would be obliged to take the direction in which the drinking of it had inadvertently led me. Now
that night had come the last flocks of goats were being herded through the narrow archway into the city. In the semi-darkness the air vibrated with the pounding of their little feet, a dog barked and dashed around directing the goats, a few quiet figures partly concealed by their loose cloak-like garments waited to pass beyond the gate into the open countryside. In the cloudless sky a planet shone brightly ahead of us. It was from such a city as this that the Kings came to Bethlehem.

We rode out into the quiet cool night.

EMANCIPATION

I went to sleep with a sense of uneasiness, and on waking next morning I lay for a moment motionless in bed trying to detect in what way the poison had worked into my system.

There seemed to be no poison in me, however; the only change I noticed was that my bowels seemed to be in somewhat better order than usual, which I reflected must clearly be due to the curd.

As I took breakfast I listened to one Englishman talking to another, a newcomer. He spoke of the usual things, of the filth in Delhi City, how beggars died of cholera in the streets and it took several hours before anyone could be found to take the bodies away, how the tonga-wallas sometimes whipped their horses till they lay down and died in harness.

I found myself wondering whether this Englishman had ever taken curd beside the Jama Mosque. Perhaps, if he had, these details would not have been the first he would have given to the newcomer. He would not for instance have regaled a visitor to Britain with descriptions of the Isle of Dogs;² it is usually better to begin with Westminster Abbey.

On the previous day I would have listened to the speaker, considering him a reasonable man and observant, but now my viewpoint had changed. The aspects of India which are to most new arrivals a source of dread and disgust were placing themselves in a new perspective, no longer at the end of the dark stereoscope, but all around me, creating the same sensation as when, having witnessed a frightening and unusual play, we mount the stage and mingle with the actors, only to find them unexpectedly friendly compared with the impression they created when seen from a distance.

I recalled once sitting in a Paris café in the morning watching two Englishmen trying to ask a waiter in French whether he could serve them bacon and eggs. Thinking of my own struggles to make myself understood on first arrival in France and of my original ignorance of French customs I had suddenly felt, as the Englishmen glanced at me in the hope of obtaining my assistance (which was given), a remoteness from them. I who had only recently been making all the same mistakes as they were had now become part of the landscape; I belonged to it and

² An area of docks and warehouses in London’s East End. [Ed.]
it to me, whilst they had no place in it; they were trippers.

It is often difficult to determine the immediate cause of the subtle change of attitude which comes over us in a foreign city when, returning one evening to our lodgings, we find ourselves saying ‘This is my street, my house.’ But, if perceived at the moment it takes place, this is as important an event as the unforgettable morning when after struggling for weeks to master a foreign language we wake up with the realization we have just been dreaming in that tongue.

For this is a liberation of the mind, when the borders of our tilled field are ploughed in and a new and greater area beyond becomes ours. In India the immediate cause of this transformation was for me the drinking of a glass of curd.

From then on I was emancipated.

AIDS TO STUDY

In the Introduction to his book, Coates says: “The links between East and West have been reduced to filaments, and though these may none the less be durable there was never a greater need than now for mutual understanding and appreciation if the mental distance between the two continents is not to grow wider and the great unifying work of the last two centuries be wasted.” With this quotation in mind, consider the following questions.

1. The writer conveys his early impressions of the city of Delhi by means of details. Point out some of these details and explain why this method is superior to a more generalizing method.
2. How much time and space does the detailed method take? Could this selection have been profitably compressed?
3. The selection tells first of the teacher of Urdu, then of the ride through the streets, the visit to the mosque, the drinking episode in the bazaar, and finally of the awakening the following morning. Why is it important that the writer’s situation in the drinking episode be fully understood? What is so decisive about taking a drink of curd with the teacher?
4. Some writers would have expanded the section called “Emancipation”; why does Coates keep it short?
5. Think back now over your discussion of these questions, bearing in mind the quotation about “mutual understanding and appreciation.” What do the details, the greater length of the description of the drinking episode, and the relative absence of generalizations have to do with “mutual understanding and appreciation”? Is there a clue here as to how these goals can be achieved?
W. H. Auden

MY BELIEF

Everything that lives is Holy—Blake

I

1. Goodness is easier to recognize than to define; only the greatest novelists can portray good people. For me, the least unsatisfactory description is to say that any thing or creature is good which is discharging its proper function, using its powers to the fullest extent permitted by its environment and its own nature—though we must remember that "nature" and "environment" are intellectual abstractions from a single, constantly changing reality. Thus, people are happy and good who have found their vocation: what vocations there are will depend upon the society within which they are practised.

There are two kinds of goodness, "natural" and "moral." An organism is naturally good when it has reached a state of equilibrium with its environment. All healthy animals and plants are naturally good in this sense. But any change toward a greater freedom of action is a morally good change. I think it permissible, for example, to speak of a favorable mutation as a morally good act. But moral good passes into natural good. A change is made and a new equilibrium stabilized. Below man, this happens at once; for each species the change toward freedom is not repeated. In man, the evolution can be continued, each stage of moral freedom being superseded by a new one. For example, we frequently admire the "goodness" of illiterate peasants as compared with the "badness" of many townees. But this is a romantic confusion. The goodness we admire in the former is a natural, not a moral, goodness. Once, the

life of the peasant represented the highest use of the powers of man, the farthest limit of his freedom of action. This is no longer true. The towner has a wider range of choice and fuller opportunities of using his power. He frequently chooses wrongly, and so becomes morally bad. We are right to condemn him for this, but to suggest that we should all return to the life of the peasant is to deny the possibility of moral progress. Worship of youth is another romantic pessimism of this kind.

2. Similarly, there is natural and moral evil. Determined and unavoidable limits to freedom of choice and action, such as the necessity for destroying life in order to eat and live, climate, accidents, are natural evils. If, on the other hand, I, say, as the keeper of a boardinghouse, knowing that vitamins are necessary to health, continue, for reasons of gain or laziness, to feed my guests on an insufficient diet, I commit moral evil. Just as moral good tends to pass into natural good, so, conversely, what was natural evil tends, with every advance in knowledge, to become moral evil.

3. The history of life on this planet is the history of the ways in which life has gained control over and freedom within its environment. Organisms may either adapt themselves to a particular environment—e.g., the fleshy leaves of the cactus permit it to live in a desert—or develop the means to change their environment—e.g., organs of locomotion.

Below the human level, this progress has taken place through structural biological changes, depending on the lack of mutations or the chances of natural selection. Only man, with his conscious intelligence, has been able to continue his evolution after his biological development has finished. By studying the laws of physical nature, he has gained a large measure of control over them and insofar as he is able to understand the laws of his own nature and of the societies in which he lives, he approaches that state where what he wills may be done. “Freedom,” as a famous definition has it, “is consciousness of necessity.”

4. The distinguishing mark of man as an animal is his plastic, un-specialized “foetalized” nature. All other animals develop more quickly and petrify sooner. In other words, the dictatorship of heredity is weakest in man. He has the widest choice of environment, and, in return, changes in environment, either changes in nature or his social life, have the greatest effect on him.

5. In contrast to his greatest rivals for biological supremacy, the insects, man has a specialized and concentrated central nervous system, and un-specialized peripheral organs, i.e., the stimuli he receives are collected and pooled in one organ. Intelligence and choice can only arise when more than one stimulus is presented at the same time in the same place.

6. Man has always been a social animal living in communities. This falsifies any theories of Social Contract. The individual in vacuo is an intellectual abstraction. The individual is the product of social life; with-
out it, he could be no more than a bundle of unconditioned reflexes. Men are born neither free nor good.

7. Societies and cultures vary enormously. On the whole, Marx seems to me correct in his view that physical conditions and the forms of economic production have dictated the forms of communities: e.g., the geographical peculiarities of the Aegean peninsula produced small democratic city-states, while the civilizations based on river irrigation like Egypt and Mesopotamia were centralized autocratic empires.

8. But we are each conscious of ourselves as a thinking, feeling, and willing whole, and this is the only whole of which we have direct knowledge. This experience conditions our thinking. I cannot see how other wholes, family, class, nation, etc., can be wholes to us except in a purely descriptive sense. We do not see a state, we see a number of individuals. Anthropological studies of different communities, such as Dr. Benedict’s work on primitive American cultures, or that of the Lynds on contemporary Middletown, have shown the enormous power of a given cultural form to determine the nature of the individuals who live under it. A given cultural pattern develops those traits of character and modes of behavior which it values, and suppresses those which it does not. But this does not warrant ascribing to a culture a superpersonality, conscious of its parts as I can be conscious of my hand or liver.

A society consists of a certain number of individuals living in a particular way, in a particular place, at a particular time; nothing else.

9. The distinction drawn by Locke between society and government is very important. Again, Marx seems to me correct in saying that sovereignty or government is not the result of a contract made by society as a whole, but has always been assumed by those people in society who owned the instruments of production.

Theories of Rights arise as a means to attack or justify a given social form, and are a sign of social strain. Burke, and later thinkers, who developed the idealist theory of the state, were correct in criticizing the _a priori_ assumptions of Social Contract and in pointing out that society is a growing organism. But, by identifying society and government, they ignored the power of the latter to interfere with the natural growth of the former, and so were led to denying the right of societies to revolt against their governments, and to the hypostatization of the _status quo_.

10. A favorite analogy for the state among idealist political thinkers is with the human body. This analogy is false. The constitution of the cells in the body is determined and fixed; nerve cells can only give rise to more nerve cells, muscle cells to muscle cells, etc. But, in the transition from parent to child, the whole pack of inherited genetic characters is shuffled. The king’s son may be a moron, the coal heaver’s a mathematical genius. The entire pattern of talents and abilities is altered at every generation.
11. Another false analogy is with the animal kingdom. Observed from
the outside (how it appears to them no one knows), the individual ani-
mal seems to be sacrificed to the continuance of the species. This ob-
servation is used to deny the individual any rights against the state. But
there is a fundamental difference between man and all other animals in
that an animal which has reached maturity does not continue to evolve,
but a man does. As far as we can judge, the only standard in the animal
world is physical fitness, but in man a great many other factors are
involved. What has survival value can never be determined; man has
survived as a species through the efforts of individuals who at the time
must often have seemed to possess very little biological survival value.

12. Man's advance in control over his environment is making it more
and more difficult for him, at least in the industrialized countries with a
high standard of living, like America or England, to lead a naturally good
life, and easier and easier to lead a morally bad one.

Let us suppose, for example, that it is sometimes good for mind and
body to take a walk. Before there were means of mechanical transport,
men walked because they could not do anything else; i.e., they com-
mitted naturally good acts. Today, a man has to choose whether to use
his car or walk. It is possible for him, by using the car on an occasion
when he ought to walk, to commit a morally wrong act, and it is quite
probable that he will. It is despair at finding a solution to this problem
which is responsible for much of the success of Fascist blood-and-soil
ideology.

II

1. A society, then, is good insofar as
a. it allows the widest possible range of choices to its members to
follow those vocations to which they are suited;
b. it is constantly developing, and providing new vocations which
make a fuller demand upon their increasing powers.

The Greeks assumed that the life of intellectual contemplation was
the only really "good" vocation. It has become very much clearer now
that this is only true for certain people, and that there are a great many
other vocations of equal value: human nature is richer and more varied
than the Greeks thought.

2. No society can be absolutely good. Utopias, whether like Aldous
Huxley's *Brave New World* or Dante's *Paradiso*, because they are static,
only portray states of natural evil or good. (Someone, I think it was
Landor, said of the characters in the *Inferno*: "But they don't want to
get out.") People committing acts in obedience to law or habit are not
being moral. As voluntary action always turns, with repetition, into
habit, morality is only possible in a world which is constantly changing
and presenting a fresh series of choices. No society is absolutely good;
but some are better than others.
3. If we look at a community at any given moment, we see that it consists of good men and bad men, clever men and stupid men, sensitive and insensitive, law-abiding and lawless, rich and poor. Our politics, our view of what form our society and our government should take here and now, will depend on

a. how far we think the bad is due to preventable causes;

b. what, if we think the causes preventable, we find them to be. If we take the extremely pessimistic view that evil is in no way preventable, our only course is the hermit’s, to retire altogether from this wicked world. If we take a fairly pessimistic view, that badness is inherited (i.e., that goodness and badness are not determined by social relations), we shall try to establish an authoritarian regime of the good. If, on the other hand, we are fairly optimistic, believing that bad environment is the chief cause of badness in individuals, and that the environment can be changed, we shall tend toward a belief in some sort of democracy. Personally I am fairly optimistic, partly for reasons which I have tried to outline above, and partly because the practical results of those who have taken the more pessimistic view do not encourage me to believe that they are right.

4. Fairly optimistic. In the history of man, there have been a few civilized individuals but no civilized community, not one, ever. Those who talk glibly of Our Great Civilization, whether European, American, Chinese, or Russian, are doing their countries the greatest disservice. We are still barbarians. All advances in knowledge, from Galileo down to Freud or Marx, are, in the first impact, humiliating; they begin by showing us that we are not as free or as grand or as good as we thought; and it is only when we realize this that we can begin to study how to overcome our own weakness.

5. What then are the factors which limit and hinder men from developing their powers and pursuing suitable vocations?

a. Lack of material goods. Man is an animal and until his immediate material and economic needs are satisfied, he cannot develop further. In the past this has been a natural evil: methods of production and distribution were too primitive to guarantee a proper standard of life for everybody. It is doubtful whether this is any longer true; in which case, it is a moral and remediable evil. Under this head I include all questions of wages, food, housing, health, insurance, etc.

b. Lack of education. Unless an individual is free to obtain the fullest education with which his society can provide him, he is being injured by society. This does not mean that everybody should have the same kind of education, though it does mean, I think, education of some kind or other, up to university age. Education in a democracy must have two aims. It must give vocational guidance and training; assist each individual to find out where his talents lie, and then help him to develop these to
the full—this for some people might be completed by sixteen—and it must also provide a general education; develop the reason and the consciousness of every individual, whatever his job, to a point where he can for himself distinguish good from bad, and truth from falsehood—this requires a much longer educational period.

At present education is in a very primitive stage; we probably teach the wrong things to the wrong people at the wrong time. It is dominated, at least in England, by an academic tradition which, except for the specially gifted, only fits its pupils to be schoolteachers. It is possible that the time for specialization (i.e., vocational training) should be in early adolescence, the twelve-to-sixteen group, and again in the latter half of the university period; but that the sixteen-to-twenty age group should have a general education.

c. Lack of occupations which really demand the full exercise of the individual's powers. This seems to me a very difficult problem indeed. The vast majority of jobs in a modern community do people harm. Children admire gangsters more than they admire factory operatives because they sense that being a gangster makes more demands on the personality than being a factory operative and is therefore, for the individual, morally better. It isn't that the morally better jobs are necessarily better rewarded economically: for instance, my acquaintance with carpenters leads me to think carpentry a very good profession, and my acquaintance with stockbrokers to think stockbroking a very bad one. The only jobs known to me which seem worthy of respect, both from the point of view of the individual and society, are being a creative artist, some kind of highly skilled craftsman, a research scientist, a doctor, a teacher, or a farmer. This difficulty runs far deeper than our present knowledge or any immediate political change we can imagine, and is therefore still, to a certain extent, a natural rather than a moral evil, though it is obviously much aggravated by gross inequalities in economic reward, which could be remedied. I don't myself much like priggish phrases such as "the right use of leisure." I agree with Eric Gill that work is what one does to please oneself, leisure the time one has to serve the community. The most one can say is that we must never forget that most people are being degraded by the work they do, and that the possibilities of sharing the dullest jobs through the whole community will have to be explored much more fully. Incidentally, there is reason for thinking that the routine manual and machine-minding jobs are better tolerated by those whose talents are for book learning than by those whose talents run in the direction of manual skill.

d. Lack of suitable psychological conditions. People cannot grow unless they are happy and, even when their material needs have been satisfied, they still need many other things. They want to be liked and to like other people; to feel valuable, both in their own eyes and in the
eyes of others; to feel free and to feel responsible; above all, not to feel lonely and isolated. The first great obstacle is the size of modern communities. By nature, man seems adapted to live in communities of a very moderate size; his economic life has compelled him to live in ever-enlarging ones. Many of the damaging effects of family life described by modern psychologists may be the result of our attempt to make the family group satisfy psychological needs which can only be satisfied by the community group. The family is based on inequality, the parent-child relationship; the community is, or should be, based on equality, the relationship of free citizens. We need both. Fortunately, recent technical advances, such as cheap electrical power, are making smaller social units more of a practical possibility than they seemed fifty years ago, and people with as divergent political views as the anarchists and Mr. Ford are now agreed about the benefits of industrial decentralization.

The second obstacle is social injustice and inequality. A man cannot be a happy member of a community if he feels that the community is treating him unjustly; the more complicated and impersonal economic life becomes, the truer this is. In a small factory where employer and employees know each other personally, i.e., where the conditions approximate to those of family life, the employees will accept without resentment a great deal more inequality than their fellows in a modern large-scale production plant.

III

1. Society consists of a number of individual wills living in association. There is no such thing as a general will of society, except insofar as all these individual wills agree in desiring certain material things, e.g., food and clothes. It is also true, perhaps, that all desire happiness and goodness, but their conceptions of these may and do conflict with each other. Ideally, government is the means by which all the individual wills are assured complete freedom of moral choice and at the same time prevented from ever clashing. Such an ideal government, of course, does not and could not ever exist. It presupposes that every individual in society possesses equal power, and also that every individual takes part in the government.

2. In practice, the majority is always ruled by a minority, a certain number of individuals who decide what a law shall be, and who command enough force to see that the majority obeys them. To do this, they must also command a varying degree of consent by the majority, though this consent need not be and never is complete. They must, for example, have the consent of the armed forces and the police, and they must either control the financial resources of society, or have the support of those who do.

3. Democracy assumes, I think correctly, the right of every individual
to revolt against his government by voting against it. It has not been as successful as its advocates hoped, firstly, because it failed to realize the pressure that the more powerful and better educated classes could bring to bear upon the less powerful and less educated in their decisions—it ignored the fact that in an economically unequal society votes may be equal but voters are not—and secondly, because it assumed, I think quite wrongly, that voters living in the same geographical area would have the same interests, again ignoring economic differences and the change from an agricultural to an industrial economy. I believe that representation should be by trade or profession. No one person has exactly the same interests as another, but I, say, as a writer in Birmingham, have more interests in common with other writers in Leeds or London than I have with my next-door neighbor who manufactures cheap jewelry. This failure of the geographical unit to correspond to a genuine political unit is one of the factors responsible for the rise of the party machine. We rarely elect a local man whom we know personally; we have to choose one out of two or three persons offered from above. This seems to me thoroughly unsatisfactory. I think one of our mistakes is that we do not have enough stages in election; a hundred thousand voters are reduced by a single act to one man who goes to Parliament. This must inevitably mean a large degree of dictatorship from above. A sane democracy would, I feel, choose its representatives by a series of electoral stages, each lower stage electing the one above it.

4. Legislation is a form of coercion, of limiting freedom. Coercion is necessary because societies are not free communities; we do not choose the society into which we are born; we can attempt to change it, but we cannot leave it. Ideally, people should be free to know evil and to choose the good, but the consequences of choosing evil are often to compel others to evil. The guiding principle of legislation in a democracy should be, not to make people good, but to prevent them making each other bad against their will. Thus we all agree that there should be laws against theft or murder, because no one chooses to be stolen from or murdered. But it is not always so simple. It is argued by laissez-faire economists that legislation concerning hours of work, wages, etc., violates the right of individual wills to bargain freely. But this presupposes that the bargaining powers of different wills are equal, and that each bargain is an individual act. Neither of these assumptions is true, and economic legislation is justified because they are not.

But there are other forms of legislation which are less justified. It is true that the individual will operating in a series of isolated acts is an abstraction—our present acts are the product of past acts and in their turn determine future ones—but I think the law has to behave as if this abstraction were a fact, otherwise there is no end to legislative interference. Take the case, for instance, of drink. If I become a drunkard, I
may not only impair my own health, but also that of my children; and it can be argued, and often is, that the law should see that I do not become one by preventing me from purchasing alcohol. I think, however, that this is an unjustifiable extension of the law's function. Everything I do, the hour I go to bed, the literature I read, the temperature at which I take my bath, affects my character for good or bad and so, ultimately, the characters of those with whom I come in contact. If the legislator is once allowed to consider the distant effects of my acts, there is no reason why he should not decide everything for me. The law has to limit itself to considering the act in isolation: if the act directly violates the will of another, the law is justified in interfering; if only indirectly, it is not. Nearly all legislation on "moral" matters, such as drink, gambling, sexual behavior between adults, etc., seems to me bad.

5. In theory, every individual has a right to his own conception of what form society ought to take and what form of government there should be and to exercise his will to realize it; on the other hand, everyone else has a right to reject his conception. In practice, this boils down to the right of different political parties to exist, parties representing the main divisions of interest in society. As the different sectional interests cannot form societies on their own—e.g., the employees cannot set up one state by themselves and the employers another—there is always coercion of the weaker by the stronger by propaganda, legislation, and sometimes physical violence; and the more evenly balanced the opposing forces are, the more violent that coercion is likely to become.

I do not see how in politics one can decide a priori what conduct is moral, or what degree of tolerance there should be. One can only decide which party in one's private judgment has the best view of what society ought to be, and to support it; and remember that, since all coercion is a moral evil, we should view with extreme suspicion those who welcome it. Thus I cannot see how a Socialist country could tolerate the existence of a Fascist party any more than a Fascist country could tolerate the existence of a Socialist party. I judge them differently because I think that the Socialists are right and the Fascists are wrong in their view of society. (It is always wrong in an absolute sense to kill, but all killing is not equally bad; it does matter who is killed.)

Intolerance is an evil and has evil consequences we can never accurately foresee and for which we shall always have to suffer; but there are occasions on which we must be prepared to accept the responsibility of our convictions. We must be as tolerant as we dare—only the future can judge whether we were tyrants or foolishly weak—and if we cannot dare very far, it is a serious criticism of ourselves and our age.

6. But we do have to choose, every one of us. We have the misfortune or the good luck to be living in one of the great critical historical periods, when the whole structure of our society and its cultural and
metaphysical values are undergoing a radical change. It has happened
before, when the Roman Empire collapsed, and at the Reformation, and
it may happen again in the future.

In periods of steady evolution, it is possible for the common man to
pursue his private life without bothering his head very much over the
principles and assumptions by which he lives, and to leave politics in
the hands of professionals. But ours is not such an age. It is idle to
lament that the world is becoming divided into hostile ideological camps;
the division is a fact. No policy of isolation is possible. Democracy, lib-
erty, justice, and reason are being seriously threatened and, in many
parts of the world, destroyed. It is the duty of every one of us, not only
to ourselves but to future generations of men, to have a clear understand-
ing of what we mean when we use these words, to remember that while
an idea can be absolutely bad, a person can never be, and to defend what
we believe to be right, perhaps even at the cost of our lives and those
of others.

1939

AIDS TO STUDY

1. Study the sentence structure and the diction of the second paragraph.
   What kinds of sentences predominate (simple, complex, compound; long,
   short, involved)? Are the words unusual, learned, technical?

2. What distinction is Auden establishing in the second paragraph? What is a
   *mutation*, and in what sense does Auden call it “a morally good act”? Do
   you think that Auden means that peasants are incapable of moral good-
   ness? What does it mean to say that “Worship of youth is another ro-
   mantic pessimism”? How can “pessimism” be “romantic”?

   Having considered both Auden’s style and the kind of ideas that he is
   presenting, notice that the straightforward style contrasts with the com-
   plicated point of view. What guidance does this discovery provide in
   your reading of the remainder of the essay?

3. I, 3. What difference does Auden see between human progress and
   progress “below the human level”?

   them?

5. I, 7 and I, 9. Auden refers approvingly to Karl Marx. What particular
   ideas of Marx does Auden accept? In the remainder of the essay watch
   for evidence of Auden’s social and political outlook.

6. I, 10, 11. Auden discusses two “false analogies.” Exactly what is each
   analogy? Why does Auden reject them both?

7. I, 12. Is Auden here contradicting himself? Earlier he defined moral
   goodness in terms of freedom to choose and develop. Now he says that
   progress in controlling the environment makes it “easier and easier” to
   lead a morally bad life. Does this mean that increased freedom favors
   morally bad rather than morally good choices? (If you can’t decide at
this point, keep the question in mind as you continue with the essay.)
8. II, 2. In the light of Auden's definition of moral good, why does he deny that acting in obedience to law or habit is moral? Does he mean that so to act is immoral?
9. II, 3, 4. Why does Auden say that a "fairly pessimistic" outlook leads to authoritarianism? What reasons does he give for being himself "optimistic" but only fairly so?
10. II, 5. Why does Auden call lack of material goods a moral evil rather than a natural one? What two aims does he define for education in a democracy? Do you think that there are other aims which he fails to mention? Is Auden saying that gangsters are morally better than factory workers? Explain. Would you add to his list of jobs that he thinks worthy of respect? If so, why?
11. III, 1, 2. What distinction does Auden make between government considered "ideally" and "in practice"?
12. III, 3. What faults does Auden see in democracy? Do they lead him to reject it?
13. III, 4. What is Auden's distinction between justifiable and unjustifiable legislation? What one test does he offer for deciding whether or not a law is justifiable? In the last sentence of the section, why does he qualify his statement by saying "between adults"?
14. III, 6. Why does Auden believe that "no policy of isolation is possible"? Considering the date of this essay, what do you suppose the "hostile ideological camps" were? Is the crisis that Auden described now ended? Would the "duty" to which he refers be a "moral good"?
Part 3

EDUCATION: IDEAL AND REALITY
“Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, sir!”

The scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a schoolroom, and the speaker’s square forefinger emphasised his observations by under-scoring every sentence with a line on the schoolmaster’s sleeve. The emphasis was helped by the speaker’s square wall of a forehead, which had his eyebrows for its base, while his eyes found commodious cellarrage in two dark caves, overshadowed by the wall. The emphasis was helped by the speaker’s mouth, which was wide, thin, and hard set. The emphasis was helped by the speaker’s voice, which was inflexible, dry, and dictatorial. The emphasis was helped by the speaker’s hair, which bristled on the skirts of his bald head, a plantation of firs to keep the wind from its shining surface, all covered with knobs, like the crust of a plum pie, as if the head had scarcely warehouse-room for the hard facts stored inside. The speaker’s obstinate carriage, square coat, square legs, square shoulders,—nay, his very neckcloth, trained to take him by the throat with an unaccommodating grasp, like a stubborn fact, as it was,—all helped the emphasis.

“In this life, we want nothing but Facts, sir; nothing but Facts!”

The speaker, and the schoolmaster, and the third grown person present, all backed a little, and swept with their eyes the inclined plane of
little vessels then and there arranged in order, ready to have imperial gallons of facts poured into them until they were full to the brim.

II

Thomas Gradgrind, sir. A man of realities. A man of facts and calculations. A man who proceeds upon the principle that two and two are four, and nothing over, and who is not to be talked into allowing for anything over. Thomas Gradgrind, sir—peremptorily Thomas—Thomas Gradgrind. With a rule and a pair of scales, and the multiplication table always in his pocket, sir, ready to weigh and measure any parcel of human nature, and tell you exactly what it comes to. It is a mere question of figures, a case of simple arithmetic. You might hope to get some other nonsensical belief into the head of George Gradgrind, or Augustus Gradgrind, or John Gradgrind, or Joseph Gradgrind (all supposititious, nonexistent persons), but into the head of Thomas Gradgrind—no, sir!

In such terms Mr. Gradgrind always mentally introduced himself, whether to his private circle of acquaintance, or to the public in general. In such terms, no doubt, substituting the words "boys and girls," for "sir," Thomas Gradgrind now presented Thomas Gradgrind to the little pitchers before him, who were to be filled so full of facts.

Indeed, as he eagerly sparkled at them from the cellarage before mentioned, he semed a kind of cannon loaded to the muzzle with facts, and prepared to blow them clean out of the regions of childhood at one discharge. He seemed a galvanizing apparatus, too, charged with a grim mechanical substitute for the tender young imaginations that were to be stormed away.

"Girl number twenty," said Mr. Gradgrind, squarely pointing with his square forefinger, "I don't know that girl. Who is that girl?"

"Sissy Jupe, sir," explained number twenty, blushing, standing up, and curtseying.

"Sissy is not a name," said Mr. Gradgrind. "Don't call yourself Sissy. Call yourself Cecilia."

"It's father as calls me Sissy, sir," returned the young girl in a trembling voice, and with another curtsey.

"Then he has no business to do it," said Mr. Gradgrind. "Tell him he mustn't. Cecilia Jupe. Let me see. What is your father?"

"He belongs to the horse-riding, if you please, sir."

Mr. Gradgrind frowned, and waved off the objectionable calling with his hand.

"We don't want to know anything about that, here. You mustn't tell us about that, here. Your father breaks horses, don't he?"

"If you please, sir, when they can get any to break, they do break horses in the ring, sir."
"You mustn't tell us about the ring. Here. Very well, then. Describe your father as a horsebreaker. He doctors sick horses, I dare say?"

"Oh yes, sir."

"Very well, then. He is a veterinary surgeon, a farrier, and horsebreaker. Give me your definition of a horse."

(Sissy Jupe thrown into the greatest alarm by this demand.)

"Girl number twenty unable to define a horse!" said Mr. Gradgrind, for the general behoof of all the little pitchers. "Girl number twenty possessed of no facts, in reference to one of the commonest of animals! Some boy's definition of a horse. Bitzer, yours."

The square finger, moving here and there, lighted suddenly on Bitzer, perhaps because he chanced to sit in the same ray of sunlight which, darting in at one of the bare windows of the intensely whitewashed room, irradiated Sissy. For, the boys and girls sat on the face of the inclined plane in two compact bodies, divided up the centre by a narrow interval; and Sissy, being at the corner of a row on the sunny side, came in for the beginning of a sunbeam, of which Bitzer, being at the corner of a row on the other side, a few rows in advance, caught the end. But, whereas the girl was so dark-eyed and dark-haired, that she seemed to receive a deeper and more lustrous colour from the sun, when it shone upon her, the boy was so light-eyed and light-haired that the self-same rays appeared to draw out of him what little colour he ever possessed. His cold eyes would hardly have been eyes, but for the short ends of lashes which, by bringing them into immediate contrast with something paler than themselves, expressed their form. His short-cropped hair might have been a mere continuation of the sandy freckles on his forehead and face. His skin was so unwholesomely deficient in the natural tinge, that he looked as though, if he were cut, he would bleed white.

"Bitzer," said Thomas Gradgrind. "Your definition of a horse."

"Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive. Sheds coat in the spring; in marshy countries, sheds hoofs, too. Hoofs hard, but requiring to be shod with iron. Age known by marks in mouth." Thus (and much more) Bitzer.

"Now girl number twenty," said Mr. Gradgrind. "You know what a horse is."

She curtseyed again, and would have blushed deeper, if she could have blushed deeper than she had blushed all this time. Bitzer, after rapidly blinking at Thomas Gradgrind with both eyes at once, and so catching the light upon his quivering ends of lashes that they looked like the antennae of busy insects, put his knuckles to his freckled forehead, and sat down again.

The third gentleman now stepped forth. A mighty man at cutting and drying, he was; a government officer; in his way (and in most other
people's too), a professed pugilist; always in training, always with a system to force down the general throat like a bolus, always to be heard of at the bar of his little Public-office, ready to fight all England. To continue in fistic phraseology, he had a genius for coming up to the scratch, wherever and whatever it was, and proving himself an ugly customer. He would go in and damage any subject whatever with his right, follow up with his left, stop, exchange, counter, bore his opponent (he always fought All England) to the ropes, and fall upon him neatly. He was certain to knock the wind out of common sense, and render that unlucky adversary deaf to the call of time. And he had it in charge from high authority to bring about the great public-office Millennium, when Commissioners should reign upon earth.

“Very well,” said this gentleman, briskly smiling, and folding his arms. “That's a horse. Now, let me ask you girls and boys, Would you paper a room with representations of horses?”

After a pause, one half of the children cried in chorus, “Yes, sir!” Upon which the other half, seeing in the gentleman's face that Yes was wrong, cried out in chorus, “No, sir!”—as the custom is, in these examinations.

“Of course, No. Why wouldn't you?”

A pause. One corpulent slow boy, with a wheezy manner of breathing, ventured the answer, Because he wouldn't paper a room at all, but would paint it.

“You must paper it,” said the gentleman, rather warmly.

“You must paper it,” said Thomas Gradgrind, “whether you like it or not. Don’t tell us you wouldn’t paper it. What do you mean, boy?”

“I'll explain to you, then,” said the gentleman, after another and a dismal pause, “why you wouldn’t paper a room with representations of horses. Do you ever see horses walking up and down the sides of rooms in reality—in fact? Do you?”

“Yes, sir!” from one half. “No, sir!” from the other.

“Of course, No,” said the gentleman, with an indignant look at the wrong half. “Why, then, you are not to see anywhere, what you don’t see in fact; you are not to have anywhere, what you don’t have in fact. What is called Taste, is only another name for Fact.”

Thomas Gradgrind nodded his approbation.

“This is a new principle, a discovery, a great discovery,” said the gentleman. “Now, I'll try you again. Suppose you were going to carpet a room. Would you use a carpet having a representation of flowers upon it?”

There being a general conviction by this time that “No, sir!” was always the right answer to this gentleman, the chorus of No was very strong. Only a few feeble stragglers said Yes: among them Sissy Jupe.

“Girl number twenty,” said the gentleman, smiling in the calm strength of knowledge.
Sissy blushed, and stood up.

"So you would carpet your room—or your husband's room, if you were a grown woman, and had a husband—with representations of flowers, would you?" said the gentleman. "Why would you?"

"If you please, sir, I am very fond of flowers," returned the girl.

"And is that why you would put tables and chairs upon them, and have people walking over them with heavy boots?"

"It wouldn't hurt them, sir. They wouldn't crush and wither, if you please, sir. They would be the pictures of what was very pretty and pleasant, and I would fancy——"

"Ay, ay, ay! But you mustn't fancy," cried the gentleman, quite elated by coming so happily to his point. "That's it! You are never to fancy."

"You are not, Cecilia Jupe," Thomas Gradgrind solemnly repeated, "to do anything of that kind."

"Fact, fact, fact!" said the gentleman. And "Fact, fact, fact!" repeated Thomas Gradgrind.

"You are to be in all things regulated and governed," said the gentleman, "by fact. We hope to have, before long, a board of fact, composed of commissioners of fact, who will force the people to be a people of fact, and of nothing but fact. You must discard the word Fancy altogether. You have nothing to do with it. You are not to have, in any object of use or ornament, what would be a contradiction in fact. You don't walk upon flowers in fact; you cannot be allowed to walk upon flowers in carpets. You don't find that foreign birds and butterflies come and perch upon your crockery; you cannot be permitted to paint foreign birds and butterflies upon your crockery. You never meet with quadrupeds going up and down walls; you must not have quadrupeds represented upon walls. You must use," said the gentleman, "for all these purposes, combinations and modifications (in primary colours) of mathematical figures which are susceptible of proof and demonstration. This is the new discovery. This is fact. This is taste."

The girl curtseyed, and sat down. She was very young, and she looked as if she were frightened by the matter of fact prospect the world afforded.

"Now, if Mr. M'Choakumchild," said the gentleman, "will proceed to give his first lesson here, Mr. Gradgrind, I shall be happy, at your request, to observe his mode of procedure."

Mr. Gradgrind was much obliged. "Mr. M'Choakumchild, we only wait for you."

So, Mr. M'Choakumchild began in his best manner. He and some one hundred and forty other schoolmasters, had been lately turned at the same time, in the same factory, on the same principles, like so many pianoforte legs. He had been put through an immense variety of paces, and had answered volumes of head-breaking questions. Orthography,
etymology, syntax, and prosody, biography, astronomy, geography, and general cosmography, the sciences of compound proportion, algebra, land-surveying and levelling, vocal music, and drawing from models, were all at the ends of his ten chilled fingers. He had worked his stony way into Her Majesty’s most Honourable Privy Council’s Schedule B, and had taken the bloom off the higher branches of mathematics and physical science, French, German, Latin, and Greek. He knew all about all the Water Sheds of all the world (whatever they are), and all the histories of all the peoples, and all the names of all the rivers and mountains, and all the productions, manners, and customs of all the countries, and all their boundaries and bearings on the two and thirty points of the compass. Ah, rather overdone, M’Choakumchild. If he had only learnt a little less, how infinitely better he might have taught much more!

He went to work in this preparatory lesson, not unlike Morgiana in the Forty Thieves: looking into all the vessels ranged before him, one after another, to see what they contained. Say, good M’Choakumchild. When from thy boiling store, thou shalt fill each jar brim full by-and-by, dost thou think that thou wilt always kill outright the robber Fancy lurking within—or sometimes only maim him and distort him!

AIDS TO STUDY

1. One difficulty in reading these selections from Dickens’ novel Hard Times is to say exactly what is fundamentally wrong about Gradgrind’s and M’Choakumchild’s theory and practice of education.
   a. What inferences do you draw from the names Gradgrind and M’Choakumchild?
   b. Look up the word fact in the dictionary and be prepared to explain what Gradgrind means by “Facts.” Why does he want “nothing but Facts”?
   c. What metaphors does Dickens use to describe how the students appear from the point of view of Gradgrind and M’Choakumchild?
   d. What exactly (quote the words Dickens uses) are the two men trying to suppress in the students? Look at the description of Bitzer and at his definition of a horse; contrast these with what Sissy Jupe looks like and with her response to Gradgrind’s question.
   e. Dickens says of M’Choakumchild: “If he had only learnt a little less, how infinitely better he might have taught much more!” What inference do you draw from this remark?
   f. Write a short paragraph in which you specify what is at fault in Gradgrind’s and M’Choakumchild’s ideas about education.

2. What is disagreeable about the kind of authority these men represent? Authority and power go together, but here they seem to be abused. For instance, how do the children respond to authority? How does authority regard the children? Are there, in your experience, modern survivals of this theory of the relations between children and adults?
Madame Biron, the butcher’s wife, lived in Apt before she moved to Peyrane. She likes living in Peyrane but she says that life in a city has one great advantage for a woman with a three-year-old boy like her Jeannot, for in the cities three-year-old children can be sent to school. In small schools like the one in Peyrane the teachers refuse to take children before their fourth birthday. Madame Biron talked to Madame Girard, the teacher of the classes enfantines, and tried to persuade her to take Jeannot a few months before his fourth birthday, but Madame Girard refused to make an exception, even though Jeannot was big for his age.

If Madame Girard had made an exception in this case she soon would have had all the three-year-old children in Peyrane. All the mothers are eager to send their children to school as soon as possible. A child in school is one less responsibility at home—at least for six hours of the day—and mothers welcome the opportunity to share their responsibilities with the teacher.

The fourth birthday is important in the life of a child, for he starts school that very day. The event does not come as a surprise to him, since there has been much talk about it in the family. He has new shoes, sturdy boots big enough so that heavy woolen socks may be worn with them. If the family purse is large enough he has a new cap or beret, new smocks, and a heavy muffler which his mother has knitted. He also has to have a brief case to carry his pencils and crayons and papers. The town furnishes school materials, but children usually prefer to have a set of their own,
and Madame Girard will not allow them to be left at the school. If private materials disappeared she would be blamed for the loss, and she is unwilling to assume this needless responsibility. So even though children are given no homework until they are six or seven years old, they often begin to carry a brief case to and from school at the age of four.

The only children to undergo a special ceremony before starting to school are boys with pretty hair like Jeannot Biron and Bébert Favre. They have their long curls cut off and get a boy’s regular haircut with a part on the side and a long lock held back with a bobby pin. Bébert’s father cut his hair the day before he started to school, but Madame Biron, who was more accustomed to city ways and whose husband’s business was prosperous, took Jeannot to Madame Avenus’s beauty parlor because she said she wanted his first haircut to “look just right.” One boy in the classe enfantine still had long curls and his mother felt it necessary to explain that she had a special reason for postponing his haircut. His aunt was to be married in a few months, and she wanted Loulou to look his best for the wedding.

On the day that the child is to start to school his mother accompanies him if she can arrange it. Otherwise an older sister or brother or a neighbor’s child will take the responsibility of introducing him to the teacher and showing the required papers: birth certificate, diphtheria inoculation certificate, and vaccination certificate. Madame Girard greets a new child with a show of affection and interest. She shakes hands with him, hugs and kisses him, and tells him how happy he is going to be now that he is grown up and can go to school with the big children. When the child’s mother leaves or when the older sister goes off to her class the child may cry and Madame Girard does her best to console him. She may hold him on her lap and mother him without interrupting her work with the older children in her room. If he is too demanding, she will call in Odette Peretti or one of the other big girls from the classe des grands to care for him until he adjusts to the new situation.

As soon as the child accepts the situation, and it rarely takes more than an hour or so, no more nonsense is expected of him. He must submit to the same rules and routine followed by all the other children. He must sit quietly at his desk for three hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon. He must not fidget or talk to other children. He can move around freely only during the fifteen minute recess periods, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

Officially, the classes enfantines are considered only a sort of garderie, a nursery where little children are kept for a few hours every day to free their mothers. Now and then Madame Girard may take the time to work with them formally, teaching them the alphabet, showing them how to copy letters and numbers, helping them learn songs or poems by heart, but most of the time she is kept busy with the older children on the other
side of the room who have regular lessons to learn. The younger ones must learn to amuse themselves without making any disturbance. Paper, crayons, a few blocks, a few books are provided for them. A four-year-old may play with them or he may just sit still and listen to the older children recite. Now and then he may put his head on his desk and take a nap. Madame Girard lets the little ones sleep when they wish, for she knows that they may have been up until very late at a family dinner or at the movies the night before. And then she says, “There is nothing serious that they have to learn for a year or so.”

The four-year-old and five-year-old children, however, do learn important lessons. They learn to sit still for long periods. They learn to accept the discipline of the school. They even learn about learning—that is, they are impressed with the fact that to learn means to copy or to repeat whatever the teacher tells them. They are not encouraged to “express their personality.” On the contrary, they learn that their personality must be kept constantly under control. These attitudes are so thoroughly inculcated in the four- and five-year-old children that by the time they are six years old they are considered mature enough to begin their formal education.

When we moved to Peyrane our older son was almost five years old, and naturally he was expected to go to school. Madame Girard said we might do as we liked about sending him but she would be glad to have him. To us it seemed cruel to ask a five-year-old child to sit at a desk for six long hours a day listening to a language he did not understand, so we sent him at first only in the morning. After a few weeks, however, he asked if he might attend both the morning and afternoon sessions. He said he liked the Peyrane school much more than the kindergarten he had attended at home. “At home we always had to keep playing all the time. Here we can learn real letters and numbers and things.”

To an observer who studies school life in Peyrane over a period of time it is apparent that the children learn much that is not explicitly stated in the curriculum. From the attitude of the teachers, from the way in which the school work is presented, from the textbooks, the children learn to make basic assumptions concerning the nature of reality and their relationship to it. These assumptions are not mentioned in the directives of the Department of Education. They are not prescribed by the Primary Inspector. If the teachers are conscious of them they never discuss them directly in class. Yet these assumptions are so important that they will determine to a large extent the frame of mind and the manner in which a child will approach the problems with which he is confronted throughout his life.

In teaching morals, grammar, arithmetic, and science the teacher always follows the same method. She first introduces a principle or rule
that each pupil is supposed to memorize so thoroughly that it can be repeated on any occasion without the slightest faltering. Then a concrete illustration or problem is presented and studied or solved in the light of the principle. More problems or examples are given until the children can recognize the abstract principle implicit in the concrete circumstances and the set of circumstances implicit in the principle. When this relationship is sufficiently established in the minds of the children, the teacher moves on to another principle and set of related facts.

The principle itself is not questioned and is hardly discussed. Children are not encouraged to formulate principles independently on the basis of an examination of concrete cases. They are given the impression that principles exist autonomously. They are always there: immutable and constant. One can only learn to recognize them, and accept them. The same is true of concrete facts and circumstances. They exist, real and inalterable. Nothing can be done to change them. One has only to recognize them and accept them. The solution of any problem lies in one’s ability to recognize abstract principles and concrete facts and to establish the relationship between them.

Another basic assumption is most clearly seen in the way history, civics, geography, and literature are studied, but it is important in all subjects. In learning history the children are first presented with a general framework which they are asked to memorize. Studying history consists partially in filling in this framework, that is, in learning how the facts of history fit into the framework. An isolated fact is unimportant in itself. It assumes importance only when one recognizes its relationship to other facts and above all its relationship to the whole framework. In learning geography a child first studies his own countryside, then the surrounding region, then France, then the world. Heavy stress is placed on the relationship of each geographical unit to a larger whole. In the study of morals and civics the children learn the proper relationship and reciprocal obligations of the individual to the family, to the community, to France, and to humanity.

This emphasis on the relationship of the part to the whole is also seen in the rather rudimentary study of literature that is carried out in the higher grades. No attempt is made to understand or to appreciate the text which is presented to the class until it has been thoroughly dissected and analyzed. It is broken down into its logical divisions, and the author’s purpose in each division is explained. Difficult or obscure words and expressions are explained. Only when each of the component parts of a passage is understood and when the relationship of each part to the whole is made clear is the passage put back together and appraised as a unit.

Thus a child comes to believe that every fact, every phenomenon, every individual is an integral part of a larger unit. As in a jigsaw
puzzle each part has its own clearly defined and proper position. They make sense only if their proper relationship is recognized.

Finally, it is assumed that knowledge is important only as it is related to human beings. There is no stress on learning simply for the sake of learning, no stress on the accumulation of facts without regard for their usefulness. This is most evident in the study of arithmetic and geometry. The principles studied and the problems solved are chosen exclusively on the basis of their usefulness in teaching the students to solve the problems which they will be confronted with after they leave school.

The purpose of the rudimentary instruction they receive in science is equally related to the children as human beings. No effort is made to have the children collect butterflies, learn to recognize different kinds of birds, study rocks simply for the purpose of being able to classify them. A bird offers no interest in itself. It is interesting because it is good to eat, or because it is harmful to the crops or eats harmful insects, or because it has beautiful plumage or a beautiful song. In the same way the study of geography does not consist in memorizing the capitals of all the departments of France; its purpose is rather to show the relationship of the people of Peyrane to their surroundings.

The learning of grammatical rules is so emphasized that at times it appears that the rules are considered important in themselves. This impression is false, however. The rules are considered important because it is believed that a person cannot express himself properly unless he knows them thoroughly. It is difficult for an Anglo-Saxon to comprehend how essential this language study is to the French. The French judge a person to a far greater degree than we do on the basis of his ability to speak and write correctly. Even in a rural community like Peyrane the way a person speaks and writes is considered an important indication of his social status. The study of grammar is thus strongly emphasized in school, not because of its intrinsic value but because it will be important to the children throughout their life.

The history course shows the same orientation. The framework of dates and facts must be memorized, it is true, but is important because it lends perspective to the two aspects of historical study which are emphasized in the course: the life of the French people at different periods of history and the study of the lives of great men.

In 1938, Monsieur Jean Zay, then Minister of Education, sent out a circular which Madame Vernet and Madame Girard told me they consider the most authoritative statement of purpose and method in primary education. Concerning the study of history the statement says:

In teaching history the teachers should emphasize the role played by those men who have helped bring about progress. Today we no longer believe that history can provide a means to foretell the future; we no longer believe that
the study of history can provide us with solutions for present-day problems. It does teach us, however, to meet events in their unfolding with a more impassive attitude, and that is a valuable contribution. It teaches us the value of honest labor, the value of great example, the comfort to be derived from healthy admiration. Children should be told of the effective role played by those men and women whom we consider the benefactors of humanity. If they retain only a genuine feeling for such people we shall have accomplished much. For they will have learned that this material progress of which we are so proud was accomplished at the cost of great effort, that it is the ever-threatened result of an immense collaboration, that in enjoying it we are responsible to the great men who created it.

Not dates or facts alone then, but human beings in relationship to dates and facts, should constitute the study of history.

So in their study of arithmetic, science, geography, grammar, and history, children learn that man is the measure of all things. Facts are important and must be recognized, accepted and learned, but they are important only as they may be related to human beings, and especially to the human beings living in the commune of Peyrane.

The most successful child in the school of Peyrane is the child who goes beyond the subject matter to grasp these basic assumptions. Without consciously realizing that he does so, he learns to recognize the relationship between abstract principle and concrete fact, the relationship between the part and the whole, and the relationship of knowledge and experience to himself as a human being.

Even the average child, who certainly has only a partial grasp of these relationships, is sufficiently imbued with their importance that they will help determine the manner in which he seeks a solution to any problem—in human relations, in politics, in mechanics. He will approach the problem as he was taught to approach all problems in school. In every problem he knows there is a principle involved, and it is important for him to recognize the principle. In every problem lurk practical, concrete difficulties which make the application of the principle difficult. There is no isolated problem; every problem is related to a larger problem. The only problems worth worrying about are those which affect people. To approach problems with these assumptions is to approach them sensibly, reasonably, logically, and therefore, it is assumed, correctly.

Of course, these assumptions are not new to the schoolchild, for they are also implicit in most of the home training he has received. One day Madame Favre was sitting in front of her house sewing. Three-year-old Dédou, who was playing in the street, went too near the gutter and was about to get muddy. His mother looked up and called sharply to him:

“Dédou, you’ll get yourself dirty. Get away from there!” Dédou was usually a docile child, but this time a naughty urge got the better of
him. He looked up impudently and shouted:

"Why?"

His mother gave him a glance that he would remember and said through her teeth:

"Because I tell you to be good ("sage"). Because you’re the child and I’m the mother. Because we’re not animals. That’s the way it is! So!"

Madame Favre was not merely exerting her authority. She was unwittingly explaining that there was a principle involved in this situation over which Dédou had no control. He could only recognize it and accept it. She was explaining that both she and he were part of a family and that each had a role that must be maintained. She was emphasizing the importance of human dignity. She was saying that those were the facts, pleasant or unpleasant, and that his only reasonable course of action was to conform.

There is no conflict between the principles of thought and action taught in the home and those taught in the school. The only difference is that in school they are taught formally. The basic assumptions are fundamentally the same.

Three afternoons a week a group of older children stayed at school from four to four-thirty to study English in the special course which the teachers and the Primary Inspector had authorized me to teach. One day, not long after I began to teach this course, I was talking to Henri Favre, the father of one of my pupils.

"How’s Jacqueline doing in the English class?" he asked.

I was embarrassed because Jacqueline was the worst student in the class. Physically mature for her thirteen years, she was merely putting in time in school until her fourteenth birthday. She was attending the English class only because of its prestige value. However, I did not want to hurt her father’s feelings, so I commented as favorably as I could:

"Oh, she’s making progress."

Henri Favre looked pleased but surprised. "I’m glad," he said, "but, you know, it astonishes me because she’s lazy and she’s not very intelligent."

It took time for me to become accustomed to the honest, objective manner in which parents openly appraised the intelligence of their children. They recognize the fact that some people are more intelligent than others, and since it is a fact it must be recognized, faced and accepted like all other facts. They see no point in hiding it, or denying it, or even in minimizing it. One cannot hide what is perfectly evident to everyone, and little purpose would be served by minimizing it. It is better to accept such facts as they exist and to try to make the most of them. Consequently, parents, teachers and children discuss differences in intelligence with relative frankness. When a parent says, "My child is not so intelligent as yours," he is not fishing for a compliment; he is stating a fact.
The first day I attended Madame Girard's class I was shocked at the way in which she insisted on discussing her pupils with me in front of them. After each child in the Preparatory Course recited she stopped the recitation to give me an analysis of his capacity.

"There's an intelligent little one," she said after Jeanne Reynard had answered a question. "She works hard, too. It's a pleasure to teach a child like that."

Renée Chanon failed to answer her question. "There's Renée. Not stupid, but lazy. She sits there distracted with her mouth open all day. And untidy! You can't expect much of that kind of girl."

Marie Père tried painfully to give some kind of answer to her question but Madame Girard cut her off and gave me a look of despair. "Poor Marie. She tries, but—I think all is not right." She tapped her forehead significantly with her forefinger. Marie squirmed in her seat and looked as unhappy as I felt over the situation, but the recitation and the commentary moved on until all the children had had their turn.

Eventually I became accustomed to hearing teachers and parents discuss the children in front of them, although I was never able to force myself to speak with frankness in the presence of the children. I am sure that my lack of forthrightness was not considered an indication of tact, however. It was taken simply as an indication that I was no judge of intelligence.

Since children differ in the degree of their intelligence and since there is no point in hiding this no one expects them all to achieve the same standard of performance. Each one is expected simply to do his best, depending on his own individual capacity. This means that there is a different standard of intellectual performance for each child in the school. Of course, no formal recognition is given to the existence of different standards. The system is simpler than that. The teacher, as she gets to know a child, inevitably makes a judgment concerning his intellectual potentialities, and once this judgment is made she expects the child to live up to her conception of his potentialities. The goal she unconsciously sets for each child is high, probably too high for the child to reach, but she exerts constant pressure on him to make an effort to live up to it.

Only the child who makes an extraordinary effort to fulfill his individual potentialities escapes punishment. Georges Vincent, one of the brightest boys in the school, does far better in his lessons than most of the children, but he receives the most sarcastic criticism of which Madame Vernet is capable because she believes his performance could be even better than it is. On the other hand, Marie Père receives very little criticism because it is recognized that she does the best she can with her limited capacity for learning. After her class had been learning how to write the alphabet Madame Girard said to her mother one day:
“Marie is doing very well. She has learned how to make only three letters, but she makes them quite neatly.”

The judgment a teacher makes concerning the potentialities of a child is based entirely on her common-sense observations. She knows about objective intelligence tests, for she has studied testing in Normal School, but she is sceptical of the usefulness and validity of objective tests. She is timid about expressing this scepticism—which, incidentally, is shared by her superior, the Primary Inspector—because she knows that “modern” education lays heavy stress on objective tests, and she does not like to be considered backward. However, she has confidence in her own judgment of a child’s capacity, which almost always coincides with the judgment made by the child’s parents and friends.

“Why,” asked Monsieur Valentini, “should the teachers take the time and trouble to give these tests to their children only to find out what is already obvious?”

Differences in intelligence are recognized, and a multiple standard is set up for intellectual performance. Differences in personality and home training are also recognized, but there is a rigorous, single standard for social behavior. The teachers may understand the reasons for a child’s misbehavior. They are not surprised that Joseph Mariano, the motherless child of a migrant laborer, is naughtier than Henri-Paul Favre, whose parents are benevolently strict in the matter of home training. To understand these differences is not to accept them, however. They refuse to tolerate misbehavior for any reason. Deviation from the standard set for all children brings immediate and stern punishment.

The code of social behavior which the teachers enforce is essentially the same that most parents have tried to maintain at home. The function of the teachers is to carry on this home discipline and to make up for omissions of lax parents. Since most parents are lax in some respect, this means that for most children the discipline is harsher at school than at home.

Whenever I went into Madame Vernet’s classroom all the children would rise at once and say in chorus, “Bonjour, Monsieur.” They would remain standing until Madame Vernet told them to sit down. In Madame Girard’s room the six-year-olds would stand up, but the younger ones had to be prompted by Madame Girard who said to them harshly:

“Well! What does one do when a grownup enters the room? One stands up straight and says ‘Bonjour, Monsieur.’” Then the little children would rise and the class would perform as directed.

It disturbed me that I should disrupt the class activities when I really wanted to slip in unobserved, so I asked Madame Vernet if this rite could be omitted when I came in. She refused.

“We’re glad when you come in,” she said. “It gives the children a chance to practice their lesson in politeness which they need so badly.”
It is as important for the children to be polite in school as it is for them to learn their lessons. They must never speak to a teacher or to any adult without addressing her or him directly as "Mademoiselle" or "Madame" or "Monsieur." If an adult stops and greets them they must extend their right hand in a forthright manner. A boy must, of course, remove his hat when he is greeting someone; simply touching one's finger to a hat is insufficient. Children must never dispute the word of the teacher. Whatever she says must be accepted respectfully, absolutely and without other comment than "Oui, Madame" or "Non, Madame." If the teacher is in error, it is up to her to discover the fact. A child must never contradict.

In all circumstances a child must "parler comme il faut," that is, he must speak clearly and directly. He must not talk to another child in the classroom without the teacher's permission. If he wants to speak to the teacher he should hold up one finger and wait patiently for her to recognize him. He should not at the same time wave his finger and call out in a loud whisper, "'dame, 'dame!"

Children must also be careful "se tenir comme il faut" at all times. This means that they must sit up straight and keep their hands no lower than the level of the desk top. They must not slouch or drape themselves over their desk. When they stand they must stand erect, squarely on both feet, without leaning on the desk in front of them.

Neatness is another virtue that is stressed. Children have already learned to play without getting dirty; now they must learn to work neatly. They must not get ink on their hands or clothing or books. The papers they write must be free of blots and smudges. An arithmetic paper with the correct answers is unacceptable if the problems are not written neatly. Finger prints and careless writing are an infraction almost as serious as a wrong answer.

The teachers try to maintain a high standard of personal cleanliness among the children, but home conditions beyond their control sometimes frustrate their efforts. If a child is always dirty they do what they can to teach him to keep himself clean, taking care not to criticize his parents. Only if the dirt is a menace to the health of the other children will they remonstrate with the parents. Of course, if a child is ill he is sent home at once. Running noses and coughs, however, are accepted as part of the normal winter condition.

The children are taught that needless daring is not a virtue. Physical danger must be faced only when it cannot be avoided. The teachers stress this lesson not only because it is part of the code but also because they feel the weight of responsibility for the safety of the children at school. They enforce the safety rules rigorously. Children must not climb on walls or jump from high banks. They must not bring knives to school. They must not expose other children to danger. Rough games
are avoided. If two children start to fight they are separated, and both of them are punished, regardless of who started the fight and regardless of who was "in the right." Complete tolerance is shown to verbal attacks, but physical aggression is taboo.

If a child is hurt he tries to hide the pain. At recess one afternoon Jules Marchal jumped from a wall and hurt his arm. Everyone crowded around, but little pity was shown in spite of the fact that Jules was obviously in pain. He was used, rather, as an object lesson to remind the other children that they often get hurt when they disobey the rules. To minimize the criticism he was receiving from both teachers and children, Jules pretended he was not really hurt. He smiled and started to play, but his face was white and he was unsteady on his feet. He stayed at school the rest of the afternoon and discovered only that evening, when his parents took him to the doctor, that his arm was broken. A child in Jules' predicament learns to keep his feelings to himself. Expressing them only exposes him to criticism. I do not mean to imply that Madame Vernet felt no personal sympathy for Jules, in this case, incidentally. Her pity was simply overshadowed by her desire to prevent a recurrence of such an accident and the desire to clear herself of the responsibility for this mishap.

The worst sin of all—that is, the worst sin that could conceivably be committed by a schoolchild—is dishonesty, dishonesty in the form of either lying or stealing. For both these offenses a child is severely punished. If it is proven that a child has knowingly and maliciously taken an object which does not belong to him, he is even more severely punished.

I observed and heard of very few cases of dishonesty among the children, however. Two of the children were said to be habitual cheaters at school, and they were frequently punished. The only sensational case of dishonesty I knew of was that of one of the youngest girls, whose father came to school one day and told Madame Girard that she had taken forty francs from his purse. When she was questioned she denied having done it. The father then went to the store and asked Monsieur Reynard if she had been there. Monsieur Reynard said that she had come in that morning to buy forty francs' worth of chewing gum. This girl received the most severe punishment given at the school during the year. No doubt her punishment at home was even more severe.

This instance of collaboration between home and school in the enforcement of the social code is typical. The parents welcome the cooperation of the teachers and complain only if the teachers are insufficiently harsh. In general, they say that the teachers are more successful in disciplining the children than they, the parents, are. Times have changed, they say. When they were children they feared their parents and would not dare to offend them. Now, they say, children are
impolite. They disobey their parents and insult them with impunity. Only the teachers can discipline them.

To an American, however, the children of Peyrane seem incredibly well behaved. They are courteous, docile, gentle, coöperative, respectful. They seem deficient in daring, but on the other hand there is no malicious destruction of property by gangs of children. They are cruel-tongued to their equals, but they are gentle and patient with children younger than they. Above all they have a sense of dignity and social poise. Regardless of what complaining parents say, the children of Peyrane appear to accept the social yoke that is placed on them. The teachers rarely have to punish a serious infraction. Their principal disciplinary efforts are directed toward insisting on courtesy and neatness, and toward repressing restlessness and talking out of turn.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. As a social scientist, Wylie is here interested in the relation between the elementary school as a socializing and social institution and the larger social life of the French village which he describes at length in the book from which this selection is taken.
   a. What evidence is there here that Wylie is a trained social scientist?
   c. Some social scientists have been accused of writing too abstractly. Comment on the writing here with this statement in mind.

2. Running through this selection, sometimes explicitly, more often implicitly, is an extended comparison between French and American elementary education. Point out some of the major points in this comparison.

3. Wylie emphasizes the things that are learned in school but that are not taught directly. What are some of these things?

4. Reread the section (pp. 183-84) in which Wylie describes the study of history, science, and grammar. How is the study of facts related to basic assumptions? Contrast this view of education with that of Thomas Gradgrind in “M’Choakumchild’s Schoolroom.”
Frank O'Connor

THE IDEALIST

Reading? I was never struck on it. It never did anything for me but get me into trouble.

Adventure stories weren't so bad, but as a kid I was very serious and always preferred realism to romance. School stories were what I liked best. The trouble was that even they seemed to be a bit far-fetched, judging by our standards. The schools were English and quite different to the one I attended. They were always called "the venerable pile," and there was usually a ghost in them; they were built in a square that was called the "quad," and, to judge by the pictures, were all clock-towers, spires and pinnacles like the lunatic asylum with us. The fellows in the stories were all good climbers, and used to get in and out of the school at night on ropes made of knotted sheets. They dressed queerly; they wore long trousers, short black jackets and top-hats. When they did anything wrong they were given "lines." When it was a bad case they were flogged, and never showed any sign of pain, only the bad fellows, and they always said "Ow! Ow!"

Mostly, they were grand chaps who always stuck together and were great at football and cricket. They never told lies, and anyone who did, they wouldn't talk to him. If they were caught out and asked a point-blank question, they always told the truth, unless someone else was in it along with them, and then wild horses wouldn't get them to split, even if the other fellow was a thief, which, as a matter of fact, he frequently was. It was surprising in such good schools, with fathers who never gave them less than five quid, the number of thieves there were. The fellows I knew hardly ever stole, even though they only got a penny a week, and some-

times not even that when their fathers were on the booze and their mothers had to go to the pawn.

I worked hard at the football and cricket, though, of course, we never had a proper football, and the sort of cricket we played was with a hurley stick against a wicket chalked on some wall. The officers in the barrack played proper cricket, and I used to go up on summer evenings to see them.

Even so, I couldn’t help being disgusted at the bad way things were run in our school. Our venerable pile was a red-brick building without tower or pinnacle a fellow could climb, and no ghost at all; we had no team, so a fellow, no matter how hard he worked, could never play for the school, and nobody had ever thought of giving us lines. Instead Murderer Molony either lifted you by the ears or bashed you with a cane.

But these were only superficial things. What was really wrong was ourselves. The fellows sucked up to the masters and told them everything that went on. If they were caught out they tried to put the blame on somebody else, even if it meant telling lies. If they were caned, they snivelled and said it wasn’t fair; drew back their hands the least shade as if they were terrified, so that the cane only caught the top of their fingers, and then screamed and stood on one leg, and shook their fingers out in hopes of getting it counted as one. Finally they roared that their wrist was broken, and crawled back to their desks with their hands squeezed under their armpits, howling. I mean, you couldn’t help feeling ashamed, imagining what chaps from a decent school would think if they saw it.

My way to school led me past the barrack gate. In those peaceful days the English sentries never minded you going past the guardroom to have a look; if you came at dinnertime they even called you in and gave you plum duff and tea. Naturally, with such a temptation on my way, I was often late. When you were late, the only excuse, short of a letter from your mother, was to say you were at early Mass. The Murderer would never know whether you were or not, and if he did anything to you, you could easily get him into trouble with the parish priest. Even as kids we all knew who the real boss of the school was.

But after I had started reading school stories I was always a bit uneasy about saying I was at Mass. It was a lie, and I knew the chaps in the stories would never have told it. They were all round me like invisible presences, and I hated to do anything they wouldn’t approve of.

One morning I was very late.

“What kept you till this hour, Regan?” asked Murderer Molony, looking at the clock.

I wanted to say I was at Mass but I couldn’t. The invisible presences were all round me.

“I delayed at the barrack, sir,” I said in panic.
There was a faint giggle from the class and Molony raised his brows in mild surprise. He was a big powerful man with fair hair and blue eyes and a manner that at times was deceptively mild.

“Oh, indeed?” he said politely enough. “And what did you do that for?”

“I was watching the soldiers drilling, sir,” said I.

The class giggled again. This was a new line entirely for them. I suppose it was the first time anyone ever told the truth in that class. Besides, Molony had a dead set on the English.

“Oh,” said Molony casually, “I never knew you were such a military man. Hold out your hand!”

 Compared with the laughter the slaps were nothing and I did not flinch. I returned to my desk slowly and quietly without snivelling or squeezing my hands, and the Murderer looked after me, raising his brows again as much as to say that this was a new line for him too. But the other fellows gaped and whispered as if I were some strange animal. At playtime they all gathered round me, full of excitement.

“Regan, why did you say that about the barrack?”

“Because ’twas true,” I replied firmly. “I wasn’t going to tell him a lie.”

“What lie?”

“That I was at Mass.”

“Then couldn’t you say you had to go on a message?”

“That would be a lie too.”

“Cripes, Regan,” they said, “you’d better mind yourself. The Murderer is in an awful wax. He’ll massacre you.”

I knew that only too well. I could see that the man’s professional pride had been deeply hurt, and for the rest of the day I was on my best behaviour. But my best was not sufficient for the occasion, for I underrated the Murderer’s guile. From the frown on his face he seemed to be puzzled over something in a book he was reading, and even when he spoke, in a low quiet voice, he scarcely raised his blue eyes from it.

“Regan, was that you talking?”

“’Twas, sir,” I replied in consternation.

This time the whole class laughed. They couldn’t believe that I wasn’t deliberately trailing my coat, and, of course, the laugh must have convinced him that I was. I suppose if people do tell you lies all day and every day it soon becomes a sort of perquisite and you resent being deprived of it.

“Oh,” he said, throwing down the book, “we’ll soon put a stop to that.”

This time it was a tougher job, because he really was on his mettle. But so was I. I knew this was the testing point, and that if only I could keep my head I should provide a model for the whole class. When I had got through with it without moving a muscle and returned to my desk
with my hands by my side, the invisible presences gave me a great clap, but the visible ones were nearly as annoyed as the Murderer. After school a half-dozen of them followed me down the playground through the smell of stale bread and butter.

“Go on!” they shouted truculently. “Shaping as usual!”

“I was not shaping.”

“You were shaping! You’re always showing off. Trying to pretend he didn’t hurt you—a blooming cry-baby like you!”

“I wasn’t trying to pretend,” I shouted, even then resisting the temptation to nurse my bruised hands. “Only decent fellows don’t cry over every little pain like kids.”

“Go on!” they bawled after me. “You ould idiot.” And as I went down the school lane, still trying to keep what the stories called “a stiff upper lip” and reminding myself that my torture was over until the next morning, I heard their mocking voices after me.

“Mad Bill! Yah, Mad Bill!”

I realized that if I were to keep on terms with the invisible presences I should have to watch my step in school.

So I did, all through that year. But then, one day, an awful thing happened. I was coming in from the yard, and in the porch outside our schoolroom I saw a fellow called Gorman taking something from a coat on the rack. Gorman was a fellow I disliked and feared; a handsome, sulky, spoiled, and sneering lout. I paid no attention to him because I had escaped for a few moments into my dream world in which fathers never gave you anything less than fivers and chaps who had been ignored suddenly turned up and saved the honour of the school in the last half of the match.

“Who are you looking at?” he asked threateningly.

“I wasn’t looking at anyone,” I said with an indignant start.

“I was only getting a pencil out of my coat,” he added, clenching his fists.

“Nobody said you weren’t,” said I, thinking this a very queer thing to start a row about.

“You’d better not either,” he snarled. “You can mind your own business.”

“You mind yours,” I retorted, for the purpose of saving face. “I never spoke to you at all.”

And that, so far as I was concerned, was the end of it. But after playtime, the Murderer, looking exceptionally serious, stood before the class, balancing a pencil in both hands.

“Everyone who left the classroom this morning, stand out!” he said. Then he lowered his head and looked at us from under his fair brows.

“Mind, now, I said everyone!”

I stood out with the others, including Gorman.
"Did you take anything from a coat on the rack this morning?" asked the Murderer, laying a heavy, hairy paw on Gorman's shoulder and staring into his face.

"Me, sir?" Gorman asked innocently. "No, sir."

"Did you see anyone doing it?"

"No, sir."

"You?" he asked another lad, but even before he reached me at all I realized why Gorman had told the lie and wondered in panic what I should do.

"You?" he asked me, and his big red face was close to mine and his blue eyes only a couple of inches away.

"I didn't take anything, sir," I said in a low voice.

"Did you see someone else do it?" he asked, raising his brows and indicating quite plainly that he had noticed my evasion. "Have you a tongue in your head?" he shouted suddenly, and the whole class, electrified, stared at me. "You?" he added curtly to the next boy as though he had given me up.

"No, sir."

"Back to your desks, the rest of ye!" he ordered. "Regan, you stay here!"

He waited until everyone was seated again before he went on.

"Turn out your pockets!"

I did, and a half-stifled giggle rose which the Murderer quelled with a thunderous glance. Even for a small boy, I had pockets that were museums in themselves; the purpose of half the things I brought to light I couldn't have explained myself. They were antiques, prehistoric, and unlabelled. Among them was a school story borrowed the previous evening from another chap, a queer fellow who chewed paper as if it were gum. The Murderer reached out for it, and, holding it at arm's length, shook it out with an expression of deepening disgust as he saw the nibbled corners and margins.

"Oh," he said disdainfully, "so this is how you waste your time, is it? What do you do with these—eat them?"

"'Tisn't mine, sir," I said against the laugh that sprang up. "I borrowed it."

"Is that what you did with the money?" he sprang quickly, his fat head on one side.

"Money?" I said, getting confused. "What money?"

"The shilling that was stolen from Flanagan's overcoat this morning," he added—Flanagan was a little hunchback whose people coddled him: no one else in the school would have had that much money.

"I never took Flanagan's shilling," I said, beginning to cry. "And you have no right to say I did."

"I have the right to say that you're the most impudent, defiant puppy
in the class,” he replied, his voice hoarse with rage, “and I wouldn’t put it past you. What else can anyone expect and you reading this dirty, rotten, filthy rubbish?” And he tore my school story in two halves and tossed them to the farthest corner of the schoolroom. “Dirty, filthy English rubbish! Now hold out your hand!”

This time the invisible presences deserted me. Hearing themselves described in those contemptuous terms, they fled. The Murderer went mad in the way people do whenever they’re up against something they don’t understand. Even the other fellows were shocked, and heaven knows they had little enough sympathy with me.

“You should put the police on him,” they advised me afterwards in the playground. “He lifted the cane over his shoulder. He could get the gaol for that.”

“But why didn’t you say you didn’t see anyone?” asked one chap.

“Because I did,” I said, beginning to sob all over again at the memory of my wrongs. “I saw Gorman.”

“Gorman?” they echoed incredulously. “Was it Gorman took Flanagan’s money? And why didn’t you say so?”

“Because it wouldn’t be right,” I sobbed.

“Why wouldn’t it be right?” one of them asked, gaping.

“Because Gorman should have told the truth himself,” I said. “And if this was a decent school no one would ever speak to him again for it.”

“But why would Gorman tell the truth if he took the money?” he asked, as you’d speak to a baby. “Jay, Regan,” he added pityingly, “you’re getting madder and madder. Now look what you’re after bringing on yourself!”

Suddenly Gorman himself came lumbering up.

“Regan,” he shouted threateningly, “did you say I stole Flanagan’s money?”

Gorman, though, of course, I didn’t realize it, was as much at sea as Molony and the rest of them. The only way he could explain my silence was by assuming that I was afraid of his threats, and now he felt the time had come to renew them. He couldn’t have come at a moment when I cared less for them. Despairingly I lashed out with all my strength at his brutal face. He screamed, and his hand came away from his mouth, all blood. Then he threw off his satchel and made for me, but at the same moment a door opened behind us and a lame teacher called Murphy emerged. We all ran like mad and the fight was forgotten.

But it wasn’t forgotten in other quarters. Next morning after prayers the Murderer scowled at me.

“Regan,” he asked, “were you fighting in the yard after school yesterday?”

For a second or so I didn’t reply. I couldn’t help feeling that the game wasn’t worth a candle. But before the spiritual presences fled for ever I made one last effort.
“I was, sir,” I said, and this time there wasn’t even a titter. The whole class took it solemnly as the behavior of a chap who was quite out of his mind.

“Who were you fighting with?”

“I’d rather not say, sir,” I replied, hysteria beginning to well up in me. It was all very well for the invisible presences, but they hadn’t to deal with the Murderer.

“Who was he fighting with?” he asked lightly, resting his hands on the desk and studying the ceiling.

“Gorman, sir,” replied three or four voices—as easy as that!

“Did Gorman hit him first?”

“No, sir. He hit Gorman first.”

“Stand out,” he said, taking up the cane again. “Now,” he added, going up to Gorman, “you take this and hit him. And make sure you hit him hard,” he added, giving Gorman’s arm an encouraging squeeze. “Regan thinks he’s a great fellow. You show him now what we think of him.”

Gorman came towards me with the cane in one hand and a broad grin on his face. The whole class began to roar as if it were a great joke and even the Murderer permitted himself a modest grin at his own cleverness.

“Hold out your hand,” he said to me.

I didn’t. I began to feel trapped and a little crazy.

“Hold out your hand, I say!” he shouted, beginning to lose his temper again.

“I will not,” I shouted back at him, losing all control of myself.

“You what?” he cried, dashing at me round the classroom with his hand raised above his head as though to strike me. “What’s that you said, you dirty little thief?”

“I’m not a thief,” I screamed. “And if he comes near me I’ll kick the shins off him. You have no right to give him that cane. And you have no right to call me a thief either. If you do it again, I’ll go down to the police and then we’ll soon see who the thief is.”

“You refused to answer my questions,” he shouted, and if I had been in my right mind I should have known that he was suddenly frightened of something.

“No,” I said through my sobs, “and I won’t answer them now either. I’m not a spy.”

“Oh,” he retorted with a sarcastic sniff, “so that’s what you call a spy?”

“Yes, and that’s what they all are, all the fellows here—dirty spies!—but I’m not going to be a spy for you. You can do your own spying.”

“That’s enough now, that’s enough!” he said, raising his fat hand almost beseechingly. “There’s no need to lose control of yourself, my dear young fellow, and there’s no need whatever to screech like that. ’Tis most unmanly. Go back to your seat now and I’ll talk to you another time.”

That day I did no work at all, and no one else did much either. The
hysteria had spread to the class. I alternated between fits of exultation at the thought of how I had defied the Murderer to his face and panic at the prospect of how he'd take it out of me after, and at each change of mood I put my head in my hands and sobbed all over again. The Murderer didn't tell me to stop. He didn't even look at me. The poor unfortunate man! When I think of it now I almost feel sorry for him.

After that I was the hero of the school for a whole afternoon. Even Gorman, when he tried to resume the fight, was told by two or three of the bigger fellows to hop off; a fellow that took the cane to beat another chap, he had no status at all. But that was not the sort of hero I wanted to be. I wanted something calmer, more codified, less sensational.

Next morning I was in such a state of panic that I didn't know how to face school at all. The silence of the school lane and the yard put me into a fresh panic. I was late again!

"What kept you, Regan?" the Murderer asked quietly.

"I was at Mass, sir," said I.

"Oh, all right," he said, though he seemed a bit surprised. What I hadn't realized was the immense advantage of our system over the English one. By this time half a dozen of his pets had brought the Murderer the true story, and if he didn't feel himself a monster, he certainly felt himself a fool, which is worse.

But by that time I didn't care. In my school-sack I had another story. Not a school story this time, though. School stories were a wash-out. "Bang! Bang!"—that was the only way to deal with fellows like the Murderer and Gorman. "The only good teacher is a dead teacher."

AIDS TO STUDY

1. Although context is by no means an infallible guide to the exact meaning of unfamiliar words, what does the context tell you about the meaning of "caught out," "in an awful wax," and "shaping"? What help will a standard dictionary give you with these terms?

2. What is the function of the introductory or expository section of the story, and where does it end? The story proper has three "episodes," which happen on three different days. Find the beginning of each episode. The conclusion of the story is a fourth episode, which contains a surprise. What is it?

3. What is meant by the phrase "invisible presences"? How often is it used? To what purpose?

4. How do you account for "Murderer Molony's" backing down on his threat to have Gorman punish Regan? What does Regan mean by saying, "When I think of it now I almost feel sorry for him"?

5. To what extent is the tone of this story controlled by the Irish setting and by the use of Irish colloquialisms? (Suppose the story were a translation from, say, French or Russian.)
My first affection for the University of Michigan was due, simply, to their accepting me. They had already turned me down twice because my academic record (I had flunked algebra three times in my Brooklyn high school) was so low as to be practically invisible, but the dean reversed himself after two letters in which I wrote that since working for two years—in a warehouse at $15 a week—I had turned into a much more serious fellow. He said he would give me a try, but I had better make some grades. I could not conceive of a dean at Columbia or Harvard doing that.

When I arrived in 1934, at the bottom of the depression, I fell in love with the place, groggy as I was from the bus ride, because I was out of the warehouse at last, and at least formally a part of a beautiful town, the college town of Ann Arbor. I resolved to make good for the dean, and studied so hard my first semester that in the history exam my mind went completely blank and the professor led me out of the class and told me to go to sleep and to come back and take the exam again.

I loved it also because of the surprises. Elmo Hamm, the son of a potato farmer in Upper Michigan, turned out to be as sharp a student as any of the myopic drudges who got the best grades in New York. I loved it because Harmon Remmel, the son of an Arkansas banker, lived in the room next to mine and from him I got a first glimpse of what the South meant to a Southerner, a Southerner who kept five rifles racked on the wall, and two .38’s in his valise, and poured himself bullets in a little mold he kept on his desk. (In his sophomore year he disappeared, and I found out he had been unable to bear it any longer once duck-
hunting time had rolled around again.)

I loved the idea of being separated from the nation, because the spirit of the nation, like its soil, was being blown by crazy winds. Friends of mine in New York, one of them a cum laude from Columbia, were aspiring to the city fireman's exam, but in Ann Arbor I saw that if it came to the worst a man could live on nothing for a long time. I earned $15 a month for feeding a building full of mice—the National Youth Administration footing the bill—and out of it I paid $1.75 a week for my room and squeezed the rest for my Granger tobacco (two packs for thirteen cents), my books, laundry and movies. For my meals I washed dishes in the co-op cafeteria. My eyeglasses were supplied by the Health Service, and my teeth were fixed for the cost of materials. The girls paid for themselves, including the one I married.

I think I sent more students to Michigan than anybody else who ever went there.

It was a great place for anybody who wanted to write. The Hopwood Awards, with prizes ranging from $250 to $1500, were an incentive, but there was something more. The English Department had, and still has, a serious respect for undergraduate writing efforts. Prof. Kenneth Rowe, who teaches playwriting, may not have created a playwright (no teacher ever did), but he surely read what we wrote with the urgency of one who actually had the power to produce the play. I loved the place, too, because it was just big enough to give one the feeling that his relative excellence or mediocrity had real meaning, and yet not so big as to drown one in numbers.

I remember the June of each year when the Hopwood Awards were announced, and the crowds would form to hear the featured speaker—some literary light from the book world—after which the presentations were made. How I hated those speakers for holding up the awards! And those prizes meant more than recognition. In my case at least, they meant the end of mouse-feeding and room-sharing, and the beginning of a serious plan to become a playwright. Avery Hopwood made millions by writing bedroom farces like Getting Gertie's Garter and Up in Mabel's Room; if my sense of it is correct, never was so much hope created in so many people by so modest an accomplishment. I have never sweated on an opening night the way I did at Hopwood time.

I do not know whether the same thing happened at Harvard or Columbia or Yale, but when I was at Ann Arbor I felt I was at home. It was a little world and it was man-sized. My friends were the sons of die-makers, farmers, ranchers, bankers, lawyers, doctors, clothing workers and unemployed relief recipients. They came from every part of the country and brought all their prejudices and special wisdoms. It was always so wonderful to get up in the morning. There was a lot learned
every day. I recall going to hear Kagawa, the Japanese philosopher, and how, suddenly, half the audience stood up and walked out because he had used the word Manchukuo, which is Japanese, for the Chinese province of Manchuria. As I watched the Chinese students excitedly talking outside on the steps of Hill Auditorium, I felt something about the Japanese attack on China that I had not felt before.

It was a time when the fraternities, like the football team, were losing their glamour. Life was too earnest. But I remember glancing with sadness at the photographs of Newman, Oosterbaan and the other gridiron heroes and secretly wishing that the gladiatorial age had not so completely disappeared. Instead, my generation thirsted for another kind of action, and we took great pleasure in the sit-down strikes that burst loose in Flint and Detroit, and we gasped when Roosevelt went over the line with the TVA, and we saw a new world coming every third morning, and some of the old residents thought we had gone stark raving mad.

I tell you true, when I think of the Library I think of the sound of a stump speaker on the lawn outside because so many times I looked up from what I was reading to try to hear what issue they were debating now. The place was full of speeches, meetings and leaflets. It was jumping with Issues.

But political facts of life were not all I learned. I learned that under certain atmospheric conditions you could ice-skate up and down all the streets in Ann Arbor at night. I learned that toward June you could swim in a certain place without a suit on, and that the Arboretum, a tract of land where the botanists studied plants and trees, was also good for anatomical studies, especially in spring under a moon. I had come to school believing that professors were objective repositories of factual knowledge; I found that they were not only fallible but some of them were damn fools, and enough of them seekers and questioners to make talking with them a longlasting memory.

I left Ann Arbor in the spring of 1938 and in two months was on relief. But, whether the measurement was false or not, I felt I had accomplished something there. I knew at least how much I did not know. I had found many friends and had the respect of the ones that mattered to me. It had been a small world, gentler than the real one but tough enough. It was my idea of what a university ought to be.

What is it now? You can see at once, I hope, that my judgment is not objective if only because my memories of the place are sweet, and so many things that formed those memories have been altered. There are buildings now where I remembered lawn and trees. And yet, I told myself as I resented these intrusions, in the Thirties we were all the time calling for these dormitories and they are finally built. In my day bequests were used for erecting less useful things—the carillon tower whose
bells woke us up in the morning, the Rackham Building, a grand mausoleum which seemed to have been designed for sitting around in a wide space.

There are certain facts about the University today that can be disposed of right off. In almost every field of study, a student will probably find no better training anywhere than at Michigan. Some say that in Forestry, Medicine, Creative Writing, and many other fields it is really the top. I wouldn’t know, I never went to any other school.

The student will need about a thousand dollars a year, which is cheaper than a lot of places. He will get free medical care and hospitalization; he will be able to borrow money from the University if he needs it and may take nearly forever to pay it back; he will use modern laboratories in the sciences and an excellent library in the humanities; as a freshman he will live in new dormitories, and the girls will have to be in bed at ten-thirty; if he flies to school he will land at the Willow Run Airport, the safest in the country, owned now by the University; he will have a radio station and a television station to try his scripts, if he writes, and if he is more literary than that he can try for a Hopwood Award in poetry, drama, the essay and the novel.

He will meet students of many backgrounds. Two-thirds will be from Michigan, and a large proportion of those from small towns. About nine hundred will be foreign, including Japanese, Turks, Chinese and Europeans. If he is Negro he will find little discrimination, except in a few Greek-letter fraternities. Most of his classes will be large in the first years, but his teachers have regular visiting hours and with a little push he can get to know them. He will not be permitted to drive a car or to keep liquor in his room.

On many winter mornings he will wake to find great snows, and there will be a serene hush upon the campus and the creaking of branches overhead as he walks to his class. In spring he will glance outside at a blossoming world and resolve to keep his eye away from the girl sitting beside him. By June, the heat of the prairies will threaten to kill him and he will leave just in time.

If he has the talent, he may join the Michigan Daily staff, and the Daily is as close to a real newspaper as he will find in any school. On its own press, it prints about 7500 copies a day, has the Associated Press wire service and syndicated columnists, and its student staff is paid $12 a month and up. The university athletic plant includes a stadium seating nearly 100,000 people, indoor and outdoor tennis courts, swimming pools, and so on.

If a figure can convey an idea of complexity and size—it costs about $40,000,000 a year to keep the place going. There are now better than 18,000 students and nearly 1200 faculty, and the figures will rise next year and the year after. The school has just bought 347 acres for new
buildings. More facts may be had for the asking; but in any case, you couldn't do better for facilities.

Things seem to be getting done now. For instance, on the north side of the campus the Phoenix Project is going up, the only thing of its kind in the country. It was conceived by an alumnus in the advertising business who discovered, while traveling through Europe, that we were being accused of using the atom for war only. Returning here, he began a campaign for alumni contributions to create an institute which will accept no Government money, do no war work, and instead of operating in secrecy will attempt to discover and disperse the knowledge of the atom that will, some say, revolutionize human life. Research projects are under way, although the scientists are not yet housed in one building, and already a method has been found by which the dreaded trichina, often found in pork, is destroyed. One of the men in charge of the project told me that the implications of Phoenix will reach into every science, that it has already moved into botany, medicine, dentistry, and eventually will span them all.

There is an enormous growth in all kinds of theater since I was at Michigan. Somewhere, sometime this year on campus, you could have seen Brigadoon, Gilbert and Sullivan, a German play, a French play, Aristophanes, Pirandello, Deep are the Roots, Faust, Madame Butterfly, Mister Roberts, and more, all acted by students. A professional theater has done Camus, Bridie, Shakespeare, Saroyan, Yeats, Gertrude Stein, Sophocles, Synge and the Norwegian Krog. A symphony orchestra and a jazz band play student compositions frequently; there is a practically continuous art show going on with both traveling and local exhibitions on view; the best foreign and art films are shown once a week and the joint is jumping with concerts. All this is proof that a considerable number of people in Ann Arbor are looking for more than technology and are eager to feed their souls—a fact sometimes doubted by many in and out of the University.

The increase in students goes far to explain the impression of great activity, of building, of research, the scores of research projects, and of course the great increases in the faculty, especially in the English and Psychology departments. But the changes are also qualitative. As one small sign, the Music School has a few teachers who actually compose. The old idea of the University is not passing away, it is being worked away, it seems; the study of phenomena is giving way to the creation of useful things. Generation, the literary magazine, does not merely publish essays on music but new scores, as well as poetry, photographs and stories.

The University has the feel of a practical workshop these days. In my time a great deal of research and thesis writing was carried on by people who were simply hiding from the Depression. When you asked under-
graduates what they intended to major in, and what career they meant to follow, you saw an oblong blur float across their eyes. These days nearly everybody seems to be quite sure. I knew graduate students who lived in an abandoned house with no electricity or heat, and never took the boardings off the windows for fear of discovery, and one of them had been around so long he had gone through every course in the Lit school but Roman Band Instruments. The lucky ones got an assistantship at $600 a year and even so looked like they had dropped out of a novel by Dostoevski. Now, in some departments, a man doing his dissertation hooks into a research project and earns $2400 a year and sometimes gets secretarial help in the bargain.

The Psychology Department, for instance, which used to have about a half-dozen members, and was year in year out trying to discover the learning processes of rats put through an enormous maze, now spreads out over a whole floor of offices, and spends tens of thousands investigating mass behavior of people, of all things, problems of industrial psychology, and in the words of one troubled researcher, “how to make people do what you want them to while thinking they are doing it because they want to.”

From the physical, quantitative point of view, it seems to me that if by some magic this University of 1953 had suddenly materialized on a morning in 1935, let’s say, we would have decided that the millennium had arrived. The mere fact that every morning the Michigan Daily displays two columns of invitations from corporations and Government bureaus to students to apply for positions would have been enough.

The millennium is here, and yet it isn’t here. What’s wrong, then? I have no proof for this, but I felt it many times in my stay and I’ll say it: I did not feel any love around the place. I suspect that I resent the Detroit Modern architecture of the new Administration Building and the new Haven and Mason Halls, and the fluorescent lighting and the gray steel furniture in the teachers’ office cubicles. Can steel furniture ever belong to anybody, or can anybody ever belong to steel furniture? Is it all right to need so much administration that you have to put up an office building with nothing but administrators in it? Maybe it’s all right, but God, it’s not a University, is it? Why not? I don’t know why not, it just feels like an insurance company, that’s all. And yet, with eighteen to twenty thousand students, I suppose you’ve got to have it. Somebody’s got to count them. But there is no love in it.

There is a certain propriety around the place that I found quite strange. Or was it always that way and I didn’t notice? I do not remember teachers lowering their voices when they spoke to you in the corridors, but they do that now. At first I thought it was my imagination, and I asked a few men about it, but they denied that they do it.
Still, they are doing it. The place is full of comportment. Maybe I have been around theatrical folk too long but it seemed to me that everybody had turned into engineers—in my day all engineers wore black suits and short, antiseptic haircuts. The curious thing is that now the engineers affect buckskin shoes and dungarees or tan chino work pants.

The lists of help-wanted notices alone would have solved the problem of my generation. And yet in talking with a certain high administrative official, it quickly became evident that the millennium had not yet arrived. I found it hard to believe that this gentleman had been elevated to Administration, because when he was my teacher several hundred years ago he used to drop his coat on the floor sometimes and forget about tying his tie correctly, and his suits were usually rumpled. He just wasn’t executive. Now his suits are pressed, and finished worsted not tweed, but the smile is still warm and the eyes crinkle with a great love for humanity. He is very proud of the school, but there is a cloud. There is a cloud over the whole place which is hard to define, and here is part of it. I do not quote him but summarize what he said:

There is less hanging around the lamppost than there used to be. The student now is very young and he has little background. He generally comes with high respect for Michigan’s academic standards. The school takes the top half of the in-state students and the top 20 per cent of the out-staters. Fear of the competition is one reason why they absorb themselves in the pursuit of grades. Another is that they do not want to lose their Army deferments. Finally, in the old days a corporation would interview a C student because he might have other valuable qualities, while today the selections are almost statistical—they see the very top of the class and no others. The students know this and are more methodical about grades to the neglect of other interests.

The implication seemed to be that they are more machinelike and perhaps even duller. Or perhaps he meant only that some spirit had departed.

What spirit was he referring to? I think I know. The word University used to imply a place of gentle inquiry, an absorbing waste of time from the money point of view, a place where one “broadened” oneself. And I think he meant that everything is being defined now, it is all becoming so purposeful in the narrow sense of the trade school that some of the old separation between University and commerce, University and vocation, University and practicality in the narrow sense, is disappearing.

One symptom of this is the growing and dangerous rivalry with Michigan State College. In my day State was an agricultural college, and the University of Michigan was “The Harvard of the West.” Today State is challenging the University for supremacy in all departments, even threatening to rename itself Michigan State University. Dr. John A. Hannah, State’s vigorous president, has been able to raise enough funds to build a row of impressive dormitories along the main road. The pub-
lie can see and count the things it is getting for its money. The University cannot compete for the public’s appreciation—and support—on the basis of invisible accomplishments like culture and broadening. Consequently, a new and in my time unheard-of slogan is going around the faculty gatherings. Service to the State is the idea. Do things they can see. My friend spoke with startlingly serious irritation, real misgivings, about State’s victories over Michigan in football. It has come even to that.

As in everything else, therefore, the competition must be carried through on the level of the lowest bidder. Michigan State has always been able to show that where one blade of corn had grown now there were two because of its new insecticides, and the cows were happier for its vaccines. Michigan State went on television, got its own station, so the University decided to win friends and acquire its station.

A professor of English was speaking to me in his office. I must note the incongruity of this particular man sitting in this particular office. In my time this man was, how shall I say, dusty. We were all afraid of him because in his classes you either knew your stuff or you didn’t. His subject had made him pale and austerely exact. A great poem was a structure that had to be turned and turned until you understood its time, its place, its rhythms and the telling reference in every line. Only a powerful love for the poem itself could have generated his kind of energy in teaching it. He is the kind of man who just does not go with fluorescent lighting and long hallways with little cubicles opening off them, and rivalry toward Michigan State. Or so it seemed long ago.

I asked if he noticed any difference between the present student and school, and the student and school of fifteen years ago. A repressed anger crackled in his eyes.

“It’s all different. Take the study of literature. Who are its judges? The psychologist is looked to for an analysis of motivations. But even that isn’t as bad as looking at a book or a play to discover what kind of Oedipus complex the author had. The sociologists are deferred to as the only men who can really say how typical the situation is in society, and the anthropologist also has a few words handy. Now, I am only an amateur in these disciplines. They are the experts. And what about the literary people? They are becoming experts in their own way. We have what are called The New Critics. The poem to them is a thing in itself. If the diction is exact, the imagery consistent, the writing original and the form consonant with the breadth of the matter, that’s the end of it. It is as though the values of humanity—”

The Values. A certain few themes kept coming up wherever I went, and The Values were in the center. The impression gained from certain quarters is that, in 1953, it is thought sufficient to have described a piece of existence, whether it is a book or an isotope. The conflict is being
played around certain connected themes. One is The Values. Another is Apathy.

Another English teacher told me: “The student today has no spine. He thinks he is here to receive something that is wrapped up, easily digestible and complete. He is not really working anything out.”

The Michigan Daily keeps bewailing “apathy” among the students. One reason is that it cannot find enough men to man its positions. The Values and Apathy.

I went back to the Daily building and looked up the papers of my day, ’34 to ’38. I was surprised and amused to read that the Michigan student was a lizard, apathetic, uninterested in campus affairs.

So it gets more complicated. The student is apathetic, but the Daily thought he was apathetic in 1936. In those days we laughed at research-for-its-own-sake and now people are disturbed because everything has got so practical, provable and dangerously unvague.

A psychology professor told me: “The student is different. The back-talk is feeble. They are passive. Imagine a graduate student asking me to tell him what his dissertation subject should be. I couldn’t believe my ears at first, but it is happening regularly now. And more than that, they expect me to lay out the lines of their research, and when I try not to do it they are astonished. They regard themselves as instruments. It is as though they thought it a waste of time to speculate, to move into unknown territory, which is just what they should be doing.”

Another psychologist said: “The most embarrassing question you can ask a researcher is, ‘Why are you doing this?’ He can tell you its immediate application, but whether it is good or bad to apply it or whether it could be a disastrous power to put in the wrong hands either is not his business or else he is just hoping for the best.”

I began to feel after a while that something was chasing everybody here. The Necessity to Keep Doing. A fantastic number of discoveries being made and a gnawing worry about What it is All For. I think the Phoenix Project is one answer, a statement of the University’s conscience.

One example of this atmosphere of pursuit is the television question. A professor of English: “Now we are going on television. Why? Allegedly to spread education among the people. But is that really why? It is not. It is because Michigan State is winning friends and influencing people, so we must. Did you know that they send out calendars reading, ‘Come to Michigan State, The Friendly College? We are now going to be ‘friendly’! Can you really teach people on a University level through TV? My subject is hard. It requires that a student work to understand it. Isn’t it inevitable that we will have to make it easier and easier, and lower our standards in order to compete? The TV audience is profoundly passive. It is looking for a massage, not a message. And in addi-
tion my subject has 'controversial' aspects. Can a teacher maintain the courage to speak his heart in the face of the pressure groups and the mass ignorance they can arouse against him? I don't believe it. We are being asked to become entertainers, and the time will come when a pro-
fessor will be cast for voice, looks and camera manners. Oh, you can laugh, but it is absolutely in the cards. We are going to have to put ourselves over, we are going to have to sell Michigan. The neon age of education is upon us. And don't confuse this with Democracy. It is the triumph of the Leveler, and the man in charge is an advertising man."

I could go on endlessly because in nearly every conversation these themes kept cropping up. But there are many who deny their validity.

A physicist: "I know they are all beefing about passivity but I don't find it in my field. They are as hep and alive as they ever were. Some of this 'apathy' is really a kind of maturity. Kids don't join things so much now because they are more serious. There is, of course, the problem of values. The atomic boys found that out with a jolt. It is not enough to discover something, one must work on the problem of its use. And you can be sure that a scientist who has the brains to work in nuclear physics is intelligent enough to worry about values. So much so that some people risked a great deal and went to the Government to implore them to understand what the atom implied. Don't think for a minute that we are automatons without conscience. Nothing is farther from the truth."

Another English professor: "I can't tell any great difference between these kids and any peacetime class. I think what some of the others are complaining about is really based on our experience with the veterans who left here about 1948. It's true, they were thrilling people to teach. They were serious but inquisitive, they were after the facts but they knew that a philosophy, a standard of values, was of first importance. But the prewar classes didn't measure up to the veterans either."

I met students in the restaurants, in dormitories, classrooms, hallways, and in the Union, the center for nonfraternity students. If there were no two alike they nevertheless had certain common feelings that came up to the surface very quickly. Michigan means freedom to them. It has nothing to do with academic freedom but a release from home and the neighbor-hood or town they came from. This is as it always was, but I had for-
gotten what an adventure it was to leave home. One afternoon I sat with the girls on the veranda of the Martha Cook dormitory. Martha Cook is brick and ivy, lawns and old trees, and windows you remember as leaded but which are not, mellow wood and an outline of Tudor-out-
of-Yale.

The Girl From Massachusetts: "Oh, gosh, yes. I would never dare do at home what I think nothing of doing here. What, exactly? Well, I don't know, but I go out with fellows my parents wouldn't approve of.
You couldn’t be friendly, really, with a Chinese or a Negro in my town. Not really, you couldn’t. You can here.”

The Girl From New York (the intellectual): “Well, that’s not quite true. It’s very complicated.”

The Girl From Ohio (who will marry a law student after graduation and settle in Rio, where he will practice): “I think it’s enormously freer. It’s like, well, it’s an explosion, almost. I started in literature, then I went to botany, and now I’m in music.” And brother, she was. As they used to say, she was bursting with life, sitting there in blue jeans, her heels tucked against her buttocks, her knees up around her cheeks, and a sun-burned face sucking in everything that was said and ever would be said. But the others thought she was hasty in planning to settle outside the country. I was surprised. I had thought they would all be thrilled at the prospect of foreign lands. It took a minute for them to say exactly why they thought her hasty.

“There might be a revolution there,” they finally agreed. It would be better to stay home.

Maybe they were just envious. But they weren’t apathetic, if that means dull, without thought. The Depression means to them what World War I meant to us; that is, an old-fashioned thing. Time after time I got the same image—“It couldn’t happen that way again. The Government wouldn’t let it, I don’t think.” They seem to feel that society is under control; it is so enormous, and it is operating, that there is just nothing to think about in that department. They feel there is enormous opportunity for anybody; that men are rewarded pretty much according to their abilities, and time and time again said the same line, “It’s up to me.”

The famous panty raids that swept the country started at Michigan last year and these girls had witnessed that strange crusade. It seems that some guy was blowing a trumpet in one of the men’s dorms and somebody else yelled at him to stop, and the trumpet player dared the other guy to make him stop, but instead of fighting they decided to invade the women’s dormitories and steal panties. A crowd gathered, and kept getting bigger all night as one dormitory after another was entered. Martha Cook was among those that “fell.” The girls were quite gay about it and told the story as though they kind of wished more of the same would happen now and then.

The story sounded as though it might well have happened at any time, the Thirties included, but to my ear there was nevertheless a strange note in it. It did not sound like a simple sexual outburst. As the girls spoke, I had the feeling that the panty raids were one of those phenomena which are only superficially sexual and were directed more as a challenge to the atmosphere of paternal repression which is, and always was, quite strong at Michigan.

An administrative official arranged a luncheon for me with a dozen or
so student leaders. I feared this would be a polite waste of time and it is no reflection on the man to say that they were under wraps in his presence. As they themselves told me later, the paternalism of the administration is not conducive to student expression. It was always a rather heavily administration-dominated school, but in the old days they had a fight for their money. I remember one hell of a racket when Fred Warner Neal, probably the most prolific reporter the paper ever had, resigned from the Daily—which gave him a full column on Page 1 to write his resignation—because the administration had forbidden him to write some story or other. And I remember he was reinstated. I remember committees demanding to see the president whenever they didn’t like something, and I remember a few times when they won the argument, or half won it.

These dozen, being interested enough to head up the student legislature, the interfraternity council and so on, were the contemporary equivalents of the people who made the noise in my time. While the official was with us they weren’t very noisy; it might have been a meeting of young bankers. But he had to leave soon and we were alone and it started coming.

"People are afraid to say anything."

Afraid of what?

"Well, for instance, a lot of people are tired of paying high prices for books. We want a University bookstore, but we know we’ll never get one because the bookstores will raise hell and, besides, the Administration won’t pay any attention to us."

But you’re evidently not afraid to make the demand.

"No, not exactly afraid—"

What do you think would happen if you tried to rally support on campus for a demand like that?

"You mean, like to have a meeting or demonstrate?"

They all looked uncomfortable. Some laughed nervously.

One boy said, "We’d be called communists."

You mean that truly?

"Sure. But the worst thing would be that back home the papers would pick up our names and there might be trouble."

You mean they’d think you’d been turned into Reds here?

"Some people would think so, but it’s not exactly being called communists, it’s different."

What exactly is it?

"Well, it’s that when you went to, let’s say, the local plant for a job and if they found out about it they would—well, they wouldn’t like you."

Oh.

A girl: "I live in a co-operative house." And really, she blushed. "I’m
getting ashamed to mention it because people on campus ask me why do you live with those collectivists? But it's cheaper, and anyway they're not collectivists.” They all laughed but they knew that what she was saying was true.

A boy hitherto silent: “I know for a fact that everything you do is being written down and sent to the authorities.”

Like what?

“Never mind, I just know it.”

I had, the day before, been sitting in the Daily building going through the 1934-38 papers. A middle-aged man with eyeglasses and a thick neck took out a file and after a while began noting things down. A reporter came over to me and whispered that this man was a state policeman, and his job was to check up on subversives in the school. The reporter said that he and the others on the paper were always trying to tell the man that the people he was listing were not Reds, but he went right on, in a very affable way, listing anyone who was connected with anything “controversial.”

It is necessary to add that at the luncheon, the very broaching of this subject reddened some faces. They were bravely willing to discuss it, and really quite eager to, but if they were not in fear I do not understand anything.

“That's why everybody wants to get into Intelligence.”

What's that?

“I'm telling you the facts.”

“Oh, go on, they just feel they won't get shot in Intelligence.”

“There's a lot of jobs in the Army where you don't get shot. I swear, they all want to get into Intelligence.”

So that they can investigate other people?

“No, they don't want to investigate other people, but they feel once they get in there they won't be bothered any more.”

Would you like to get into Intelligence?

Laughter. “Sure, I'd take it.”

And he blushes. That is, he blushes, but he would take it although he's against it.

There are more evidences of gumshoeing around the campus, but it would be false to picture the place as being in fear of any specific thing. The important fact to me is that the gumshoeing is disliked, sometimes scorned, but accepted as perfectly natural. Sometimes the old liberalism will crop up, however. Not long ago the University prohibited a communist from speaking on campus, and Professor Slosson went to the hall where the man had to make his address, debated with him, and from all accounts slaughtered him.

Compared to my years at Michigan there does seem to be a blanket over the place now. The tone is more subdued, if one measures tone by
the amount of discussion, argument and protest openly indulged in. In my day we were more likely to believe that what we thought and did would have an effect upon events, while the present student sees himself separated from the great engine that is manufacturing his and the country’s fate.

But it would be inaccurate to think that these boys and girls are inert. I sat in on a graduate seminar in Political Science one afternoon at which five students and a professor were discussing the subtler relationships between political ideologies over a span of three centuries. It is a long time since I witnessed such complete concentration upon essentials, sharpness of mind, and freedom from cant and sloganeering. In the Thirties such a discussion would have verged on partisanship after an hour, but it never did here, and that is a big change, I think.

They know now that the old easy solutions are suspect, and they are examining rather than exhorting each other. In this sense they are more mature than we were, yet they are also more separated and removed from the idea of action. But action is immensely more complicated than it was and more difficult to conceive—for instance, one of the heaviest loads they bear is the Army draft. In my day we could rally and vote against conscription because it was only a threat, while today there is nothing to be done about it, and it makes futile many of their plans and weakens as well the very idea of controlling their own destinies.

I do not know how things will work out at Michigan any more than the next man does. It may be the faculty men are correct who see a profound shift of values which will make of Michigan a place not unintelligent, not overtly browbeaten, but a school of obedient pragmatists where each individual walks in blinders toward his niche in government or giant corporation, his soul unswept by the hot blasts of new ideas and vast social concepts. The very bigness of Michigan, the size of the investment in it, and the mutual suspicion that is gripping so many people are forces that would help such a process along. And there is a deeper, less-noticed frame of mind which goes even farther to create such an atmosphere, and I think of the faculty man-of-good-will, in this context, who was talking to me about a certain administrator who paid no attention to the students’ ideas or complaints or suggestions. “It’s a pity,” said this faculty man, “that X’s public relations are not better.” Whether X might in fact have been authoritarian and unheeding was evidently beside the point. The fault to remedy was X’s inability to put himself over. It is in such remarks and attitudes that one sees the absence of an idealism I clearly remember at Michigan, and in its place a kind of pragmatism that threatens to create a race of salesmen in the tawdry sense of that word.

I cannot promise that it will not end this way—a chromium-plated silence, a highly organized, smoothly running factory for the production of conformism. I only know that in my time it was supposed to be a
training ground for leftists or, from the opposite viewpoint, a cave of vigilantism, and it turned out to be neither. I know that when I recently sat with individual students they spoke like seekers, their clean, washed faces as avid for truth as I suppose we were so long ago. I know that they do not think of themselves as a “silent generation” or as a generation at all but simply as “me.” I know that in their rooming houses and dormitories the old bull sessions go on into the mornings, but I also know that what so many of them really feel—and here, I think, lies the difference between the generations—they are not saying in public nowadays, if it seems to question that this is the best of all possible worlds. It is simply not done in 1953.

When I stood waiting for the plane at Willow Run I tried to summon up the memory of the other time I had left Ann Arbor, in the fall of 1938. I had had a ride to New York with a young salesman of saddles and riding equipment who had just passed through Ann Arbor. He had been in contact only with the upper echelons of the community—certain high officials, industrialists, a regent or two who owned horses. He had sold a lot of saddles in Ann Arbor. He was leaving with the impression of a fairly ritzy school. For myself, I had not known a single soul in four years who had mounted a horse.

As he started the engine I waved to a girl who was standing in front of the Women’s League, a girl that I dared not dream I would ever have money enough, or security of soul enough, to marry. As we drove east, through Toledo, Ashtabula, the red-brick roads through the Ohio farmlands, I tried to tell him what Michigan really was. It was the professor who, with selected members of his class, held séances during which the spirits of Erasmus, Luther and other historical figures were summoned and listened to. It was the fraternity boys sitting on the porches of their mansions, singing nostalgic Michigan songs as in a movie, and it was three radicals being expelled. It was, in short, the testing ground for all my prejudices, my beliefs and my ignorance, and it helped to lay out the boundaries of my life. For me it had, above everything else, variety and freedom. It is probably the same today. If it is not, a tragedy is in the making.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. Like every good piece of writing, this essay has a simple strong structure. Here the structure is that of a contrast between the way things were and the way they are now. Point out how this structural principle pervades the whole essay by listing some of the contrasts the author uses, e.g., physical facilities, kinds of students, values, etc.

2. Point out the sentence in which Miller identifies the major contrast he observed between his generation and the one he is reporting on.

3. Miller has much affection for the University of Michigan. What inspires
this affection? How much “old grad” nostalgia is there in his tone?

4. Miller tries to avoid the mistake of thinking, as one’s elders sometimes do, that everything was better when he was a young man than it now is. Indicate some of the places where he shows his awareness of the possibility of making this error. Is it nevertheless possible that some things really were better when he was a student? What might they be?
Schneider glanced with a practiced eye at his class and judged there might be thirty students ranged in front of him waiting for him to begin his lecture on the last decades of the nineteenth century. Theoretically, there should have been fifty-three; but May had come around again; his students were beginning to cram for finals; the evenings were getting pleasantly warm; the fancy of the young men was lightly turning to thoughts of girl students, even to some girl students who had left them quite unmoved during the long and bitter winter. So they sat up late now; and lay abed till noon. In short, spring fever had combined with the pressures of memorization to disintegrate Schneider’s class.

He supposed he should call the roll and report the absentees. But he had always hated rolls. They had seemed to him so eloquent of the fact that most students found most lectures truly not worth attending and would have been better off in their rooms or at the library, reading. Now and then a form card from the Dean’s office reminded him that he was expected to report absences promptly; and he usually did so for several weeks immediately after receiving such a reminder. But he always stopped it again as soon as he dared.

He sat waiting for the bell to ring before beginning his lecture. One or two more students might straggle in. He glanced at his notes. But why repeat these so-called facts about the nineteenth century? Their textbook gave them. The Britannica gave them. Dozens of other books in the library gave them. Why should he make sure their lecture notes gave them too? Why on earth, as a matter of fact, should there be lecture notes? And why should these nice kids be asked to listen to fifteen so-called lectures a week on five different and apparently unrelated subjects?
Had they learned anything whatever from him since September? He wondered. They could scarcely be expected to learn much. He had ample evidence that they had never previously learned to read except in a very loose sense of the word; and, when they took quizzes, their writing was nothing short of terrifying. He already looked forward with horror to the examinations he must grade next month. They would be illegibly written, grossly ungrammatical, whimsically punctuated, and misspelled. As a professional historian who had worked in manuscript collections in several languages, he believed he could decipher nearly any handwriting, on condition that the writer was literate, could spell, could punctuate, and had some notions of grammar. He was confident also that he could read a manuscript with no punctuation whatever, if the words were recognizably spelled and the grammatical structure reasonably intact. But you had to have leverage somewhere.

These nice kids, here in front of him now, had never learned their own mother tongue. Brought up on comic strips, they had listened in infancy to soap operas, and in adolescence they had sat for hours before the television screen. These things had been their books. And, in terms of what he wanted to say in his lecture this morning, it would be interesting to know precisely why. How and why do civilizations collapse and crumble like Nineveh into dust, with or without benefit of guided missiles? He intended to talk this morning about the period of European history between 1870 and 1914, a period that slightly overlapped his own lifetime. He ached to take these students back in time, into that extraordinary nineteenth-century world, so confident of continuous progress, so sure of the imminent triumph of man, so innocent of the horrors just ahead, the massacres, the tortures, the exiles. But these kids could probably not even remember Hiroshima, much less Hitler’s rape of Poland. The Second World War was now jumbled in with the other blurred memories of their early childhood.

Some of them just conceivably may have had an elder brother who fought, or even died, in Korea. But mostly, thought Schneider, they have lived their lives in a country steadily more and more stupefied by comfort, more and more hypnotized by the television screen, a country of “viewers.” For viewers they are; spectators; waiting to be amused, and to be sold. They have lived their lives in a country where it pays not to say things that other people are not saying. They hope for jobs in business, and they expect their careers to be scrutinized by some monstrous I.B.M. machine in some automated, chrome-plated office. They do not propose to join anything or say anything that may cause an I.B.M. machine to retch, or snort, or even gasp. Although they are terribly bored from the eyebrows up, they have never known any other state. And since they are excited and amused from the eyebrows down, it is not accurate to say that they are depressed.
They live in a mild euphoria, enhanced now by the spring. Schneider noted that, as spring progressed, they tended to pair off heterosexually in their choice of seats in his lecture room. At times, he noted they even held hands. Not ecstatically, not in the delicious agony of the romantic, but bucolically. It was clear that, although they were drawn to each other sexually, it was less as the great lovers of legend than as puppies who lick food off each other’s mouths. They merely took pleasure in each other. If one of them found a third pup with a stickier mouth, he or she wandered off and formed a new symbiosis; and, although Schneider supposed that the deserted pup must feel some pang or other of rejection and pain, yet some fourth accommodating pup was likely to turn up all too soon. And so they all went their dreamlike, pleasant, unstrenuous, unexhilarated way through the merry month of May, promiscuous and tolerant, viewers and spectators, dynamic conservatives, their young hearts bursting with singing commercials.

But aren’t these kids ultimately Europeans? he asked himself. It is true that the student body contained a small sprinkle of Negro Americans, of Chinese Americans, of Mexican Americans; but it happened that none of them was in his class. He glanced from the faces before him to his class roll. European names. Almost all of them North European. British, German, Scandinavian, Dutch, one or two Irish. Their grandparents in many cases, their parents perhaps in one or two cases, had been born in Europe. But they had swarmed across the sea to this new Europe of ours, shaking the dust of old Europe unregretfully from their shoes. They had swarmed across the Appalachians, and even across the broad Mississippi. Perhaps they were merely displaced persons, modern history’s first vast consignment of D.P.s. Perhaps, thought Schneider, we are viewers primarily because we are the first wave of D.P.s, not yet recovered from the trauma of displacement, missing we know not what, half remembering the things we want to forget, resenting the efforts of Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt to pull us back into Europe’s orbit, drawn by our manifest destiny toward the Pacific and beyond, haunted by the old dream of Cathay and the newer dream of the Open Door in China, remembering with anger the white crosses of our soldiers killed in Europe’s stupid wars, yet eager to shoot Japanese in the Pacific, to seize Pacific islands and to hold them, to follow the setting sun as we have followed it for generations. Would these D.P.s in front of him, dwelling now in their well-fed, hygienic euphoria, their amoral and unstrenuous promiscuity, want to hear about their Homeland of a hundred years ago? Should they want to? He noted their names on the roll, and for the first time his historian’s eye was caught by the dullness of their names. Westward the course of dullness takes its way, bringing with it a faceless flotsam with names that remind one of nothing—names, he added to himself, like Schneider.

The class bell jangled shrilly, like a factory bell calling all men to the
assembly line. Well, he thought, flotsam and jetsam that we are, here we go together. Let us now remember. He kept his seat at the little table and began to speak. He had thrust his notes from him.

"In the second half of the nineteenth century," he said, "we enter the Age of Progress. It is the age I was myself born into, although in 1914, when it came crashing to the ground, I was too young to know that my world had tottered. It is a world which, of course, you never lived in; but your grandfathers lived in it, and I should like to suggest this morning what sort of world they lived in and what gods they believed in. For clearly I do not mean that modern science and technology stopped progressing in 1914. Even if I told you it had, you wouldn't believe me. You know better.

