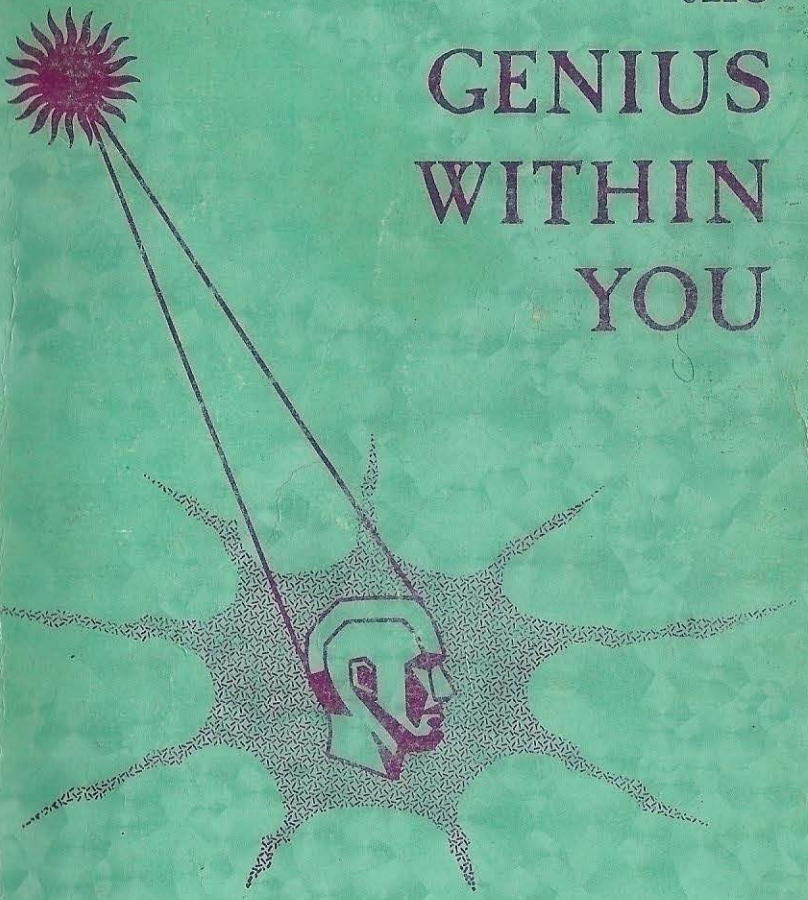
DISCOVERING the GENIUS WITHIN YOU



A Guide to Creativity

by

STANWOOD COBB

"What Is Genius?"

The creativeness of genius is an outpouring, like the eruption from a hot volcano; or to put it more sweetly, like the songs of birds at twilight.

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There is something in genius that has to come forth, a surplus of creativeness that must erupt.

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This eruption is not due—as psychiatrists like to claim—to external conditions impinging upon the soul. Rather it is in the nature of an internal combustion.

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Genius operates in the realm of the intuition—an area which defies the analysis of the psychologist. This supernormal power, this fourth dimensional functioning, is beyond the ken of the materialistic scientist. That is why psychology—which today denies the soul by omission—is, up to the present, all at sea in its consideration of genius.

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Up to the present, genius is beyond the reach of the psychologist. But genius does not greatly concern itself about this fact. For genius—divinely gifted—functions in its own way, seeking no permission, following no rules, content only in creating.

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Bookwa-er

Discovering the
GENIUS
Within You

BY

STANWOOD COBB
Author of "The New Leaven," etc.

Yours for success

Stanwood Cobb

Scarecrow Reprint Corporation
Metuchen, N. J.

Dedicated

to that vivid and
remarkable personality—
comrade, helpmate, partner, wife

NAYAN

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

STANWOOD COBB was born in Newton, Massachusetts, and was educated at Dartmouth College and at the Divinity School of Harvard University. From 1907 to 1910 he taught at Robert College in Constantinople, and after two more years of teaching in Europe he returned to America and was, successively, on the faculties of St. John's College, Annapolis, the Asheville School for Boys and the U. S. Naval Academy.

In 1919 Mr. Cobb was instrumental in organizing the Progressive Education Association, of which he has been both president and executive secretary. Mr. Cobb founded, with his wife, the Chevy Chase Country Day School, now one of the best known progressive private schools. In 1926 Mast Cove Camp was opened at Eliot, Maine, as an extension of the work of Chevy Chase Day School.

Mr. Cobb is the author of—in addition to *Discovering the Genius Within You—The New Leaven, The Real Turk, Ayesha of the Bosphorus, The Essential Mysticism, The Wisdom of Wu Ming Fu, Simla, A Tale in Verse, New Horizons for the Child, Character: A Sequence in Spiritual Psychology, Security for a Failing World, Patterns in Jade of Wu Ming Fu* and *The Meaning of Life.*

CONTENTS

PRELUDE

"Our chief want in life is somebody who shall make us do what we can. This is the service of a friend."—EMERSON.

May *Discovering the Genius Within You* perform the part of such a friend, and aid each reader to discover some of the hidden riches of his nature and expend these riches for his own blessing and to the blessing of mankind.

Discovering the
GENIUS
Within You

CHAPTER 1

The Universality of Genius

THE power of creativeness is open to everyone. Many people are discouraged. They have never realized their own possibilities. In consequence they never experience the fruitful activity and the happiness which could be theirs. It is perhaps our greatest human tragedy that so many people suffer this needless loss and allow themselves to suffer it; for in every human being, I believe, there is a spark of the creative nature.

Not every human being is capable of the same degree of distinctive and outstanding achievement. Indeed, if we took this attitude, we should be facing the problem in quite the wrong spirit. It is not to anyone's advantage that people should strive to outshine one another. What we need is that they should develop their own ability to the full, irrespective of whether someone else has more or less. They should give free rein to their own uniqueness; and between the uniqueness of one man and the uniqueness of another, there can be no comparison.

When we speak of creative action, then, we need not confine ourselves to the work of artists or to the conception and initiation of great enterprises and inventions. At the same time we cannot call it crea-

tive to know how to do one thing in the best possible way, and to repeat the achievement without variation. In the Middle Ages, perhaps, a man who made a perfect pair of shoes may really have exercised his creative ability. He may have put his own interest into each separate piece of workmanship, and each pair may have been different from any other pair he made. But at the present day the man who fits accurately bolt after bolt into iron work is showing not creativeness but skill.

We find the creative life best illustrated amongst those people we call men of genius; and if we examine their characters and their accomplishments, we shall be able to see more clearly what we mean by *living on the creative level.*

2

Modern psychology has shown us that there is no unbridgeable gulf between the genius and his fellow men. There is an infinite number of gradations; but these differences are differences of degree, not of kind. The man of genius has no more than human faculties at his call, but these faculties he has developed to a superlative degree. We can marvel at him but we need not idolize him. He is no more a god than were the Spanish invaders of Mexico who were worshiped by the Indians for the miracles they worked through their superior knowledge.[1]

[1] "There is, in effect, no such thing as genius. A man may be talented; he may, because of that talent, become well known. Subsequently, as his name and work grow more influential, he may become famous. And when once he is famous there is a possibility that the popular view of him may assume a quality of reverence. If that happens, he is a genius (until the popular taste veers); but only because of the popular election. He himself remains merely talented."—DR. W. LANGE-EICHBAUM.

Not every man, of course, can be a genius. Nevertheless, every man has some gift of personality, some quality of uniqueness, which is of the same substance as genius, though not of the same rank. All men, however great or small their talents may be, are linked together as being individual vehicles of this uniqueness of the Self.

The majority of people are those of average ability and belong to the great median group. In native endowments they stand between the highest and the lowest. But even if they fall within this medium group they need never be mediocre. To be mediocre is merely to fail to express the uniqueness of the Self within us, the inalienable birthright of every human being. And we shall, perhaps, find reason to believe that even the highest achievements of the greatest geniuses depend not so much on their native endowments as on the use to which they put the faculties they possess in common with other people.

At present we can be content to say that it is within the power of every individual to live on the altitudes of creative action and so to share, in his own degree, the same air which is breathed by the man of genius. If he does so, we can no longer call

him mediocre, whether he is peasant or king, mechanic or statesman.

3

If we study the lives of those men who are recognized by all to have been creative in a superlative degree—we may call them interchangeably great men, creators, artists, or geniuses—we find that they possess in common certain striking qualities. We find that these qualities are not superhuman; they are qualities native to everyone; but we find them expressed most freely, spontaneously and abundantly in the men we call great.

If, then, an individual should wish to develop in himself the qualities of genius, it would be necessary for him to study the lives of men of genius and the technique by which they have worked. Perhaps he would never come to the stature of those great men whom he is studying; but he would learn to apply to his own life the traits of personality and character which they have shown, and fill his own life with richer and more zestful experiences.

Who is the man that "has life most abundantly"? It is the man who creates. It is the man whose vitality goes outward and expresses itself in deeds and achievements beyond himself. It is the man whose unique personality impresses itself on the world around him; who works with circumstances as the sculptor works with clay; whose thoughts and feelings, whose impetus and *élan,* find an expression and

an existence independent of himself. It is in such a man that we see the highest evidence of the life force, the most enduring manifestation of humanity. And there is no man of average faculties to whom this possibility is closed.

"Be not afraid of greatness."
—Shakespeare.

Genius is not a mysterious gift which descends by grace on a small number of especially blessed human beings. It is not a superhuman quality. It is a heightened expression of ordinary human faculties. After a prolonged study of the nature of genius, Drs. Vorvenal and Remond concluded: "There is nothing more in the man of genius than in the normal man, unless it be a superior quality of general intellectual equilibrium." If this be true, then every man may learn to heighten the degree and plane of his existence till it approximates to the level of genius. You are never kept back by your past. To-day you can always surpass the point which you had reached yesterday. If you take seriously, as the genius does, the possibilities which life offers you, you can discover incalculable treasures within yourself. You are richer than you realize.

CHAPTER 2

Working for Self-chosen Goals

ALL men of genius work for goals they have chosen themselves. The direction of their efforts is not imposed on them from outside: it is the natural expression of their own gifts and interests. We can hardly imagine a man showing genius when his activities are dictated to him by others, when there is no creative stimulus in the work he is doing and his heart is elsewhere.

Often the man of genius finds obstacles in his path. He meets with poverty, ill-health or discouragement. Perhaps his parents use their influence to turn him into a safer course. They try to push him into routine work or settle him in a profession where the monetary rewards are higher. Even his friends may think him wrong. The struggle is hard. Recognition is slow in coming. At times he may suffer from that "night of the soul" when he doubts the value of all his efforts. But his courage rises again, and he never rests until he succeeds in establishing the conditions in which his genius can have full scope.

Compare with this the passivity of the average man. He accepts the kind of life in which circumstances have set him. His whole working career may

be spent in a business or profession which is not to his own taste and gives him no enjoyment or satisfaction. His work becomes toil. The mere arduousness of making a living occupies the main part of the day. Often his interests are so much atrophied by this joyless existence that he cannot use even his leisure for living on the creative level.

Wherever an individual finds that his working day is a mere grind, it is more than ever important that he should express his creative interests in his spare time. It is the best thing of all, however, if he can push and pull at his circumstances till he finds a way to engage in work which is also pleasure, to make his livelihood by means which are after his own heart. This is the first secret of the genius. He has discrimination enough to find the work best suited to his gifts, and energy and persistence enough to make opportunities for following it. He is not crimped and constrained by his circumstances—he bends them to his own ends.

2

If one man contributed more than any other to the advance of electrical science it was Michael Faraday. Let us consider his life. At the age of twenty-one he was burning with the ambition to become an experimental physicist. But what could he do? He had no advanced education. He had no money. He was earning a bare living as a bookbinder's apprentice.

"Luck was with him," says Waldemar Kaempf-

fert.[1] "A Mr. Dance, a customer of his master's, gave him four tickets to hear the last four lectures that were to be delivered by Sir Humphry Davy at the Royal Institution in 1812. There was no more eminent scientific personage in England than Davy. He was a poet, a skilled experimenter and one of the most fascinating lecturers that ever graced a platform. The bookbinder's apprentice was entranced. He took down every word, transcribed his notes in a neat copperplate hand, bound them himself in four volumes and sent them to Davy with a letter. Would the great Davy employ him as an amanuensis?

"Davy could not but be touched by so much zeal. 'What am I to do?' he asked one of the managers of the institution. 'Do? Put him to washing bottles.' Davy did better than that. He made Faraday assistant in the laboratory at twenty-five shillings a week, with two rooms at the top of the institution."

So Faraday found a starting place for his genius. He lived to perform over two thousand experiments and to make scores of discoveries in chemistry and physics. It is to him that we owe the method of generating electricity by means of the dynamo. His name has passed into the general language of science.

We can see the same purposiveness and indefatigable energy among men of literary genius. Anthony Trollope pursued the humdrum vocation of post office inspector in Ireland and wrote books in the time left free from his daily labors. His first three

[1] "Science Pays Great Tribute to Faraday." *New York Times Magazine*, August 30, 1931.

novels were not successful; they were published at a financial loss and only the greatest persistence and power of persuasion kept his publisher from throwing up the experiment. By dint of practice and undiminished confidence he finally became world-famous, and his courage in struggling to his goal seems all the greater when we recollect that in his youth he had given little evidence of natural talent in writing.

Young Arnold Bennett, out of his earnings as a journalist, saved eighty pounds and lived on his savings for two years while he wrote his *Old Wives' Tale*. Sinclair Lewis wrote novels in the train as he traveled to his newspaper office in the morning. His early books brought him neither fame nor money. One year, finding himself with a small surplus, he gave up his job and devoted himself to writing "a really good novel." The result was *Main Street*. Now he can give all his time to the career of his choice; but the possibility was laid open to him through that early industry of his, when concentration was difficult and a strong will was needed if he was to come nearer to his goal.

3

It is not always early in life that an individual arrives at a clear recognition of his goal. Often he must look around him, gauge opportunities, measure his own abilities. Sometimes a young man may appear to be drifting, when in reality he is engaged in an indirect process of finding himself. His apparent

instability may conceal a gradual, unconscious effort towards a goal that has not yet openly declared itself. Youth is a time of experiment, adventure and change. There is no harm in vocational fluctuations between the ages of twenty and thirty.

Sometimes the form of expression suited to a creative personality does not yet exist. He must make his own medium, create a new profession or a new channel for human energy. Indeed this is true to some extent of all the achievements of genius—a genius must make his own market, his own audience. We need not wonder if sometimes the man of genius is slow in coming to the full fruition of his powers.

So Robert Frost drifts here and there, goes to two colleges and leaves them, takes work as a ranchman, a teacher, a sailor. He refuses to stay settled in any place or any activity where he feels that the free expression of his genius is inhibited. It is while living in England, not in his own country, that his poetic gifts first win recognition. To a casual observer his voyage through life would have seemed aimless; but none the less he was seeking an outlet for his own particular life-interest and life-work.

Some men find their fullest expression by breaking into a new field after long application to a less suitable profession. Perhaps one of the most notable examples is William De Morgan, who was over sixty years old when he began to write the novels that made him famous. One brilliant youth became a professor of Greek at the age of twenty-one and a college professor at thirty. Ten years later he decided

that neither college administration nor Greek scholarship held for him the future he desired. At considerable sacrifice to himself and his family he left his work and for two years threw himself into the study of the history of education. He forged out a new career for himself, and he soon became one of the world's greatest authorities in his new subject. This is the story of Frank P. Graves, who now holds the highest paid educational post in the country as Commissioner of Education for the State of New York and Chancellor of New York State University.

Much help can be given to young people by vocational guidance; with many of them the whole task of discovering their natural bent and their most favorable career can be greatly eased. But it is life itself that takes the main part in teaching us what we want. Often we must experiment in mistaken directions before we find ourselves forced into the right direction.

4

With every individual the time comes when he begins to see the activities he likes and the activities for which he is not suited. At this crisis a clear self-analysis is essential. Every man at some point in his life should carry through this casting of his accounts, and he should do it as completely and objectively as he can. He should reckon up his abilities, his tastes, his failures and his successes. From now on he can no longer afford to let himself drift: he must take charge of himself and of his own future.

There is a difference between a wish and a goal. When a man fixes upon a goal he puts all the activities in train which will help him to achieve it; he grows towards his goal. An idle wish has nothing creative or constructive in it. A man can *wish* and remain behind. But the man who fixes a goal for himself makes himself responsible for its accomplishment.

At this crisis, therefore, when an individual sees his limits and his opportunities it is imperative that he should set a goal for himself. His goal should be the highest achievement of which he can conceive. This goal he should make his life-work, the inspiration of all his activities.

It is not at all necessary, in fixing his goal, that he should be able to see every step that leads to its attainment. He will go on living and struggling towards it, and he will see new ways of approaching it and helping to realize it. This is the place of faith in every accomplishment. The man who cannot make use of faith in furthering his aims and ambitions is denying himself the most powerful instrument of progress.

It is not even necessary that the goal should seem accessible. The creative life is not an endowment policy. We cannot expect our efforts to cease at a certain date and a period of well-earned leisure to ensue. A goal should be something towards which we can always work, not something we can finish and have done with. The happiest life is a constant

struggle to the unattainable, with a daily realization of progress and distinct achievement.

5

Once the goal is definitely chosen, everything else must be subordinated to it. Life must be charted and organized, mechanized, even, like the great moving platform in Ford's assembly plant that compels a fixed standard of attainment. Otherwise we shall continue to drift, and our days will be absorbed in the petty interruptions and distractions which infringe upon us.

The social environment can play the tyrant over us. It can drag us into a thousand trivialities and give us the feeling that we are energetic and busy, when in fact we are doing nothing. How many people there are who are lucky enough, or unlucky enough, to have a private income and fritter away their days in meaningless activities. They hurry around with no purpose but to pass the time. Their idleness exhausts them and they complain that their time is too fully occupied; they can do nothing because they are doing so much.

The man who would achieve anything worth while must be ruthless. Everything that interferes with the pursuit of his goal must go by the board. He must make an analysis of the demands upon him, and budget his time and energy. There are duties and obligations which have an undeniable claim on his

attention and he must take care to provide the recreation he needs. But apart from these claims, no time that can be devoted to his goal must be sacrificed on nonessentials.

It is easy to delude ourselves by a system of deferred payments—by the substitution of resolves for present exertion. But what we are hoping to do to-morrow never gets done. It is only what we do to-day that counts towards progress. We are all familiar with those promising young men who are always planning great achievements. In a little time they will begin writing the book they speak of. Meanwhile life is so taken up with social engagements that they have no opportunity for starting. But this "meanwhile" spreads until it covers the whole of their careers. While they were young they could live on "promise"; they could be happy in the illusion of deferred payments. As the years passed it became evident to everyone but themselves that no book was ever going to be written.

6

"My advice to a young writer," said Hilaire Belloc to Sisley Huddleston, "is to concentrate on one subject. Let him, when he is twenty, write about the earthworm. Let him continue forty years to write of nothing but the earthworm. When he is sixty, pilgrims will make a hollow path with their feet to the door of the world's great authority on the earthworm. They will knock at his door and humbly beg to be allowed to see the Master of the Earthworm."

It is consistent effort in any chosen direction that brings rewards. It seems as if the powers of the inner self become more and more focused as the persistent effort continues: the individual becomes richer, more skilled, more expert, till finally he wakes up to find himself not only capable of great achievement but noted for the things he has already achieved.

Outer success will always eventually follow that inner success of self-control, self-discipline, self-development and self-expression. No one can say *when* this success will come. It is probable that if everyone had a signed and dated guarantee of eventual success everyone would go forward with cheerfulness and energy to his highest achievements. But it is the law of our own world that inner organization must precede the realization of our aims. We must work before we are paid. Countless numbers of mankind shrink before this prospect. They wish for a guarantee external to themselves, and when they find none they complain that the world denies them freedom to follow their own aims.

Self-limitation and self-expansion go hand in hand. We need a sense of proportion. We need our discrimination and judgment at every turn. We must learn to choose between what is appropriate and what is inappropriate, between things of great worth and things of little worth; and we must learn

to trust our own judgment and put ourselves behind our decisions.

7

The man who would climb, therefore, must take his staff in hand and reduce his baggage to the minimum. He must pursue the path he has chosen and pay no attention to the opposition of those who stand by and watch his struggle to rise. Some will say, "You must give me some of your time." Others will say, "You are neglecting your duties. Stay here in the valley." If he listens to either voice, he will remain where he started.

Strange as it may seem, society does not wish us to devote ourselves to great achievements. Society, in the common sense of the word, is envious of genius and tries to obstruct the individual who is intent on rising to higher levels of living. It tries to bind him down to ordinary, humdrum ways of living. The mob mind worships a great achievement after it has taken place and especially, as we know, speaks good of the dead; but when it is confronted with a living human being who is struggling to rise above mediocrity it takes the struggle as a criticism of itself and is immediately hostile. The tendency of the mob is not to help upward, but to pull down.

Yet how much can be lost through the interference of the social world. The story of *Kubla Khan* is well known. While Coleridge was writing this great poem, he was interrupted by a knock at the door. A visitor had called to ask him some trivial

question. His visitor went and Coleridge found himself unable to recall the vision with which he had been occupied. The immortal fragment remains to-day like the solitary pier of an immense bridge; a bridge that, if it had been completed, would have conveyed us to strange shores and marvelous new scenes. The world will never know what has been taken from it by the untimely visit of the "person from Porlock."

8

In the service of our goal we must avoid all detailed work which can be delegated to others. Lazy men, it is said, make the best executives—they know how to make others work for them. Such men are not really lazy; they are economical with their energy. They refuse to fatigue themselves with actions which can be as well accomplished by others. So they are able to spare themselves for what they want to do and what they only are capable of doing.

Remember how aggrieved Martha felt when Mary let her tidy the room, set the table and prepare the meal while she herself was sitting and listening at the Master's feet. Truly she was neglecting the ordinary household obligations, the tasks so important in general to the human race. None the less she was making a better use of her time. When her great Teacher was speaking to her, housekeeping could well afford to wait.

As soon as a man's work begins to win recognition, it is possible for him, through his own income

or through the help of his employers, to secure the subordinates who will relieve him of the strain of unnecessary detail. It is more difficult to manage this before recognition has come. But to some extent it can always be managed; and if an individual is to advance to higher and higher achievement, it is absolutely necessary that he should find the way to do it.

If a man has fixed his goal with resolution, the rest will follow. He will always be conserving his energy and applying it with full force where it is most needed. "This one thing I do," said Paul. He was one of the greatest practical psychologists in our human history; and he has pointed the way for all achievement.

Creation is a combination of vision and will. Vision gives the plan, but will is the human energy that builds to completion.
—Wu Ming Fu.

The man of genius chooses his own goal and works towards it with indivertible courage. He meets barriers in the way, but he trains himself to overcome them all. He allows nothing to obstruct his creative desires. Every man can work in the same way for a definite goal which is the expression

of his strongest talent. In so doing he will be sharing, to his own degree, in the birthright of genius. We should make our lives single-pointed and focus them on ideals even higher than we can hope to attain. What does it matter if life is too short for the full achievement of our aims? Every step towards the goal is a landmark of progress and bears in itself the stamp of our final hope.

CHAPTER 3

Concentration

WITH the creator time never flags. He has chosen his goal and his purpose is clear before him. He works with zest and complete concentration. His taskmaster is himself—his own desire to achieve his ends. The work he accomplishes each day is a definite step towards his goal, and that goal is so lofty that all the years of his life can hardly suffice him for reaching it.

The day, the month, the year, is never long enough for him. Where health permits it, his enjoyment of life, his creative impulse, persists undiminished to the very portals of the tomb. So Michael Angelo in his ninetieth year was as full of energy and activity as he had been in his youth; and in recent times we have had the example of Charles W. Eliot, living to a still greater age with a liveliness of mind which calls for the utmost admiration.

Often men of genius are so taken up and absorbed by their interests that all other concerns are excluded. When Edison was tracking down an idea he worked without meals or sleep for days on end. Auguste Comte, the great French philosopher, once remained in unbroken meditation for eighty hours. From the old days of Greece we have preserved the

anecdote of Socrates, on service in a military camp, standing motionless in the snow for a whole day while he solved a problem to his own satisfaction.

It is this intense concentration that accounts for the many stories of absent-mindedness among men of genius. Sir Isaac Newton would forget whether he had dined; and it is said that he was once discovered boiling his watch and consulting an egg which he held in his hand to see if the three and a half minutes were over.

The classic example of the abstracted thinker is Archimedes. Realizing the danger of his temperament, he engaged a slave to wake him from his fits of abstraction at mealtimes. Often it was necessary for the slave to drag him away by force. How unfortunate it was for the world that this slave was not at hand when the Romans captured Syracuse! Oblivious of the battle around him, Archimedes stood drawing figures in the sand. When the Roman soldiers shouted questions at him he made no reply, except, "Don't disturb my figures"; and the soldiers, angered by his obstinacy, as they thought it, cut him down where he stood.

There are many amusing anecdotes told of Dr. Francis Peabody, theologian and President of Harvard in the middle of the last century. On one occasion, as he was walking along the street, head down in profound study, he bumped into a cow. He raised his hat, remarked, "I beg your pardon, madam!" and passed on.

He called as usual one afternoon at the post office,

stood before the window, and asked, "Any mail for me?" The pretty little postmistress, who generally answered him with a smile and a bundle of letters, happened to be absent that day. In her place was a rather forbidding woman, who replied in a harsh and peremptory voice, "What name, please?" The good professor was taken by surprise. For the life of him he could not recollect who he was. There he remained, scratching his head and hoping for an inspiration. At last a friend came into the post office. "Good evening, Dr. Peabody," he said. "Ah!" cried the professor, in great relief, "Peabody's the name —Peabody!"

Dr. Peabody once complained when my father visited him for an evening that the stories of his absent-mindedness were greatly exaggerated. Before my father left, Dr. Peabody was kind enough to give him a copy of one of his books and added to his kindness by autographing it. It would hardly have been tactful to point out that the autograph was written with the book upside down, at the bottom of the last page.

My father, an artist himself, was a match for anyone in absent-mindedness. It was no rare experience to see him start out of the house carrying the coal scuttle instead of his traveling bag, and often he would pick up the baby tenderly and hold her upside down. There were seven children in the family and he never succeeded in mastering our names sufficiently for impromptu address. He would call out to us, "Here, Boy!" or "Come, Little Girl"—which

was perhaps as efficient a mode of address as any. I can remember that if I met him in the town he would not see or recognize me.

2

Instances like these in the life of a genius amuse us all, but it is just by such powers of absorption that a genius shows his single-hearted pursuit of his goal. These periods of deep mental concentration are necessary for the germination of ideas; they are the preparation for later creative achievement.

We should be more tolerant, therefore, of preoccupation and absent-mindedness in children. They are as much entitled as adults to their own deep life of thought. There are many records of men of genius who were scolded for such traits in their childhood; but in their maturity, after they had achieved great things, the same habits were found excusable and even admirable. The world forgives everything to the creator; and, indeed, it has no choice but to allow him his own way if his genius is to bear fruit for humanity.

At times this absorption may even appear to be rudeness. I used to wonder how my father, when visitors came to the house, could sit looking out of the window for long stretches of time. To all appearance his guests did not concern him in the slightest. The entertaining was left entirely to my mother. When he felt in the mood for it he would pour out a stream of most animated and enjoyable conversa-

tion; but if he was not in the mood nothing existed for him but the clouds which floated on the distant horizon.

If this conduct were displayed without some compensating element of positive value, we should have to call it bad manners. Yet here is an important point to notice. Our visitors were never pained by my father's preoccupation. None of them took offense at it. They accepted him as an artist, and they accepted him on his own terms.

Most of us are too much distracted by our human environment. We scatter ourselves before the unreasoning and unreasonable demands which the trivialities of social intercourse make upon us. It is in part by his refusal to fall in with these demands that the genius is able to escape tedium and routine and to pursue and capture his own creative thoughts. A little more courage, and every individual would find himself in a similar position. He could learn how to concentrate on the task at hand, how to give himself fully to an idea, hold it in his mind and carry it through to a successful conclusion.

3

A Congressman came to Theodore Roosevelt with a legislative project and asked him for his opinion. He had prepared a long brief, and as they were speaking together Roosevelt turned over the pages. At the end of half an hour the President said, "I think I understand what you have in mind.

