

Reveries of a Schoolmaster eBook

Reveries of a Schoolmaster

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Contents

Reveries of a Schoolmaster eBook.....	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	6
Page 1.....	7
Page 2.....	9
Page 3.....	10
Page 4.....	11
Page 5.....	13
Page 6.....	14
Page 7.....	15
Page 8.....	16
Page 9.....	17
Page 10.....	19
Page 11.....	20
Page 12.....	21
Page 13.....	22
Page 14.....	23
Page 15.....	24
Page 16.....	25
Page 17.....	26
Page 18.....	27
Page 19.....	28
Page 20.....	30
Page 21.....	31
Page 22.....	32



Page 23..... 33
Page 24..... 34
Page 25..... 35
Page 26..... 36
Page 27..... 37
Page 28..... 39
Page 29..... 40
Page 30..... 41
Page 31..... 43
Page 32..... 44
Page 33..... 45
Page 34..... 46
Page 35..... 47
Page 36..... 48
Page 37..... 49
Page 38..... 50
Page 39..... 51
Page 40..... 52
Page 41..... 53
Page 42..... 54
Page 43..... 55
Page 44..... 56
Page 45..... 57
Page 46..... 58
Page 47..... 59
Page 48..... 60



[Page 49..... 61](#)

[Page 50..... 62](#)

[Page 51..... 63](#)

[Page 52..... 64](#)

[Page 53..... 65](#)

[Page 54..... 66](#)

[Page 55..... 67](#)

[Page 56..... 68](#)

[Page 57..... 69](#)

[Page 58..... 70](#)

[Page 59..... 71](#)

[Page 60..... 72](#)

[Page 61..... 73](#)

[Page 62..... 74](#)

[Page 63..... 75](#)

[Page 64..... 76](#)

[Page 65..... 78](#)

[Page 66..... 80](#)

[Page 67..... 81](#)

[Page 68..... 82](#)

[Page 69..... 84](#)

[Page 70..... 85](#)

[Page 71..... 87](#)

[Page 72..... 89](#)

[Page 73..... 91](#)

[Page 74..... 92](#)



[Page 75..... 93](#)
[Page 76..... 94](#)
[Page 77..... 95](#)
[Page 78..... 96](#)
[Page 79..... 97](#)
[Page 80..... 99](#)
[Page 81..... 100](#)
[Page 82..... 101](#)
[Page 83..... 102](#)
[Page 84..... 103](#)
[Page 85..... 104](#)
[Page 86..... 106](#)
[Page 87..... 107](#)
[Page 88..... 108](#)



Table of Contents

Section	Table of Contents	Page
Start of eBook		1
CHAPTER		1
CHAPTER I		1
CHAPTER II		4
CHAPTER III		7
CHAPTER IV		9
CHAPTER V		13
CHAPTER VI		15
CHAPTER VII		19
CHAPTER VIII		21
CHAPTER IX		24
CHAPTER X		27
CHAPTER XI		30
CHAPTER XII		32
CHAPTER XIII		35
CHAPTER XIV		37
CHAPTER XV		40
CHAPTER XVI		43
CHAPTER XVII		46
CHAPTER XVIII		48
CHAPTER XIX		51
CHAPTER XX		54
CHAPTER XXI		56
CHAPTER XXII		59
CHAPTER XXIII		62
CHAPTER XXIV		64
CHAPTER XXV		67
CHAPTER XXVI		70
CHAPTER XXVII		73
CHAPTER XXVIII		76
CHAPTER XXIX		79
CHAPTER XXX		82
CHAPTER XXXI		85



Page 1

CHAPTER

- I. *In medias res*
- II. Retrospect
- III. Brown
- IV. Psychological
- V. Balking
- VI. Lanterns
- VII. Complete living
- VIII. My speech
- IX. School-teaching
- X. Beefsteak
- XI. Freedom
- XII. Things
- XIII. Targets
- XIV. Sinners
- XV. Hoeing potatoes
- XVI. Changing the mind
- XVII. The point of view
- XVIII. Picnics
- XIX. Make-believe
- XX. Behavior
- XXI. Forefingers
- XXII. Story-telling
- XXIII. Grandmother
- XXIV. My world
- XXV. This or that
- XXVI. Rabbit pedagogy
- XXVII. Perspective
- XXVIII. Purely pedagogical
- XXIX. Longevity
- XXX. Four-leaf clover
- XXXI. Mountain-climbing

REVERIES OF A SCHOOLMASTER

CHAPTER I

IN MEDIAS RES

I am rather glad now that I took a little dip (one could scarce call it a baptism) into the Latin, and especially into Horace, for that good soul gave me the expression *in medias*



res. That is a forceful expression, right to the heart of things, and applies equally well to the writing of a composition or the eating of a watermelon. Those who have crossed the Channel, from Folkstone to Boulogne, know that the stanch little ship *Invicta* had scarcely left dock when they were *in medias res*. They were conscious of it, too, if indeed they were conscious of anything not strictly personal to themselves. This expression admits us at once to the light and warmth (if such there be) of the inner temple nor keeps us shivering out in the vestibule.

Writers of biography are wont to keep us waiting too long for happenings that are really worth our while. They tell us that some one was born at such a time, as if that were really important. Why, anybody can be born, but it requires some years to determine whether his being born was a matter of importance either to himself or to others. When I write my biographical sketch of William Shakespeare I shall say that in a certain year he wrote "Hamlet," which fact clearly justified his being born so many years earlier.

The good old lady said of her pastor: "He enters the pulpit, takes his text, and then the dear man just goes everywhere preaching the Gospel." That man had a special aptitude for the *in medias res* method of procedure. Many children in school who are not versed in Latin would be glad to have their teachers endowed with this aptitude. They are impatient of preliminaries, both in the school and at the dinner-table. And it is pretty difficult to discover just where childhood leaves off in this respect.



Page 2

So I am grateful to Horace for the expression. Having started right in the midst of things, one can never get off the subject, and that is a great comfort. Sometimes college graduates confess (or perhaps boast) that they have forgotten their Latin. I fear to follow their example lest my neighbor, who often drops in for a friendly chat, might get to wondering whether I have not also forgotten much of the English I am supposed to have acquired in college. He might regard my English as quite as feeble when compared with Shakespeare or Milton as my Latin when compared with Cicero or Virgil. So I take counsel with prudence and keep silent on the subject of Latin.

When I am taking a stroll in the woods, as I delight to do in the autumn-time, laundering my soul with the gorgeous colors, the music of the rustling leaves, the majestic silences, and the sounds that are less and more than sounds, I often wonder, when I take one bypath, what experiences I might have had if I had taken the other. I'll never know, of course, but I keep on wondering. So it is with this Latin. I wonder how much worse matters could or would have been if I had never studied it at all. As the old man said to the young fellow who consulted him as to getting married: "You'll be sorry if you do, and sorry if you don't." I used to feel a sort of pity for my pupils to think how they would have had no education at all if they had not had me as their teacher; now I am beginning to wonder how much further along they might have been if they had had some other teacher. But probably most of the misfits in life are in the imagination, after all. We all think the huckleberries are more abundant on the other bush.

Hoeing potatoes is a calm, serene, dignified, and philosophical enterprise. But at bottom it is much the same in principle as teaching school. In my potato-patch I am merely trying to create situations that are favorable to growth, and in the school I can do neither more nor better. I cannot cause either boys or potatoes to grow. If I could, I'd certainly have the process patented. I know no more about how potatoes grow than I do about the fourth dimension or the unearned increment. But they grow in spite of my ignorance, and I know that there are certain conditions in which they flourish. So the best I can do is to make conditions favorable. Nor do I bother about the weeds. I just centre my attention and my hoe upon loosening the soil and let the weeds look out for themselves. Hoeing potatoes is a synthetic process, but cutting weeds is analytic, and synthesis is better, both for potatoes and for boys. In good time, if the boy is kept growing, he will have outgrown his stone-bruises, his chapped hands, his freckles, his warts, and his physical and spiritual awkwardness. The weeds will have disappeared.

Page 3

The potato-patch is your true pedagogical laboratory and conservatory. If one cannot learn pedagogy there it is no fault of the potato-patch. Horace must have thought of *in medias res* while hoeing potatoes. There is no other way to do it, and that is bed-rock pedagogy. Just to get right at the work and do it, that's the very thing the teacher is striving toward. Here among my potatoes I am actuated by motives, I invest the subject with human interest, I experience motor activities, I react, I function, and I go so far as to evaluate. Indeed, I run the entire gamut. And then, when I am lying beneath the canopy of the wide-spreading tree, I do a bit of research work in trying to locate the sorest muscle. And, as to efficiency, well, I give myself a high grade in that and shall pass *cum laude* if the matter is left to me. If our grading were based upon effort rather than achievement, I could bring my aching back into court, if not my potatoes. But our system of grading in the schools demands potatoes, no matter much how obtained, with scant credit for backaches.

We have farm ballads and farm arithmetics, but as yet no one has written for us a book on farm pedagogy. I'd do it myself but for the feeling that some Strayer, or McMurry, or O'Shea will get right at it as soon as he has come upon this suggestion. That's my one great trouble. The other fellow has the thing done before I can get around to it. I would have written "The Message to Garcia," but Mr. Hubbard anticipated me. Then, I was just ready to write a luminous description of Yellowstone Falls when I happened upon the one that DeWitt Talmage wrote, and I could see no reason for writing another. So it is. I seem always to be just too late. I wish now that I had written "Recessional" before Kipling got to it. No doubt, the same thing will happen with my farm pedagogy. If one could only stake a claim in all this matter of writing as they do in the mining regions, the whole thing would be simplified. I'd stake my claim on farm pedagogy and then go on hoeing my potatoes while thinking out what to say on the subject.

Whoever writes the book will do well to show how catching a boy is analogous to catching a colt out in the pasture. Both feats require tact and, at the very least, horse-sense. The other day I wanted to catch my colt and went out to the pasture for that purpose. There is a hill in the pasture, and I went to the top of this and saw the colt at the far side of the pasture in what we call the swale—low, wet ground, where weeds abound. I didn't want to get my shoes soiled, so I stood on the hill and called and called. The colt looked up now and then and then went on with his own affairs. In my chagrin I was just about ready to get angry when it occurred to me that the colt wasn't angry, and that I ought to show as good sense as a mere horse. That reflection relieved the tension somewhat, and I thought it wise to meditate a bit. Here am



Page 4

I; yonder is the colt. I want him; he doesn't want me. He will not come to me; so I must go to him. Then, what? Oh, yes, native interests—that's it, native interests. I'm much obliged to Professor James for reminding me. Now, just what are the native interests of a colt? Why, oats, of course. So, I must return to the barn and get a pail of oats. An empty pail might do once, but never again. So I must have oats in my pail. Either a colt or a boy becomes shy after he has once been deceived. The boy who fails to get oats in the classroom to-day, will shy off from the teacher to-morrow. He will not even accept her statement that there is oats in the pail, for yesterday the pail was empty—nothing but sound.

But even with pail and oats I had to go to the colt, getting my shoes soiled and my clothes torn, but there was no other way. I must begin where the colt (or boy) is, as the book on pedagogy says. I wanted to stay on the hill where everything was agreeable, but that wouldn't get the colt. Now, if Mr. Charles H. Judd cares to elaborate this outline, I urge no objection and shall not claim the protection of copyright. I shall be only too glad to have him make clear to all of us the pedagogical recipe for catching colts and boys.

CHAPTER II

RETROSPECT

Mr. Patrick Henry was probably correct in saying that there is no way of judging the future but by the past, and, to my thinking, he might well have included the present along with the future. Today is better or worse than yesterday or some other day in the past, just as this cherry pie is better or worse than some past cherry pie. But even this pie may seem a bit less glorious than the pies of the past, because of my jaded appetite—a fact that is easily lost sight of. Folks who extol the glories of the good old times may be forgetting that they are not able to relive the emotions that put the zest into those past events. We used to go to "big meeting" in a two-horse sled, with the wagon-body half filled with hay and heaped high with blankets and robes. The mercury might be low in the tube, but we recked not of that. Our indifference to climatic conditions was not due alone to the wealth of robes and blankets, but the proximity of another member of the human family may have had something to do with it. If we could reconstruct the emotional life of those good old times, the physical conditions would take their rightful place as a background.

If we could only bring back the appetite of former years we might find this pie better than the pies of old. The good brother who seems to think the textbooks of his boyhood days were better than the modern ones forgets that along with the old-time textbooks went skating, rabbit-hunting, snowballing, coasting, fishing, sock-up, bull-pen, two-old-cat,

townball, and shinny-on-the-ice. He is probably confusing those majors with the text-book minor.

Page 5

His criticism of things and books modern is probably a voicing of his regret that he has lost his zeal for the fun and frolic of youth. If he could but drink a few copious drafts from the Fountain of Youth, the books of the present might not seem so inferior after all. The bread and apple-butter stage of our hero's career may seem to dim the lustre of the later porterhouse steak, but with all the glory of the halcyon days of yore it is to be noted that he rides in an automobile and not in an ox-cart, and prefers electricity to the good old oil-lamp.

I concede with enthusiasm the joys of bygone days, and would be glad to repeat those experiences with sundry very specific reservations and exceptions. That thick bread with its generous anointing of apple butter discounted all the nectar and ambrosia of the books and left its marks upon the character as well as the features of the recipient. The mouth waters even now as I recall the bill of fare plus the appetite. But if I were going back to the good old days I'd like to take some of the modern improvements along with me. It thrills me to consider the modern school credits for home work with all the "57 varieties" as an integral feature of the good old days. Alas, how much we missed by not knowing about all this! What miracles might have been wrought had we and our teachers only known! Poor, ignorant teachers! Little did they dream that such wondrous things could ever be. Life might have been made a glad, sweet song for us had it been supplied with these modern attachments. I spent many weary hours over partial payments in Ray's Third Part, when I might have been brushing my teeth or combing my hair instead. Then, instead of threading the mazes of Greene's Analysis and parsing "Thanatopsis," I might just as well have been asleep in the haymow, where ventilation was super-abundant. How proudly could I have produced the home certificate as to my haymow experience and received an exhilarating grade in grammar!

Just here I interrupt myself to let the imagination follow me homeward on the days when grades were issued. The triumphal processions of the Romans would have been mild by comparison. The arch look upon my face, the martial mien, and the flashing eye all betoken the real hero. Then the pride of that home, the sumptuous feast of chicken and angel-food cake, and the parental acclaim—all befitting the stanch upholder of the family honor. Of course, nothing like this ever really happened, which goes to prove that I was born years too early in the world's history. The more I think of this the more acute is my sympathy with Maud Muller. That girl and I could sigh a duet thinking what might have been. Why, I might have had my college degree while still wearing short trousers. I was something of an adept at milking cows and could soon have eliminated the entire algebra by the method of substitution. Milking the cows was one of my regular tasks, anyhow, and I could thus have combined business with pleasure. And if by riding a horse to water I could have gained immunity from the *Commentaries* by one Julius Caesar, full lustily would I have shouted, *a la* Richard III: "A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse!"



Page 6

One man advocates the plan of promoting pupils in the schools on the basis of character, and this plan strongly appeals to me as right, plausible, and altogether feasible. Had this been proposed when I was a schoolboy I probably should have made a few conditions, or at least have asked a few questions. I should certainly have wanted to know who was to be the judge in the matter, and what was his definition of character. Much would have depended upon that. If he had decreed that cruelty to animals indicates a lack of character and then proceeded to denominate as cruelty to animals such innocent diversions as shooting woodpeckers in a cherry-tree with a Flobert rifle, or smoking chipmunks out from a hollow log, or tying a strip of red flannel to a hen's tail to take her mind off the task of trying to hatch a door-knob, or tying a tin can to a dog's tail to encourage him in his laudable enterprise of demonstrating the principle of uniformly accelerated motion—if he had included these and other such like harmless antidotes for ennui in his category, I should certainly have asked to be excused from his character curriculum and should have pursued the even tenor of my ways, splitting kindling, currying the horse, washing the buggy, carrying water from the pump to the kitchen and saying, "Thank you," to my elders as the more agreeable avenue of promotion.

If we had had character credits in the good old days I might have won distinction in school and been saved much embarrassment in later years. Instead of learning the latitude and longitude of Madagascar, Chattahoochee, and Kamchatka, I might have received high grades in geography by abstaining from the chewing of gum, by not wearing my hands in my trousers-pockets, by walking instead of ambling or slouching, by wiping the mud from my shoes before entering the house, by a personally conducted tour through the realms of manicuring, and by learning the position and use of the hat-rack. Getting no school credits for such incidental minors in the great scheme of life, I grew careless and indifferent and acquired a reputation that I do not care to dwell upon. If those who had me in charge, or thought they had, had only been wise and given me school credits for all these things, what a model boy I might have been!

Why, I would have swallowed my pride, donned a kitchen apron, and washed the supper dishes, and no normal boy enjoys that ceremony. By making passes over the dishes I should have been exorcising the spooks of cube root, and that would have been worth some personal sacrifice. What a boon it would have been for the home folks too! They could have indulged their penchant for literary exercises, sitting in the parlor making out certificates for me to carry to my teacher next day, and so all the rough places in the home would have been made smooth. But the crowning achievement would have been my graduation from college. I can see the picture. I am husking corn in the lower field. To reach



Page 7

this field one must go the length of the orchard and then walk across the meadow. It is a crisp autumn day, about ten o'clock in the morning, and the sun is shining. The golden ears are piling up under my magic skill, and there is peace. As I take down another bundle from the shock I descry what seems to be a sort of procession wending its way through the orchard. Then the rail fence is surmounted, and the procession solemnly moves across the meadow. In time the president and an assortment of faculty members stand before me, bedight in caps and gowns. I note that their gowns are liberally garnished with Spanish needles and cockleburs, and their shoes give evidence of contact with elemental mud. But then and there they confer upon me the degree of bachelor of arts *magna cum laude*. But for this interruption I could have finished husking that row before the dinner-horn blew.

CHAPTER III

BROWN

My neighbor came in again this evening, not for anything in particular, but unconsciously proving that men are gregarious animals. I like this neighbor. His name is Brown. I like the name Brown, too. It is easy to pronounce. By a gentle crescendo you go to the summit and then coast to the bottom. The name Brown, when pronounced, is a circumflex accent. Now, if his name had happened to be Moriarity I never could be quite sure when I came to the end in pronouncing it. I'm glad his name is not Moriarity—not because it is Irish, for I like the Irish; so does Brown, for he is married to one of them. Any one who has been in Cork and heard the fine old Irishman say in his musical and inimitable voice, "Tis a lovely dye," such a one will ever after have a snug place in his affections for the Irish, whether he has kissed the "Blarney stone" or not. If he has heard this same driver of a jaunting-car rhapsodize about "Shandon Bells" and the author, Father Prout, his admiration for things and people Irish will become well-nigh a passion. He will not need to add to his mental picture, for the sake of emphasis or color, the cherry-cheeked maids who lead their mites of donkeys along leafy roads, the carts heaped high with cabbages. Even without this addition he will become expansive when he speaks of Ireland and the Irish.

But, as I was saying, Brown came in this evening just to barter small talk, as we often do. Now, in physical build Brown is somewhere between Falstaff and Cassius, while in mental qualities he is an admixture of Plato, Solomon, and Bill Nye.

Page 8

When he drops in we do not discuss matters, nor even converse; we talk. Our talk just oozes out and flows whither it wills, or little wisps of talk drift into the silences, and now and then a dash of homely philosophy splashes into the talking. Brown is a real comfort. He is never cryptic, nor enigmatic, at least consciously so, nor does he ever try to be impressive. If he were a teacher he would attract his pupils by his good sense, his sincerity, his simplicity, and his freedom from pose. I cannot think of him as ever becoming teachery, with a high-pitched voice and a hysteric manner. He has too much poise for that. He would never discuss things with children. He would talk with them. Brown cannot walk on stilts, nor has the air-ship the least fascination for him.

One of my teachers for a time was Doctor T. C. Mendenhall, and he was a great teacher. He could sound the very depths of his subject and simply talk it. He led us to think, and thinking is not a noisy process. Truth to tell, his talks often caused my poor head to ache from overwork. But I have been in classes where the oases of thought were far apart and one could doze and dream on the journey from one to the other. Doctor Mendenhall's teaching was all white meat, sweet to the taste, and altogether nourishing. He is the man who made the first correct copy of Shakespeare's epitaph there in the church at Stratford-on-Avon. I sent a copy of Doctor Mendenhall's version to Mr. Brassinger, the librarian in the Memorial Building, and have often wondered what his comment was. He never told me. There are those "who, having eyes, see not." There had been thousands of people who had looked at that epitaph with the printed copy in hand, and yet had never noticed the discrepancy, and it remained for an American to point out the mistake. But that is Doctor Mendenhall's way. He is nothing if not thorough, and that proves his scientific mind.

Well, Brown fell to talking about the Isle of Pines, in the course of our verbal exchanges, and I drew him out a bit, receiving a liberal education on the subjects of grapefruit, pineapples, and bananas. From my school-days I have carried over the notion that the Caribbean Sea is one of the many geographical myths with which the school-teacher is wont to intimidate boys who would far rather be scaring rabbits out from under a brush heap. But here sits a man who has travelled upon the Caribbean Sea, and therefore there must be such a place. Our youthful fancies do get severe jolts! From my own experience I infer that much of our teaching in the schools doesn't take hold, that the boys and girls tolerate it but do not believe. I cannot recall just when I first began to believe in Mt. Vesuvius, but I am quite certain that it was not in my school-days. It may have been in my teaching-days, but I'm not quite certain. I have often wondered whether we teachers really believe all we try to teach.

Page 9

I feel a pity for poor Sisyphus, poor fellow, rolling that stone to the top of the hill, and then having to do the work all over when the stone rolled to the bottom. But that is not much worse than trying to teach Caribbean Sea and Mt. Vesuvius, if we can't really believe in them. But here is Brown, metamorphosed into a psychologist who begins with the known, yea, delightfully known grapefruit which I had at breakfast, and takes me on a fascinating excursion till I arrive, by alluring stages, at the related unknown, the Caribbean Sea. Too bad that Brown isn't a teacher.

Brown has the gift of holding on to a thing till his craving for knowledge is satisfied. Somewhere he had come upon some question touching a campanile or, possibly, *the Campanile*, as it seemed to him. Nor would he rest content until I had extracted what the books have to say on the subject. He had in mind the Campanile at Venice, not knowing that the one beside the Duomo at Florence is higher than the one at Venice, and that the Leaning Tower at Pisa is a campanile, or bell-tower, also. When I told him that one of my friends saw the Campanile at Venice crumble to a heap of ruins on that Sunday morning back in 1907, and that another friend had been of the last party to go to the top of it the evening before, he became quite excited, and then I knew that I had succeeded in investing the subject with human interest, and I felt quite the schoolmaster. Nothing of this did I mention to Brown, for there is no need to exploit the mental machinery if only you get results.

Many people who travel abroad buy postcards by the score, and seem to feel that they are the original discoverers of the places which these cards portray, and yet these very places were the background of much of their history and geography in the schools. Can it be that their teachers failed to invest these places with human interest, that they were but words in a book and not real to them at all? Must I travel all the way to Yellowstone Park to know a geyser? Alas! in that case, many of us poor school-teachers must go through life geyserless. Wondrous tales and oft heard I in my school-days of glacier, iceberg, canyon, snow-covered mountain, grotto, causeway, and volcano, but not till I came to Grindelwald did I really know what a glacier is. There's many a Doubting Thomas in the schools.

CHAPTER IV

PSYCHOLOGICAL

The psychologist is so insistent in proclaiming his doctrine of negative self-feeling and positive self-feeling that one is impelled to listen out of curiosity, if nothing else. Then, just as you are beginning to get a little glimmering as to his meaning, another one begins to assail your ears with a deal of sesquipedalian English about the emotion of

subjection and the emotion of elation. Just as I began to think I was getting a grip of the thing a college chap came in and proceeded

Page 10

to enlighten me by saying that these two emotions may be generated only by personal relations, and not by relations of persons and things. I was thinking of my emotion of subjection in the presence of an original problem in geometry, but this college person tells me that this negative self-feeling, according to psychology, is experienced only in the presence of another person. Well, I have had that experience, too. In fact, my negative self-feeling is of frequent occurrence. Jacob must have had a rather severe attack of the emotion of subjection when he was trying to escape from the wrath of Esau. But, after his experience at Bethel, where he received a blessing and a promise, there was a shifting from the negative self-feeling to the positive—from the emotion of subjection to that of elation.

The stone which Jacob used that night as a pillow, so we are told, is called the Stone of Scone, and is to be seen in the body of the Coronation Chair in Westminster Abbey. The use of that stone as a part of the chair might seem to be a psychological coincidence, unless, indeed, we can conceive that the fabricators of the chair combined a knowledge of psychology and also of the Bible in its construction. It is an interesting conceit, at any rate, that the stone might bring to kings and queens a blessing and a promise, as it had done for Jacob, averting the emotion of subjection and perpetuating the emotion of elation.