"But when you and I started this course together, you may remember I pictured to you a Europe filled with petty wars, it is true, but united also by common memories of the crusades, worshiping in cathedrals dedicated to the same saints, tilling the fields for their daily bread, and living—at least, most Europeans—in similar huts and cottages. I tried to suggest that the El Dorado Columbus sought when he sailed west, a land of gold and gems, took the place in many men's imaginations of the Christian Paradise; and that the very painters of Europe in the Renaissance turned from the religious insights of Italian primitives to the brilliant, joyous portrayal of this world. I said that Luther and Calvin tried to call Europe back to her love of the invisible and unworliday, but that Shakespeare and Racine were calling European man to go forward to his tragic destiny. Galileo was calling him to the truth of his universe, in defiance of the Church's edicts. I told you about the great capitalists like Fugger of Augsburg; of the slave traders that ransacked the coasts of Africa for human labor to develop El Dorado and enrich their owners. I told you of the conquest of India, and eventually of much of Asia. Of the little children working under the lash in England's factories at the new machines; of the armies of Napoleon smashing the feudal structure of Western Europe.

"Now I want to speak of the middle-class paradise that the new machines built in Europe, with the help of millions of sweating, starving, dyeing coolies in Asia, and Negroes in the two Americas. Actually, we have been trying for eight months to understand a series of religions that Christendom has tried to substitute for the Christian doctrines of the Middle Ages. This morning I want to talk about the religion of progress, of the theology of science, of man's worship of the machine, and of his firm belief that by his own efforts he could bring Heaven to earth for you and me, his descendants.

"So-called pure science was as remote from the average man as God the Father had been, and maybe remoter. But it rapidly became applied science and entered the familiar daily world of Western man. Abstract scientific laws became incarnate in the machine, took on flesh, became
modern man's mediator and redeemer. The machine mediated by becoming like man and dwelling among men: by pumping out mines as he had pumped out mines, by drawing his water, hewing his wood, spinning his thread and weaving his garments, by bearing his burdens faster than he could bear them, paddling his boats, plowing his fields, reaping his grain, and making his daily bread. The machine redeemed man from toil—or promised to. It entered into the hospital to heal him of sickness, or to protect him from pain. It transfigured itself into a telegraph and carried his messages by code; or into a telephone and put him in communion with all those who truly turn to the telephone; or into a radio and brought him knowledge and entertainment in his loneliness. It became a telescope and let him gaze at stars no man had seen. It became a submarine and took him to the depths that only the fish had known. It took on wings and lifted him toward the heavens themselves."

Schneider had started speaking quietly; but as he spoke, such an overpowering vision of Western man's dream of material progress seized him that the words poured uncontrollably from his mouth. However, when he looked around, he saw that a good half of his class was not with him. Some were studying for a quiz that loomed ahead of them later in the day. One was covertly reading the comics. A couple of co-eds were busy with their make-up, studying their faces in the mirrors of their compacts. A singularly pretty girl, with a shapely body and empty, regular face, who never wore jeans but always dressed in charming skirts had as usual managed to arrange her skirt and her legs so that Schneider and only Schneider could catch just a glimpse of one white thigh. She had often paid Schneider this personal compliment in the past: whether from sheer exhibitionism or to see whether she could put him out of countenance, or to soften him up when he came to grade her wretched examination paper, he could never guess. He had always in the past found her stimulating, but today he barely saw her in his excitement over a period into which he, though not she, had been born.

As a matter of fact, something else had caught his eye. A lad halfway back on the other side of the room had started to lean forward as Schneider spoke. He had a pale, oval face, quite unlike the acres of uncharted flesh that most of his students used for faces. His hair was slightly disordered. His eyes were fixed on Schneider and were burning with interest as Schneider evoked these lost and confident decades. Schneider forgot the others and hurried on, as if he were talking to him and to him alone. But as his own excitement grew, he rose from his chair and paced slowly in front of the blackboard while he spoke.

"The machine," he said, "would mediate between abstract science and the daily, concrete needs of man only if man imitated his new redeemer by achieving increased mechanical efficiency. And so man learned to imitate the machine, by living intimately with it, by serving it faithfully and
promptly. It was a severe discipline, but it promised him redemption from all the evils of this life. It promised him his lost 'dominion over creation.' It promised him power and proud citizenship in a new city, the City of Nature, whose name is Industrialism, whose inexorable rulers are Matter and Force, and whose missionaries are commanded to spread ceaselessly the use of the machine. Like Augustine's City of God, this city too would be a pilgrim city, moving through the desert of agrarian peasant society with its primitive techniques, its poverty, its ignorance, and its military impotence."

He talked on, engrossed by the vision before him, and the young student with the burning eyes never glanced from his face. They were both unconscious of the co-eds who now manicured, of the students who jotted down for no genuine reason fragments of Schneider's tumultuous lecture, of one student who had fallen asleep. And Schneider spoke of the doubts that John Ruskin and William Morris had expressed; of the artists, like Van Gogh, who had gone insane, or, like Gauguin, to the South Seas; of the impressionists, the cubists. Of that new animal, the social scientist, who reported the facts of the social order and who more often than not failed to ask what a good life was. Of naturalism in literature. And of Baudelaire's bitter eloquence about the horrible burden of boredom.

He spoke, too, of the immigrants who crowded from Europe to America.

"What this river of immigrants," he said, "contributed to America besides their muscle, their energy, and their skill depends in part on what was in their hearts when they left Europe. There are no statistics on that, and there can of course be none. But all the evidence suggests that they sought primarily economic opportunity, the nineteenth-century form of personal salvation. They sought, too, freedom from the burden of military conscription, that burden which the democratic era had brought Europe's system of sovereign nation-states. And in America, where even second-rate skills fetched rewards that first-rate skills in Europe could not guarantee, they learned better even than Europe the optimism of the Age of Progress. They learned that land can be not only a peasant's family heritage but real estate, capable of bringing enormous unearned increment. They learned the joys of an anarchical economic system in an environment of apparently unlimited resources. They learned to reverse exactly the medieval hierarchy of economic pursuits; to respect, first the financier, whose backing would open a golden West; next, the businessman, the industrialist, who supplied clothes and shelter; and last, the farmer, who produced only the food without which all would perish, but who was thrust aside in American esteem by the growing power of urban business."

But America was Cardwell's field, and Schneider guiltily skipped back to Europe, to Auguste Comte, to Locksley Hall, to Victor Hugo, to Darwin, and to Herbert Spencer's vision of necessary progress.
“By the opening years of this century you were born in,” he said, while the boy’s eyes burned brightly in the sea of bored or neutral faces, “the citizens of Christendom proudly stood on a pinnacle of material power that exceeded every previous dream of man. Moreover, the pinnacle had been built by man’s own efforts and hence invited an understandable pride. It had been built by human reason, by ‘the scientific method,’ by a rapidly growing technology. The rules were already known by which this mighty skyscraper city could be built even higher. To the critic who scoffed that it was a purely material achievement, modern man could reply that not only were he and his fellow citizens more comfortable physically than their fathers had been but that liberalism was everywhere triumphant or about to triumph, that political privilege had been sharply curtailed, that economic privilege was under attack, that, in short, social justice was a goal universally professed. If religion and art seemed often to be lagging, might not that be that they still lacked an adequate material base? Seek ye first a high standard of living, and all these things shall be added unto you. It was good to be alive in the years of man’s unbelievable power and of man’s increasing hope for the future. It was good to be alive in the opening years of the twentieth century, this century, your century and mine, for they were in all truth wonderful, glittering years.”

He paused and looked about him as if in sudden pain. Some of his students stared curiously. Breathing harder, he began again.

“From this bourgeois, Baconian Eden modern man was ejected with a sudden violence unique in his experience. In a few days, millions of men were mobilized to kill and be killed. It was as if some terrible madness had seized on the citizens of the city that Matter and Force had so benignly ruled. Across the tranquil, smiling, midsummer countryside of Europe swept vast armies, bearing more deadly weapons than man had ever known. The earth rocked and the sky reeled. The great gray ships of the British Royal Navy hurried silently to their appointed posts. It was the summer of 1914.”

Suddenly, such violent emotions arose in Schneider that he knew he could not go on. He glanced at his watch. There was lots of time left—but it was time he could not use. His throat became dry; his voice came to his own ears as if from a great distance. He felt slightly dizzy.

“I cannot discuss the First World War today. I am sorry.”

He bowed slightly, rose clumsily to his feet, and left his classroom. What had he said, he wondered. Had any of it made sense? It seemed to him to have a certain rhythm. Had it had any genuine, logical structure? Whether it had or not, they were not interested, except for that one boy. They would remember nothing.

Two days later, at the next meeting of the class, instead of recounting the horrors of 1914-18, he invited questions, followed by a brief factual quiz. It was a glorious May morning. The sunlight poured into the
windows, and sweet, cool air poured with it. A bird sang in a tree just outside. The girl with the lovely thighs obliged with her customary gleam of white. Some of the husky young men were sitting by their sweeties, holding them by the hands. Schneider remembered that, immediately before this period, came a class in sociology, on marriage, which was an enormously popular elective, and he smiled. The boy who had followed his last lecture sat silent, apparently reflecting. A few vanity cases were already in operation. A hand went up, and he recognized its owner by a glance and a slight nod.

One of the students asked a question about Bismarck’s policy toward the Socialists. He was rather obviously trying to spot a question in the approaching quiz.

“Sir,” said the pretty girl next to him, “I think Jim overlooks the fact that the Socialists were an in-group.”

There, thought Schneider, is that infernal terminology again, that sociological jargon. He could not even remember what sociologists thought they meant by in-group.

“In-group?” he said.

“I mean to say, so far as the Socialists and their plans, and so far as they had systematicized their plans, weren’t they a sort of we-group?”

“And if they were,” said Schneider, “what do you think were Bismarck’s motives?”

“I can’t identify with Bismarck,” she said, as if she had just cut Bismarck dead in a way the old chap would remember for a good while.

That’s psychology, I guess, thought Schneider, though it could be sociology too. There’s an overlap: illiteracy. And they are equally systematiced.

Another co-ed asked whether the Bavarians had any nationality feeling.

“If I understand you correctly,” said Schneider in a grave voice, “they had.”

An unusually plump co-ed opined that the East Prussian peasants could not have had much euphoria, although she supposed there was no euphorimeter that would tell.

“How do you mean?”

“Well, in what concerned the peasant,” she said, “were they happy?”

“That is a difficult question,” said Schneider. Then he smiled. “Are you?”

She didn’t know for sure, and Schneider said the peasants were probably not too sure either. One thing was certain: by our standards, they were dreadfully poor. She replied that she had thought she detected a “good deal of dead hand in modern German history,” a guess that Schneider felt unable to appraise. The terms of discourse were beginning to confuse him. Why did Milton and his staff fill these children’s heads
up with half-chewed ideas and flat-minded metaphors? It made him feel quite bitter.

Would Schneider say, asked a student eagerly, whether Bismarck wielded charismatic authority? Schneider replied that he apparently did.

Another said he gathered the situation process in Bismarck’s Germany was not a social capillarity and that there was little socialarity, and Schneider cagily agreed that it was possible. For Schneider lacked the linguistic capability and semantic communications skill, as his students would have put it, to know what in God’s name they were talking about.

The questions kept coming, and Schneider had to decide whether a bio-social change, like a first-class famine, might have shaken things up a bit in Bismarck’s time—or, put in the actual language of the questioner, whether it wouldn’t have induced catastrophic change. He thought so, but said the question was a bit iffy. The in-group girl said that, so far as reforms in the administration, she thought an affiliation of the peasant in-group to the Junker in-group would have helped, and Schneider imagined it would. She added that certainly telic change was needed. With this he agreed so deeply, though privately, that he put a quiz on the blackboard and retreated to his near-by office. He felt like Alice at the end of her trip through Wonderland, when the playing cards suddenly fell confusedly on her head. He felt pelted by meaningless syllables. This terminology of the sociologists was a dreadful thing to try to speak. It was like a mouthful of feathers. You couldn’t swallow them, and you couldn’t spit them out. He remembered hearing that, in the course on marriage, a husband and wife formed, not too unexpectedly, a dyadic group; and also a direct-contact group. With something like despair in his heart, he gathered up his quiz papers. Feeling like a beast, he left them in young Ripley’s office to correct—assuming he could find out what they said—and started home to lunch with his we-group—that is, with Henrietta and their three little daughters, whose school had been closed by catastrophic change: a case of diphtheria.

Out under the trees, now clothed in the shrill green of their young leaves, he saw, walking ahead of him in a dyadic group, a massive half-back and his sweetie. The girl was small and slender and, even in her dirty jeans, graceful. Her huge companion lumbered beside her, accentuating his physical clumsiness as if to suggest to passers-by that his bulk was too vast to be wholly co-ordinated, and he leaned one arm heavily on her slender shoulder while his hand grasped the back of her neck. Schneider, who had noted this type of symbiosis often in his daily rounds, had never been able to decipher it wholly. He knew, of course, that a male cat seizes his consort’s neck in his teeth until she emits just the right feminine shriek; and the halfback’s grip might be sexual in its symbolism. But he was unsure. And what was symbolized by his making
this poor little creature partly carry him? Student customs, he said grimly to himself; I give up. But they have sense enough to know one thing: it's spring.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. This selection contains some critical observations about contemporary education in America. What are some of these?
2. What inferences can be drawn from what the students in Schneider's class do or do not do? What is the attitude of the students toward the lecturer? What is the reason for mentioning the student who "had a pale, oval face, quite unlike the acres of uncharted flesh that most of his students used for faces"?
3. What is the teacher's attitude toward his students? He refers to them more than once as "nice kids"; how do you interpret these references? Are there other statements that reveal the lecturer's attitude?
4. What connection is there between the theme of the lecture and the observations about education? Why is the lecturer forced to break off before he has really finished what he has to say? Why, at the next class meeting, doesn't he conclude his lecture?
5. Why does the writer poke fun at the sociological and psychological jargon the students use? Specifically, what is wrong with the student's saying, "I can't identify with Bismarck"? What is the connection between the writer's comments about education and the students' use of jargon? Explain the following: "That's psychology, I guess, thought Schneider, though it could be sociology too. There's an overlap: illiteracy. And they are equally systematiced."
6. On the basis of your experience of college life, is Schneider's discouragement justified or exaggerated?
WHAT IS CULTURE?

I. PROFESSIONAL CULTURE AND GENERAL CULTURE

There is great truth in that definition of culture according to which culture consists in "knowing something of everything and everything of something."

The man who knows everything about something, without knowing anything about all the rest, restricts his intellectual activities. He quenches in himself all curiosity outside the narrow circle of his speciality. He excludes himself from the world. He is the man of a single book, as our forefathers said. He cannot in any way be considered a man of culture. The specialist has killed the man. Our forefathers were wont to say Mathematicus purus asinus purus: The mathematician who knows nothing beyond his mathematics is a thorough ass.

Specialization is usually regarded as a professional malady peculiar to those who dedicate themselves to science, and particularly to university professors. But the banker, too, suffers from the same psychological deformity when he lives absorbed in the one preoccupation of growing rich, looking neither right nor left, piling up transaction upon transaction and wealth upon wealth, and completely stifling his inner life. So also does the judge who fits the whole human spirit into the code of legal procedure, and turns a cold eye upon the infinite welter of human miseries which life brings before him, intent only on classifying them according to the framework of the law. So does the engineer who seeks around him nothing but machines to construct, formulas to apply, and

refractory materials to conquer, and forgets that behind the machines there are men who feel and think and suffer, and that men are not made for the machines but the machines to serve men. So does the military chief who in his barrack life regards the whole world as a barrack, and carries the habit of undisputed command and the need for immediate obedience into spheres where that habit and that need are out of place and even dangerous. These men, too, are one-sided specialists. A psychological deformation has taken place in them similar to that which as a rule is attributed to scientists alone.

To avoid the bad results produced on the inner life by excessive limitation of the intellectual range, we need, besides specialized and professional knowledge, a wide and varied stock of information of all kinds. In other words we must know something of everything, besides knowing everything of something. This nonprofessional culture we are led to acquire not by the desire to earn money but by a free and disinterested desire to cultivate our mind, to extend the field of our knowledge, and to live in addition to our own life the life of our fellows. We usually give the name of "general culture" to this not strictly professional knowledge, which is not intended to be turned into hard cash. Sometimes we call it "culture" pure and simple, as if to show that true culture does not consist in the knowledge we need in a special profession but begins precisely where professional utility ends.

For a day laborer the ability to read and write is culture. For the intellectual the ability to read and write is nothing: culture begins for him far beyond that. Knowledge which in a doctor is professional, and thus not a part of culture, becomes culture when it is found in the intellectual store of a lawyer. Vice versa, legal knowledge, which is culture for a doctor, does not imply in the lawyer any intellectual superiority or strength outside his profession. A friend of mine, a professor completely absorbed in the study of his special subject, was wont to say: "Culture is the luxury which my wife can afford herself."

Culture therefore is the sum of all that knowledge which serves no practical purpose but which one must possess if one wants to be a human being and not a specialized machine. Culture is the indispensable superfluity.

This stock of nonprofessional information which presumably serves no practical purpose needs to be organically arranged round that more solid nucleus of professional learning which is, so to speak, the personal property of the specialist. The man who has a smattering of everything and never concentrates his intellectual activities on a fixed point may perhaps score easy conversational triumphs; he succeeds better than the specialist in "cutting a good figure in society," as the expression is; but in the world of thought and the world of action he is utterly useless. He is not a man of culture he is a parasite on the culture of others.
This is why we need not only to know something of everything but also everything of something.

II. THE RIGHT TO BE IGNORANT

On the other hand, the definition that culture consists in "knowing everything of something and something of everything" must be taken with many reservations.

In 1933 the professors of Princeton University, who so many times had subjected their pupils to intelligence tests, were in their turn subjected by their pupils to a test of the same nature. A questionnaire of forty-one statements drawn from all fields of knowledge—architecture, art and archeology, astronomy, biology, chemistry, the classics, economics, engineering, English, geology, history, mathematics, military science, modern languages, Oriental languages, philosophy, physics, politics, psychology, geography, music, and "library"—was submitted to twenty-five professors, who were asked to mark each question "true" or "false." The result of the test was disastrous for the professors. It showed "the inability of most modern scholars to answer comparatively simple questions outside their own fields. . . . Some of Princeton's most distinguished teachers made lamentable scores."

If I had been one of the guinea pigs in that experiment, I should have made a very low score. I should have been able to answer only twelve questions, most of them relating to historical, economic, political, or artistic matters. To the other twenty-nine questions I should have been unable to give any answer. In many cases I should have been unable even to understand the question. Sentences like the following: "Recent developments in the manufacture of steel wire have emphasized the economy of cantilever as compared with suspension bridges," or "The roots of a general polynomial of a degree higher than four are not complete numbers," or "The four-dimensional analogue of a cube has twelve corners," or "One gram of methyl alcohol added to one kilogram of water is more effective in lowering the freezing point than one gram of ethyl alcohol," were wholly above or below my understanding. Words might have slipped from one of these sentences into another, and I should not even have been aware of the confusion.

Yet I am not ashamed of my ignorance. A man cannot know everything. I am an historian by profession, and I have been a teacher of history for about fifty years; yet I am far from knowing everything about history. I possess a reasonably wide knowledge concerning about half a dozen groups of historical facts, which I have studied in the sources. Even of these facts, however, I cannot be said to know "everything." My colleagues say that I am an expert in these subjects, because

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1 Princeton Alumni Weekly, April 7, 1933.
I know more about them than the majority of historians and have brought to light facts which were formerly unknown, but even on these subjects there are facts immeasurably more numerous than those which I have succeeded in acquiring. Those who have carried on research after me in the same field have not found too great difficulty in surpassing my knowledge. This holds good only of the half dozen groups of historical facts which I have studied directly. Of most events of history I only know what is said in certain textbooks, and I shall never have either the opportunity or the time to go beyond the textbooks. Of many facts, again, I know nothing, or almost nothing. If I had to pass an examination in the history of the United States, I should certainly fail.

We shall never succeed in "knowing everything" even in the field of our professional culture, however hard we work, however great our powers of assimilation, and however narrow the limits which we lay down for our activities.

If it is beyond human powers to know everything about one thing, it is appalling to think what an immense burden of fatigue would be shouldered by the man who adopted the program of "knowing something about everything." The gaps in our culture, both general and professional, will always remain enormous. What one succeeds in learning and what one will never know stand in the proportions of a finite quantity to infinity: that is to say, our finite knowledge in relation to our infinite ignorance will always be equal to zero.

We are reluctant to recognize, in ourselves and in others, the necessity of being ignorant about an infinite number of things. We torment others and ourselves because we have neither the courage nor the humility to admit that our capacity to learn is and always will be limited, and that in these circumstances others as well as ourselves have the right of being and remaining ignorant of an infinite number of things. We think it "strange" that others do not know what we know, even if, on their part, they know a great many other things of which we are ignorant. We are a little like a certain lady I used to know, who read one novel a year, talked for the whole year about this novel, and regarded as ignorant those people who had not read her novel.

Our educational system often fails to recognize the right of youth to be ignorant about an infinite number of things.

If we examine one by one the different ways in which we have gathered the concrete facts of which our personal culture is today built up, we realize that very few of them came to us from school; and, vice versa, that we have forgotten in the course of our life much of the knowledge once imparted to us at school. The facts which we possess today have been acquired by us since our school days, in our daily experience of life, in reading books and reviews, listening to public lectures, conversing and discussing various subjects with friends, going to
the theater or cinema, looking at advertisements and reading the papers—especially in reading the daily papers, which, with all their inaccuracies and shortcomings, are today the most effective and economical dissemnators of varied knowledge.

Look into yourselves for a moment and think of all the information about hygiene, legal procedure, international history, art, science, etc., you absorb every day, without any effort, by reading a good newspaper. Even if your only object is to answer a crossword puzzle, you are obliged to search out a wide mass of information: you must consult dictionaries and encyclopedias; you must call upon the culture of your friends to help you in interpreting metaphors and allusions. These are many new materials which increase your knowledge.

No school can impart all the knowledge which may be necessary, useful, or pleasant in life. What the school can give is a small number of clear and well-coördinated facts and ideas, capable of serving as a framework into which to fit the further experiences of life. After we leave school unexpected information reaches us day by day throughout the whole course of our life. This unexpected information acquires meaning and value only as it fits into the framework of the knowledge gained at school. The school gives us keys to open locks and compasses to guide us on the sea of life. It teaches us to be on our guard against unlikely or false statements. It gives us a sense of proportion and perspective. It prepares our thought to receive, little by little, the seeds which will afterwards bear fruit. It instills into us the taste for learning and the discipline of study. It teaches us how to learn for ourselves whenever the need or the opportunity arises. Had our schools not given us this intellectual discipline, the heterogeneous notions we pick up day by day in after life would remain so much indigestible material, never to be assimilated. They would be not culture but scattered and useless bread-crumbs.

Unfortunately, education is too often based on the prejudice that the pupil will never learn anything in his life after he has left school, and that therefore he must learn at school everything which may be in some way necessary, or indeed merely useful, to him in life. The newspapers are full of complaints about the inefficiency of the schools. One day some well-intentioned person mourns that in the schools of a given city the history of that city is not part of the curriculum. Another day some educator proposes that on the senior high school level the boys and girls shall be instructed in social finance, family budgeting, installment planning, taxation, and government. On still another day someone despairs because the “nation’s children are unable to carry on government,” and therefore suggests that they shall be obliged to study sociology, social psychology, and current events. On another day we are told that boys and girls should be taken at the age of ten and instructed in aviation until
they are eighteen. Another day cries of despair arise because twenty-seven per cent of the pupils do not know "the number of churches," forty-three per cent do not know "how many newspapers" there are, and only about a fifth know "the local death rate and the average annual rainfall" in their community. Besides being instructed in these indispensable matters, high school students should be versed also in "questions involving nationalism, internationalism, race, and politics" and should be informed on "the total breadth of various social sciences." The students themselves are convinced that it is their right to be taught everything in school and that after leaving school they will no longer learn anything. While I am taking a last glance at these pages, I read that two hundred Harvard students have signed a petition asking for a "special practical guidance course" in marriage. Evidently they do not expect any practical knowledge from their personal experience after leaving school, when it comes to choosing their wives. At the same time everybody complains that the colleges are sending out many graduates who cannot write their mother tongue.

I have no quarrel either with aviation or with the science of government or of marriage, and even less with writing one's mother tongue. I only ask, "What are the other subjects that the high school student will be allowed to ignore in order to find time to study aviation, marriage, the total breadth of various social sciences, and the rest?" There are only twenty-four hours in a day. How many hours a day must the high school student devote to study? Everything cannot be crowded into those hours, whatever they may be. You cannot expect a boy or girl to know aviation, government, the science of marriage, the history of his own town, etc., and at the same time expect him to know how to write correct and forceful English. There is not time for everything. One has to choose. If boys and girls are to acquire a thorough knowledge of English, the science of marriage, aviation, and the rest must be postponed to a more appropriate time. On the other hand, why should boys and girls devote their youth to learning to carry on government? How many university professors reach the age of eighty without knowing anything about family budgeting and installment planning?

The result of the fatal misconception that education consists in encyclopedic knowledge crammed in at school is that the pupils are overburdened, bewildered, and suffocated by an incoherent mass of facts, which are often at loggerheads among themselves, and which the pupils must have at the tips of their tongues, ready to repeat them parrot-wise. The soul, as Plutarch said, is not a vessel to be filled but a fire to be kindled. This fire is not kindled by crushing the spirit under the dead weight of material facts and stuffing it with an unassimilated medley of

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encyclopedic knowledge. No wonder, therefore, if more than a third of the pupils in the seventh grade answer that “habeas corpus” is a disease—an answer that would put them at the top of their class in Nazi Germany or Fascist Italy; if one out of ten defines “habeas corpus” as a lawyer—which in truth is not far from the mark; and if one out of every ten defines poverty as “the boyhood of great men,” while five per cent of the seniors, having become better acquainted with the realities of life, answer that poverty is an “unhappy state.” They have had no time to think, reflect, or assimilate. They have acquired neither a solid groundwork of facts nor soundness of judgment. They are incapable of analyzing, abstracting, associating, and coördinating ideas. Of this kind of education Oscar Wilde was thinking, probably, when he stated that “people are made stupid by education.” They have studied every conceivable thing; but the result of all this labor is that nothing remains in their minds except a violent dislike of study. They graduate in order to have done with studying, as some men take a wife in order to do away with love.

The evil is in this, not in the fact that young people do not know how many churches there are and what the rainfall is in their respective communities. If I were a meteorologist or a farmer, the knowledge of the average annual rainfall in my community would form a necessary element in my professional equipment, and I should be a fool if I were ignorant of such an important piece of information. But since I am an historian by trade I may without great disadvantage remain in ignorance concerning that phenomenon, so important for meteorologists and farmers. Of course I should not feel ashamed if I knew not only the average annual rainfall but also the death rate, the birth rate, the number of churches, newspapers, motorcars, deaf-mutes, and telegraph poles, and many other numbers not only in my community but in all communities of the world. I should like to know everything about everything. But this is impossible; I have to give up many things. I start with giving up the rainfall. The only thing about rainfall I need to know is that when it rains I must take an umbrella—and this I did not learn at school.

To achieve good results, the school must not attempt to teach either everything on something or something on everything; it must not overburden and weary the brain with encyclopedic knowledge: it must recognize the right of the young to be ignorant.

III. INTELLECTUAL CULTURE

What then is culture?

To answer this question, let us observe how a man with a highly specialized training, say a physician, behaves if he is at the same time a man of culture.

However great may be his medical knowledge, he does not know medicine in the sense of having always present in his memory all the innumerable possible maladies which may torment the human race. He recognizes at first sight and knows how to treat immediately only those diseases which occur most commonly in the practice of his profession. In addition he knows that there exist diseases which present different symptoms from those about which he has most experience. When he is confronted with one of such cases, he reserves his opinion before giving a definite verdict. He returns to his books. He returns again to observe the patient. When he is sure of what he says, he gives his opinion. The difference between the great physician and the mediocre or incompetent practitioner does not lie in the former’s knowing everything and the latter’s knowing very little. The former also knows very little in the face of the infinite number of facts which constitute the doctrine and practice of medicine, but he is capable of facing new problems whenever the necessity or the desire arises, and despite the gaps in his learning; whereas the second not only knows very little but is incapable of dealing with unexpected difficulties. A further difference between the cultured physician and the practitioner who cares about nothing beyond his professional round is that the former, with his wide range of outside interests, remains intellectually fresh and vigorous long after his colleague has fallen victim to professional somnambulism and lost all human contact with his fellows.

If knowledge of history means the ability to repeat the whole of history by heart, nobody, not even the greatest historian, knows history. But he knows that he does not know the whole of history, and this is already a great deal. Moreover, he is capable of studying and understanding historical facts whenever the desire or the necessity arises. This is what is really important. In addition, he knows that reality is something infinitely more vast and complex than the field of his own profession, and he tries to keep the doors and windows of his mind open towards the unforeseen contingencies of life. This is more important than his professional and non-professional knowledge.

To put the matter in a nutshell, culture consists not in the mass of raw material stored in memory but in the capacity of the mind to be always on the alert, to be rich in curiosity about varied fields, and to be able, when necessary, to acquire new knowledge. Culture is the habit of clear and logical thinking, is the courage of independent judgment. “Culture is what remains in our mind after we have forgotten everything we have learned.”

Although culture consists not so much in concrete knowledge as in a capacity to master facts and organize them in our minds, we must not conclude that there is a contradiction between knowledge and culture,
between learning and understanding. Understanding cannot be achieved without acquiring at the same time a wide knowledge of concrete facts, both professional and non-professional. A well-formed brain is always a well-stocked brain. Every new bit of information, on entering the mind which has habits of order and clarity, is at once illumined, vivified, and enriched by associating itself with already acquired notions which the well-stocked and agile mind brings into play. No idea is ever formulated without immediately becoming a nucleus around which are coördinated other ideas and experiences. Thus, abundance of information is the natural result of true "culture."

But anybody who aims at this result must give up the illusion of being able to learn everything. If one studies history with the sole purpose of hurriedly wiping out the disgrace of one's ignorance, one will read the first book as quickly as possible so as to acquire the greatest possible mass of information; but behind the first book there is another book waiting to be read; and behind that, another awaits reproachfully. Never a moment's rest or relaxation. The result is that the mind wears itself out and exhausts itself with a burden of indigested knowledge. The delicate mechanism of the mind threatens to break down without even increasing its store of concrete facts.

Knowledge acquired in frantic haste soon fades from the memory, because memory, as a rule, retains facts and ideas only when they are logically coördinated. Even if memory is so tenacious that it never forgets a thing once acquired, these hurried and haphazard acquisitions do not constitute culture; they add nothing to the strength, beauty, or refinement of the mind. At the most, they turn the brain into a secondhand shop.

A history book is to be studied not with the aim of stuffing the memory with facts but with that of training the mind to observe the complexity of the social structure, the continuity of historical processes, the relativity of institutions and ideas, and the relations of cause and effect which bind together social phenomena, whether past or contemporary.

To read a book properly, one must take time over it and meditate on it at leisure. Meanwhile one must give up the idea of studying many other books. In this way one's culture will rest on a comparatively small number of facts. But these facts will be a lasting possession, because they are not scattered and inorganic fragments. They form a compact system, firmly joined by intimate logical ties to all the other elements of one's culture. One will never be able to recall to one's mind a single part of the knowledge so well mastered without immediately witnessing the effortless revival of all the other parts. After a year, or five, or ten, the concrete facts thus acquired will drop from one's memory as the autumn leaves fall one by one from the tree. Other facts will take their place and
will in their turn fall into oblivion and make way for others. But they will leave the mind with a greater intellectual agility, a more vigorous, plastic, and widely ranging thought. This will be the permanent gain to culture.

Study is for the intelligence what gymnastics are for the body. In gymnastic exercises the immediate results have a practical value only for the professional who has specialized in a definite branch of athletics with the purpose of earning money in matches. The great majority of those who play games do not seek financial profit from them but only physical culture pure and simple. You row for the sheer pleasure of the exercise and also because afterwards your body is better balanced and your muscles more fully developed.

Study is not so delightful as rowing. But even the learning to row is not all pleasure in the beginning. It is only when the beginner has got over the first ache of his unaccustomed muscles that rowing becomes a pleasure. Study, too, once the habit is formed, becomes a source of delight. And, besides its immediate results, it enriches us with a further gain which is still more precious: it makes the mind stronger and renders it capable of new efforts and conquests.

Imagine a boy struggling with a foreign text which he does not understand. Before being able to translate it, he has to put forth all the faculties of his mind to grasp the thought of the author. Memories of grammar and vocabulary alone are not enough. Reason must supply the guiding thread. Where memory and reason fall short, imagination must step into the breach with hypotheses, as in scientific research. Results known to be certain must become starting points or checks for new hypotheses. In laying bare the thoughts of others, the boy learns to probe his own thoughts; when he comes to the work of translation he must summon to his aid all the subtleties of his own mother tongue, in order to reproduce as closely as possible ideas which are nearly always expressed in a manner foreign to his native idiom. At the end of all this toil he has nothing to show but one poor wretched page of translation. The uneducated and superficial observer, seeing nothing beyond this meager return, regards the hours spent in wrestling with these difficulties as sheer waste of the boy’s time, and thinks to himself how much better this time might have been spent in learning to set up a wireless apparatus or in organizing an advertising campaign which should induce millions of men and women to masticate a new brand of chewing-gum. From the point of view of an immediate financial return, it is obvious that the boy has been wasting his time. But in making this apparently useless effort he awakes and refines his critical acumen. He grows used to observing methodically, thinking clearly and logically, and expressing himself with order and precision. He becomes a man of heightened reasoning powers.
IV. AESTHETIC AND MORAL CULTURE

Intellectual culture is not the only aspect of culture. Every human being is a bundle of possibilities not only intellectual but also aesthetic and moral. Alongside of intellectual culture there also exist an aesthetic culture and a moral culture.

When we listen to a symphony by Beethoven, or gaze at Botticelli’s “Venus Rising from the Sea,” or read Shelley’s Prometheus Unbound, we are doing nothing to increase our balance at the bank, supposing we have one. No doubt these are opportunities for us to increase our stock of knowledge by learning that there once existed a certain Beethoven who was a composer of music, that Venus was a fair goddess of ancient Greece, and that Prometheus came to a bad end because he wanted to know too much. But, if that is all, we should have done better to turn to an encyclopedia. The work of art is not made to increase our erudition. It is there to give us joy, to refine our taste, to heighten our vital energy, to enrich our experience. This explains why we return again and again to the same work of art without ever growing tired of it, without ever feeling that it is a waste of time. This is aesthetic culture.

Let us now read that short poem of Kipling’s entitled “If.” After reading it, we are none the wiser about the way the Britishers founded their empire or how many inhabitants it contains. But we do feel that our own energies, our courage to face new problems of thought and action, and our powers of rapid decision and firm purpose have been heightened. This is moral culture. Tolstoy’s Resurrection does not give us one single item of information which is of the slightest practical utility. Even from the point of view of aesthetic value, Resurrection is far from being the finest of Tolstoy’s works. And yet, when we read it, something most profound and unforgettable enters our souls. We become conscious of all our own moral ugliness, of all those failings which we have never confessed to anyone else, and hardly acknowledge to ourselves; but at the same time we are lifted to moral heights of which before we had never dreamed. Our spirit is swept along by a magnificent wave of desire for goodness. Alas, we cannot maintain ourselves always on that level. We lack the heroism of the great. But, for having even once touched those heights, we are never quite the same again after we return to our everyday life. Something remains in our innermost selves which will never be entirely lost. This is moral culture.

Most boys would prefer a jolly walk in the company of friends to attending school. Yet they have to go to school; and by doing so they accustom themselves to realize that life is not made up only of pleasure, and that there are pleasures which one must give up in order to do work which one should like to escape. To wake up at a given hour, to arrive
on time at school to obey the rules which regulate conduct in school, all this is not pleasant, may even be regarded as a burden at moments. But through the sacrifices which are needed in the daily life at school the boy acquires habits of order and discipline indispensable in after life. This is moral culture. The dogged effort to which our school years accustom us, besides giving us invaluable intellectual habits, also forms in us certain moral habits of industry, tenacity, self-control, which are infinitely more essential in after life than any acquisition of concrete knowledge and any degree of intellectual refinement.

The difficulties of certain studies are simply a foretaste of the far greater difficulties of life. A certain number of failures at school are all to the good if the experience of failure teaches the young person to avoid more disastrous and irreparable failures in after life. Life after all is but a series of examinations which cannot be taken a second time.

We have the right to be ignorant. We have no right to be lazy. Our ignorance must be a conscious ignorance, eager to conquer itself, and not a complacent, resigned ignorance. We must not passively accept it, like oxen chewing the cud. But the capacity to overcome our ignorance whenever necessity arises is not acquired without strenuous effort. “In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou earn thy bread.” Culture is the bread of the soul. It is not found readymade in the cradle. We must toil and suffer to acquire and preserve it.

This means that the foundation of a solid intellectual culture is to be found in a strong moral character. However fine an intellect may be, it will never produce its fruit unless coupled with sufficient strength of character; and, conversely, a powerful will can achieve great things with an intelligence of only mediocre quality.

The human spirit cannot be cut up in slices. We can never say: “Now by this exercise we are going to educate the mind, and by this other exercise we are going to train the character.” Every intellectual effort is at the same time a training of character. And, conversely, we cannot conceive of any moral endeavor unaccompanied by an effort of intelligence.

Even the physical culture attained by games, when not carried to such excess that it leaves no room for intellectual culture, is of indirect benefit to the mind, in that it brings rest and a respite from books and gives the mind time to recover freshness and vigor for further labors. When it does not degenerate into brutality, as in boxing or bullfighting, sport is a most valuable factor in the formation of character in so far as it teaches self-control, cooperation, subordination of self to the good of the team, fair play towards the adversary, modesty in success, courage and good humor in defeat.

Physical culture, intellectual culture, aesthetic culture, and moral culture are the different aspects of human culture. The ideal human per-
sonality is attained by the balanced development of all four. What human society needs is that its members should have healthy bodies, well-stocked and alert minds, refined tastes, and well-disciplined characters. But in the long run what the community most needs is moral culture. If one aspect is to be stressed at the expense of the others, then it should be that of moral culture.

A French novelist, Jean Aicard, in his novel Maurin des Maures, tells the story of an unlettered man of the people who takes his eleven-year-old son to a pensioned naval surgeon with the request to give the lad a bit of schooling. “What do you want me to teach him?” asks the surgeon. “I don’t know. But I want him not to be like me, hardly able to read. I am nothing better than a savage.” “I see. Does the boy know how to read?” “Yes, he has learnt the three R’s.” “Well, what do you want to turn him to?” The father could not find a reply. “But surely you have some plan or other for the lad’s future. Do you want him to be a farmer, or a soldier, or a sailor, or a hunter, or a gardener? According as you decide, I will try to adapt my teaching.” After a long hesitation the father finally found what he wanted: “Teach him justice.” The common sense of this man of the people, ignorant but intelligent and morally sound, realized that it was futile to decide what a boy of eleven was to do when he grew up. The boy would get his specialized training by himself later on when he was old enough to know his own mind. But one thing he would need, more essential than an intellectual culture extending beyond the three R’s. That was a moral training that would make him grow up an honest man.

So let us conclude with the words of this unlettered man, who, though he thought himself nothing better than a savage, was more civilized than most of the men who pass for such. Develop your intellectual, aesthetic, and physical culture, but above all learn “justice.”

AIDS TO STUDY

1. What is the logical relation between the first and the second sections of this essay?
2. Why does Salvemini defend the students’ right to be ignorant? Why does he admit his ignorance of many subjects? How do you interpret his remark that “our finite knowledge in relation to our infinite ignorance will always be equal to zero”? What fault does he find with high school curricula?
3. How does Salvemini’s definition of culture in Section iii qualify the definition which he offered in Section i? What is the function of the last paragraph of Section iii?
4. What distinction does Salvemini make, in Section iv, between the cultural values of such works as Shelley’s Prometeus Unbound and Kipling’s “If”?
5. In discussing “moral culture” Salvemini develops a viewpoint that may at first seem old-fashioned or hidebound. What does he mean by “moral
culture"—behaving respectfully? avoiding sin? keeping out of trouble? or something else?
6. Do you think that Salvemini should have given more space to the discussion of physical culture?
7. Why does Salvemini call the father who was hardly able to read "more civilized than most of the men who pass for such"? Does this opinion weaken the emphasis on intellectual culture?
CONFLICTS IN THE LEARNING PROCESS: THE STUDENT’S RESPONSE TO TEACHING

One of the practical hints which others have given you on the art of lecturing is that you should always have the beginnings of your lectures “down cold.” This is a very valuable idea. If you have your opening words nearly automatic, then when you get up in front of your audience and suffer the inevitable stage fright, you can let the lower nerve centers take over. You can get started even though your upper nerve centers are, for the moment, paralyzed with adrenalin. Altogether it is a lovely picture. It works too. That is, it works when you really know what you are going to say—when you really know what you want to talk about. We might hope that this will be most of the time.

But there will come other times, toward the middle or the end of a course, perhaps, when you begin to feel that your audience is somehow going dead on you, and for good reason. You watch them at the lectures in which they take down the answers that you give them, these positive things that you know, and as they write them down, you begin to wonder if that might not be the end of it after all. You knew your stuff, you said it, and they wrote it down. And then as you think things over, you suddenly come to a point when it seems most important to you to talk about the things that you are not so sure of, the things that you wonder


1 This is one of a series of lectures given at Harvard University to graduate students preparing for teaching careers. [Ed.]
about, the edge of the thoughts that you have been working with, the fringes of that boundless ignorance that Professor Richards spoke of. And you decide that now you want to talk about that. Then what are you going to do? You can spend your ten hours of preparation making up your speech, but you will not find a beginning that is worth a hoot. All your pat beginnings will sound more businesslike than you mean to be. And you cannot stand up in front of people and say: “Today we are going to talk about my uncertainties under three headings”—and so there you are. And that is always the time when the stage fright is worse. If you are going to talk about your uncertainties, your lecture is either going to work or it isn’t. And if it doesn’t, what disaster! To find yourself isolated from your audience, all alone with thoughts like that! It is hard to begin and you don’t know what to say. It is a very painful feeling indeed. And that is the kind of lecture this is.

I suppose we might begin in such a way as this. It may be, after all, that some of these doubts I have in mind, these wonderings and so on, are in your mind too, and we might explore them a little and see in what direction they take us. You have noticed, I know, that there is something a little paradoxical in all this business of teaching. There is so much that seems so wonderful about it, and so much that seems so puzzling and terrifying. We cannot be too sure of what it is going to be like. Are we going to be as good at it as we hope?

There are lots of different motives that take us into teaching. Some of them we will talk about, some of them we will hide from others, and some of them we will hide from ourselves. Possibly one of the strongest motives is one of those marginal ones that we will tell to ourselves but perhaps not to others. We know that we are going into teaching at least in part because teaching is surely one thing that we can do much better than we have seen it done to ourselves. We may except our one “great” teacher, but on the whole that is one thing that we are sure of. So we feel a confidence about the matter, and we think that we will be pretty good at it. And then sometimes we wonder. If it is really as easy as all that, why isn’t it done better? And this question makes us very uneasy.

So we come to these lectures and we get a lot of reassurance. There is a kind of theme running through these lectures: that even though there is this you should keep in mind and that you should keep in mind, just the same, if you really love your subject enough and are enthusiastic about the teaching, everything will be all right. But then, just when we are feeling better, the same old paradox reappears. One lecturer will make a little remark about “those moments of black despair that all teachers have,” and this echoes once or twice. Just when we are ready to forget about it, the next man says, “There are these moments, but you will live through them.” We begin to wonder secretly about these moments. What are they: just something that happens to everybody? Or are they
an occupational disease of teachers? One's confidence has to be pretty
good to stand up against this sort of thing.

I think that it might be good to get some of these moments of black
despair up where we can look at them and see what they are made of.
I should warn you in advance that you should take everything that I have
to say about the difficulties of teaching with a grain of salt. I am an edu-
cational garage man. That is what a counselor is; he deals in other
people's trouble. So perhaps I take a dim view, or get too close a view,
of some of the difficulties in education. In any case, I hope that you will
find your faith in teaching strong enough to stand up against anything
that I may say. In fact, you may even glean a little encouragement for
yourself from the notion that when things go wrong it may not be en-
tirely your fault.

It might be a good idea to review some of our fundamental faiths to
begin with. Some of these things have been said so often that they sound
a little corny when we put them into words, but nonetheless we do be-
lieve in them. We believe, don't we, that the education of the young is
fundamentally the hope of the world? And we believe that through
breadth and liberality of education we can get and give the kind of un-
derstanding of humanity that will prevent world-wide disasters—we be-
lieve this, or why else are we going into teaching? They don't pay you
anything. And we have heard—we have gotten a little tired of the words
perhaps—but we have heard from commencement speakers for years
about the fountain of knowledge, and we have been going on in our
education to drink more and more at the fountain of knowledge, and
they tell us this will bring us more understanding and breadth, and that
we will be more interested and more interesting people, and better
citizens. And we have been told that knowledge is power, and further-
more that it brings with it responsibilities. We have been told that, and
we believe it. So here we are as teachers, and prospective teachers, on the
edge of acquitting our responsibilities. We have drunk deep of this
fountain of knowledge, we have it near us in our libraries, and we are
now going to graduate and become dispensers of the waters of the foun-
tain of knowledge. Corny, but true.

Our responsibility is to dispense knowledge, first of all in a way that
is clear, and second in assimilable quantities. You have heard about being
clear: "Write it on the blackboard so somebody can see it, for goodness'
sake, see it from the back row," and you have been told not to stand in
the way of what you have written, and not to mumble in your beards—
if you have them. You have been told these things, and it is obviously
your responsibility to be clear and not to muddy up the waters of
knowledge by being slovenly in your organization or in your speech.
After you are clear and love your subject and have an enthusiasm for
teaching, everything will be all right. There will not be any conflict,
even, between love of subject and love of teaching. In fact, I suppose, you have all been told that there is really no conflict whatever between scholarship and teaching and that they really go together.

Well, if all this is so, why these moments of black despair? Why these moments of futility and of frustration that we hear about? What about them? Let us not suppose that they don't happen or that they aren't real.

What about the day when you look at your students and realize that except for the two or three bright, eager people, whom you have allowed to fool you all along into thinking that everything was going fine, no one is doing any thinking at all? How about it when you look at your group and see not eager souls thirsty for the fountain of knowledge, but a bunch of lunkheads who are just sitting there, their mouths wide open and their pencils poised: "Say it, sir (or madam), say it, and we will write it down." What about the day when you discover among these people a conspiracy to parrot none of the things that you mean, and all of the trivialities that you say? And they will point out that it was what you said, even when you know that it is jargon, just words that do not mean a thing.

How about the day when you discover among these people another conspiracy to protect themselves from getting any knowledge whatever, no matter how good for them? How about it when you find that an informal organization exists among your students, an agreement to spend less time on their work than both you and they know is for their own good? And you have set out supplementary reading and offered grades as rewards for writing extra papers, and nobody does them. I think we have all heard ourselves, to our own shame sometimes, saying to other students after we got a good grade, "Well, that was pretty good luck I had there; you know I didn't crack a book."

What about the day, too, when you discover that whatever you do and say in class is consistently misinterpreted, and that your students look upon you as a person who seems to have nothing realistically to do with you at all. That is, you will start your class and find that some people in it think you are just wonderful and yet you haven't done a thing to earn it; they don't know you yet, you have just started, but they feel that you are the good father or the good mother that they have always looked for. And if you look carefully you will find a less vociferous group, but one that makes itself felt, that thinks that you are all that is evil that they have ever seen in their lives; probably because you remind them of Uncle Abner or Aunt Matilda, or perhaps they have just come from a class where they got rather mistreated for some error of their own, and since they could not take it out on that teacher, they take it out on you. After this sort of beginning, anything that you do doesn't seem to have much to do with the case, except that the people who
thought that you were wonderful at the beginning will become so dis-
appointed in you in the end that they will hate you violently; and the
people who hated you in the beginning may discover—some of them—
that you are not so bad as they thought you were, and so they will think
that you are equally and absurdly wonderful, and you will stand in the
middle of all this with a sense of futility and nonentity.

So in the end, after you have tried persuading and being reasonable
and exerting the strong arm and being stimulating, and after you have
tried those deep and penetrating silences—after you have tried everything,
there will come a day when you will sit down with a student toward the
end of your course, and the student won't have done anything, not a
stroke of work. So you sit down over a beer or a cup of coffee, and you
take your insignia off, and you say, “Now what goes on here?” The
student will say to you: “Well, I wish I knew really. I know what I
should do, and I really would have liked to have done it, and I want to
do well, and I loved your course, and yet I kept putting all the work
off, or something. I just didn’t get it done, I don’t know why; I guess I
just lack will power or something.” And then both of you will look at
each other across Mark Hopkins’ glorious log and wonder about the
educational system.

When these moments of futility come, what are you going to do?
You are going to look at these people and say to yourself, “Shall I give
up my dream? Shall I give up this hope that I have started with, or not?”
And then an idea will come to you: “Maybe there is something wrong
here, maybe—I’ve got it—they weren’t taught right in high school.” So
you take your responsibility with you and go into high school teaching,
and there you meet the same thing. You wonder again and say, “Oh no,
the trouble is in elementary school.” So then you go to elementary
school and you say, “These parents!” So you quit elementary school and
you go and have children of your own—then you will really be in
trouble.

Where then, may I ask you, is your love of your subject? Where
then will be your scholarship? Surely you will have given up scholar-
ship for education, won’t you? For where will your precious subject be
then? What has history to do with child training? Or have you given
up? Maybe you haven’t after all. You see, there will come a day when,
if you are really honest, you may catch an echo. You may find yourself
saying, “Now, Sally, two more spoonfuls of beans or no dessert; it’s not
fair to keep everybody waiting, two more spoonfuls of beans or no
dessert.” Just as you get through saying that you think, “Wait a minute,
where have I heard that before; where have I said that?” And in your
mind you will hear yourself saying way back there in your college
classes, “And now for next week you will hand in a paper of no less
than 2,000 words on the subject of the Elizabethan Concept of the
Tragic Hero, and in view of the fact that papers have been coming in quite late and out of fairness to those who get their papers in on time, I will have to mark down half a grade for every day a paper is late." Two more spoonfuls of beans or no dessert. When you hear that echo, you are just about ready to begin to think about education. And by the way, if you have two children and you hear Sally's older brother across the table saying, "Don't eat 'em, Sally, don't eat 'em, we don't want any dessert, let's both be excused," then you will be ready to think about the conspiracy.

It begins to look, in fact, as if education did not consist solely of this fountain of knowledge. Education has been defined, and quite helpfully, as the transmission of the culture from one generation to another. Of course this gets us into a definition of culture and so forth, and things get a little complicated. But nonetheless we can suppose that culture is a term which must be applied not only to those things which are the rewards and benefits of the society and those things that we can all get from knowledge—understanding and the richness of life—but it must also refer to the "do's" and the "don'ts," the "this-way's" and the "not-those-way's" of the society. Now since the teacher is someone who has been hired by the community to engage full-time in this transmission of the culture, you will find that you are not just a Ganymede or a Hebe standing at the fountain of knowledge with a little cup, but rather you will find that your students are quite properly responding to you as if your other hand, the one you have behind your back, had brass knuckles on it. They will be responding to you as if you were saying, as you must say—as you cannot escape saying whether you put it into words or not—not only, "Come and drink from the fountain of knowledge," but also, "And while you are at it, bud, you do it our way on time; if you don't, you will not only not get these lovely things, but you will be sent shamefully home, a failure."

Now what do people do under stresses and threats like that? They resist, just as Sally resists eating those beans, not because she doesn't like beans, but because she is afraid that by liking them, now that you have told her to eat them, she will somehow be losing something. She doesn't know quite what, but she feels that something dreadfully important will be lost. So what students do in their resistance is to conform to the letter of what you say. They will eat two spoonfuls of beans, with one bean on each. They will say the letter of what you require them to repeat, but they will reject the spirit, even if they think it will be good for them. I remember saying to my boy the other day, "You forgot to pick up your shoes." He replied, "Well, you didn't tell me to pick up my shoes, you told me to pick up my clothes." So when you make an assignment from page such-and-such to page such-and-such, and when you ask some questions about it, you may say, "Look at these papers;
no one has thought about this.” And the response will be, verbalized or not, “You didn’t tell us to think about it, you just told us to read it.”

What I should like to do, therefore, is to abandon for a while all thoughts of the teaching process, of the giving end of education, and to examine the receiving end. What I am going to do is to try to explore how the educational world looks to the student—perhaps, indeed, how the world itself looks. By this I don’t mean what he will or can tell you about it; I mean, rather, what his assumptions are and what his frame of reference is, the more or less unconscious basis of his behavior. Here I am launching those tentative suppositions in which one must explore the sea of one’s ignorance. I am going to draw a kind of chart in the hope that it may keep us from becoming utterly lost.

When we as children first come into the world and look around to see what the world is made of, we see soon enough that the world is made of They. And what are They like? They tell us, do They not, what we ought to do? They tell us our duty. They tell us what is necessary. And it is necessary to do a lot of things that we don’t like in the world, so They say. It is necessary to do a lot of things that are unpleasant. So that this business that They tell us about is by their own account unpleasant. So this is the world and its demands.

But now, as I look at this world, I begin to think of my own individuality and separateness, and I say to myself, “Who’s Me?” Well, I am little and I am helpless, but I obviously have to be something quite different from all this if I am going to have any differentness, any individuality, which seems so precious to me. And what is the opposite to all that They stand for? Why, it is obviously what I want. So it follows that my individuality and my integrity, for which I will fight to the death, consists of what I want—that is, of my wishes—all of which I associate with the pleasant:

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Clearly, now, I am faced at once with a number of serious difficulties. In the first place my integrity demands that I get what I want. If I do not, I am not only frustrated, I am much worse than that: I am somehow less Me. On the other hand, a lot of things that I want can be at-
tained only through They, and They disapprove of other things that I want. If I do not give up these tabooed wants and do a certain amount of the unpleasant, then They will not love me any more, and that would be fatal to all my wishes. Furthermore, I may feel in part genuinely fond of They in that They do give me some things I want. Another difficulty is still more confusing. I soon discover, let us say at the age of three or four, or five, that They got me so young, when I was unable to defend myself, that They went and put a little bit of They in Me and I can't get away from it; it keeps nagging me all the time.

The dilemma is very serious indeed, and is made worse by the conflicting nature of my wishes. I wish to be dominant and independent; I wish also to be dependent and loved. However, I blind myself to this internal source of difficulty and concentrate on what seems the external problem of getting what I want and placating They. There are all sorts of attempted solutions to this almost insoluble problem. The most obvious one is the Social Contract of Rousseau—that is, the compromise. In this solution I simply do a number of the things that They say I ought to do, and then I hope that They will leave me alone to go forth and do some of the things that I want. The trouble with this solution is that the compromise never really seems to be accepted by either side; both sides seem to be trying to beat the game and to ask for more. It is a very uneasy situation. I do some of the things that I want to do for a while; then I get a guilty conscience and do some of the things that I ought to do for a while; then I feel frustrated and so I go and do what I want to do, and then I get conscience-stricken again, and back and forth, back and forth, I go. And all this time the sensation keeps piling up that somebody is wasting time.

We might digress for a moment here and look at a curious application of this Social Contract in the educational world. It is perfectly clear to Me, in the educational world, that what They want is for me to be good; what They want is for me to do my duty, which is to sit down and do this studying that I have been given to do. If I do that, their part of the bargain is that They will give me the good grade that I want, so we get the curious formula which you find running throughout education, namely: work through time equals grades. This is a kind of basic moral law. It does not matter what I say on an examination; if I have done the work I should get the grade, and if my roommate, who has done none of the work, reads my notes before the examination and goes in and gets a higher grade than I do, that shows that They are unfair.

We might digress a little further. My integrity, my sense of Me-ness is bound up with my wishes, and since They invade my integrity with all these "don'ts" and "ought's," and since the Social Contract is not working very well and I am getting a little resentful, it is very natural for me to decide that I really could have everything that I wanted if it were not
for They; given half a chance I would prove as omnipotent as I secretly believe myself to be. This feeling, which we have all shared, is exemplified by a student who once said: "I really could cut loose from everything; I could cut loose from my parents and my wife and from everything, just as a friend of mine has done who is now down in Ceylon. I could do that, only I don't think I ought to. I could be really perfectly independent and get everything that I wanted. I just don't do it because I don't think I should. Besides that, of course, I gain such satisfactions from my family." I said, "You mean that if you went to Ceylon you wouldn't have those satisfactions that you want?" He replied, "No." He was still blind to his contradiction. Then suddenly it struck him, and he said, "This is the first time I've ever realized that I couldn't really have everything I wanted if it wasn't for them."

If it is natural and easy for us to engage in this kind of thinking about our omnipotence, we can carry it one step further. I shall bethink me of the future; I shall conjure up an ideal picture of what I shall become. I shall be a doctor, a really great doctor; I shall be so clever that everyone will admire me, and I shall know so much that I can do anything I want. Now it is a highly commendable thing to be a good doctor and to make discoveries that will ease the lot of the human race, and here, you see, is where I satisfy They, especially the They of my own conscience. So here I have an ideal which seems to satisfy both my need for independence or power and my conscience. There is only one trouble with it—the minute that I try to put it into action, They get in my way again; They require that I study German and various aspects of physics and literature which will be really of no use to me. Naturally, it is an invasion of my integrity to study these requirements and somehow I have a terrible time with them. "I won't eat those beans if They tell me to; no matter how good they may be, no matter how fine the dessert, it is not worth the price of my integrity, and I won't do it." Or if my revolt is not as conscious as this, I will simply relegate doing them until "tomorrow."

We had better not digress any more, for we could probably digress forever and still have an over-simple picture of the matter. It is my opinion, anyway, that from the particular point of view of which we have been speaking—that is, the child's point of view—the problems of life are actually insoluble. It has always been my suspicion that Rousseau never quite grew up. Let us go back to the point where we felt that in the midst of all these attempted solutions somebody was wasting time.

It is this very notion of time that is crucial. Until now we have made no mention of time. Time is an aspect of reality, and we have made no mention whatever of reality. To the child there is no such thing as reality directly; there is only what They say is necessary, and even when what They say is necessary or real actually happens, even that appears
to be just an “I-told-you-so” of grown-ups. Time, as one aspect of reality, does not apply to Me. In fact Me is at its most omnipotent in the timelessness of tomorrow. One of the most obvious solutions to the dilemma of the Me is to do what I want to do today and do what I ought to do tomorrow. Perhaps it is in large part through this sensation of wasting time that reality first comes into awareness—that I get my first glimpse of just plain fact. It is this stunning revelation of the factual, the notion that I cannot go to Ceylon and have everything that I want, that breaks down utterly the dichotomy of the They and the Me. And here we are on the brink of maturity. For now that this dichotomy is broken down, we can have a look at the frame of reference from which the sensation that I have been wasting time arises. The whole sensation implies a new value system, some wholly different frame of reference in which defending the integrity of my wishes is not what I really want to be doing. Here it is that I discover that the person who has been wasting time is my Self.

It is upon the difference between the Me and the Self that everything that I have to say hinges. The difference is one of essential personal identity; it is a felt difference that concerns who I am—that concerns what makes up, for me, my personal individuality. We have already seen that for the child identity is conceived as consisting of wishes, especially those wishes which the child holds in contradistinction to They. No internal conflict or contradiction is accepted among these wishes; all conflict is projected and seems to be externally imposed. But for the Self wishes suddenly lose their distinctive and individual character. I suddenly perceive that everyone has much the same wishes, and furthermore I see these wishes as an aspect of fact and reality. They then lose their glorious simplicity and can be seen in all the conflict and complexity which is really theirs. For the first time, therefore, I am confronted with the real issue of choice. The individuality and integrity of the Self is therefore conceived to reside not in my wishes, but in the act of choosing in the midst of the complexity of reality. This reality consists not only of my wishes, but also of society and of physical limitations, including that of time. Up until now I had confused freedom with independence, now I realize that freedom is not the independence to follow one’s wishes, but the act of choice among personal values. And personal values for my Self include not only wishes in the narrow sense of impulses, but also objective purposes in a real world and many of those responsibilities and obligations and duties which I have previously seen only as the demands of They. In this new frame of reference it is no longer either a loss of integrity, or an act of masochism, to do something unpleasant; it may be simply useful or productive. And though I still have both my wishes and my “ought’s,” my integrity is not at issue between them; it is, in fact, expressed in my act of choice whichever way I choose in relation to a particular set of circumstances in reality.
As an illustration we might consider the matter of the language requirement. Almost all colleges and graduate schools have a language requirement, and as students we buck it. It is a great symbol, the language requirement; it is the last great apotheosis of Their incredible and unreasonable demands. When it comes time to sit down and do that German, we read the newspaper, we read Life, we sharpen our pencils, we do anything to delay the awful moment. When finally we do get to work, we do just what we feel we are "required" to do: we turn the word-cards over, we translate word by word from this or that, and if nothing comes from all our labors, it is not our fault, it is Theirs; and the fact that nothing ever seems to come out of it just goes to show how right we are. The language requirement appears as a price we are forced to pay for a degree which They withhold. It obviously is not the business of a Me, it is just a requirement of They, and I spend a great deal of time expanding upon its archaism and injustice. From the point of view of the Self, however, the matter looks very different indeed. You have come to this store of your own choice, to buy a certain article, an A.B. or a Ph.D. And how in this store does this article come packaged; in what form does it appear on the counter? It always includes the language requirement. It is not, if you please, a price that you pay, but rather part of the product that you buy. You may not want this accessory, you understand, you may not consider it reasonable, and you may wish that the product came packaged without it; but if the management is not disposed to change the package, you have, in fact, a choice of taking the article or leaving it. If you choose to take it, it is not an invasion of your integrity to fulfill the language requirement, it is, in fact, an expression of your own choice in regard to reality; and because the Self is primarily the chooser, it is an act of Self-expression. Certainly it may be unpleasant or dull, and even frustrating of other purposes that you would like to substitute for it; but for the Self, frustration is not purely an imposition from the outside and a threat to integrity, rather it is one of the conditions of life, because even my own wishes are often incompatible. Hence, dull or not, it can be done with a will.

In the event that you have been subscribing at all to this, you have probably been looking at yourself, if not with alarm, at least with some concern, with the question, "Am I a Me or am I a Self? Am I a child or
am I an adult?” I doubt that you will find a ready answer. The question would have been prompted by the way I have been presenting this. I have seemed to imply that a person is either a child or an adult, but this is because such things as authority, necessity, and the unpleasant are so sharply different in quality when looked at from the two points of view that there are really no in-betweens; it is an all-or-none proposition. The two frames of reference are separate, distinct, and self-contained, but what makes growth into maturity look like a gradual thing is, I think, first that we take the point of view of Self in one area of life at a time and, second, that even in those areas in which we have attained it, it is notoriously unstable. A student, for instance, may attain a mature frame of reference in his social relationships and remain a child in his school work. He may feel and act as an adult in his summer job and in the fall drag his feet, as a pupil, reluctantly to school. He may feel and act as an adult away from home, but when he returns to the family that treats him as a child, he will feel like one. It is this jumping back and forth from one frame of reference to another that is the basis, I believe, of the instability of adolescence. Of course it stays with us, to a degree, all our lives.

So far I have painted the frame of reference of the Self as so much more comfortable and desirable that this critical instability may seem strange. Let us have a look at a few of its discomforts. Being a Self is a very risky and frightening business. As a Me I still have claims on that day when things go wrong in life. When I fail, when I am disappointed, when I am hurt, I can call on Them for comfort, for love, for reassurance, for protection. If I am a Self, I no longer have these claims in anything like the same degree. In fact I am alone, and I have not yet learned that to be alone, as all human beings are, is not necessarily to be lonely. Hardest of all, I must, to be a Self, allow my wishes, my omnipotence, and my fantasies to suffer real defeats in the face of reality. I may never be a really great doctor, and to be even a mediocre one, or even a failure, I must sweat. Even if I turn out to have ability and have worked hard, just plain circumstances may defeat me. Can I stand this without the compensation of Their sympathy and support, without being able to demand that They play fair? And deeper down than any of this, can I really trust my Self? If I try to rely on choice instead of upon the compulsions of “ought’s” and “must’s,” will I ever get anything done?

We might take this last question and see how the fear operates to tip us out of the mature frame of reference. Suppose that I am approaching my academic work, and the language requirement too, with all kinds of maturity. I have kept in mind my own choice; I have come to this institution because I chose to; I accept the language requirement as an aspect of reality; I accept the notion that time applies to me; and I
choose, therefore, to do the language requirement now rather than to-
morrow. I am doing my German, and my roommate comes in and asks
me to make a fourth at bridge. Now I enjoy bridge; furthermore I
haven't played for quite some time; furthermore I have been working
very hard. I deserve (what frame of reference does that word come
from?) a bit of a change, a little relaxation. I am sorely tempted. Su-
ddenly I am afraid. I am afraid that I will go and play bridge and not get
that language requirement done. I suddenly lose confidence in the Self
to choose wisely. I cannot say to my roommate or to myself, “That
sounds nice, but I want to get this German done.” I cannot voice a simple
preference. Instead, I say, “No, I really ought to do my German, I really
must get it done.” Now understand me, it looks as if I have not capitul-
ated. I have not said to myself that I can do the German “tomorrow”
and I have not gone off to play bridge. But I have capitulated. I have lost
confidence in my own capacity to choose, and I have called upon the
“ought’s” and the “should’s” and the “must’s” to compel me, to do the
deciding for me; and in the next hour, how I will resent it! I have set
They up again as my masters, and how I will buck them! I will feel
frustrated, I will think about the bridge, and somehow I will defeat my
efforts to learn anything. Of course I may be able to get something done
for a while by glorying in a kind of masochistic righteousness, but I
won’t keep it up for long. My spell of self-righteousness will only give
me the excuse for taking the whole week end off. From the mature
point of view it would have been better had my Self actually chosen to
play bridge and to deal with the consequences. I am not arguing against
the value of a conscience; I am saying that if we set up the conscience
as our compulsive authority instead of as our guide, then we may react
as children toward it. To rely entirely upon its compulsion is to surren-
der the integrity of the Self, to abnegate the function of choice. Until
one has had a little experience with the Self, it is hard to believe that we,
as people, could really prefer to do our work. We say, “I have to drive
myself to work.” Who is driving whom here? Self-expression is the act
of doing what we as whole people prefer.

Perhaps we can turn now to the subject of education. I was talking
with a student the other day who relied so heavily upon his conscience
and upon his parents that though he had the intentions of doing college
work, he could not see them as his own. Whenever he told himself that
he ought to get to work, he sounded to himself so much like his parents
that he resisted his own statements. There was a constant strife between
the parent in him, who was trying to make him do things, and the child
in him, who was in revolt. Things had gotten a little pressing just before
examinations, and he had begun to do a little work. He had decided, he
said, that the only trouble with him was that he had no incentive. “But
recently," he said, "I've had a lot of incentive; in fact I can't remember being so incensed in all my life."

What I am trying to say is that being incensed may be the normal and appropriate state of mind of the young while being educated. Education is the way that we get at them. We force the culture upon them, the "do's" and the "don'ts" and the "ought's" and the "must's," and when they start doing these, can they eagerly espouse them and keep their integrity, or must they resist to live? Watch them. They go on slow-down strikes and become slow readers. They bewilder themselves by their "laziness." They appeal to you, in conscience-stricken despair. And when they do their work, is their main purpose to learn something or to placate you? It is very profitable and enlightening to look at the act of studying as the process of placating authority in the educational world.

Does this sound extreme? I remember when I first went into the business of helping students to study better, more efficiently and all that. I assumed, of course, that everybody wants to be efficient—that is to get the same results with the least effort—and for all I know this still may be a perfectly reasonable assumption. When a student came to me, I would try to show him how to be efficient. He would say, "Here are my notes. I take lots of notes. I don't really know what is the matter, I'm not getting anywhere, that's all. I've been working and working and working, but I don't get the grades." Well, he would have plenty of notes, all right, stacks of them, all very neatly arranged, and most of them copied right out of the book; so I would show him, as kindly as possible, how inefficient all this was, how he had written and written but hadn't learned a thing. And I would show him how to learn much more and to do about one-fourth of all that copy work, and then he would say, "I don't know why I didn't think of that before; why that's marvelous! Thank you so much, sir." And he would run off. In a few weeks I'd see him again and say, "How are you getting on these days?" And there would be that same mass of verbatim notes. And while I sat there, feeling that wave of the teacher's despair, the student would say, "I tried your method, sir, really I did [whose method?], but I don't know, really, sir, it just seems better this way."

Now the student was right. I had been trying to give him an efficient way of learning something, whereas he already had a very efficient way of satisfying his conscience, which was what he was mainly trying to do. You cannot imagine a more efficient way to satisfy your conscience than sitting for hours and writing out those notes. The note goes from the book up one finger and one arm, and across the shoulders, and down the other arm onto the paper, and your mind and heart and soul can be off on something else more pleasant. No extra effort at all. Such a method for such a student is admirably designed to fit his purposes. Do you
suppose, as a teacher, that your main problem will be your students' stupidity? Or does it begin to seem as if your main problem might be the extraordinary wisdom of their resistance?

No wonder, then, that you will suffer moments of dark despair.

At this point I hesitate to remind you that this is an excursion into my ignorance and that I have no more idea of what to do about these things than you have. I may have offered you the sorry consolation that when you fail to educate a student it may not be wholly your own fault. But surely I am not going to leave you with this, and surely there must be something that you can do about the situation, in addition to the big job of accepting it. Nobody knows the answer to this one, but it may help a little if we look back over the implications of what we have been saying.

From what we have said, it seems to follow that the good teacher's greatest responsibilities and greatest skills lie not in his love for the subject or in the clarity of his exposition, or in his enthusiasm, but in his handling of the problems of resistance. That is to say he will accept the fact that his students will react to him not in terms of who he is, but as a They, and he will, in the face of this, attempt to create a situation in which his students may more readily become Selves in the educational world.

We might expand on the first of these a little. You will be told by another lecturer, "Naturally you never will pull your rank on your students." Now I don't think you will either, not if you have acknowledged that you have a rank and are willing to accept the consequences. The only teacher who pulls his rank is the person who refuses to accept either the rank itself or the adolescents' reaction to it. If you refuse to accept your disciplinary function as an educator, either in kindergarten or in graduate school, and pose, in your own mind, simply as the students' guide and friend, you will be very vulnerable indeed. For when a student turns the hostility which he has accumulated for those who do not let him have what he wants (and he could have it if it were not for Them), when he turns that full blast on you, with an accuracy which he has learned from long experience, and hurts right on the sore spot, what will you do then? If you take it personally, you will pull your rank on him out of your own self-preservation. But if you see it in its context, it will not look like a personal affront, and you will deal with it educationally in its own terms. But more important, if you acknowledge to yourself what your role is and how your students view you, then you will be able to handle your authority productively instead of denying it. That is, you will be able to use it in ways in which it will do the least harm by exciting resistance. Denying it does not do away with it; it
simply leaves it out of control. We have all been taught by the teacher who stands between his subject and his students, so that he seems to represent his subject in such a way that the subject matter is inextricable from our reaction to his authority. The admonition which you received earlier not to stand between your students and what you had written on the blackboard referred to something much deeper than the interference caused by your bodily opacity. The good teacher stands to one side of the direct line between his students and his subject. Then his authority can be perceived as a separate matter, and his teaching can be interpreted as assistance rather than imposition.

The job of helping students to discover their Selves in the educational world follows directly from this sort of thing, but it is so complex, so subtle, and so obscure, that I dare not venture far upon it. Certainly it must have something to do with the complicated job of acknowledging one's authoritative position and still treating one's students as persons with integrity and freedom of choice. It would be easy to say that if we want our students to act and think of themselves as mature, we must treat them as mature. It is correspondingly easy to suppose that any teacher who fails to do so fails because of the limitations of his own character. But this is a very harsh judgment indeed, because once more it leaves the students' response out of the picture. The adolescent's desire to be treated as an adult is a highly ambivalent desire. With being an adult come all the difficulties and handicaps which we mentioned. For most of his life, too, the student has developed his skills and his sense of security in dealing with an authoritarian They. He has learned that the way to deal with teachers is to get them to commit themselves, to find out what they think and hand it back to them on examinations. Suppose, then, that you start encouraging your students to think for themselves, and you withhold your own convictions as stultifying to this process. The anxiety and the panic and the hostility will be indescribable. How much of it can you stand? Can you permit the organized conspiracy to promote a whispering campaign on the campus to the effect that your course is vague and indeterminant? Can you let your students complain to the dean that you do not tell them what to expect? Can you allow the head of your department to learn that the students "aren't getting anything" out of your section meetings? Experience with this sort of thing has shown that the students will eventually reverse themselves, but it takes a full academic year for them to do it. Do not judge your colleagues too harshly should they fail to carry through the experiment.

I should like to venture one idea from the counseling process itself, even though I am not very sure how generally it may apply. It sometimes seems to me that the greatest source of anxiety among college students is their sense of personal isolation from their teachers. By personal isolation I do not refer to the lack of teas and social gatherings and bull
sessions, or to any specific item of academic paraphernalia. What I mean is the sense that the only connection one has with the professor and the institution at large resides in one's academic record. As one student said, "I feel like a B-minus walking around on two legs." The anxiety of this personal isolation is the breeding ground of infantile defensiveness and resistance. A large part of it is doubtless inevitable and only an indirect expression of homesickness, but much more of it seems to be a vicious by-product of the fixity of student-teacher roles in our education. When a student comes to you after class with a question about a mathematical problem, what he may really want to say is, "I'm scared to death, I don't think anybody knows I'm here, and nobody cares. Please, teacher, acknowledge that I count, that I am a person, and that you are paying attention." But he cannot say this. He cannot say that in mathematics he is lonely; so he asks a question about a problem, and what are you to do? Can you do anything but answer the question? I do not know. I only know that in the counseling clinic where such things are, after all, infinitely easier to do, more difficulties with mathematics are resolved by accepting and acknowledging how the student feels than by demonstrating some difficult point in a proof.

Now one cannot engage in a Rogerian non-directive interview while erasing the blackboard at the end of a lecture, but in the briefest of these student contacts there can be an enormous difference in quality. The difference resides in the implied topic of the conversation. It can be perfectly clear that the topic of conversation is the subject matter and nothing more, or it can be equally clear that the topic of conversation is the student in his emotional relation to his work. If this is important in the brief moments after class, it should be infinitely more so in the longer office hours. It is extraordinary how simple a matter it really is to give a student a sense of personal relatedness to the community of scholars. All one really has to do is to try to see how he himself at this particular moment sees things and feels things and to show him that one somehow understands. It is in the student's sense of the warmth of being understood, of being therefore personally related, that he is set free from his anxiety so that he can do his academic work productively.

And it is not impossible that it is through the warmth that you may convey this way that the student may come to feel that it may be worth while to grow up. If grown-ups are impersonal, authoritative, and intellectual, then it is perfectly clear that being mature means to give up having fun. It means to the student that to grow up and be a Self must carry with it an absolutely intolerable loss, the discard of all his impulses and desires, and that to be a Self will not only mean to be alone, but to be lonely indeed. But if you are warm and attentive to your students' feelings, then they will realize that you, too, put some value on feelings, and that maybe it would be possible to grow up and still have
feelings and still have fun. In that case, since you eat beans, maybe they will try them, too.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. Perry takes pains to establish a tone of informality at the start of his talk. How does he do this? (Look at his diction, his use of "we," his plain speaking about certain kinds of students.)

2. What connection is there between the tone and Perry's subject? Try to relate the teacher's uncertainties and doubts to those of the students. Is Perry suggesting that teachers and students are in the same boat?

3. Write a paragraph in which you summarize Perry's account of human growth as a conflict between "Me" and "They" which has to be reconciled if the person is to become mature.

4. Rousseau's Social Contract is one way of explaining and reconciling the conflict between the individual and society. What fault does Perry find with Rousseau's theory?

5. At times Perry appears to put himself in the place of the "Me" and to speak with the "Me's" voice. What is the advantage of this procedure? Is there any resemblance between this way of writing and the dramatist's?

6. Perry draws on his experience as a counselor of students for some of his examples. Do these give you any confidence in his judgment? Is he a wise counselor? Justify your opinion by reference to the advice he gives and the tone in which he gives it.

7. In what way is time related to the conflict that Perry describes?

8. Toward the end of his talk, Perry gives some advice to prospective teachers. Summarize this advice in a paragraph. Is there, implicitly, any advice here for students?

9. The last sentence in Perry's talk goes back to an earlier example drawn from his own experience. Why is it appropriate for him to end his talk in this way?

10. At one point near the end of his talk Perry says: "... I have no more idea of what to do about these things than you have." Is this a confession of weakness? A sign of Perry's maturity? Why does he make this admission?
Part 4

LANGUAGE: FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY
From THE STORY OF MY LIFE

MY FIRST WORD

The most important day I remember in all my life is the one on which my teacher, Anne Mansfield Sullivan, came to me. I am filled with wonder when I consider the immeasurable contrast between the two lives which it connects. It was the third of March, 1887, three months before I was seven years old.

On the afternoon of that eventful day, I stood on the porch, dumb, expectant. I guessed vaguely from my mother’s signs and from the hurrying to and fro in the house that something unusual was about to happen, so I went to the door and waited on the steps. The afternoon sun penetrated the mass of honeysuckle that covered the porch, and fell on my upturned face. My fingers lingered almost unconsciously on the familiar leaves and blossoms which had just come forth to greet the sweet southern spring. I did not know what the future held of marvel or surprise for me. Anger and bitterness had preyed upon me continually for weeks and a deep languor had succeeded this passionate struggle.

Have you ever been at sea in a dense fog, when it seemed as if a tangible white darkness shut you in, and the great ship, tense and anxious, groped her way toward the shore with plummet and sounding-line, and you waited with beating heart for something to happen? I was like that ship before my education began, only I was without compass or sounding-line, and had no way of knowing how near the harbour was. “Light! give me light!” was the wordless cry of my soul, and the light of love shone on me in that very hour.

I felt approaching footsteps. I stretched out my hand as I supposed to my mother. Some one took it, and I was caught up and held close in the arms of her who had come to reveal all things to me, and, more than all things else, to love me.

The morning after my teacher came she led me into her room and
gave me a doll. The little blind children at the Perkins Institution had sent it and Laura Bridgman had dressed it; but I did not know this until afterward. When I had played with it a little while, Miss Sullivan slowly spelled into my hand the word “d-o-l-l.” I was at once interested in this finger play and tried to imitate it. When I finally succeeded in making the letters correctly I was flushed with childish pleasure and pride. Running downstairs to my mother I held up my hand and made the letters for doll. I did not know that I was spelling a word or even that words existed; I was simply making my fingers go in monkey-like imitation. In the days that followed I learned to spell in this uncomprehending way a great many words, among them pin, hat, cup and a few verbs like sit, stand and walk. But my teacher had been with me several weeks before I understood that everything has a name.

One day, while I was playing with my new doll, Miss Sullivan put my big rag doll into my lap also, spelled “d-o-l-l” and tried to make me understand that “d-o-l-l” applied to both. Earlier in the day we had had a tussle over the words “m-u-g” and “w-a-t-e-r.” Miss Sullivan had tried to impress it upon me that “m-u-g” is mug and that “w-a-t-e-r” is water, but I persisted in confounding the two. In despair she had dropped the subject for the time, only to renew it at the first opportunity. I became impatient at her repeated attempts and, seizing the new doll, I dashed it upon the floor. I was keenly delighted when I felt the fragments of the broken doll at my feet. Neither sorrow nor regret followed my passion-ate outburst. I had not loved the doll. In the still, dark world in which I lived there was no strong sentiment or tenderness. I felt my teacher sweep the fragments to one side of the hearth, and I had a sense of satisfaction that the cause of my discomfort was removed. She brought me my hat, and I knew I was going out into the warm sunshine. This thought, if a wordless sensation may be called a thought, made me hop and skip with pleasure.

We walked down the path to the well-house, attracted by the fra-grance of the honeysuckle with which it was covered. Some one was drawing water and my teacher placed my hand under the spout. As the cool stream gushed over one hand she spelled into the other the word water, first slowly, then rapidly. I stood still, my whole attention fixed upon the motions of her fingers. Suddenly I felt a misty consciousness as of something forgotten—a thrill of returning thought; and somehow the mystery of language was revealed to me. I knew then that “w-a-t-e-r” meant the wonderful cool something that was flowing over my hand. That living word awakened my soul, gave it light, hope, joy, set it free! There were barriers still, it is true, but barriers that could in time be swept away.

I left the well-house eager to learn. Everything had a name, and each name gave birth to a new thought. As we returned to the house every
object which I touched seemed to quiver with life. That was because I
saw everything with the strange, new sight that had come to me. On
entering the door I remembered the doll I had broken. I felt my way
to the hearth and picked up the pieces. I tried vainly to put them to-
gether. Then my eyes filled with tears; for I realized what I had done,
and for the first time I felt repentance and sorrow.

I learned a great many new words that day. I do not remember what
they all were; but I do know that mother, father, sister, teacher were
among them—words that were to make the world blossom for me, “like
Aaron’s rod, with flowers.” It would have been difficult to find a happier
child than I was as I lay in my crib at the close of that eventful day
and lived over the joys it had brought me, and for the first time longed
for a new day to come.

TWO LETTERS FROM ANNE MANSFIELD SULLIVAN

April 5, 1887.

I must write you a line this morning because something very important
has happened. Helen has taken the second great step in her education.
She has learned that everything has a name, and that the manual alphabet
is the key to everything she wants to know.

In a previous letter I think I wrote you that “mug” and “milk” had
given Helen more trouble than all the rest. She confused the nouns with
the verb “drink.” She didn’t know the word for “drink,” but went
through the pantomime of drinking whenever she spelled “mug” or
“milk.” This morning, while she was washing, she wanted to know the
name for “water.” When she wants to know the name of anything, she
points to it and pats my hand. I spelled “w-a-t-e-r” and thought no more
about it until after breakfast. Then it occurred to me that with the help
of this new word I might succeed in straightening out the “mug-milk”
difficulty. We went out to the pump-house, and I made Helen hold her
mug under the spout while I pumped. As the cold water gushed forth,
filling the mug, I spelled “w-a-t-e-r” in Helen’s free hand. The word
coming so close upon the sensation of cold water rushing over her hand
seemed to startle her. She dropped the mug and stood as one transfixed.
A new light came into her face. She spelled “water” several times. Then
she dropped on the ground and asked for its name and pointed to the
pump and the trellis, and suddenly turning round she asked for my name.
I spelled “Teacher.” Just then the nurse brought Helen’s little sister into
the pump-house, and Helen spelled “baby” and pointed to the nurse.
All the way back to the house she was highly excited, and learned the
name of every object she touched, so that in a few hours she had added
thirty new words to her vocabulary. Here are some of them: Door, open,
shut, give, go, come, and a great many more.
P. S.—I didn’t finish my letter in time to get it posted last night; so I shall add a line. Helen got up this morning like a radiant fairy. She has flitted from object to object, asking the name of everything and kissing me for very gladness. Last night when I got in bed, she stole into my arms of her own accord and kissed me for the first time, and I thought my heart would burst, so full was it of joy.

April 10, 1887.

I see an improvement in Helen from day to day, almost from hour to hour. Everything must have a name now. Wherever we go, she asks eagerly for the names of things she has not learned at home. She is anxious for her friends to spell, and eager to teach the letters to every one she meets. She drops the signs and pantomime she used before, as soon as she has words to supply their place, and the acquirement of a new word affords her the liveliest pleasure. And we notice that her face grows more expressive each day.

I have decided not to try to have regular lessons for the present. I am going to treat Helen exactly like a two-year-old child. It occurred to me the other day that it is absurd to require a child to come to a certain place at a certain time and recite certain lessons, when he has not yet acquired a working vocabulary. I sent Helen away and sat down to think. I asked myself, “How does a normal child learn language?” The answer was simple, “By imitation.” The child comes into the world with the ability to learn, and he learns of himself, provided he is supplied with sufficient outward stimulus. He sees people do things, and he tries to do them. He hears others speak, and he tries to speak. But long before he utters his first word, he understands what is said to him. I have been observing Helen’s little cousin lately. She is about fifteen months old, and already understands a great deal. In response to questions she points out prettily her nose, mouth, eye, chin, cheek, ear. If I say, “Where is baby’s other ear?” she points it out correctly. If I hand her a flower, and say, “Give it to mamma,” she takes it to her mother. If I say, “Where is the little rogue?” she hides behind her mother’s chair, or covers her face with her hands and peeps out at me with an expression of genuine rougishness. She obeys many commands like these: “Come,” “Kiss,” “Go to papa,” “Shut the door,” “Give me the biscuit.” But I have not heard her try to say any of these words, although they have been repeated hundreds of times in her hearing, and it is perfectly evident that she understands them. These observations have given me a clue to the method to be followed in teaching Helen language. I shall talk into her hand as we talk into the baby’s ears. I shall assume that she has the normal child’s capacity of assimilation and imitation. I shall use complete sentences in talking to her, and fill out the meaning with gestures and her descriptive
signs when necessity requires it; but I shall not try to keep her mind fixed on any one thing. I shall do all I can to interest and stimulate it, and wait for results.

AIDS TO STUDY

When Hellen Keller was less than 2 years old she was deprived by illness of sight, hearing, and speech. Until Anne Sullivan came, five years later, to be her teacher, the child was imprisoned in silence, darkness, and the confusion of her thoughts and feelings. The extracts from Helen Keller’s autobiography and from Anne Sullivan’s letters recount from two points of view the unlocking of the prison.

1. What is the evidence that Helen Keller is writing retrospectively rather than in strict narrative progression? What would have been gained by not suggesting in advance what was to come? What lost?
2. What is the significance of the incident of Helen’s breaking the doll? How would you explain the child’s difficulty in distinguishing between the words mug and water?
3. What is “the mystery of language” that was “revealed” to the child in the well-house? How would you explain what happened there?
4. The first of Anne Sullivan’s letters, written on the day which Helen Keller is recalling some years later, differs in detail from Helen’s account. What are the differences? How would you explain them?
5. Are there any clues in Anne Sullivan’s letters as to her success as a teacher?
6. For Helen Keller and her teacher what was the most remarkable result of learning the secret of language?
As we turned to the elevator on the third floor of the Business Associates Building at 1115-20 Horace Street, we saw the scratched black letters on the frosted glass: “Edward Zybowski—Best Directions Writer in the World.” We let the elevator go down without us.

Mr. Zybowski was willing to talk to us, he said, because at the moment he was stuck. “I’ve got 45 words for a label and I’ve got to get it down to 25.”

As he spoke, he lifted the rod that held his paper against the typewriter roller and squinted at the words. He was ordinary-looking, about forty, the black hair at the back and sides of his head emphasizing the whiteness of the balding front part. Except for his face: it was kindly but looked mashed in.

“Not kicking about copy they gave me,” he said. “Never do. More copy, more challenge to cut it till you wouldn’t believe it was possible. That’s what keeps customers comin’ to me.”

“We don’t want to keep you from your work. . . .”

“That’s O.K. I’m stuck. No use worryin’ and worryin’ over a label. Don’t think consciously about it for a few hours when you’re stuck. Then suddenly your unconscious comes through for you—wham! There it is. Needs only final touches. No ulcers for the writer that way.”

“Inspiration?” we ventured.

“Inspiration! That’s a literary myth. Purely a matter of the unconscious memories and tips your mind has stored up. Then they spill over.

“This job’s more than just writing,” he said. “Deciding position and size of type very important.” He picked up a brightly colored jar lid. “Ad on top for radio program, see? Where’s the direction? On side of

lid where you put your fingers to open it. Why there? Most logical place in the world."

We read the instructions printed in blue along the fluted edge:

**AFTER OPENING, KEEP IN REFRIGERATOR**
**DO NOT FREEZE**

"You’re opening the jar," he said, "and you see the word OPENING. Stops you, doesn’t it? Same thing appears on other side of lid. Don’t ordinarily believe in presenting any direction twice, but got to here. So important—food’ll spoil if you don’t follow these directions."

"We’re just curious, Mr. Zybowski. What is difficult about writing a direction like that? Seems the only way one could say this idea."

Mr. Z. looked affronted for a second, then smiled. "Yeah, no one can see it at first. And that’s really a compliment to me. Shows I did it the simplest and most natural way it could be done. Now take this jar-lid direction—copy came to me like this:

"When stored at normal refrigerator temperature this food will retain its taste, lightness, color, and value as a food product; but when exposed to air or kept at freezing temperature will suffer a chemical change which may render it unfit for human consumption. It is therefore recommended that it be kept at refrigerated temperature when not being used. However, it may be stored at room temperature safely if the lid has never been removed."

"I get that essay on the subject, figure I got a space a half an inch high around the lid, and a damned important direction. So I write:

**AFTER OPENING, KEEP IN REFRIGERATOR**
**DO NOT FREEZE**

Our respect for Mr. Z. was growing. "You must be quite an expert on the English language," we said.

"I hate to put it this way," he said, "but I think I know more about English usage than 90 per cent of the college teachers in the country. And also how to use English—that’s a different thing, you know. Under the how-to-use part, for example, there’s this business of adjectives. The college experts who think they’re up on the latest, say don’t use adjectives. They got it from Hemingway, they claim. I read all the books and magazines on English, too. Almost never learn anything from them. When you got a space half an inch square facing you and an important idea to get across, you learn something about language. What was I going to say?"

"You were speaking of not using adjectives."

"Yeah. They say don’t use 'em. In a way they’re right. Adjectives are usually weak as hell." Without looking, he pointed to the wall behind him where hung a half-letter-size sheet of blue paper framed in black.
“That one up there,” he said, “has no adjectives. Shouldn’t have any. It’s true you should use ’em sparingly. But take this tea-bag carton.” He pulled a box from a desk drawer. “After I told ’em how to make hot tea on the left panel here, then I say: ‘For perfect iced tea, make hot tea and steep for 6 minutes.’ The word perfect is a selling word there—plug. I don’t like to write any plug angles into directions. Leave that slush to ad-writers, damn their lyin’ souls. This business of mine you can be honest in. Givin’ directions is really helpin’ people, educatin’ them.”

We could see Mr. Z. was in the first glow of a long speech, but we wanted to find out how he wrote directions. So we interrupted. “We can see that it is an honorable occupation in a dirty business world. Would you mind telling us more about this tea-bag label? You said you used no adjectives except for perfect, but in the hot-tea instructions we see the words warmed teapot, fresh, bubbling, boiling water.”

“Glad you mentioned it. Easy to misunderstand. You see, warmed teapot is what you’ve got to use, one of the important tricks of tea-making. So warmed isn’t an idle little descriptive word thrown in. It’s the kind of teapot you’ve got to use or else you don’t get first-rate tea. And the same way with fresh. I hate a word like that usually because it sounds like those damned ad-writers’ slush. You know how you always see the word on the package when you buy five-day-old stale cupcakes in a grocery store. But when used with water, the word fresh means something. When water stands around, it loses a lot—loses, to be exact.

. . .” He reached for a chemical dictionary.

“Oh, don’t bother,” we said. “We know you’re right there.”

“And bubbling,” he said, pushing the book back in the case behind him. “I’m sure you know there are many different stages of boiling, and ‘bubbling’ identifies the stage we want.”

“Yes, so in that sense of basic meaning, you don’t consider these words adjectives,” we said.

“Right,” he said, beaming with satisfaction as he leaned back in his chair. “One point those modern English teachers are straight on: use active verbs whenever possible. I use ‘push,’ ‘lift,’ ‘scoop,’ ‘unscrew.’ Never say anything like, ‘The turn of the cap is accomplished by a twist.’” He smiled. “I would say, ‘Twist cap to left.’”

“We’ll have to go soon,” we said. Mr. Z. looked crestfallen. “Could you show us the direction that you consider your masterpiece?”

“Well,” he said, “there can be only one masterpiece done by any one artist. I couldn’t pick which is best. I try not to let any of ’em get out of this office till they’re at least pared to the minimum. They may not always be brilliant, but they gotta be the minimum or they don’t go out.”

“How about that one in the frame? Any special significance in putting it on blue paper?”
He stood up and unhooked it from the wall. “Blue paper, use it for all final O.K.’d directions, so as not to make a mistake and let one of the earlier versions—call them scratches—get out when there’s a better one been done.” He held the frame out to us. “This one, I’ll admit, is pretty good.”

We read:

IF TOO HARD-WARM • IF TOO SOFT-COOL
PEANUT BUTTER SOMETIMES CONTRACTS
CAUSING AIR SPACE ON SIDE OF JAR
THIS MAY RESULT IN A WHITE APPEARANCE
WHICH IN NO WAY AFFECTS QUALITY OR TASTE.

“I like this one,” he said, “’cause no adjectives and no plug. First line there got the concentration of a line from Milton’s Samson, my favorite poem.”

We noticed the adjective white before appearance, but knew now that it wasn’t an adjective to Mr. Z. and, for that matter, to us any more. “Why so little punctuation?” we asked. “One period at the end and then only two hyphens in the first line.”

“Glad you asked,” he said, wiping his forehead with a handkerchief. “Damnedest thing, punctuation! Spent years mastering American English punctuation when I started this business. Had to know it first but all along thought I wouldn’t use it much.” He picked up the framed direction from the desk. “Didn’t either.”

“Now first of all, you see these words,” said Mr. Z.

BUTTER SOMETIMES CONTRACTS
CAUSING AIR SPACE

Ordinary punctuation usage says comma before ‘causing,’ but I take care of that by ending one line and starting another. Never need punctuation when eye has to stop and move over and down to a new line. In first line I use hyphen instead of dash because public doesn’t know hyphen from a dash anyway. Hyphen saves space, and, when you don’t use both in same copy, you don’t need to differentiate between them. Remember, my context for a direction is not a chapter or a book or even a page, just the round top of a jar lid or one side of a package. Sometimes no other words except the direction. No chance for confusing with antecedents or references several pages before. And thank God! No footnotes! I won’t allow any asterisks. Every explanation’s gotta be complete in itself.”

“How about that middle dot in the first line?” we said.

“Oh, that? I’m proud of that middle dot. Easier to see than period. A better stop really. We ought to use ’em in all writing, but you know
the power of convention in usage. And this particular middle dot is in center of eight words, four on each side, with equal meaning and importance. A really logical and rational mark here, don’t you think?”

We had to agree. “Anybody can see it’s a very intelligent job of direction writing,” we said. “There is only one thing that seems inconsistent with what you have said today.”

“What’s that?”

“After ‘causing air space on side of jar,’ you say ‘this may result.’ It seems that the ‘this’ is a waste of words. Couldn’t you say ‘causing air space on side of jar and resulting in a white . . .’?”

“Good point,” said Mr. Z. “A really fine point of the trade. I’m glad, though, you didn’t object to ‘this’ and say it is a vague reference. Anybody can see the reference is perfectly clear. But I’ll tell you why I used the ‘this.’ Gettin’ to be a pretty long sentence, that one. And if you say ‘resulting,’ you have to look back to be sure what the relationship is between ‘resulting’ and ‘causing.’ In a sense it would be no vaguer than ‘this’ in its reference, but in reality it would be harder to follow because that kind of parallelism is not in common everyday speech use. But the ‘this’ construction is. Remember my audience is everybody. A lot of those everybodies really don’t read, so you gotta talk, not write, to ‘em.”

“What would you say is the secret of this job, if there is one, Mr. Zybowski?”

“Funny thing,” he said, “but I’ve thought that over a lot and come to an awfully egotistic conclusion. The secret is the same as for writing a great book or doing anything else that really gives something to people. That is to learn to put yourself in the other guy’s place.”

We knew nothing to say to such a statement. “It’s been a pleasure,” we said, getting up.

“Come in again. Sure enjoyed talkin’ to you,” he said.

As we got to the door, he looked up from the typewriter. “I forgot to tell you one other thing about this peanut-butter direction. Notice last phrase: ‘in no way affects quality or taste.’ That’s the time I beat the ad-writers at their own game and still didn’t misrepresent anything or slush the customer. The way I put it, it’s a statement of fact, yet a subtle idea creeps into customer’s mind that the quality and taste of this butter is exceptionally good. This time language did even more than it was expected to do.”

“Goodbye,” we said, shaking our head in wonder as we closed the frosted-glass door. We believed the words on it now.

**AIDS TO STUDY**

1. Does the Direction Writer’s own style of utterance—choice of words, structure of sentences—accord with his views on effective expression? What are
his distinctive mannerisms of expression?
2. Look at the directions printed on ten or a dozen packages or bottles in a medicine cabinet, kitchen cupboard, or supermarket. Are any of them deficient in clarity or brevity? Do any of them mix “selling words” with the necessary information? Copy down some examples for analysis.
3. How do the first three paragraphs of this sketch try to arouse the reader’s attention? Do they succeed? Are they merely introductory or do they help to define the topic to be discussed?
4. Why does the author mention the “half-letter-size sheet of blue paper framed in black” without mentioning what is printed on it? Later he quotes it. Would you prefer that he did not mention it until he was ready to quote it?
5. The last paragraph but one contains an afterthought, yet expresses an important idea. Should this point have been worked into the paragraph beginning, “‘Funny thing,’ he said”? If so, why? If not, why not?
6. The last sentence of the sketch tries to make the reader refer back to the beginning. Why?
"The average Yaleman, Class of '24," *Time* magazine reported last year after reading something in the New York *Sun*, a newspaper published in those days, "makes $25,111 a year."

Well, good for him!

But, come to think of it, what does this improbably precise and salubrious figure mean? Is it, as it appears to be, evidence that if you send your boy to Yale you won't have to work in your old age and neither will he? Is this average a mean or is it a median? What kind of sample is it based on? You could lump one Texas oilman with two hundred hungry free-lance writers and report *their* average income as $25,000-odd a year. The arithmetic is impeccable, the figure is convincingly precise, and the amount of meaning there is in it you could put in your eye.

In just such ways is the secret language of statistics, so appealing in a fact-minded culture, being used to sensationalize, inflate, confuse, and oversimplify. Statistical terms are necessary in reporting the mass data of social and economic trends, business conditions, "opinion" polls, this year's census. But without writers who use the words with honesty and understanding and readers who know what they mean, the result can only be semantic nonsense.

In popular writing on scientific research, the abused statistic is almost crowding out the picture of the white-jacketed hero laboring overtime without time-and-a-half in an ill-lit laboratory. Like the "little dash of powder, little pot of paint," statistics are making many an important fact "look like what she ain't." Here are some of the ways it is done.

THE SAMPLE WITH THE BUILT-IN BIAS

Our Yale men—or Yalemen, as they say in the Time-Life building—belong to this flourishing group. The exaggerated estimate of their income is not based on all members of the class nor on a random or representative sample of them. At least two interesting categories of 1924-model Yale men have been excluded.

First there are those whose present addresses are unknown to their classmates. Wouldn’t you bet that these lost sheep are earning less than the boys from prominent families and the others who can be handily reached from a Wall Street office?

There are那些 who chucked the questionnaire into the nearest wastebasket. Maybe they didn’t answer because they were not making enough money to brag about. Like the fellow who found a note clipped to his first pay check suggesting that he consider the amount of his salary confidential: “Don’t worry,” he told the boss. “I’m just as ashamed of it as you are.”

Omitted from our sample then are just the two groups most likely to depress the average. The $25,111 figure is beginning to account for itself. It may indeed be a true figure for those of the Class of ’24 whose addresses are known and who are willing to stand up and tell how much they earn. But even that requires a possibly dangerous assumption that the gentlemen are telling the truth.

To be dependable to any useful degree at all, a sampling study must use a representative sample (which can lead to trouble too) or a truly random one. If all the Class of ’24 is included, that’s all right. If every tenth name on a complete list is used, that is all right too, and so is drawing an adequate number of names out of a hat. The test is this: Does every name in the group have an equal chance to be in the sample?

You’ll recall that ignoring this requirement was what produced the Literary Digest’s famed fiasco. When names for polling were taken only from telephone books and subscription lists, people who did not have telephones or Literary Digest subscriptions had no chance to be in the sample. They possibly did not mind this underprivilege a bit, but their absence was in the end very hard on the magazine that relied on the figures.

This leads to a moral: You can prove about anything you want to by letting your sample bias itself. As a consumer of statistical data—a reader, for example, of a news magazine—remember that no statistical conclusion can rise above the quality of the sample it is based upon. In the absence of information about the procedures behind it, you are not warranted in giving any credence at all to the result.

1 The Literary Digest, a well-known news magazine, predicted, on the basis of a supposedly scientific poll, that Landon would defeat Franklin Roosevelt in the presidential election of 1936. [Ed.]
THE TRUNCATED, OR GEE-WHIZ, GRAPH

If you want to show some statistical information quickly and clearly, draw a picture of it. Graphic presentation is the thing today. If you don't mind misleading the hasty looker, or if you quite clearly want to deceive him, you can save some space by chopping the bottom off many kinds of graphs.

Suppose you are showing the upward trend of national income month by month for a year. The total rise, as in one recent year, is 7 per cent. It looks like this:

![Graph with truncated bottom](image)

That is clear enough. Anybody can see that the trend is slightly upward. You are showing a 7 per cent increase and that is exactly what it looks like.

But it lacks schmaltz. So you chop off the bottom, this way:

![Graph with truncated bottom and captions](image)

The figures are the same. It is the same graph and nothing has been falsified—except the impression that it gives. Anyone looking at it can just feel prosperity throbbing in the arteries of the country. It is a subtler equivalent of editing "National income rose 7 per cent" into "... climbed a whopping 7 per cent."

It is vastly more effective, however, because of that illusion of objectivity.
THE SOUPED-UP GRAPH

Sometimes truncating is not enough. The trifling rise in something or other still looks almost as insignificant as it is. You can make that 7 per cent look livelier than 100 per cent ordinarily does. Simply change the proportion between the ordinate and the abscissa. There's no rule against it, and it does give your graph a prettier shape.

But it exaggerates, to say the least, something awful:

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THE WELL-CHOSEN AVERAGE

I live near a country neighborhood for which I can report an average income of $15,000. I could also report it as $3,500.

If I should want to sell real estate hereabouts to people having a high snobbery content, the first figure would be handy. The second figure, however, is the one to use in an argument against raising taxes, or the local bus fare.

Both are legitimate averages, legally arrived at. Yet it is obvious that at least one of them must be as misleading as an out-and-out lie. The $15,000-figure is a mean, the arithmetic average of the incomes of all the families in the community. The smaller figure is a median; it might be called the income of the average family in the group. It indicates that half the families have less than $3,500 a year and half have more.

Here is where some of the confusion about averages comes from. Many human characteristics have the grace to fall into what is called the "normal" distribution. If you draw a picture of it, you get a curve that is shaped like a bell. Mean and median fall at about the same point, so it doesn't make very much difference which you use.

But some things refuse to follow this neat curve. Income is one of them. Incomes for most large areas will range from under $1,000 a
year to upward of $50,000. Almost everybody will be under $10,000, way over on the left-hand side of that curve.

One of the things that made the income figure for the "average Yale-man" meaningless is that we are not told whether it is a mean or a median. It is not that one type of average is invariably better than the other; it depends upon what you are talking about. But neither gives you any real information—and either may be highly misleading—unless you know which of those two kinds of average it is.

In the country neighborhood I mentioned, almost everyone has less than the average—the mean, that is—of $10,500. These people are all small farmers, except for a trio of millionaire week-enders who bring up the mean enormously.

You can be pretty sure that when an income average is given in the form of a mean nearly everybody has less than that.

THE INSIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE OR THE ELUSIVE ERROR

Your two children Peter and Linda (we might as well give them modish names while we're about it) take intelligence tests. Peter's IQ, you learn, is 98 and Linda's is 101. Aha! Linda is your brighter child.

Is she? An intelligence test is, or purports to be, a sampling of intellect. An IQ, like other products of sampling, is a figure with a statistical error, which expresses the precision or reliability of the figure. The size of this probable error can be calculated. For their test the makers of the much-used Revised Stanford-Binet have found it to be about 3 per cent. So Peter's indicated IQ of 98 really means only that there is an even chance that it falls between 95 and 101. There is an equal probability that it falls somewhere else—below 95 or above 101. Similarly, Linda's has no better than a fifty-fifty chance of being within the fairly sizeable range of 98 to 104.

You can work out some comparisons from that. One is that there is rather better than one chance in four that Peter, with his lower IQ rating, is really at least three points smarter than Linda. A statistician doesn't like to consider a difference significant unless you can hand him odds a lot longer than that.

Ignoring the error in a sampling study leads to all kinds of silly conclusions. There are magazine editors to whom readership surveys are gospel; with a 40 per cent readership reported for one article and a 35 per cent for another, they demand more like the first. I've seen even smaller differences given tremendous weight, because statistics are a mystery and numbers are impressive. The same thing goes for market surveys and so-called public-opinion polls. The rule is that you cannot make a valid comparison between two such figures unless you know the deviations. And unless the difference between the figures is many times greater than the probable error of each, you have only a guess that the
one appearing greater really is.

Otherwise you are like the man choosing a camp site from a report of mean temperature alone. One place in California with a mean annual temperature of 61 is San Nicolas Island on the south coast, where it always stays in the comfortable range between 47 and 87. Another with a mean of 61 is in the inland desert, where the thermometer hops around from 15 to 104. The deviation from the mean marks the difference, and you can freeze or roast if you ignore it.

THE ONE-DIMENSIONAL PICTURE

Suppose you have just two or three figures to compare—say the average weekly wage of carpenters in the United States and another country. The sums might be $60 and $30. An ordinary bar chart makes the difference graphic.

That is an honest picture. It looks good for American carpenters, but perhaps it does not have quite the oomph you are after. Can't you make that difference appear overwhelming and at the same time give it what I am afraid is known as eye-appeal? Of course you can. Following tradition, you represent these sums by pictures of money bags. If the $30 bag is one inch high, you draw the $60 bag two inches high. That's in proportion, isn't it?

The catch is, of course, that the American's money bag, being twice as tall as that of the $30 man, covers an area on your page four times as great. And since your two-dimensional picture represents an object that would in fact have three dimensions, the money bags actually would differ much more than that. The volumes of any two similar solids vary as the cubes of their heights. If the unfortunate foreigner's bag holds $30 worth of dimes, the American's would hold not $60 but a neat $240.
You didn’t say that, though, did you? And you can’t be blamed, you’re only doing it the way practically everybody else does.

THE EVER-IMPRESSIVE DECIMAL

For a spurious air of precision that will lend all kinds of weight to the most disreputable statistics, consider the decimal.

Ask a hundred citizens how many hours they slept last night. Come out with a total of, say 781.3. Your data are far from precise to begin with. Most people will miss their guess by fifteen minutes or more and some will recall five sleepless minutes as half a night of tossing insomnia.

But go ahead, do your arithmetic, announce that people sleep an average of 7.813 hours a night. You will sound as if you knew precisely what you are talking about. If you were foolish enough to say 7.8 (or “almost 8”) hours it would sound like what it was—an approximation.

THE SEMI-ATTACHED FIGURE

If you can’t prove what you want to prove, demonstrate something else and pretend that they are the same thing. In the daze that follows the collision of statistics with the human mind, hardly anybody will notice the difference. The semi-attached figure is a durable device guaranteed to stand you in good stead. It always has.

If you can’t prove that your nostrum cures colds, publish a sworn laboratory report that the stuff killed 31,108 germs in a test tube in eleven seconds. There may be no connection at all between assorted germs in a test tube and the whatever-it-is that produces colds, but people aren’t going to reason that sharply, especially while sniffling.

Maybe that one is too obvious and people are beginning to catch on. Here is a trickier version.

Let us say that in a period when race prejudice is growing it is to your advantage to “prove” otherwise. You will not find it a difficult assignment.
Ask that usual cross section of the population if they think Negroes have as good a chance as white people to get jobs. Ask again a few months later. As Princeton's Office of Public Opinion Research has found out, people who are most unsympathetic to Negroes are the ones most likely to answer yes to this question.

As prejudice increases in a country, the percentage of affirmative answers you will get to this question will become larger. What looks on the face of it like growing opportunity for Negroes actually is mounting prejudice and nothing else. You have achieved something rather remarkable: the worse things get, the better your survey makes them look.

THE UNWARRANTED ASSUMPTION, OR POST HOC RIDES AGAIN

The interrelation of cause and effect, so often obscure anyway, can be most neatly hidden in statistical data.

Somebody once went to a good deal of trouble to find out if cigarette smokers make lower college grades than non-smokers. They did. This naturally pleased many people, and they made much of it.

The unwarranted assumption, of course, was that smoking had produced dull minds. It seemed vaguely reasonable on the face of it, so it was quite widely accepted. But it really proved nothing of the sort, any more than it proved that poor grades drive students to the solace of tobacco. Maybe the relationship worked in one direction, maybe in the other. And maybe all this is only an indication that the sociable sort of fellow who is likely to take his books less than seriously is also likely to sit around and smoke many cigarettes.

Permitting statistical treatment to befog casual relationships is little better than superstition. It is like the conviction among the people of the Hebrides that body lice produce good health. Observation over the centuries had taught them that people in good health had lice and sick people often did not. Ergo, lice made a man healthy. Everybody should have them.

Scantier evidence, treated statistically at the expense of common sense, has made many a medical fortune and many a medical article in magazines, including professional ones. More sophisticated observers finally got things straightened out in the Hebrides. As it turned out, almost everybody in those circles had lice most of the time. But when a man took a fever (quite possibly carried to him by those same lice) and his body became hot, the lice left.

Here you have cause and effect not only reversed, but intermingled.

There you have a primer in some ways to use statistics to deceive. A well-wrapped statistic is better than Hitler's "big lie": it misleads, yet it can't be pinned onto you.

Is this little list altogether too much like a manual for swindlers? Per-
haps I can justify it in the manner of the retired burglar whose published reminiscences amounted to a graduate course in how to pick a lock and muffle a footfall: The crooks already know these tricks. Honest men must learn them in self-defense.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. Why does Huff doubt that the “average” Yale man of the class of 1924 makes $25,111 a year? What source of error does his discussion of this figure emphasize?

2. What kind of misrepresentation of fact is exemplified by the “truncated” and the “souped-up” graphs?

3. What is the difference between the mean and the median? (Nine children walked the following distances to school: 2 blocks, 3 blocks, 4 blocks, 9 blocks, 3 blocks, 11 blocks, 2 blocks, 1 block, 10 blocks. What are the mean and the median? Is there a significant difference?)

4. Why is the mean annual temperature of a locality a poor indication of the actual temperatures? What information besides the mean is required?

5. In the heading of the last section of the essay, what is meant by “post hoc”?

6. Why is the reader expected not to take seriously the suggestion that a discussion of “how to lie with statistics” is a “manual for swindlers”? Judging from the evidence that Huff has presented in his essay, whom does he mean by “swindlers”?
Cool was I and logical. Keen, calculating, perspicacious, acute and astute—I was all of these. My brain was as powerful as a dynamo, as precise as a chemist's scales, as penetrating as a scalpel. And—think of it!—I was only eighteen.

It is not often that one so young has such a giant intellect. Take, for example, Petey Bellows, my roommate at the university. Same age, same background, but dumb as an ox. A nice enough fellow, you understand, but nothing upstairs. Emotional type. Unstable. Impressionable. Worst of all, a faddist. Fads, I submit, are the very negation of reason. To be swept up in every new craze that comes along, to surrender yourself to idiocy just because everybody else is doing it—this, to me, is the acme of mindlessness. Not, however, to Petey.

One afternoon I found Petey lying on his bed with an expression of such distress on his face that I immediately diagnosed appendicitis.

"Don't move," I said. "Don't take a laxative. I'll get a doctor."

"Raccoon," he mumbled thickly.

"Raccoon?" I said, pausing in my flight.

"I want a raccoon coat," he wailed.

I perceived that his trouble was not physical, but mental. "Why do you want a raccoon coat?"

"I should have known it," he cried, pounding his temples. "I should have known they'd come back when the Charleston came back. Like a fool I spent all my money for textbooks, and now I can't get a raccoon coat."

"Can you mean," I said incredulously, "that people are actually wearing raccoon coats again?"

“All the Big Men on Campus are wearing them. Where’ve you been?”
“In the library,” I said, naming a place not frequented by Big Men on Campus.
He leaped from the bed and paced the room. “I’ve got to have a raccoon coat,” he said passionately. “I’ve got to!”
“Petey, why? Look at it rationally. Raccoon coats are unsanitary. They shed. They smell bad. They weigh too much. They’re unsightly. They——”
“You don’t understand,” he interrupted impatiently. “It’s the thing to do. Don’t you want to be in the swim?”
“No,” I said truthfully.
“Well, I do,” he declared. “I’d give anything for a raccoon coat. Anything!”

My brain, that precision instrument, slipped into high gear. “Anything?” I asked, looking at him narrowly.
“Anything,” he affirmed in ringing tones.
I stroked my chin thoughtfully. It so happened that I knew where to get my hands on a raccoon coat. My father had had one in his undergraduate days; it lay now in a trunk in the attic back home. It also happened that Petey had something I wanted. He didn’t have it exactly, but at least he had first rights on it. I refer to his girl, Polly Espy.

I had long coveted Polly Espy. Let me emphasize that my desire for this young woman was not emotional in nature. She was, to be sure, a girl who excited the emotions, but I was not one to let my heart rule my head. I wanted Polly for a shrewdly calculated, entirely cerebral reason.

I was a freshman in law school. In a few years I would be out in practice. I was well aware of the importance of the right kind of wife in furthering a lawyer’s career. The successful lawyers I had observed were, almost without exception, married to beautiful, gracious, intelligent women. With one omission, Polly fitted these specifications perfectly.

Beautiful she was. She was not yet of pin-up proportions, but I felt sure that time would supply the slack. She already had the makings.

Gracious she was. By gracious I mean full of graces. She had an erectness of carriage, an ease of bearing, a poise that clearly indicated the best of breeding. At table her manners were exquisite. I had seen her at the Kozy Kampus Korner eating the specialty of the house—a sandwich that contained scraps of pot roast, gravy, chopped nuts, and a dipper of sauerkraut—without even getting her fingers moist.

Intelligent she was not. In fact, she veered in the opposite direction. But I believed that under my guidance she would smarten up. At any rate, it was worth a try. It is, after all, easier to make a beautiful dumb girl smart than to make an ugly smart girl beautiful.

“Petey,” I said, “are you in love with Polly Espy?”
"I think she's a keen kid," he replied, "but I don't know if you'd call it love. Why?"

"Do you," I asked, "have any kind of formal arrangement with her? I mean are you going steady or anything like that?"

"No. We see each other quite a bit, but we both have other dates. Why?"

"Is there," I asked, "any other man for whom she has a particular fondness?"

"Not that I know of. Why?"

I nodded with satisfaction. "In other words, if you were out of the picture, the field would be open. Is that right?"

"I guess so. What are you getting at?"

"Nothing, nothing," I said innocently, and took my suitcase out of the closet.

"Where you going?" asked Petey.

"Home for the week end." I threw a few things into the bag.

"Listen," he said, clutching my arm eagerly, "while you're home, you couldn't get some money from your old man, could you, and lend it to me so I can buy a raccoon coat?"

"I may do better than that," I said with a mysterious wink and closed my bag and left.