"Pardon me, Mr. Roosevelt," the Congressman rejoined, "but you could not possibly have grasped it in this short time. Merely to read that manuscript would take a couple of hours. Yet as you have been scanning the manuscript you have been talking with me and fully comprehending what I have been saying. How can you have digested this abstract at the same time?" Roosevelt smiled indulgently. "Quiz me on it," he suggested. And his answers to the Congressman's questions showed that he had mastered the whole material before him.

Even in the midst of a busy life great men are able to give complete attention to anything they choose. Not all of them possess a faculty for multiple concentration such as Roosevelt so clearly showed. It is a gift, perhaps, which is beyond the normal endowments; but all of us can learn to concentrate our minds and our efforts on the tasks on which we are engaged and thus make more effective instruments of ourselves.

Sometimes we shall need to find our own technique for concentration. William G. McAdoo, for example, when he held at the same time the posts of Secretary of the Treasury and Director of Railroad Administration, found it wise to divide up his duties and to keep them entirely separate. His mornings he spent in the Treasury Building and nothing was allowed to divert his attention from his work as Treasurer. In the afternoons he went to the office of the Railroad Administration. While he was there, the Treasury Department did not exist for him. He

allowed no business concerning it to be brought before him. By completely dividing his life into these two compartments, he managed to accomplish, with perfect health of mind and body, two gigantic tasks, either of which would have been a strain to the ordinary individual.

4

It is a great help to concentration to organize work so that it calls for as little irrelevant effort as possible. There are labor-saving devices for the mind as well as for the body. During the war Colonel Leonard P. Ayres invented new ways to keep headquarters informed of the state of supplies with the minimum reading of memoranda by commanding officers. Everything was worked out in graphs. The amount on hand of every necessity was shown in concrete pictures, and the officers in charge could see at a single glance exactly what was needed.

In every kind of activity executives are discovering how to economize their efforts, how to eliminate detail and routine. What others can do must be left to others. The man with the *idea* safeguards his energies and concentrates more fully upon his own creative task. This is the secret of every gifted executive—he knows how to organize and how to spare himself from nonessentials. So Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Persian Empire, organized a system of bureaus and departments which enabled him to keep control of all the ramifications of state affairs. "By speaking with a few persons only," says Xenophon, "he was thus able to keep every department of business under superintendence; and in consequence he had more leisure than many another man who had charge only of a single house or a single ship."

When H. G. Wells was composing those great works of his, *The Outline of History* and *The Science of Life,* he made use of a corps of editorial workers. He has been criticized by professional historians and scientists, who do not believe it possible for one man to adequately survey such vast fields of specialized knowledge; but in spite of their criticism these books stand almost without parallel as popular introductions to culture and general knowledge. They stand also as monuments of the human ability to organize, to maintain a sense of proportion in work, and to subordinate detail to creation.

In my own activities I have been impressed by the small amount of actual effort with which considerable tasks can be accomplished. It is my vocation to run a school during the winter, a camp during the summer, and to write when I can; but in addition I enjoy the delightful hobby of editing a magazine. My assistant editor, who is salaried, takes off my hands all the details of management, correspondence and printing. A few conferences each month are sufficient for the writing of editorials, the discussion of contributions, the deciding of policy and the settling of all outstanding questions. Even after a hard day's work I can apply myself with pleasure to these

editorial duties. Indeed, an hour or two spent in this way is surprisingly refreshing to me.

5

We should not allow ourselves to think that we need always be at the highest tension of effort. While Edison and Noguchi would concentrate for days on end without sleep, Darwin and Spencer could work no more than three hours a day. It was during those short periods that they accomplished their monumental tasks. Other men of genius have been able to keep their highest level of concentration only for an hour at a time.

It is important, therefore, to find out, by experiment and observation, what is our own span of concentration. We do not need to overwork ourselves. If we take care to maintain body and brain in a condition of healthful energy, much work of the highest creative value can be completed in a relatively short period of time. With one or two hours a day of creative writing, a book can be finished just as fast as with seven hours a day when the fatigued brain wanders.

There is marvelous power in the human brain for dashing off in the shortest time creative work of the highest quality. If the full powers of the mind are brought to bear on any creative task, it can be done swiftly and correctly at the first onset. The intellect, freed from its tasks for the rest of the day,

may then browse at will and recuperate for its next period of intense vitality.

Inventors and scientists, as well as poets and artists, have confessed to flashes of intuition during which, in a moment's inspiration, they find the solution of problems which have long puzzled them. As a rule the illumination occurs after a long period of study and preparation; but it comes at a time when the mind is not consciously at work on the problem. Jules Henri Poincaré, the great French mathematician, would work over a problem for weeks and come no nearer to a solution. He would stop considering the problem, sleep through a night, and awake with the solution clear in his mind.

Perhaps these swift achievements, these inspirations and periods of high concentration, are always the gift of the subconscious self. Perhaps it is from this source that all purely creative work derives. If this is true, we must try to find out the conditions under which the subconscious self is freest and most continuous in this activity.

6

The intermittent flash of genius, in so far as it prevails among scientists, has been investigated by Professor R. A. Baker of the College of the City of New York.[1] In speaking of this unifying, or clarify-

[1] Professor Baker has gathered extremely interesting and valuable information on the "scientific hunch." In order to prepare a report on this subject for the annual meeting of the American Chemical Society (V. *New York Times,* Mar. 29, 1931) he sent

ing, idea springing suddenly into consciousness as a solution to a problem, he decided: "It is a process of creative thought."

There are three preparatory stages, he discovered; first a long period of investigation, next a period of assimilation of facts, and third a period of complete rest. It is during the period of rest that the "hunch" comes. It occurs most often when the mind is in that borderland of consciousness which precedes sleep, when it is fresh on awakening, or when it is occupied with some unrelated subject.

The most favorable circumstances for these brilliant intuitions are a general condition of good health, relaxation, freedom from worry and absence of interruption. Such mild physical exercise as gardening, fishing, golfing or driving an automobile is also helpful. To many scientists their best ideas come while they are walking in the country, to others while they are listening to music. Unfavorable circumstances are: small irritations, over-fatigue, worry, depression, too constant occupation with the problem, work under pressure and too long a period of working in one place. The scientists who admitted to these "hunches" offered the following suggestions for inducing them:—"Temporarily abandoning the problem and taking up other work; idleness and complete relaxation; going over the problem before retiring for the night; physical occupation or exercise; use of coffee or tobacco."

questionnaires to leading scientists of the country. Of the 232 replies received, 33 per cent reported that they had experienced this phenomenon frequently, 50 per cent occasionally, and 17 per cent never.

7

The experiences of these scientists bear witness to a fact that we have learned perhaps from our own experiences. Our work will be at its best if we can arrange to intersperse periods of low mental intensity with periods of high intensity. After a stretch of mental concentration we often find that we can recuperate quickly by taking up routine tasks which call for little mental effort.

With every individual there is a daily cycle of energy. It is important for him to find out his own best tempo and accommodate his work to it. The intense mental work of the day should be accomplished in the periods of high mental vitality; the periods of low mental vitality should be devoted to routine or to rest. When vitality is exhausted, the time should be given to recreation or sleep.

With the average individual the daily cycle starts at a low level in the early morning and reaches the highest plateau of the day between ten and twelve o'clock. At one o'clock there is a considerable lowering of the vitality as a result of the morning's work. If a heavy lunch is taken a period of lethargy ensues and lasts till about three o'clock. Some people find it advantageous either to eat no lunch or to eat only a very light and easily digested lunch; in this way they avoid the lethargic period at the beginning

of the afternoon. With people past middle age it may be beneficial to stretch out for a brief rest or nap of fifteen or twenty minutes immediately after lunch.

The second highest plateau of energy occurs from three o'clock to five o'clock. It ends in a sharply descending line and a period of very low vitality at the end of the day's work. Exercise, recreation or absolute rest is now needed as a preliminary to a substantial evening meal.

If the strain of the day has not been abnormal, after a period of low vitality subsequent to the evening meal, the third highest plateau of the day is reached. For a period of two or three hours the individual is capable of concentrated work, serious reading or such social activities as lectures and concerts.

Where the rhythm of the day has already been mismanaged, however, or where too much work has been done with too little opportunity for recuperation, the evening will be worthless. It will be, not a plateau of energy, but a valley of exhaustion. The tired business man, who has prodded himself on throughout the day, feels worn out at night. There is nothing he wishes to do but collapse into a semi-conscious state.

The cycle of energy is not the same for all individuals or for all climates. We can alter the natural cycle and train ourselves into an artificial cycle. This is the practice of musicians, actors, lecturers and scholars. Their main effort comes in the

evening. In compensation they devote mornings or afternoons to sleep, rest or recreation, and succeed in attaining the highest peak of vitality in the evening. A society woman must also adapt her cycle of energy. She must spare herself so that she is able to shine brightest at night and in the small hours of the morning.

But if a man whose vocation demands intensive work in the morning undertakes habitually to give out vitality in the evening, the result in the long run is disastrous. His health, his work and his enjoyment of leisure will all suffer.

8

No rule can be given that fits every man. Each individual must study himself and make use of his own temperament, his own biological machinery. This much can be said in general, however: when an individual has learned to recognize his period of highest efficiency, he should be very careful not to waste it. As far as possible he should exclude from this period all routine details and use it for work of the greatest importance. The periods of diminished efficiency may be left for those concerns which can easily be handled by a tired mind.

The prohibition against rules, however, goes even further. When we think that we have budgeted our time to perfection and established a routine which seems ideal, we may suddenly discover ourselves suffering from too much regularity. We must remem-

ber that the human race is not a race of automatons. It is only a few thousand years since every human being was a free roaming savage, following the whim of the moment, entirely unsubdued to time schedules and precisely determined tasks. Even our less remote ancestors spent much of the day in what the old-world aristocracies called "gentlemanly leisure." The attempt to squeeze our lives into a rigid mold may produce psychological disasters and breakdowns.

President Hyde of Bowdoin College once thought he had established an ideal routine. He had made provision for all his varied activities and he left time over for exercise and recreation. Some hours in the day were occupied by college work, others by literary creation, and the remainder by social enjoyment, exercise or rest. There was a program for each day, and each day went according to this program. In these ideal conditions Dr. Hyde had a nervous breakdown. His physicians ordered him to forget his program. If he felt like working, he was to work; if he preferred to loaf, why, then, he should loaf. His carefully ordered day went by the board, and he began to follow his own inclinations. He was soon restored to full health and activity.

Emerson came from an over-refined and sensitive stock. Two of his brothers had suffered from nervous breakdowns. Early in life he resolved never to put compulsion upon his mind or to drive it too fixedly in one direction. In his studies he formed the habit of intellectual browsing, and his creative

work was done in the same way. As he walked or talked or worked in the garden he would jot down in notebooks the thoughts and observations that occurred to him. These notebooks were the foundation of his essays; he strung his casual thoughts together into a unique mosaic pattern. In consequence there is a lack of coherence and constructive power in his writings; but this lack has been no hindrance to his success and influence in literature. Indeed, it was his method of composition which enabled him to continue creative through a long life of superb mental achievement. In the last decade of his life his powers failed him; but perhaps this is merely additional evidence that it would have been ruinous for him to force himself to tasks that were too strenuous and sustained.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose writings shook all Europe and helped to produce the French Revolution and a no less important revolution in methods of education, conceived in youth the ambitious idea of "mastering all human knowledge." Yet he found himself unable, on account of his poor physique, of even an hour's steady concentration. What was he to do? "For nearly five years," says his latest biographer,[1] "he proceeded to gorge his mind with different, often contradictory ideas. He made a sponge of himself and soaked up everything. However, he developed no exclusive devotion to any one subject. He was not capable of doing so. Steady concentra-

[1] *Rousseau, the Child of Nature,* by John Charpentier, The Dial Press, New York.

tion prolonged for any period of time wearied him so that he felt dizzy if he worked more than half an hour on the same thing, 'especially following any other man's trend of thought.' He had to renew his interest or refresh his mind by changing its preoccupation, and so he turned from one subject to another, not without seeking other distractions meanwhile out of doors or in the bosom of his circle."

9

A fixed goal, the habit of concentration, and—the pursuit of our whims! There is really no contradiction here. These whims of ours are the small warning flags which the psyche puts out. All of us must pay attention to the voice within us, urging us to do or to refrain from doing, to be active or to be reposeful. The psyche has its own way of securing a free flow for its energy, and there are times when it is extremely dangerous not to follow its warnings.

Many an artist, accused of caprice and self-indulgence, is listening very closely to the inner self which tells him, "You wish to create; then follow my guidance." At times he may seem drawn into the extremes of playfulness, dalliance and disregard of convention. The result upon him is like a tonic. It keeps the channels free and clear for intensive creative work.

This advice would be dangerous only to a man who had no goal before him. To such a man, whose soul was all whim and no coherence, the following

of impulses might lead merely to libertarianism and waste of time.

Most people, however, are afraid of following their whims even in innocent and reasonable ways, ways that bring no disadvantage either to themselves or to others. It is not surprising that in these circumstances they cramp the flow of their energy and imprison their creative powers. Too many of us allow the conventions and demands of society to close in on us and inhibit our expressiveness. We should live more as children live, spontaneously, without self-criticism and self-stultification.

The best creative work seems ultimately to spring from the free expression of our inner urges. Where they come from we do not know; and we do not need to know. It is within our power to direct them, to prevent them from dispersing, to give them shape and form. But once the form becomes stronger than the impulse, once we let ourselves sink into subordination to a routine—become the slaves of a routine and not its masters—then our creative force is smothered. We have lost our vitality.

10

Life must be rhythmic. A stage of high intensity and vigor must be followed by a stage of low intensity and rest. Nature itself is rhythm, and her effort is always intermittent. Through the whole cosmos the output of energy has no absolute continuity. Even light, we are now told, is emitted in

separate units, separate impulses. The electrons which circle the nucleus of an atom follow one orbit, then make a sudden leap to another. Such are the laws of nature—the nature which Lao-tse took as the model for human behavior. Such, too, are the laws of our own being.

If we have rightly proportioned our day, our week, our year, with a proper balance between labor, recreation and rest, with full freedom for the harmless indulgence of our vagaries, then we shall find that our minds run smoothly at the highest level of creativeness. We shall find that when we need to concentrate there will be no difficulty. It will not be a matter of conflicting tugs and pushes. We shall not be trying to keep our minds trained on one subject against the constant distraction of other interests and urges. Our powers will naturally spring to order and find their proper rank at the word of command.

But when the mind has lost its rhythm, when we work against the grain, when we distort and deny our impulses, our efficiency suffers. Even when we wish to we can no longer concentrate. Thoughts are turgid. Mental images are vague. We are living in a fog of our own making.

This fog is prohibitive of all creative work. There must be clear images, vivid pictures, concrete aims, before the mind of a creator. There is no creation without definition and substantiality. Blurred thinking is bad thinking. Not until our thinking becomes a clear image can we convey a thought to others so

that it can function actively and move the world. Otherwise, we should be like an inventor who had no clear idea of what he wished to invent.

II

Beware of evaporation. Water, when superheated, can become power. It can also rise in clouds and evaporate into space. Too many men have inspirations, ideas, which could really be profitable and creative. They give them no definition. They do not follow them through. They allow them to evaporate. They have not learned the law of concentration. They have not learned, in Shakespeare's words, "To body forth the forms of things unseen, and give to airy nothing a local habitation and a name."

Man has not attained his station as a man until he becomes capable of focusing all his physical, mental, emotional and spiritual powers. Concentration is a link between conception and achievement. It is concentration that sharpens the development of man's intelligence, that makes an actuality out of the mere possibilities within him. It is concentration that makes him equal to the issues of life and the necessities of the world in which he finds himself. Anyone who has learned this art and makes a sincere and conscientious effort in all his undertakings will unfailingly make the best use of his abilities and attain the success which is commensurate with them.

"Man must be tireless in his effort. Once his effort is directed in the proper channel, if he does not suc-

ceed to-day he will succeed to-morrow. Effort in itself is one of the noblest traits of human character. Devotion to one's calling, effort in its speedy execution, simplicity of spirit and steadfastness through all the ups and downs—these are the hall-marks of success. A person characterized with these attributes will gather the fruits of his labors." [1]

"Concentration is the Secret of Success in all the management of human affairs." —Emerson.

The man of genius can bring to a focus, at the creative moment, all faculties of his body and mind. He has learned the supreme art of concentration. His forces are not dispersed. Because his life is rhythmic, because he allows free rein to his own whims, there is no over-lag in his impulses. When he is at work there are no conflicting desires which have not been satisfied during his periods of recreation and rest. Behind concentration is will, behind will is a goal, behind the goal is desire. The genius concentrates powerfully because he has powerful desires. You must avoid dispersal of your forces through multitudinous desires; especially through

[1] Abdu'l Baha, *The Divine Art of Living*. Brentano's.

multitudinous unfulfilled desires. When you have learned the twin arts of rhythm and concentration, you will be astonished at your power and accomplishment.

CHAPTER 4

The Power of Enthusiasm

INTEREST, zest, enthusiasm—these are the hall-marks of genius. The man of genius has an enthusiastic interest in the tasks before him, in his own work and achievements. He has the same enthusiasm for the work and the lives of other people; for the events that take place around him; for everything that bears on the onward march of humanity; even for trifles, for casual insights into life, for happenings that to a less observant man, a man with less vitality, would seem commonplace. All he does is done with gusto.

So Theodore Roosevelt lived. This quality, enthusiasm, he ranked as one of the essentials for great achievement; and in his own life he exemplified it as highly as any individual in modern history. Enthusiasm is the motor which bears us to success. There can be no such thing as a listless achievement.

When enthusiasm is lacking, something is wrong with the personality; something, perhaps, is wrong with health. It is normal, it is natural, to feel enthusiasm over our work and our recreation. If enthusiasm wanes, we should be warned. It is a signal saying to us, "Your line of work or your habits of work, your health or your psychological balance are

at fault. Take care. See what you need to change."

We are almost forced to admire zest and enthusiasm, sheer appetite for living. It is what most amazes and most delights us in youth. It is no monopoly of youth, however. If we learn to live always on the creative level, we shall retain our ardor and enthusiasm.

If we can find no interest in the world around us, it is not the world around us which has ceased to be full of life, full of wonder, full of luster and color and magnificent deeds. It is our own souls that have grown dreary and moribund. Perhaps this is the meaning of those cryptic words in the *Unwritten Sayings of Jesus,* "He who wonders shall reign."

2

The capacity for enthusiasm varies in individuals. It seems to be more or less commensurate with one's vitality, the degree to which one is alive and alert. Men and women of great achievement seem often to be dowered with almost miraculous vitality.

Napoleon owed his victories, in part, to his power of maintaining energy and enthusiasm through the strain of battle. After the fluctuations of battle, when there had been advances here and retreats there, when the issue was still undecided, the morale of the enemy would begin to falter. But at this point of stress Napoleon's courage and confidence burned as brightly as ever. He was able to inspire his soldiers with an ardor which drove them on to victory.

Financial giants also seem to be possessed of a titanic energy; they are able to fight zestfully when the psychic forces of other men are faltering. Cornelius Vanderbilt, J. P. Morgan, Sr., J. J. Hill the great railroad builder, E. H. Harriman—such men had physiques which enabled them to endure heavy strain and to maintain their enthusiasm throughout.

But if enthusiasm depended wholly on physique and the functioning of glands, the ordinary individual might despair at finding himself less bountifully endowed than the superman. Enthusiasm, however, is not so much a matter of physical as of spiritual vitality. Many people of low physical vitality—even semi-invalids—have shone with the clear flame of enthusiasm. Elizabeth Barrett Browning is a striking example. Alexander Pope, with his dwarfed and crooked body, with his diseased spine braced up with corsets, suffering from constant headaches, is another witness that the mind of man can rise triumphantly over the disadvantages of its vehicle. Indeed, it often seems that enthusiasm and fragility of body go hand in hand, and we see, as Dryden describes it:

> "A fiery spirit, fretting to decay,
> That o'er informs its tenement of clay."

Sarah J. Farmer, the founder of Greenacre—that unique summer colony devoted to high thought and plain living, a replica of Brook Farm on a more feasible scale—was so strong and eager in her enthusiasm that by her spirit alone she was able to

build up and maintain an organization against tremendous odds. When she presided at a lecture, I received more inspiration from watching the play of emotion upon her face than from everything I heard. I have never known a personality more moving in the contagion of its enthusiasm. Long after her own means had been exhausted in caring for the colony, the power of her spirit found ways to keep it going.

By the time I saw her, the candle of her life was burning too brightly for its own permanence. Her physician compelled her, for a large part of the day, to isolate herself from all human contacts. Those who had the privilege of a personal interview would find her at some distance from the center of activity of the colony, resting on her couch in a bungalow tent under the pines. I shall not easily forget how luminous her eyes were when they opened thus to greet me, and how strongly she stimulated the spirits of us all by her dynamic personality and enthusiasm. Her life left its touch upon many people while it was thus burning itself away in service.

3

All normal people can be roused to intense enthusiasm. In the history of religious movements—the Crusades, the Reformation, Puritanism, Quakerism, Methodism—we can see how men and women can be blown to a white heat of activity. Politics can stir people at least to a temporary enthusiasm, and,

if they serve for nothing else, they at any rate provide an emotional release.

War can provoke whole populaces to a height of enthusiasm; indeed its incitement is often so strong as to injure the psyche if it is prolonged too far. It is not normal or wholesome to continue to live in the atmosphere of violent emotion; and such enthusiasm may degenerate to hysteria.

Even apart from the results it produces in creative work, enthusiasm is a valuable emotional experience. William James suggested that every man should go on an "emotional spree" at least once a week. Sports, the drama, movies, all the various amusements to which Americans are prone, play their own rôle in helping to stimulate and stir the enthusiasm of the crowd.

In our own days, for the first time, the value of enthusiasm in education is beginning to be recognized, and our new psychological knowledge has made a revolution in the teaching of children. Unless we can stir the interest of the child little can be done. We can try to hammer facts into his head, but if he has no spontaneous enthusiasm he will learn poorly. The old devices of iteration and rule of thumb were costly and inadequate. They wasted time and they made school a purgatory which any sensible child would detest. Now from the start we must work with the child's interest, not against it. Even in his acquiring of the mere tools in the process of learning we must develop techniques for keeping and increasing his zest. As soon as the elements of reading and writing have been learned, we must awaken and sustain in him an enthusiasm for knowledge. If we can succeed, his knowledge will grow like wildfire; he will have an appetite for learning; he will learn as easily as he breathes. An unwilling child will learn less in six years than an eager and interested child will find out for himself in six months.

If any thought, any truth, any belief, is to spread through the world and to leave an effect on human life, it must be such as to win enthusiasm and it must be enthusiastically served. It is impossible for a religion to establish itself in the hearts of men without fire among its adherents, fire so all devouring that everything in the path of service is sacrificed. The writer of the *Revelation* knew this psychological truth. He condemned the too complacent spirit among the Christians of Laodicea: "Because thou art lukewarm," he writes, "I spew thee out of my mouth!" It is worthy of note that the only two great world religions which are active in propaganda and rapid in growth—Christianity and Mohammedanism—are the two which possess and arouse the most enthusiasm.

In love, it goes without saying, enthusiasm is at its highest pitch. Here more than in any other experience of life we make no voluntary steps towards enthusiasm; it comes to us, not we to it. The man and woman in love feel the world transfigured. Their sense of living is heightened, their energies revivified. They feel that their powers are increased, and the feeling is no self-deception. Each of them,

with the confidence of the partner's love, with the effort to deserve it and the desire to return it, is living in a new realm, with more promise, more hope, more courage and more achievement. Through the depth of enthusiasm which suffuses the being, each is living on one of the highest levels of creativeness which we can find in life. Love, indeed, is the most typical example of creative action. It sets free our potentialities and develops them to their greatest efficiency. *"Ama et fac quid vis,"* was St. Augustine's charge to his fellow men: "Love, and accomplish whatever you desire."

4

"It is clear that a life empty of enthusiasm is a sad business," you will say perhaps. "But what can one do? Suppose you feel, like Hamlet, that the world is 'flat, stale and unprofitable,' how can you change your attitude? The disease is exactly what prevents a remedy. How can one be enthusiastic for a world which presents no points of interest?"

It is true that a lazy man finds it hard to bestir himself, and a discouraged man finds it hard to cheer himself up. It is true that if we find a man who has lost his zest for food we are not helping him very much if we say, "But you should cultivate an appetite." But the difficulty is not so great as it seems. We may not be able to increase our enjoyment of life by giving ourselves "pep talks"; but if we change the conditions of our living the improvement will

follow of itself. We have already insisted that it is natural and normal to be full of enthusiasm and zest. We do not need to dope ourselves or intoxicate ourselves into the enjoyment of life. If we put ourselves in the right condition, enjoyment will naturally follow.

The first step is the maintenance of health. Fatigue and lassitude are often the result of autointoxication; we have been poisoning ourselves by unwise diet or irregular habits of living. If we find ourselves, therefore, under gray and somber skies, if everything seems featureless and uninteresting, the first hint by which we can hope to renew our zest is—look to the stomach!

There is no doubt that many of us eat too much and overload our stomachs. Many of us eat injudiciously and set up a chronic state of warfare in our organs. How can we expect in these circumstances to have a fresh and eager outlook on life? But there is little use in merely blaming ourselves. There is nothing to do, if we are seriously dissatisfied, but to change our ways of living and regulate ourselves better. This matter of the health and efficiency of our physical vehicle is of obvious importance. This is not the place to go into fuller details. There are many good books upon health and diet, and they are readily available for anyone who wishes to improve his habits of living in this respect.[1]

The next factor to consider is our work. Work

[1] From my own study and experience in regard to diet, the most valuable hint that can be given to people from middle age on is: first, to cut down the proportion of meat, starch, and sugar in the

takes up the greater part of our waking day; it exercises an overwhelming influence on the health of our minds. If we have chosen unwisely, if we are moving in the wrong direction, there will be a perpetual drag on our energies, a perpetual dampening of our spirits. It is impossible to sustain enthusiasm if in our working life we feel suppressed and bored.

Fortunately there is always the opportunity, with whatever choices we have made, to correct our mistakes and change our direction. There is no question but that in present-day civilization there are difficulties in the way of enthusiasm and work. The activities of the savage were always undertaken with zest. For the Indians their hunting, fishing and war-making were as exciting as any sport. Nowadays to provide food for ourselves many of us toil in a humdrum, distasteful way; and it is comparatively rare that enthusiasm inspires the working life of an individual. There are obstacles here, but there are no impossibilities. If an individual has chosen for himself a vocation in the line of his main interests, he will retain his enthusiasm, no matter how much call on his energies the tasks that face him may make.

It is where work has no object, no visible use for others, that it becomes most distasteful. It has been said that the cruelest and most heart-breaking punishment for convicts that has ever been designed

diet and increase the proportion of watery vegetables and fruit, especially citrous fruits. And secondly to let the amount we eat be guided by our actual appetites and not by what is on the table.

was to set them moving a pile of stones from one side of the road to the other; and when they had finished, to force them to carry them back again. After some days of this meaningless labor, every convict was broken-spirited and exasperated. Where there is no purpose in work it is always insufferably tedious. As Coleridge phrased it so well:

> "Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve
> And hope without an object cannot live."

5

If work plays so crucial a part in our psychological health, what a tragedy it is that most people drift into their vocations more from the pressure of environment and occasion than from any wise and deliberate choice. Often they have not even tried to discover where their own bent lies; and, strange though it may seem, many of them are quite unaware that they have special interests and can find work which offers an opportunity for their fulfillment. Perhaps if you asked them, "What would you like to do best?" they would answer, "Oh, I don't know. Everything is pretty much the same."

They have never observed themselves. They have never given themselves a fair trial. Everyone has his own gifts and interests; and everyone displays them somehow or other, whether he wishes to or not. Perhaps these interests are not very strong or clear. If so, it is because they have been allowed to

atrophy. They can always be developed further and raised to a state of greater efficiency.

One trick by which we can help to reveal our underlying interest is to imagine as vividly as we can what we should like best to do if we had a million dollars. Modern psychologists tell us the pictures which rise before us show our own natural gifts and proclivities; these are the things which, in some way or other, to a greater or smaller degree, we should struggle to bring into our lives.