Now, there's Hazzard, the big, glorious Hazzard. I met him first on the deck of the S. S. *Campania*, and I gladly agreed to his proposal that we travel together. He is a large man (one need not be more specific) and a veritable steam-engine of activity and energy. It was altogether natural, therefore, that he should assume the leadership of our party of two in all matters touching places, modes of travel, hotels, and other details large and small, while I trailed along in his wake. This order continued for some days, and I, of course, experienced all the while the emotion of subjection in some degree. When we came to the Isle of Man we puzzled our heads no little over the curious coat of arms of that quaint little country. This coat of arms is three human legs, equidistant from one another. At Peel we made numerous inquiries, and also at Ramsey, but to no avail. In the evening, however, in the hotel at Douglas I saw a picture of this coat of arms, accompanied by the inscription, *Quocumque jeceris stabit*, and gave some sort of translation of it. Then and there came my emancipation, for after that I was consulted and deferred to during all the weeks we were together. It is quite improbable that Hazzard himself realized any change in our relations, but unconsciously paid that subtle tribute to my small knowledge of Latin. When we came to Stratford I did not call upon Miss Marie Corelli, for I had heard that she is quite averse to men as a class, and I feared I might suffer an emotional collapse. I was so comfortable in my newly acquainted emotion of elation that I decided to run no risks.

Page 11

When at length I resumed my schoolmastering I determined to give the boys and girls the benefit of my recent discovery. I saw that I must generate in each one, if possible, the emotion of elation, that I must so arrange school situations that mastery would become a habit with them if they were to become “masters in the kingdom of life,” as my friend Long says it. I saw at once that the difficulties must be made only high enough to incite them to effort, but not so high as to cause discouragement. I recalled the sentence in Harvey’s Grammar: “Milo began to lift the ox when he was a calf.” After we had succeeded in locating the antecedent of “he” we learned from this sentence a lesson of value, and I recalled this lesson in my efforts to inculcate progressive mastery in the boys and girls of my school. I sometimes deferred a difficult problem for a few days till they had lifted the growing calf a few more times, and then returned to it. Some one says that everything is infinitely high that we can’t see over, so I was careful to arrange the barriers just a bit lower than the eye-line of my pupils, and then raise them a trifle on each succeeding day. In this way I strove to generate the positive self-feeling so that there should be no depression and no white flag. And that surely was worth a trip to the Isle of Man, even if one failed to see one of their tailless cats.

I had occasion or, rather, I took occasion at one time to punish a boy with a fair degree of severity (may the Lord forgive me), and now. I know that in so doing I was guilty of a grave error. What I interpreted as misconduct was but a straining at his leash in an effort to extricate himself from the incubus of the negative self-feeling. He was, and probably is, a dull fellow and realized that he could not cope with the other boys in the school studies, and so was but trying to win some notice in other fields of activity. To him notoriety was preferable to obscurity. If I had only been wise I would have turned his inclination to good account and might have helped him to self-mastery, if not to the mastery of algebra. He yearned for the emotion of elation, and I was trying to perpetuate his emotion of subjection. If Methuselah had been a schoolmaster he might have attained proficiency by the time he reached the age of nine hundred and sixty-eight years if he had been a close observer, a close student of methods, and had been willing and able to profit by his own mistakes.

Friend Virgil says something like this: “They can because they think they can,” and I heartily concur. Some one tells us that Kent in “King Lear” got his name from the Anglo-Saxon word can and he was aptly named, in view of Virgil’s statement. But can I cause my boys and girls to think they can? Why, most assuredly, if I am any sort of teacher. Otherwise I ought to be dealing with inanimate things and leave the school work to those who can. I certainly can help

Page 12

young folks to shift from the emotion of subjection to the emotion of elation. I had a puppy that we called Nick and thought I'd like to teach him to go up-stairs. When he came to the first stair he cried and cowered and said, in his language, that it was too high, and that he could never do it. So, in a soothing way, I quoted Virgil at him and placed his front paws upon the step. Then he laughed a bit and said the step wasn't as high as the moon, after all. So I patted him and called him a brave little chap, and he gained the higher level. Then we rested for a bit and spent the time in being glad, for Nick and I had read our "Pollyanna" and had learned the trick of gladness. Well, before the day was over that puppy could go up the stairs without the aid of a teacher, and a gladder dog never was. If I had taken as much pains with that boy as I did with Nick I'd feel far more comfortable right now, and the boy would have felt more comfortable both then and after. O schoolmastering! How many sins are committed in thy name! I succeeded with the puppy, but failed with the boy. A boy does not go to school to study algebra, but studies algebra to learn mastery. I know this now, but did not know it then, more's the pity!

I had another valuable lesson in this phase of pedagogy the day my friend Vance and I sojourned to Indianapolis to call upon Mr. Benjamin Harrison, who had somewhat recently completed his term as President of the United States. We were fortified with ample and satisfactory credentials and had a very fortunate introduction; but for all that we were inclined to walk softly into the presence of greatness, and had a somewhat acute attack of negative self-feeling. However, after due exchange of civilities, we succeeded somehow in preferring the request that had brought us into his presence, and Mr. Harrison's reply served to reassure us. Said he: "Oh, no, boys, I couldn't do that; last year I promised Bok to write some articles for his journal, and I didn't have any fun all summer." His two words, "boys" and "fun," were the magic ones that caused the tension to relax and generated the emotion of elation. We then sat back in our chairs and, possibly, crossed our legs—I can't be certain as to that. At any rate, in a single sentence this man had made us his co-ordinates and caused the negative self-feeling to vanish. Then for a good half-hour he talked in a familiar way about great affairs, and in a style that charmed. He told us of a call he had the day before from David Starr Jordan, who came to report his experience as a member of the commission that had been appointed to adjudicate the controversy between the United States and England touching seal-fishing in the Behring Sea. It may be recalled that this commission consisted of two Americans, two Englishmen, and King Oscar of Sweden. Mr. Harrison told us quite frankly that he felt a mistake had been made in making up the commission,



Page 13

for, with two Americans and two Englishmen on the commission, the sole arbiter in reality was King Oscar, since the other four were reduced to the plane of mere advocates; but, had there been three Americans and two Englishmen, or two Americans and three Englishmen, the function of all would have been clearly judicial. Suffice it to say that this great man made us forget our emotion of subjection, and so made us feel that he would have been a great teacher, just as he was a great statesman. I shall always be grateful for the lesson he taught me and, besides, I am glad that the college chap came in and gave me that psychological massage.

CHAPTER V

BALKING

When I write my book on farm pedagogy I shall certainly make large use of the horse in illustrating the fundamental principles, for he is a noble animal and altogether worthy of the fullest recognition. We often use the expression "horse-sense" somewhat flippantly, but I have often seen a driver who would have been a more useful member of society if he had had as much sense as the horses he was driving. If I were making a catalogue of the "lower animals" I'd certainly include the man who abuses a horse. Why, the celebrated German trick-horse, Hans, had even the psychologists baffled for a long time, but finally he taught them a big chapter in psychology. They finally discovered that his marvellous tricks were accomplished through the power of close observation. Facial expression, twitching of a muscle, movements of the head, these were the things he watched for as his cue in answering questions by indicating the right card. There was a teacher in our school once who wore old-fashioned spectacles. When he wanted us to answer a question in a certain way he unconsciously looked over his spectacles; but when he wanted a different answer he raised his spectacles to his forehead. So we ranked high in our daily grades, but met our Waterloo when the examination came around. That teacher, of course, had never heard of the horse Hans, and so was not aware that in the process of watching his movements we were merely proving that we had horse-sense. He probably attributed our ready answers to the superiority of his teaching, not realizing that our minds were concentrated upon the subject of spectacles.

Of course, a horse balks now and then, and so does a boy. I did a bit of balking myself as a boy, and I am not quite certain that I have even yet become immune. Doctor James Wallace (whose edition of "Anabasis" some of us have read, halting and stumbling along through the parasangs) with three companions went out to Marathon one day from Athens. The distance, as I recall it, is about twenty-two miles, and they left early in the morning, so as to return the same day. Their conveyance was an open wagon with two horses attached. When they had gone a mile or two out of town one of the horses



Page 14

balked and refused to proceed. Then and there each member of the party drew upon his past experiences, seeking a panacea for the equine delinquency. One suggested the plan of building a fire under the recalcitrant horse, while another suggested pouring sand into his ears. Doctor Wallace discouraged these remedies as being cruel and finally told the others to take their places in the wagon and he would try the merits of a plan he had in mind. Accordingly, when they were seated, he clambered over the dash, walked along the wagon-pole, and suddenly plumped himself down upon the horse's back. Then away they went, John Gilpin like, Doctor Wallace's coat-tails and hair streaming out behind.

There was no more balking in the course of the trip, and no one (save, possibly, the horse) had any twinges of conscience to keep him awake that night. The incident is brimful of pedagogy in that it shows that, in order to cure a horse of an attack of balking, you have but to distract his mind from his balking and get him to thinking of something else. Before this occurrence taught me the better way, I was quite prone, in dealing with a balking boy, to hold his mind upon the subject of balking. I told him how unseemly it was, how humiliated his father and mother would be, how he could not grow up to be a useful citizen if he yielded to such tantrums; in short, I ran the gamut of all the pedagogical bromides, and so kept his mind centred upon balking. Now that I have learned better, I strive to divert his mind to something else, and may ask him to go upon some pleasant errand that he may gain some new experiences. When he returns he has forgotten that he was balking and recounts his experiences most delightfully.

Ed was one of the balkiest boys I ever had in my school. His attacks would often last for days, and the more attention you paid to him the worse he balked. In the midst of one of these violent and prolonged attacks a lady came to school who, in the kindness of her generous nature, was proposing to give a boy Joe (now a city alderman) a Christmas present of a new hat. She came to invoke my aid in trying to discover the size of Joe's head. I readily undertook the task, which loomed larger and larger as I came fully to realize that I was the sole member of the committee of ways and means. In my dire perplexity I saw Ed grouching along the hall. Calling him to one side, I explained to the last detail the whole case, and confessed that I did not know how to proceed. At once his face brightened, and he readily agreed to make the discovery for me; and in half an hour I had the information I needed and Ed's face was luminous. Yes, Joe got the hat and Ed quit balking. If Doctor Wallace had not gone to Marathon that day I can scarcely imagine what might have happened to Ed; and Joe might not have received a new hat.



Page 15

I have often wondered whether a horse has a sense of humor. I know a boy has, and I very strongly suspect that the horse has. It was one of my tasks in boyhood to take the horses down to the creek for water. Among others we had a roan two-year-old colt that we called Dick, and even yet I think of him as quite capable of laughter at some of his own mischievous pranks. One day I took him to water, dispensing with the formalities of a bridle, and riding him down through the orchard with no other habiliments than a rope halter. In the orchard were several trees of the bellflower variety, whose branches sagged near to the ground. Dick was going along very decorously and sedately, as if he were studying the golden text or something equally absorbing, when, all at once, some spirit of mischief seemed to possess him and away he bolted, willy-nilly, right under the low-hanging branches of one of those trees. Of course, I was raked fore and aft, and, while I did not imitate the example of Absalom, I afforded a fairly good imitation, with the difference that, through many trials and tribulations, I finally reached the ground. Needless to say that I was a good deal of a wreck, with my clothing much torn and my hands and face not only much torn but also bleeding. After relieving himself of his burden, Dick meandered on down to the creek in leisurely fashion, where I came upon him in due time enjoying a lunch of grass.

Walking toward the creek, sore in body and spirit, I fully made up my mind to have a talk with that colt that he would not soon forget. He had put shame upon me, and I determined to tell him so. But when I came upon him looking so lamblike in his innocence, and when I imagined that I heard him chuckle at my plight, my resolution evaporated, and I realized that in a trial of wits he had got the better of me. Moreover, I conceded right there that he had a right to laugh, and especially when he saw me so superlatively scrambled. He had beaten me on my own ground and convicted me of knowing less than a horse, so I could but yield the palm to him with what grace I could command. Many a time since that day have I been unhorsed, and by a mere boy who laughed at my discomfiture. But I learned my lesson from Dick and have always tried, though grimly, to applaud the victor in the tournament of wits. Only so could I hold the respect of the boy, not to mention my own. If a boy sets a trap for me and I walk into it, well, if he doesn't laugh at me he isn't much of a boy; and if I can't laugh with him I am not much of a schoolmaster.

CHAPTER VI

LANTERNS

Page 16

I may be mistaken, but my impression is that "The Light of the World," by Holman Hunt, is the only celebrated picture in the world of which there are two originals. One of these may be seen at Oxford and the other in St. Paul's, London. Neither is a copy of the other, and yet they are both alike, so far as one may judge without having them side by side. The picture represents Christ standing at a door knocking, with a lantern in one hand from which light is streaming. When I think of a lantern the mind instantly flashes to this picture, to Diogenes and his lantern, and to the old tin lantern with its perforated cylinder which I used to carry out to the barn to arrange the bed-chambers for the horses. All my life have I been hearing folks speak of the association of ideas as if one idea could conjure up innumerable others. The lantern that I carried to the barn never could have been associated with Diogenes if I had not read of the philosopher, nor with the picture at Oxford if I had never seen or heard of it. In order that we have association of ideas, we must first have the ideas, according to my way of thinking.

Thus it chanced that when I came upon some reference to Holman Hunt and his great masterpiece, my mind glanced over to the cynical philosopher and his lantern. The more I ponder over that lantern the more puzzled I become as to its real significance. The popular notion is that it is meant to show how difficult it was in his day to find an honest man. But popular conceptions are sometimes superficial ones, and if Diogenes was the philosopher we take him to have been there must have been more to that lantern than the mere eccentricity of the man who carried it. If we could go back of the lantern we might find the cynic's definition of honesty, and that would be worth knowing. Back home we used to say that an honest man is one who pays his debts and has due respect for property rights. Perhaps Diogenes had gone more deeply into the matter of paying debts as a mark of honesty than those who go no further in their thinking than the grocer, the butcher, and the tax-man.

This all tends to set me thinking of my own debts and the possibility of full payment. I'm just a schoolmaster and people rather expect me to be somewhat visionary or even fantastic in my notions. But, with due allowance for my vagaries, I cannot rid myself of the feeling that I am deeply in debt to somebody for the Venus de Milo. She has the reputation of being the very acme of sculpture, and certainly the Parisians so regard her or they would not pay her such a high tribute in the way of space and position. She is the focus of that whole wonderful gallery. No one has ever had the boldness to give her a place in the market quotations, but I can regale myself with her beauty for a mere pittance. This pittance does not at all cancel my indebtedness, and I come away feeling that I still owe something to somebody, without in the least knowing who it is or how I am to pay. I can't even have the poor satisfaction of making proper acknowledgment to the sculptor.

Page 17

I can acknowledge my obligation to Michael Angelo for the Sistine ceiling, but that doesn't cancel my indebtedness by any means. It took me fifteen years to find the Cumaean Sibyl. I had seen a reproduction of this lady in some book, and had become much interested in her generous physique, her brawny arms, her wide-spreading toes, and her look of concentration as she delves into the mysteries of the massive volume before her. Naturally I became curious as to the original, and wondered if I should ever meet her face to face. Then one day I was lying on my back on a wooden bench in the Sistine Chapel, having duly apologized for my violation of the conventions, when, wonder of wonders, there was the Cumaean Sibyl in full glory right before my eyes, and the quest of all those years was ended in triumph. True, the Sibyl does not compare in greatness with the "Creation of Adam" in one of the central panels, but for all that I was glad to have her definitely localized.

I have never got it clearly figured out just how the letters of the alphabet were evolved, nor who did the work, but I go right on using them as if I had evolved them myself. They seem to be my own personal property, and I jostle them about quite careless of the fact that some one gave them to me. I can't see how I could get on without them, and yet I have never admitted any obligation to their author. The same is true of the digits. I make constant use of them, and sometimes even abuse them, as if I had a clear title to them. I have often wondered who worked out the table of logarithms, and have thought how much more agreeable life has been for many people because of his work. I know my own debt to him is large, and I dare say many others have a like feeling. Even the eighth-grade boys in the Castle Road school, London, share this feeling, doubtless, for in a test in arithmetic that I saw there I noted that in four of the twelve problems set for solution they had permission to use their table of logarithms. They probably got home earlier for supper by their use of this table.

I hereby make my humble apologies to Mr. Thomas A. Edison for my thoughtlessness in not writing to him before this to thank him for his many acts of kindness to me. I have been exceedingly careless in the matter. I owe him for the comfort and convenience of this beautiful electric light, and yet have never mentioned the matter to him. He has a right to think me an ingrate. I have been so busy enjoying the gifts he has sent me that I have been negligent of the giver. As I think of all my debts to scientists, inventors, artists, poets, and statesmen, and consider how impossible it is for me to pay all my debts to all these, try as I may, I begin to see how difficult it was for Diogenes to find a man who paid all his debts in full. Hence, the lantern.

Page 18

It seems to me that, of the varieties of late potatoes the Carmen is the premier. Part of the charm of hoeing potatoes lies in anticipating the joys of the potato properly baked. Charles Lamb may write of his roast pig, and the epicures among the ancients may expatiate upon the glories of a dish of peacock's tongues and their other rare and costly edibles, but they probably never knew to what heights one may ascend in the scale of gastronomic joys in the immediate presence of a baked Carmen. When it is broken open the steam ascends like incense from an altar, while at the magic touch the snowy, flaky substance billows forth upon the plate in a drift that would inspire the pen of a poet. The further preliminaries amount to a ceremony. There can be, there must be no haste. The whole summer lies back of this moment. There on the plate are weeks of golden sunshine, interwoven with the singing of birds and the fragrance of flowers; and it were sacrilege to become hurried at the consummation. When the meat has been made fine the salt and pepper are applied, deliberately, daintily, and then comes the butter, like the golden glow of sunset upon a bank of flaky clouds. The artist tries in vain to rival this blending of colors and shades. But the supreme moment and the climax come when the feast is glorified and set apart by its baptism of cream. At such a moment the sense of my indebtedness to the man who developed the Carmen becomes most acute. If the leaders of contending armies could sit together at this table and join in this gracious ceremony, their rancor and enmity would cease, the protocol would be signed, and there would ensue a proclamation of peace. Then the whole world would recognize its debt to the man who produced this potato.

Having eaten the peace-producing potato, I feel strengthened to make another trial at an interpretation of that lantern. I do not know whether Diogenes had any acquaintance with the Decalogue, but have my doubts. In fact, history gives us too few data concerning his attainments for a clear exposition of his character. But one may hazard a guess that he was looking for a man who would not steal, but could not find him. In a sense that was a high compliment to the people of his day, for there is a sort of stealing that takes rank among the fine arts. In fact, stealing is the greatest subject that is taught in the school. I cannot recall a teacher who did not encourage me to strive for mastery in this art. Every one of them applauded my every success in this line. One of my early triumphs was reciting "Horatius at the Bridge," and my teacher almost smothered me with praise. I simply took what Macaulay had written and made it my own. I had some difficulty in making off with the conjugation of the Greek verb, but the more I took of it the more my teacher seemed pleased. All along the line I have been encouraged to appropriate what others have produced and to take

Page 19

joy in my pilfering. Mr. Carnegie has lent his sanction to this sort of thing by fostering libraries. Shakespeare was arrested for stealing a deer, but extolled for stealing the plots of "Romeo and Juliet," "Comedy of Errors," and others of his plays. It seems quite all right to steal ideas, or even thoughts, and this may account again for the old man's lantern. But, even so, it would seem quite iconoclastic to say that education is the process of reminding people of their debts and of training them to steal.

CHAPTER VII

COMPLETE LIVING

In my quiet way I have been making inquiries among my acquaintances for a long time, trying to find out what education really is. As a schoolmaster I must try to make it appear that I know. In fact, I am quite a Sir Oracle on the subject of education in my school. But, in the quiet of my den, after the day's work is done, I often long for some one to come in and tell me just what it is. I am fairly conversant with the multiplication table and can distinguish between active and passive verbs, but even with these attainments I somehow feel that I have not gone to the extreme limits of the meaning of education. In reality, I don't know what it is or what it is for. I do wish that the man who says in his book that education is a preparation for complete living would come into this room right now, sit down in that chair, and tell me, man to man, what complete living is. I want to know and think I have a right to know. Besides, he has no right to withhold this information from me. He had no right to get me all stirred up with his definition, and then go away and leave me dangling in the air. If he were here I'd ask him a few pointed questions. I'd ask him to tell me just how the fact that seven times nine is sixty-three is connected up with complete living. I'd want him to explain, too, what the binomial theorem has to do with complete living, and also the dative of reference. I got the notion, when I was struggling with that binomial theorem, that it would ultimately lead on to fame or fortune; but it hasn't done either, so far as I can make out.

There was a time when I could solve an equation of three unknown quantities, and could even jimmy a quantity out from under a radical sign, and had the feeling that I was quite a fellow. Then one day I went into a bookstore to buy a book. I had quite enough money to pay for one, and had somehow got the notion that a boy of my attainments ought to have a book. But, in the presence of the blond chap behind the counter, I was quite abashed, for I did not in the least know what book I wanted. I knew it wasn't a Bible, for we had one at home, but further than that I could not go. Now, if knowing how to buy a book is a part of complete living, then, in that blond presence, I was hopelessly adrift. I had been taught that gambling is wrong, but there was a situation where I had to take a chance or show the white feather. Of course, I took the chance and was relieved of my money by a blond who may or may not have been able to solve radicals.

I shall not give the title of the book I drew in that lottery, for this is neither the time nor the place for confessions.

Page 20

I was a book-agent for one summer, but am trying to live it down. Hoping to sell a copy of the book whose glowing description I had memorized, I called at the home of a wealthy farmer. The house was spacious and embowered in beautiful trees and shrubbery. There was a noble driveway that led up from the country road, and everything betokened great prosperity. Once inside the house, I took a survey of the fittings and could see at once that the farmer had lavished money upon the home to make it distinctive in the neighborhood as a suitable background for his wife and daughters. The piano alone must have cost a small fortune, and it was but one of the many instruments to be seen. There were carpets, rugs, and curtains in great profusion, and a bewildering array of all sorts of bric-a-brac. In time the father asked one of the daughters to play, and she responded with rather unbecoming alacrity. What she played I shall never know, but it seemed to me to be a five-finger exercise. Whatever it was, it was not music. I lost interest at once and so had time to make a more critical inspection of the decorations. What I saw was a battle royal. There was the utmost lack of harmony. The rugs fought the carpets, and both were at the throats of the curtains. Then the wall-paper joined in the fray, and the din and confusion was torture to the spirit. Even the furniture caught the spirit of discord and made fierce attacks upon everything else in the room. The reds, and yellows, and blues, and greens whirled and swirled about in such a dizzy and belligerent fashion that I wondered how the people ever managed to escape nervous prostration. But the daughter went right on with the five-finger exercise as if nothing else were happening. I shall certainly cite this case when the man comes in to explain what he means by complete living.

This all reminds me of the man of wealth who thought it incumbent upon him to give his neighbors some benefit of his money in the way of pleasure. So he went to Europe and bought a great quantity of marble statuary and had the pieces placed in the spacious grounds about his home. When the opening day came there ensued much suppressed tittering and, now and then, an uncontrollable guffaw. Diana, Venus, Vulcan, Apollo, Jove, and Mercury had evidently stumbled into a convention of nymphs, satyrs, fairies, sprites, furies, harpies, gargoyles, giants, pygmies, muses, and fates. The result was bedlam. Parenthetically, I have often wondered how much money it cost that man to make the discovery that he was not a connoisseur of art, and also what process of education might have fitted him for a wise expenditure of all that money.



Page 21

So I go on wondering what education is, and nobody seems quite willing to tell me. I bought some wall-paper once, and when it had been hung there was so much laughter at my taste, or lack of it, that, in my chagrin, I selected another pattern to cover up the evidence of my ignorance. But that is expensive, and a schoolmaster can ill afford such luxurious ignorance. People were unkind enough to say that the bare wall would have been preferable to my first selection of paper, I was made conscious that complete living was impossible so long as that paper was visible. But even when the original had been covered up I looked at the wall suspiciously to see whether it would show through as a sort of subdued accusation against me. I don't pretend to know whether taste in the selection of wall-paper is inherent or acquired. If it can be acquired, then I wonder, again, just how cube root helps it along.

I don't know what education is, but I do know that it is expensive. I had some pictures in my den that seemed well enough till I came to look at some others, and then they seemed cheap and inadequate. I tried to argue myself out of this feeling, but did not succeed. As a result, the old pictures have been supplanted by new ones, and I am poorer in consequence. But, in spite of my depleted purse, I take much pleasure in my new possessions and feel that they are indications of progress. I wonder, though, how long it will be till I shall want still other and better ones. Education may be a good thing, but it does increase and multiply one's wants. Then, in a brief time, these wants become needs, and there you have perpetual motion. When the agent came to me first to try to get me interested in an encyclopaedia I could scarce refrain from smiling. But later on I began to want an encyclopaedia, and now the one I have ranks as a household necessity the same as bathtub, coffee-pot, and tooth-brush.