"Look," I said to Petey when I got back Monday morning. I threw open the suitcase and revealed the huge, hairy, gamy object that my father had worn in his Stutz Bearcat in 1925.

"Holy Toledo!" said Petey reverently. He plunged his hands into the raccoon coat and then his face. "Holy Toledo!" he repeated fifteen or twenty times.

"Would you like it?" I asked.

"Oh yes!" he cried, clutching the greasy pelt to him. Then a canny look came into his eyes. "What do you want for it?"

"Your girl," I said, mincing no words.

"Polly?" he said in a horrified whisper. "You want Polly?"

"That's right."

He flung the coat from him. "Never," he said stoutly.

I shrugged. "Okay. If you don't want to be in the swim, I guess it's your business."

I sat down in a chair and pretended to read a book, but out of the corner of my eye I kept watching Petey. He was a torn man. First he looked at the coat with the expression of a waif at a bakery window. Then he turned away and set his jaw resolutely. Then he looked back at the coat, with even more longing in his face. Then he turned away, but with not so much resolution this time. Back and forth his head swiveled, desire waxing, resolution waning. Finally he didn't turn away at all; he just stood and stared with mad lust at the coat.
“It isn’t as though I was in love with Polly,” he said thickly. “Or going steady or anything like that.”

“That’s right,” I murmured.

“What’s Polly to me, or me to Polly?”

“Not a thing,” said I.

“It’s just been a casual kick—just a few laughs, that’s all.”

“Try on the coat,” said I.

He complied. The coat bunched high over his ears and dropped all the way down to his shoe tops. He looked like a mound of dead raccoons. “Fits fine,” he said happily.

I rose from my chair. “Is it a deal?” I asked, extending my hand.

He swallowed. “It’s a deal,” he said and shook my hand.

I had my first date with Polly the following evening. This was in the nature of a survey; I wanted to find out just how much work I had to do to get her mind up to the standard I required. I took her first to dinner. “Gee, that was a delish dinner,” she said as we left the restaurant. Then I took her to a movie. “Gee, that was a marvy movie,” she said as we left the theater. And then I took her home. “Gee, I had a sensaysh time,” she said as she bade me good night.

I went back to my room with a heavy heart. I had gravely underestimated the size of my task. This girl’s lack of information was terrifying. Nor would it be enough merely to supply her with information. First she had to be taught to think. This loomed as a project of no small dimensions, and at first I was tempted to give her back to Petey. But then I got to thinking about her abundant physical charms and about the way she entered a room and the way she handled a knife and fork, and I decided to make an effort.

I went about it, as in all things, systematically. I gave her a course in logic. It happened that I, as a law student, was taking a course in logic myself, so I had all the facts at my finger tips. “Polly,” I said to her when I picked her up on our next date, “tonight we are going over to the Knoll and talk.”

“Oo, terrif,” she replied. One thing I will say for this girl: you would go far to find another so agreeable.

We went to the Knoll, the campus trysting place, and we sat down under an old oak, and she looked at me expectantly. “What are we going to talk about?” she asked.

“Logic.”

She thought this over for a minute and decided she liked it. “Magnif,” she said.

“Logic,” I said, clearing my throat, “is the science of thinking. Before we can think correctly, we must first learn to recognize the common fallacies of logic. These we will take up tonight.”

“Wow-dow!” she cried, clapping her hands delightedly.
I winced, but went bravely on. "First let us examine the fallacy called Dicto Simpliciter."

"By all means," she urged, batting her lashes eagerly.

"Dicto Simpliciter means an argument based on an unqualified generalization. For example: Exercise is good. Therefore everybody should exercise."

"I agree," said Polly earnestly. "I mean exercise is wonderful. I mean it builds the body and everything."

"Polly," I said gently, "the argument is a fallacy. Exercise is good is an unqualified generalization. For instance, if you have heart disease, exercise is bad, not good. Many people are ordered by their doctors not to exercise. You must qualify the generalization. You must say exercise is usually good, or exercise is good for most people. Otherwise you have committed a Dicto Simpliciter. Do you see?"

"No," she confessed. "But this is marvy. Do more! Do more!"

"It will be better if you stop tugging at my sleeve," I told her, and when she desisted, I continued. "Next we take up a fallacy called Hasty Generalization. Listen carefully: You can't speak French. I can't speak French. Petey Bellows can't speak French. I must therefore conclude that nobody at the University of Minnesota can speak French."

"Really?" said Polly, amazed. "Nobody?"

I hid my exasperation. "Polly, it's a fallacy. The generalization is reached too hastily. There are too few instances to support such a conclusion."

"Know any more fallacies?" she asked breathlessly. "This is more fun than dancing even."

I fought off a wave of despair. I was getting nowhere with this girl, absolutely nowhere. Still, I am nothing if not persistent. I continued. "Next comes Post Hoc. Listen to this: Let's not take Bill on our picnic. Every time we take him out with us, it rains."

"I know somebody just like that," she exclaimed. "A girl back home—Eula Becker, her name is. It never fails. Every single time we take her on a picnic—"

"Polly," I said sharply, "it's a fallacy. Eula Becker doesn't cause the rain. She has no connection with the rain. You are guilty of Post Hoc if you blame Eula Becker."

"I'll never do it again," she promised contritely. "Are you mad at me?"

I sighed. "No, Polly, I'm not mad."

"Then tell me some more fallacies."

"All right. Let's try Contradictory Premises."

"Yes, let's," she chirped, blinking her eyes happily.

I frowned, but plunged ahead. "Here's an example of Contradictory Premises: If God can do anything, can He make a stone so heavy that He won't be able to lift it?"
“Of course,” she replied promptly.
“But if He can do anything, He can lift the stone,” I pointed out.
“Yeah,” she said thoughtfully. “Well, then I guess He can’t make the stone.”
“But He can do anything,” I reminded her.
She scratched her pretty, empty head. “I’m all confused,” she admitted.

“Of course you are. Because when the premises of an argument contradict each other, there can be no argument. If there is an irresistible force, there can be no immovable object. If there is an immovable object, there can be no irresistible force. Get it?”

“Tell me some more of this keen stuff,” she said eagerly.
I consulted my watch. “I think we’d better call it a night. I’ll take you home now, and you go over all the things you’ve learned. We’ll have another session tomorrow night.”

I deposited her at the girls’ dormitory, where she assured me that she had had a perfectly terrific evening, and I went glumly home to my room. Petey lay snoring in his bed, the raccoon coat huddled like a great hairy beast at his feet. For a moment I considered waking him and telling him that he could have his girl back. It seemed clear that my project was doomed to failure. The girl simply had a logic-proof head.

But then I reconsidered. I had wasted one evening; I might as well waste another. Who knew? Maybe somewhere in the extinct crater of her mind a few embers still smoldered. Maybe somehow I could fan them into flame. Admittedly it was not a prospect fraught with hope, but I decided to give it one more try.

Seated under the oak the next evening I said, “Our first fallacy tonight is called Ad Misericordiam.”

She quivered with delight.

“Listen closely,” I said. “A man applies for a job. When the boss asks him what his qualifications are, he replies that he has a wife and six children at home, the wife is a helpless cripple, the children have nothing to eat, no clothes to wear, no shoes on their feet, there are no beds in the house, no coal in the cellar, and winter is coming.”

A tear rolled down each of Polly’s pink cheeks. “Oh, this is awful, awful,” she sobbed.

“Yes, it’s awful,” I agreed, “but it’s no argument. The man never answered the boss’s question about his qualifications. Instead he appealed to the boss’s sympathy. He committed the fallacy of Ad Misericordiam. Do you understand?”

“Have you got a handkerchief?” she blubbered.

I handed her a handkerchief and tried to keep from screaming while she wiped her eyes. “Next,” I said in a carefully controlled tone, “we
will discuss False Analogy. Here is an example: Students should be allowed to look at their textbooks during examinations. After all, surgeons have X-rays to guide them during an operation, lawyers have briefs to guide them during a trial, carpenters have blueprints to guide them when they are building a house. Why, then, shouldn't students be allowed to look at their textbooks during an examination?"

"There now," she said enthusiastically, "is the most marvly idea I've heard in years."

"Polly," I said testily, "the argument is all wrong. Doctors, lawyers, and carpenters aren't taking a test to see how much they have learned, but students are. The situations are altogether different, and you can't make an analogy between them."

"I still think it's a good idea," said Polly.

"Nuts," I muttered. Doggedly I pressed on. "Next we'll try Hypothesis Contrary to Fact."

"Sounds yummy," was Polly's reaction.

"Listen: If Madame Curie had not happened to leave a photographic plate in a drawer with a chunk of pitchblende, the world today would not know about radium."

"True, true," said Polly, nodding her head. "Did you see the movie? Oh, it just knocked me out. That Walter Pidgeon is so dreamy. I mean he fractures me."

"If you can forget Mr. Pidgeon for a moment," I said coldly, "I would like to point out that the statement is a fallacy. Maybe Madame Curie would have discovered radium at some later date. Maybe somebody else would have discovered it. Maybe any number of things would have happened. You can't start with a hypothesis that is not true and then draw any supportable conclusions from it."

"They ought to put Walter Pidgeon in more pictures," said Polly. "I hardly ever see him any more."

One more chance, I decided. But just one more. There is a limit to what flesh and blood can bear. "The next fallacy is called Poisoning the Well."

"How cute!" she gurgled.

"Two men are having a debate. The first one gets up and says, 'My opponent is a notorious liar. You can't believe a word that he is going to say.' . . . Now, Polly, think. Think hard. What's wrong?"

I watched her closely as she knit her creamy brow in concentration. Suddenly a glimmer of intelligence—the first I had seen—came into her eyes. "It's not fair," she said with indignation. "It's not a bit fair. What chance has the second man got if the first man calls him a liar before he even begins talking?"

"Right!" I cried exultantly. "One hundred per cent right. It's not fair.
The first man has poisoned the well before anybody could drink from it. He has hamstrung his opponent before he could even start. . . . Polly, I'm proud of you."

"Pshaw," she murmured, blushing with pleasure.

"You see, my dear, these things aren't so hard. All you have to do is concentrate. Think—examine—evaluate. Come now, let's review every-thing we have learned."

"Fire away," she said with an airy wave of her hand.

Heartened by the knowledge that Polly was not altogether a cretin, I began a long, patient review of all I had told her. Over and over and over again I cited instances, pointed out flaws, kept hammering away without letup. It was like digging a tunnel. At first everything was work, sweat, and darkness. I had no idea when I would reach the light, or even if I would. But I persisted. I pounded and clawed and scraped, and finally I was rewarded. I saw a chink of light. And then the chink got bigger and the sun came pouring in and all was bright.

Five grueling nights this took, but it was worth it. I had made a logician out of Polly; I had taught her to think. My job was done. She was worthy of me at last. She was a fit wife for me, a proper hostess for my many mansions, a suitable mother for my well-heeled children.

It must not be thought that I was without love for this girl. Quite the contrary. Just as Pygmalion loved the perfect woman he had fashioned, so I loved mine. I decided to acquaint her with my feelings at our very next meeting. The time had come to change our relationship from aca-demie to romantic.

"Polly," I said when next we sat beneath our oak, "tonight we will not discuss fallacies."

"Aw, gee," she said, disappointed.

"My dear," I said, favoring her with a smile, "we have now spent five evenings together. We have gotten along splendidly. It is clear that we are well matched."

"Hasty Generalization," said Polly brightly.

"I beg your pardon," said I.

"Hasty Generalization," she repeated. "How can you say that we are well matched on the basis of only five dates?"

I chuckled with amusement. The dear child had learned her lessons well. "My dear," I said, patting her hand in a tolerant manner, "five dates is plenty. After all, you don't have to eat a whole cake to know that it's good."

"False Analogy," said Polly promptly. "I'm not a cake. I'm a girl."

I chuckled with somewhat less amusement. The dear child had learned her lessons perhaps too well. I decided to change tactics. Obviously the best approach was a simple, strong, direct declaration of love. I paused
for a moment while my massive brain chose the proper words. Then I began:

"Polly, I love you. You are the whole world to me, and the moon and the stars and the constellations of outer space. Please, my darling, say that you will go steady with me, for if you will not, life will be meaningless. I will languish. I will refuse my meals. I will wander the face of the earth, a shambling, hollow-eyed hulk."

There, I thought, folding my arms, that ought to do it.

"Ad Misericordiam," said Polly.

I ground my teeth. I was not Pygmalion; I was Frankenstein, and my monster had me by the throat. Frantically I fought back the tide of panic surging through me. At all costs I had to keep cool.

"Well, Polly," I said, forcing a smile, "you certainly have learned your fallacies."

"You're darn right," she said with a vigorous nod.

"And who taught them to you, Polly?"

"You did."

"That's right. So you do owe me something, don't you, my dear? If I hadn't come along you never would have learned about fallacies."

"Hypothesis Contrary to Fact," she said instantly.

I dashed perspiration from my brow. "Polly," I croaked, "you mustn't take all these things so literally. I mean this is just classroom stuff. You know that the things you learn in school don't have anything to do with life."

"Dicto Simpliciter," she said, wagging her finger at me playfully.

That did it. I leaped to my feet, bellowing like a bull. "Will you or will you not go steady with me?"

"I will not," she replied.

"Why not?" I demanded.

"Because this afternoon I promised Petey Bellows that I would go steady with him."

I reeled back, overcome with the infamy of it. After he promised, after he made a deal, after he shook my hand! "The rat!" I shrieked, kicking up great chunks of turf. "You can't go with him, Polly. He's a liar. He's a cheat. He's a rat."

"Poisoning the Well," said Polly, "and stop shouting. I think shouting must be a fallacy too."

With an immense effort of will, I modulated my voice. "All right," I said. "You're a logician. Let's look at this thing logically. How could you choose Petey Bellows over me? Look at me—a brilliant student, a tremendous intellectual, a man with an assured future. Look at Petey—a knothead, a jitterbug, a guy who'll never know where his next meal is coming from. Can you give me one logical reason why you should go
steady with Petey Bellows?"
"I certainly can," declared Polly. "He's got a raccoon coat."

AIDS TO STUDY
1. The narrator in Shulman's story uses a large number of clichés and near-clichés—such as (in the second paragraph) "the very negation of" and "the acme of." Locate a number of other examples throughout the story. How does his use of the clichés differ from Polly's slang? What does his style tell us about the kind of person he is?
2. The story has three stages of plot-development. What are they, and where do the latter two begin?
3. How would the tone and the final effect of the story be changed if any of the characters were developed as a complex personality?
4. List the fallacies that the narrator teaches to Polly, and briefly write a definition of each in your own words. Supply one more example of each.
5. Does the story end too abruptly? Explain.
Teachers and scholars are constantly picking at faulty writing. Indeed, instructors in English do little else. But the writing of the college professor himself, I think, could stand one more attack, though I repeat much said before. Recently, as I was getting together a volume from different scientific and scholarly fields, several things from freshman handbooks and articles on composition came home. Regardless of person or field, I saw, writing always fails in the same way. Words should count, they should make sense, and the great enemy of counting sensibly is wordiness. I saw also that behind the professor’s wordiness lay a failure of attitude, a mistaken stance encouraged by both our scientific and our pedantic selves.

We mistake, I think, how scholarship should look and sound in public. Picture a young man in a rusty cutaway and striped pants, a celluloid collar and flowing tie, face serious, eyes glazed, gesticulating with his gloves, mumbling long words while no one at the party pays him the slightest attention. Or perhaps he is dapper, nose-in-the-air, full of jargon and wind. Picture either one and you will have some idea of the way a great many scholars attempt to address their readers. Both have the wrong attitude. Our scientific temper has made our syntax ponderous, and our dignity strings out long words like so much bunting.

Now, both scholar and scientist owe first allegiance to the scientific method. Whether he works with books or social behavior or metallic


salts, the researcher collects his facts, weighs them, and shapes from probability an hypothesis about the truth. But the scientific attitude has nevertheless, I think, done much to load our sentences with nouns, and to teach us the passive voice.

Because the scientist, social or natural, prefers things to qualities, he prefers nouns to adjectives. Indeed, whenever he can, he makes qualities into things by building nouns around them. He will write Spanish-type instead of Spanish. He will write in size instead of long. He will always say of a peculiar order when he means peculiar, and of an indefinite nature when he means indefinite, and of great importance when he means important. He will encumber prepositions with nouns, apparently because this makes the preposition more substantial, less like a disembodied process. He will say in order to rather than to, and by means of rather than by. Where and or with would serve, he writes in relation to. When he wants to add a phrase, he will select the relative pronoun—usually which—rather than the adjective or participle: “a subject which was popular a decade ago” rather than “a subject popular a decade ago.”

The trouble with this is its density—more words, less light, and almost no movement. The ofs and the whiches have thrown our prose into a hundred-years’ sleep. Here is a piece typically respectable and drowsy:

Many biological journals, especially those which regularly publish new scientific names, now state in each issue the exact date of publication of the preceding issue. In dealing with journals which do not follow this practice, or with volumes which are issued individually, the biologist often needs to resort to indexes . . . in order to determine the actual date of publication of a particular name.

By eliminating ofs and the nouns they bring, by changing which- phrases into participles, and nouns into verbs, we can cut this passage almost to half without touching the sense:

Many biological journals, especially those regularly publishing new scientific names, now give the date of each preceding issue. With journals not following this practice, and with some books, the biologist must turn to indexes . . . to date a particular name.

Our heavy preference for nouns, moreover, leads to a habit worse than any indulgence in whiches and ofs: we modify nouns by nouns instead of by adjectives. The social sciences here sin more than most. Working with intangibles, the social scientist seems urged to stiffen his nouns with nouns, and the reader can separate main thought from modifier only after initiation. “Child sex education” stands for “the sexual education of children,” I think, unless it stands for “educating someone about the sex of children.” Is sex educational, or is education sexual? The noun-habit often carries us completely away from what words mean, and keeps us
there by elevated sound alone. And even if by habit we learn to read these constructions, they remain lumpy and unattractive: body consciousness, human body function, significance level, sign situation, population theory, art ability, teacher grades, nature-nurture evidence. If we can’t drop one of the nouns or find its related adjective, the only cure is homeopathic—a cautious shot of of's.

II

Our scientific taste prefers not only the solid noun but the impersonal passive voice—an opiate which cancels responsibility, hides identity, and numbs the reader. And our adherence to officialdom and groups strengthens the preference.

We have almost forgotten that the simple English sentence, the basis of good writing, moves. It moves from subject through verb to object: “Smith laid the cornerstone on April 1.” But because we must sound important, because the institution must be bigger than Smith, we write “the cornerstone was laid on April 1,” and the human being vanishes from the earth. The doer and the writer both—all traces of individuality—disappear behind elongated verbs. Men don’t do things, things merely are done; stones move into place, whole campuses emerge from the ground, regulations crystallize overhead. Committees always write this way—and the ecological effect on scholarly writing is deadly. “It was moved that a conference would be held,” the secretary writes, to avoid pinning the rap on anybody.

Unfortunately, we like this. We use the passive voice at every opportunity, even with nothing to hide and no one to protect. The passive voice seems dignified and authoritative, and, for all this, it makes our writing dreary with extra ises, beens and bys. It overruns every scholarly field:

Public concern has also been given a tremendous impetus by the findings of the Hoover Commission in the federal government, and “little Hoover” commissions to survey the organizational structure and functions of many state governments have been established. [In the federal government, the findings of the Hoover Commission have also greatly stimulated public concern, and many states have established “little Hoover” commissions to survey their govern-ments.]

The algal mats are made up of the interwoven filaments of several genera. [The interwoven filaments of several genera make up these algal mats.]
Many of the remedies would probably be shown to be “faith cures.” [Many of the remedies are probably “faith cures.”]
In this way less developed countries can be enabled to participate in the higher production system of the Western World. [These programs can help backward countries to Western productivity.]
Anxiety and emotional conflict are lessened when latency sets in. The total personality is oriented in a repressive, inhibitory fashion so as to maintain the
barriers, and what Freud has called "psychic dams," against psychosexual impulses. [When latency sets in, anxiety and emotional conflict subside. The personality inhibits itself, maintaining its barriers—Freud's "psychic dams"—against psychosexual impulses.]

The passive voice, simply in its wordiness is unclear; but, eliminating the real subject of the verb, as it does, it is intrinsically unclear also. An essay, getting started, will state, "it was demonstrated," and one can only guess as to whether the writer or his rivals had done the demonstrating.

The passive voice is the natural voice of science. Not only officialdom but scientific objectivity tempts us to it. It sounds dispassionate and impersonal; it stops time and holds life still so we can catalogue it. (Flowers never grow in this dry land; they "are found.") Perhaps scientific German has had something to do with it. At any rate, since the scientist describes what is, since our dignity demands is laid instead of laid, is becomes almost our only verb. All of us, following first the natural and then the social scientist, define, partition, arrange categories and cement our writing into blocks with an equals—sign our only predication.

Is so besets us—we are so willing to sit back on our ises—that we not only replace active with passive voice, but active verbs with sedentary ones. We can almost see the roadblocks—separated by a narrow was, inverted to look passive—in this opening sentence:

Typical of the rationalism of the eighteenth century was a view of prose fiction which developed during the middle decades.

After a little blasting, we might get on into the essay, leaving something like this behind:

A new view of prose fiction, typically rational, developed in the middle decades of the eighteenth century.

To make matters worse, we spread our isms by handing out exists and existences at every opportunity. We write "this association is not known to exist," not "this association is unknown." And we like to carry phrases around in a stretcher that looks like this: "There is . . . which." It may substitute for there. That or who may substitute for which. But they are all equally wordy: "Moreover, there is one class of worker which never seeks regular employment." If we drop the italicized words, nothing diminishes but clumsiness.

III

If we straighten out our syntax, however, we are still left with the ornate vocabulary we think proper to scholarship. Vocabulary is a matter of tone. Tone is a matter of attitude. All our ofs, our whiches, our passives, our clumps of substantives—all rise from the same source as our vocabulary: the pompous and circumstantial attitude so common to
our scholarly, scientific pages. Official anonymity is in our ears. We wish to be modest and objective. We want to impress other zoologists, psychologists, economists, and literary men by writing like them. And the result is an inky, back-bay fog. We should work like scholars and scientists, but we should write like writers. We should take our subjects seriously but ourselves with grains of salt, with the knowledge that we are all sinners, all wordy, and all—whether courtly or pontifical—to fond of big Latin words.

Two scientific fishermen have compared numbers of bass in the pond to numbers in the basket, and have watched imported bass survive in mixed company. Their article begins:

Of the many things which influence angling success, the size of population of the species sought must be a prime factor. In order to gain information on the relationship between population and yield to fishermen in a fishery based mainly on large mouth bass, Micropterus salmoides (Lacépède), we have experimented . . .

The trouble with this is not Micropterus salmoides. Technical Latin words are precise and useful. The trouble lies in influence, success, population, factor, information, relationship, population, and the ambiguous yield to—all slushing along together through the weedy connectives. Does your subject seem mundane or trivial? Then give it a Latin diploma and it will graduate into elegant dullness. Actually, this article soon begins to read quite well. After a Latin period or two the writers get down to ponds and fish; they leave the academic procession and get out their waders. If we traded our Latin words for Anglo-Saxon ones wherever we could make a bargain, and long words for short ones; if we wrote find for determine, see for inquire, watch for observe, book for volume; if we banished all words containing rion, and then let not more than three sneak back into any one paragraph, our writing would be clearer. Subjects needing Latin technicalities should insist the more stoutly on short English words for the writing in between.

But the social sciences—especially sociology and psychology—unblessed with Latin genera, are in a bad way. They must make their own terms as they go, and few men have Freud’s command of words. Some words, like schizophrenia and psychosomatic, describe what they represent; ego and id are clear enough. But, for the most part, poor writers have endowed psychology with a technical vocabulary that would put even Solomon on the couch. We hear of reaction fixation, of reaction to action. Factors, aspects, and situations are functions of every sentence, and a word like motivation takes on private meanings which force the writer to new definitions. Affect changes into a noun and affects the sanity of everyone trying to write effectively.

Language is public property that must not be rough-hewn to private
ends. A real knowledge of Latin might save us from this—a real understanding of what a word means at the root. But we are not Latinists; we are merely Latinate. Always looking for an exact scientific language, we never write with an alert and delighted sense that words have more than one meaning, that our sentences can strike harmonics and still be precise. Beware of the writer who must define his terms, I say. He may be unable to use language, as it runs, to express his meaning, and—whatever his motivation—the result is pomposity. He is Humpty Dumpty, the original egghead, making words say what he wants them to mean instead of meaning what he wants to say. He is either evading the toil of finding the right word, or defining the obvious:

Let us agree to use the word signal as an abbreviation for the phrase “the simplest kind of sign.” (This agrees fairly well with the customary meaning of the word “signal.”)

A definer of words is usually a bad writer. The man, above, who had to get his signals straight, a semanticist, by the way, grinds out about three parts sawdust to every one of meat. In the following excerpt, the italics are his; the brackets, mine. Read the sentence first as it was written; then read it again, omitting the bracketed words:

The moral of such examples is that all intelligent criticism [of any instance] of language [in use] must begin with understanding [of] the motives [and purposes] of the speaker [in that situation].

Here, each of the bracketed phrases is already implied in the others. Attempting to be precise, our writer has only clouded his meaning. We have reached our last infirmity of scientific mind. Naturally the speaker would be “in that situation”; naturally a sampling of language would be “an instance” of language “in use.” And even if motives are not purposes, the difference is too small to dawdle over. His next sentence deserves some kind of immortality. He means “muddy language causes trouble”:

Unfortunately, the type of case that causes trouble in practice is that in which the kind of use made of language is not transparently clear. . . .

IV

Clearly, it is hard to be transparent. Writing is hard. Even divinity has found it necessary to write in the middle of the night with great commotion. Writing is probably more than half of the researcher’s job, as anyone will testify who has found himself hunting up one more fact, and running one more test, postponing the awful hour when he must face the mystery of the word, to gather his thoughts and to communicate. It is a matter of finding first the right attitude, and then the right words—and no more. If we have little to say, we will be pompous, we will write in the passive voice, we will throw phrases in the air like dust.
But if you have something to say and still sound timid, we can work out our salvation. Here are some suggestions:

1. Economize. Think of explaining what you have to say clearly, simply and pleasantly to a small mixed group of intelligent people.
2. Never use a long word when you can find a short one, or a Latin word when you can find a good Old English one.
3. Suspect yourself of wordiness whenever you see an of, a which or a that. Inspect all areas surrounding any form of to be. Never use exist.
4. Resolve not to use the passive voice. Simply fly in the face of convention and begin your sentences with “I” or “we” or “the writer.”
5. Take pains to avoid modifying a noun with a noun.
6. Make sure that each word really makes sense. No one who had inspected the meaning of his words could have written: “Every seat in the auditorium was filled to capacity.”
7. Beware of the metaphor. It is the spirit of good prose. It gives the reader a picture, a glimpse of what the subject really looks like to the writer. But it is dangerous, can easily get tangled and insistent, the more so when it almost works: don’t have a violent explosion pave the way for a new growth.

The important thing is, I think, to pick up each sentence in turn, asking ourselves if we can possibly make it shorter. This done, clarity will come of itself, and with it the peculiar pleasure of having wrestled—the struggle itself will be agony—with the written word, and written well. We may even live in a style in which we never dreamed we could become accustomed.

AIDS TO STUDY

Although the author is immediately addressing professional scholars, his advice applies equally to anyone writing expository prose. Students exposed daily to the infection of professors’ wordiness can do with some inoculation against it. “Evil communications corrupt good manners.”

1. Baker is mainly attacking wordiness. What connection does he see between wordiness and “the scientific attitude”? What does he mean by “the noun-habit,” and why is it bad?
2. What has he got against the passive voice? What resemblance is there between overuse of the passive and overuse of is?
3. Carefully read the paragraph at the beginning of section II. What is its function? Does it mainly repeat or does it amplify the first two paragraphs of the essay? How does the phrase “whether courtly or pontifical” relate to the second paragraph of the essay?
4. What does Baker mean by saying, “we are not Latinists; we are merely Latinate”?
5. It is an accepted rule of clear discourse to “define your terms.” Why, then, does Baker say, “Beware of the writer who must define his terms”?
“I have invented a reading machine,” said Professor Entwhistle, a strident energumen whose violent enthusiasms are apt to infect his colleagues with nausea or hot flashes before the eyes.

Every head in the smoking room of the Faculty Club bowed over a magazine, in an attitude of prayer. The prayer was unanswered, as usual.

“It is obvious,” said Professor Entwhistle, “that the greatest waste of our civilization is the time spent in reading. We have been able to speed up practically everything to fit the modern tempo—communication, transportation, calculation. But today a man takes just as long to read a book as Dante did, or—”

“Great Caesar!” said the Professor of Amphibology, shutting his magazine with a spank.

“Or great Caesar,” continued Professor Entwhistle. “So I have invented a machine. It operates by a simple arrangement of photoelectric cells, which scan a line of type at lightning speed. The operation of the photoelectric cells is synchronized with a mechanical device for turning the pages—rather ingenious. I figure that my machine can read a book of three hundred pages in ten minutes.”

“Can it read French?” said the Professor of Bio-Economics, without looking up.

“It can read any language that is printed in Roman type. And by an alteration of the master pattern on which the photoelectric cells operate, it can be fitted to read Russian, or Bulgarian, or any language printed in the Cyrillic alphabet. In fact, it will do more. By simply throwing a switch, you can adapt it to read Hebrew, or Arabic, or any language

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that is written from right to left instead of from left to right.”

“Chinese?” said the Professor of Amphibology, throwing himself into the arena. The others still studied their magazines.

“Not Chinese, as yet,” said Professor Entwhistle. “Though by inserting the pages sidewise . . . Yes, I think it could be done.”

“Yes, but when you say this contrivance reads, exactly what do you mean? It seems to me—”

“The light waves registered by the photoelectric cells are first converted into sound waves.”

“So you can listen in to the reading of the text?”

“Not at all. The sound waves alter so fast that you hear nothing but a continuous hum. If you hear them at all. You can’t, in fact, because they are on a wave length inaudible to the human ear.”

“Well, it seems to me—”

“Think of the efficiency of the thing!” Professor Entwhistle was really warming up. “Think of the time saved! You assign a student a bibliography of fifty books. He runs them through the machine comfortably in a weekend. And on Monday morning he turns in a certificate from the machine. Everything has been conscientiously read!”

“Yes, but the student won’t remember what he has read!”

“He doesn’t remember what he reads now.”

“Well, you have me there,” said the Professor of Amphibology. “I confess you have me there. But it seems to me we would have to pass the machine and fail the student.”

“Not at all,” said Professor Entwhistle. “An accountant today does not think of doing his work by multiplication and division. Often he is unable to multiply and divide. He confides his problem to a business machine and the machine does his work for him. All the accountant has to know is how to run the machine. That is efficiency.”

“Still, it seems to me that what we want to do is to transfer the contents of the book to the student’s mind.”

“In the mechanized age? My dear fellow! What we want is to train the student to run machines. An airplane pilot doesn’t need to know the history of aerodynamics. He needs to know how to run his machine. A lawyer doesn’t want to know the development of theories of Roman law. He wants to win cases, if possible by getting the right answers to logical problems. That is largely a mechanical process. It might well be possible to construct a machine. It could begin by solving simple syllogisms, you know—drawing a conclusion from a major premise and a minor premise—”

“Here, let’s not get distracted. This reading machine of yours, it must do something, it must make some kind of record. What happens after you get the sound waves?”

“That’s the beauty of it,” said Professor Entwhistle. “The sound waves
are converted into light waves, of a different character from the original light waves, and these are communicated to an automatic typewriter, working at inconceivable speed. This transforms the light impulses into legible typescript, in folders of a hundred pages each. It tosses them out the way a combine tosses out sacked wheat. Thus, everything the machine reads is preserved entire, in durable form. The only thing that remains is to file it somewhere, and for this you would need only the services of a capable filing clerk.”

“Or you could read it?” persisted the Professor of Amphibology.

“Why yes, if you wanted to, you could read it,” said Professor Entwhistle.

An indigestible silence hung over the Faculty Club.

“I see where the Athletic Association has bought a pitching machine,” said the Assistant Professor of Business Psychology (Retail). “Damn thing throws any curve desired, with a maximum margin of error of three centimetres over the plate. What’ll they be thinking of next?”

“A batting machine, obviously,” said Professor Entwhistle.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. What is an “energumen”?
2. What is “Amphibology”?
3. What is the target of Bishop’s satire—the other professors, Professor Entwhistle, the use of “machines that can think,” a theory of education? Explain.
4. What is the analogy between the reading machine and the pitching and batting machines?
In the first place, I want to emphasise the note of interrogation at the end of my title. Even if I could answer the question for myself, the answer would apply only to me and not to you. The only advice, indeed, that one person can give another about reading is to take no advice, to follow your own instincts, to use your own reason, to come to your own conclusions. If this is agreed between us, then I feel at liberty to put forward a few ideas and suggestions because you will not allow them to fetter that independence which is the most important quality that a reader can possess. After all, what laws can be laid down about books? The battle of Waterloo was certainly fought on a certain day; but is Hamlet a better play than Lear? Nobody can say. Each must decide that question for himself. To admit authorities, however heavily furred and gowned, into our libraries and let them tell us how to read, what to read, what value to place upon what we read, is to destroy the spirit of freedom which is the breath of those sanctuaries. Everywhere else we may be bound by laws and conventions—there we have none.

But to enjoy freedom, if the platitude is pardonable, we have of course to control ourselves. We must not squander our powers, helplessly and ignorantly, squirting half the house in order to water a single rose-bush; we must train them, exactly and powerfully, here on the very spot. This, it may be, is one of the first difficulties that faces us in a library. What is “the very spot”? There may well seem to be nothing but a conglomeration and huddle of confusion. Poems and novels, histories and memoirs, dictionaries and blue-books; books written in all languages by

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*A paper read at a School.
men and women of all tempers, races, and ages jostle each other on the shelf. And outside the donkey brays, the women gossip at the pump, the colts gallop across the fields. Where are we to begin? How are we to bring order into this multitudinous chaos and so get the deepest and widest pleasure from what we read?

It is simple enough to say that since books have classes—fiction, biography, poetry—we should separate them and take from each what it is right that each should give us. Yet few people ask from books what books can give us. Most commonly we come to books with blurred and divided minds, asking of fiction that it shall be true, of poetry that it shall be false, of biography that it shall be flattering, of history that it shall enforce our own prejudices. If we could banish all such preconceptions when we read, that would be an admirable beginning. Do not dictate to your author; try to become him. Be his fellow-worker and accomplice. If you hang back, and reserve and criticise at first, you are preventing yourself from getting the fullest possible value from what you read. But if you open your mind as widely as possible, then signs and hints of almost imperceptible fineness, from the twist and turn of the first sentences, will bring you into the presence of a human being unlike any other. Steep yourself in this, acquaint yourself with this, and soon you will find that your author is giving you, or attempting to give you, something far more definite. The thirty-two chapters of a novel—if we consider how to read a novel first—are an attempt to make something as formed and controlled as a building: but words are more impalpable than bricks; reading is a longer and more complicated process than seeing. Perhaps the quickest way to understand the elements of what a novelist is doing is not to read, but to write; to make your own experiment with the dangers and difficulties of words. Recall, then, some event that has left a distinct impression on you—how at the corner of the street, perhaps, you passed two people talking. A tree shook; an electric light danced; the tone of the talk was comic, but also tragic; a whole vision, an entire conception, seemed contained in that moment.

But when you attempt to reconstruct it in words, you will find that it breaks into a thousand conflicting impressions. Some must be subdued; others emphasized; in the process you will lose, probably, all grasp upon the emotion itself. Then turn from your blurred and littered pages to the opening pages of some great novelist—Defoe, Jane Austen, Hardy. Now you will be better able to appreciate their mastery. It is not merely that we are in the presence of a different person—Defoe, Jane Austen, or Thomas Hardy—but that we are living in a different world. Here, in Robinson Crusoe, we are trudging a plain high road; one thing happens after another; the fact and the order of the fact is enough. But if the open air and adventure mean everything to Defoe they mean nothing to Jane Austen. Hers is the drawing-room, and people talking, and by
the many mirrors of their talk revealing their characters. And if, when we have accustomed ourselves to the drawing-room and its reflections, we turn to Hardy, we are once more spun round. The moors are round us and the stars are above our heads. The other side of the mind is now exposed—the dark side that comes uppermost in solitude, not the light side that shows in company. Our relations are not towards people, but toward Nature and destiny. Yet different as these worlds are, each is consistent with itself. The maker of each is careful to observe the laws of his own perspective, and however great a strain they may put upon us they will never confuse us, as lesser writers so frequently do, by introducing two different kinds of reality into the same book. Thus to go from one great novelist to another—from Jane Austen to Hardy, from Peacock to Trollope, from Scott to Meredith—is to be wrenched and uprooted; to be thrown this way and then that. To read a novel is a difficult and complex art. You must be capable not only of great fineness of perception, but of great boldness of imagination if you are going to make use of all that the novelist—the great artist—gives you.

But a glance at the heterogeneous company on the shelf will show you that writers are very seldom "great artists"; far more often a book makes no claim to be a work of art at all. These biographies and autobiographies, for example, lives of great men, of men long dead and forgotten, that stand cheek by jowl with the novels and poems, are we to refuse to read them because they are not "art"? Or shall we read them, but read them in a different way, with a different aim? Shall we read them in the first place to satisfy that curiosity which possesses us sometimes when in the evening we linger in front of a house where the lights are lit and the blinds are not yet drawn, and each floor of the house shows us a different section of human life in being? Then we are consumed with curiosity about the lives of these people—the servants gossiping, the gentlemen dining, the girl dressing for a party, the old woman at the window with her knitting. Who are they, what are they, what are their names, their occupations, their thoughts, and adventures?

Biographies and memoirs answer such questions, light up innumerable such houses; they show us people going about their daily affairs, toiling, failing, succeeding, eating, hating, loving, until they die. And sometimes as we watch, the house fades and the iron railings vanish and we are out at sea; we are hunting, sailing, fighting; we are among savages and soldiers; we are taking part in great campaigns. Or if we like to stay here in England, in London, still the scene changes; the street narrows; the house becomes small, cramped, diamond-paned, and malodorous. We see a poet, Donne, driven from such a house because the walls were so thin that when the children cried their voices cut through them. We can follow him, through the paths that lie in the pages of books,
to Twickenham; to Lady Bedford’s Park, a famous meeting-ground for nobles and poets; and then turn our steps to Wilton, the great house under the downs, and hear Sidney read the Arcadia to his sister; and ramble among the very marshes and see the very herons that figure in that famous romance; and then again travel north with that other Lady Pembroke, Anne Clifford, to her wild moors, or plunge into the city and control our merriment at the sight of Gabriel Harvey in his black velvet suit arguing about poetry with Spenser. Nothing is more fascinating than to grope and stumble in the alternate darkness and splendour of Elizabethan London. But there is no staying there. The Temples and the Swifts, the Harleys and the St. Johns beckon us on; hour upon hour can be spent disentangling their quarrels and deciphering their characters; and when we tire of them we can stroll on, past a lady in black wearing diamonds, to Samuel Johnson and Goldsmith and Garrick; or cross the channel, if we like, and meet Voltaire and Diderot, Madame du Deffand; and so back to England and Twickenham—how certain places repeat themselves and certain names!—where Lady Bedford had her Park once and Pope lived later, to Walpole’s home at Strawberry Hill. But Walpole introduces us to such a swarm of new acquaintances, there are so many houses to visit and bells to ring that we may well hesitate for a moment, on the Miss Berry’s doorstep, for example, when behold, up comes Thackeray; he is the friend of the woman whom Walpole loved; so that merely by going from friend to friend, from garden to garden, from house to house, we have passed from one end of English literature to another and wake to find ourselves here again in the present, if we can so differentiate this moment from all that have gone before. This, then, is one of the ways in which we can read these lives and letters; we can make them light up the many windows of the past; we can watch the famous dead in their familiar habits and fancy sometimes that we are very close and can surprise their secrets, and sometimes we may pull out a play or a poem that they have written and see whether it reads differently in the presence of the author. But this again rouses other questions. How far, we must ask ourselves, is a book influenced by its writer’s life—how far is it safe to let the man interpret the writer? How far shall we resist or give way to the sympathies and antipathies that the man himself rouses in us—so sensitive are words, so receptive of the character of the author? These are questions that press upon us when we read lives and letters, and we must answer them for ourselves, for nothing can be more fatal than to be guided by the preferences of others in a matter so personal.

But also we can read such books with another aim, not to throw light on literature, not to become familiar with famous people, but to refresh and exercise our own creative powers. Is there not an open
window on the right hand of the bookcase? How delightful to stop reading and look out! How stimulating the scene is, in its unconsciousness, its irrelevance, its perpetual movement—the colts galloping round the field, the woman filling her pail at the well, the donkey throwing back his head and emitting his long, acrid moan. The greater part of any library is nothing but the record of such fleeting moments in the lives of men, women, and donkeys. Every literature, as it grows old, has its rubbish-heap, its record of vanished moments and forgotten lives told in faltering and feeble accents that have perished. But if you give yourself up to the delight of rubbish-reading you will be surprised, indeed you will be overcome, by the relics of human life that have been cast out to moulder. It may be one letter—but what a vision it gives! It may be a few sentences—but what vistas they suggest! Sometimes a whole story will come together with such beautiful humour and pathos and completeness that it seems as if a great novelist had been at work, yet it is only an old actor, Tate Wilkinson, remembering the strange story of Captain Jones; it is only a young subaltern serving under Arthur Wellesley and falling in love with a pretty girl at Lisbon; it is only Maria Allen letting fall her sewing in the empty drawing-room and sighing how she wishes she had taken Dr. Burney’s good advice and had never eloped with her Rishy. None of this has any value; it is negligible in the extreme; yet how absorbing it is now and again to go through the rubbish-heaps and find rings and scissors and broken noses buried in the huge past and try to piece them together while the colt gallops round the field, the woman fills her pail at the well, and the donkey brays.

But we tire of rubbish-reading in the long run. We tire of searching for what is needed to complete the half-truth which is all that the Wilkinsons, the Bunburys, and the Maria Allens are able to offer us. They had not the artist’s power of mastering and eliminating; they could not tell the whole truth even about their own lives; they have disfigured the story that might have been so shapely. Facts are all that they can offer us, and facts are a very inferior form of fiction. Thus the desire grows upon us to have done with half-statements and approximations; to cease from searching out the minute shades of human character, to enjoy the greater abstractness, the purer truth of fiction. Thus we create the mood, intense and generalised, unaware of detail, but stressed by some regular, recurrent beat, whose natural expression is poetry; and that is the time to read poetry when we are almost able to write it.

Western wind, when wilt thou blow?
The small rain down can rain.
Christ, if my love were in my arms,
And I in my bed again!
The impact of poetry is so hard and direct that for the moment there is no other sensation except that of the poem itself. What profound depths we visit then—how sudden and complete is our immersion! There is nothing here to catch hold of; nothing to stay us in our flight. The illusion of fiction is gradual; its effects are prepared; but who when they read these four lines stops to ask who wrote them, or conjures up the thought of Donne's house or Sidney's secretary; or enmeshes them in the intricacy of the past and the succession of generations? The poet is always our contemporary. Our being for the moment is centred and constricted, as in any violent shock of personal emotion. Afterwards, it is true, the sensation begins to spread in wider rings through our minds; remoter senses are reached; these begin to sound and to comment and we are aware of echoes and reflections. The intensity of poetry covers an immense range of emotion. We have only to compare the force and directness of

I shall fall like a tree, and find my grave,
Only remembering that I grieve,

with the wavering modulation of

Minutes are numbered by the fall of sands,
As by an hour glass; the span of time
Doth waste us to our graves, and we look on it;
An age of pleasure, revelled out, comes home
At last, and ends in sorrow; but the life,
Weary of riot, numbers every sand,
Wailing in sighs, until the last drop down,
So to conclude calamity in rest,

or place the meditative calm of

whether we be young or old,
Our destiny, our being's heart and home,
Is with infinitude, and only there;
With hope it is, hope that can never die,
Effort, and expectation, and desire,
And something evermore about to be,

beside the complete and inexhaustible loveliness of

The moving Moon went up the sky,
And nowhere did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside—

or the splendid fantasy of

And the woodland haunter
Shall not cease to saunter
When, far down some glade,
Of the great world’s burning,
One soft flame upturning
Seems, to his discerning,
Crocus in the shade,
to bethink us of the varied art of the poet; his power to make us at once actors and spectators; his power to run his hand into character as if it were a glove, and be Falstaff or Lear; his power to condense, to widen, to state, once and for ever.

“We have only to compare”—with those words the cat is out of the bag, and the true complexity of reading is admitted. The first process, to receive impressions with the utmost understanding, is only half the process of reading; it must be completed, if we are to get the whole pleasure from a book, by another. We must pass judgment upon these multitudinous impressions; we must make of these fleeting shapes one that is hard and lasting. But not directly. Wait for the dust of reading to settle; for the conflict and the questioning to die down; walk, talk, pull the dead petals from a rose, or fall asleep. Then suddenly without our willing it, for it is thus that Nature undertakes these transitions, the book will return, but differently. It will float to the top of the mind as a whole. And the book as a whole is different from the book received currently in separate phrases. Details now fit themselves into their places. We see the shape from start to finish; it is a barn, a pig-sty, or a cathedral. Now then we can compare book with book as we compare building with building. But this act of comparison means that our attitude has changed; we are no longer the friends of the writer, but his judges; and just as we cannot be too sympathetic as friends, so as judges we cannot be too severe. Are they not criminals, books that have wasted our time and sympathy; are they not the most insidious enemies of society, corrupters, defilers, the writers of false books, faked books, books that fill the air with decay and disease? Let us then be severe in our judgments; let us compare each book with the greatest of its kind. There they hang in the mind the shapes of the books we have read solidified by the judgments we have passed on them—Robinson Crusoe, Emma, The Return of the Native. Compare the novels with these—even the latest and least of novels has a right to be judged with the best. And so with poetry—when the intoxication of rhythm has died down and the splendour of words has faded, a visionary shape will return to us and this must be compared with Lear, with Phèdre, with The Prelude; or if not with these, with whatever is the best or seems to us to be the best in its own kind. And we may be sure that the newness of new poetry and fiction is its most superficial quality and that we have only to alter slightly, not to recast, the standards by which we have judged the old.
It would be foolish, then, to pretend that the second part of reading, to judge, to compare, is as simple as the first—to open the mind wide to the fast flocking of innumerable impressions. To continue reading without the book before you, to hold one shadow-shape against another, to have read widely enough and with enough understanding to make such comparisons alive and illuminating—that is difficult; it is still more difficult to press further and to say, “Not only is the book of this sort, but it is of this value; here it fails; here it succeeds; this is bad; that is good.” To carry out this part of a reader’s duty needs such imagination, insight, and learning that it is hard to conceive any one mind sufficiently endowed; impossible for the most self-confident to find more than the seeds of such powers in himself. Would it not be wiser, then, to remit this part of reading and to allow the critics, the gowned and furred authorities of the library, to decide the question of the book’s absolute value for us? Yet how impossible! We may stress the value of sympathy; we may try to sink our own identity as we read. But we know that we cannot sympathise wholly or immerse ourselves wholly; there is always a demon in us who whispers, “I hate, I love,” and we cannot silence him. Indeed, it is precisely because we hate and we love that our relation with the poets and novelists is so intimate that we find the presence of another person intolerable. And even if the results are abhorrent and our judgments are wrong, still our taste, the nerve of sensation that sends shocks through us, is our chief illuminant; we learn through feeling; we cannot suppress our own idiosyncrasy without impoverishing it. But as time goes on perhaps we can train our taste; perhaps we can make it submit to some control. When it has fed greedily and lavishly upon books of all sorts—poetry, fiction, history, biography—and has stopped reading and looked for long spaces upon the variety, the incongruity of the living word, we shall find that it is changing a little; it is not so greedy, it is more reflective. It will begin to bring us not merely judgments on particular books, but it will tell us that there is a quality common to certain books. Listen, it will say, what shall we call this? And it will read us perhaps Lear and then perhaps the Agamemnon in order to bring out that common quality. Thus, with our taste to guide us, we shall venture beyond the particular book in search of qualities that group books together; we shall give them names and thus frame a rule that brings order into our perceptions. We shall gain a further and a rarer pleasure from that discrimination. But as a rule only lives when it is perpetually broken by contact with the books themselves—nothing is easier and more stultifying than to make rules which exist out of touch with facts, in a vacuum—now at last, in order to steady ourselves in this difficult attempt, it may be well to turn to the very rare writers who are able to enlighten us upon literature as an art.
Coleridge and Dryden and Johnson, in their considered criticism, the poets and novelists themselves in their unconsidered sayings, are often surprisingly relevant; they light up and solidify the vague ideas that have been tumbling in the misty depths of our minds. But they are only able to help us if we come to them laden with questions and suggestions won honestly in the course of our own reading. They can do nothing for us if we herd ourselves under their authority and lie down like sheep in the shade of a hedge. We can only understand their ruling when it comes in conflict with our own and vanquishes it.

If this is so, if to read a book as it should be read calls for the rarest qualities of imagination, insight, and judgment, you may perhaps conclude that literature is a very complex art and that it is unlikely that we shall be able, even after a lifetime of reading, to make any valuable contribution to its criticism. We must remain readers; we shall not put on the further glory that belongs to those rare beings who are also critics. But still we have our responsibilities as readers and even our importance. The standards we raise and the judgment we pass steal into the air and become part of the atmosphere which writers breathe as they work. An influence is created which tells upon them even if it never finds it way into print. And that influence, if it were well instructed, vigorous and individual and sincere, might be of great value now when criticism is necessarily in abeyance; when books pass in review like the procession of animals in a shooting gallery, and the critic has only one second in which to load and aim and shoot and may well be pardoned if he mistakes rabbits for tigers, eagles for barndoor fowls, or misses altogether and wastes his shot upon some peaceful cow grazing in a further field. If behind the erratic gunfire of the press the author felt that there was another kind of criticism, the opinion of people reading for the love of reading, slowly and unprofessionally, and judging with great sympathy and yet with great severity, might this not improve the quality of his work? And if by our means books were to become stronger, richer, and more varied, that would be an end worth reaching.

Yet who reads to bring about an end, however desirable? Are there not some pursuits that we practise because they are good in themselves, and some pleasures that are final? And is not this among them? I have sometimes dreamt, at least, that when the Day of Judgment dawns and the great conquerors and lawyers and statesmen come to receive their rewards—their crowns, their laurels, their names carved indelibly upon imperishable marble—the Almighty will turn to Peter and will say, not without a certain envy when He sees us coming with our books under our arms, “Look, these need no reward. We have nothing to give them here. They have loved reading.”
AIDS TO STUDY

1. The plan of this much admired essay is both simple and complex. One way to appreciate that fact is to list exactly what kinds of literature Mrs. Woolf discusses, and in what order. Then observe that she is developing at the same time two main ideas about "the process of reading." What are they? To perceive the interweaving of these two lines of development (kinds of literature; the process of reading) study the first few sentences of the seventh, ninth, and tenth paragraphs.

2. In the first and last paragraphs Mrs. Woolf speaks in paradox. Make sure that you understand that term and how it applies to each paragraph. How do these paradoxes establish the tone of the essay? (Imagine the essay without them.)

3. In general, the term metaphor means to carry a word across from its factual meaning and to apply it figuratively to an object, event, or idea to which the word cannot literally apply. In other words, a metaphor is a transfer, as when Mrs. Woolf writes, "We must not squander our powers, helplessly and ignorantly, squirting half the house in order to water a single rose-bush..." Here the playful description of watering a garden is transferred to the directing of our mental powers (likened to a stream of water) upon interesting books (the "rose-bush"). Find other examples of metaphorical words and phrases and carefully note the exact connection between the literal and the figurative meanings. A sustained metaphor is begun in the fourth paragraph. What is it? How far is it carried, and with what effect?
Part 5

SCIENCE: DISCOVERIES AND INTERPRETATIONS
THE PASSENGER PIGEON

The passenger pigeon, or, as it is usually named in America, the wild pigeon, moves with extreme rapidity, propelling itself by quickly repeated flaps of the wings, which it brings more or less near to the body, according to the degree of velocity which is required. Like the domestic pigeon, it often flies, during the love season, in a circling manner, supporting itself with both wings angularly elevated, in which position it keeps them until it is about to alight. Now and then, during these circular flights, the tips of the primary quills of each wing are made to strike against each other, producing a smart rap, which may be heard at a distance of 30 to 40 yards. Before alighting, the wild pigeon, like the Carolina parrot and a few other species of birds, breaks the force of its flight by repeated flappings, as if apprehensive of receiving injury from coming too suddenly into contact with the branch or the spot of ground on which it intends to settle.

I have commenced my description of this species with the above account of its flight, because the most important facts connected with its habits relate to its migrations. These are entirely owing to the necessity of procuring food, and are not performed with the view of escaping the severity of a northern latitude, or of seeking a southern one for the purpose of breeding. They consequently do not take place at any fixed period or season of the year. Indeed, it sometimes happens that a continuance of a sufficient supply of food in one district will keep these birds absent from another for years. I know, at least, to a certainty that in Kentucky they remained for several years constantly, and were nowhere else to be found. They all suddenly disappeared one season when the mast was exhausted, and did not return for a long period. Similar facts have been observed in other States.
Their great power of flight enables them to survey and pass over an astonishing extent of country in a very short time. This is proved by facts well known in America. Thus, pigeons have been killed in the neighborhood of New York, with their crops full of rice, which they must have collected in the fields of Georgia and Carolina, these districts being the nearest in which they could possibly have procured a supply of that kind of food. As their power of digestion is so great that they will decompose food entirely in 12 hours, they must in this case have traveled between 300 and 400 miles in 6 hours, which shows their speed to be at an average about 1 mile in a minute. A velocity such as this would enable one of these birds, were it so inclined, to visit the European Continent in less than three days.

This great power of flight is seconded by as great a power of vision, which enables them, as they travel at that swift rate, to inspect the country below, discover their food with facility, and thus attain the object for which their journey has been undertaken. This I have also proved to be the case, by having observed them, when passing over a sterile part of the country, or one scantily furnished with food suited to them, keep high in the air, flying with an extended front, so as to enable them to survey hundreds of acres at once. On the contrary, when the land is richly covered with food, or the trees abundantly hung with mast, they fly low, in order to discover the part most plentifully supplied.

Their body is of an elongated oval form, steered by a long well-plumed tail, and propelled by well-set wings, the muscles of which are very large and powerful for the size of the bird. When an individual is seen gliding through the woods and close to the observer, it passes like a thought, and on trying to see it again, the eye searches in vain; the bird is gone.

The multitudes of wild pigeons in our woods are astonishing. Indeed, after having viewed them so often, and under so many circumstances, I even now feel inclined to pause and assure myself that what I am going to relate is fact. Yet I have seen it all, and that too, in the company of persons who, like myself, were struck with amazement.

In the autumn of 1813, I left my house at Henderson, on the banks of the Ohio, on my way to Louisville. In passing over the Barrens, a few miles beyond Harrodsburg, I observed the pigeons flying from northeast to southwest in greater numbers than I thought I had ever seen them before, and feeling an inclination to count the flocks that might pass within the reach of my eye in one hour, I dismounted, seated myself on an eminence, and began to mark with my pencil, making a dot for every flock that passed. In a short time finding the task which I had undertaken impracticable, as the birds poured in in countless multitudes, I rose, and counting the dots then put down, found that 163 had been made in 21 minutes. I traveled on, and still met more the farther I proceeded. The
air was literally filled with pigeons; the light of noonday was obscured as by an eclipse; the dung fell in spots, not unlike melting flakes of snow; and the continued buzz of wings had a tendency to lull my senses to repose.

Whilst waiting for dinner at Young's inn, at the confluence of Salt-River with the Ohio, I saw, at my leisure, immense legions still going by with a front reaching far beyond the Ohio on the west, and the beechwood forests directly on the east of me. Not a single bird alighted; for not a nut or acorn was that year to be seen in the neighborhood. They consequently flew so high, that different trials to reach them with a capital rifle proved ineffectual; nor did the reports disturb them in the least. I can not describe to you the extreme beauty of their aerial evolutions, when a hawk chanced to press upon the rear of a flock. At once, like a torrent, and with a noise like thunder, they rushed into a compact mass, pressing upon each other toward the center. In these almost solid masses, they darted forward in undulating and angular lines, descended and swept close over the earth with inconceivable velocity, mounted perpendicularly so as to resemble a vast column, and, when high, were seen wheeling and twisting within their continued lines, which then resembled the coils of a gigantic serpent.

Before sunset I reached Louisville, distant from Hardinsburg 55 miles. The pigeons were still passing in undiminished numbers, and continued to do so for three days in succession. The people were all in arms. The banks of the Ohio were crowded with men and boys, incessantly shooting at the pilgrims, which there flew lower as they passed the river. Multitudes were thus destroyed. For a week or more, the population fed on no other flesh than that of pigeons, and talked of nothing but pigeons. The atmosphere, during this time, was strongly impregnated with the peculiar odor which emanates from the species.

It is extremely interesting to see flock after flock performing exactly the same evolutions which had been traced, as it were, in the air by a preceding flock. Thus, should a hawk have charged on a group at a certain spot, the angles, curves, and undulations that have been described by the birds, in their efforts to escape from the dreaded talons of the plunderer, are undeviatingly followed by the next group that comes up. Should the bystander happen to witness one of these affrays, and, struck with the rapidity and elegance of the motions exhibited, feel desirous of seeing them repeated, his wishes will be gratified if he only remain in the place until the next group comes up.

It may not, perhaps, be out of place to attempt an estimate of the number of pigeons contained in one of those mighty flocks, and of the quantity of food daily consumed by its members. The inquiry will tend to show the astonishing bounty of the great Author of Nature in providing for the wants of His creatures. Let us take a column of 1 mile
in breadth, which is far below the average size, and suppose it passing over us without interruption for three hours, at the rate mentioned above of 1 mile in the minute. This will give us a parallelogram of 180 miles by 1, covering 180 square miles. Allowing 2 pigeons to the square yard, we have 1,115,136,000 pigeons in one flock. As every pigeon daily consumes fully half a pint of food, the quantity necessary for supplying this vast multitude must be 8,712,000 bushels per day.

As soon as the pigeons discover a sufficiency of food to entice them to alight, they fly round in circles, reviewing the country below. During their evolutions, on such occasions, the dense mass which they form exhibits a beautiful appearance, as it changes its direction, now displaying a glistening sheet of azure, when the backs of the birds come simultaneously into view, and anon, suddenly presenting a mass of rich deep purple. They then pass lower, over the woods, and for a moment are lost among the foliage, but again emerge, and are seen gliding aloft. They now alight, but the next moment, as if suddenly alarmed, they take to wing, producing by the flappings of their wings a noise like the roar of distant thunder, and sweep through the forests to see if danger is near. Hunger, however, soon brings them to the ground. When alighted, they are seen industriously throwing up the withered leaves in quest of the fallen mast. The rear ranks are continually rising, passing over the main body, and alighting in front, in such rapid succession, that the whole flock seems still on the wing. The quantity of ground thus swept is astonishing, and so completely has it been cleared, that the gleaner who might follow in their rear would find his labor completely lost. Whilst feeding, their avidity is at times so great that in attempting to swallow a large acorn or nut they are seen gasping for a long while, as if in the agonies of suffocation.

On such occasions, when the woods are filled with these pigeons, they are killed in immense numbers, although no apparent diminution ensues. About the middle of the day, after their repast is finished, they settle on the trees, to enjoy rest, and digest their food. On the ground they walk with ease, as well as on the branches, frequently jerking their beautiful tail, and moving the neck backward and forward in the most graceful manner. As the sun begins to sink beneath the horizon, they depart en masse for the roosting place, which not unfrequently is hundreds of miles distant, as has been ascertained by persons who have kept an account of their arrivals and departures.

Let us now, kind reader, inspect their place of nightly rendezvous. One of these curious roosting places, on the banks of the Green River in Kentucky, I repeatedly visited. It was, as is always the case, in a portion of the forest where the trees were of great magnitude, and where there was little underwood. I rode through it upward of 40 miles, and, crossing it in different parts, found its average breadth to be rather more than
3 miles. My first view of it was about a fortnight subsequent to the period when they had made choice of it, and I arrived there nearly two hours before sunset. Few pigeons were then to be seen, but a great number of persons, with horses and wagons, guns and ammunition, had already established encampments on the borders. Two farmers from the vicinity of Russellville, distant more than 100 miles, had driven upward of 300 hogs to be fattened on the pigeons which were to be slaughtered. Here and there, the people employed in plucking and salting what had already been procured, were seen sitting in the midst of large piles of these birds. The dung lay several inches deep, covering the whole extent of the roosting place, like a bed of snow. Many trees 2 feet in diameter, I observed, were broken off at no great distance from the ground, and the branches of many of the largest and tallest had given way, as if the forest had been swept by a tornado. Everything proved to me that the number of birds resorting to this part of the forest must be immense beyond conception. As the period of their arrival approached, their foes anxiously prepared to receive them. Some were furnished with iron pots containing sulphur, others with torches of pine knots, many with poles, and the rest with guns. The sun was lost to our view, yet not a pigeon had arrived. Everything was ready, and all eyes were gazing on the clear sky, which appeared in glimpses amidst the tall trees. Suddenly there burst forth a general cry of "Here they come!" The noise which they made, though yet distant, reminded me of a hard gale at sea passing through the rigging of a close-reefed vessel. As the birds arrived, and passed over me, I felt a current of air that surprised me. Thousands were soon knocked down by the pole men. The birds continued to pour in. The fires were lighted, and a magnificent, as well as wonderful and almost terrifying sight presented itself. The pigeons, arriving by thousands, alighted everywhere, one above another, until solid masses as large as hogsheads, were formed on the branches all round. Here and there the perches gave way under the weight with a crash, and falling to the ground, destroyed hundreds of the birds beneath, forcing down the dense groups with which every stick was loaded. It was a scene of uproar and confusion. I found it quite useless to speak, or even to shout to those persons who were nearest to me. Even the reports of the guns were seldom heard, and I was made aware of the firing only by seeing the shooters reloading.

No one dared venture within the line of devastation. The hogs had been penned up in due time, the picking up of the dead and wounded being left for the next morning's employment. The pigeons were constantly coming, and it was past midnight before I perceived a decrease in the number of those that arrived. The uproar continued the whole night, and as I was anxious to know to what distance the sound reached, I sent off a man accustomed to perambulate the forest, who, returning
two hours afterwards, informed me he had heard it distinctly when 3 miles from the spot. Toward the approach of day, the noise in some measure subsided; long before objects were distinguishable, the pigeons began to move off in a direction quite different from that in which they had arrived the evening before, and at sunrise all that were able to fly had disappeared. The howlings of the wolves now reached our ears, and the foxes, lynxes, cougars, bears, raccoons, opossums and polecats were seen sneaking off, whilst eagles and hawks of different species, accompanied by a crowd of vultures, came to supplant them, and enjoy their share of the spoil.

It was then that the authors of all this devastation began their entry amongst the dead, the dying, and the mangled. The pigeons were picked up and piled in heaps, until each had as many as he could possibly dispose of, when the hogs were let loose to feed on the remainder.

Persons unacquainted with these birds might naturally conclude that such dreadful havoc would soon put an end to the species. But I have satisfied myself, by long observation, that nothing but the gradual diminution of our forests can accomplish their decrease, as they not unfrequently quadruple their numbers yearly, and always at least double it. In 1805 I saw schooners loaded in bulk with pigeons caught up the Hudson River, coming into the wharf at New York, when the birds sold for a cent a piece. I knew a man in Pennsylvania who caught and killed upward of 500 dozens in a clapnet in one day, sweeping sometimes 20 dozens or more at a single haul. In the month of March, 1830, they were so abundant in the markets of New York, that piles of them met the eye in every direction. I have seen the Negroes at the United States salines, or salt works of Shawneetown, wearied with killing pigeons, as they alighted to drink the water issuing from the leading pipes, for weeks at a time; and yet, in 1826, in Louisiana, I saw congregated flocks of these birds as numerous as ever I had seen them before, during a residence of nearly 30 years in the United States.

The breeding of the wild pigeons, and the places chosen for that purpose are points of great interest. The time is not much influenced by season, and the place selected is where food is most plentiful and most attainable, and always at a convenient distance from water. Forest trees of great height are those in which the pigeons form their nests. Thither the countless myriads resort, and prepare to fulfill one of the great laws of nature. At this period the note of the pigeon is a soft coo-coo-coo-coo, much shorter than that of the domestic species. The common notes resemble the monosyllables kee-kee-kee-kee, the first being the loudest, the others gradually diminishing in power. The male assumes a pompous demeanor, and follows the female whether on the ground or on the branches, with spread tail and drooping wings, which it rubs against the part over which it is moving. The body is elevated, the throat swells,
the eyes sparkle. He continues his notes and now and then rises on the wing, and flies a few yards to approach the fugitive and timorous female. Like the domestic pigeon and other species, they caress each other by billing, in which action, the bill of the one is introduced transversely into that of the other, and both parties alternately disgorge the contents of their crop by repeated efforts. These preliminary affairs are soon settled, and the pigeons commence their nests in general peace and harmony. They are composed of a few dry twigs, crossing each other, and are supported by forks of the branches. On the same tree from 50 to 100 nests may frequently be seen: I might say a much greater number were I not anxious, kind reader, that however wonderful my account of the wild pigeon is, you may not feel disposed to refer it to the marvelous. The eggs are two in number, of a broadly elliptical form, and pure white. During incubation, the male supplies the female with food. Indeed, the tenderness and affection displayed by these birds toward their mates, are in the highest degree striking. It is a remarkable fact, that each brood generally consists of a male and a female.

Here, again, the tyrant of the creation, man, interferes, disturbing the harmony of this peaceful scene. As the younger birds grow up, their enemies, armed with axes, reach the spot, to seize and destroy all they can. The trees are felled, and made to fall in such a way that the cutting of one causes the overthrow of another, or shakes the neighboring trees so much, that the young pigeons, or squabs, as they are named, are violently hurled to the ground. In this manner also, immense quantities are destroyed.

The young are fed by the parents in the manner described above; in other words, the old bird introduces its bill into the mouth of the young one in a transverse manner, or with the back of each mandible opposite the separations of the mandibles of the young bird, and disgorges the contents of its crop. As soon as the young birds are able to shift for themselves, they leave their parents and continue separate until they attain maturity. By the end of six months they are capable of reproducing their species.

The flesh of the wild pigeon is of a dark color, but affords tolerable eating. That of young birds from the nest is much esteemed. The skin is covered with small white, filmy scales. The feathers fall off at the least touch, as has been remarked to be the case in the Carolina turtle. I have only to add that this species, like others of the same genus, immerses its head up to the eyes while drinking.

In March, 1839, I bought about 350 of these birds in the market of New York at 4 cents a piece. Most of these I carried alive to England, and distributed amongst several noblemen, presenting some at the same time to the zoological society.

Adult male: Bill straight, of ordinary length, rather slender, broader
than deep at the base, with a tumid fleshy covering above, compressed toward the end, rather obtuse; upper mandible slightly declinate at the tip; edges inflected. Head small, neck slender, body rather full. Legs short and strong; tarsus rather rounded, anteriorly scutellate; toes slightly webbed at the base; claws short, depressed, obtuse.

Plumage blended on the neck and under parts, compact on the back. Wings long, the second quill longest. Tail graduated, of 12 tapering feathers.

Bill black. Iris bright red. Feet carmine purple, claws blackish. Head above and on the sides light blue. Throat, fore neck, breast, and sides light brownish-red, the rest of the under parts white. Lower part of the neck behind, and along the sides, changing to gold, emerald green, and rich crimson. The general color of the upper parts is grayish blue, some of the wing coverts marked with a black spot. Quills and larger wing coverts blackish, the primary quills bluish on the outer web, the larger coverts whitish at the tip. The two middle feathers of the tail black, the rest pale blue at the base, becoming white toward the end.

Length 16¼ inches; extent of wings 25; bill along the ridge ½; along the gap 1½; tarsus 1¾; middle toe 1½.

The colors of the female are much duller than those of the male, although their distribution is the same. The breast is light grayish-brown, the upper parts pale reddish-brown, tinged with blue. The changeable spot on the neck is of less extent, and the eye of a somewhat duller red, as are the feet.

Length 15 inches; extent of wings 23; bill along the ridge ¾; along the gap ½.

AIDS TO STUDY

See Aids to Study at end of next article.
The Passing of the Passenger Pigeon: A Lesson in Biological Survival

Ludlow Griscom

We live in an era in which birds are "protected" legally throughout the country, and more and more people are becoming conservation-minded. Many of them may not remember the early years of the century, when utterly different conditions prevailed. In those days a substantial class of commercial hunters made a living by killing or capturing a large variety of birds for sport, food, the millinery trade, and other purposes. Large birds were regarded as natural targets by hunters and vacation tourists; small boys learned to shoot by practicing on the robins and other song birds on the parental lawn; and desperately poor, lower-class immigrants eked out a miserable living by means of blackbird pies and young night heron stews. The result was the extinction of several birds and the decimation of bounteous wild-life resources. Nearly one hundred species were either close to extinction or at least "vanishing."

Thoughtful people who deplored these things initiated a campaign of protection. Popular education and sentimental appeals roused a supine public and forced the passage of a long series of state and national laws. One of the earlier premises was that the decrease of various birds was primarily due to slaughter by human beings. The extinction of the passenger pigeon was widely used as an illustration. We now know that this premise is correct only in part. Certain adequately protected birds have continued to decrease just the same. It transpires that survival or extinction usually depends upon several or a complicated series of factors. Each living species of animal, and the total number of individuals composing it, represent ages of evolution, a perfectly adjusted balance between favorable and unfavorable factors. Most birds are adaptable

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to changing conditions; a very few are so specialized that the sudden arrival of new or additional unfavorable factors insures their doom.

The passenger pigeon furnishes an ideal example for several reasons. No other bird on earth in the human era has existed in such spectacular multitudes, in which respect it rivalled the insect world. One might consequently suppose that it would be the last bird to become extinct, even though the known statistics of its mass slaughter for commercial purposes are equally prodigious. Finally, the details of its life history are sufficiently well known so that we can state with some assurance that it had a long list of biological "defects" or "specializations," every one of them potentially dangerous to any bird possessing them.

In the early decades of the last century the wild pigeon existed in enormous flocks that wandered over the country from winter roosts to summer nesting areas, the chief factor being an adequate food supply. These flocks were one of the great wonders of the natural world. During migration the birds flew with great swiftness (forty to sixty miles per hour) in a front about a mile wide. There were countless flocks 200-300 miles long, which took all day to pass a given point. The sun was obscured as by an eclipse, the air reeked with "pigeon smell," and the roar of wings could be heard from four to six miles away. Wilson estimated that such a flock required at least seventeen million bushels of acorns and nuts per day. The largest flock on record was noted by Audubon in 1813, in Kentucky. He happened to leave Henderson one autumn day as a great flight began. He reached Louisville, 55 miles away, by sunset. During all this time the pigeons were passing in undiminished numbers. This flight lasted for three days. Audubon assumed that the flock averaged a mile wide, that the pigeons flew at the rate of a mile a minute, and that there were two pigeons to the square yard. This worked out to 1,115,000,000 pigeons every three hours!

The winter and nesting roosts were scenes of indescribable uproar and confusion. As new flocks arrived and attempted to alight in already crowded trees, limbs gave way with a crash, killing hundreds of birds or precipitating nests, eggs and squabs to the ground. Every beast and bird of prey of the continent gathered to feast on the dead and dying. The forest would be killed outright by the square mile, and the ground became white with excrement. Each pigeon laid only one egg, rarely two, and the nest was so flimsy that it readily collapsed.

Used to prodigious mortality under primeval conditions, wild pigeons kept right on doing what they had once begun. They continued to arrive at a nesting forest even if it was set on fire. On migration they followed the leaders into a fog, into a blizzard. If the line of flight just cleared a hill top, all people had to do was to stand there waving poles, until they had killed as many as they chose. Blind instinct appears to have driven them like a swarm of locusts or army ants on the march.
Passenger pigeons were delicious eating and constituted a natural and normal food supply for the Indians and the earliest colonists. In the nineteenth century, the big city markets were insatiable. Even in the late seventies, New York could absorb one hundred barrels a day for weeks, without a break in the price. Each barrel contained from forty to fifty-five dozen birds. By 1860 there were 400-1000 "pigeoners" or netters, who pursued the great flocks from state to state, throughout the year, aided by the new railroads and telegraph lines. In the early seventies, one such flock was subjected to three "killings" in one year. It nested in Missouri in April, then flew to Michigan, and finally in July tried to nest again in Ulster County, New York.

The last great nesting (and the last great "killing") in history was near Petoskey, Michigan, in 1878. The nesting area was forty miles long by three to ten miles wide and covered 100,000 acres, while the feeding area was much greater than this. Over 300 tons of pigeons were sent to various city markets! The wild pigeon had already virtually disappeared from the Atlantic states; after this, it rapidly decreased in the interior. For reasons which we shall never exactly know, smaller groups of pigeons apparently never nested successfully, and the bird seemed incapable of overcoming its prodigiously developed gregarious instinct.

Let us now attempt a summary of the factors involved in the extinction of the passenger pigeon. More rashly, perhaps, I shall attempt to arrange them in an order of approximate importance. A generation ago it was universally held that large-scale slaughter by man for commercial purposes was primarily responsible. I fear this is unsound biology.

1. The primary cause for the passing of the passenger pigeon was its own specialized habits and a long list of biological "defects." Its low egg-laying capacity, flimsy nest, and herd instinct in migration are three minor ones. Its spectacular gregariousness was disastrous in two respects. The huge flocks could not be overlooked by the bird's enemies, and no effort was made to avoid them. In a primeval wilderness their ravages were overcome by sheer weight of numbers. Every nesting automatically involved an appalling mortality of adults and young and a waste of eggs, caused by the habits of the bird itself. The final "defect" of this pigeon was its inability to learn anything new; it could not change its habits to meet the pressure of new and unfavorable conditions or dangers.

2. It follows from the above that a primeval wilderness was a prerequisite for survival. There would have had to be thousands of unbroken square miles of beech and oak forest in a nesting reservation, and another equally great winter roosting area, for one flock of passenger pigeons to have been conserved for posterity. It has never been sufficiently emphasized that the inevitable advances of human civilization which involved the destruction of the primeval forests, would have
proved fatal to this pigeon, even if its flesh had been rank, unpalatable and of no commercial value.

3. The outrageous slaughter of pigeons by skilled professionals from 1860 on merely hastened their inevitable doom. Unfortunately, it was just as easy to kill the last birds in the 1890’s as it was for the Pilgrims to kill the first 250 years earlier. In this stretch of time the passenger pigeon had learned nothing, evolved no defensive adaptation.

Warrant for these judgments may be found by comparison with other North American birds. Civilization destroyed the northern forests without endangering a single other species; only three or four were seriously reduced in numbers. Other birds, too, had the habit of nesting in great colonies or rookeries, and this habit is fatal in settled districts. These birds gradually learned to abandon it. The night heron is an outstanding example. Formerly all the night herons in the northeast nested in four to six great rookeries, which could not escape detection and persecution. There were three in eastern Massachusetts. Today, an army of one hundred observers would not suffice to locate in one season all the scattered pairs and groups in this state. The net result is that a large and conspicuous bird is more abundant and widely distributed than ever before.

The canvasback duck was mercilessly hunted by skilled professionals from 1860 to 1910, while a fair percentage of its southern breeding range was destroyed, as advancing civilization drained the prairie sloughs and lakes. Moreover, in prehistoric times the total maximum number of canvasbacks in existence could hardly have equalled the multitudes in one flock of passenger pigeons. While admittedly greatly reduced in numbers, the canvasback was never in danger of extinction. Why? First and foremost, the genius of man simply could not kill it in sufficiently large numbers, try as hard as he would. The canvasback at once became shy, wary, and “clever.” No matter what new device for its destruction was thought up, an adequate number of these ducks learned to avoid it in one season. Moreover, the canvasback was remarkably prolific, and did not require an uninhabited wilderness in which to nest. Finally, a large number of pairs could nest in the rushes of a favorable lake without killing each other and destroying each other’s eggs. Who can deny that these “assets” helped this bird to survive outrageous persecution?

In every known case of extinction, man has been to blame in one way or another. In no known case has man been solely to blame. Nature is cold, ruthless and impersonal. Biologically speaking, “Nothing succeeds like success.” Mankind himself had better not forget it.

AIDS TO STUDY

(Reference is to the two preceding articles: “The Passenger Pigeon” and “The Passing of the Passenger Pigeon.”)
1. Compare and contrast such features of these two selections as organization, details, purpose.
2. Which of the two is the more scientific? Why?
3. Audubon thought that "nothing but a gradual diminution of our forests can accomplish their decrease." Does this opinion fit in with Griscom's analysis?
4. Again, Audubon speaks of "the tyrant of creation, man." What attitude is suggested by this remark? Does Griscom suggest this attitude too?
5. Griscom says, "Biologically speaking, 'nothing succeeds like success.' Mankind himself had better not forget it." What implications for human beings do you see in these two accounts of the passenger pigeon?
6. What course of action should "mankind himself" follow in order to avoid the fate of the passenger pigeon? For instance, if, as Griscom says, "Nature is cold, ruthless, and impersonal," should mankind seek to be like nature?
7. Is there anything self-contradictory in the question, "should mankind seek to be like nature"?
Sherlock Holmes took his bottle from the corner of the mantelpiece, and his hypodermic syringe from its neat morocco case. With his long, white, nervous fingers he adjusted the delicate needle and rolled back his left shirtcuff. For some little time his eyes rested thoughtfully upon the sinewy forearm and wrist, all dotted and scarred with innumerable puncture-marks. Finally, he thrust the sharp point home, pressed down the tiny piston, and sank back into the velvet-lined armchair with a long sigh of satisfaction.

Three times a day for many months I had witnessed this performance, but custom had not reconciled my mind to it. On the contrary, from day to day I had become more irritable at the sight, and my conscience swelled nightly within me at the thought that I had lacked the courage to protest. Again and again I had registered a vow that I should deliver my soul upon the subject; but there was that in the cool, nonchalant air of my companion which made him the last man with whom one would care to take anything approaching to a liberty. His great powers, his masterly manner, and the experience which I had had of his many extraordinary qualities, all made me diffident and backward in crossing him.

Yet upon that afternoon, whether it was the Beaune which I had taken with my lunch or the additional exasperation produced by the extreme deliberation of his manner, I suddenly felt that I could hold out no longer.

"Which is it to-day," I asked, "morphine or cocaine?"

He raised his eyes languidly from the old black-letter volume which he had opened.

"It is cocaine," he said, "a seven-percent solution. Would you care to try it?"

"No, indeed," I answered brusquely. "My constitution has not got
over the Afghan campaign yet. I cannot afford to throw any extra strain upon it.”

He smiled at my vehemence. “Perhaps you are right, Watson,” he said. “I suppose that its influence is physically a bad one. I find it, however, so transcendentally stimulating and clarifying to the mind that its secondary action is a matter of small moment.”

“But consider!” I said earnestly. “Count the cost! Your brain may, as you say, be roused and excited, but it is a pathological and morbid process which involves increased tissue-change and may at least leave a permanent weakness. You know, too, what a black reaction comes upon you. Surely the game is hardly worth the candle. Why should you, for a mere passing pleasure, risk the loss of those great powers with which you have been endowed? Remember that I speak not only as one comrade to another but as a medical man to one for whose constitution he is to some extent answerable.”

He did not seem offended. On the contrary, he put his finger-tips together, and leaned his elbows on the arms of his chair, like one who has a relish for conversation.

“My mind,” he said, “rebels at stagnation. Give me problems, give me work, give me the most abstruse cryptogram, or the most intricate analysis, and I am in my own proper atmosphere. I can dispense then with artificial stimulants. But I abhor the dull routine of existence. I crave for mental exaltation. That is why I have chosen my own particular profession, or rather created it, for I am the only one in the world.”

“The only unofficial detective?” I said, raising my eyebrows.

“The only unofficial consulting detective,” he answered. “I am the last and highest court of appeal in detection. When Gregson, or Lestrade, or Athelney Jones are out of their depths—which, by the way, is their normal state—the matter is laid before me. I examine the data, as an expert, and pronounce a specialist’s opinion. I claim no credit in such cases. My name figures in no newspaper. The work itself, the pleasure of finding a field for my peculiar powers, is my highest reward. But you have yourself had some experience of my methods of work in the Jefferson Hope case.”

“Yes, indeed,” said I cordially. “I was never so struck by anything in my life. I even embodied it in a small brochure, with the somewhat fantastic title of ‘A Study in Scarlet.’”

He shook his head sadly.

“I glanced over it,” said he. “Honesty, I cannot congratulate you upon it. Detection is, or ought to be, an exact science and should be treated in the same cold and unemotional manner. You have attempted to tinge it with romanticism, which produces much the same effect as if you worked a love-story or an elopement into the fifth proposition of Euclid.”
“But the romance was there,” I remonstrated. “I could not tamper with the facts.”

“Some facts should be suppressed, or, at least, a just sense of proportion should be observed in treating them. The only point in the case which deserved mention was the curious analytical reasoning from effects to causes, by which I succeeded in unravelling it.”

I was annoyed at this criticism of a work which had been specially designed to please him. I confess, too, that I was irritated by the egotism which seemed to demand that every line of my pamphlet should be devoted to his own special doings. More than once during the years that I had lived with him in Baker Street I had observed that a small vanity underlay my companion’s quiet and didactic manner. I made no remark, however, but sat nursing my wounded leg. I had had a Jezail bullet through it some time before, and though it did not prevent me from walking it ached wearily at every change of the weather.

“My practice has extended recently to the Continent,” said Holmes after a while, filling up his old brier-root pipe. “I was consulted last week by François le Villard, who, as you probably know, has come rather to the front lately in the French detective service. He has all the Celtic power of quick intuition, but he is deficient in the wide range of exact knowledge which is essential to the higher developments of his art. The case was concerned with a will and possessed some features of interest. I was able to refer him to two parallel cases, the one at Riga in 1857, and the other at St. Louis in 1871, which have suggested to him the true solution. Here is the letter which I had this morning acknowledging my assistance.”

He tossed over, as he spoke, a crumpled sheet of foreign notepaper. I glanced my eyes down it, catching a profusion of notes of admiration, with stray magnifiques, coup-de-maitres and tours-de-force, all testifying to the ardent admiration of the Frenchman.

“He speaks as a pupil to his master,” said I.

“Oh, he rates my assistance too highly,” said Sherlock Holmes lightly. “He has considerable gifts himself. He possesses two out of the three qualities necessary for the ideal detective. He has the power of observation and that of deduction. He is only wanting in knowledge, and that may come in time. He is now translating my small works into French.”

“Your works?”

“Oh, didn’t you know?” he cried, laughing. “Yes, I have been guilty of several monographs. They are all upon technical subjects. Here, for example, is one ‘Upon the Distinction between the Ashes of the Various Tobaccos.’ In it I enumerate a hundred and forty forms of cigar, cigarette, and pipe tobacco, with coloured plates illustrating the difference in the ash. It is a point which is continually turning up in criminal trials, and which is sometimes of supreme importance as a clue. If you can say
definitely, for example, that some murder has been done by a man who was smoking an Indian _hunkah_, it obviously narrows your field of search. To the trained eye there is as much difference between the black ash of a Trichinopoly and the white fluff of bird’s-eye as there is between a cabbage and a potato.”

“You have an extraordinary genius for minutiae,” I remarked.

“I appreciate their importance. Here is my monograph upon the tracing of footsteps, with some remarks upon the uses of plaster of Paris as a preserver of impresses. Here, too, is a curious little work upon the influence of a trade upon the form of the hand, with lithotypes of the hands of slaters, sailors, cork-cutters, compositors, weavers, and diamond-polishers. That is a matter of great practical interest to the scientific detective—especially in cases of unclaimed bodies, or in discovering the antecedents of criminals. But I weary you with my hobby.”

“Not at all,” I answered earnestly. “It is of the greatest interest to me, especially since I have had the opportunity of observing your practical application of it. But you spoke just now of observation and deduction. Surely the one to some extent implies the other.”

“Why, hardly,” he answered, leaning back luxuriously in his armchair and sending up thick blue wreaths from his pipe. “For example, observation shows me that you have been to the Wigmore Street Post-Office this morning, but deduction lets me know that when there you dispatched a telegram.”

“Right!” said I. “Right on both points! But I confess that I don’t see how you arrived at it. It was a sudden impulse upon my part, and I have mentioned it to no one.”

“It is simplicity itself,” he remarked, chuckling at my surprise—“so absurdly simple that an explanation is superfluous; and yet it may serve to define the limits of observation and of deduction. Observation tells me that you have a little reddish mould adhering to your instep. Just opposite the Wigmore Street Office they have taken up the pavement and thrown up some earth, which lies in such a way that it is difficult to avoid treading in it in entering. The earth is of this peculiar reddish tint which is found, as far as I know, nowhere else in the neighbourhood. So much is observation. The rest is deduction.”

“How, then, did you deduce the telegram?”

“How, of course I knew that you had not written a letter, since I sat opposite to you all morning. I see also in your open desk there that you have a sheet of stamps and a thick bundle of postcards. What could you go into the post-office for, then, but to send a wire? Eliminate all other factors, and the one which remains must be the truth.”

“In this case it certainly is so,” I replied after a little thought. “The thing, however, is, as you say, of the simplest. Would you think me impertinent if I were to put your theories to a more severe test?”
"On the contrary," he answered, "it would prevent me from taking
a second dose of cocaine. I should be delighted to look into any prob-
lem which you might submit to me."

"I have heard you say that it is difficult for a man to have any object
in daily use without leaving the impress of his individuality upon it in
such a way that a trained observer might read it. Now, I have here a
watch which has recently come into my possession. Would you have the
kindness to let me have an opinion upon the character or habits of the
late owner?"

I handed him over the watch with some slight feeling of amusement
in my heart, for the test was, as I thought, an impossible one, and I in-
tended it as a lesson against the somewhat dogmatic tone which he oc-
casionally assumed. He balanced the watch in his hand, gazed hard at the
dial, opened the back, and examined the works, first with his naked eyes
and then with a powerful convex lens. I could hardly keep from smiling
at his crestfallen face when he finally snapped the case to and handed it
back.

"There are hardly any data," he remarked. "The watch has been re-
cently cleaned, which robs me of my most suggestive facts."

"You are right," I answered. "It was cleaned before being sent to me."

In my heart I accused my companion of putting forward a most lame
and impotent excuse to cover his failure. What data could he expect
from an uncleaned watch?

"Though unsatisfactory, my research has not been entirely barren," he
observed, staring up at the ceiling with dreamy, lack-lustre eyes. "Subject
to your correction, I should judge that the watch belonged to your
elder brother, who inherited it from your father."

"That you gather, no doubt, from the H. W. upon the back?"

"Quite so. The W. suggests your own name. The date of the watch
is nearly fifty years back, and the initials are as old as the watch: so it
was made for the last generation. Jewellery usually descends to the eldest
son, and he is most likely to have the same name as the father. Your
father has, if I remember right, been dead many years. It has, therefore,
been in the hands of your eldest brother."

"Right, so far," said I. "Anything else?"

"He was a man of untidy habits—very untidy and careless. He was left
with good prospects, but he threw away his chances, lived for some time
in poverty with occasional short intervals of prosperity, and finally, tak-
ing to drink, he died. That is all I can gather."

I sprang from my chair and limped impatiently about the room with
considerable bitterness in my heart.

"This is unworthy of you, Holmes," I said. "I could not have believed
that you would have descended to this. You have made inquiries into the
history of my unhappy brother, and you now pretend to deduce this
knowledge in some fanciful way. You cannot expect me to believe that you have read all this from his old watch! It is unkind and, to speak plainly, has a touch of charlatanism in it."

"My dear doctor," said he kindly, "pray accept my apologies. Viewing the matter as an abstract problem, I had forgotten how personal and painful a thing it might be to you. I assure you, however, that I never even knew that you had a brother until you handed me the watch."

"Then how in the name of all that is wonderful did you get these facts? They are absolutely correct in every particular."

"Ah, that is good luck. I could only say what was the balance of probability. I did not at all expect to be so accurate."

"But it was not mere guesswork?"

"No, no: I never guess. It is a shocking habit—destructive to the logical faculty. What seems strange to you is only so because you do not follow my train of thought or observe the small facts upon which large inferences may depend. For example, I began by stating that your brother was careless. When you observe the lower part of that watch-case you notice that it is not only dinted in two places but it is cut and marked all over from the habit of keeping other hard objects, such as coins or keys, in the same pocket. Surely it is no great feat to assume that a man who treats a fifty-guinea watch so cavalierly must be a careless man. Neither is it a very far-fetched inference that a man who inherits one article of such value is pretty well provided for in other respects."

I nodded to show that I followed his reasoning.

"It is very customary for pawnbrokers in England, when they take a watch, to scratch the number of the ticket with a pin-point upon the inside of the case. It is more handy than a label as there is no risk of the number being lost or transposed. There are no less than four such numbers visible to my lens on the inside of this case. Inference—that your brother was often at low water. Secondary inference—that he had occasional bursts of prosperity, or he could not have redeemed the pledge. Finally, I ask you to look at the inner plate, which contains the keyhole. Look at the thousands of scratches all round the hole—marks where the key has slipped. What sober man’s key could have scored those grooves? But you will never see a drunkard’s watch without them. He winds it at night, and he leaves these traces of his unsteady hand. Where is the mystery in all this?"

"It is as clear as daylight," I answered. "I regret the injustice which I did you. I should have had more faith in your marvellous faculty. May I ask whether you have any professional inquiry on foot at present?"

"None. Hence the cocaine. I cannot live without brainwork. What else is there to live for? Stand at the window here. Was ever such a dreary, dismal, unprofitable world? See how the yellow fog swirls down the street and drifts across the dun-coloured houses. What could be
more hopelessly prosaic and material? What is the use of having powers, Doctor, when one has no field upon which to exert them? Crime is commonplace, existence is commonplace, and no qualities save those which are commonplace have any function upon earth.”

I had opened my mouth to reply to this tirade when, with a crisp knock, our landlady entered, bearing a card upon the brass salver.

“A young lady for you, sir,” she said, addressing my companion.

“Miss Mary Morstan,” he read. “Hum! I have no recollection of the name. Ask the young lady to step up, Mrs. Hudson. Don’t go, Doctor. I should prefer that you remain.”

AIDS TO STUDY

1. In this prefatory chapter to his novel *The Sign of Four*, how does Doyle prevent Holmes’ egotism and even his cocaine addiction from seeming offensive?

2. What other personal qualities and habits does Holmes exhibit in his conversation with Watson? What difference does it make that Holmes is an “unofficial” consultant—that is, an amateur?

3. What are “the three qualities necessary for the ideal detective”? How do these qualities differ from one another? Are there other qualities that you yourself would think essential?

4. When Holmes rightly concludes that Watson has sent a telegram from a certain post office, what qualities of detection are exemplified? Since Watson is a gratifyingly predictable fellow, Holmes’ conclusion is correct. Can you think of circumstances that might have tripped Holmes up, even granting the evidence he has?

5. In the matter of the watch, carefully distinguish between what Holmes observes and what he deduces. Is special knowledge involved as well as observation and deduction?

6. Why does Holmes call guessing “a shocking habit”?
“Dorsey an’ Dugan are havin’ throuble,” said Mr. Hennessey.
“What about?” asked Mr. Dooley.
“Dorsey,” said Mr. Hennessy, “says Dugan stole his dog. They had a party at Dorsey’s an’ Dorsey heerd a noise in th’ back yard an’ wint out an’ see Dugan makin’ off with his bull tarryer.”
“Ye say he see him do it?”
“Yis, he see him do it.”
“Well,” said Mr. Dooley, “‘twud baffle th’ injinooty iv a Sherlock Holmes.”
“Who’s Sherlock Holmes?”
“He’s th’ gr-reatest detictive that iver was in a story book. I’ve been r-readin’ about him an’ if I was a criminal, which I wud be if I had to wurruk f’r a livin’, an’ Sherlock Holmes got afther me, I’d go straith to th’ station an’ give mesilf up. I’d lay th’ goods on th’ desk an’ say: ‘Sargeant, put me down in th’ hard cage. Sherlock Holmes has jus’ see a man go by in a cab with a Newfoundland dog an’ he knows I took th’ spoons.’ Ye see, he ain’t th’ ordh’nry fly cop like Mulcahy that always runs in th’ Schmidt boy f’r ivry crime rayported fr’m stealin’ a ham to forgin’ a check in th’ full knowledge that some day he’ll get him f’r th’ right thing. No, sir; he’s an injanyous man that can put two an’ two together an’ make eight iv thim. He applies his brain to crime, d’ye mind, an’ divvle th’ crime, no matther how cunnin’ it is, will escape him. We’ll suppose, Hinnissy, that I’m Sherlock Holmes. I’m settin’ here in me little parlor wearin’ a dhressin’ gown an’ now an’ thin pokin’ mesilf full iv morpheen. Here we are. Ye come in. ‘Good-mornin’, Watson.’”
“I ain’t Watson,” said Mr. Hennessy. “I’m Hinnissy.”
“Ah,” said Mr. Dooley; “I thought I’d wring it fr’m ye. Perhaps ye’d
like to know how I guessed ye had come in. 'Tis very simple. Only a marther iv observation. I heard ye'er step; I seen ye'er reflection in th' lookin' glass; ye spoke to me. I put these things together with me thrawn faculty f'r observation an' deduction, d'ye mind. Says I to mesilf: 'This must be Hinnissy.' But mind ye, th' chain iv circumstances is not complete. It might be some wan disguised as ye. So says I to mesilf: 'I will throw this newcome, whoiver he is, off his guard, be callin' him be a strange name!' Ye wudden't feel complimented, Hinnissy, if ye knew who Watson is. Watson knows even less than ye do. He don't know anything, an' anything he knows is wrong. He has to look up his name in th' parish raygister before he can speak to himself. He's a gr-reat frind iv Sherlock Holmes an' if Sherlock Holmes iver loses him, he'll find him in th' nearest asylum f'r th' feeble-minded. But I surprised ye'er secret out iv ye. Thrown off ye'er guard be me innocent question, ye popped out 'I'm Hinnissy,' an' in a flash I guessed who ye were. Be th' same process iv raisonin' be deduction, I can tell ye that ye were home las' night in bed, that ye're on ye'er way to wurruk, an' that ye'er salary is two dollars a day. I know ye were at home las' night because ye ar-re always at home between iliven an' sivin, bar Pathrick's night, an' ye'er wife hasn't been in lookin' f'r ye. I know ye're on ye'er way to wurruk because I heerd ye'er dinner pail jingle as ye stepped softly in. I know ye get two dollars a day because ye tol' me ye get three an' I deducted thirty-three an' wan third per cint f'r poetic license. 'Tis very simple. Ar-re those shoes ye have on ye'er feet? Be hivins, I thought so."

"Simple," said Mr. Hennessy, scornfully; "'tis foolish."

"Niver mind," said Mr. Dooley. "Pass th' dope, Watson. Now bein' full iv th' cillybrated Chow Sooey brand, I addrress me keen mind to th' discussion iv th' case iv Dorsey's dog. Watson, look out iv th' window an' see if that's a cab goin' by ringin' a gong. A throlley car? So much th' betther. Me observation tol' me it was not a balloon or a comet or a reindeer. Ye ar-re a gr-reat help to me, Watson. Pass th' dope. Was there a dog on th' car? No? That simplifies th' thing. I had an idee th' dog might have gone to wurruk. He was a bull-tarryer, ye say. D'ye know anynthing about his parents? Be Mulligan's Sloppy Weather out iv O'Hannigan's Diana iv th' Slough; Iv coarse. Was ayether iv thin seen in th' neighborhood th' night iv th' plant? No? Thin it is not, as manny might suppose, a case iv abduction. What were th' habits iv Dorsey's coyote? Was he a dog that drhrank? Did he go out iv nights? Was he payin' anyn particular attintions to anyn iv th' neighbors? Was he baffled in love? Ar-re his accounts straight? Had Dorsey said anynthing to him that wud've made him despondent? Ye say no. He led a dog's life but seemed to be happy. Thin 'tis plainly not a case iv suicide.

"I'm gettin' up close to th' criminals. Another shot iv th' mad mixture.
Wait till I can find a place in th’ ar-rm. There ye ar-re. Well, Watson, what d’ye make iv it?"

"If ye mane me, Dugan stole th’ dog."

"Not so fast," said Mr. Dooley. "Like all men iv small minds ye make ye’ers up readily. Th’ smaller th’ mind, th’ aiser ’tis made up. Ye’ers is like a blanket on th’ flure before th’ fire. All ye have to do to make it up is to lave it. Mine is like a large double bed, an’ after I’ve been tossin’ in it. ’tis no asy job to make it up. I will puncture me tire with th’ fav’rite flower iv Chinnytown an’ go on. We know now that th’ dog did not elope, that he didn’t commit suicide an’ that he was not kidnapped be his rayturnin’ parents. So far so good. Now I’ll tell ye who stole th’ dog.

Yisterdah afternoon I see a suspicuous lookin’ man goin’ down th’ sthreet. I say he was suspicuous lookin’ because he was not disguised an’ looked ivry wan in th’ face. He had no dog with him. A danny circumstance, Watson, because whin he’d stolen th’ dog he never wud’ve taken it down near Dorsey’s house. Ye wuddn’t notice these facts because ye’er mind while feeble is unthrained. His coat collar was turned up an’ he was whistlin’ to himself, a habit iv dog fanciers. As he wint be Hogan’s house he did not look around or change his gait or otherwise do anything that wud indicate to an unthrained mind that there was anynthing wrong, facts in thimselfs that proved to me cultivated intillgence that he was guilty. I followed him in me mind’s eye to his home an’ there chained to th’ bed leg is Dorsey’s dog. Th’ name iv th’ criminal is P. X. O’Hannigan, an’ he lives at twinty-wan hundred an’ ninety-nine South Halsted sthreet, top flat, rear, a plumber be pro-fission. Officer, arrest that man!

"That’s all right," said Mr. Hennessy; "but Dugan rayturned th’ dog las’ night."

"Oh, thin," said Mr. Dooley, calmly, "this is not a case f’r Sherlock Holmes but wan f’r th’ polis. That’s th’ throuble, Hinnissy, with th’ detective iv th’ story. Nawthin’ happens in rale life that’s complicated enough f’r him. If th’ Prisident iv th’ Epworth League was a safe-blower be night th’ man that’d catch him’d be a la-ad with gr-reat powers iv observation an’ thrained habits iv raisinon’. But crime, Hinnissy, is a pur-soot iv th’ simple minded—that is, catchable crime is a pursoot iv th’ simple-minded. Th’ other kind, th’ uncatchable kind that is took up be men iv intilect is called high fi-nance. I’ve known manny criminals in me time, an’ some iv thim was fine men an’ very happy in their home life, an’ a more simple, pasth’ral people ye niver knew. Wan iv th’ ablest bank robbers in th’ country used to live near me—he ownded a flat buildin’—an’s before he’d turn in to bed after rayturnin’ fr’m his night’s wurruk, he’d go out in th’ shed an’ chop th’ wood. He always wint into th’ house through a thransom f’r fear iv wakin’ his wife who was a
delicate woman an' a shop lifter. As I tell ye he was a man without guile, an' he wint about his jooties as modestly as ye go about ye'ers. I don't think in th' long run he made much more thin ye do. Wanst in a while, he'd get hold iv a good bunch iv money, but manny other times after dhrillin' all night through a steel dure, all he'd find'd be a short crisp note fr'm th' prisidint iv th' bank. He was often discouraged, an' he tol' me wanst if he had an income iv forty dollars th' month, he'd retire fr'm business an' settle down on a farm.

"No, sir, criminals is th' simplest crathers in th' wide wide wurruld—innocent, straighth-forward, dangerous people, that haven't sense enough to be honest or prosperous. Th' extint iv their schamin' is to break a lock on a dure or sweep a handful iv change fr'm a counter or dhrill a hole in a safe or administer th' strong short arm to a tired man takin' home his load. There are no mysterious crimes excep'thin that happens to be. Th' ordh'ny crook, Hinissys, goes around ringin' a bell an' distributin' hand-bills announcin' his business. He always breaks through a window instead iv goin' through an open dure, an' afther he's done anthing that he thinks is commindable, he goes to a neighborin' liquor saloon, stands on th' pool table an' confides th' secret to ivrybody within sound iv his voice. That's why Mulligan is a better deticitive thin Sherlock Holmes or me. He can't put two an' two together an' he has no powers iv deduction, but he's a hard dhrinker an' a fine sleuth. Sherlock Holmes niver wud've caught that frind iv mine. Whin th' safe iv th' Ninth Rational Bank was blewed, he wud've put two an' two together an' arrested me. But me frind wint away lavin' a hat an' a pair iv cuffs marked with his name in th' safe, an' th' polis combined these discoveries with th' well-known fact that Muggins was a notorryous safe blower an' they took him in. They found him down th' sthreet thrizin' to sell a bushel basket full iv Alley L stock. I told ye he was a simple man. He ralized his ambition fr' an agaracoolchral life. They give him th' care iv th' cows at Joliet."

"Did he rayform?" asked Mr. Hennessy.

"No," said Mr. Dooley; "he escaped. An' th' way he got out wud baffle th' injinooty iv a Sherlock Holmes."

"How did he do it?" asked Mr. Hennessy.

"He climbed over th' wall," said Mr. Dooley.

AIDS TO STUDY

First read "Sherlock Holmes on the Science of Deduction." (Mr. Dooley and his friend Hennessy, two fictional Irishmen living in Chicago at the turn of the century, are the vehicles of some of the most amusing and rational editorializing in the annals of American journalism. Though Hennessy says, "I ain't Watson," he is Watson in the sense that he is a foil to the clever common sense of Mr. Dooley.)
1. What aspects of Holmes's conversation with Watson does Mr. Dooley parody? By what means does Mr. Dooley make both Watson and Holmes seem a bit absurd?

2. What distinction does Mr. Dooley make between "a case for Holmes" and "a case for the police"? What is his point concerning "one of the ablest bank robbers in the country"?

3. Is Mr. Dooley also satirizing police methods? If so, how?

4. Holmes says that knowledge, observation, and deduction are necessary to the ideal detective. Clearly, Mr. Dooley thinks that Holmes lacks one other desirable quality. What is it?

5. Can Dunne be paying Conan Doyle a compliment while at the same time poking fun at Holmes and Watson? Explain.
When I first went to live in San Pedro Tlaquepaque, a small pottery-making town in western Mexico, I was under the mistaken impression that my Mexican neighbors had nothing but dump heaps and a few trees in the yards behind their homes. As I lived there longer and came to know more about the life of the village, I realized that many of these dump heaps were carefully managed gardens and orchards. I saw enough so that several years later in highland Guatemala I played hooky from the cornfields I was supposed to be studying, and spent an afternoon in an Indian village with a Spanish-speaking youth who belonged to one of the two or three Ladino families in that town. Again I came back home with the little more I had learned and thought it over for another two years. By the time of my next visit to Guatemala I was certain that the simple facts concerning these gardens were something worth careful study; and in the few days at my disposal I again visited the village of Santa Lucia on the little height of land between Antigua and Guatemala City and again prevailed upon Señor San Salazar to let one of his sons serve as a guide and interpreter. This time I spent a good part of one day visiting and photographing Indian gardens and finally mapped and measured one of them in detail.

The garden I charted was a small affair about the size of a small city plot in the United States. It was covered with a riotous growth so luxuriant and so apparently planless that any ordinary American or European visitor, accustomed to the puritanical primeness of north European gardens, would have supposed (if he even chanced to realize that
it was indeed a garden) that it must be a deserted one. Yet when I went through it carefully I could find no plants which were not useful to the owner in one way or another. There were no noxious weeds, the return per man-hour of effort was apparently high, and I came away feeling that as an experienced vegetable gardener (I am one of those strange people who would rather hoe vegetables than play golf or go to the movies) I had got more new ideas about growing vegetables than from visiting any other garden anywhere.

The garden, like most of those in Santa Lucia, was rectangular and much longer than broad. On three sides it was surrounded by a low fence made from the local cornstalks, which are so big and so durable that I suspect some of the Guatemalan corns must have been deliberately selected for such purposes. Along the other side was a pruned hedge of chichicast, a rough-leaved shrub, which the Mayas used for various purposes and which has given its name to a well-known Guatemalan town, Chichicastenango, literally, “place of the chichicast.” Growing along the fence and the hedge were several varieties of squash and pumpkins as well as some squash relatives not so well known in the Temperate Zone. There was the perennial chayote whose pale-green, large-seeded fruits are now becoming a common vegetable in our own markets, the related “caiba,” much more piquant in flavor, and the black-seeded Cucurbita ficifolia, which we know from archaeological evidence to have been one of the most anciently cultivated cucurbits in the New World. The squashes grew more rampantly than they usually do with us and the chayote draped itself over everything, garden walls, trees, mature cornstalks, making the whole garden into a picturesque tangled bower.

Though at first sight there seemed little order, as soon as we started mapping the garden we realized that it was planted in fairly definite crosswise rows. There were fruit trees, native and European, in great variety: annonas, cherimoyas, avocados, peaches, quinces, plums, a fig, and a few coffee bushes. There were giant cacti grown for their fruit. There was a large plant of rosemary, a plant of rue, some poinsettias, and a fine semi-climbing tea rose. There was a whole row of the native domesticated hawthorn, whose fruits, like yellow, doll-size apples, make a delicious conserve. There were two varieties of corn, one well past bearing and now serving as a trellis for climbing string beans which were just coming into season, the other, a much taller sort, which was tasselling out. There were specimens of a little banana with smooth wide leaves which are the local substitute for wrapping paper, and are also used instead of corn-husks in cooking the native variant of hot tamales. Over it all clambered the luxuriant vines of the various cucurbits. Chayote, when finally mature, has a large nutritious root weighing several pounds. At one point there was a depression the size of a small bathtub where
a chayote root had recently been excavated; this served as a rubbish-heap and compost for the waste from the house. At one end of the garden was a small beehive made from boxes and tin cans. In terms of our American and European equivalents the garden was a vegetable garden, an orchard, a medicinal garden, a dump heap, a compost heap, and a bee-yard. There was no problem of erosion though it was at the top of a steep slope; the soil surface was practically all covered and apparently would be during most of the year. Humidity would be kept up during the dry season and plants of the same sort were so isolated from one another by intervening vegetation that pests and diseases could not readily spread from plant to plant. The fertility was being conserved; in addition to the waste from the house, mature plants were being

Figs. 1 and 2. Diagrammatic map of an orchard-garden in the Indian village of Santa Lucia, Guatemala. The glyphs listed above not only identify the plants as shown in the plan on the opposite page, they indicate by their shapes in what
buried in between the rows when their usefulness was over.

It is frequently said by Europeans and European Americans that time means nothing to an American Indian. This garden seemed to me to be a good example of how the Indian, when we look more than superficially into his activities, is budgeting his time more efficiently than we do. The

general category the plants belong. Circular glyphs indicate fruit trees (such as plum and peach) of European origin; rounded irregular glyphs indicate fruit trees (such as the manzanilla) which are of American origin. Similarly, dotted lines are for climbing vegetables, small circles for subshrubs, large stars for succulents, and an irregular wedge-shaped figure for plants in the banana family. The long irregular mass at the right-hand side of Fig. 2 represents a hedge of “chichicaste,” a shrub used by the Mayas.
garden was in continuous production but was taking only a little effort at any one time: a few weeds pulled when one came down to pick the squashes, corn and bean plants dug in between the rows when the last of the climbing beans were picked, and a new crop of something else planted above them a few weeks later.

I was so impressed by the apparent efficiency of the garden that I have since tried out several of its basic principles on my own vegetable plots with considerable success. Instead of putting my sweet potatoes all neatly in one little bed down at the far end of the garden I plant them one row at a time in different places. They now grow out vigorously across the garden by late summer; they keep the ground moist during the dry days of August; and they help keep out weeds. I also plant a few cornfield beans in among the corn plants after they are pretty well up and have a good extra crop of string beans after the sweet-corn season is over. From these experiences I suspect that if one were to make a careful time study of such an American Indian garden, one would find it more productive than ours in terms of pounds of vegetables and fruit per man-hour per square foot of ground. Far from saying that time means nothing to an Indian, I would suggest that it means so much more to him that he does not wish to waste it in profitless effort as we do.

This is the most primitive type of garden which I have so far been able to study personally; from the literature I gather that it is characteristic of wide areas in the New World, Asia, and Africa. Under more strictly tropical conditions (because of its altitude, Santa Lucia for all practical purposes is almost in the Temperate Zone) such garden-orchards blend even more closely into the native vegetation. In Malaysia, on more than one occasion deliberately planted native orchards have been mistaken for part of the natural woodland by European and American plant collectors. Varieties of citrus fruits said to be wild were actually collected from native gardens by Occidental botanists so imperceptive that they could not distinguish between man-made orchards and more or less natural vegetation. Perhaps a goodly number of the primitive varieties of various cultivated plants which have been collected at one time or another in the tropics by northern botanists and which are said to be the wild ancestors of such-and-such a crop are in the same category. Here, as in many other basic problems of tropical agriculture, we are up against a serious difficulty. Agriculture, as an ancient art, began in the tropics and has various special complexities there by reason of its long persistence in those areas. Agriculture as a modern science developed in the Temperate Zone. Most of our scientific understanding of agriculture comes from our experiences during the last few centuries with the relatively simple agricultural problems of northern Europe and North America. When the average scientific agriculturist goes to the tropics he has much more
These hit-or-miss tropical gardens are of particular significance because they fit in perfectly with a theory of Carl Sauer's that agriculture may have originated among a sedentary fisherfolk. The first definite beginnings of agriculture took place very early, about the time man domesticated the dog, perhaps in those early Neolithic times which many authorities designate as the Mesolithic. As a geographer, Sauer thinks of the Mesolithic as time in which rapidly melting ice sheets were raising the sea level all over the world, flooding continental shelves which had been bared when a good portion of the world's precipitation was locked up in polar ice-caps. It was a time when coastal valleys were becoming estuaries, when there was a rapid building of new deltas, an increase in length and complexities of shorelines and the formation of river swamps and oxbow lakes. In such an environment people living primarily by fishing would have been able to supply themselves with food without shifting from place to place. The archaeological records show that shell middens accumulated of such a size as to indicate centuries of occupation. Excavations indicate that this was an era in which there was an elaboration of fishing gear, boats, harpoons, and fish-hooks. The fish-hooks are important for our story; they imply fishing lines, and fishing lines indicate the use of plants for cordage.

From the world-wide distribution of fish poisons Sauer infers that this lazy-man's way of stunning your prey with a plant poison is a very ancient trait. He thinks it likely that the first fish poisons may have followed naturally from the making of fish-lines. What could be more natural than that in the process of bruising vines and bark with blunt stone instruments and soaking the fibres to rot away the soft parts, man should accidentally have discovered that some of these plants can stupefy fish and make them easier to catch? As a further argument he points out that some primitive fibre plants are known to be still in use as fish poisons. To him it seems likely that such a folk, blessed with abundant food, becoming increasingly skilled in navigation and hence in transport, already using plants for fibre and for poison, might gradually shift from plant gathering, to unintentional domestication, to the purposeful growing of plants. He points out that in one of the most ancient centers for man, southeastern Asia, there was extensive drowning of ancient coastline and the production of long and complicated new ones. In this area he finds evidence for an early center of gathering and preparing plant products with blunt stone instruments, the grubbing up of tuberous plants from river swamps, the manufacture of nets and cordage, the elaboration of fish poisons, the manufacture of cloth and of bark, and the building of bark houses. He brings out the interesting fact that the
making of sago by shredding and soaking and pounding the stems of certain palms and cycads is mostly limited to this area. "The practice of shredding, pounding, washing, and decanting runs through plant uses throughout south-east Asia and seems to tie fibre-making and toughening, poison preparation for fishing, hunting, and medicine, and food preparation, including the coagulation of sago, into one culture complex."

To me this theory is worth careful consideration because such people would have also created refuse heaps and I am even more intrigued than Sauer by the notion that such refuse heaps may have played a key role in the origin of cultivated plants. These ancient dump heaps are of extraordinary interest in connection with the origin of cultivated plants, because they are open habitats.

What do we mean by an open habitat? Well, let me begin my explanation by telling you the story of Mrs. Swune and the hollyhocks. Mrs. Swune (that was not her real name, but she was a very real person) loved hollyhocks, and they did well in her garden with very little care. Seedlings came up all through the perennial border and even among the shrubbery, and all during the early summer her place was ablaze with hollyhocks. Naturally, she became very hollyhock-conscious, and she wrote some poems about them and had her friends in for a sedate tea among the hollyhocks, and brought out the poems and read them to her guests. I was invited to one of the teas, and it really wasn't as bad as it sounds: the poems were short and there were plenty of excellent tea-cakes, and the other guests were swell people and we kind of banded together. At the conclusion of the tea she presented each of us with a large packet of hollyhock seed and wanted to know if we would please scatter them through the Ozarks whenever we drove down that way. Spring bloom in the Ozarks she found satisfactory, but to her the summer roadsides were dull, and she thought if we would just toss the seeds out the windows as we motored along they would just naturally come up all through the Ozarks, and Highway 61 would become a Hollyhock Memory Trail.

Well, I knew the hollyhocks wouldn't come up (even though they do grow along roadsides in the Eastern state), but it is fruitless to argue with people like Mrs. Swune. She was so persistent that eventually I even tossed my seeds out the car window according to her directions, and so, I suspect, did some of the other guests, but the Ozark highways are just as bare of volunteer hollyhocks as they ever were. What Mrs. Swune did not understand is that most plants are very choosy about where they will and will not grow, and that some places, like gardens and dump heaps, are relatively open habitats, receptive to a good many kinds of plants while other places, such as meadows and mountain-tops, are relatively closed habitats in which aliens will have trouble getting a footing.
A useful concept in discussing such problems is that every organism has a kind of niche which it has been evolved to fit into (an ecological niche is the precise scientific way of phrasing it); and that many of the things which happen in the domestication of plants and the origin of weeds can best be understood in terms of this concept. It really isn't so complicated when you start thinking it over. Even Mrs. Swune would have realized that you can't plant orange seeds in Greenland and expect to raise orange orchards. Any person of normal intelligence knows that all plants and animals have different likes and dislikes; some are suited to one place and some to another. You don't try to grow water lilies in a desert or plant cacti in a redwood grove. What such people as Mrs. Swune do not realize is not only that oranges will not do in Greenland, but that the average plant is most awfully finicky about just where and when it will grow, under exactly what conditions it will germinate, under exactly what circumstances it will persist to maturity after it has once come up as a seedling. So choosy are most plants about these matters, so individual are most of their likes and dislikes, that we understand it scientifically in only the crudest sort of way. Precise limits of temperature and moisture have been worked out for some plants but the vastly more intricate business of which plants they will and will not tolerate as neighbors, and under what conditions, has never been looked into except in a preliminary way for a few species.