If a man has made a mistake in his choice of vocation, if he finds that the work he is doing makes no appeal to him, he should never hesitate to change it. If he is a wage earner and has a family dependent upon him, it may be difficult to make a change. Nevertheless, even under such circumstances it is possible to do it. Perhaps he cannot change immediately; but he can work towards a position in which he is able to make a change, and he can look around him with an alert eye, determined to discover an opening that leads to more agreeable work and to make use of it as soon as he has discovered it. If we persist year in and year out in work which is unpleasant to us, then it is we ourselves who are responsible for the tedium of our lives.

One point especially deserves underlining in our minds. Work which is of benefit to others can always be found attractive. It allows us to preserve our self-esteem; we can find a real creative pleasure in doing it. But work which runs counter to the welfare of others will always be found a psychological strain.

In choosing a vocation every individual should be careful not to work under conditions that call for dishonesty towards the public. Who can preserve his enthusiasm if he is selling goods that he believes are not of good quality and real value to the consumer? Who can keep a free and happy mind if he is part of an establishment or commercial organization where he is continually required to practice unethical acts? If a man discovers that he has drifted into such position, at whatever risk to his security he should sever himself from it. He may be assured that no happiness can result from it, and that the constant, even if unadmitted, sapping of his self-esteem will destroy all peace of mind and all prospects of worth while success.

6

Let us take it at the worst, however, and suppose not only that our work is uninspiring but also that no opportunity will ever be offered us to make a change. In these circumstances how can anyone avoid losing his vitality and good spirits?

If our work does not bring us enthusiasm, we must bring enthusiasm to our work. If we cannot do what we love doing, then we must find out how to love what we do. It will be clear that if we grant the supposition that it is impossible to change our work, then there is no alternative. By hook or crook we must interest ourselves in our tasks; we must make them interesting.

A minister of the gospel once complained of the dull monotony of his vocation. Every Sunday, he said, he was compelled to preach two sermons; and the audience to which he preached them was absolutely uninspiring. When he saw such dead faces around him, he was overwhelmed by the tedium of his mission. We should all suspect, on hearing such a complaint, that at least a part of the fault lay in the minister himself. If he found his audiences uninspiring, it must have been because he did not inspire them himself. He blamed them for a lack of response, but he was at least equally to blame himself for his lack of enthusiasm.

So everyone who finds his work uninteresting is at least in part to blame for his own lack of interest. We might even say that it is not so much the work itself that is tedious, but that he himself is a tedious person, bringing with him into his work his own lack of zest. The very affirmation of enthusiasm in the day's work, as if by some occult law, will cause progress and increase of vitality. Not only so: If we work with ardor at tasks which are not entirely in the line of our natural interests, we shall bring nearer the time when we can change to work which we enjoy far more.

Every investment of enthusiasm pays large profits. It is the man who does more than he needs who soon finds himself able to do just what he wants. The fact that he does not bargain for his energy, the fact that he is willing to make this voluntary expense of enthusiasm, will attract the attention

of his employer, will win the good will of his client. It will open before him unexpected opportunities of development and advancement.

It is certainly not the easiest of times in which to apply enthusiasm to our work. The present industrial age, with its specialized and mechanical labor, offers few of the satisfactions that were available when labor was more of a craft and less of a mere skill in repetition. In the Middle Ages, we may assume, men could far more easily find the work they loved and love the work they did. Even to-day, wherever objects of beauty and value are made by hand, love of work and pride in accomplishment go together. Elizabeth Morrow tells the story of a wood worker she encountered in Cuernavaca, Mexico. He insisted that if she wanted a dozen chairs of the same design he must charge her extra for each of them. "It would be so dull," he explained, "to make twelve chairs all alike." So we find that both children and adults who study a handicraft gain a huge enjoyment from their work and put a big enthusiasm into it.

What can we do, however, with these machines of ours? What can we do with standardization and mass production? The one way of restoring enthusiasm to labor in our modern conditions is by profit-sharing. Here undoubtedly is the only solution to the struggle between capital and labor, a struggle which otherwise can lead only to constant warfare or to forcible domination of one party by the other.

In every enterprise labor should have joint ownership and direction and a definite share in the net profits. If this proposal were realized there would be a great change in the psychology of the laborer. He would be working with an end in view. There would be an incentive for him to do his best. There would be a new interest and a new sense of importance in his achievement.

7

Let us go still further. Let us pretend—a wild and fantastic pretense—that the working hours are bound to be dismal and uninspiring. There is still time left; and we shall be surprised at the change that will come into our lives if we decide upon persuing in our spare time only those activities over which we can be enthusiastic.

All around us there are possibilities of simple pleasures, often enough despised because of their simplicity. What do people talk about most when they are telling the memories of their travels? They generally dwell most lovingly on the hotels, restaurants, cafés, where they most enjoyed their meals. The day may come when we absorb our nourishment in pills or precipitate it from the air; but if it does we shall have lost a main source of recreation and enjoyment. If even our mealtimes find us without enthusiasm and appetite, then something is wrong either with our attitude or with our food.

Perhaps we misuse the hours which we give to

exercise or amusement. There is no benefit in exercise which affords us no pleasure. If we have been bullied or cajoled into exerting ourselves physically when we do not like it, we should discontinue our self-punishment. Exercise should be a pleasurable art, not a duty. If one form of exercise does not please us, we can find other forms, perhaps, which are more to our taste. But if we do not feel like taking any kind of exercise at all, then we should let the exhortations of our more hearty and strenuous friends spend themselves in the air. Plainly, it is loafing that we need.

So we should never allow ourselves to drift into kinds of recreation that are a trial to us. Let us show some sincerity and courage. If we detest playing bridge let us refuse to be inveigled into it. If certain people bore us to death, let us avoid them like the plague, and decline, politely if we can, invitations to their houses. Let us go to the theater, to a concert or lecture only when we really feel that we shall be entertained.

It would be good if all our amusements came to us as unobtrusively, as undogmatically, as the radio. If the program is not to our liking, we can shift the dial until we find something better. If nothing suits us we can cut the radio off altogether. How often, in a lecture, a concert or a play, we have longed to obliterate the whole performance. How we have wished that through the single effort of will we could transfer ourselves elsewhere. Alas, we were stuck in our seats and had to endure to the bitter end.

Many people make the mistake of subscribing to a whole "series" of concerts or lectures; and, with incredible and profitless heroism, they see them through in order not to waste the money they have paid for their tickets. It is better to waste money than patience. If an entertainment ceases to entertain us, let us take the loss and be wiser next time. If we do not employ these valuable hours of our freedom in activities of our own choice, our life may well be burdensome and lacking in enthusiasm.

8

Though men of genius are capable of great enthusiasm, we should be mistaken if we imagined that they never fell into the pit of depression. We have seen already that no output of energy is absolutely constant, that there is a rhythm in human psychology to which we must accommodate ourselves. Great men are men of strong feelings, and it is within their power to feel grief and despair as well as enthusiasm and joy.

So Napoleon confessed in a moment of bitterness that he was distinguished from other men because he felt himself more capable of misery. So Mark Twain, a great humorist, was given to fits of melancholy and brooding. If we give expression to our natural emotions we cannot always be sure that we shall have only pleasurable experiences. Many people, through their fear of suffering, try mistakenly to deaden their feelings, and so unfit themselves for either sorrow or happiness.

When periods of depression come to us, therefore, we should not be disturbed. If we do not fight against them they will pass. On the other hand, if we interfere with the necessary rhythm of our being by the use of stimulants or narcotics, if we try to maintain ourselves always at the peak of energy or to deaden our capacity for feeling, we risk the loss of all our vitality.

There will always be times when work seems mere drudgery, when life is without its savor. We must draw, then, on our store of faith and common sense. We need not add to our worry by worrying *because* we are worried. One woman came to a psychologist, in the depths of depression. "What makes you so sad?" he asked. "It always distresses me," she replied, "when I think that I can never be happy." In this way she was doubling her depression. She had not the confidence to allow it to take its own course, but always put before herself the prospect of an eternity of woe. It is no wonder that her melancholy persisted.

It is only when we find ourselves lackadaisical or depressed over a long period of time that we need pay special attention to such a condition. Even then, we must not take ourselves tragically and so increase our difficulties. We must set about removing the cause of our depression. Either our health is below par or we need a change of work. Often discontent is brought to us by destiny to wean us from the voca-

tion or the environment in which we are fixed. This is the divine discontent which leads to progress.

9

The scientist slaves day and night to discover something that will improve human welfare or increase human knowledge. The artist throws all his heart into the creation of beauty and forgets as he works all immediate financial benefit he may gain. Even the business man may be more occupied in producing order out of chaos, in creating an organization to serve human needs, than in calculating his profits and adding to his wealth.

Enthusiasm is in inverse proportion to the mercenary or selfish quality of our goal. Why have the saints and heroes of the world seemed endowed with such prodigious strength? Why have they seemed undeterred by obstacles which might well have discouraged lesser men? It is because they drew strength from the cause they served and from the confidence that their efforts were in the interests of all humanity. Above all other sources of enthusiasm is the devotion to the advancement of human welfare; to the interests, the hopes and aims of our fellow beings.

It is for this reason that religion has inspired so many men to great lives. Wherever we look around us we can see the power that is given to those who are loyal to a cause greater than themselves. When we work for universal aims we have the feeling that

our efforts are grounded in whatever is most enduring and sure. Under such an inspiration we develop the best that is in us and our creative enthusiasm has no limits.

"Enthusiasm is the genius of sincerity, and truth accomplishes no victories without it."

—Lord Lytton.

Study the magnificent vitality of animals. They are never spiritless, except when man has broken their spirits by cruel domination. Vitality is natural to them. With man, too, vitality is natural. It is an evidence of normality. His vitality expresses itself most typically in his enthusiastic enjoyment of the sights and sounds around him and in his enthusiastic devotion to great thoughts and great issues. The man of genius is normality itself; normality developed to the highest and most astonishing degree. His enthusiasms, as with all his feelings, are the same as yours; but they are better exercised, more lively and stronger. Too many people lose the savor of life through the constraints of society which they allow to weaken them. But you can burst through these constraints, as the genius does. You can live in delight, as full of eagerness as the butterfly that greets the sun after its dark confinement in inertia.

CHAPTER 5

Environment and Atmosphere

MODERN studies in sociology have shown that national qualities do not spring so much from racial stock as from physical environment and cultural traditions. The environment exercises a continual influence on the character and personality of the individual during his whole development; and no doubt many of the achievements which we have been accustomed to attribute to the biological inheritance of a race were due rather to the climate they found themselves in, the tasks which nature set them and the social customs which they originated or passed on.

There is no need to point out, for example, that in a peasant community we are not likely to find many great attainments in industry, scholarship or invention. The opportunity for these interests is not present and we should be surprised to find them developing. In an industrial community there is little encouragement for the artist. Where militarism is the dominant note, the chief expression of ability and the chief rewards of ability will lie in military and political realms. Human nature falls easily into the mold of a psychological environment and adapts itself to the demands and ideals of time and place.

Only the rarest and most stalwart personalities can transcend this influence.

Most brilliant periods of civilization—the age of the Greeks and of the Saracens, the Renaissance, and the American technological era of to-day—have been due not so much to the genius of a single race as to the gifts and abilities of many people who have been drawn together into a vortex of activity where the environment was most favorable for expression. The more the fame of such a cultural center grows, the more do gifted individuals from all parts of the world pour into the vortex and add to its force. In such an environment achievements are easier and the rewards for talent are greater.

So the foundations of Greek art were laid not so much by the Greeks themselves as by the Egyptian and Cretan sculptors, painters and potters who brought their skill where they felt the current of strongest activity. The early artists of Greece were almost all foreigners. The man whom the Greeks worshiped as a founder of letters was Cadmus; and it was their tradition that he came from Semitic stock. Even in the most flourishing period of Greek culture, many of their philosophers, orators and artists came from distant parts of the world.

In our own days it would have been impossible for Michael Pupin, for example, to become the great scientist and inventor he succeeded in becoming if he had remained in Serbia. It was in this country that he found scope for his talents. Here and here

only were the atmosphere and environment most conducive to technical achievement.

2

Plants and animals, through long periods of evolution, have developed different characters in response to the pressure of climatic and physical condition. In the millenniums of life before history began, humanity, in a similar way, differentiated itself in accordance with the different conditions of its habitation. Each group of people adapted itself to its own climate. To-day the northern races find it almost impossible to live for long periods in the tropics at the best level of health and achievement.

The temperate zones seem especially favorable to mental and physical vigor and to successful achievement on the material plane. The semi-tropics are conducive to geniality of living, graciousness of manner, joyous acceptance of daily life and a carefree spirit, content to live in the present without worry over the future. It is in this zone that the world's greatest thinking has been forged out; that the great philosophies and the great religions have been born. Men here seem to have felt a deeper and more mystical understanding of life.

In the intense cold of the arctic circle, human energy has been completely absorbed in the maintenance of life. In the torrid zone both plants and animals are stimulated to a physical exuberance of growth, and in men this exuberance tends to express

itself in sensuality. Life is easy, but sustained effort is difficult.

The man of genius seems to be more sensitive than others to environment and atmosphere; and he sees more clearly the necessity of controlling them. Such men have tended to break away from home ties, from the small life of their native town, even from their national environment. They have wandered and sought until they found the best conditions for their life work. So Robert Louis Stevenson —poet and vagabond—traveled the world around before he settled down as the patriarchal ruler of the South Sea Islands.

Often a man of great soul, having discovered for himself his own most favorable situation, draws to him other men of similar gifts. Together they contribute to the force of the environment and exert a common influence upon one another. So Wordsworth, living in the English lake district, attracted to him Coleridge, Southey and De Quincey. So Shelley and Byron lived a stone's throw from each other in Italy and were visited there by Leigh Hunt and Keats. At Concord, Emerson and Thoreau had for companions Hawthorne and Alcott. Many a school of writers, of artists, of musicians, of philosophers, has been founded under similar circumstances.

3

The intimate domestic environment is still more important. Anatole France was always changing the

decorations of his home, building up an atmosphere expressive of the period which was engaging his thoughts. When he wrote *Thaïs* he surrounded himself with the art of ancient Greece,—pieces of sculpture and fragments of columns which he had managed to acquire. For *Le Lys Rouge* he submerged himself in the works of Italian art; for *Jeanne d'Arc* he hung on his walls beautiful tapestries of the fifteenth century.

Beauty of scene adds greatly to the writer's powers. Perfect in this respect was the study in which Longfellow worked, the famous room overlooking the Charles River and its sunlit meadows. Even business men have begun to realize the importance of atmosphere and to make their offices spacious, comfortable and full of charm. They do it not only to please and impress their clients but to refresh and enrich their own minds as they work. I have seen offices which were as lovely as any old drawing room or salon, with deep carpets underfoot, rare prints and paintings on the walls, admirably designed and executed furniture. It is in such surroundings that men can feel an attitude to business which does not condemn it to the realm of money-grubbing and selfish souls. It is only in our own civilization that the purpose of business as the supply of human needs has begun to be grasped, and business itself recognized as an activity equally noble in conception with every other service to humanity. We have begun to realize that business may have a dignity of its own, but it would be foolish to pre-

tend that we have yet made it, in general, a human and humane art and science.

The church was perhaps the first institution to realize and meet the need for atmosphere. Primitive peoples made use of moonlight nights and elaborate costume to enhance the appeal of their religious ceremonials and dances. From the earliest periods of history there have been temples in which men gathered together to express their common aspirations; and the most magnificent relics of human life are the edifices which they left behind them as monuments of their religious strivings. From the dawn of history to the present day the earth has borne the impress of the worship of mankind. We feel awe before the great monoliths of Stonehenge, the lovely temples of the Greeks, the Egyptians and the Romans, the Gothic cathedrals of the Middle Ages. Whole races of men saw visions and created around them the body of their dreams.

4

Before we know it, impressions from our surroundings have stolen into our souls and influenced our moods. A scent remembered from childhood, the sound of a distant waterfall—without conscious volition our feelings are stirred, our minds are in agitation, as when a pebble breaks the glass-like surface of a pool. We see the dead leaves fluttering in the fall, and something of the melancholy of death comes uninvited into our hearts.

We live in the constant play of these impressions; and for the most part we do not even know what has given rise to our moods. Yet Wordsworth suggested that the constant influence of such impressions built itself into our characters and molded our lives; and modern psychology has done much to prove him right. They are not all-important: two men subjected to the same influences will always respond to them in different ways; but there is no doubt that these small influences, continuously exerted, have a deep effect on the individual development.

It was the taste of a small cake which he was dipping in his tea that recalled to Marcel Proust a similar incident in his childhood and started him off on that vast train of reminiscence which was his masterpiece. It took fourteen volumes for him to explore the world which had reopened itself to his eyes, to trace the reverberations of that single note. It is of such substance, often regarded as trivial, that the depths of the soul are formed.

Perhaps we cannot control the course of our moods; but we can do more—we can control their origin. We can change our environment and put ourselves in harmonious surroundings; we can refuse to subject ourselves to impressions that are disadvantageous to our peace of mind and to the free flow of our energy. Why should any man, with the opportunity to live among favorable and stimulating impressions, condemn himself to live dismally, in dismal surroundings?

This is another secret that men of genius have always known—they have chosen the influences to which they were content to submit.

5

So great is this power of environment that men seem almost different individuals in the different human associations in which they are placed. William James pointed out this multiplicity of "social selves" in a single man—how, for example, a business man will show quite different personalities as the director of a bank or factory, as the superintendent of a Sunday School, as the father of a family, and as one of a group of old cronies seeking a "good time" together.

"Many a youth," he comments, "who is demure enough before his parents and teachers, swears and swaggers like a pirate among his 'tough' young friends. We do not show ourselves to our children as to our club companions, to our customers as to the laborers we employ, to our masters and employers as to our intimate friends. Nothing is commoner than to hear people discriminate between their different selves of this sort: 'As a man I pity you, but as an official I must show you no mercy'; 'As a politician I regard him as an ally, but as a moralist I loathe him.'"

It is especially true in America, where women so dominate the home life, that a man can be quite different in his professional and his domestic en-

vironments. An industrialist who is commanding and powerful in his business life may become, when he returns home, the mild and helpless subject of a benevolent despotism. It is now the wife who is the commander. What a ludicrous incongruity it would reveal if one might play, before his autocratically ruled employees, a phonograph record of his gentle domestic, "Yes, dear."

This is, of course, an extreme example; but there are many business men who really find their working environment more agreeable, more favorable to self-expression, than their homes. It is this fact that led G. K. Chesterton to remark that the typical American business man "goes home to his office in the morning." For it is in the office that they feel most themselves; while in the home they are bewildered and capitulative in their endeavor to effect a compromise with life.

6

It is in the home, however, that the average individual is most constantly impressed. His home is a part of himself, an extension of his personality; and it is the greatest force in his emotional life. Here, too, he has it in his own hands to subject himself to encouraging or discouraging experiences. It is always an interesting and moving sight when we see a young married couple building up for themselves the environment which expresses their joint personality. They are creating the gods of the hearth, the *lares and penates* of their own futures.

Naturally the atmosphere of every home differs. No two are alike. A sensitive observer can feel the atmospheric quality in any house he enters; and this quality is not wholly made up of the material objects it contains—the furniture, decorations, fireplaces and so forth. Everything seems to reflect the spirit of those who are living there. In some houses our nerves are set jangling; in others we feel restful and quiet. Gerard Manley Hopkins, the English poet, friend of Robert Bridges, described a house such as the latter:

"Comforting smell breathed at very entering."

If people realized how their houses soaked up the atmosphere of their lives, they would work far harder at filling their domestic relationships with harmony and love than at papering the walls, arranging the furniture and hanging the pictures.

In his home every individual should have his own sanctum, his own private terrain, free from the invasion of other personalities. By frequenting such a room he is strengthening and concentrating its atmosphere, increasing its power to soothe his mind and give him refreshment. All his past thoughts and emotions linger round it. His intimate familiarity with every detail it contains heightens his feeling of security and repose. He has become friends with it and it is the comforter of his solitude.

When Cardinal Newman joined the Church of

Rome and left the religious colony at Littlemore where he had lived and worked for years, the pain of parting from his old friends was very severe. But he showed his grief most when the time came to leave the small bedroom where he had spent his hours of solitary reading and meditation. With a sudden access of emotion he kissed the mantel-shelf, quite bare but for its two candlesticks, and kissed the trestle bed on which he would sleep no more. There were tears in his eyes as he went out of the door, never to return.

One reason, I think, why we grow tired of constant travel is that we can establish no *pied-à-terre;* we are restless if we can never bathe and refresh ourselves in a long familiar atmosphere. Hotel rooms have no atmosphere, or they have an atmosphere so confused and diluted by the succession of guests that we can find no peace in them. At last the time comes to the tourist when home, with its intimate and peculiar flavor, seems the loveliest place in all the world.

7

There can be no doubt, however, that we need more than one type of atmosphere, or impressions will become too familiar and our feelings will grow stale. Men and women are now broadening their horizons. Home is not their only stimulus and refuge. There are clubs and societies to suit every temperament and to give to each man or woman

the stimulus that otherwise would be lacking to them.

In the future, if we can judge from present tendencies, men and women will spend still less time in their homes and much more in group activities. This does not mean that homes will be abandoned—there is nothing which can take their place when we need solace and peacefulness. But individuals will not restrict themselves to their domestic environment, as did those "model daughters" of a previous era who passed almost all their lives indoors in the seclusion of their families. Now we seek a greater expansion of experience by mingling together in congenial groups. Thus there are clubs where men and women of the same professions may meet and interchange opinions; and there are clubs which include every type of profession and every shade of opinion and degree of culture. It can well be imagined that club life is merely at the beginning of its development.

These new circumstances have arisen in part from the increasing smallness of modern families, which are no longer in themselves societies in miniature as they once were; and in part from the decrease in the importance of the family as an economic unit. This broadening of our social basis will probably have the most beneficial results. The old inbreeding, the old family-bound tradition, not only created narrowness of personality and interest, but by forcing a small circle into continual and unavoidable closeness of contact it often was the occasion of hysterical

hatreds and unwholesome revulsions among the members of the family.

8

In America the atmospheres of life in the city and of life in the small town are vastly different; and it would be good for every individual if he could have his share of both experiences. In small towns perhaps one can learn more of human nature, since one sees it closer; and much genuine and deep friendliness is found there, with its roots in a long and profound personal acquaintance. On the other hand, the continual drift to the big city shows us how many people have a preference for the most concentrated urban life.

In the city we find all the modern comforts of living brought together in a marvelous aggregation of luxury and entertainment. It is the highest expression of man's material genius. In the turbulent stream of human life the city dweller feels himself more of a spectator than a participator. He can observe without incurring the least responsibility towards the people around him. To walk in city streets after months of living in the country is like witnessing a constant drama. Ibsen found most of the inspiration for his plays in watching and analyzing the life that passed before him in city cafés. Dickens poured into his novel the thousands of vivid and eager observations he had made as he roamed the city streets, a young newspaper reporter. He

was never happy when he was long separated from his beloved London.

Strangely enough those who are used to either scene feel much the same sort of electric stimulus when they change their surroundings on a vacation. The country dweller in the city, the city dweller in the country breathe more deeply and look around with wider eyes. "Ah!" each says to himself, "now I am really living!"

9

Just as it stimulates us to vary for a time the familiar circumstances of city or country, so it is beneficial to escape even from our national and racial environment. When we find ourselves set in the midst of a completely different race and culture, something important happens to us. We see new possibilities that hitherto we had not dreamed of. New sights, new customs, new personalities, awake us to the infinite variety of the human process. What we had taken for granted as the only life turns out to be but one of a multiplicity of forms. We catch a larger perspective. We live more *sub specie æternitatis*.

Just as plants benefit by transplanting, so do human beings. From the earliest days of history, individuals who have been awakened to human values and could contrive to follow their interests have visited older and richer civilizations than their own. Thus the Greeks poured into Egypt to capture there

something of the last secret of wisdom which the Egyptian culture contained, to learn the arts and sciences which were expressed there. The Romans in turn visited Greece to complete their education. The Italians of the Renaissance drank thirstily from the learning of Constantinople and Arabia. In the eighteenth century every English youth whose family could afford it was sent on the "Grand Tour," so that contact with the traditions of Europe should cultivate and refine his mind.

Now America has arrived at full national consciousness; and Americans, finding themselves in a country relatively bare of tradition, of atmosphere and culture, pour into Europe and enrich their experience of life by the charm of an older and more compact civilization. When they return they are no longer the same beings. They bring with them something of the inspiration they have felt, and are able now to give a fuller expressiveness to the culture of their own country.

10

The man of genius takes even greater advantage of the variety of this planet than do other men. Sometimes he is more really at home in the atmosphere of a foreign country than in that of his own. Henry James found England best suited to his needs and took a never-failing delight in the complications, the shades of meaning, the allusions and half-lights of English social intercourse. Stevenson gained stimulus from America and peace from the South Sea Islands. It was in the South Sea Islands, too, that Gauguin gave us his most typical expression. Lafcadio Hearn, an American of Irish and Greek parentage, roamed all over the earth and finally set up his home in Japan. There he found his ideal environment and atmosphere. He was naturalized as a Japanese citizen; and when we read of his life in Japan we cannot but feel that he was destined to live and to create in just such circumstances.

In our own day we find Americans of great gifts scattered throughout the world. Conrad Aiken fled from the routine of Harvard University to the cultural freedom of London. T. S. Eliot, a New Englander, has adopted the old England as his home. Ezra Pound lives in Italy; and there is a whole colony of talented writers in Paris. Sinclair Lewis, after painting with astonishing fidelity the small town life of America, took advantage of the financial opportunity his early books brought him to widen his horizon in the different capitals of Europe.

Even in one's own country, travel and change of habitation afford a great enrichment of life. A man or woman's profession may be such as to lead him to many parts of the country. Or it may be such as to offer him some choice as regards permanent location. And even if one is held to one locality by the need of livelihood, the automobile to-day renders easily accessible a vast variety of scenes, of people, and of climatic conditions. All America in the summertime is on the road, so it would seem, seeking a

change of environment for at least a brief period of time. Soon they will all be in the air routes, seeking their destinations with more speed and less irksomeness.

These movements of humanity to and fro across the surface of our planet are of immense value in spreading and consolidating our cultural advantages. In the future, as communication becomes still easier, we shall doubtless make full use of the world's variety of geographical and human environment to refresh and inspire our lives.

II

One form of environment we cannot easily escape, and it is the form which influences us most powerfully. This is our human environment. Our family we are born into. But we may choose our partner in love, our friends and our companions; and the choices we make in these directions are of crucial importance to us.

Some people leave their friendships to chance. They drift aimlessly and helplessly into human relationships, and when these turn out unfortunately see no way of severing them. Everyone should learn to analyze the effects of other personalities upon himself. With some people we feel dead and constrained. It is as if some cold magnetic force throws all expressiveness from our hearts. Others are sympathetic and responsive. Some bring us calm. Some interest and excite us, but none the less, if we see

too much of them, they overstimulate us and put a strain on our tranquillity and our health.

Men of great lives have the courage to choose their own friends and the experience to recognize what human relationships are best fitted to their own temperaments. They shield themselves from mean and mediocre people, but they give themselves generously to those who offer a mutual enrichment. They value their time and energy too highly to waste them heedlessly and fritter them away in social strain and discomfort.

Anatole France detested public ceremonies. Once, as he approached the harbor of Rio de Janeiro in the course of his travels, he was horrified to find himself the prospective victim of a celebration in his honor. He was dining with congenial friends on the boat, when suddenly they were disturbed by fireworks, bands, illuminated pleasure-boats, and cries of "Viva Anatolio!"

France rushed to his cabin, undressed and got into bed. His secretary found him and announced that a delegation of Brazilians had come to take him to preside at a banquet. "I am dying, my child! I am dying! It has come upon me suddenly. I shall never finish the voyage, I fear. Express my regrets to these good folks. Tell them to put out their lanterns and to stop their music. Perhaps a night of undisturbed rest will restore me." After an hour everything was quiet. The delegation had departed, and with them went Anatole's malady. He was soon walking again on the deck of his boat, enjoying the moonlit beauty

of the harbor and conversing peacefully with his friends.