But, try as I may, I can't clearly distinguish between wants and needs. I see a thing that I want, and the very next day I begin to wonder how I can possibly get on without it. This must surely be the psychology of show-windows and show-cases. If I didn't see the article I should feel no want of it, of course. But as soon as I see it I begin to want it, and then I think I need it. The county fair is a great psychological institution, because it causes people to want things and then to think they need them. The worst of it is the less able I am to buy a thing the more I want it and seem to need it. I'd like to have money enough to make an experiment on myself just to see if I could ever reach the point, as did the Caliph, where the only want I'd have would be a want. Possibly, that's what the man means by complete living. I wonder.

CHAPTER VIII

MY SPEECH



Page 22

For some time I have had it in mind to make a speech. I don't know what I would say nor where I could possibly find an audience, but, in spite of all that, I feel that I'd like to try myself out on a speech. I can't trace this feeling back to its source. It may have started when I heard a good speech, somewhere, or, it may have started when I heard a poor one. I can't recall. When I hear a good speech I feel that I'd like to do as well; and, when I hear a poor one, I feel that I'd like to do better. The only thing that is settled, as yet, about this speech that I want to make is the subject, and even that is not my own. It is just near enough my own, however, to obviate the use of quotation-marks. The hardest part of the task of writing or speaking is to gain credit for what some one else has said or written, and still be able to omit quotation-marks. That calls for both mental and ethical dexterity of a high order.

But to the speech. The subject is Dialectic Efficiency—without quotation-marks, be it noted. The way of it is this: I have been reading, or, rather, trying to read the masterly book by Doctor Fletcher Durell, whose title is "Fundamental Sources of Efficiency." This is one of the most recondite books that has come from the press in a generation, and it is no reflection upon the book for me to say that I have been trying to read it. It is so big, so deep, so high, and so wide that I can only splash around in it a bit. But "the water's fine." At any rate, I have been dipping into this book quite a little, and that is how I came upon the caption of my speech. Of course, I get the word "efficiency" from the title of the book, and, besides, everybody uses that word nowadays. Then, the author of this book has a chapter on "Dialectic," and so I combine these two words and thus get rid of the quotation-marks.

And that certainly is an imposing subject for a speech. If it should ever be printed on a programme, it would prove awe-inspiring. Next to making a good speech, I'd like to be skilled in sleight-of-hand affairs. I'd like to fish up a rabbit from the depths of an old gentleman's silk tile, or extract a dozen eggs from a lady's hand-bag, or transmute a canary into a goldfish. I'd like to see the looks of wonder on the faces of the audience and hear them gasp. The difficulty with such a subject as I have chosen, though, is to fill the frame. I went into a shop in Paris once to make some small purchase, expecting to find a great emporium, but, to my surprise, found that all the goods were in the show-window. That's one trouble with my subject—all the goods seem to be in the show-window. But, I'll do the best I can with it, even if I am compelled to pilfer from the pages of the book.



Page 23

In the introduction of the speech I shall become expansive upon the term *Dialectic*, and try to impress my hearers (if there are any) with my thorough acquaintance with all things which the term suggests. If I continue expatiating upon the word long enough they may come to think that I actually coined the word, for I shall not emphasize Doctor Durell especially—just enough to keep my soul untarnished. In a review of this book one man translates the first word “luck.” I don’t like his word and for two reasons: In the first place, it is a short word, and everybody knows that long words are better for speechmaking purposes. If he had used the word “accidental” or “incidental” I’d think more of his translation and of his review. I’m going to use my word as if Doctor Durell had said *Incidental*.

So much for the introduction; now for the speech. From this point forward I shall draw largely upon the book but shall so turn and twist what the doctor says as to make it seem my own. With something of a flourish, I shall tell how in the year 1856 a young chemist, named Perkin, while trying to produce quinine synthetically, hit upon the process of producing aniline dyes. His incidental discovery led to the establishment of the artificial-dye industry, and we have here an example of dialectic efficiency. This must impress my intelligent and cultured auditors, and they will be wondering if I can produce another illustration equally good. I can, of course, for this book is rich in illustrations. I can see, as it were, the old fellow on the third seat, who has been sitting there as stiff and straight as a ramrod, limber up just a mite, and with my next point I hope to induce him to lean forward an inch, at least, out of the perpendicular.

Then I shall proceed to recount to them how Christopher Columbus, in an effort to circumnavigate the globe and reach the eastern coast of Asia, failed in this undertaking, but made a far greater achievement in the discovery of America. If, at this point, the old man is leaning forward two or three inches instead of one, I may ask, in dramatic style, where we should all be to-day if Columbus had reached Asia instead of America—in other words, if this principle of dialectic efficiency had not been in full force. Just here, to give opportunity for possible applause, I shall take the handkerchief from my pocket with much deliberation, unfold it carefully, and wipe my face and forehead as an evidence that dispensing second-hand thoughts is a sweat-producing process.

Then, in a sort of sublimated frenzy, I shall fairly deluge them with illustrations, telling how the establishment of rural mail-routes led to improved roads and these, in turn, to consolidated schools and better conditions of living in the country; how the potato-beetle, which seems at first to be a scourge, was really a blessing in disguise in that it set farmers to studying improved methods resulting in largely increased crops, and how the scale has done a like service for fruit-growers; how a friend of mine was drilling for oil and found water instead, and now has an artesian well that supplies water in great abundance, and how one Mr. Hellriegel, back in 1886, made the incidental discovery that leguminous plants fixate nitrogen, and, hence, our fields of clover, alfalfa, cow-peas, and soybeans.



Page 24

It will not seem out of place if I recall to them how the Revolution gave us Washington, the Adamses, Hancock, Madison, Franklin, Jefferson, and Hamilton; how slavery gave us Clay, Calhoun, and Webster; and how the Civil War gave us Lincoln, Seward, Stanton, Grant, Lee, Sherman, Sheridan, and “Stonewall” Jackson. If there should, by chance, be any teachers present I’ll probably enlarge upon this historical phase of the subject if I can think of any other illustrations. I shall certainly emphasize the fact that the incidental phases of school work may prove to be more important than the objects directly aimed at, that while the teacher is striving to inculcate a knowledge of arithmetic she may be inculcating manhood and womanhood, and that the by-products of her teaching may become world-wide influences.

As a peroration, I shall expand upon the subject of pleasure as an incidental of work—showing how the mere pleasure-seeker never finds what he is seeking, but that the man who works is the one who finds pleasure. I think I shall be able to find some apt quotation from Emerson before the time for the speech comes around. If so, I shall use it so as to take their minds off the fact that I am taking the speech from Doctor Durell’s book.

CHAPTER IX

SCHOOL-TEACHING

The first school that I ever tried to teach was, indeed, fearfully and wonderfully taught. The teaching was of the sort that might well be called elemental. If there was any pedagogy connected with the work, it was purely accidental. I was not conscious either of its presence or its absence, and so deserve neither praise nor censure. I had one pupil who was nine years my senior, and I did not even know that he was retarded. I recall quite distinctly that he had a luxuriant crop of chin-whiskers but even these did not disturb the procedure of that school. We accepted him as he was, whiskers included, and went on our complacent way. He was blind in one eye and somewhat deaf, but no one ever thought of him as abnormal or subnormal. Even if we had known these words we should have been too polite to apply them to him. In fact, we had no black-list, of any sort, in that school. I have never been able to determine whether the absence of such a list was due to ignorance, or innocence, or both. So long as he found the school an agreeable place in which to spend the winter, and did not interfere with the work of others, I could see no good reason why he should not be there and get what he could from the lessons in spelling, geography, and arithmetic. I do not mention grammar for that was quite beyond him. The agreement of subject and verb was one of life’s great mysteries to him. So I permitted him to browse around in such pastures as seemed finite to him, and let the infinite grammar go by default so far as he was concerned.

Page 25

I have but the most meagre acquaintance with the pedagogical dicta of the books—a mere bowing acquaintance—but, at that time, I had not even been introduced to any of these. But, as the saying goes, “The Lord takes care of fools and children,” and, so, somehow, by sheer blind luck, I instinctively veered away from the Procrustean bed idea, and found some work for my bewhiskered disciple that connected with his native dispositions. Had any one told me I was doing any such things I think I should, probably, have asked him how to spell the words he was using. I only knew that this man-child was there yearning for knowledge, and I was glad to share my meagre store of crumbs with him. His gratitude for my small gifts was really pathetic, and right there I learned the joys of the teacher. That man sought me out on our way home from school and asked questions that would have puzzled Socrates, but forgot my ignorance of hard questions in his joy at my answers of easy ones. When some light would break in upon him he cavorted about me like a glad dog, and became a second Columbus, discovering a new world.

I almost lose patience with myself, at times, when I catch myself preening my feathers before some pedagogical mirror, as if I were getting ready to appear in public as an accredited schoolmaster. At such a time, I long to go back to the country road and saunter along beside some pupil, either with or without whiskers, and give him of my little store without rules or frills and with no pomp or parade. In that little school at the crossroads we never made any preparation for some possible visitor who might come in to survey us or apply some efficiency test, or give us a rating either as individuals or as a school. We were too busy and happy for that. We kept right on at our work with our doors and our hearts wide open for every good thing that came our way, whether knowledge or people. As I have said, our work was elemental.

I am glad I came across this little book of William James, “On Some of Life’s Ideals,” for it takes me back, inferentially, to that elemental school, especially in this paragraph which says: “Life is always worth living, if one have such responsive sensibilities. But we of the highly educated classes (so-called) have most of us got far, far away from Nature. We are trained to seek the choice, the rare, the exquisite exclusively and to overlook the common. We are stuffed with abstract conceptions, and glib with verbalities and verbosities; and in the culture of these higher functions the peculiar sources of joy connected with our simpler functions often dry up, and we grow stone-blind and insensible to life’s more elementary and general goods and joys.”



Page 26

I wish I might go home from school one evening by way of the top of Mt. Vesuvius, another by way of Mt. Rigi, and, another, by way of Lauterbrunnen. Then the next evening I should like to spend an hour or two along the borders of Yellowstone Canyon, and the next, watch an eruption or two of Old Faithful geyser. Then, on still another evening, I'd like to ride for two hours on top of a bus in London. I'd like to have these experiences as an antidote for emptiness. It would prepare me far better for to-morrow work than pondering Johnny's defections, or his grades, whether high or low, or marking silly papers with marks that are still sillier. I like Walt Whitman because he was such a sublime loafer. His loafing gave him time to grow big inside, and so, he had big elemental thoughts that were good for him and good for me when I think them over after him.

If I should ever get a position in a normal school I'd want to give a course in William J. Locke's "The Beloved Vagabond," so as to give the young folks a conception of big elemental teaching. If I were giving a course in ethics, I'd probably select another book, but, in pedagogy, I'd certainly include that one. I'd lose some students, to be sure, for some of them would be shocked; but a person who is not big enough to profit by reading that book never ought to teach school—I mean for the school's sake. If we could only lose the consciousness of the fact that we are schoolmasters for a few hours each day, it would be a great help to us and to our boys and girls.

I am quite partial to the "Madonna of the Chair," and wish I might visit the Pitti Gallery frequently just to gaze at her. She is so wholesome and gives one the feeling that a big soul looks out through her eyes. She would be a superb teacher. She would fill the school with her presence and still do it all unconsciously. The centre of the room would be where she happened to be. She would never be mistaken for one of the pupils. Her pupils would learn arithmetic but the arithmetic would be laden with her big spirit, and that would be better for them than the arithmetic could possibly be. If I had to be a woman I'd want to be such as this Madonna—serene, majestic, and big-souled.

I have often wondered whether bigness of soul can be cultivated, and my optimism inclines to a vote in the affirmative. I spent a part of one summer in the pine woods far away from the haunts of men. When I had to leave this sylvan retreat it required eleven hours by stage to reach the railway-station. There for some weeks I lived in a log cabin, accompanied by a cook and a professional woodsman. I was not there to camp, to fish, or to loaf, and yet I did all these. There were some duties and work connected with the enterprise and these gave zest to the fishing and the loafing. Giant trees, space, and sky were my most intimate associates, and they told me only of big things. They had never



Page 27

a word to say of styles of clothing or becoming shades of neckwear or hosiery. In all that time I was never disturbed by the number and diversity of spoons and forks beside my plate at the dinner-table. Many a noble meal I ate as I sat upon a log supported in forked stakes, and many a big thought did I glean from the talk of loggers about me in their picturesque costumes. In the evening I sat upon a great log in front of the cabin or a friendly stump, and forgot such things as hammocks and porch-swings. Instead of gazing at street-lamps only a few yards away I was gazing at stars millions of miles away, and, somehow, the soul seemed to gain freedom.

And I had luxury, too. I had a room with bath. The bath was at the stream some fifty yards away, but such discrepancies are minor affairs in the midst of such big elemental things as were all about me. My mattress was of young cherry shoots, and never did king have a more royal bed, or ever such refreshing sleep. And, while I slept, I grew inside, for the soft music of the pines lulled me to rest, and the subdued rippling of my bath-stream seemed to wash my soul clean. When I arose I had no bad taste in my mouth or in my soul, and each morning had for me the glory of a resurrection. My trees were there to bid me good morning, the big spaces spoke to me in their own inspiring language, and the big sun, playing hide-and-seek among the great boles of the trees as he mounted from the horizon, gave me a panorama unrivalled among the scenes of earth.

When I returned to what men called civilization, I experienced a poignant longing for my big trees, my sky, and my spaces, and felt that I had exchanged them for many things that are petty and futile. If my school were only out in the heart of that big forest, I feel that my work would be more effective and that I would not have to potter about among little things to obey the whims of convention and the dictates of technicalities, but that the soul would be free to revel in the truth that sky and space proclaim. I do hope I may never know so much about technical pedagogy that I shall not know anything else. This may be what those people mean who speak of the "revolt of the ego."

CHAPTER X

BEEFSTEAK

I am just now quite in the mood to join the band; I mean the vocational-education band. The excitement has carried me off my feet. I can't endure the looks of suspicion or pity that I see on the faces of my colleagues. They stare at me as if I were wearing a tie or a hat or a coat that is a bit below standard. I want to seem, if not be, modern and up-to-date, and not odd and peculiar. So I shall join the band. I am not caring much whether I beat the drum, carry the flag, or lead the trick-bear. I may even ride in the gaudily

painted wagon behind a spotted pony and call out in raucous tones to all and sundry to hurry around to the main

Page 28

tent to get their education before the rush. In times past, when these vocational folks have piped unto me I have not danced; but I now see the error of my ways and shall proceed at once to take dancing lessons. When these folks lead in the millennium I want to be sitting well up in front; and when they get the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow I want to participate in the distribution. I do hope, though, that I may not exhaust my resources on the band and have none left for the boys and girls. I hope I may not imitate Mark Twain's steamboat that stopped dead still when the whistle blew, because blowing the whistle required all the steam.

I suspect that, like the Irishman, I shall have to wear my new boots awhile before I can get them on, for this new role is certain to entail many changes in my plans and in my ways of doing things. I can see that it will be a wrench for me to think of the boys and girls as pedagogical specimens and not persons. I have contracted the habit of thinking of them as persons, and it will not be easy to come to thinking of them as mere objects to practise on. The folks in the hospital speak of their patients as "cases," but I'd rather keep aloof from the hospital plan in my schoolmastering. But, being a member of the band, I suppose that I'll feel it my duty to conform and do my utmost to help prove that our cult has discovered the great and universal panacea, the balm in Gilead.

As a member of the band, in good and regular standing, I shall find myself saying that the school should have the boys and girls pursue such studies as will fit them for their life-work. This has a pleasing sound. Now, if I can only find out, somehow, what the life-work of each one of my pupils is to be, I'll be all right, and shall proceed to fit each one out with his belongings. I have asked them to tell me what their life-work is to be, but they tell me they do not know. So I suspect that I must visit all their parents in order to get this information. Until I get this information I cannot begin on my course of study. If their parents cannot tell me I hardly know what I shall do, unless I have recourse to their maiden aunts. They ought to know. But if they decline to tell I must begin on a long series of guesses, unless, in the meantime, I am endowed with omniscience.

This whole plan fascinates me; I dote upon it. It is so pliable, so dreamy, and so opalescent that I can scarce restrain my enthusiasm. But if I should fit one of my boys out with the equipment necessary for a blacksmith, and then he should become a preacher, I'd find the situation embarrassing. My reputation as a prophet would certainly decline. If I could know that this boy is looking forward to the ministry as his life-work, the matter would be simple. I'd proceed to fit him out with a fire-proof suit of Greek, Hebrew, and theology and have the thing done. But even then some of my colleagues might protest on the assumption that Greek



Page 29

and Hebrew are not vocational studies. The preacher might assert that they are vocational for his work, in which case I'd find myself in the midst of an argument. I know a young man who is a student in a college of medicine. He is paying his way by means of his music. He both plays and sings, and can thus pay his bills. In the college he studies chemistry, anatomy, and the like. I'm trying to figure out whether or not, in his case, either his music or his chemistry is vocational.

I have been perusing the city directory to find out how many and what vocations there are, that I may plan my course of study accordingly when I discover what the life-work of each of my pupils is to be. If I find that one boy expects to be an undertaker he ought to take the dead languages, of course. If another boy expects to be a jockey he might take these same languages with the aid of a "pony." If a girl decides upon marriage as her vocation, I'll have her take home economics, of course, but shall have difficulty in deciding upon her other studies. If I omit Latin, history, and algebra, she may reproach me later on because of these omissions. She may find that such studies as these are essential to success in the vocation of wife and mother. She may have a boy of her own who will invoke her aid in his quest for the value of x , and a mother hesitates to enter a plea of ignorance to her own child.

I can fit out the dancing-master easily enough, but am not so certain about the barber, the chauffeur, and the aviator. The aviator would give me no end of trouble, especially if I should deem it necessary to teach him by the laboratory method. Then, again, if one boy decides to become a pharmacist, I may find it necessary to attend night classes in this subject myself in order to meet the situation with a fair degree of complacency. Nor do I see my way clear in providing for the steeple-climber, the equilibrist, the railroad president, or the tea-taster. I'll probably have my troubles, too, with the novel-writer, the poet, the politician, and the bareback rider. But I must manage somehow if I hope to retain my membership in the band.

I see that I shall have to serve quite an apprenticeship in the band before I write my treatise on the subject of pedagogical predestination. The world needs that essay, and I must get around to it just as soon as possible. Of course, that will be a great step beyond the present plan of finding out what a boy expects to do, and then teaching him accordingly. My predestination plan contemplates the process of arranging such a course of study for him as will make him what we want him to be. A naturalist tells me that when a queen bee dies the swarm set to work making another queen by feeding one of the common working bees some queen stuff. He failed to tell me just what this queen stuff is. That process of producing a queen bee is what gave me the notion as to my treatise. If the parents want their boy to become a lawyer I shall feed him lawyer stuff; if a preacher, then preacher stuff, and so on.



Page 30

This will necessitate a deal of research work, for I shall have to go back into history, first of all, to find out the course of study that produced Newton, Humboldt, Darwin, Shakespeare, Dante, Edison, Clara Barton, and the rest of them. If a roast-beef diet is responsible for Shakespeare, surely we ought to produce another Shakespeare, considering the excellence of the cattle we raise. I can easily discover the constituent elements of the beef pudding of which Samuel Johnson was so fond by writing to the old Cheshire Cheese in London. Of course, this plan of mine seems not to take into account the Lord's work to any large extent. But that seems to be the way of us vocationalists. We seem to think we can do certain things in spite of what the Lord has or has not done.

The one danger that I foresee in all this work that I have planned is that it may produce overstimulation. Some one was telling me that the trees on the Embankment there in London are dying of arboreal insomnia. The light of the sun keeps them awake all day, and the electric lights keep them awake all night. So the poor things are dying from lack of sleep. Macbeth had some trouble of that sort, too, as I recall it. I'm going to hold on to the vocational stimulation unless I find it is producing pedagogical insomnia. Then I'll resign from the band and take a long nap. I'll continue to advocate pudding, pastry, and pie until I find that they are not producing the sort of men and women the world needs, and then I'll beat an inglorious retreat and again espouse the cause of orthodox beefsteak.

CHAPTER XI

FREEDOM

I have often wondered what conjunction of the stars caused me to become a schoolmaster, if, indeed, the stars, lucky or otherwise, had anything to do with it. It may have been the salary that lured me, for thirty-five dollars a month bulks large on a boy's horizon. Possibly the fact that in those days there was no anteroom to the teaching business may have been the deciding factor. One had but to exchange his hickory shirt for a white one, and the trick was done. There was not even a fence between the corn-field and the schoolhouse. I might just as easily have been a preacher but for the barrier in the shape of a theological seminary, or a hod-carrier but for the barrier of learning how. As it was, I could draw my pay for husking corn on Saturday night, and begin accumulating salary as a schoolmaster on Monday. The plan was simplicity itself, and that may account for my choice of a vocation.

I have sometimes tried to imagine myself a preacher, but with poor success. The sermon would bother me no little, to make no mention of the other functions. I think I never could get through with a marriage ceremony, and at a christening I'd be on nettles all the while, fearing the baby would cry and thus disturb the solemnity of the occasion and of the preacher. I'd want to take the baby into my own arms and have a romp with



him—and so would forget about the baptizing. In casting about for a possible text for this impossible preacher, I have found only one that I think I might do something with. Hence, my preaching would endure but a single week, and even at that we'd have to have a song service on Sunday evening in lieu of a sermon.



Page 31

My one text would be: "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." I do not know how big truth is, but it must be quite extensive if science, mathematics, history, and literature are but small parts of it. I have never explored these parts very far inland, but they seem to my limited gaze to extend a long distance before me; and when I get to thinking that each of these is but a part of something that is called truth I begin to feel that truth is a pretty large affair. I suspect the text means that the more of this truth we know the greater freedom we have. My friend Brown has an automobile, and sometimes he takes me out riding. On one of these occasions we had a puncture, with the usual attendant circumstances. While Brown made the needful repairs, I sat upon the grassy bank. The passers-by probably regarded me as a lazy chap who disdained work of all sorts, and perhaps thought of me as enjoying myself while Brown did the work. In this they were grossly mistaken, for Brown was having the good time, while I was bored and uncomfortable. Why, Brown actually whistled as he repaired that puncture. He had freedom because he knew which tool to use, where to find it, and how to use it. But there I sat in ignorance and thralldom—not knowing the truth about the tools or the processes.

In the presence of that episode I felt like one in a foreign country who is ignorant of the language, while Brown was the concierge who understands many languages. He knew the truth and so had freedom. I have often wondered whether men do not sometimes get drunk to win a respite from the thralldom and boredom of their ignorance of the truth. It must be a very trying experience not to understand the language that is spoken all about one. I have something of that feeling when I go into a drug-store and find myself in complete ignorance of the contents of the bottles because I cannot read the labels. I have no freedom because I do not know the truth. The dapper clerk who takes down one bottle after another with refreshing freedom relegates me to the kindergarten, and I certainly feel and act the part.

I had this same feeling, too, when I was making ready to sow my little field with alfalfa. I wanted to have alfalfa growing in the field next to the road for my own pleasure and for the pleasure of the passers-by. A field of alfalfa is an ornament to any landscape, and I like to have my landscapes ornamental, even if I must pay for it in terms of manual toil. I had never even seen alfalfa seed and did not in the least know how to proceed in preparing the soil. If I ever expected to have any freedom I must first learn the truth, and a certain modicum of freedom necessarily precedes the joy of alfalfa.



Page 32

Thus it came to pass that I set about learning the truth. I had to learn about the nature of the soil, about drainage, about the right kinds of fertilizer, and all that, before I could even hitch the team to a plough. Some of this truth I gleaned from books and magazines, but more of it I obtained from my neighbor John, who lives about two hundred yards up the pike from my little place. John is a veritable encyclopedia of truth when it comes to the subject of alfalfa. There I would sit at the feet of this alfalfa Gamaliel. Be it said in favor of my reactions that I learned the trick of alfalfa and now have a field that is a delight to the eye. And I now feel qualified to give lessons in alfalfa culture to all and sundry, so great is my sense of freedom.

I came upon a forlorn-looking woman once in a large railway-station who was in great distress. She wanted to get a train, but did not know through which gate to go nor where to obtain the necessary information. She was overburdened with luggage and a little girl was tugging at her dress and crying pitifully. That woman was as really in bondage as if she had been in prison looking out through the barred windows. When she had finally been piloted to the train the joy of freedom manifested itself in every lineament of her face. She had come to know the truth, and the truth had set her free.

I know how she felt, for one night I worked for more than two hours on what, to me, was a difficult problem, and when at last I had it solved the manifestations of joy caused consternation to the family and damage to the furniture. I never was in jail for any length of time, but I think I know, from my experience with that problem, just how a prisoner feels when he is set free. The big out-of-doors must seem inexpressibly good to him. My neighbor John taught me how to spray my trees, and now, when I walk through my orchard and see the smooth trunks and pick the beautiful, smooth, perfect apples, I feel that sense of freedom that can come only through a knowledge of the truth.