If you don't mind, let us again consider the spiderworts. You will remember that *Tradescantia obiensis* and *T. pilosa* seldom produced hybrids in nature, though in the experimental plot they came up like weeds. We interpreted this as due to the garden being an open habitat. The complex flora of the woodland was made up of species which had evolved together. Natural selection had made them fit into each other's company like the pieces of an intricate jigsaw puzzle. If the plants in this association went to seed, the seedling was likely to find a niche to which it was suited and its chances of survival were good. If a hybrid seed, or an alien seed from some other flora, were planted there, even though able to germinate, it did not fit into the strict interlocked economy of that vegetation, or the chances of its doing so were minuscule. The habitat was closed. Start making a refuse heap in the neighborhood of these two species, however, and one might find even more hybrids in it than in a garden. Here is a strange new kind of habitat. Many of the plants in the native flora do not fit into it, some aliens will, and some hybrids. Plants which can grow in such places will have less interference from other plants. Kitchen middens would be likely places in which fruit pits, seed heads, and the like, brought to the village from some distance, might germinate and survive. However, before we come to grips with the dump heap theory, let us spend a little longer with the concept of the ecological niche.
I learned a great deal about such matters from seeing a fire line ploughed across upland meadows in our Arboretum. In the lowlands of this area, meadows and fields are dotted every spring with the green-yellow blossoms of winter cress, a kind of wild mustard. With us, the winter cress is common in the flood-plain, but until we ploughed the fire lines it had never appeared on our hillsides. Yet for several years after the ploughing was done there were so many winter-cress plants along the fire line that they made a streak of yellow in the landscape. Since then the grass has grown back in and the cress is again restricted to the lowlands. From this I learned that cress grew down in the lowlands not just because it wanted more water, but because the water in the lowlands held in check some of the plants, such as bluegrass, which competed with the cress. Standing water made enough bare spots in the flood-plain meadows so that cress got started there; on the uplands, it required ploughing to give cress a start and repeated ploughing if it was to persist.

Nor is winter cress the only lowland plant which one finds in the uplands, following a ploughing. If we watch deserted fields in the northern edge of the Ozarks, most of the trees which come up spontaneously are flood-plain trees, rather than upland trees. Cut down a woodland of oak and maple, or of oak and hickory. Clear the land and plough, grow wheat, or soybeans, or potatoes for a while, and then leave the field fallow. Even though there are oaks and maples and hickories all around the edge of the plot, they are not the first trees to come up there. Far from it. It is elms and sycamores and honey locusts, all of them trees which belong in the flood-plain.

Why do flood-plain trees come up in deserted upland fields? Drive around Missouri in the winter-time and look at the sycamores and you will find your answer. The sycamores are easy to spot in the landscape. Their bark peels off in big flakes and in the winter-time they are nearly as shining white as a paper birch. In Missouri they are one of our commonest trees and one sees them lining the banks of rivers, forming little parks of all one kind of tree on our big gravel bars, or growing in the actual beds of small creeks. Ordinarily they are seen only along these watercourses and you might easily suppose that only there do they find things to their liking. On a day's drive, with sharp eyes, one can find a fair number of exceptions. These are the key to the story. Quite frequently one sees a few isolated sycamores, far from any watercourse, in a feed lot or near a barn. Some few of these may intentionally have been planted there, but surely not all of them. In the abandoned mine dumps and borrow pits of the lead belt and the tiff district one sees much more evidence of this sort. These picturesque small-scale mining operations have been going on for over a century. On brushy hillsides, irregularly dug-over fifty to a hundred years ago, sycamores are nearly as common as they are along the rivers and creeks. The first need of a
Dump Heaps and the Origin of Agriculture

Sycamore seedling is evidently not a high water table; it is open soil. On the uplands under natural conditions, areas of exposed soil are very rare; it is only when a big tree blows over and brings up a mound of soil with its roots that one finds them at all. In the lowlands the river is continually ploughing its banks and dumping mud, sand, and gravel in new places. Upland plants have not been evolved to fit into habitats where the topsoil is being churned and re-churned; many flood-plain plants like nothing better. So it was that flood-plain trees came up in the abandoned upland fields. Not until they had grown to some size and made a leaf-cover over the raw soil would the sugar maples and white oaks which belonged there spread back in.

Now patches of open soil, like dump heaps, are a part of our story, for these are two of the commonest scars man leaves on the landscape. When he began to spread out of his original corner and into lands previously without human inhabitants, the open habitats which he tended to create, the strange new niches where something different might get a foothold were dump heaps and patches of open, more or less eroded soil. In both of these habitats his only natural partner was the big rivers. They too make dump heaps of a sort; they too plough up the mantle of vegetation and leave raw scars in it. Rivers are weed breeders; so is man, and many of the plants which follow us about have the look of belonging originally on gravel bars or mud-banks.

If we now reconsider the kitchen middens of our sedentary fisherfolk, it seems that they would be a natural place where some of the aggressive plants from the river-banks might find a home, where seeds and fruits brought back from up the hill or down the river might sometimes sprout and to which even more rarely would be brought seeds from across the lake or from another island. Species which had never intermingled might do so there, and the open habitat of the dump heap would be a more likely niche in which strange new mongrels could survive than any which had been there before man came along. Century after century these rubbish-piles should have bred a strange new weed flora, and when man first took to growing plants these rubbish-pile mongrels would be among the most likely candidates.

If we look over our cultivated plants with the dump heap theory in mind, we find that a goodly number of our oldest crops look as if they might well have come from some such place. Hemp is difficult to keep off of modern dump heaps once it is established in a neighborhood; squashes, pumpkins, beans all have the look of such an origin. Among the world's oldest but least-known crops are the grain amaranths. These big coarse pig-weeds, or "redroot" as they are sometimes called, have little seeds about the size of the head of a common pin. They are grown as a grain crop by primitive highland peoples both in the Old World and the New. The red-leaved variants are used for food color,
or planted in other crops to scare away devils; the young leaves are used for greens; the seeds are made into a gruel or are popped and used in foods and various religious rites. Amaranths are a dump heap plant *par excellence*, and are common in barnyards, middens, and refuse dumps throughout the world. The ancient Aztecs in a sort of pagan communion ceremony mixed the popped seeds with human blood, moulding the mess into the shape of a god which was sacrificed on the altars and then passed around to be eaten. Of these grain and weed amaranths we can write with some assurance, for Jonathan Sauer has begun their careful study; as the result of his work we have a fairly precise notion of what species of grain amaranth there are, where they are grown, and how they are used. For an understanding of many other dump heap plants we shall have to wait until other scholars take an equally keen interest in the other humble plants which have travelled with us so long and so far. The history of weeds is the history of man, but we do not yet have the facts that will let us sit down and write very much of it.

**AIDS TO STUDY**

1. What gives unity to the first six paragraphs of this essay? If the central point of the essay is stated in the tenth paragraph, what is the relation of that paragraph to the first six? What useful purpose is served by the seventh, eighth, and ninth paragraphs?

2. Why does the author take such care to define “open habitat”? What is an “open habitat”? What point is illustrated by the growth of winter cress along the fire lines? What is the significance of the grain amaranths?

3. Although this essay is of particular interest to horticulturalists, it is entirely readable by someone who has only an amateur’s knowledge of plants and gardens. What makes it accessible to the amateur? Look at the sentence structure, the levels of usage, the vocabulary. Which of these particularly contributes to the general readability of the selection? How?

4. Do you have confidence that the author is qualified to write on his subject? If so, how does his handling of the subject give rise to your confidence? If not, why not? Is the author’s object to drive home conclusions or to follow lines of inquiry?
There are two kinds of knowledge broadly and practically distinguishable: we may call them respectively knowledge of acquaintance and knowledge-about. Most languages express the distinction; thus, γνώμαι, εἰδέμαι; noscere, scire; kennen, wissen; connaître, savoir. I am acquainted with many people and things, which I know very little about, except their presence in the places where I have met them. I know the color blue when I see it, and the flavor of a pear when I taste it; I know an inch when I move my finger through it; a second of time, when I feel it pass; an effort of attention when I make it; a difference between two things when I notice it; but about the inner nature of these facts or what makes them what they are, I can say nothing at all. I cannot impart acquaintance with them to any one who has not already made it himself. I cannot describe them, make a blind man guess what blue is like, define to a child a syllogism, or tell a philosopher in just what respect distance is just what it is, and differs from other forms of relation. At most, I can say to my friends, Go to certain places and act in certain ways, and these objects will probably come. All the elementary natures of the world, its highest genera, the simple qualities of matter and mind, together with the kinds of relation that subsist between them, must either not be known at all, or known in this dumb way of acquaintance without knowledge-about. In minds able to speak at all there is, it is true, some knowledge about everything. Things can at least be classed, and the times of their appearance told. But in general, the less we analyze a thing, and the fewer of its relations we perceive, the less we know about it and the more our familiarity with it is of the acquaintance-type. The two kinds of knowledge are, therefore, as the human mind practically exerts them, relative terms. That is, the same thought of a thing may be called knowledge-about it in comparison with a simpler thought, or ac-
quaintance with it in comparison with a thought of it that is more articulate and explicit still.

The grammatical sentence expresses this. Its "subject" stands for an object of acquaintance which, by the addition of the predicate, is to get something known about it. We may already know a good deal, when we hear the subject named—its name may have rich connotations. But, know we much or little then, we know more still when the sentence is done. We can relapse at will into a mere condition of acquaintance with an object by scattering our attention and staring at it in a vacuous trance-like way. We can ascend to knowledge about it by rallying our wits and proceeding to notice and analyze and think. What we are only acquainted with is only present to our minds; we have it, or the idea of it. But when we know about it, we do more than merely have it; we seem, as we think over its relations, to subject it to a sort of treatment and to operate upon it with our thought. The words feeling and thought give voice to the antithesis. Through feelings we become acquainted with things, but only by our thoughts do we know about them. Feelings are the germ and starting point of cognition, thoughts the developed tree. The minimum of grammatical subject, of objective presence, of reality known about, the mere beginning of knowledge, must be named by the word that says the least. Such a word is the interjection, as lo! there! ecco! voilà! or the article or demonstrative pronoun introducing the sentence, as the, it, that. . . .

The mental states usually distinguished as feelings are the emotions, and the sensations we get from skin, muscle, viscus, eye, ear, nose, and palate. The "thoughts," as recognized in popular parlance, are the conceptions and judgments. . . . It may perhaps be well to notice now that our senses only give us acquaintance with facts of body, and that of the mental states of other persons we only have conceptual knowledge. Of our own past states of mind we take cognizance in a peculiar way. They are "objects of memory," and appear to us endowed with a sort of warmth and intimacy that makes the perception of them seem more like a process of sensation than like a thought.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. The writer defines two kinds of knowledge by using several examples to point out the differences between the two. Try to amplify James's stock of examples. (Look at the selection by Elton Mayo for an extended example of "knowledge of acquaintance.")

2. Explain the sentence in paragraph one which contains the phrase "in this dumb way of acquaintance without knowledge-about." Be sure to explain why "dumb" here does not mean "stupid."

3. How useful in practice is the distinction that James makes here? Is it pos-
sible that the knowledge of acquaintance could be transformed into knowledge-about?

4. How closely is this distinction related to the distinctions commonly made between theory and practice, or relative and absolute?

5. James mentions Greek, Latin, German, and French as languages which have two different words to distinguish two kinds of knowledge. What words does English have for this purpose?
Economic theory in its human aspect is woefully insufficient; indeed it is absurd. Humanity is not adequately described as a horde of individuals, each actuated by self-interest, each fighting his neighbor for the scarce material of survival. Realization that such theories completely falsify the normal human scene drives us back to study of particular human situations. Knowledge-of-acquaintance of the actual event, intimate understanding of the complexity of human relationships, must precede the formulation of alternatives to current economic abstractions. This is the clinical method, the necessary preliminary to laboratory investigation. Only when clinically tested by successful treatment can a diagnosis be safely developed toward logical elaboration and laboratory experiment.

The first inquiry we undertook ran headlong into illustration of the insufficiency of the assumption that individual self-interest actually operates as adequate incentive. Rather more than twenty years ago we were asked to discover, if possible, the causes of a high labor turnover in the mule-spinning department of a textile mill near Philadelphia. The general labor situation elsewhere in the plant seemed highly satisfactory; the employers were unusually enlightened and humane; the work was exceedingly well organized in respect of operations and the company was generally regarded as an extremely successful venture. But the president and his director of personnel were much troubled by the situation

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in the mule-spinning department. Whereas the general labor turnover in other departments was estimated to be approximately 5% or 6% per annum, in the spinning department the turnover was estimated at approximately 250%. That is to say, about 100 men had to be taken on every year in order to keep about 40 working. And the difficulty tended to be most acute when the factory was busily employed and most in need of men.

Several firms of efficiency engineers had been consulted; these firms had instituted altogether four financial incentive schemes. And these schemes had been a total failure; labor turnover had not dropped one point, nor had production improved: it was almost as a last resort that the firm consulted a university. Although other plants in the vicinity had apparently drifted into acceptance of low morale amongst mule spinners as inevitable, the president of this company refused to believe that the situation was beyond remedy.

On a first inspection the conditions of work in the department did not seem to differ in any general respect from conditions elsewhere in the mill. For some time Saturday work had been discontinued throughout the plant, so that the work week was of 50 hours—five days of 10 hours, two shifts of 5 hours each separated by a 45-minute lunch interval. The mule-spinner attendant was known as a piecer; his work involved walking up and down a long alley, perhaps 30 yards or more, on either side of which a machine head was operating spinning frames. These frames moved back and forth stretching yarn taken from the carding machines, twisting it, and rolling it up on cops. The number of frames operated by a machine head varied from 10 to 14. All had to be closely watched; threads constantly broke and had to be pieced together. The number of pieces in an alley, usually two or three, varied according to the kind of yarn being spun. To an observer the work looked monotonous—walking up and down an alley twisting together broken threads. The only variation in work occurred when a machine head was stopped in order to doff or to replace some spools.

Dr. S. D. Ludlum, professor of neuropsychiatry in the graduate school of medicine in the University of Pennsylvania, was of immense aid to us at this stage as later in the study. He arranged that a registered nurse, one of our group, should be able to relate her small clinic for minor troubles in the plant direct to the Polyclinic Hospital in Philadelphia. Serious cases she referred to the hospital clinicians; minor injuries, a cut or splinter, she could deal with herself. This arrangement seemed to do away with any need for further explanation. Workers gratefully accepted the services of the nurse and, in some instances, the further clinical aid of the hospital. These services were real and understandable. From the first the mule spinners formed a large part of the nurse's regular callers—and either when at work or in the clinic talked to her and to
us quite freely. It was of course clearly understood that nothing said to any of us was ever repeated to anyone in the plant.

As the men began to talk to us, the picture of the situation developed quite differently from that obtained at first inspection. We discovered that almost every piecer suffered from foot trouble of one or another kind for which he apparently knew no effective remedy. Many also claimed neuritis in various localities of arms, shoulders, or legs. But above and beyond all this, the striking fact was the uniformly pessimistic nature of the preoccupations of these workers while at work. To this there seemed no exception: their own opinion of their work was low, even lower than the estimate of mule spinning held by other workers in the plant. We discovered also that the job was essentially solitary: there might be three workers in an alley, but the amount of communication between them in a day was almost nil. One might be piecing threads together here; another, 20 yards away. And the doffing process when it took place involved rapid work with a minimum of communication. Some of the men were young—in the twenties, others were in the fifties—all alike claimed that they were too fatigued to enjoy social evenings after work. Occasionally a worker would flare out into apparently unreasonable anger and incontinently leave his job.

The whole group was characterized by a species of strongly held loyalty to the company president. He had been a colonel in the regular United States Army and had seen active service both before and during the First World War. Many of the workers had been in the trenches in France under his immediate command and had the highest opinion of him; they had come with him from his regiment to the textile mill. Perhaps for this reason their pessimistic moods showed no anger against “The Colonel” or “the company.” For the most part the individual seemed to be almost melancholic about himself; this mood alternated with spurts of rage against some immediate supervisor.

After some discussion the management permitted us to experiment with rest periods—two of 10 minutes’ length in the morning and two again in the afternoon. We arranged these rests so that the work period should be divided thus: 2 hours’ work, 10 minutes’ rest; 1 ½ hours’ work, 10 minutes’ rest; and a final work period of 1 hour and 10 minutes. The actual uninterrupted work period thus diminished in morning and afternoon. In these rest periods the workers were permitted to lie down; we instructed them in the best methods of securing the maximum of muscular relaxation. We encouraged them to sleep for 10 minutes and most of them were able to do so.

We began with one team of pieciers, about one-third of the total number, and the results were encouraging from the outset. The men themselves were pleased and interested; they speedily adopted the method of rest we advised. The effect was immediate—symptoms of melancholy
preoccupation almost wholly disappeared, the labor turnover came to an end, production was maintained, and the morale generally improved. Such immediate effects could not be attributed to the mere elimination of physical fatigue. This was confirmed by the fact that an almost equivalent improvement showed itself in the work of the other two-thirds of the piecers. These men had discussed the experiment at lunch time with their fellows and were confident that “The Colonel” would extend the system to them if it were found satisfactory. And in the October of that year, 1923, this expectation was fulfilled; the management, pleased with the improved condition of the men and the work, decided to extend the rest period system to include the entire personnel of the spinning department. This made it possible for us to do what we could not do before—to measure the effect of the rest periods upon the productivity of the department.

Until October, 1923, the spinning department had never earned a bonus under one of the incentive systems introduced; in October and for the months recorded thereafter, with one interesting exception, the spinners consistently earned a bonus in addition to their wages. I have elsewhere described the bonus plan\(^2\) and shall not repeat this detail here. Enough to say that, if the production of the department in any month exceeded 75% of a carefully calculated possibility, every spinner was paid an excess percentage of his flat-rate wage equivalent to the average excess percentage of production over 75%. Thus a monthly man-hour efficiency of 80% meant a 5% bonus on his monthly wage to every employee in the department. As said above, no fraction of bonus had ever been earned by the department. We were unable to get figures showing the average productivity of the department before October, 1923, when the experiment proper began; but it was generally admitted by executives and supervisors that production had never been above an approximate 70%.

The period from October, 1923, to mid-February, 1924, inclusive, showed a surprising change. The mental and physical condition of the men continued to improve, and, whereas the financial incentive of the bonus had not operated to stimulate production while they felt fatigued, they were now pleased by the fact that under conditions of work that seemed much easier they were earning bonuses as never before. The system was not, however, altogether satisfactory at this time. The immediate supervisors had never liked the sight of workers lying asleep on sacks while the mules were running; it occurred to one of them that the men should be made to “earn” their rest periods. That is to say, a task was set and, if finished within a given time, the men had their rest. For the most part, the workers had three or four rests every day and the in-

\(^2\) Elton Mayo, “Revery and Industrial Fatigue,” loc. cit.
novation worked well enough. For example, the monthly average of productivity ran as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Efficiency</th>
<th>Bonus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October, 1923</td>
<td>79 1/2%</td>
<td>4 1/2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November, &quot;</td>
<td>78 3/4</td>
<td>3 3/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December, &quot;</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January, 1924</td>
<td>78 3/4</td>
<td>3 3/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February, &quot;</td>
<td>80 3/4</td>
<td>5 3/4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This, for workers who had never before earned a bonus, meant much.

This general condition continued until Friday, February 15, when in response to a heavy demand for goods the supervisor who had introduced the idea of earned rest periods ordered the whole system abandoned. Within five days production fell to a point lower than it had been for months. And on February 22, we found that the old pessimistic preoccupations had returned in full force, thus coinciding almost exactly with the drop in production. The executive officer in charge ordered the resumption of the rest period system on Monday, February 25; this was done, but the idea of earned rest periods was also reinstated even more strongly than before. At this point, the workers gave every symptom of profound discouragement; they professed a belief that the system would be discontinued before long. In spite of this, the daily record for March showed definite improvement, but the general average for the month was back at the old point, 70%.

At this point the president of the company, "The Colonel," took charge. His military service had taught him two important things—one, to care for his men, and, two, not to be afraid of making decisions. He called a conference in his office to discuss the remarkable diminution from 80% to 70% in the department's productive efficiency. We were able to point out that in March there had been a recrudescence of absenteeism, an ill that had notably diminished in the October to February period. This meant that the men were taking their rest periods in the form of "missed" days, a proceeding that did not greatly remedy their condition and that produced chaos in the plant. We put it therefore that the question was not whether a certain proportion of their working time was to be given up to rest. We pointed out that they took the rest, whether it was given them or not. We were asking that a less proportion should be thus allotted, but that it should be done systematically. Furthermore, we were able to claim that the whole rest period system had never had a fair trial. In other words, it had not been possible for a worker to know as he entered the factory in the morning that he was assured of his four rests in the day.

In order to test our claim, the president ordered that during the month of April the spinning mules should be shut down for 10 minutes
at a time four times a day and that all hands from the floor supervisor down should rest as they had been instructed to do. There was some difficulty in securing the requisite amount of floor space for approximately 40 men to lie down by their machines and in securing sufficient sacking to provide for their comfort. With the exception of the president himself, there were few who believed that this drastic alteration of method could result in increased production. The men themselves believed that 40 minutes lost by 40 men per day during a whole month could not be recovered. They pointed out that the machines could not be "speeded up" and that there was no other way of recovering the lost time. In spite of this general belief, the returns for April showed an improvement on March. The March production-efficiency figure had been 70%, the April figure was 77½%. This, while it represented a 7½% gain in the company's rating, was actually a 10% gain. The men had had their rests, the pessimism had again disappeared; simultaneously, their morale had much improved, absenteeism had diminished, and every worker had earned a 2½% bonus on his wages. In the month of May and thereafter, the president ordered a return to the system of alternating rest periods, with this important difference that each group of three men in an alley was to determine for itself the method of alternation, the understanding being that every worker was to have four such rest periods daily and regularly. In the month of May, the average efficiency of man-hour production was 80 ¼%. In June it reached the then record high figure of 85%. During the following three months the department maintained its improved capacity: July, 82%; August, 83½%; September, 86½%.

It is interesting to observe the difference that an absolute certainty of a minimum number of rest periods made. The months from April to September differed from the preceding months in this respect and they revealed a steady progress. Mondays and Fridays were no longer the worst days in the week. The irregularity reported in May was due to the fact that the spinning mules were constantly "running away from the cards," that is, outdistancing the carding machines which supplied them with spooled yarn. By June, the company had put in two new carding machines, and June was as steadily above 85% as March was below 75%.

The investigation began with a question as to the causes of a very high labor turnover. In the 12 months of experiment there was no labor turnover at all. This does not mean that no worker left the factory—during a period of trade slackness, some were laid off, one at least moved his place of residence and found work elsewhere, another was found to be phthisical and sent to the country. But the former problem

3 Ibid.
of a highly emotional labor turnover ceased to exist. The factory began
to hold its mule spinners and no longer had difficulty in maintaining a
full complement in times of rushed work. The attitude of management
to the innovation was revealed in the fact that the company purchased
army cots for the workers to rest upon. When these cots proved un-
equal to the wear and tear, management installed a bed and mattress at
the end of each alley as provision for the workers' adequate rest. And
the workers developed the habit of sleeping for the last three rest periods
of the day, the late morning rest and both afternoon rests. Experience
seemed to show that the benefit was directly proportionate to the com-
pleteness of the relaxation—hence the beds. Several years later, the presi-
dent of the company said publicly that from this time the labor turnover
sank to an approximate 5% or 6% per annum and stayed there until the
mules were taken out and ring spinning substituted.

At the time when we completed our part in this work, we were sure
that we had not wholly discovered the causes of the high labor tur-
over. We could not even attribute the change to the mere introduction
of rest periods; inevitably many other changes had been simultaneously
introduced. For example, we had listened carefully and with full atten-
tion to anything a worker wished to say, whatever the character of his
comment. In addition to this, we—supported by the president—had dem-
onstrated an interest in what was said by the introduction of experi-
mental changes, by instruction in the best methods of relaxation. The
Colonel also had demonstrated unmistakably a sincere interest in his
workers' welfare; he had lived up to his Army reputation. The super-
visor who instituted the earning of rest periods was swept aside by the
president and the company—thereby "placing" the company's attitude in
the minds of its workers.

But, in addition to this—and we did not see this clearly at the time—
the president had effected another important change. He had helped to
transform a horde of "solitaries" into a social group. In May, 1924, he
placed the control of rest periods squarely in the hands of the workers
in an alley with no one to say them nay. This led to consultation, not
only between individuals, but between alleys throughout the group—and
to a feeling of responsibility directly to the president. And the general
social changes effected were astonishing—even in relationships outside
the factory. One worker told us with great surprise that he had begun
taking his wife to "movies" in the evenings, a thing he had not done for
years. Another, equally to his surprise, gave up a habit of spending al-
coholic week ends on bootleg liquor. In general the change was com-
plex, and the difficulty of assigning the part played in it by various as-
pcts of the experiment impossible to resolve. We should have liked to
experiment further, but this desire—probably wisely in the circumstances
—was disallowed. Thus the inquiry left us with many questions un-
answered, but it pointed a direction for further studies, the results of which later proved helpful in reinterpreting the data of this first investigation.

But we had moved onwards. The efficiency experts had not consulted the workers; they regarded workers' statements as exaggerated or due to misconception of the facts and therefore to be ignored. Yet to ignore an important symptom—whatever its character—on supposedly moral grounds is preposterous. The "expert" assumptions of rabble hypothesis and individual self-interest as a basis for diagnosis led nowhere. On the other hand, careful and pedestrian consideration of the workers' situation taken as part of a clinical diagnosis led us to results so surprising that we could at the time only partly explain them.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. The first paragraph contains a series of related generalizations. Try to describe the relations between these sentences. For example, sentence two states the cause; sentence one the effect of that cause. What relation is there between other sentences in this paragraph? How is the whole first paragraph related to the rest of the selection? How is it related to the last paragraph?

2. The phrase "knowledge-of-acquaintance" is used to distinguish one kind of knowledge from "knowledge about." What seems to be the distinction between these two kinds of knowledge? You will be helped to see this by looking up the two French verbs savoir and connaître, and by considering the special meaning of the modern phrase "know-how." You may also wish to consult William James's "Two Kinds of Knowledge," in this book.

3. Why is this distinction between two sorts of knowledge important to the main point of this selection?

4. Analyze into its successive stages Mayo's account of the investigation that was carried on. What is "scientific" about the way the investigators went about their work and about the way the investigation is reported?

5. What analogies do you see between this investigation and a chemistry experiment? What differences can you point out?

6. What generalizations does Mayo make about this investigation? Is he cautious or bold in his conclusions? Mayo values a "careful and pedestrian consideration" of this problem. Explain why he does so.
"Everything is water." So spoke Thales of Miletus in the sixth century B.C. It may not appear very obvious at first that this has anything to do with the age of the universe; but, as we shall see later, it most certainly does have. It is certainly not irrelevant that Thales was able accurately to predict the solar eclipse of May 28, 585 B.C. and that with him there began the school of thinkers known as physiologoi (in modern phrase, physicists). The search for the one universal substance—if there be one such substance—which started with Thales and his younger contemporary Anaximander is only now beginning to move to its conclusion. And the answer which the modern physicists are beginning to give to the old question—what was the primeval stuff out of which our varied universe has developed?—turns out to be bound up very intimately with another question which has plagued man's curiosity from the very first days: When did the whole drama begin, if indeed it did begin at all? What do we mean by the "Age of the Universe," and what is it?

It is easier to begin with the question of the age of the universe, although we will inevitably be involved in the problem of the ylem (Aristotle's name for primordial matter, which has recently been adopted by astrophysicists) out of which it grew. Recent developments, particularly in the field of large telescopes, have enabled us to form a fairly good picture of the structure of our universe. As one distinguished astrophysicist recently put it, "We are no longer like little boys at the holes of a circus tent, struggling to get an imperfect peep at the show; we have ringside seats." Thales, studying the eclipses, could propound the revolutionary theory that the sun and moon were not gods, but fiery

bodies. But he had scarcely a glimmering of the fantastic story that modern science has enabled us to write. I venture a very brief summary.

Our sun is one among some thousands of millions of stars. These stars are clustered together in what we are pleased to call "our" galaxy, although the sun is in no way particularly remarkable, and in all probability there are plenty of other stars with associated planets, in the same way that our earth is associated with the sun. A ray of light which will go completely round the earth six times in a single second takes 100,000 years to cross from one side to the other of the bun-shaped region of space which the galaxy occupies. But this is not all; for our galaxy, large as it may seem to be, is only one among some hundred million others, most of them roughly the same size as our own. These galaxies—or nebulae, though the word is not a very happy choice, since their cloud-like appearance is merely the result of their great distance—are immensely separated from us and from each other, the space between them being practically devoid of any concentrations of matter. We might be tempted to liken them to lonely wanderers in an arid and almost empty desert. And as far as we can see into this "desert" there are galaxies. The light from some of the more distant among them has taken no less than a thousand million years to reach us. Such is our universe, as we know it now.

Even a moment's thought will show the nature of our difficulty when we try to find out how old this strange pattern is—and the manner of its birth. In one quite fundamental way we are presented with a situation entirely distinct from that involved in normal scientific inquiry, and distinct even from that involved in estimating the age of the earth. For we live on the earth; our material is close at hand; we can weigh and measure and study. To some extent we can choose our tools and the manner of our experimenting. We can, for example, determine the amount of radioactivity in the rocks, we can measure the temperature below the earth's surface, we can trace in fossil form the development of life upward from its most primitive beginnings. But with the universe as a whole we can do none of these things. Indeed, our earth is one of the smallest bits—Jeans called it "a minute speck in the infinitude of time and space"—and we can't even approach the larger bits; they're too hot and too distant. I think it is this inaccessibility, so different from most scientific study, which provides much of the fascination exerted by cosmology. We can never be sure that we've got the answer right. The best that we can hope for is that when we gather up all the different bits of evidence we shall be able to fit them into some pattern or scheme which will be consistent in itself and with the whole body of scientific thinking about the behavior of matter on our own earth. If people say that they see no particular reason why the laws which appear to govern
this behavior on earth should apply to matter in these distant nebulae, then there is nothing that can be done about it. No one can disprove such assertions, even though, from the nature of the case, they can’t be proved either. Until it has been shown that the laws which describe terrestrial behavior are unable to describe the behavior of the universe, the only sensible and scientific thing to do is to suppose, as far as possible, that there really is a uni-verse, over the whole of which scientific laws have substantially the same form as they have here and now on our earth.

There is, in fact, a particular reason for making this assumption of uniformity. For if the laws of the outer universe are different from the laws of the earth, then we can have no reasonable chance of ever discovering them. And if the laws of the universe have been slowly changing over the long ages of time, then there is no possibility of verifying them in any convincing fashion. For we can neither go pleasantly meandering into the outer regions of space to see what they are like, nor project ourselves backward in time to confirm any suspicions which we may hold regarding possible secular variations in such fundamental quantities as the velocity of light or the mass of an electron. If we are to make any physical theory of the age of the universe, it can only be achieved on the basis of a principle of uniformity. Any other theory would not be physics, but metaphysics. If a person is still skeptical, all that we can now do is to remind him of the point which the distinguished American astronomer Hubble has made: that out of the very large number of speculations which have been made from time to time on the general structure of the universe, the few which have survived the results of later more accurate observation have all been based on this principle.

First let us look at the way in which the different nebulae are moving. My calling them lonely wanderers in an arid and almost empty desert may give a false impression because, on closer inspection, they almost all appear to be moving away from us and also, of course, from one another. We can tell approximately how fast they are moving away from us by comparing the color of the light they emit with the corresponding color measured in a laboratory. A large part of each star is composed of hydrogen, and hydrogen, when it is very hot, emits light of quite characteristic color. If the atom is moving away from us, the color seems to us to be more red than if it is at rest; if it is moving toward us, the color is more blue. The basic phenomenon here, technically referred to as “the Doppler effect,” is identical with that which is familiar to us in the change of pitch in an automobile horn as the vehicle passes us. In its application to nebulae it means that, by measuring the color of the light, we obtain an estimate of the speed with which a good many of these nebulae are moving along our line of sight. With only a few exceptions
—and these the nearer ones—the nebulae are receding from us. And what is more, the rate at which they are receding seems to be directly proportional to their distance from us. A nebula, or galaxy, which is twice as far away appears to be moving from us twice as fast. Of course this assumes that we know how far away they really are. This is a very difficult thing to determine at all accurately, but we can get a pretty good estimate from the brightness of some of the stars within these galaxies. What we need is some sort of astronomical yardstick. One such yardstick is provided by a certain class of star, known as the Cepheids. Their peculiarity is that their brightness fluctuates, increasing and then decreasing, and then increasing again. It seems, from a careful study of the closer Cepheids (which, if they belong to our own galaxy, are more amenable to study by other methods) that there is a definite relation between the period of fluctuation and the true brightness of the star (that is, its luminosity). Now the period of a Cepheid is not difficult to observe even for quite distant ones; and so we can infer its true brightness. Our telescopes report the apparent brightness with which the light from the star reaches us. Comparing these two figures, we obtain the star's distance away from us. This is how the famous law which I have just mentioned was obtained by Hubble and Humason.

The only way to avoid the conclusion that the galaxies are running away from us is to suppose that the change of color on which it is based is due to some other cause. It has been seriously suggested by some people that in the course of time the color of light becomes very gradually more and more red. In scientific terms, the frequency slowly decreases: almost as if the light "grew weary" on its long journey. There is no evidence to be obtained on this earth in favor of such a suggestion, so that it becomes one of those assertions which, on account of their unprovable character, we have decided to reject so far as is humanly possible. Let us go on, then, believing that the nebulae really are receding.

At first sight all this may not appear to have much relation to the age of the universe. But let us imagine ourselves going backward in time. The nebulae retrace their various paths: they all come nearer to us and to each other. It is rather like an athletic race where, if a film is taken, it shows the runners who are farthest from the starting point to be the fastest; but if the film is run backwards then the runners are all getting closer together, until at the moment when the race began they were all clustered at the starting point. With the nebulae, the discovery that their apparent speeds away from us are directly proportional to their distance implies that (assuming this motion to have gone on unchecked) there must have been a moment, far back, when they were all crowded in a very small region of space. According to this picture the universe has
been steadily expanding ever since. If we use the actual numerical values found in the Hubble-Humason law, this rather special moment of time was about six thousand million years ago. It is true that certain refinements need to be made, such as an allowance for the force of gravitational attraction which every nebula must exert on every other nebula and which influences their spreading out from each other. But all this does not greatly affect the numerical answer. Now if the matter in the universe was really so greatly concentrated at that time, it is hard to avoid calling that the moment of creation: and so we get the age of the universe—six thousand million years.

We can get some most interesting light on this figure by comparing it with the age of the earth. Here we have many more techniques available, and fortunately half a dozen distinct lines of evidence all give approximately the same answer, though the most recent values tend to be rather higher than the older ones. It seems safe to assert that the earth's crust was formed at a period between two and six billion years ago. The most probable value is about four billion years. It is certainly an interesting situation, and one that could not have been foreseen, that our earth is only relatively little younger than the universe as a whole. It may be only a tiny speck but it seems to be nearly as old as the rest.

That figure of six thousand million years has only just been obtained. For some years it seemed to be only two thousand million years; and a great difficulty arose, because it was not easy to see how the age of the universe could possibly be less than the age of the earth! But in the last year two changes have had to be made, bringing it to its present calculation. The first of these is a recognition that there are other reasons for the reddening of distant stars than that they are receding from us. Certain nebulae, which appear to be elliptical in shape, show an unusual reddening of color as compared with spiral ones; by sticking to the spiral nebulae we can avoid this confusion. The second change is a revision of the yardstick of distance. Thanks to the enormous 200-inch telescope at Mount Palomar in California, a more reliable account of the nearer Cepheids has been obtained, leading to astronomical distances about twice as great as had previously been believed. Inasmuch as this implies twice as great an age, it gets us out of our previous impasse.

To the non-scientist this progressive variation in the age of the universe may appear unsatisfactory. But it is true to the way in which most of the fundamental quantities in physics have been treated. First estimates may be wildly incorrect, but they are usually followed by a series of later modifications. These seldom change the final value by a factor greater than five or ten, so that ultimately the estimated values begin to converge to what is accepted as the true value. This is what seems to

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1 A billion years is here used in the sense of a thousand million—$10^{9}$—and not, as in Britain, a million million, i.e. $10^{12}$. 
be happening now with the age of the universe. If it is fair to extrapolate here on the basis of other physical magnitudes, further refinements are not likely to alter the figure of six billion years by more than ten or twenty per cent. Still, we had better not be too dogmatic; and extrapolations in a problem of this kind may well be more dangerous than in most other spheres.

Fortunately for us, the method of estimating the age of the universe by using the Hubble-Humason law is not the only possible one. For example, we could consider a group of stars moving more or less parallel to each other in the same region of the galaxy. The Pleiades, a group of about two hundred stars in the constellation Taurus, is one such cluster; the Praesepe cluster in Cancer is another. Now it can be shown that clusters of this kind must eventually break up, due either to their interactions with each other or to their interaction with the galaxy of which they form a part. Professor Chandrasekhar, the distinguished Indian physicist, has calculated that a cluster like the Pleiades would have a life of about three thousand million years. There are several hundred clusters of this sort within our galaxy (i.e. the "Milky Way"). If the age of the galaxy were much greater than a few thousand million years it is hard to see why these clusters have not all broken up. And so, once again, we come back to our original figures. As a matter of fact, there are clusters of galaxies, such as the Virgo, as well as clusters of stars.

Applying the same sort of analysis, we find an upper limit of about one hundred billion years. But a very detailed statistical discussion of the way that the component galaxies are distributed within these clusters, i.e. the extent to which the break-up of the cluster has progressed, leads to a much smaller age calculation, of the order of four billion years.

There are at least two other lines of evidence which we can pursue. One arises from the fact that quite a large proportion of the stars which we see are really double stars, consisting of two stars which move in some sort of orbit round one another. They may be a long way off from each other on an absolute scale, but, since they are much closer to each other than to any other neighbors, we can treat them as a single unit, and discuss the motion of one of them relative to the other. It appears that in the course of time these binary stars should all be separated, largely as a result of occasional accidental collisions, or near-collisions, with other stars. A careful statistical analysis of these binaries shows that, on the average, their dissolution has only just started; thus, an upper limit to the age of the universe can be found. Once again we get the same value as before, a few thousand million years.

The last of our methods is quite different. It concerns the heat energy being generated in a star. We are fairly certain nowadays that a star gets the energy which it gives out as light and heat by converting hydrogen atoms into helium atoms. (The process is not quite so straightforward
as this bald statement may make it seem; it appears to require carbon and nitrogen as well as hydrogen to make the reaction "go," the carbon and nitrogen acting as catalysts, and remaining unconsumed in the whole affair.) Thanks to the work of Carl von Weizsäcker in Germany and Hans Bethe in America, we are able to follow this process and to determine how far the consumption of hydrogen has gone. For example, the stars which we call red giants are those which have used up almost all their hydrogen. From their size and brightness we can tell the rate at which the consumption of hydrogen is taking place, and the amount that has already been changed into helium. In this way we infer ages of about four thousand million years. None of the ages exceeds this figure, though many come near to it. Other stars, such as our own sun, are less clear-cut in the evidence they provide. There is enough hydrogen in the sun to last another fifty billion years, but it is not easy to say just how much helium has already been formed. This depends on whether the outer and inner parts of the sun have the same proportion of helium. It seems possible that the inside is somewhat denser in helium than the outside. Depending on the way in which the helium is distributed we get various estimates of the age of the sun. The greatest age that could reasonably be inferred in this way is forty billion years; but the most likely value is much less, perhaps five billion years. We seem to be back again more or less where we were, with the sun among the older parts of the universe as a whole.

What seems to me quite astonishing about all this is that the different clues which we have been following all lead to the same conclusion, and force us to accept a figure of about five or six billion years as central to any discussion of the age of the universe. The agreement which we have found is much too imposing to be treated as mere coincidence. There is something here which we could not possibly have foreseen at the very outset. How are we to interpret this estimate of "a few thousand million years"? What do the theoretical astrophysicists have to say?

It is surely most remarkable that, side by side with the experimental researches which I have been describing, there has been some purely theoretical work leading to just the same sort of conclusion. There are no less than three models which have been propounded during the last thirty years. The fact that there are three, and that they do not entirely agree with each other, should be sufficient to warn us against taking any of them too seriously. Still, there is sufficient in common between them to justify a short description of their main features.

The first is that of Sir Arthur Eddington. According to this theory, at a sufficiently distant date, all the matter in the universe was concentrated in a minute region which it completely filled like a cloud. In time some parts of the cloud became more dense, other parts correspondingly
less dense. The dense bits condensed to form galaxies and stars and planets; the less dense bits became very rarified interstellar gas. And since that first movement began it all has been steadily expanding until it became what we see it to be today. The age of the universe is the time-interval since the first fluctuation in density of the cloud set the whole process going. Eddington was inclined to put this as far back as ninety thousand million years. There are obvious difficulties in any attempt of this sort to give a very definite date for the beginning of things. Some of them are scientific, and involve us in defining what we mean by "a small fluctuation in a very dense cloud." Others are philosophical, and are related to the meaning of any statement about time when "little or nothing is happening," and therefore, in a sense, there can be no clocks by which to measure the passage of time. My own predecessor at Oxford, Professor E. A. Milne, was much preoccupied with these problems, and insisted—even though very few people have agreed with him—that what we call the uniform flowing of time is by no means obvious or inevitable: other time-scales may be more appropriate than the one we conventionally adopt. So it may be that there are no real grounds for being upset about Eddington's timetable stretching farther back than our experimental measurements would lead us to believe it should do. It is far more significant that the order of magnitude agrees so well.

The second theoretical model is closely related to the first, and is due to the Abbé Lemaître in Louvain. He starts with all matter in the form of one gigantic atom, displaying the perfect symmetry that we have come to recognize in an atom. But because it was unstable (on account of its size), this primeval atom exploded in the greatest atomic explosion there has ever been, and the various bits are the stars and galaxies which we see in our telescopes, still flying away from each other, with the fastest ones the farthest away. There are difficulties in being too explicit in this theory. Thus, is there any meaning in talking about the lifetime of the "primeval atom," in the same way in which we talk about the lifetime of an atom of radium or any other radioactive nucleus?

Quite clearly we are now in a world where we must scrutinize most carefully the grounds on which we make any assertion whatever. Perhaps—to take an extreme view—there is no single quantity which we can unequivocally call "the age of the universe." Do we have the right to raise the question which had bothered St. Augustine: "What was happening before all this?" There are, after all, certain questions which a scientist may not ask, which for him would be strictly improper. A scientist operates within a certain framework, and the language which he uses must be related to that framework and defined within it. It is, clearly, quite proper to ask about an atom of radium before it splits up spontaneously into two smaller fragments. This is because we can handle radium in our laboratory, and can see what happens when radium atoms
disintegrate. But by no conceivable possibility could we do the same with our universe. We are, for better or worse, part of it, and we can neither think ourselves into another, nor form any judgment about our own beginning. The best that we can hope for is an agreement regarding (in the sense in which I have been describing it) the earliest moment about which it is meaningful to speak. It is this moment which seems to have been about six billion years ago. The remarkable agreement between the different experiments and between experiment and theory seems to suggest rather strongly that there really was a moment when something unique happened, and beyond which science cannot possibly hope to penetrate.

I have still to mention the third theoretical model. This theory (associated with the names of the American physicists Gamow, Alpher, and Herman, and the Japanese physicist Hayashi) accepts the idea of a "moment of creation," at which all the stuff of the universe was highly compressed in an exceedingly small volume, and then attempts to describe what happened afterwards. It appears to be possible to give a quite astonishingly detailed account of the main processes at work from as little as the ten-thousandth of a second after the start right up to the present time. The chief contribution of this theory is that it investigates, with a new thoroughness, the constitution of the primordial matter (which at the beginning I referred to as the ylem). It is able to show that neither the "concentrated cloud" picture of Eddington nor the "huge atom" picture of Lemaitre is consistent with our knowledge of the behavior of matter at these high densities and correspondingly high temperatures. The point is that matter and energy are interchangeable, and if they are in equilibrium with each other, then matter is continually changing into radiation and radiation into matter. We are familiar with this interchange on a relatively small scale when an atomic bomb explodes; for when a balance sheet is made up of the various substances involved, there is a small loss of matter. This matter has been changed into radiation and is nothing else than the energy given off in the explosion. Einstein has shown us that a mass \( m \) has an associated energy \( mc^2 \) (\( c \) being the velocity of light); this is the amount of energy which could turn into mass \( m \), or which would be provided by mass \( m \) if it were wholly converted into radiation. Now in a condition of relative equilibrium the proportions of matter and energy depend on the temperature and pressure. It is precisely here that our present situation differs most profoundly from that at the early stages "after the beginning." Putting it in its simplest terms, it seems that whereas our present stage of evolution is one characterized by a preponderance of matter over energy (the energy is in the form of radiation, flowing with the speed of light all over our universe), in these earliest moments the ylem was almost entirely radiation. This means that, 2,500 years ago, Thales was
almost right. His metaphysical remark, "everything is water," should have been replaced by the physical remark, "almost all the ylem was radiation." The reason for this is that until the universe was five minutes old, its temperature was at least a billion degrees, and at such enormous temperatures effectively all the energy exists in the form of radiation and not ordinary matter. Indeed, any composite elements such as lithium or iron or lead, which might accidentally be formed out of their constituent neutrons and protons, would immediately evaporate into these components, many of which would then turn into radiation. But by the end of half an hour the temperature would have cooled down sufficiently for matter, rather than radiation, to "rule the roost." Increasingly radiation was turning itself into neutrons and protons and other fundamental particles; and these were joining together to build up the nuclei of heavier elements. Within an hour or so, this genesis of the elements would be practically complete, and the whole assembly would have started that outward expansion whose later effects we have already seen how to describe in the Hubble-Humason law.

The refinement of detail in this theory is almost frightening. Of course it says nothing about what may have happened before "zero hour." It may have been that a reverse process to that which is happening now was operative then. If so the universe would have been contracting to the size of a nutshell instead of, as at present, expanding to infinity. But we shall never be sure about this, since it can be shown that the present state of affairs is almost entirely independent of how the bits and pieces came together at zero hour, and is governed essentially by the processes of expansion rather than of previous contraction. We are led once more to the idea of one special moment in the history of time—some unique event which we may perhaps not unreasonably call "the moment of creation." Sir Edmund Whittaker has said of the agreement between theory and the whole body of experiment that I have described so far that "if it is confirmed by later researches, it may well come to be regarded as the most momentous discovery of the age. For it represents a fundamental change in the scientific conception of the universe, such as was effected four hundred years ago by the work of Copernicus and the abandonment of geocentric astronomy."

"If it is confirmed"—that is the point. At this moment there is a great controversy raging. A group of brilliant young astrophysicists have begun to claim that there is something more to be said. They believe that all through this whole universe, new matter is continuously springing into existence—probably in the form of atoms of hydrogen gas. The rate is very low, but because space is so large the total amount of new material each year is quite huge. This increase just balances a loss, which arises from the fact that the farthest galaxies—those at the edge of space—
are continually disappearing. This disappearance is one of the most fascinating suggestions of modern cosmology. It follows from the Hubble-Humason law, according to which they are continually increasing their speed away from us. Now no light signal (or any other kind of contact) can travel faster than light, so that when the recession of a galaxy reaches this speed it becomes completely impossible for us ever to have any contact with it. We cannot even see it; so far as we are concerned it just does not exist. It certainly cannot be said to belong to our universe. We are obliged to say that this particular galaxy has disappeared at the boundary of space. Creation and disappearance match in such a way that the total amount of matter accessible to us remains more or less constant. The same is true for the number of stars, because the dilute hydrogen gas that comes into existence gradually condenses into larger and larger drops, until a new star is formed out of it. So the story is: new hydrogen atoms appear from nowhere; they collect into groups and form stars and nebulae; these nebulae move away from us faster and faster until they disappear. But the play goes on, each star acting its part upon the great stage and then passing off at the wings. So it was a thousand million years ago, is now, and will be a thousand million years to come. Continuous creation—no beginning and no end of the play—only a beginning and an end for each separate element. This is the picture put forward by the English astrophysicists Hoyle, Lyttleton, Bondi, and Gold.

The situation presented by the intervention of these “continuous creation” theories really is most exciting. Yet a direct test between the two main competitors—a finite age for the universe and an infinite age—is not possible. If I were to be asked what I myself thought about the rival claims, I should reply in some words famous in another connection, but admirably suited to the subject of astrophysics, namely: it is safer to “wait and see.” I say this because the new theories, of both kinds, are still too flexible and turbulent to be assessed with anything like objective calm. The hard words which are occasionally tossed about from one expert to another are abundant evidence for this. And, as a distinguished scientist remarked only the other day: “Every one of these theories is so beautiful that it is a pity they cannot all be true!”

Meanwhile, if the older views which I described first are acceptable, they do at least provide a surprisingly consistent and impressive answer to our question—our universe appears to be about six thousand million years old and appears to have started as a small volume of very hot, dense radiation. However, having gone so far as to say all that, I dare not conclude without a final caution—not one single scrap of all this creative pattern has been proved. It was a very wise scientist who wrote these words on the last page of a recent book of cosmology: “Our idea of the universe as a whole is still a product of the imagination. . . .”
[It is only fair to say that since this article was written at the end of 1954, it does not say the last word that could be said scientifically on this theme—C. A. C.]

AIDS TO STUDY

1. Has Coulson any claim to authority in the subject under discussion? What evidence, direct or indirect, does the essay itself offer on this point? Where may you find further information?

2. This essay is an example of popularization, that is, of expressing very technical and abstract ideas in terms understandable to the general reader. How much and what sort of knowledge and interest does the author assume that his readers bring? Point to specific evidence in support of your answer. From your own viewpoint does he assume too much? Too little?

3. One of Coulson’s methods of explanation is analogy. For example, he compares galaxies to “lonely wanderers in an arid and almost empty desert.” Another appears in his discussion of the “Doppler effect.” What is the analogy?

4. Note carefully the successive stages of the author’s argument. Why does he mention “the principle of uniformity” before dealing with the theory that “nebulae really are receding”? What is the significance of the Cepheids?

5. What do the “three models” of the origin of the universe have in common? How does the hypothesis of “continuous creation” differ from the assumption common to the three models? With which view does the author himself side?

6. What is the value, if any, of knowing the age of the universe?
Loren Eiseley

THE REAL SECRET OF PILTDOWN

How did man get his brain? Many years ago Charles Darwin's great contemporary, and co-discoverer with him of the principle of natural selection, Alfred Russel Wallace, propounded that simple question. It is a question which has bothered evolutionists ever since, and when Darwin received his copy of an article Wallace had written on this subject he was obviously shaken. It is recorded that he wrote in anguish across the paper, "No!" and underlined the "No" three times heavily in a rising fervor of objection.

Today the question asked by Wallace and never satisfactorily answered by Darwin has returned to haunt us. A skull, a supposedly very ancient skull, long used as one of the most powerful pieces of evidence documenting the Darwinian position upon human evolution, has been proven to be a forgery, a hoax perpetrated by an unscrupulous but learned amateur. In the fall of 1953 the famous Piltdown cranium, known in scientific circles all over the world since its discovery in a gravel pit on the Sussex Downs in 1911, was jocularly dismissed by the world's press as the skull that had "made monkeys out of the anthropologists." Nobody remembered in 1953 that Wallace, the great evolutionist, had protested to a friend in 1913, "The Piltdown skull does not prove much, if anything!"

Why had Wallace made that remark? Why, almost alone among the English scientists of his time, had he chosen to regard with a dubious eye a fossil specimen that seemed to substantiate the theory to which he and Darwin had devoted their lives? He did so for one reason: he did not believe what the Piltdown skull appeared to reveal as to the nature of the process by which the human brain had been evolved. He did not believe in a skull which had a modern brain box attached to an appar-

ently primitive face and given, in the original estimates, an antiquity of something over a million years.

Today we know that the elimination of the Piltdown skull from the growing list of valid human fossils in no way affects the scientific acceptance of the theory of evolution. In fact, only the circumstance that Piltdown had been discovered early, before we had a clear knowledge of the nature of human fossils and the techniques of dating them, made the long survival of this extraordinary hoax possible. Yet in the end it has been the press, absorbed in a piece of clever scientific detection, which has missed the real secret of Piltdown. Darwin saw in the rise of man, with his unique, time-spanning brain, only the undirected play of such natural forces as had created the rest of the living world of plants and animals. Wallace, by contrast, in the case of man, totally abandoned this point of view and turned instead toward a theory of a divinely directed control of the evolutionary process. The issue can be made clear only by a rapid comparison of the views of both men.

As everyone who has studied evolution knows, Darwin propounded the theory that since the reproductive powers of plants and animals potentially far outpace the available food supply, there is in nature a constant struggle for existence on the part of every living thing. Since animals vary individually, the most cleverly adapted will survive and leave offspring which will inherit, and in their turn enhance, the genetic endowment they have received from their ancestors. Because the struggle for life is incessant, this unceasing process promotes endless slow changes in bodily form, as living creatures are subjected to different natural environments, different enemies, and all the vicissitudes against which life has struggled down the ages.

Darwin, however, laid just one stricture on his theory: it could, he maintained, "render each organized being only as perfect or a little more perfect than other inhabitants of the same country." It could allow any animal only a relative superiority, never an absolute perfection—otherwise selection and the struggle for existence would cease to operate. To explain the rise of man through the slow, incremental gains of natural selection, Darwin had to assume a long struggle of man with man and tribe with tribe.

He had to make this assumption because man had far outpaced his animal associates. Since Darwin's theory of the evolutionary process is based upon the practical value of all physical and mental characters in the life struggle, to ignore the human struggle of man with man would have left no explanation as to how humanity by natural selection alone managed to attain an intellectual status so far beyond that of any of the animals with which it had begun its competition for survival.

To most of the thinkers of Darwin's day this seemed a reasonable explanation. It was a time of colonial expansion and ruthless business competition. Peoples of primitive cultures, small societies lost on the world's
margins, seemed destined to be destroyed. It was thought that Victorian civilization was the apex of human achievement and that other races with different customs and ways of life must be biologically inferior to Western man. Some of them were even described as only slightly superior to apes. The Darwinians, in a time when there were no satisfactory fossils by which to demonstrate human evolution, were unconsciously minimizing the abyss which yawned between man and ape. In their anxiety to demonstrate our lowly origins they were throwing modern natives into the gap as representing living “missing links” in the chain of human ascent.

It was just at this time that Wallace lifted a voice of lonely protest. The episode is a strange one in the history of science, for Wallace had, independently of Darwin, originally arrived at the same general conclusion as to the nature of the evolutionary process. Nevertheless, only a few years after the publication of Darwin’s work, The Origin of Species, Wallace had come to entertain a point of view which astounded and troubled Darwin. Wallace, who had had years of experience with natives of the tropical archipelagoes, abandoned the idea that they were of mentally inferior cast. He did more. He committed the Darwinian heresy of maintaining that their mental powers were far in excess of what they really needed to carry on the simple food-gathering techniques by which they survived.

“How, then,” Wallace insisted, “was an organ developed so far beyond the needs of its possessor? Natural selection could only have endowed the savage with a brain a little superior to that of an ape, whereas he actually possesses one but little inferior to that of the average member of our learned societies.”

At a time when many primitive peoples were erroneously assumed to speak only in grunts or to chatter like monkeys, Wallace maintained his view of the high intellectual powers of natives by insisting that “the capacity of uttering a variety of distinct articulate sounds and of applying to them an almost infinite amount of modulation . . . is not in any way inferior to that of the higher races. An instrument has been developed in advance of the needs of its possessor.”

Finally, Wallace challenged the whole Darwinian position on man by insisting that artistic, mathematical, and musical abilities could not be explained on the basis of natural selection and the struggle for existence. Something else, he contended, some unknown spiritual element, must have been at work in the elaboration of the human brain. Why else would men of simple cultures possess the same basic intellectual powers which the Darwinists maintained could be elaborated only by competitive struggle?

“If you had not told me you had made these remarks,” Darwin said,
“I should have thought they had been added by someone else. I differ grievously from you and am very sorry for it.” He did not, however, supply a valid answer to Wallace’s queries. Outside of murmuring about the inherited effects of habit—a contention without scientific validity today—Darwin clung to his original position. Slowly Wallace’s challenge was forgotten and a great complacency settled down upon the scientific world.

For seventy years after the publication of The Origin of Species in 1859, there were only two finds of fossil human skulls which seemed to throw any light upon the Darwin-Wallace controversy. One was the discovery of the small-brained Java Ape Man, the other was the famous Piltdown or “dawn man.” Both were originally dated as lying at the very beginning of the Ice Age, and, though these dates were later to be modified, the skulls, for a very long time, were regarded as roughly contemporaneous and very old.

Two more unlike “missing links” could hardly be imagined. Though they were supposed to share a million-year antiquity, the one was indeed quite primitive and small-brained; the other, Piltdown, in spite of what seemed a primitive lower face, was surprisingly modern in brain. Which of these forms told the true story of human development? Was a large brain old? Had ages upon ages of slow, incremental, Darwinian increase produced it? The Piltdown skull seemed to suggest such a development.

Many were flattered to find their anthropoid ancestry seemingly removed to an increasingly remote past. If one looked at the Java Ape Man, one was forced to contemplate an ancestor, not terribly remote in time, who still had a face and a brain which hinted strongly of the ape. Yet, when by geological evidence this “erect walking ape-man” was finally assigned to a middle Ice Age antiquity, there arose the immediate possibility that Wallace could be right in his suspicion that the human brain might have had a surprisingly rapid development. By contrast, the Piltdown remains seemed to suggest a far more ancient and slow-paced evolution of man. The Piltdown hoaxer, in attaching an ape jaw to a human skull fragment, had, perhaps unwittingly, created a creature which supported the Darwinian idea of man, not too unlike the man of today, extending far back into pre-Ice Age times.

Which story was the right one? Until the exposé of Piltdown in 1953, both theories had to be considered possible and the two hopelessly unlike fossils had to be solemnly weighed in the same balance. Today Piltdown is gone. In its place we are confronted with the blunt statement of two modern scientists, M. R. A. Chance and A. P. Mead.

“No adequate explanation,” they confess over eighty years after Darwin scrawled his vigorous “No!” upon Wallace’s paper, “has been put
forward to account for so large a cerebrum as that found in man."

We have been so busy tracing the tangible aspects of evolution in the *forms of animals* that our heads, the little globes which hold the midnight sky and the shining, invisible universes of thought, have been taken about as much for granted as the growth of a yellow pumpkin in the fall.

Now a part of this mystery as it is seen by the anthropologists of today lies in the relation of the brain to time. "If," Wallace had said, "researches in all parts of Europe and Asia fail to bring to light any proofs of man's presence far back in the Age of Mammals, it will be at least a presumption that he came into existence at a much later date and by a more rapid process of development." If human evolution should prove to be comparatively rapid, "explosive" in other words, Wallace felt that his position would be vindicated, because such a rapid development of the brain would, he thought, imply a divinely directed force at work in man. In the 1870's when he wrote, however, human prehistory was largely an unknown blank. Today we can make a partial answer to Wallace's question. Since the exposure of the Piltdown hoax all of the evidence at our command—and it is considerable—points to man, in his present form, as being one of the youngest and newest of all earth's swarming inhabitants.

The Ice Age extends behind us in time for, at most, a million years. Though this may seem long to one who confines his studies to the written history of man, it is, in reality, a very short period as the student of evolution measures time. It is a period marked more by the extinction of some of the last huge land animals, like the hairy mammoth and the saber-toothed tiger, than it is by the appearance of new forms of life. To this there is only one apparent exception: the rise and spread of man over the Old World land mass.

Most of our knowledge of him—even in his massive-faced, beetle-browed stage—is now confined, since the loss of Piltdown, to the last half of the Ice Age. If we pass backward beyond this point we can find traces of crude tools, stone implements which hint that some earlier form of man was present here and there in Europe, Asia, and particularly Africa in the earlier half of Ice Age time, but to the scientist it is like peering into the mists floating over an unknown landscape. Here and there through the swirling vapor one catches a glimpse of a shambaling figure, or a half-wild primordial face stares back at one from some momentary opening in the fog. Then, just as one grasps at a clue, the long gray twilight settles in and the wraiths and the half-heard voices pass away.

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 Nevertheless, particularly in Africa, a remarkable group of human-like apes have been discovered: creatures with small brains and teeth of a remarkably human cast. Prominent scientists are still debating whether they are on the direct line of ascent to man or are merely near relatives of ours. Some, it is now obvious, existed too late in time to be our true ancestors, though this does not mean that their bodily characters may not tell us what the earliest anthropoids who took the human turn of the road were like.

These apes are not all similar in type or appearance. They are men and yet not men. Some are frailer-bodied, some have great, bone-cracking jaws and massive gorilloid crests atop their skulls. This fact leads us to another of Wallace's remarkable perceptions of long ago. With the rise of the truly human brain, Wallace saw that man had transferred to his machines and tools many of the alterations of parts that in animals take place through evolution of the body. Unwittingly, man had assigned to his machines the selective evolution which in the animal changes the nature of its bodily structure through the ages. Man of today, the atomic manipulator, the aeronaut who flies faster than sound, has precisely the same brain and body as his ancestors of twenty thousand years ago who painted the last Ice Age mammoths on the walls of caves in France.

To put it another way, it is man's ideas that have evolved and changed the world about him. Now, confronted by the lethal radiations of open space and the fantastic speeds of his machines, he has to invent new electronic controls that operate faster than his nerves, and he must shield his naked body against atomic radiation by the use of protective metals. Already he is physically antique in this robot world he has created. All that sustains him is that small globe of gray matter through which spin his ever-changing conceptions of the universe.

Yet, as Wallace, almost a hundred years ago, glimpsed this timeless element in man, he uttered one more prophecy. When we come to trace our history into the past, he contended, sooner or later we will come to a time when the body of man begins to differ and diverge more extravagantly in its appearance. Then, he wrote, we shall know that we stand close to the starting point of the human family. In the twilight before the dawn of the human mind, man will not have been able to protect his body from change and his remains will bear the marks of all the forces that play upon the rest of life. He will be different in his form. He will be, in other words, as variable in body as we know the South African man-apes to be.

Today, with the solution of the Piltdown enigma, we must settle the question of the time involved in human evolution in favor of Wallace,
not Darwin; we need not, however, pursue the mystical aspects of Wallace’s thought—since other factors yet to be examined may well account for the rise of man. The rapid fading out of archaeological evidence of tools in lower Ice Age times—along with the discovery of man-apes of human aspect but with ape-sized brains, yet possessing a diverse array of bodily characters—suggests that the evolution of the human brain was far more rapid than that conceived of in early Darwinian circles. At that time it was possible to hear the Eskimos spoken of as possible survivals of Miocene men of several million years ago. By contrast to this point of view, man and his rise now appear short in time—explosively short. There is every reason to believe that whatever the nature of the forces involved in the production of the human brain, a long slow competition of human group with human group or race with race would not have resulted in such similar mental potentialities among all peoples everywhere. Something—some other factor—has escaped our scientific attention.

There are certain strange bodily characters which mark man as being more than the product of a dog-eat-dog competition with his fellows. He possesses a peculiar larval nakedness, difficult to explain on survival principles; his periods of helpless infancy and childhood are prolonged; he has aesthetic impulses which, though they vary in intensity from individual to individual, appear in varying manifestations among all peoples. He is totally dependent, in the achievement of human status, upon the careful training he receives in human society.

Unlike a solitary species of animal, he cannot develop alone. He has suffered a major loss of precise instinctive controls of behavior. To make up for this biological lack, society and parents condition the infant, supply his motivations, and promote his long-drawn training at the difficult task of becoming a normal human being. Even today some individuals fail to make this adjustment and have to be excluded from society.

We are now in a position to see the wonder and terror of the human predicament: man is totally dependent on society. Creature of dream, he has created an invisible world of ideas, beliefs, habits, and customs which buttress him about and replace for him the precise instincts of the lower creatures. In this invisible universe he takes refuge, but just as instinct may fail an animal under some shift of environmental conditions, so man’s cultural beliefs may prove inadequate to meet a new situation, or, on an individual level, the confused mind may substitute, by some terrible alchemy, cruelty for love.

The profound shock of the leap from animal to human status is echoing still in the depths of our subconscious minds. It is a transition which would seem to have demanded considerable rapidity of adjustment in order for human beings to have survived, and it also involved the growth
of prolonged bonds of affection in the subhuman family, because otherwise its naked, helpless offspring would have perished.

It is not beyond the range of possibility that this strange reduction of instincts in man in some manner forced a precipitous brain growth as a compensation—something that had to be hurried for survival purposes. Man's competition, it would thus appear, may have been much less with his own kind than with the dire necessity of building about him a world of ideas to replace his lost animal environment. As we will show later, he is a pedomorph, a creature with an extended childhood.

Modern science would go on to add that many of the characters of man, such as his lack of fur, thin skull, and globular head, suggest mysterious changes in growth rates which preserve, far into human maturity, foetal or infantile characters which hint that the forces creating man drew him fantastically out of the very childhood of his brutal forerunners. Once more the words of Wallace come back to haunt us: "We may safely infer that the savage possesses a brain capable, if cultivated and developed, of performing work of a kind and degree far beyond what he ever requires it to do."

As a modern man, I have sat in concert halls and watched huge audiences floating dazed on the voice of a great singer. Alone in the dark box I have heard far off as if ascending out of some black stairwell the guttural whisperings and bestial coughings out of which that voice arose. Again, I have sat under the slit dome of a mountain observatory and marveled, as the great wheel of the galaxy turned in all its midnight splendor, that the mind in the course of three centuries has been capable of drawing into its strange, nonspatial interior that world of infinite distance and multitudinous dimensions.

Ironically enough, science, which can show us the flints and the broken skulls of our dead fathers, has yet to explain how we have come so far so fast, nor has it any completely satisfactory answer to the question asked by Wallace long ago. Those who would revile us by pointing to an ape at the foot of our family tree grasp little of the awe with which the modern scientist now puzzles over man's lonely and supreme ascent. As one great student of paleoneurology, Dr. Tilly Edinger, recently remarked, "If man has passed through a Pithecanthropus phase, the evolution of his brain has been unique, not only in its result but also in its tempo. . . . Enlargement of the cerebral hemispheres by 50 per cent seems to have taken place, speaking geologically, within an instant, and without having been accompanied by any major increase in body size."

The true secret of Piltdown, though thought by the public to be merely the revelation of an unscrupulous forgery, lies in the fact that it has forced science to reëxamine carefully the history of the most remarkable creation in the world—the human brain.
AIDS TO STUDY

1. Explain the function of the first three paragraphs and of the last sentence of the third paragraph.

2. In what ways did Wallace’s view of human evolution differ from Darwin’s? What was the significance of Wallace’s view of the high intellectual powers of “savages”?

3. What theory of human evolution was supported by the Piltdown fossil? What problem is posed by the large size of the human cerebrum?

4. Does Eiseley side with Wallace or with Darwin? Explain. Does he accept or reject Wallace’s view that the rapid evolution of the human brain is evidence of divine direction?

5. What does Eiseley mean by “The wonder and terror of the human predicament”? For what reasons is man “totally dependent on society”?

6. The third paragraph from the end of the essay contributes little to the line of discussion. What, then, is its function? Although this essay is informative and analytical, it also conveys the author’s imaginative interest in his subject. Find how this warmth of interest is suggested.
J. R. Oppenheimer

THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

When I speak to the press I am aware that I am talking to a group of men who have a singularly critical destiny in these rather peculiar times. Those of us whose work it is to preserve old learning, and to find new, look to the press to keep the channels of truth and communication open and to keep men in some sense united in common knowledge and common humanity.

I want to talk about the nature and structure of our knowledge today and how it has altered and complicated the problems of the press. There are enormous differences between our world of learning today—our Tree of Knowledge—and those of Athens, or the Enlightenment, or the dawn of science in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Europe. You can get some suggestion of how shattering these changes have been if you remember that Plato, when he tried to think about human salvation and government, recommended mathematics as one of the ways to learn to know the truth, to discriminate good from evil and the wise from the foolish. Plato was not a creative mathematician, but students confirm that he knew the mathematics of his day, and understood it, and derived much from it.

Today, it is not only that our kings do not know mathematics, but our philosophers do not know mathematics and—to go a step further—our mathematicians do not know mathematics. Each of them knows a branch of the subject and they listen to each other with a fraternal and honest respect; and here and there you find a knitting together of the different fields of mathematical specialization. In fact, a great deal of progress in mathematics is a kind of over-arching generalization which brings things that had been separate into some kind of relation. Neverthe-

less, it is not likely today that our most learned advisers—the men who write in the press and tell us what we may think—would suggest that the next President of the United States be able to understand the mathematics of the day.

The first characteristic of scientific knowledge today—a trivial and pedestrian characteristic—is that its growth can be measured. When I talk of "science" here I would like to use the word in the broadest sense to include all man's knowledge of his history and behavior, his knowledge, in fact, of anything that can be talked of in an objective way so that people all over the world can understand it, know what the scientist has done, reproduce it, and find out if it is true or not. It is hard to measure the growth of science defined in these terms in a sensible way but it can be measured in fairly foolish ways.

One way of measuring science, for example, is to find out how many people are engaged in it. I know a young historian of science who has amused himself by counting the scientists of the last two centuries and he has found that their number has, quite accurately, doubled about every ten years. Professor Purcell of Harvard put the same conclusion another way the other day when he said, "Ninety per cent of all scientists are alive." This gives some notion of the changes involved.

I must, however, qualify this trend in two ways. First, it cannot continue, because if it went on for another century, then everyone would be a scientist—there would be nobody else left. So a kind of stagnation is setting in and the rate of science's growth is slowing down. The second qualification is that what might be called the "stature" of science is not proportional to its volume; it may be proportional to the cube root of its volume or something like that. In short, every scientist is not a Newton and the proportion of Newtons among all scientists tends to decline as the number of people involved gets bigger.

Despite all qualification, though, the fact remains that the growth in the number of people in science and the growth in firm knowledge—important, non-trivial knowledge of the kind that appears in learned journals and books—have been more or less parallel; and this growth will continue, although the increase in it is bound to taper off. The result is that nearly everything that is now known was not in any book when most of us went to school; we cannot know it unless we have picked it up since. This in itself presents a problem of communication that is nightmarishly formidable.

On the other hand, there is a more encouraging aspect of this scientific knowledge. As it grows, things, in some ways, get much simpler. They do not get simpler because one discovers a few fundamental principles which the man in the street can understand and from which he can derive everything else. But we do find an enormous amount of order. The world is not random and whatever order it has seems in large part "fit,"
as Thomas Jefferson said, for the human intelligence. The enormous variety of facts yields to some kind of arrangement, simplicity, generalization.

One great change in this direction—and it has not yet, I think, fully come to public understanding—is that we are beginning to see that the hard boundaries which once seemed to separate the parts of the natural world from each other are now yielding to some kind of inquiry. We are beginning to see ways across the gaps between the living and the dead, the physical and the mental.

Let me give just a few illustrations:

- It is probably not an accident, although it is not really understood, that the age of the earth—some six or seven billion years according to calculation by radioactive techniques—is very close to the period required for the most distant nebulae to recede into the furthest reaches of space. We can picturesquely define that time by saying that during it things were a lot closer together than they are now and the state of the material universe was very different. Some years ago the brilliant Russian biochemist Oparin suggested that when the atmosphere had no oxygen in it, certain conditions could have prevailed on earth under which life could have originated from inorganic matter. There has since been confirmation in Urey’s laboratory and this hypothesis turns out to be true. Although mermaids and heroes do not walk out of the test tube, we do see that quite reasonable accounts of the origin of life are not too far from our grasp.

- The recent research on how the genetic mechanisms of all living material operate shows how certain proteins have special information-bearing properties—how they can store information and transmit it from one generation to another.¹

- The study of how the nerve impulses from our sense organs to the brain can be modulated and altered by the perceptive apparatus of the animal—often it is an animal rather than a man—gives us some notion both of the unreliability of our sense impressions and of the subtlety of the relations between thought and the object of thought.

All these problems, which even in the nineteenth century seemed to obstruct the possibility of a unified view of the great arch of nature, are yielding to discovery; and in all science there is a pervasive, haunting sense that no part of nature is really irrelevant to any other.

But the model of science which results from all this investigation is entirely different from a model which would have seemed natural and understandable to the Greeks or the Newtonians. Although we do start

¹ An account of this development, by F. H. C. Crick, appeared in *Scientific American*, September 1957.
from common human experience, as they did, we so refine what we think, we so change the meaning of words, we build up so distinctive a tradition, that scientific knowledge today is not an enrichment of the general culture. It is, on the contrary, the possession of countless, highly specialized communities who love it, would like to share it, would very much like to explain it, and who make some efforts to communicate it; but it is not part of the common human understanding. This is the very strange predicament to which the press addresses itself today and to which it can give, I believe, only a partial solution.

It would of course be splendid—and one often hears this—if we could say that while we cannot know the little details about the workings of atoms and proteins and the human psyche, we can know the fundamental principles of science. But I am afraid that this is only marginally true. The fundamentals of physics are defined in terms of words that refer to an experience that lay people have not had and that very few people have run across in their education.

For example, in my opinion, it is almost impossible to explain what the fundamental principle of relativity is about, and this is even more true of the quantum theory. It is only possible to use analogies, to evoke some sense of understanding. And as for the recent discovery—the very gay and wonderful discovery for which Dr. Yang and Dr. Lee were awarded the Nobel Prize—that nature has a preference for right-handed or left-handed screws in certain situations and is not indifferent to the handedness of the screw—to explain this is, I believe, quite beyond my capacity. And I have never heard anyone do it in a way that could be called an enrichment of culture.

*To sum up the characteristics of scientific knowledge today, then, I would say that it is mostly new: it has not been digested: it is not part of man’s common knowledge: it has become the property of specialized communities who may on occasion help one another but who, by and large, pursue their own way with growing intensity further and further from their roots in ordinary life.*

We must always remember that, like most human accomplishments, the sciences have grown out of a long, accumulating experience of error, astonishment, invention, and understanding. Taken as a whole, they constitute a series of traditions; and these traditions—once largely common, now largely separate—are as essential to understanding a part of biology or astronomy or physics as the general human tradition is to the existence of civilized life. I know that a complete immersion in these many different, related, yet specific traditions is beyond the reach of any one person—that as things stand today, most of us are without any experience, really, in any. We have much in common from the simple ways in which we have learned to live and talk and work together. Out of this have
grown the specialized disciplines like the fingers of the hand, united in origin but no longer in contact.

Now I am going to make a distinction which may seem arbitrarily sharp but, which is I think important both to the learned community and the press. I have been talking until now about science as the things we have discovered about nature— incredible things and beautiful and astonishing, but defined, usually, not by any use to which they are put, but simply in terms of the ways in which they were found out. Pure science is thus inherently circumscribed but immensely revealing, showing as it does that left to itself, man's imagination was not a patch on reality.

Seeking out this knowledge is one problem and I am not through with it. But the other problem is that, of course, this knowledge has practical consequences. On it is built the world we live in and the face of that world has been changed, probably more than in any other period of history, by the scientific revolution. Now these practical consequences, because they are intended in some way to be responsive to man's needs, can be talked about in an intelligible way. It is not necessary to know how a nucleus is put together, or what are the laws which determine its behavior, in order to explain what nuclear energy is all about. It may be very hard to explain it well because it involves human choices, options, decisions, prejudices. But I believe that it is no more difficult to write about nuclear energy than about where people go for a holiday. It is not much harder to write about nuclear weapons, except that, to the problems of human variety, there is added the problem of a very great deal of secrecy.

To take another example, it has not been hard to write about the use of vaccines in the prevention of disease and these can be described without elaborate theory. As a matter of fact the vaccines were discovered without much theoretical background and the atomic bomb was made before we had much idea what held nuclei together; we do not have very much idea today.

The press has done an admirable job in explaining these and other practical applications of science—I think it is aware that it has to do a much, much greater one. But there are, I think, some booby traps which stand in its way. I would like to list three of them.

One of the simplest traps is that when technical people talk they always emphasize the fact that they are not sure. Sometimes, as in the case of knowing all the effects of radiation on life, we are not, in fact, sure, because experience takes so long to acquire. But usually the statement that we are not sure is more like the polite comment, "I don't want to bore you but . . ." Statements about scientific matters are not entirely sure—nothing is—but compared to politics they are so extremely sure as
to be of a different order of certainty. If a scientist says he is not sure, pay attention to the limits within which he says this—the margin for error he insists on allowing. This margin will not be so wide. Within what limits we are uncertain about the genetic damages of radiation, for example, is not something to worry or wonder about. We know something of the effects on the genes. The differences of opinion over this question lie in quite a different field. They lie in conflicting assessments of the relative gravity of these damages and of other vaster dangers of total nuclear war.

A second trap to beware of is the strange fact that the words scientists use have taken on special meaning so that there is a confusing quality of punning when they discuss technical things and describe their aims. “Relativity” sounds like something that occurs in daily life; it is not. Scientists talk about the “adventure” of science and they are right; but of course in the public mind this is very likely to be identified with looking to see if the other side of the moon is really there. Here the public is wrong. The adventures of science are intellectual adventures, involving discoveries of the inadequacy of our means of describing nature, because it is so unfamiliar and strange. Space travel has, no doubt, its value and virtue, but it is in no way related to the great adventures of science. It would be, of course, if we could go out two or three billion light-years and see what is going on there, because it is hard to see that far with telescopes. But this is not the same thing as the progress of human learning and understanding.

A third trap and a serious one—it has infested the discussion of radioactive fallout—is that in most technical explanations, very large numbers occur, and it is often hard to convey their implications sensitively. It may be equally true to say, for instance, that something will cause 10,000 casualties and that these casualties will affect a hundred-thousandth of the population of the world; but one statement can make the effect seem rather small and the other can make it very big. We cannot get over the habit of talking in numbers but it takes some exposition if we are to avoid creating the wrong impression.

I have one example of this. It has to do with radioactive fallout. I know nothing about the main efforts being made to eliminate fallout at present but it is obvious that they have to do with the elimination of fissionable material from bombs. The first step is to take the casing away from big bombs and the next step, presumably, is to take away much—or even all—of the rest.

I have some understanding of this as a technical problem and some idea of the benefits which will accrue from it. But in an old day, when we had the first primitive, tiny, atomic weapons, there was also a contrast. The story is in the public domain and I am surprised that no reporter has dug it out. We were thinking then in terms of casualties of hundreds of thousands and not hundreds of millions. It was a much more
innocent age but it was warfare and in that sense it was not innocent. All the bombs then had fissionable material and the first one we set off at Trinity near Los Alamos was dirty. It was set off practically at ground level, the fireball touched the ground and in fact a great deal of radioactive contamination was spread, by the standard of those days. The government had a lot of trouble with a herd of cattle whose hair turned white as a result. It was a very dirty bomb.

The bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki on the other hand were clean. They were exploded high in the air and few if any casualties were produced by fallout. Possibly there were a handful on a global scale, but practically all the hundreds of thousands who died, and the others who were maimed from radiation and blast, did not have the benefit of fallout. Nevertheless, I vastly prefer our first dirty bomb to those two clean ones.

When all is said and done about these problems—essentially soluble problems—of describing the practical consequences of scientific progress, there remains the central, perplexing question, to which I keep returning, of bringing an appreciation of the new scientific knowledge to the world. It is a question of high importance; it deserves study.

I do not see, for example, how the scientist can evoke the same understanding and grateful warmth from his fellows as the actor who gives them pleasure and insight, and reveals their own predicament to them, or the musician or dancer or writer or athlete, in whom they see their talents in greater perfection, and often their own limitations and error in larger perspective. The power of the new knowledge itself to excite the intelligent public's mind is very different from the days of Newton when the problems under discussion—the course of the heavenly bodies, the laws of dynamics—were not far from ordinary human experience. People could go to demonstrations to see the new principles in action; they could discuss them in salons and cafés. The ideas were revolutionary but not very hard to understand. It is no wonder that the excitement and change and enrichment of culture in Europe that came about as a result of these discoveries were without parallel.

Today there are sciences like that, which are just starting. During the nineteenth century the theory of evolution certainly played this role. And today, in the psychological sciences there are many fundamental points that anyone can understand if he is willing to take the trouble—science here is just beginning to leave the common experience, and the accumulated tradition has not yet grown very far.

Yet as a whole, the problem is formidable. It is not hopeless—much can and should be done. But I do not believe it can be done by the press alone. Part of the solution lies in education, and, I think, part of it lies with just learning to live with it. Our tradition and culture and community of learning have become reticulated, complicated, and non-hierarchal. They have their own nobility if one brings to them the right
attitudes of affection, interest, and indefatigability. The new knowledge is not the kind of thing one can ever finally master; there is no place a man can go to get it all straight. But it has its beauty if one knows how to live with it. And the main thing is to recognize this and not to talk in terms of cultures which are unattainable for us, but to welcome those that are at hand.

Because beyond the need for explanation of the practical, beyond the need for information, there will always be the need for a community of meaning and understanding. To my mind this is a basic and central need. It is a very grave circumstance of our time that the overwhelming part of new knowledge is available only to a few people and does not enrich common understanding. I think, nevertheless, that learned folk do have some sense of this community; and I think this furnishes a clue for others, because it comes in part from the similarities of experience in our professional lives—from recognizing points in common and differences in our separate traditions. We have lived in parallel ways through experience and wonder and have some glimmering of a kind of new-found harmony.

This suggests to me that all of us in our years of learning, and many if not most of us throughout our lives, need some true apprenticeship, some hard and concentrated work, in the specialized traditions. This will make us better able to understand one another but, most important of all, it will clarify for us the extent to which we do not understand one another. It will not be easy. It means a major change in the way we look at the world and in our educational practices. It means that an understanding of the scope, depth, and nature of our ignorance should be among the primary purposes of education. But to me, it seems necessary for the coherence of our culture, and for the very future of any free civilization. A faithful image of this in the public press could do a great deal to help us all get on with it.

I want to turn now to a second subject—disarmament—which may seem irrelevant but, as I hope to show, is not entirely so. Somehow it does not seem quite right of me to discuss a question which I regard as quite central for the future of culture without adding at least a few phrases about the anomalous and terrible situation of the new weapons with which, in their origins, I had quite a close connection.

Perhaps I can best start with a story. It seems that a man was driving into an American city to keep an appointment and one of his back wheels came off in front of an insane asylum. One of the inmates stared out of the window at him and the man said to him in desperation, “Look, the bolts are missing from one of my wheels—I’ve got an important engagement and everything depends on my making it.” The man in the asylum said, “Well you’ve got four wheels, take a bolt from each of the other three and your problem is solved.” The traveler looked up and said, “Say,
you aren’t so crazy.” And the inmate replied, “Sure I’m crazy, but I’m not stupid.” That may be a good parable for where we stand with our weapons.

I fully respect those who take the cheerful view that matters might be much worse. It would certainly be worse if all Europe were in Communist hands; it would be worse if a third world war had broken out and ravaged our lives and our culture. But the situation is still terribly dangerous. When we come on testimony before Congressional committees that our operations as now planned would call for 300 million deaths, and so on, we are not, I believe, hearing overstatements or misstatements.

Furthermore, it is my impression that those who are in a position to know expect that, for a time at least, technical developments may tend to create a situation much more trigger-happy and much less subject to the enormous control these weapons call for—the control which should perhaps be the first expression of that change in the behavior of states and governments for which we are surely destined if we are to survive.

Yet there is enough anxiety so that there is more and more talk of disarmament, and the governments—which have agonizing responsibilities for maintaining the power and influence of their states—are at last nibbling gently at the subject.

I would be reluctant to create the impression that I do not believe in disarmament. We all know what indescribable difficulties stand in the way of negotiating it and how Utopian it seems to talk of meaningful, effective, adequate disarmament which would protect the world. But my point is a little different. It is not that disarmament is Utopian but that it really is not Utopian enough. There are two quite simple arguments from the nature of scientific progress which bear on the stability and value of disarmament. They are very general principles and they were very much on our minds when, in 1946, a group of people in this country and abroad tried to work out an idea of what the control of atomic energy would mean.

The first point, which I mentioned earlier, is that new discoveries are made with such enormous and unpredictable rapidity that you cannot possibly devise an instrument of disarmament which is to hold good twenty or thirty years from now unless you forbid inquiry and discovery—and you probably could not legislate that even if you wanted to.

The second point is that the acquisition of knowledge is, for practical purposes, and barring global catastrophe, an irreversible thing. If ever the nations do start to fly at each other’s throats they will be quite capable of doing again whatever they once learned to do.

These two propositions meant to us then, and mean to me now, that the world has to be an open world in which, practically speaking, secrets are illegal. They mean that some of the great power and responsibility which habitually and traditionally rest with the nation-states must rest in
less national hands which are better able to use it. They mean that ours must be a united world, as it has never been before.

Some part of this redistribution of power can be accomplished through international organizations, and the experience of OEEC and EURATOM and NATO give very great hope for developing into valuable transnational institutions. NATO, in particular, may have its greatest historic destiny in this hope, rather than in its past.

But, even more than a growing role for the international organizations, these propositions signify to me the greater development of something which pervades the whole of natural science, and most of learning, and which is beginning even to touch our colleagues behind the Iron Curtain. I refer to the fraternal communities of men embarked on specialized work: those who know how to extirpate malaria; those who seek to understand the radio signals coming to us from remote parts of the Universe; those who recreate the early history of man, his art, and his learning. Their knowledge and know-how bind them together as possessors of true community, complementary to the local geographic communities, complementary to the communities of state and civic tradition; they are the warp of community, as the nations are the woof.

These communities of the mind are the human counterpart and the basis of the international institutions that the future must hold in store and on them rests, it seems to me, the hope that we will survive this unprecedented period in the history of man.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. This essay is a slightly revised version of a lecture delivered from notes. What evidence can you discern that the spoken version came first? (Look at the paragraphing, the choice of language, including the levels of diction, and the general organization.)

2. Study the use of the dashes in the first section of the essay. They are used consistently in one way. What is it? Is the use of the dash related to the fact that this essay was originally a lecture?

3. In the first section, how does Oppenheimer account for the fact that whereas science yields a glimpse of “the great arch of nature,” scientific knowledge is “not an enrichment of the general culture”? Why does Oppenheimer expect only a “partial solution” of this problem?

4. In the second section, what is Oppenheimer’s basic distinction between “pure science” and its “practical consequences”? Why does he believe that practical consequences are relatively easy to discuss whereas “pure science” is not?

5. In the same section, Oppenheimer gives three warnings against misunderstanding scientific discussions. What are they, and what, in your own words, does each mean?

6. Near the end of the second section, Oppenheimer explains that something besides “education” is needed to meet the problem he has described. What
else is needed? Why does he believe that “education” is an insufficient answer?

7. Oppenheimer acknowledges that his “second subject” (in the third section) “may seem irrelevant.” Why may it? Yet he hopes that it is relevant. Does he show that it is?

8. In the paragraph before the final one, Oppenheimer distinguishes between “true community” and various “communities.” What is the difference? In the last sentence of the paragraph he speaks of “warp” and “woof.” What do these terms mean as applied to the main idea of the paragraph?

9. The lecture was addressed to an audience of editors and journalists. What does Oppenheimer suggest that the press can do to serve “true community”? Popularize scientific research? Avoid certain errors? Does he imply that the press should take a stand in favor of disarmament or that it should be neutral in such matters?
The house in which I live is what some people would call "shut in." It is on a not much traveled road near the top of a hill, but there are higher hills round about and there is not much "view."

That is the way I like it, and this, I suppose, is one of the signs that I belong to that class called introverts, of whom the wake-up-and-live psychologists so sharply disapprove. Many of us, however, are not particularly sorry for ourselves, and some of these psychologists would be surprised at how much satisfaction we take in things which would not suit them at all. We do not mind being shut in if we can choose the people and the things we are shut in with.

Too long a view in either time or space makes people miss a great deal that is close at hand, and it is my experience that those who are quickly bored in the country are usually those who lack "the microscopic eye," those to whom "nature" means only "scenery," and "scenery" means only "views." Charles Lamb once declared that he would not much care if he never saw another mountain, and, while I would not by any means go so far, I think I know what he meant. To know nature only that way is like knowing a city only by its skyline. To feel the life of either city or country, one must be actually in it, aware of the excitement and variety of individual lives. People are often blamed because they cannot see the wood for the trees, but that does not seem to me so bad as not seeing the trees for the wood.

Summer especially is a time for the short view. In winter not so much

is going on, and by way of compensation the large forms of trees and
hills are revealed in all their beautiful nakedness. But summer is too fully
clothed to reveal form on this scale. The trees are muffled in leaves,
the outline of one merges into that of the other, and they combine to
blur the shapes of the earth itself. For form one must now look closely—at
the individual leaf or flower in front of one’s eyes, or at the shoot com-
ing up out of the ground.

A few years before the most recent world war, a fanatical German
published a typically German book of startling photographs called
Urformen der Kunst. Its thesis was that all man’s conceptions of abstract
form, whether architectural, structural, or decorative, came from the
natural forms of stems, buds, and seed pods. His magnified images were
startlingly effective, and even if one is not willing to follow him all the
way, one thing is certain. To whatever extent man has copied nature’s
inventions in his own building, it is the detail of plants that he has copied.
Art can do little with a landscape except to reproduce a somewhat
schematized image of it. The grand forms of hill and valley offer no
hints to the architect or the designer. He cannot build as the earth is
built; nor is there in hill and valley any formal design which he can copy.

Landscape is not inclined to geometry. The human mind is; most living
things are. They employ, as man does, the circle, the sphere, the triangle,
and the star. Tree and herb alike demonstrate how stresses may be cal-
culated and supported by struts, buttresses, and columns like those which
man will use. Also, and unlike the hill or the valley, they reveal how
regularity and repetition constitute the essential elements of formal de-
sign. If we did not borrow from living nature a very large part of the
art of both building and design, then we, being also living things, have
independently discovered what the builders of branches, the designers
of seed pods, the constructors of shells and bones, have discovered be-
fore us. And it is all this which passes quite unnoticed in the mere general
view.

That cult of the sublime which developed in the eighteenth century,
and which is generally credited with the creation of the great body of
romantic nature-poetry, was, I am convinced, an enemy of another kind
of appreciation of nature which means more to me. For this cult focused
attention on landscape. and encouraged a mere vague ecstasy, whose
devotees, instead of really examining nature, projected upon her their
own fancies. Mountains served chiefly the purpose served by the crystal
ball of the pseudo seer or the glittering speculum of the hypnotist. Those
who gazed upon them went into a sort of trance, which may have helped
to bring out something in them, but discovered nothing outside them-
"
because they were afraid the naturalist might take them out of them-
selves and show them something they did not want to see.

Even an amateur like myself will seldom lack something to see if he
will only look. "Lift up thine eyes unto the hills" is a religious ex-
hortation. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard," is a scientific one. And, at
least, for certain temperaments, it is the more fruitful. Because I obey
it, the place where I am is never really the same place two days in suc-
cession, and I can take every morning the same short walk down a certain
wood road because it is not really the same walk.

Certain things, to be sure, repeat themselves with the seasons. One
morning in autumn there are shooting crystals of ice in a puddle where
before there was only water; one morning in spring there will be water
where for long months there has been only the glassy ice. But from that
morning on, hardly a day will pass when some old friend is not to be
greeted anew. Even the most casual observers are seldom unaware of
the unrolling of the ferns—partly because they come early, before there
is any lush undergrowth, and partly because they are so striking in them-
selves. "Fiddle-backs" they are commonly and inevitably called, and no
doubt the curl on the end of the neck of the modern violin was copied
from them. But the Ionic capital also either copies or re-invents that
spiral unrolling, and the emerging form is one of the most obvious of
the Urformen der Kunst.

So, too, are the reinforced columnar fruiting stems of the equisetum,
or horsetail, which push up at about the same time, though not in the
same place. For the equisetum prefers stony ground, and around here
it thrusts itself upward with astonishing force through the compact tar
and gravel at the edge of my hard-surfaced road. Fairly early, too, I
look for the queer-shaped flowers of what the delicate call wood betony
and the downright call lousewort. Last of all, and writing finis to the
season—possibly after frost has already come—the yellow flowers of the
witch hazel break out unexpectedly. Perhaps, though I do not know, the
"witch" part was first suggested by this perverse blooming habit. It
seems as dangerously abnormal as the crowing hen who was once thought
to have given her soul to the devil.

Some things grow fast and some grow slowly. The puffball rounds
itself out to melon size almost overnight, and the huge yellow mass of
the gelatinous fungus which attacks rotten wood is suddenly there where
it wasn't the last time one passed by.

At the other extreme are the lichens, sometimes a foot in diameter
on a boulder, and yet, to the eye, precisely the same size for five years
on end. Some say that certain giant individuals of this family must have
lived through whole millennia, and that it is they, rather than the red-
woods of our western coast, which are the oldest living things on earth.
Once when I was arranging a terrarium to remind me during the long winter months what summer is like, I spent a good deal of time searching for a lichen on a smallish stone before my dull mind realized that I was asking for the impossible. Only a boulder or a slab heavy enough to stay put for many years on end can acquire a lichen large enough to be noticed. Moss grows rather quickly, and what a rolling stone really can't gather is lichens.

But not everything is regularly recurrent along this same half-mile stretch of wood road. Last autumn, for example, a certain low bank covered with leaf mold was star-scattered for the first time with the curious mushroom called Geaster, a kind of puffball whose outer skin splits into petal-like segments which reflex until they form a five-pointed star with a round button in the middle—another striking example of nature's decorative use of geometrical design. I have now seen them once, but there are other queer things which I have never come across. For years I have poked hopefully at rotting logs (and found a great many surprising things in them), but I have never come across myxomycete, one of the puzzles and paradoxes of the natural world, which is said not to be uncommon. A mobile film of jelly often several inches square, it is (so the books say) neither plant nor animal, neither a colony nor an individual. It flows along like an amoeba, but it forms spores and reproduces like a mushroom. It seems to be a single individual, yet, if broken into pieces, each individual piece not only can live indefinitely by itself, but can also, if it meets its better or worser half again, merge with it to become again one individual!

Until last night I had never seen another paradox—the flying squirrel. Many other country dwellers, I imagine, have also never seen one, for, though they are said to inhabit forested regions throughout all America, they are so exclusively nocturnal that one may live surrounded by them without ever knowing that they exist. It was one of my cats who brought me a specimen last night, and who made an unusual fuss over it, almost as though he knew that it was a novelty which I should examine. My first impulse was, as usual, to scold. But he had only done what most naturalists who profess, as he does not, to love nature would have done when meeting a strange animal for the first time. There are only two differences. One is that whereas the cat "kills," the naturalist "collects." The other is that the naturalist would have stuffed the squirrel and that the cat stuffed himself. His belly, I am afraid, is a museum which has in its time housed a great variety of specimens.

Some modern painters have, of course, gone to living nature in their search for formal design. Georgia O'Keefe's often scandalous analogies are, in America at least, especially well known. But it surprises me that most of the abstractionists who go in for the geometrical seem to
prefer as a source of inspiration the man-made machine, rather than the plant which was the original inventor of most geometrical design. Such design hardly exists in inanimate nature, except in the case of the misleading crystal, which so often looks as though it were the product of organic growth and seems to mock the creations of that life in which it has never had any share. But living things are almost always "well designed."

Most of the functionless pseudo machines which one kind of abstractionist designs on canvas or realizes in metal masses, or the still more grotesque "mobiles" of the avant-garde galleries, strike me as comically futile. They are not nearly so beautiful as the actual and purposeful steam turbines, electric generators, and gantry cranes which they seem to be attempting to improve upon. And however Philistine my reaction may be, they generally suggest to me not their often beautiful originals, but those insane mechanical fantasies which Mr. Goldberg once made famous.

If I were a painter or a sculptor more interested in design than in storytelling, it seems to me that I should go instead to the living organisms, which, to anyone who looks closely, exhibit many examples of "modern" geometrical design. I should go to the blossom, which usually builds up a pattern of fives or threes; to the seed pods, which come in an infinite variety of boxes, flasks, and urns; even, if I wanted a "mobile," to the ripe fruit of the wild geranium, whose effective catapult was tossing hard round seeds many millenniums before the military engineers of the Renaissance discovered that the same principle could be used to hurl boulders at an enemy. Curiously enough, it seems that the smaller the living unit, the more exquisitely elaborate and perfect the form will be. Pollen grains which no man saw before the invention of the microscope come in an endless variety of regular shapes, and many of them are embossed or engraved with patterns which rival in intricacy those sculptured on the glass shells of the microscopic bivalves called diatoms.

Man is a lonely creature. A very great deal—perhaps all of his religion and his art has been an attempt to discover or to read into the universe outside himself something which corresponds to certain things which he finds in himself. So far as literature is concerned that means finding, especially, purposes and values. So far as the plastic arts are concerned it means finding regular design, for geometry is hardly less important to man than morality is.

In his pictures he schematizes landscapes or arranges groups of figures into pyramidal or other patterns because it comforts him to sense such patterns in a representation of nature, and he arranges the trees and the hills of his landscapes into similar patterns. But the formalists who conclude therefore that the purest art is that which gives us design itself, rather than design discovered in or imposed upon recognizable objects,
are quite wrong. And they are quite wrong because it is not the mere existence of the design, but the discovery (or the illusion) that it exists in nature, in something outside ourselves, which reassures us.

In nature itself, it is not the grand aggregation of growing things, but the individual plant or part of a plant, which unmistakably reveals that the design is actually there, that nature herself can geometrize. Perhaps no more than the first faint beginnings of what the philosopher or poet will recognize as purpose or the establishment of values can be found there, but humanly recognizable design is already fully developed. One might travel to all the famous “beauty spots” of the earth and come home again un comforted—not sure, I mean, that even formal design as we recognize it exists outside ourselves. But almost any roadside weed, closely looked at, will demonstrate beyond any possible doubt that it does. We are not alone in understanding or needing it.

Perhaps an unwillingness to acknowledge that fact is the perverse reason that leads so many modern artists to prefer to find form in machinery. If I am right in a certain suspicion which has forced itself upon me, our tendency to get away from nature is an expression of a fundamental perversity which is leading man to prefer a sense of isolation, to stress rather than to minimize his uniqueness and his aloneness. He seems increasingly to prefer to believe that he is not part of nature but something separate from it, and therefore to be most pleased when the world in which he lives is as completely as possible artificial. Even his pictures must be pictures, not of natural objects, but either of states of soul or of the machine. God made the country and man made the town. Man belongs, ergo, with brick, and mortar, and iron.

Personally, I feel both happier and more secure when I am reminded that I have the backing of something older and perhaps more permanent than I am—the something, I mean, which taught the flower to count five and the beetle to know that spots are more pleasing if arranged in a definite order. Some of the most important secrets are, they assure me, known to others besides myself.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. Each of the three sections of this essay has a central point to emphasize, though you may not find that point expressed in a single sentence. After reading each section, express in your own words the gist of the section.

2. Study the relationships between paragraphs, particularly between ends and beginnings of paragraphs and ends and beginnings of sections. Some paragraphs are closely interwoven with others. Some are more independent. Find examples of both kinds.

3. Urformen der Kunst means, approximately, “the underlying or original forms of art.” Can you add further examples to Krutch’s considerable list of beautifully “designed” natural forms?
4. Krutch is not only developing his positive belief that there are many delightful things for "the microscopic eye" to see; he is also rather casually attacking some commonly held ideas. Reread each section and list the ideas which he criticizes.

5. In the final paragraph Krutch speaks of "something older and perhaps more permanent than I am." What do you think he is referring to, and what sort of thing is it?
Linguistics is the science of language; hence we had better start by trying to define language.

Suppose we go to some remote corner of the world and observe two persons conversing with one another. We ask ourselves whether these persons are speaking the same language. (This need not be the case; on a visit to the conclaves of the United Nations we happened to observe one delegate speaking in French and another replying in Russian.) We make a tape recording of the sounds we hear, and upon careful study of this recording it turns out that the sounds uttered by the two persons have at least some similarities. Though many of the sounds may seem strange to our ears, we can learn to recognize, fairly well, the vowels and consonants which occurred in the speech of our subjects. Suppose we find that the various vowels and consonants we recognize sound approximately the same no matter which one of our subjects is talking, and that they occur on the average with about the same frequencies. This would be partial evidence for concluding that the two persons are speaking the same language. But it is not enough: they might perchance be speaking two different languages with the same systems of elementary sounds (though this would be a rare case). We analyze our tape recording further and find that the sounds often occur in similar sequences; if we listen carefully to the breaks between these sequences we might conclude that our subjects use many "words" in common, and we would then have further evidence that they are speaking the same language. We could go on in this way, making increasingly detailed analyses. We should want to study how the longer sequences of sounds are put to-
gether; we would try to discover certain constancies or invariances in the structure of our subjects' utterances. We would probably have to go back to our subjects for further information. We might, for example, be able to get them to give us verbal responses to a number of common objects and situations, with a view to seeing whether their responses are similar. If we could find a high degree of similarity in their verbal responses, or at least a large number of common traits in their utterances, we would probably be justified in concluding that they are speaking the same language.

Let us consider several things about this observation.

First, the mere fact that our subjects seem to "understand one another" is no guarantee that they are speaking the same language. Mutual intelligibility is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for such a conclusion. We might have a situation in which the speakers are using two languages, but in which each speaker understands the language of the other. Our conclusion that the same language is being used must emerge from our finding that a high degree of similarity, in some sense, is manifested in the utterances of the two speakers.

Second, the utterances do not have to be similar in all respects. Even the elementary sounds which we ordinarily call vowels and consonants may vary slightly in their acoustical properties, and certainly the total utterances of the two speakers will rarely be found to be even approximately parallel. It is only when we find that these utterances are in most respects structured according to the same self-consistent system that we can conclude that they are in the same language.

Third, we might find that the utterances of one or both of our speakers occasionally depart from the self-consistent system we have discovered. We might suspect, in such a case, that our speakers are occasionally making "quotations" from still another language, just as we do when we use a French or Latin phrase in our English speech, or when we utter a foreign surname (like Turgenev, for example, particularly if we give it the Russian pronunciation) which does not pattern itself like English names. There would be enough self-consistency in the bulk of the utterances to enable us to spot such "quotations" from another language and lay them aside.

Fourth, let us notice that the discovery that two speakers are using the same language does not imply that we would necessarily find any other human beings using this language. Our two subjects might have developed this language themselves, or they might be the last remaining speakers of a moribund language. Whatever the case, the system we have discovered would still be a language. As a matter of fact, everyone knows of languages without speakers currently living, but ancient Greek or ancient Hittite can still be called languages.

Finally, we might ask ourselves whether our two subjects are merely
uttering structured nonsense. The test of this would be to see whether they verbally respond in any similar and consistent way to certain objects and situations, whether their verbal responses represent discriminations between various aspects of their physical environment, and finally whether the speakers are in any sense able to control differentially each other's behavior in ways depending on their use of structured verbal responses. If these things are found to be the case, we can say that the language common to the two speakers has a symbolic, communicative function. A structured system of verbal responses would not be a language unless it has a symbolic, communicative function. Of course, there is hardly any reason for such a system to be structured unless it is to be used for communication.

One may rightly ask why we have introduced two speakers in our illustration. It is true that a language can be a system possessed by only one person. (He could have invented it for his own purposes, assigning his own arbitrary symbolic functions of the language.) Furthermore, it is possible to make an analysis of a language system solely on the basis of the utterances of a single informant; in fact, this has often been done. Nevertheless, there is much reason to believe that the symbolic function of a language arises only by social facilitation—that the elements of a language system to correspond to a certain speech community, repre-
discriminative verbal responses of two or more human beings who desire to influence each other's behavior in various ways. The users of a common language system constitute the speech community of that language. All the major languages of the world have, or have had at some time, a speech community of considerable extent. It is characteristic of a language system to correspond to a certain speech community, represented in the present illustration by our two speakers. There can of course be such a thing as a speech community consisting of one speaker, but this is usually an historical residue from a larger speech community. Even the man who invents a new artificial language does so by virtue of the verbal habits he has acquired in a larger speech community.

A language is never perfectly uniform throughout a speech community of two or more persons; as the speech community gets larger, there is likely to be less uniformity. Indeed, each member of a speech community may be said to possess his own idiolect, his own personal variety of the language system. A single individual will often possess several idiolects, to be used as the situation demands—for example, one for talking to contemporaries and one for talking to children. (Of course, such idiolects would have their parallels in other speakers.) Furthermore, the various members of the speech community will not possess all the linguistic items which properly belong to the language; for example, large numbers of people in the English speech community do not use or even recognize the meanings of many words which are used by the educated
classes or by members of specialized trades and occupations. All these items, however, are structured according to the patterns which are characteristic of the English language. The learned word psychoanalytic, for example, contains sounds which are characteristic of other, more common English words; its syllabic structure and its accentuation follow usual patterns; and from the standpoint of word order it falls into sentence positions at least partially similar to those of numerous common words like good, proper, lovely, etc. The abstracted system of common traits in the idiolects of all members of a speech community, then, is what we call a language. If we find certain members of a speech community whose idiolects resemble each other rather more than they resemble those of other members of a speech community, we say that their system of common linguistic traits constitutes a dialect.

We are now ready to essay a formal definition of a language, if we bear in mind the various issues raised in the foregoing discussion.

A language is a structured system of arbitrary vocal sounds and sequences of sounds which is used, or can be used, in interpersonal communication by an aggregation of human beings, and which rather exhaustively catalogs the things, events, and processes in the human environment. The sounds and sequences of sounds are arbitrary only in the sense that they have no inherent or necessary connections with the things to which they are said to "refer," or to the situations or contexts in which they are used—these connections having been established only by specific processes of learning.

It will be observed that this definition of language excludes nonvocal acts such as gestures and pantomimic responses. Though such acts may often be structured somewhat as vocal responses are, and though they may perform a communicative function which parallels or supplements that of verbal acts, they are as a matter of definition not included in language. (We may, however, speak of gesture language by a transferred meaning of the term language.) Our definition also excludes any system of written or printed symbols which may be used to represent the possible utterances of a language. (Here we must speak of the system of writing language X; particularly to be avoided is any suggestion that a language may be equated to a system of writing.)

We reserve the term language, as a general rule, to refer to a system which "rather exhaustively catalogs the things, events, and processes in the human environment." This restriction excludes such special "languages" as the "language" of chess—a system which permits one to communicate only in reference to the moves of pieces on a chessboard. In contrast, natural languages like English, French, Chinese, and even artificial languages like Esperanto, permit one to communicate with reference to nearly everything in one's environment and experience. The number of truly ineffable things is surely small; perhaps there is nothing
that cannot be formulated in language in some manner.

If we define a *semeiotic system* as any system of signs which can be used in some communicative function—however broad or restricted that function may be—we see that a language, as we have defined it above, is merely one type of semeiotic system, but a most important type. Gesture and writing constitute other types of semeiotic systems, even though they may be, and usually are, connected intimately with language. Systems of mathematical notation and the "language" of chess constitute still other examples of semeiotic systems.

We can now say what is meant by *linguistics* by stating that it is the scientific enterprise of investigating the languages and dialects which are in use, or have been used, by various speech communities throughout the world. The analysis of a language system is possible only by examining and comparing actual manifestations of language as represented by samples of speech or text, but the end result is a description of the "linguistic code" which more or less uniformly manifests itself in all verbal communications or messages observable in the speech community. The distinction between the language system (*la langue*) and the manifestation of that system in the speech of particular individuals (*la parole*) was emphasized by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1916), who pointed out that linguistics is concerned primarily with *la langue*, the language system.

The subject matter of linguistics, so defined, has far-reaching ramifications, but for several reasons the field has had to be kept within certain confines. And there are inevitably certain matters of emphasis within this field of investigation. It must be made clear that we are here describing the field of linguistics as it has actually developed. A number of linguistic scientists have indicated possible expansions of the field, many of these overlapping considerably with allied fields such as philosophy, psychology, and anthropology, but such expansions must be regarded as justified only if their development depends inherently upon the concept of structure which is central in scientific linguistics.

First of all, the linguist limits his field of inquiry by refusing to be concerned except in a rather indirect way, with the content of the communication, that is, "what is being talked about." The linguist is not interested in what is communicated; he is interested primarily in the *vehicle* of communication, that is, the language system. If he became concerned with the content of communication, he would in effect be concerned with the totality of human knowledge.

Secondly, the linguist limits his field by refusing to inquire into the mechanisms, psychological or otherwise, whereby human beings are able to use linguistic symbols; nor does the linguist ask about their motivations in making any particular utterance. To put the matter in common-sense terms, the linguist is not interested in what an individual is talking
about or why he wants to talk at all but only in the fact that what is said is cast in a certain culturally determined mold, that mold being the language of the individual’s speech community.

A third limitation which the linguist usually imposes on himself arises from the way he defines language. Of the various types of communication which are observed in human societies—communication by sequences of speech sounds, by visual symbols, by signaling and gesturing, or by other means—the linguist has concluded that the most important for his purposes is communication by sequences of speech sounds. Other types of semeiotic systems have been regarded as either primitive, “non-structured” sets of signals, or as systems which have developed out of, and by virtue of, speech systems. Thus, the linguist is likely to become concerned with the written or orthographic accompaniments of a living language system, for example, only after the phonetic characteristics of the spoken language have been thoroughly investigated. Even when a linguist is investigating the structure of a “dead” language which can be studied only from written records, he tries to discover what the spoken form of the language must have been, and draws on principles and results developed in connection with the study of living languages.

Since the linguist is first of all a social scientist, he is not immediately concerned with normative aspects of communication. He does not try to evaluate how things should be said, what grammatical constructions should be used, or how words should be pronounced. He only observes the way people actually say things, the grammatical constructions which they actually use, and the way they actually pronounce words. His interest in prescribing norms extends only to suggesting how greater stability and efficiency of communication may be achieved in a linguistic system.

The narrowing of attention to language as a system of spoken communication may have been unfortunate, in that the study of gesture and other nonlinguistic semeiotic systems related to language has thus far been slighted. The study of spoken communication systems is in itself a tremendous task and linguists may perhaps be excused for not taking full account of other forms of communicative behavior.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. In this selection Carroll is making a formal definition, and the following questions are intended to help you think about the way in which this process is carried out.
   a. After reading the whole selection, explain why Carroll defines language before he defines linguistics. He begins with a brief definition of linguistics. Why isn’t this sufficient?
b. What is a "formal" definition? Why doesn't Carroll start his discussion with the formal definition?

c. A fairly long and detailed analysis precedes the formal definition. Work out the steps in this preliminary analysis. What does the writer do first?

d. The writer deliberately invites us to consider several points about his initial observation. Why does he do this? Is he questioning his own procedure? Is he unsure of his method?

1. Carroll says that "mutual intelligibility is a necessary but not a sufficient condition..." Explain this sentence.

e. Carroll anticipates his formal definition of language at least twice. Point out these two sentences. What is the usefulness of these anticipations?

f. Are all the items in the formal definition substantiated by the previous discussion?

g. Compare Carroll's definition of language with the definition in a good dictionary. Why didn't he use the dictionary definition?

h. Point out Carroll's definition of linguistics. How is this related to the definition of language?

2. From one point of view, definition may be regarded as a process of limitation or classification. How is the term linguistics defined by limitation?

3. Judging by this example, what are some of the procedures you might use in defining an abstract term?
Part 6

THE EXPERIMENT OF DEMOCRACY
Thomas Jefferson and Others

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776
THE UNANIMOUS DECLARATION OF THE THIRTEEN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain Unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future secu-
rity. Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former systems of government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these States. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his assent to laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise; the state remaining, in the meantime, exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavored to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither, and raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands.

He has obstructed the administration of justice, by refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.

He has made judges dependent on his will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of new offices, and sent hither swarms of officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, standing armies without the consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the military independent of and superior to the civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation: for quartering large bodies of armed troops among us; for protecting them, by a mock trial, from punish-
ment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these States; for cutting off our trade with all parts of the world; for imposing taxes on us without our consent; for depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of trial by jury; for transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offenses; for abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government, and enlarging its boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies; for taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws, and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments; for suspending our own legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated government here, by declaring us out of his protection and waging war against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burned our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation, and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow citizens taken captive on the high seas to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends and brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions.

In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms: our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have we been wanting in attention to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the
world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name, and by authority of the good people of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. The second paragraph of the Declaration contains some important phrases which must be understood by those who want to discuss the document intelligently:
   a. “All men are created equal.” Since it is obvious from a common-sense point of view that all men are not equal physically, morally, or intellectually, how can this claim be made? In what sense are all men equal?
   b. What is a “self-evident” truth? What kind of evidence should one gather to prove a “self-evident” truth? If this is a hard phrase to define, should it have been left out?
   c. What are “unalienable rights”? If these are rights which cannot be taken away, how can Jefferson complain that they are being taken away?

2. The Declaration is both an argument intended to explain and persuade and a public “Declaration” of certain actions. How do these two objectives influence the form and style of the Declaration?
   a. What explanation is given in the first paragraph for the production of the Declaration? What motive could there be for referring to a “decent respect to the opinions of mankind”?
   b. In the second paragraph the virtue of prudence is mentioned. What does this word mean as it is used here? Would “caution” be a better word? Considering the weak state of the Colonies when the Declaration was issued, prudence might have been best exemplified by submission to Great Britain, how then do you explain the references to “prudence” here?
   c. Most of the Declaration consists of a long list of “facts.” Why is the list so specific? Do these “facts” differ from one another? Is there any plan or order in the arrangement of the list of “facts”?
   d. The last paragraph especially seems formal and very particular. What explains the formality? Why does the paragraph end with a pledge of lives, fortunes, and sacred honor? Why are these phrases in this order?
   e. What purposes does the last paragraph serve? If a straightforward resolution was called for, why not simply include that and stop?
From THE FEDERALIST

THE CONTROL OF FACTION

To the People of the State of New York:

Among the numerous advantages promised by a well-constructed Union, none deserves to be more accurately developed than its tendency to break and control the violence of faction. The friend of popular governments never finds himself so much alarmed for their character and fate, as when he contemplates their propensity to this dangerous vice. He will not fail, therefore, to set a due value on any plan which, without violating the principles to which he is attached, provides a proper cure for it. The instability, injustice, and confusion introduced into the public councils, have, in truth, been the mortal diseases under which popular governments have everywhere perished; as they continue to be the favorite and fruitful topics from which the adversaries to liberty derive their most specious declamations. The valuable improvements made by the American constitutions on the popular models, both ancient and modern, cannot certainly be too much admired; but it would be an unwarrantable partiality, to contend that they have as effectually obviated the danger on this side, as was wished and expected. Complaints are everywhere heard from our most considerate and virtuous citizens, equally the friends of public and private faith, and of public and personal liberty, that our governments are too unstable, that the public good is disregarded in the conflicts of rival parties, and that measures are too often decided, not according to the rules of justice and the rights of the minor party, but by the superior force of an interested and overbearing majority. However anxiously we may wish that these complaints had no foundation, the evidence of known facts will not permit us to deny that they are in some degree true. It will be found, indeed, on a candid review of our situation, that some of the distresses under which we labor have been erroneously charged on the operation of our govern-
ments; but it will be found, at the same time, that other causes will not alone account for many of our heaviest misfortunes; and, particularly, for that prevailing and increasing distrust of public engagements, and alarm for private rights, which are echoed from one end of the continent to the other. These must be chiefly, if not wholly, effects of the unsteadiness and injustice with which a factious spirit has tainted our public administrations.