12

The average person is deadly afraid of being rude; and it is true that he is not readily allowed the same privileges that we give to men of genius. It is important for everyone, however, to know how to fend off social aggressiveness on the part of people in whom he has no interest. Rudeness is not necessary. We can accomplish as much by clear-mindedness and resolution accompanied by tact.

Probably too many people are afraid of *being in the wrong.* They are afraid to incur even the momentary opposition of other people. We should realize that no reasonable course of action should be avoided simply because we do not care to face some slight disagreement. If we feel that a course of action is reasonable and not dictated by hostility to others, there is no need to make such a fetish of politeness that we spoil our own enjoyment of life.

"Associate only with people who bring inspiration to you or to whom you can bring inspiration," said Abdu'l Baha. No one need live a trivial or discontented social life, if he has the courage to select his own friends and refuse to be driven into close acquaintances which mean nothing to him at all. Let us welcome, let us go out and seek, those people who refresh and stimulate us, whatever their social position may be. Let us firmly and tactfully exclude those who drag our vitality out of us and bring us no return. Otherwise we shall have only ourselves to blame if human associations, instead of being a pleasure, are a trial and embarrassment to us.

It is safe to say that no man could remain living at the creative level if he suffered his personal associations to drift aimlessly into the trivial patterns which most people endure. Here, as elsewhere, we must have the courage to take our own initiative and control our own environment.

13

For the encouragement of those who feel themselves fatally entangled in a petty, disagreeable or disharmonious environment, I assert that we are free to choose our own environment. Though we may shrink from taking the steps to improve our environment, let us be assured that every step in the right direction, no matter how difficult it may seem beforehand, brings its own reward.

How do we begin to master this task? First, by considering the situation and analyzing it objectively. Second, by seeing how we allowed ourselves to drift into the situation. Third, by realizing that we are responsible for it and that we can change it if we choose. Fourth, by forming a clear image, a mental picture, of the kind of environment we desire. Fifth, by seizing every opportunity that offers itself; using prayer, receptivity to guidance and constant effort. We shall not find that all difficulties vanish as soon as we have made a resolution. It is

not making a resolution that accomplishes a change —it is seeing a resolution through. We may not realize the circumstances we desire for a long time. In any case we shall not realize them until we have worked for them and earned them.

Nevertheless we *can* change. We are the makers of our own environment. The environment in which we are placed at present is our own achievement. It is the environment we have created or passively accepted; and we are as much responsible for what we accept as for what we set ourselves out to gain. Is it not better to be creative and earn the environment we desire, than to be passive and complain of the environment we have incurred?

14

A very remarkable example of this important truth—that we can make our own environment—was once brought to my attention while traveling in Europe. In a Munich pension at which I sojourned, the hostess, a sensitive, cultured woman of fallen fortunes, bewailed to me the unhappiness caused her by having to carry on not only her work but her daily living in the midst of a querulous and inharmonious human environment. I told her she could make her own environment. But she did not see how it could be done, in her circumstances.

Within a month after that time I found myself in London, in a pension also presided over by a woman of culture. But this lady knew how to build up a

human environment to her own taste, even while under the necessity of running a boarding-house. For she admitted as guests only individuals recommended for their creative ability in some form of the arts, or for their cultural tastes.

She had a most loyal coterie of young musicians and writers, already attracting international fame, who would never stop anywhere else during their London season. Here, for instance, I met John Powell, Daisy Kennedy, Warrington Dawson, and other gifted people.

Always our hostess was being invited by these artists to their concerts or plays—in fact so many complimentary tickets were showered upon her that she was able to share this free enjoyment of the arts with her non-professional guests.

The lives of these two women have always stood out in my mind ever since as a striking demonstration of how differently the same situation could be handled. In one case circumstance was the master, and a tyrannical one at that, so it seemed to our poor German hausfrau of the fallen gentility. But in the other case circumstance *was mastered,* and made to serve both the happiness and cultural tastes of the individual. This is how life ought to be lived. The soul of man should be the ruler, not the slave, of the world-about-us.

There is an even deeper truth about environment which is hard for the average person to understand: that is, environment is only one of the many forms of expression of the Self. The environment we are

at the present moment moving in and building up for ourselves should, if unsatisfactory, make us pause and examine ourselves with the closest scrutiny. To aggressive and erratic people the whole world will seem out of tune. People of hellish dispositions will always find their environment hellish. Harmonious people, on the other hand, will find themselves living in a fairly harmonious atmosphere and environment. Improvement of the Self will unfailingly bring improvement of the environment. Every heaven must be earned.

"Great thoughts, great feelings, came to him like instincts, unawares."
—Lord Houghton.

The genius, more than other people, asserts his independence of time and place. He is susceptible, as we all are, to the influence of the environment—perhaps even more susceptible. Therefore he chooses his own environment. Often he is a roamer, passing over land and sea in his search for a congenial habitat. He makes his own friends and he gathers around him those who will conduce to his development, his expressiveness, and his achievement. Every man would make his own life far richer and more

expressive if, in the same way, he paid attention to his natural inclinations and tastes in forming his environment, and consciously avoided inharmonious surroundings. Foolish people—and so many of us are foolish!—sink helplessly into the environment into which chance and their own lack of creativeness have brought them. They are submerged in it, and they cannot even imagine that they can control their own circumstances. They curse fate for their own mistakes. But change is always possible. You can begin at any time; you can begin now. Insuperable difficulties seem to stand in the way—they are all phantasms, the shadows of past thoughts and past despairs. If you feel yourself to be in an environment which is displeasing or inharmonious, you can build up an environment of your own choosing. Nothing can hinder you except the lack of clear thinking and of courage to act.

CHAPTER 6

The Need of Solitude and Meditation

IN the United States Bureau of Standards there is one of the world's greatest experts on glass. When he is given a problem to work out, he must be left entirely to himself. He makes no report of his progress and is held to no schedule. If he were tied down to the ordinary demands of the workaday world he would throw up his job and the problem would never get solved. Important scientific discoveries might then be lost to the world.

We can see here the value of solitude. Every man of genius, from time to time, must escape from the turmoil of the crowd, the choppy sea of human vibrations which surround him. Solitude is essential for all deep meditation. In solitude man finds his true self again; he is able to set his compass free from the magnetism which has influenced and deflected it.

There are some who feel more keenly than others the need of solitude. Some even try to isolate themselves from all contact. This is abnormal; our fellowmen are necessary to the development of ourselves. But if we give ourselves out to others, a time comes when we must withdraw and gather in our powers again. We must re-create our individuality. If we

are too long in the crowd we lose our way. Then we must climb to a mountain top and remap our course.

Many busy people find in the enforced isolation of travel by train a refreshing period of freedom from all the obligations of human contact. They can read, dream, look out of the window at the passing scenery. For the time being they are spectators, not participators. There is much repose and enjoyment to be gained from this momentary withdrawal from the stream of life.

2

It is in moments of solitude that the creative force wells up within us. It was in such sacred moments that the psalms were inspired; that Walt Whitman conceived his *Leaves of Grass;* that William Blake wrote his strange mystical poems. It was as he walked in solitude over the mountains of the lake district that Wordsworth composed his poetry, reciting it to himself with none to hear. Thoreau preferred solitude to the turmoil of the town, and his whole contribution to society came from his desire to retire from the world of men and commune with nature. It is in solitude that we strengthen the foundations of our being and learn once more to live from the world within instead of being captive to the world without. Even Christ felt the need to retire from the crowds and renew his creative strength by quiet and prayerful communion with the Over-Soul.

The poetry of Robert Frost is refreshing because it is conceived in moments of rapt solitude in the presence of nature. In the countryside and alone we can find the best of all companions—the fields, the sky, the clouds, the sunsets and the stars. We can find a thousand things to interest and delight us, and there is nothing to distract us and sap our concentration. We are alone, but never lonely.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau could compose only in the country. The artificial life of the city disturbed and distracted him. But in the midst of nature he was in ecstasy, and his ideas poured out upon paper with both clarity and eloquence. Of his sojourn in the country he once wrote, "I had longed for the open country. Now I had it. I was free as air. I rose with the sun, and I rejoiced. I went out into the open, and I rejoiced. I wandered in the woods and over the slopes. I strayed in the dells. I read and idled. I worked in the garden and gathered fruits."—But the best fruits he gathered from this solitary contemplation of nature were multitudinous ideas which later were to set the world on fire.

The great English novelists have always known the benefit of retiring from the world for a great part of the year. Thomas Hardy, even when he was at the height of his fame, lived a retired life in the country. In his later years Joseph Conrad lived secluded on the coast of Cornwall, and it was very difficult for visitors to gain access to him. Hugh Walpole spends eight months of every year in rustic surroundings, and the secret of his locality is no

known to the general public. It is there that he does his writing; the remaining months he is free to devote to social life in London.

Captain Fred McLaughlin of Washington, an author who did not start to write until after he was forty-five years old and then gained success by his historical romances, is one of the fervent admirers of solitude. "To write," he advises, "stay away from people. Alone, one can live mentally in a much bigger world; one can be everywhere and do almost anything. I live the life of my characters."

3

For all intensive work it is obvious that freedom from distraction and interruption is a first requisite. The scientist must contrive to obtain many hours of constant solitude. Without solitude he would never be able to concentrate all his faculties on his theories and experiments.

Noguchi managed to create solitude for himself even in the midst of people. His friends might be around him conversing, but he would go on with his reading or writing and pay them no attention. Often he was not even aware of what was going on. Best of all, he loved to be alone in his laboratory.

At the height of his fame, a dinner was given in honor of Noguchi. He could not well decline; but let us see how he met the situation. "He arrives, is very lovable, when anyone speaks to him smiles and

answers, nevertheless shows clearly he is nervous, so soon as the food is in him apologizes charmingly, but has risen before he apologizes, has pushed his chair forward under the table, says that now he feels he must go back to his work and goes." [1]

Business men whose work calls for creative thinking arrange their offices so that they can be alone whenever the mood seizes them or necessity demands. Here in the inner sanctum there is no suggestion of office routine—no typewriters, no files, no clerks. There is only beauty, spaciousness and quiet. Solitude in such an environment brings them quickly to the solution of vital problems.

Statesmen, whose lives are surrounded and hemmed in by other human beings, break through all barriers at times and withdraw to solitude. This was the practice of our greatest presidents. Washington retired from his fellows and devoted hours to solitary prayer. Lincoln, both before and during his presidency, often sought solitude and divine guidance. Roosevelt could sometimes be seen dashing from the White House in the early morning hours and setting out for a country walk at a pace which left his guards far behind him. In the critical period before and during our participation in the World War, Wilson would retire to his chamber and spend two or three hours there, reading and meditating.

[1] *Noguchi,* by Gustav Eckstein, Harper & Bros., New York, 1931

4

The granddaughter of Thomas Jefferson describes in one of her letters the constant procession of visitors that came to Monticello. "They came of all nations, at all times, and paid longer or shorter visits. . . . We had persons from abroad, from all the states of the Union, from every part of the state—men, women and children. In short, almost every day for at least eight months of the year brought its contingent of guests. People of wealth, fashion, men in office, professional men, military and civil, lawyers, doctors, foreign ministers, Protestant clergymen, Catholic priests, members of Congress, missionaries, Indian Agents, tourists, travelers, artists, strangers, friends. Some came from affection and respect, some from curiosity, some to give or receive advice or instruction, some from idleness, some because others set the example."

It is not strange that Jefferson built for himself a home hidden in the wilds of Virginia and retired there from time to time to escape this stream of intruders. At Poplar Forest, as he called it, he could be himself again; he could recover from the drag and drain on his energies that those unthinking multitudes had caused him.

When a man is famous, it is often necessary for him to guard against interruption at any cost—even at the cost of breaking the ordinary amenities of politeness. It is reported that Tennyson, caught for the night in a country inn, responded to the eager

overtures of a fellow guest by a series of grunts. Woodrow Wilson, when he was playing a solitary round at his golf links, paid not the slightest attention to the friendly greetings of those who met him.

For those of us who are free from the clamor of fame there will rarely be need for such measures—we can learn to preserve our privacy when we desire to keep it by gentler means and with good will to everyone. But all of us suffer too much obstruction from trivial social demands; and we should have the courage to refuse engagements or intercourse when we can occupy ourselves better in solitude. For solitude is not only a refuge from distraction—it has its own positive value.

5

Oriental peoples know very well the value of giving a part of every day to silent meditation. The artists of Japan or China will often spend the first two hours of the day in tranquilizing their spirits, sitting in motionless relaxation. At his Bolpur school Rabindranath Tagore has trained the young students to begin the morning with meditation; and he himself is in the habit of giving two or three hours a day to retirement for this purpose. Religious disciplines have always recognized the importance of the "retreat" and of the "habit of recall," as the Catholic mystics called it.

Nothing can keep Mahatma Gandhi from his periods of prayer at four in the morning and half

past seven in the evening. Sherwood Eddy tells of his amazement when he saw Gandhi, at a moment of tense climax, leave the platform of the Lahore Congress to carry out his devotions. "One evening his enemy had risen to speak, ostensibly to flatter him but in reality endeavoring to win the majority from allegiance to Gandhi. The latter was to reply, and then the vote was to be taken. At half past seven, while his enemy was still speaking, came his hour for worship. We saw him slip quietly off the back of the platform, and followed him across to his tent for his unfailing hour of prayer. We tried to recall any other politician in the world to-day, say for instance in our American Senate, or any other statesman in history, who at the crisis of the debate would count prayer a really more dynamic, a more practical and efficacious way of working than taking part in that debate. But we could think of none." [1]

In speaking to the Society of Friends at St. Martin's Lane, London, Abdu'l Baha gave a beautiful and clear exposition of the value of meditation. "The sign of intellect," he said, "is contemplation, and the sign of contemplation is silence, because it is impossible for a man to do two things at once—he cannot both speak and meditate. While you meditate you are speaking with your own spirit. In that state of mind, you put certain questions to your spirit and the spirit answers: the light breaks forth and reality is revealed.

[1] *The Challenge of the East*, by Sherwood Eddy, Farrar & Rinehart, New York, 1931.

"You cannot apply the name 'man' to any being devoid of this faculty of meditation; without it man is a mere brute.

"The spirit of man is itself informed and strengthened during meditation. Through it affairs of which man knew nothing are unfolded before his view. Through it he receives divine inspiration. Meditation is the key for opening the doors of mysteries. In that state man abstracts himself; in that state man withdraws himself from all outside objects; in that subjective condition he is immersed in the ocean of spiritual life and can unfold the secrets of things in themselves.

"This faculty of meditation brings forth the sciences and arts from the invisible plane. Through the meditative faculty inventions are made possible, colossal undertakings are carried out. Through it governments can run smoothly."

6

The need for privacy is recognized in the modern advocacy of separate rooms for husband and wife. More harmony can exist in the hours spent together if the individuals of any social group can secure undisturbed solitude whenever they wish. And just as it is important for adults to be able to be alone, so, too, it is important for children. Wherever it is possible each child should have its own little den, never to be invaded except by the child's permission. Here the child can play by itself or study; the walls can be

decorated at its own pleasure, with no fear of reproof for early exercises in self-expression. Children often need to escape from the dominating influence and all-too-frequent interference of adults.

When we are in the company of other human beings, even if they are silent their personalities are all the time impinging on us. Which one of us has not been conscious, suddenly, that someone else is present, though we have not heard or seen anyone? This play of personalities is like the air we breathe, as omnipresent, as capable of stuffiness or invigoration. We have already mentioned how necessary it is for us to control our human contacts; but there are times when it is necessary for us to exclude them altogether, to recall our faculties and rebuild our separate and unique natures.

"The potency of invisible, inaudible and intangible things is perhaps nowhere more generally realized and acknowledged than in regard to what is termed atmosphere. Alike from an individual and from a group, a fluidic something seems to emanate, volatile and elusive, yet often definite in its effects. At one time provocative of action, at another of thought, at another inhibiting all but feeling and emotion—a strongly charged atmosphere may be as dangerous or as helpful as the higher voltages of electricity it seems to resemble." [1]

[1] "Atmospheres," by Dora Hecht, *World Theosophy*, May, 1931.

"Solitude sometimes is best society."
—Milton.

Urban and semi-urban life may have taken away from us a great privilege and source of strength—the freedom to be alone with our thoughts. The races which are accustomed to solitude—the American Indian, the Bedouin Arab, the primitive mountaineer—draw from the wide spaces, the wildernesses and the mountains a certain nobility and self-sufficiency. Town-dwellers, in comparison, seem occupied with trivialities. The man of genius feels keenly the need for solitude and takes what steps he can to secure it. From time to time he withdraws from social contacts to concentrate on his work or to refresh himself in the presence of nature. So David, greatest of poets, sang, "I will look unto the hills whence cometh my strength." So the modern poet or artist spends hours or days in the quiet beauty of the countryside. The businessman, the professional man and the statesman feel equally at times the craving for retirement. When the healing powers of nature are not available for you, then make a sanctum for yourself, some room where you can meditate in private and commune with your own spirit and with God. In such sacred hours life becomes clarified and ennobled.

CHAPTER 7

Spontaneity

ORIGINALITY and spontaneity come from the same sources; they are the unrestricted outflow of a sincere spirit. All creators have shown this "fine excess," this impulsive enjoyment of life, this free and fearless expressiveness. Charles Dickens was at his happiest when he was playing with his children or keeping his friends in roars of laughter with absurd charades and fantastic stories. And one of the few fragments of personal knowledge that have survived shows us that Shakespeare, too, had an irrepressible flow of "natural spirits." *"Olim sufflaminandus erat,"* says the severe Ben Jonson: "Sometimes he might well have been damped down a little."

Why are men of genius able to preserve their spontaneity? It is because they are not working against the grain. They are not under duress to satisfy others in their work. They have never let themselves be cowed into subordination to an institutional machine. They are not standardized. They have the courage to be themselves.

So we see them, wearing the clothes they choose for themselves, conducting themselves in accordance with their own ideals, disregarding the conventions

of society which to them seem senseless. Sometimes they carry this tendency to eccentricity; but in general it is the insistence of a strong personality upon living his life on his own terms. It is only with imitators and the would-be-great that we find this freedom degenerating to affectation; for there can be no affectation except amongst people who are deeply influenced by the conventions and afraid of them.

Society should not demand from the individual a conformity which is repressive and which leads to artificiality. The true purpose of society is to be an aid and enrichment to the individuals who compose it, not to hedge them round with obstacles and restrictions. It should enlarge the lives of its members, not diminish them. It should not enslave the individual, but set him free.

How can society be reformed and brought nearer to its true purpose? How else but by the efforts of each individual to assert his rights in the face of social pressure! If all of us exercised, in a justifiable degree, with no infringement on the rights of others, our native freedom to be fully ourselves, society would soon become more wholesome. Creative living stimulates creation in others; it is contagious; it refines and vivifies the whole atmosphere. And, after all, society is no monster, no demi-god; it is nothing else than our crystallized habits of living together, and it reflects our own desires, our own psychology.

2

"He who desires but acts not," says Blake, "breeds pestilence." The man of genius finds the appropriate action for his desires, and the result is not disorder but harmony. The man whose desires are disorderly and conflict with his own well-being is always the man who has penned them up and allowed them no normal outlet. It is by spontaneity that we gain equilibrium.

This balanced nature can often be found in people much less gifted than the genius. The mechanic, the farmer, the fisherman, the Indian guide—such men are apt to be naïve, simple and expressive. Even in their speech we hear an unusual richness of character, a forthrightness and genuineness of thought. Shrewdness and wisdom radiate from them. They are true to their own natures.

The primitive and the peasant are spontaneous. In consequence they are far more creative than the middle class dweller in our modern cities. Abundant evidence of their creative interest lies in their beautiful handicrafts, their ballads and folk-songs, their astonishing ability to express themselves in dance and ritual.

They love their work because they feel it to be an expression of themselves. A traveler amongst the black tribes of Australia, supposedly the most degenerated of all races, was much interested in their crafts. He wished to make a collection of their work in all stages of execution. But nothing would persuade

these aborigines to let him have any object until they had finished it and brought it as near perfection as they could. He offered them far more for the unfinished work, but they were obdurate. Once they had satisfied themselves that they had done their best they were very generous; they would cheerfully part with an ax head that had cost them days of labor.[1]

3

The average person is far too terrified of the opinions of others. He is so afraid of risking disapproval that he must always be referring his conduct to a standard outside of his own nature—"What would the neighbors say?" Of course he cannot be spontaneous in these circumstances; nobody could. When an impulse comes to him he has to deny it an outlet until he has looked it over and decided that it is perfectly safe. It is through this habit of delaying action that his whole personality becomes mediocre. Perhaps he succeeds in being thoroughly unobjectionable—it is not always so, for nobody really likes a self-conscious person—but even if he is "safe," he is colorless.

The man of creative power, on the other hand, takes the shortest road to his goal. His own aims are built into his character. They are natural to him. He does not have to keep referring his promptings to an external standard. In consequence, nothing intervenes between his desires and his actions.

[1] *Wanderings in Wild Australia,* by Sir Baldwin Spencer, Macmillan, New York, 1929.

When Garibaldi tells how he met his wife, he gives us an excellent example of the directness and fearlessness of genius. "I had never dreamt of marriage," he remarks, "and had always regarded myself as quite unsuited to be a husband." All his greatest friends had died, one by one, and he was feeling the depths of loneliness. "I wanted someone who would love me, and that immediately." No man was ever quicker than Garibaldi to transfer a thought into an action. "From my cabin in the Itaparika I turned my eyes landwards—from my place on board I could see some pretty young girls occupied in domestic work. One of these attracted my attention above the rest. There was nothing for it but to go ashore and I immediately directed my steps towards the house on which my gaze had been so long fixed. A man invited me to come in. I would have entered even though he had forbidden me. I saw the young girl and said to her, 'Maiden, thou shalt be mine.' By these words I had created a bond which death alone could break." [1]

4

Consistency can be a virtue and consistency can be a vice. The man who can never change his mind is keeping his spontaneity in fetters. To quote Blake again, he "is like standing water, and breeds reptiles

[1] *Memoirs of Garibaldi,* edited by Alexander Dumas, Ernest Benn, London.

of the mind." A man who was proud of not changing would in reality be saying, "I have never made a mistake. I have never grown. My development is finished, and I am perfect already."

What we are to-day, we may not desire to be to-morrow. For then we may see new prospects before us. Life is always moving, and we should move with it. We always have new wants, we always feel within ourselves new stirrings, new powers awaiting expression. Let us have courage to change as our desires change, and to refuse to be forced into a mold.

Society, it is true, is bent upon forcing us to reproduce continually the self which it has become accustomed to know. There is a tremendous force of individual and social momentum trying to fix us into a single position, trying to rank us and number us and keep us in our place. But our real self is Protean, ever changing in its modes of expression. It is death to the Self if we crystallize it into a hard-and-fast pattern.

The creator has no fear of the criticism of the world. If he sees an advancement coming through a change on his part he makes the change. If new urgings rise within him, he gives them expression. He is not tied to his past, for his eyes are set on the present and future.

Not many people know that Professor Fretwell, of Teachers College of Columbia University, was once a successful opera singer, a career for which he had abandoned high school teaching. "Why did you

give up the opera," I once asked him, "if you were successful in it?" His answer was: "Because I looked ahead and saw that my career would probably not advance any further in this direction. So I decided to prepare for a career in higher education, where one's professional life is more apt to advance with the years, instead of diminish." So, taking his savings, he devoted several years to earning his doctorate, and to-day leads a very satisfying career in which teaching is combined with a relic of the old vocal profession in the form of public lecturing.

5

Our lives would probably be richer and fuller if we had been fortunate enough to experience the kind of education which is now given to children in progressive schools. They are encouraged to express their own individuality, to have no fear of being thought "different." As a result they are creative and happy.

In the lives of men of genius we generally find that in some way or other they received the benefit of this kind of education. A mother stood by them, perhaps, and encouraged them to express their own uniqueness, defended them against criticism and protected them from the social restraint and repression which tends to flow in around every human being and stifle his self-expression. The more original the genius of a human being has been, it seems, the more eccentric and unusual has been his behavior even

from childhood. Without the love and fostering care of an understanding parent or friend, many men of genius might have been prevented from the fruition of their gifts.

Angelo Patri, wise and understanding friend of youth, once found his progressive educational ideas taxed to the utmost in the request of a boy, who varied greatly from the masculine type, to take sewing instead of shop work. "But the boys will make life miserable for you." "I don't care," was the boy's reply. With a sigh the perplexed educator decided to go the limit in the principle of "freedom for self-expression." "Very well," he agreed, "you may take sewing." As Patri foresaw, at the end of school on the first sewing day, a procession of persecutors followed the seamster to his house. This boy of strange tastes defied them, however, and when he reached the safety of his doorway he turned upon them and cried out, "I don't care what you do or say, I'm going to do what I want to do." To-day that boy, grown man, is a famous designer of women's hats and clothes. But he might have missed his vocation altogether if he had not been rarely fortunate, as a boy, in falling into the hands of one of the world's most gifted and intuitive educators.

Childhood and youth are the times most typical of spontaneity and quick, eager enthusiasm. It is a crime to do anything to hinder the growth of spontaneity and sincerity at these periods. Indeed, it is well for our world that the young preserve as much

as they do their daring, their enthusiasm and their aggressive self-expression. Otherwise progress and reform would never be achieved.

Youth leaps instinctively forward towards the new and the untried. The Self within ventures forth into the universe, not heedful as yet of those constraints which society will later put upon it; not yet wary of defeat and frustration. In this period of tremendous self-assertion, of adventure, of the thrill of finding oneself, are born new and potent ideals which fructify later in life as achievement making for human progress.

Much of this self-expression of youth is selfish, egotistic and disturbing. Often it is dangerous to the individual. Yet it is the way of life. And there is always something fine in this *élan,* something admirable and pleasant to see. In later years ameliorating forces will bring more grace and composure into the expression of life; there will be more social adaptation and more social ease. We must beware, however, as we grow to maturity and take on ourselves the obligations of life, that we do not yield too supinely to those demands. We must find a way to harmonize ourselves with society; but we must do it without sacrificing the independence, the courage and the fire of youth.

6

Nothing will help us more than the habit of honesty—honesty with ourselves and honesty with

others. And honesty begins in the courage to form and to admit our own opinions and tastes. The effect of this is cumulative. If we are bold with ourselves in confessing our likes and dislikes, we shall grow bold in our convictions and beliefs. Our sincerity in small things will continually increase our insight and we shall be infinitely more able to see the world as it is. So many people obscure the world for themselves, befog themselves and muddle themselves, by the perpetual fear of appearing wrong.

These daily honest judgments, even of simple and unimportant things, begin to flow like innumerable brooklets into one vast stream. They make a reservoir of truth and conviction so deep, so mighty, that at last it must burst its barriers and rush out to sweep away artificial structures and to purify the world.

So Martin Luther, revolting gradually from the insincerities of the church, seeing them more honestly and acutely all the time, at last was seized with the fervor of illumination. Fearless of criticism, he set his beliefs against the lazy and static opinions of the world. "On this truth I stand!" he cried. "God help me, I can do no other!"

Yes, this is the career of those who deal daily with truth. They become so accustomed to honest judgment that in time the falseness of the world stifles them. They can no longer bear it. They must stand upon the housetops and bear witness to the truth that is in them.

So happen all great reforms. So Abraham Lincoln, pondering for years on the problems of slavery, came at last to the clear conviction that no country could remain half slave and half free. No other man, among thousands of statesmen and political thinkers, saw this truth as nakedly as he saw it. Through the depth of his conviction, through the moving power of his sincerity and the simple lucidity of his utterance, it became the vision and guiding star of the new-formed Republican Party. Raised to the plane of action, this truth broke the shackles from the hands of slaves and made our country altogether free.

7

Honest men are apt to be troublesome. When they see a civilization built upon cruelty or exploitation, they cry out upon it; they do not let us rest. They are rebels, reformers, forerunners and achievers of new and better civilizations. Without these men who look with honest eyes and tell what they see without fear, there would be no progress in human affairs; the world would consist of oppressors and cowards.