I haven't looked up the etymology of *grippe*, but the word itself seems to tell its own story. It seems to mean restriction, subjection, slavery. It certainly spells lack of freedom. I have seen many boys and girls who seemed afflicted with arithmetical, grammatical, and geographical grippe, and I have sought to free them from its tyranny and lead them forth into the sunlight and pure air of freedom. If I only knew just how to do this effectively I think I'd be quite reconciled to the work of a schoolmaster.

CHAPTER XII

THINGS



Page 33

I keep resolving and resolving to reform and lead the simple life, but something always happens that prevents the execution of my plans. When I am grubbing out willows along the ravine, the grubbing-hoe, a lunch-basket well filled, and a jug of water from the deep well up there under the trees seem to be the sum total of the necessary appliances for a life of usefulness and contentment. There is a friendly maple-tree near the scene of the grubbing activities, and an hour at noon beneath that tree with free access to the basket and the jug seems to meet the utmost demands of life. The grass is luxuriant, the shade is all-embracing, and the willows can wait. So, what additions can possibly be needed? I lie there in the shade, my hunger and thirst abundantly satisfied, and contemplate the results of my forenoon's toil with the very acme of satisfaction. There is now a large, clear space where this morning there was a jungle of willows. The willows have been grubbed out *imis sedibus*, as our friend Virgil would say it, and not merely chopped off; and the thoroughness of the work gives emphasis to the satisfaction.

The overalls, the heavy shoes, and the sunshade hat all belong in the picture. But the entire wardrobe costs less than the hat I wear on Sunday. Then the comfort of these inexpensive habiliments! I need not be fastidious in such a garb, but can loll on the grass without compunction. When I get mud upon my big shoes I simply scrape it off with a chip, and that's all there is to it. The dirt on my overalls is honest dirt, and honestly come by, and so needs no apology. I can talk to my neighbor John of the big things of life and feel no shame because of overalls.

Then, in the evening, when resting from my toil, I sit out under the leafy canopy and revel in the sounds that can be heard only in the country—the croaking of the frogs, the soft twittering of the birds somewhere near, yet out of sight, the cosey crooning of the chickens as they settle upon their perches for the night, and the lonely hooting of the owl somewhere in the big tree down in the pasture. I need not move from my seat nor barter my money for a concert in some majestic hall ablaze with lights when such music as this may be had for the listening. Under the magic of such music the body relaxes and the soul expands. The soft breezes caress the brow, and the moon makes shimmering patterns on the grass.

But when I return to the town to resume my school-mastering, then the strain begins, and then the reign of complexities is renewed. When I am fully garbed in my town clothing I find myself the possessor of nineteen pockets. What they are all for is more than I can make out. If I had them all in use I'd have to have a detective along with me to help me find things. Out there on the farm two pockets quite suffice, but in the town I must have seventeen more. The difference between town and country seems to be about the difference between grubbing willows and schoolmastering. Among the willows I find two pockets are all I require; but among the children I must needs have nineteen, whether I have anything in them or not.



Page 34

One of these seems to be designed for a college degree; another is an efficiency pocket; another a discipline pocket; another a pocket for methods; another for professional spirit; another for loyalty to all the folks who are in need of loyalty, and so on. I really do not know all the labels. When I was examined for a license to teach they counted my pockets, and, finding I had the requisite nineteen, they bestowed upon me the coveted document with something approaching *eclat*. In my teaching I become so bewildered ransacking these pockets, trying to find something that will bear some resemblance to the label, that I come near forgetting the boys and girls. But they are very nice and polite about it, and seem to feel sorry that I must look after all my pockets when I'd so much rather be teaching.

Out in the willow thicket I can go right on with my work without so much care or perplexity. Why, I don't need to do any talking out there, and so have time to do some thinking. But here I do so much talking that neither I nor my pupils have any chance for thinking. I know it is not the right way, but, somehow, I keep on doing it. I think it must be a bad habit, but I don't do it when I am grubbing willows. I seem to get to the bottom of things out there without talking, and I can't make out why I don't do the same here in the school. Out there I do things; in here I say things. I do wonder if there is any forgiveness for a schoolmaster who uses so many words and gets such meagre results.

And then the words I use here are such ponderous things. They are not the sort of human, flesh-and-blood words that I use when talking to neighbor John as we sit on top of the rail fence. These all seem so like words in a book, as if I had rehearsed them in advance. It may be just the town atmosphere, but, whatever it is, I do wish I could talk to these children about decimals in the same sort of words that I use when I am talking with John. He seems to understand me, and I think they could.

Possibly it is just the tension of town life. I know that I seem to get keyed up as soon as I come into the town. There are so many things here, and many of them are so artificial that I seem unable to relax as I do out there where there are just frogs, and moon, and chickens, and cows. When I am here I seem to have a sort of craze for things. The shop-windows are full of things, and I seem to want all of them. I know I have no use for them, and yet I get them. My neighbor Brown bought a percolator, and within a week I had one. I had gone on for years without a percolator, not even knowing about such a thing, but no sooner had Brown bought one than every sound I heard seemed to be inquiring: "What is home without a percolator?"



Page 35

So I go on accumulating things, and my den is a veritable medley of things. They don't make me any happier, and they are a great bother. There are fifty-seven things right here in my den, and I don't need more than six or seven of them. There are twenty-two pictures, large and small, in this room, but I couldn't have named five of them had I not just counted them. Why I have them is beyond my comprehension. I inveigh against the mania of people for drugs and narcotics, but my mania for things only differs in kind from theirs. I have a little book called "Things of the Mind," and I like to read it. Now, if my mind only had as many things in it as my den, I'd be a far more agreeable associate for Brown and my neighbor John. Or, if I were as careful about getting things for my mind as I am in accumulating useless bric-a-brac, it would be far more to my credit.

If the germs that are lurking in and about these fifty-seven things should suddenly become as large as spiders, I'd certainly be the unhappy possessor of a flourishing menagerie, and I think my progress toward the simple life would be very promptly hastened.

CHAPTER XIII

TARGETS

In my work as a schoolmaster I find it well to keep my mind open and not get to thinking that my way is the only way, or even the best way. I think I learn more from my boys and girls than they learn from me, and so long as I can keep an open mind I am certain to get some valuable lessons from them. I got to telling the college chap about a hen that taught me a good lesson, and the first thing I knew I was going to school to this college youth, and he was enlightening me on the subject of animal psychology, and especially upon the trial-and-error theory. That set me wondering how many trials and errors that hen made before she finally succeeded in surmounting that fence. At any rate, the hen taught me another lesson besides the lesson of perseverance.

I have a high wire fence enclosing the chicken-yard, and in order to make steady the posts to which the gate is attached, I joined them at the top by nailing a board across. The hen that taught me the lesson must be both ambitious and athletic, for time after time have I found her outside the chicken-yard. I searched diligently for the place of exit, but could not find it. So, in desperation, I determined one morning to discover how that hen gained her freedom if it took all day. So I found a comfortable seat and waited. In an hour or so the hen came out into the open and took a survey of the situation. Then, presently, with skill born of experience, she sidled this way and that, advanced a little and then retreated until she found the exact location she sought, poised herself for a moment, and went sailing right over the board that connected the posts. Having made this discovery, I removed the board and used wire instead, and thus reduced the hen to the plane of obedience.



Page 36

Just as soon as the hen lacked something to aim at, she could not get over the wire barrier, and she taught me the importance of giving my pupils something to aim at. I like my boys and girls, and believe they are just as smart as any hen that ever was, and that, if I'll only supply things for them to aim at, they will go high and far. Every time I see that hen I am the subject of diverse emotions. I feel half angry at myself for being so dull that a mere hen can teach me, and then I feel glad that she taught me such a useful lesson. Before learning this lesson I seemed to expect my pupils to take all their school work on faith, to do it because I told them it would be good for them. But I now see there is a better way. In my boyhood days we always went to the county fair, and that was one of the real events of the year. On the morning of that day there was no occasion for any one to call me a second time. I was out of bed in a trice, at the first call, and soon had my chores done ready for the start. I had money in my pocket, too, for visions of pink lemonade, peanuts, ice-cream, candy, and colored balloons had lured me on from achievement to achievement through the preceding weeks, and thrift had claimed me for its own. So I had money because, all the while, I had been aiming at the county fair.

We used to lay out corn ground with a single-shovel plough, and took great pride in marking out a straight furrow across the field. There was one man in the neighborhood who was the champion in this art, and I wondered how he could do it. So I set about watching him to try to learn his art. At either end of the field he had a stake several feet high, bedecked at the top with a white rag. This he planted at the proper distance from the preceding furrow and, in going across the field, kept his gaze fixed upon the white rag that topped the stake. With a firm grip upon the plough, and his eyes riveted upon the white signal, he moved across the field in a perfectly straight line. I had thought it the right way to keep my eyes fixed upon the plough until his practice showed me that I had pursued the wrong course. My furrows were crooked and zigzag, while his were straight. I now see that his skill came from his having something to aim at.

I am trying to profit by the example of that farmer in my teaching. I'm all the while in quest of stakes and white rags to place at the other side of the field to direct the progress of the lads and lasses in a straight course, and raise their eyes away from the plough that they happen to be using. I want to keep them thinking of things that are bigger and further along than grades. The grades will come as a matter of course, if they can keep their eyes on the object across the field. I want them to be too big to work for mere grades. We never give prizes in our school, especially money prizes. It would seem rather a cheap enterprise to my fine boys and girls to get a piece of money for committing to memory the "Gettysburg Speech." We respect ourselves and Lincoln too much for that. It would grieve me to know that one of my girls could be hired to read a book for an hour in the evening to a sick neighbor. I want her to have her pay in a better and more enduring medium than that. I'd hope she would aim at something higher than that.

Page 37

If I can arrange the white rag, I know the pupils will do the work. There was Jim, for example, who said to his father that he just couldn't do his arithmetic, and wished he'd never have to go to school another day. When his father told me about it I began at once to hunt for a white rag. And I found it, too. We can generally find what we are looking for, if we look in dead earnest. Well, the next morning there was Jim in the arithmetic class along with Tom and Charley. I explained the absence of Harry by telling them about his falling on the ice the night before and breaking his right arm. I told them how he could get on well enough with his other studies, but would have trouble with his arithmetic because he couldn't use his arm. Now, Tom and Charley are quick in arithmetic, and I asked Tom to go over to Harry's after school and help with the arithmetic, and Charley to go over the next day, and Jim the third day. Now, anybody can see that white rag fluttering at the top of the stake across the field two days ahead. So, my work was done, and I went on with my daily duties. Tom reported the next day, and his report made our mouths water as he told of the good things that Harry's mother had set out for them to eat. The report of Charley the next day was equally alluring. Then Jim reported, and on his day that good mother had evidently reached the climax in culinary affairs. Jim's eyes and face shone as if he had been communing with the supernals.

That was the last I ever heard of Jim's trouble with arithmetic. His father was eager to know how the change had been brought about, and I explained on the score of the angel-food cake and ice-cream he had had over at Harry's, with no slight mention of my glorious white rag. The books, I believe, call this social co-operation, or something like that, but I care little what they call it so long as Jim's all right. And he is all right. Why, there isn't money enough in the bank to have brought that look to Jim's face when he reported that morning, and any offer to pay him for his help to Harry, either in money or school credits, would have seemed an insult. My neighbor John tells me many things about sheep and the way to drive them. He says when he is driving twenty sheep along the road he doesn't bother about the two who frisk back to the rear of the flock so long as he keeps the other eighteen going along. He says those two will join the others, all in good time. That helped me with those three boys. I knew that Tom and Charley would go along all right, so asked them to go over to Harry's before I mentioned the matter to Jim. When I did ask him he came leaping and frisking into the flock as if he were afraid we might overlook him. What a beautiful straight furrow he ploughed, too. His arithmetic work now must make the angels smile. I shall certainly mention sheep, the hen, and the white rag in my book on farm pedagogy.

CHAPTER XIV



Page 38

SINNERS

I take unctio to myself, sometimes, in the reflection that I have a soul to save, and in certain moments of uplift it seems to me to be worth saving. Some folks probably call me a sinner, if not a dreadful sinner, and I admit the fact without controversy. I do not have at hand a list of the cardinal sins, but I suspect I might prove an alibi as to some of them. I don't get drunk; I don't swear; I go to church; and I contribute, mildly, to charity. But, for all that, I'm free to confess myself a sinner. Yet, I still don't know what sin is, or what is the way of salvation either for myself or for my pupils. I grope around all the while trying to find this way. At times, I think they may find salvation while they are finding the value of x in an algebraic equation, and possibly this is true. I cannot tell. If they fail to find the value of x , I fall to wondering whether they have sinned or the teacher that they cannot find x .

I have attended revivals in my time, and have had good from them. In their pure and rarefied atmosphere I find myself in a state of exaltation. But I find myself in need of a continuous revival to keep me at my best. So, in my school work, I feel that I must be a revivalist or my pupils will sag back, just as I do. I find that the revival of yesterday will not suffice for to-day. Like the folks of old, I must gather a fresh supply of manna each day. Stale manna is not wholesome. I suspect that one of my many sins is my laziness in the matter of manna. I found the value of x in the problem yesterday, and so am inclined to rest to-day and celebrate the victory. If I had to classify myself, I'd say that I am an intermittent. I eat manna one day, and then want to fast for a day or so. I suspect that's what folks mean by a besetting sin.

During my fasting I find myself talking almost fluently about my skill and industry as a gatherer of manna, I suspect I am trying to make myself believe that I'm working in the manna field to-day, by keeping my mind on my achievement yesterday. That's another sin to my discredit, and another occasion for a revival. When I am fasting I do the most talking about how busy I am. If I were harvesting manna I'd not have time for so much talk. I should not need to tell how busy I am, for folks could see for themselves. I have tried to analyze this talk of mine about being so busy just to see whether I am trying to deceive myself or my neighbors. I fell to talking about this the other day to my neighbor John, and detected a faint smile on his face which I interpreted to be a query as to what I have to show for all my supposed industry. Well, I changed the subject. That smile on John's face made me think of revivals.



Page 39

I read Henderson's novel, "John Percyfield," and enjoyed it so much that when I came upon his other book, "Education and the Larger Life," I bought and read it. But it has given me much discomfort. In that book he says that it is immoral for any one to do less than his best. I can scarcely think of that statement without feeling that I ought to be sent to jail. I'm actually burdened with immorality, and find myself all the while between the "devil and the deep sea," the "devil" of work, and the "deep sea" of immorality. I suppose that's why I talk so much about being busy, trying to free myself from the charge of immorality. I think it was Virgil who said *Facilis descensus Averno*, and I suppose Mr. Henderson, in his statement, is trying to save me from the inconveniences of this trip. I suppose I ought to be grateful to him for the hint, but I just can't get any great comfort in such a close situation.

I know I must work or go hungry, and I can stand a certain amount of fasting, but to be stamped as immoral because I am fasting rather hurts my pride. I'd much rather have my going hungry accounted a virtue, and receive praise and bouquets. When I am in a lounging mood it isn't any fun to have some Henderson come along and tell me that I am in need of a revival. A copy of "Baedeker" in hand, I have gone through a gallery of statues but did not find a sinner in the entire company. The originals may have been sinners, but not these marble statues. That is some comfort. To be a sinner one must be animate at the very least. I'd rather be a sinner, even, than a mummy or a statue. St. Paul wrote to Timothy: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." There was nothing of the mummy or the statue in him. He was just a straight-away sinful man, and a glorious sinner he was.

I like to think of Titian and Michael Angelo. When their work was done and they stood upon the summit of their achievements they were up so high that all they had to do was to step right into heaven, without any long journey. Tennyson did the same. In his poem, "Crossing the Bar," he filled all the space, and so he had to cross over into heaven to get more room. And Riley's "Old Aunt Mary" was another one. She had been working out her salvation making jelly, and jam, and marmalade, and just beaming goodness upon those boys so that they had no more doubts about goodness than they had of the peach preserves they were eating. Why, there just had to be a heaven for old Aunt Mary. She gathered manna every day, and had some for the boys, too, but never said a word about being busy.



Page 40

When I was reading the *Georgics* with my boys, we came upon the word *bufo* (toad), and I told them with much gusto that that was the only place in the language where the word occurs. I had come upon this statement in a book that they did not have. Their looks spoke their admiration for the schoolmaster who could speak with authority. After they had gone their ways, two to Porto Rico, one to Chili, another to Brazil, and others elsewhere, I came upon the word *bufo* again in Ovid. I am still wondering what a schoolmaster ought to do in a case like that. Even if I had written to all those fellows acknowledging my error, it would have been too late, for they would, long before, have circulated the report all over South America and the United States that there is but one toad in the Latin language. If I hadn't believed everything I see in print, hadn't been so cock-sure, and hadn't been so ready to parade borrowed plumage as my own, all this linguistic coil would have been averted. I suppose Mr. Henderson would send me to jail again for this. I certainly didn't do my best, and therefore I am immoral, and therefore a sinner; *quad erat demonstrandum*.

So, I suppose, if I'm to save my soul, I must gather manna every day, and if I find the value of x to-day, I must find the value of a bigger x to-morrow. Then, too, I suppose I'll have to choose between Mrs. Wiggs and Emerson, between the Katzenjammers and Shakespeare, and between ragtime and grand opera. I am very certain growing corn gives forth a sound only I can't hear it. If my hearing were only acute enough I'd hear it and rejoice in it. It is very trying to miss the sound when I am so certain that it is there. The birds in my trees understand one another, and yet I can't understand what they are saying in the least. This simply proves my own limitations. If I could but know their language, and all the languages of the cows, the sheep, the horses, and the chickens, what a good time I could have with them. If my powers of sight and hearing were increased only tenfold, I'd surely find a different world about me. Here, again, I can't find the value of x , try as I will.

The disquieting thing about all this is that I do not use to the utmost the powers I have. I could see many more things than I do if I'd only use my eyes, and hear things, too, if I'd try more. The world of nature as it reveals itself to John Burroughs is a thousand times larger than my world, no doubt, and this fact convicts me of doing less than my best, and again the jail invites me.

CHAPTER XV

HOEING POTATOES

Page 41

As I was lying in the shade of the maple-tree down there by the ravine, yesterday, I fell to thinking about my rights, and the longer I lay there the more puzzled I became. Being a citizen in a democracy, I have many rights that are guaranteed to me by the Constitution, notably life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. In my school I become expansive in extolling these rights to my pupils. But under that maple-tree I found myself raising many questions as to these rights, and many others. I have a right to sing tenor, but I can't sing tenor at all, and when I try it I disturb my neighbors. Right there I bump against a situation. I have a right to use my knife at table instead of a fork, and who is to gainsay my using my fingers? Queen Elizabeth did. I certainly have a right to lie in the shade of the maple-tree for two hours to-day instead of one hour, as I did yesterday. I wonder if reclining on the grass under a maple-tree is not a part of the pursuit of happiness that is specifically set out in the Constitution? I hope so, for I'd like to have that wonderful Constitution backing me up in the things I like to do. The sun is so hot and hoeing potatoes is such a tiring task that I prefer to lounge in the shade with my back against the Constitution.

In thinking of the pursuit of happiness I am inclined to personify happiness and then watch the chase, wondering whether the pursuer will ever overtake her, and what he'll do when he does. I note that the Constitution does not guarantee that the pursuer will ever catch her—but just gives him an open field and no favors. He may run just as fast as he likes, and as long as his endurance holds out. I suspect that's where the liberty comes in. I wonder if the makers of the Constitution ever visualized that chase. If so, they must have laughed, at least in their sleeves, solemn crowd that they were. If I were certain that I could overtake happiness I'd gladly join in the pursuit, even on such a warm day as this, but the dread uncertainty makes me prefer to loll here in the shade. Besides, I'm not quite certain that I could recognize her even if I could catch her. The photographs that I have seen are so very different that I might mistake happiness for some one else, and that would be embarrassing.

If I should conclude that I was happy, and then discover that I wasn't, I scarcely see how I could explain myself to myself, much less to others. So I shall go on hoeing my potatoes and not bother my poor head about happiness. It is just possible that I shall find it over there in the potato-patch, for its latitude and longitude have never been definitely determined, so far as I am aware. I know I shall find some satisfaction over there at work, and I am convinced that satisfaction and happiness are kinsfolk. Possibly my potatoes will prove the answer to some mother's prayer for food for her little ones next winter. Who knows? As I loosen the soil about the vines I can look down the vista of the months, and see some little one in his high chair smiling through his tears as mother prepares one of my beautiful potatoes for him, and I think I can detect some moisture in mother's eyes, too. It is just possible that her tears are the consecrated incense upon the altar of thanksgiving.



Page 42

I like to see such pictures as I ply my hoe, for they give me respite from weariness, and give fresh ardor to my hoeing. If each one of my potatoes shall only assuage the hunger of some little one, and cause the mother's eyes to distil tears of joy, I shall be in the border-land of happiness, to say the least. I had fully intended to exercise my inalienable rights and lie in the shade for two hours to-day, but when I caught a glimpse of that little chap in the high chair, and heard his pitiful plea for potatoes, I made for the potato-patch post-haste, as if I were responding to a hurry call. I suppose there is no more heart-breaking sound in nature than the crying of a hungry child. I have been whistling all the afternoon along with my hoeing, and now that I think of it, I must be whistling because my potatoes are going to make that baby laugh.

Well, if they do, then I shall elevate the hoeing of potatoes to the rank of a privilege. Oh, I've read my "Tom Sawyer," and know about his enterprise in getting the fence whitewashed by making the task seem a privilege. But Tom was indulging in fiction, and hoeing potatoes is no fiction. Still those whitewash artists had something of the feeling that I experience right now, only there was no baby in their picture as there is in mine, and so I have the baby as an additional privilege. I wish I knew how to make all the school tasks rank as privileges to my boys and girls. If I could only do that, they would have gone far toward a liberal education. If I could only get a baby to crying somewhere out beyond cube root I'm sure they would struggle through the mazes of that subject, somehow, so as to get to the baby to change its crying into laughter. 'Tis worth trying.

I wonder, after all, whether education is not the process of shifting the emphasis from rights to privileges. I have a right, when I go into the town, to keep my seat in the car and let the old lady use the strap. If I insist upon that right I feel myself a boor, lacking the sense and sensibilities of a gentleman. But when I relinquish my seat I feel that I have exercised my privilege to be considerate and courteous. I have a right to permit weeds and briars to overrun my fences, and the fences themselves to go to rack, and so offend the sight of my neighbors; but I esteem it a privilege to make the premises clean and beautiful, so as to add so much to the sum total of pleasure. I have a right to stay on my own side of the road and keep to myself; but it is a great privilege to go up for a half-hour's exchange of talk with my neighbor John. He always clears the cobwebs from my eyes and from my soul, and I return to my work refreshed.



Page 43

I have a right, too, to pore over the colored supplement for an hour or so, but when I am able to rise to my privileges and take the Book of Job instead, I feel that I have made a gain in self-respect, and can stand more nearly erect. I have a right, when I go to church, to sit silent and look bored; but, when I avail myself of the privilege of joining in the responses and the singing, I feel that I am fertilizing my spirit for the truth that is proclaimed. As a citizen I have certain rights, but when I come to think of my privileges my rights seem puny in comparison. Then, too, my rights are such cold things, but my privileges are full of sunshine and of joy. My rights seem mathematical, while my privileges seem curves of beauty.

In his scientific laboratory at Princeton, on one occasion, the celebrated Doctor Hodge, in preparing for an experiment said to some students who were gathered about him: "Gentlemen, please remove your hats; I am about to ask God a question." So it is with every one who esteems his privileges. He is asking God questions about the glory of the sunrise, the fragrance of the flowers, the colors of the rainbow, the music of the brook, and the meaning of the stars. But I hear a baby crying and must get back to my potatoes.

CHAPTER XVI

CHANGING THE MIND

I have been reading, in this book, of a man who couldn't change his mind because his intellectual wardrobe was not sufficient to warrant a change. I was feeling downright sorry for the poor fellow till I got to wondering how many people are feeling sorry for me for the same reason. That reflection changed the situation greatly, and I began to feel some resentment against the blunt statement in the book as being rather too personal. Just as I begin to think that we have standardized a lot of things, along comes some one in a book, or elsewhere, and completely upsets my fine and comforting theories and projects me into chaos again. No sooner do I get a lot of facts all nicely settled, and begin to enjoy complacency, than some disturber of the peace knocks all my facts topsy-turvy, and says they are not facts at all, but the merest fiction. Then I cry aloud with my old friend Cicero, *Ubinam gentium sumus*, which, being translated in the language of the boys, means, "Where in the world (or nation) are we at?" They are actually trying to reform my spelling. I do wish these reformers had come around sooner, when I was learning to spell *phthisic*, *syzygy*, *daguerreotype*, and *caoutchouc*. They might have saved me a deal of trouble and helped me over some of the high places at the old-fashioned spelling-bees.



Page 44

I have a friend who is quite versed in science, and he tells me that any book on science that is more than ten years old is obsolete. Now, that puzzles me no little. If that is true, why don't they wait till matters scientific are settled, and then write their books? Why write a book at all when you know that day after tomorrow some one will come along and refute all the theories and mangle the facts? These science chaps must spend a great deal of their time changing their intellectual clothing. It would be great fun to come back a hundred years from now and read the books on science, psychology, and pedagogy. I suppose the books we have now will seem like joke books to our great-grandchildren, if people are compelled to change their mental garments every day from now on. I wonder how long it will take us human coral insects, to get our building up to the top of the water.