By a faction, I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community.

There are two methods of curing the mischiefs of faction: the one, by removing its causes; the other, by controlling its effects.

There are again two methods of removing the causes of faction: the one, by destroying the liberty which is essential to its existence; the other, by giving to every citizen the same opinions, the same passions, and the same interests.

It could never be more truly said than of the first remedy, that it was worse than the disease. Liberty is to faction what air is to fire, an aliment without which it instantly expires. But it could not be less folly to abolish liberty, which is essential to political life, because it nourishes faction, than it would be to wish the annihilation of air, which is essential to animal life, because it imparts to fire its destructive agency.

The second expedient is as impracticable as the first would be unwise. As long as the reason of man continues fallible, and he is at liberty to exercise it, different opinions will be formed. As long as the connection subsists between his reason and his self-love, his opinions and his passions will have a reciprocal influence on each other; and the former will be objects to which the latter will attach themselves. The diversity in the faculties of men, from which the rights of property originate, is not less an insuperable obstacle to a uniformity of interests. The protection of these faculties is the first object of government. From the protection of different and unequal faculties of acquiring property, the possession of different degrees and kinds of property immediately results; and from the influence of these on the sentiments and views of the respective proprietors, ensues a division of the society into different interests and parties.

The latent causes of faction are thus sown in the nature of man; and we see them everywhere brought into different degrees of activity, according to the different circumstances of civil society. A zeal for different opinions concerning religion, concerning government, and many other points, as well of speculation as of practice; an attachment to different leaders ambitiously contending for pre-eminence and power;
or to persons of other descriptions whose fortunes have been interesting to the human passions, have, in turn, divided mankind into parties, inflamed them with mutual animosity, and rendered them much more disposed to vex and oppress each other than to co-operate for their common good. So strong is this propensity of mankind to fall into mutual animosities, that where no substantial occasion presents itself, the most frivolous and fanciful distinctions have been sufficient to kindle their unfriendly passions and excite their most violent conflicts. But the most common and durable source of factions has been the various and unequal distribution of property. Those who hold and those who are without property have ever formed distinct interests in society. Those who are creditors, and those who are debtors, fall under a like discrimination. A landed interest, a manufacturing interest, a mercantile interest, a moneyed interest, with many lesser interests, grow up of necessity in civilized nations, and divide them into different classes, actuated by different sentiments and views. The regulation of these various and interfering interests forms the principal task of modern legislation, and involves the spirit of party and faction in the necessary and ordinary operations of the government.

No man is allowed to be a judge in his own cause, because his interest would certainly bias his judgment, and, not improbably, corrupt his integrity. With equal, nay with greater reason, a body of men are unfit to be both judges and parties at the same time; yet what are many of the most important acts of legislation, but so many judicial determinations, not indeed concerning the rights of single persons, but concerning the rights of large bodies of citizens? And what are the different classes of legislators but advocates and parties to the causes which they determine? Is a law proposed concerning private debts? It is a question to which the creditors are parties on one side and the debtors on the other. Justice ought to hold the balance between them. Yet the parties are, and must be, themselves the judges; and the most numerous party, or, in other words, the most powerful faction must be expected to prevail. Shall domestic manufactures be encouraged, and in what degree, by restrictions on foreign manufactures? are questions which would be differently decided by the landed and the manufacturing classes, and probably by neither with a sole regard to justice and the public good. The apportionment of taxes on the various descriptions of property is an act which seems to require the most exact impartiality; yet there is, perhaps, no legislative act in which greater opportunity and temptation are given to a predominant party to trample on the rules of justice. Every shilling with which they overburden the inferior number, is a shilling saved to their own pockets.

It is in vain to say that enlightened statesmen will be able to adjust these clashing interests, and render them all subservient to the public
good. Enlightened statesmen will not always be at the helm. Nor, in many cases, can such an adjustment be made at all without taking into view indirect and remote considerations, which will rarely prevail over the immediate interest which one party may find in disregarding the rights of another or the good of the whole.

The inference to which we are brought is, that the causes of faction cannot be removed, and that relief is only to be sought in the means of controlling its effects.

If a faction consists of less than a majority, relief is supplied by the republican principle, which enables the majority to defeat its sinister views by regular vote. It may clog the administration, it may convulse the society; but it will be unable to execute and mask its violence under the forms of the Constitution. When a majority is included in a faction, the form of popular government, on the other hand, enables it to sacrifice to its ruling passion or interest both the public good and the rights of other citizens. To secure the public good and private rights against the danger of such a faction, and at the same time to preserve the spirit and the form of popular government, is then the great object to which our inquiries are directed. Let me add that it is the great desideratum by which this form of government can be rescued from the opprobrium under which it has so long labored, and be recommended to the esteem and adoption of mankind.

By what means is this object attainable? Evidently by one of two only. Either the existence of the same passion or interest in a majority at the same time must be prevented, or the majority, having such coexistent passion or interest, must be rendered, by their number and local situation, unable to concert and carry into effect schemes of oppression. If the impulse and the opportunity be suffered to coincide, we well know that neither moral nor religious motives can be relied on as an adequate control. They are not found to be such on the injustice and violence of individuals, and lose their efficacy in proportion to the number combined together, that is, in proportion as their efficacy becomes needful.

From this view of the subject it may be concluded that a pure democracy, by which I mean a society consisting of a small number of citizens, who assemble and administer the government in person, can admit of no cure for the mischiefs of faction. A common passion or interest will, in almost every case, be felt by a majority of the whole; a communication and concert result from the form of government itself; and there is nothing to check the inducements to sacrifice the weaker party or an obnoxious individual. Hence it is that such democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and have in general been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths. Theoretic politicians, who have patronized this species of gov-
ernment, have erroneously supposed that by reducing mankind to a perfect equality in their political rights, they would, at the same time, be perfectly equalized and assimilated in their possessions, their opinions, and their passions.

A republic, by which I mean a government in which the scheme of representation takes place, opens a different prospect, and promises the cure for which we are seeking. Let us examine the points in which it varies from pure democracy, and we shall comprehend both the nature of the cure and the efficacy which it must derive from the Union.

The two great points of difference between a democracy and a republic are: first, the delegation of the government, in the latter, to a small number of citizens elected by the rest; secondly, the greater number of citizens, and greater sphere of country, over which the latter may be extended.

The effect of the first difference is, on the one hand, to refine and enlarge the public views, by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country, and whose patriotism and love of justice will be least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations. Under such a regulation, it may well happen that the public voice, pronounced by the representatives of the people, will be more consonant to the public good than if pronounced by the people themselves, convened for the purpose. On the other hand, the effect may be inverted. Men of factious tempers, of local prejudices, or of sinister designs, may, by intrigue, by corruption, or by other means, first obtain the suffrages, and then betray the interests, of the people. The question resulting is, whether small or extensive republics are more favorable to the election of proper guardians of the public weal; and it is clearly decided in favor of the latter by two obvious considerations:

In the first place, it is to be remarked that, however small the republic may be, the representatives must be raised to a certain number, in order to guard against the cabals of a few; and that, however large it may be, they must be limited to a certain number, in order to guard against the confusion of a multitude. Hence, the number of representatives in the two cases not being in proportion to that of the two constituents, and being proportionally greater in the small republic, it follows that, if the proportion of fit characters be not less in the large than in the small republic, the former will present a greater option, and consequently a greater probability of a fit choice.

In the next place, as each representative will be chosen by a greater number of citizens in the large than in the small republic, it will be more difficult for unworthy candidates to practise with success the vicious arts by which elections are too often carried; and the suffrages of the people being more free, will be more likely to centre in men who possess the
most attractive merit and the most diffusive and established characters.

It must be confessed that in this, as in most other cases, there is a mean, on both sides of which inconveniences will be found to lie. By enlarging too much the number of electors, you render the representative too little acquainted with all their local circumstances and lesser interests; as by reducing it too much, you render him unduly attached to these, and too little fit to comprehend and pursue great and national objects. The federal Constitution forms a happy combination in this respect; the great and aggregate interests being referred to the national, the local and particularly to the State legislatures.

The other point of difference is, the greater number of citizens and extent of territory which may be brought within the compass of republican than of democratic government; and it is this circumstance principally which renders factious combinations less to be dreaded in the former than in the latter. The smaller the society, the fewer probably will be the distinct parties and interests composing it; the fewer the distinct parties and interests, the more frequently will a majority be found of the same party; and the smaller the number of individuals composing a majority, and the smaller the compass within which they are placed, the more easily will they concert and execute their plans of oppression. Extend the sphere, and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests; you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens; or if such a common motive exists, it will be more difficult for all who feel it to discover their own strength, and to act in unison with each other. Besides other impediments, it may be remarked that, where there is a consciousness of unjust or dishonorable purposes, communication is always checked by distrust in proportion to the number whose concurrence is necessary.

Hence, it clearly appears, that the same advantage which a republic has over a democracy, in controlling the effects of faction, is enjoyed by a large over a small republic,—is enjoyed by the Union over the States composing it. Does the advantage consist in the substitution of representatives whose enlightened views and virtuous sentiments render them superior to local prejudices and to schemes of injustice? It will not be denied that the representation of the Union will be most likely to possess these requisite endowments. Does it consist in the greater security afforded by a greater variety of parties, against the event of any one party being able to outnumber and oppress the rest? In an equal degree does the increased variety of parties comprised within the Union, increase this security. Does it, in fine, consist in the greater obstacles opposed to the concert and accomplishment of the secret wishes of an unjust and interested majority? Here, again, the extent of the Union gives it the most palpable advantage.
The influence of factious leaders may kindle a flame within their particular States, but will be unable to spread a general conflagration through the other States. A religious sect may degenerate into a political faction in a part of the Confederacy; but the variety of sects dispersed over the entire face of it must secure the national councils against any danger from that source. A rage for paper money, for an abolition of debts, for an equal division of property, or for any other improper or wicked project, will be less apt to pervade the whole body of the Union than a particular member of it; in the same proportion as such a malady is more likely to taint a particular county or district, than an entire State.

In the extent and proper structure of the Union, therefore, we behold a republican remedy for the diseases most incident to republican government. And according to the degree of pleasure and pride we feel in being republicans, ought to be our zeal in cherishing the spirit and supporting the character of Federalists.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. Madison's essay is a remarkable example of the truth of A. N. Whitehead's statement that "what education has to impart is an intimate sense for the power of ideas, for the beauty of ideas, and for the structure of ideas . . .". Can you point out in this essay the power, beauty, and structure of Madison's ideas?

   One way to begin is to make a fairly detailed outline of the essay. Use the following as the main heads of your outline and work in the subordinate points in such a way as to show your understanding of Madison's argument:

   - Definition of a faction; its importance, its evils.
   - Methods of controlling a faction: removing its causes; controlling its effects.
   - Conclusion; the advantages of a large republic in controlling the effects of faction.

2. What is Madison's explanation of the difference between a democracy and a republic? Which does he prefer?

3. Madison believes that the cause of faction is to be found in human nature. Does this mean that he does not trust people? How much reliance on the innate virtue of the common man does Madison have?

4. In what way can Madison's proposal be called an organizational solution to a fundamental human problem?

5. Unlike some twentieth-century writers, Madison finds some advantages in the fact of size. What are these advantages? Are there some disadvantages which Madison does not consider?

6. Cite from recent history some events which illustrate the problems which Madison analyzes.
Before a calendar of great Americans can be made out, a valid canon of Americanism must first be established. Not every great man born and bred in America was a great "American." Some of the notable men born among us were simply great Englishmen; others had in all the habits of their thought and life the strong flavor of a peculiar region, and were great New Englanders or great Southerners; others, masters in the fields of science or of pure thought, showed nothing either distinctively national or characteristically provincial, and were simply great men; while a few displayed odd cross-strains of blood or breeding. The great Englishmen bred in America, like Hamilton and Madison; the great provincials, like John Adams and Calhoun; the authors of such thought as might have been native to any clime, like Asa Gray and Emerson; and the men of mixed breed, like Jefferson and Benton,—must be excluded from our present list. We must pick out men who have created or exemplified a distinctively American standard and type of greatness.

To make such a selection is not to create an artificial standard of greatness, or to claim that greatness is in any case hallowed or exalted merely because it is American. It is simply to recognize a peculiar stamp of character, a special make-up of mind and faculties, as the specific product of our national life, not displacing or eclipsing talents of a different kind, but supplementing them, and so adding to the world's variety. There is an American type of man, and those who have exhibited this type with a certain unmistakable distinction and perfection have been great "Americans." It has required the utmost variety of character and energy to establish a great nation, with a polity at once free and firm, upon this continent, and no sound type of manliness could have been
dispensed with in the effort. We could no more have done without our
great Englishmen, to keep the past steadily in mind and make every
change conservative of principle, than we could have done without the
men whose whole impulse was forward, whose whole genius was for
origination, natural masters of the art of subduing a wilderness.

Certainly one of the greatest figures in our history is the figure of
Alexander Hamilton. American historians, though compelled always to
admire him, often in spite of themselves, have been inclined, like the
mass of men in his own day, to look at him askance. They hint, when
they do not plainly say, that he was not "American." He rejected, if he
did not despise, democratic principles; advocated a government as strong,
almost, as a monarchy; and defended the government which was actu-
ally set up, like the skilled advocate he was, only because it was the
strongest that could be had under the circumstances. He believed in
authority, and he had no faith in the aggregate wisdom of masses of men.
He had, it is true, that deep and passionate love of liberty, and that
steadfast purpose in the maintenance of it, that mark the best English-
men everywhere; but his ideas of government stuck fast in the old-world
politics, and his statesmanship was of Europe rather than of America.
And yet the genius and the steadfast spirit of this man were absolutely
indispensable to us. No one less masterful, no one less resolute than he to
drill the minority, if necessary, to have their way against the majority,
could have done the great work of organization by which he established
the national credit, and with the national credit the national government
itself. A pliant, popular, optimistic man would have failed utterly in the
task. A great radical mind in his place would have brought disaster upon
us: only a great conservative genius could have succeeded. It is safe to
say that, without men of Hamilton's cast of mind, building the past into
the future with a deep passion for order and old wisdom, our national
life would have miscarried at the very first. This tried English talent for
conservation gave to our fibre at the very outset the stiffness of maturity.

James Madison, too, we may be said to have inherited. His invaluable
gifts of counsel were of the sort so happily imparted to us with our
English blood at the first planting of the States which formed the Union.
A grave and prudent man, and yet brave withal when new counsel was
to be taken, he stands at the beginning of our national history, even in
his young manhood, as he faced and led the constitutional convention, a
type of the slow and thoughtful English genius for affairs. He held old
and tested convictions of the uses of liberty; he was competently read
in the history of government; processes of revolution were in his thought
no more than processes of adaptation: exigencies were to be met by
modification, not by experiment. His reasonable spirit runs through all
the proceedings of the great convention that gave us the Constitution,
and that noble instrument seems the product of character like his. For
all it is so American in its content, it is in its method a thoroughly English production, so full is it of old principles, so conservative of experience, so carefully compounded of compromises, of concessions made and accepted. Such men are of a stock so fine as to need no titles to make it noble, and yet so old and so distinguished as actually to bear the chief titles of English liberty. Madison came of the long line of English constitutional statesmen.

There is a type of genius which closely approaches this in character, but which is, nevertheless, distinctively American. It is to be seen in John Marshall and in Daniel Webster. In these men a new set of ideas find expression, ideas which all the world has received as American. Webster was not an English but an American constitutional statesman. For the English statesman constitutional issues are issues of policy rather than issues of law. He constantly handles questions of change: his constitution is always a-making. He must at every turn construct, and he is deemed conservative if only his rule be consistency and continuity with the past. He will search diligently for precedent, but he is content if the precedent contain only a germ of the policy he proposes. His standards are set him, not by law, but by opinion: his constitution is an ideal of cautious and orderly change. Its fixed element is the conception of political liberty: a conception which, though steeped in history, must ever be added to and altered by social change. The American constitutional statesman, on the contrary, constructs policies like a lawyer. The standard with which he must square his conduct is set him by a document upon whose definite sentences the whole structure of the government directly rests. That document, moreover, is the concrete embodiment of a peculiar theory of government. That theory is, that definitive laws, selected by a power outside the government, are the structural iron of the entire fabric of politics, and that nothing which cannot be constructed upon this stiff framework is a safe or legitimate part of policy. Law is, in his conception, creative of states, and they live only by such permissions as they can extract from it. The functions of the judge and the functions of the man of affairs have, therefore, been very closely related in our history, and John Marshall, scarcely less than Daniel Webster, was a constitutional statesman. With all Madison’s conservative temper and wide-eyed prudence in counsel, the subject-matter of thought for both of these men was not English liberty or the experience of men everywhere in self-government, but the meaning stored up in the explicit sentences of a written fundamental law. They taught men the new—the American—art of extracting life out of the letter, not of statutes merely (that art was not new), but of statute-built institutions and documented governments: the art of saturating politics with law without grossly discoloring law with politics. Other nations have had written constitutions, but no other nation has ever filled a written con-
stitution with this singularly compounded content, of a sound legal conscience and a strong national purpose. It would have been easy to deal with our Constitution like subtle dialecticians; but Webster and Marshall did much more and much better than that. They viewed the fundamental law as a great organic product, a vehicle of life as well as a charter of authority; in disclosing its life they did not damage its tissue; and in thus expanding the law without impairing its structure or authority they made great contributions alike to statesmanship and to jurisprudence. Our notable literature of decision and commentary in the field of constitutional law is America's distinctive gift to the history and the science of law. John Marshall wrought out much of its substance; Webster diffused its great body of principles throughout national policy, mediating between the law and affairs. The figures of the two men must hold the eye of the world as the figures of two great national representatives, as the figures of two great Americans.

Jefferson was not a thorough American because of the strain of French philosophy that permeated and weakened all his thought. Benton was altogether American so far as the natural strain of his blood was concerned, but he had encumbered his natural parts and inclinations with a mass of undigested and shapeless learning. Bred in the West, where everything was new, he had filled his head with the thought of books (evidently very poor books) which exhibited the ideals of communities in which everything was old. He thought of the Roman Senate when he sat in the Senate of the United States. He paraded classical figures whenever he spoke, upon a stage where both their costume and their action seemed grotesque. A pedantic frontiersman, he was a living and a pompous antinomy. Meant by nature to be an American, he spoiled the plan by applying a most unsuitable gloss of shallow and irrelevant learning. Jefferson was of course an almost immeasurably greater man than Benton, but he was un-American in somewhat the same way. He brought a foreign product of thought to a market where no natural or wholesome demand for it could exist. There were not two incompatible parts in him, as in Benton's case: he was a philosophical radical by nature as well as by acquirement; his reading and his temperament went suitably together. The man is homogeneous throughout. The American shows in him very plainly, too, notwithstanding the strong and inherent dash of what was foreign in his make-up. He was a natural leader and manager of men, not because he was imperative or masterful, but because of a native shrewdness, tact, and sagacity, an inborn art and aptness for combination, such as no Frenchman ever displayed in the management of common men. Jefferson had just a touch of rusticity about him, besides; and it was not pretense on his part or merely a love of power that made him democratic. His indiscriminate hospitality, his almost passion-
ate love for the simple equality of country life, his steady devotion to what he deemed to be the cause of the people, all mark him a genuine democrat, a nature native to America. It is his speculative philosophy that is exotic, and that runs like a false and artificial note through all his thought. It was un-American in being abstract, sentimental, rationalistic, rather than practical. That he held it sincerely need not be doubted; but the more sincerely he accepted it so much the more thoroughly was he un-American. His writings lack hard and practical sense. Liberty, among us, is not a sentiment, but a product of experience; its derivation is not rationalistic, but practical. It is a hard-headed spirit of independence, not the conclusion of a syllogism. The very aerated quality of Jefferson's principles gives them an air of insincerity, which attaches to them rather because they do not suit the climate of the country and the practical aspect of affairs than because they do not suit the character of Jefferson's mind and the atmosphere of abstract philosophy. It is because both they and the philosophical system of which they form a part do seem suitable to his mind and character, that we must pronounce him, though a great man, not a great American.

It is by the frank consideration of such concrete cases that we may construct, both negatively and affirmatively, our canons of Americanism. The American spirit is something more than the old, the immemorial Saxon spirit of liberty from which it sprung. It has been bred by the conditions attending the great task which we have all the century been carrying forward: the task, at once material and ideal, of subduing a wilderness and covering all the wide stretches of a vast continent with a single free and stable polity. It is, accordingly, above all things, a hopeful and confident spirit. It is progressive, optimistically progressive, and ambitious of objects of national scope and advantage. It is unpedantic, unprovincial, unspeculative, unfastidious; regardful of law, but as using it, not as being used by it or dominated by any formalism whatever; in a sense unrefined, because full of rude force; but prompted by large and generous motives, and often as tolerant as it is resolute. No one man, unless it be Lincoln, has ever proved big or various enough to embody this active and full-hearted spirit in all its qualities; and the men who have been too narrow or too speculative or too pedantic to represent it have, nevertheless, added to the strong and stirring variety of our national life, making it fuller and richer in motive and energy; but its several aspects are none the less noteworthy as they separately appear in different men.

One of the first men to exhibit this American spirit with an unmistakable touch of greatness and distinction was Benjamin Franklin. It was characteristic of America that this self-made man should become a philosopher, a founder of philosophical societies, an authoritative man of science; that his philosophy of life should be so homely and so prac-
tical in its maxims, and uttered with so shrewd a wit; that one region should be his birthplace and another his home; that he should favor effective political union among the colonies from the first, and should play a sage and active part in the establishment of national independence and the planning of a national organization; and that he should represent his countrymen in diplomacy abroad. They could have had no spokesman who represented more sides of their character. Franklin was a sort of multiple American. He was versatile without lacking solidity; he was a practical statesman without ceasing to be a sagacious philosopher. He came of the people, and was democratic; but he had raised himself out of the general mass of unnamed men, and so stood for the democratic law, not of equality, but of self-selection in endeavor. One can feel sure that Franklin would have succeeded in any part of the national life that it might have fallen to his lot to take part in. He will stand the final and characteristic test of Americanism: he would unquestionably have made a successful frontiersman, capable at once of wielding the axe and of administering justice from the fallen trunk.

Washington hardly seems an American, as most of his biographers depict him. He is too colorless, too cold, too prudent. He seems more like a wise and dispassionate Mr. Alworthy, advising a nation as he would a parish, than like a man building states and marshaling a nation in a wilderness. But the real Washington was as thoroughly an American as Jackson or Lincoln. What we take for lack of passion in him was but the reserve and self-mastery natural to a man of his class and breeding in Virginia. He was no parlor politician, either. He had seen the frontier, and far beyond it where the French forts lay. He knew the rough life of the country as few other men could. His thoughts did not live at Mount Vernon. He knew difficulty as intimately and faced it always with as quiet a mastery as William the Silent. This calm, straightforward, high-spirited man, making charts of the western country, noting the natural land and water routes into the heart of the continent, marking how the French power lay, conceiving the policy which should dispossess it, and the engineering achievements which should make the utmost resources of the land our own; counseling Braddock how to enter the forest, but not deserting him because he would not take advice; planning step by step, by patient correspondence with influential men everywhere, the meetings, conferences, common resolves which were finally to bring the great constitutional convention together; planning, too, always for the country as well as for Virginia; and presiding at last over the establishment and organization of the government of the Union: he certainly—the most suitable instrument of the national life at every moment of crisis—is a great American. Those noble words which he uttered amidst

1 The benevolent country squire in Fielding's novel, *Tom Jones.* [Ed.]
the first doubtings of the constitutional convention might serve as a motto for the best efforts of liberty wherever free men strive: “Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair; the event is in the hand of God.”

In Henry Clay we have an American of a most authentic pattern. There was no man of his generation who represented more of America than he did. The singular, almost irresistible attraction he had for men of every class and every temperament came, not from the arts of the politician, but from the instant sympathy established between him and every fellow-countryman of his. He does not seem to have exercised the same fascination upon foreigners. They felt toward him as some New Englanders did: he seemed to them plausible merely, too indiscriminately open and cordial to be sincere,—a bit of a charlatan. No man who really takes the trouble to understand Henry Clay, or who has quick enough parts to sympathize with him, can deem him false. It is the odd combination of two different elements in him that makes him seem irregular and inconstant. His nature was of the West, blown through with quick winds of ardor and aggression, a bit reckless and defiant; but his art was of the East, ready with soft and placating phrases, reminiscent of old and revered ideals, thoughtful of compromise and accommodation. He had all the address of the trained and sophisticated politician, bred in an old and sensitive society; but his purposes ran free of cautious restraints, and his real ideals were those of the somewhat bumptious Americanism which was pushing the frontier forward in the West, which believed itself capable of doing anything it might put its hand to, despised conventional restraints, and followed a vague but resplendent “manifest destiny” with lusty hurrahs. His purposes were sincere, even if often crude and uninstructed; it was only because the subtle arts of politics seemed inconsistent with the direct dash and bold spirit of the man that they sat upon him like an insincerity. He thoroughly, and by mere unconscious sympathy, represented the double America of his day, made up of a West which hurried and gave bold strokes, and of an East which held back, fearing the pace, thoughtful and mindful of the instructive past. The one part had to be served without offending the other: and that was Clay’s mediatorial function.

Andrew Jackson was altogether of the West. Of his sincerity nobody has ever had any real doubt; and his Americanism is now at any rate equally unimpeachable. He was like Clay with the social imagination of the orator and the art and sophistication of the Eastern politician left out. He came into our national politics like a cyclone from off the Western prairies. Americans of the present day perceptibly shudder at the very recollection of Jackson. He seems to them a great Vandal, playing fast and loose alike with institutions and with tested and established policy, debauching politics like a modern spoilsman. But whether we
would accept him as a type of ourselves or not, the men of his own day accepted him with enthusiasm. He did not need to be explained to them. They crowded to his standard like men free at last, after long and tedious restraint, to make their own choice, follow their own man. There can be no mistaking the spontaneity of the thoroughgoing support he received. His was the new type of energy and self-confidence bred by life outside the States that had been colonies. It was a terrible energy, threatening sheer destruction to many a carefully wrought arrangement handed on to us from the past; it was a perilous self-confidence, founded in sheer strength rather than in wisdom. The government did not pass through the throes of that signal awakening of the new national spirit without serious rack and damage. But it was no disease. It was only an incautious, abounding, madcap strength which proved so dangerous in its readiness for every rash endeavor. It was necessary that the West should be let into the play: it was even necessary that she should assert her right to the leading rôle. It was done without good taste, but that does not condemn it. We have no doubt refined and schooled the hoyden influences of that crude time, and they are vastly safer now than then, when they first came bounding in; but they mightily stirred and enriched our blood from the first. Now that we have thoroughly suffered this Jackson change and it is over, we are ready to recognize it as quite as radically American as anything in all our history.

Lincoln, nevertheless, rather than Jackson, was the supreme American of our history. In Clay, East and West were mixed without being fused or harmonized: he seems like two men. In Jackson there was not even a mixture: he was all of a piece, and altogether unacceptable to some parts of the country,—a frontier statesman. But in Lincoln the elements were combined and harmonized. The most singular thing about the wonderful career of the man is the way in which he steadily grew into a national stature. He began an amorphous, unlicked cub, bred in the rudest of human lairs; but, as he grew, everything formed, informed, transformed him. The process was slow but unbroken. He was not fit to be President until he actually became President. He was fit then because, learning everything as he went, he had found out how much there was to learn, and had still an infinite capacity for learning. The quiet voices of sentiment and murmurs of resolution that went whispering through the land, his ear always caught, when others could hear nothing but their own words. He never ceased to be a common man: that was his source of strength. But he was a common man with genius, a genius for things American, for insight into the common thought, for mastery of the fundamental things of politics that inhere in human nature and cast hardly more than their shadows on constitutions; for the practical niceties of affairs; for judging men and assessing arguments. Jackson had
no social imagination: no unfamiliar community made any impression on him. His whole fibre stiffened young, and nothing afterward could modify or even deeply affect it. But Lincoln was always a-making; he would have died unfinished if the terrible storms of the war had not stung him to learn in those four years what no other twenty could have taught him. And, as he stands there in his complete manhood, at the most perilous helm in Christendom, what a marvelous composite figure he is! The whole country is summed up in him: the rude Western strength, tempered with shrewdness and a broad and humane wit; the Eastern conservatism, regardful of law and devoted to fixed standards of duty. He even understood the South, as no other Northern man of his generation did. He respected, because he comprehended, though he could not hold, its view of the Constitution; he appreciated the inexorable compulsions of its past in respect of slavery; he would have secured it once more, and speedily if possible, in its right to self-government, when the fight was fought out. To the Eastern politicians he seemed like an accident; but to history he must seem like a providence.

Grant was Lincoln's suitable instrument, a great American general, the appropriate product of West Point. A Western man, he had no thought of commonwealths politically separate, and was instinctively for the Union; a man of the common people, he deemed himself always an instrument, never a master, and did his work, though ruthlessly, without malice; a sturdy, hard-willed, taciturn man, a sort of Lincoln the Silent in thought and spirit. He does not appeal to the imagination very deeply; there is a sort of common greatness about him, great gifts combined singularly with a great mediocrity; but such peculiarities seem to make him all the more American,—national in spirit, thoroughgoing in method, masterful in purpose.

And yet it is no contradiction to say that Robert E. Lee also was a great American. He fought on the opposite side, but he fought in the same spirit, and for a principle which is in a sense scarcely less American than the principle of Union. He represented the idea of the inherent—the essential—separateness of self-government. This was not the principle of secession: that principle involved the separate right of the several self-governing units of the federal system to judge of national questions independently, and as a check upon the federal government,—to adjudge the very objects of the Union. Lee did not believe in secession, but he did believe in the local rootage of all government. This is at the bottom, no doubt, an English idea; but it has had a characteristic American development. It is the reverse side of the shield which bears upon its obverse the devices of the Union, a side too much overlooked and obscured since the war. It conceives the individual State a community united by the most intimate associations, the first home and foster-
mother of every man born into the citizenship of the nation. Lee considered himself a member of one of these great families; he could not conceive of the nation apart from the State: above all, he could not live in the nation divorced from his neighbors. His own community should decide his political destiny and duty.

We shall not in the future have to take one type of Americanism at a time. The frontier is gone: it has reached the Pacific. The country grows rapidly homogeneous. With the same pace it grows various, and multi-form in all its life. The man of the simple or local type cannot any longer deal in the great manner with any national problem. The great men of our future must be of the composite type of greatness: sound-hearted, hopeful, confident of the validity of liberty, tenacious of the deeper principles of American institutions, but with the old rashness schooled and sobered, and instinct tempered by instruction. They must be wise with an adult, not with an adolescent wisdom. Some day we shall be of one mind, our ideals fixed, our purposes harmonized, our nationality complete and consentaneous: then will come our great literature and our greatest men.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. Wilson says in his first sentence that “a valid canon of Americanism must first be established.” In other words, a definition (or standard) is necessary before we can make “a calendar of great Americans.” How does Wilson establish this standard?
   a. For instance, why does Wilson consider Hamilton and Madison and then reject them from his calendar?
   b. On what grounds is Jefferson excluded?
   c. What are the chief features of the standard that Wilson finally adopts?

2. How could we determine whether or not Wilson’s judgment in this matter is good?
   a. Is it possible to challenge Wilson’s standard by observing that he does not include certain American traits or that he overemphasizes others?
   b. Are there other qualified judges whose choices might differ from Wilson’s?
   c. Would it be more reliable to take a poll of public opinion?
   d. Would the “test of time” have anything to do with our opinion of Wilson’s judgment?

3. Wilson says of the American spirit that it is “above all things, a hopeful and confident spirit.” Point out examples that support Wilson’s claim. What distinction should be made between “shallow optimism” and Wilson’s “optimistically progressive”?

4. What does Wilson mean when he says of the American spirit that “It is unpedantic, unprovincial, unspeculative, unfastidious”? Show how this state-
ment is borne out in what he says of Jackson and Lincoln. Would this suggest that Wilson's great Americans are uncultivated men?

5. Why does Wilson end his essay as he does? Would he have done better to begin with this definition?

6. Judged by his own standard, does Wilson himself belong in this calendar of great Americans?
THE TYRANNY OF THE MAJORITY*

Tyranny of the Majority. How the principle of the sovereignty of the people is to be understood.—Impossibility of conceiving a mixed government.—The sovereign power must exist somewhere.—Precautions to be taken to control its action.—These precautions have not been taken in the United States.—Consequences.

I hold it to be an impious and detestable maxim that, politically speaking, the people have a right to do anything; and yet I have asserted that all authority originates in the will of the majority. Am I, then, in contradiction with myself?

A general law, which bears the name of justice, has been made and sanctioned, not only by a majority of this or that people, but by a majority of mankind. The rights of every people are therefore confined within the limits of what is just. A nation may be considered as a jury which is empowered to represent society at large and to apply justice, which is its law. Ought such a jury, which represents society, to have more power than the society itself whose laws it executes?

When I refuse to obey an unjust law, I do not contest the right of the majority to command, but I simply appeal from the sovereignty of the people to the sovereignty of mankind. Some have not feared to assert that a people can never outstep the boundaries of justice and reason in those affairs which are peculiarly its own; and that consequently full power may be given to the majority by which it is represented. But this is the language of a slave.

A majority taken collectively is only an individual, whose opinions,

* Trans. by Henry Reeve, rev. by Francis Bowen.
and frequently whose interests, are opposed to those of another individual, who is styled a minority. If it be admitted that a man possessing absolute power may misuse that power by wronging his adversaries, why should not a majority be liable to the same reproach? Men do not change their characters by uniting with one another; nor does their patience in the presence of obstacles increase with their strength. For my own part, I cannot believe it; the power to do everything, which I should refuse to one of my equals, I will never grant to any number of them.

I do not think that, for the sake of preserving liberty, it is possible to combine several principles in the same government so as really to oppose them to one another. The form of government that is usually termed mixed has always appeared to me a mere chimera. Accurately speaking, there is no such thing as a mixed government, in the sense usually given to that word, because in all communities some one principle of action may be discovered which preponderates over the others. England in the last century—which has been especially cited as an example of this sort of government—was essentially an aristocratic state, although it comprised some great elements of democracy; for the laws and customs of the country were such that the aristocracy could not but preponderate in the long run and direct public affairs according to its own will. The error arose from seeing the interests of the nobles perpetually contending with those of the people, without considering the issue of the contest, which was really the important point. When a community actually has a mixed government—that is to say, when it is equally divided between adverse principles—it must either experience a revolution, or fall into anarchy.

I am therefore of the opinion, that social power superior to all others must always be placed somewhere; but I think that liberty is endangered when this power finds no obstacle which can retard its course and give it time to moderate its own vehemence.

Unlimited power is in itself a bad and dangerous thing. Human beings are not competent to exercise it with discretion. God alone can be omnipotent, because his wisdom and his justice are always equal to his power. There is no power on earth so worthy of honor in itself or clothed with rights so sacred that I would admit its uncontrolled and all-predominant authority. When I see that the right and the means of absolute command are conferred on any power whatever, be it called a people or a king, an aristocracy or a democracy, a monarchy or a republic, I say there is the germ of tyranny, and I seek to live elsewhere, under other laws.

In my opinion, the main evil of the present democratic institutions of

1 No one will assert that a people cannot forcibly wrong another people; but parties may be looked upon as lesser nations within a great one, and they are aliens to each other. If, therefore, one admits that a nation can act tyrannically towards another nation, it cannot be denied that a party may do the same towards another party.
the United States does not arise, as is often asserted in Europe, from their weakness, but from their irresistible strength. I am not so much alarmed at the excessive liberty which reigns in that country as at the inadequate securities which one finds there against tyranny.

When an individual or a party is wronged in the United States, to whom can he apply for redress? If to public opinion, public opinion constitutes the majority; if to the legislature, it represents the majority and implicitly obeys it; if to the executive power, it is appointed by the majority and serves as a passive tool in its hands. The public force consists of the majority under arms; the jury is the majority invested with the right of hearing judicial cases; and in certain states even the judges are elected by the majority. However iniquitous or abused the measure of which you complain, you must submit to it as well as you can.²

If on the other hand, a legislative power could be so constituted as to represent the majority without necessarily being the slave of its passions, an executive so as to retain a proper share of authority, and a judiciary so as to remain independent of the other two powers, a government would be formed which would still be democratic while incurring scarcely any risk of tyranny.

²A striking instance of the excesses that may be occasioned by the despotism of the majority occurred at Baltimore during the War of 1812. At that time the war was very popular in Baltimore. A newspaper that had taken the other side excited, by its opposition, the indignation of the inhabitants. The mob assembled, broke the printing-presses, and attacked the house of the editors. The militia was called out, but did not obey the call; and the only means of saving the wretches who were threatened by the frenzy of the mob was to throw them into prison as common malefactors. But even this precaution was ineffectual; the mob collected again during the night; the magistrates again made a vain attempt to call out the militia; the prison was forced, one of the newspaper editors was killed upon the spot, and the others were left for dead. The guilty parties, when they were brought to trial, were acquitted by the jury.

I said one day to an inhabitant of Pennsylvania: “Be so good as to explain to me how it happens that in a state founded by Quakers, and celebrated for its toleration, free blacks are not allowed to exercise civil rights. They pay taxes; is it not fair that they should vote?”

“You insult us,” replied my informant, “if you imagine that our legislators could have committed so gross an act of injustice and intolerance.”

“Then the blacks possess the right of voting in this country?”

“Without doubt.”

“How comes it, then, that at the polling-booth this morning I did not perceive a single Negro?”

“That is not the fault of the law. The Negroes have an undisputed right of voting, but they voluntarily abstain from making their appearance.”

“A very pretty piece of modesty on their part!” rejoined I.

“Why, the truth is that they are not disinclined to vote, but they are afraid of being maltreated; in this country the law is sometimes unable to maintain its authority without the support of the majority. But in this case the majority entertains very strong prejudices against the blacks, and the magistrates are unable to protect them in the exercise of their legal rights.”

“Then the majority claims the right not only of making the laws, but of breaking the laws it has made?”
I do not say that there is a frequent use of tyranny in America at the present day; but I maintain that there is no sure barrier against it, and that the causes which mitigate the government there are to be found in the circumstances and the manners of the country more than in its laws.

Power exercised by the majority in America upon opinion. In America, when the majority has once irrevocably decided a question, all discussion ceases.—Reason for this.—Moral power exercised by the majority upon opinion.—Democratic republics have applied despotism to the minds of men.

It is in the examination of the exercise of thought in the United States that we clearly perceive how far the power of the majority surpasses all the powers with which we are acquainted in Europe. Thought is an invisible and subtle power that mocks all the efforts of tyranny. At the present time the most absolute monarchs in Europe cannot prevent certain opinions hostile to their authority from circulating in secret through their dominions and even in their courts. It is not so in America; as long as the majority is still undecided, discussion is carried on; but as soon as its decision is irrevocably pronounced, everyone is silent, and the friends as well as the opponents of the measure unite in assenting to its propriety. The reason for this is perfectly clear: no monarch is so absolute as to combine all the powers of society in his own hands and to conquer all opposition, as a majority is able to do, which has the right both of making and of executing the laws.

The authority of a king is physical and controls the actions of men without subduing their will. But the majority possesses a power that is physical and moral at the same time, which acts upon the will as much as upon the actions and represses not only all contest, but all controversy.

I know of no country in which there is so little independence of mind and real freedom of discussion as in America. In any constitutional state in Europe every sort of religious and political theory may be freely preached and disseminated; for there is no country in Europe so subdued by any single authority as not to protect the man who raises his voice in the cause of truth from the consequences of his hardihood. If he is unfortunate enough to live under an absolute government, the people are often on his side; if he inhabits a free country, he can, if necessary, find a shelter behind the throne. The aristocratic part of society supports him in some countries, and the democracy in others. But in a nation where democratic institutions exist, organized like those of the United States, there is but one authority, one element of strength and success, with nothing beyond it.

In America the majority raises formidable barriers around the liberty
of opinion; within these barriers an author may write what he pleases, but woe to him if he goes beyond them. Not that he is in danger of an auto-da-fé, but he is exposed to continued obloquy and persecution. His political career is closed forever, since he has offended the only authority that is able to open it. Every sort of compensation, even that of celebrity, is refused to him. Before making public his opinions he thought he had sympathizers; now it seems to him that he has none any more since he has revealed himself to everyone; then those who blame him criticize loudly and those who think as he does keep quiet and move away without courage. He yields at length, overcome by the daily effort which he has to make, and subsides into silence, as if he felt remorse for having spoken the truth.

Fetters and headsmen were the coarse instruments that tyranny formerly employed; but the civilization of our age has perfected despotism itself, though it seemed to have nothing to learn. Monarchs had, so to speak, materialized oppression; the democratic republics of the present day have rendered it as entirely an affair of the mind as the will which it is intended to coerce. Under the absolute sway of one man the body was attacked in order to subdue the soul; but the soul escaped the blows which were directed against it and rose proudly superior. Such is not the course adopted by tyranny in democratic republics; there the body is left free, and the soul is enslaved. The master no longer says: “You shall think as I do or you shall die”; but he says: “You are free to think differently from me and to retain your life, your property, and all that you possess; but you are henceforth a stranger among your people. You may retain your civil rights, but they will be useless to you, for you will never be chosen by your fellow citizens if you solicit their votes; and they will affect to scorn you if you ask for their esteem. You will remain among men, but you will be deprived of the rights of mankind. Your fellow creatures will shun you like an impure being; and even those who believe in your innocence will abandon you, lest they should be shunned in their turn. Go in peace! I have given you your life, but it is an existence worse than death.”

Absolute monarchies had dishonored despotism; let us beware lest democratic republics should reinstate it and render it less odious and degrading in the eyes of the many by making it still more onerous to the few.

Works have been published in the proudest nations of the Old World, expressly intended to censure the vices and the follies of the times: Labrouyère inhabited the palace of Louis XIV when he composed his chapter upon the Great, and Molière criticized the courtiers in the plays that were acted before the court. But the ruling power in the United States is not to be made game of. The smallest reproach irritates its sensibility, and the slightest joke that has any foundation in truth renders
it indignant; from the forms of its language up to the solid virtues of its character, everything must be made the subject of encomium. No writer, whatever be his eminence, can escape paying this tribute of adulation to his fellow citizens. The majority lives in the perpetual utterance of self-applause, and there are certain truths which the Americans can learn only from strangers or from experience.

If America has not as yet had any great writers, the reason is given in these facts; there can be no literary genius without freedom of opinion, and freedom of opinion does not exist in America. The Inquisition has never been able to prevent a vast number of anti-religious books from circulating in Spain. The empire of the majority succeeds much better in the United States, since it actually removes any wish to publish them. Unbelievers are to be met with in America, but there is no public organ of infidelity. Attempts have been made by some governments to protect morality by prohibiting licentious books. In the United States no one is punished for this sort of books, but no one is induced to write them; not because all the citizens are immaculate in conduct, but because the majority of the community is decent and orderly.

In this case the use of power is unquestionably good; and I am discussing the nature of the power itself. This irresistible authority is a constant fact, and its judicious exercise is only an accident.

Effects of the Tyranny of the Majority upon the National Character of the Americans—The Courtier Spirit in the United States. Effects of the tyranny of the majority more sensibly felt hitherto on the manners than on the conduct of society.—They check the development of great characters.—Democratic republics, organized like the United States, infuse the courtier spirit into the mass of the people.—Proofs of this spirit in the United States.—Why there is more patriotism in the people than in those who govern in their name.

The tendencies that I have just mentioned are as yet but slightly perceptible in political society, but they already exercise an unfavorable influence upon the national character of the Americans. I attribute the small number of distinguished men in political life to the ever increasing despotism of the majority in the United States.

When the American Revolution broke out, they arose in great numbers; for public opinion then served, not to tyrannize over, but to direct the exertions of individuals. Those celebrated men, sharing the agitation of mind common at that period, had a grandeur peculiar to themselves, which was reflected back upon the nation, but was by no means borrowed from it.

In absolute governments the great nobles who are nearest to the throne flatter the passions of the sovereign and voluntarily truckle to his caprices. But the mass of the nation does not degrade itself by servitude;
it often submits from weakness, from habit, or from ignorance, and sometimes from loyalty. Some nations have been known to sacrifice their own desires to those of the sovereign with pleasure and pride, thus exhibiting a sort of independence of mind in the very act of submission. These nations are miserable, but they are not degraded. There is a great difference between doing what one does not approve, and feigning to approve what one does; the one is the weakness of a feeble person, the other befits the temper of a lackey.

In free countries, where everyone is more or less called upon to give his opinion on affairs of state, in democratic republics, where public life is incessantly mingled with domestic affairs, where the sovereign authority is accessible on every side, and where its attention can always be attracted by vociferation, more persons are to be met with who speculate upon its weaknesses and live upon ministering to its passions than in absolute monarchies. Not because men are naturally worse in these states than elsewhere, but the temptation is stronger and at the same time of easier access. The result is a more extensive debasement of character.

Democratic republics extend the practice of currying favor with the many and introduce it into all classes at once; this is the most serious reproach that can be addressed to them. This is especially true in democratic states organized like the American republics, where the power of the majority is so absolute and irresistible that one must give up one’s rights as a citizen, and almost abjure one’s qualities as a man, if one intends to stray from the track which it prescribes.

In that immense crowd which throngs the avenues to power in the United States, I found very few men who displayed that manly candor and masculine independence of opinion which frequently distinguished the Americans in former times, and which constitutes the leading feature in distinguished characters wherever they may be found. It seems at first sight as if all the minds of the Americans were formed upon one model, so accurately do they follow the same route. A stranger does, indeed, sometimes meet with Americans who dissent from the rigor of these formulas, with men who deplore the defects of the laws, the mutability and the ignorance of democracy, who even go so far as to observe the evil tendencies that impair the national character, and to point out such remedies as it might be possible to apply; but no one is there to hear them except yourself, and you, to whom these secret reflections are confided, are a stranger and a bird of passage. They are very ready to communicate truths which are useless to you, but they hold a different language in public.

If these lines are ever read in America, I am well assured of two things—in the first place, that all who peruse them will raise their voices to condemn me; and, in the second place, that many of them will acquit me at the bottom of their conscience.
I have heard of patriotism in the United States, and I have found true patriotism among the people, but never among the leaders of the people. This may be explained by analogy: despotism debases the oppressed much more than the oppressor: in absolute monarchies the king often has great virtues, but the courtiers are invariably servile. It is true that American courtiers do not say "Sire," or "Your Majesty,"—a distinction without a difference. They are forever talking of the natural intelligence of the people whom they serve; they do not debate the question which of the virtues of their master is pre-eminently worthy of admiration, for they assure him that he possesses all the virtues without having acquired them, or without caring to acquire them; they do not give him their daughters and their wives to be raised at his pleasure to the rank of his concubines; but by sacrificing their opinions they prostitute themselves. Moralists and philosophers in America are not obliged to conceal their opinions under the veil of allegory; but before they venture upon a harsh truth, they say: "We are aware that the people whom we are addressing are too superior to the weaknesses of human nature to lose the command of their temper for an instant. We should not hold this language if we were not speaking to men whom their virtues and their intelligence render more worthy of freedom than all the rest of the world." The syco-phant of Louis XIV could not flatter more dexterously.

For my part, I am persuaded that in all governments, whatever their nature may be, servility will cower to force, and adulation will follow power. The only means of preventing men from degrading themselves is to invest no one with that unlimited authority which is the sure method of debasing them.

The greatest dangers of the American republics proceed from the omnipotence of the majority. Democratic republics liable to perish from a misuse of their power, and not from impotence.—The governments of the American republics are more centralized and more energetic than those of the monarchies of Europe.—Dangers resulting from this.—Opinions of Madison and Jefferson upon this point.

Governments usually perish from impotence or from tyranny. In the former case, their power escapes from them; it is wrested from their grasp in the latter. Many observers who have witnessed the anarchy of democratic states have imagined that the government of those states was naturally weak and impotent. The truth is that when war is once begun between parties, the government loses its control over society. But I do not think that a democratic power is naturally without force or resources; say, rather, that it is almost always by the abuse of its force and the misemployment of its resources that it becomes a failure. Anarchy is almost always produced by its tyranny or its mistakes, but not by its want of strength.
It is important not to confuse stability with force, or the greatness of a thing with its duration. In democratic republics the power that directs society is not stable, for it often changes hands and assumes a new direction. But whichever way it turns, its force is almost irresistible. The governments of the American republics appear to me to be as much centralized as those of the absolute monarchies of Europe, and more energetic than they are. I do not, therefore, imagine that they will perish from weakness.

If ever the free institutions of America are destroyed, that event may be attributed to the omnipotence of the majority, which may at some future time urge the minorities to desperation and oblige them to have recourse to physical force. Anarchy will then be the result, but it will have been brought about by despotism.

Mr. Madison expresses the same opinion in The Federalist, No. 51. "It is of great importance in a republic, not only to guard the society against the oppression of its rulers, but to guard one part of the society against the injustice of the other part. Justice is the end of government. It is the end of civil society. It ever has been, and ever will be, pursued until it be obtained, or until liberty be lost in the pursuit. In a society, under the forms of which the stronger faction can readily unite and oppress the weaker, anarchy may as truly be said to reign as in a state of nature, where the weaker individual is not secured against the violence of the stronger: and as, in the latter state, even the stronger individuals are prompted by the uncertainty of their condition to submit to a government which may protect the weak as well as themselves, so, in the former state, will the more powerful factions be gradually induced by a like motive to wish for a government which will protect all parties, the weaker as well as the more powerful. It can be little doubted, that, if the State of Rhode Island was separated from the Confederacy and left to itself, the insecurity of right under the popular form of government within such narrow limits would be displayed by such reiterated oppressions of the factious majorities, that some power altogether independent of the people would soon be called for by the voice of the very factions whose misrule had proved the necessity of it."

Jefferson also said: "The executive power in our government is not the only, perhaps not even the principal, object of my solicitude. The tyranny of the legislature is really the danger most to be feared, and will continue to be so for many years to come. The tyranny of the executive power will come in its turn, but at a more distant period."

3 This power may be centralized in an assembly, in which case it will be strong without being stable; or it may be centralized in an individual, in which case it will be less strong, but more stable.

4 I presume that it is scarcely necessary to remind the reader here, as well as throughout this chapter, that I am speaking, not of the Federal government, but of the governments of the individual states, which the majority controls at its pleasure.
I am glad to cite the opinion of Jefferson upon this subject rather than that of any other, because I consider him the most powerful advocate democracy has ever had.

**AIDS TO STUDY**

Because this selection from de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (based on his tour of the United States in 1831) emphasizes a weakness in democratic government, it is well to know that de Tocqueville heartily accepted the principles of democracy and predicted the success of the American republic. But his analysis of American society was philosophical, and it was no part of his intention to inflate the claims that can be made for it.

1. Although de Tocqueville presents a close analysis of the idea of government by majority, his main point is quickly and clearly established in the first four paragraphs: the majority tyrannizes when it exceeds the limits of its authority. Where does de Tocqueville set those limits? Does he recognize some principle higher than that of a governing majority?

2. Why does he think that the main evil of democratic institutions lies not in their weakness but in their "irresistible strength"?

3. What is the point of the anecdote in the second footnote concerning the failure of Negroes to vote in Pennsylvania?

4. What limitations upon freedom of thought and expression does de Tocqueville find in America? Since he says that it is "unquestionably good" that antireligious and licentious books do not appear in America, why does he object to the "empire of the majority" in matters of opinion?

5. In discussing the "Effects of the Tyranny of the Majority upon the National Character of the Americans" de Tocqueville explains why a democracy is likely to be afflicted with cheap politicians, publicity-seekers, and demagogues. What is his explanation? Why does he call the fact "that American courtiers do not say 'Sire,' or 'Your Majesty,' a distinction without a difference"? Whom does he mean by "courtiers"? Does he believe that other forms of government would be free of these vices?

6. Why does de Tocqueville agree with Jefferson that the tyranny of the majority is more to be feared in the legislature than in the executive?

7. The next chapter of *Democracy in America* explains how the tyranny of the majority is minimized in the United States. Does the quotation from Madison suggest the means by which this might be attempted? (See also Madison's "The Control of Faction," in this book.)
After you, my dear Alphonse

Mrs. Wilson was just taking the gingerbread out of the oven when she heard Johnny outside talking to someone.

'Johnny,' she called, 'you're late. Come in and get your lunch.'

'Just a minute, Mother,' Johnny said. 'After you, my dear Alphonse.'

'After you, my dear Alphonse,' another voice said.

'No, after you, my dear Alphonse,' Johnny said.

Mrs. Wilson opened the door. 'Johnny,' she said, 'you come in this minute and get your lunch. You can play after you've eaten.'

Johnny came in after her, slowly. 'Mother,' he said, 'I brought Boyd home for lunch with me.'

'Boyd?' Mrs. Wilson thought for a moment. 'I don't believe I've met Boyd. Bring him in, dear, since you've invited him. Lunch is ready.'

'Boyd!' Johnny yelled. 'Hey, Boyd, come on in!'

'I'm coming. Just got to unload this stuff.'

'Well, hurry, or my mother'll be sore.'

'Johnny, that's not very polite to either your friend or your mother,' Mrs. Wilson said. 'Come sit down, Boyd.'

As she turned to show Boyd where to sit, she saw he was a Negro boy, smaller than Johnny but about the same age. His arms were loaded with split kindling wood. 'Where'll I put this stuff, Johnny?' he asked.

Mrs. Wilson turned to Johnny. 'Johnny,' she said, 'what did you make Boyd do? What is that wood?'

'Dead Japanese,' Johnny said mildly. 'We stand them in the ground and run over them with tanks.'

From The Lottery, or the Adventures of James Harris by Shirley Jackson. Copyright 1949 by Shirley Jackson. Copyright 1943 by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc. Used by permission of the publishers, Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, Inc.
‘How do you do, Mrs. Wilson?’ Boyd said.

‘How do you do, Boyd? You shouldn’t let Johnny make you carry all that wood. Sit down now and eat lunch, both of you.’

‘Why shouldn’t he carry the wood, Mother? It’s his wood. We got it at his place.’

‘Johnny,’ Mrs. Wilson said, ‘go on and eat your lunch.’

‘Sure,’ Johnny said. He held out the dish of scrambled eggs to Boyd.

‘After you, my dear Alphonse.’

‘After you, my dear Alphonse,’ Boyd said.

‘After you, my dear Alphonse,’ Johnny said. They began to giggle.

‘Are you hungry, Boyd?’ Mrs. Wilson asked.

‘Yes, Mrs. Wilson.’

‘Well, don’t you let Johnny stop you. He always fusses about eating, so you just see that you get a good lunch. There’s plenty of food here for you to have all you want.’

‘Thank you, Mrs. Wilson.’

‘Come on, Alphonse,’ Johnny said. He pushed half the scrambled eggs on to Boyd’s plate. Boyd watched while Mrs. Wilson put a dish of stewed tomatoes beside his plate.

‘Boyd don’t eat tomatoes, do you, Boyd?’ Johnny said.

‘Doesn’t eat tomatoes, Johnny. And just because you don’t like them, don’t say that about Boyd. Boyd will eat anything.’

‘Bet he won’t,’ Johnny said, attacking his scrambled eggs.

‘Boyd wants to grow up and be a big strong man so he can work hard,’ Mrs. Wilson said. ‘I’ll bet Boyd’s father eats stewed tomatoes.’

‘My father eats anything he wants to,’ Boyd said.

‘So does mine,’ Johnny said. ‘Sometimes he doesn’t eat hardly anything. He’s a little guy, though. Wouldn’t hurt a flea.’

‘Mine’s a little guy, too,’ Boyd said.

‘I’ll bet he’s strong, though,’ Mrs. Wilson said. She hesitated. ‘Does he . . . work?’

‘Sure,’ Johnny said. ‘Boyd’s father works in a factory.’

‘There, you see?’ Mrs. Wilson said. ‘And he certainly has to be strong to do that—all that lifting and carrying at a factory.’

‘Boyd’s father doesn’t have to,’ Johnny said. ‘He’s a foreman.’

Mrs. Wilson felt defeated. ‘What does your mother do, Boyd?’

‘My mother?’ Boyd was surprised. ‘She takes care of us kids.’

‘Oh. She doesn’t work, then?’

‘Why should she?’ Johnny said through a mouthful of eggs. ‘You don’t work.’

‘You really don’t want any stewed tomatoes, Boyd?’

‘No, thank you, Mrs. Wilson,’ Boyd said.

‘No, thank you, Mrs. Wilson, no, thank you, Mrs. Wilson, no, thank you, Mrs. Wilson,’ Johnny said. ‘Boyd’s sister’s going to work, though.
She's going to be a teacher.

'That's a very fine attitude for her to have, Boyd.' Mrs. Wilson restrained an impulse to pat Boyd on the head. 'I imagine you're all very proud of her?'

'I guess so,' Boyd said.

'What about all your other brothers and sisters? I guess all of you want to make just as much of yourselves as you can.'

'There's only me and Jean,' Boyd said. 'I don't know yet what I want to be when I grow up.'

'We're going to be tank drivers, Boyd and me,' Johnny said.

'Zoom.' Mrs. Wilson caught Boyd's glass of milk as Johnny's napkin ring, suddenly transformed into a tank, plowed heavily across the table.

'Look, Johnny,' Boyd said. 'Here's a foxhole. I'm shooting at you.'

Mrs. Wilson, with the speed born of long experience, took the gingerbread off the shelf and placed it carefully between the tank and the foxhole.

'Now eat as much as you want to, Boyd,' she said. 'I want to see you get filled up.'

'Boyd eats a lot, but not as much as I do,' Johnny said. 'I'm bigger than he is.'

'You're not much bigger,' Boyd said. 'I can beat you running.'

Mrs. Wilson took a deep breath. 'Boyd,' she said. Both boys turned to her. Boyd, Johnny has some suits that are a little too small for him, and a winter coat. It's not new, of course, but there's lots of wear in it still. And I have a few dresses that your mother or sister could probably use. Your mother can make them over into lots of things for all of you, and I'd be very happy to give them to you. Suppose before you leave I make up a big bundle and then you and Johnny can take it over to your mother right away . . .' Her voice trailed off as she saw Boyd's puzzled expression.

'But I have plenty of clothes, thank you,' he said. 'And I don't think my mother knows how to sew very well, and anyway I guess we buy about everything we need. Thank you very much, though.'

'We don't have time to carry that old stuff around, Mother,' Johnny said. 'We got to play tanks with the kids today.'

Mrs. Wilson lifted the plate of gingerbread off the table as Boyd was about to take another piece. 'There are many little boys like you, Boyd, who would be very grateful for the clothes someone was kind enough to give them.'

'Boyd will take them if you want him to, Mother,' Johnny said.

'I didn't mean to make you mad, Mrs. Wilson,' Boyd said.

'Don't think I'm angry, Boyd. I'm just disappointed in you, that's all. Now let's not say anything more about it.'

She began clearing the plates off the table, and Johnny took Boyd's
hand and pulled him to the door. 'Bye, Mother,' Johnny said. Boyd stood for a minute, staring at Mrs. Wilson's back.

'After you, my dear Alphonse,' Johnny said, holding the door open. 'Is your mother still mad?' Mrs. Wilson heard Boyd ask in a low voice. 'I don't know,' Johnny said. 'She's screwy sometimes.'

'So's mine,' Boyd said. He hesitated. 'After you, my dear Alphonse.'

AIDS TO STUDY

The title of the story is a phrase of comically exaggerated politeness, probably picked up by the boys from a movie or radio program. The point of the story emerges very clearly, but much of the interest of the story lies in the building up of small details that support the final disclosure of Mrs. Wilson's attitude.

1. Why does Mrs. Wilson assume that Johnny "made" Boyd carry the wood?
2. Why does she assume that Boyd will "eat anything"?
3. Why does she seem gratified to find that Boyd's father works in a factory?
4. Why does she "feel defeated" when she finds that his father is a foreman?
5. Carefully note each of the assumptions that Mrs. Wilson makes about Boyd's family and observe what happens to each of her assumptions.
6. Why does she lift the gingerbread off the table?
7. The author makes no interpretive comment upon the story. Should she? Why, or why not?
On the day the Daviccis moved into their house, Ethel was visited by a "Welcome Wagon" hostess bearing small gifts from local merchants, but after that by nobody for three weeks, only Ralph's relatives and door-to-door salesmen. And then Mrs. Hancock came smiling. They sat on the matching green chairs which glinted with threads of what appeared to be gold. In the picture window, the overstimulated plants grew wild in pots.

Mrs. Hancock had guessed right about Ethel and Ralph, that they were newlyweds. "Am I right in thinking you're of Swedish descent, Mrs. Davicky? You, I mean?"

Ethel smiled, as if taking a compliment, and said nothing. "I only ask because so many people in the neighborhood are. I'm not, myself," said Mrs. Hancock. She was unnaturally pink, with tinted blue hair. Her own sharp-looking teeth were transparent at the tips. "But you're so fair."

"My maiden name was Taylor," Ethel said. It was, and it wasn't—it was the name she'd got at the orphanage. Wanting a cigarette, she pushed the silver box on the coffee table toward Mrs. Hancock.

Mrs. Hancock used one of her purple claws to pry up the first cigarette from the top layer. "A good old American name like mine."

Like what? Ethel wanted to ask. Mrs. Hancock wasn't giving her maiden name, though.

"Is your husband in business, Mrs. Davicky?"

"Yes, he is." Ethel put the lighter—a simple column of silver, the mate to the box—to Mrs. Hancock's cigarette and then to her own.
“Not here in Blue Island?”

“No.” From here on, it could be difficult. Ralph was afraid that people in the neighborhood would disapprove of his business. “In Minneapolis.” The Mohawk Inn, where Ethel had worked as a waitress, was first-class—thick steaks, dark lights, an electric organ—but Ralph’s other places, for which his brothers were listed as the owners, were cut-rate bars on or near Washington Avenue. “He’s a distributor,” Ethel said, heading her off. “Non-alcoholic beverages mostly.” It was true. Ralph had taken over his family’s wholesale wine business, never much in Minneapolis, and got it to pay by converting to soft drinks.

Mrs. Hancock was noticing the two paintings which, because of their size and the lowness of the ceiling, hung two feet from the floor, but she didn’t comment on them. “Lovely, lovely,” she said, referring to the driftwood lamp in the picture window. A faraway noise came from her stomach. She raised her voice. “But you’ve been lonely, haven’t you? I could see it when I came in. It’s this neighborhood.”

“It’s very nice,” said Ethel quickly. Maybe Mrs. Hancock was at war with the neighbors, looking for an ally.

“I suppose you know Mrs. Nilgren,” said Mrs. Hancock, nodding to the left.

“No, but I’ve seen her. Once she waved.”

“She’s nice. Tied down with children, though,” Mrs. Hancock nodded to the right. “How about old Mrs. Mann?”

“I don’t think anybody’s there now.”

“The Manns are away! California. So you don’t know anybody yet?”

“No.”

“I’m surprised you haven’t met some of them at the Cashway.”

“I never go there,” Ethel said. “Ralph—that’s my husband—he wants me to trade at the home-owned stores.”

“Oh?” Mrs. Hancock’s stomach cut loose again. “I didn’t know people still felt that way.” Mrs. Hancock looked down the street, in the direction of the little corner store. “Do they do much business?”

“No,” said Ethel. The old couple who ran it were suspicious of her, she thought, for buying so much from them. The worst of it was that Ralph had told her to open a charge account, and she hadn’t, and she never knew when he’d stop there and try to use it. There was a sign up in the store that said: In God We Trust—All Others Pay Cash.

“I’ll bet that’s it,” Mrs. Hancock was saying. “I’m afraid people are pretty clannish around here—and the Wagners have so many friends. They live one-two-three-five houses down.” Mrs. Hancock had been counting the houses across the street. “Mr. Wagner’s the manager of the Cashway.”

Ethel was holding her breath.

“I’m afraid so,” said Mrs. Hancock.
Ethel sighed. It was Ralph's fault. She'd always wanted to trade at the Cashway.

Mrs. Hancock threw back her head, inhaling, and her eyelids, like a doll's, came down. "I'm afraid it's your move, Mrs. Davicky."

Ethel didn't feel that it was her move at all and must have shown it. Mrs. Hancock sounded impatient. "Invite 'em in. Have 'em in for a morning coffee."

"I couldn't do that," Ethel said. "I've never been to one." She'd only read about coffees in the women's magazines to which Ralph subscribed her. "I wouldn't know how."

"Nothing to it. Rolls, coffee, and come as you are. Of course nobody really does, not really." Mrs. Hancock's stomach began again. "Oh, shut up," she said to it. "I've just come from one too many." Mrs. Hancock made a face, showing Ethel a brown mohair tongue. She laughed at Ethel. "Cheer up. It wasn't in this neighborhood."

Ethel felt better. "I'll certainly think about it," she said.

Mrs. Hancock rose, smiling, and went over to the telephone. "You'll do it right now," she said, as though being an old woman entitled her to talk that way to Ethel. "They're probably dying to get inside this lovely house."

After a moment, Ethel, who was already on her feet, having thought that Mrs. Hancock was leaving, went over and sat down to telephone. In the wall mirror she saw how she must appear to Mrs. Hancock. When the doorbell had rung, she'd been in too much of a hurry to see who it was to do anything about her lips and hair. "Will they know who I am?"

"Of course." Mrs. Hancock squatted on the white leather hassock with the phone book. "And you don't have to say I'm coming. Oh, I'll come. I'll be more than happy to. You don't need me, though. All you need is confidence."

And Mrs. Hancock was right. Ethel called eight neighbors, and six could come on Wednesday morning, which Mrs. Hancock had thought would be the best time for her. Two of the six even sounded anxious to meet Ethel, and, surprisingly, Mrs. Wagner was one of these.

"You did it all yourself," said Mrs. Hancock.

"With your help," said Ethel, feeling indebted to Mrs. Hancock, intimately so. It was as if they'd cleaned the house together.

They were saying goodbye on the front stoop when Ralph rolled into the driveway. Ordinarily at noon he parked just outside the garage, but that day he drove in—without acknowledging them in any way. "Mr. Davechee," Ethel commented. For Mrs. Hancock, after listening to Ethel pronounce her name for all the neighbors, was still saying "Davicky."

Mrs. Hancock stayed long enough to get the idea that Ralph wasn't
going to show himself. She went down the front walk saying, "'Bye
now."

While Mrs. Hancock was getting into her car, which seemed a little
old for the neighborhood, Ralph came out of the garage.

Mrs. Hancock waved and nodded—which, Ethel guessed, was for
Ralph's benefit, the best Mrs. Hancock could do to introduce herself at
the distance. She drove off. Too late, Ralph's hand moved up to wave.
He stared after Mrs. Hancock's moving car with a look that just didn't
belong to him, Ethel thought, a look that she hadn't seen on his face
until they moved out to Blue Island.

During lunch, Ethel tried to reproduce her conversation with Mrs.
Hancock, but she couldn't tell Ralph enough. He wanted to know the
neighbors' names, and she could recall the names of only three. Mrs.
Wagner, one of them, was very popular in the neighborhood, and her
husband . . . "You go to the Cashway then. Some of 'em sounded all
right, huh?" "Ralph, they all sounded all right, real friendly. The man
next door sells insurance. Mr. Nilgren."

Ethel remembered that one of the husbands was a lawyer and told
Ralph that. He left the table. A few minutes later, Ethel heard him
driving away.

It had been a mistake to mention the lawyer to Ralph. It had made
him think of the shooting they'd had at the Bow Wow, one of the
joints. There had been a mixup, and Ralph's home address had appeared
in the back pages of one of the papers when the shooting was no longer
news. Ethel doubted that the neighbors had seen the little item. Ralph
might be right about the lawyer, though, who would probably have to
keep up with everything like that.

Ralph wouldn't have worried so much about such a little thing in the
old days. He was different now. It was hard to get him to smile. Ethel
could remember how he would damn the Swedes for slapping higher
and higher taxes on liquor and tobacco, but now, when she pointed out a
letter some joker had written to the paper suggesting a tax on coffee, or
when she showed him the picture of the wife of the Minnesota senator—
the fearless one—christening an ore boat with a bottle of milk, which
certainly should've given Ralph a laugh, he was silent.

It just made Ethel sick to see him at the windows, watching Mr. Nil-
gren, a sandy-haired, dim-looking man who wore plaid shirts and a red
cap in the yard. Mr. Nilgren would be raking out his hedge, or wiring
up the skinny little trees, or washing his car if it was Sunday morning,
and there Ralph would be, behind a drape. One warm day Ethel had
seen Mr. Nilgren in the yard with a golf club, and had said, "He should
get some of those little balls that don't go anywhere." It had been pain-
ful to see Ralph then. She could almost hear him thinking. He would
get some of those balls and give them to Mr. Nilgren as a present. No, it would look funny if he did. Then he got that sick look that seemed to come from wanting to do a favor for someone who might not let him do it.

A couple of days later Ethel learned that Ralph had gone to an indoor driving range to take golf lessons. He came home happy, with a club he was supposed to swing in his spare time. He'd made a friend too, another beginner. They were going to have the same schedule and be measured for clubs. During his second lesson, however, he quit. Ethel wasn't surprised, for Ralph, though strong, was awkward. She was better than he was with a hammer and nails, and he mutilated the heads of screws. He must have been badly surprised to discover he was just as bad when he went back the second time, after carrying the club around the house for three days. Ethel asked about the other beginner, and at first Ralph acted as though she'd made him up, and then he hotly rejected the word "friend," which she'd used. Finally he said, "If you ask me, that bastard's played before!"

That was just like him. At the coffee, Ethel planned to ask the women to come over soon with their husbands, but she was afraid some of the husbands wouldn't take to Ralph. Probably he could buy insurance from Mr. Nilgren. He would want to do something for the ones who weren't selling something, though—if there were any like that—and they might misunderstand Ralph. He was used to buying the drinks. He should relax and take the neighbors as they came. Or move.

She didn't know why they were there anyway. It was funny. After they were married, before they left on their honeymoon, Ralph had driven her out to Blue Island and walked her through the house. That was all there was to it. Sometimes she wondered if he'd won the house at cards. She didn't know why they were there when they could just as well be living at Minnetonka or White Bear where they could keep a launch like the one they'd hired in Florida—and where the houses were far apart and neighbors wouldn't matter so much. What were they waiting for? Some of the things they owned, she knew, were for later. They didn't need sterling for eighteen in Blue Island. And the two big pictures were definitely for later.

She didn't know what Ralph liked about his picture, which was of an Indian who looked all-in sitting on a horse that looked all-in, but he had gone to the trouble of ordering it from a regular art store. Hers was more cheerful, the palace of the Doge of Venice, Italy. Ralph hadn't wanted her to have it at first. He was really down on anything foreign. (There were never any Italian dishes on the menu at the Mohawk.) But she believed he liked her for wanting that picture, for having a weakness for things Italian, for him—and even for his father and mother whom he was always sorry to see and hadn't invited to the house. When they
came anyway, with his brothers, their wives and children (and wine, which Ralph wouldn't touch), Ralph was in and out, upstairs and down, never long in the same room with them, never encouraging them to stay when they started to leave. They called him "Rock" or "Rocky," but Ralph didn't always answer to that. To one of the little boys who had followed him down into the basement, Ethel had heard him growl, "The name's Ralph"—that to a nine-year-old. His family must have noticed the change in Ralph, but they were wrong if they blamed her, just because she was a little young for him, a blonde and not a Catholic—not that Ralph went to church. In fact, she thought Ralph would be better off with his family for his friends, instead of counting so much on the neighbors. She liked Ralph's family and enjoyed having them in the house.

And if Ralph's family hadn't come around, the neighbors might even think they weren't properly married, that they had a love nest going there. Ethel didn't blame the neighbors for being suspicious of her and Ralph. Mr. Nilgren in his shirt and cap that did nothing for him, he belonged there, but not Ralph, so dark, with his dark blue suits, pearl grey hats, white jacquard shirts—and with her, with her looks and platinum hair. She tried to dress down, to look like an older woman, when she went out. The biggest thing in their favor, but it wasn't noticeable yet, was the fact that she was pregnant.

Sometimes she thought Ralph must be worrying about the baby—as she was—about the kind of life a little kid would have in a neighborhood where his father and mother didn't know anybody. There were two pre-school children at the Nilgrens'. Would they play with the Davicci kid? Ethel didn't ever want to see that sick look of Ralph's on a child of hers.

That afternoon two men in white overalls arrived from Minneapolis in a white truck and washed the windows, inside and out, including the basement and garage. Ralph had sent them. Ethel sat in the dining room and polished silver to the music of Carmen on records. She played whole operas when Ralph wasn't home.

In bed that night Ralph made her run through the neighbors again. Seven for sure, counting Mrs. Hancock. "Is that all?" Ethel said she was going to call the neighbor who hadn't been home. "When?" When she got the number from Mrs. Hancock. "When's that?" When Mrs. Hancock phoned, if she phoned . . . and that was where Ralph believed Ethel had really fallen down. She didn't have Mrs. Hancock's number—or address—and there wasn't a Hancock listed for Blue Island in the phone book. "How about next door?" Mrs. Nilgren was still coming. "The other side?" The Manns were still away, in California, and Ralph knew it. "They might come back. Ever think of that? You don't wanna
leave them out." *They*, he'd said, showing Ethel what was expected of her. He wanted those husbands. Ethel promised to watch for the return of the Manns. "They could come home in the night," Ethel reminded Ralph that a person in her condition needed a lot of sleep, and Ralph left her alone then.

Before Ralph was up the next morning, Ethel started to clean the house. Ralph was afraid the house-cleaning wouldn't be done right (he spoke of her condition) and wanted to get another crew of professionals out from Minneapolis. Ethel said it wouldn't look good. She said the neighbors expected them to do their own house-cleaning—and *window washing*. Ralph shut up.

When he came home for lunch, Ethel was able to say that Mrs. Hancock had called and that the neighbor who hadn't been home could come to the coffee. Ethel had talked to her, and she had sounded very friendly. "That's three of 'em, huh?" Ethel was tired of that one, but told him they'd *all* sounded friendly to her. "Mrs. Hancock okay?" Mrs. Hancock was okay. More than happy to be coming. Ralph asked if Ethel had got Mrs. Hancock's phone number and address. No. "Why not?" Mrs. Hancock would be there in the morning. That was why—and Ralph should get a hold on himself.

In the afternoon, after he was gone, Ethel put on one of her new conservative dresses and took the bus to Minneapolis to buy some Swedish pastry. She wanted something better than she could buy in Blue Island. In the window of the store where they'd bought Ralph's Indian, there were some little miniatures, lovely New England snow scenes. She hesitated to go in when she saw the sissy clerk was on duty again. He had made Ralph sore, asking how he'd like to have the Indian framed in birch bark. The Mohawk was plastered with birch bark, and Ralph thought the sissy recognized him and was trying to be funny. "This is going into my home!" Ralph had said and ordered the gold frame costing six times as much as the Indian. However, he'd taken the sissy's advice about having a light put on it. Ethel hesitated, but she went in. In his way, the sissy was very nice, and Ethel went home with five little Old English prints. When she'd asked about the pictures in the window, the New England ones, calling them "landscapes," he'd said "snowscapes" and looked disgusted, as if they weren't what she should want.

When she got home, she hung the prints over the sofa where there was a blank space, and they looked fine in their shiny black frames. She didn't say anything to Ralph, hoping he'd notice them, but he didn't until after supper. "Hey, what is this?" he said. He bounced off the sofa, confronting her. "Ralph, they're cute!" "Not in my home!" "Ralph, they're humorous!" The clerk had called them that. But Ralph called them drunks and whores. He had Ethel feeling ashamed of herself. It was hard to believe that she could have felt they were just fat and funny
and just what their living room needed, as the clerk had said. Ralph took them down. “Man or woman sell ’em to you?” Ethel, seeing what he had in mind, knew she couldn’t tell him where she’d got them. She lied. “I was in Dayton’s . . .” “A woman—all right, then you take ’em back!”

She was scared. Something like that was enough to make Ralph regret marrying her—and to remind her again that she couldn’t have made him. If there had been a showdown between them, he would’ve learned about her first pregnancy. It would’ve been easy for a lawyer to find out about that. She’d listened to an old doctor who’d told her to go ahead and have it, that she’d love her little baby, who hadn’t lived, but there would be a record anyway. She wasn’t sorry about going to a regular hospital to have it, though it made it harder for her now, having that record. She’d done what she could for the baby. She hated to think of the whole thing, but when she did, as she did that evening, she knew she’d done her best.

It might have been a bad evening for her, with Ralph brooding on her faults, if a boy hadn’t come to the door selling chances on a raffle. Ralph bought all the boy had, over five dollars’ worth, and asked where he lived in the neighborhood. “I live in Minneapolis.” “Huh? Whatcha doin’ way out here then?” The boy said it was easier to sell chances out there. Ethel, who had been doing the dishes, returned to the sink before Ralph could see her. He went back to his Reader’s Digest, and she slipped off to bed, early, hoping his mind would be occupied with the boy if she kept out of sight.

He came to bed after the ten o’clock news. “You awake?” Ethel, awake, but afraid he wanted to talk neighbors, moaned remotely. “If anybody comes to the door sellin’ anything, make sure it’s somebody local.”

In the morning, Ralph checked over the silver and china laid out in the dining room and worried over the pastry. “Fresh?” Fresh! She’d put it in the deep freeze right away and it hadn’t even thawed out yet. “Is that all?” That was all, and it was more than enough. She certainly didn’t need a whole quart of whipping cream. “Want me to call up for something to go with this?” No. “Turkey or a ham? I maybe got time to go myself if I go right now.” He carried on like that until ten o’clock, when she got rid of him, saying, “You wouldn’t want to be the only man, Ralph.”

Then she was on her own, wishing Mrs. Hancock would come early and see her through the first minutes.

But Mrs. Wagner was the first to arrive. After that, the neighbors seemed to ring the bell at regular intervals. Ethel met them at the door, hung their coats in the hall closet, returning each time to Mrs. Wagner in the kitchen. They were all very nice, but Mrs. Wagner was the nicest.

“Now let’s just let everything be,” she said after they’d arranged the
food in the dining room. "Let's go in and meet your friends."
They found the neighbors standing before the two pictures. Ethel
snapped on the spot lights. She heard little cries of pleasure all around.
"Heirlooms!"
"Is Mr. Davitchy a collector?"
"Just likes good things, huh?"
"I just love this lamp."
"I just stare at it when I go by."
"So do I."

Ethel, looking at her driftwood lamp, her plants, and beyond, stood
in a haze of pleasure. Earlier, when she was giving her attention to Mrs.
Nilgren (who was telling about the trouble "Carl" had with his trees),
Ethel had seen Ralph's car cruise by, she thought, and now again, but
this time there was no doubt of it. She recognized the rather old one
parked in front as Mrs. Hancock's, but where was Mrs. Hancock?
"Hello, everybody!"

Mrs. Hancock had let herself in, and was hanging up her coat.

Ethel disappeared into the kitchen. She carried the coffee pot, which
had been on low, into the dining room where they were supposed to
come and help themselves. She stood by the pot, nervous, ready to pour,
hoping that someone would look in and see that she was ready, but no
one did.

She went to see what they were doing. They were still sitting down,
listening to Mrs. Hancock. She'd had trouble with her car. That was
why she was late. She saw Ethel. "I can see you want to get started,"
she said, rising. "So do I."

Ethel returned to the dining room and stood by the coffee pot.

Mrs. Hancock came first. "Starved," she said. She carried off her
coffee, roll, and two of the little Swedish cookies, and Ethel heard her
in the living room rallying the others.

They came then, quietly, and Ethel poured. When all had been
served, she started another pot of coffee, and took her cup and a cookie
—she wasn't hungry—into the living room.

Mrs. Hancock, sitting on the hassock, had a bottle in her hand. On
the rug around her were some brushes and one copper pan. "Ladies," she
was saying, "now here's something new." Noticing Ethel, Mrs. Hancock
picked up the pan. "How'd you like to have this for your kitchen? Here."

Ethel crossed the room. She carried the pan back to where she'd been
standing.

"This is no ordinary polish," continued Mrs. Hancock, shaking the
bottle vigorously. "This is what is known as liquefied ointment. It
possesses rare medicinal properties. It renews wood. It gives you a base
for polishing—something to shine that simply wasn't there before. There's
nothing like it on the market—not in the polish field. It's a Shipshape product, and you all know what that means." Mrs. Hancock opened the bottle and dabbed at the air. "Note the handy applicator." Snatching a cloth from her lap, she rubbed the leg of the coffee table—"remove all foreign matter first"—and dabbed at the leg with the applicator. "This does for wood what liniment does for horses. It relaxes the grain, injects new life, soothes the wood. Well, how do you like it?" she called over to Ethel.

Ethel glanced down at the pan, forgotten in her hand.

"Pass it around," said Mrs. Hancock.

Ethel offered the pan to Mrs. Nilgren, who was nearest.

"I’ve seen it, thanks."

Ethel moved to the next neighbor.

"I’ve seen it."

Ethel moved on. "Mrs. Wagner, have you?"

"Many times"—with a smile.

Ethel looked back where she’d been standing before she started out with the pan—and went the other way, finally stepping into the hallway. There she saw a canvas duffle bag on the side of which was embossed a pennant flying the word SHIPSHAPE. And hearing Mrs. Hancock—"And this is new, girls. Can you all see from where you’re sitting?"—Ethel began to move again. She kept right on going.

Upstairs, in the bedroom, lying down, she noticed the pan in her hand. She shook it off. It hit the headboard of the bed, denting the traditional mahogany, and came to rest in the satin furrow between Ralph’s pillow and hers. Oh, God! In a minute, she’d have to get up and go down to them and do something . . . but then she heard the coat hangers banging back empty in the closet downstairs, and the front door opening and, finally, closing. There was a moment of perfect silence in the house before her sudden sob, then another moment, before she heard someone coming, climbing the carpeted stairs.

Ethel foolishly thought it would be Mrs. Wagner, but of course it was Mrs. Hancock, after her pan.

She tiptoed into the room, adjusted the venetian blind, and seated herself lightly on the edge of the bed. "Don’t think I don’t know how you feel," she said. "Not that it shows yet. I wasn’t sure, dear." She looked into Ethel’s eyes, frightening her.

As though only changing positions, Ethel moved the hand that Mrs. Hancock was after.

"My ointment would fix that, restore the surface," said Mrs. Hancock, her finger searching the little wound in the headboard. She began to explain, gently—like someone with a terrible temper warming up: "When we first started having these little Shipshape parties, they didn’t tell each other. They do now, oh yes, or they would if I’d let them. I’m onto
them. They’re just in it for the mops now. You get one, you know, for having the party in your home. It’s collapsible, ideal for the small home or travel. But the truth is you let me down! Why, when you left the room the way you did, you didn’t give them any choice. Why, I don’t think there’s one of that crowd—with the exception of May Wagner—that isn’t using one of my free mops! Why, they just walked out on me!”

Ethel, closing her eyes, saw Mrs. Hancock alone, on the hassock, with her products all around her.

“It’s a lot of pan for the money,” Mrs. Hancock was saying now. She reached over Ethel’s body for it. “You’ll love your little pan,” she said, fondling it.

Ethel’s eyes were resisting Mrs. Hancock, but her right hand betrayed her.

“Here?” Mrs. Hancock opened a drawer, took out a purse, and handed it over, saying, “Only $12.95.”

Ethel found a five and a ten.

“You do want the ointment, don’t you? The pan and the large bottle come to a little more than this, but it’s not enough to worry about.”

Mrs. Hancock got up, apparently to leave.

Ethel thought of something. “You do live in Blue Island, don’t you?” Ralph would be sure to ask about that—if she had to tell him. And she would!

“Not any more, thank God.”

Ethel nodded. She wasn’t surprised.

Mrs. Hancock, at the door, peeked out—reminding Ethel of a bored visitor looking for a nurse who would tell her it was time to leave the patient. “I’ll leave your ointment and mop downstairs,” she said. “I just know everything’s going to be all right.” Then she smiled and left.

When, toward noon, Ethel heard Ralph come into the driveway, she got out of bed, straightened the spread, and concealed the pan in the closet. She went to the window and gazed down upon the crown of his pearl grey hat. He was carrying a big club of roses.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. What function is served in the story by the mention of the matching green chairs, the “overstimulated plants,” and the driftwood lamp? Why does Ethel think that the sterling silver and the two pictures are “for later”?

2. Why has Ralph insisted that Ethel trade at the corner grocery, and why does he later change his mind? Why does Ralph take golf lessons and then abandon them?

3. What evidence points to the quality of the relationship between Ralph and Ethel? What is revealed by Ethel’s attitude toward Ralph’s relatives and by the incident of the “five little Old English prints”?

4. After the arrival of Mrs. Hancock at the coffee party, the narrator gives
only slight indications of what Ethel is feeling. Does this diminish or increase your awareness of what she is undergoing? Find the points at which Ethel's feelings are directly revealed.

5. Why does Ethel buy the pan and the ointment?

Carl Becker

SOME GENERALITIES THAT STILL GLITTER

I

Not so long ago one of my lively-minded colleagues invited me to provide democracy with an ideology. The need for one, he said, was urgent. He maintained that in the conflict between the democratic and the totalitarian states the great advantage of the latter was that they united their subjects by centering their activities on something beyond their personal interests, on a common ideal end which, however fantastic and unreal it might be, they could pursue with profound conviction. I reminded him that democracy already had an ideology, and a very good one. To which he replied: "True enough, it has one, and in the great crusading days it was a good one because men were then willing to sacrifice themselves for it. But it has ceased to be effective because it has ceased to be a living faith. We accept it perfunctorily, and with reservations, which means that we only half believe in it after all. What is needed is a restatement of the democratic faith, such as you could make. Whether the statement be strictly true or not doesn't greatly matter. What matters is that it should include those points which the adherents of democracy can agree upon, and be formulated in such a way that it will sound real and convincing, so that we can go all out for it." My colleague, needless to say, is an Englishman.

Being an Englishman, he could understand the difficulty and at the same time appreciate the advantage of being able to go all out for something. He could also understand the futility of constructing ideologies out of hand. His suggestion that I should thus construct one was, of

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course, not seriously meant. It was inspired by the strong desire on his part to be able to go all out against fascism and communism, and was, in effect, nothing more than a dialectical device for getting me to argue the question. Yet in his main contention he was serious enough, and his main contention was a sound one. We do accept democracy somewhat perfunctorily—less so now that Hitler has brought into strong relief its essential virtues, but still rather from habit than from profound conviction. Long familiarity with democracy as a going concern, by disclosing its glaring defects and discords, has bred in many quarters a half-cynical skepticism which is alternately directed against the democratic reality as something scarcely worth preserving, and against the ideal as something impossible to achieve. The result is that if we go all out for the reality we are in danger of being thought hypocritical, while if we go all out for the ideal we are sure to be thought naive. We can therefore only accept democracy with reservations, and it is difficult indeed to go all out for reservations.

This is the normal price paid by all religious and social systems for success and long life. Having conquered the world, they are subdued to it. The ideological faiths that originally gave them intellectual coherence and moral support, being gradually assimilated to the worldly conventions, come to be accepted as a matter of course, without serious reservations perhaps, but at least without the disturbing zeal engendered by deep conviction. If then, under the stress of profound discords in the system, the ideology is subjected to skeptical criticism and analysis, it is likely to fade away into the realm of myth, leaving nothing but inertia or naked force to preserve the system from decay or destruction.

Since primitive times most religious and social systems have attempted to avoid this fate by forbidding free criticism and analysis, either of the established institutions or of the doctrines that sustain them. Democracy is the one system that cannot employ this method of self-preservation, since the cardinal principle of its ideology is that free criticism and analysis by all and sundry is the highest virtue. Democracy, if it be consistent, must welcome the critical examination, not only of its current institutions and policies but even of the fundamental assumptions on which it rests. Democracy is thus a stupendous gamble for the highest stakes. It offers long odds on the capacity of the human mind. It wagers all it has that the freest exercise of the human reason will never disprove the proposition that only by the freest exercise of the human reason can a tolerably just and rational society ever be established.

The play is still going on, the outcome of the wager is still uncertain, but the gamble seems now a more desperate one than it did a century ago. During the last hundred years, the assumptions of the democratic faith have been subjected to the freest possible and the most penetrating critical examination; and the result is to leave us somewhat doubtful, not
perhaps of the capacity of the human mind at its best, but certainly of
the capacity of the average human mind to perceive that which is true
and to cleave to that which is good. Our doubt in this respect arises in
part from the fact that our conception of human reason, of its capacity
to devise a rational system of law and government, and of the part it
plays in shaping the conduct of men, is in certain important respects
different from that which inspired the early prophets and protagonists
of democracy.

In the early nineteenth century the adherents of democracy were apt
to say, with an air of saying everything, that democracy is a govern-
ment by laws and not a government by men. They were, of course,
aware of the fact that since laws are made by men even a government
by laws must in the last analysis be a government by men. Nevertheless,
the distinction remained for them valid and all-important. For them a
government by men was one in which the people were subject to the
irresponsible will of one man or a few, registered in decisions that need
not be justified and could be changed at any time. A government by
laws, on the contrary, was one in which the people were subject to rules
known beforehand and not easily changed—rules having a general or
universal validity because they derived, not from the irresponsible will
of individuals, but from the collective reason impersonally applied to the
particular or the general situation. For the men of that time a government
by men was personal and arbitrary government; a government by laws
was impersonal and rational government.

This clear-cut distinction was real and convincing to the men of that
time because it was based upon a particular conception of reason and
law. For the eighteenth-century philosopher, reason was, so to speak, a
bit of universal intelligence placed within the individual man to make
manifest to him the universal reason implicit in things and events. Any
man might, indeed, act contrary to reason, since he might be misled by
insufficient knowledge, or corrupted by nonrational impulses. But "re-a-
son," was something apart from these impulses, a possession of man but
not an integral part of him, a kind of impersonal spiritual compass, care-
fully insulated in a box set behind the eyes, to serve as an undeflectable
and entirely reliable guide to correct thinking and right conduct.

II

This way of regarding man and the universe, so real and convincing
to Rousseau and Volney, to Godwin and Shelley, to Mazzini, with
qualifications even to Bentham and the Mills, is no longer possible for
us. "The rational, right-thinking man," as Max Lerner says, "has as
surely ceased to be considered the center of our intellectual system as
the earth has ceased to be considered the center of the planetary system."
For good or ill, we can no longer think of the universe as having been constructed by a benevolent intelligence to be the safe and adequately endowed playground for the education of mankind. For good or ill, we must think of the world not as a creation but as a self-conditioned becoming. For good or ill, we must think of man as part of that becoming, an animal organism which has slowly emerged, without instructions or credentials, from a universe as unaware of him as of itself, and as indifferent to his fate as to its own. Unable any longer to regard man as the favorite child of God, obliged to see him only as part of an evolutionary process, we must assume that, like other animal organisms, he is what he successively becomes, and that his mind, like the rest of him, is at any moment what his biological and cultural inheritance and the conditions of time and place have made it.

In the measure that these assumptions determined the course of thought, intelligence and reason lost their sovereign rights and commanding position. By gradual stages the notion of intelligence as a universal activating agency behind men and events was first transformed and then dispensed with altogether, in as much as, after Darwin and Freud, a purely material process was found adequate to give an account of, if not to account for, the intricacies of biological and psychological phenomena. But if all could be understood in terms of material process, then mind must be a part of the process—a “survival product” appearing in certain organisms because useful to them, and useful to them because, by facilitating their adjustment to environment, it enabled them to attain desired ends. In this account of things, “reason” could be adequately explained as a function of the organism’s total activity, and “truth” as a coherent integration of activities that proved successful in attaining the ends desired. Thus the reasonings of the conscious mind, ceasing to be the voice of God or a reflection of universal intelligence, could be regarded as in some sense the docile agent and front of the subconscious, serving the individual by providing him with “good reasons” for doing what his submerged and unplumbed desires impelled him to do.

With the universe thus divested of rational purpose, and the mind of man reduced to a biological character, ideas could no longer be properly understood apart from the conditions of time and place in which they appeared. Ideas, in the realm of law and government more especially, so far from being ideal forms laid away in heaven to be apprehended by pure contemplation, came to be regarded as in some sense weapons employed in the mundane conflict for attaining practical ends. To determine the truth of an idea in the world of logical concepts was less important than to estimate its function in the world of social relations; and to estimate its function, it was necessary to know what individual or group interests inspired it, what unexamined presuppositions in the pre-
vailing climate of opinion provided it with intellectual credit, and what measure of success or failure it encountered in the competitive struggle for existence and survival. To understand an idea it was then, above all, necessary to relate its history, and so identify it as thirteenth century or eighteenth century, German or English, conservative or liberal, bourgeois or proletarian. In the realm of law and government, ideas could best be regarded as ideologies, performing a necessary function in the particular social situation which gave birth to them, but inevitably losing much of their point and relevance as the situation was transformed.

In this climate of opinion, the cardinal doctrines of the democratic faith could be most conveniently apprehended as an ideology in relation to the conflicts of a bygone revolutionary age. They could be taken neither as true nor false, but either as "glittering generalities," incapable of realization, or as "bourgeois ideas," "cultural constructs" emerging from a capitalist economy because suited to the interests of a ruling class. It ceased to be self-evident that all men were endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, although one could understand why the idea seemed to Jefferson and his compatriots a good one at the time. Far more self-evident was the conclusion that man, being the only creator, could be endowed with such rights only as he might from time to time win for himself in the competitive struggle for advantage and security. Democracy was what it turned out to be—something to be taken not as an ideal projection of immutable truths but as an imperfect and mutable going concern. As a going concern, it could be supported on its merits as desirable, but only with reservations which allowed for the certainty that the particular institutional forms through which it functioned would inevitably be transformed by the impact of novel social conditions.

In a world in which reason was a fallible instrument, law could not be the expression of infallible principles. Natural law, once regarded as an objective transcendent entity, assumed the character of a temporary if useful hypothesis having such validity only as positive law and custom conferred upon it. Constitutions ceased to be sacrosanct, and so far from being regarded as impregnable bulwarks of universal rights could only be understood as documents historically conditioned, the imperfect and temporary products of time and place. Reason in the law, whether constitutional or no, was not found but placed there by judges and legislators, who might be austere but were certainly not disembodied. Judges and legislators, like other men, arrived at their decisions not by the impersonal application of abstract reason to the situation but by estimating the social consequences of alternative decisions and finding suitable reasons for justifying the one that seemed to them most expedient. Judges were legislators too, so that to comprehend the opinion of a judge it was less essential to examine his logic than his premises—the unconscious pre-
suppositions that derived from the economic interests and social status of the class to which he belonged. Reason in the law was but the reasoning of fallible and interested men, and government by laws turned out, after all, to be government by men—government which, in democratic countries, might be cynically defined as government of the people, by the politicians, for whatever pressure groups could get their interests attended to.

III

These “anti-intellectual” assumptions as to the nature of man and the mind of man were the chief contribution of scientific investigation and disinterested critical analysis to the social thinking of the late nineteenth century. Upon semiscientific and popular thought their effect, intensified by the disruptive social experience of the time, was by and large disillusioning. All the assured traditional foundations of law and morality seemed to be crumbling away; and, as usually happens in periods of intellectual reorientation, the new ideas were apprehended and made use of in their crudest and least defensible form. It was readily supposed that if reason was an instrument biologically developed to serve the interests of the organism, its pronouncements could never be disinterested; that if truth was relative, nothing could be really true; that if morals varied with the customs of time and place, any custom that got itself established was moral, and one system of morality as good as another; that if ideas were inspired by individual or class interest, the success of an idea in promoting individual or class interest was the only test of its validity. In the crude form that the existence and pressure of the fact carry their own justification, the assumption that ideas are weapons was itself a weapon which could be put to work in the world of practical affairs; and it was notably and effectively employed to rationalize, and had the effect of intensifying, the two major conflicts of the time—the social conflict within the nations, and the imperial and military conflict between them.

The competitive scramble for the exploitation of “backward countries” was at best a sordid affair, difficult to justify on democratic principles. For the sentimental the notion that it was the “white man’s burden” to bring the blessings of Christian civilization to such benighted people as the Filipinos and the Chinese served well enough, but for the tough-minded something more realistic was required. The realistic justification, deriving from the Darwinian theory of struggle for existence and survival of the fittest, was provided by works maintaining the thesis, with a formidable show of scholarship, that the perpetual struggle of the races is the law of history, while perpetual peace is the dream of idealists. In more palatable form, this thesis was maintained by a multitude of writers in every country—for example, by the Reverend James Ram,
who celebrated the virtues of war in developing combativeness and the capacity to suffer, and thereby giving rise to the “continual replacing of inferior types of men” by the more capable; by the eminent English scientist, Karl Pearson, who maintained that history disclosed only one way in which a high degree of civilization had ever been developed, namely, by “the struggle of race with race, and the survival of the physically and mentally fitter race”; by Treitschke and Bernhardi, Theodore Roosevelt and Captain Alfred Mahan, and by an anonymous writer in The Seven Seas Magazine, who declared that it was the peculiar duty and merit of Americans, as the highest type of imperial master, “to expand, to found colonies, to get richer and richer by every proper means, such as armed conquest, commerce, and diplomacy.” Not only in Germany but in all democratic countries the people were indoctrinated with this “new imperialist” philosophy, the essence of which was that ideas are the servants of power, and justice is the interest of the stronger.

Meantime, the embittered social conflict within the nations was rationalized on essentially the same principles. The cardinal doctrines of Marx were two: first, that the social structure at any time, together with its supercargo of institutions and ideas, was fundamentally conditioned by the economic factors of production and distribution; second, that social change, or progress, was the result not of a conflict of ideas but of a conflict of economic interests, a conflict between the ruling and the dispossessed classes. Not by the persuasive force of ideas but only by the impersonal pressure of economic conditions could the ruling class ever be dispossessed, or the institutions and ideas through which its power functioned ever be transformed. The Marxian doctrines provided a persuasive ideology for the oppressed working classes, whose hopes were persistently defeated by democracy as a going concern. Its analysis of the capitalist economy justified their grievances, while its philosophy of history assured them that, in employing their collective power to gain their immediate ends or ultimately to destroy the existing social structure, they were supported by the indefeasible forces that shape human destiny. It rested upon the assumption that social ideas, both bourgeois and proletarian, were social products, weapons employed in the class conflict, the validity of which could be measured only in terms of their success in sustaining or transforming the existing social structure. If, in the conflict between the bourgeois and proletarian classes, the proletarians were successful, the superior truth and relevance of proletarian ideas would thereby be demonstrated.

In various ways, and in crude and attenuated forms, the implications of these philosophies became implicit in the attitude of common men who were innocent of philosophy and unaware of implications. In this connection, something must be credited to the incessant preoccupation with machines and the machine process, which confirmed common men in a
native disposition to take a literal and pragmatic view of life. The hand of man is subdued to what it works in, and the mind admires what the hand can accomplish. Modern man is, therefore, enamored of mechanical force. Fascinated by the delicate precision and sheer power of the devices he has invented, he is disposed to use them for doing whatever by their aid can be done, in the confident expectation that what can be done with such clean efficiency must be worth doing. He finds it easier, and far more exhilarating, to extend his personality by driving seventy miles an hour than to deepen his understanding by mastering the Critique of Practical Reason. And since he cares much for the machines, while they care nothing for him, he must adjust his activities and his thinking to their virtues and limitations. Their virtue is to release on demand a measurable mechanical force; their limitation is to be wholly indifferent to the use that is made of that force. Not being on the side of the angels, they remain impassive in the presence of righteous indignation, wishful thinking, and the moral imperative, but they respond without prejudice or comment or ethical reservations to mechanical power properly applied. The attitude of the machine is insensibly communicated to the man who uses it. If he would use it at all, he must use it on its own terms. He, too, must dispense with wishful thinking and the moral imperative, must learn how to accommodate himself to the fact, to yield to the pressure of what is, of what can be done in the world, without wasting valuable time in wishing that it might be different from what it turns out to be.

This literal and pragmatic attitude toward life was admirably suited to survival in the accelerating tempo of a complicated technological society. The ruthless competition for profits and jobs, the organized technique required for success in advertising and high-powered salesmanship, the hectic struggle for survival or arrival in the business world, in political life, in the professions, even in scholarship and the arts, imposed upon men an ever more insistent demand to be efficient, to make good by delivering the goods, by approved methods if possible, but at all events to deliver the goods—or else! Not the right-thinking man but the man who had what it takes was likely to be preferred and awarded the prize. Under this pressure, the disposition would be to allow the man who had what it takes to take what he had, to think him good enough if he was good enough to get by with it. Confronted with the accomplished fact in almost any situation in life, the disposition would be to be satisfied with the casual judgment, “that’s that,” and go on from there. Protests against it on the ground that it ought not to be, that it contravened some established principle of law or justice or morality, could always be most simply disposed of by an abrupt and disconcerting “So what?”
IV

The trend of thought variously known as anti-intellectualism, relativism, activism, assumes its crudest and least defensible form in the dictum of Thrasymachus that “might makes right, justice is the interest of the stronger.” For more than half a century this doctrine, in more or less diluted form, has slowly, insidiously, not altogether unashamed, warped itself into the fabric of democratic thought and practice; and now, under pressure of economic collapse and social frustration, it has been exalted to the level of a complete philosophy of life in certain countries which have frankly abandoned democratic institutions. In their theoretical exposition of ultimate aims, both communism and fascism pay tribute to certain ideal values—the welfare and happiness of the community, the progress of mankind—which are assumed to be in some mystical fashion identified with an abstract entity, called in the one case the dialectic of history, in the other the totalitarian state. Yet both assume that the abstract entity is realized in the activities of an inspired leader to whom the truth has been revealed and the direction of affairs committed; and as they exhibit themselves in action under the leader both represent a direct attack upon intelligence, an unqualified denial of any obligation to be guided by rational thinking or humane dealing. Both assume that the individual man has no importance except as an instrument to be used, with whatever degree of brutality may be necessary, for the common good as the leader understands it. Both subordinate reason to will, identify law and morality with naked force as an instrument of will, and accord value to the disinterested search for truth only in so far as the leader judges it to be momentarily useful for the attainment of immediate political ends. Herein the anti-intellectual, relativist trend of thought reaches a final, fantastic form: truth and morality turn out to be relative to the purposes of any egocentric somnambulist who can succeed, by a ruthless projection of his personality, in creating the power to impose his unrestrained will upon the world.

Hitler and Stalin represent an exorbitant price for a little wisdom. But they have at least done something to strengthen the cause of democracy. More than anything else in recent years, their incredible sophistries and ruthless brutalities have revealed to us the advantages of democratic institutions and the reality of the rational and humane values that are traditionally associated with them. The Declaration of Independence may now be referred to without apology, and even policemen on the beat are becoming dimly aware that there is such a thing as the Bill of Rights. What associations for the defense of civil liberties could not accomplish, Hitler and Stalin have in some measure accomplished; and they have accomplished it by frankly accepting, ruthlessly applying, and thereby reducing to an absurdity the principle that law and morality are nothing more than the right of the stronger.
The absurdity is that this principle, accepted with the moral obtuseness and applied with the cynical brutality of the Hitlers and the Stalins, eliminates from the world those rational and humane values which for more than two thousand years men have commonly accepted as the test of civilized living, however little their actual conduct may have conformed to them. The exertion of brute force is a fact which we cannot ignore; but to justify the brute fact by its existence and pressure is to end with no means of distinguishing fact from illusion, since illusion is a fact the existence of which is undeniable and the pressure of which may be immense. Might and right are discordant and incommensurable terms, and while it is necessary to submit to that which is stronger, there is nothing which men have more persistently or universally denied than that it is right to approve of it for that reason. To say that justice is the right of the stronger is to dispense with right and justice altogether. There is then nothing but the fact, or rather nothing but what is, which is neither good nor bad, fact nor illusion, but merely that which is "existential," as the philosophers say. There is then no place for law or morality. There is then no place for reason, even as an instrument functionally developed to serve the interest of a biological organism. For if reason is a functional instrument, then it must have a function, and what function can it have if it be not to discriminate the relatively true from the relatively false, the dependable fact from the deceptive illusion, in order that the organism may pursue the better rather than the less good interest? Granted that reason is an instrument developed to serve the interest of the organism, the chief service it can perform is to determine which of many interests it is best for the organism to pursue. The choice in any particular instance may be a good one, but whether it is so or not cannot be determined by the fact that the organism has chosen to respond to a purely egoistic impulse and has exhibited the power required to gratify it.

It does not matter that we cannot share the belief of an earlier generation in the easy triumph of the right-thinking man. We may still believe in his triumph. We may admit that mind is an integral part of the animal organism, and that the pronouncements of reason are subtly shaped by subconscious desire and emotion. We may admit it, and we should admit it gladly, since to know the limitations of reason is to increase its power in the long run. If we know (and we knew it long before Freud) that the wish is father to the thought, that the heart has reasons that reason knows not of, it was, after all, reason that revealed this secret to us, and the secret, once revealed, enables reason to avoid illusions that would otherwise vitiate its conclusions. The fallacy is to suppose that because truth is in some sense relative it cannot be distinguished from error, or that the margin of error cannot be progressively reduced. The fallacy
is to suppose that reason cannot transcend its lowly animal origin, to suppose that because it is a function of the organism's total activity and can be and is employed in the service of purely egoistic and brutal impulses, it cannot serve purposes of a more humane and impersonal import. On the contrary, whatever success men have had since the Stone Age in lifting themselves above the level of brute existence has been the result of the slowly developing capacity of reason to distinguish fact from illusion and to prefer the values that exalt the humane and rational qualities of the human personality to the values that deny and degrade them.

To have faith in the dignity and worth of the individual man as an end in himself, to believe that it is better to be governed by persuasion than by coercion, to believe that fraternal good will is more worthy than a selfish and contentious spirit, to believe that in the long run all values are inseparable from the love of truth and the disinterested search for it, to believe that knowledge and the power it confers should be used to promote the welfare and happiness of all men rather than to serve the interests of those individuals and classes whom fortune and intelligence endow with temporary advantage—these are the values which are affirmed by the traditional democratic ideology. But they are older and more universal than democracy and do not depend upon it. They have a life of their own apart from any particular social system or type of civilization. They are the values which, since the time of Buddha and Confucius, Solomon and Zoroaster, Plato and Aristotle, Socrates and Jesus, men have commonly employed to measure the advance or the decline of civilization, the values they have celebrated in the saints and sages whom they have agreed to canonize. They are the values that readily lend themselves to rational justification, yet need no justification. No one ever yet found it necessary to justify a humane and friendly act by saying that it was really a form of brutality and oppression; but the resort to coercion in civil government, in war and revolution, in the exploitation of the poor or the liquidation of the rich, has always to be justified by saying that the apparent evil is an indirect means of achieving the greater or the ultimate good. Even the Hitlers and the Stalins, in order to win the support of their own people, find it necessary to do lip service to the humane values, thus paying the customary tribute of hypocrisy which virtue exacts from vice.

Whatever the limitations of reason may be, it is folly to renounce it, since it is the only guide we have—the only available means of enlarging the realm of scientific knowledge, the only means of discriminating the social value of the various uses to which such knowledge may be put. Whatever the limitations of reason may be, they are not so great that the civilized man cannot recognize the existence and the necessity of naked force and coercion in an imperfect social world, without at-
tributing to them the creation of those humane and rational values which by their very nature affirm that naked force and coercion are at best necessary evils.

The case for democracy is that it accepts the rational and humane values as ends, and proposes as the means of realizing them the minimum of coercion and the maximum of voluntary assent. We may well abandon the cosmological temple in which the democratic ideology originally enshrined these values without renouncing the faith it was designed to celebrate. The essence of that faith is belief in the capacity of man, as a rational and humane creature, to achieve the good life by rational and humane means. The chief virtue of democracy, and the sole reason for cherishing it, is that with all its faults it still provides the most favorable conditions for achieving that end by those means.

1940.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. This masterful and penetrating essay is somewhat abstract and erudite. What evidence can you point to in part i to indicate the kind of reader that Becker is addressing? What assumptions does Becker make about his reader’s degree of education, his ability to handle general concepts? Why does Becker say (at the start of the second paragraph), that “Being an Englishman, he could understand . . .”?

2. In part ii, who are Rousseau, Volney, Godwin, Shelley, Mazzini, Bentham, the Mills, and Max Lerner? If you do not know who they are, what might you assume about them from the context (first paragraph) in which they appear? Is the order in which their names are mentioned significant?

3. Study the length of the sentences in any three paragraphs in sequence. Compare your findings with the results of a like study of Schlesinger’s “The Decline of Greatness” and Lewis’ “The Abolition of Man.” What differences do you find? How do you account for the differences (by subject matter? by the authors’ different temperaments or degrees of education? by the audience addressed? by a combination of these or other causes?)

4. Complex as Becker’s argument is, it is lucidly presented. After reading each part, state in your own words what the topic of the part is and the main point that the author is making.

5. Summarize in your own words, and in some detail, the defense of democratic institutions that Becker makes in part iv. Does he restate the position presented in part i? Does he modify his defense to accord with any of the objections to democracy stated in parts ii and iii? If so, indicate at what points in part iv these modifications can be discerned.

6. According to Becker, democracy rests on certain assumptions. What are they? Do they describe the American system in particular or might they be embodied in other political forms? Would it be possible, given Becker’s
assumptions, to have democracy in political arrangements but not in economic ones?

7. Be sure that you know the exact meaning of totalitarian, perfunctorily, ideology, inertia, protagonists, arbitrary, sanction, transcendent, docile, bourgeois, proletarian, indefeasible, fallible, cardinal (adj.), literal, pragmatic, succinct, dialectic, incommensurable, canonize.
Part 7

SOCIETY: ENDS AND MEANS
TRAVELING WITH A REFORMER

Last spring I went out to Chicago to see the Fair, and although I did not see it my trip was not wholly lost—there were compensations. In New York I was introduced to a major in the regular army who said he was going to the Fair, and we agreed to go together. I had to go to Boston first, but that did not interfere; he said he would go along, and put in the time. He was a handsome man, and built like a gladiator. But his ways were gentle, and his speech was soft and persuasive. He was companionable, but exceedingly reposeful. Yes, and wholly destitute of the sense of humor. He was full of interest in everything that went on around him, but his serenity was indestructible; nothing disturbed him, nothing excited him.

But before the day was done I found that deep down in him somewhere he had a passion, quiet as he was—a passion for reforming petty public abuses. He stood for citizenship—it was his hobby. His idea was that every citizen of the republic ought to consider himself an unofficial policeman, and keep unsalaried watch and ward over the laws and their execution. He thought that the only effective way of preserving and protecting public rights was for each citizen to do his share in preventing or punishing such infringements of them as came under his personal notice.

It was a good scheme, but I thought it would keep a body in trouble all the time; it seemed to me that one would be always trying to get offending little officials discharged, and perhaps getting laughed at for all reward. But he said no, I had the wrong idea; that there was no occasion to get anybody discharged; that in fact you mustn’t get anybody discharged; that that would itself be a failure; no, one must reform the man—reform him and make him useful where he was.
"Must one report the offender and then beg his superior not to discharge him, but reprimand him and keep him?"

"No, that is not the idea; you don’t report him at all, for then you risk his bread and butter. You can act as if you are going to report him—when nothing else will answer. But that’s an extreme case. That is a sort of force, and force is bad. Diplomacy is the effective thing. Now if a man has tact—if a man will exercise diplomacy—"

For two minutes we had been standing at a telegraph wicket, and during all this time the Major had been trying to get the attention of one of the young operators, but they were all busy skylarking. The Major spoke now, and asked one of them to take his telegram. He got for reply:

"I reckon you can wait a minute, can’t you?" and the skylarking went on.

The Major said yes, he was not in a hurry. Then he wrote another telegram:

President Western Union Tel. Co.:
Come and dine with me this evening. I can tell you how business is conducted in one of your branches.

Presently the young fellow who had spoken so pertly a little before reached out and took the telegram, and when he read it he lost color and began to apologize and explain. He said he would lose his place if this deadly telegram was sent, and he might never get another. If he could be let off this time he would give no cause of complaint again. The compromise was accepted.

As we walked away, the Major said:

"Now, you see, that was diplomacy—and you see how it worked. It wouldn’t do any good to bluster, the way people are always doing—that boy can always give you as good as you send, and you’ll come out defeated and ashamed of yourself pretty nearly always. But you see he stands no chance against diplomacy. Gentle words and diplomacy—those are the tools to work with."

"Yes, I see; but everybody wouldn’t have had your opportunity. It isn’t everybody that is on those familiar terms with the president of the Western Union."

"Oh, you misunderstand. I don’t know the president—I only used him diplomatically. It is for his good and for the public good. There’s no harm in it."

I said, with hesitation and diffidence:

"But is it ever right or noble to tell a lie?"

He took no note of the delicate self-righteousness of the question, but answered, with undisturbed gravity and simplicity:

"Yes, sometimes. Lies told to injure a person, and lies told to profit yourself are not justifiable, but lies told to help another person, and lies
told in the public interest—oh, well, that is quite another matter. Anybody knows that. But never mind about the methods: you see the result. That youth is going to be useful now, and well behaved. He had a good face. He was worth saving. Why, he was worth saving on his mother’s account if not his own. Of course, he has a mother—sisters, too. Damn those people who are always forgetting that! Do you know, I’ve never fought a duel in my life—never once—and yet have been challenged, like other people. I could always see the other man’s unoffending women folks or his little children standing between him and me. They hadn’t done anything—I couldn’t break their hearts, you know.”

He corrected a good many little abuses in the course of the day, and always without friction—always with a fine and dainty “diplomacy” which left no sting behind; and he got such happiness and such contentment out of these performances that I was obliged to envy him his trade—and perhaps would have adopted it if I could have managed the necessary deflections from fact as confidently with my mouth as I believe I could with a pen, behind the shelter of print, after a little practice.

Away late that night we were coming up-town in a horse-car when three boisterous roughs got aboard, and began to fling hilarious obscenities and profanities right and left among the timid passengers, some of whom were women and children. Nobody resisted or retorted; the conductor tried soothing words and moral suasion, but the roughs only called him names and laughed at him. Very soon I saw that the Major realized that this was a matter which was in his line; evidently he was turning over his stock of diplomacy in his mind and getting ready. I felt that the first diplomatic remark he made in this place would bring down a landslide of ridicule upon him and maybe something worse; but before I could whisper to him and check him he had begun, and it was too late. He said, in a level and dispassionate tone:

“Conductor, you must put these swine out. I will help you.”

I was not looking for that. In a flash the three roughs plunged at him. But none of them arrived. He delivered three such blows as one could not expect to encounter outside the prize-ring, and neither of the men had life enough left in him to get up from where he fell. The Major dragged them out and threw them off the car, and we got under way again.