How essential this honesty is to every nation! If we begin our lives by acquiescence in the opinions of others, by passive acceptance of the folk-modes in which we are placed; if we hesitate to think life out for ourselves and declare courageously what we have thought; if we capitulate daily to the voice of the crowd,—then at moments of crisis, in individual

and in national affairs, we shall fail ourselves and we shall fail our fellows. We shall have formed the habit of idle conformity. We shall have become automatons, moved by the crudest "public opinion" in our thoughts and actions. But it is that "public opinion" which we ourselves, by virtue of our precious gift of individuality, should be helping to influence, mold and create.

Happy the nation whose children have been brought up in freedom and independence! Happy the society which is a collaboration of honest and courageous minds! Such a nation, such a society, will not fail at moments of crisis, for each member of it will be able to bear his own part in the common task.

8

When Christ bade his disciples pluck wheat on the Sabbath and eat it; when he told the paralytic on the Sabbath to take up his bed and walk; when he dined with publicans and sinners, he ran counter to all contemporary notions of religion and good manners. Those who saw him were shocked. It was not because his actions were intrinsically wrong that they were shocked. No, they were shocked simply because a body of dogmatic tradition was so ingrained in them that they could not easily think for themselves.

All who bring a new message or a new hope to humanity have a great difficulty in their way: it is the obstacle of human inertia. People do not want

to have their eyes opened. They do not want to be awakened to new truths. They are offended by any assertion of clearer sight or higher inspiration than their own—their egotism is touched. The group mind has always stoned prophets; perhaps it always will.

Of all individuals on this planet, those are the most heroic who testify unflinchingly to the truth. It is they who lead the most courageous lives, for they dare more than any others to oppose themselves to an enraged public opinion. In the end it is they who bring most benefit to their fellows, for they bear the brunt of the fight against evil conditions, and they make life easier for those who come after them.

9

The man who, with tact and harmony of soul, ventures, in his own degree, to be true to himself in whatever environment he is placed—this is the courageous and the successful man. He is successful because straightforwardness and spontaneity never fail in the end to win appreciation and esteem. He may meet with opposition, but the enduring forces are on his side.

There is no compromise possible here. Either we are growing daily in sincerity, honesty and courage, discovering more of our inner nature and listening more whole-heartedly to the voice within us . . . or we are becoming more cowardly, more insincere, more sophisticated, more standardized.

Mediocre people are always trying, in their conversation, in their behavior, to reproduce some pattern foreign to themselves. They live under the strain of perpetually propitiating "public opinion." Once we try to please this monster we are done for. It is insatiable. It demands the sacrifice of all our energies, all our uniqueness, all our distinct and separate value.

The great-souled know how to manage this monster. They know it as a bully and a coward. They ignore it. They laugh at it. They even openly affront it. In consequence, it fawns upon them and follows at their feet.

Even those who try to be "different" are bound hand and foot to public opinion. They are acting, just as much as others, with the thought in their minds of the impression they are making on other people. And one can see with half an eye that those who try to be "different" are the most imitative, the least spontaneous, of all. It is no use trying to be "different"; we must be ourselves. We must be ourselves without trying. Is it so very difficult to follow our natural inclinations, our own true judgments? In reality it is much more difficult to do as most people do—to make efforts to be someone else.

The man who is simply and courageously himself is always sure, in the end, of being liked. Why is this? It is because we all feel a respect for sincerity. Everyone instinctively admires a thoroughly direct and honest person. In his presence the constrained feel at ease and artificial people become simple and

real; to abandon their pretenses. They feel that they need no longer put on airs nor they need no longer strive to impress. Because of his courage, others also become courageous and dare to be themselves.

"Genius can only breathe freely in an atmosphere of freedom."

—J. S. Mill.

The man of genius is not afraid of ridicule; he is not afraid of the criticism of the crowd. He dares to be himself. He is spontaneous, and because of his spontaneity he is equal-minded and full of natural spirits. His impulses do not turn sour on him; he allows them free and harmonious play. Too many people, through fear of self-expression, are always occupied with thinking, "What impression do I make on others?" The more they curb their self-expression, the more anxious they are for the approval of others. They wish to *seem,* not to *be.* If you cannot be simply, straightforwardly, naturally yourself, admitting your own likes and dislikes, holding to your own convictions and beliefs, you will never succeed in being anything at all. You will not even impress others; for the world always, in the end, respects courage and sincerity, and despises those who are afraid of its judgment.

CHAPTER 8

Genius Is Childlike

IS it because genius is ever expressive that it remains ever youthful? A creator keeps the heart of a child and he is not afraid to display this childlikeness before others. He knows that the soul need never grow old. Life never loses for him its element of play; and this play is art itself. It is not by accident that we call even the greatest of dramas "plays"; they spring from the same roots as the phantasies of childhood; they are make-believe; even a tragedy is a creation made for the joy of creation.

"In every real man," said Nietzsche, "there is a child hidden—it wants to come out and play." Too many people forget this child. They take everything with melancholy or boredom; the universe is somber to them and they are self-important to themselves. Life is responsibility, they think; life is economic struggle; life is a series of difficult problems, and they are perpetually facing an examination. But life is also opportunity; it is also enjoyment, freedom to move, freedom to create and to delight in creation. God is not only a judge; he is also an artist and a creator.

When people cease to be expressive they are growing old. Some begin to do this at twenty-five, and at forty they are already old men. They move with staidness and assumed dignity. They measure every act. A mask of dullness and rigidity covers their faces and they are not even capable of a care-free smile. Their only way to *unbend,* perhaps, is by means of alcohol; and even in their hilarity there is tension. At fifty they are through. Their life has been led. The future years hold nothing for them; they are content to pass the time in moderate health and moderate complacency till they reach the biblical limit of three score years and ten; and they die without having released their spirits, played, enjoyed themselves, given expression to the child within them.

The trouble with these people is that they begin to die from the top down in early life. They are the victims of a psychological necrosis, and their epitaph should be, "Here lies a man who was never a complete man. Half-dead all his life, he is now wholly dead."

The creative man never begins to die at the top. His body may age, but not so easily his mind. He may become lame, he may become paralyzed, but the flame is ever burning at the sacred threshold. Till his dying day he is young, he is growing, his development is unfinished; and when we see the brightness of his spirit we cannot conceive that it will fade and tarnish with his death.

How well I remember a visit to Auguste Forel, the world's greatest authority on ants, at his modest

home in Yvonne, Switzerland. He was then seventy-six years old and a stroke had left him a paralytic. He spoke and wrote with difficulty; yet he was still creative, he still carried on his research and continued his achievements in scholarship. The energy of his genius still manifested itself through the crippled medium of his body and nervous system; the vigor of his mind was unimpaired; and his influence reached out over all Europe. He kept up his mental activity undiminished until his death at the age of eighty-three.

2

No man should leave his youth behind him; and one of the best ways to continue our youth is to associate with young people. In the normal life this recreation of ourselves comes about naturally, through marriage and the raising of a family. Our childhood is renewed in our children; we share in their growth, we live through their development. When the children have grown up and left the home we are again lonely without them; but our life is again renewed with our grandchildren. We need only watch a grandparent around whom little children are at play to realize what a joy age finds in the recurrent cycle of youth.

Men of genius have almost always understood this need of comradeship with the young and have found in it one of the sources of their spontaneity and power. There is something in the sight of a youth beginning the climb of life that stirs all our

sympathy and generosity. How many artists have given themselves ungrudgingly to help and encourage the younger generation; have put at their service all their experience and skill and been rewarded by the contagion of their hope and enthusiasm. The man is unfortunate indeed who has never been thrilled by the striving of his children to make their own place in life or by that of protégés whom he is aiding with counsel, with friendship, and perhaps with material encouragement.

He who does not love and understand the young is already senile. He is no longer himself a part of the ever-living, ever-developing process of humanity. The man who can retain his contact with the young is himself ageless.

3

Even the body does not necessarily grow decrepit because its prime has passed. Many people face old age as if it were a period of disability and sickness; but if too great a strain has not been put upon the organism by sensuality and self-indulgence—or by overwork and lack of common sense—the physical life can still be active and exuberant in old age.

Professor Fay of Tufts College took up mountaineering after he was fifty years old. In appearance he was slight and frail, but he soon became known as one of the most energetic and intrepid members of the Appalachian Club. Every summer till his death at eighty-four he climbed the peaks of the White Mountains, and he cut many trails to aid

climbers who were younger than himself. He was the first to scale one of the Rocky Mountains, and now it bears his name in commemoration of the feat. The summer before his death he climbed Mount Chicoroa in company with a group of young people, and if anyone lagged behind or needed help it was not he.

Cornelius Vanderbilt, at the age of seventy, entirely abandoned the steamship business, in which he had made a fortune, for railroads, because he had become convinced that greater opportunities lay in this direction. In this new field he was destined to startle the country with his unprecedented operations, and to achieve even more significantly in the fields of transportation and finance than he had ever done before.

Perhaps I have had unusual opportunities for seeing how much of vigor and robustness can survive into old age. My own father I remember as indefatigable at the age of seventy. I never knew him to complain of fatigue or to look fatigued. In the summer he rose at dawn and worked for two or three hours in the garden before leaving for his studio in town. He disdained the use of the elevator there and preferred to run up and down the three flights of stairs that led to the studio. He swam, he tramped, he climbed mountains with me. We spent two weeks camping out on Mount Desert Island and he enjoyed the outing with all the enthusiasm of youth. His legs were short, and whenever we had to make speed on our tramps he kept up with my longer strides by trotting for a mile at a time. His playfulness and his

creative power continued to the very end; and, as I shall mention later on, if he had died at the age of eighty he would have missed the greatest joy and triumph of his life.

Titian went on with his creative work till the age of ninety-nine, and then died suddenly of the plague. Sarah Bernhardt acted with the same fire and passion throughout her long career. Pavlova performed her miracles of grace and beauty to her dying day. But why multiply examples? This is the typical life of a genius: he may die but he never grows old.

4

A comparison of the portraits of Bernard Shaw at forty-five and at seventy-five is amazing. He has grown younger. In these two and a half decades he has gained immensely in vitality and power. All of his work that the world most admires has come from his fruitful brain since the age of forty-five, and today he is the very model of a young and creative being.

We could well gather hints from his life. All the forces of his body have been focused on achievement, not wasted in self-indulgence. He has lived temperately but also courageously. He has not been staid and sober in a puritanic sense, but he has directed his own abilities and used them to the utmost. And with it all he has remained a child—even an *enfant terrible.*

It is the brain-worker who stands most chance of

remaining youthful in his old age. With physical types, when their strength of body begins to diminish they feel only too often that there is nothing left for them but a gradual deterioration. After the half century they begin to decline. But the man who exercises his mind can keep it as sharp and bright after fifty as it was in his youth. Indeed his experience of life has added to his insight and to the stores of his wisdom.

Experiments have proved that the expectation of most people that age will bring a gradual stiffening of mind is entirely unbased. A man at fifty can learn a new subject as easily as a boy at fifteen; and indeed he can learn it far more quickly and thoroughly than a boy who is not interested in learning. He can master a new language in three months, while a boy, brought up by old-fashioned educational means, would be ignorant of it after it had been daily drilled into his head for three years. If he has never learned mathematics he can progress as rapidly then as at any time of his life. Mentally he is always at the beginning of his life.

What a sad commentary it is on the discouragement of human beings that for so long the superstition has remained that mental progress is only possible in youth. It has been left to science to disprove this superstition, when any man might have found out its falsity by his own efforts. We see in the lives of genius that they were always aware of this immortal truth; they never thought that their minds were less active and limber, less capable of exploration and new ventures, as their bodies grew older. They remained children, with the infinite potentialities of children.

"Youth is unselfish in its thoughts and feelings. On that account it feels truth most deeply."

—Heine.

The chief difficulties of old age come from our attitude towards it. We often regard it as if it were a period of stagnation and decay of function. It is in fact as much a period of growth as any other period; and the cessation of physical growth does not mean that our creative powers diminish the tempo of their development. The man of genius retains his youth. He is childlike; he can still play. He loves children, and he finds himself a contemporary of the smallest child. If you remain expressive, you, too, will retain your youth, for expressiveness is the very essence of youth. Though you are constantly growing older, age cannot touch your spirit. It may tyrannize over your body; but the Self in you it can never reach, unless you allow it to gain a hold through the illusion that your real powers fail with the increasing years.

CHAPTER 9

Constant Self-improvement

GIFTED though he is, the genius is constantly trying to improve himself. The interior energies of the soul become the motive power for constant progress. An intense desire to advance, to excel, is seen in the lives of all creative people, even from childhood. The life of expression never comes to a halt; there is always more to do, more to learn, more skill to apply. A painter does not remain satisfied with one masterpiece; he leaves it behind him and tackles a new problem, with new ardor, with new desire to accomplish more than he has accomplished hitherto. If he ceases to progress, his days of creativeness are over for them; he repeats his old formulas and his work becomes mechanical.

This is the law of the creative life—"Stand still and you fall behind." It is easy enough to see why Creation calls for an ever-living interest, and to be interested we must have new aims and objects before us. So in the work of every creative artist such supreme artists, for example, as Goethe and Shakespeare—we can see a continuous development a continuous feeling for new problems, a continuous enrichment of mind. What a world of thought and

experience separates the early *Romeo and Juliet* from the later *Hamlet* or *King Lear*. The same hand is at work in them all; but with what differences of interest and preoccupation.

Professor Robinson, president of the College of the City of New York, has proposed that every man should learn a new hobby each year. He himself has followed this advice and found in it an enrichment of personality and a great aid to full and abundant living. In his belief there is nothing that men cannot accomplish if they give their will to the task. Some friends of his, dubious of his statement, challenged him to master the cello, an instrument difficult even for musicians of long training. Professor Robinson had never previously played any instrument; but after a summer vacation devoted to the study of music and to intensive practice he was able to convince his skeptical friends that his "gift for music" had merely lain dormant and that he could develop it successfully when he gave himself to the task.

2

Knowledge, wisdom, culture, are cumulative. The more one gets of them the more one craves them and the more effort one puts into further enrichment along these lines. The misfortune of ignorance and lack of culture is that they tend to perpetuate themselves: it is just as easy, however, for an individual who has started on the road to self-improvement to continue in it as it is for another man to stay where

he is. For inertia fortunately has a double quality; while it resists the tendency to get into motion, it also resists the tendency to stop once motion has begun.

Many instances can be brought from the lives of creative individuals to show their ability to make new achievements in entirely new fields. Elihu Vedder, after he was seventy years old, gave up his old medium of paint and took to writing poetry. To a group of us in Rome he delighted to read from his manuscripts, and it was one of the happiest moments of his life when these poems of his, illustrated by his own hand, were published.

Indeed, it is the most usual thing in the world to find the genius expressing himself in many fields of endeavor. We find Milton a great poet, a secretary of state under Cromwell, and a passionate admirer of music. We find Goethe combining poetry, science, philosophy, drama and fiction, and contributing to the world in every interest he pursued. William Blake was as notable for his drawing as for his lyrics. Benjamin Disraeli has his secure place both as a statesman and novelist, William Ewart Gladstone was a classical scholar of some eminence, as well as being a great public servant, Secretary Hay wrote poetry in his moments of leisure; and several still surviving buildings bear witness to the skill of Jefferson as an architect. Michael Angelo was both sculptor and painter. And Leonardo da Vinci, greatest of the Florentines, was engineer, scientist, inventor, poet, musician, painter, sculptor and philosopher.

3

The truth is that every individual has the faculty for creation wherever his will and his interest are engaged. Technique is the result of much practice under the stimulus of intense desire and inspiration. The lives of geniuses attest this fact. We can see them ceaselessly training themselves to be successful, ceaselessly interested in their chosen tasks. It is as true for a more average individual, and possibly the average individual will only fall short of the achievements of genius because he lacks the intensity of desire and purpose that heightens the efforts of the genius.

At least each one of us has ability enough to improve by exercise. Each one of us can enlarge the scope of our self-expression and enrich our lives by constantly reaching out into new fields of cultural activity. It is this spread of our interest that brings the world to life around us and makes it an exciting place to live in. A dead soul lives in a dead world.

It was an inspiration to me to notice in my father's life this constant enrichment, this versatility of expression. Painting was his profession; but he had also written books. He sang and he played musical instruments, and he could delight large audiences with his music. In later years he began to write poetry. The greatest proof of the unfailing vitality of the self, however, was that in his eightieth year

he achieved his greatest painting, a portrait head of Christ. He lectured with it from coast to coast as often as three times a day; and brought his lecturing, with the help of his manager, to a pitch of perfection that he had never attained before. To be willing at the age of eighty, after a life crowded with achievements and of no small renown, to take direction from his manager and adapt his oratory till he reached a point of singular mastery—this seemed to me then, and still seems to me now, one of the highest triumphs of his life.

4

The creative use that we make of our leisure hours is the true measure of the richness of our lives. Here we are free from necessity. We can express ourselves and embody our desires in action; we can accomplish things that we long to do but cannot do during the working day.

Whatever use we find for our leisure time, we should at least cultivate one or more enduring interests, one or more hobbies, to keep our lives stimulating and alert. Because we are free to choose, this should be our best time for creative work. We have only ourselves to blame if our leisure hours are dull and profitless. It is not lack of talent that keeps a man confined to a treadmill existence; it is sheer laziness and inertia.

It is to be noted that men who are achieving powerfully in their professional life are yet able to

turn with renewed energy to some hobby after the day's work is done. Often their hobbies are in great contrast to their profession; and it is perhaps more refreshing and invigorating when this is true. Many people with sedentary and intellectual pursuits find enjoyment in amateur gardening. Here they have an opportunity for combining physical exercise and esthetic pleasure. The planning of a flower garden, its planting and cultivation, the hours spent in the open air with the sun and the sky and the green beauty of nature around us—how reposeful it all is; how tranquilizing; how favorable to quiet thought and deep feeling. Well does Marvell describe such hours spent in a garden:

> "Annihilating all that's made
> To a green thought in a green shade."

Then to watch, as if by miracle, the shoots coming up where there was nothing but dead seed, to see the plants grow to full blossom and to fruition! Here is one of the eternal mysteries of the universe, here at our doorsteps. To wrestle with nature in her contrary moods—this is a conquest that injures no one and brings joy to the victor. Some day, perhaps, the frenzy of war will be subdued and sublimated into the gentle art of the gardener.

For contented domesticity it is almost a necessity that we should have some small plot of land that we can call our own, that we can plan for, that we can till and keep trim. In our suburbs the sense of neatness and beauty is spreading into the mass-conscious-

ness; and there is a new refreshment to the eyes as we pass through them. This is truly a creative development, a stimulus to the powers of the individual and an improvement of our common life; and it is an expression available to us all.

5

Since all of us have the desire, in our own way, to be artists and since everyday life gives to few of us the chance of pursuing art as a vocation, it is in our leisure hours that we can make our own opportunity. It is in this time that we may become—in the ardent expression of a hobby or avocation—a musician, poet, painter, public speaker, amateur actor or playwright.

In Germany more than in any other country the common people are steeped in music. Each member of a family will learn a different instrument and they will play chamber music among themselves. In the old days this charming custom prevailed more widely; we can read in the diaries of Samuel Pepys, for example, how he and his wife would pass the evening in playing or singing, and every educated man of those days could take his part in common song. It is something of a pity that the phonograph and the radio in America have made the enjoyment of music a passive rather than an active experience. The chief joys of art are in participation; but there is no doubt that there is also a cultural pleasure and enrichment in listening to good music.

How many of our friends are secretly writing stories, poems, or novels! Every now and then some will confide in us and show us their work; and at times their literary expression is found worthy of publication. But even in writing without any thought of publication, there is a creative release, a joy which satisfies our craving to interest ourselves in *making*. There have even been great writers who paid no thought to publication during their lifetime. John Donne, the Elizabethan poet, for example, circulated his poems in manuscript among his friends; and the diaries of Samuel Pepys were not even deciphered from their secret script till over a hundred years after his death.

If we cannot enrich our leisure by self-expression in one of the arts, we can at least gather around us those who are engaged in creative work, enjoy their society and share in their interests. I once heard Robert Frost read his poems to such a group[1] and respond with far deeper inspiration to their fine appreciation than he had shown when I heard him address a public audience that same afternoon. In the intimacy of such a group and the mutual appreciation of its members there can be one of the profoundest educational forces.

[1] At the home of Mr. Ben Miller, of Washington, who in his lonely declining years has established a weekly "salon" of poets young and old, amateur and professional.

6

A hobby is especially valuable to those whose vocations do not fulfill their desires; and often work which is done after business hours leads an individual towards a vocation which is better fitted to his interests. The adult education movement, which grows more and more important as the hours of leisure increase in proportion to the working hours of the day, is an effort to bring creative living within the reach of everyone, and to prove that individuals can continue to spread their interests at any age of life. There is no official or standardized curriculum in adult education. When we are teaching our equals in age we are compelled to apply the measures which we should voluntarily apply even to children—we are compelled to speak and discuss with them as if they were on the same plane as ourselves. We cannot try to cram learning down their throats; and if they do not like our methods we have no way of exacting submissive obedience from them. Everything depends on the interest we can arouse. It is the aim, therefore, of adult education to bring to its classes what they themselves would most like to study.

Often the classes are more of informal discussions and consultations than of set lectures. As far as it can be managed each member is free to learn exactly what he wishes to learn. A golden opportunity is thus provided for every individual to make up the gaps in his intellectual development, to gain for himself everything that he has missed.

7

One thing has hitherto provided a very grave obstacle to the creative use of leisure—the exhaustion which comes from the strenuousness of the working day in modern civilization. When the day leaves us fatigued and nervously worn out, there is little use in holding out to us opportunities to improve our leisure. All we then want is rest or easy distraction. We want *others* to amuse us; we want *others* to do the work of entertaining us.

There is no doubt that primitive life was, and still is, wherever it prevails, happier than the life of our industrial civilization. Primitive peoples have more freedom to follow their own inclinations; their ways of life are not so complex, so interorganized; society makes less continuous demands upon them. In addition, man in civilization has been so much occupied with creating the *means* to a fuller life that he has forgotten to enjoy the use of them. The means have become more important than the end. So, with the superior opportunities of our culture, we have less pleasure than many "uncivilized" natives.

The solution to this problem must come from the dividends of leisure that our civilization is making possible. Economic developments foreshadow a time when the hours of labor each day will be shortened, perhaps in the near future, to five or less. It may be that in the past men were not ready for so much leisure and would not have known how to use it; but to-day, with the diffusion of education and the accessibility of cultural opportunities, the problem of

making use of leisure will not be one of meager restriction—it will be the problem of choice among many alternatives. This revolution in the laborer's working hours holds infinite promise for the enriching of his life; and it will tend to diminish the inequalities which still persist.

8

If cultural tastes and hobbies are important as an enrichment to life while under duress of earning a livelihood, how much more important they are as an employment of those years—otherwise so empty and barren—which come after retirement from an active business career.

Mr. Edward C. Potter of Washington, retired steel manufacturer now transformed into a scholar and a composer of music, told me one day how he was led to provide a cultural avocation for his old age. His father, a Chicago business man, had worked so hard and so restrictedly in the treadmill of commerce that when his time came for retirement he had no further interest in life. As a natural result he aged quickly and died.

This life-pattern of the father made such a deep impression on the son that he determined, at all cost, to avoid a like dénouement. Consequently he took up seriously the study of music, and since he retired from business has found a great joy in creating songs and orchestral compositions. "The days are never long enough," he said. He has learned the secret

of the genius, how to taste of immortality while still on this earth.

We are faced with the task of learning to rule the unparalleled civilization we have built up, learning to make its treasures available for all individuals. In some ways the older nations of the East, with a lower standard of life, have made a better use of their opportunities; have lived more in the presence of spiritual values and have won a greater common artistic heritage. We of the West have been too busy creating new opportunities to turn them to advantage.

Now we have solved, in principle at least, the problem of gaining almost unlimited wealth from the earth. We make goods faster than we can consume them. There is too much food, it seems; there is too much cotton; there is too much produce of every kind. It is time we found out how we can enjoy the fruits of our work.

With the new leisure that comes to us, we must try to find a new balance, a new poise, in our way of life. The creative life will soon be open to everyone who has the desire to seize it; it will no longer be the privilege of an aristocracy of leisure, for in this sense we shall all be aristocrats. We are experiencing the difficulties of adjustment to this changed possibility, but there can be no doubt that there are higher chances before us all than there have ever been in human history.

"Think not of rest; though dreams be sweet,
Start up and ply your heavenward feet."
—Keble.

One of the greatest sources of happiness for an individual lies in his consciousness that he is developing, improving, learning better each day to take advantage of the riches of life. Often some stimulus from without awakens us suddenly to the realization of new possibilities, new powers. We broaden out, we become alive to our very finger-tips. But the creative individual does not wait for chance to bring him inspiration; he bears his own inspiration with him. He always moves onward and forward; he expresses himself in this direction and in that as he sees, or, rather, makes for himself, the opportunity. What he has already learned to do no longer suffices. He aches to explore new realms, to make new conquests, to bring new capacities to fruit. Thus, ever expanding, the creator truly fulfills the injunction of the poet:

"Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll.
Leave thy low-vaulted past;
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast."

CHAPTER 10

World Vision and Idealism

"I COUNT nothing that is human foreign to me," said Terence. It is the motto of all great geniuses; the reason why we feel that they are representative human beings. Their interests stretch out and include so many diversities. They are not set on their own individual salvation; they take their fellow men to their hearts and bring all their vitality to bear on our common problems, the problems which beset every man.

The true artist is deeply concerned with the conditions of humanity in his own age and civilization. He cannot help it. It is his own life; it is his own world; he feels he belongs to it and shares in its troubles and joys. And as he is more awake to the world about him than the generality of men, so he must feel its advantages and disadvantages more and strive more whole-heartedly to better it where he feels that it is at fault.

Tolstoy, on his estates in Russia, had his finger on the pulse of the whole world. He was not only concerned in the emancipation of the Russian serfs; he was interested in every liberating movement in India, in China, in America, in every habitable part of the globe. His correspondence was world-wide

and thousands upon thousands of people thought of him as a sympathizer and a fellow man.

One of the chief aims of Charles Dickens in his novels was to help in correcting the wrongs and injustices of humanity, and he did incalculable service in remedying the conditions of child labor and removing the indignities of the English Poor Law. So in America *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* the sole purpose of which was humanitarian, had more success than any other novel in our literary history. Edwin Markham's poem, *The Man with the Hoe,* one of the greatest human documents dealing with the oppressiveness of toil, was immediately translated into dozens of foreign languages and it remains to-day the greatest achievement of this remarkable poet.

Nor is the debt entirely one-sided. Many are the statesmen and the men of industrial genius who have taken the greatest interest in the progress of the arts and sciences and helped to make the way of the creator in other realms than their own easier to travel. In the midst of his arduous duties in guiding the affairs of state, Roosevelt took time and pains to acquaint himself with the work of artists and writers, invited them to the White House and aided them in every way he could to win public recognition. The institutions that Carnegie and Rockefeller founded bear witness to the liveliness of their concern for cultural advancement.

In England men of intellect, means and position occupy themselves unstintingly with national and local politics. It is a thousand pities that in our own

country the same class of men, on the whole, leave politics alone and allow them to become the province of men of a vastly inferior type. In this respect we cannot be said to use our creative powers to the utmost.

2

"Where vision fails, the people perishes." Few are the individuals who keep intact their sympathy with their fellow men; but these few are the salt of the earth. They do not struggle to impress others with their personalities; their personalities are naturally strengthened by their aims. They work, not for petty ends of their own, but for large ends common to many; and the largeness of their ends enters naturally into their character, informs it and ennobles it.

In his *Philosophy of Loyalty,* Josiah Royce gives similar testimony. No man, he tells us, reaches his complete development until he is able to identify himself with a cause greater than himself. Then, no matter what are the ups and downs of his personal life, no matter what his health or private fortune, he has the joy of seeing the cause he loves move onward to its realization. He is a partaker in universal values, and the universal truths of life can never go down to defeat.

It is the universal that always thrives; the particular meets with haphazard fortune—now prospers and now fails—but the universal is indestructible. It is so in nature; the plant perishes but the species

survives. It is so, too, in the life of man; there is no individual security of health, happiness and prosperity, but the common aims of mankind go forward to greater and greater realization. A cause which is favorable to general human happiness will move to ever-increasing success until its work is accomplished and its value has been incorporated in common life.