Whoever it was that said that consistency is a jewel would need to take treatment for his eyes in these days. If I must change my mental garb each day I don't see how I can be consistent. If I said yesterday that some theory of science is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and then find a revision of the statement necessary to-day, I certainly am inconsistent. This jewel of consistency certainly loses its lustre, if not its identity, in such a process of shifting. I do hope these chameleon artists will leave us the multiplication table, the yardstick, and the ablative absolute. I'm not so particular about the wine-gallon, for prohibition will probably do away with that anyhow. When I was in school I could tell to a foot the equatorial and the polar diameter of the earth, and what makes the difference. Why, I knew all about that flattening at the poles, and how it came about. Then Mr. Peary went up there and tramped all over the north pole, and never said a word about the flattening when he came back. I was very much disappointed in Mr. Peary.

I know, quite as well as I know my own name, that the length of the year is three hundred and sixty-five days, five hours, forty-eight minutes, and forty-eight seconds, and if I find any one trying to lop off even one second of my hard-learned year, I shall look upon him as a meddler. That is one of my settled facts, and I don't care to have it disturbed. If any one comes along trying to change the length of my year, I shall begin to tremble for the safety of the Ten Commandments. If I believe that a grasshopper is a quadruped, what satisfaction could I possibly take in discovering that he has six legs? It would merely disturb one of my settled facts, and I am more interested in my facts than I am in the grasshopper. The trouble is, though, that my neighbor John keeps referring to the grasshopper's six legs; so I suppose I shall, in the end, get me a grasshopper suit of clothes so as to be in the fashion.



Page 45

This discarding of my four-legged grasshopper and supplying myself with one that has six legs may be what the poet means when he speaks of our dead selves. He may refer to the new suit of mental clothing that I am supposed to get each day, to the change of mind that I am supposed to undergo as regularly as a daily bath. Possibly Mr. Holmes meant something like that when he wrote his "Chambered Nautilus." At each advance from one of these compartments to another, I suppose I acquire a new suit of clothes, or, in other words, change my mind. Let's see, wasn't it Theseus whose eternal punishment in Hades was just to sit there forever? That seems somewhat heavenly to me. But here on earth I suppose I must try to keep up with the styles, and change my mental gear day by day.

I think I might come to enjoy a change of suits every day if only some one would provide them for me; but, if I must earn them myself, the case is different. I'd like to have some one bestow upon me a beautiful Greek suit for Monday, with its elegance, grace, and dignity, a Roman suit for Tuesday, a science suit for Wednesday, a suit of poetry for Thursday, and so on, day after day. But when I must read all of Homer before I can have the Greek suit, the price seems a bit stiff, and I'm not so avid about changing my mind. We had a township picnic back home, once, and it seemed to me that I was attending a congress of nations, for there were people there who had driven five or six miles from the utmost bounds of the township. That was a real mental adventure, and it took some time for me to adjust myself to my new suit. Then I went to the county fair, where were gathered people from all the townships, and my poor mind had a mighty struggle trying to grasp the immensity of the thing. I felt much the same as when I was trying to understand the mathematical sign of infinity. And when I came upon the statement, in my geography, that there are eighty-eight counties in our State, the mind balked absolutely and refused to go on. I felt as did the old gentleman who saw an aeroplane for the first time. After watching its gyrations for some time he finally exclaimed: "They ain't no sich thing."

My college roommate, Mack, went over to London, once, on some errand, and of course went to the British Museum. Near the entrance he came upon the Rosetta Stone, and stood enthralled. He reflected that he was standing in the presence of a monument that marks the beginning of recorded history, that back of that all was dark, and that all the books in all the libraries emanate from that beginning. The thought was so big, so overmastering, that there was no room in his mind for anything else, so he turned about and left without seeing anything else in the Museum. Since then we have had many a big laugh together as he recounts to me his wonderful visit to the Rosetta Stone. I see clearly that in the presence of that modest stone he got all the mental clothing he could possibly wear at the time. Changing the mind sometimes seems to amount almost to surgery.



Page 46

Sometime, if I can get my stub pen limbered up I shall try my hand at writing a bit of a composition on the subject of "The Inequality of Equals." I know that the Declaration tells us that all men are born free and equal, and I shall explain in my essay that it means us to understand that while they are born equal, they begin to become unequal the day after they are born, and become more so as one changes his mind and the other one does not. I try, all the while, to make myself believe that I am the equal of my neighbor, the judge, and then I feel foolish to think that I ever tried it. The neighbors all know it isn't true, and so do I when I quit arguing with myself. He has such a long start of me now that I wonder if I can ever overtake him. One thing, though, I'm resolved upon, and that is to change my mind as often as possible.

CHAPTER XVII

THE POINT OF VIEW

Just why a boy is averse to washing his neck and ears is one of the deep problems of social psychology, and yet the psychologists have veered away from the subject. There must be a reason, and these mind experts ought to be able and willing to find it, so as to relieve the anxiety of the rest of us. It is easy for me to say, with a full-arm gesture, that a boy is of the earth earthy, but that only begs the question, as full-arm gestures are wont to do. Many a boy has shed copious tears as he sat on a bench outside the kitchen door removing, under compulsion, the day's accumulations from his feet as a prerequisite for retiring. He would much prefer to sleep on the floor to escape the foot-washing ordeal. Why, pray, should he wash his feet when he knows full well that tomorrow night will find them in the same condition? Why all the bother and trouble about a little thing like that? Why can't folks let a fellow alone, anyhow? And, besides, he went in swimming this afternoon, and that surely ought to meet all the exactions of capricious parents. He exhibits his feet as an evidence of the virtue of going swimming, for he is arranging the preliminaries for another swimming expedition to-morrow.

I recall very distinctly how strange it seemed that my father could sit there and calmly talk about being a Democrat, or a Republican, or a Baptist, or a Methodist, or about some one's discovering the north pole, or about the President's message when the dog had a rat cornered under the corn-crib and was barking like mad. But, then, parents can't see things in their right relations and proportions. And there sat mother, too, darning stockings, and the dog just stark crazy about that rat. 'Tis enough to make a boy lose faith in parents forevermore. A dog, a rat, and a boy—there's a combination that recks not of the fall of empires or the tottering of thrones. Even chicken-noodles must take second place in such a scheme of world activities. And yet a mother would hold a boy back from the forefront of such an enterprise to wash his neck. Oh, these mothers!

Page 47

I have read “Adam’s Diary,” by Mark Twain, in which he tells what events were forward in Eden on Monday, what on Tuesday, and so on throughout the week till he came to Sunday, and his only comment on that day was “Pulled through.” In the New England Primer we gather the solemn information that “In Adam’s fall, we sinned all.” I admit the fact freely, but beg to be permitted to plead extenuating circumstances. Adam could go to church just as he was, but I had to be renovated and, at times, almost parboiled and, in addition to these indignities, had to wear shoes and stockings; and the stockings scratched my legs, and the shoes were too tight. If Adam could barely manage to pull through, just think of me. Besides, Adam didn’t have to wear a paper collar that disintegrated and smeared his neck. The more I think of Adam’s situation, the more sorry I feel for myself. Why, he could just reach out and pluck some fruit to help him through the services, but I had to walk a mile after church, in those tight shoes, and then wait an hour for dinner. And I was supposed to feel and act religious while I was waiting, but I didn’t.

If I could only have gone to church barefoot, with my shirt open at the throat, and with a pocket full of cookies to munch *ad lib* throughout the services, I am sure that the spiritual uplift would have been greater. The soul of a boy doesn’t expand violently when encased in a starched shirt and a paper collar, and these surmounted by a thick coat, with the mercury at ninety-seven in the shade. I think I can trace my religious retardation back to those hungry Sundays, those tight shoes, that warm coat, and those frequent jabs in my ribs when I fain would have slept.

In my childhood there was such a host of people who were pushing and pulling me about in an effort to make me good that, even yet, I shy away from their style of goodness. The wonder is that I have any standing at all in polite and upright society. So many folks said I was bad and naughty, and applied so many other no less approbrious epithets to me that, in time, I came to believe them, and tried somewhat diligently to live up to the reputation they gave me. I recall that one of my aunts came in one day and, seeing me out in the yard most ingloriously tousled, asked my good mother: “Is that your child?” Poor mother! I have often wondered how much travail of spirit it must have cost her to acknowledge me as her very own. One thumb, one great toe, and an ankle were decorated with greasy rags, and I was far from being ornamental. I had been hulling walnuts, too, and my stained hands served to accentuate the human scenery.



Page 48

This same aunt had three boys of her own, later on, and a more disreputable-looking crew it would be hard to find. I confess that I took a deal of grim satisfaction in their dilapidated ensemble, just for my aunt's benefit, of course. They were fine, wholesome, natural boys in spite of their parentage, and I liked them even while I gloried in their cuts, bruises, and dirt. At that time I was wearing a necktie and had my shoes polished but, even so, I yearned to join with them in their debauch of sand, mud, and general indifference to convention. They are fine, upstanding young chaps now, and of course their mother thinks that her scolding, nagging, and baiting made them so. They know better, but are too kind and considerate to reveal the truth to their mother.

Even yet I have something like admiration for the ingenuity of my elders in conjuring up spooks, hob-goblins, and bugaboos with which to scare me into submission. I conformed, of course, but I never gave them a high grade in veracity. I yielded simply to gain time, for I knew where there was a chipmunk in a hole, and was eager to get to digging him out just as soon as my apparent submission for a brief time had proved my complete regeneration. They used to tell me that children should be seen but not heard, and I knew they wanted to do the talking. I often wonder whether their notion of a good child would have been satisfactorily met if I had suddenly become paralyzed, or ossified, or petrified. In either of these cases I could have been seen but not heard. One day, not long ago, when I felt at peace with all the world and was comfortably free from care, a small, thumb-sucking seven-year-old asked: "How long since the world was born?" After I told him that it was about four thousand years he worked vigorously at his thumb for a time, and then said: "That isn't very long." Then I wished I had said four millions, so as to reduce him to silence, for one doesn't enjoy being routed and put to confusion by a seven-year-old.

After quite a silence he asked again: "What was there before the world was born?" That was an easy one; so I said in a tone of finality: "There wasn't anything." Then I went on with my meditations, thinking I had used the soft pedal effectively. Silence reigned supreme for some minutes, and then was rudely shattered. His thumb flew from his mouth, and he laughed so lustily that he could be heard throughout the house. When his laughter had spent itself somewhat, I asked meekly: "What are you laughing at?" His answer came on the instant, but still punctuated with laughter: "I was laughing to see how funny it was when there wasn't anything." No wonder that folks want children to be seen but not heard. And some folks are scandalized because a chap like that doesn't like to wash his neck and ears.

CHAPTER XVIII

PICNICS



Page 49

The code of table etiquette in the days of my boyhood, as I now recall it, was expressed something like: "Eat what is set before you and ask no questions." We heeded this injunction with religious fidelity, but yearned to ask why they didn't set more before us. About the only time that a real boy gets enough to eat is when he goes to a picnic and, even there and then, the rounding out of the programme is connected with clandestine visits to the baskets after the formal ceremonies have been concluded. At a picnic there is no such expression as "from soup to nuts," for there is no soup, and perhaps no nuts, but there is everything else in tantalizing abundance. If I find a plate of deviled eggs near me, I begin with deviled eggs; or, if the cold tongue is nearer, I begin with that. In this way I reveal, for the pleasure of the hostesses, my unrestricted and democratic appetite. Or, in order to obviate any possible embarrassment during the progress of the chicken toward me, I may take a piece of pie or a slice of cake, thinking that they may not return once they have been put in circulation. Certainly I take jelly when it passes along, as well as pickles, olives, and cheese. There is no incongruity, at such a time, in having a slice of baked ham and a slice of angel-food cake on one's plate or in one's hands. They harmonize beautifully both in the color scheme and in the gastronomic scheme. At a picnic my boyhood training reaches its full fruition: "Eat what is set before you and ask no questions." These things I do.

That's a good rule for reading, too, just to read what is set before you and ask no questions. I'm thinking now of the reader member of my dual nature, not the student member. I like to cater somewhat to both these members. When the reader member is having his inning, I like to give him free rein and not hamper him by any lock-step or stereotyped method or course. I like to lead him to a picnic table and dismiss him with the mere statement that "Heaven helps those who help themselves," and thus leave him to his own devices. If Southey's, "The Curse of Kehama," happens to be nearest his plate, he will naturally begin with that as I did with the deviled eggs. Or he may nibble at "The House-Boat on the Styx" while some one is passing the Shakespeare along. He may like Emerson, and ask for a second helping, and that's all right, too, for that's a nourishing sort of food. Having partaken of this generously, he will enjoy all the more the jelly when it comes along in the form of "Nonsense Anthology." The more I think of it the more I see that reading is very like a picnic dinner. It is all good, and one takes the food which is nearest him, whether pie or pickles.



Page 50

When any one asks me what I am reading, I become much embarrassed. I may be reading a catalogue of books at the time, or the book notices in some magazine, but such reading may not seem orthodox at all to the one who asks the question. My reading may be too desultory or too personal to be paraded in public. I don't make it a practice to tell all the neighbors what I ate for breakfast. I like to saunter along through the book just as I ride in a gondola when in Venice. I'm not going anywhere, but get my enjoyment from merely being on the way. I pay the gondolier and then let him have his own way with me. So with the book. I pay the money and then abandon myself to it. If it can make me laugh, why, well and good, and I'll laugh. If it causes me to shed tears, why, let the tears flow. They may do me good. If I ever become conscious of the number of the page of the book I am reading, I know there is something the matter with that book or else with me. If I ever become conscious of the page number in David Grayson's "Adventures in Contentment," or "The Friendly Road," I shall certainly consult a physician. I do become semiconscious at times that I am approaching the end of the feast, and feel regret that the book is not larger.

I have spasms and enjoy them. Sometimes, I have a Dickens spasm, and read some of his books for the *n*th time. I have frittered away much time in my life trying to discover whether a book is worth a second reading. If it isn't, it is hardly worth a first reading, I don't get tired of my friend Brown, so why should I put Dickens off with a mere society call? If I didn't enjoy Brown I'd not visit him so frequently; but, liking him, I go again and again. So with Dickens, Mark Twain, and Shakespeare. The story goes that a second Uncle Remus was sitting on a stump in the depths of a forest sawing away on an old discordant violin. A man, who chanced to come upon him, asked what he was doing. With no interruption of his musical activities, he answered: "Boss, I'se serenadin' m' soul." Book or violin, 'tis all the same. Uncle Remus and I are serenading our souls and the exercise is good for us.

I was laid by with typhoid fever for a few weeks once, and the doctor came at eleven o'clock in the morning and at five o'clock in the afternoon. If he happened to be a bit late I grew impatient, and my fever increased. He discovered this fact, and was no more tardy. He was reading "John Fiske" at the time, and Grant's "Memoirs," and at each visit reviewed for me what he had read since the previous visit. He must have been glad when I no longer needed to take my history by proxy, for I kept him up to the mark, and bullied him into reciting twice a day. I don't know what drugs he gave me, but I do know that "Fiske" and "Grant" are good for typhoid, and heartily commend them to the general public. I am rather glad now that I had typhoid fever.



Page 51

I listen with amused tolerance to people who grow voluble on the weather and their symptoms, and often wish they would ask me to prescribe for them. I'd probably tell them to become readers of William J. Locke. But, perhaps, their symptoms might seem preferable to the remedy. A neighbor came in to borrow a book, and I gave her "Les Miserables," which she returned in a day or so, saying that she could not read it. I knew that I had overestimated her, and that I didn't have a book around of her size. I had loaned my "Robin Hood," "Rudder Grange," "Uncle Remus," and "Sonny" to the children round about.

I like to browse around among my books, and am trying to have my boys and girls acquire the same habit. Reading for pure enjoyment isn't a formal affair any more than eating. Sometimes I feel in the mood for a grapefruit for breakfast, sometimes for an orange, and sometimes for neither. I'm glad not to board at a place where they have standardized breakfasts and reading. If I feel in the mood for an orange I want an orange, even if my neighbor has a casaba melon. So, if I want my "Middlemarch," I'm quite eager for that book, and am quite willing for my neighbor to have his "Henry Esmond." The appetite for books is variable, the same as for food, and I'd rather consult my appetite than my neighbor when choosing a book as a companion through a lazy afternoon beneath the maple-tree, I refuse to try to supervise the reading of my pupils. Why, I couldn't supervise their eating. I'd have to find out whether the boy was yearning for porterhouse steak or ice-cream, first; then I might help him make a selection. The best I can do is to have plenty of steak, potatoes, pie, and ice-cream around, and allow him to help himself.

CHAPTER XIX

MAKE-BELIEVE

The text may be found in "Over Bemerton's," by E. V. Lucas, and reads as follows: "A gentle hypocrisy is not only the basis but the salt of civilized life." This statement startled me a bit at first; but when I got to thinking of my experience in having a photograph of myself made I saw that Mr. Lucas has some warrant for his statement. There has been only one Oliver Cromwell to say: "Paint me as I am." The rest of us humans prefer to have the wart omitted. If my photograph is true to life I don't want it. I'm going to send it away, and I don't want the folks who get it to think I look like that. If I were a woman and could wear a disguise of cosmetics when sitting for a picture the case might not be quite so bad. The subtle flattery of the photograph is very grateful to us mortals whether we admit it or not. My friend Baxter introduced me once as a man who is not two-faced, and went on to explain that if I had had two faces I'd have brought the other instead of this one. And that's true. I expect the photographer to evoke another face for me, and hence my generous gift of money to him. I like that chap immensely. He takes my money, gives me another face, bows me out with the grace of a finished courtier, and never, by word or look, reveals his knowledge of my hypocrisy.



Page 52

As a boy I had a full suit of company manners which I wore only when guests were present, and so was always sorry to have guests come. I sat back on the chair instead of on its edge; I didn't swing my legs unless I had a lapse of memory; I said, "Yes, ma'am," and, "No, ma'am," like any other parrot, just as I did at rehearsal; and, in short, I was a most exemplary child save for occasional reactions to unlooked-for situations. The folks knew I was posing, and were on nettles all the while from fear of a breakdown; the guests knew I was posing, and I knew I was posing. But we all pretended to one another that that was the regular order of procedure in our house. So we had a very gratifying concert exercise in hypocrisy. We said our prayers that night just as usual.

With such thorough training in my youth it is not at all strange that I now consider myself rather an adept in the prevailing social usages. At a musicale I applaud fit to blister my hands, even though I feel positively pugnacious. But I know the singer has an encore prepared, and I feel that it would be ungracious to disappoint her. Besides, I argue with myself that I can stand it for five minutes more if the others can. Professor James, I think it is, says that we ought to do at least one disagreeable thing each day as an aid in the development of character. Being rather keen on character development, I decide on a double dose of the disagreeable while opportunity favors. Hence my vigorous applauding. Then, too, I realize that the time and place are not opportune for an expression of my honest convictions; so I choose the line of least resistance and well-nigh blister my hands to emphasize my hypocrisy.

At a formal dinner I have been known to sink so low into the depths of hypocrisy as to eat shrimp salad. But when one is sitting next to a lady who seems a confirmed celibate, and who seems to find nothing better than to become voluble on the subject of her distinguished ancestors, even shrimp salad has its uses. Now, under normal conditions my perverted and plebeian taste regards shrimp salad as a banality, but at that dinner I ate it with apparent relish, and tried not to make a wry face. But, worst of all, I complimented the hostess upon the excellence of the dinner, and extolled the salad particularly, although we both knew that the salad was a failure, and that the dinner itself convicted the cook of a lack of experience or else of a superfluity of potatoes.

When the refreshments are served I take a thimbleful of ice-cream and an attenuated wafer, and then solemnly declare to the maid that I have been abundantly served. In the hallowed precincts that I call my den I could absorb nine rations such as they served and never bat an eye. And yet, in making my adieus to the hostess, I thank her most effusively for a delightful evening, refreshments included, and then hurry grumbling home to get something to eat. Such are some of the



Page 53

manifestations of social hypocrisy. These all pass current at their face value, and yet we all know that nobody is deceived. Still it is great fun to play make-believe, and the world would have convulsions if we did not indulge in these pleasing deceptions. In the clever little book "Molly Make-Believe" the girl pretends at first that she loves the man, and later on comes to love him to distraction, and she lived happy ever after, too. When, in my fever, I would ask about my temperature, the nurse would give a numeral about two degrees below the real record to encourage me, and I can't think that St. Peter will bar her out just for that.

The psychologists give mild assent to the theory that a physical attitude may generate an emotion. If I assume a belligerent attitude, they claim that, in time, I shall feel really belligerent; that in a loafing attitude I shall presently be loafing; and that, if I assume the attitude of a listener, I shall soon be listening most intently. This seems to be justified by the experiences of Edwin Booth on the stage. He could feign fighting for a time, and then it became real fighting, and great care had to be taken to avert disastrous consequences when his sword fully struck its gait. I believe the psychologists have never fully agreed on the question whether the man is running from the bear because he is scared or is scared because he is running.

I dare say Mr. Shakespeare was trying to express this theory when he said: "Assume a virtue, though you have it not." That's exactly what I'm trying to have my pupils do all the while. I'm trying to have them wear their company manners continually, so that, in good time, they will become their regular working garb. I'm glad to have them assume the attitudes of diligence and politeness, thinking that their attitudes may generate the corresponding emotions. It is a severe strain on a boy at times to seem polite when he feels like hurling missiles. We both know that his politeness is mere make-believe, but we pretend not to know, and so move along our ways of hypocrisy hoping that good may come.

There is a telephone-girl over in the central station, wherever that is, who certainly is beautiful if the voice is a true index. Her tones are dulcet, and her voice is so mellow and well modulated that I visualize her as another Venus. I suspect that, when she began her work, some one told her that her tenure of position depended upon the quality of her voice. So, I imagine, she assumed a tonal quality of voice that was really a sublimated hypocrisy, and persisted in this until now that quality of voice is entirely natural. I can't think that Shakespeare had her specially in mind, but, if I ever have the good fortune to meet her, I shall certainly ask her if she reads Shakespeare. Now that I think of it, I shall try this treatment on my own voice, for it sorely needs treatment. Possibly I ought to take a course of training at the telephone-station.



Page 54

I am now thoroughly persuaded that Mr. Lucas gave expression to a great principle of pedagogy in what he said about hypocrisy, and I shall try to be diligent in applying it. If I can get my boys to assume an arithmetical attitude, they may come to have an arithmetical feeling, and that would give me great joy. I don't care to have them express their honest feelings either about me or the work, but would rather have them look polite and interested, even if it is hypocrisy. I'd like to have all my boys and girls act as if they consider me absolutely fair, just, and upright, as well as the most kind, courteous, generous, scholarly, skillful, and complaisant schoolmaster that ever lived, no matter what they really think.

CHAPTER XX

BEHAVIOR

If I only knew how to teach English, I'd have far more confidence in my schoolmastering. But I don't seem to get on. The system breaks down too often to suit me. Just when I think I have some lad inoculated with elegant English through the process of reading from some classic, he says, "might of came," and I become obfuscated again. I have a book here in which I read that it is the business of the teacher so to organize the activities of the school that they will function in behavior. Well, my boys' behavior in the use of English indicates that I haven't organized the activities of my English class very effectively. I seem to be more of a success in a cherry-orchard than in an English class. My cherries are large and round, a joy to the eye and delightful to the taste. The fruit expert tells me they are perfect, and so I feel that I organized the activities in that orchard efficiently. In fact, the behavior of my cherry-trees is most gratifying. But when I hear my pupils talk or read their essays, and find a deal of imperfect fruit in the way of solecisms and misspelled words, I feel inclined to discredit my skill in organizing the activities in this human orchard.

I think my trouble is (and it is trouble), that I proceed upon the agreeable assumption that my pupils can "catch" English as they do the measles if only they are exposed to it. So I expose them to the objective complement and the compellative, and then stand aghast at their behavior when they make all the mistakes that can possibly be made in using a given number of words. I have occasion to wonder whether I juggle these big words merely because I happen to see them in a book, or whether I am trying to be impressive. I recall how often I have felt a thrill of pride as I have ladled out deliberative subjunctives, ethical datives, and hysteron proteron to my (supposedly) admiring Latin pupils. If I were a soldier I should want to wear one of those enormous three-story military hats to render me tall and impressive. I have no desire to see a drum-major minus his plumage. The disillusionment would probably be depressing. Liking to wear my shako, I must continue to talk of objective complements instead of using simple English.



Page 55

I had watched men make a hundred barrels, but when I tried my skill I didn't produce much of a barrel. Then I knew making barrels is not violently infectious. But I suspect that it is quite the same as English in this respect. My behavior in that cooper-shop, for a time, was quite destructive of materials, until I had acquired skill by much practice.