I was astonished; astonished to see a lamb act so; astonished at the strength displayed, and the clean and comprehensive result; astonished at the brisk and business-like style of the whole thing. The situation had a humorous side to it, considering how much I had been hearing about mild persuasion and gentle diplomacy all day from this pile-driver, and I would have liked to call his attention to that feature and do some sarcasms about it; but when I looked at him I saw that it would be of no use—his placid and contented face had no ray of humor in it; he would
not have understood. When we left the car, I said:

“That was a good stroke of diplomacy—three good strokes of diplo-
man’s macy, in fact.”

“That? That wasn’t diplomacy. You are quite in the wrong. Diplomacy is a wholly different thing. One cannot apply it to that sort; they would not understand it. No, that was not diplomacy; it was force.”

“Now that you mention it, I—yes, I think perhaps you are right.”

“Right? Of course I am right. It was just force.”

“I think, myself, it had the outside aspect of it. Do you often have to reform people in that way?”

“Far from it. It hardly ever happens. Not oftener than once in half a year, at the outside.”

“Those men will get well?”

“Get well? Why, certainly they will. They are not in any danger. I know how to hit and where to hit. You noticed that I did not hit them under the jaw. That would have killed them.”

I believed that. I remarked—rather wittily, as I thought—that he had been a lamb all day, but now had all of a sudden developed into a ram—battering-ram; but with dulcet frankness and simplicity he said no, a battering-ram was quite a different thing and not in use now. This was maddening, and I came near bursting out and saying he had no more appreciation of wit than a jackass—in fact, I had it right on my tongue, but did not say it, knowing there was no hurry and I could say it just as well some other time over the telephone.

We started to Boston the next afternoon. The smoking-compartment in the parlor-car was full, and we went into the regular smoker. Across the aisle in the front seat sat a meek, farmer-looking old man with a sickly pallor in his face, and he was holding the door open with his foot to get the air. Presently a big brakeman came rushing through, and when he got to the door he stopped, gave the farmer an ugly scowl, then wrenched the door to with such energy as to almost snatch the old man’s boot off. Then on he plunged about his business. Several passengers laughed, and the old gentleman looked pathetically shamed and grieved.

After a little the conductor passed along, and the Major stopped him and asked him a question in his habitually courteous way:

“Conductor, where does one report the misconduct of a brakeman? Does one report to you?”

“You can report him at New Haven if you want to. What has he been doing?”

The Major told the story. The conductor seemed amused. He said, with just a touch of sarcasm in his bland tones:

“As I understand you, the brakeman didn’t say anything.”

“No, he didn’t say anything.”

“But he scowled, you say.”
"Yes."
"And snatched the door loose in a rough way."
"Yes."
"That's the whole business, is it?"
"Yes, that is the whole of it."
The conductor smiled pleasantly, and said:
"Well, if you want to report him, all right, but I don't quite make out what it's going to amount to. You'll say—as I understand you—that the brakeman insulted this old gentleman. They'll ask you what he said. You'll say he didn't say anything at all. I reckon they'll say, how are you going to make out an insult when you acknowledge yourself that he didn't say a word."

There was a murmur of applause at the conductor's compact reasoning, and it gave him pleasure—you could see it in his face. But the Major was not disturbed. He said:

"There—now you have touched upon a crying defect in the complaint system. The railway officials—as the public think and as you also seem to think—are not aware that there are any kind of insults except spoken ones. So nobody goes to headquarters and reports insults of manner, insults of gesture, look, and so forth; and yet these are sometimes harder to bear than any words. They are bitter hard to bear because there is nothing tangible to take hold of; and the insulter can always say, if called before the railway officials, that he never dreamed of intending any offense. It seems to me that the officials ought to specially and urgently request the public to report unworded affronts and incivilities."

The conductor laughed, and said:
"Well, that would be trimming it pretty fine, sure!"
"But not too fine, I think. I will report this matter at New Haven, and I have an idea that I'll be thanked for it."
The conductor's face lost something of its complacency; in fact, it settled to a quite sober cast as the owner of it moved away. I said:
"You are not really going to bother with that trifle, are you?"
"It isn't a trifle. Such things ought always to be reported. It is a public duty, and no citizen has a right to shirk it. But I sha'n't have to report this case."
"Why?"
"It won't be necessary. Diplomacy will do the business. You'll see."
Presently the conductor came on his rounds again, and when he reached the Major he leaned over and said:
"That's all right. You needn't report him. He's responsible to me, and if he does it again I'll give him a talking to."
The Major's response was cordial:
"Now that is what I like! You musn't think that I was moved by any vengeful spirit, for that wasn't the case. It was duty—just a sense of duty,
that was all. My brother-in-law is one of the directors of the road, and when he learns that you are going to reason with your brakeman the very next time he brutally insults an unoffending old man it will please him, you may be sure of that."

The conductor did not look as joyous as one might have thought he would, but on the contrary looked sickly and uncomfortable. He stood around a little; then said:

"I think something ought to be done to him now. I'll discharge him."

"Discharge him? What good would that do? Don't you think it would be better wisdom to teach him better ways and keep him?"

"Well, there's something in that. What would you suggest?"

"He insulted the old gentleman in presence of all these people. How would it do to have him come and apologize in their presence?"

"I'll have him here right off. And I want to say this: If people would do as you've done, and report such things to me instead of keeping mum and going off and blackguarding the road, you'd see a different state of things pretty soon. I'm much obliged to you."

The brakeman came and apologized. After he was gone the Major said:

"Now, you see how simple and easy that was. The ordinary citizen would have accomplished nothing—the brother-in-law of a director can accomplish anything he wants to."

"But are you really the brother-in-law of a director?"

"Always. Always when the public interests require it. I have a brother-in-law on all the boards—everywhere. It saves me a world of trouble."

"It is a good wide relationship."

"Yes. I have over three hundred of them."

"Is the relationship never doubted by a conductor?"

"I have never met with a case. It is the honest truth—I never have."

"Why didn't you let him go ahead and discharge the brakeman, in spite of your favorite policy? You know he deserved it."

The Major answered with something which really had a sort of distant resemblance to impatience:

"If you would stop and think a moment you wouldn't ask such a question as that. Is a brakeman a dog, that nothing but dog's methods will do for him? He is a man, and has a man's fight for life. And he always has a sister, or a mother, or wife and children to support. Always—there are no exceptions. When you take his living away from him you take theirs away too—and what have they done to you? Nothing. And where is the profit in discharging an uncourteous brakeman and hiring another just like him? It's unwisdom. Don't you see that the rational thing to do is to reform the brakeman and keep him? Of course it is."

Then he quoted with admiration the conduct of a certain division
superintendent of the Consolidated road, in a case where a switchman of
two years' experience was negligent once and threw a train off the
track and killed several people. Citizens came in a passion to urge the
man's dismissal, but the superintendent said:

“No, you are wrong. He has learned his lesson, he will throw no more
trains off the track. He is twice as valuable as he was before. I shall keep
him.”

We had only one more adventure on the trip. Between Hartford and
Springfield the train-boy came shouting in with an armful of literature
and dropped a sample into a slumbering gentleman’s lap, and the man
woke up with a start. He was very angry, and he and a couple of friends
discussed the outrage with much heat. They sent for the parlor-car con-
ductor and described the matter, and were determined to have the boy
expelled from his situation. The three complainants were wealthy
Holyoke merchants, and it was evident that the conductor stood in some
awe of them. He tried to pacify them, and explained that the boy was
not under his authority, but under that of one of the news companies;
but he accomplished nothing.

Then the Major volunteered some testimony for the defense. He said:

“I saw it all. You gentlemen have not meant to exaggerate the circum-
stances, but still that is what you have done. The boy has done nothing
more than all train-boys do. If you want to get his ways softened down
and his manners reformed, I am with you and ready to help, but it isn’t
fair to get him discharged without giving him a chance.”

But they were angry, and would hear of no compromise. They were
well acquainted with the president of the Boston & Albany, they said,
and would put everything aside next day and go up to Boston and fix
that boy.

The major said he would be on hand too, and would do what he
could to save the boy. One of the gentlemen looked him over, and said:

“Apparently it is going to be a matter of who can wield the most in-
fluence with the president. Do you know Mr. Bliss personally?”

The Major said, with composure:

“Yes; he is my uncle.”

The effect was satisfactory. There was an awkward silence for a
minute or more; then the hedging and the half-confessions of overhaste
and exaggerated resentment began, and soon everything was smooth and
friendly and sociable, and it was resolved to drop the matter and leave
the boy's bread-and-butter unmolested.

It turned out as I had expected: the president of the road was not the
Major's uncle at all—except by adoption, and for this day and train only.

We got into no episodes on the return journey. Probably it was be-
cause we took a night train and slept all the way.

We left New York Saturday night by the Pennsylvania road. After
breakfast the next morning we went into the parlor-car, but found it a
dull place and dreary. There were but few people in it and nothing go-
ing on. Then we went into the little smoking-compartment of the same
car and found three gentlemen in there. Two of them were grumbling
over one of the rules of the road—a rule which forbade card-playing on
the trains on Sunday. They had started an innocent game of high-low-
jack and been stopped. The Major was interested. He said to the third
gentleman:

"Did you object to the game?"

"Not at all. I am a Yale professor and a religious man, but my preju-
dices are not extensive."

Then the Major said to the others:

"You are at perfect liberty to resume your game, gentlemen; no one
here objects."

One of them declined the risk, but the other one said he would like to
begin again if the Major would join him. So they spread an overcoat
over their knees and the game proceeded. Pretty soon the parlor-car
conductor arrived, and said brusquely:

"There, there, gentlemen, that won't do. Put up the cards—it's not
allowed."

The Major was shuffling. He continued to shuffle, and said:

"By whose order is it forbidden?"

"It's my order. I forbid it."

The dealing began. The Major asked:

"Did you invent the idea?"

"What idea?"

"The idea of forbidding card-playing on Sunday."

"No—of course not."

"Who did?"

"The company."

"Then it isn't your order, after all, but the company's. Is that it?"

"Yes. But you don't stop playing; I have to require you to stop play-
ing immediately."

"Nothing is gained by hurry, and often much is lost. Who authorized
the company to issue such an order?"

"My dear sir, that is a matter of no consequence to me, and—"

"But you forget that you are not the only person concerned. It may
be a matter of consequence to me. It is indeed a matter of very great
importance to me. I cannot violate a legal requirement of my country
without dishonoring myself; I cannot allow any man or corporation
to hamper my liberties with illegal rules—a thing which railway com-
panies are always trying to do—without dishonoring my citizenship. So
I come back to that question: By whose authority has the company is-
sued this order?"
"I don't know. That's their affair."

"Mine, too. I doubt if the company has any right to issue such a rule. This road runs through several states. Do you know what state we are in now, and what its laws are in matters of this kind?"

"Its laws do not concern me, but the company's orders do. It is my duty to stop this game, gentlemen, and it must be stopped."

"Possibly; but still there is no hurry. In hotels they post certain rules in the rooms, but they always quote passages from the state laws as authority for these requirements. I see nothing posted here of this sort. Please produce your authority and let us arrive at a decision, for you see yourself that you are marring the game."

"I have nothing of the kind, but I have my orders, and that is sufficient. They must be obeyed."

"Let us not jump to conclusions. It will be better all around to examine into the matter without heat or haste, and see just where we stand before either of us makes a mistake—for the curtailing of the liberties of a citizen of the United States is a much more serious matter than you and the railroads seem to think, and it cannot be done in my person until the curtailer proves his right to do so. Now—"

"My dear sir, will you put down those cards?"

"All in good time, perhaps. It depends. You say this order must be obeyed. Must. It is a strong word. You see yourself how strong it is. A wise company would not arm you with so drastic an order as this, of course, without appointing a penalty for its infringement. Otherwise it runs the risk of being a dead letter and a thing to laugh at. What is the appointed penalty for an infringement of this law?"

"Penalty? I never heard of any."

"Unquestionably you must be mistaken. Your company orders you to come here and rudely break up an innocent amusement, and furnishes you no way to enforce the order? Don't you see that that is nonsense? What do you do when people refuse to obey this order? Do you take the cards away from them?"

"No."

"Do you put the offender off at the next station?"

"Well, no—of course we couldn't if he had a ticket."

"Do you have him up before a court?"

The conductor was silent and apparently troubled. The Major started a new deal, and said:

"You see that you are helpless, and that the company has placed you in a foolish position. You are furnished with an arrogant order, and you deliver it in a blustering way, and when you come to look into the matter you find you haven't any way of enforcing obedience."

The conductor said, with chill dignity:

"Gentlemen, you have heard the order, and my duty is ended. As to
obeying it or not, you will do as you think fit.” And he turned to leave.  
“But wait. The matter is not yet finished. I think you are mistaken about your duty being ended; but if it really is, I myself have a duty to perform yet.”  
“How do you mean?”  
“Are you going to report my disobedience at headquarters in Pittsburgh?”  
“No. What good would that do?”  
“You must report me, or I will report you.”  
“Report me for what?”  
“For disobeying the company’s orders in not stopping this game. As a citizen it is my duty to help the railway companies keep their servants to their work.”  
“Are you in earnest?”  
“Yes, I am in earnest. I have nothing against you as a man, but I have this against you as an officer—that you have not carried out that order, and if you do not report me I must report you. And I will.”  
The conductor looked puzzled, and was thoughtful a moment; then he burst out with:  
“I seem to be getting myself into a scrape! It’s all a muddle; I can’t make head or tail of it; it’s never happened before; they always knocked under and never said a word, and so I never saw how ridiculous that stupid order with no penalty is. I don’t want to report anybody, and I don’t want to be reported—why, it might do me no end of harm! Now do go on with the game—play the whole day if you want to—and don’t let’s have any more trouble about it!”  
“No, I only sat down here to establish this gentleman’s rights—he can have his place now. But before you go won’t you tell me what you think the company made this rule for? Can you imagine an excuse for it? I mean a rational one—an excuse that is not on its face silly, and the invention of an idiot?”  
“Why, surely I can. The reason it was made is plain enough. It is to save the feelings of the other passengers—the religious ones among them, I mean. They would not like it, to have the Sabbath desecrated by card-playing on the train.”  
“I just thought as much. They are willing to desecrate it themselves by traveling on Sunday, but they are not willing that other people—”  
“By gracious, you’ve hit it! I never thought of that before. The fact is, it is a silly rule when you come to look into it.”  
At this point the train-conductor arrived, and was going to shut down the game in a very high-handed fashion, but the parlor-car conductor stopped him and took him aside to explain. Nothing more was heard of the matter.  
I was ill in bed eleven days in Chicago and got no glimpse of the Fair,
for I was obliged to return east as soon as I was able to travel. The Major secured and paid for a stateroom in a sleeper the day before we left, so that I could have plenty of room and be comfortable; but when we arrived at the station a mistake had been made and our car had not been put on. The conductor had reserved a section for us—it was the best he could do, he said. But the Major said we were not in a hurry, and would wait for the car to be put on. The conductor responded, with pleasant irony:

"It may be that you are not in a hurry, just as you say, but we are. Come, get aboard, gentlemen, get aboard—don't keep us waiting."

But the Major would not get aboard himself nor allow me to do it. He wanted his car, and said he must have it. This made the hurried and perspiring conductor impatient, and he said:

"It's the best we can do—we can't do impossibilities. You will take the section or go without. A mistake has been made and can't be rectified at this late hour. It's a thing that happens now and then, and there is nothing for it but to put up with it and make the best of it. Other people do."

"Ah, that is just it, you see. If they had stuck to their rights and enforced them you wouldn't be trying to trample mine under foot in this bland way now. I haven't any disposition to give you unnecessary trouble, but it is my duty to protect the next man from this kind of imposition. So I must have my car. Otherwise I will wait in Chicago and sue the company for violating its contract."

"Sue the company?—for a thing like that!"

"Certainly."

"Do you really mean that?"

"Indeed, I do."

The conductor looked the Major over wonderingly, and then said:

"It beats me—it's bran-new—I've never struck the mate to it before. But I swear I think you'd do it. Look here, I'll send for the station-master."

When the station-master came he was a good deal annoyed—at the Major, not at the person who had made the mistake. He was rather brusque, and took the same position which the conductor had taken in the beginning; but he failed to move the soft-spoken artilleryman, who still insisted that he must have his car. However, it was plain that there was only one strong side in this case, and that that side was the Major's. The station-master banished his annoyed manner, and became pleasant and even half apologetic. This made a good opening for a compromise, and the Major made a concession. He said he would give up the engaged stateroom, but he must have a stateroom. After a deal of ransacking, one was found whose owner was persuadable; he exchanged it for our section, and we got away at last. The conductor called on us in the
evening, and was kind and courteous and obliging, and we had a long
talk and got to be good friends. He said he wished the public would
make trouble oftener—it would have a good effect. He said that the
railroads could not be expected to do their whole duty by the traveler
unless the traveler would take some interest in the matter himself.

I hoped that we were done reforming for the trip now, but it was
not so. In the hotel-car, in the morning, the Major called for broiled
chicken. The waiter said:

"It's not in the bill of fare, sir; we do not serve anything but what
is in the bill."

"That gentleman yonder is eating a broiled chicken."

"Yes, but that is different. He is one of the superintendents of the
road."

"Then all the more must I have broiled chicken. I do not like these
discriminations. Please hurry—bring me a broiled chicken."

The waiter brought the steward, who explained in a low and polite
voice that the thing was impossible—it was against the rule, and the rule
was rigid.

"Very well, then, you must either apply it impartially or break it im-
partially. You must take that gentleman's chicken away from him or
bring me one."

The steward was puzzled, and did not quite know what to do. He
began an incoherent argument, but the conductor came along just then,
and asked what the difficulty was. The steward explained that here was a
gentleman who was insisting on having a chicken when it was dead
against the rule and not in the bill. The conductor said:

"Stick by your rules—you haven't any option. Wait a moment—is this
the gentleman?" Then he laughed and said: "Never mind your rules—it's
my advice, and sound; give him anything he wants—don't get him
started on his rights. Give him whatever he asks for; and if you haven't
got it, stop the train and get it."

The Major ate the chicken, but said he did it from a sense of duty and
to establish a principle, for he did not like chicken.

I missed the Fair, it is true, but I picked up some diplomatic tricks
which I and the reader may find handy and useful as we go along.

1893

AIDS TO STUDY

1. What do you think is Mark Twain’s purpose in this essay? To describe
   a character? To illustrate ways in which the public’s rights are abused? To
   persuade others to follow the Major’s example?
2. Why is the fact stressed that the Major has no sense of humor?
3. Why does Mark Twain include the one incident when the Major uses force instead of diplomacy?

4. Analyze the narrator's attitudes throughout these scenes. What functions does he serve?

5. Define the Major's conception of "diplomacy." Is it a more useful word in the context than "persuasion"? Why?

6. In what ways does the behavior of the various people seem to be exaggerated? Relate your answer to Mark Twain's purpose.

7. What ethical attitudes are revealed by the Major's statement, "But never mind about the methods; you see the result."

8. Do you think any changes have occurred since 1893 in the effectiveness of individual "reformers" and the degree to which people defend their rights?

9. Do the words "diplomacy" and "force" suggest that Mark Twain may have intended his narrative to have a larger, political significance?

10. What considerations does the Major overlook in his insistence on his own rights?

11. Reformers are not always popular even among those whom they are supposed to be helping. Does the essay supply any reasons why this is so?
A long time ago, "when I was still a prince in Arcadia," I became interested in the language and literature of the Pennsylvania Germans. I had been rather astonished—I don't know why—at discovering accidentally that they had not only a literature of their own, but a good one, and that a thriving organization called the Pennsylvania German Society was busy fostering and preserving it. This was a pleasant surprise; and at odd times during two or three years I dipped at random into this literature, thus finally getting a fair-to-middling acquaintance with it, especially with its religious and pastoral poetry, the side by which it is seen in perhaps its most amiable and attractive aspect.

By origin, the Pennsylvania Germans spoke the dialect of the Pfalz; but in the course of a couple of centuries a good many English words have crept into their vocabulary to make everlasting sorrow and vexation for the outsider. A macaronic speech is easy enough to read when printed, but hardest of all (for me, at least) to understand when spoken. The Italian which one hears down Greenwich Village way in New York, for instance, is very difficult on this account, even when it is otherwise pretty good Italian. The Pfälzer dialect is not troublesome if you take it straight, but by the time you have shifted gears to accommodate two or three English words in the course of a long sentence, your interlocutor is away out of sight down the homestretch, leaving you in an exhausted and ignorant state; especially since the English words come out so heavily coated with a foreign inflection that it takes a minute or so to penetrate their disguise and recognize them. In dealing with the printed word,
however, one escapes these tribulations. Here, for example, is the first stanza of a poem from Harbaugh's *Harfe*. Read it aloud at ordinary conversational speed to someone who knows German well, and see what he makes of it; then let him look at it as printed, and see what he makes of that:

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Heit is's 'xäctly zwansig Jobr,
Dass ich bin owwe naus;
Nau bin ich widder lewig z'rick
Un sichte am Schulhaus an d'r Krick,
Juscht neekscht an's Dady's Haus.¹
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The second verse is still more distressing. Here you have a colloquial English verb—slang, to the purist—handsomely tailored up with a good German prefix; and you have also an exact German rendering of an English idiomatic expression. These are heartbreakers; to the ear they carry nothing but grief and woe, yet see how familiar and domestic is their look in print:

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Ich bin in hunnert Heiser g'west,
Vun Märbelstee' un Brick,
Un alles was sie ben, die Leit,
Dhet ich verschwappe eenig Zeit
For's Schulhaus an der Krick.²
```

But I must stop rambling around in this peculiar philology, and get on with my story. Some years later, when the first bloom of my interest in the Pennsylvania Germans had been rubbed off under pressure of more immediate concerns, I noticed that they were being visited with the curse of publicity. Fictioneers, mostly of the female persuasion, *Gott soll büten*,³ were exploiting them in popular magazinedom. Reporters played them up by the side of their prowess in eating and their alleged prowess in witchcraft, the two accomplishments most likely to strike fire with the great American public. One or two cookbooks of dubious authenticity appeared. Then when lately the inhabitants of a certain district were had up in court for refusing to send their children to a State central

¹ Today it is exactly twenty years,
   That I have been up and out;
   Now I am back again alive
   And stand by the schoolhouse on the creek,
   Just next to Daddy's house.  [Ed.]

² I have been in a hundred houses
   Of marble and brick,
   And all that those people have,
   That would I swap any time
   For the schoolhouse on the creek.  [Ed.]

³ Heaven help us!
school, I perceived that the Pennsylvania Germans were really in the news.

I did not read any of the fiction, nor did I care about the Hexerei, but the two items about food and schools attracted me. The mention of food set up a nagging persistent hankering for a certain native country-made product which I had sampled many years before. I am not naming it because it seems to be scarce as hens' teeth, and having at last found it I am happily on the inside track and propose to stay there; so any inquiry about it will merely waste postage.

Thus my interest in the Pennsylvania Germans livened up again. My hankering for the food product would not subside, so I began to take measures. I wrote to the publisher of a book dealing largely with the region's cookery, asking him to sound out the young woman who wrote it; which he did, with no result. I wrote the chambers of commerce in the principal towns; the executive secretaries gave me names of some producers, to whom in turn I wrote without result. I then betought me of my old friend Jeff Jones, who maintains a sales force in those parts; so I wrote him, suggesting that he turn his hellhounds loose to harry the whole countryside without respite, which I don't doubt he did, but they brought down no prey. At last I perceived that the matter required my personal attention. I determined to set forth in person and explore the counties of Lebanon and Lancaster with two objects in view. First, I would see what account of themselves the Pennsylvania Germans were actually giving. Second, I would find that food product if it existed, whether in the heavens above those two counties, or on the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth. The opportunity presenting itself, I went and was successful. I found the food product, as I have already said, and bore it away in a burst of glory. I also found that the Pennsylvania Germans have a vast deal to say for themselves. One group especially excited my interest, and it is of them that I propose now to speak.

They are known as the Old Amish or House Amish. They are a split-off from the Mennonites, a religious body formed at Zurich early in the sixteenth century. In number, the Old Amish run to something between 8500 and 9000, and of these some 1500 are settled in the county of Lancaster, mostly on a stretch of rich farmland bordered by the Conestoga. They have been there since 1720, and their small rural communities grew up under odd names like Smoketown, Bird-in-hand, Blue Ball. I could get no reliable account of the origin of these names.

The Old Amish are reputed to be the best farmers in America, and a glance at their territory sets up a strong conviction that this is so. The Amishman is actually a farmer, not a manufacturer, like our large-
scale single-crop producers. Nor is he a political farmer, of the kind whose perennial sorrows lie so close to the heart of Mr. Wallace. He cares nothing whatever for Mr. Wallace, and asks no political favors from anybody. His produce goes first to feed his family and his livestock. If any be left over, he takes it to the public markets at Lancaster; and by the way, if you want to see something which you could really call a public market, go to Lancaster. I never in my life saw so much super-excellent superelegant produce of all kinds clustered together as I saw there, and practically all of it was Amish produce. But speaking commercially, the Amishman's market trade is on the side; what he gets out of it is loose change—lagniappe. He is not a truck-gardener. After the needs of his family are provided for, after he has put down great store and abundance of beef products, pork products, dairy products, vegetable and cereal products, all of his own raising—then if he can pick up an odd dollar or two in the markets, well and good; but not before.

Judged by current standards, the Amishman has an unorthodox view of his mission in life. His one cash crop is tobacco. If he were a right-minded man, he would put down all the land he could get hold of in tobacco, and let his family eat out of tin cans. But in the first place, he does not want any more land than he and his family can work properly under their own steam. He is not keen on hired help, and sees nothing in share-cropping. Then further, he has only very vague and uncertain notions about tin cans; I suspect you might have to go quite a way to find a can opener in an Amish household, or to find anybody who has ever seen one. For the Amishman, the idea of paying out good money for canned foodstuffs far inferior to what one can raise for oneself is one of those things that simply will not bear thinking about. Hence he limits his cash crop rigorously; it is strictly a side line, like his other market trade. It yields him plenty of money to go on with, for he needs hardly any, and he lets it go at that.

By sticking to this general policy for a couple of centuries, the Amish have worked themselves into an economic position that is pretty nearly impregnable. They have the real thing in "social security." Ten years ago, one of my town-dwelling friends wrote to a correspondent asking how Lancaster was doing under the depression. The correspondent telegraphed back, "What depression? There is no depression here." The Amish, putting it mildly, are exceeding well-to-do; or as the sinful would phrase it, they are rich as soap grease. I have heard say that Lancaster County is the richest agricultural region in the world, and I believe it; richest, that is, in good hard available cash money that can be dug up on demand at any moment, out of the Amishman's pants pocket.

The Amish beat the New Deal's whole program of social security, hands down. They have the best form of old-age pension that can be devised; when you grow old you simply take things easy, and live wie Gott in
Frankreich\textsuperscript{4} while your family carries on. No need for some officious nincompoop to come down from Washington and tell you how to do that. So also with “relief.” No Amishman’s name was ever yet on the relief roll of Lancaster County, and none ever will be. The Amishman does not waste a single bawbee on insurance, for he already has the best kind of insurance, on which he pays no premiums and his policy never expires. If lightning strikes his barn, his coreligionists in that district build him a new one; if he is ill, they help out with his work; if he dies untimely, they make arrangements to have things go on. No insurance company can compete with that.

He takes no oaths and signs no contracts or any form of written agreement, nor will he serve on juries or have anything to do with litigation; his religion forbids him all such. He lets his yea be yea and his nay nay, as the Bible commands, and he always keeps his given word. He is not a speculator or a borrower, and he does not hold public office. He is punctilious about taxes, paying the State’s blackmail in full, and asking nothing in return but to be let alone—poor soul, as if that were not the very last thing the State would ever consent to do for anybody! The State lately foisted a grant of some $56,000 on the Old Amish for a PWA project in one of their townships, and they not only refused to accept it but appealed to the courts to have the noisome proposal nullified. It is no wonder that when this incredible miracle was reported at Washington the effect on the PWA personnel was devastating; fifteen fainted away, eleven went into convulsions, and three of them died. I have this on good authority.

III

The visitor does not have to look too closely to see what principle, what general theory of life, is at work here to bring this exemplary state of things about. It is religion. The Old Amish have the record of sticking longer and more faithfully to the original tenets, customs, and practices of their religion than any other Christian body in America; and it is this fidelity which has brought them where they are. This obviously says something for the Old Amish themselves, individually and collectively; but it also says something rather handsome for their religion. In the matter of getting results—and this is what all variants of religion presumably aim at—the Old Amish variant seems valid enough to stand up under the fire of criticism’s most heftiest Blitzkrieg. Like the provisions of the Levitical law, its tenets, apparently arbitrary as many of them are, turn out to have a surprising deal of sound science and sound common sense behind them. In this they furnish material for advantageous comparison with the tenets and practices of other religious bodies. They

\textsuperscript{4} Like God in France. [Ed.]
will not, and should not, suggest to these bodies a wholesale taking over and substitution of Old Amish tenets and practices to displace their own. They do suggest, however, that if the other bodies want results comparable with those the Old Amish get under their conditions, they should make whatever modifications and displacements are appropriate to bringing them about under their own conditions.

The Old Amish believe that the agrarian life is the one most in accord with the Scriptures. This is their fundamental tenet; it merely puts a religious sanction on the agrarian doctrine held by Turgot, Benjamin Franklin, and above all by Mr. Jefferson. The Amishman’s logic of it is that man is a land-animal; God made him so. He derives his sustenance wholly from the land, and every kind and form of wealth that exists or can exist is producible only by the application of labor and capital to land; God made this arrangement. Therefore the more direct the mode of this application, the better and simpler becomes the fulfillment of God’s will.

Now, whatever one may think of the theological side of this reasoning, the economic side of it is sound to the core. It is the basic position of fundamental economics, and there is no sophistry by which one can squirm away from it. But for the Amish the theological side is also sound, and they are strong on it; it sums up pretty much all the dogmatic theology the Amish have. They are probably a little weak on economic theory, but they are strong on the theological rationale of their agrarianism. It is the controlling principle of their lives. The result is that under this control their practice of sound agrarian economics has made them a solvent, stable, self-respecting people, as prosperous as any in the land and certainly the most independent; and it has also confirmed in them the sterling character and sterling moral qualities to which I have alluded.

Perhaps—I put it tentatively—perhaps this is about all that should be expected from this combination of forces. It is a highly respectable showing, to say the very least of it. I am told there is complaint against organized Christianity as being “out of touch with practical life” and therefore so dissatisfying that the churches are losing ground—well, here is one variant of organized Christianity, at any rate, which surely does not come under that censure.

Artemus Ward said the trouble with Napoleon was that he tried to do too much, and did it. Something like this may be the trouble with organized Christianity at large. The expectations it puts upon human nature may be a little excessive. The ultimate secular aim it proposes for the individual may not be quite simple and definite enough, and its confessional constructions may involve more metaphysics than the average mind can comfortably take in. I feel free to suggest this because I myself am far too simple-minded to get the drift of such apologetic literature, even of the most modern type, as has come my way. When I ask myself just what it
is driving at, and what it proposes for me to drive at, I am wholly at a loss for an answer.

In these respects the Old Amish variant is exceptional. On its confessional side it has next to nothing, no formal creed, no metaphysical formulas, no elaborate theology. On its secular side, its aim for the individual is simple, clear, and moderate. Its counsels and assistances are all directed towards the twofold end of making him an upright man and a first-class farmer. Beyond this they seem not to go. Judging by results, one would think that the rest of organized Christianity might profit by analogous—not the same, or similar, but analogous—simplifications, both of confessional content and practical intention.

All the prescriptions, customs, and practices which the Old Amish variant enforces tend towards the same end, even those which, as I have said, seem petty and arbitrary. They have actually the character and sanction of religious ritual, and there is no trouble about understanding their full and exact import. With the best will in the world, one can hardly say so much for such other variants of organized Christianity as I am acquainted with. For instance, in the November Atlantic Dr. Bell cites “one of the world’s most harassed statesmen” as saying, “I could not live, I think . . . if I could not go to Mass. I assist several times a week.” This devotion is all very well and highly commendable, but when this harassed statesman goes on to account for his devotion to this ritual practice in terms of what accrues from it (mea culpa, maybe maxima culpa; prava et turpissima culpa, if you like—however, there it is) I don’t understand one single word of what he is talking about.

On the other hand, I get the bearing of the Amishman’s ritual prescriptions instantly and with no trouble at all. They all aim, as I have said, at making him an upright man and a good farmer; and anybody knows sufficiently well what a good farmer is and what an upright man is, and what qualities go into their making. Moreover, one can hardly fail to see that if conduct be three-fourths of life, and if religion be supposed to bear at all on conduct, the very simplicity, clearness, and directness of the Amishman’s prescriptions, their strict avoidance of trying to do too much, are decidedly advantageous in respect of conduct, by comparison with the more indeterminate and apparently unrelated prescriptions laid down by other variants of organized Christianity. For instance, while Dr. Bell’s harassed statesman may be an exception, I never knew or heard of a modern statesman, harassed or otherwise, who would boggle for an instant at lying like a hundred devils, if some political exigency required it of him; nor one who would not on like occasion break his word at a moment’s notice, connive at any form of violence and crime, or act the part of an arrant swindler. The Amishman will do none of these things under any circumstances. Thus while religion’s higher satisfactions such as the
harassed statesman speaks of, whatever those are, may be inaccessible to the Amishman, he plods his way throughout the whole broad area of conduct with the firm step of a pretty tolerably well accredited citizen; and this, I repeat, no modern statesman that I know or ever heard of seems either able to do or even notably desirous of doing. The Amishman quite literally "lives by his religion," and his religion seems to be a workable one to live by. At any rate, he does not turn to it, or return to it, from motives of weakness, disillusionment, or fear. In this respect he appears to have a decided advantage over the reclaimed brethren Dr. Bell cites in his admirable article.

Coming now to less recondite matters, the Old Amish get a little "edge" even on the Quakers, in not having any churches. They meet for worship in their houses, taking them in turn throughout the district. They have no stated ministry. Each district chooses its minister by lot from among its own number, to serve for a year. He has no special training; every Amishman is presumed to be qualified for a job of such simplicity, and no doubt is. He is not paid one single picayune. These economical arrangements keep down the overhead, thereby wholly doing away with the need for ministerial salesmanship, advertising, canvassing for new members, and all other money-raising devices—a need which appears most seriously, often exclusively, to preoccupy other Christian communities.

There is a sound idea here. If you want to "purify politics," whether Church politics or secular politics, begin by taking the money out of it. You won't have to do much else; human nature will do the rest. It is exactly Lincoln Steffens's idea of fixing the responsibility for the Fall of Man. Some blame Adam, while others put the blame on Eve; Steffens put it on the apple. If the apple had not been there everything would have gone smoothly. Obviously, then, the thing to do in like circumstances is to take away the apple. If you do this you can't have any trouble, and this is what the Old Amish have done, thereby giving evidence of a great brain and a level head.

By this device they have closed up every loophole against professionalism. Rapid rotation in unpaid office, combined with absence of all special training, is death on the development of a priestly class. Sacerdotalism does not stand a dog's chance with the Old Amish; and the elaborate metaphysical Aberglaube of its associated sacramentalism stands no better chance. All this seems to suggest an opportunity for further simplification on the part of other Christian bodies. It is surely a fair question whether a competent practice of religion calls for quite as much apparatus, metaphysical and physical, as the main body of organized Christianity has constructed and is trying, none too successfully, to keep in running order.

5 Superstition. [Ed.]
There need be, and should be, no thought of taking over the Old Amish pattern as it stands; yet no well-ordered mind should be above looking it over, on the chance of finding food for profitable thought.

Like orthodox Jews and Roman Catholics, the Old Amish send their children to schools of their own, to avoid contaminating contacts. They do not educate their children beyond the eighth grade, in the belief that this comprises all the book learning that a good farmer needs. There is much to be said for this view, and everything to be said for Mr. Jefferson's further view that this is as much as any but the very rarely exceptional child can use to any good purpose. America is now paying enormous amounts of margin on its cat-and-dog investments in a type of citizen "whose education is far too much for his abilities," as the Duke of Wellington said. Amish children may not enter the professions or the white-collar vocations, and this without prejudice to either; if, for instance, the Amishman has occasion to employ a physician, he gets the best one he can find and ungrudgingly pays him top prices. The only point is that in pursuance of the will of God those children are to stay on the land, and should be learning how to work the paternal acreage with love and reverence as well as skill. An Amish boy who wants to go to college and then take up a profession may of course do so, but not by easy gravitation. He must break with his religion, tradition, and family; and if his call is loud enough, and if he has grit enough to scrabble over this three-barred obstruction, the chances are that he is the sort to succeed. One cannot be sure but that this is as it should be, for we are discovering that the way to a desirable thing can be made altogether too easy. I am told, however, that the Amish children very seldom break over the traces, and one can easily see good reason why this should be so. They are already booked at birth for inheritance in about the soundest going concern in the United States, so why leave a bone for a shadow? They will always eat, and eat mighty well, always be well-clad, well-housed. They will never lose their jobs, never worry about their wives and children wanting bread, never punch a clock, truckle to a gang-boss, or scuffle for a living against cutthroat competition. They will always be able to look the world in the face and think and say exactly what they damn' well please about anything and anybody. Isn't that pretty much the old-time American ideal?

The Old Amish house themselves well, and keep their houses with the most painstaking neatness, but they have no central heating, their furniture is sparse and simple, and they have no ornaments. They use no electricity, thus escaping the distractions of the telephone, radio, telegraph, and motion picture. They do not use automobiles, but are finished experts with the horse and buggy; many, probably most of them, have never been farther away from home than the county town. They wear always the same cut of clothes, as distinctive as a uniform, with no adornment of any kind, not even buttons; their coats are fastened with hooks and eyes.
If someone appears in their midst wearing buttoned garments, he is known at once as a “stylisher,” and is given more or less of a wide berth. All these are religious observances. As can be easily seen, their aim is to encourage thrift and a wholesome simplicity of living, to promote domestic and communal solidarity, and to hit the golden mean between too much ease and comfort and too little. However rigorous and niggling such regulations may appear to us, it is a mistake to regard them as bearing heavily on their votaries, or to regard the Amish as a “stubborn, fierce and isolated people,” as Matthew Arnold describes the Jews of early days. On the contrary, they have excellent humor, are fond of fun, and are extremely sociable and jolly among themselves; not, however, with strangers. They amuse themselves, as they do all things, simply and heartily; the lighter side of their life seems to be about what it was with their progenitors living in the Pfalz; or indeed, pretty much what it was with our own progenitors living in America not so many years ago.

IV

In studying any order of fauna one gets some impressions less agreeable than others. I got a few from the Amish that I thought were hardly worth carrying away with me, so I was glad to forget them. What did me a great and lasting good was to see what I had come to think existed nowhere in America, a people with clear strong sense of the *ne quid nimis,* and a resolute determination to live by that sense. I was among them for only a short time, and saw their life only from outside; they are not partial to strangers. But even so, it was a cheering and hope-inspiring experience to touch the fringes of a well-to-do, prosperous, hard-working society which does not believe in too much money, too much land, too much impedimenta, too much ease, comfort, schooling, mechanization, aimless movement, idle curiosity; which does not believe in too many labor-saving devices, gadgets, gimcracks; and which has the force of character—fed and sustained by a type of religion which seems really designed to get results—the force of sterling character, I say, to keep itself well on the safe lee side of all such excesses.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. Look up the following words in your dictionary and be ready to explain them in class: *macaronic, perennial, buzzbee, sanction, sustenance, sophistry, rationale, recondite, picayune, metaphysical, sacerdotalism, fauna.*

2. From your research you may come to the conclusion that Mr. Nock uses an unusually large number of uncommon words and that he would have done better to substitute more usual words and phrases so that everyone would be sure to understand him. As a professional writer, Mr. Nock was undoubtedly aware that some readers might be daunted by his vocabulary.

6 Nothing too much.
Why, then, did he write as he does? Could he have used different language and still made the same impression?

3. The essay is divided into four parts indicated by Roman numerals. Write a sentence for each part summarizing what the writer says.

4. Why is the first part so long? What is its function? What relation does it have to the other three parts? In answering these questions, you might consider the following points:
   a. The quotations from the poem;
   b. The writer's interest in a "food product"

5. Why is the fourth part so short? Why didn't the writer stop at the end of part III?

6. Some readers would describe Nock's style as lively or interesting. What contribution is made to those effects by the writer's language, his occasional exaggeration, his forthright tone? Would the essay be more interesting if Nock had used more qualifications and had been more tentative in his assertions?
Ours is an age without heroes—and, when we say this, we suddenly realize how spectacularly the world has changed in a generation. Most of us grew up in a time of towering personalities. For better or for worse, great men seemed to dominate our lives and shape our destiny. In the United States we had Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt. In Great Britain, there were Lloyd George and Winston Churchill. In other lands, there were Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, Mussolini, Clemenceau, Gandhi, Kemal, Sun Yat-sen. Outside of politics there were Einstein, Freud, Keynes. Some of these great men influenced the world for good, others for evil; but, whether for good or for evil, the fact that each had not died at birth made a difference, one believed, to everyone who lived after them.

Today no one bestrides our narrow world like a colossus; we have no giants who play roles which one can imagine no one else playing in their stead. There are a few figures on the margin of uniqueness, perhaps: Adenauer, Nehru, Tito, De Gaulle, Chiang Kai-shek, Mao Tse-tung. But there seem to be none in the epic style of those mighty figures of our recent past who seized history with both hands and gave it an imprint, even a direction, which it otherwise might not have had. As De Gaulle himself remarked on hearing of Stalin’s death, “The age of giants is over.” Whatever one thought, whether one admired or detested Roosevelt or Churchill, Stalin or Hitler, one nevertheless felt the sheer weight of such personalities on one’s own existence. We feel no comparable pressures today. Our own President, with all his pleasant qualities, has more or less explicitly renounced any desire to impress his own views on history. The

From The Saturday Evening Post, November 1, 1958. Reprinted by permission of Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.
Macmillans, Khrushchevs and Gronchis have measurably less specific gravity than their predecessors. Other men could be in their places as leaders of America or Britain or Russia or Italy without any change in the course of history. Why ours should thus be an age without heroes, and whether this condition is good or bad for us and for civilization, are topics worthy of investigation.

Why have giants vanished from our midst? One must never neglect the role of accident in history; and accident no doubt plays a part here. But too many accidents of the same sort cease to be wholly accidental. One must inquire further. Why should our age not only be without great men but even seem actively hostile to them? Surely one reason we have so few heroes now is precisely that we had so many a generation ago. Greatness is hard for common humanity to bear. As Emerson said, "Hero-ism means difficulty, postponement of praise, postponement of ease, introduction of the world into the private apartment, introduction of eternity into the hours measured by the sitting-room clock." A world of heroes keeps people from living their own private lives.

Moreover, great men live dangerously. They introduce extremes into existence—extremes of good, extremes of evil—and ordinary men after a time flinch from the ultimates and yearn for undemanding security. The Second World War was the climax of an epoch of living dangerously. It is no surprise that it precipitated a universal revulsion against greatness. The war itself destroyed Hitler and Mussolini. And the architects of victory were hardly longer-lived. After the war, the British repudiated Churchill, and the Americans (with the adoption of the 22nd Amendment), Roosevelt. In due course, the French repudiated De Gaulle (they later repented, but it took the threat of civil war to bring him back); the Chinese, Chiang Kai-shek; and the Russians, Stalin. Khrushchev, in toppling Stalin from his pedestal, pronounced the general verdict against the uncommon man: the modern world, he said, had no use for the "cult of the individual." And, indeed, carried to the excesses to which the worshipers of Hitler and Stalin carried it, even to the much milder degree to which admirers of Roosevelt and Churchill sometimes carried it, the cult of the individual was dangerous. No man is infallible, and every man needs to be reminded of this on occasion. Still, our age has gone further than this—it objects not just to hero worship but to heroes. The century of the common man has come into its own.

II

This term, "common man," suggests the deeper problem. There is more involved than simply a dismissal of those colossi whom the world identified with a season of blood and agony. The common man has always regarded the great man with mixed feelings—resentment as well as admiration, hatred as well as love. The Athenian who refused to vote for Aris-
tides because he was so tired of hearing him called "the Just" expressed a natural reaction. Great men make small men aware of their smallness. Rancor is one of the unavowed but potent emotions of politics; and one must never forget that the envy of the have-nots can be quite as consuming when the haves have character or intelligence as it is when they have merely material possessions.

Modern democracy inadvertently gave envy new scope. While the purpose of democracy was to give everyone a fair chance to rise, its method enabled rancorous men to invoke "equality" as an excuse for keeping all down to their own level. "I attribute the small number of distinguished men in political life," wrote Alexis de Tocqueville after visiting the United States in the 1830's, "to the ever-increasing despotism of the majority. . . . The power of the majority is so absolute and irresistible that one must give up one's rights as a citizen and almost abjure one's qualities as a human being, if one intends to stray from the track which it prescribes." James Bryce even titled a chapter in his American Commonwealth, "Why Great Men Are Not Chosen President."

History has shown these prophets unduly pessimistic. Distinguished men do enter American politics; great men have been chosen President. Democracy demonstrates a capability for heroic leadership quite as much as it does a tendency toward mediocrity. Yet Tocqueville and the others were correct enough in detecting the dislike of great men as a permanent potentiality in a democracy. And the evolution of industrial society appears to have given this sentiment new force. More and more of us live and work within great organizations; an influential book has already singled out the organization man as the American of the future. The bureaucratization of American life, the decline of the working class, the growth of the white-collar class, the rise of suburbia—all this has meant the increasing homogeneity of American society. Though we continue to speak of ourselves as rugged individualists, our actual life has grown more and more collective and anonymous. As a Monsanto Chemical film put it, showing a group of technicians at work in a laboratory: "No geniuses here; just a bunch of average Americans working together." Our ideal is increasingly smooth absorption into the group rather than self-realization in the old-fashioned, strong-minded, don't-give-a-damn sense. Where does the great man fit into our homogenized society?

"The greatness of England is now all collective," John Stuart Mill wrote a century ago: "individually small, we only appear capable of anything great by our habit of combining." He might have been writing about contemporary America; but where we Americans are inclined to rejoice over the superiority of the "team," Mill added somberly, "It was men of another stamp than this that made England what it has been; and men of another stamp will be needed to prevent its decline."

But was Mill right? Do individuals really have impact on history? A
powerful school of philosophers has denied any importance at all to great men. Such thinkers reject heroes as a childish hangover from the days when men ascribed everything to the action of gods. History, they assert, is not made by men, but by inexorable forces or irrevocable laws: if these forces or laws do not manifest themselves through one individual, they will do so through another. What has happened already has comprehensively and absolutely decided what will happen in the future. "If there is a single human action due to free will," wrote Tolstoi, "no historical law exists, and no conception of historical events can be formed." If all this is so, obviously the presence or absence of any particular "hero" at any particular time cannot make the slightest difference.

This view of history is a form of fatalistic determinism; and Tolstoi's War and Peace offers one of its most eloquent statements. Why, Tolstoi asked, did millions of men in the time of Napoleon, repudiating their common sense and their human feelings, move from west to east, slaughtering their fellows? The answers provided by historians seemed to him hopelessly superficial. His own answer was: "The war was bound to happen simply because it was bound to happen"; all previous history pre-determined it. Where did this leave the great men? In Tolstoi's view, they were the most deluded figures of all. Great men, he said, "are but the labels that serve to give a name to an event and, like labels, they have the least possible connection with the event itself." The greater the man, "the more conspicuous is the inevitability and predestination of every act he commits." The hero, said Tolstoi, "is the slave of history."

III

There are many forms of historical fatalism. Toynbee and Spengler, with their theory of the inexorable growth and decay of civilizations, represent one form. The Marxists, with their theory that changes in the modes of production control the course of history, represent another. When Khrushchev denounced the practice of making "a hero" out of "a particular leader" and condemned the cult of the individual as "alien to the spirit of Marxism-Leninism," he was speaking the true spirit of his faith. And Marxism is not the only form of economic determinism; there are also, for example, economic determinists of the laissez-faire school who believe that all civilization is dependent on rigid adherence to a certain theory of the sacredness of private property.

Fatalists differ greatly among themselves. But, however much they differ, they unite in the conclusion that the individual plays no role of his own in history. If they are right, then nothing could matter less whether or not this is an age without heroes.

But they are not right. The philosophy of historical fatalism rests on serious fallacies. For one thing, it supposes that, because a thing happens, it had to happen. But causation is one matter; predestination another. The
construction of a causal explanation after an event merely renders that event in some sense intelligible. It does not in the least show that this particular event, and no other, had to take place; that nothing else could possibly have occurred in its stead. The serious test of the fatalist case must be applied before the event. The only conclusive proof of fatalism would lie in the accurate prediction of events that have not yet happened. And to say, with Tolstoi, that all prior history predetermines everything that follows is to say nothing at all. It is to produce an explanation which applies equally to everything—and thus becomes so vague and limitless as to explain nothing.

Fatalism raises other difficulties. Thus it imputes reality to mystical historical “forces”—class, race, nation, the will of the people, the spirit of the times, history itself. But there are no such forces. They are merely abstractions or metaphors with no existence except in the mind of the beholder. The only evidence for them is deduction from the behavior of individuals. It is therefore the individual who constitutes the basic unit of history. And, while no individual can be wholly free—and, indeed, recent discoveries of the manifold ways in which we are unconsciously conditioned should constitute a salutary check on human vanity—one must assume the reality of an area of free choice until that assumption is challenged, not by metaphysical affirmation, but by verifiable proof—that is, consistently accurate prediction of the future.

Fatalism, moreover, is incompatible with human psychology and human morality. Anyone who rigorously accepted a deterministic view of life, for example, would have to abandon all notions of human responsibility, since it is manifestly unfair to praise or punish people for acts which are by definition beyond their control. But such fatalism is belied by the assumption of free choice which underlies every move we make, every word we utter, every thought we think. As Sir Isaiah Berlin observes of determinism, “If we begin to take it seriously, then, indeed, the changes in our language, our moral notions, our attitudes toward one another, our views of history, of society and of everything else will be too profound to be even adumbrated.” We can no more imagine what the universe of the consistent determinist would be like than we can imagine what it would be like to live in a world without time or one with seventeen-dimensional space.

For, the historian concerned with concrete interpretation of actual events can easily demonstrate the futility of fatalism by trying to apply it to specific historical episodes. According to the extreme determinist view, no particular individual can make the slightest difference. As slaves of history, all individuals are, so to speak, interchangeable parts. If Napoleon had not led his armies across Europe, Tolstoi implies, someone else would have. William James, combating this philosophic fatalism, once asked the determinists whether they really believed “the conver-
gence of sociological pressures to have so impinged on Stratford-on-Avon about April 23, 1564, that a W. Shakespeare, with all his mental peculiarities, had to be born there.” And did they further believe, James continued, that “if the aforesaid W. Shakespeare had died of cholera infantum, another mother at Stratford-on-Avon would needs have engendered a duplicate copy of him to restore the sociologic equilibrium?” Who could believe such stuff? Yet, if the determinists do not mean exactly this, how can they read the individual out of history?

In December, 1931, a British politician, crossing Fifth Avenue in New York between 76th and 77th streets around ten-thirty at night, was knocked down and gravely injured by an automobile. Fourteen months later an American politician, sitting in an open car in Miami, Florida, was fired on by an assassin; a man standing beside him was killed. Would the next two decades of history have been the same had Contasini’s car killed Winston Churchill in 1931 and Zangara’s bullets killed Franklin Roosevelt in 1933? Suppose, in addition, that Adolf Hitler had been killed in the street fighting during the Munich Putsch of 1923, and that Lenin and Mussolini had died at birth. Where would our century be now?

Individuals, of course, must operate within limits. They cannot do everything. They cannot, for example, propel history into directions for which the environment and the human material are not prepared: no genius, however heroic, could have brought television to ancient Troy. Yet, as Sidney Hook has convincingly argued in his thoughtful book, The Hero in History, great men can count decisively “where the historical situation permits of major alternative paths of development.”

This argument between fatalism and heroism is not one on which there is a lot to be said on both sides. The issue is far too sharp to be straddled. Either history is rigidly determined and foreordained, in which case individual striving does not matter; or it is not, in which case there is an essential role for the hero. Analysis of concrete episodes suggests that history is, within limits, open and unfinished; that men have lived who did what no substitute could ever have done; that their intervention set history on one path rather than another. If this is so, the old maxim, “There are no indispensable men,” would seem another amiable fallacy. There is, then, a case for heroes.

To say that there is a case for heroes is not to say that there is a case for hero worship. The surrender of decision, the unquestioning submission to leadership, the prostration of the average man before the Great Man—these are the diseases of heroism, and they are fatal to human dignity. But, if carried too far, hero worship generates its own antidote. “Every hero,” said Emerson, “becomes a bore at last.” And we need not
go too far. History amply shows that it is possible to have heroes without turning them into gods.

And history shows, too, that, when a society, in flight from hero worship, decides to do without great men at all, it gets into troubles of its own. Our contemporary American society, for example, has little use for the individualist. Individualism implies dissent from the group; dissent implies conflict; and conflict suddenly seems divisive, un-American and generally unbearable. Our greatest new industry is evidently the production of techniques to eliminate conflict, from positive thoughts through public relations to psychoanalysis, applied everywhere from the couch to the pulpit. Our national aspiration has become peace of mind, peace of soul. The symptomatic drug of our age is the tranquilizer. "Togetherness" is the banner under which we march into the brave new world.

Obviously society has had to evolve collective institutions to cope with problems that have grown increasingly complex and concentrated. But the collective approach can be overdone. If Khrushchev worried because his collectivist society developed a cult of the individual, maybe we Americans should start worrying as our so-called individualist society develops a cult of the group. We instinctively suppose that the tough questions will be solved by an interfaith conference or an interdisciplinary research team or an interdepartmental committee or an assembly of wise men meeting at Arden House. But are not these group tactics essentially means by which individuals hedge their bets and distribute their responsibilities? And do they not nearly always result in the dilution of insight and the triumph of mishmash? If we are to survive, we must have ideas, vision, courage. These things are rarely produced by committees. Everything that matters in our intellectual and moral life begins with an individual confronting his own mind and conscience in a room by himself.

V

A bland society will never be creative. "The amount of eccentricity in a society," said John Stuart Mill, "has generally been proportional to the amount of genius, mental vigor and moral courage it contained. That so few now dare to be eccentric marks the chief danger of the time." If this condition frightened Mill in Victorian England, it should frighten us much more. For our national apotheosis of the group means that we systematically lop off the eccentrics, the originals, the proud, imaginative, lonely people from whom new ideas come. What began as a recoil from hero worship ends as a conspiracy against creativity. If worship of great men brings us to perdition by one path, flight from great men brings us there just as surely by another. When we do not admire great men, then our instinct for admiration is likely to end by settling on ourselves. The one thing worse for democracy than hero worship is self-worship.
A free society cannot get along without heroes, because they are the most vivid means of exhibiting the power of free men. The hero exposes to all mankind unsuspected possibilities of conception, unimagined resources of strength. “The appearance of a great man,” wrote Emerson, “draws a new circle outside of our largest orbit and surprises and commands us.” Carlyle likened ordinary, lethargic times, with their unbelief and perplexity, to dry, dead fuel, waiting for the lightning out of heaven to kindle it. “The great man, with his free force direct out of God’s own hand, is the lightning. . . . The rest of men waited for him like fuel, and then they too would flame.”

Great men enable us to rise to our own highest potentialities. They nerve lesser men to disregard the world and trust to their own deepest instinct. “In picking out from history our heroes,” said William James, “each one of us may best fortify and inspire what creative energy may lie in his own soul. This is the last justification of hero worship.” Which one of us has not gained fortitude and faith from the incarnation of ideals in men, from the wisdom of Socrates, from the wondrous creativity of Shakespeare, from the strength of Washington, from the compassion of Lincoln, and above all, perhaps, from the life and the death of Jesus? “We feed on genius,” said Emerson. “Great men exist that there may be greater men.”

Yet this may be only the smaller part of their service. Great men have another and larger role—to affirm human freedom against the supposed inevitabilities of history. The first hero was Prometheus, who defied the gods and thus asserted the independence and autonomy of man against all determinism. Zeus punished Prometheus, chaining him to a rock and encouraging a vulture to pluck at his vitals.

Ever since, man, like Prometheus, has warred against history. It has always been a bitter and remorseless fight; for the heavy weight of human inertia lies with fatalism. It takes a man of exceptional vision and strength and will—it takes, in short, a hero—to try to wrench history from what lesser men consider its preconceived path. And often history tortures the hero in the process, chains him to a rock and exposes him to the vulture. Yet, in the model of Prometheus, man can still hold his own against the gods. Brave men earn the right to shape their own destiny.

An age without great men is one which acquiesces in the drift of history. Such acquiescence is easy and seductive; the great appeal of fatalism, indeed, is as a refuge from the terror of responsibility. Where a belief in great men insistently reminds us that individuals can make a difference, fatalism reassures us that they can’t. It thereby blesses our weakness and extenuates our failure. Fatalism, in Berlin’s phrase, is “one of the great alibis” of history.

Let us not be complacent about our supposed capacity to get along without great men. If our society has lost its wish for heroes and its
ability to produce them, it may well turn out to have lost everything else as well.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. In the first two paragraphs, Schlesinger lists a number of great men of the recent past. What do they have in common? Do these first paragraphs imply that the author makes no distinction between great men who have benefited mankind and those who have not? Keep this question sharply in mind as you consider the rest of the essay.

2. Apart from "accident," what accounts for the lack of "giants" in "our age," according to Schlesinger?

3. In the second section, what connection does the author see between democracy and great men? In the third paragraph of the section, Schlesinger says, "Democracy demonstrates a capability for heroic leadership quite as much as it does a tendency toward mediocrity." Does he, then, agree with de Tocqueville and Bryce (quoted in the preceding paragraph)? To what other influence besides that of democracy does he attribute the dislike of great men?

4. The fifth paragraph states the underlying issue of the essay. Restate it in your own words.

5. What is the question being debated in section m? What is a "fallacy"? List the fallacies that Schlesinger finds in the philosophy of historical fatalism.

6. In the last two paragraphs of section m Schlesinger uses the method of argumentation called the reductio, in which an opponent's position is attacked by reducing it to absurd extremes. Explain the point of the reference to the birth of Shakespeare. Why does the last paragraph of this section end with a series of questions? How does the author expect the reader to answer them? (Such questions are called rhetorical.)

7. In the fourth section, what concessions does Schlesinger make to his potential critics? Does he strengthen or weaken his argument by this procedure?

8. In the last paragraph of this section, what does the author mean by "the triumph of mishmash"?

9. The third paragraph of the fifth section refers to some other great men. Who are they? Compare this list with that of the first paragraph of the essay and consider again the question that you were asked to keep in mind.

10. Why does Schlesinger call Prometheus "the first hero"? Why "the first"? In the context of this essay, whom does the author mean by "Zeus" and "the gods"?
From THE CAUSES OF WORLD WAR THREE

THE PIVOTAL DECISION

Tomorrow morning, it is easy to suppose, the equipment of a U.S. radar man somewhere in Canada mechanically fails, or under extreme pressure of time he mistakes a dead satellite or a stray meteor for an incoming ballistic missile. He tracks it toward the industrial heart of the U.S.A. In a few minutes his alarm is out, and in a few more—about fifteen minutes in all, we are told—the planes of the Strategic Air Command, from several dozen bases tucked in as close as they can get to the U.S.S.R., zero in on Soviet industries and cities.

The "fail safe" system of orders comes into operation, but no mechanical systems are foolproof. In the balance of terror, mechanical error and human misjudgment are unknown statistical probabilities. And the danger of miscalculation increases as the weapons become greater in power, speed, and range. On either side, should a ghost electronic echo on a radar screen trigger the launching of a missile, there are—we are told of the U.S. system—only some three hundred seconds to destroy it after its launching toward its Soviet target. Moreover, as nuclear weapons are distributed to other nations the chances of accident increase. American military men, we may suppose, simply cannot make mistakes, garble radio messages, or, while on flying missions, become mentally deranged. But might not Russians be subject to such accidents? "Over the long run," Harry Lustig, a physicist, has reflected, "it does not matter how small the probability of an accident is per unit time; it is mathematically demonstrable that as time goes on, this probability approaches certainty."

Should accident or breakdown occur, SAC drops its stuff. Or the missile is launched. The Americans have massively retaliated. The Russians
retaliate massively. A few hours later the world is a radioactive shambles, a chaos of disaster.

Assuming that anyone is still around and capable of curiosity, what were the causes of World War III? And was anyone responsible for it? Certainly the radar man is not; somebody else sent him there and he followed instructions as best he could. If we follow that chain of instructions we end up in such symbolic centers as Pentagon and White House and Kremlin; out of those centers, too, we follow the network of near-automatic reactions that sent SAC hurtling toward the Soviet.

Just now, the chance of a deliberately planned war is perhaps not as great as is the "accidental" precipitation of war. But the prime conditions of the "accident" are not themselves accidental; they are planned and deliberate. The war mechanism of U.S. men and machines is all set up and triggered to go. It stands opposite a similar mechanism of Soviet design and maintenance. The first cause of World War III is, obviously, the existence of these bureaucratic and lethal machineries. Without them there could be no war.

But who caused these mechanisms to be built and maintained? Certainly not "the Russian people" or "the American people." "All men" have not decided to build and maintain the machineries of the arms race; most men have not been consulted.

At the top of the military hierarchy from which the radar man received his instructions are a few hundred professional military agents. They are in charge and they set up and maintain the U.S. war machine. At the top of the industrial complex which built these machines there are several hundred corporate rich and their executives who run the key sectors of this economy. At the top of the state—to which both military men and corporation executives look—there are a few hundred political directors who, with the aid and advice of military and business elites, make ultimate decisions about the shaping and about the uses of these war machines.

All of it, of course, is "in the name of the nation," but in itself what does that mean? That is a formula of power which may or may not mean something beyond the uses of mere rhetoric. We should never forget that no nation-state is a homogeneous entity, that none is in itself a history-making agent. "It" does not possess decision or will or interest or honor or fright. "Nation" refers to a people occupying a more or less defined territory and organized under the authority of a state or, with some chance of success, claiming such an autonomous organization. The "state," a dominating apparatus, refers to an organization that effectively monopolizes the legitimate means of violence and administration over a defined territory. "Legitimate" means: more or less generally acquiesced
in by publics and masses, for reasons in which they believe. In the case of the nation-state these reasons are the symbols and ideologies of nationalism. “Nation” and “state,” I think, must be used mainly as adjectives referring to national spokesmen, power elites, and policy-makers. People who are not among such men form the underlying population, which is part of the historical context but which is not itself among the decision-makers today.

The causes of this war are not inherent in some vague, historical context of drift and maneuver called “international relations.” The causes are seated mainly in the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. The immediate cause of World War III is the preparation of it. The indispensable condition for this kind of preparation is the fact of the sovereign state as a continental economic domain. International events are increasingly the result of the decisions and the lack of decisions of men who act in the name of these nations and with the means of action made available by their economic, military, and political institutions. The international centralization of decision and the internal development of the superstates, we have seen, mean that history-making is less a matter of some overwhelming fate than of the decisions and the defaults of two power elites. Accordingly, the viewpoints these elites hold, the definitions of reality they accept and act upon, the policies they espouse and attempt to realize—these are among the immediate causes of the thrust toward World War III.

And in both Russia and America, the ruling circles are possessed by the military metaphysic.

Confronted by the buzzing confusion of the world in which they live, decision-makers regularly seize upon the threat of violence as “the real factor.” The deciding point in the conflict between Soviet communism and American capitalism is held (especially, it now must be admitted, by the elite of the U.S.A.) to be the state of violence and the balance of fright. The pivotal decision made by the elite is in accordance with this military metaphysic. It is the decision, as Lewis Mumford has put it, of trying “to solve the problems of absolute peace, presented by nuclear weapons, by concentrating their national resources upon instruments of genocide.” It rests upon the dogmatic view—held, I am sure, with sincerity and good intention—that only by accumulating ever new and ever greater military peril can a condition of peace be created. The key moral fact about it is the virtual absence within ourselves of opposition to this definition of world reality, to the elites’ strategy and policies. The key political and intellectual result is the absence within Russia and within America, among publics and masses, of any truly debated alternatives.

In terms of this metaphysic of violence, elite spokesmen now regularly interchange unpleasantries; their policy-makers plan each other’s ruin.
Official definitions of world reality and virtually all discourse of significant public relevance are in their hands, and they are at proclamatory war. Each defines his own nation's reality in terms of his own nation's favorite proclamations; each defines the reality of the other nation in terms of its worst decisions and actions. Surely their conduct of affairs is the key instance today of what Jakob Burckhardt had in mind a hundred years ago when he predicted "the age of the terrible simplifiers."

The arms race is the master line of action followed by the power elites of the continental states. It is not subordinated to and made an instrument of any economic and political goal. What is the economic and political goal of the U.S., to which its military actions are a means? The accumulation of military power has become an ascendant end in itself; economic and political maneuvers and hesitations—from imperialist action in the desert to diplomatic coyness in the drawing room—are subordinated to and judged in terms of military forces and potentials. The spokesmen of each side say they know that war is obsolete as a means of policy, yet they search for peace by warlike means. The strategic outlook is not decisively, and certainly not permanently, changed by any one or another turn of the arms race. We are beyond that. The equipment in combat readiness on both sides is already devastating. The development of this equipment is cumulative: One "ultimate weapon" follows another in geometric progression, and the base for the acceleration in both war camps is quite adequate for the end in view. Never before has there been an arms race of this sort—a scientific arms race, with a series of ultimate weapons, dominated by the strategy of obliteration. At every turn of this "competition," each side becomes more edgy and the chances become greater that accidents of character or of technology, that the U.S. radar man in Canada or his Russian counterpart in Siberia, will trigger the sudden ending.

But the strategic outlook is the idiot's outlook. It is the fact of this idiot's race that is important, not the score at any given moment, not the alarmist cries which would frighten men from examining its deadly assumptions. ("The last thing [Western statesmen] wanted," a veteran Washington correspondent said in the last weeks of October, 1957, "was to deprive the Western world of its Sputnik-inspired fright...") Both the Russian and the American elites, and intellectuals in both societies, are fighting the cold war in the name of peace, but the assumptions of their policies and the effects of their interactions have been, and are, increasing the chances of war. War, it is assumed in their military metaphysic, is the most likely outcome of the parallel existence of the two types of political economy. Such is the official lay of the land, the official definition of world reality, the contribution to peace of the nationalist spokesmen among the power elite.
AIDS TO STUDY

1. This chapter from an urgently worded tract aims less to inform than to convince. If Mills' argument is to stand up, it must correspond recognizably to the facts as we know them and must offer acceptable definitions of key terms. Does his presentation of military and political facts strike you as accurate?

2. What does he mean by "state," "legitimate," and "power elite"? Are his definitions acceptable?

3. What is "the pivotal decision"?

4. Mills speaks of "the military metaphysic" and the "metaphysic of violence." What does metaphysic mean in his context?

5. Why is the chapter divided into four sections? Does each section relate closely to the ones that follow or precede? Or does each stand somewhat independent?

6. Does a reading of this week's international news generally confirm or generally contradict Mills' analysis? How?

7. How would you characterize the tone of this essay? Is it rational, hysterical, angry, thoughtful? Does this tone affect its power to convince?
THE MAN THAT CORRUPTED
HADLEYBURG

I

It was many years ago. Hadleyburg was the most honest and upright town in all the region round about. It had kept that reputation unsmirched during three generations, and was prouder of it than of any other of its possessions. It was so proud of it, and so anxious to insure its perpetuation, that it began to teach the principles of honest dealing to its babies in the cradle, and made the like teachings the staple of their culture thenceforward through all the years devoted to their education. Also, throughout the formative years temptations were kept out of the way of the young people, so that their honesty could have every chance to harden and solidify, and become a part of their very bone. The neighboring towns were jealous of this honorable supremacy, and affected to sneer at Hadleyburg's pride in it and call it vanity; but all the same they were obliged to acknowledge that Hadleyburg was in reality an incorruptible town; and if pressed they would also acknowledge that the mere fact that a young man hailed from Hadleyburg was all the recommendation he needed when he went forth from his natal town to seek for responsible employment.

But at last, in the drift of time, Hadleyburg had the ill luck to offend a passing stranger—possibly without knowing it, certainly without caring, for Hadleyburg was sufficient unto itself, and cared not a rap for strangers or their opinions. Still, it would have been well to make an exception in this one's case, for he was a bitter man and revengeful. All through his wanderings during a whole year he kept his injury in mind, and gave all his leisure moments to trying to invent a compensating satisfaction for it. He contrived many plans, and all of them were good, but
none of them was quite sweeping enough; the poorest of them would hurt a great many individuals, but what he wanted was a plan which would comprehend the entire town, and not let so much as one person escape unhurt. At last he had a fortunate idea, and when it fell into his brain it lit up his whole head with an evil joy. He began to form a plan at once, saying to himself, "That is the thing to do—I will corrupt the town."

Six months later he went to Hadleyburg, and arrived in a buggy at the house of the old cashier of the bank about ten at night. He got a sack out of the buggy, shouldered it, and staggered with it through the cottage yard, and knocked at the door. A woman's voice said, "Come in," and he entered, and set his sack behind the stove in the parlor, saying politely to the old lady who sat reading the Missionary Herald by the lamp:

"Pray keep your seat, madam, I will not disturb you. There—now it is pretty well concealed; one would hardly know it was there. Can I see your husband a moment, madam?"

No, he was gone to Brixton, and might not return before morning.

"Very well, madam, it is no matter. I merely wanted to leave that sack in his care, to be delivered to the rightful owner when he shall be found. I am a stranger; he does not know me; I am merely passing through the town tonight to discharge a matter which has been long in my mind. My errand is now completed, and I go pleased and a little proud, and you will never see me again. There is a paper attached to the sack which will explain everything. Good night, madam."

The old lady was afraid of the mysterious big stranger, and was glad to see him go. But her curiosity was roused, and she went straight to the sack and brought away the paper. It began as follows:

"TO BE PUBLISHED; or, the right man sought out by private inquiry—either will answer. This sack contains gold coin weighing a hundred and sixty pounds four ounces—"

"Mercy on us, and the door not locked!"

Mrs. Richards flew to it all in a tremble and locked it, then pulled down the window-shades and stood frightened, worried, and wondering if there was anything else she could do toward making herself and the money more safe. She listened awhile for burglars, then surrendered to curiosity and went back to the lamp and finished reading the paper:

"I am a foreigner, and am presently going back to my own country, to re-
main there permanently. I am grateful to America for what I have received at her hands during my long stay under her flag; and to one of her citizens—a citizen of Hadleyburg—I am especially grateful for a great kindness done me a year or two ago. Two great kindnesses, in fact. I will explain. I was a gam-
bler. I say I WAS. I was a ruined gambler. I arrived in this village at night, hungry and without a penny. I asked for help—in the dark; I was ashamed to
beg in the light. I begged of the right man. He gave me twenty dollars—that is to say, he gave me life, as I considered it. He also gave me fortune; for out of that money I have made myself rich at the gaming-table. And finally, a remark which he made to me has remained with me to this day, and has at last conquered me; and in conquering has saved the remnant of my morals: I shall gamble no more. Now I have no idea who that man was, but I want him found, and I want him to have this money, to give away, throw away, or keep, as he pleases. It is merely my way of testifying my gratitude to him. If I could stay, I would find him myself; but no matter, he will be found. This is an honest town, an incorruptible town, and I know I can trust it without fear. This man can be identified by the remark which he made to me; I feel persuaded that he will remember it.

"And now my plan is this: If you prefer to conduct the inquiry privately, do so. Tell the contents of this present writing to anyone who is likely to be the right man. If he shall answer, 'I am the man; the remark I made was so-and-so,' apply the test—to wit: open the sack, and in it you will find a sealed envelope containing that remark. If the remark mentioned by the candidate tallies with it, give him the money, and ask no further questions, for he is certainly the right man.

"But if you shall prefer a public inquiry, then publish this present writing in the local paper—with these instructions added, to wit: Thirty days from now, let the candidate appear at the town-hall at eight in the evening (Friday), and hand his remark, in a sealed envelope to the Rev. Mr. Burgess (if he will be kind enough to act); and let Mr. Burgess there and then destroy the seals of the sack, open it, and see if the remark is correct; if correct, let the money be delivered, with my sincere gratitude, to my benfactor thus identified."

Mrs. Richards sat down, gently quivering with excitement, and was soon lost in thinkings—after this pattern: "What a strange thing it is!... And what a fortune for that kind man who set his bread afloat upon the waters!... If it had only been my husband that did it!—for we are so poor, so old and poor!..." Then, with a sigh—"But it was not my Edward; no, it was not he that gave a stranger twenty dollars. It is a pity, too; I see it now...." Then, with a shudder—"But it is gambler's money! the wages of sin: we couldn't take it; we couldn't touch it. I don't like to be near it; it seems a defilement." She moved to a farther chair. "'I wish Edward would come, and take it to the bank; a burglar might come at any moment; it is dreadful to be here all alone with it."

At eleven Mr. Richards arrived, and while his wife was saying, "I am so glad you've come!" he was saying, "I'm so tired—tired clear out; it is dreadful to be poor, and have to make these dismal journeys at my time of life. Always at the grind, grind, grind, on a salary—another man's slave, and he sitting at home in his slippers, rich and comfortable."

"I am so sorry for you, Edward, you know that; but be comforted: we have our livelihood; we have our good name—"
“Yes, Mary, and that is everything. Don’t mind my talk—it’s just a moment’s irritation and doesn’t mean anything. Kiss me—there, it’s all gone now, and I am not complaining any more. What have you been getting? What’s in the sack?”

Then his wife told him the great secret. It dazed him for a moment; then he said:

“It weighs a hundred and sixty pounds? Why, Mary, it’s for-ty thou-sand dollars—think of it—a whole fortune! Not ten men in this village are worth that much. Give me the paper.”

He skimmed through it and said:

“Isn’t it an adventure! Why, it’s a romance; it’s like the impossible things one reads about in books, and never sees in life.” He was well stirred up now; cheerful, even gleeful. He tapped his old wife on the cheek, and said, humorously, “Why, we’re rich, Mary, rich; all we’ve got to do is to bury the money and burn the papers. If the gambler ever comes to inquire, we’ll merely look coldly upon him and say: ‘What is this nonsense you are talking? We have never heard of you and your sack of gold before’; and then he would look foolish, and—”

“And in the meantime, while you are running on with your jokes, the money is still here, and it is fast getting along toward burglar-time.”

“True. Very well, what shall we do—make the inquiry private? No, not that: it would spoil the romance. The public method is better. Think what a noise it will make! And it will make all the other towns jealous; for no stranger would trust such a thing to any town but Hadleyburg, and they know it. It’s a great card for us. I must get to the printing-office now, or I shall be too late.”

“But stop—stop—don’t leave me here alone with it, Edward!”

But he was gone. For only a little while, however. Not far from his own house he met the editor-proprietor of the paper, and gave him the document, and said, “Here is a good thing for you, Cox—put it in.”

“It may be too late, Mr. Richards, but I’ll see.”

At home again he and his wife sat down to talk the charming mystery over; they were in no condition for sleep. The first question was, Who could the citizen have been who gave the stranger the twenty dollars? It seemed a simple one; both answered it in the same breath:

“Barclay Goodson.”

“Yes,” said Richards, “he could have done it, and it would have been like him, but there’s not another in the town.”

“Everybody will grant that, Edward—grant it privately, anyway. For six months, now, the village has been its own proper self once more—honest, narrow, self-righteous, and stingy.”

“It is what he always called it, to the day of his death—said it right out publicly, too.”

“Yes, and he was hated for it.”
"Oh, of course; but he didn't care. I reckon he was the best-hated man among us, except the Reverend Burgess."

"Well, Burgess deserves it—he will never get another congregation here. Mean as the town is, it knows how to estimate him. Edward, doesn't it seem odd that the stranger should appoint Burgess to deliver the money?"

"Well, yes—it does. That is—that is—"

"Why so much that-is-ing? Would you select him?"

"Mary, maybe the stranger knows him better than this village does."

"Much that would help Burgess!"

The husband seemed perplexed for an answer; the wife kept a steady eye upon him, and waited. Finally Richards said, with the hesitancy of one who is making a statement which is likely to encounter doubt.

"Mary, Burgess is not a bad man."

His wife was certainly surprised.

"Nonsense!" she exclaimed.

"He is not a bad man. I know. The whole of his unpopularity had its foundation in that one thing—the thing that made so much noise."

"That 'one thing,' indeed! As if that 'one thing' wasn't enough, all by itself."

"Plenty. Plenty. Only he wasn't guilty of it."

"How you talk! Not guilty of it! Everybody knows he was guilty."

"Mary, I give you my word—he was innocent."

"I can't believe it, and I don't. How do you know?"

"It is a confession. I am ashamed, but I will make it. I was the only man who knew he was innocent. I could have saved him, and—and—well, you know how the town was wrought up—I hadn't the pluck to do it. It would have turned everybody against me. I felt mean, ever so mean; but I didn't dare; I hadn't the manliness to face that."

Mary looked troubled, and for a while was silent. Then she said, stammeringly:

"I—I don't think it would have done for you to—to—One mustn't—er—public opinion—one has to be so careful—so—" It was a difficult road, and she got mired; but after a little she got started again. "It was a great pity, but—Why, we couldn't afford it, Edward—we couldn't indeed. Oh, I wouldn't have had you do it for anything!"

"It would have lost us the good-will of so many people, Mary; and then—and then—"

"What troubles me now is, what he thinks of us, Edward."

"He? He doesn't suspect that I could have saved him."

"Oh," exclaimed the wife, in a tone of relief, "I am glad of that. As long as he doesn't know that you could have saved him, he—he—well, that makes it a great deal better. Why, I might have known he didn't know, because he is always trying to be friendly with us, as little en-
couragement as we give him. More than once people have twitted me with it. There’s the Wilsons, and the Wilcoxes, and the Harknesses, they take a mean pleasure in saying, ‘Your friend Burgess,’ because they know it pesters me. I wish he wouldn’t persist in liking us so; I can’t think why he keeps it up.”

“I can explain it. It’s another confession. When the thing was new and hot, and the town made a plan to ride him on a rail, my conscience hurt me so that I couldn’t stand it, and I went privately and gave him notice, and he got out of the town and stayed out till it was safe to come back.”

“Edward! If the town had found it out—”

“Don’t! It scares me yet, to think of it. I repented of it the minute it was done; and I was even afraid to tell you, lest your face might betray it to somebody. I didn’t sleep any that night, for worrying. But after a few days I saw that no one was going to suspect me, and after that I got to feeling glad I did it. And I feel glad yet, Mary—glad through and through.”

“So do I, now, for it would have been a dreadful way to treat him. Yes, I’m glad; for really you did owe him that, you know. But, Edward, suppose it should come out yet, some day!”

“It won’t.”

“Why?”

“Because everybody thinks it was Goodson.”

“Of course they would!”

“Certainly. And of course he didn’t care. They persuaded poor old Sawlsberry to go and charge it on him, and he went blustering over there and did it. Goodson looked him over, like as if he was hunting for a place on him that he could despise the most, then he says, ‘So you are the Committee of Inquiry, are you?’ Sawlsberry said that was about what he was. ‘Hm. Do they require particulars, or do you reckon a kind of a general answer will do?’ ‘If they require particulars, I will come back, Mr. Goodson; I will take the general answer first.’ ‘Very well, then, tell them to go to hell—I reckon that’s general enough. And I’ll give you some advice, Sawlsberry; when you come back for the particulars, fetch a basket to carry the relics of yourself home in.’ ”

“Just like Goodson; it’s got all the marks. He had only one vanity: he thought he could give advice better than any other person.”

“It settled the business, and saved us, Mary. The subject was dropped.”

“Bless you, I’m not doubting that.”

Then they took up the gold-sack mystery again, with strong interest. Soon the conversation began to suffer breaks—interruptions caused by absorbed thinkings. The breaks grew more and more frequent. At last Richards lost himself wholly in thought. He sat long, gazing vacantly at the floor, and by and by he began to punctuate his thoughts with little
nervous movements of his hands that seemed to indicate vexation. Meantime his wife too had relapsed into a thoughtful silence, and her movements were beginning to show a troubled discomfort. Finally Richards got up and strode aimlessly about the room, plowing his hands through his hair, much as a somnambulist might do who was having a bad dream. Then he seemed to arrive at a definite purpose; and without a word he put on his hat and passed quickly out of the house. His wife sat brooding, with a drawn face, and did not seem to be aware that she was alone. Now and then she murmured, “Lead us not into t— . . . but— but—we are so poor, so poor! . . . Lead us not into . . . Ah, who would be hurt by it?— and no one would ever know. . . . Lead us. . . .” The voice died out in mumblings. After a little she glanced up and muttered in a half-frightened, half-glad way—

“He is gone! But, oh dear, he may be too late— too late. . . . Maybe not— maybe there is still time.” She rose and stood thinking, nervously clasping and unclasping her hands. A slight shudder shook her frame, and she said, out of a dry throat, “God forgive me— it’s awful to think such things— but . . . Lord, how we are made— how strangely we are made!”

She turned the light low, and slipped stealthily over and kneeled down by the sack and felt of its ridgy sides with her hands, and fondled them lovingly; and there was a glistening light in her poor old eyes. She fell into fits of absence; and came half out of them at times to mutter, “If we had only waited!— oh, if we had only waited a little, and not been in such a hurry!”

Meantime Cox had gone home from his office and told his wife all about the strange thing that had happened, and they had talked it over eagerly, and guessed that the late Goodson was the only man in the town who could have helped a suffering stranger with so noble a sum as twenty dollars. Then there was a pause, and the two became thoughtful and silent. And by and by nervous and fidgety. At last the wife said, as if to herself:

“Nobody knows this secret but the Richardses . . . and us . . . nobody.”

The husband came out of his thoughts with a slight start, and gazed wistfully at his wife, whose face was become very pale; then he hesitatingly rose, and glanced furtively at his hat, then at his wife— a sort of mute inquiry. Mrs. Cox swallowed once or twice, with her hand at her throat, then in place of speech she nodded her head. In a moment she was alone, and mumbling to herself.

And now Richards and Cox were hurrying through the deserted streets, from opposite directions. They met, panting, at the foot of the printing-office stairs; by the nightlight there they read each other’s face. Cox whispered:
“Nobody knows about this but us?”
The whispered answer was:
“Not a soul—on honor, not a soul!”
“If it isn’t too late to—”
The men were starting upstairs; at this moment they were overtaken by a boy, and Cox asked:
“Is that you, Johnny?”
“Yes, sir.”
“You needn’t ship the early mail—nor any mail; wait till I tell you.”
“It’s already gone, sir.”
“Gone?” It had the sound of an unspeakable disappointment in it.
“Yes, sir. Time-table for Brixton and all the towns beyond changed today, sir—had to get the papers in twenty minutes earlier than common. I had to rush; if I had been two minutes later—”

The men turned and walked slowly away, not waiting to hear the rest. Neither of them spoke during ten minutes; then Cox said, in a vexed tone:
“What possessed you to be in such a hurry, I can’t make out.”
The answer was humble enough:
“I see it now, but somehow I never thought, you know, until it was too late. But the next time—”
“Next time be hanged! It won’t come in a thousand years.”

Then the friends separated without a good night, and dragged themselves home with the gait of mortally stricken men. At their homes their wives sprang up with an eager “Well?”—then saw the answer with their eyes and sank down sorrowing, without waiting for it to come in words. In both houses a discussion followed of a heated sort—a new thing; there had been discussions before, but not heated over, not ungentle ones. The discussions tonight were a sort of seeming plagiarisms of each other. Mrs. Richards said:
“If you had only waited, Edward—if you had only stopped to think; but no, you must run straight to the printing-office and spread it all over the world.”
“It said publish it.”
“That is nothing; it also said do it privately, if you liked. There, now—is that true, or not?”
“Why, yes—yes, it is true; but when I thought what a stir it would make, and what a compliment it was to Hadleyburg that a stranger should trust it so—”

“Oh, certainly, I know all that; but if you had only stopped to think, you would have seen that you couldn’t find the right man, because he is in his grave, and hasn’t left chick nor child nor relation behind him; and as long as the money went to somebody that awfully needed it, and nobody would be hurt by it, and—and—”
She broke down, crying. Her husband tried to think of some comforting thing to say, and presently came out with this:

"But after all, Mary, it must be for the best—it must be; we know that. And we must remember that it was so ordered—"

"Ordered! Oh, everything's ordered, when a person has to find some way out when he has been stupid. Just the same, it was ordered that the money should come to us in this special way, and it was you that must take it on yourself to go meddling with the designs of Providence—and who gave you the right? It was wicked, that is what it was—just blasphemous presumption, and no more becoming to a meek and humble professor of—"

"But, Mary, you know how we have been trained all our lives long, like the whole village, till it is absolutely second nature to us to stop not a single moment to think when there's an honest thing to be done—"

"Oh, I know it, I know it—it's been one everlasting training and training and training in honesty—honesty shielded, from the very cradle, against every possible temptation, and so it's artificial honesty, and weak as water when temptation comes, as we have seen this night. God knows I never had shade nor shadow of a doubt of my petrified and indestructible honesty until now—and now, under the very first big and real temptation, I—Edward, it is my belief that this town's honesty is as rotten as mine is; as rotten as yours is. It is a mean town, a hard, stingy town, and hasn't a virtue in the world but this honesty it is so celebrated for and so conceited about; and so help me, I do believe that if ever the day comes that its honesty falls under great temptation, its grand reputation will go to ruin like a house of cards. There, now, I've made confession, and I feel better; I am a humbug, and I've been one all my life, without knowing it. Let no man call me honest again—I will not have it."

"I—well, Mary, I feel a good deal as you do; I certainly do. It seems strange, too, so strange. I never could have believed it—never."

A long silence followed; both were sunk in thought. At last the wife looked up and said:

"I know what you are thinking, Edward."

Richards had the embarrassed look of a person who is caught.

"I am ashamed to confess it, Mary, but—"

"It's no matter, Edward, I was thinking the same question myself."

"I hope so. State it."

"You were thinking, if a body could only guess out what the remark was that Goodson made to the stranger."

"It's perfectly true. I feel guilty and ashamed. And you?"

"I'm past it. Let us make a pallet here; we've got to stand watch till the bank vault opens in the morning and admits the sack. . . . Oh dear, oh dear—if we hadn't made the mistake!"

The pallet was made, and Mary said:
“The open sesame—what could it have been? I do wonder what that remark could have been? But come; we will get to bed now.”

“And sleep?”

“No; think.”

“Yes, think.”

By this time the Coxes too had completed their spat and their reconciliation, and were turning in—to think, to think, and toss, and fret, and worry over what the remark could possibly have been which Goodson made to the stranded derelict; that golden remark; that remark worth forty thousand dollars, cash.

The reason that the village telegraph office was open later than usual that night was this: The foreman of Cox’s paper was the local representative of the Associated Press. One might say its honorary representative, for it wasn’t four times a year that he could furnish thirty words that would be accepted. But this time it was different. His dispatch stating what he had caught got an instant answer:

“Send the whole thing—all the details—twelve hundred words.”

A colossal order! The foreman filled the bill; and he was the proudest man in the State. By breakfast-time the next morning the name of Hadleyburg the Incorruptible was on every lip in America, from Montreal to the Gulf, from the glaciers of Alaska to the orange-groves of Florida; and millions and millions of people were discussing the stranger and his money-sack, and wondering if the right man would be found, and hoping some more news about the matter would come soon—right away.

Hadleyburg village woke up world-celebrated—astonished—happy—vain. Vain beyond imagination. Its nineteen principal citizens and their wives went about shaking hands with each other, and beaming, and smiling, and congratulating, and saying this thing adds a new word to the dictionary—Hadleyburg, synonym for incorruptible—destined to live in dictionaries forever! And the minor and unimportant citizens and their wives went around acting in much the same way. Everybody ran to the bank to see the gold-sack; and before noon grieved and envious crowds began to flock in from Brixton and all neighboring towns; and that afternoon and next day reporters began to arrive from everywhere to verify the sack and its history and write the whole thing up anew, and make dashing free-hand pictures of the sack, and of Richards’s house, and the bank, and the Presbyterian church, and the Baptist church, and the public square, and the town-hall where the test would be applied and the money delivered; and damnable portraits of the Richardses, and Pinkerton the banker, and Cox, and the foreman, and Reverend Burgess, and the postmaster—and even of Jack Halliday, who was the loafing, good-natured, no-account, irreverent fisherman, hunter, boys’ friend, stray-
dogs' friend, typical "Sam Lawson" of the town. The little mean, smirking, oily Pinkerton showed the sack to all comers, and rubbed his sleek palms together pleasantly, and enlarged upon the town's fine old reputation for honesty and upon this wonderful endorsement of it, and hoped and believed that the example would now spread far and wide over the American world, and be epoch-making in the matter of moral regeneration. And so on, and so on.

By the end of a week things had quieted down again; the wild intoxication of pride and joy had sobered to a soft, sweet, silent delight—a sort of deep, nameless, unutterable content. All faces bore a look of peaceful, holy happiness.

Then a change came. It was a gradual change: so gradual that its beginnings were hardly noticed; maybe were not noticed at all, except by Jack Halliday, who always noticed everything; and always made fun of it, too, no matter what it was. He began to throw out chaffing remarks about people not looking quite so happy as they did a day or two ago; and next he claimed that the new aspect was deepening to positive sadness; next, that it was taking on a sick look; and finally he said that everybody was become so moody, thoughtful, and absent-minded that he could rob the meanest man in town of a cent out of the bottom of his breeches pocket and not disturb his reverie.

At this stage—or at about this stage—a saying like this was dropped at bedtime—with a sigh, usually—by the head of each of the nineteen principal households: "Ah, what could have been the remark that Goodson made?"

And straightway—with a shudder—came this, from the man's wife:

"Oh, don't! What horrible thing are you mulling in your mind? Put it away from you, for God's sake!"

But that question was wrung from those men again the next night—and got the same retort. But weaker.

And the third night the men uttered the question yet again—with anguish, and absently. This time—and the following night—the wives fidgeted feebly, and tried to say something. But didn't.

And the night after that they found their tongues and responded—longingly:

"Oh, if we could only guess!"

Halliday's comments grew daily more and more sparkingly disagreeable and disparaging. He went diligently about, laughing at the town, individually and in mass. But his laugh was the only one left in the village: it fell upon a hollow and mournful vacancy and emptiness. Not even a smile was findable anywhere. Halliday carried a cigar-box around on a tripod, playing that it was a camera, and halted all passers and aimed the thing and said, "Ready!—now look pleasant, please," but not even this capital joke could surprise the dreary faces into any softening.
So three weeks passed—one week was left. It was Saturday evening—after supper. Instead of the aforetime Saturday-evening flutter and bustle and shopping and larking, the streets were empty and desolate. Richards and his old wife sat apart in their little parlor—miserable and thinking. This was become their evening habit now: the lifelong habit which had preceded it, of reading, knitting, and contented chat, or receiving or paying neighborly calls, was dead and gone and forgotten, ages ago—two or three weeks ago; nobody talked now, nobody read, nobody visited—the whole village sat at home, sighing, worrying, silent. Trying to guess out that remark.

The postman left a letter. Richards glanced listlessly at the superscription and the postmark—unfamiliar, both—and tossed the letter on the table and resumed his might-have-beens and his hopeless dull miseries where he had left them off. Two or three hours later his wife got wearily up and was going away to bed without a good night—custom now—but she stopped near the letter and eyed it awhile with a dead interest, then broke it open, and began to skim it over. Richards, sitting there with his chair tilted back against the wall and his chin between his knees, heard something fall. It was his wife. He sprang to her side, but she cried out:

"Leave me alone, I am too happy. Read the letter—read it!"

He did. He devoured it, his brain reeling. The letter was from a distant State, and it said:

"I am a stranger to you, but no matter: I have something to tell. I have just arrived home from Mexico, and learned about that episode. Of course you do not know who made that remark, but I know, and I am the only person living who does know. It was Goodson. I knew him well, many years ago. I passed through your village that very night, and was his guest till the midnight train came along. I overheard him make that remark to the stranger in the dark—it was in Hale Alley. He and I talked of it the rest of the way home, and while smoking in his house. He mentioned many of your villagers in the course of his talk—most of them in a very uncomplimentary way, but two or three favorably; among these latter yourself. I say 'favorably'—nothing stronger. I remember his saying he did not actually like any person in the town—not one; but that you—I think he said you—am almost sure—had done him a very great service once, possibly without knowing the full value of it, and he wished he had a fortune, he would leave it to you when he died, and a curse apiece for the rest of the citizens. Now, then, if it was you that did him that service, you are his legitimate heir, and entitled to the sack of gold. I know that I can trust to your honor and honesty, for in a citizen of Hadleyburg these virtues are an unfailing inheritance, and so I am going to reveal to you the remark, well satisfied that if you are not the right man you will seek and find the right one and see that poor Goodson's debt of gratitude for the service referred to is paid. This is the remark: 'YOU ARE FAR FROM BEING A BAD MAN: GO, AND REFORM.'

Howard L. Stephenson."
"Oh, Edward, the money is ours, and I am so grateful,—kiss me, dear, it's forever since we kissed—and we needed it so—the money—and now you are free of Pinkerton and his bank, and nobody's slave any more; it seems to me I could fly for joy."

It was a happy half hour that the couple spent there on the settee caressing each other; it was the old days come again—days that had begun with their courtship and lasted without a break till the stranger brought the deadly money. By and by the wife said:

"Oh, Edward, how lucky it was you did him that grand service, poor Goodson! I never liked him, but I love him now. And it was fine and beautiful of you never to mention it or brag about it." Then, with a touch of reproach, "But you ought to have told me, Edward, you ought to have told your wife, you know."

"Well, I—er—well, Mary, you see—"

"Now stop hemming and hawing, and tell me about it, Edward. I always loved you, and now I'm proud of you. Everybody believes there was only one good generous soul in this village, and now it turns out that you—Edward, why don't you tell me?"

"Well—er—er— Why, Mary, I can't!"

"You can't? Why can't you?"

"You see, he—well, he—he made me promise I wouldn't."

The wife looked him over, and said, very slowly:

"Made—you—promise? Edward, what do you tell me that for?"

"Mary, do you think I would lie?"

She was troubled and silent for a moment, then she laid her hand within his and said:

"No . . . no. We have wandered far enough from our bearings—God spare us that! In all your life you have never uttered a lie. But now—now that the foundations of things seem to be crumbling from under us, we—we—" She lost her voice for a moment, then said, brokenly, "Lead us not into temptation. . . . I think you made the promise, Edward. Let it rest so. Let us keep away from that ground. Now—that is all gone by; let us be happy again; it is no time for clouds."

Edward found it something of an effort to comply, for his mind kept wandering—trying to remember what the service was that he had done Goodson.

The couple lay awake the most of the night, Mary happy and busy, Edward busy but not so happy. Mary was planning what she would do with the money. Edward was trying to recall that service. At first his conscience was sore on account of the lie he had told Mary—if it was a lie. After much reflection—suppose it was a lie? What then? Was it such a great matter? Aren't we always acting lies? Then why not tell them? Look at Mary—look what she had done. While he was hurrying off on his honest errand, what was she doing? Lamenting because the papers
hadn't been destroyed and the money kept! Is theft better than lying?

*That* point lost its sting—the lie dropped into the background and left comfort behind it. The next point came to the front: *Had* he rendered that service? Well, here was Goodson's own evidence as reported in Stephenson's letter; there could be no better evidence than that—it was even *proof* that he had rendered it. Of course. So that point was settled. . . No, not quite. He recalled with a wince that this unknown Mr. Stephenson was just a trifle unsure as to whether the performer of it was Richards or some other—and, oh dear, he had put Richards on his honor! He must himself decide whither that money must go—and Mr. Stephenson was not doubting that if he was the wrong man he would go honorably and find the right one. Oh, it was odious to put a man in such a situation—ah, why couldn't Stephenson have left out that doubt! What did he want to intrude that for?

Further reflection. How did it happen that *Richards's* name remained in Stephenson's mind as indicating the right man, and not some other man's name? That looked good. Yes, that looked very good. In fact, it went on looking better and better, straight along—until by and by it *grew* into positive *proof*. And then Richards put the matter at once out of his mind, for he had a private instinct that a *proof* once established is better left so.

He was feeling reasonably comfortable now, but there was still one other detail that kept pushing itself on his notice: of course he had done that service—that was settled; but what *was* that service? He must recall it—he would not go to sleep till he had recalled it; it would make his peace of mind perfect. And so he thought and thought. He thought of a dozen things—possible services, even probable services—but none of them seemed adequate, none of them seemed large enough, none of them seemed worth the money—worth the fortune Goodson had wished he could leave in his will. And besides, he couldn't remember having done them, anyway. Now, then—now, then—what *kind* of a service would it be that would make a man so inordinately grateful? Ah—the saving of his soul! That must be it. Yes, he could remember, now, how he once set himself the task of converting Goodson, and labored at it as much as—he was going to say three months; but upon closer examination it shrunk to a month, then to a week, then to a day, then to nothing. Yes, he remembered now, and with unwelcome vividness, that Goodson had told him to go to thunder and mind his own business—he wasn't hankering to follow Hadleyburg to heaven!

So that solution was a failure—he hadn't saved Goodson's soul. Richards was discouraged. Then after a little came another idea: had he saved Goodson's property? No, that wouldn't do—he hadn't any. His life? That is it! Of course. Why, he might have thought of it before. This time he
Thereafter during a stretch of two exhausting hours he was busy saving Goodson's life. He saved it in all kinds of difficult and perilous ways. In every case he got it saved satisfactorily up to a certain point; then, just as he was beginning to get well persuaded that it had really happened, a troublesome detail would turn up which made the whole thing impossible. As in the matter of drowning, for instance. In that case he had swum out and tugged Goodson ashore in an unconscious state with a great crowd looking on and applauding, but when he had got it all thought out and was just beginning to remember all about it, a whole swarm of disqualifying details arrived on the ground: the town would have known of the circumstance, Mary would have known of it, it would glare like a limelight in his own memory instead of being an inconspicuous service which he had possibly rendered "without knowing its full value." And at this point he remembered that he couldn't swim, anyway.

Ah—there was a point which he had been overlooking from the start: it had to be a service which he had rendered "possibly without knowing the full value of it." Why, really, that ought to be an easy hunt—much easier than those others. And sure enough, by and by he found it. Goodson, years and years ago, came near marrying a very sweet and pretty girl, named Nancy Hewitt, but in some way or other the match had been broken off; the girl died, Goodson remained a bachelor, and by and by became a soured one and a frank despiser of the human species. Soon after the girl's death the village found out, or thought it had found out, that she carried a spoonful of Negro blood in her veins. Richards worked at these details a good while, and in the end he thought he remembered things concerning them which must have gotten mislaid in his memory through long neglect. He seemed to dimly remember that it was he that found out about the Negro blood; that it was he that told the village; that the village told Goodson where they got it; that he thus saved Goodson from marrying the tainted girl; that he had done him this great service "without knowing the full value of it," in fact without knowing that he was doing it; but that Goodson knew the value of it, and what a narrow escape he had had, and so went to his grave grateful to his benefactor and wishing he had a fortune to leave him. It was all clear and simple now, and the more he went over it the more luminous and certain it grew; and at last, when he nestled to sleep satisfied and happy, he remembered the whole thing just as if it had been yesterday. In fact, he dimly remembered Goodson's telling him his gratitude once. Meantime Mary had spent six thousand dollars on a new house for herself and a pair of slippers for her pastor, and then had fallen peacefully to rest.
That same Saturday evening the postman had delivered a letter to each of the other principal citizens—nineteen letters in all. No two of the envelopes were alike, and no two of the superscriptions were in the same hand, but the letters inside were just like each other in every detail but one. They were exact copies of the letter received by Richards—handwriting and all—and were all signed by Stephenson, but in place of Richards's name each receiver's own name appeared.

All night long eighteen principal citizens did what their caste-brother Richards was doing at the same time—they put in their energies trying to remember what notable service it was that they had unconsciously done Barclay Goodson. In no case was it a holiday job; still they succeeded.

And while they were at this work, which was difficult, their wives put in the night spending the money, which was easy. During that one night the nineteen wives spent an average of seven thousand dollars each out of the forty thousand in the sack—a hundred and thirty-three thousand altogether.

Next day there was a surprise for Jack Halliday. He noticed that the faces of the nineteen chief citizens and their wives bore that expression of peaceful and holy happiness again. He could not understand it, neither was he able to invent any remarks about it that could damage it or disturb it. And so it was his turn to be dissatisfied with life. His private guesses at the reasons for the happiness failed in all instances, upon examination. When he met Mrs. Wilcox and noticed the placid ecstasy in her face, he said to himself, "Her cat has had kittens"—and went and asked the cook: it was not so; the cook had detected the happiness, but did not know the cause. When Halliday found the duplicate ecstasy in the face of "Shadbelly" Billson (village nickname), he was sure some neighbor of Billson's had broken his leg, but inquiry showed that this had not happened. The subdued ecstasy in Gregory Yates's face could mean but one thing—he was a mother-in-law short: it was another mistake. "And Pinkerton—Pinkerton—he has collected ten cents that he thought he was going to lose." And so on, and so on. In some cases the guesses had to remain in doubt, in the others they proved distinct errors. In the end Halliday said to himself, "Anyway it foots up that there's nineteen Hadleyburg families temporarily in heaven: I don't know how it happened; I only know Providence is off duty today."

An architect and builder from the next State had lately ventured to set up a small business in this unpromising village, and his sign had now been hanging out a week. Not a customer yet; he was a discouraged man, and sorry he had come. But his weather changed suddenly now. First one and then another chief citizen's wife said to him privately:

"Come to my house Monday week—but say nothing about it for the present. We think of building."
He got eleven invitations that day. That night he wrote his daughter
and broke off her match with her student. He said she could marry a
mile higher than that.

Pinkerton the banker and two or three other well-to-do men planned
country-seats—but waited. That kind don't count their chickens until
they are hatched.

The Wilsons devised a grand new thing—a fancy-dress ball. They made
no actual promises, but told all their acquaintanceship in confidence that
they were thinking the matter over and thought they should give it—"and
if we do, you will be invited, of course." People were surprised, and
said, one to another, "Why, they are crazy, those poor Wilsons, they
can't afford it." Several among the nineteen said privately to their hus-
bands, "It is a good idea: we will keep still till their cheap thing is over,
then we will give one that will make it sick."

The days drifted along, and the bill of future squanderings rose higher
and higher, wilder and wilder, more and more foolish and reckless. It
began to look as if every member of the nineteen would not only spend
his whole forty thousand dollars before receiving-day, but be actually
in debt by the time he got the money. In some cases light-headed people
did not stop with planning to spend, they really spent—on credit. They
bought land, mortgages, farms, speculative stocks, fine clothes, horses,
and various other things, paid down the bonus, and made themselves li-
able for the rest—at ten days. Presently the sober second thought came,
and Halliday noticed that a ghastly anxiety was beginning to show up in a
good many faces. Again he was puzzled, and didn't know what to make
of it. "The Wilcox kittens aren't dead, for they weren't born; nobody's
broken a leg; there's no shrinkage in mother-in-laws; nothing has hap-
pened—it is an unsolvable mystery."

There was another puzzled man, too—the Rev. Mr. Burgess. For days,
wherever he went, people seemed to follow him or to be watching out for
him; and if he ever found himself in a retired spot, a member of the
nineteen would be sure to appear, thrust an envelope privately into his
hand, whisper "To be opened at the town-hall Friday evening," then
vanish away like a guilty thing. He was expecting that there might be
one claimant for the sack—doubtful, however, Goodson being dead—but
it never occurred to him that all this crowd might be claimants. When
the great Friday came at last, he found that he had nineteen envelopes.

The town-hall had never looked finer. The platform at the end of it
was backed by a showy draping of flags; at intervals along the walls were
festoons of flags; the gallery fronts were clothed in flags; the supporting
columns were swathed in flags; all this was to impress the stranger, for
he would be there in considerable force, and in a large degree he would
be connected with the press. The house was full. The 412 fixed seats were occupied; also the 68 extra chairs which had been packed into the aisles; the steps of the platform were occupied; some distinguished strangers were given seats on the platform; at the horseshoe of tables which fenced the front and sides of the platform sat a strong force of special correspondents who had come from everywhere. It was the best-dressed house the town had ever produced. There were some tolerably expensive toilets there, and in several cases the ladies who wore them had the look of being unfamiliar with that kind of clothes. At least the town thought they had that look, but the notion could have arisen from the town's knowledge of the fact that these ladies had never inhabited such clothes before.

The gold-sack stood on a little table at the front of the platform where all the house could see it. The bulk of the house gazed at it with a burning interest, a mouth-watering interest, a wistful and pathetic interest; a minority of nineteen couples gazed at it tenderly, lovingly, proprietarily, and the male half of this minority kept saying over to themselves the moving little impromptu speeches of thankfulness for the audience's applause and congratulations which they were presently going to get up and deliver. Every now and then one of these got a piece of paper out of his vest pocket and privately glanced at it to refresh his memory.

Of course there was a buzz of conversation going on—there always is; but at last when the Rev. Mr. Burgess rose and laid his hand on the sack he could hear his microbes gnaw, the place was so still. He related the curious history of the sack, then went on to speak in warm terms of Hadleyburg's old and well-earned reputation for spotless honesty, and of the town's just pride in this reputation. He said that this reputation was a treasure of priceless value; that under Providence its value had now become inestimably enhanced, for the recent episode had spread this fame far and wide, and thus had focused the eyes of the American world upon this village, and made its name for all time, as he hoped and believed, a synonym for commercial incorruptibility. [Applause.] "And who is to be the guardian of this noble treasure—the community as a whole? No! The responsibility is individual, not communal. From this day forth each and every one of you is in his own person its special guardian, and individually responsible that no harm shall come to it. Do you—does each of you—accept this great trust? [Tumultuous assent.] Then all is well. Transmit it to your children and to your children's children. Today your purity is beyond reproach—see to it that it shall remain so. Today there is not a person in your community who could be beguiled to touch a penny not his own—see to it that you abide in this grace. ["We will! we will!"] This is not the place to make comparisons between ourselves and other communities—some of them ungracious toward us; they have their ways, we have ours; let us be content. [Applause.] I am done. Under my
hand, my friends, rests a stranger's eloquent recognition of what we are; through him the world will always henceforth know what we are. We do not know who he is, but in your name I utter your gratitude, and ask you to raise your voices in endorsement."

The house rose in a body and made the walls quake with the thunders of its thankfulness for the space of a long minute. Then it sat down, and Mr. Burgess took an envelope out of his pocket. The house held its breath while he slit the envelope open and took from it a slip of paper. He read its contents—slowly and impressively—the audience listening with tranced attention to this magic document, each of whose words stood for an ingot of gold:

"The remark which I made to the distressed stranger was this: "You are very far from being a bad man: go, and reform."" Then he continued:

"We shall know in a moment now whether the remark here quoted corresponds with the one concealed in the sack; and if that shall prove to be so—and it undoubtedly will—this sack of gold belongs to a fellow-citizen who will henceforth stand before the nation as the symbol of the special virtue which has made our town famous throughout the land—Mr. Billson!"

The house had gotten itself all ready to burst into the proper tornado of applause; but instead of doing it, it seemed stricken with a paralysis; there was a deep hush for a moment or two, then a wave of whispered murmurs swept the place—of about this tenor: "Billson! oh, come, this is too thin! Twenty dollars to a stranger—or anybody—Billson! tell it to the marines!" And now at this point the house caught its breath all of a sudden in a new access of astonishment, for it discovered that whereas in one part of the hall Deacon Billson was standing up with his head meekly bowed, in another part of it Lawyer Wilson was doing the same. There was a wondering silence now for a while.

Everybody was puzzled, and nineteen couples were surprised and indignant.

Billson and Wilson turned and stared at each other. Billson asked, bitingly:

"Why do you rise, Mr. Wilson?"

"Because I have a right to. Perhaps you will be good enough to explain to the house why you rise?"

"With great pleasure. Because I wrote that paper."

"It is an impudent falsity! I wrote it myself."

It was Burgess's turn to be paralyzed. He stood looking vacantly at first one of the men and then the other, and did not seem to know what to do. The house was stupefied. Lawyer Wilson spoke up, now, and said:

"I ask the Chair to read the name signed to that paper."
That brought the Chair to itself, and it read out the name:

"'John Wharton Billson,'"

"There!" shouted Billson, "what have you got to say for yourself, now? And what kind of apology are you going to make to me and to this insulted house for the imposture which you have attempted to play here?"

"No apologies are due, sir; and as for the rest of it, I publicly charge you with pilfering my note from Mr. Burgess and substituting a copy of it signed with your own name. There is no other way by which you could have gotten hold of the test-remark; I alone, of living men, possessed the secret of its wording."

There was likely to be a scandalous state of things if this went on; everybody noticed with distress that the shorthand scribes were scribbling like mad; many people were crying "Chair, Chair! Order! order!" Burgess rapped with his gavel, and said:

"Let us not forget the proprieties due. There has evidently been a mistake somewhere, but surely that is all. If Mr. Wilson gave me an envelope—and I remember now that he did—I still have it."

He took one out of his pocket, opened it, glanced at it, looked surprised and worried, and stood silent a few moments. Then he waved his hand in a wandering and mechanical way, and made an effort or two to say something, then gave it up, despondently. Several voices cried out:

"Read it! read it! What is it?"

So he began in a dazed and sleep-walker fashion:

"'The remark which I made to the unhappy stranger was this: 'You are far from being a bad man. [The house gazed at him, marveling.] Go, and reform.'" [Murmurs: "Amazing! what can this mean?" ] This one," said the Chair, "is signed Thurlow G. Wilson."

"There!" cried Wilson, "I reckon that settles it! I knew perfectly well my note was purloined."

"Purloined!" retorted Billson. "I'll let you know that neither you nor any man of your kidney must venture to—"

The Chair. "Order, gentlemen, order! Take your seats, both of you, please."

They obeyed, shaking their heads and grumbling angrily. The house was profoundly puzzled; it did not know what to do with this curious emergency. Presently Thompson got up. Thompson was the hatter. He would have liked to be a Nineteener; but such was not for him; his stock of hats was not considerable enough for the position. He said:

"Mr. Chairman, if I may be permitted to make a suggestion, can both of these gentlemen be right? I put it to you, sir, can both have happened to say the very same words to the stranger? It seems to me—"

The tanner got up and interrupted him. The tanner was a disgruntled
man; he believed himself entitled to be a Nineteener, but he couldn't get recognition. It made him a little unpleasant in his ways and speech. Said he:

"Sho, that's not the point! That could happen—twice in a hundred years—but not the other thing. Neither of them gave the twenty dollars!"

*A ripple of applause.*

Billson. "I did!"

Wilson. "I did!"

Then each accused the other of pilfering.

*The Chair.* "Order! Sit down, if you please—both of you. Neither of the notes has been out of my possession at any moment."

*A Voice.* "Good—that settles that!"

*The Tanner.* "Mr. Chairman, one thing is now plain: one of these men has been eavesdropping under the other one's bed, and filching family secrets. If it is not unparliamentary to suggest it, I will remark that both are equal to it. [*The Chair.* "Order! order!""] I withdraw the remark, sir, and will confine myself to suggesting that if one of them has overheard the other reveal the test-remark to his wife, we shall catch him now."

*A Voice.* "How?"

*The Tanner.* " Easily. The two have not quoted the remark in exactly the same words. You would have noticed that, if there hadn't been a considerable stretch of time and an exciting quarrel inserted between the two readings."

*A Voice.* "Name the difference."

*The Tanner.* "The word *very* is in Billson's note, and not in the other."

*Many Voices.* "That's so—he's right!"

*The Tanner.* "And so, if the Chair will examine the test-remark in the sack, we shall know which of these two frauds—[*The Chair.* "Order!""]—which of these two adventurers—[*The Chair.* "Order! order!""]—which of these two gentlemen—[*laughter and applause*]—is entitled to wear the belt as being the first dishonest blatherskite ever bred in this town—which he has dishonored, and which will be a sultry place for him from now out!" [*Vigorous applause.*]

*Many Voices.* "Open it!—open the sack!"

Mr. Burgess made a slit in the sack, slid his hand in and brought out an envelope. In it were a couple of folded notes. He said:

"One of these is marked, 'Not to be examined until all written communications which have been addressed to the Chair—if any—shall have been read.' The other is marked 'The Test.' Allow me. It is worded—to wit:

"I do not require that the first half of the remark which was made to me by my benefactor shall be quoted with exactness, for it was not
striking, and could be forgotten; but its closing fifteen words are quite striking, and I think easily rememberable; unless these shall be accurately reproduced, let the applicant be regarded as an impostor. My benefactor began by saying he seldom gave advice to any one, but that it always bore the hall-mark of high value when he did give it. Then he said this—and it has never faded from my memory: "You are far from being a bad man—"


People jumped up and crowded around Wilson, wringing his hand and congratulating fervently—meantime the Chair was hammering with the gavel and shouting:

"Order, gentlemen! Order! Order! Let me finish reading, please."

When quiet was restored, the reading was resumed—as follows:

"'Go, and reform—or, mark my words—some day, for your sins, you will die and go to hell or Hadleyburg—try and make it the former.'"

A ghastly silence followed. First an angry cloud began to settle darkly upon the faces of the citizenship; after a pause the cloud began to rise, and a tickled expression tried to take its place; tried so hard that it was only kept under with great and painful difficulty; the reporters, the Brixtonites, and other strangers bent their heads down and shielded their faces with their hands, and managed to hold in by main strength and heroic courtesy. At this most inopportune time burst upon the stillness the roar of a solitary voice—Jack Halliday’s:

"That’s got the hall-mark on it!"

Then the house let go, strangers and all. Even Mr. Burgess’s gravity broke down presently, then the audience considered itself officially absolved from all restraint, and it made the most of its privilege. It was a good long laugh, and a tempestuously wholehearted one, but it ceased at last—long enough for Mr. Burgess to try to resume, and for the people to get their eyes partially wiped; then it broke out again; and afterward yet again; then at last Burgess was able to get out these serious words:

"It is useless to try to disguise the fact—we find ourselves in the presence of a matter of grave import. It involves the honor of your town, it strikes at the town’s good name. The difference of a single word between the test-remarks offered by Mr. Wilson and Mr. Billson was itself a serious thing, since it indicated that one or the other of these gentlemen had committed a theft—"

The two men were sitting limp, nerveless, crushed; but at these words both were electrified into movement, and started to get up—

"Sit down!" said the Chair, sharply, and they obeyed. "That, as I have said, was a serious thing. And it was—but for only one of them. But the
matter has become graver; for the honor of both is now in formid able peril. Shall I go even further, and say in inextricable peril? Both left out the crucial fifteen words.” He paused. During several moments he al lowed the pervading stillness to gather and deepen its impressive effects, then added: “There would seem to be but one way whereby this could happen. I ask these gentlemen—Was there collusi on?—agreement?”

A low murmur sifted through the house; its import was, “He’s got them both.”

Billson was not used to emergencies; he sat in a helpless collapse. But Wilson was a lawyer. He struggled to his feet, pale and worried, and said:

“I ask the indulgence of the house while I explain this most painful matter. I am sorry to say what I am about to say, since it must inflict irreparable injury upon Mr. Billson, whom I have always esteemed and respected until now, and in whose invulnerability to temptation I entirely believed—as did you all. But for the preservation of my own honor I must speak—and with frankness. I confess with shame—and I now beseech your pardon for it—that I said to the ruined stranger all of the words contained in the test-remark, including the disparaging fifteen. [Sensation.] When the late publication was made I recalled them, and I re solved to claim the sack of coin, for by every right I was entitled to it. Now I will ask you to consider this point, and weigh it well: that stranger’s gratitude to me that night knew no bounds; he said himself that he could find no words for it that were adequate, and that if he should ever be able he would repay me a thousand fold. Now, then, I ask you this: Could I expect—could I believe—could I even remotely imagine—that, feeling as he did, he would do so un grateful a thing as to add those quite unnecessary fifteen words to his test?—set a trap for me?—expose me as a slanderer of my own town before my own people assembled in a public hall? It was preposterous; it was impossible. His test would contain only the kindly opening clause of my remark. Of that I had no shadow of doubt. You would have thought as I did. You would not have expected a base betrayal from one whom you had befriended and against whom you had committed no offense. And so, with perfect confidence, perfect trust, I wrote on a piece of paper the opening words—ending with ‘Go, and reform’—and signed it. When I was about to put it in an envelope I was called into my back office, and without thinking I left the paper lying open on my desk.” He stopped, turned his head slowly toward Billson, waited a moment, then added: “I ask you to note this: when I returned, a little later, Mr. Billson was retiring by my street door.” [Sensation.]

In a moment Billson was on his feet and shouting:
"It's a lie! It's an infamous lie!"

*The Chair.* "Be seated, sir! Mr. Wilson has the floor."

Billson's friends pulled him into his seat and quieted him, and Wilson went on:

"Those are the simple facts. My note was now lying in a different place on the table from where I had left it. I noticed that, but attached no importance to it, thinking a draft had blown it there. That Mr. Billson would read a private paper was a thing which could not occur to me; he was an honorable man, and he would be above that. If you will allow me to say it, I think his extra word 'very' stands explained; it is attributable to a defect of memory. I was the only man in the world who could furnish here any detail of the test-remark—by *honorable* means. I have finished."

There is nothing in the world like a persuasive speech to fuddle the mental apparatus and upset the convictions and debauch the emotions of an audience not practiced in the tricks and delusions of oratory. Wilson sat down victorious. The house submerged him in tides of approving applause; friends swarmed to him and shook him by the hand and congratulated him, and Billson was shouted down and not allowed to say a word. The Chair hammered and hammered with its gavel, and kept shouting:

"But let us proceed, gentlemen, let us proceed!"

At last there was a measurable degree of quiet, and the hatter said:

"But what is there to proceed with, sir, but to deliver the money?"

*Voices.* "That's it! That's it! Come forward, Wilson!"

*The Hatter.* "I move three cheers for Mr. Wilson, Symbol of the special virtue which—"

The cheers burst forth before he could finish; and in the midst of them—and in the midst of the clamor of the gavel also—some enthusiasts mounted Wilson on a big friend's shoulder and were going to fetch him in triumph to the platform. The Chair's voice now rose above the noise:

"Order! To your places! You forget that there is still a document to be read." When quiet had been restored he took up the document, and was going to read it, but laid it down again, saying, "I forgot; this is not to be read until all written communications received by me have first been read." He took an envelope out of his pocket, removed its enclosure, glanced at it—seemed astonished—held it out and gazed at it—stared at it.

Twenty or thirty voices cried out:

"What is it? Read it! read it!"

And he did—slowly, and wondering:

"The remark which I made to the stranger—[Voices. "Hello! how's this?"]—was this: "You are far from being a bad man. [Voices. "Great
Go, and reform." [Voice. "Oh, saw my leg off!""] Signed by Mr. Pinkerton the banker.

The pandemonium of delight which turned itself loose now was of a sort to make the judicious weep. Those whose withers were unwrung laughed till the tears ran down; the reporters, in throes of laughter, set down disordered pot-hooks which would never in the world be decipherable; and a sleeping dog jumped up, scared out of its wits, and barked itself crazy at the turmoil. All manner of cries were scattered through the din: "We're getting rich—two Symbols of Incorruptibility!—without counting Billson!" "Three!—count Shadbelly in—we can't have too many!" "All right—Billson's elected!" "Alas, poor Wilson—victim of two thieves!"

A Powerful Voice. "Silence! The Chair's fished up something more out of its pocket."

Voices. "Hurrah! Is it something fresh? Read it! read! read!"

The Chair [reading.] "'The remark which I made,' etc.: "You are far from being a bad man. Go," etc. Signed, 'Gregory Yates.'"

Tornado of Voices. "Four Symbols!" "'Rah for Yates!" "Fish again!"

The house was in a roaring humor now, and ready to get all the fun out of the occasion that might be in it. Several Nineteeners, looking pale and distressed, got up and began to work their way toward the aisles, but a score of shouts went up:

"The doors, the doors—close the doors; no Incorruptible shall leave this place! Sit down, everybody!"

The mandate was obeyed.

"Fish again! Read! read!"

The Chair fished again, and once more the familiar words began to fall from its lips—"'You are far from being a bad man—'"

"Name! name! What's his name?"

"'L. Ingoldsby Sargent.'"

"Five elected! Pile up the Symbols! Go on, go on!"

"'You are far from being a bad—'"

"Name! name!"

"'Nicholas Whitworth.'"

"Hooray! hooray! it's a symbolical day!"

Somebody wailed in, and began to sing this rhyme (leaving out "it's") to the lovely "Mikado" tune of "When a man's afraid, a beautiful maid—"; the audience joined in, with joy; then, just in time, somebody contributed another line:

"And don't you this forget—"

The house roared it out. A third line was at once furnished:

"Corruptibles far from Hadleyburg are—"
The house roared that one too. As the last note died, Jack Halliday's voice rose high and clear, freighted with a final line:

“But the Symbols are here, you bet!”

That was sung, with booming enthusiasm. Then the happy house started in at the beginning and sang the four lines through twice, with immense swing and dash, and finished up with a crashing three-times-three and a tiger for “Hadleyburg the Incorruptible and all Symbols of it which we shall find worthy to receive the hall-mark tonight.”

Then the shoutings at the Chair began again, all over the place:

“Go on! go on! Read! read some more! Read all you've got!”

“That's it—go on! We are winning eternal celebrity!”

A dozen men got up now and began to protest. They said that this farce was the work of some abandoned joker, and was an insult to the whole community. Without a doubt these signatures were all forgeries—

“Sit down! sit down! Shut up! You are confessing. We'll find your names in the lot.”

“Mr. Chairman, how many of those envelopes have you got?”

The Chair counted.

“Together with those that have been already examined, there are nineteen.”

A storm of derisive applause broke out.

“Perhaps they all contain the secret. I move that you open them all and read every signature that is attached to a note of that sort—and read also the first eight words of the note.”

“Second the motion!”

It was put and carried—uproariously. Then poor old Richards got up, and his wife rose and stood at his side. Her head was bent down, so that none might see that she was crying. Her husband gave her his arm, and so supporting her, he began to speak in a quavering voice:

“My friends, you have known us two—Mary and me—all our lives, and I think you have liked us and respected us—”

The Chair interrupted him:

“Allow me. It is quite true—that which you are saying, Mr. Richards: this town does know you two; it does like you; it does respect you; more—it honors you and loves you—”

Halliday's voice rang out:

“That's the hall-marked truth, too! If the Chair is right, let the house speak up and say it. Rise! Now, then—hip! hip! hip!—all together!”

The house rose in mass, faced toward the old couple eagerly, filled the air with a snowstorm of waving handkerchiefs, and delivered the cheers with all its affectionate heart.

The Chair then continued:

“What I was going to say is this: We know your good heart, Mr.
Richards, but this is not a time for the exercise of charity toward offenders. [Shouts of "Right! right!"] I see your generous purpose in your face, but I cannot allow you to plead for these men—"

"But I was going to—"

"Please take your seat, Mr. Richards. We must examine the rest of these notes—simple fairness to the men who have already been exposed requires this. As soon as that has been done—I give you my word for this—you shall be heard."

Many Voices. "Right!—the Chair is right—no interruption can be permitted at this stage! Go on!—the names! the names!—according to the terms of the motion!"

The old couple sat reluctantly down, and the husband whispered to the wife, "It is pitifully hard to have to wait; the shame will be greater than ever when they find we were only going to plead for ourselves."

Straightway the jollity broke loose again with the reading of the names.

"'You are far from being a bad man—' Signature, 'Robert J. Titmarsh.'
"'You are far from being a bad man—' Signature, 'Eliphalet Weeks.'
"'You are far from being a bad man—' Signature, 'Oscar B. Wilder.'"

At this point the house lit upon the idea of taking the eight words out of the Chairman's hands. He was not unthankful for that. Thenceforward he held up each note in its turn, and waited. The house droned out the eight words in a massed and measured and musical deep volume of sound (with a daringly close resemblance to a well-known church chant)—"'You are f-a-r from being a b-a-a-a-d man.'" Then the Chair said, "Signature, 'Archibald Wilcox.'" And so on, and so on, name after name, and everybody had an increasingly and gloriously good time except the wretched Nineteen. Now and then, when a particularly shining name was called, the house made the Chair wait while it chanted the whole of the test-remark from the beginning to the closing words, "And go to hell or Hadleyburg—try and make it the for-or-m-e-r!" and in these special cases they added a grand and agonized and imposing "A-a-a-a-men!"

The list dwindled, dwindled, dwindled, poor old Richards keeping tally of the count, wincing when a name resembling his own was pronounced, and waiting in miserable suspense for the time to come when it would be his humiliating privilege to rise with Mary and finish his plea, which he was intending to word thus: "... for until now we have never done any wrong thing, but have gone our humble way unreproached. We are very poor, we are old, and have no chick nor child to help us; we were sorely tempted, and we fell. It was my purpose when I got up before to make confession and beg that my name might not be read out in this public place, for it seemed to us that we could not bear
it; but I was prevented. It was just; it was our place to suffer with the rest. It has been hard for us. It is the first time we have ever heard our name fall from anyone's lips—sullied. Be merciful—for the sake of the better days; make our shame as light to bear as in your charity you can.”

At this point in his reverie Mary nudged him, perceiving that his mind was absent. The house was chanting, “You are f-a-r,” etc.

“Be ready,” Mary whispered. “Your name comes now; he has read eighteen.”

The chant ended.

“Next! next! next!” came volleying from all over the house.

Burgess put his hand into his pocket. The old couple, trembling, began to rise. Burgess fumbled a moment, then said:

“I find I have read them all.”

Faint with joy and surprise, the couple sank into their seats, and Mary whispered:

“Oh, bless God, we are saved!—he has lost ours—I wouldn’t give this for a hundred of those sacks!”

The house burst out with its “Mikado” travesty, and sang it three times with ever-increasing enthusiasm, rising to its feet when it reached for the third time the closing line:

“But the Symbols are here, you bet!”

and finishing up with cheers and a tiger for “Hadleyburg purity and our eighteen immortal representatives of it.”

Then Wingate, the saddler, got up and proposed cheers “for the cleanest man in town, the one solitary important citizen in it who didn’t try to steal that money—Edward Richards.”

They were given with great and moving heartiness; then somebody proposed that Richards be elected sole guardian and Symbol of the now Sacred Hadleyburg Tradition, with power and right to stand up and look the whole sarcastic world in the face.

Passed, by acclamation; then they sang the “Mikado” again, and ended it with:

“And there’s one Symbol left, you bet!”

There was a pause; then:

_A Voice._ “Now, then, who’s to get the sack?”

_The Tanner (with bitter sarcasm)._ “That’s easy. The money has to be divided among the eighteen Incorruptibles. They gave the suffering stranger twenty dollars apiece—and that remark—each in his turn—it took twenty-two minutes for the procession to move past. Staked the stranger—total contribution, $360. All they want is just the loan back—and interest—forty thousand dollars altogether.”
Many Voices [derisively.] "That's it! Divvy! divvy! Be kind to the poor—don't keep them waiting!"

The Chair. "Order! I now offer the stranger's remaining document. It says: 'If no claimant shall appear [grand chorus of groans], I desire that you open the sack and count out the money to the principal citizens of your town, they to take it in trust [cries of "Oh! Oh! Oh!"]], and use it in such ways as to them shall seem best for the propagation and preservation of your community's noble reputation for incorruptible honesty [more cries]—a reputation to which their names and their efforts will add a new and far-reaching luster.' [Enthusiastic outburst of sarcastic applause.] That seems to be all. No—here is a postscript:

"P.S.—Citizens of Hadleyburg: There is no test-remark—nobody made one. [Great sensation.] There wasn't any pauper stranger, nor any twenty-dollar contribution, nor any accompanying benediction and compliment—these are all inventions. [General buzz and hum of astonishment and delight.] Allow me to tell my story—it will take but a word or two. I passed through your town at a certain time, and received a deep offense which I had not earned. Any other man would have been content to kill one or two of you and call it square, but to me that would have been a trivial revenge, and inadequate; for the dead do not suffer. Besides, I could not kill you all—and, anyway, made as I am, even that would not have satisfied me. I wanted to damage every man in the place, and every woman—and not in their bodies or in their estate, but in their vanity—the place where feeble and foolish people are most vulnerable. So I disguised myself and came back and studied you. You were easy game. You had an old and lofty reputation for honesty, and naturally you were proud of it—it was your treasure of treasures, the very apple of your eye. As soon as I found out that you carefully and vigilantly kept yourselves and your children out of temptation, I knew how to proceed. Why, you simple creatures, the weakest of all weak things is a virtue which has not been tested in the fire. I laid a plan, and gathered a list of names. My project was to corrupt Hadleyburg the Incorruptible. My idea was to make liars and thieves of nearly half a hundred smirchless men and women who had never in their lives uttered a lie or stolen a penny. I was afraid of Goodson. He was neither born nor reared in Hadleyburg. I was afraid that if I started to operate my scheme by getting my letter laid before you, you would say to yourselves, "Goodson is the only man among us who would give away twenty dollars to a poor devil"—and then you might not bite at my bait. But Heaven took Goodson; then I knew I was safe, and I set my trap and baited it. It may be that I shall not catch all the men to whom I mailed the pretended test secret, but I shall catch the most of them, if I know Hadleyburg nature."
[Voices. “Right—he got every last one of them.”] I believe they will even steal ostensible *gamble*-money, rather than miss, poor, tempted, and mistrained fellows. I am hoping to eternally and everlastingly squelch your vanity and give Hadleyburg a new renown—one that will *stick*—and spread far. If I have succeeded, open the sack and summon the Committee on Propagation and Preservation of the Hadleyburg Reputation.”

*A Cyclone of Voices.* “Open it! Open it! The Eighteen to the front! Committee on Propagation of the Tradition! Forward—the Incorruptibles!”

The Chair ripped the sack wide, and gathered up a handful of bright, broad, yellow coins, shook them together, then examined them.

“Friends, they are only gilded disks of lead!”

There was a crashing outbreak of delight over this news, and when the noise had subsided, the tanner called out:

“By right of apparent seniority in this business, Mr. Wilson is Chairman of the Committee on Propagation of the Tradition. I suggest that he step forward on behalf of his pals, and receive in trust the money.”


*Wilson* [in a voice trembling with anger.] “You will allow me to say, and without apologies for my language, *damn* the money!”

*A Voice.* “Oh, and him a Baptist!”

*A Voice.* “Seventeen Symbols left! Step up, gentlemen, and assume your trust!”

There was a pause—no response.

*The Saddler.* “Mr. Chairman, we’ve got one clean man left, anyway, out of the late aristocracy; and he needs money, and deserves it. I move that you appoint Jack Halliday to get up there and auction off that sack of gilt twenty-dollar pieces, and give the result to the right man—the man whom Hadleyburg delights to honor—Edward Richards.”

This was received with great enthusiasm, the dog taking a hand again; the saddler started the bids at a dollar, the Brixton folk and Barnum’s representative fought hard for it, the people cheered every jump that the bids made, the excitement climbed moment by moment higher and higher, the bidders got on their mettle and grew steadily more and more daring, more and more determined, the jumps went from a dollar up to five, then to ten, then to twenty, then fifty, then to a hundred, then—

At the beginning of the auction Richards whispered in distress to his wife: “O Mary, can we allow it? It—it—you see, it is an honor-reward, a testimonial to purity of character, and—and—can we allow it? Hadn’t I better get up and—O Mary, what ought we to do?—what do you think we—[Halliday’s voice. “Fifteen I’m bid!—fifteen for the sack!—twenty!—ab, thanks—thirty—thanks again! Thirty, thirty, thirty!—do I hear forty!—forty it is! Keep the ball rolling, gentlemen, keep it rolling!—fifty!”—
thanks, noble Roman! going at fifty, fifty, fifty—seventy!—ninety!—splendid!—a hundred!—pile it up, pile it up!—hundred and twenty—forty!—just in time!—hundred and fifty!—two hundred!—superb! Do I hear two b—thanks!—two hundred and fifty!—"

"It is another temptation, Edward—I'm all in a tremble—but, oh, we've escaped one temptation, and that ought to warn us to—["Six did I hear?—thanks!—six fifty, six f—seven hundred!""] And yet, Edward, when you think—nobody susp—["Eight hundred dollars!—hurrah!—make it nine! Mr. Parsons, did I hear you say—thanks—nine!—this noble sack of virgin lead going at only nine hundred dollars, gilding and all—come! do I hear—a thousand!—gratefully yours!—did someone say eleven?—a sack which is going to be the most celebrated in the whole Uni—"] O Edward" (beginning to sob), "we are so poor!—but—but—do as you think best—do as you think best."

Edward fell—that is, he sat still; sat with a conscience which was not satisfied, but which was overpowered by circumstances.

Meantime a stranger, who looked like an amateur detective gotten up as an impossible English earl, had been watching the evening's proceedings with manifest interest, and with a contented expression in his face; and he had been privately commenting to himself. He was now soliloquizing somewhat like this: "None of the Eighteen are bidding; that is not satisfactory; I must change that—the dramatic unities require it; they must buy the sack they tried to steal; they must pay a heavy price, too—some of them are rich. And another thing, when I make a mistake in Hadleyburg nature the man that puts that error upon me is entitled to a high honorarium, and someone must pay it. This poor old Richards has brought my judgment to shame; he is an honest man:—I don't understand it, but I acknowledge it. Yes, he saw my deuces and with a straight flush, and by rights the pot is his. And it shall be a jack-pot, too, if I can manage it. He disappointed me, but let that pass."

He was watching the bidding. At a thousand, the market broke; the prices tumbled swiftly. He waited—and still watched. One competitor dropped out; then another, and another. He put in a bid or two, now. When the bids had sunk to ten dollars, he added a five; someone raised him a three; he waited a moment, then flung in a fifty-dollar jump, and the sack was his—at $1,282. The house broke out in cheers—then stopped; for he was on his feet, and had lifted his hand. He began to speak.

"I desire to say a word, and ask a favor. I am a speculator in rarities, and I have dealings with persons interested in numismatics all over the world. I can make a profit on this purchase, just as it stands; but there is a way, if I can get your approval, whereby I can make every one of these leaden twenty-dollar pieces worth its face in gold, and perhaps more. Grant me that approval, and I will give part of my gains to your Mr. Richards, whose invulnerable probity you have so justly and so
cordially recognized tonight; his share shall be ten thousand dollars, and I will hand him the money tomorrow. [Great applause from the house. But the "invulnerable probity" made the Richardses blush prettily; however, it went for modesty, and did no harm.] If you will pass my proposition by a good majority—I would like a two-thirds vote—I will regard that as the town's consent, and that is all I ask. Rarities are always helped by any device which will rouse curiosity and compel remark. Now if I may have your permission to stamp upon the faces of each of these ostensible coins the names of the eighteen gentlemen who—"

Nine-tenths of the audience were on their feet in a moment—dog and all—and the proposition was carried with a whirlwind of approving applause and laughter.

They sat down, and all the Symbols except "Dr." Clay Harkness got up, violently protesting against the proposed outrage, and threatening to—

"I beg you not to threaten me," said the stranger, calmly. "I know my legal rights, and am not accustomed to being frightened at bluster." [Applause.] He sat down. "Dr." Harkness saw an opportunity here. He was one of the two very rich men of the place, and Pinkerton was the other. Harkness was proprietor of a mint; that is to say, a popular patent medicine. He was running for the Legislature on one ticket, and Pinkerton on the other. It was a close race and a hot one, and getting hotter every day. Both had strong appetites for money; each had bought a great tract of land, with a purpose; there was going to be a new railway, and each wanted to be in the Legislature and help locate the route to his own advantage; a single vote might make the decision, and with it two or three fortunes. The stake was large, and Harkness was a daring speculator. He was sitting close to the stranger. He leaned over while one or another of the other Symbols was entertaining the house with protests and appeals, and asked, in a whisper:

"What is your price for the sack?"

"Forty thousand dollars."

"I'll give you twenty."

"No."

"Twenty-five."

"No."

"Say thirty."

"The price is forty thousand dollars; not a penny less."

"All right, I'll give it. I will come to the hotel at ten in the morning. I don't want it known; will see you privately."

"Very good." Then the stranger got up and said to the house:

"I find it late. The speeches of these gentlemen are not without merit,
not without interest, not without grace; yet if I may be excused I will take my leave. I thank you for the great favor which you have shown me in granting my petition. I ask the Chair to keep the sack for me until tomorrow, and to hand these three five-hundred-dollar notes to Mr. Richards.” They were passed up to the Chair. “At nine I will call for the sack, and at eleven will deliver the rest of the ten thousand to Mr. Richards in person, at his home. Good night.”

Then he slipped out, and left the audience making a vast noise, which was composed of a mixture of cheers, the “Mikado” song, dog-disapproval, and the chant, “You are f-a-r from being a b-a-a-d man—a-a-a-a-men!”

IV

At home the Richardses had to endure congratulations and compliments until midnight. Then they were left to themselves. They looked a little sad, and they sat silent and thinking. Finally Mary sighed and said:

“Do you think we are to blame, Edward—much to blame?” and her eyes wandered to the accusing triplet of big bank-notes lying on the table, where the congratulators had been gloating over them and reverently fingering them. Edward did not answer at once; then he brought out a sigh and said, hesitatingly:

“We—we couldn’t help it, Mary. It—well, it was ordered. All things are.”

Mary glanced up and looked at him steadily, but he didn’t return the look. Presently she said:

“I thought congratulations and praises always tasted good. But—it seems to me, now—Edward?”

“Well?”

“Are you going to stay in the bank?”

“N-no.”

“Resign?”

“In the morning—by note.”

“It does seem best.”

Richards bowed his head in his hands and muttered:

“Before, I was not afraid to let oceans of people’s money pour through my hands, but—Mary, I am so tired, so tired—”

“We will go to bed.”

At nine in the morning the stranger called for the sack and took it to the hotel in a cab. At ten Harkness had a talk with him privately. The stranger asked for and got five checks on a metropolitan bank—drawn to “Bearer”—four for $1,500 each, and one for $34,000. He put one of the former in his pocketbook, and the remainder, representing $38,500 he
put in an envelope, and with these he added a note, which he wrote
after Harkness was gone. At eleven he called at the Richards's house and
knocked. Mrs. Richards peeped through the shutters, then went and
received the envelope, and the stranger disappeared without a word. She
came back flushed and a little unsteady on her legs, and gasped out:

"I am sure I recognized him! Last night it seemed to me that maybe I
had seen him somewhere before."

"He is the man that brought the sack here?"

"I am almost sure of it."

"Then he is the ostensible Stephenson, too, and sold every important
citizen in this town with his bogus secret. Now if he has sent checks
instead of money, we are sold, too, after we thought we had escaped. I
was beginning to feel fairly comfortable once more, after my night's
rest, but the look of that envelope makes me sick. It isn't fat enough;
$8,500 in even the largest bank-notes makes more bulk than that."

"Edward, why do you object to checks?"

"Checks signed by Stephenson! I am resigned to take the $8,500 if it
could come in bank-notes—for it does seem that it was so ordered, Mary
—but I have never had much courage, and I have not the pluck to try to
market a check signed with that disastrous name. It would be a trap.
That man tried to catch me; we escaped somehow or other; and now
he is trying a new way. If it is checks—"

"Oh, Edward, it is too bad!" and she held up the checks and began to
cry.

"Put them in the fire! quick! we mustn't be tempted. It is a trick to
make the world laugh at us, along with the rest, and—Give them to me,
since you can't do it!" He snatched them and tried to hold his grip till
he could get to the stove; but he was human, he was a cashier, and he
stopped a moment to make sure of the signature. Then he came near to
fainting.

"Fan me, Mary, fan me! They are the same as gold!"

"Oh, how lovely, Edward! Why?"

"Signed by Harkness. What can the mystery of that be, Mary?"

"Edward, do you think—"

"Look here—look at this! Fifteen—fifteen—fifteen—thirty-four. Thirty-
eight thousand five hundred! Mary, the sack isn't worth twelve dollars,
and Harkness—apparently—has paid about par for it."

"And does it all come to us, do you think—instead of the ten thou-
sand?"

"Why, it looks like it. And the checks are made to 'Bearer,' too."

"Is that good, Edward? What is it for?"

"A hint to collect them at some distant bank, I reckon. Perhaps Hark-
ness doesn’t want the matter known. What is that—a note?”

“Yes. It was with the checks.”

It was in the “Stephenson” handwriting, but there was no signature. It said:

“I am a disappointed man. Your honesty is beyond the reach of temptation. I had a different idea about it, but I wronged you in that, and I beg pardon, and do it sincerely. I honor you—and that is sincere too. This town is not worthy to kiss the hem of your garment. Dear sir, I made a square bet with myself that there were nineteen debauchable men in your self-righteous community. I have lost. Take the whole pot, you are entitled to it.”

Richards drew a deep sigh, and said:

“It seems written with fire—it burns so. Mary—I am miserable again.”

“I, too. Ah dear, I wish—”

“To think, Mary—he believes in me.”

“Oh, don’t, Edward—I can’t bear it.”

“If those beautiful words were deserved, Mary—and God knows I believed I deserved them once—I think I could give the forty thousand dollars for them. And I would put that paper away, as representing more than gold and jewels, and keep it always. But now—We could not live in the shadow of its accusing presence, Mary.”

He put it in the fire.

A messenger arrived and delivered an envelope.

Richards took from it a note and read it; it was from Burgess.

“You saved me, in a difficult time. I saved you last night. It was at cost of a lie, but I made the sacrifice freely, and out of a grateful heart. None in this village knows so well as I know how brave and good and noble you are. At bottom you cannot respect me, knowing as you do of that matter of which I am accused, and by the general voice condemned; but I beg that you will at least believe that I am a grateful man; it will help me to bear my burden.

[Signed] “Burgess.”

“Saved, once more. And on such terms!” He put the note in the fire.

“I—I wish I were dead, Mary, I wish I were out of it all.”

“Oh, these are bitter, bitter days, Edward. The stabs, through their very generosity, are so deep—and they come so fast!”

Three days before the election each of two thousand voters suddenly found himself in possession of a prized memento—one of the renowned bogus double-eagles. Around one of its faces was stamped these words: “The remark I made to the poor stranger was—” Around the other face was stamped these: “Go, and reform. [Signed] Pinkerton.” Thus the entire remaining refuse of the renowned joke was emptied upon a single head, and with calamitous effect. It revived the recent vast laugh
and concentrated it upon Pinkerton; and Harkness's election was a walk-over.

Within twenty-four hours after the Richardses had received their checks their consciences were quieting down, discouraged; the old couple were learning to reconcile themselves to the sin which they had committed. But they were to learn, now, that a sin takes on new and real terrors when there seems a chance that it is going to be found out. This gives it a fresh and most substantial and important aspect. At church the morning sermon was of the usual pattern; it was the same old things said in the same old way; they had heard them a thousand times and found them innocuous, next to meaningless, and easy to sleep under; but now it was different: the sermon seemed to bristle with accusations; it seemed aimed straight and specially at people who were concealing deadly sins. After church they got away from the mob of congratulators as soon as they could, and hurried homeward, chilled to the bone at they did not know what—vague, shadowy, indefinite fears. And by chance they caught a glimpse of Mr. Burgess as he turned a corner. He paid no attention to their nod of recognition! He hadn't seen it; but they did not know that. What could his conduct mean? It might mean—it might mean—oh, a dozen dreadful things. Was it possible that he knew that Richards could have cleared him of guilt in that bygone time, and had been silently waiting for a chance to even up accounts? At home, in their distress they got to imagining that their servant might have been in the next room listening when Richards revealed the secret to his wife that he knew of Burgess's innocence; next, Richards began to imagine that he had heard the swish of a gown in there at that time; next, he was sure he had heard it. They would call Sarah in, on a pretext, and watch her face: if she had been betraying them to Mr. Burgess, it would show in her manner. They asked her some questions—questions which were so random and incoherent and seemingly purposeless that the girl felt sure that the old people's minds had been affected by their sudden good fortune; the sharp and watchful gaze which they bent upon her frightened her, and that completed the business. She blushed, she became nervous and confused, and to the old people these were plain signs of guilt—guilt of some fearful sort or other—without doubt she was a spy and a traitor. When they were alone again they began to piece many unrelated things together and get horrible results out of the combination. When things had got about to the worse, Richards was delivered of a sudden gasp, and his wife asked:

"Oh, what is it?—what is it?"

"The note—Burgess's note! Its language was sarcastic, I see it now."

He quoted: "'At bottom you cannot respect me, knowing, as you do,
of *that matter* of which I am accused"—oh, it is perfectly plain, now, God help me! He knows that I know! You see the ingenuity of the phrasing. It was a trap—and like a fool, I walked into it. And Mary—?"

"Oh, it is dreadful—I know what you are going to say—he didn't return your transcript of the pretended test-remark."

"No—kept it to destroy us with. Mary, he has exposed us to some already. I know it—I know it well. I saw it in a dozen faces after church. Ah, he wouldn't answer our nod of recognition—he knew what he had been doing!"

In the night the doctor was called. The news went around in the morning that the old couple were rather seriously ill—prostrated by the exhausting excitement growing out of their great windfall, the congratulations, and the late hours, the doctor said. The town was sincerely distressed; for these old people were about all it had left to be proud of, now.

Two days later the news was worse. The old couple were delirious, and were doing strange things. By witness of the nurses, Richards had exhibited checks—for $8,500? No—for an amazing sum—$38,500! What could be the explanation of this gigantic piece of luck?

The following day the nurses had more news—and wonderful. They had concluded to hide the checks, lest harm come to them; but when they searched they were gone from under the patient's pillow—vanished away. The patient said:

"Let the pillow alone; what do you want?"

"We thought it best that the checks—"

"You will never see them again—they are destroyed. They came from Satan. I saw the hell-brand on them, and I knew they were sent to betray me to sin." Then he fell to gabbling strange and dreadful things which were not clearly understandable, and which the doctor admonished them to keep to themselves.

Richards was right; the checks were never seen again.

A nurse must have talked in her sleep, for within two days the forbidden gabblings were the property of the town; and they were of a surprising sort. They seemed to indicate that Richards had been a claimant for the sack himself, and that Burgess had concealed that fact and then maliciously betrayed it.

Burgess was taxed with this and stoutly denied it. And he said it was not fair to attach weight to the chatter of a sick old man who was out of his mind. Still, suspicion was in the air, and there was much talk.

After a day or two it was reported that Mrs. Richards's delirious deliveries were getting to be duplicates of her husband's. Suspicion flamed up into conviction, now, and the town's pride in the purity of its one
undiscredited important citizen began to dim down and flicker toward extinction.
Six days passed, then came more news. The old couple were dying. Richards's mind cleared in his latest hour, and he sent for Burgess. Burgess said:
“Let the room be cleared. I think he wishes to say something in privacy.”
“No!” said Richards: “I want witnesses. I want you all to hear my confession, so that I may die a man, and not a dog. I was clean—artificially—like the rest; and like the rest I fell when temptation came. I signed a lie, and claimed the miserable sack. Mr. Burgess remembered that I had done him a service, and in gratitude (and ignorance) he suppressed my claim and saved me. You know the thing that was charged against Burgess years ago. My testimony, and mine alone, could have cleared him, and I was a coward, and left him to suffer disgrace—”
“No—no—Mr. Richards, you—”
“My servant betrayed my secret to him—”
“No one has betrayed anything to me—”
—and then he did a natural and justifiable thing, he repented of the saving kindness which he had done me, and he exposed me—as I deserved—”
“Never!—I make oath—”
“Out of my heart I forgive him.”
Burgess’s impassioned protestations fell upon deaf ears; the dying man passed away without knowing that once more he had done poor Burgess a wrong. The old wife died that night.
The last of the sacred Nineteen had fallen a prey to the fiendish sack; the town was stripped of the last rag of its ancient glory. Its mourning was not showy, but it was deep.
By act of the Legislature—upon prayer and petition—Hadleyburg was allowed to change its name to (never mind what—I will not give it away), and leave one word out of the motto that for many generations had graced the town's official seal.
It is an honest town once more, and the man will have to rise early that catches it napping again.
AIDS TO STUDY

1. Almost any story will correspond more or less closely to a basic narrative pattern, which requires that the story be set in motion, that interactions of characters and events be developed, that there be a major climax, and that the consequences of the climax be indicated. Review each of the four sections of this story and state clearly how each section fulfills this basic narrative pattern.

2. Section III is almost a self-sustaining story. If it were to be made an independent story what would have to be added, altered, or removed?

3. What motive prompts "the man that corrupted Hadleyburg"? Upon which characters is the reader's attention mainly concentrated? Why? For which characters is the reader expected to have some sympathy? For which, none? What useful part does Jack Halliday serve in section II?

4. The plot unfolds through a series of skillfully planned disclosures: first, the stranger arrives; then, the honest man and wife begin to be tempted; the first letter arrives; then we learn that other letters have arrived, and so forth. Study section III in particular to note the successive moments of increasing disclosure by which the plot of that section is developed. How do these disclosures contribute to interest and suspense?

5. Does this story impress you as an account of real events? Compare it, in this respect, with "The Portable Phonograph" or "Ida M'Toy." Is Mark Twain trying to show or to prove something about human nature? What is the significance of the change in the motto of the official seal? Interpret the first paragraph of the story in the light of that change.

   The final sentence of the story may be read either as a statement of fact or as a piece of sarcasm. Which meaning do you attach to it, and why?
Socrates. There are many reasons why I am not grieved, O men of Athens, at the vote of condemnation. I expected it, and am only surprised that the votes are so nearly equal; for I had thought that the majority against me would have been far larger; but now, had thirty votes gone over to the other side, I should have been acquitted. And I may say, I think, that I have escaped Meletus. I may say more; for without the assistance of Anytus and Lycon, any one may see that he would not have had a fifth part of the votes, as the law requires, in which case he would have incurred a fine of a thousand drachmae.

And so he proposes death as the penalty. And what shall I propose on my part, O men of Athens? Clearly that which is my due. And what is my due? What returns shall be made to the man who has never had the wit to be idle during his whole life; but has been careless of what the many care for—wealth, and family interests, and military offices, and speaking in the assembly, and magistracies, and plots, and parties. Reflecting that I was really too honest a man to be a politician and live, I did not go where I could do no good to you or to myself; but where I could do the greatest good privately to every one of you, thither I went, and sought to persuade every man among you that he must look to himself, and seek virtue and wisdom before he looks to his private interests, and look to the State before he looks to the interests of the State; and that this should be the order which he observes in all his actions. What shall be done to such an one? Doubtless some good thing, O men of Athens, if

*Translation by Benjamin Jowett.*
he has his reward; and the good should be of a kind suitable to him. What would be a reward suitable to a poor man who is your benefactor, and who desires leisure that he may instruct you? There can be no reward so fitting as maintenance in the Prytaneum, O men of Athens, a reward which he deserves far more than the citizen who has won the prize at Olympia in the horse or chariot race, whether the chariots were drawn by two horses or by many. For I am in want, and he has enough; and he only gives you the appearance of happiness, and I give you the reality. And if I am to estimate the penalty fairly, I should say that maintenance in the Prytaneum is the just return.

Perhaps you think that I am braving you in what I am saying now, as in what I said before about the tears and prayers. But this is not so. I speak rather because I am convinced that I never intentionally wronged any one, although I cannot convince you—the time has been too short; if there were a law at Athens, as there is in other cities, that a capital cause should not be decided in one day, then I believe that I should have convinced you. But I cannot in a moment refute great slanders; and, as I am convinced that I never wronged another, I will assuredly not wrong myself. I will not say of myself that I deserve any evil, or propose any penalty. Why should I? Because I am afraid of the penalty of death which Meletus proposes? When I do not know whether death is a good or an evil, why should I propose a penalty which would certainly be an evil? Shall I say imprisonment? And why should I live in prison, and be the slave of the magistrate of the year—of the Eleven? Or shall the penalty be a fine, and imprisonment until the fine is paid? There is the same objection. I should have to lie in prison, for money I have none, and cannot pay. And if I say exile (and this may possibly be the penalty which you will affix), I must indeed be blinded by the love of life, if I am so irrational as to expect that when you, who are my own citizens, cannot endure my discourses and words, and have found them so grievous and odious that you will have no more of them, others are likely to endure me. No, indeed, men of Athens, that is not very likely. And what a life should I lead, at my age, wandering from city to city, ever changing my place of exile, and always being driven out! For I am quite sure that wherever I go, there, as here, the young men will flock to me; and if I drive them away, their elders will drive me out at their request; and if I let them come, their fathers and friends will drive me out for their sakes.

Some one will say: Yes, Socrates, but cannot you hold your tongue, and then you may go into a foreign city, and no one will interfere with you? Now, I have great difficulty in making you understand my answer to this. For if I tell you that to do as you say would be a disobedience to the God, and therefore that I cannot hold my tongue, you will not believe that I am serious; and if I say again that daily to discourse about virtue, and of those other things about which you hear me examining
myself and others, is the greatest good of man, and that the unexamined life is not worth living, you are still less likely to believe me. Yet I say what is true, although a thing of which it is hard for me to persuade you. Also, I have never been accustomed to think that I deserve to suffer any harm. Had I money I might have estimated the offence at what I was able to pay, and not have been much the worse. But I have none, and therefore I must ask you to proportion the fine to my means. Well, perhaps I could afford a mina, and therefore I propose that penalty: Plato, Crito, Critobulus, and Apollodorus, my friends here, bid me say thirty minae, and they will be the sureties. Let thirty minae be the penalty; for which sum they will be ample security to you.

[After the sentence of death.]

Not much time will be gained, O Athenians, in return for the evil name which you will get from the detractors of the city, who will say that you killed Socrates, a wise man; for they will call me wise, even although I am not wise, when they want to reproach you. If you had waited a little while, your desire would have been fulfilled in the course of nature. For I am far advanced in years, as you may perceive, and not far from death. I am speaking now not to all of you, but only to those who have condemned me to death. And I have another thing to say to them: You think that I was convicted because I had no words of the sort which would have procured my acquittal—I mean, if I had thought fit to leave nothing undone or unsaid. Not so; the deficiency which led to my conviction was not of words—certainly not. But I had not the boldness or impudence or inclination to address you as you would have liked me to do, weeping and wailing and lamenting, and saying and doing many things which you have been accustomed to hear from others, and which, as I maintain, are unworthy of me. I thought at the time that I ought not to do anything common or mean when in danger: nor do I now repent of the style of my defence; I would rather die having spoken after my manner, than speak in your manner and live. For neither in war nor yet at law ought I or any man to use every way of escaping death. Often in battle there can be no doubt that if a man will throw away his arms, and fall on his knees before his pursuers, he may escape death; and in other dangers there are other ways of escaping death, if a man is willing to say and do anything. The difficulty, my friends, is not to avoid death, but to avoid unrighteousness; for that runs faster than death. I am old and move slowly, and the slower runner has overtaken me, and my accusers are keen and quick, and the faster runner, who is unrighteousness, has overtaken them. And now I depart hence condemned by you to suffer the penalty of death,—they too go their ways condemned by the truth to suffer the penalty of villainy and wrong; and I must abide by my award—
let them abide by theirs. I suppose that these things may be regarded as fated,—and I think that they are well.

And now, O men who have condemned me, I would fain prophesy to you; for I am about to die, and in the hour of death men are gifted with prophetic power. And I prophesy to you who are my murderers, that immediately after my departure punishment far heavier than you have inflicted on me will surely await you. Me you have killed because you wanted to escape the accuser, and not to give an account of your lives. But that will not be as you suppose: far otherwise. For I say that there will be more accusers of you than there are now; accusers whom hitherto I have restrained: and as they are younger they will be more inconsiderate with you, and you will be more offended at them. If you think that by killing men you can prevent some one from censuring your evil lives, you are mistaken; that is not a way of escape which is either possible or honourable; the easiest and the noblest way is not to be disabling others, but to be improving yourselves. This is the prophecy which I utter before my departure to the judges who have condemned me.

Friends, who would have acquitted me, I would like also to talk with you about the thing which has come to pass, while the magistrates are busy, and before I go to the place at which I must die. Stay then a little, for we may as well talk with one another while there is time. You are my friends, and I should like to show you the meaning of this event which has happened to me. O my judges—for you I may truly call judges—I should like to tell you of a wonderful circumstance. Hitherto the divine faculty of which the internal oracle is the source has constantly been in the habit of opposing me even about trifles, if I was going to make a slip or error in any matter; and now as you see there has come upon me that which may be thought, and is generally believed to be, the last and worst evil. But the oracle made no sign of opposition, either when I was leaving my house in the morning, or when I was on my way to the court, or while I was speaking, at anything which I was going to say; and yet I have often been stopped in the middle of a speech, but now in nothing I either said or did touching the matter in hand has the oracle opposed me. What do I take to be the explanation of this silence? I will tell you. It is an intimation that what has happened to me is a good, and that those of us who think that death is an evil are in error. For the customary sign would surely have opposed me had I been going to evil and not to good.

Let us reflect in another way, and we shall see that there is great reason to hope that death is a good; for one of two things—either death is a state of nothingness and utter unconsciousness, or, as men say, there is a change and migration of the soul from this world to another. Now, if you suppose that there is no consciousness, but a sleep like the sleep of him who is undisturbed even by dreams, death will be an unspeakable gain. For if
a person were to select the night in which his sleep was undisturbed even by dreams, and were to compare with this the other days and nights of his life, and then were to tell us how many days and nights he had passed in the course of his life better and more pleasantly than this one, I think that any man, I will not say a private man, but even the great king will not find many such days or nights, when compared with the others. Now, if death be of such a nature, I say that to die is gain; for eternity is then only a single night. But if death is the journey to another place, and there, as men say, all the dead abide, what good, O my friends and judges, can be greater than this? If, indeed, when the pilgrim arrives in the world below, he is delivered from the professors of justice in this world, and finds the true judges who are said to give judgment there, Minos and Rhadamanthus and Aeacus and Triptolemus, and other sons of God who were righteous in their own life, that pilgrimage will be worth making. What would not a man give if he might converse with Orpheus and Musaeus and Hesiod and Homer? Nay, if this be true, let me die again and again. I myself, too, shall have a wonderful interest in there meeting and conversing with Palamedes, and Ajax the son of Telamon, and any other ancient hero who has suffered death through an unjust judgment; and there will be no small pleasure, as I think, in comparing my own sufferings with theirs. Above all, I shall then be able to continue my search into true and false knowledge; as in this world, so also in the next; and I shall find out who is wise, and who pretends to be wise, and is not. What would not a man give, O judges, to be able to examine the leader of the great Trojan expedition; or Odysseus or Sisyphus, or numberless others, men and women too! What infinite delight would there be in conversing with them and asking them questions! In another world they do not put a man to death for asking questions: assuredly not. For besides being happier than we are, they will be immortal, if what is said is true.

Wherefore, O judges, be of good cheer about death, and know of a certainty, that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death. He and his are not neglected by the gods; nor has my own approaching end happened by mere chance. But I see clearly that the time had arrived when it was better for me to die and be released from trouble; wherefore the oracle gave no sign. For which reason, also, I am not angry with my condemners, or with my accusers; they have done me no harm, although they did not mean to do me any good; and for this I may gently blame them.

Still, I have a favour to ask of them. When my sons are grown up, I would ask you, O my friends, to punish them; and I would have you trouble them, as I have troubled you, if they seem to care about riches, or anything, more than about virtue; or if they pretend to be something when they are really nothing,—then reprove them, as I have reproved you, for not caring about that for which they ought to care, and thinking that they are something when they are really nothing. And if you
do this, both I and my sons will have received justice at your hands.
   The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways—I to die, and
   you to live. Which is better God only knows.

_The CRITO_

_Socrates._ Why have you come at this hour, Crito? It must be quite
   early?

_Crito._ Yes, certainly.

_Socrates._ What is the exact time?

_Crito._ The dawn is breaking.

_Socrates._ I wonder that the keeper of the prisoner would let you in.

_Crito._ He knows me, because I often come, Socrates; moreover, I
   have done him a kindness.

_Socrates._ And are you only just arrived?

_Crito._ No, I came some time ago.

_Socrates._ Then why did you sit and say nothing, instead of at once
   awakening me?

_Crito._ I should not have liked myself, Socrates, to be in such great
   trouble and unrest as you are—indeed I should not: I have been watching
   with amazement your peaceful slumbers; and for that reason I did not
   awake you, because I wished to minimize the pain. I have always thought
   you to be of a happy disposition; but never did I see anything like the
   easy, tranquil manner in which you bear this calamity.

_Socrates._ Why, Crito, when a man has reached my age he ought not
   to be repining at the approach of death.

_Crito._ And yet other old men find themselves in similar misfortunes,
   and age does not prevent them from repining.

_Socrates._ That is true. But you have not told me why you come at this
   early hour.

_Crito._ I come to bring you a message which is sad and painful; not, as
   I believe, to yourself, but to all of us who are your friends, and saddest
   of all to me.

_Socrates._ What? Has the ship come from Delos, on the arrival of
   which I am to die?

_Crito._ No, the ship has not actually arrived, but she will probably be
   here to-day, as persons who have come from Sunium tell me that they
   left her there; and therefore to-morrow, Socrates, will be the last day of
   your life.

_Socrates._ Very well, Crito; if such is the will of God, I am willing; but
   my belief is that there will be a delay of a day.

_Crito._ Why do you think so?

_Socrates._ I will tell you. I am to die on the day after the arrival of
   the ship.

_Crito._ Yes; that is what the authorities say.

_Socrates._ But I do not think that the ship will be here until to-morrow;
this I infer from a vision which I had last night, or rather only just now, when you fortunately allowed me to sleep.

Crito. And what was the nature of the vision?

Socrates. There appeared to me the likeness of a woman, fair and comely, clothed in bright raiment, who called to me and said: O Socrates,

"The third day hence to fertile Phthia shalt thou go."

[Iliad, Bk. ix, l. 363.]

Crito. What a singular dream, Socrates!

Socrates. There can be no doubt about the meaning, Crito, I think.

Crito. Yes; the meaning is only too clear. But, oh! my beloved Socrates, let me entreat you once more to take my advice and escape. For if you die I shall not only lose a friend who can never be replaced, but there is another evil: people who do not know you and me will believe that I might have saved you if I had been willing to give money, but that I did not care. Now, can there be a worse disgrace than this—that I should be thought to value money more than the life of a friend? For the many will not be persuaded that I wanted you to escape, and that you refused.

Socrates. But why, my dear Crito, should we care about the opinion of the many? Good men, and they are the only persons who are worth considering, will think of these things truly as they occurred.

Crito. But you see, Socrates, that the opinion of the many must be regarded, for what is now happening shows that they can do the greatest evil to any one who has lost their good opinion.

Socrates. I only wish it were so, Crito; and that the many could do the greatest evil; for then they would also be able to do the greatest good—and what a fine thing this would be! But in reality they can do neither; for they cannot make a man either wise or foolish; and whatever they do is the result of chance.

Crito. Well, I will not dispute with you; but please to tell me, Socrates, whether you are not acting out of regard to me and your other friends: are you not afraid that if you escape from prison we may get into trouble with the informers for having stolen you away, and lose either the whole or a great part of our property; or that even a worse evil may happen to us? Now, if you fear on our account, be at ease; for in order to save you, we ought surely to run this, or even a greater risk; be persuaded, then, and do as I say.

Socrates. Yes, Crito, that is one fear which you mention, but by no means the only one.

Crito. Fear not—there are persons who are willing to get you out of prison at no great cost; and as for the informers, they are far from being exorbitant in their demands—a little money will satisfy them. My means, which are certainly ample, are at your service, and if you have a scruple about spending all mine, here are strangers who will give you the use of
their; and one of them, Simmias the Theban, has brought a large sum of
money for this very purpose; and Cebes and many others are prepared to
spend their money in helping you to escape. I say, therefore, do not hesi-
tate on our account, and do not say, as you did in the court, that you will
have a difficulty in knowing what to do with yourself anywhere else. For
men will love you in other places to which you may go, and not in Athens
only; there are friends of mine in Thessaly, if you like to go to them, who
will value and protect you, and no Thessalian will give you any trouble.
Nor can I think that you are at all justified, Socrates, in betraying your
own life when you might be saved; in acting thus you are playing into the
hands of your enemies, who are hurrying on your destruction. And fur-
thor I should say that you are deserting your own children; for you might
bring them up and educate them; instead of which you go away and leave
them, and they will have to take their chance; and if they do not meet
with the usual fate of orphans, there will be small thanks to you. No man
should bring children into the world who is unwilling to persevere to the
end in their nurture and education. But you appear to be choosing the
easier path, not the better and manlier, which would have been more
becoming in one who professes to care for virtue in all his actions, like
yourself. And, indeed, I am ashamed not only of you, but of us who are
your friends, when I reflect that the whole business will be attributed
to our want of courage. The trial need never have come on, or
might have been managed differently; and this last act, or crowning folly,
will seem to have occurred through our negligence and cowardice, who
might have saved you, if we had been good for anything; and you might
have saved yourself, for there was no difficulty at all. See now, Socrates,
how sad and discreditable are the consequences, both to us and you.
Make up your mind, then, or rather have your mind already made up,
for the time of deliberation is over, and there is only one thing to be
done, which must be done this very night, and if we delay at all will be
no longer practicable or possible; I beseech you therefore, Socrates, be
persuaded by me, and do as I say.

Socrates. Dear Crito, your zeal is invaluable, if a right one; but if
wrong, the greater the zeal the greater the danger; and therefore we
ought to consider whether I shall or shall not do as you say. For I am
and always have been one of those natures who must be guided by reason,
whatever the reason may be which upon reflection appears to me to be
the best; and now that this chance has befallen me, I cannot repudiate my
own words: the principles which I have hitherto honoured and revered I
still honour, and unless we can at once find other and better principles,
I am certain not to agree with you; no, not even if the power of the
multitude could inflict many more imprisonments, confiscations, deaths,
frightening us like children with hobgoblin terrors. What will be the
fairest way of considering the question? Shall I return to your old argu-
ment about the opinions of men?—we were saying that some of them are to be regarded, and others not. Now, were we right in maintaining this before I was condemned? And has the argument which was once good now proved to be talk for the sake of talking—mere childish nonsense? That is what I want to consider with your help, Crito:—whether, under my present circumstances, the argument appears to be in any way different or not; and is to be allowed by me or disallowed. That argument, which, as I believe, is maintained by many persons of authority, was to the effect, as I was saying, that the opinions of some men are to be regarded, and of other men not to be regarded. Now you, Crito, are not going to die to-morrow—at least, there is no human probability of this—and therefore you are disinterested and not liable to be deceived by the circumstances in which you are placed. Tell me, then, whether I am right in saying that some opinions, and the opinions of some men only, are to be valued, and that other opinions, and the opinions of other men, are not to be valued. I ask you whether I was right in maintaining this?

Crito. Certainly.
Socrates. The good are to be regarded, and not the bad?
Crito. Yes.
Socrates. And the opinions of the wise are good, and the opinions of the unwise are evil?
Crito. Certainly.
Socrates. And what was said about another matter? Is the pupil who devotes himself to the practice of gymnastics supposed to attend to the praise and blame and opinion of every man, or of one man only—his physician or trainer, whoever he may be?
Crito. Of one man only.
Socrates. And he ought to fear the censure and welcome the praise of that one only, and not of the many?
Crito. Clearly so.
Socrates. And he ought to act and train, and eat and drink in the way which seems good to his single master who has understanding, rather than according to the opinion of all other men put together?
Crito. True.
Socrates. And if he disobeys and disregards the opinion and approval of the one, and regards the opinion of the many who have no understanding, will he not suffer?
Crito. Certainly he will.
Socrates. And what will the evil be, whether tending and what affecting, in the disobedient person?
Crito. Clearly, affecting the body; that is what is destroyed by the evil.
Socrates. Very good; and is not this true, Crito, of other things which we need not separately enumerate? In questions of just and unjust, fair and foul, good and evil, which are the subjects of our present consulta-
tion, ought we to follow the opinion of the many and to fear them; or the opinion of the one man who has understanding? ought we not to fear and reverence him more than all the rest of the world: and if we desert him shall we not destroy and injure that principle in us which may be assumed to be improved by justice and deteriorated by injustice;—there is such a principle?

Crito. Certainly there is, Socrates.

Socrates. Take a parallel instance:—if, acting under the advice of those who have no understanding, we destroy that which is improved by health and is deteriorated by disease, would life be worth having? And that which has been destroyed is—the body?

Crito. Yes.

Socrates. Could we live, having an evil and corrupted body?

Crito. Certainly not.

Socrates. And will life be worth having, if that higher part of man be destroyed, which is improved by justice and depraved by injustice? Do we suppose that principle, whatever it may be in man, which has to do with justice and injustice, to be inferior to the body?

Crito. Certainly not.

Socrates. More honourable than the body?

Crito. Far more.

Socrates. Then, my friend, we must not regard what the many say of us: but what he, the one man who has understanding of just and unjust, will say, and what the truth will say. And therefore you begin in error when you advise that we should regard the opinion of the many about just and unjust, good and evil, honourable and dishonourable.—“Well,” some one will say, “but the many can kill us.”

Crito. Yes, Socrates; that will clearly be the answer.

Socrates. And it is true: but still I find with surprise that the old argument is unshaken as ever. And I should like to know whether I may say the same of another proposition—that not life, but a good life, is to be chiefly valued?

Crito. Yes, that also remains unshaken.

Socrates. And a good life is equivalent to a just and honourable one—that holds also?

Crito. Yes, it does.

Socrates. From these premises I proceed to argue the question whether I ought or ought not to try to escape without the consent of the Athenians: and if I am clearly right in escaping, then I will make the attempt; but if not, I will abstain. The other considerations which you mention, of money and loss of character and the duty of educating one’s children, are, I fear, only the doctrines of the multitude, who would be as ready to restore people to life, if they were able, as they are to put them to death—and with as little reason. But now, since the argument has thus far pre-
vailed, the only question which remains to be considered is, whether we shall do rightly either in escaping or in suffering others to aid in our escape and paying them in money and thanks, or whether in reality we shall not do rightly; and if the latter, then death or any other calamity which may ensue on my remaining here must not be allowed to enter into the calculation.

Crito. I think that you are right, Socrates; how then shall we proceed?

Socrates. Let us consider the matter together, and do you either refute me if you can, and I will be convinced; or else cease, my dear friend, from repeating to me that I ought to escape against the wishes of the Athenians: for I highly value your attempts to persuade me to do so, but I may not be persuaded against my own better judgment. And now please to consider my first position, and try how you can best answer me.

Crito. I will.

Socrates. Are we to say that we are never intentionally to do wrong, or that in one way we ought and in another way we ought not to do wrong, or is doing wrong always evil and dishonourable, as I was just now saying, and as has been already acknowledged by us? Are all our former admissions which were made within a few days to be thrown away? And have we, at our age, been earnestly discoursing with one another all our life long only to discover that we are no better than children? Or, in spite of the opinion of the many, and in spite of consequences whether better or worse, shall we insist on the truth of what was then said, that injustice is always an evil and dishonour to him who acts unjustly? Shall we say so or not?

Crito. Yes.

Socrates. Then we must do no wrong?

Crito. Certainly not.

Socrates. Nor when injured injure in return, as the many imagine; for we must injure no one at all?

Crito. Clearly not.

Socrates. Again, Crito, may we do evil?

Crito. Surely not, Socrates.

Socrates. And what of doing evil in return for evil, which is the morality of the many—is that just or not?

Crito. Not just.

Socrates. For doing evil to another is the same as injuring him?

Crito. Very true.

Socrates. Then we ought not to retaliate or render evil for evil to any one, whatever evil we may have suffered from him. But I would have you consider, Crito, whether you really mean what you are saying. For this opinion has never been held, and never will be held, by any considerable number of persons; and those who are agreed and those who are not agreed upon this point have no common ground, and can only despise
one another when they see how widely they differ. Tell me, then, whether you agree with and assent to my first principle, that neither injury nor retaliation nor warding off evil by evil is ever right. And shall that be the premiss of our argument? Or do you decline and dissent from this? For so I have ever thought, and continue to think; but, if you are of another opinion, let me hear what you have to say. If, however, you remain of the same mind as formerly, I will proceed to the next step.

_Crito._ You may proceed, for I have not changed my mind.

_Socrates._ Then I will go on to the next point, which may be put in the form of a question:—Ought a man to do what he admits to be right, or ought he to betray the right?

_Crito._ He ought to do what he thinks right.

_Socrates._ But if this is true, what is the application? In leaving the prison against the will of the Athenians, do I wrong any? or rather do I not wrong those whom I ought least to wrong? Do I not desert the principles which were acknowledged by us to be just—what do you say?

_Crito._ I cannot tell, Socrates; for I do not know.

_Socrates._ Then consider the matter in this way:—Imagine that I am about to play truant (you may call the proceeding by any name which you like), and the laws and the government come and interrogate me: “Tell us, Socrates,” they say; “what are you about? are you not going by an act of yours to overturn us—the laws, and the whole State, as far as in you lies? Do you imagine that a State can subsist and not be overthrown, in which the decisions of law have no power, but are set aside and trampled upon by individuals?” What will be our answer, Crito, to these and the like words? Any one, and especially a rhetorician, will have a good deal to say on behalf of the law which requires a sentence to be carried out. He will argue that this law should not be set aside; and shall we reply, “Yes; but the State has injured us and given an unjust sentence.” Suppose I say that?

_Crito._ Very good, Socrates.

_Socrates._ “And was that our agreement with you?” the law would answer; “or were you to abide by the sentence of the State?” And if I were to express my astonishment at their words, the law would probably add: “Answer, Socrates, instead of opening your eyes—you are in the habit of asking and answering questions. Tell us,—What complaint have you to make against us which justifies you in attempting to destroy us and the State? In the first place did we not bring you into existence? Your father married your mother by our aid and begat you. Say whether you have any objection to urge against those of us who regulate marriage:” None, I should reply. “Or against those of us who after birth regulate the nurture and education of children, in which you also were trained? Were not the laws, which have the charge of education, right in commanding your father to train you in music and gymnastic?” Right, I should reply.
"Well, then, since you were brought into the world and nurtured and educated by us, can you deny in the first place that you are our child and slave, as your fathers were before you? And if this is true, you are not on equal terms with us; nor can you think that you have a right to do to us what we are doing to you. Would you have any right to strike or revile or do any other evil to your father or your master, if you had one, because you have been struck or reviled by him, or received some other evil at his hands?—you would not say this? And because we think right to destroy you, do you think that you have any right to destroy us in return, and your country as far as in you lies? Will you, O professor of true virtue, pretend that you are justified in this? Has a philosopher like you failed to discover that our country is more to be valued and higher and holier far than mother or father or any ancestor, and more to be regarded in the eyes of the gods and of men of understanding? also to be soothed, and gently and reverently entreated when angry, even more than a father, and either to be persuaded, or if not persuaded, to be obeyed? And when we are punished by her, whether with imprisonment or stripes, the punishment is to be endured in silence; and if she lead us to wounds or death in battle, thither we follow as is right; neither may any one yield or retreat or leave his rank, but whether in battle or in a court of law, or in any other place, he must do what his city and his country order him; or he must change their view of what is just: and if he may do no violence to his father or mother, much less may he do violence to his country." What answer shall we make to this, Crito? Do the laws speak truly, or do they not?

Crito. I think that they do.

Socrates. Then the laws will say: "Consider, Socrates, if we are speaking truly that in your present attempt you are going to do us an injury. For, having brought you into the world, and nurtured and educated you, and given you and every other citizen a share in every good which we had to give, we further proclaim to any Athenian by the liberty which we allow him, that if he does not like us when he has become of age and has seen the ways of the city, and made our acquaintance, he may go where he pleases and take his goods with him. None of us laws will forbid him or interfere with him. Any one who does not like us and the city, and who wants to emigrate to a colony or to any other city, may go where he likes, retaining his property. But he who has experience of the manner in which we order justice and administer the State, and still remains, has entered into an implied contract that he will do as we command him. And he who disobeys us is, as we maintain, thrice wrong; first, because in disobeying us he is disobeying his parents; secondly, because we are the authors of his education; thirdly, because he has made an agreement with us that he will duly obey our commands; and he neither obeys them nor convinces us that our commands are unjust; and we do not rudely
impose them, but give him the alternative of obeying or convincing us;—
that is what we offer, and he does neither.

"These are the sort of accusations to which, as we were saying, you,
Socrates, will be exposed if you accomplish your intentions; you, above
all other Athenians." Suppose now I ask, why I rather than anybody else?
they will justly retort upon me that I above all other men have acknowled-
aged the agreement. "There is clear proof," they will say, "Socrates,
that we and the city were not displeasing to you. Of all Athenians you
have been the most constant resident in the city, which, as you never
leave, you may be supposed to love. For you never went out of the city
either to see the games, except once when you went to the Isthmus, or
to any other place unless when you were on military service; nor did you
travel as other men do. Nor had you any curiosity to know other States
or their laws: your affections did not go beyond us and our State; we
were your special favourites, and you acquiesced in our government of
you; and here in this city you begat your children, which is a proof of
your satisfaction. Moreover, you might in the course of the trial, if you
had liked, have fixed the penalty at banishment; the State which refuses to
let you go now would have let you go then. But you pretended that you
preferred death to exile, and that you were not unwilling to die. And now
you have forgotten these fine sentiments, and pay no respect to us, the
laws, of whom you are the destroyer; and are doing what only a miserable
slave would do, running away and turning your back upon the compacts
and agreements which you made as a citizen. And, first of all, answer this
very question: Are we right in saying that you agreed to be governed
according to us in deed, and not in word only? Is that true or not?" How
shall we answer, Crito? Must we not assent?

Crito. We cannot help it, Socrates.

Socrates. Then will they not say: "You, Socrates, are breaking the
covenants and agreements which you made with us at your leisure, not
in any haste or under any compulsion or deception, but after you have
had seventy years to think of them, during which time you were at liberty
to leave the city, if we were not to your mind, or if our covenants ap-
ppeared to you to be unfair. You had your choice, and might have gone
either to Lacedaemon or Crete, both which States are often praised by
you for their good government, or to some other Hellenic or foreign
State. Whereas you, above all other Athenians, seemed to be so fond of
the State, or, in other words, of us, her laws (and who would care about
a State which has no laws?), that you never stirred out of her; the halt,
the blind, the maimed were not more stationary in her than you were.
And now you run away and forsake your agreements. Not so, Socrates,
if you will take our advice; do not make yourself ridiculous by escaping
out of the city.

"For just consider, if you transgress and err in this sort of way, what
good will you do either to yourself or to your friends? That your friends will be driven into exile and deprived of citizenship, or will lose their property, is tolerably certain; and you yourself, if you fly to one of the neighbouring cities, as, for example, Thebes or Megara, both of which are well governed, will come to them as an enemy, Socrates, and their government will be against you, and all patriotic citizens will cast an evil eye upon you as a subverter of the laws, and you will confirm in the minds of the judges the justice of their own condemnation of you. For he who is a corrupter of the laws is more than likely to be a corrupter of the young and foolish portion of mankind. Will you then flee from well-ordered cities and virtuous men? and is existence worth having on these terms? Or will you go to them without shame, and talk to them, Socrates? And what will you say to them? What you say here about virtue and justice and institutions and laws being the best things among men? Would that be decent of you? Surely not. But if you go away from well-governed States to Crito's friends in Thessaly, where there is great disorder and licence, they will be charmed to hear the tale of your escape from prison, set off with ludicrous particulars of the manner in which you were wrapped in a goatskin or some other disguise, and metamorphosed as the manner is of runaways; but will there be no one to remind you that in your old age you were not ashamed to violate the most sacred laws from a miserable desire of a little more life? Perhaps not, if you keep them in a good temper; but if they are out of temper you will hear many degrading things; you will live, but how?—as the flatterer of all men, and the servant of all men; and doing what?—eating and drinking in Thessaly, having gone abroad in order that you may get a dinner. And where will be your fine sentiments about justice and virtue? Say that you wish to live for the sake of your children—you want to bring them up and educate them—will you take them into Thessaly and deprive them of Athenian citizenship? Is this the benefit which you will confer upon them? Or are you under the impression that they will be better cared for and educated here if you are still alive, although absent from them; for your friends will take care of them? Do you fancy that if you are an inhabitant of Thessaly they will take care of them, and if you are an inhabitant of the other world that they will not take care of them? Nay; but if they who call themselves friends are good for anything, they will—to be sure they will.

"Listen, then, Socrates, to us who have brought you up. Think not of life and children first, and of justice afterwards, but of justice first, that you may be justified before the princes of the world below. For neither will you nor any that belong to you be happier or holier or juster in this life, or happier in another, if you do as Crito bids. Now you depart in innocence, a sufferer and not a doer of evil; a victim, not of the laws but of men. But if you go forth, returning evil for evil, and injury for injury, breaking the covenants and agreements which you have made with us,
and wronging those whom you ought least of all to wrong, that is to say, yourself, your friends, your country, and us, we shall be angry with you while you live, and our brethren, the laws in the world below, will receive you as an enemy; for they will know that you have done your best to destroy us. Listen, then, to us and not to Crito."

This, dear Crito, is the voice which I seem to hear murmuring in my ears, like the sound of the flute in the ears of the mystic; that voice, I say, is humming in my ears, and prevents me from hearing any other. And I know that anything more which you may say will be vain. Yet speak, if you have anything to say.

Crito. I have nothing to say, Socrates.

Socrates. Leave me then, Crito, to fulfil the will of God, and to follow whither he leads.

From the PHAEDO

When he had done speaking, Crito said: And have you any commands for us, Socrates—anything to say about your children, or any other matter in which we can serve you?

Nothing particular, Crito, he replied: only, as I have always told you, take care of yourselves; that is a service which you may be ever rendering to me and mine and to all of us, whether you promise to do so or not. But if you have no thought for yourselves, and care not to walk according to the rule which I have prescribed for you, not now for the first time, however much you may profess or promise at the moment, it will be of no avail.

We will do our best, said Crito: And in what way shall we bury you?

In any way that you like; but you must get hold of me, and take care that I do not run away from you. Then he turned to us, and added with a smile:—I cannot make Crito believe that I am the same Socrates who have been talking and conducting the argument; he fancies that I am the other Socrates whom he well soon see, a dead body—and he asks, How shall he bury me? And though I have spoken many words in the endeavour to show that when I have drunk the poison I shall leave you and go to the joys of the blessed,—these words of mine, with which I was comforting you and myself, have had, as I perceived, no effect upon Crito. And therefore I want you to be surety for me to him now; as at the trial he was surety to the judges for me: but let the promise be of another sort; for he was surety for me to the judges that I would remain, and you must be my surety to him that I shall not remain, but go away and depart; and then he will suffer less at my death, and not be grieved when he sees my body being burned or buried. I would not have him sorrow at my hard lot, or say at the burial, Thus we lay out Socrates, or, Thus we follow him to the grave or bury him; for false words are not only evil in themselves, but they inflict the soul with evil. Be of good
cheer then, my dear Crito, and say that you are burying my body only, and do with that whatever is usual, and what you think best.

When he had spoken these words, he arose and went into a chamber to bathe; Crito followed him and told us to wait. So we remained behind, talking and thinking of the subject of discourse, and also of the greatness of our sorrow; he was like a father of whom we were being bereaved, and we were about to pass the rest of our lives as orphans. When he had taken the bath his children were brought to him (he had two young sons and an elder one); and the women of his family also came, and he talked to them and gave them a few directions in the presence of Crito; then he dismissed them and returned to us.

Now the hour of sunset was near, for a good deal of time had passed while he was within. When he came out, he sat down with us again after his bath, but not much was said. Soon the jailer, who was the servant of the Eleven, entered and stood by him, saying:—To you, Socrates, whom I know to be the noblest and gentlest and best of all who ever came to this place, I will not impute the angry feeling of other men, who rage and swear at me, when, in obedience to the authorities, I bid them drink the poison—indeed, I am sure that you will not be angry with me; for others, as you are aware, and not I, are to blame. And so fare you well, and try to bear lightly what must needs be—you know my errand. Then bursting into tears he turned away and went out.

Socrates looked at him and said: I return your good wishes, and will do as you bid. Then turning to us, he said, How charming the man is: since I have been in prison he has always been coming to see me, and at times he would talk to me, and was as good to me as could be, and now see how generously he sorrows on my account. We must do as he says, Crito; and therefore let the cup be brought, if the poison is prepared: if not, let the attendant prepare some.

Yet, said Crito, the sun is still upon the hill-tops, and I know that many a one has taken the draught late, and after the announcement has been made to him, he has eaten and drunk, and enjoyed the society of his beloved: do not hurry—there is time enough.

Socrates said: Yes, Crito, and they of whom you speak are right in so acting, for they think that they will be gainers by the delay; but I am right in not following their example, for I do not think that I should gain anything by drinking the poison a little later; I should only be ridiculous in my own eyes for sparing and saving a life which is already forfeit. Please then to do as I say, and not to refuse me.

Crito made a sign to the servant, who was standing by; and he went out, and having been absent for some time, returned with the jailer carrying the cup of poison. Socrates said: You, my good friend, who are experienced in these matters, shall give me directions how I am to proceed. The man answered: You have only to walk about until your legs are
heavy, and then to lie down, and the poison will act. At the same time he handed the cup to Socrates, who in the easiest and gentlest manner, with-out the least fear or change of colour or feature, looking at the man with all his eyes, Echecrates, as his manner was, took the cup and said: What do you say about making a libation out of this cup to any god? May I, or not? The man answered: We only prepare, Socrates, just so much as we deem enough. I understand, he said: but I may and must ask the gods to prosper my journey from this to the other world—even so—and so be it according to my prayer. Then raising the cup to his lips, quite readily and cheerfully he drank off the poison. And hitherto most of us had been able to control our sorrow; but now when we saw him drinking, and saw too that he had finished the draught, we could no longer forbear, and in spite of myself my own tears were flowing fast; so that I covered my face and wept, not for him, but at the thought of my own calamity in having to part from such a friend. Nor was I the first; for Crito, when he found himself unable to restrain his tears, had got up, and I followed; and at that moment, Apollodorus, who had been weeping all the time, broke out in a loud and passionate cry which made cowards of us all. Socrates alone retained his calmness: What is this strange outcry? he said. I sent away the women mainly in order that they might not misbehave in this way, for I have been told that a man should die in peace. Be quiet then, and have patience. When we heard his words we were ashamed, and refrained our tears; and he walked about until, as he said, his legs began to fail, and then he lay on his back, according to directions, and the man who gave him the poison now and then looked at his feet and legs; and after a while he pressed his foot hard, and asked him if he could feel; and he said, No; and then his leg, and so upwards and upwards, and showed us that he was cold and stiff. And he felt them himself, and said: When the poison reaches the heart, that will be the end. He was beginning to grow cold about the groin, when he uncovered his face, for he had covered himself up, and said—they were his last words—he said: Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepius; will you remember to pay the debt? The debt shall be paid, said Crito; is there anything else? There was no answer to this question; but in a minute or two a movement was heard, and the attend-ants uncovered him; his eyes were set, and Crito closed his eyes and mouth.

Such was the end, Echecrates, of our friend; concerning whom I may truly say, that of all men of his time whom I have known, he was the wisest and justest and best.

AIDS TO STUDY

The passages quoted here from the end of the Apology (which means the Defense) record the address of Socrates to the Court of the Five Hundred
which had found him guilty of corrupting the youth of Athens and of religious impiety. As was the custom, Socrates is allowed to suggest a suitable penalty and an appropriate fine. For his penalty he proposes that he be treated as a public benefactor and be supported in Prytaneum—that is, at the public table. This proposal was regarded as impudent and may have galled the judges into imposing a heavier sentence than they otherwise would have done.

In the Crito the attempt to persuade Socrates to flee Athens takes place while his execution was being delayed some weeks until the end of a civic religious observance.