To such a cause is brought the devotion of thousands and millions of individuals. Their feeling of solidarity fills each one with a strength and energy far beyond his own separate powers. Every man needs this experience to give him that sense of permanence and grandeur which he can never gain from self-seeking and the pursuit of private aims. It is the experience of *communion*—of unity with the durable and the ideal.

"The true test of personality," says E. W. McDiarmid,[1] "is not the man but the range of his interests. What cause does the man espouse? With what great thoughts is he familiar? What ideals lure him on? How large a section of the world does he care for in a vital, responsible way, thinking, planning, working for its welfare, its improvement, its advancement? The magnitude of the ends one sees and serves is the true measure of one's personality. Call the roll of the great. Study their activities. It will be to discover that he only is great in mind who has fastened on some great idea, some lofty

[1] "The Human Engineer," by E. W. McDiarmid, Professor of Philosophy at Texas Christian University, *The Torch*, October 1931.

cause, and that he only is great in heart who has flooded the world with a great affection . . . Here is the secret! Let a man think great thoughts. Let him consecrate himself to some great cause. At once he rises to the stars and dwells among them."

3

The ant has achieved the most thoroughgoing socialization of all creatures on this planet. Its community of labor is well known. William Beebe has a marvelous picture of the mutual aid he observed in a colony of ants.[1] "Their ultimate functions and distribution," he comments, "were so astounding, so correlated, so synchronized with the activities of all the others that it was difficult not to postulate an all-pervading intelligence, to think of these hundreds and thousands of organisms as other than corpuscles in a dynamic stream of life controlled by some single outside mind.

"At uncertain, unguarded turns," he continues, "a huge soldier would take up his station, with as many functions and duties as a member of the Broadway traffic squad. Stray, wandering ants would be set right by a single twiddle of antennæ; an overburdened brother would be given a helping jaw and assisted for some distance to the end of his beat. I was especially interested in seeing, again and again, this willingness to help bear the burdens."

[1] *Jungle Peace*, by William Beebe, The Modern Library, New York.

Perhaps not so many know the fact, discovered by Auguste Forel, that the ant has a social stomach as well as an individual stomach. To this social stomach the food goes first, and there it is digested but not assimilated. If other members of the ant colony need food they are fed from this social stomach and only about one-nineteenth of what he consumes is reserved for the individual. Not until the ant has thus given charity to the hungry from his innermost being does he permit any of the food to pass on into his own private stomach for his own nourishment.

No one asks of human beings that they should socialize their lives to such a degree as the ant. It is our human glory to be diverse, to be each of us unique in his possibilities of contribution to others. But we should be happier by far if we lived more deeply in the life of our community, our country, our world, and fought less stubbornly for our own individual selves.

4

Education could do much more to bring to the individual a sense of group consciousness; and in the new type of schools this task has already been undertaken. Stress is laid more upon collaboration in common projects than upon competition and individual prominence in activities where the success of one means the defeat of others. The needs of humanity are discussed with the children at an early age and methods for the solution of our problems are suggested. Feelings of friendliness are encouraged; the children learn to help one another and to like one another. They are never shy or self-defensive: they do not try to ward off the other children and they do not regard other human beings as enemies. Already they are beginning to think in world-terms, in terms of all humanity as one organic whole. When they come to maturity they will have a much broader vision of life than their mis-educated progenitors.

Once Gifford Pinchot remarked to a friend that he had noticed that a reform movement took about twenty-five years to develop, running its course from ideals and propaganda to successful expression in action. And this period, he observed, was just the length of time it would take for those who had been imbued in youth with new ideals to grow to the age for action.

Of course, we should protect the young from any partisan propaganda; we do not wish to inoculate them with a dogma; we wish to widen their interest and encourage them to think and feel for themselves. We should encourage them, however, to make efforts for issues that are not confined to their private success and prosperity, and to feel that impersonal ends are the most worthy of devotion. If we succeed, we shall be helping in the birth of a generation of ideal fellow-countrymen and fellow-citizens of the world, willing and able to grapple intelligently with the major problems that face humanity.

5

There is no lack of movements in which the individual may profitably interest himself. And if any one of us feels that the movement for which we are looking does not yet exist, it is not beyond the power of enthusiasm and devotion to create it, to set it going on our own impetus.

America is more often satirized for the abundance of its "movements" than for their absence. There are associations of every kind and caliber to engross our interests. And truly enough we are sometimes open to satire. Much of the enterprise that goes into group effort has some taste of egoism about it, some suspicion of self-importance. Even so, it serves a larger end than if the same egoism were devoted to purely personal aims.

It is hardly open to dispute that America is the most idealistic country in the world. This tendency should meet with no derision, and it needs no defense. As a nation we may suffer from a low level of culture. We may be a bourgeois people. We may be platitudinous. At the root of all, however, America is making a noble effort to find herself; to express a soul; to assert a spiritual life in the midst of material plenty.

6

It is particularly after the prime of life is over that the individual should broaden his interests

and expand his horizons. Self-seeking motives and ambitions should give way to motives of helpfulness, idealism, universality. While middle life marks the end of man's physical development, it is only the beginning of his spiritual development. He has now more leisure to apply to the problems of human beings other than himself. He has digested the lessons of his own experience. His intellectual wealth improves with every passing year. His powers of analysis and synthesis become stronger and stronger. He is at the stage of the philosopher whom Plato would wish to rule the world—not a cloistral dreamer but a man who has lived richly and has grown to understand life better than he could ever have understood it when he was younger.

At this period of biological climacteric, however, a new orientation is urgently needed. Those who continue to cling to the life of the senses, who strive to re-stimulate and gratify waning appetites, are doomed to decrepitude, incapacity and growing despair. To them it will seem that the tide is ebbing yearly, that life offers them less and less each day. They grow old as animals grow old; but their fate is still worse, for they keep with them the memory of past prowess to tantalize them and infuriate them with regret.

From such a fate man can escape only by raising his vital expression more and more to the plane of the ideal. With each passing year his interests must become more intellectual, more cultural, more social, more spiritual. He will find, then, that there is no

diminution in the stream of his life; it is as rich and full as it has ever been; it comes to him, however, in another guise, from other sources, and he must adapt himself to the change and welcome it.

Can any life be more of a beacon for those who face the increasing tale of human years than the life of Charles W. Eliot. It was not till he had passed his seventieth year that his reputation as a great educator became overshadowed by his new fame as a great world citizen. At last he had time to enlarge the scope of his interests and activities. His last years of life were his richest and happiest.

There is something miraculous in this power of the human brain to go on developing long after the physical vehicle has passed its prime. The inner self does not age or grow feeble. It seems to live as an immortal in that limited machine we call the body. As the driver of the machine it increases steadily in wisdom and skill; and at last, when the machine is completely worn out, that self in us withdraws to still greater fields of activity.

"He never errs who sacrifices self."
—Lord Lytton.

"Where vision fails, the people perishes"—and the individual perishes, too. We can forgive the

young man whose eyes are still blinded by self-gratification and egoism. He has a long journey before him, and it may well look to him that he must take good care of his own interests and provide for the vicissitudes of the way. Such traits in the mature man, however, are not only disgusting to see—they are fatal to the man himself. More than anything else they conduce to the feeling of old age, decrepitude and futility. For life does not afford us increasing pleasures of a selfish kind as we grow older. On the contrary, the capacity for such pleasures dwindles away in the course of nature. But the joy in helping others, the power to help them and the opportunity for helping them increase with every passing year. The people whom the world most admires and respects are those who have been of most signal benefit to their fellows, those who have served them best, with most insight and most world vision. Let us learn, therefore, in good time to feel and think with all humanity. The hours will never be dull then; the years will never be too long. And we shall die as we have lived, in the midst of glorious tasks and achievements.

CHAPTER 11

The Victorious Attitude

THE creative individual has always a victorious attitude towards life. To create is itself the supreme victory—a victory which does not entail disaster upon anyone but is rather a benefaction to all other souls. What does anything avail to discourage a man whose life is being poured forth in beauty, achievement and service? The creator is always the most joyous of men.

Psychologists tell us that we are driven by three major appetites—the appetite for food, the appetite for sex expression, and the appetite for approval. No man's life can be quite normal without adequate satisfaction for these three deep-rooted needs.

The need for the esteem of one's fellow has become more clear from the results reached by modern schools of psychology. Many complexes gather in the subconscious where there is a lack of satisfactory achievement and appreciation. Envy, bitterness, aggressiveness, even mental derangement may follow upon a chronic feeling of inferiority. When an individual loses self-confidence and sinks into depression, the very glands of internal secretion fail in their proper functions and the whole nervous system is disordered.

Much of the criminal element in our big cities is an expression of the inferiority complex. A dangerous youth, recently sentenced to execution in New York City as a result of many killings, was reported to be the quickest man on the trigger in all of New York's gangdom. To the press reporters he told how he came to acquire this skill. "I never had a chance in a fight," he said, "because I was so puny. I got tired of being cuffed about by other men, so I began to use a revolver. I found I could hold my own with that and soon came to be the best shot of the gang."

Thus we see a youth—through his fragility feeling his inferiority daily in a thousand disagreeable and concrete ways—resorting to any means to regain his prestige, to "come out on top." What he did any man might do who is repressed, cuffed about by fortune and at a loss to know what to do to win the approbation of his fellows.

2

The proverbial bad boy in the school and neighborhood gangs is most often a boy who is abnormal or retarded in academic work. Desiring to shine amongst his fellows he must resort to mischievous pranks. The unfailing cure for such a child is to help him to find some useful talent in himself, no matter what it is, that he can express. As soon as he begins to achieve something that he feels is worth while, life seems satisfactory to him again and he

ceases to try to shine on the useless, the anti-social side of life.

The story is told by Dr. Winship, Editor of the *Journal of Education,* of a high school youth who was the terror of the school. Once the teacher of manual training found the boy showing an interest in taxidermy. In all his educational history it had been the first subject to make the slightest appeal to him. He was encouraged to collect the furs of animals, to study the process of curing and stuffing. The specimens that he made for the school won the admiration of all the other students. He even read deeply into the subject and became a considerable authority. His whole life was reconstructed by this awakening of an interest, this realization of a capacity.

"The need of success as a wholesome stimulus is universal. Children have an enormous appetite for it. They need larger doses. Adults become depressed without it. It is vital for the normal. The diseased are often cured by it. The modern method in the best hospitals of giving the patient interesting work, something worth while to do, has demonstrated its value for health. It is the gravest error for physicians, social workers and teachers not to employ this wholesome stimulus.

"The teacher's business is to see that every child at some time, in some way, in some subject, achieves a marked success, and that sometimes they get an honest gauge of themselves by failure. In like manner the task for the physician in large part is to give

the patient the opportunity to do something that seems worth while, a definite, concrete task to perform, either in caring for his own health, or in doing something that indirectly will be a benefit to health. The business of the social worker also in large part is to give concrete tasks to those who are chronic failures, to give the opportunity for success, so that the stimulus of success may be a help to further activities." [1]

3

The surest way to a stable self-esteem is not through rivalry and competition but through the release of the inner forces pent up within us and the opening up of channels through which they can flow. Competition for external reward and for a relative position of importance can lead only to constant feelings of envy and of inferiority. Only one person at a time can be "at the top" in any one organization, profession or political system.

Hidden jealousies exist wherever men are striving to climb above their fellows. There is no possibility of peace of mind and satisfaction in this struggle for place and pelf. Every commercial and industrial organization, every educational institution, every hospital, church and political organization is riddled with envy and spite. Wherever people are seeking to attain a success measured by external standards, seeking to gain more dignity and power

[1] *Success and Failure as Conditions of Mental Health,* by William H. Burnham.

in the eyes of their fellows, we shall find this miasma of human hostility.

This is not what I mean by the victorious attitude. The victorious life does not involve the defeat of others. It is not reached by getting ahead of others. It is based on an adequate ratio between one's powers and their expression. When we have won the fullest and most unobstructed expression of our abilities and tastes, we have a sense of completeness and of abundant living. Self-expression leads to satisfaction, poise, unselfishness, social feeling. Rivalry and selfish competition, on the other hand, lead to all the sinister accompaniments of egotism.

We should never measure ourselves by external standards. Everyone has enough of a battle to fight in his own small kingdom of the self, without choosing to make war on others. When we are expressing our own powers in adequate achievement we are in competition only with ourselves; and we find a perennial delight in surpassing our past records, in continuous growth and development.

4

Since every individual is unique and different from every other, it follows that each one can achieve something that no one else in the world can achieve. When we are doing this to the full extent of our powers we are happy; we have come to the highest fruition of our natures.

"Surely the thing that matters in a man," said

H. G. Wells, "is that thing which is peculiar to him, his distinctive gift and aptitude, however small that may be. To realize that, to develop it fully, to bring it to the completest fruition, is at once the full triumph of one's individual life and the supreme service one can render to mankind: wealth, notoriety, place and power are no measure of success whatever. The only true measure of success is the ratio between what we might have been, on the one hand, and the thing we have done and the thing we have made of ourselves on the other."

5

It is always refreshing to run across people who seem happy and wholesome in their work. They can be found in every walk of life. It may be a preacher, a lawyer, a doctor, a teacher. It may be a writer, a musician, a painter, a lecturer. It may be a manufacturer, a business man. It may be a farmer, a store clerk, a mechanic, a servant. We may well form the habit of observing such people when we meet them: they are our guides to victory.

Recently I found such a man as chief mechanic in a hotel garage at Hot Springs, Virginia.

"I have been here twenty years," he remarked, "right in this garage."

"You like Hot Springs, then, and you like your work?"

"Yes, I'm contented here. They treat me very well. What more could I ask?"

He was a genial man, robust and wholesome.

In Portsmouth is a dealer in second-hand goods and antiques who is quite famous. Everybody calls him "Captain" or "Cappy" for short. His goods fill a series of one-story buildings and overflow into a big yard on the water-front. He has everything from boats to china. Always cheerful, generous-hearted, genuinely interested in his own wares, it is a pleasure to deal with him. To these humble surroundings, lumbered up with an accumulation of odds and ends, people love to come, partly because they can find rare things, but more, I believe, for the mere pleasure of shopping with "Cappy." His seems such a contented and successful life that I was surprised when he recently told me that he had been caring for an invalid wife for ten years. No one would gather from his manner and bearing that he carried such a heavy inner burden; for he is plainly living the victorious life.

At a bank, a store, a post office, railroad station or restaurant—everywhere we go we may meet one of these happy and sturdy personalities. They have found a way to lift their work above the plane of drudgery. They are serving, not a machine, but other human beings.

6

The normal person finds a great part of the happiness of life in the birth, training and development

of children. Every effort expended upon children is repaid a thousandfold. They are living material; they are capable of one knows not what achievements and successes. The parent lives again in the child, feels his triumphs vicariously, is carried by his successes to the height of pride and joy. Nothing can take away the satisfaction in having aided in the development of a child of one's own.

A mother's life especially is bound up in the lives of her children. Their victories are her victories. What she herself dreamed of doing and aspired to be, she can perhaps help them to do and be. The creative task of a mother is second to none in the world; and the whole future of mankind is dependent upon the intelligence, the sympathy, and the artistic insight with which she fulfills it.

The supreme importance of a mother's task is often lost sight of in our own days. People pay it lip-service; but they do not generally see how much art, how much interest, how much training must go into the creative achievement of motherhood. All that is necessary, they think, is self-sacrifice. But there must be joy, there must be enthusiasm, there must be spontaneity, there must be all the qualities which we have attributed to genius, before we can see the fine flower of the genius for motherhood that so many women still possess. To be a good mother is one of the highest vocations in the world.

An admiring woman was looking rather wistfully at a group of children in Lafayette Park. She turned to the mother and said, "I would give ten years of

my life to have three such lovely children." "I *have* given ten years, madam," was the answer.

7

Even with a home and children a woman's life should not be wholly occupied. Other lines of effort and achievement—cultural and social—should continue. There should be other channels of enrichment, for home duties sometimes grow stale, and a day will come when the young take their own flight and leave the home empty. Then, if a woman has no other compelling interests, no capacity for creative living outside of the domestic circle, her remaining years will be pinched and impoverished.

In earlier times a woman's home offered her more creative opportunity. Families were large and the children were the focus of the mother's life. There was a wide variety of domestic tasks, baking, brewing, spinning, sewing; herbs to gather and dry, fruits to preserve. All of them could be done with the highest skill, and a good housewife was often renowned through the whole community. In addition, a mother took a hand in the education of her children and their spiritual guidance; and she passed on to her daughters all the skill she had learned in household management and the women's lore she had heard from her own mother.

Now, with small families, with labor-saving devices, with outside influences that tend to disperse the members of the family, the modern mother finds

herself less closely bound to the home and with more leisure to spare. Often she becomes absorbed in large and gripping activities quite apart from her domestic life.

Spurred on by the desire to make a contact with the external world, many women of ability are now creating for themselves business careers. Thus they can both augment the family income and increase their own sense of satisfaction in useful achievement.

A lady who brought her daughter to our camp this summer—by her appearance one would judge her to be a woman of means and leisure—was at the same time bringing up a family of four children and carrying on a business as an interior decorator. Her married sister, too, was combining her home duties with a professional career. "It is a matter of heredity, perhaps," this lady said to me, half in jest. "Our mother was a clergyman's wife. She, too, increased our small income at home by conducting departments in several magazines." This mother of hers, by the way, is now approaching her three score years and ten. Is she sitting in resignation by the hearth-side? Not in the slightest; she is working with enthusiasm and devotion in Red Cross activities amongst the sailors in large port cities.

8

A lady I met at an educational conference described to me with such illuminating details the solu-

tion she had found to the modern housewife's dilemma that I have asked her to tell it here.

"While in college," she writes, "I had no thought of preparing myself for anything except to be a fascinating wife. The business of being a mother was to absorb me the rest of my life. After college came a year or two of music and various activities to pass the time, and then my marriage.

"The war had broken out in Europe before I had finished college, and occasionally I thought vaguely of doing something useful; but my father's conventional point of view and my own lack of confidence prevented me. Anyway, my heart's desire was a family! I had two children very promptly—confident of one thing at least, that I could be a successful parent. I soon began to learn things. One thing was that a family is a very expensive luxury.

"And now let me describe the community to which I came to live. It is a city of about a hundred thousand, with a largely industrial population and a small aristocracy with the most conservative and self-sufficient point of view that I have ever encountered. A college woman was a strange creature, and I soon found myself constantly on guard lest I should refer to college and be accused of putting on airs. I missed the interests and diversions that a great city offers, desperately. I didn't seem to fit in anywhere. There is a small college community in the vicinity, and *there* was the group whose lives I felt were most satisfying; but they were all absorbed in their work and

and I had nothing to offer *them*. The social life of the town bored me to death.

"My children were enough till they were about two and four: in fact they were a little too much, and when they reached that age we decided that we must have a nurse for a year or two, until I could catch my breath. So the nurse was procured, and in two weeks I had fully recovered and was longing for something to do besides the exclusive care of children.

"There were Hospital and Old People's Home and Orphan Asylum Boards on which to serve, all of which I loathed—tiresome jobs, and dozens of nice old ladies who loved them. I had no special aptitude and no training for anything. There was a Dramatic Club; but I couldn't be in every play every year. A year passed and the boredom became so oppressive that my mental condition really became serious. I was a menace to my family, and there was no escape.

"Finally an inspiration came. Fortunately I had a little capital of my own. Our town boasted of only one bookstore—and a very commercial one; and so, summoning a vestige of my early initiative I decided to open a bookshop.

"Of course the idea met with the most bitter opposition on the part of my family. My husband was the only one to be even neutral on the subject and there was the most vigorous disapproval from my friends. Suffice it to say that the experiment was a brilliant success from my point of view. I learned a

great deal, gained a degree of self-confidence, and my mental attitude was remade.

"My family throve and blossomed, with a contented wife and mother who had a happy, healthy, enthusiastic outlook on life. The five year experiment fully vindicated itself. Even the disapproving relatives admit that I prescribed well for myself and reluctantly concede that my children are 'beautifully brought up.' "

9

There is a discontent which is unwholesome and there is a divine discontent which impels us on to seek ever higher fields for self-expression. Some people who have far goals to reach may take years to attain the serenity which can come only from a balance between desire and accomplishment. They must have patience. Their goals are not ordinary goals; they require more exertion and more time for their attainment.

Half the zest of life is in the struggle. If a man sees that he is making progress, however slowly towards his goal, if he has hope to cheer and comfort him in the midst of work which may not be wholly to his satisfaction, there will be no need for him to be depressed and pessimistic. A life which rises to a climax is infinitely to be preferred to a life which falls away to anti-climax.

We can well afford to struggle through obstacles and turmoils for the greater proportion of life if the ultimate act of our drama is victory. To some people falls the sad fate of ease and triumph at the beginning of life and catastrophe and tragedy at the end. These are the men and women we may pity.

10

Victorious living is not dependent upon great talents. It is a peculiarly relative and psychological condition, marked by a sense of achievement commensurate with one's abilities. Those who have few talents will feel contented if they are expressing them to the best of their power in an environment that is harmonious and appreciative.

"Our self-feeling in this world," said William James, "depends entirely on what we *back* ourselves to be and do. It is determined by the ratio of our actualities to our supposed potentialities; a fraction of which our pretensions are the denominator and the numerator our success: thus, Self-esteem $= \frac{\text{Success}}{\text{Pretensions}}$. Such a fraction may be increased as well by diminishing the denominator as well as by increasing the numerator. To give up pretensions is as blessed a relief as to get them gratified."

In Washington, for instance, there is a striking contrast between the mental attitude of colored cooks and that of white cooks. White people who are seeking positions as cooks are not generally happy and contented in their work. They feel themselves above it. They are apt to be women of fallen

fortune, widows left without means, and such people. They have strong inferiority complexes. They work for a living, but there is an inner conflict in their souls.

Colored people, on the other hand, are generally happy in their work. If they succeed in pleasing, if conditions are right in the kitchen and the home, if the relations between the cook and the mistress are harmonious and the pay is adequate, to the ambitions of the cook there are no further fields to conquer. Such people are expressing the best that is in them; they are contributing to others to the best of their ability; they, too, are living the creative life. The only thing they dislike is the monotony of sustained work in one situation; but they take an easy way to solve this difficulty. They simply leave and find another place. Thus they satisfy their sense of the dramatic as often as they desire. They have discovered, in their simple way, a great secret of life: how to keep, like flowing water, constantly moving and fresh.

11

No one can complain that he has no opportunity for victorious living. Victory is within the grasp of everyone. There are no real hindrances except in ourselves; and it is within our power to change ourselves. If we could realize this, if we could put our energy not into complaints against life and the bitter sense of deprivation but into the overcoming of ob-

stacles, we should make the path to success straight and clear.

We have enough to do without wasting our thought in envy of others and the creation of excuses for our own lack of triumph. Suppose our lot is low. Suppose, even, that we suffer from more disadvantages than the majority of our fellows. We can still enjoy the opportunities we have. We can still master our circumstances and live victoriously. Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus, two of the greatest philosophers of Rome, equals in deep and spiritual thought, were, one an emperor, and the other a slave.

The negative attitude never leads anywhere except to stagnation. It is only by cheerfulness and courage that the individual can progress to higher goals of living.

12

We have been speaking of the victorious attitude as the result and accompaniment of success in life; but it is also a *cause* of achievement and success. Unwavering faith in our abilities, a consciousness of our inner power to achieve, the vivid realization of success to come—these are the essential factors in the dynamics of a career. We must ourselves have more faith in ourselves than anyone else has in us. The triumphs of life are fought out and won on the inner plane, before opportunity finds ability to match it and outer success is assured.

What infinite power of expression lies in all living

things! A seed, once it finds lodgment, will grow even on a stony crag and split the rock itself. The force of genius in us cannot be hemmed in for long. In spite of all obstacles it will force a way through. Have faith in this creative self within you. It is your own truest reality. Trust it. Be confident. Know yourself as victorious even before the event has proved it.

Henry Ford, one of the greatest of industrial creators, once lost for a brief period the superb courage which had helped him through so many struggles. Discouraged by the slow progress of his car, harassed by stringency of credit, weakened physically by attacks of lumbago so severe that they made him writhe in pain upon the floor, he came to New York, determined to sell out his interests for three million dollars.

He was saved by a new disaster. New York bankers were skeptical. They refused to believe that the Ford Company was worth three million dollars. They refused to buy. So Ford went back to Detroit and kept on at his destiny, his unmatched achievement in making low-priced cars available to the whole world. And in ten years the Ford Company was valued at two hundred million dollars.

Thus, in the most dangerous moment of Ford's career, when he was ready to abandon a victory that was just within his grasp, fate slipped in and rescued him from himself. Such an incident teaches us never to despair; to hold on to our goal and to see victory even in the midst of defeat.

"He came forth conquering and to conquer."

—Revelation.

The victorious attitude leads to victory. We need it in all the vicissitudes of life; we need it for our mental health and happiness. How can we achieve it? We are not all born to the purple; we cannot all scramble to the top of the ladder and stand above our contemporaries. But all of us can make the most of ourselves, and it is this which is the real victory. If we are always comparing ourselves with others, we shall always be defeated. For we cannot hope to outdistance all others. But every one of us is unique, and has greater excellence than others in his own way. What we can hope to do, therefore, is to use to the full our capacity for enjoying the richness of life and contributing to the world our own creative accomplishments.

CHAPTER 12

The Midas Touch

ALTHOUGH almost all human beings live under constant economic necessity, it is not true that most of them live chiefly for money. The men we honor most are not those who have acquired the most gold; nor did the rich men we admire set out with the desire for wealth alone foremost in their hearts. Even in the humblest walks of life, though the wage-earner is pleased when pay-day comes round, the actual amount of money he receives gives him a content which would not be his had he stayed idle at home and received the same amount as a gift. His reward is in very considerable part the satisfaction that comes from work done, and the bills in his pocket are a passport into next week when he will continue his usefulness.

Unfortunately there are too many people to whom the taste for money becomes almost a disease. No weakness enfeebles the creative life of the soul so much as this psychological disease. Greed vitiates all spontaneity, cripples any untrammeled expression of the soul. Where everything is calculated in terms of material gain man becomes less than himself, and life about him becomes as rigid, unfruitful and arid as it did to Midas. Just as with him, if gold

is what we prize most we lose everything else, even the power to enjoy all that we foolishly fancied money could buy.

2

It is taken for granted that the professional man will be altruistic about his work. We should feel considerable contempt for a doctor who thought only of his fee while he was treating a patient; of a teacher who had no concern for the welfare of his pupils; or of a lawyer who remained untouched by the needs of his clients. Why, then, should we ever take it for granted that men in the world of business should have special dispensation to concentrate solely on profits?

There is absolutely no necessity whatever to be mercenary because one is in business. In actual fact, it is the man who sets out to see how life can be made simpler, more comfortable, more agreeable to his fellow-beings who finds most often he has set his feet on the path to fortune. Every employer knows, too, that the employee who works for his salary alone is not worth that salary. It is the man or woman who gives service and enthusiasm that really counts. This world of ours is run by intricate and complicated machinery, each of us contributing with our work to its smooth revolution: the employee or the employer who does not to some degree contribute good will and enjoyment is slowing up the processes.

The British make an interesting distinction be-

tween retail and wholesale business. To their idea, the man in the wholesale business is much better suited for preferment in the social scale than the man in retail business. The wholesale trader, if he is otherwise well qualified, finds it much easier to mingle with the "gentry." This caste idea may seem absurd on the face of it, but it is based on the general principle that the man in retail trade is far too apt to develop into a mere money-seeker, measuring everything in terms of daily profit instead of in terms of service. It is thought all too easy for him to lose sight of profound human responsibilities and values.

We all know in our own experience how monetary considerations injure the fine fabric of human association. Over-sensitive people can hardly bear to be agreeable to their elderly relatives for fear of being suspected of "waiting for dead men's shoes": while those of another type are affability itself for the sake of what they may get later. Sometimes lending or borrowing, though honorably settled, has been the means of spoiling friendships. And how often do we feel, when traveling in Europe, that the tipping system spoils everything. When a man seems over eager to proffer us service or kindness, we cannot help suspecting that the motive is purely one of gain. The man thus seeking a tip lowers himself in our esteem, though in doing so he is more the victim than the cause of habits due to social usage. One of the most admirable characteristics of our American democracy is the fact that services can be rendered

and kindnesses exchanged between people living on very different levels of income without any thought of monetary reward.