If I could only organize the activities in my English class so that they would function in such behavior as Lincoln's "Letter to Mrs. Bixby," I should feel that I might continue my teaching instead of devoting all my time to my cherry-orchard. Or, if I could see that my pupils were acquiring the habit of correct English as the result of my work, I'd give myself a higher grade as a schoolmaster. My neighbor over here teaches agriculture, and one of his boys produced one hundred and fifty bushels of corn on an acre of ground. That's what I call excellent behavior, and that schoolmaster certainly knows how to organize the activities of his class. My boy's yield of thirty-seven bushels, mostly nubbins, does not compare favorably with the yield of his boy, and I feel that I ought to reform, or else wear a mask. Here is my boy saying "might of came," and his boy is raising a hundred and fifty bushels of corn per acre.

If I could only assemble all my boys and girls twenty years hence and have them give an account of themselves for all the years after they left school, I could grade them with greater accuracy than I can possibly do now. Of course, I'd simply grade them on behavior, and if I could muster up courage, I might ask them to grade mine. I wonder how I'd feel if I'd find among them such folks as Edison, Burbank, Goethals, Clara Barton, and Frances Willard. My neighbor John says the most humiliating experience that a man can have is to wear a pair of his son's trousers that have been cut down to fit him. I might have some such feelings as that in the presence of pupils who had made such notable achievements. But, should they tell me that these achievements were due, in some good measure, to the work of the school, well, that would be glory enough for me. One of my boys was telling me only yesterday of a bit of work he did the day before in the way of revealing a process in chemistry to a firm of jewellers and hearing the superintendent say that that bit of information is worth a thousand dollars to the establishment. If he keeps on doing things like that I shall grade his behavior one of these days.

I suppose Mr. Goethals must have learned the multiplication table, once upon a time, and used it, too, in constructing the Panama Canal. He certainly made it effective, and the activities of that class in arithmetic certainly did function. I tell my boys that this multiplication table is the same one that Mr. Goethals has been using all the while, and then ask them what use they expect to make of it. One man made use of this table in tunnelling the Alps, and another in building the Brooklyn Bridge, and it seems to be good for many more bridges and tunnels if I can only organize the activities aright.



Page 56

I was standing in front of St. Marks, there in Venice, one morning, regaling myself with the beauty of the festive scene, and talking to a friend, when four of my boys came strolling up, and they seemed more my boys than ever before. What a reunion we had! The folks all about us didn't understand it in the least, but we did, and that was enough. I forgot my coarse clothes, my well-nigh empty pockets, my inability to buy the many beautiful things that kept tantalizing me, and the meagreness of my salary. These were all swallowed up in the joy of seeing the boys, and I wanted to proclaim to all and sundry; "These are my jewels." Those boys are noble, clean, upstanding fellows, and no schoolmaster could help being proud of them. Such as they nestle down in the heart of the schoolmaster and cause him to know that life is good.

I was sorry not to be able to share my joy with my friend who stood near, but that could not be. I might have used words to him, but he would not have understood. He had never yearned over those fellows and watched them, day by day, hoping that they might grow up to be an honor to their school. He had never had the experience of watching from the schoolhouse window, fervently wishing that no harm might come to them, and that no shadows might come over their lives. He had never known the joy of sitting up far into the night to prepare for the coming of those boys the next day. He had never seen their eyes sparkle in the classroom when, for them, truth became illumined. Of course, he stood aloof, for he couldn't know. Only the schoolmaster can ever know how those four boys became the focus of all that wondrous beauty on that splendid morning. If I had had my grade-book along I would have recorded their grades in behavior, for as I looked upon those glorious chaps and heard them recount their experiences I had a feeling of exaltation, knowing that the activities of our school had functioned in right behavior.

CHAPTER XXI

FOREFINGERS

This left forefinger of mine is certainly a curiosity. It looks like a miniature totem-pole, and I wish I had before me its life history. I'd like to know just how all these seventeen scars were acquired. It seems to have come in contact with about all sorts and sizes of cutlery. If only teachers or parents had been wise enough to make a record of all my bloodletting mishaps, with occasions, causes, and effects, that record would afford a fruitful study for students of education. The pity of it is that we take no account of such matters as phases or factors of education. We keep saying that experience is the best teacher, and then ignore this eloquent forefinger. I call that criminal neglect arising from crass ignorance. Why, these scars that adorn many parts of my body are the foot-prints of evolution, if, indeed, evolution makes tracks. The scars on the faces of those

Page 57

students at Heidelberg are accounted badges of honor, but they cannot compare with the big scar on my left knee that came to me as the free gift of a corn-knife. Those students wanted their scars to take home to show their mothers. I didn't want mine, and made every effort to conceal it, as well as the hole in my trousers. I got my scar as a warning. I profited by it, too, for never were there two cuts in exactly the same place. In fact, they were widely, if not wisely, distributed. They are the indices of the soaring sense of my youthful audacity. And yet neither parents nor teachers ever graded my scars.

I recall quite distinctly that, at one time, I proclaimed boldly over one entire page of a copy-book, that knowledge is power, and became so enthusiastic in these numerous proclamations that I wrote on the bias, and zigzagged over the page with fine abandon. But no teacher ever even hinted to me that the knowledge I acquired from my contest with a nest of belligerent bumblebees had the slightest connection with power. When I groped my way home with both eyes swollen shut I was never lionized. Indeed, no! Anything but that! I couldn't milk the cows that evening, and couldn't study my lesson, and therefore, my newly acquired knowledge was called weakness instead of power. They did not seem to realize that my swollen face was prominent in the scheme of education, nor that bumblebees and yellow-jackets may be a means of grace. They wanted me to be solving problems in common (sometimes called vulgar) fractions. I don't fight bumblebees any more, which proves that my knowledge generated power. The emotions of my boyhood presented a scene of grand disorder, and those bumblebees helped to organize them, and to clarify and define my sense of values. I can philosophize about a bumblebee far more judicially now than I could when my eyes were swollen shut.

I went to the town to attend a circus one day, and concluded I'd celebrate the day with eclat by getting my hair cut. At the conclusion of this ceremony the tonsorial Beau Brummel, in the most seductive tones, suggested a shampoo. I just couldn't resist his blandishments, and so consented. Then he suggested tonic, and grew quite eloquent in recounting the benefits to the scalp, and I took tonic. I felt quite a fellow, till I came to pay the bill, and then discovered that I had but fifteen cents left from all my wealth. That, of course, was not sufficient for a ticket to the circus, so I bought a bag of peanuts and walked home, five miles, meditating, the while, upon the problem of life. My scalp was all right, but just under that scalp was a seething, soundless hubbub. I learned things that day that are not set down in the books, even if I did get myself laughed at. When I get to giving school credits for home work I shall certainly excuse the boy who has had such an experience as that from solving at least four problems in vulgar fractions, and I shall include that experience in my definition of education, too.



Page 58

I have tried to back-track Paul Laurence Dunbar, now and then, and have found it good fun. Once I started with his expression, “the whole sky overhead and the whole earth underneath,” and tried to get back to where that started. He must have been lying on his back on some grass-plot, right in the centre of everything, with that whole half-sphere of sky luring his spirit out toward the infinite, with a pillow that was eight thousand miles thick. If I had been his teacher I might have called him lazy and shiftless as he lay there, because he was not finding how to place a decimal point, I’m glad, on the whole, that I was not his teacher, for I’d have twinges of conscience every time I read one of his big thoughts. I’d feel that, while he was lying there growing big, I was doing my best to make him little. When I was lying on my back there in the Pantheon in Rome, looking up through that wide opening, and watching a moving-picture show that has no rival, the fleecy clouds in their ever-changing forms against that blue background of matchless Italian sky, those gendarmes debated the question of arresting me for disorderly conduct. My conduct was disorderly because they couldn’t understand it. But, if Raphael could have risen from his tomb only a few yards away, he would have told those fellows not to disturb me while I was being so liberally educated. Then, that other time, when my friend Reuben and I stood on the very prow of the ship when the sea was rolling high, swinging us up into the heights, and then down into the depths, with the roar drowning out all possibility of talk—well, somehow, I thought of that copy-book back yonder with its message that “Knowledge is power.” And I never think of power without recalling that experience as I watched that battle royal between the power of the sea and the power of the ship that could withstand the angry buffeting of the waves, and laugh in glee as it rode them down. I know that six times nine are fifty-four, but I confess that I forgot this fact out there on the prow of that ship. Some folks might say that Reuben and I were wasting our time, but I can’t think so. I like, even now, to stand out in the clear during a thunder-storm. I want the head uncovered, too, that the wind may toss my hair about while I look the lightning-flashes straight in the eye and stand erect and unafraid as the thunder crashes and rolls and reverberates about me. I like to watch the trees swaying to and fro, keeping time to the majestic rhythm of the elements. To me such an experience is what my neighbor John calls “growing weather,” and at such a time the bigness of the affair causes me to forget for the time that there are such things as double datives.



Page 59

One time I spent the greater part of a forenoon watching logs go over a dam. It seems a simple thing to tell, and hardly worth the telling, but it was a great morning in actual experience. In time those huge logs became things of life, and when they arose from their mighty plunge into the watery deeps they seemed to shake themselves free and laugh in their freedom. And there were battles, too. They struggled and fought and rode over one another, and their mighty collisions produced a very thunder of sound. I tried to read the book which I had with me, but could not. In the presence of such a scene one cannot read a book unless it is one of Victor Hugo's. That copy-book looms up again as I think of those logs, and I wonder whether knowledge is power, and whether experience is the best teacher. But, dear me! Here I've been frittering away all this good time, and these papers not graded yet!

CHAPTER XXII

STORY-TELLING

My boys like to have me tell them stories, and, if the stories are true ones, they like them all the better. So I sometimes become reminiscent when they gather about me and let them lead me along as if I couldn't help myself when they are so interested. In this way I become one of them. I like to whittle a nice pine stick while I talk, for then the talk seems incidental to the whittling and so takes hold of them all the more. In the midst of the talking a boy will sometimes slip into my hand a fresh stick, when I have about exhausted the whittling resources of the other. That's about the finest encore I have ever received. A boy knows how to pay a compliment in a delicate way when the mood for compliments is on him, and if that mood of his is handled with equal delicacy great things may be accomplished.

Well, the other day as I whittled the inevitable pine stick I let them lure from me the story of Sant. Now, Sant was my seatmate in the village school back yonder, and I now know that I loved him whole-heartedly. I didn't know this at the time, for I took him as a matter of course, just as I did my right hand. His name was Sanford, but boys don't call one another by their right names. They soon find affectionate nicknames. I have quite a collection of these nicknames myself, but have only a hazy notion of how or where they were acquired. When some one calls me by one of these names, I can readily locate him in time and place, for I well know that he must belong in a certain group or that name would not come to his lips. These nicknames that we all have are really historical. Well, we called him Sant, and that name conjures up before me one of the most wholesome boys I have ever known. He was brimful of fun. A heartier, more sincere laugh a boy never had, and my affection for him was as natural as my breathing. He knew I liked him, though I never told him so. Had I told him, the charm would have been broken.



Page 60

In those days spelling was one of the high lights of school work, and we were incited to excellence in this branch of learning by head tickets, which were a promise of still greater honor, in the form of a prize, to the winner. The one who stood at the head of the class at the close of the lesson received a ticket, and the holder of the greatest number of these tickets at the end of the school year bore home in triumph the much-coveted prize in the shape of a book as a visible token of superiority. I wanted that prize, and worked for it. Tickets were accumulating in my little box with exhilarating regularity, and I was nobly upholding the family name when I was stricken with pneumonia, and my victorious career had a rude check. My nearest competitor was Sam, who almost exulted in my illness because of the opportunity it afforded him for a rich harvest of head tickets. In the exuberance of his joy he made some remark to this effect, which Sant overheard. Up to this time Sant had taken no interest in the contests in spelling, but Sam's remark galvanized him into vigorous life, and spelling became his overmastering passion. Indeed, he became the wonder of the school, and in consequence poor Sam's anticipations were not realized. Day after day Sant caught the word that Sam missed, and thus added another ticket to his collection. So it went until I took my place again, and then Sant lapsed back into his indifference, leaving me to look after Sam myself. When I tried to face him down with circumstantial evidence he seemed pained to think that I could ever consider him capable of such designing. The merry twinkle in his eye was the only confession he ever made. Small wonder that I loved Sant. If I were writing a testimonial for myself I should say that it was much to my credit that I loved a boy like that.

As a boy my risibilities were easily excited, and I'm glad that, even yet, I have not entirely overcome that weakness. If I couldn't have a big laugh, now and then, I'd feel that I ought to consult a physician. My boys and girls and I often laugh together, but never at one another. Sant had a deal of fun with my propensity to laugh. When we were conning our geography lesson, he would make puns upon such names as Chattahoochee and Appalachicola, and I would promptly explode. Then, enter the teacher. But I drop the mantle of charity over the next scene, for his school-teaching was altogether personal, and not pedagogical. He didn't know that puns and laughter were the reactions on the part of us boys that caused us to know the facts of the book. But he wanted us to learn those facts in his way, and not in our own. Poor fellow! *Requiescat in pace*, if he can.



Page 61

Sant was the first one of our crowd to go to college, and we were all proud of him, and predicted great things for him. We all knew he was brilliant and felt certain that the great ones in the college would soon find it out. And they did; for ever and anon some news would filter through to us that Sant was battenning upon Latin, Greek, mathematics, science, and history. Of course, we gave all the credit to our little school, and seemed to forget that the Lord may have had something to do with it. When we proved by Sant's achievements that our school was *ne plus ultra*, I noticed that the irascible teacher joined heartily in the chorus. I intend to get all the glory I can from the achievements of my pupils, but I do hope that they may not be my sole dependence at the distribution of glory. Yes, Sant graduated, and his name was written high upon the scroll. But he could not deliver his oration, for he was sick, and a friend read it for him. And when he arose to receive his diploma he had to stand on crutches. They took him home in a carriage, and within a week he was dead. The fires of genius had burned brightly for a time and then went out in darkness, because his father and mother were first cousins.

At the conclusion of this story, the boys were silent for a long time, and I knew the story was having its effect. Then there was a slight movement, and one of them put into my hand another pine stick. I whittled in silence for a time, and then told them of a woman I know who is well-known and highly esteemed in more than one State because of her distinctive achievements. One day I saw her going along the street leading by the hand a little four-year-old boy. He was the picture of health, and rollicked along as only such a healthy little chap can. He was eager to see all the things that were displayed in the windows, but to me he and the proud mother were the finest show on the street. She beamed upon him like another Madonna, and it seemed to me that the Master must have been looking at some such glorious child as that when he said; "Suffer the little children to come unto me."

A few weeks later I was riding on the train with that mother, and she was telling me that the little fellow had been ill, and told how anxious she had been through several days and nights because the physicians could not discover the cause of his illness. Then she told how happy she was that he had about recovered, and how bright he seemed when she kissed him good-by that morning. I saw her several times that week and at each meeting she gave me good news of the little boy at home.



Page 62

Inside of another month that noble little fellow was dead. Apparently he was his own healthy, happy little self, and then was stricken as he had been before. The pastor of the church of which the parents are members told me of the death scene. It occurred at about one o'clock in the morning, and the mother was worn and haggard from anxiety and days of watching. The members of the family, the physician, and the pastor were standing around the bed, but the mother was on her knees close beside the little one, who was writhing in the most awful convulsions. Then the stricken mother looked straight into heaven and made a personal appeal to God to come and relieve the little fellow's sufferings. Again and again she prayed: "Oh, God, do come and take my little boy." And the Angel of Death, in answer to that prayer, came in and touched the baby, and he was still.

The mother of that child may or may not know that the grandfather of that child came into that room that night, though he had been long in his grave, and murdered her baby—murdered him with tainted blood. That grandfather had not lived a clean life, and so broke a mother's heart and forced her in agony to pray for the death of her own child.

When I had finished I walked quietly away, leaving the boys to their own thoughts, and as I walked I breathed the wish that my boys may live such clean, wholesome, upright, temperate lives that no child or grandchild may ever have occasion to reproach them, or point the finger of scorn at them, and that no mother may ever pray for death to come to her baby because of a taint in their blood.

CHAPTER XXIII

GRANDMOTHER

My grandmother was about the nicest grandmother that a boy ever had, and in memory of her, I am quite partial to all the grandmothers. I like Whistler's portrait of his mother there in the Luxembourg—the serene face, the cap and strings, and the folded hands—because it takes me back to the days and to the presence of my grandmother. She got into my heart when I was a boy, and she is there yet; and there she will stay. The bread and butter that she somehow contrived to get to us boys between meals made us feel that she could read our minds. I attended a banquet the other night, but they had no such bread and butter as we boys had there in the shade of that apple-tree. It was real bread and real butter, and the appetite was real, too, and that helped to invest grandmother with a halo. Sometimes she would add jelly, and that caused our cup of joy to run over. She just could not bear a hungry look on the face of a boy, and when such a look appeared she exorcised it in the way that a boy likes. What I liked about her was that she never attached any conditions to her bread and butter—no, not even when she added jelly, but her gifts were as free as salvation. The more I think of the matter, the more I am convinced that her gifts were salvation, for I know, by experience, that a hungry boy is never a good boy, at least, not to excess.



Page 63

Whatever the vicissitudes of life might be to me, I knew that I had a city of refuge beside grandmother's big armchair, and when trouble came I instinctively sought that haven, often with rare celerity. In that hallowed place there could be no hunger, nor thirst, nor persecution. In that place there was peace and plenty, whatever there might be elsewhere. I often used to wonder how she could know a boy so well. I would be aching to go over to play with Tom, and the first thing I knew grandmother was sending me over there on some errand, telling me there was no special hurry about coming back. My father might set his foot down upon some plan of mine ever so firmly, but grandmother had only to smile at him and he was reduced to a degree of limpness that contributed to my escape. I have often wondered whether that smile on the face of grandmother did not remind him, of some of his own boyish pranks.

We boys knew, somehow, what she expected of us, and her expectation was the measuring rod with which we tested our conduct. Boy-like, we often wandered away into a far country, but when we returned, she had the fatted calf ready for us, with never a question as to our travels abroad. In that way foreign travel lost something of its glamour, and the home life made a stronger appeal. She made her own bill of fare so appetizing that we lost all our relish for husks and the table companions connected with them. She never asked how or where we acquired the cherry-stains on our shirts, but we knew that she recognized cherry-stains when she saw them. The next day our shirts were innocent of foreign cherry-stains, and we experienced a feeling of righteousness. She made us feel that we were equal partners with her in the enterprise of life, and that hoeing the garden and eating the cookies were our part of the compact.

When we went to stay with her for a week or two we carried with us a book or so of the lurid sort, but returned home leaving them behind, generally in the form of ashes. She found the book, of course, beneath the pillow, and replaced it when she made the bed, but never mentioned the matter to us. Then, in the afternoon, while we munched cookies she would read to us from some book that made our own book seem tame and unprofitable. She never completed the story, however, but left the book on the table where we could find it easily. No need to tell that we finished the story, without help, in the evening, and the next day cremated the other book, having found something more to our liking. One evening, as we sat together, she said she wished she knew the name of Jephthah's daughter, and then went on with her knitting as if she had forgotten her wish. At that age we boys were not specially interested in daughters, no matter whose they were; but that challenge to our curiosity was too much for us, and before we went to bed we knew all that is known of that fine girl.

That was the beginning of our intimate, personal knowledge of Bible characters—Ruth, Esther, David, and the rest; but grandmother made us feel that we had known about them all along. I know, even yet, just how tall Ruth was, and what was the color of her eyes and hair; and Esther is the standard by which I measure all the queens of earth, whether they wear crowns or not.



Page 64

One day when we went over to play with Tom we saw a peacock for the first time, and at supper became enthusiastic over the discovery. In the midst of our rhapsodizing grandmother asked us if we knew how those beautiful spots came to be in the feathers of the peacock. We confessed our ignorance, and like Ajax, prayed for light. But we soon became aware that our prayer would not be answered until after the supper dishes had been washed. Our alacrity in proffering our services is conclusive evidence that grandmother knew about motivation whether she knew the word or not. We suggested the omission of the skillets and pans for that night only, but the suggestion fell upon barren soil, and the regular order of business was strictly observed.

Then came the story, and the narrator made the characters seem lifelike to us as they passed in review. There were Jupiter and Juno; there were Argus with his hundred eyes, the beautiful heifer that was Io, and the crafty Mercury. In rapt attention we listened until those eyes of Argus were transferred to the feathers of the peacock. If Mercury's story of his musical pipe closed the eyes of Argus, grandmother's story opened ours wide, and we clamored for another, as boys will do. Nor did we ask in vain, and we were soon learning of the Flying Mercury, and how light and airy Mercury was, seeing that an infant's breath could support him. After telling of the wild ride of Phaeton and his overthrow, she quoted from John G. Saxe:

“Don't set it down in your table of forces
That any one man equals any four horses.
Don't swear by the Styx!
It is one of old Nick's
Diabolical tricks
To get people into a regular 'fix,'
And hold 'em there as fast as bricks!”

Be it said to our credit that after such an evening dish-washing was no longer a task, but rather a delightful prelude to another mythological feast. We wandered with Ulysses and shuddered at Polyphemus; we went in quest of the Golden Fleece, and watched the sack of Troy; we came to know Orpheus and Eurydice and Pyramus and Thisbe; and we sowed dragon's teeth and saw armed men spring up before us. Since those glorious evenings with grandmother the classic myths have been among my keenest delights. I read again and again Lowell's extravaganza upon the story of Daphne, and can hear grandmother's laugh over his delicious puns. I can hear her voice as she reads Shelley's musical Arethusa, and then turns to his Skylark to compare their musical qualities. I feel downright sorry for the boy who has no such grandmother to teach him these poems, but not more sorry than I do for those boys who took that Diamond Dick book with them when they went visiting. Even now, when people talk to me of omniscience I always think of grandmother.



CHAPTER XXIV

MY WORLD



Page 65

“The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This sea that bares her bosom to the moon,
The winds that will be howling at all hours
And are up-gather’d now like sleeping flowers,
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not. Great God! I’d rather be
A pagan suckled in a creed out-worn—
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
And hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.”

—*Wordsworth.*

I have heard many times that this is one of the best of Wordsworth’s many sonnets, and in the matter of sonnets, I find myself compelled to depend upon others for my opinions. I’m sorry that such is the case, for I’d rather not deal in second-hand judgments if I could help it. About the most this sonnet can do for me is to make me wonder what my world is. I suppose that the size of my world is the measure of myself, and that in my schoolmastering I am simply trying to enlarge the world of my pupils. I saw a gang-plough the other day that is drawn by a motor, and that set me to thinking of ploughs in general and their evolution; and, by tracing the plough backward, I saw that the original one must have been the forefinger of some cave-dweller.

When his forefinger got sore, he got a forked stick and used that instead; then he got a larger one and used both hands; then a still larger one, and used oxen as the motive power; and then he fitted handles to it, and other parts till he finally produced a plough. But the principle has not been changed, and the gang-plough is but a multifold forefinger. It is great fun to loose the tether of the mind and let it go racing along, in and out, till it runs to earth the original plough. Whether the solution is the correct one makes but little difference. If friend Brown cannot disprove my theory, I am on safe ground, and have my fun whether he accepts or rejects my findings.

This is one way of enlarging one’s world, I take it, and if this sort of thing is a part of the process of education, I am in favor of it, and wish I knew how to set my boys and girls going on such excursions. I wish I might have gone to school to Agassiz just to get my eyes opened. If I had, I’d probably assign to my pupils such subjects as the evolution of a snowflake, the travels of a sunbeam, the mechanism of a bird’s wing, the history of a dewdrop, the changes in a blade of grass, and the evolution of a grain of sand. If I could only take them away from books for a month or so, they’d probably be able to

read the books to better advantage when they came back. I'd like to take them on a walking trip over the Alps and through rural England and Scotland for a few weeks.



Page 66

If they could only gather broom, heather, shamrock, and edelweiss, they would be able to see clover, alfalfa, arbutus, and mignonette when they came back home. If they could see black robins in Wales and Germany, the robin redbreast here at home would surely be thought worthy of notice. If they could see stalactites and stalagmites in Luray Cave, their world would then include these formations. One of my boys was a member of an exploring expedition in the Andes, and one night they were encamped near a glacier. This glacier protruded into a lake, and on that particular night the end of that river of ice broke off and thus formed an iceberg. The glacier was nearly a mile wide, and when the end broke off the sound was such as to make the loudest thunder seem a whisper by comparison. It was a rare experience for this young fellow to be around where icebergs are made, and vicariously I shared his experience.

I want to know the price of eggs, bacon, and coffee, but I need not go into camp on the price-list. Having purchased my bacon and eggs, I like to move along to where my friend is sitting, and hear him tell of his experiences with glaciers and icebergs, and so become inoculated with the world-enlarging virus. Or, if he comes in to share my bacon and eggs, these mundane delights lose none of their flavor by being garnished with conversation on Andean themes. I'm glad to have my friend push that greatest of monuments, "The Christ of the Andes," over into my world. I arise from the table feeling that I have had full value for the money I expended for eggs and bacon.