The scene at the end of the Phaedo comes after Socrates has discoursed to his friends and students on the immortal nature of the soul and on the afterlife.

The Apology

1. What is the tone and manner of Socrates’ remarks to his judges? Calm? indignant? humorous? reasonable? Can you point to some passages which convey one tone, some another? Does he speak differently to those who condemned him and to those who voted for his acquittal?

2. Summarize the alternative views of death that Socrates presents and his reasons for hoping that death is not an evil. Does Socrates neglect some alternative that he should consider? If so, can you explain why he neglects it?

3. Why does Socrates ask his friends to punish his sons?

The Crito

1. What sort of relationship exists between Crito and Socrates in the opening speeches of this dialogue?

2. What motive does Crito first mention for asking Socrates to escape from Athens? What reason does Socrates offer for mistrusting “the opinion of the many”? Would you infer that Socrates believed in government by simple majorities of the voters?

3. What other arguments does Crito advance to urge Socrates to escape?

4. In reply, Socrates at first suggests that the opinions of some men are more to be respected than those of others. This principle seems simply a truism. But what conclusion does Socrates draw from it? Whose opinion is to be respected?

5. What does Socrates say about returning evil for evil? And why does he think that his opinion “has never been held, and never will be held, by any considerable number of persons”? Do you agree?

6. On what grounds does Socrates believe that the laws must be obeyed even if a person thinks he has been unjustly treated? Is he arguing that unjust laws should be obeyed?

7. Why does Socrates personify the laws and let them speak his own real views?

8. The last paragraph in which the laws speak (“Listen, then, Socrates . . .”) suggests that Socrates believes in principles which underlie the actual laws themselves. What principles?

9. The same paragraph is one of the passages in which Socrates expresses the loftiest ethical ideals of Athenian culture. Compare them with the ideals of
other great teachers of mankind. (The phrase "the will of God" in the last speech of the dialogue should not be read in a Biblical or Christian sense. The phrase might properly be rendered as "the divine law" or "what the god intends.")

The Phaedo

1. What irony is there in the fact that Socrates finds it necessary to try to cheer Crito up?
2. How does Socrates regard his jailer?
3. Socrates' last words mean merely that he intends to observe the custom of making a thank-offering to a god who has done a human being a favor. Asclepius is the god of medicine and healing. How, then, do you interpret Socrates' request? Is it in keeping with his character as you have seen it in these selections?
Christopher Dawson

THE RELATION BETWEEN RELIGION AND CULTURE

There is still a certain amount of distrust of the sociological concept of culture among historians and men of letters, owing to the feeling that it is an alien importation into our language. Since the days when Tylor wrote his book on Primitive Culture, however, it has been adopted so widely by anthropologists and ethnologists, that it seems pedantic to object to a word which has acquired a scientific status as a specific term for which there is no satisfactory alternative.

A social culture is an organized way of life which is based on a common tradition and conditioned by a common environment. It is therefore not identical with the concept of civilization which involves a high degree of conscious rationalization nor with society itself, since a culture normally includes a number of independent social units.

The fact that a culture is a way of life adapted to a particular environment involves a certain degree of social specialization and the canalization of social energies along certain lines. We see this most clearly in the case of isolated marginal cultures, like that of the Esquimaux in the Arctic or that of the Bushmen in South Africa. In these cases the inter-relation of social organism, economic function and geographical environment is so complete that culture becomes inseparable from race.

But this does not mean, as the racialists believe, that culture is the result of predetermined racial inheritance. On the contrary it would be more true to say that race is the product of culture, and that the differentiation of racial types represents the culmination of an age-long process of cultural segregation and specialization at a very primitive level, just as in modern times nationality and the differentiation of national types

is the result of the growth of special cultural traditions rather than vice versa.

It is indeed remarkable how rapidly the human type is modified or transformed by a new way of life or a new environment. Take a few hundred thousand nineteenth century English and Irish, transplant them to Australia and let them adapt their social habits and organization to this new environment, and in a century you find a new human type which is both physically and psychologically different from that of the parent society.

Nevertheless in spite of these far-reaching changes, the factor of cultural tradition remains predominant. The new Australian type is not a variety of the native Australian type but of the British type, so that to an Australian aboriginal the two will probably appear so similar as to be indistinguishable. For the way of life of any particular society exerts so powerful an influence on its individual members that hereditary differences of character and predisposition are worked into the pattern of culture as the multi-coloured threads are woven into the design of a fabric. Thus culture is the form of society. The society without culture is a formless society—a crowd or a collection of individuals brought together by the needs of the moment—while the stronger a culture is, the more completely does it inform and transform the diverse human material of which it is composed.

What then is the relation of culture to religion? It is clear that a common way of life involves a common view of life, common standards of behaviour and common standards of value, and consequently a culture is a spiritual community which owes its unity to common beliefs and common ways of thought far more than to any uniformity of physical type. Now it is easy for a modern man living in a highly secularized society to conceive this common view of life as a purely secular thing which has no necessary connection with religious beliefs. But in the past, it was not so. From the beginning man has already regarded his life and the life of society as intimately dependent on forces that lie outside his own control—on superhuman powers which rule both the world and the life of man. “No man,” said an Indian hunter, “can succeed in life alone, and he cannot get the help he needs from men.”

This conviction that “the way of man is not in himself,” that it is not for man to walk and direct his own steps, is as old as humanity itself. We can find most clear and moving expressions of this belief among the primitive peoples—most of all perhaps among the hunting peoples like the North American Indians whose conception of dependence on spiritual powers has been described with exceptional fullness by a series of excellent scholars and observers, like I. O. Dorsey, F. Boas and Ruth Benedict.

But it is also found amongst much more primitive races, and needless to
say in all the higher religions.

Therefore from the beginning the social way of life which is culture has been deliberately ordered and directed in accordance with the higher laws of life which are religion. As the powers of heaven rule the seasons, so the divine powers rule the life of man and society, and for a community to conduct its affairs without reference to these powers, seems as irrational as for a community to cultivate the earth without paying any attention to the course of the seasons. The complete secularization of social life is a relatively modern and anomalous phenomenon. Throughout the greater part of mankind's history, in all ages and states of society, religion has been the great central unifying force in culture. It has been the guardian of tradition, the preserver of the moral law, the educator and the teacher of wisdom.

And in addition to this conservative function, religion has also had a creative, conative, dynamic function, as energizer and life giver. Religion holds society in its fixed culture pattern, as in Plato's Laws, or as in the hierarchic order of Sumerian and Egyptian culture; but it also leads the people through the wilderness and brings them back from captivity and inspires them with the hope of future deliverance.

Religion is the key of history. We cannot understand the inner form of a society unless we understand its religion. We cannot understand its cultural achievements unless we understand the religious beliefs that lie behind them. In all ages the first creative works of a culture are due to a religious inspiration and dedicated to a religious end. The temples of the gods are the most enduring works of man. Religion stands at the threshold of all the great literatures of the world. Philosophy is its offspring and is a child which constantly returns to its parent.

And the same is true of social institutions. Kingship and law are religious institutions and even to-day they have not entirely divested themselves of their numinous character, as we can see in the English coronation rite and in the formulas of our law courts.

All the institutions of family and marriage and kinship have a religious background and have been maintained and are still maintained by formidable religious sanctions. The earliest social differentiation and the one that has had the most potent influence on culture has been due to the development of specialized social classes and institutions, charged with the function of maintaining relations between society and the divine powers. The fact that this class has almost invariably been responsible in whole or in part for the education of the community and the preservation of sacred tradition and learning gives it an exceptional importance in the history of culture; and we must study the specific form it takes in any particular culture or religion before we can begin to understand it. The Sumerian and Egyptian temple priesthoods, the Brahmin caste in ancient India, the clergy and the monastic orders in mediaeval Christendom are
not merely religious institutions, they are also vital social organs in their respective cultures. And the same is true of the Shamans, the medicine men and witch doctors among primitive peoples although our current terminology often blurs the distinction between the sorcerer, whose function is non-social or anti-social, and the priest, who is the recognized religious organ of the community—a confusion which has been increased by the attempt to draw a rigid and exclusive line of division between religion and magic.

The more primitive a culture is, of course, the less room there is for an explicit differentiation of social functions, but on the other hand, the more directly is its religion bound up with the elementary needs of life, so that the social and economic way of life is more clearly interpenetrated by and fused with religion than is the case in the higher cultures.

Thus among the Australians there was no true priesthood and the leadership in religion as in other matters fell to the old men who were the natural leaders of the tribe and the guardians of tradition. Nevertheless they possessed a most elaborate and highly organized system of religious rites to ensure the continuity of the life of the tribe and the maintenance of its food supply—a regular liturgy, which in some instances, as described by Spencer and Gillen, occupied the community almost continuously for three or four months at a time. In this case the way of life of the community is conceived as dependent on another and a sacred world—the world of the divine totemic ancestors—from which the spirit comes and to which it returns, and the totemic ceremonies provide the way of access and communion between the life of the tribe and the other world of the sacred alcheringa age.

It is difficult for a civilized man to understand either the religious significance or the cultural importance of such ceremonies. But to the primitive the dance or mime is at once the highest form of social activity and the most powerful kind of religious action. Through it the community participates in a mystery which confers supernatural efficacy upon its action. How this may affect social life and change the course of historical events may be seen in the rise of the Ghost Dance religion among the Indians of the Plains at the end of the nineteenth century. Here we have a well attested case of how a dance may become the medium by which the religious experience of an individual may be socialized and transmitted from one person to another with revolutionary political effects. Wovoka, an Indian of a little known and unimportant tribe in Nevada, received in a vision a dance the performance of which would bring back the spirits of their dead ancestors and the vanished herds of buffalo and the good times that were past. The dance cult spread like wildfire eastward across the mountains to the Indians of the great plains and finally stimulated the Sioux to their last desperate rising against the United States government.
The most remarkable thing about this movement was the extreme rapidity with which it communicated itself from people to people across half the continent, so that if it had not been defeated by a hopeless inequality of material power, the Ghost Dance might have changed not only the religion but also the social existence of the Indians of the Middle West in the course of a few years. Such revolutionary changes are in fact by no means rare in history. We have an example of it on the higher religious level and on a vast historical scale in the case of the rise of Islam. Here we see in full clearness and detail how a new religion may create a new culture. A single individual living in a cultural backwater originates a movement which in a comparatively short time sweeps across the world, destroying historic empires and civilizations and creating a new way of life which still moulds the thought and behaviour of millions from Senegal to Borneo. And in this case there is no common geographical environment or racial inheritance to form a basis for the spiritual community. A common faith has imposed its stamp on the most diverse human material so that the resultant product is even physically recognizable. The Arab of the desert, the West African Negro, the Malay pirate, the Persian philosopher, the Turkish soldier, the Indian merchant all speak the same religious language, profess the same theological dogmas and possess the same moral values and the same social conventions. Just as Moslem architecture is different in every country but is everywhere unmistakably Moslem, so it is with this literature and speech and behaviour.

No doubt modern nationalism and secularism have altered all this, but they have done so only recently and superficially and incompletely. Islam still exists as a living culture as well as a world religion.

Thus Islam provides a classic example of how culture—the social way of life—may be transformed by a new view of life and a new religious doctrine, and how as a result social forms and institutions may be created which transcend racial and geographical limits and remain fixed for centuries. And on the other hand we have countless examples—especially among primitive peoples—of religions which are so bound up with the culture of the community that they seem to be mere psychological reflections of the way of life of a particular people in a particular environment and to possess no religious significance apart from their social background. But however earthbound and socially conditioned these religions appear to be, they always look beyond society to some trans-social and superhuman reality towards which their worship is directed.

And conversely, however universal and spiritual a religion may be, it can never escape the necessity of becoming incarnated in culture and clothing itself in social institutions and traditions, if it is to exert a permanent influence on human life and behaviour.

For every historic religion from the lowest to the highest agrees on two fundamental points;—first in the belief in the existence of divine or
supernatural powers whose nature is mysterious but which control the world and the life of man; and secondly in the association of these powers with particular men, or things, or places or ceremonies, which act as channels of communication or means of access between the human and the divine worlds. Thus on the lowest levels of culture we find the Shaman, the fetish, the holy place and the sacred dance, while on the higher level we have the prophet and priest, the image or sacred symbol, the temple and the sacramental liturgy. Thus every great historic culture, viewed from within through the eyes of its members, represents a theogamy, a coming together of the divine and the human within the limits of a sacred tradition.

As a rule the creative role in the formation of culture is assigned to divine or semi-divine mythical figures—culture heroes or divine ancestors—who have delivered to their descendants or followers not only the sacred myths and sacred rites of religion but the arts of life and the principles of social organization.

Sometimes these figures are themselves the creators of man, like the totemic ancestors who, as the tribes of Central Australia believe, had in the beginning journeyed through their country, performing ceremonies and leaving spirit children behind them. Sometimes they are heroic human figures which have become the centres of a cycle of myths; while the great historic cultures for the most part look back to the personality of some historical prophet or lawgiver as the source of sacred tradition or the mediator of divine revelation. And there seems to be no reason why we should exclude a priori the possibility of such figures arising in very primitive cultures, in the same way that Wovoka arose among the Paviotso in the nineteenth century. We must never forget that existing or recorded primitive culture is, no less than any higher civilization, the result of a long process of historical change and development, in the course of which there may have been periods of advance and regression in thought as well as in action. And though primitive culture is more communal and anonymous than the higher civilizations, it is never so communal as to exclude the creative action and influence of individual personalities. Hence the mythical figure of the first man, the culture hero, the firebearer, the teacher of the arts of life and the rites of religion is the archetype of the many forgotten or half-remembered figures which have played a decisive role in the formation or transformation of culture. In classical and oriental archaeology the progress of modern research has discovered again and again a solid bedrock of historical truth underlying the myths and legends that tradition has preserved, and in the same way behind primitive culture there is a lost world of history which is still more deeply submerged beneath the surface of consciousness.

In this twilight world history and religion are inextricably interwoven and confused, as we can see in the legends of our own past, where lost
gods like Bran and Pwyll appear side by side with half-remembered historical figures like Arthur and Maxim Wedig and with the creatures of poetic legend. In fact culture is like a palimpsest in which the new characters never entirely efface the old, or a patchwork in which fragments of different age and material are brought together in a single social pattern.

To the outside observer the most striking feature of primitive culture is its extreme conservatism. Society follows the same path of custom and convention with the irrational persistence of animal life.

But in reality all living culture is intensely dynamic. It is dominated by the necessity of maintaining the common life, and it is possible to ward off the forces of evil and death and gain life and good fortune and prosperity only by a continuous effort of individual and social discipline. Hence the ascetic element is prominent in primitive culture and in both primitive and advanced religions. The law of life is the law of sacrifice and discipline. If the hunter is to capture his prey, if the warrior is to overcome his enemies, if the cultivator is to receive the fruits of the earth, he must give as well as take. And he does not think of this giving in terms of manure, or drill, or athletic exercise, he views it in religious terms as sacrifice and penance and ritual acts paid to the powers above. This is the meaning of the fertility rites of the peasant culture, of the ascetic practices of the Indians of the Plains and the cult of the animal guardians among primitive hunters, all of which are keys to the understanding of their respective cultures.

So too the initiation rites, which hold so large a place in every form of culture, represent an intensive effort of social discipline directed towards the incorporation of the individual into the community under the sanction of religious powers. These are not merely ordeals of social fitness to prepare the candidate for adult life as a full member of the community, they are even more an initiation into sacred mysteries which confer new powers upon him. In some cases these initiations involve supernormal psychological experiences so that a youth’s future social career may depend on the nature of his visionary experience. “Your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams.” This is no more than the common experience of many an uncivilized people, and it shows how, even in lower forms of culture, religion tends to transcend the social way of life and seeks to open a path of direct access to the world above.

Thus while a culture is essentially an organized way of life, it is never conceived as a purely man-made order. The social way of life is founded on a religious law of life, and this law in turn depends on non-human powers towards which man looks with hope and fear, powers which can be known in some fashion but which remain essentially mysterious, since they are superhuman and supernatural.

Hence the relation between religion and culture is always a two-sided
one. The way of life influences the approach to religion, and the religious attitude influences the way of life. Whatever is felt to be of vital importance in the life of people is brought into close relation with religion and surrounded by religious sanctions, so that every economic and social way of life has its corresponding form of religion. In so far as this is so, it is possible to construct a classification of religions based on the main sociological and economic types of culture. Thus we can distinguish the religion of the hunter, the religion of the peasant, and the religion of the warrior. Or again the religion of the tribe, the religion of the city, and the religion of the empire. These types are, of course, abstractions and cannot be applied in an exclusive or wholesale manner to the historical actuality of a particular culture. Nevertheless they are valid and useful within their proper limits and it is hardly possible to understand a particular religion without reference to them. For example the religion of the hunter is characterized by the existence of Shamans or prophets, by the dream-vision and by the cult of animal spirits, and much that appears at first sight inexplicable in the culture and religion of a people of hunters can be understood when we view it in the context of these practices and ideas. In the same way, the religion of the peasant is characterized by the worship of the Earth Mother and the cult of fertility which recur with remarkable similarities all over the world wherever the peasant culture is to be found. And since the peasant way of life underlies the higher civilizations, even when the latter are controlled by a conquering warrior people, and consciously identified with its life, we cannot understand the development of the higher religions unless we take account of the underlying stratum of peasant religion which survives as a submerged and half-forgotten element in the spiritual tradition of the culture.

All this may seem to suggest that religion is so conditioned by culture and economics that it is itself a product of culture. But however far this process of cultural conditioning goes—and it certainly may go very far—we can never exclude the alternative relation—that culture is moulded and changed by religion. It is obvious that a man's way of life is the way by which he apprehends reality—and consequently the way in which he approaches religion. Nevertheless the object of religion essentially transcends human life and the human way of life. Over against the world of human experience and social behaviour there stands the world of divine power and mystery, which is conceived by the primitive no less than by the advanced theist as essentially creative and the ultimate source of all power.

Therefore while in practice the religion of a people is limited and conditioned by its culture, in theory—and even in the theory of the primitive himself—culture is a deliberate effort to bring human life into relation with divine reality and into subordination to divine power.

Thus the culture process is open to change from either direction. Any
material change which transforms the external conditions of life will also
change the cultural way of life and thus produce a new religious attitude.
And likewise any spiritual change which transforms men's views of
reality will tend to change their way of life and thus produce a new
form of culture.

Great cultural changes are extremely complex processes in which it is
often difficult to decide the relative importance of the spiritual and ma-
terial factors. But it is no more possible to deny the creative influence of
new religious beliefs and doctrines, than that of new political ideas or
new scientific inventions. And where the new religious influence is em-
bodyed in the personality of a great prophet or lawgiver, this creative
influence of religion in cultural change is immediately evident.

No doubt great changes would have occurred in the culture of the
Near East about the seventh century A.D. in any case, but that they should
have taken the form they did can be explained only by the personality of
Mohammed and by the doctrine he taught.

For religion, though it normally exerts a conservative influence on cul-
ture, also provides the most dynamic means of social change. Indeed one
might almost go so far as to say that it is only by religion that a religious
culture can be changed. The fact that a way of life has been consecrated
by tradition and myth renders it singularly resistant to external change,
even when the change seems obviously advantageous from a practical
point of view. But if the impulse to change comes from above, from the
organs of the sacred tradition itself or from some other source which
claims superhuman authority, the elements in society which are most sen-
sitive to religious impulses and most resistant to secular influences them-
selves become the willing agents of change.

And the creative role taken by religion in regard to culture is also to
be seen in the case of those religions which at first sight seem entirely
indifferent to cultural considerations. To the Western mind, for example,
Buddhism has no obvious relation to culture. It appears to represent a
turning of the mind away from life, in a victory of the death instinct and
a denial of all the values of human culture. Nevertheless, Buddhism was
emphatically a way of life, which created communities and institutions
and had a more far-reaching influence on the culture of Eastern and
Southern Asia than any other movement. Even to-day the Buddhist
theocracy of Tibet is the most complete and imposing example of a
purely religious culture existing in the modern world. And this is a re-
markably interesting case, since it shows how a highly specialized way
of life adapted to an exceptional environment can become fused with a
very highly developed religious culture, which arose in an entirely differ-
ent milieu and was imported ready-made into the utterly different social
and geographical world of mediaeval Tibet. Not only was the extremely
subtle and elaborate structure of Buddhist metaphysics transferred intact
from Sanskrit to Tibetan, but it was later retransferred en bloc from Tibetan to Mongolian, so that the whole of Eastern Central Asia from the Himalayas to Lake Baikhal and Manchuria is dominated by this secondary derivative Buddhist culture which has its centre in the great monasteries of Lhasa and Tashi Llumpo and Urga. Thus by a strange irony of history the most aggressive warrior people of Asia—the Mongols—came to adopt a religion of non-aggression and universal compassion; and if, as seems probable, this event gradually led to a change in the character and habits of the people which contributed to the cessation of the age-long drive of the peoples of the steppes to East and West, it may be reckoned one of the turning points in world history.

On the other hand it is equally, or even more, clear that the native traditions of culture in Tibet and Mongolia had a powerful influence on the higher religion, so that the gods of the steppes have become members of the Buddhist pantheon and the Tibetan or Mongolian Lama is half or three-quarters a Shaman.

Here we see displayed on a colossal scale in time and space the processes of mutual interaction which are to be found everywhere at work in the relations between religion and culture. A new religion comes into contact with an old culture: it changes it and is changed by it; or a religion which has already found cultural expression in an old advanced civilization comes into contact with a primitive culture which it assimilates by communicating its own higher tradition of culture. These patterns are repeated in an endless series of variations so that they form an immense labyrinth of cultural change in which every historic culture is involved. It has been the task of the modern science of religion to unravel this tangled web and reveal the simple patterns that underlie its complexities. But this rational simplification is not enough; we also need the help of a true Natural Theology to interpret the supercultural and purely religious elements that are contained in the hieroglyphs of ritual and myth. This was the older tradition of the science of religion—the tradition of the philosophers and the Fathers—and although it was discredited by the absence of a true method of historical enquiry and a lack of psychological and philological techniques, it was more true in principle than the rationalism of nineteenth century comparative religion, since it did attempt to explain religious phenomena in terms of religion—theologically, not anthropologically.

From the point of view of the theologian who studies the nature of the divine as such, there is no insuperable difficulty in the cultural differentiation of religion and the development of types of religion corresponding to the nature of the primitive cultural types. For in so far as a culture represents a natural way of life, it reflects a distinct aspect of reality and has its own particular truth and its own scale of values which provide a way of approach to transcendent truths and values, and open, as it were,
a new window to heaven as well as to earth. Every way of life is therefore a potential way to God, since the life that it seeks is not confined to material satisfaction and animal activities but reaches out beyond itself towards eternal life.

The theologian teaches that every being of its nature possesses an innate tendency towards God—the natural inclination to what is absolutely universal good.

Therefore the particular goods of particular cultures are not dead ends; they are the media by which the universal good is apprehended and through which these cultures are orientated towards the good that transcends their own power and knowledge.

And thus every culture, even the most primitive, seeks, like the old Roman civic religion, to establish a *jus divinum* which will maintain the *pax deorum*, a religious order which will relate the life of the community to the transcendent powers that rule the universe. The way of life must be a way of the service of God. Otherwise it will become a way of death. This is the lesson alike of the most primitive cultures and of the highest religions, and in this agreement we find, so it seems to me, a point at which the old Natural Theology and the new scientific study of comparative religion can establish contact and find a basis of mutual understanding. Without this the study of comparative religion becomes lost in the maze of sociological relativity, and Natural Theology loses contact with religion as an historical fact.

**AIDS TO STUDY**

1. How does Dawson define a social culture?
2. What point is illustrated by the example of the English and Irish emigrants to Australia?
3. Why does Dawson say that it is “easy for a modern man living in a highly secularized society to conceive this common view of life as a purely secular thing”? What does secular mean? What are some of its antonyms?
4. What “conservative” functions does Dawson ascribe to religion? What creative or dynamic ones? Does he offer any evidence to support his claim that “Religion is the key of history”?
5. What effect of religion upon culture is exemplified by the Ghost Dance of the American Plains Indians?
6. Cite examples, if you can, of “the mythical figure of the first man, the culture hero, the firebearer, the teacher of the arts of life and the rites of religion.”
7. To what extent does Dawson believe that religion is conditioned by particular cultures?
8. Some students of cultures view religion as a product of the culture and nothing more. Find evidence that Dawson, who is a Roman Catholic and a professional historian, rejects this view.
9. Read the last four paragraphs together. What common purpose does Dawson see in the different cultures? Why does he not think that the human values expressed through cultures are purely secular?

10. The "Natural Theology" to which Dawson refers several times is a branch of systematic religious philosophy. Natural Theology is not concerned with the supernatural revelations but with the evidences of divine power and wisdom that can be discerned in the realm of nature. Dawson argues that support for the spiritual view of man's origin and destiny can be drawn from human culture itself. In this view he differs radically from those students of society who say that varieties of religious belief and practice indicate that religion is an exploded myth. Write a sentence or two summing up Dawson's concluding argument. Do you find it reasonable?
Part 8

OPEN QUESTIONS
The red sunset, with narrow black cloud strips like threats across it, lay on the curved horizon of the prairie. The air was still and cold, and in it settled the mute darkness and greater cold of night. High in the air there was wind, for through the veil of the dusk the clouds could be seen gliding rapidly south and changing shapes. A queer sensation of torment, of two-sided, unpredictable nature, arose from the stillness of the earth air beneath the violence of the upper air. Out of the sunset, through the dead, matted grass and isolated weed stalks of the prairie, crept the narrow and deeply rutted remains of a road. In the road, in places, there were crusts of shallow, brittle ice. There were little islands of an old oiled pavement in the road too, but most of it was mud, now frozen rigid. The frozen mud still bore the toothed impress of great tanks, and a wanderer on the neighboring undulations might have stumbled, in this light, into large, partially filled-in and weed-grown cavities, their banks channeled and beginning to spread into badlands. These pits were such as might have been made by falling meteors, but they were not. They were the scars of gigantic bombs, their rawness already made a little natural by rain, seed, and time. Along the road there were rakish remnants of fence. There was also, just visible, one portion of tangled and multiple barbed wire still erect, behind which was a shelving ditch with small caves, now very quiet and empty, at intervals in its back wall. Otherwise there was no structure or remnant of a structure visible over the dome of the darkling earth, but only, in sheltered hollows, the darker shadows of young trees trying again.

Under the wuthering arch of the high wind a V of wild geese fled south. The rush of their pinions sounded briefly, and the faint, plaintive notes of their expeditionary talk. Then they left a still greater vacancy. There was the smell and expectation of snow, as there is likely to be when the wild geese fly south. From the remote distance, towards the red sky, came faintly the protracted howl and quick yap-yap of a prairie wolf.

North of the road, perhaps a hundred yards, lay the parallel and deeply intrenched course of a small creek, lined with leafless alders and willows. The creek was already silent under ice. Into the bank above it was dug a sort of cell, with a single opening, like the mouth of a mine tunnel. Within the cell there was a little red of fire, which showed dully through the opening, like a reflection or a deception of the imagination. The light came from the chary burning of four blocks of poorly aged peat, which gave off a petty warmth and much acrid smoke. But the precious remnants of wood, old fenceposts and timbers from the long-deserted dug-outs, had to be saved for the real cold, for the time when a man's breath blew white, the moisture in his nostrils stiffened at once when he stepped out, and the expansive blizzards paraded for days over the vast open, swirling and settling and thickening, till the dawn of the cleared day when the sky was thin blue-green and the terrible cold, in which a man could not live for three hours unwarmed, lay over the uniformly drifted swell of the plain.

Around the smoldering peat four men were seated cross-legged. Behind them, traversed by their shadows, was the earth bench, with two old and dirty army blankets, where the owner of the cell slept. In a niche in the opposite wall were a few tin utensils which caught the glint of the coals. The host was rewrapping in a piece of daubed burlap four fine, leather-bound books. He worked slowly and very carefully and at last tied the bundle securely with a piece of grass-woven cord. The other three looked intently upon the process, as if a great significance lay in it. As the host tied the cord he spoke. He was an old man, his long, matted beard and hair gray to nearly white. The shadows made his brows and cheekbones appear gnarled, his eyes and cheeks deeply sunken. His big hands, rough with frost and swollen by rheumatism, were awkward but gentle at their task. He was like a prehistoric priest performing a fateful ceremonial rite. Also his voice had in it a suitable quality of deep, reverent despair, yet perhaps at the moment a sharpness of selfish satisfaction.

‘When I perceived what was happening,’ he said, ‘I told myself, “It is the end. I cannot take much; I will take these.”’

‘Perhaps I was impractical,’ he continued. ‘But for myself, I do not regret, and what do we know of those who will come after us? We are the doddering remnant of a race of mechanical fools. I have saved what I love; the soul of what was good in us is here; perhaps the new ones will
make a strong enough beginning not to fall behind when they become clever.'

He rose with slow pain and placed the wrapped volumes in the niche with his utensils. The others watched him with the same ritualistic gaze. "Shakespeare, the Bible, Moby Dick, the Divine Comedy," one of them said softly. 'You might have done worse, much worse.'

'You will have a little soul left until you die,' said another harshly. 'That is more than is true of us. My brain becomes thick, like my hands.' He held the big, battered hands, with their black nails, in the glow to be seen.

'I want paper to write on,' he said. 'And there is none.'

The fourth man said nothing. He sat in the shadow farthest from the fire, and sometimes his body jerked in its rags from the cold. Although he was still young, he was sick and coughed often. Writing implied a greater future than he now felt able to consider.

The old man seated himself laboriously and reached out, groaning at the movement, to put another block of peat on the fire. With bowed heads and averted eyes his three guests acknowledged his magnanimity.

'We thank you, Dr. Jenkins, for the reading,' said the man who had named the books.

They seemed then to be waiting for something. Dr. Jenkins understood but was loath to comply. In an ordinary moment he would have said nothing. But the words of The Tempest, which he had been reading, and the religious attention of the three made this an unusual occasion.

'You wish to hear the phonograph,' he said grudgingly.

The two middle-aged men stared into the fire, unable to formulate and expose the enormity of their desire.

The young man, however, said anxiously, between suppressed coughs, 'Oh, please,' like an excited child.

The old man rose again in his difficult way and went to the back of the cell. He returned and placed tenderly upon the packed floor, where the firelight might fall upon it, an old portable phonograph in a black case. He smoothed the top with his hand and then opened it. The lovely green-felt-covered disk became visible.

'I have been using thorns as needles,' he said. 'But tonight, because we have a musician among us—he bent his head to the young man, almost invisible in the shadow—'I will use a steel needle. There are only three left.'

The two middle-aged men stared at him in speechless adoration. The one with the big hands, who wanted to write, moved his lips, but the whisper was not audible.

'Oh, don't!' cried the young man, as if he were hurt. 'The thorns will do beautifully.'

'No,' the old man said. 'I have become accustomed to the thorns, but
they are not really good. For you, my young friend, we will have good music tonight.'

'After all,' he added generously, and beginning to wind the phonograph, which creaked, 'they can't last forever.'

'No, nor we,' the man who needed to write said harshly. 'The needle, by all means.'

'Oh, thanks,' said the young man. 'Thanks,' he said again in a low, excited voice, and then stifled his coughing with a bowed head.

'The records, though,' said the old man when he had finished winding, 'are a different matter. Already they are very worn. I do not play them more than once a week. One, once a week, that is what I allow myself.

'More than a week I cannot stand it; not to hear them,' he apologized. 'No, how could you?' cried the young man. 'And with them here like this.'

'A man can stand anything,' said the man who wanted to write, in his harsh, antagonistic voice.

'Please, the music,' said the young man.

'Only the one,' said the old man. 'In the long run, we will remember more that way.'

He had a dozen records with luxuriant gold and red seals. Even in that light the others could see that the threads of the records were becoming worn. Slowly he read out the titles and the tremendous, dead names of the composers and the artists and the orchestras. The three worked upon the names in their minds, carefully. It was difficult to select from such a wealth what they would at once most like to remember. Finally the man who wanted to write named Gershwin's 'New York.'

'Oh, no!' cried the sick young man, and then could say nothing more because he had to cough. The others understood him, and the harsh man withdrew his selection and waited for the musician to choose.

The musician begged Dr. Jenkins to read the titles again, very slowly, so that he could remember the sounds. While they were read he lay back against the wall, his eyes closed, his thin, horned hand pulling at his light beard, and listened to the voices and the orchestras and the single instruments in his mind.

When the reading was done he spoke despairingly. 'I have forgotten,' he complained. 'I cannot hear them clearly.

'There are things missing,' he explained.

'I know,' said Dr. Jenkins. 'I thought that I knew all of Shelley by heart. I should have brought Shelley.'

'That's more soul than we can use,' said the harsh man. 'Moby Dick is better.

'By God, we can understand that,' he emphasized.

The Doctor nodded.

'Still,' said the man who had admired the books, 'we need the absolute if we are to keep a grasp on anything.
'Anything but these sticks and peat clods and rabbit snares,' he said bitterly.
'Shelley desired an ultimate absolute,' said the harsh man. 'It's too much,' he said. 'It's no good; no earthly good.'

The musician selected a Debussy nocturne. The others considered and approved. They rose to their knees to watch the Doctor prepare for the playing, so that they appeared to be actually in an attitude of worship. The peat glow showed the thinness of their bearded faces, and the deep lines in them, and revealed the condition of their garments. The other two continued to kneel as the old man carefully lowered the needle onto the spinning disk, but the musician suddenly drew back against the wall again, with his knees up, and buried his face in his hands.

At the first notes of the piano the listeners were startled. They stared at each other. Even the musician lifted his head in amazement but then quickly bowed it again, strainingly, as if he were suffering from a pain he might not be able to endure. They were all listening deeply, without movement. The wet, blue-green notes tinkled forth from the old machine and were individual, delectable presences in the cell. The individual, delectable presences swept into a sudden tide of unbearably beautiful dissonance and then continued fully the swelling and ebbing of that tide, the dissonant inpourings, and the resolutions, and the diminishments, and the little, quiet wavelets of interlude lapping between. Every sound was piercing and singularly sweet. In all the men except the musician there occurred rapid sequences of tragically heightened recollection. He heard nothing but what was there. At the final, whispering disappearance, but moving quietly so that the others would not hear him and look at him, he let his head fall back in agony, as if it were drawn there by the hair, and clenched the fingers of one hand over his teeth. He sat that way while the others were silent and until they began to breathe again normally. His drawn-up legs were trembling violently.

Quickly Dr. Jenkins lifted the needle off, to save it and not to spoil the recollection with scraping. When he had stopped the whirling of the sacred disk he courteously left the phonograph open and by the fire, in sight.

The others, however, understood. The musician rose last, but then abruptly, and went quickly out at the door without saying anything. The others stopped at the door and gave their thanks in low voices. The Doctor nodded magnificently.

'Come again,' he invited, 'in a week. We will have the "New York."'

When the two had gone together, out towards the rimed road, he stood in the entrance, peering and listening. At first there was only the resonant boom of the wind overhead, and then far over the dome of the dead, dark plain the wolf cry lamenting. In the rifts of clouds the Doctor saw four stars flying. It impressed the Doctor that one of them had just been obscured by the beginning of a flying cloud at the very moment he heard
what he had been listening for, a sound of suppressed coughing. It was not near by, however. He believed that down against the pale alders he could see the moving shadow.

With nervous hands he lowered the piece of canvas which served as his door and pegged it at the bottom. Then quickly and quietly, looking at the piece of canvas frequently, he slipped the records into the case, snapped the lid shut, and carried the phonograph to his couch. There, pausing often to stare at the canvas and listen, he dug earth from the wall and disclosed a piece of board. Behind this there was a deep hole in the wall, into which he put the phonograph. After a moment's consideration he went over and reached down his bundle of books and inserted it also. Then, guardedly, he once more sealed up the hole with the board and the earth. He also changed his blankets and the grass-stuffed sack which served as a pillow, so that he could lie facing the entrance. After carefully placing two more blocks of peat upon the fire he stood for a long time watching the stretched canvas, but it seemed to billow naturally with the first gusts of a lowering wind. At last he prayed, and got in under his blankets, and closed his smoke-smarting eyes. On the inside of the bed, next the wall, he could feel with his hand the comfortable piece of lead pipe.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. What is the order of progression in the first three paragraphs down through the first sentence of the fourth?
2. In the first paragraph which details suggest the passage of time since the end of the war? About how much time has passed?
3. What can you infer of the background, profession, and interests of each of the four characters? How is the musician distinguished from the others? What does Dr. Jenkins suspect him of at the end of the story? Are his suspicions groundless?
4. About two pages go to describing the phonograph, the different needles, and the selection of a record. Clearly, this information could have been conveyed in a few sentences. What justification is there for drawing these matters out?
5. Why are the listeners “startled” at the first notes of the piano? How do the musician’s reactions differ from those of the others? Why?
6. How many references are there to the piece of canvas in the final paragraph? Why is it emphasized?
7. What difference would it make if the last sentence of the story had been omitted?
8. Look again at the first paragraph. Does the scene in the final paragraph help to explain what has happened to the world described in the first?
Before the end of the present century, unless something quite unforeseeable occurs, one of three possibilities will have been realized. These three are:

1. The end of human life, perhaps of all life on our planet.
2. A reversion to barbarism after a catastrophic diminution of the population of the globe.
3. A unification of the world under a single government, possessing a monopoly of all the major weapons of war.

I do not pretend to know which of these will happen, or even which is the most likely. What I do contend is that the kind of system to which we have been accustomed cannot possibly continue.

The first possibility, the extinction of the human race, is not to be expected in the next world war, unless that war is postponed for a longer time than now seems probable. But if the next world war is indecisive, or if the victors are unwise, and if organized states survive it, a period of feverish technical development may be expected to follow its conclusion. With vastly more powerful means of utilizing atomic energy than those now available, it is thought by many sober men of science that radioactive clouds, drifting round the world, may disintegrate living tissue everywhere. Although the last survivor may proclaim himself universal Emperor, his reign will be brief and his subjects will all be corpses. With his death the uneasy episode of life will end, and the peaceful rocks will revolve unchanged until the sun explodes.

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Perhaps a disinterested spectator would consider this the most desirable consummation, in view of man’s long record of folly and cruelty. But we who are actors in the drama, who are entangled in the net of private affections and public hopes, can hardly take this attitude with any sincerity. True, I have heard men say that they would prefer the end of man to submission to the Soviet government, and doubtless in Russia there are those who would say the same about submission to Western capitalism. But this is rhetoric with a bogus air of heroism. Although it must be regarded as unimaginative humbug, it is dangerous, because it makes men less energetic in seeking ways of avoiding the catastrophe that they pretend not to dread.

The second possibility, that of a reversion to barbarism, would leave open the likelihood of a gradual return to civilization, as after the fall of Rome. The sudden transition will, if it occurs, be infinitely painful to those who experience it, and for some centuries afterwards life will be hard and drab. But at any rate there will still be a future for mankind, and the possibility of rational hope.

I think such an outcome of a really scientific world war is by no means improbable. Imagine each side in a position to destroy the chief cities and centers of industry of the enemy; imagine an almost complete obliteration of laboratories and libraries, accompanied by a heavy casualty rate among men of science; imagine famine due to radioactive spray, and pestilence caused by bacteriological warfare: would social cohesion survive such strains? Would not prophets tell the maddened populations that their ills were wholly due to science, and that the extermination of all educated men would bring the millennium? Extreme hopes are born of extreme misery, and in such a world hopes could only be irrational. I think the great states to which we are accustomed would break up, and the sparse survivors would revert to a primitive village economy.

The third possibility, that of the establishment of a single government for the whole world, might be realized in various ways: by the victory of the United States in the next world war, or by the victory of the U.S.S.R., or, theoretically, by agreement. Or—and I think this is the most hopeful of the issues that are in any degree probable—by an alliance of the nations that desire an international government, becoming, in the end, so strong that Russia would no longer dare to stand out. This might conceivably be achieved without another world war, but it would require courageous and imaginative statesmanship in a number of countries.

There are various arguments that are used against the project of a single government of the whole world. The commonest is that the project is utopian and impossible. Those who use this argument, like most of those who advocate a world government, are thinking of a world government brought about by agreement. I think it is plain that the mutual suspicions between Russia and the West make it futile to hope, in any near future,
for any genuine agreement. Any pretended universal authority to which both sides can agree, as things stand, is bound to be a sham, like UN. Consider the difficulties that have been encountered in the much more modest project of an international control over atomic energy, to which Russia will consent only if inspection is subject to the veto, and therefore a farce. I think we should admit that a world government will have to be imposed by force.

But—many people will say—why all this talk about a world government? Wars have occurred ever since men were organized into units larger than the family, but the human race has survived. Why should it not continue to survive even if wars go on occurring from time to time? Moreover, people like war, and will feel frustrated without it. And without war there will be no adequate opportunity for heroism or self-sacrifice.

This point of view—which is that of innumerable elderly gentlemen, including the rulers of Soviet Russia—fails to take account of modern technical possibilities. I think civilization could probably survive one more world war, provided it occurs fairly soon and does not last long. But if there is no slowing up in the rate of discovery and invention, and if great wars continue to recur, the destruction to be expected, even if it fails to exterminate the human race, is pretty certain to produce the kind of reversion to a primitive social system that I spoke of a moment ago. And this will entail such an enormous diminution of population, not only by war, but by subsequent starvation and disease, that the survivors are bound to be fierce and, at least for a considerable time, destitute of the qualities required for rebuilding civilization.

Nor is it reasonable to hope that, if nothing drastic is done, wars will nevertheless not occur. They always have occurred from time to time, and obviously will break out again sooner or later unless mankind adopts some system that makes them impossible. But the only such system is a single government with a monopoly of armed force.

If things are allowed to drift, it is obvious that the bickering between Russia and the Western democracies will continue until Russia has a considerable store of atomic bombs, and that when that time comes there will be an atomic war. In such a war, even if the worst consequences are avoided, Western Europe, including Great Britain, will be virtually exterminated. If America and the U.S.S.R. survive as organized states, they will presently fight again. If one side is victorious, it will rule the world, and a unitary government of mankind will have come into existence; if not, either mankind or, at least, civilization will perish. This is what must happen if nations and their rulers are lacking in constructive vision.

When I speak of “constructive vision,” I do not mean merely the theoretical realization that a world government is desirable. More than half the American nation, according to the Gallup poll, holds this opinion.
But most of its advocates think of it as something to be established by friendly negotiation, and shrink from any suggestion of the use of force. In this I think they are mistaken. I am sure that force, or the threat of force, will be necessary. I hope the threat of force may suffice, but, if not, actual force should be employed.

Assuming a monopoly of armed force established by the victory of one side in a war between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., what sort of world will result?

In either case, it will be a world in which successful rebellion will be impossible. Although, of course, sporadic assassination will still be liable to occur, the concentration of all important weapons in the hands of the victors will make them irresistible, and there will therefore be secure peace. Even if the dominant nation is completely devoid of altruism, its leading inhabitants, at least, will achieve a very high level of material comfort, and will be freed from the tyranny of fear. They are likely, therefore, to become gradually more good-natured and less inclined to persecute. Like the Romans, they will, in the course of time, extend citizenship to the vanquished. There will then be a true world state, and it will be possible to forget that it will have owed its origin to conquest. Which of us, during the reign of Lloyd George, felt humiliated by the contrast with the days of Edward I?

A world empire of either the U.S. or the U.S.S.R. is therefore preferable to the results of a continuation of the present international anarchy.

II

There are, however, important reasons for preferring a victory of America. I am not contending that capitalism is better than communism; I think it not impossible that, if America were communist and Russia were capitalist, I should still be on the side of America. My reason for siding with America is that there is in that country more respect than in Russia for the things that I value in a civilized way of life. The things I have in mind are such as: freedom of thought, freedom of inquiry, freedom of discussion, and humane feeling. What a victory of Russia would mean is easily to be seen in Poland. There were flourishing universities in Poland, containing men of great intellectual eminence. Some of these men, fortunately, escaped; the rest disappeared. Education is now reduced to learning the formulae of Stalinist orthodoxy; it is only open (beyond the elementary stage) to young people whose parents are politically irreproachable, and it does not aim at producing any mental faculty except that of glib repetition of correct shibboleths and quick apprehension of the side that is winning official favor. From such an educational system nothing of intellectual value can result.

Meanwhile the middle class was annihilated by mass deportations, first in 1940, and again after the expulsion of the Germans. Politicians of ma-
minority parties were liquidated, imprisoned, or compelled to fly. Betraying friends to the police, or perjury when they are brought to trial, is often the only means of survival for those who have incurred governmental suspicions.

I do not doubt that, if this regime continues for a generation, it will succeed in its objects. Polish hostility to Russia will die out and be replaced by communist orthodoxy. Science and philosophy, art and literature, will become sycophantic adjuncts of government, jejune, narrow, and stupid. No individual will think, or even feel, for himself, but each will be contentedly a mere unit in the mass. A victory of Russia would, in time, make such a mentality world-wide. No doubt the complacency induced by success would ultimately lead to a relaxation of control, but the process would be slow and the revival of respect for the individual would be doubtful. For such reasons I should view a Russian victory as an appalling disaster.

A victory by the United States would have far less drastic consequences. In the first place, it would not be a victory of the United States in isolation, but of an alliance in which the other members would be able to insist upon retaining a large part of their traditional independence. One can hardly imagine the American army seizing the dons at Oxford and Cambridge and sending them to hard labor in Alaska. Nor do I think that they would accuse Mr. Attlee of plotting and compel him to fly to Moscow. Yet these are strict analogues of the things the Russians have done in Poland. After a victory of an alliance led by the United States there would still be British culture, French culture, Italian culture, and (I hope) German culture; there would not, therefore, be the same dead uniformity as would result from Soviet domination.

There is another important difference, and that is that Moscow’s orthodoxy is much more pervasive than that of Washington. In America, if you are a geneticist, you may hold whatever view of Mendelism the evidence makes you regard as the most probable; in Russia, if you are a geneticist who disagrees with Lysenko, you are liable to disappear mysteriously. In America, you may write a book debunking Lincoln if you feel so disposed; in Russia, if you should write a book debunking Lenin, it would not be published and you would be liquidated. If you are an American economist, you may hold, or not hold, that America is heading for a slump; in Russia, no economist dare question that an American slump is imminent. In America, if you are a professor of philosophy, you may be an idealist, a materialist, a pragmatist, a logical positivist, or whatever else may take your fancy; at congresses you can argue with men whose opinions differ from yours, and listeners can form a judgment as to who has the best of it. In Russia, you must be a dialectical materialist, but at one time the element of materialism outweighs the element of dialectic, and at other times it is the other way round. If you fail to
follow the developments of official metaphysics with sufficient nimbleness, it will be the worse for you. Stalin at all times knows the truth about metaphysics, but you must not suppose that the truth this year is the same as it was last year. In such a world, intellect must stagnate, and even technological progress must soon come to an end.

Liberty, of the sort that communists despise, is important not only to intellectuals or to the more fortunate sections of society. Owing to its absence in Russia, the Soviet government has been able to establish a greater degree of economic inequality than exists in Great Britain or even in America. An oligarchy which controls all the means of publicity can perpetrate injustices and cruelties which would be scarcely possible if they were widely known. Only democracy and free publicity can prevent the holders of power from establishing a servile state, with luxury for the few and overworked poverty for the many. This is what is being done by the Soviet government wherever it is in secure control. There are, of course, economic inequalities everywhere, but in a democratic regime they tend to diminish, whereas under an oligarchy they tend to increase. And wherever an oligarchy has power, economic inequalities threaten to become permanent owing to the modern impossibility of successful rebellion.

III

I come now to the question, What should be our policy, in view of the various dangers to which mankind is exposed? To summarize the above arguments: we have to guard against three dangers—the extinction of the human race, a reversion to barbarism, and the establishment of a universal slave state involving misery for the vast majority and the disappearance of all progress in knowledge and thought. Either the first or second of these disasters is almost certain unless great wars can soon be brought to an end. Great wars can be brought to an end only by the concentration of armed force under a single authority. Such a concentration cannot be brought about by agreement, because of the opposition of Soviet Russia, but it must be brought about somehow.

The first step—and it is one which is now not very difficult—is to persuade the United States and the British Commonwealth of the absolute necessity for a military unification of the world. The governments of the English-speaking nations should then offer to all other nations the option of entering into a firm alliance, involving a pooling of military resources and mutual defense against aggression. In the case of hesitant nations, such as Italy, great inducements, economic and military, should be held out to produce their cooperation.

At a certain stage, when the alliance had acquired sufficient strength, any great power still refusing to join should be threatened with outlawry and, if recalcitrant, should be regarded as a public enemy. The resulting
war, if it occurred fairly soon, would probably leave the economic and political structure of the United States intact, and would enable the victorious alliance to establish a monopoly of armed force, and therefore to make peace secure. But perhaps, if the alliance were sufficiently powerful, war would not be necessary, and the reluctant powers would prefer to enter it as equals rather than, after a terrible war, submit to it as vanquished enemies. If this were to happen, the world might emerge from its present dangers without another great war. I do not see any hope of such a happy issue by any other method. But whether Russia would yield when threatened with war is a question as to which I do not venture an opinion.

I have been dealing mainly with the gloomy aspects of the present situation of mankind. It is necessary to do so, in order to persuade the world to adopt measures running counter to traditional habits of thought and ingrained prejudices. But beyond the difficulties and probable tragedies of the near future there is the possibility of immeasurable good, and of greater well-being than has ever before fallen to the lot of man. This is not merely a possibility, but, if the Western democracies are firm and prompt, a probability. From the breakup of the Roman Empire to the present day, states have almost continuously increased in size. There are now only two fully independent states, America and Russia. The next step in this long historical process should reduce the two to one, and thus put an end to the period of organized wars, which began in Egypt some six thousand years ago. If war can be prevented without the establishment of a grinding tyranny, a weight will be lifted from the human spirit, deep collective fears will be exorcised, and as fear diminishes we may hope that cruelty also will grow less.

The uses to which men have put their increased control over natural forces are curious. In the nineteenth century they devoted themselves chiefly to increasing the numbers of *Homo sapiens*, particularly of the white variety. In the twentieth century they have, so far, pursued the exactly opposite aim. Owing to the increased productivity of labor, it has become possible to devote a larger percentage of the population to war. If atomic energy were to make production easier, the only effect, as things are, would be to make wars worse, since fewer people would be needed for producing necessaries. Unless we can cope with the problem of abolishing war, there is no reason whatever to rejoice in laborsaving technique, but quite the reverse. On the other hand, if the danger of war were removed, scientific technique could at last be used to promote human happiness. There is no longer any technical reason for the persistence of poverty, even in such densely populated countries as India and China. If war no longer occupied men’s thoughts and energies, we could, within a generation, put an end to all serious poverty throughout the world.

I have spoken of liberty as a good, but it is not an absolute good. We
all recognize the need to restrain murderers, and it is even more important to restrain murderous states. Liberty must be limited by law, and its most valuable forms can only exist within a framework of law. What the world most needs is effective laws to control international relations. The first and most difficult step in the creation of such law is the establishment of adequate sanctions, and this is possible only through the creation of a single armed force in control of the whole world. But such an armed force, like a municipal police force, is not an end in itself; it is a means to the growth of a social system governed by law, where force is not the prerogative of private individuals or nations, but is exercised only by a neutral authority in accordance with rules laid down in advance. There is hope that law, rather than private force, may come to govern the relations of nations within the present century. If this hope is not realized we face utter disaster; if it is realized, the world will be far better than at any previous period in the history of man.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. Make a simple outline of this essay using four or five main headings to make clear how the essay is constructed.
2. Russell begins with a very positive statement and follows it with three alternatives. What is the effect of beginning this way? What relation is there between Russell's subject and this beginning? Are there other alternatives that Russell does not mention?
3. Look closely at the two sentences which follow immediately after the statement of the three alternatives. What is the relation between them? Why is the first of the two sentences included? What is the relation between the second of these two sentences and the first sentence of the essay?
4. Exactly how does Russell follow up the statement of the three alternatives?
5. Later in the essay Russell tries to prove his statement that "... the kind of system to which we have been accustomed cannot possibly continue." Why doesn't this proof follow at once after the first statement of the proposition?
6. What are the reasons Russell gives for preferring the victory of America instead of Soviet Russia? How does Russell develop these reasons?
7. Having explained his preference how does Russell conclude his essay? Is his summary of his previous arguments necessary?
8. In contrast to the opening of the essay, the conclusion is hopeful. What reasons are given for this optimism? Why didn't the essay begin with this optimistic note and end with the three alternatives?
INDEFENSIBLE AND UNINHABITABLE

*Peter Viereck*

**How can a mere political innovation ever suffice to change men once and for all into happy inhabitants of the earth?**

Nietzsche, 1874

So long as people believe in the perfectibility of man, they will continue to use those freedom-destroying “bad means” (totalitarianism) that promise the quickest shortcut to this “good end.” According to the perceptive Polish poet and anti-communist, Czeslaw Milosz, “A gradual disappearance of the faith in the earthly paradise which justifies all crimes, is an essential preliminary to the destruction of totalitarianism.” By rejecting the possibility of an earthly paradise, conservatism rejects all brands of Rousseauistic perfectibility of man, rejecting the *a priori* utopias not only of Jacobinism and of socialism but also of doctrinaire *laissez faire* capitalism.

The most blood-curdling crimes are done not by criminals but by perfectionists. Criminals normally stop killing when they attain their modest goal: loot. Perfectionists never stop killing because their goal is never attainable: the ideal society.

The guillotine of a Robespierre comes from ideals too abstractly perfect for man, not from the imperfect, the organically evolved. The guillotine occurs in an enlightened geometric France, not in a ramshackle unsymmetric Hapsburg Empire. Tom Paine proved the French Revolution simply had to be good, peaceful, free. Deductively, his proof was irrefutable. Concretely, the French Revolution became the terror Burke had predicted and for the reason he had predicted: namely, that the well-

built, infallible bed of Procrustes did not fit the fallible, concrete flesh. When Paine was jailed by the same French Revolution he had defended, that ingratitude was profoundly just. The man who sacrificed concrete flesh to Procrustes’s abstract bed became fittingly, like later the Old Bolsheviks, its own victim.

Earth is one of the uninhabitable planets. Unlike the habitable ones, earth is a planet with a built-in cellar of error, death, decay. If frail children scrawl blueprints of progress on the ceiling, how will that conjure away the reality of the cellar?—does not everything in the house, including the ceiling itself, rest on the foundation of that cellar of error, death, decay? Just as our planet is uninhabitable, so our society is indefensible. Every conceivable society of man will always be indefensible, innately unjust, world without end. Yet somehow we must live within the unbearable but inescapable framework of this uninhabitable planet, this indefensible social order. To act as if there were no such things as error, death, decay, will not abolish but redouble their unbearableness.

Then is any human betterment possible at all? Sustained betterment never; fluctuating betterment often. Gradual, limited reform can indeed be accomplished, always working within a rooted framework, moving always from particular to particular. Such humane reforms can be achieved and urgently ought to be, despite the resistance of reactionaries (a resistance as doctrinaire as progressivism). We must build what society we can out of what clay we have: the clay of decay, the clay of frailty and constant unpredictable blunder. But the good builder builds with the clay at hand; never does he pile up utopias from some ideal airy clay that does not exist on his particular planet.

It is not a question of being inhumanely blind to the monstrous faults of the old order, of all old orders. It is simply a matter of learning inductively the impossibility of any new program too sweeping, any progress long sustained. Only dead chemicals can be sweepingly reorganized, sustainedly perfected; everything alive is indefensible because infinitely precarious. Humanity is wilful, wanton, unpredictable. It is not there to be organized for its own good by coercive righteous busybodies. Man is a ceaseless anti-managerial revolution.

Whenever enlightened reformers expect the crowd to choose Christ, it cheers for Barabbas. Whenever some Weimar Republic gets rid of some old monarchy, the liberated crowd turns its republic over to some Hitler. Then what consolation remains for the brute fact that sustained progress is impossible? Sheer self-deception is the hope of overcoming man’s doom by founding a more exact social science. How can there ever be an exact science dealing with man? Science is exact when dealing with predictable chemicals; only art can deal with flesh. There are indeed consolations for man’s precariousness, but they consist not of trying to end it but of learning to find in it not only the lowest but the highest reaches of the spirit,
not only cruel social wrongs but the holy welding-flame of the lyric imagination, transfiguring frailty into beauty. This is the Baudelairean truth that the best roses grow from manure.

During a recent discussion of these points, an able social scientist rejoined: "Yes, you are partly right. But only about the past. A truly scientific planner has nothing but contempt for communists and Jacobins; they planned things wrong. Men did not know enough in those backward days. But next time we shall have learnt so much more about improving human nature. Next time we shall plan everything better."

When that day comes, when human reactions can be predicted like test tubes and adjusted into bliss, this writer will take to the hills. Meanwhile, whether you blame it on original sin or on the id, the clay remains refractory; and this fact is not only bitter but exalting. The ultimate unadjustedness of the putty of humanity is the source of all the beauty as well as misery of life on earth.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. The writer says that a belief in "the perfectibility of man" leads to certain evil consequences.
   a. What is meant by the phrase "the perfectibility of man"? What evidence is there in this selection that this idea is not original with Viereck?
   b. What are the evil consequences of believing in "the perfectibility of man"?
   c. "Perfectionists" sacrifice "concrete flesh" to "Procrustes's abstract bed."

   Look up Procrustes in your dictionary and then explain what it is that "perfectionists" do.

2. Explain what Viereck means when he says that "Just as our planet is uninhabitable, so our society is indefensible." Before composing your explanation look up the word paradox in your dictionary and then look at other statements in this selection to see if there are any paradoxes among them. In what sense is it true that life is rooted in and grows out of death?

3. What proof does the writer offer to support his assertions about human nature and "perfectionists"? (Examples, logic, appeals to personal experience or to history?)

4. Are there signs at present of the activities of "truly scientific" planners? Does the writer imply that planning is evil?

5. Although Viereck does not believe in progress, as that word is commonly understood, he is not gloomy or pessimistic; in fact he seems rather cautiously hopeful. How can he be so?
It came burning hot into my mind, whatever he said and however he flattered, when he got me home to his house, he would sell me for a slave.

Bunyan

'Man's conquest of Nature' is an expression often used to describe the progress of applied science. 'Man has Nature whacked' said someone to a friend of mine not long ago. In their context the words had a certain tragic beauty, for the speaker was dying of tuberculosis. 'No matter,' he said, 'I know I'm one of the casualties. Of course there are casualties on the winning as well as on the losing side. But that doesn't alter the fact that it is winning.' I have chosen this story as my point of departure in order to make it clear that I do not wish to disparage all that is really beneficial in the process described as 'Man's conquest,' much less all the real devotion and self-sacrifice that has gone to make it possible. But having done so I must proceed to analyse this conception a little more closely. In what sense is Man the possessor of increasing power over Nature?

Let us consider three typical examples: the aeroplane, the wireless, and the contraceptive. In a civilized community, in peace-time, anyone who can pay for them may use these things. But it cannot strictly be said that when he does so he is exercising his own proper or individual power over Nature. If I pay you to carry me, I am not therefore myself a strong man. Any or all of the three things I have mentioned can be withheld from some men by other men—by those who sell, or those who allow the sale,

From C. S. Lewis, The Abolition of Man, 1947, Chap. III. Copyright by The Macmillan Company and used with their permission.
or those who own the sources of production, or those who make the goods. What we call Man's power is, in reality, a power possessed by some men which they may, or may not, allow other men to profit by. Again, as regards the powers manifested in the aeroplane or the wireless, Man is as much the patient or subject as the possessor, since he is the target both for bombs and for propaganda. And as regards contraceptives, there is a paradoxical, negative sense in which all possible future generations are the patients or subjects of a power wielded by those already alive. By contraception simply, they are denied existence; by contraception used as a means of selective breeding, they are, without their concurring voice, made to be what one generation, for its own reasons, may choose to prefer. From this point of view, what we call Man's power over Nature turns out to be a power exercised by some men over other men with Nature as its instrument.

It is, of course, a commonplace to complain that men have hitherto used badly, and against their fellows, the powers that science has given them. But that is not the point I am trying to make. I am not speaking of particular corruptions and abuses which an increase of moral virtue would cure: I am considering what the thing called 'Man's power over Nature' must always and essentially be. No doubt, the picture could be modified by public ownership of raw materials and factories and public control of scientific research. But unless we have a world state this will still mean the power of one nation over others. And even within the world state or the nation it will mean (in principle) the power of majorities over minorities, and (in the concrete) of a government over the people. And all long-term exercises of power, especially in breeding, must mean the power of earlier generations over later ones.

The latter point is not always sufficiently emphasized, because those who write on social matters have not yet learned to imitate the physicists by always including Time among the dimensions. In order to understand fully what Man's power over Nature, and therefore the power of some men over other men, really means, we must picture the race extended in time from the date of its emergence to that of its extinction. Each generation exercises power over its successors: and each, in so far as it modifies the environment bequeathed to it and rebels against tradition, resists and limits the power of its predecessors. This modifies the picture which is sometimes painted of a progressive emancipation from tradition and a progressive control of natural processes resulting in a continual increase of human power. In reality, of course, if any one age really attains, by eugenics and scientific education, the power to make its descendants what it pleases, all men who live after it are the patients of that power. They are weaker, not stronger: for though we may have put wonderful machines in their hands we have pre-ordained how they are to use them. And
if, as is almost certain, the age which had thus attained maximum power over posterity were also the age most emancipated from tradition, it would be engaged in reducing the power of its predecessors almost as drastically as that of its successors. And we must also remember that, quite apart from this, the later a generation comes—the nearer it lives to that date at which the species becomes extinct—the less power it will have in the forward direction, because its subjects will be so few. There is therefore no question of a power vested in the race as a whole steadily growing as long as the race survives. The last men, far from being the heirs of power, will be of all men most subject to the dead hand of the great planners and conditioners and will themselves exercise least power upon the future. The real picture is that of one dominant age—let us suppose the hundredth century A.D.—which resists all previous ages most successfully and dominates all subsequent ages most irresistibly and thus is the real master of the human species. But even within this master generation (itself an infinitesimal minority of the species) the power will be exercised by a minority smaller still. Man's conquest of Nature, if the dreams of some scientific planners are realized, means the rule of a few hundreds of men over billions upon billions of men. There neither is nor can be any simple increase of power on Man's side. Each new power won by man is a power over man as well. Each advance leaves him weaker as well as stronger. In every victory, besides being the general who triumphs, he is also the prisoner who follows the triumphal car.

I am not yet considering whether the total result of such ambivalent victories is a good thing or a bad. I am only making clear what Man's conquest of Nature really means and especially that final stage in the conquest, which, perhaps, is not far off. The final stage is come when Man by eugenics, by pre-natal conditioning, and by an education and propaganda based on a perfect applied psychology, has obtained full control over himself. Human nature will be the last part of Nature to surrender to Man. The battle will then be won. We shall have 'taken the thread of life out of the hand of Clitho' and be henceforth free to make our species whatever we wish it to be. The battle will indeed be won. But who, precisely, will have won it?

For the power of Man to make himself what he pleases means, as we have seen, the power of some men to make other men what they please. In all ages, no doubt, nurture and instruction have, in some sense, attempted to exercise this power. But the situation to which we must look forward will be novel in two respects. In the first place, the power will be enormously increased. Hitherto the plans of educationalists have achieved very little of what they attempted and indeed, when we read them—how Plato would have every infant 'a bastard nursed in a bureau,' and Elyot would have the boy see no men before the age of seven and, after that, no women,1 and how Locke wants children to have leaky
shoes and no turn for poetry—we may well thank the beneficent obstinacy of real mothers, real nurses, and (above all) real children for preserving the human race in such sanity as it still possesses. But the man-moulders of the new age will be armed with the powers of an omnicompetent state and an irresistible scientific technique: we shall get at last a race of conditioners who really can cut out all posterity in what shape they please. The second difference is even more important. In the older systems both the kind of man the teachers wished to produce and their motives for producing him were prescribed by the Tao—a norm to which the teachers themselves were subject and from which they claimed no liberty to depart. They did not cut men to some pattern they had chosen. They handed on what they had received: they initiated the young neophyte into the mystery of humanity which over-arched him and them alike. It was but old birds teaching young birds to fly. This will be changed. Values are now mere natural phenomena. Judgements of value are to be produced in the pupil as part of the conditioning. Whatever Tao there is will be the product, not the motive, of education. The conditioners have been emancipated from all that. It is one more part of Nature which they have conquered. The ultimate springs of human action are no longer, for them, something given. They have surrendered—like electricity: it is the function of the Conditioners to control, not to obey them. They know how to produce conscience and decide what kind of conscience they will produce. They themselves are outside, above. For we are assuming the last stage of Man's struggle with Nature. The final victory has been won. Human nature has been conquered—and, of course, has conquered, in whatever sense those words may now bear.

The Conditioners, then, are to choose what kind of artificial Tao they will, for their own good reasons, produce in the Human race. They are the motivators, the creators of motives. But how are they going to be motivated themselves? For a time, perhaps, by survivals, within their own minds, of the old 'natural' Tao. Thus at first they may look upon themselves as servants and guardians of humanity and conceive that they have a 'duty' to do it 'good.' But it is only by confusion that they can remain in this state. They recognize the concept of duty as the result of certain

1 The Boke Named the Governour, 1. iv: 'Al men except physitions only shulde be excluded and knepe out of the norisery.' 1. vi: 'After that a childe is come to seuen yeres of age . . . the most sure counsaille is to withdrawe him from all company of women.'

2 Some Thoughts concerning Education, § 7: 'I will also advise his Feet to be wash'd every Day in cold Water, and to have his Shoes so thin that they might leak and let in Water, whenever he comes near it.' § 174: 'If he have a poetick vein, 'tis to me the strangest thing in the World that the Father should desire or suffer it to be cherished or improved. Methinks the Parents should labour to have it stifled and suppressed as much as may be.' Yet Locke is one of our most sensible writers on education.

3 See first two paragraphs of the "Aids to Study." [Ed.]
processes which they can now control. Their victory has consisted precisely in emerging from the state in which they were acted upon by those processes to the state in which they use them as tools. One of the things they now have to decide is whether they will, or will not, so condition the rest of us that we can go on having the old idea of duty and the old reactions to it. How can duty help them to decide that? Duty itself is up for trial: it cannot also be the judge. And ‘good’ fares no better. They know quite well how to produce a dozen different conceptions of good in us. The question is which, if any, they should produce. No conception of good can help them to decide. It is absurd to fix on one of the things they are comparing and make it the standard of comparison.

To some it will appear that I am inventing a factitious difficulty for my Conditioners. Other, more simple-minded, critics may ask ‘Why should you suppose they will be such bad men?’ But I am not supposing them to be bad men. They are, rather, not men (in the old sense) at all. They are, if you like, men who have sacrificed their own share in traditional humanity in order to devote themselves to the task of deciding what ‘Humanity’ shall henceforth mean. ‘Good’ and ‘bad,’ applied to them, are words without content: for it is from them that the content of these words is henceforward to be derived. Nor is their difficulty factitious. We might suppose that it was possible to say ‘After all, most of us want more or less the same things—food and drink and sexual intercourse, amusement, art, science, and the longest possible life for individuals and for the species. Let them simply say, This is what we happen to like, and go on to condition men in the way most likely to produce it. Where’s the trouble?’ But this will not answer. In the first place, it is false that we all really like the same things. But even if we did, what motive is to impel the Conditioners to scorn delights and live laborious days in order that we, and posterity, may have what we like? Their duty? But that is only the Tao, which they may decide to impose on us, but which cannot be valid for them. If they accept it, then they are no longer the makers of conscience but still its subjects, and their final conquest over Nature has not really happened. The preservation of the species? But why should the species be preserved? One of the questions before them is whether this feeling for posterity (they know well how it is produced) shall be continued or not. However far they go back, or down, they can find no ground to stand on. Every motive they try to act on becomes at once a petitio. It is not that they are bad men. They are not men at all. Stepping outside the Tao, they have stepped into the void. Nor are their subjects necessarily unhappy men. They are not men at all: they are artefacts. Man’s final conquest has proved to be the abolition of Man.
Yet the Conditioners will act. When I said just now that all motives fail them, I should have said all motives except one. All motives that claim any validity other than that of their felt emotional weight at a given moment have failed them. Everything except the *sic volo, sic jubeo* has been explained away. But what never claimed objectivity cannot be destroyed by subjectivism. The impulse to scratch when I itch or to pull to pieces when I am inquisitive is immune from the solvent which is fatal to my justice, or honour, or care for posterity. When all that says 'it is good' has been debunked, what says 'I want' remains. It cannot be exploded or 'seen through' because it never had any pretensions. The Conditioners, therefore, must come to be motivated simply by their own pleasure. I am not here speaking of the corrupting influence of power nor expressing the fear that under it our Conditioners will degenerate. The very words corrupt and degenerate imply a doctrine of value and are therefore meaningless in this context. My point is that those who stand outside all judgements of value cannot have any ground for preferring one of their own impulses to another except the emotional strength of that impulse. We may legitimately hope that among the impulses which arise in minds thus emptied of all 'rational' or 'spiritual' motives, some will be benevolent. I am very doubtful myself whether the benevolent impulses, stripped of that preference and encouragement which the *Tao* teaches us to give them and left to their merely natural strength and frequency as psychological events, will have much influence. I am very doubtful whether history shows us one example of a man who, having stepped outside traditional morality and attained power, has used that power benevolently. I am inclined to think that the Conditioners will hate the conditioned. Though regarding as an illusion the artificial conscience which they produce in us their subjects, they will yet perceive that it creates in us an illusion of meaning for our lives which compares favourably with the futility of their own: and they will envy us as eunuchs envy men. But I do not insist on this, for it is mere conjecture. What is not conjecture is that our hope even of a 'conditioned' happiness rests on what is ordinarily called 'chance'—the chance that benevolent impulses may on the whole predominate in our Conditioners. For without the judgement 'Benevolence is good'—that is, without re-entering the *Tao*—they can have no ground for promoting or stabilizing their benevolent impulses rather than any others. By the logic of their position they must just take their impulses as they come, from chance. And Chance here means Nature. It is from heredity, digestion, the weather, and the association of ideas, that the motives of the Conditioners will spring. Their extreme rationalism, by 'seeing through' all

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4 As I wish, so I decree. [Ed.]
'rational' motives, leaves them creatures of wholly irrational behaviour. If you will not obey the Tao, or else commit suicide, obedience to impulse (and therefore, in the long run, to mere 'nature') is the only course left open.

At the moment, then, of Man's victory over Nature, we find the whole human race subjected to some individual men, and those individuals subjected to that in themselves which is purely 'natural'—to their irrational impulses. Nature, untrammelled by values, rules the Conditioners and, through them, all humanity. Man's conquest of Nature turns out, in the moment of its consummation, to be Nature's conquest of Man. Every victory we seemed to win has led us, step by step, to this conclusion. All Nature's apparent reverses have been but tactical withdrawals. We thought we were beating her back when she was luring us on. What looked to us like hands held up in surrender was really the opening of arms to enfold us for ever. If the fully planned and conditioned world (with its Tao a mere product of the planning) comes into existence, Nature will be troubled no more by the restive species that rose in revolt against her so many millions of years ago, will be vexed no longer by its chatter of truth and mercy and beauty and happiness. Ferum victorem cepit⁶: and if the eugenics are efficient enough there will be no second revolt, but all snug beneath the Conditioners, and the Conditioners beneath her, till the moon falls or the sun grows cold.

My point may be clearer to some if it is put in a different form. Nature is a word of varying meanings, which can best be understood if we consider its various opposites. The Natural is the opposite of the Artificial, the Civil, the Human, the Spiritual, and the Supernatural. The Artificial does not now concern us. If we take the rest of the list of opposites, however, I think we can get a rough idea of what men have meant by Nature and what it is they oppose to her. Nature seems to be the spatial and temporal, as distinct from what is less fully so or not so at all. She seems to be the world of quantity, as against the world of quality: of objects as against consciousness: of the bound, as against the wholly or partially autonomous: of that which knows no values as against that which both has and perceives value: of efficient causes (or, in some modern systems, of no causality at all) as against final causes. Now I take it that when we understand a thing analytically and then dominate and use it for our own convenience we reduce it to the level of 'Nature' in the sense that we suspend our judgements of value about it, ignore its final cause (if any), and treat it in terms of quantity. This repression of elements in what would otherwise be our total reaction to it is sometimes very noticeable and even painful: something has to be overcome before we can cut up a dead man or a live animal in a dissecting room. These objects resist the movement of the mind whereby we thrust them into the world of

⁶ Nature conquers her conquerors. [Ed.]
mere Nature. But in other instances too, a similar price is exacted for our analytical knowledge and manipulative power, even if we have ceased to count it. We do not look at trees either as Dryads or as beautiful objects while we cut them into beams: the first man who did so may have felt the price keenly, and the bleeding trees in Virgil and Spenser may be far-off echoes of that primeval sense of impiety. The stars lost their divinity as astronomy developed, and the Dying God has no place in chemical agriculture. To many, no doubt, this process is simply the gradual discovery that the real world is different from what we expected, and the old opposition to Galileo or to ‘bodysnatchers’ is simply obscurantism. But that is not the whole story. It is not the greatest of modern scientists who feel most sure that the object, stripped of its qualitative properties and reduced to mere quantity, is wholly real. Little scientists, and little unscientific followers of science, may think so. The great minds know very well that the object, so treated, is an artificial abstraction, that something of its reality has been lost.

From this point of view the conquest of Nature appears in a new light. We reduce things to mere Nature in order that we may ‘conquer’ them. We are always conquering Nature, because ‘Nature’ is the name for what we have, to some extent, conquered. The price of conquest is to treat a thing as mere Nature. Every conquest over Nature increases her domain. The stars do not become Nature till we can weigh and measure them: the soul does not become Nature till we can psycho-analyse her. The wresting of powers from Nature is also the surrendering of things to Nature. As long as this process stops short of the final stage we may well hold that the gain outweighs the loss. But as soon as we take the final step of reducing our own species to the level of mere Nature, the whole process is stultified, for this time the being who stood to gain and the being who has been sacrificed are one and the same. This is one of the many instances where to carry a principle to what seems its logical conclusion produces absurdity. It is like the famous Irishman who found that a certain kind of stove reduced his fuel bill by half and thence concluded that two stoves of the same kind would enable him to warm his house with no fuel at all. It is the magician’s bargain: give up our soul, get power in return. But once our souls, that is, our selves, have been given up, the power thus conferred will not belong to us. We shall in fact be the slaves and puppets of that to which we have given our souls. It is in Man’s power to treat himself as a mere ‘natural object’ and his own judgements of value as raw material for scientific manipulation to alter at will. The objection to his doing so does not lie in the fact that this point of view (like one’s first day in a dissecting room) is painful and shocking till we grow used to it. The pain and the shock are at most a warning and a symptom. The real objection is that if man chooses to treat himself as raw material, raw material he will be: not raw material to be manipulated, as he fondly imagined, by himself, but by mere appetite,
that is, mere Nature, in the person of his de-humanized Conditioners.

We have been trying, like Lear, to have it both ways: to lay down our human prerogative and yet at the same time to retain it. It is impossible. Either we are rational spirit obliged for ever to obey the absolute values of the Tao, or else we are mere nature to be kneaded and cut into new shapes for the pleasures of masters who must, by hypothesis, have no motive but their own 'natural' impulses. Only the Tao provides a common human law of action which can over-arch rulers and ruled alike. A dogmatic belief in objective value is necessary to the very idea of a rule which is not tyranny or an obedience which is not slavery.

I am not here thinking solely, perhaps not even chiefly, of those who are our public enemies at the moment. The process which, if not checked, will abolish Man, goes on apace among Communists and Democrats no less than among Fascists. The methods may (at first) differ in brutality. But many a mild-eyed scientist in pince-nez, many a popular dramatist, many an amateur philosopher in our midst, means in the long run just the same as the Nazi rulers of Germany. Traditional values are to be 'debunked' and mankind to be cut out into some fresh shape at the will (which must, by hypothesis, be an arbitrary will) of some few lucky people in one lucky generation which has learned how to do it. The belief that we can invent 'ideologies' at pleasure, and the consequent treatment of mankind as mere \( \text{specimens, preparations, begins to affect our very language. Once we killed bad men: now we liquidate unsocial elements. Virtue has become integration and diligence dynamism, and boys likely to be worthy of a commission are 'potential officer material.' Most wonderful of all, the virtues of thrift and temperance, and even of ordinary intelligence, are sales-resistance.}

The true significance of what is going on has been concealed by the use of the abstraction Man. Not that the word Man is necessarily a pure abstraction. In the Tao itself, as long as we remain within it, we find the concrete reality in which to participate is to be truly human: the real common will and common reason of humanity, alive, and growing like a tree, and branching out, as the situation varies, into ever new beauties and dignities of application. While we speak from within the Tao we can speak of Man having power over himself in a sense truly analogous to an individual's self-control. But the moment we step outside and regard the Tao as a mere subjective product, this possibility has disappeared. What is now common to all men is a mere abstract universal, an H.C.F., and Man's conquest of himself means simply the rule of the Conditioners over the conditioned human material, the world of post-humanity which, some knowingly and some unknowingly, nearly all men in all nations are at present labouring to produce.

\[ ^6 \text{Material. [Ed.]} \]
Nothing I can say will prevent some people from describing this lecture as an attack on science. I deny the charge, of course: and real Natural Philosophers (there are some now alive) will perceive that in defending value I defend *inter alia* the value of knowledge, which must die like every other when its roots in the *Tao* are cut. But I can go further than that. I even suggest that from Science herself the cure might come. I have described as a ‘magician’s bargain’ that process whereby man surrenders object after object, and finally himself, to Nature in return for power. And I meant what I said. The fact that the scientist has succeeded where the magician failed has put such a wide contrast between them in popular thought that the real story of the birth of Science is misunderstood. You will even find people who write about the sixteenth century as if Magic were a medieval survival and Science the new thing that came in to sweep it away. Those who have studied the period know better. There was very little magic in the Middle Ages: the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are the high noon of magic. The serious magical endeavour and the serious scientific endeavour are twins: one was sickly and died, the other strong and thrrove. But they were twins. They were born of the same impulse. I allow that some (certainly not all) of the early scientists were actuated by a pure love of knowledge. But if we consider the temper of that age as a whole we can discern the impulse of which I speak. There is something which unites magic and applied science while separating both from the ‘wisdom’ of earlier ages. For the wise men of old the cardinal problem had been how to conform the soul to reality, and the solution had been knowledge, self-discipline, and virtue. For magic and applied science alike the problem is how to subdue reality to the wishes of men: the solution is a technique; and both, in the practice of this technique, are ready to do things hitherto regarded as disgusting and impious—such as digging up and mutilating the dead. If we compare the chief trumpeter of the new era (Bacon) with Marlowe’s Faustus, the similarity is striking. You will read in some critics that Faustus has a thirst for knowledge. In reality, he hardly mentions it. It is not truth he wants from his devils, but gold and guns and girls. ‘All things that move between the quiet poles shall be at his command’ and ‘a sound magician is a mighty god.’ In the same spirit Bacon condemns those who value knowledge as an end in itself: this, for him, is to use as a mistress for pleasure what ought to be a spouse for fruit. The true object is to extend Man’s power to the performance of all things possible. He rejects magic because it does not work, but his goal is that of the magician. In Paracelsus the characters of magician and scientist are combined. No doubt those who really

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7 Dr. Faustus, 77–90.
8 *Advancement of Learning*, Bk. I (p. 60 in Ellis and Spedding, 1905; p. 35 n Everyman Edn.).
9 *Filum Labyrinthi*, i.
founded modern science were usually those whose love of truth exceeded their love of power; in every mixed movement the efficacy comes from the good elements not from the bad. But the presence of the bad elements is not irrelevant to the direction the efficacy takes. It might be going too far to say that the modern scientific movement was tainted from its birth: but I think it would be true to say that it was born in an unhealthy neighbourhood and at an inauspicious hour. Its triumphs may have been too rapid and purchased at too high a price: reconsideration, and something like repentance, may be required.

Is it, then, possible to imagine a new Natural Philosophy, continually conscious that the ‘natural object’ produced by analysis and abstraction is not reality but only a view, and always correcting the abstraction? I hardly know what I am asking for. I hear rumours that Goethe’s approach to nature deserves fuller consideration—that even Dr. Steiner may have seen something that orthodox researchers have missed. The regenerate science which I have in mind would not do even to minerals and vegetables what modern science threatens to do to man himself. When it explained it would not explain away. When it spoke of the parts it would remember the whole. While studying the It it would not lose what Martin Buber calls the Thou-situation. The analogy between the Tao of Man and the instincts of an animal species would mean for it new light cast on the unknown thing, Instinct, by the only known reality of conscience and not a reduction of conscience to the category of Instinct. Its followers would not be free with the words only and merely. In a word, it would conquer Nature without being at the same time conquered by her and buy knowledge at a lower cost than that of life.

Perhaps I am asking impossibilities. Perhaps, in the nature of things, analytical understanding must always be a basilisk which kills what it sees and only sees by killing. But if the scientists themselves cannot arrest this process before it reaches the common Reason and kills that too, then someone else must arrest it. What I most fear is the reply that I am ‘only one more’ obscurantist, that this barrier, like all previous barriers set up against the advance of science, can be safely passed. Such a reply springs from the fatal serialism of the modern imagination—the image of infinite unilinear progression which so haunts our minds. Because we have to use numbers so much we tend to think of every process as if it must be like the numeral series, where every step, to all eternity, is the same kind of step as the one before. I implore you to remember the Irishman and his two stoves. There are progressions in which the last step is sui generis—incommensurable with the others—and in which to go the whole way is to undo all the labour of your previous journey. To reduce the Tao to a mere natural product is a step of that kind. Up to that point, the kind of explanation which explains things away may give us something, though at a heavy cost. But you cannot go on ‘explaining away’ for ever: you will
find that you have explained explanation itself away. You cannot go on ‘seeing through’ things for ever. The whole point of seeing through something is to see something through it. It is good that the window should be transparent, because the street or garden beyond it is opaque. How if you saw through the garden too? It is no use trying to ‘see through’ first principles. If you see through everything, then everything is transparent. But a wholly transparent world is an invisible world. To ‘see through’ all things is the same as not to see.

AIDS TO STUDY

This essay, the final chapter in a small book entitled The Abolition of Man, presents one side of a many-sided debate that is at the center of twentieth-century philosophy. It concerns the power of man over himself and over other men. Other discussions will be found in Aldous Huxley’s Brave New World, George Orwell’s Nineteen Eighty-Four, and Jean Rostand’s Can Man be Modified? and in the works of such Existentialist writers as Nicholas Berdyaev, Albert Camus, Jean Paul Sartre, Jacques Maritain, and Martin Buber. The philosophical questions have been dramatized in our times by the extermination of some six million Jews in Hitlerite Germany, by the alleged threat to the human race from nuclear fall-out, and by recent research in genetics, which offers the possibility of making extensive changes in “human nature.”

Lewis argues that certain necessary limits and directions for human conduct are more fundamental than science. These limits and directions he calls the Tao, which is also called “Natural Law or Traditional Morality or the First Principles of Practical Reason or the First Platitudes.” “It is,” he says, “the sole source of all value judgements. If it is rejected, all value is rejected.” What might happen if “all value is rejected” is the subject of this essay.

1. The first two paragraphs develop a single point. What is it? What is the purpose of the next three paragraphs? Do they introduce another idea or develop the first one?
2. In the seventh and eighth paragraphs, what does Lewis mean by “the Conditioners”? Why does he say that “only by confusion” can they continue to look upon themselves as bound to do good for humanity? Why does he say that “Duty itself is up for trial”? Does he mean that “Duty” is part of the Tao? If so, why is it on “trial”?
3. In the next paragraph (eight), Lewis says that the Conditioners “are not men at all.” What does this remark show about Lewis’ definition of “man”? What is a petitio?
4. If the Conditioners “must come to be motivated simply by their own pleasure” (paragraph nine), may not their “pleasure” be to serve the interests of mankind? What does Lewis have to say about trusting in the “benevolent” exercise of power? He says that history supports his doubt. Do you agree? Can you cite examples which run counter to his doubt? How about Abraham Lincoln? Was he a man who “stepped outside traditional morality”?
5. The next paragraph (ten) states the main point that Lewis has been leading up to. Restate it in your own terms. Why does Lewis say, "if the eugenics are efficient enough"? What are eugenics?

6. The two paragraphs that follow are largely an explanation of the point made in paragraph ten. What is the point of the story (twelve) of the Irishman with two stoves? Give another example that illustrates the same logical fallacy.

7. What does paragraph fourteen imply about the circumstances under which this essay was written? What difference does Lewis see between the idea of "killing bad men" and "liquidating unsocial elements"?

8. Why, in the third paragraph from the end of the essay, does Lewis deny that he is attacking science? Does he mean that science is dependent on the Tao? If so, how? And if it is, then has he not been magnifying dangers that hardly exist? What connection does Lewis see between magic and science? Does he think the connection a necessary one?

9. In the last paragraph Lewis states that there are processes "in which to go the whole way is to undo all the labour of your previous journey." What process is he mainly criticizing? One example of such a process is to fill a glass with water even above the brim by adding one drop at a time, within the limits of the surface tension. What is the last drop that can be added? Supply other examples of similar processes. Explain what Lewis means by, "How if you saw through the garden too?"

10. In an earlier essay Lewis explained that he is "a Theist, and indeed a Christian." Could the argument in the present essay be put forward by someone who was neither? Explain.
Streamlining is one of the most popular fallacies of our time. If you apply streamlining to poetry the argument runs about as follows: Since the chief aim of poetry is to bring about a formal ordering or integration of the feelings, communication cannot be its main purpose. Consequently poetry that eliminates communication is purer, and hence better, than poetry that admits a “message.” The poem should not attempt to rival the scientific textbook; or as Archibald MacLeish has so incisively put it, “A poem should not mean but be.”

With the modernist poet’s fastidious avoidance of meaning (once he has stated his *ars poetica*), it is instructive to compare the practice of a great poet like Dante, who seems curiously unaware of how much he might have improved his *Commedia* if he had not sought to use it as an instrument of communication. Instead of reducing the element of meaning to the lowest possible terms, Dante appears almost avid to multiply meanings, to double and redouble the implications of his thought. Can it be that disdain of meaning is a symptom of the poverty of poetry in a time of failing convictions?

A renewed perception of the many levels of implication beneath the innocent-looking surfaces of Robert Frost’s poems reminded me recently of the manifold harmonies of Dante’s great poetic instrument. Reading again in Mr. Untermeier’s expert selection, *Come In*, the lyric that so happily lends its title to the book, I became aware that the words of the poem were opening vistas in several directions, as from one spot in the forest the eye may fancy that it discerns colonnaded aisles leading off ahead, behind, and on either hand.

Particularly in the last two stanzas I thought I could detect an effect like "underpainting," layer upon layer, beneath the plain intent of the words:

Far in the pillared dark
Thrush music went—
Almost like a call to come in
To the dark and lament.

But no, I was out for stars:
I would not come in.
I meant not even if asked,
And I hadn't been.

Here is a poem which, though it does not shirk the obligation of lucid statement, is not exhausted when its surface meaning has been communicated. Instead the simplicity and clearness of the incident recorded leave the reader unimpeded by verbal perplexities, not to turn away satisfied unless he is a singularly obtuse reader, but to look further into these limpid depths and perceive what he can, whether of cloudy reflections of his own mind or of ultimate intentions lurking in the poet's.

After the labor of assimilating to our being much poetry that aims not to mean but to be, the pleasure of encountering a poem that actually conveys a well-defined reading of experience is enormous.

Taken literally, the lines I have quoted record a very ordinary incident of a walk at twilight. A man with an eye for the first stars is distracted momentarily by the poignant beauty of the thrush's song, but he refuses to follow its lure into the darkening woods or to accept its mood of lamentation. The laconic last two lines confirm the New England setting of the poem.

Indeed the intonations are so characteristic that they can hardly fail to recall to the many persons who have listened to Robert Frost's remarkable readings from his poems the voice of the poet himself. Every other part of the poem is equally authentic. Much that Frost has written attests his intimate acquaintance with country things: he can be trusted to select the moment of the day when the wood-thrush's song sounds clearest. His reference to stars is no casual literary gesture, but a tribute to a lifelong passion for astronomy, amply confirmed in other poems.

Not only the person speaking, but the setting of the poem is utterly true to life. It might be any one of the New Hampshire or Vermont farms where Frost has lived, since he has seldom lodged far from the edge of the woods and the companionship of trees. I do not know where this poem was written, nor what landscape was present to the writer's mind, but to me it seems to fit perfectly the region of Ripton, Vermont, where he has latterly spent his summers.

The dark woods might be the half-mile stretch of state forest, largely
pine, between his cottage on the Homer Noble place and "Iry" Dow's, the home-place of his current venture in farming. To get from one property to the other by road is a matter of several miles, and it is natural, therefore, to cut through the woods. But if one were going nowhere in particular it would be easy to refuse the walk beneath the trees for a climb to upland pastures, whence as from a shelf hung high on the slope of the Green Mountains one may look off westward across a narrow strip of Lake Champlain to tumbled Adirondack masses on the rim of the world and above them the evening star.

Ripton is typical "Frost country," though the bulk of his writing was done before he came to live in this neighborhood. It reached the height of its prosperity about the time of the Civil War. The mounting tide of human settlement then flowed up to the higher clearings; since then it has mostly receded, leaving behind a sparse population on "marginal" land and many cellar holes. Among the people are some whom Frost might name along with the best he has encountered anywhere in rural New England. Others are not to be clearly distinguished from the oddments on any beach at low tide.

There was "Iry" Dow, for example, now departed, who for upwards of forty years professed to make his living as a blacksmith, though prevented by a weak heart from making any strenuous exertions. Consequently a great deal of conversation flowed between blows on the anvil. "That Iry Dow," said one irritated customer, "is as much slower 'n stock-still's stock-still is slower 'n greased lightnin'." The year before he died the village elected him to the legislature so that he might continue his endless talk without the bother of now and then pretending to beat on a horseshoe. Nothing that Frost found among these people would have suggested any need of revising what he had previously written of other little towns north of Boston.

The surrounding country, dominated by the ridge of the mountains, once partly settled, then unsettled again, is full of the wild things, both animals and plants, that the poet has so often observed and described. A great lover of woodlands and Morgan horses, the late Joseph Battell, once possessed much of Ripton, and his will is still reflected in the quantity of standing timber. So bold and numerous are the deer that vegetable gardens need the protection of an electrically charged wire. Overgrown roads follow the brooks and lead to abandoned mowings high on the ridges.

II

In one respect, however, Ripton is peculiar. It contains Bread Loaf, the summer school of English which Frost helped to found some twenty-five years ago and which he still benevolently frequents. Frost, in fact, would
not be fully himself unless there were an educational project somewhere in the offing for him to cherish and humorously despair of, for he is a born teacher with a knack of charging dry subjects with intellectual excitement and a large patience for struggling learners.

Teaching to him is a natural extension of his unfeigned interest in people. I have seen him ask friendly, insistent questions about the little country town where a man was born and brought up, and have watched the man, at first answering with diffidence because for years he had been apologetic about his simple beginnings and anxious to live them down, gradually warm to his memories, discover a fresh respect for the sources of his being, and go out from the interview (as he said later) with a new dimension added to his personality. I doubt if Frost knew how much that conversation meant to the other man. He was just expressing an interest in the ways of little towns.

It is against the background of Ripton, then, that I picture Frost hearing thrush music, as it is there that I recall him in many other postures: a stocky figure but alert in motion, wearing an old suit and scuffed shoes, a freshly laundered soft shirt open at his throat, his white hair tousled in the wind, his seafarer's blue eyes twinkling. One would find him skirting a mowing field, crossing a stone wall to a pasture where blueberries grew, measuring the water in the spring, or playing softball with younger friends on a diamond wrung from the hayfield, where running for a fly was an adventure. Then would come hours of such converse as I never expect to repeat.

For me the poem I have quoted is inseparably bound up with these personal memories of the man and the region. But for anyone, even for anyone ages hence, it is marked with authentic traits of individuality, images to the ear and to the eye, that distinguish it from conventionalized writing just as readily as a portrait can be told from an idealized face when archaeologists study the sculptures found in the buried cities of Yucatan.

In the first instance, then, the poem is justified by its absolute integrity of substance. Whatever it speaks of is something that the poet has absorbed completely into himself, generally by seeing it, hearing it, living through it; less frequently by imaginative reading. But though the poem may appear simple and complete on the literal level, its texture may be dense with implied cross-references. In such poetry it is not inappropriate to look for undermeanings, at one's own risk, of course. The meanings may be all in the reader's eye, or again they may attain to a certain significance if they are confirmed by what the poet has elsewhere written.

Frost himself may be held responsible if readers persist in looking in his poems for more meaning than meets the casual eye. Though he denies
a didactic intent, he is not unwilling to have his poetic records of experience flower in explicit apothegm. Only there is seldom or never any indication of his writing for the sake of the moral. In that respect he differs completely from makers of fables. La Fontaine, as Mr. Untermeyer claims, might conceivably have shaped the substance of Frost's "At Woodward's Gardens" into an apologue entitled "The Boy, the Monkeys, and the Burning-Glass," ending with the epigram:—

It's knowing what to do with things that counts.

But Frost's first instinct is to make sure of the reality of his material; nine-tenths of his poem is painstakingly devoted to picturing his monkeys, not as actors in a fable, but as actual monkeys. He calls our attention to their "purple little knuckles," and condenses all the confusion of the simian brain into one delicious line:—

They bit the glass and listened for the flavor.

Not until that has been fully done does he turn to the moral as a means of rounding the poem. To call such a piece of writing a fable, as at least two good critics have recently chosen to do, is to label it as something less than it actually is.

Except where Frost has completed his poem by attaching an abstract meaning to it—not necessarily a statement of the poem's whole meaning—he is entitled to insist that his intention has been to present, not the symbol of a thought, but an image of an experience. To this there is only one answer: that experience as Frost absorbs and interprets it often spreads out into so many ramifications that thoughts get tangled in it like stars seen through tree branches.

To consider now more searchingly the stanzas that I have quoted about the thrush, would it not be possible to read the episode as a literaryparable? A poet of our time hears a birdlike voice from the dark wood (ancient symbol of error) singing of irremediable ills. The call to "come in to the dark and lament" awakens an impulse to become a modernist poet of the decadent school, to take the veil (or, as Frost once put it, "take the blanket") of calculated obscurity and imitate the fashionable lead of the French Symbolistes. The summons, however sweetly conveyed, can be resisted by a poet who has long considered it inappropriate "to write the Russian novel in America," and who prefers to keep on in the way he was going.

To place this interpretation on the poem (and I do not imply that the poem demands it) is to emphasize Frost's remarkable independence of the contemporary note in letters. Though he has studied the experimental poetry of recent years with attention—and some amusement—he has never felt called to share in any experiments except his own, which have been more far-reaching in their metrical subtlety than many readers realize.
Ever since as a young poet barely out of his teens Frost was advised by a New York editor to try to write like Sidney Lanier, he has been set in his determination to write like no one but Robert Frost.

His aloofness has been held against him. It has been asserted that any sensitive spirit of our time must be wounded by the spectacle of the world as it exists, and must respond by exhibiting his mutilations in public. Frost’s obvious cultivation of soundness and balance, therefore, has been taken as indicative of a refusal to face the bitter realities that really matter, of his retreat to a protected backwater safe from the storm. This to a man who, unlike many of his critics, has worked in the factory and on the farm, who has known poverty as well as grief, and who has waited twenty years for recognition of his work to overtake him!

If Frost has not been willing to come in to the dark and lament, it has not been because he was unacquainted with the night, but because he had something to do that pleased him better. Perhaps he has felt that the business of putting love in order, of creating form out of the formless, can be better done by a poet who declined to be warped by the pressures of modern living. At any rate he has been unwavering in his allegiance to an Emersonian conception of human wholeness.

His deep-seated instinct for centrality and balance brings us back to the poem of the thrush to discover its meaning as ethical symbol. We are not disappointed. What else does the poem portray but one of the familiar dilemmas of man’s existence? His walk lies between the two extremes represented by the dark woods and the stars. To the heavenly extreme he can never attain, to the other he is unwilling to let himself descend, but he may be aware of both and may on occasion incline a little one way or the other. That is what our living is, discovering where the extremes lie and where we belong on a sort of scale drawn between them.

There are innumerable such scales in politics, in religion, in education. If we do not complete the scale, we risk falling into the illusion of progress—that is, of supposing that we are drifting inevitably toward a far-off divine event; or we are conscious only of what we have fallen from and invent the myth of original sin. Looking toward one extreme only, we commonly speak of savagery in contrast to civilization. Frost recently made us aware of the other end of the scale when he declared, “The opposite of civilization is Utopia.” Thus the scale is completed, and man is put back between the poles—where he belongs.

One result of thinking of the normal human position as somewhere midway between two extremes is to awaken a fierce distrust of extremists and totalitarians, no matter how high-minded they may be. Once we are forced as far as we can go toward either extreme, we are committed, we
lose our power to maneuver, we must adopt the party line. Only from a central position can we be said to have the ability to choose that makes life dramatic. Frost would not trade the freedom of his material in the world as he finds it for any number of freedoms in Utopia. What he holds precious is the privilege of meeting the exigencies of life by apt recalls from past experience, with only enough newness to freshen thought.

IV

But what if the world’s crisis is so desperate as to justify a concerted movement to one extreme or the other in the attempt to alleviate it? Are we always to see life waste away into war, insanity, poverty, and crime and do nothing about it? Here indeed we touch on ultimate values. In an address to Amherst seniors a few years ago Frost declared that the thought of coming to condone the world’s sorrow is terrible to contemplate. It is our darkest concern. Yet unless I misread the poem, Frost has indicated the inevitable response of a wise man in the poem we have been discussing. To be resolutely “out for stars” is not to be concerned overmuch with the still, sad music of humanity.

The poet must nerve himself to say with Housman: “Be still, my soul, and see injustice done.” It is his function to realize the millennium, not in terms of social adjustments, but either

right beside you book-like on the shelf,
Or even better god-like in yourself.

Frost has spoken with deep compassion of the Shelleyan natures who insist on bearing their share, or more than their share, of the world’s miseries, but he has not hesitated to proclaim that the call to struggle for society’s betterment is “poetry’s great antilure.” He is not attracted by

the tenderer-than-thou
Political collectivistic love
With which the modern world is being swept.

The poet, in so far as he is a poet, must not be too cognizant of mankind’s wounds or his own. His business is not to make humanity whole, but to explore the uses of wholeness. It is naïve to hang the class struggle on his shoulders. In the American tradition one does not have to join the army to be a good citizen.

If anyone still should ask, Why is the function that the poet performs so important that he may seek exemption from duties incumbent on his fellows? the best answer is to read once again the lovely stanzas of “Come In” or the new poem that stands as an afterword in the anthology of Frost’s writings that Mr. Untermeyer has just compiled. Is it nothing to
us that someone should be out for stars? Is it nothing in a universe where every star we can examine seems to be engaged in radiating incredible light and heat—is it nothing in our preoccupation with war and wages and prices, to be reminded of the sense in which a star by its mere existence can “ask a little of us here”?

It asks of us a certain height,
So when at times the mob is swayed
To carry praise or blame too far,
We may choose something like a star
To stay our minds on and be staid.

AIDS TO STUDY

1. In the first section of the essay, Whicher contrasts Frost with other poets whom he calls “modernist.” From what he says and from your own reading, what poets or what sorts of poetry do you think he refers to? Where does Whicher summarize the plain sense of the poem “Come In”? What does he mean by, “The laconic last two lines confirm the New England setting of the poem”?

2. The first section also describes the countryside around Ripton, Vermont, and the people who live there. Reread the poem after rereading the last four paragraphs of this section. Do you find that Whicher has succeeded in enriching your response to the poem? If so, how does it come about? If not, do you find Whicher guilty of irrelevancies?

3. What is the relation of the last paragraph of section III to the rest of that short section? What does Whicher mean by “undermeanings”? Does he imply that a reader should have known Frost in order to read his poetry appreciatively?

4. The third section of the essay presents two rather distinct “undermeanings” that Whicher finds appropriate. One is literary. How does it help Whicher to describe Frost’s position? The other is philosophical or “ethical.” What is a Utopia? What sense can you make out of Frost’s remark about civilization and Utopia? What does Whicher mean by defining, in the last paragraph of section III, “the normal human position as somewhere midway between two extremes”? Would his sentence be improved if it omitted “somewhere”? Can you apply this theory of “the normal human position” to your understanding of the poem “Come In”?

5. Up to section IV, Whicher has mainly contrasted Frost with writers who are not concerned with clearly communicable meaning. The last section defends Frost against the charge that he should take sides in the fight for social betterment. What is Whicher’s defense? How is it supported by the final quotation? Does that quotation suggest still another level of meaning in “Come In”?
Suggestions for Writing are provided for every selection. In the main, we have listed not short title topics but writing assignments worked out in varying degrees of detail. Some are short. Some will produce exercises or experiments rather than finished "themes." But all are intended to provoke thought, to focus upon a manageable topic, or to offer a basic plan that the student can adapt to his own needs.

A number of the Suggestions are considerably elaborated in the expectation that they may be helpful in establishing sound procedures early in the course and in reinforcing them from time to time. But our good intentions would mis-carry if the Suggestions were used mechanically and as a substitute for the careful laying of groundwork in class and in conference. Frankly, we wish to oppose the assigning of mere topics and to support the practice of leading the student to view the assignment as an opportunity to explore his mind and to acquire, little by little, the skill to express ideas clearly and responsibly. Difficult as this achievement is, it is also deeply satisfying to both teacher and student. The Suggestions vary in difficulty, but they are suggestions only and may be readily modified or ignored.
EDGAR ANDERSON   Dump Heaps and the Origin of Agriculture

1. Theories concerning the domestication of plants and animals are lively and appealing subjects for essays based on a certain amount of library investigation. Part of the value of such an investigation lies in the discovery of the limitations and sometimes the surprising depth and complexity of scientific inquiry. After a preliminary survey of the available materials, write an essay summarizing as best you can the present state of knowledge (and controversy) about the domestication of a single plant or group of plants or of one of the domestic animals. This essay may be handled either as a report on the available information or as an informal essay digesting and illustrating your findings. The first would be a report; the second, an expository essay. Try to get into your manner of presentation some of the liveliness and the sense of adventure which Anderson displays in his essay. (How did he do it?)

2. No matter how much we are told or shown about how to do something, nothing entirely takes the place of learning to do it ourselves. Write a paragraph narrating your experience of learning to do something yourself. (Or, you may handle this in two paragraphs: one on being told and shown; the other on actually doing it.) Childhood experiences may come in usefully here: riding a bicycle, finding one's way home, caring for an invalid, sailing a boat, making a speech. Obviously such a narrative might be considerably built up. The point here is to do it swiftly, yet concretely.

W. H. AUDEN   My Belief

1. As an experiment in the making and breaking of analogies, accept the analogy between the human body and a complex social group—such as a college, with its administration, faculty, students, buildings, resources, etc. Rapidly sketch the analogy; then show how it applies; then attack it. (See Auden, i, 10, 11.) Remember that no analogy is literally true. Its use is to illustrate and enhance some features of the thing described (in the example, a college).

2. "People committing acts in obedience to law or habit are not being moral." (Auden, ii, 2.) Debate this statement. First establish in your own mind what Auden meant in the context of his essay. Then present an essay in the following manner: first take up and develop fully and fairly the position contrary to the one which you yourself accept; then present your own view. In each of the two major sections of your essay illustrate by a well-developed example the position you are defining.

3. Auden argues that only if an action "directly violates the will of another" is the law "justified in interfering." (iii, 4.) Debate this proposition, following the suggestions in assignment 2. (Do I, for example, violate what John Stuart Mill called "a distinct and assignable obligation" if I refuse to pay taxes to support public schools to which I send no children? From a different viewpoint, may the law not only forbid certain actions but also
positively require actions in the interest of the community—as in forbidding me to create fire hazards on my property and in positively requiring me to serve on a jury? Would either of these demands meet Auden's test?)

J. J. Audubon The Passenger Pigeon

Observe some familiar scene in nature or some common human activity. Don't try to see everything at once, but make several observations at different times. Concentrate on the details of the scene and try hard for exactness in observation and statement; don't try to generalize, and don't try to include your own feelings. Just try to report what you have observed.

Sheridan Baker Scholarly Style, or the Lack Thereof

1. Inspect your own textbooks, including this one, for violations of the principles which Baker (like Macrorie) supports. A lively and very useful report can be made by presenting evidence of two or three kinds of violation and by analyzing the evidence to show exactly what is at fault. You may like to try rewriting some passages as Baker does to demonstrate possible improvements. (Baker implies that semanticists and social scientists are especially prone to wordiness. Look at the articles in this book by Carroll, Mayo, Wylie, Coulson, and Anderson; all are scientists, though of different kinds. By Baker's standards, do some write better than others? How can you tell?)

2. Write a paragraph or two discussing Baker's own use of metaphor. (See also the Suggestions for Writing on Virginia Woolf's "How Should One Read a Book.")

Stringfellow Barr From Purely Academic: Lecture and Discussion

The picture here presented of American college students is scarcely flattering. Is it, in your experience, a truthful picture? If you think it unfair, what reasons do you have for thinking so? Is there any reason why students should in fact pay attention to the words of a middle-aged man who is talking about matters that seem to them unimportant? Write an essay dealing squarely with some of the problems raised in this selection, such as the divergence of interests between the teacher and the learner; the serious student versus the free loader.

Carl Becker Some Generalities That Still Glitter

1. James Madison's "The Control of Faction" is an example of political philosophy from the early period of the American Republic when, according to Becker, reason was regarded as "a kind of impersonal spiritual compass"
which would guide men aright. Study Madison’s essay in the light of Becker’s first section. Can you find evidence that Madison holds the faith which Becker describes? If so, where? Or does Madison believe that there are other forces operating besides reason? On what does he found his argument for representative government? Write an essay carefully comparing and, if appropriate, contrasting Madison’s belief in democracy with Becker’s. You may wish to conclude by stating your own position.

2. Turn to the Declaration of Independence and consider the list of grievances drawn up against the British government. Write a short essay showing that these grievances do or do not rest on the assumption that government should be by laws rather than by men (see Becker, part 1).

3. The word democracy has not always been a term of honor. Consult the entry on democracy in the Oxford English Dictionary and set forth in two or three paragraphs the major differing usages of the term since its first appearance in English. Quote evidence in support of your classifications, but do not merely transcribe from the dictionary. Analyze the evidence sufficiently to show your reader what the evidence means. Other terms for study: politician, progress, capitalist, union, prosperity.

4. Do you think that all social institutions should be organized on democratic lines? Many businesses are not. Many churches are not. The Army, Navy, and Air Force are not. Most families are not. Take some institution with which you are reasonably familiar that is not democratically run. Show, with clear statement of reasons, that it should be or should not be so run. Notice that you may argue from principles, or from predictable or demonstrable effects, or from both. (Is it conceivable that an institution not at all democratic in organization may still be serving the values which democracy supports?)

Morris Bishop The Reading Machine

1. Following the general lines of Bishop’s story, write a comparable satire, beginning, “I have invented a theme-writing machine,’ said the oldest Freshman.”

2. In one developed paragraph describe, in nontechnical language, the way in which a machine in common use operates. It will not be necessary to deal with minute details. The machine may be relatively simple, such as a mechanical pencil, or complex, such as a television receiver. If you fix your attention on the principles by which it works and the main stages or important parts, a readable and uncomplicated description will result.

John B. Carroll From The Science of Linguistics: Definition of Language

Choose a word like democracy, liberty, guilt, or justice—some fairly abstract or general word. Ask five of your friends what the word means to them. Is there any common element in their definitions? Look up the
meaning of the word in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. How are the various meanings distinguished from one another? Is knowledge of the history of the word any help in understanding its meaning?

Look up your word in some standard reference book or a textbook. What is the process by which the writer defines the word? Does he accept the dictionary definition? Your friends' definitions?

Now look back on what you have been doing: What different ways have you used to define your word? Is the definition determined by what the dictionary says? What good does it do, if any, to find out what your friends think the word means? What has helped you most to understand the word? What determines how careful you have to be in forming a definition? Write an essay in which you describe what you have done and then draw whatever conclusions seem to you relevant about the process of definition.

Winston Churchill   Painting as a Pastime

2. You undoubtedly have a diversion that gives you particular satisfaction. Following Churchill's example, try to interest your readers in taking it up for themselves. Although autobiography will play a part in this attempt, try also to describe the satisfactions which might come to other people.
3. In one paragraph describe a single object with objective care: your hand, the leaf of a tree, a pen, a doorway, a dollar bill. Pay particular attention to details of color, shape, and markings that would distinguish the object from other objects of the same kind.
4. Schlesinger in "The Decline of Greatness" places Churchill among the great men of very recent times. Knowing what you do about Churchill's leadership of England during the second World War, write an essay analyzing his "Painting as a Pastime" for clues to that "greatness."

Walter Van Tilburg Clark   The Portable Phonograph

1. Add one paragraph to Clark's story. (Of course the story ends just where it should, but you can afford to play with the potentialities inherent in the situation and the characterization. Before deciding what direction to take, you may well list several alternatives, beginning with the possibility of keeping the end unchanged except for the addition of further descriptive details.)
2. Dr. Jenkins has brought four books with him. If you could choose to preserve a few works of art, music, literature, or philosophy to represent the best achievements in those fields, what would you select? Present a list of nominations, giving your reasons, and try to convey to your readers
some idea of the quality of the works. Present only works which you yourself know and genuinely admire and do not feel obliged to mention only works of great renown. You may wish to discuss only one work or works of only one kind—paintings, for example.

3. Suppose that you, with the knowledge and skills which you now possess, found yourself living in Europe before, say, the invention of printing (or at any period you wish to specify). What knowledge or techniques would you want to introduce, and how would you go about it, assuming that you had the patient but skeptical attention of intelligent people? Write an essay describing the knowledge or skills that you would want to further, your reasons for choosing those, and the methods by which you would proceed. If you think that you would encounter great difficulties, explain why.

Austin Coates From An Invitation to an Eastern Feast: A New Perspective on India

In the field of cultural relations, as in some others, good will is desirable for success but not sufficient in itself. There must be action, usually quite personal and individual. Write an essay in which you describe in some detail your own relations with persons of another race or culture. Have you always managed to get on good terms with them? How was this accomplished, if it was? When the relations were unsatisfactory, what was wrong? A failure of motives, a lack of common interests? In the conclusion of your essay, try not to generalize your experience. Does it appear to you that there are any limits to "mutual understanding and appreciation"?

C. A. Coulson The Age of the Universe

1. Many concepts basic to the sciences are not readily understood even by people who have some general interest in science. Assuming an interested but relatively uninformed reader, explain in one paragraph, or a few paragraphs (according to the degree of your own interest and knowledge), the meaning of such a term as valence, oxidization, negative charge, osmosis, protoplasm, penumbra, voltage, equinox, refraction, or antibody. Although you may need to refresh your own understanding of the term before writing about it, do not copy a dictionary or textbook definition. Use ordinary language and familiar illustration.

2. The discussion of even a relatively simple scientific term can be much enlarged by investigating its history. When did the term come into use? What line of experiment or practical application called the term into being? Who made the basic discoveries and how? These are matters in the history of science.

   Undertake to write for a general reader the history of such a term as one of those listed in Suggestion 1 or of another such as speed of light, mass, cell, comet, vacuum, hybrid, fossil. The presentation of your findings in a
"popular" essay will require a high degree of control, since each topic will tend to open out in many different directions. Notice that your essay is not to be the history of an invention or the personal drama of a scientist but the explanation of the growth of an idea. Keep all matters subsidiary to that.

3. Whether you are interested in sciences or not, you might be entertained by science-fiction. Read one of the short science-fiction novels of H. G. Wells or one of the recent ones by such writers as Ray Bradbury, Isaac Azimov, Robert Heinlein, August Derleth, Theodore Sturgeon, or James Blish. Then write an essay centered on the question: How far is the novel based on scientific considerations, even if speculative ones? How far is it a fantasy only superficially scientific? What is the author trying to show or to accomplish? Support your discussion with relevant quotation and reference but avoid a lengthy and merely mechanical summary.

If you should wish to discuss the literary merits of the work of science-fiction that you have read, consider the effectiveness of characterization, the handling of the plot, the choice of narrative viewpoint, and other matters that would bear upon the discussion of any work of fiction.

CHRISTOPHER DAWSON The Relation Between Religion and Culture

1. To study the influence of a distinctly religious outlook upon the interpretation of current affairs, compare the views expressed in a secular periodical such as Time, U.S. News and World Report, The Nation, or The New Republic with those expressed in a periodical having a definitely religious position: America and Commonweal (Roman Catholic); Christian Century and the Christian Science Monitor (Protestant); Commentary and Midstream (Jewish). The problem to be discussed, with evidence, is "What difference—if any—does a definably religious outlook make in the attitudes expressed on such and such a subject or subjects?"

2. Unless conscientious scruples prevent, attend some religious observances considerably different from those with which you are most familiar. Write a descriptive report discussing what you observe. What really seemed to be going on? Of course, it might be desirable to attend such observances more than once, to equip yourself with some information, and to have the guidance of someone well versed in the observances. But it is not necessary. To the degree that you recognize your lack of understanding, however, make frank acknowledgment of your limitations.

CHARLES DICKENS From Hard Times: M'Choakumchild's Schoolroom

In this assignment you are being asked to write a thoughtful essay on the best kind of secondary education for students who are going on to college. First, read the selections in this book by Barr, Miller, and Wylie, and keep in mind your own educational experience. Do their ideas and recommenda-
tions resemble what happened to you in high school? Make some notes on the points in which your experience agrees or disagrees with what they say.
Two defects are common to students’ essays on education: they contain too many clichés and they repeat what adults say, instead of what students think. Here are some suggestions that may help you to avoid these errors.

Objectives of Education: What is being aimed at in education? The release and use of individual talent? Social adjustment? Relief for parents in the form of subsidized baby sitting? Imparting society’s common core of ideals and beliefs? Training for citizenship? Holding young people off the labor market? Try to nail down two or three reasons which seem to you to explain the great sums of money spent on secondary education.

Methods of Education: The methods are related to the objectives, of course, since how one does something depends on what one is doing. What, then, should be the relation between teacher and student? Is the teacher a foster parent, a friendly guide, a person employed to teach a definite body of knowledge?

How can this relation, however you conceive it, be made clear to students and teachers? How much allowance do you think should be and can be made for human variety and individual differences?

What should young people study in school, or should they “study” anything? French? Physics? Home Economics? Driver Training? Great Moral Issues? The Ancient World? In other words, granted that students should be in a school for five to seven hours a day, what should be happening during that time? Be realistic about this; don’t set up an “ideal” program that no human being could manage.

Finally, try to make a common-sense appraisal of what secondary school graduates should be like at graduation. Remember that the school is only one among many social institutions which influence all of us. Remember also that these questions and ideas are only suggestions. Your object is to write a thoughtful and original essay on secondary education.

A. Conan Doyle   Sherlock Holmes on the Science of Deduction

1. Holmes’s deductions about the watch are impressive; however, it would not be difficult to take exception (without resorting to tricks) to every step in his reasoning. As an experiment and a diversion, rewrite the essay, beginning with Watson’s words, “I sprang from my chair and limped impatiently about the room with considerable bitterness in my heart,” to let Watson refute Holmes. Try to construct a thoroughly credible series of alternatives to those which Holmes has imagined. Although you should not exaggerate, you can afford to exercise your sense of humor.

2. Minutely observe some object—such as an ash tray and its contents, a well-worn article of clothing, a used book, a worn golf club, and write the human history that you can decipher. Rely on evidence and reasoning but do not hesitate to let your imagination assist you. Your conclusions need not be correct (since you may not be able to check them anyway) but try to make them convincing.
LOREN EISELEY  The Real Secret of Piltdown

1. In scientific periodicals or the science sections of news magazines for 1953 look up the account of how the Piltdown hoax was discovered. Then write in about 500 words an informative report of what happened. At the end of your report put a note indicating exactly the source of your information but use your own words throughout your paper.

2. Consult the Dictionary of National Biography, the Encyclopaedia Britannica, or other reference works on the career of A. R. Wallace. Then write a brief report on his stature as a scientist. At the end of your report state exactly the source of your information but use your own words throughout your paper.

3. Eiseley suggests that man has transferred to machines and tools the evolutionary developments that once would have been modifications of bodily parts and functions. For example, a telephone extends the range of voice and ear but, of course, does not alter the physical organs. In two or three paragraphs develop this line of thought by explaining how several machines may be regarded as extensions or modifications of physical functions.

LEONARD FEINBERG  Fire Walking in Ceylon

1. In a short descriptive essay try to convey your impression of the behavior of a crowd by singling out certain individuals for particular attention, as Feinberg does in describing the fire walking.

2. If you have ever witnessed or experienced a strange occurrence, or have heard first-hand accounts of one, write as convincing a report of the occurrence as you can. Do not try, at least in any obvious way, to heighten the strangeness. Try, rather, to make it seem objectively real. (The scary tricks of the ghost story teller may have the reverse effect, by producing a psychological thrill that will not stand inspection.)

3. As you can verify for yourself by introducing the topic of fire walking (or mental telepathy or clairvoyance) into an informal conversation, some people will almost immediately take sides, whether they are well informed or not. Is it fair to say that one class of persons will show skepticism or offer to explain the subject away, while another class will try to make difficulties for the skeptics by introducing more evidence or other examples that are harder to explain? If you are a bit enterprising, you can prepare for a lively essay by in fact introducing such a topic into several conversations and observing the results. Instead of trying to arrive at a conclusion about the subject yourself, concentrate on listening to what the arguers are trying to say. For example, you may feel that the unbelievers, or some of them, are "really" saying, "I insist on living in a world that corresponds to what I think is reasonable. I reject a world that has dark corners out of which unexplainable things can jump at you." Or some of the believers may seem to be saying, "I want to believe that wishes can come true. I'm lucky and I like a lucky world." After listening sympathetically, write an essay de-
scribing what you have discerned. This may be mainly a report of the most revealing things said. It may be mainly a charting of the currents of feeling beneath the surface of the arguments.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN From Autobiography: Projects and Improvements

1. Franklin, in writing about his book Poor Richard's Almanack, speaks highly of the value of proverbs. He says they inculcate industry and frugality as the means of obtaining wealth and thus help a man to be more virtuous. Write an essay on proverbial wisdom in which you consider whether or not proverbs do contain "wisdom." What effect do proverbs have on people? Why do they repeat proverbs: to console themselves, or to impress others? Are proverbs a substitute for thinking, or are they a distillation of human experience?
2. Imagining for the moment that you are Franklin, write a critical essay on D. H. Lawrence and his view of life.
3. After reading the essays by D. H. Lawrence and Woodrow Wilson, write an essay on Franklin as a typical American.

D. S. FREEMAN From R. E. Lee: The Answer He Was Born to Make

1. Read the essays by Schlesinger and Wilson to find out what they have to say about heroes and famous Americans. Their generalizations form a context in which you may place what you have learned about Lee and Grant. Write an essay in which you consider these questions: Who are our modern heroes? What characteristics in them do we most admire? How are these heroes useful to us? How do we treat them?
2. The selection on Lee poses the issue of personal allegiance acutely, just as the selections on Socrates do. What modern instances can you think of which raise the same problems? What are the sources of the conflicting claims? What principle can be used to decide which claim is more important? Socrates was called a corrupter of youth and Lee was regarded as a traitor, but the verdict of history has reversed these judgments, which suggests that contemporary opinion is not a satisfactory guide. Write an essay in which you develop a thesis about personal or social loyalty, and use evidence drawn from the essays on Lee and Socrates, or from your own experience.

U. S. GRANT The Surrender at Appomattox

1. After having read the selections by Grant and D. S. Freeman, write a character sketch of Lee or Grant.
2. Look up the word understatement in a dictionary. Then write a report of some event of which you were an eyewitness. Try to imitate Grant's matter-of-fact tone and play down, in the manner of understatement, the emotional possibilities of the situation you are describing.
Ludlow Griscom  The Passing of the Passenger Pigeon: A Lesson in
Biological Survival
1. This brief essay might be called a case history of the evolutionary process.
   Write an essay, using a different example, in which you try to make clear
   the various features of the process, such as adaptation, environment, special-
   ization, biological defects, and survival.
2. In his final paragraph Griscom says, "Biologically speaking, 'Nothing suc-
   ceeds like success.' Mankind himself had better not forget it." Rather
cryptically, Griscom seems to say that change and adaptation are necessary
to survival in nature. Can this same law, if it is one, be applied to personal
and social life? Write an essay in which you seek to show that some person
or some group failed to survive because they disregarded this fundamental
rule of nature.
3. Griscom's essay appears to treat "survival" as the most important good.
   Yet there is an old saying that "it is better to be Socrates dissatisfied than
   a pig satisfied," and Socrates chose to die rather than to submit to things
   he thought were evil. For him, survival was not the highest good. Write an
   essay in which you consider some of the issues involved in this large
   question.

Darrell Huff  How to Lie with Statistics
1. Find in current popular magazines and newspapers examples of the reliable
   and the unreliable presentation of factual matters. (You need not confine
   your attention to statistics.) Base an essay on a selection of your evidence
   and show why the material is reliable or not. Obviously it will be useful to
   have examples of both kinds. Then set forth your own opinion of the
   common misrepresentations. (Do they do any harm? Is the public well im-
   munized against them? Are certain kinds acceptable in the interest of pro-
   moting worthy ends? Do the ends justify the means?)
2. Find a single example of misrepresentation of facts. Describe it and, in one
   paragraph, explain what the source of the misrepresentation is.
3. As an exercise in contrasting points of view, write a paragraph or two de-
   scribing a person, a pet, or a meaningful object in statistical terms exclu-
   sively (height, weight, size, color, distinguishing characteristics); then de-
   scribe the same thing more subjectively, to convey your feeling toward it,
   or to evoke an appreciative response from a reader. (See Tomlinson's "A
   Brown Owl."

Shirley Jackson  After You, My Dear Alphonse
1. What Shirley Jackson reveals about the way racial prejudice operates even
   in people who are not consciously prejudiced can also be expressed in ex-
   pository discussion. As an experiment try writing a brief essay which con-
veys the substance of her story. Notice that it shows what some of the common prejudicial assumptions are, that it describes how a person may react when his assumptions are contradicted, and that it illustrates the opposite of prejudice in the relationship between the two boys. There is your basis for at least three paragraphs of exposition. Try to link them by firm transitions. Or, work out a different plan of your own.

2. Some attitudes of our parents and our elders seem unreasonable, or as Johnny says, "screwy." In one paragraph describe one such attitude with some exactness and explain why you do not accept it or would wish to modify it.

WILLIAM JAMES  
On Some Mental Effects of the Earthquake

1. Some investigation of contemporary accounts of the San Francisco "Fire," as the earthquake was euphemistically called, will lead to a better understanding of the originality and clear-headedness of James's account and to an appreciation of how clichés or "stereotypes" can distort and deaden writing. If library resources permit, look up accounts of the earthquake published in periodicals of the time. Choose two that seem representative and compare and contrast them with each other and with James's report.

If the resources of your library do not permit you to reach back as far as the San Francisco earthquake, you can still make a comparable study of a more recent event of a similar kind—such as the Texas City disaster or the sinking of the Andrea Doria.

2. Describe an event of significance in your own life (an unexpected disappointment, leaving home, the important recital, pinch-hitting in the last of the ninth, an achievement, etc.) and try to convey what you felt but avoid merely emotional terms. To gain objectivity, you may prefer to use the third personal pronoun. Guide yourself by James's remark: "I discerned retrospectively certain peculiar ways in which my consciousness had taken in the phenomenon. These ways were quite spontaneous, and, so to speak, inevitable and irresistible."

WILLIAM JAMES  
Two Kinds of Knowledge

1. Define some word by citing half a dozen examples of what you mean. Assume that your audience does not have much theoretical or general knowledge but that it will be able to understand your analysis of examples chosen from daily life.

2. Write an essay in which you try to explain to an intelligent child the meaning of some term like gravitation, magnetism, or growth.

THOMAS JEFFERSON AND OTHERS  
The Declaration of Independence

1. A definition of the term equality. Do not repeat the platitudes you have heard about equality. even if you believe them to be true. Try instead to
specify and explain exactly two or three ways in which men are equal to one another.

2. Equality as an ideal. Should all men be regarded as equal to one another, even if you can prove that they are not? Is there any conflict between the ideal of equality and the ideal of liberty? If, in fact, men are not equal, is it unjust to act as if they were?

3. Fears have recently been expressed that some people nowadays would be afraid to sign the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration says that under some conditions people have a right and a duty to overthrow their government and set up a different one. Is this idea acceptable at the present time? Would people be afraid that they would be called subversive if they supported the claims of the Declaration?

HELEN KELLER From The Story of My Life: My First Word

1. Write a brief account of a moment of discovery. It may be a sudden moment of insight, of surprise, or even of disappointment. It may belong to your childhood or to the past week. The important thing will be to try to convey what the actual moment felt like and what it signified. If you avoid irrelevancies, a paragraph or two should suffice.

2. The effort to teach another person how to do something can be frustrating or rewarding, or both. Briefly narrate such an attempt, successful or unsuccessful. Then comment on the experience. What are the hazards or obstacles? How can they be minimized? Another way to handle the same question is to narrate the experience twice: once from the point of view of the learner, once from that of the teacher.

3. Is Helen Keller famous only as a person who surmounted a formidable handicap or for other reasons as well? Using the resources of the library, find out the answer to this question and briefly report your findings. Make this an objective report rather than an emotional tribute to Helen Keller.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH The Microscopic Eye: Some Thoughts on the Form of Nature

1. Adapting to your own purposes Krutch’s short walk that is different every day, carefully observe the same short stretch of street, road, path, field, or river bank every day for several days, and make notes either during your walk or right afterward. At the end of this period of observation, write an essay built on details, and tell what changed from day to day, or did not. You need not concentrate on “nature.” A city street will yield from day to day particular evidences of what is going on in some bit of the world. But try for unity of observation—clues that show one sort of thing, such as economic activity, people’s habits, or bird life. (You might accomplish similar results in a single day by covering the same route four or five times at different hours.)
2. Much of Krutch's essay derives from a long-established theological "proof" of the existence and attributes of God. This proof is called "the argument from design" and goes—to put it rather simply—like this: the delicacy, stability, order, and functionalism of patterns in organic and inorganic nature can hardly be accidental, must be purposive, and so bear witness to the hand and mind of a Creator. If you know something of natural science and have a speculative turn of mind, you might like to undertake this subject in terms of a specific natural form and function (such as an eye or a spider's web). After having explained the delicacy, functionalism, etc., proceed to discuss the question of what such order signifies—or whether it signifies anything at all. But do not undertake this topic unless you are prepared to marshall your ideas smartly and objectively.

D. H. LAWRENCE Benjamin Franklin

1. Contrast the opinions of Franklin and Lawrence.
2. Write an essay on one of the following statements from Lawrence's essay.
   a. "The Perfectibility of Man! Ah, Heaven, what a dreary theme!"
   b. "I am a moral animal. But I am not a moral machine."
   c. "SILENCE Be still when you have nothing to say; when genuine passion moves you, say what you've got to say, and say it fast."
3. Write an essay in which you seek to explain that Lawrence is not practicing what he preaches. For example, you might begin with the idea that Lawrence is just as much of an "educator" as Franklin, and then go on to show that his list of virtues is, in its way, just as prescriptive and demanding as Franklin's list.

C. S. LEWIS The Abolition of Man

1. If you have read Aldous Huxley's Brave New World, write an interpretation of Huxley's satire in the light of Lewis' idea of "the Conditioners." Upon what biological innovations does Huxley's imagined society rest? Who runs that society and by what principles? Since everyone is "happy" in that society, is there any fault to be found with it? Is John Savage a representative of the Tao? If so, what is the significance of what happens to him at the end? These are some of the questions that might arise in your preparation of an interpretive essay.
2. A similar study might be made of Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four. For what purpose does the society which he describes exist? What are O'Brien's basic motives? What is the purpose of inventing the language of "Newspeak"? Are there any representatives of the Tao in Orwell's imagined society? Orwell shows one deeply felt love affair threatening the fabric of the totalitarian society. Does this idea accord with Lewis' view of the Tao, or does it indicate that Orwell looks elsewhere for values? At the end of the novel is there any "way out" suggested?
3. Many people feel that scientific experimentation upon animals, let alone upon human beings, is morally dubious or wrong. Construct a reasoned argument for or against such experimentation upon animals or people. Note that this essay will require you to make some clear distinctions. If you approve some experimentation, why that and not all? If you approve animal experimentation generally, how do you draw a line between that and experiments upon human subjects? Or do you approve of some experimentation upon people but not all? How and where will you draw whatever lines you draw? Do you believe that there are some classes of persons upon whom experiments may be conducted with or without their consent? What values are you affirming at each point where you draw a line? Your essay should consist of a discussion of the problem, once you have limited it in any way that seems good, and of a discussion of the values which you have invoked in establishing your position. Are they scientific? Practical? Religious? Purely personal?

KEN MACRORIE  World's Best Directions Writer

1. Write a readable, fully developed explanation of how to carry out some process that you understand well but that may be unfamiliar, in detail at least, to your readers: how to select, prepare, and broil a steak, how to pitch an overnight camp, how to seed a lawn, how to erect and trim a Christmas tree, how to have a quick picnic—and so on. After writing your explanation in lively standard English, reduce it to a series of unmistakably clear, economically worded directions.

2. Mr. Zybowskii, the Directions Writer, calls the language of advertising "slush." Examine with his kind of minute care the language of the advertising in a popular magazine. You will probably find that the language is of several kinds and that you can classify them according to the product or service being advertised and the audience being courted. Report your findings, with examples, in an essay that attempts to judge whether Mr. Zybow- ski's epithet is ever justified.

JAMES MADISON  From The Federalist: The Control of Faction

1. A definition of a republic and a democracy in order to display the differences between the two.
2. The superiority of a republic over a democracy.
3. The case for the minority in government. Should the majority always rule? What restraints, if any, should be placed on the majority?
4. What characteristic features of human nature have you observed operating in student self-government? What organizational solutions are there to some of the problems of student self-government?
5. A contrast between the views of human nature shown in the Declaration of Independence and "The Control of Faction."
636 SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING

GUY DE MAUPASSANT   Happiness

1. The narrator tells the story of the man and woman in “Happiness” to prove that there is such a thing as constant love. To this end he focuses on details that reveal this quality and omits all irrelevant or conflicting ideas. Select a person of your acquaintance who is notably generous, ambitious, courageous, or reckless. Describe an incident or action involving this person which illustrates this one trait. Try to limit your description, as de Maupassant does, to material that bears directly on the point you are making. Try also to convey the idea through significant speech, action, and other concrete details, rather than by direct statement.

2. In “Happiness” the author shows that the listeners did not all make the same judgments about the woman’s choice. Think of an occasion when you have observed a similar conflict regarding the rightness or wrongness of some action. What was the issue? State briefly and clearly the position of the opponents. Analyze these different points of view: what rational support exists for each? What irrational motives are evident? Make your own judgment and analyze it in the same way.

ELTON MAYO   From The Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization: The First Inquiry

1. After getting clear in your mind the distinction between “knowledge-about” and “knowledge-of-acquaintance,” (see William James, “Two Kinds of Knowledge”) write a short paper in which you try to show how this distinction can be usefully applied to your own experience.

2. In this selection Mayo finds fault with the idea of “self-interest” as a sufficient motive to explain human action. Read Madison, “The Control of Faction,” find out what Madison’s idea of self-interest is, and write a report of the differences between the views of these two writers.

ARTHUR MILLER   University of Michigan

1. Write an argumentative essay based on the structural principle of contrast. Advocate some course of action or point out how one condition is superior to another by isolating the major features of each and then by showing the important differences which make what you are advocating better than the contrasting alternative.

2. Of the courses you have taken in the last two or three years, which has been the most valuable? (“Valuable” here does not necessarily mean useful.) Describe the course and explain what you think you learned. Having done so, define “valuable,” and apply your definition to the course. Try to analyze the causes of your satisfaction: the course material? Your own growing maturity? The instructor? Some specific effect on your conduct or your future? What suggestions do you have to make that would produce more courses like the one you value?
C. Wright Mills  From *The Causes of World War Three*: The Pivotal Decision

1. Write a persuasive editorial (not more than two or three well-developed paragraphs) showing what you object to in some prevailing practice which you have observed personally.

2. When a deadlock exists between two people or between two groups of people, what are some of the means by which it can be resolved? Superior logic? Superior force? Mediation? Carefully describe such a deadlock, showing what led to it, and then discuss either the actual or the hypothetical means of dealing with it. Keep to affairs that you yourself have observed in school, church, business, or club.

3. One good way to gain some perspective on American and Russian relations is to read the comments that appear in newspapers and periodicals published in other countries. If your library resources permit, read several foreign magazines or periodicals that comment on Russian and American affairs, then write an essay reporting on the differences in point of view that you have noticed. (If you do not read foreign languages readily, you can find Canadian, Australian, Indian, and Irish periodicals that will afford interesting vantage points.)

Albert Jay Nock  Utopia in Pennsylvania: The Amish

1. The Amish are by no means the only group that has its own customs and practices in our pluralistic society. Choose some similar group with which you are already rather familiar, find out more about it either through conversation or reading, then write an accurate, detailed description of this group, emphasizing those of its features that make it unusual.

2. After your descriptive paper has been returned to you, amplify and revise it in the ways suggested by your instructor. Once you have perfected a fairly substantial description, you are ready for the next step, and that is to explain the significance of the group you have described, just as Nock does. For example, why is the group the way it is? What motivates it? Why does the rest of society allow the group to exist? Is society indifferent because the group is unknown and weak? Why does society not insist that the group conform to the usual pattern? What special virtues, if any, does the group display? These questions are only exemplary. Your job in your essay is to show the particular significance of the group you have described.

Frank O'Connor  The Idealist

1. Regan's attempt to practice the chivalric code which he has idealized is remarkably like the sort of solution that is often proposed for difficulties in personal and social relationships: "If people only would . . ." If students would only study regularly, there would be no need to cram for examina-
tions. If drivers would only remember that courtesy makes for safety, there would be less need for highway patrols. If nations would only keep their pledges, the danger of war would be reduced. All such arguments are really arguments "in a circle." For if "people" already did whatever is wished for in the phrase "would only," there would be no problem to be solved.

Write an essay in which you first describe a condition which needs correction (cheating on examinations, a safety hazard, persistent friction in house meetings). Then propose a practical solution, or, if no complete solution seems possible, a way of alleviating the difficulty. Alternatively, describe a solution that has been proposed but that seems to you inadequate; then put forward a better plan, with reasons. The acuteness of your analysis of the problem will largely determine the effectiveness of your proposed solution.

2. Everyone has at some time found the fulfillment of his plans to be contrary to his expectations. Narrate such an experience (a date, a trip, winning a contest, etc.) either in the first or the third person, and try, as O'Connor does, to gain a perspective from which the significance of your experience can be appreciated, without moralizing.

J. R. OPPENHEIMER The Tree of Knowledge

1. A sustained investigative paper can be based on Oppenheimer's career, in particular the controversy a few years back concerning his trustworthiness to do "sensitive" nuclear research. Write an essay which briefly presents his scientific attainments; then examine with care the charges and countercharges concerning him as a "security risk." If you can, form your own judgment. If you cannot, explain in some detail why you cannot.

2. Another investigative paper: Find out why Dr. Yang and Dr. Lee were awarded the Nobel Prize (1957). Then read in several magazines and newspapers the attempts of the science writers at that time to explain the nature of the discovery for which the prize was awarded. Write an essay reporting the results of your study. (Did any of the writers succeed? How? Or did none? Why not?) Some will have succeeded better than others. In what ways?) Build your discussion around the question of whether such research ought to be and can be reported effectively to the general public.

WILLIAM G. PERRY, JR. Conflicts in the Learning Process: The Student's Response to Teaching

1. After reading Perry's essay, answering the questions about it, and discussing it in class, you should be ready to write a paper on "Maturity" or "Conflict" or "Parents and Children." Use your personal experience (suitably disguised!) and examples drawn from your observation of your friends' lives. Your purpose in the paper should be to try to connect Perry's analysis to your knowledge and reflections. This does not mean that you should
accept what Perry says as necessarily true. Instead you should show that you understand his explanation and then you should test it against what you think is right.

2. One of the key problems in growing up is expressed in Perry's statement: "The only teacher who pulls his rank is the person who refuses to accept either the rank itself or the adolescents' reaction to it." In other words, authority, power, and responsibility—how we understand and react to these—are central to the gaining of maturity. After you have explained Perry's view and tested it, try to show how, in practice, it might be applied to some conflicts over power (between children and parents, between friends). Should we respond to authority in the same way all the time? Should we resist most of the time? How, in a word, can we preserve our integrity and still act in a mature way?

PLATO Last Days of Socrates

1. Write an essay describing the character and personality of Socrates as he appears in the three dialogues. This assignment does not call for explaining Socrates' beliefs at any length but rather emphasizes his temperament, his manner, his qualities in relation to other persons. Support your views by reference to and quotation from the three dialogues. The most successfully conceived essay will center on a very few leading characteristics and will try to discern a central characteristic.

2. Present an argument in the following manner: state the problem; offer as fairly as you can the reasons and evidence that point to a solution which in fact you believe either wrong or defective; then set forth the solution which seems to you superior and show its advantages. Some sample topics: that a more accurate grading system should be employed—either in the direction of dividing the scale of grades into more parts (from 1 to 10 instead of from A to E) or of reducing the scale to Pass, Fail, and Honors; that persons proved to be responsible for serious automobile accidents should be deprived of the license to drive; that teachers should be evaluated by their students as well as students by teachers; that persons who refuse to bear arms for their country should be denied the rights of citizenship. See also the topics suggested in connection with "The Control of Faction.

3. The essay described in the preceding Suggestion can be handled as a dialogue. It must be remembered, however, that the dialogue is an expansive form, and that consequently it will be advisable to limit the discussion to a few clearly definable points.

J. F. POWERS Blue Island

1. In one paragraph describe a room that expresses the interests, values, or character of the person or persons who use it. Rely on details to convey your impression; do not comment directly.
2. Most people have an image of their own success, either as a condition to be achieved or as a hidden potential which circumstances have held in check. The image is not always a healthy one, but it is worth looking at, nevertheless. Picture yourself as you would be at five o’clock on an April afternoon five years from the present, if your idea of your own happiness could be realized. Or, project the image of success which you believe suits a person whom you know well. Whichever you choose, write in the third person and make plentiful use of significant detail to keep the picture from becoming too subjective.

BERTRAND RUSSELL  

The Future of Mankind

In this essay Russell seems to argue that, since a third World War will probably result in atomic annihilation, it is better to submit to a tyranny that will ultimately disappear than to resist it. This point of view is quite opposed to Patrick Henry’s, “Give me liberty or give me Death,” and to Socrates’ answer to his judges in the *Apology*. Write an essay in which you examine the case for both these opinions. Consider also whether or not there is a middle way between these extremes. Given our present circumstances, which seems to you the better course to follow, Russell’s or Henry’s?

GAETANO SALVEMINI  

What Is Culture?

1. Salvemini insists that much culture is acquired outside of school. Keeping in mind his four categories of culture—intellectual, aesthetic, moral, and physical—take stock of what you have learned in the last three or four years, then develop an essay on the value of what you have learned outside of school. Your essay may very well center on one kind of culture and upon a single major experience or influence.

2. Although a great many insincere generalities are asserted about the value of sports in developing good personal qualities, it is still possible to write candidly and vividly about the value of sports if you yourself know some sport thoroughly and love it. If you do, write an essay on the satisfactions that the sport has given you. (Churchill’s essay on “Painting As a Pastime”—though far more elaborate than the essay you will undertake—shows how the satisfactions of an amateur can be communicated.)

3. You have probably been fortunate enough to know at least a few people who were “cultured”—in Salvemini’s sense or in some other. After considering what qualities go to make up a cultured person, write an essay describing one such person whom you have known. To do this you will not have to construct a general definition of culture, but you will need to define with convincing evidence the qualities of the person you describe.

ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER, JR.  

The Decline of Greatness

1. Look back upon some significant decision that you have made (in choice of college or vocation, in taking a summer job, in joining or not joining
an organization) and discuss as objectively as you can the causes (not the reasons) that affected your decision. Then try to confront the admittedly hard question, “After the causes and influences are taken into account, what part did I have in making the decision?” (The answer might be “all” or “none” or something between.)

2. Write a short essay on “What Schlesinger Means by Greatness.” This should be based on the examples he offers as well as upon what he says generally about “heroism.”

3. Schlesinger writes that “it is manifestly unfair to praise or punish people for acts which are by definition beyond their control.” If you accept this principle, write an essay on how to determine whether in any given case a person should be held accountable for his actions. Develop your analysis in reference to a specific class of infractions—for example, dishonesty on examinations, reckless driving, or shoplifting. You may wish to present the same infraction as committed by two different people, or by the same person under different circumstances. (Notice that the infraction must not be in doubt; it is the “motive” or degree of responsibility which is at issue.) If you are what Schlesinger would call a “fatalist,” you can undertake to explain how you view the question of responsibility in such practical matters as operating an automobile or caring for children.

MAX SHULMAN  Love Is a Fallacy

Look up several analogies in the Rhetorical Index at the back of this book, and submit each analogy to the tests which Shulman’s narrator uses to detect false analogy. Then write a report of your findings. Quote evidence to support your decisions. (Make certain that you understand what a correct analogy is before you begin your analysis.)

G. R. STEWART  The Smart Ones Got Through

1. Write a paragraph contrasting things as they once were with things at present. Restrict your topic to your own observations: a street corner, your room, an interest that has waxed or waned, a brother or sister.

2. An investigative paper: What may be called the private life of history is contained in family traditions, old letters, photographs, and notebooks, the personal memories of our elders, in village, township, and county records and archives, in the collections made by local historical societies, in the back files of local newspapers. The large events of history take on color and significance when seen from the local and personal viewpoints. Under the guidance of your instructor choose a topic which your family background or your interest in your community will permit you to explore. It may be the story of a grandparent who left Europe for America. It may be the story of the founding of a fire department, a local park, a church. Be alert to the larger historical events which are proceeding simultaneously
with the subject that you are exploring. Back files of newspapers and periodicals may help to give you a more detailed impression of the times with which you deal. Don't hesitate to use actual names and homely facts. Especially be alert to the trustworthiness of your sources of information and accurately describe them. Try to discern the human interest, the significance, the consequences, of the events with which you are concerned, and make this interest or significance the central and guiding theme of the account which you write.

H. D. THOREAU  From Allegash and East Branch: The Indian Guide

1. Having in mind Thoreau's description of the canoe and of the routine of making camp, describe fully some activity which you know well and enjoy. If what you describe is a game or sport, do not give instructions to the novice, but describe what interests you.

2. Making things real: observe a starlit sky for ten minutes; or watch a driver search for a parking space, find one, and park; or watch a child on a playground—in other words, observe a common sight. Then write one or two paragraphs in which you try to make what you have observed objectively clear and convincing. (See also Tomlinson's "A Brown Owl" and Feinberg's "Fire Walking in Ceylon.")

3. Some people found Thoreau personally rather odd, even compared him to an Indian. Thoreau, however, was evidently fascinated by the differences between himself and his Indian guide. Try in a brief essay to give a vivid impression of a person who seems rather strange to you—the kind of person of whom one says, "I don't understand him at all." The sense of difference is not the same as dislike and may even make ground for friendship. You may wish to bear in mind that (as in the case of Thoreau and his guide) the two persons who seem alien to each other may be in some ways curiously alike.

ALEXIS DE TOQUEVILLE  From Democracy in America: The Tyranny of the Majority

1. Are there some circumstances in ordinary life in which decision by a majority would be foolish or awkward, although possible? (Consider family life, education, sports.) Choose a single example of a decision not reached by majority vote and show that voting would or would not be an improvement. (The example must be one in which a majority vote is at least conceivable.) This essay need not be more than two paragraphs long.

2. Auden argues that laws (made by a majority in a democracy) ought not to be passed concerning actions that do not violate the rights of others. De Tocqueville argues that the mere pressure of majority opinion has a restrictive effect upon the uttering of ideas that the majority regards as subversive or otherwise objectionable. Consider censorship, either official or unofficial. Try, in a developed essay that is well supplied with actual or
hypothetical examples, to distinguish between acceptable or necessary censorship and unacceptable. If you can deal with censorship which you have observed in your community or church or college, your essay will gain in assurance and particularity. But here is a hypothetical case: representatives of several civic clubs which are probably a fairly good reflection of "public opinion" informally notify newsstand operators that their business will suffer unless they remove from sale a number of magazines that are alleged to be "sexy" and harmful to the morals of teen-agers, or a number of paperback books which are alleged to disseminate un-American ideas. What should the newsstand operator do? What should the community do?

H. M. Tomlinson A Brown Owl

1. As an experiment, write a short character sketch twice. First, in a few paragraphs write a thoroughly objective and factual account of someone whom you know well, or of an animal or bird, if you prefer. Organize each paragraph to present a major characteristic (note that this is not a biography); meticulously keep back your own relationship with the person described. Support your general points with particulars and illustrations. Next, develop the sketch more personally, not hesitating to set forth your interpretation of the facts and including your own relationship with the person described.

2. Do animals and birds have what may be called "personality," or is that an illusion which illustrates our tendency to project our feelings sentimentally? Develop what seems to you a reasonable argument on this topic. But this you can hardly do unless you have had the opportunity to observe an animal or bird closely over a considerable period of time.

3. As objectively as you can, observe for at least a quarter of an hour an animal or a person whom you do not know. Then simply describe, with the greatest accuracy and detachment that you can achieve, what you have observed. You may wish to discuss, also, what deductions you made concerning the inner experience and personal qualities of the subject that you observed and to analyze the meaningful clues.

Anthony Trollope From Autobiography: My Mother

Write an account of the character of some person you know at least fairly well. Explain what he does and how well he does it. Deal with the good and bad features of his character, with emphasis on the very worst and very best. Try to imitate Trollope's simplicity and clarity of style by being as honest and straightforward as good taste allows.

Mark Twain From Life on the Mississippi: A Pilot's Needs

1. Write a first person account of how somebody taught you "the hard way" to do something. Make yourself the victim and try to show that, in addition
to your “lesson,” you learned to laugh at yourself a little.

2. This selection contains generalizations and examples which, taken together, could be worked into a theory and plan of education. Write a brief report on the objectives and methods of education according to Mark Twain.

3. With the idea in mind of writing an essay about your experience, spend an hour visiting a class in which you are not enrolled. Take careful notes about what you see and hear. How many students are there? What does the instructor look like? Describe his manner. What are the students wearing? What sort of a room are they in? How do the students act? What do they say? Try to distinguish and name the tone of their actions and words. You will be surprised to find how difficult this is to do, but don’t fake it. Try very hard for accuracy and inclusiveness.

Now on the basis of your observations, explain what was really going on in that room. Of course, there was an instructor lecturing or students reciting, but that was on the surface. What about the relations between the instructor and the students? What judgments and preferences were revealed? Did the students like one another? Were they competing? Were they bored? If you were a visitor from Mars, what would you decide was going on? With your descriptive data and the notes you have made of your reflections on the data, write an essay giving an account of this experience in observing a familiar scene.

MARK TWAIN

The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg

1. The man that corrupted Hadleyburg explained, “As soon as I found out that you carefully and vigilantly kept yourselves and your children out of temptation, I knew how to proceed. Why, you simple creatures, the weakest of all weak things is a virtue which has not been tested in the fire.” The issues posed here are too complex to be argued briefly (witness the length of Twain’s story), but a particular instance can be isolated. Most American colleges and universities impose more or less severe rules for student conduct, particularly in college housing. Some impose restrictions on the circulation of some kinds of literature or upon sponsoring lectures by “Communists” or “atheists.” Write an essay in which you criticize or defend some such body of regulations, and focus your discussion on the quotation from Mark Twain. (There are, of course, other principles which might be invoked.) Note that you may agree with Twain wholly, in part, or not at all, and that you may have to recognize questions of degree of restriction and degree of responsibility. But do not avoid making a commitment of your own opinion finally. For example, you might wish to argue that while maturity of judgment can be attained only through experience, still that maturity must come gradually, and that restrictions are needed (but here the question of degree arises) along the way toward maturity. Or, you might argue that no maturity will be achieved while excessive protection exists. To deal convincingly with your subject, make sure that you know and do not distort the actual facts. (If existing restrictions have loopholes in them, say so.) One feasible plan would be to present the facts,
then to explain your principle, then to analyze the facts in the light of the principle, then to state your conclusion. Remember that the discrepancy that always exists between what we resolve to do or profess to believe and what we actually do is a fundamental basis of tolerance and of comedy. Without trying to be funny, preserve the awareness of humor.

2. Probably everyone has made fine resolves and failed to keep them. From observation or personal experience write the chronicle of a comic failure of good intentions. It may seem natural to write it in the first person, but it might prove better to do it in the third person, for the sake of gaining more detachment and perhaps thereby more control.

Mark Twain    Traveling with a Reformer

1. One of the reasons that Mark Twain's account of the Major's reforming zeal is interesting is that Twain takes the time to tell in detail what happened, what the Major said, what his opponent said, and what the outcome was. In other words, although Twain doesn't try to get everything in, he does concentrate on including many exact details instead of summary generalizations.

Write an account of some encounter or dispute you have had when you thought you were being treated unfairly or deprived of your rights. What were the circumstances? Why didn't you just give in at the beginning? What was your state of mind? What tone did you use in speaking? Were you as calm as Mark Twain's major and as persistent? Did you get angry? After the affair was over, did you think of all the clever things you should have said?

These are only a few questions to consider. Your main object is to put down in some detail the substance of what happened and the state of mind of those (including yourself) who were involved. After you have done this, you should go on to draw whatever inferences or make whatever generalizations (but very briefly) seem to you appropriate.

2. The Major thinks that rights are abused because people do not protest enough. From your own observation of a particular group describe instances in which people let themselves be imposed upon. In each example tell what means the people had of protecting themselves; what the probable results would have been if they had asserted their rights; what motives they had for tolerating the abuse.

From all these instances draw a general conclusion about some group (e.g., students, citizens of a particular town) and about why abuses exist (e.g., calculated selfishness, thoughtlessness, or ignorance).

Peter Viereck    Indefensible and Uninhabitable

It is sometimes argued that it is a mistake to have laws or rules that forbid people to do what some of them are going to do anyway. For instance,
some young people drink, others want to get married very young, even though these practices may run counter to the laws or rules of their communities. Should the laws and rules be changed, or should they be strictly enforced, with severe penalties for violators? In other words, what should be the relation between the laws and human beings?

Write a thoughtful essay in which you seek to establish what this relation should be. You may choose to work from the general principle to the particular instance or reverse the procedure. Whichever you choose to do, concentrate on the concrete evidence in some familiar situation.

EUDORA WELTY

Ida M'Toy

1. Three methods for describing a character are: (1) Stating your own opinion, as Miss Welty does when she writes that Ida “has in all her ways something of the seer about her.” (2) Showing what other people think of the person; for example, the way the ladies of the town made telephone calls for Ida. (3) Selecting significant facts about the person or quoting remarks which reveal character and letting the reader discover for himself their implications (“I just sit at home and enjoy my fingers.”)

Write a description of a person whom you know and use all of these methods, but concentrate on the third. Try to choose some details that make the character representative of a particular group (business man, sports-car enthusiast, member of a family, etc.) and some details which give him individuality.

2. Eudora Welty says that Ida's life is “in many ways eloquent of duality.” One example of this duality is the fact that her earlier ancestors may well have been tribal kings and her more immediate ancestors were slaves. Write a short essay in which you name and analyze other such examples of the duality in Ida's character.

GEORGE F. WHICHER

Out for Stars: A Meditation on Robert Frost

1. Choose another of Frost's poems, such as “There Are Roughly Zones” or “Good-Bye and Keep Cold,” and write an essay showing what Whicher's discussion adds to your reading of the poem you choose. (It may help to illuminate Whicher's point of view if you listen to a recording of Frost reading the poem.)

2. Having in mind Whicher's description of the Ripton countryside and people, try to capture in not more than a thousand words your impression of a place for which you have a personal feeling (friendly or not) and the sort of people you associate with it. “My Home Town” or “My Neighborhood” may seem the natural topics, but they are not so suitable unless you can write with sufficient detachment to permit good control of your point of view. A place that you know in a less complex way may actually offer you a better topic.
3. Scholars (both teachers and students) are often criticized for living in “an ivory tower” or “a cloister” and for knowing too little and caring too little for the pressing issues of the times. In the light of the last two paragraphs of Whicher’s essay, write a defense of detachment, if you can do it honestly. Or, join the critics. Whichever you do, try to take a realistic point of view; that is, avoid stereotypes and catchwords. This topic will be more readily handled after reading Barr’s “Purely Academic” and Miller’s “University of Michigan.”

E. B. White  The Door

If it were possible to condition human beings through the subconscious so that they would never, under any circumstances, violate rules for traffic safety, would you be in favor of doing so?

Write an essay in which you answer this question, taking into consideration at least some of the following points:

a. Whether you would be willing to undergo this treatment yourself.

b. Other socially desirable results that might be achieved by the same means.

c. Who should decide what ends are “socially desirable.”

d. The dangers that are implicit in this kind of manipulation of individuals.

e. The difference between “conditioning” and “educating.”

Walt Whitman  From Specimen Days: The Civil War

Once you have read a number of the pieces based on personal observation, you may derive pleasure and benefit from keeping a journal of your own for a time. Journal keeping may well be treated as a basic continuing accompaniment to more formal writing assignments or may be made an “experiment” to be carried on for a week or two. James, Feinberg, and Whitman write of notable or unusual events. But Thoreau recounts more ordinary experiences. The keeping of a journal that will prove interesting to a hypothetical second person (who may prove to be the journal-keeper himself in the role of a reader) depends on observing distinctive details of objects and persons and upon registering the emotional experiences in close relationship to physical facts and events. Effectively written journal entries will seldom resemble either diary jottings or “mood music.”

Woodrow Wilson  A Calendar of Great Americans

1. In the light of your reading of the selection on Lee by D. S. Freeman and of the chapter from U. S. Grant’s Memoirs, write an essay on R. E. Lee as a great American.

2. The structure of Wilson’s essay is fairly simple: initial generalization; negative examples; working definition; positive examples; summary and
repetition of definition. Put this useful structure to work in an essay in which you establish and apply a definition.

**Virginia Woolf**  How Should One Read a Book?

1. Students are likely to have heard a good deal about the advantages of "rapid reading." But Mrs. Woolf speaks of "reading for the love of reading, slowly and unprofessionally." Perhaps both sorts have their proper applications. Develop an essay showing, with a few convincing examples, the right use, and possibly the potential absurdities, of each kind. Or, if your interest is high enough, deal with one kind only, its uses and abuses. Your treatment of the topic should of course be reasonable, but it need not be deadly serious.

2. Mrs. Woolf speaks of the "erratic gunfire" of book reviews that are not "well-instructed, vigorous and individual and sincere." With the aid of the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature and the Book Review Digest, look up three or four reviews of a book that you have enjoyed and that was published in your lifetime. In the light of your opinion of the book, how adequate or inadequate are the reviews? Report your findings in an informal essay. Notice that although you need not set up formal standards for book reviews generally, you will have to be clear about the qualities that a good review of the book in question should exhibit. Quote to substantiate your points, but do not rely on quotations to interpret themselves or to convey your estimate of them.

3. Turn, as Mrs. Woolf suggests, to the opening page or two—not more—of novels by Defoe, Jane Austen, and Thomas Hardy (or turn to the opening pages of three stories in this book) and see what you can infer about the interests, temperament, and outlook of the narrator. (You need not, for purposes of this paper, make any distinction between the author himself and the teller of the story.) What evidence will you have? Setting? Choice of characters? Vocabulary and sentence structure? The details which the narrator chooses to emphasize? You may present your findings either as three sketches, without trying to bind them into a unified essay, or you may explain the question that you are investigating and, in conclusion, try to sum up what you have learned about this kind of analysis.

**Lawrence Wylie**  From A Village in the Vaucluse: An American Looks at a French School

Sketch the outline of a paper comparing what you have read here about French education with what you know about American elementary school life from first-hand observation. Make notes about the principal points and list as many details and illustrative examples as come to your mind readily. With all this material, write a paper in which you describe and explain one major difference between French and American elementary education.
Rhetorical Index

This index is intended to enable the instructor or student to locate quickly a passage or a whole selection which illustrates a particular rhetorical device or term. The index is neither comprehensive nor exhaustive; not all the possible categories are included, and not all the possible examples are listed. The aim has been to indicate a few clear applications of the most commonly used devices or terms. Listings are by author's name, followed by numbers referring to the page or pages on which the example is to be found. When an entire selection is cited, the page on which the piece begins is followed by "ff."; e.g., "Mills, 504 ff."

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