One wealthy woman I know, who is most generous in giving financial aid both to individuals and institutions, makes it a rule not to reward directly the personal kindnesses or services of others. She feels that only voluntary service arising out of goodness of heart should be contributed or accepted, and that to pay for it deprives those less well off of the opportunity to be generous and sincere towards the wealthy.

3

It is a lamentable fact that we see all too often men, who having attained success because of great achievement, fail—after they have acquired wealth—to maintain the creative character of their work. This is most noticeable, perhaps, with artists and writers whose work is there for all to see and judge. The more successful they become the more, in many instances, we notice the quality of their work falling off. They have become used to living on a lavish scale as a result of the large returns from their earlier work, and now they have begun to produce with the sole aim of keeping up or of further increasing their incomes. They write or paint too much and too hastily. Their work proves almost wholly lacking in that highly personal touch, the fine inspiration which was noticeable in the days when they were making their way to fame.

In the business world, too, similar examples of really able men permitting their talents to be smothered and dulled as they become a slave to mere possessions can also far too often be met.

Life in a large city is especially dangerous in this way, and probably more so in New York than it is in any other city. Almost over night one can see the sad spectacle of a brilliant and talented man achieving success and being destroyed by it. Now he thinks of nothing but money and the complicated and soul destroying activities into which money can so easily tempt one. Greed has got possession of him, and his talents lie dormant.

The sad story of Ralph Barton, successful artist and caricaturist, showed what city life can do to the artist with great financial success. His recent suicide was the result of a life too satiated, too little creative. "New York is a crazy city," he said. "Americans are crazy and I find I am crazy, too. We are all too rich. We have too much money. I have too much money. That's why I am crazy. All artists ought to be prohibited from earning as much money as I do. Yet if someone suggested cutting my earnings, I would scream so you could hear me for three blocks."

Paul Green, on the other hand, successful playwright and Pulitzer prize-winner, knows enough to turn his back on New York. Three days on Broadway seeing his new play launched were enough for him. "I've a lot more work to do," he told the Associated Press, "and I'd rather do it on my little farm

in North Carolina where it is quiet and peaceful."

This poet, dramatist and instructor in philosophy at the University of North Carolina dresses carelessly, usually forgets to have his shoes shined, and once in his own room sheds coat, vest and necktie as quickly as possible. "Money," he says, "is a good thing to have. It has its uses. But I like to work and study. Money gets in the way sometimes."

4

Among professional men, doctors and surgeons—engaged in humanitarian work as they are—prove often so unmercenary as to be poor collectors of their just debts. This is especially true of country doctors, who know intimately the family affairs of their patients and who feel that they must often give service without reward, or see human beings remain in suffering and fear of death. The idealistic picture we form of the beloved family physician would be spoiled if we were forced to believe that the accumulation of wealth were his chief motive. Those few mercenary specialists of our great towns who pile up a fortune by pampering the whims of spoiled and idle women do not win anyone's admiration because of their big earnings.

In fact we assume that clergymen, educators and scientists as well as doctors work chiefly for something other than gain. Love of their work and the opportunity of following their own interests mean more to them than mere salaries.

Goldberger, who discovered the cause of pellagra, preferred to continue his researches on this subject on a modest government salary rather than to accept a large salary at one of our leading universities to undertake research work in which he was not interested. "They want me to do research work in dementia præcox," he told his wife, "and it would bore me to death."

"If you are not interested in doing such work, that settles it," said the faithful wife. "We'll stay where we are."

5

The degree to which the professional man can entirely lack interest in the financial side of his work is well illustrated by an incident related by Vernon McKenzie in "Scouting for Brains." [1]

"A Massachusetts technological institution president tells of one remarkable interview he had when the candidate for a position took an extreme and almost amusing lack of interest in material rewards.

"This man entered the president's office rather timidly, coming in answer to a wire requesting an interview. As he got into his subject, however, he quickly regained his *savoir-faire*. After some general discussion he was told how weak the work in zoölogy was at this institution, and he was asked whether he was interested in the commercial side.

"His reply came promptly: 'Not the slightest.'

" 'What do you wish to do?'

[1] *Saturday Evening Post,* August 15th, 1931.

" 'I want to do several years' work on fish parasites.'

" 'Anything else?'

" 'I can give two or three lecture courses in related fields, but I want two-thirds of my time for my own special work, for at least five or ten years.'

" 'That'll be satisfactory, I believe, and . . .'

"The parasitologist interrupted the president with: 'Very well, I accept the position.'

" 'But you haven't asked the salary.'

" 'That doesn't matter. I'm not married.'

" 'And you haven't inquired about your rank!'

" 'That doesn't matter either; such minor details will look after themselves.'

" 'Do you mean to say that if I offered you an instructorship you'd take it?'

" 'Certainly, because conditions where I am now do not, and likely never will, permit me to do as much as I want to do in the study of fish parasites.'

"The president knew he'd found a jewel, as the lapse of years has proved to him, as well as to the industry at large."

6

When I was a student working my way through Harvard Graduate School my eyes became seriously strained. I first consulted a Back Bay oculist who gave half-rates to Harvard students. Even his half-rate was a sizeable bill. It cost me twenty-five dollars for a prescription for glasses. Then I made the

painful discovery that the prescribed glasses were not right. My eyesight grew worse. I found later that his diagnosis and his prescription were both wrong. To this day I feel that the doctor in question was one of those to whom earnings are more than service.

How different was the doctor to whom I next turned. This was Dr. Morgan, who had been Roosevelt's oculist, who had served many famous men and who I heard worked miracles with the eyes. I consulted him and his prescription proved a perfect adjustment of my difficulty.

"How much do I owe you?" I asked, telling him I was a student. "Two dollars," he said. And each year after when I went to him when I asked for his bill he said, "How much did I charge you before?" And the two dollars remained the price of his wonderful service to me.

I saw a poor woman from the tenement district who had preceded me one day give him fifty cents for his services. He thanked her with grave courtesy. His ante-chamber was filled with the suffering and afflicted of all ages, classes and degrees of wealth. His doorkeeper told me that he worked from eight in the morning till seven at night without stopping for anything to eat, serving a steady stream of patients. He was then a man seventy years of age.

What a life of service! His joy was in his work, of inestimable value to the public.

7

Just as it is harmful to the work of the professional man and detrimental to his character when he lets money-seeking play too large a part in his activities, so it is dangerous to every one of us. There is never any necessity for us to stake all our hopes on the quest for gold.

The manufacturer who makes it his ambition as well as his business to give quality and service is living on the creative level. Henry Ford, who is in a position to judge, assures us that such real service inevitably brings its just financial reward. On the other hand, he contends, commercial activities devoid of integrity and ideals can bring but ephemeral success.

Nevertheless, it is easier to conceive the idea that people engaged in business should fasten their attention more on service than on money-getting, than it is to put this idea into practice. We may accept the theory that those who give good service will receive good patronage in return. But when it comes to the actual daily problems of business, the issues are by no means clear-cut. Good salesmanship, astute bargaining, sound publicity and careful accounting are as inevitably a part of business as the technique of any profession, and there is small use going into business in a half-hearted way. The important thing however is the spirit in which it is undertaken. The chief aim should be to create something of value to the public, and to serve it. It is putting the cart be-

fore the horse for a business man to think *first* of the gain that will come to him if he succeeds. The intrinsic quality of the service rendered is the best guarantee of the stability of any business.

The importance of having the right basic attitude in business is that while it does bring financial returns it also enables those taking part in it to live on a creative level. When a business man believes that he is doing something of real value to the public, rendering real service for the money he receives, then both he and his employees express something far higher and nobler than when the underlying ambition that sets the machinery of business in motion is merely a desire to get hold of the dollar in the other fellow's pocket. What is more, the work itself on all the many levels that exist in any one concern, is done far more gladly and with far more pleasure in an institution expressing service than when purely mercenary considerations are the rule.

In the first instance the business man is a creator, he is contributing something. In the second instance he is an exploiter, a man of greed. The character of every man and woman employed in business is bound to develop in one direction or the other. One of two motives will always predominate—self-seeking or service, acquisitiveness or creativeness. The latter gives happiness and is useful to the world as well as an inspiration to its possessor; the former spells aridity, discontent and the death of the spirit.

"I am not in business, anyhow, to make money, but to live as happy a life as my potentialities will

permit," says Vash Young in his remarkable book, *A Fortune to Share.*

8

Bryan the silver-tongued in one of his lectures asked the audience this question: "How much money can a man honestly make in his lifetime?"

Reckoning an average salary at about three thousand a year, with a working lifetime of at least thirty-three years, he showed that to earn honestly a hundred thousand dollars in a lifetime was within the power of us all. Could one, he asked, honestly earn a million dollars in a lifetime? Yes, one could. And the great orator—influenced though he was by the ideas of socialism—went on to state, to the amazement of his hearers, that a man could honestly earn a hundred million dollars in one lifetime, or even ten times that amount. For who could compute in monetary value the worth of a Pasteur to the world? Or of a Lincoln or an Edison? Such men, he said, honestly earn hundreds of millions of dollars. But that is not what they set out to do. As Bryan said, they are too busy earning this money to bother to collect it; while those whose first thought is to collect money from society, seldom truly earn it.

The way the world is to-day, those who have an overwhelming desire just to make money can express this quality of theirs and win a certain measure of success in wealth. With some of them, it seems as

though everything they touch turns to gold. They have the Midas touch. But are such people happy?

Be assured that life brings its richest rewards only when we follow the path of service and creativeness —rewards not merely of wealth but, what is more important in the end for our happiness, the esteem and love of our fellows and contentment with ourselves.

Character is built up not only of tendencies and wishes and thoughts, but of actions. Our deeds from day to day weave the pattern of our lives. Let us then analyze ourselves a little. Are we allowing ourselves to be drawn into the mad vortex of greed which inhibits all the noblest sentiments of man? Instead of giving of our best, are we thinking too much of getting?

9

It would be a wonderful thing for all of us if we could disassociate the thought of rewards from the thought of our work. At first this seems impossible, especially for those of us who fill relatively humble positions which seem at times to offer us so little room for self-expression. But it is not really as hard as it seems. Naturally we have to make a living: and this in itself is an honorable enterprise. For if we do not earn our own living then someone else, or society itself, will have to support us. But once having made the necessary financial arrangements which are part and parcel of our life, we can center our thoughts and ambitions on the work itself.

What is there to prevent our saying, then: "Providence enables me to gain enough for all the necessities of life. I don't have to worry, really, about the money side of my work. I can afford to do it in the spirit of service. I can think of it as a benefit I am rendering to society."

This should be our prevailing habit of mind. It in no way interferes with our being practical. It still leaves us perfectly free to change our methods of business, to rebudget our expenses or recast our financial situation, or aim at a higher salary. But we can make ourselves more and more useful and can contribute more and more effectively if we work in the spirit of service.

10

It was Baha'o'llah, the Persian prophet, who in speaking of the dignity of labor said: "Work done in the spirit of service is equivalent to prayer."

When I visited Haifa to interview Abdu'l Baha, the successor to the leadership of the Baha'i movement, I noticed among his followers a man with a white halo of hair and a very saintlike countenance. He attracted my attention. He seemed to me the most spiritual of the men in the Persian colony living with Abdu'l Baha. Upon inquiry, I learned that this man was quite illiterate, but had for years served Baha'o'llah lovingly and faithfully in the capacity of cook. His whole life had indeed been a proof that work done in the spirit of service is a

spiritual exercise, refining both to man's personality and to his innermost soul.

Work done in a mercenary spirit brings no such blessings as those which accrue to the individual whose aim is to be of benefit to humanity in his own particular niche. Looked at rightly, all work is of benefit to humanity. We should hold to that knowledge, not only as regards our own work but as regards the work of others. It is true, in proper proportion, of the engine-driver, of the men who keep our streets wholesome and clean, of laundresses and office-workers as well as of the more patently humanitarian workers of this world.

Try to feel this towards whoever serves you even in the humblest capacity. See how happily such people will respond to the feeling on your part that they are conferring a benefit. Such an attitude gives dignity to labor.

Man, when engaged in sincere and useful work into which he puts his whole energies and being, becomes thereby a partner with the Creator in running the Universe. Effort put forth with magnanimous intention lifts the individual above the mundane plane and endows him with cosmic power.

11

One of the worst aspects of the purely commercial or greedy attitude to work is that it creates an appetite which grows the more it is fed. There is no limit to the amount of money the mercenary man

desires to accumulate. The appetite grows beyond bounds. As the wealth accumulates, the greedy man gives more and more attention not only to increasing his wealth but to the care of what he has already amassed. We have all in our own lifetime seen such people. The desire for more gets them in its grip. Now they must have bigger investments, or a more expensive make of car, or a bigger house, or give more lavish parties. A whole relentless machinery gets them in its power. They have no time to live; they have only time to acquire, to preserve and to spend. Their life becomes wholly selfish. Even the hospitality they give has the intention not of true hospitality but of proving how rich they are. This self-seeking has a disastrous result upon the individual. The ravages which greed works upon the soul are betrayed in their faces.

"He who would save his life shall lose it." This is just what happens to those who try to transmute human existence into bullion. They succeed often enough in their endeavors, and that is in reality the worst thing that could befall them.

12

With most people, however, it is a desire for security rather than unjustifiable greed which urges them on towards a mercenary attitude to life. It often seems to the average man as though a bank account were a sort of bulwark against all vicissitudes; that wealth is a fortress which makes the in-

dividual secure against the accidents of life. On wealth he stands and feels himself able to defy the universe.

The assumption is false. Sickness, bereavement, pain and heart-break come to the rich as well as to the poor. And when the dark hours come, how tragically often is it proved true that in times of stress it is the poor that help not only the poor but the rich too. The rich man, in agony of mind or in the midst of grief, then finds his rich acquaintances too taken up with the complex life that such people live, too indifferent to anything but the very fact of being rich and busy, to heed him. He finds himself alone, or turns for comfort to some simple creature whose existence he never noticed before.

And more and more in our time it can be perceived that wealth itself is no longer even a material security. In the amazing fluctuations of the business world, no wealth is secure. Armour saw his fortune decline from two hundred million to nothing and died a bankrupt. The hereditary aristocracy, the great landowners and the rich men of Russia found themselves penniless overnight. Scores and scores of men who two years ago were accounted rich in our own country are to-day stripped clean. In England social and economic changes are slowly taking away the financial superiority of the landed aristocracy. Young men from families that once would have thought it beneath them to "soil their hands" with trade are only too glad nowadays to get themselves any kind of a job that promises a fair livelihood.

All over the world there is a tendency to tax inheritance and to grade the larger and especially the unearned incomes for purposes of taxation in such a manner as to restrict severely the amount of wealth a man can accumulate and bequeath to his children. It seems as though nothing can check this tendency until a greater equality of economic prosperity has been achieved; until something of that security which formerly the wealthy man alone felt has been distributed to the average individual in the form of accident and sickness insurance, unemployment insurance and old age insurance. It is gradually being accepted that it is the duty of the state to guarantee a minimum livelihood to every person. Towards this goal most European governments are fast tending. It is the only way, they seem to feel, to save themselves from communism. And America, happy hunting-ground of the individualistic capitalist, cannot but follow suit in time.

The result will be a happy one, not only for the employee but for the employer too. Such an economic spread will liberate the worker from the grinding anxiety in which he has lived in the past, enable him to tackle his job, not out of a fear of starvation, but because he finds he can do it well, and enjoys trying to do it still better. At the same time the capitalist, whose accumulated wealth will be limited, will be freed from the temptation to give way to an ever-increasing greed. It will be a happier world all around.

13

Even now, in our present conditions, the average man and woman could make far better use of that marvelous economic phenomenon, insurance, than he customarily does. There might well be a much freer use of endowment policies to protect the head of the family, policies for the education of his children, insurance against accident and sickness. In insurance we have ready to hand an unofficial coöperative system which can relieve the ordinary man of much of his financial anxieties. Freed from strain and anxiety, he would find himself able to develop his capacities to the utmost, to enjoy life to its fullest, to give of his best joyously both in work and out of it.

Even leaving aside all the many factors of our present-day economic conditions, let us assert again that there is not an individual living who is unable to release himself from commercialism. The possibility lies within his own power. It is a state of mind, an attitude to life which can be achieved by any of us; and which if achieved is conducive not only to happiness but to true prosperity. It has been proved and is proved again daily in the lives of many. I believe it to be a universal law: that generous service, a heart free from greed, can always prevail. The reader may accept this idea and make what use of it he will.

"No man's fortune can be an end worthy of his being."

—Bacon.

We begin life joyously expressing our inclinations and our talents. Soon life puts responsibilities on us. Chief among these is the necessity for earning a livelihood for ourselves and our dependents. Now comes the great test. Shall we let the need of money grow into a greed for money which usurps full sway over our lives until all spontaneity has died, all inspiration is stifled? Shall we seek only pecuniary recompense from life? If we do so we are lost souls. We have lost the art of living creatively, which was our birthright. Let us rather live as the child and as the genius live, working from within outwards instead of being driven from without in. Let us express ourselves, giving the best in us that is uniquely ours to the world, believing that in doing so we shall not only attain our highest development but that we shall also win all that we need of earthly reward. Let us prove the truth of that cryptic saying—"Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven, and all these things shall be added unto you." It is by growth from within out that the flower attains the perfection of its fruit. Let us grow to the full stature of free manhood and find that, in so growing, we have obtained the only kind of success which can bring contentment.

CHAPTER 13

Bovine Souls

THE trouble with many people is that they have bovine souls. Like cows, they graze in the pastures of life with heads down, wholly absorbed in satisfying their immediate personal needs. Nothing else means anything to them. Such people are neither selfish nor unselfish in their general attitude towards life. They are as innocent of intent to harm as of energy to do good. They are easily regimented, content to stay where they are put, and they take everything as it comes without thought or initiative—unless something that seems to threaten their peace and physical comfort momentarily shocks them into startled action.

The sort of life these cow-like people lead, wholly wrapped up in the narrowest daily needs of self and family, produces the mentality satirized in *Babbitt*. These people are not by any means peculiar to this country. Europe with its bourgeois mentality, its self-satisfied and narrow-minded crowds, has nothing to boast of over us in this direction.

It is instinctive in all human beings to seek comfort and security first, and then, when these are found, to fall into the error of complacency, thinking themselves well off just because they are secure

and comfortable. Stagnation is the result. There is nothing so dangerous to the individual, or to a nation, as this dull combination of security and complacency. For such, it seems that hardship and need come suddenly as a blessing, as a tonic, to startle them out of their bovine, less-than-human stupor.

This narrowness of mental horizon which we call "small-town mentality" is by no means confined to the small towns. The bovine inhabitants of big cities, self-satisfied and smug, are innumerable. Social approbations, the tendency for groups to huddle together chiefly for the purpose of patting each other on the back, are common failings everywhere. Yet human beings nowhere need to live on this low level. What can awake us to more creative living?

2

Listen critically for a moment to the sort of conversation going on among adults. What do we hear? The same old complaints about servants, the same old self-flattering anecdotes about employers or fellow-employees, descriptions of illnesses or operations, mulling over of bridge or golf triumphs, narrow-minded gossip about relations and neighbors—such are the topics that fill the major portion of conversation between ordinary groups of people who think themselves quite average human beings and better than most.

How limited the outlook! If we analyze the conversation further, we shall see that each individual

is really talking about himself, boosting himself, even when he is running others down. Each of them is entirely egocentric, wrapped up in his own little troubles and triumphs. Seldom do we hear abstract ideas discussed. No one seems to have any real concern with what goes on in the world or any real interest in the broader problems of humanity. No one seems to want to learn anything or broaden his outlook. "Me and mine" is the only topic that really interests these bovine souls.

We are proud to believe ourselves citizens of the most highly educated country in the world, rich in schools, in public libraries, in first-class educational centers, in fine magazines. A good many of us reflect precious little credit on it in the way we talk. The besetting sin of narrowness, of self-centeredness, of provincialism and a parochial outlook afflict the lives of all too many of us. Even the most highly educated classes are guilty of this—sometimes they are the worst of all, so satisfied and secure are they in the enjoyment of ample means. Their outlook is about as wide as that of the cow grazing in its field.

3

What new force, what inspiration can be brought into the lives of people to broaden their horizons, to lift them to a higher level and greater multiplicity of interests, to give them an appetite for nobler motives and loftier goals?

Schools must be the starting-place for this widening of outlook. Here is where the mind can be prepared for expansion, infected with large enthusiasms, excited by the vast problems which confront not only humanity in mass but the individual too. Here is the proper ground for sowing the seeds of social and coöperative effort towards the bringing about of better human conditions.

Education properly speaking is not an affair of mere inculcation of knowledge, of so training children to pass examinations that, once they leave school, they have a chronic aversion to all the half-digested matter that has been stuffed into them. Education should orient the child towards life and conduce to the development of his inner resources. School is the place where children should acquire a real, personal interest in the universe we live in, a many-sided cultural grasp with interests branching out in every direction, so that graduation from school or college will mean not the end but the beginning of a rich intellectual approach to life.

But what really happens? In the elementary school the natural aptitudes and enthusiasms of the children function fairly well. Through the junior high school, with its liberal methods and broad program, interests continue. It is in the senior high school, with its stereotyped curriculum and methods, that intellectual enthusiasms die out. Youth goes to college already trivial in mental outlook, hard-boiled and bored about learning, and insulated against any real chance of becoming infected with intellectual enthusiasm.

The average high school is, in my opinion, definitely stultifying to the mentality of many students. The curriculum is mainly disciplinary. Many of the teachers lack the intellectual richness and interest which are necessary if they are to fire their students with enthusiasm. The pace is set for the mass. Political and private interests often prevent the administration from enforcing scholarly standards. The intellectual life of the classroom is on a low level and the students leave school utterly bored with education, glad to escape a routine which they accept as being necessary but are glad to dismiss as past. Is it not natural enough that in after life they should continue bored with and impervious to the wider and higher ideas which, they were convinced at school, are dull and useless? Those among them who possess a real capacity for intellectual enthusiasm may leave school definitely injured. Too often, there is nothing in the conversation or the general attitude to life of their home-folks to correct the harm that has already been done. So another generation of bovine souls comes into the world.

4

Think of what could be done, by different methods, with youth at this impressionable age! If sociology, economics, modern history, were taught in a different way they would cease to be regarded as dull and necessary "subjects." They would excite the real interests of the young student, and give him a

splendid orientation in human society. The world around him would become full of meaning and he would be fitted to understand it and his place in it. In the same way by a really inspired and broad treatment modern science would cease to be just one more "subject" and provide a brilliant illumination of this marvelous natural environment into which we are born—this Cosmos which is the theater for our activities.

Every individual, before finishing his secondary education, should be versed in what for lack of a better term I choose to call "universe knowledge." He should understand the universe he lives in. He should understand, so far as we can surmise it, the origin of this planet on which we live and its gradual evolution from flaming star-dust to that crisis at which life entered existence. He should have an appreciation of the chemical composition of matter, the physical states of matter, the structure of the lithosphere, the composition and nature of the atmosphere, the nature of space. He should have followed the swift transitions of life on this planet, from unicellular organism to man.

Then he would be prepared to follow man in his varied career upon the planet, agglomerating himself into groups from family to nation. He would grasp the many grave problems of the human race, would understand the basic causes of war, racial prejudice, religious feuds, the gulf between capital and labor. He would see the import of economics.

Just as in the study of science there can be no

strict division between astronomy, chemistry, physics, geology and biology, he would see that there are no water-tight compartments between sociology, economics, political science and history. The former group between them enable us to understand the universe about us; the latter group throw light upon man's existence in relation to man upon this planet.

I have myself tried this system of instruction upon quite young children. I have given courses in sociology, in evolution and in general universe knowledge to classes of children from ten to fourteen years of age. They were not only enthusiastic, they were keenly intelligent about it.

5

It may be objected, how can all these subjects be taught in the brief span of secondary education? The answer is that in order to achieve it, education must be approached from a new point of view. The sciences must be taught not, as formerly, as highly specialized courses of pre-professional type. They must be more descriptive and broader, and more brief as to details. For example, in the science laboratory the work will have for its purpose an introduction to the scientific understanding of the natural world. It will not attempt, as now, to prescribe detailed scientific experiment such as might prepare the scholar for advanced investigation in highly specialized fields.

This would require, as one can readily perceive,

a type of teacher unlike the type which exists to-day. It demands not specialists in one subject each but men and women of the broadest culture and interests who can deal earnestly and creatively with universal science; who can marshal facts for the dramatic purpose of arousing youth to wonderment and a better understanding of the universe he lives in. These teachers will not only impart learning, they will stimulate an active curiosity and zeal on the part of the students.

A gifted science teacher of this type, Bertha Stevens, of the Avery Coonley School in Downers Grove, Illinois, has been giving universe knowledge in a remarkable way to quite young children, aged seven to nine. Her methods and experiences with these children she describes in the most inspiring and illuminating book on science teaching I have ever read.[1]

"In these early years," she says, "the purpose of awakening thought can be served, and the way should be prepared for vitally interested application, later, to more intensive study. Children at this age are truth seekers. They are simple, direct and eager; with freshness and expectancy they approach a world sighted but unexplored. . . . These children should have concrete experiences, in universe and earth study, which can point them to underlying truths. They should gain the knowledge that can

[1] *Child and the Universe,* by Bertha Stevens, The John Day Company, New York, 1931.

make them aware of the universe as a great, progressive, coördinated system. They should become acquainted as far as possible first hand, with part after part by an orderly plan; and they should understand the relation of these parts to the whole."

Universe knowledge, then, can be brought to children at a very early age, and repeated in cycles of ever-broadening spirals, until the years of specialization are reached. Youth thus educated will have broad interests and keen perceptions.

6

Recently I had an experience with a youth of seventeen which proved both deeply interesting and encouraging. This boy had failed in many subjects in the first two years of high school in a mid-west city. He had gone then to a well known military academy where, after eighteen months, he was still having difficulties. As he did not care to go to college, I was given a free hand with him.

He was not, as one might suppose, below the average intelligence. He was actually far above it. He was a very gifted youth. I soon found what was wrong. The methods of teaching to which he had been subjected had stultified him.

The program I followed with him for five months was as follows. We dropped Latin and took up French in a really practical way, eliminating grammar and composition and focusing our whole attention on translation. In addition to oral translation,

I asked him to bring me a page of French each day written out in colloquial English. Though he was quite gifted in English expression, the first translations he brought were stiff and pedantic. The reason for this was that for two years he had been trained to use no word in translation which was not in the vocabulary at the back of his book. After about two weeks of practice he brought a translation which was in natural, easy-flowing and lively English. I commended him for this piece of work. From then on he loved his French, worked hours at it and got real intellectual pleasure out of it. We shall see shortly how useful this proved later.

The next subject we concentrated on was modern history, leaving his textbook somewhat aside and studying history in the making as reported in our local newspaper. He began to find history interesting. He had probably never realized before that history had anything to do with him or the world he lived in.

Sociology was introduced to him with Elwood's *Modern Social Problems*. He liked this so well that he would break off our discussion on the subject most reluctantly when the dinner-bell rang.

He had been studying economics from a textbook designed to kill all interest in the subject. Since we were under no obligation to respect this dismal book we made progress in our own way.

One day this boy made an important discovery. "Why," he exclaimed exultantly, "to-day I had this topic in history, and the same in sociology and now

here it is in economics!" Well might he exult, for the majority of educators never permit their students the slightest inkling of this great and inspiring truth: that all learning is one. Perhaps they themselves are not aware of it. If they were, they would hardly divide human knowledge and instruction, as they do, into hard and fast compartments, so that the student can seldom see the underlying import of the facts that he has to memorize without understanding.

My youthful friend himself asked to add some knowledge of psychology to his curriculum, and this admirably filled out his survey of human life. I should have wished to precede this with a year of "universe knowledge," but that, of course, had not been possible.

What was the result of my procedure with young Bob? He decided that he wanted to go to college. Then when he returned to his native city (for I was not able to give attention to him the second year) he did such good work at his own high school in the first few months that, despite his previous bad record, his principal offered to certify him for college if he continued his high marks. This he succeeded in doing.