I'd like to have in my world a liberal sprinkling of stars, for when I am looking at stars I get away from sordid things, for a time, and get my soul renovated. I think St. Paul must have been associating with starry space just before he wrote the last two verses of that eighth chapter of Romans. I can't see how he could have written such mighty thoughts if he had been dwelling upon clothes or symptoms. The reading of a patent-medicine circular is not specially conducive to thoughts of infinity. So I like, in my meditations, to take trips from star to star, and from planet to planet. I like to wonder whether these planets were rightly named—whether Venus is as beautiful as the name implies, and whether the Martians are really disciples of the warlike Mars. I like to drift along upon the canals on the planet Mars, with heroic Martians plying the oars. I have great fun on such spatial excursions, and am glad that I ever annexed these planets to my world. I can take these stellar companions with me to my potato-patch, and they help the day along.



Page 67

I want pictures in my world, too, and statues; for they show me the hearts of the artists, and that is a sort of baptism. Sometimes I grow a bit impatient to see how slowly some work of mine proceeds. Then I think of Ghiberti, who worked for forty-two years on the bronze doors of the Baptistry there in Florence, which Michael Angelo declared to be worthy of paradise. Then I reflect that it was worth a lifetime of work to win the praise of such as Angelo. This reflection calms me, and I plod on more serenely, glad of the fact that I can count Ghiberti and the bronze doors as a part of my world. When I can have Titian, Rembrandt, Leonardo da Vinci, Andrea del Sarto, Raphael, and Rosa Bonheur around, I feel that I have good company and must be on my good behavior. If Corot, Reynolds, Leighton, Watts, and Landseer should be banished from my world I'd feel that I had suffered a great loss. I like to hobnob with such folks as these, both for my own pleasure and also for the reputation I gain through such associations.

I must have people in my world, also, or it wouldn't be much of a world. And I must be careful in my selection of people, if I am to achieve any distinction as a world builder. I just can't leave Cordelia out, for she helps to make my world luminous. But she must have companions; so I shall select Antigone, Evangeline, Miranda, Mary, and Martha if she can spare the time. Among the male contingent I shall want Job, Erasmus, Petrarch, Dante, Goethe, Shakespeare, Milton, and Burns. I want men and women in whose presence I must stand uncovered to preserve my self-respect. I want big people, wise people, and dynamic people in my world, people who will teach me how to work and how to live.

If I can get my world made and peopled to my liking, I shall refute Mr. Wordsworth's statement that the world is too much with us. If I can have the right sort of folks about me, they will see to it that I do not waste my powers, for I shall be compelled to use my powers in order to avert expulsion from their good company. If I get my world built to suit me, I shall have no occasion to imitate the poet's plaint. I suspect there is no better fun in life than in building a world of one's own.

CHAPTER XXV

THIS OR THAT

One day in London a friend told me that on the market in that city they have eggs of five grades—new-laid eggs, fresh eggs, imported fresh eggs, good eggs, and eggs. A few days later we were in the Tate Gallery looking at the Turner collection when he told me a story of Turner. It seems that a friend of the artist was in his studio watching him at his work, when suddenly this friend said: "Really, Mr. Turner, I can't see in nature the colors that you portray on canvas." The artist looked at him steadily for a moment, and then replied: "Don't you wish you could?" Life, even at its best, certainly is a maze. I find



Page 68

myself in the labyrinth, all the while groping about, but quite unable to find the exit. Theseus was most fortunate in having an Ariadne to furnish him with the thread to guide him. But there seems to be no second Ariadne for me, and I must continue to grope with no thread to guide. There in the Tate Gallery I was standing enthralled before pictures by Watts and Leighton, and paying small heed to the Turners, when the story of my friend held a mirror before me, and as I looked I asked myself the question: "Don't you wish you could?"

Those Barbizon chaps, artists that they were, used to laugh at Corot and tell him he was parodying nature, but he went right on painting the foliage of his trees silver-gray until, finally, the other artists discovered that he was the only one who was telling the truth on canvas. Every one of my dilemmas seems to have at least a dozen horns, and I stand helpless before them, fearful that I may lay hold of the wrong one. I was reading in a book the other day the statement of a man who says he'd rather have been Louis Agassiz than the richest man in America. In another little book, "The Kingdom of Light," the author, who is a lawyer, says that Concord, Massachusetts, has influenced America to a greater degree than New York and Chicago combined. I think I'll blot out the superlative degree in my grammar, for the comparative gives me all the trouble I can stand.

Everything seems to be better or worse than something else, and there doesn't seem to be any best or worst. So I'll dispense with the superlative degree. Whether I buy new-laid eggs, or just eggs, I can't be certain that I have the best or the worst eggs that can be found. If I go over to Paris I may find other grades of eggs. Our Sunday-school teacher wanted a generous contribution of money one day, and, by way of causing purse-strings to relax, told of a boy who was putting aside choice bits of meat as he ate his dinner. Upon being asked by his father why he was doing so, he replied that he was saving the bits for Rover. He was reminded that Rover could do with scraps and bones, and that he himself should eat the bits he had put aside. When he went out to Rover with the plate of leavings, he patted him affectionately and said:

"Poor doggie! I was going to bring you an offering to-day; but I guess you'll have to put up with a collection."

I like Robert Burns and think his "To Mary in Heaven" is his finest poem. But the critics seem to prefer his "Highland Mary." So I suppose these critics will look at me, with something akin to pity in the look, and say: "Don't you wish you could?" Years ago some one planted trees about my house for shade, and selected poplar. Now the roots of these trees invade the cellar and the cistern, and prove themselves altogether a nuisance. Of course, I can cut out the trees, but then I should have no shade. That man, whoever he was, might just as well have planted elms or maples, but, by some sort of perversity or ignorance, planted poplars, and here am I, years afterward, in a



state of perturbation about the safety of cellar and cistern on account of those pesky roots. I do wish that man had taken a course in arboriculture before he planted those trees. It might have saved me a deal of bother, and been no worse for him.



Page 69

Back home, after we had passed through the autograph-album stage of development, we became interested in another sort of literary composition. It was a book in which we recorded the names of our favorite book, author, poem, statesman, flower, name, place, musical instrument, and so on throughout an entire page. That experience was really valuable and caused us to do some thinking. It would be well, I think, to use such a book as that in the examination of teachers and pupils. I wish I might come upon one of the books now in which I set down the record of my favorites. It would afford me some interesting if not valuable information.

If I were called upon to name my favorite flower now I'd scarcely know what to say. In one mood I'd certainly say lily-of-the-valley, but in another mood I might say the rose. I do wonder if, in those books back yonder, I ever said sunflower, dandelion, dahlia, fuchsia, or daisy. If I should find that I said heliotrope, I'd give my adolescence a pretty high grade. If I were using one of these books in my school, and some boy should name the sunflower as his favorite, I'd find myself facing a big problem to get him converted to the lily-of-the-valley, and I really do not know quite how I should proceed. It might not help him much for me to ask him: "Don't you wish you could?" If I should let him know that my favorite is the lily-of-the-valley, he might name that flower as the line of least resistance to my approval and a high grade, with the mental reservation that the sunflower is the most beautiful plant that grows. Such a course might gratify me, but it certainly would not make for his progress toward the lily-of-the-valley, nor yet for the salvation of his soul.

I have a boy of my own, but have never had the courage to ask him what kind of father he thinks he has. He might tell me. Again I am facing a dilemma. Dilemmas are quite plentiful hereabouts. I must determine whether to regard him as an asset or a liability. But, that is not the worst of my troubles. I plainly see that sooner or later he is going to decide whether his father is an asset or a liability. We must go over our books some day so as to find out which of us is in debt to the other. I know that I owe him his chance, but parents often seem backward about paying their debts to their children, and I'm wondering whether I shall be able to cancel that debt, to his present and ultimate satisfaction. I'd be decidedly uncomfortable, years hence, to find him but "the runt of something good" because I had failed to pay that debt. When I was a lad they used to say that I was stubborn, but that may have been my unsophisticated way of trying to collect a debt. I take some comfort, in these later days, in knowing that the folks at home credit me with the virtue of perseverance, and I wish they had used the milder word when I was a boy.



Page 70

There is a picture show just around the corner, and I'm in a quandary, right now, whether to follow the crowd to that show or sit here and read Ruskin's "Sesame and Lilies." If I go to see the picture film I'll probably see an exhibition of cowboy equestrian dexterity, with a "happy ever after" finale, and may also acquire the reputation among the neighbors of being up to date. But, if I spend the evening with Ruskin, I shall have something worth thinking over as I go about my work to-morrow. So here is another dilemma, and there is no one to decide the matter for me. This being a free moral agent is not the fun that some folks try to make it appear. I don't really see how I shall ever get on unless I subscribe to Sam Walter Foss's lines:

"No other song has vital breath
Through endless time to fight with death,
Than that the singer sings apart
To please his solitary heart."

CHAPTER XXVI

RABBIT PEDAGOGY

As I think back over my past life as a schoolmaster I keep wondering how many inebrates I have produced in my career. I'd be glad to think that I have not a single one to my discredit, but that seems beyond the wildest hope, considering the character of my teaching. I am a firm believer in temperance in all things; but, in the matter of pedagogy, my practice cannot be made to square with my theory. In fact, I find, upon reflection, that I have been teaching intemperance all the while. I'm glad the officers of my church do not know of my pedagogical practice. If they did, they would certainly take action against me, and in that case I cannot see what adequate defense I could offer. Being a schoolmaster, I could scarcely bring myself to plead ignorance, for such a plea as that might abrogate my license. So I shall just keep quiet and look as nearly wise as possible. It is embarrassing to me to reflect how long it has taken me to see the error of my practice. If I had asked one of my boys he could have told me of the better way.

When we got the new desks in our school, back home, our teacher seemed very anxious to have them kept in their virgin state, and became quite animated as he walked up and down the aisle fulminating against the possible offender. In the course of his sulphury remarks he threatened condign punishment upon the base miscreant who should dare use his penknife on one of those desks. His address was equal to a course in "Paradise Lost," nor was it without its effect upon the audience. Every boy in the room felt in his pocket to make sure that it contained his knife, and every one began to wonder just where he would find the whetstone when he went home. We were all eager for school to close for the day that we might set about the important matter of whetting

our knives. Henceforth wood-carving was a part of the regular order in our school, but it was done without special supervision. Of

Page 71

course, each boy could prove an alibi when his own desk was under investigation. It would not be seemly, in this connection, to give a verbatim report of the conversations of us boys when we assembled at our rendezvous after school. Suffice it to say that the teacher's ears must have burned. The consensus of opinion was that, if the teacher didn't want the desks carved, he should not have told us to carve them. We seemed to think that he had said, in substance, that he knew we were a gang of young rascallions, and that, if he didn't intimidate us, we'd surely be guilty of some form of vandalism. Then he proceeded to point out the way by suggesting penknives; and the trick was done. We were ever open to suggestions.

We had another teacher whose pet aversion was match heads. Cicero and Demosthenes would have apologized to him could they have come in when he was delivering one of his eloquent orations upon this engaging theme. His vituperative vocabulary seemed unlimited, inexhaustible, and cumulative. He raved, and ranted, and exuded epithets with the most lavish prodigality. It seemed to us that he didn't care much what he said, if he could only say it rapidly and forcibly. In the very midst of an eloquent period another match head would explode under his foot, and that seemed to answer the purpose of an encore. The class in arithmetic did not recite that afternoon. There was no time for arithmetic when match heads were to the fore. I sometimes feel a bit guilty that I was admitted to such a good show on a free pass. The next day, of course, the Gatling guns resumed their activity; the girls screeched as they walked toward the water-pail to get a drink; we boys studied our geography lesson with faces garbed in a look of innocence and wonder; our mothers at home were wondering what had become of all the matches; and the teacher—but the less said of him the better.

We boys needed only the merest suggestion to set us in motion, and like Dame Rumor in the Aeneid, we gathered strength by the going. One day the teacher became somewhat facetious and recounted a red-pepper episode in the school of his boyhood. That was enough for us; and the next day, in our school, was a day long to be remembered. I recall in the school reader the story of "Meddlesome Matty." Her name was really Matilda. One day her curiosity got the better of her, and she removed the lid from her grandmother's snuff-box. The story goes on to say:

"Poor eyes, and nose, and mouth, and chin
A dismal sight presented;
And as the snuff got further in
Sincerely she repented."

Barring the element of repentance, the red pepper was equally provocative of results in our school.



I certainly cannot lay claim to any great degree of docility, for, in spite of all the experiences of my boyhood, I fell into the evil ways of my teachers when I began my schoolmastering, and suggested to my pupils numberless short cuts to wrong-doing. I railed against intoxicants, and thus made them curious. That's why I am led to wonder if I have incited any of my boys to strong drink as my teachers incited me to desk-carving, match heads, and red pepper.



Page 72

I have come to think that a rabbit excels me in the matter of pedagogy. The tar-baby story that Joel Chandler Harris has given us abundantly proves my statement. The rabbit had so often outwitted the fox that, in desperation, the latter fixed up a tar-baby and set it up in the road for the benefit of the rabbit. In his efforts to discipline the tar-baby for impoliteness, the rabbit became enmeshed in the tar, to his great discomfort and chagrin. However, Brer Rabbit's knowledge of pedagogy shines forth in the following dialogue:

W'en Brer Fox fine Brer Rabbit mixt up wid de Tar-Baby he feel mighty good, en he roll on de groun' en laff. Bimeby he up'n say, sezee:

"Well, I speck I got you dis time, Brer Rabbit," sezee. "Maybe I ain't, but I speck I is. You been runnin' roun' here sassin' atter me a mighty long time, but I speck you done come ter de een' er de row. You bin cuttin' up yo' capers en bouncin' 'roun' in dis neighborhood ontwel you come ter b'leeve yo'se'f de boss er de whole gang. En den youer allers some'rs whar you got no bizness," sez Brer Fox, sezee. "Who ax you fer ter come en strike up a'quaintance wid dish yer Tar-Baby? En who stuck you up dar whar you is? Nobody in de roun' worril. You des tuck en jam yo'se'f on dat Tar-Baby widout watin' fer enny invite," sez Brer Fox, sezee, "en dar you is, en dar you'll stay twel I fixes up a bresh-pile and fires her up, kaze I'm gwineter bobby-cue you dis day, sho," sez Brer Fox, sezee.

Den Brer Rabbit talk mighty 'umble.

"I don't keer w'at you do wid me, Brer Fox," sezee, "so you don't fling me in dat brier-patch. Roas' me, Brer Fox," sezee, "but don't fling me in dat brier-patch," sezee.

"Hit's so much trouble fer ter kindle a fier," sez Brer Fox, sezee, "dat I speck I'll hatter hang you," sezee.

"Hang me des ez high as you please, Brer Fox," sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, "but do fer de Lord's sake don't fling me in dat brier-patch," sezee.

"I ain't got no string," sez Brer Fos, sezee, "en now I speck I'll hatter drown you," sezee.

"Drown me des ez deep ez you please, Brer Fox," sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, "but do don't fling me in dat brier-patch," sezee.

"Dey ain't no water nigh," sez Brer Fox, sezee, "en now I speck I'll hatter skin you," sezee.

"Skin me, Brer Fox," sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, "snatch out my eyeballs, t'ar out my years by de roots, en cut off my legs," sezee, "but do please, Brer Fox, don't fling me in dat brier-patch," sezee.



Co'se Brer Fox wanten hurt Brer Rabbit bad ez he kin, so he cotch 'im by de behime legs en slung 'im right in de middle er de brier-patch. Dar wuz a considerbul flutter whar Brer Rabbit struck de bushes, en Brer Fox sorter hang 'roun' fer ter see w'at wuz gwineter happen. Bimeby he hear somebody call 'im, en way up de hill he see Brer Rabbit settin' cross-legged on a chinkapin log koamin' de pitch outen his har wid a chip. Den Brer Fox know dat he bin swop off mighty bad. Brer Rabbit was bleedzed fer ter fling back some er his sass, en he holler out:



Page 73

“Bred en bawn in a brier-patch, Brer Fox—bred en bawn in a brier-patch!” en wid dat he skip out des ez lively ez a cricket in de embers.

CHAPTER XXVII

PERSPECTIVE

I wish I could ever get the question of majors and minors settled to my complete satisfaction. I thought my college course would settle the matter for all time, but it didn't. I suspect that those erudite professors thought they were getting me fitted out with enduring habits of majors and minors, but they seem to have made no allowance for changes of styles nor for growth. When I received my diploma they seemed to think I was finished, and would stay just as they had fixed me. They used to talk no little about finished products, and, on commencement day, appeared to look upon me as one of them. On the whole, I'm glad that I didn't fulfil their apparent expectations. I have never been able to make out whether their attentions, on commencement day, were manifestations of pride or relief. I can see now that I must have been a sore trial to them. In my callow days, when they occupied pedestals, I bent the knee to them by way of propitiating them, but I got bravely over that. At first, what they taught and what they represented were my majors, but when I came to shift and reconstruct values, some of them climbed down off their pedestals, and my knee lost some of its flexibility.

We had one little professor who afforded us no end of amusement by his taking himself so seriously. The boys used to say that he wrote letters and sent flowers to himself. He would strut about the campus as proudly as a pouter-pigeon, never realizing, apparently, that we were laughing at him. At first, he impressed us greatly with his grand air and his clothes, but after we discovered that, in his case at least, clothes do not make the man, we refused to be impressed. He could split hairs with infinite precision, and smoke a cigarette in the most approved style, but I never heard any of the boys express a wish to become that sort of man. Had there occurred a meeting, on the campus, between him and Zeus he would have been offended, I am sure, if Zeus had failed to set off a few thunderbolts in his honor. We used to have at home a bantam rooster that could create no end of flutter in the chicken yard, and could crow mightily; but when I reflected that he could neither lay eggs nor occupy much space in a frying-pan, I demoted him, in my thinking, from major rank to a low minor, and awarded the palm to one of the less bumptious but more useful fowls. Our little professor had degrees, of course, and has them yet, I suspect; but no one ever discovered that he put them to any good use. For that reason we boys lost interest in the man as well as his garnishments.

Page 74

Our professor of chemistry was different. He was never on dress-parade; he did not pose; he was no snob. We loved him because he was so genuine. He had degrees, too, but they were so obscured by the man that we forgot them in our contemplation of him. We knew that they do not make degrees big enough for him. I often wonder what degrees the colleges would want to confer upon William Shakespeare if he could come back. Then, too, I often think what a wonderful letter Abraham Lincoln could and might have written to Mrs. Bixby, if he had only had a degree. Agassiz may have had degrees, but he didn't really need them. Like Browning, he was big enough, even lacking degrees, to be known without the identification of his other names. If people need degrees they ought to have them, especially if they can live up to them. Possibly the time may come when degrees will be given for things done, rather than for things hoped for; given for at least one stage of the journey accomplished rather than for merely packing a travelling-bag. If this time ever comes Thomas A. Edison will bankrupt the alphabet.

In this coil of degrees and the absence of them, I become more and more confused as to majors and minors. There in college were those two professors both wearing degrees of the same size. Judged by that criterion they should have been of equal size and influence. But they weren't. In the one case you couldn't see the man for the degree; in the other you couldn't see the degree for the man. Small wonder that I find myself in such a hopeless muddle. I once thought, in my innocence, that there was a sort of metric scale in degrees—that an A.M. was ten times the size of an A.B.; that a Ph.D. was equal to ten A.M.'s; and that the LL.D. degree could be had only on the top of Mt. Olympus. But here I am, stumbling about among folks, and can't tell a Ph.D. from an A.B. I do wish all these degree chaps would wear tags so that we wayfaring folks could tell them apart. It would simplify matters if the railway people would arrange compartments on their trains for these various degrees. The Ph.D. crowd would certainly feel more comfortable if they could herd together, so that they need not demean themselves by associating with mere A.M.'s or the more lowly A.B.'s. We might hope, too, that by way of diversion they would put their heads together and compound some prescription by the use of which the world might avert war, reduce the high cost of living, banish a woman's tears, or save a soul from perdition.

Be it said to my shame, that I do not know what even an A.B. means, much less the other degree hieroglyphics. Sometimes I receive a letter having the writer's name printed at the top with an A.B. annex; but I do not know what the writer is trying to say to me by means of the printing. He probably wants me to know that he is a graduate of some sort, but he fails to make it clear to me whether his degree



Page 75

was conferred by a high school, a normal school, a college, or a university. I know of one high school that confers this degree, as well as many normal schools and colleges. There are still other institutions where this same degree may be had, that freely admit that they are colleges, whether they can prove it or not. I'll be glad to send a stamped envelope for reply, if some one will only be good enough to tell me what A.B. does really mean.

I do hope that the earth may never be scourged with celibacy, but the ever-increasing variety of bachelors, male and female, creates in me a feeling of apprehension. Nor can I make out whether a bachelor of arts is bigger and better than bachelors of science and pedagogy. The arts folks claim that they are, and proceed to prove it by one another. I often wonder what a bachelor of arts can do that the other bachelors cannot do, or *vice versa*. They should all be required to submit a list of their accomplishments, so that, when any of the rest of us want a bit of work done, we may be able to select wisely from among these differentiated bachelors. If we want a bridge built, a beefsteak broiled, a mountain tunnelled, a loaf of bread baked, a railroad constructed, a hat trimmed, or a book written, we ought to know which class of bachelors will serve our purpose best. Some one asked me just a few days ago to cite him to some man or woman who can write a prize-winning short story, but I couldn't decide whether to refer him to the bachelors of arts or the bachelors of pedagogy. I might have turned to the Litt.D.'s, but I didn't suppose they would care to bother with a little thing like that.

In college I studied Greek and, in fact, won a gold medal for my agility in ramping through Mr. Xenophon's parasangs. That medal is lost, so far as I know, and no one now has the remotest suspicion that I ever even halted along through those parasangs, not to mention ramping, or that I ever made the acquaintance of ox-eyed Juno. But I need no medal to remind me of those experiences in the Greek class. Every bluebird I see does that for me. The good old doctor, one morning in early spring, rhapsodized for five minutes on the singing of a bluebird he had heard on his way to class, telling how the little fellow was pouring forth a melody that made the world and all life seem more beautiful and blessed. We loved him for that, because it proved that he was a big-souled human being; and pupils like to discover human qualities in their teachers. The little professor may have heard the bluebird's singing, too; but if he did, he probably thought it was serenading him. If colleges of education and normal schools would select teachers who can delight in the song of a bluebird their academic attainments would be ennobled and glorified, and their students might come to love instead of fearing them. Only a man or a woman with a big soul can socialize and vitalize the work of the schools. The mere academician can never do it.



Page 76

The more I think of all these degree decorations in my efforts to determine what is major in life and what is minor, the more I think of George. He was an earnest schoolmaster, and was happiest when his boys and girls were around him, busy at their tasks. One year there were fourteen boys in his school, fifteen including himself, for he was one of them. The school day was not long enough, so they met in groups in the evening, at the various homes, and continued the work of the day. These boys absorbed his time, his strength, and his heart. Their success in their work was his greatest joy. Of those fourteen boys one is no more. Of the other thirteen one is a state official of high rank, five are attorneys, two are ministers of the Gospel, two are bankers, one is a successful business man, and two are engineers of prominence. George is the ideal of those men. They all say he gave them their start in the right direction, and always speak his name with reverence. George has these thirteen stars in his crown that I know of. He had no degrees, but I am thinking that some time he will hear the plaudit: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

CHAPTER XXVIII

PURELY PEDAGOGICAL

It was a dark, cold, rainy night in November. The wind whistled about the house, the rain beat a tattoo against the window-panes and flooded the sills. The big base-burner, filled with anthracite coal, was illuminating the room through its mica windows, on all sides, and dispensing a warmth that smiled at the storm and cold outside. There was a book in the picture, also; and a pair of slippers; and a smoking-jacket; and an armchair. From the ceiling was suspended a great lamp that joined gloriously in the chorus of light and cheer. The man who sat in the armchair, reading the book, was a schoolmaster—a college professor to be exact. Soft music floated up from below stairs as a soothing accompaniment to his reading. Subconsciously, as he turned the pages, he felt a pity for the poor fellows on top of freight-trains who must endure the pitiless buffeting of the storm. He could see them bracing themselves against the blasts that tried to wrest them from their moorings. He felt a pity for the belated traveller who tries, well-nigh in vain, to urge his horses against the driving rain onward toward food and shelter. But the leaves of the book continued to turn at intervals; for the story was an engaging one, and the schoolmaster was ever responsive to well-told stories.

It was nine o'clock or after, and the fury of the storm was increasing. As if responding to the challenge outside, he opened the draft of the stove and then settled back, thinking he would be able to complete the story before retiring. In the midst of one of the many compelling passages he heard a bell toll, or imagined he did. Brought to check by this startling sensation, he looked back over the

Page 77

page to discover a possible explanation. Finding none, he smiled at his own fancy, and then proceeded with his reading. But, again, the bell tolled, and he wondered whether anything he had eaten at dinner could be held responsible for the hallucination. Scarcely had he resumed his reading when the bell again tolled. He could stand it no longer, and must come upon the solution of the mystery. Bells do not toll at nine o'clock, and the weirdness of the affair disconcerted him. The nearer he drew to the foot of the stair, in his quest for information, the more foolish he felt his question would seem to the members of the family. But the question had scarce been asked when the boy of the house burst forth: "Yes, been tolling for half an hour." Meekly he asked: "Why are they tolling the bell?" "Child lost." "Whose child?" "Little girl belonging to the Norwegians who live in the shack down there by the woods."

So, that was it! Well, it was some satisfaction to have the matter cleared up, and now he could go back to his book. He had noticed the shack in question, which was made of slabs set upright, with a precarious roof of tarred paper; and had heard, vaguely, that a gang of Norwegians were there to make a road through the woods to Minnehaha Falls. Beyond these bare facts he had never thought to inquire. These people and their doings were outside of his world. Besides, the book and the cheery room were awaiting his return. But the reading did not get on well. The tolling bell broke in upon it and brought before his mind the picture of a little girl wandering about in the storm and crying for her mother. He tried to argue with himself that these Norwegians did not belong in his class, and that they ought to look after their own children. He was under no obligations to them—in fact, did not even know them. They had no right, therefore, to break in upon the serenity of his evening.

But the bell tolled on. If he could have wrenched the clapper from out that bell, the page of his book might not have blurred before his eyes. As the wind moaned about the house he thought he heard a child crying, and started to his feet. It was inconceivable, he argued, that he, a grown man, should permit such incidental matters in life to so disturb his composure. There were scores, perhaps hundreds, of children lost somewhere in the world, for whom regiments of people were searching, and bells were tolling, too. So why not be philosophical and read the book? But the words would not keep their places, and the page yielded forth no coherent thought. He could endure the tension no longer. He became a whirlwind—slamming the book upon the table, kicking off the slippers, throwing the smoking-jacket at random, and rushing to the closet for his gear. At ten o'clock he was ready—hip-boots, slouch-hat, rubber coat, and lantern, and went forth into the storm.



Page 78

Arriving at the scene, he took his place in the searching party of about twenty men. They were to search the woods, first of all, each man to be responsible for a space about two or three rods wide and extending to the road a half-mile distant. Lantern in hand, he scrutinized each stone and stump, hoping and fearing that it might prove to be the little one. In the darkness he stumbled over logs and vines, became entangled in briars and brambles, and often was deluged with water from trees as he came in contact with overhanging boughs. But his blood was up, for he was seeking a lost baby. When he fell full-length in the swale, he got to his feet the best he could and went on. Book and room were forgotten in the glow of a larger purpose. So for two hours he splashed and struggled, but had never a thought of abandoning the quest until the child should be found.

At twelve o'clock they had reached the road and were about to begin the search in another section of the wood when the church-bell rang. This was the signal that they should return to the starting-point to hear any tidings that might have come in the meantime. Scarcely had they heard that a message had come from police headquarters in the city, and that information could be had there concerning a lost child when the schoolmaster called out: "Come on, Craig!" And away went these two toward the barn to arouse old "Blackie" out of her slumber and hitch her to a buggy. Little did that old nag ever dream, even in her palmiest days, that she could show such speed as she developed in that four-mile drive. The schoolmaster was too much wrought up to sit supinely by and see another do the driving; so he did it himself. And he drove as to the manner born.

The information they obtained at the police station was meagre enough, but it furnished them a clew. A little girl had been found wandering about, and could be located on a certain street at such a number. The name of the family was not known. With this slender clew they began their search for the street and house. The map of streets which they had hastily sketched seemed hopelessly inadequate to guide them in and out of by-streets and around zigzag corners. They had adventures a plenty in pounding upon doors of wrong houses and thus arousing the fury of sleepy men and sleepless dogs. One of the latter tore away a quarter-section of the schoolmaster's rubber coat, and became so interested in this that the owner escaped with no further damage. After an hour filled with such experiences they finally came to the right house. Joy flooded their hearts as the man inside called out: "Yes, wait a minute." Once inside, questions and answers flew back and forth like a shuttle. Yes, a little girl—about five years old—light hair—braided and hanging down her back—check apron. "She's the one—and we want to take her home." Then the lady appeared, and said it was too bad to take the little



Page 79

one out into such a night. But the schoolmaster bore her argument down with the word-picture of the little one's mother pacing back and forth in front of the shack, her hair hanging in strings, her clothing drenched with rain and clinging to her body, her eyes upturned, and her face expressing the most poignant agony. When they left she had thus been pacing to and fro for seven hours and was, no doubt, doing so yet. The mother-heart of the woman could not withstand such an appeal, and soon she was busy in the difficult task of trying to get the little arms into the sleeves of dress and apron. Meanwhile, the two bedraggled men were on their knees striving with that acme of awkwardness of which only men are capable, to ensconce the little feet in stockings and shoes. The dressing of that child was worthy the brush of Raphael or the smile of angels. At three o'clock in the morning the schoolmaster stepped from the buggy and placed the sleeping baby in the mother's arms, and only the heavenly Father knows the language she spoke as she crooned over her little one. As the schoolmaster wended his way homeward, cold, hungry, and worn he was buoyant in spirit to the point of ecstasy. But he was chastened, for he had stood upon the Mount of Transfiguration and knew as never before that the mission of the schoolmaster is to find and restore the lost child.

CHAPTER XXIX

LONGEVITY

I'm quite in the notion of playing a practical joke on Atropos, and, perhaps, on Methuselah, while I'm about it. I'm not partial to Atropos at the best. She's such a reckless, uppish, heedless sort of tyrant. She rushes into huts, palaces, and even into the grand stand, and lays about her with her scissors, snipping off threads with the utmost abandon. She wields her shears without any sort of apology or by your leave. Not even a check-book can stay her ravages. Her devastation knows neither ruth nor gentleness. I don't like her, and have no compunction about playing a joke at her expense. I don't imagine it will daunt her, in the least, but I can have my fun, at any rate.

It is now just seven o'clock in the evening, and I shall not retire before ten o'clock at the earliest. So here are three good hours for me to dispose of; and I am the sole arbiter in the matter of disposing of them. My neighbor John has a cow, and he is applying the efficiency test to her. He charges her with every pound of corn, bran, fodder, and hay that she eats, and doctor's bills, too, I suppose, if there are any. Then he credits her with all the milk she furnishes. There is quite a book-account in her name, and John has a good time figuring out whether, judged by net results, she is a consumer or a producer. If I can resurrect sufficient mathematical lore, I think I shall try to apply this efficiency test to my three hours just to see if I can prove that hours are as important as

cows. I ought to be able, somehow, to determine whether these hours are consumers or producers.



Page 80

I read a book the other evening whose title is "Stories of Thrift for Young Americans," and it made me feel that I ought to apply the efficiency test to myself, and repeat the process every waking hour of the day. But, in order to do this, I must apply the test to these three hours. In my dreamy moods, I like to personify an Hour and spell it with a capital. I like to think of an hour as the singular of Houri which the Mohammedans call nymphs of paradise, because they were, or are, beautiful-eyed. My Hour then becomes a goddess walking through my life, and, as the poet says, *et vera incessu patuit dea*. If I show her that I appreciate her she comes again just after the clock strikes, in form even more winsome than before, and smiles upon me as only a goddess can. Once, in a sullen mood, I looked upon her as if she were a hag. When she returned she was a hag; and not till after I had done full penance did she become my beautiful goddess again.

A young man who had been spending the evening in the home of a neighbor complained that they did not play any games, and did nothing but talk. I could not ask what games he meant, fearing that I might smile in his face if he should say crokinole, tiddledy-winks, or button-button. Later on I learned that much of the talking was done that evening by a very cultivated man who has travelled widely and intelligently, and has a most engaging manner in his fluent discussions of art, literature, archaeology, architecture, places, and peoples. I was sorry to miss such an evening, and think I could forego tiddledywinks with a fair degree of amiability if, instead, I could hear such a man talk. I have seen people yawn in an art gallery. I fear to play tiddledywinks lest my hour may resume the guise of a hag. But that makes me think of Atropos again, and the joke I am planning to play on her. Still, I see that I shall not soon get around to that joke if I persist in these dim generalities, as a schoolmaster is so apt to do.

Well, as I was saying, these three hours are at my disposal, and I must decide what to do with them here and now. In deciding concerning hours I must sit in the judgment-seat whether I like it or not. Tomorrow evening I shall have other three hours to dispose of the same as these, and the next evening three others, and my decision to-night may be far-reaching. In six days I shall have eighteen such hours, and in fifty weeks nine hundred. I suppose that a generous estimate of a college year would be ten hours a day for one hundred and eighty days, or eighteen hundred hours in all. I am quite aware that some college boys will feel inclined to apply a liberal discount to this estimate, but I am not considering those fellows who try to do a month's work in the week of examination, and spend their fathers' money for coaching. Now, if eighteen hundred hours constitute a college year then my nine hundred hours are one-half a college year, and it makes a deal of difference what I do with these three hours.



Page 81

If I had only started this joke on Atropos earlier and had applied these nine hundred hours on my college work, I could have graduated in three years instead of four, and that surely would have been in the line of efficiency. But in those days I was devoting more time and attention to Clotho than to Atropos. I would fain have ignored Lachesis altogether, but she made me painfully conscious of her presence, especially during the finals when, it seemed to me, she was unnecessarily diligent in her vocation. I could have dispensed with much of her torsion with great equanimity. I suppose that now I am trying to square accounts with her by playing this joke on her sister.

So I have decided that I shall read a play of Shakespeare to-night, another one to-morrow evening, and continue this until I have read all that he wrote. In the fifty weeks of the year I can easily do this and then reread some of them many times. I ought to be able to commit to memory several of the plays, too, and that would be good fun. If those chaps back yonder could recite the Koran word for word I shall certainly be able to learn equally well some of these plays. It would be worth while to recite "King Lear," "Macbeth," "Othello," "Hamlet," "The Tempest," and "As You Like It," the last week of the year just before I take my vacation of two weeks. If I can recite even these six plays in those six evenings I shall feel that I did well in deciding for Shakespeare instead of tiddledywinks.

Next year I shall read history, and that will be rare fun, too. In the nine hundred hours I shall certainly be able to read all of Fiske, Mommsen, Rhodes, Bancroft, McMaster, Channing, Bryce, Hart, Motley, Gibbon, and von Holst not to mention American statesmen. About the Ides of December I shall hold a levee and sit in state as the characters of history file by. I shall be able to call them all by name, to tell of the things they did and why they did them, and to connect their deeds with the world as it now is. I can't conceive of any picture-show equal to that, and all through my year with Shakespeare I shall be looking forward eagerly to my year with the historians. I plainly see that the neighbors will not need to bring in any playthings to amuse and entertain me, though, of course, I shall be grateful to them for their kindly interest. Then, the next year I shall devote to music, and if, by practising for nine hundred hours, I cannot acquire a good degree of facility in manipulating a piano or a violin, I must be too dull to ever aspire to the favor of Terpsichore. If I but measure up to my hopes during this year I shall be saved the expense of buying my music ready-made. The next year I shall devote to art, and by spending one entire evening with a single artist I shall thus become acquainted with three hundred of them. If I become intimate with this number I shall not be lonesome, even if I do not know the others. I think I shall give an art party at the holiday time of that year, and have three hundred people impersonate these artists. This will afford me a good review of my studies in art. It may diminish the gate receipts of the picture-show for a few evenings, but I suspect the world will be able to wag along.



Page 82

Then the next year I shall study poetry, the next astronomy, and the next botany. Thus I shall come to know the plants of earth, the stars of heaven, and the emotions of men. That ought to ward off ennui and afford entertainment without the aid of the saloon. In the succeeding twelve years I shall want to acquire as many languages, for I am eager to excel Elihu Burritt in linguistic attainments even if I must yield to him as a disciple of Vulcan. If I can learn a language and read the literature of that language each year, possibly some college may be willing to grant me a degree for work *in absentia*. If not, I shall poke along the best I can and try to drown my grief in more copious drafts of work.

And I shall have quite enough to do, for mathematics, the sciences, and the arts and crafts all lie ahead of me in my programme. I plainly see that I have played my last game of tiddledywinks and solitaire. But I'll have fun anyhow. If I gain a half-year in each twelve-month as I have my programme mapped out, in seventy years I shall have a net gain of thirty-five years. Then, when Atropos comes along with her scissors to snip the thread, thinking I have reached my threescore and ten, I shall laugh in her face and let her know, between laughs, that I am really one hundred and five, and have played a thirty-five-year joke on her. Then I shall quote Bacon at her to clinch the joke: "A man may be young in years but old in hours if he have lost no time."

CHAPTER XXX

FOUR-LEAF CLOVER

I have no ambition to become either a cynic, a pessimist, or an iconoclast. To aspire in either of these directions is bad for the digestion, and good digestion is the foundation and source of much that is desirable in human affairs. Introspection has its uses, to be sure, but the stomach should have exemption as an objective. A stomach is a valuable asset if only one is not conscious of it. One of the emoluments of schoolmastering is the opportunity it affords for communing with elect souls whose very presence is a tonic. Will is one of these. He has a way of shunting my introspection over to the track of the head or the heart. He just talks along and the first thing I know the heart is singing its way through and above the storm, while the head has been connected up to the heart, and they are doing team-work that is good for me and good for all who meet me. At church I like to have them sing the hymn whose closing couplet is:

"I'll drop my burden at his feet
And bear a song away."

I come out strong in singing that couplet, for I like it. In a human sense, that is just what happens when I chat with Will for an hour. When I ask him for bread, he never gives me a stone. On the contrary, he gives me good, white bread, and a bit of cake, besides.



Page 83

In one of our chats the other day he was dilating upon Henry van Dyke's four rules, and very soon had banished all my little clouds and made my mental sky clear and bright. When I get around to evolving a definition of education I think I shall say that it is the process of furnishing people with resources for profitable and pleasant conversation. Why, those four rules just oozed into the talk, without any sort of flutter or formality, and made our chat both agreeable and fruitful. Henry Ward Beecher said many good things. Here is one that I caught in the school reader in my boyhood: "The man who carries a lantern on a dark night can have friends all about him, walking safely by the help of its rays and he be not defrauded." Education is just such a lantern and this schoolmaster, Will, knows how to carry it that it may afford light to the friends about him.

Well, the first of van Dyke's rules is: "You shall learn to desire nothing in the world so much but that you can be happy without it." I do wonder if he had been reading in Proverbs: "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." Or he may have been reading the statement of St. Paul: "For I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content." Or, possibly, he may have been thinking of the lines of Paul Laurence Dunbar,

"Sometimes the sun, unkindly hot,
My garden makes a desert spot;
Sometimes the blight upon the tree
Takes all my fruit away from me;
And then with throes of bitter pain
Rebellious passions rise and swell—
But life is more than fruit or grain,
And so I sing, and all is well."

I am plebeian enough to be fond of milk and crackers as a luncheon; but I have just a dash of the patrician in my make-up and prefer the milk unskimmed. Sometimes, I find that the cream has been devoted to other, if not higher, uses and that my crackers must associate perforce with milk of cerulean hue. Such a situation is a severe test of character, and I am hoping that at such junctures along life's highway I may find some support in the philosophy of Mr. van Dyke.

I suspect that he is trying to make me understand that happiness is subjective rather than objective—that happiness depends not upon what we have, but upon what we do with what we have. I couldn't be an anarchist if I'd try. I don't grudge the millionaire his turtle soup and caviar. But I do feel a bit sorry for him that he does not know what a royal feast crackers and unskimmed milk afford. If the king and the anarchist would but join me in such a feast I think the king would soon forget his crown and the anarchist his plots, and we'd be just three good fellows together, living at the very summit of life and wishing that all men could be as happy as we.

Page 84

The next rule is a condensed moral code: "You shall seek that which you desire only by such means as are fair and lawful, and this will leave you without bitterness toward men or shame before God." No one could possibly dissent from this rule, unless it might be a burglar. I know the grocer makes a profit on the things I buy from him, and I am glad he does. Otherwise, he would have to close his grocery and that would inconvenience me greatly. He thanks me when I pay him, but I feel that I ought to thank him for supplying my needs, for having his goods arranged so invitingly, and for waiting upon me so promptly and so politely. I can't really see how any customer can feel any bitterness toward him. He gives full weight, tells the exact truth as to the quality of the goods, and in all things is fair and lawful. I have no quarrel with him and cannot understand why others should, unless they are less fair, lawful, and agreeable than the grocer himself. I suspect that the grocer and the butcher take on the color of the glasses we happen to be wearing, and that Mr. van Dyke is admonishing us to wear clear glasses and to keep them clean.

The third rule needs to be read at least twice if not oftener: "You shall take pleasure in the time while you are seeking, even though you obtain not immediately that which you seek; for the purpose of a journey is not only to arrive at the goal, but also to find enjoyment by the way." I have seen people rushing along in automobiles at the mad rate of thirty or forty miles an hour, missing altogether the million-dollar scenery along the way, in their haste to get to the end of their journey, where a five-cent bag of peanuts awaited them. Had I been riding in an automobile through the streets of Tacoma I might not have seen that glorious cluster of five beautiful roses on a single branch in that attractive lawn. Because of them I always think of Tacoma as the city of roses, for I stopped to look at them. I have quite forgotten the objective point of my stroll; I recollect the roses. When we were riding out from Florence on a tram-car to see the ancient Fiesole I plucked a branch from an olive-tree from the platform of the car. On that branch were at least a dozen young olives, the first I had ever seen. I have but the haziest recollection of the old theatre and the subterranean passages where Catiline and his crowd had their rendezvous; but I do recall that olive branch most distinctly. I cannot improve upon Doctor van Dyke's statement of the rule, but I can interpret it in terms of my own experiences by way of verifying it. I am sure he has it right.



Page 85

The fourth rule is worthy of meditation and prayer; "When you attain that which you have desired, you shall think more of the kindness of your fortune than of the greatness of your skill. This will make you grateful and ready to share with others that which Providence hath bestowed upon you; and truly this is both reasonable and profitable, for it is but little that any of us would catch in this world were not our luck better than our deserts." I shall omit the lesson in arithmetic to-morrow and have, instead, a lesson in life and living, using these four rules as the basis of our lesson. My boys and girls are to have many years of life, I hope, and I'd like to help them to a right start if I can. Some of my many mistakes might have been avoided if my teachers had given me some lessons in the art of living, for it is an art and must be learned. These rules would have helped, could I have known them. I am glad to know that my pupils have faith in me. When I pointed out a nettle to them one day, they avoided it; when I showed them a mushroom that is edible, they accepted the statement without question. So I'll see what I can do for them to-morrow with these four rules. Then, if we have time, we shall learn the lines of Mrs. Higginson:

"I know a place where the sun is like gold,
And the cherry blooms burst with snow,
And down underneath is the loveliest nook,
Where the four-leaf clovers grow.

One leaf is for hope, and one is for faith,
And one is for love, you know,
And God put another in for luck—
If you search, you will find where they grow.

But you must have hope, and you must have faith,
You must love and be strong—and so,
If you work, if you wait, you will find the place
Where the four-leaf clovers grow."

CHAPTER XXXI

MOUNTAIN-CLIMBING

Mountain-climbing is rare sport. And it is sport if only one has the courage to do it. We had gone to the top of Vesuvius on the funicular railway; but one man decided to make the climb. We forgot the volcano in our admiration of the climber. Foot by foot he made his way zigzagging this way and that, slipping, falling, and struggling till at last he reached the summit. Then, fifty throats poured forth a lusty cheer to do him honor. He was not good to look at, for his clothing was crumpled and soiled, the veins stood out on his neck, his hair was tousled, his face was red and streaming with sweat; yet, for all that, we cheered him and meant it, too. He acknowledged our applause in an honest,



simple way, and then disappeared in the crowd. He was not posing as a heroic figure, but was just an honest mountain-climber who accepted the challenge of the mountain and won. In our cheering we did just what the world does: we gave the laurel wreath to the man who wins in a test of courage.



Page 86

I think "Excelsior" is pretty good stuff in the way of depicting mountain-climbing, and I always want to cheer that young chap as he fights his way toward the top. He could have stopped down there in the valley, where everything was snug and comfortable, but he chose to climb so as to have a look around. I thought of him one day at Scheidegg. There we were, nearly a mile and a half above sea-level, shivering in the midst of ice and snow in mid-July, but we had a look around that made us glad in spite of the cold. As Virgil says: "It will be pleasing to remember these things hereafter." I have often noticed that the old soldiers seem to recall the hardest marches, the most severe battles, and the greatest privations more vividly than their every-day experiences.

So the mountain-climbing that I have been doing with my boys and girls stands out like a cameo in my retrospective view. Sometimes we looked back toward the valley, and it seemed so peaceful and beautiful that it caused the mountain before us to seem ominous. At such times, when courage seemed to be oozing, we needed to reinforce one another with words of cheer. The steep places seemed perilously rough at times, and I could hear a stifled sob somewhere in my little company. At such times I would urge myself along at a more rapid pace, that I might reach a higher level and call out to them in heartening tones to hurry on up to our resting-place. We would often sing a bit in the midst of our resting, and when the sob had been changed to a laugh I felt that life was well worth while.

As we toiled upward I was ever on the lookout for a patch of sunlight in the midst of the shadows that it might lure them on. And it never failed. Like magic that sun-spot always quickened their pace, and they often hailed it with a shout. They would even race toward that sunny place, their weariness all gone. When a bird sang we always stopped to listen; and the song acted upon them as the music of a band acts upon drooping soldiers. On the next stage of the journey their eyes sparkled, and their step was more elastic. When one stumbled and fell, we helped him to his feet and praised his effort, wholly ignoring the fall. Sometimes one would become discouraged and would want to drop out of the company and return home. When this happened, we would gather about him and tell him how good it was to have him with us, how he helped us on, and how sorry we should be to have him absent when we reached the top. When he decided to keep on with us, we gave a mighty cheer and then went whistling on our upward way.



Page 87

We constantly vied with one another in discovering chaste bits of scenery along the way, and we were ever too generous to withhold praise or to appropriate to ourselves the credit that belonged to another. If one found the nest of a bird hidden away in the foliage, we all stopped in admiration. When another discovered a spring gushing out from beneath the rocks, we all refreshed ourselves with the limpid water and poured out our thanks to the discoverer. When a rare flower was found, we took time to examine it minutely till we all felt joy in the flower and in the finder. To us nothing was ever small or negligible that any one of our company discovered. If one started a song we all joined in heartily as if we had been waiting for that one to lead us in the singing. Thus each one, according to his gifts and inclinations, became a leader on one or another of the enterprises connected with our journey.

So, in time, it seemed to us that the big tree came to meet us in order to give its kindly shade for our comfort; that the bird poured forth its song as a special gift to us to give us new courage; that the flower met us at the right time and place to smile its beauty into our lives; that each stream laughed its way to our feet to quench our thirst, and to share with us its coolness; that the mossy bank gave us a special invitation to enjoy its hospitality; that the cloud had heard our wishes and came to shield us from the sun, and that the path came forth from among the thickets to guide us on our way. Because we were winning, all nature seemed to be cheering us on as the people cheered the man at Vesuvius.

Having reached the summit, we sat together in eloquent silence. We had toiled, and struggled, and suffered together, and so had learned to think and feel in unison. Our spirits had become fused in a common purpose, and we could sit in silence and not be abashed. We had become honest with our surroundings, honest with one another, and honest with ourselves, and so could smile at mere conventions and find joy in one another without words. We had encountered honest difficulties—rocks, trees, streams, sloughs, tangles, sand, and sun, and had overcome them by honest effort and so had achieved honesty. We had met and overcome big things, too, and in doing so had grown big. No longer did our hearts flutter in the presence of little things, for we had won poise and serenity.

The fogs had been banished from our minds; our sight had become clear; our spirits had been enlarged; our courage had been made strong, and our faith was lifted up. A new horizon opened up before us that stretched on and on and made us know that life is a big thing. The sky became our companion with all its myriad stars; the sea became our neighbor with all the life it holds, and the landscape became our dooryard, with all its varied beauty and grandeur. The ships upon the sea and the trains upon the land became our messengers of service. The wires and the air sped our thoughts abroad and linked us to the world. We looked straight into the faces of the big elemental things of life and were not afraid.

Page 88

When we came back among our own people, they seemed to know that some change had taken place and loved us all the more. They came to us for counsel and comfort, paying silent tribute to the wisdom that had come to us from the mountain. They looked upon us not as superiors, but as larger equals. We had learned another language, but had not forgotten theirs. We nestled down in their affections and told them of our mountain, and they were glad.

* * * * *

And now I sit before the fire and watch the pictures in the flickering flames. In my reverie I see my boys and girls, companions in the mountain-climbing, going upon their appointed ways. I see them healing and comforting the sick, relieving distress, ministering to the needy, and supplanting darkness with light. I see them in their efforts to make the world better and more beautiful, and life more blessed. I see them bringing hope and courage and cheer into many lives. They are bringing the spirit of the mountain down into the valley, and men rejoice. Seeing them thus engaged, and hearing them singing as they go, I can but smile and smile.