Now he began to wonder if he would not find the freshman year at the average college rather uninspiring. Since he had a small patrimony awaiting him, and some income available at the will of his trustees, he decided to spend a year abroad. His first thought was to get a job in Paris. He wanted

to learn more French. (Note the consequence of his having found French enjoyable!) Finally, however, at my suggestion he decided to do special work at the University of Geneva. In order to profit by the lectures, which were all in French, he did three hours' work a day in French at a special school.

Was this enthusiastic boy really the same backward student whom we saw eighteen months before, failing in most of his subjects? It was the same youth, but how different! Formerly, he was living in the midst of a fog, an intellectual mediocrity, not even interested in what he was doing. Now he had tasted the joys of self-development, of creative endeavor. He saw clearly and he had a purpose. He had ceased to be a bovine student.

After he came back to this country, he entered a college of business administration where he passed a successful year. Among other activities, he helped to organize a little society of progressive youths who met monthly at a round-table forum presided over by a professor or an invited guest.

I am confident enough to believe that nothing this youth does in the future will be commonplace. He has learned to think for himself, to enjoy learning, to derive pleasure from his own mental activities and to acquire an appetite for cultural living. He has escaped the dangers of mediocrity.

"Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm."

—Emerson.

Why rest content with the narrow outlook over the pasture on which you happen to be grazing? Beware of letting the material necessities of life absorb your attention and deaden your interests. Otherwise you are no better than the animals, who also contrive to get a living for themselves and their families. You have the precious gifts of intelligence that you may look beyond your physical boundaries, cultivate your hidden capacities, and grasp something of the vastness, the unity of life. Therefore develop yourself instead of vegetating. Acquire large enthusiasms. You will be surprised to find what exhilarating happiness comes to you, how much more worth while life seems.

CHAPTER 14

Inertia

THE most important factor in producing any forward movement, any action or progress, is desire. Where there is vivid desire, life becomes intense; lethargy and inertia vanish; mediocrity is banished. But in order to desire worth while things strongly enough to pursue and achieve them, we have first to conceive them. This requires both knowledge and imagination. Once we visualize vividly something that seems desirable, we are on the way towards realization.

The most hideous thing about ignorance is its persistence. People who are intelligent and interested in life become more so with the years. The stupid, ignorant and dull person, remains just as he is. His imagination is never stirred by the vision of what he might attain through self-development. Born into a dull environment, untouched by that restlessness which characterizes the intelligent person, such individuals find no stimulus powerful enough to lift them out of the slough of despond. And unless they are attacked by active personalities who know how to sharpen up these dull intellects, they remain forever in bondage to mental inertia.

Our mountain whites, a race fundamentally en-

dowed with shrewd native intelligence, had in their isolation degenerated into ignorance, illiteracy, cultural inertia, until startled out of their sleep by humanitarians desiring to bring them the stimulating benefits of education in its broadest sense.

So in China, the mass education movement of James Yen is suddenly arousing millions of peasants from their age-long sleep, bringing the means to help them not only in the realm of literacy and knowledge, but in earning their livelihood and in fitting themselves to new demands that life is making of them.

2

The first task of the salesman and of the whole complex business of advertising is to awake the public imagination to a concept of what the goods offered might do in the way of bringing comfort or pleasure. A picture must be evoked. A desire is awakened, and if the desire is strong enough then there will be action. The sale will take place.

We might apply the procedure of the salesman to the planning of our own lives. The first step is to visualize, to form a clear and vivid picture of the thing we need. From this, desire grows. Desire in time culminates in a sudden decision. Now we can act.

But between the initial desire for something different, something larger in our lives, there is the period of flowering when with new energy we must analyze our situation and envisage all possible

means of accomplishing our desire. We should think over all the possibilities which may lead to change and progress as thoroughly and patiently as a Sherlock Holmes examining clews.

When the will to improvement has urged our imagination for some time in this search among various possibilities, it often happens that the real solution of our problem flashes upon us in the form of an intuition or "hunch." Just as with scientists and inventors seeking to perfect a discovery, who after weeks and months of conscientious effort and research "suddenly" find the right answer to their problem, so the individual in search of an answer to the problem of how he shall live more abundantly "suddenly" finds the solution.

What is this strange power that comes to our aid when we are exerting ourselves to the utmost to find the means to attain to our ends? We may call it intuition, we may call it the subconscious mind, or we may call it inspiration from the Platonic "world-of-the-ideal." No man living but knows of this strange power invested in us when we are truly set upon progress or achievement. We suddenly see the way clear before us; our desire blossoms into action.

How often, too, when we have conscientiously striven towards a goal, apparently in vain, opportunity is brought to our door wholly unexpectedly! It is as if our earnest desire for greater achievement has set mysterious powers to work, all unsuspected, in our behalf. How often have I myself heard men and women relate how their first real step to success

seemed to be thrust upon them, at the very right moment! Yet these same people had prepared themselves beforehand, by their attitude toward life to take advantage of the "miraculous opportunity" when it occurred. And on the reverse side of the medal, we all know how true it is that opportunity does not come to visit those who sit idle, "waiting for something to turn up."

3

The old saying that "God helps those that help themselves" is as true as any natural law. It is only when we overcome our inertia and start ourselves in movement that fortune takes any step in our direction.

Time and time again in my own experience desired goals have been attained in what seemed the most surprising way, as though Destiny had taken a willing hand. Yet before this could come to pass, the conditions that govern the law of achievement first had to come into existence. First, a careful analysis of the existing situation; second, a realization of the need for change and a definite sense of the direction in which change should occur; third, desire nursed for weeks, months or years; finally, awareness and action when opportunity suddenly occurred.

Not everything that we desire for ourselves can come to pass. If it were so, we should be magicians indeed. We may just as well take it for granted that life will continue to give us healthful doses of frustration: will continue to throw obstacles in our path, as it has always done. None of us can see into the future. All of us, if we are living on a creative level, almost unconsciously adapt ourselves to life. And we can well afford to give the same effort and the same persistence in pursuing our desires, irrespective of the outcome. For no effort is ever wasted, though the future may find us reaping the benefit of it in fields quite other than those we had dreamed of.

After all, the most important thing in our lives is not the goals we attain, but the development that grows from our efforts towards achievement—in the heightened imagination, the enriched experiences and wisdom, the strengthened will, the casting out of dullness and mediocrity and lethargy from our natures; in the habit and enjoyment of continuous and creatively applied effort. These things are more valuable and give us more joy than all the possessions in the world.

4

How cheerfully we should accept and even welcome the knowledge that some frustration is bound to be our lot, that some obstacles will always confront us, may be better realized if we look over the wider achievements of the human race. The effects of environment and of climate on national character are well known; and we find that it is under what seem like harsh circumstances and in difficulty that races and individuals alike attain most.

In warm and luxuriant climates where two months' work will often suffice to supply a whole family with a year's necessities, where only the simplest shelter is needed, where no rigors of climate demand expense of fuel for heating—how could one expect to meet with much energy? Southern races are notoriously prone to inertia. Day-dreaming rather than action seems inevitable where there exists a warm and enervating climate, a rich natural environment and a natural ease of livelihood.

The effect of climate on one's temperament is astonishing. I myself find it impossible to be as strenuous either physically or mentally in Washington as I am in New England. The climate of Constantinople—where some years ago I spent three years as teacher at Robert College—I found really detrimental to mental energy. During my first year I revised the course of English instruction at the College and wrote many articles for American journals. The second year I did far less. The third year I accomplished nothing outside the necessary daily routine. I had fallen into the Turkish habit of frequently indulging in *bir az rahat* or "taking a little rest." The most intense pleasure in life seemed to be the pleasure of repose as soon as the needful work was done. I have written more fully of this experience in *The Real Turk*.[1] So well known to the college authorities was the effect of Constantinople's climate upon Americans that all professors were sent back

[1] *The Real Turk*, by Stanwood Cobb, Pilgrim Press. (Chapter I, Character and Climate.)

to the States for a year's vacation at the end of every five years. And each year the majority of the staff sought a bracing and mountainous climate in which to spend their summer vacation.

When we realize that the northern races, living under what seem like far less favorable conditions, have evolved furthest in our present civilization, and when we recall how in race after race a period of ease and success without action has inevitably been followed by decadence and overthrow, we cannot but recognize the need for obstacles and difficult conditions to provoke the highest human achievement. And to turn from the wider realm of national well-being to that of the individual, I might well quote the opinion of a brilliant and experienced educator who has said that, all other things being equal, he considers that the young student in possession of a private income or certain of inheriting great wealth is handicapped almost tragically along the road to self-development and creative attainment. For such a student lacks a real stimulus to enable him to overcome inertia.

5

All of us have visions of what we might accomplish. All of us dream of achievement. The danger is that such dreams tend too often to be substitutes for action. They serve as an anodyne instead of a stimulus. The modern psychologists have laid bare the limitations and perils of such soothing and

self-flattering mental processes as the day-dream and the wish-fulfillment dream by which we try to pretend we have already done what still lies before us, achieved all that is still left undone.

Nevertheless it is by drawing upon our inmost selves, by listening to our hidden dreams and wishes that we shall enrich our lives, if we can transmute these dreams into action and give concrete expression to them. The task that we must set ourselves is to harness our dreams to reality and make them productive.

It is from the stuff of which dreams are made that all the great musicians and writers, the philosophers and inventors have drawn forth those richly creative compositions, those discoveries, the fine books and profound truths for which we revere their names. They were not content, as the idle and uninspired individual is, merely to dream on. From the inexhaustible treasures of the human imagination they knew how to draw forth and make concrete and communicable what was within them. Had they been content merely to amuse themselves with day-dreaming they would have been nonentities.

In the same way, though in lesser and less creative degree, many men and women from the same inner compulsions and dream-wishes have derived the energy and inspiration to interest themselves actively in the arts, in creative activities by way of a hobby, in club work or in charitable enterprises. Unable, many of them, to see a way clear to further

progress in their actual careers, they have turned instead to an enrichment of their leisure.

I know, for instance, a man in the government service in Washington who, with no great future before him vocationally, has made himself into an excellent Shakespearian scholar-amateur. He lectures before clubs frequently, and has recently been appointed lecturer on Shakespeare at a Washington University.

In every neighborhood there are men and women who are well satisfied with an ordinary success in their careers, which bring them a modest livelihood and an adequate exercise of their powers. Surplus energy which remains, ambitions still unsatisfied, they have harnessed to some hobby or interest through which they find a fullness of life and unfailing delight and stimulation. Such an individual was the French artist Rousseau, called *le Douanier,* a petty official who spent his Sundays in painting. Obscure and humble in his lifetime, but happy in having this outlet for his imaginative life, Rousseau painted pictures which are now ardently collected by wealthy art-lovers.

It is by no means necessary, in order to live a rich and fundamentally successful life, that we should all strive to rise to a dominant position in our careers. By overcoming inertia I do not at all suggest that it is necessary for us to keep pepping ourselves up to the point of super-salesmanship. It is something far different I propose. In order not to be a slave to inertia, in order not to be one of

those bovine souls, what we do need is to take frequent stock of ourselves, to make a sound judgment of our abilities, our ambitions, our powers and to strive to give them expression. There are an infinite number of ways in which we can keep ourselves lively-minded, can live creatively.

"What men have done can still be done—
And shall be done *to-day*."
—George Barlow.

Our greatest foe is inertia. This negative force which holds all the material universe in its grip and affects even the lives of the plant and animal world, would keep us too on the level of the rock, the tree or the animal if it were not for another dynamic and restless force within us. This spirit of man, mysterious in its nature and its source, manifests itself as *will*. By its means man develops his intelligence and then applies that intelligence to the conquest of his environment. His only limitations then are those he passively accepts. His fiery will can break through every barrier. Every door opens to this talisman. Yet mere wishes and discontent and dream-desires do not bring this escape from slavery to *circumstance*. Face life, analyze your situation,

clarify your vision and your desires and focus your will upon the worth while goals. Then you will rise triumphant over life and leave behind forever that servile self.

CHAPTER 15

Lotus Island

WHEN Ulysses was adventuring back to Ithaca, he came across many dangerous situations, and one of the most threatening of all was the sojourn at Lotus Island. Here his men, learning the pleasures of the poppy, cared no longer to struggle on. Nothing Ulysses could do stirred them. His only recourse was hastily to gather together such men as had not fallen under the spell and fly with them from this lethal paradise.

For all of us in the adventure of life come similar temptations, similar threats to energetic and creative living. They are doubly dangerous because most of them find entrance into our general scheme of existence so insidiously.

There are four directions in which man chiefly tends to waste his powers and to neglect a proper self-restraint, with the result that he dissipates the vitality which would otherwise be available for creative effort. These four are sex, food, stimulants of all kinds, and amusements. All these, wrongly approached, become anodynes that lull the self to brutish sleep in its cage, the body. Taking their proper part in the cycle of life, they maintain the wholesome rhythm which is essential for human

activity. But when indulged in wrongly and to excess, they shut us in behind the walls of the flesh, preclude us from the inspiration and outer stimulus that lies everywhere without us ready for our reception.

Those human beings who abandon themselves to the drugging delights of Lotus Island become gross and sluggish, in appearance and in soul. Their faces become blank, disconsolate, or coarse. They live in a negative state. They have no radiance. They are striving to absorb from life, but they give nothing out. One sees the faces of such people by thousands upon the streets of our cities.

2

Gandhi relates how, married in boyhood, he found his life on the verge of ruin from sexual excess. He called into service such will power as remained to him and reorientated his life and his energies, with results that have since made him famous the world over.

Children of the tropics come to maturity earlier than those of the northern climes, and during their early school-days make quicker progress. At adolescence they fall behind. Mental activity seems to dwindle. Why is this? Their vitality is canalized into the sex-life and their principal expression is on that plane. According to Katherine Mayo, sex is the curse of India. In spite of the books which followed the publication of her *Mother India* by way of rebuttal, there remains all too much evidence that life

in India is kept at a low level and debilitated, not only by climate and other conditions, but by sexual excess.

It is noteworthy that the great treasures of India's classical days, its works of spiritual and metaphysical wisdom, sprang from a very different sort of attitude and inspiration. In classical times it was the custom for men of the Brahmin caste, after their families were grown, and while they themselves were still in the prime of life, to retire from the world and devote themselves to solitary meditation. Thus the flower of the race was saved from the perils of sex-debilitation, so fatal a cause of degeneracy after the prime of life. It was in celibacy and solitude that the vast spiritual treasures of India—the *Upanishads* and the *Aranyakas*—were brought forth.

We might well remember, also, that the most primitive and savage races have well understood the need for regulating and governing the sex impulse and its expression. The most complicated system of laws and tabus governs the sex-life of savages.

At the other end of the scale of civilization, and notably among the northern races of Europe and in America, it is customary for a long period to intervene between adolescence and the normal age of marriage. That period is, among the foremost races of the world, one of intense effort on the part of the individual, of daring and of achievement. That is the time when careers are founded, and wide culture assimilated. The greatest flow of vitality is centered

on physical and mental activities and the expression of sex is sublimated. The whole concept of sex has, among all progressive peoples, been infinitely enlarged by considerations of chivalry and romance until the very desire itself has become fraught with countless refining and inspiring ideals that transform the sex-impulse into something in no way comparable with the soul-deadening pursuit of gratification. We, to-day, regard the individual who permits himself to be side-tracked into any such pursuit of anodynes as an individual who falls short of true civilization.

3

A wrong attitude to sex has proved again and again to be one of the chief factors determining the downfall of great civilizations in the past. Especially was this true of the Arab race. Sensuous by nature, the Arab lives temperately in his desert life. It is affluence and the luxury of urban life that tempts him into gross sensuality. Thus successive waves of conquest came forth from the hardy and temperate Arabians of the deserts, only to fall more or less swiftly into decadence in the rich cities of the plains. Such was the end of the old, vanished civilizations of Babylon, of Chaldea and of Assyria. Later the great Islamic conquerors sank into a sensual decadence in the rich cities of Bagdad, Damascus, Cordova and Seville.

All through history, indeed, we see great civilizations that had become tainted with sensuality falling

before hard-living and temperate races, like the "barbarians" who swept down upon Rome. It is noteworthy that those nations which to-day are world-leaders in achievement and progress have been and are still the most restrained in the expression of sex—the Germans, the Americans and the English.

Sex expression has its own immense value for the individual. It can be an important factor in creativeness, an inspiration and delight on the mental plane and the spiritual. It becomes dangerous to the highest development, it saps energy and deflects us from our course only when we approach it in the wrong way and let what might be one of the most refining and inspiring motives become instead a deadening of our inner powers. It is the wrong use and the abuse of sex which endangers our well-being, not its use.

4

Next to sex wrongly directed, gluttony is undoubtedly the greatest source of lost energy and of waste in life.

Food should taste good and meals should be a pleasurable part of everyday life to all healthy people. Something is very wrong otherwise. What is important is that our habits of eating should be simple. We should be intelligent about food and make a point of seeing not only that our diet is conducive to pleasure but also to health, vigor and achievement. Nowadays a sound understanding of

what to eat and why to eat it is easily enough acquired by everyone.

It is really most important that we should eat only when we are hungry. To take food frequently or to consume it in great quantities creates a strain on our vital forces—it is draining away our strength, not increasing it.

Of late, business men have realized that light lunches are not only sensible but actually necessary if they are to do important work in the afternoon. Gone forever are the days when men thought it necessary to stuff themselves with all kinds of solid and rich dishes at midday. Nowadays the sensible habit of most of us is to find out what suits us best, what diet gives the best results in the way of clear-headedness and energy. There are men who find that no lunch at all is the best for them. I know one business man who used regularly to consume quite a meal in a restaurant every day but who, now that his daily lunch consists of two oranges, finds himself much healthier.

When in Constantinople, I was surprised to notice how little food business men there eat at lunchtime—a bowl of rice-milk pudding with a roll, followed by a water-ice and a cup of Turkish coffee; or a small quantity of chicken-breast grated into a sort of blanc-mange; or a bowl of *yaghourt* (sour milk) with stewed fruit on it—a very palatable and wholesome dish. The main meal of these men, taken at night, is also simple. The average Turk does not eat much meat. In the opinion of an American dietitian

who visited Turkey during my stay there, the Turkish diet is the most wholesome he has come across in his travels.

With this frugal diet and their simple living, the Turks remain perfectly healthy without taking exercise. That such a thing as keeping perfectly healthy without exercise could be possible was at first incredible to an American Y.M.C.A. gymnast teaching at Robert College—it was his creed that man must exercise to keep healthy. After he had lived in Constantinople for two years, and had by then observed for himself, he admitted that it was quite possible for a man to keep perfectly fit without taking any exercise. It would not be possible, naturally, on the sort of diet most of us Americans are accustomed to. Most of us eat very much more than is necessary and a good many eat far more than is wise.

I should be inclined to say, indeed, that the first step any individual should take who is anxious to put himself on to a more creative level of living is to consider his diet. Let him consult his appetite instead of following the usual customs and habits of those around him. At the same time, let him also take the trouble to find out what sort of minimum diet would best suit him, with regard to his physical build, his occupation, his age and so forth.

It is only necessary for us to consider the very natural disgust we feel at the thought of people who give way to gluttony for us to realize how deadening a weakness this can be—the typical glutton

looks coarser than any animal and the human spark is hard to seek in his face. Happily, the number of those who over-indulge themselves in food or in drink is very much less than it was formerly. We have already reached a better understanding of these matters.

5

On the subject of alcohol and narcotics of all sorts, there is so much controversy that I feel I had best leave a more detailed consideration to the good sense and discretion of the individual reader. It is safe to say that any excess in these directions so quickly teaches its own lesson, so plainly marks those weak enough to have fallen a victim to abuse, that a real desire to regulate one's life and to produce the utmost in the way of personal achievement will quickly check any wish to play with such temptations.

6

A fourth channel of wastage in our lives, though innocent enough in appearance, is much more closely connected with the foolish use of stimulants than we sometimes realize. Our so-called recreations may become utterly disastrous to progress and achievement. Wisely and well approached, our recreations are the means by which we infinitely enrich our lives and through which we may express untold creative effort. Just any recreation, however, will not do that.

Much of what we human beings do under the

name of amusement and recreation is unworthy of the name. It does not "recreate" us at all. It becomes a clog on our creative urge, a deadening of our vitality. It is an excuse for being as dull, as uninspired as we possibly can be. Especially the amusements which people in urban life seek are too often either in the nature of drugs or of unwholesome stimulants. They bring no refreshment, contribute nothing to the enrichment either of body or soul, and far from renewing the force of the individual they aid in dissipating whatever vitality is left after the day's work.

Look at the faces you see in so many so-called places of amusement! What do you see but boredom, weariness, vacuity and dullness? You might imagine the people there were suffering some form of punishment, for all the evidences of happiness, gayety, or spontaneous bubbling of spirits there can be detected among them.

There are the people who play too much bridge or other games, night after night; and those who can think of no other way of passing an evening but to go to the movies, and who while they are there sit in a sort of drugged stupor like mindless effigies, incapable of critical effort or even of true appreciation which, after all, does call for mental alertness and activity. There are those who resort to light and exciting reading—which can be as much a drug addiction as anything else. After an evening spent in any of these ways, life is not refreshed. The individual is more jaded and stale, more stupefied at

the end of the period of worthless excitation than at the beginning.

A good deal of the conversation which people conduct is also a sheer waste of energy. No ideas are exchanged. Most of it is gossip, often actually malicious, and too much of the rest mere boring and thoughtless babble. It is especially noticeable that women in warm southern climes, where physical inactivity is the rule, talk excessively fast and inanely. The only form of activity of which they seem capable is this light and meaningless talking. Who is the better off for it? What gain is there to anyone?

7

It is not for us, however, to tabulate what people should avoid in life or to lay down rules as to what activities are wholesome and helpful. The pastimes, indulged in to excess or in the wrong way, which we have mentioned above are all of them capable of being a means of mental stimulation and delight and of providing true recreation and a way to more creative living. Bridge is an excellent mental exercise; the movies can have a broadening effect as well as providing both real enjoyment and an occasion for the exercise of the critical faculty. Books of all kinds offer us countless treasures—some widen the individual's experience of life vicariously, others truly divert us, and there are those which both entertain and instruct. Conversation can be raised to the levels of an art.

In indicating the temptations of Lotus Island it is only possible here to outline the general principles that should rightly govern our appetites and tastes; the details are for the individual to fill in, each according to his own understanding of himself and his desire to attain a rich level of fulfillment.

Each must live his own life as experience and wisdom dictate. No person is going to listen to what the moralists say until he has brought himself, by his own experience and out of his own desire, to conceive and grasp their ideas himself. Then, perhaps, it is helpful to find that one's own experience is reënforced by the experience of others. It is in such a fraternal spirit that we offer these suggestions for richer and more wholesome living.

"There is not a little generalship and strategy required in the managing and marshaling of our pleasures."

—C. C. Colton.

We need to refresh our lives with pleasures and recreations. Both should supply a reinvigoration of mind and body for the purpose of further achievement. But life is constantly tempting us to foolish dalliance endangering our vitality. It is important not to permit ourselves to be side-tracked and de-

vitalized by a wrong approach to pleasure and to recreation. Ask yourself whether it is your purpose to deaden and stupefy yourself or whether you would not prefer, by adopting another attitude and clarifying your true goal, to seek instead fresh inspiration and reawakened vigor.

The genius—the artist and creator—may not be a saint, but very noticeably he does not let his senses and his ambitions be lulled to sleep by the drowsy charms of Lotus Island where, if a man lingers too long, he forgets even that he had a great purpose ahead of him.

It is not Anthony, full of promise though he was but helplessly captive to Cleopatra's wiles, whom we count among the world's great men; it is Cæsar, master of himself and of his destiny, who became a hero and the type of great achiever.

CHAPTER 16

The New Education

IT is remarkable how closely the steps taken in progressive schools to-day coincide with the suggested development of the genius within us which we are considering in this book.

The new movement in education, sometimes called Progressive Education [1] has for its aim the all-round development of the child—on the physical, mental, emotional and social planes. It sees the child as essentially a creative being with innate powers seeking expression. Its chief aim is to aid those powers, rather than to follow a hard-and-fast curriculum which imposes itself from without on the child. Its slogan is: Release the creative energies of the child.

Let us see in some detail what the progressive school does for the child and what results it attains in its effort to awake the child to more creative living.

2

Children in progressive schools are encouraged to work as far as possible for self-chosen goals. In some of the more radical schools, an attempt is even

[1] See *The New Leaven: Progressive Education and Its Effect Upon the Child and Society*, by Stanwood Cobb, The John Day Co., New York, 1928.

made to base the whole curriculum upon the choice of the children themselves. If a child does not want to study a particular subject it is free to absent itself from classes; if it wants to take up some other subject or interest, it is encouraged to do so.

In those schools where a standard curriculum is adhered to, the children are given a certain amount of power to make selections, enough at any rate to make the academic work seem partly, or even largely, a matter of their own choice. Even in the necessary drills, every effort is made to awaken interest and arouse a desire to tackle these drills.

As an example of the method which may be adopted with routine drills to make them of interest to the children, I have used the following procedure for reviewing the dates of American history in the eighth grade. The children themselves pick out the dates which they think are important and which they feel are the ones to be learned. We then compare lists and from these compile a group list. This list, embodying as it does the actual convictions of the class of the dates which should be known by them and by any educated person, is then studied with an earnest effort towards mastery. If the test does not provide satisfactory results, the children ask for another opportunity to perfect their own knowledge of these important dates.[1]

[1] I need hardly state what a wide and intelligent grasp of American history itself was acquired with real interest and understanding by this method, so unlike the parrot-learning of lists of dates that mean little or nothing which the old method encouraged.

In the same way in most of their studies the children feel that they are expressing their own desire for academic knowledge. Seldom if ever do they undergo the experience so common in the old-type school, of being forced to tasks they resent and for which they see no purpose. Surprising though it may seem, as much academic work gets done—often considerably more gets done—with this new approach to learning, and at the same time it is being carried out in a way completely satisfying to the pupils. They are working as artists do, for ends which they appreciate and desire.

3

It is fairly easy to see how in arts and crafts children can be given opportunity for free expression. In the progressive schools the methods of teaching these subjects are being revolutionized. In painting, in modeling, in rhythmics, in poetry and prose-writing, the first approach to achievement which the children make is wholly unhampered by criticism or any laying down of the laws of technique.

Remarkable things are accomplished by children under this method of free expression. They choose subjects that might well seem impossible even to older and more trained persons. For instance, I once saw in Girard College a water-color painting by a boy of eight which was unforgettable. It depicted a group of children in an electric car on their way to an excursion. The sheer daring of the attempt itself and the effectiveness of the final result were alike amazing. The figures were not perfect, the drawing was crude, but the painting achieved perfectly the impression of a rip-roaring, hurrahing crowd overflowing the confines of an electric car in motion. It *was* a spontaneous work of art, not a meaningless exercise or copy.

A teacher in my own school, who had had no art-training and could not draw herself, was successful in producing some most unusual work from her classes. I remember especially a set of crayon drawings to illustrate Longfellow's *Hiawatha* which were exceptionally good. An eight-year-old boy entirely without training in art drew trees with amazing obedience to the laws of perspective—evidently his visual memory alone, working subconsciously, had served him well.

A really epoch-making collection of art-works by children in progressive schools was reproduced, in color, in a special number of *Progressive Education,* April, 1926, under the title "Creative Expression through Art." In an article in the same number, "Art in the Life of the Child," Florence Cane, gifted teacher of art in the Walden School, says: "Man is born with the creative impulse and this impulse may become the means of revealing and developing the self . . . Infinite care must be taken to do nothing that may stifle this creative impulse. The greatest harm that teachers of art can do is to let the acquiring of technique postpone or exclude creation."

Examples of original, creative work by children in music and in poetry are given in other issues of *Progressive Education* — "Creative Expression through Music" January, 1927) and "Creative Expression through Literature" (January, 1928).[1] Highly significant collections of children's verse can also be found in *Creative Youth* by Hughes Mearns and *Singing Youth* by Mabel Mondidier. Hughes Mearns, who has become famous for the high quality of poetic expression he is able to educe from children, claims that the natural expression of the child is genuinely poetic and would remain so if not obstructed by adult criticism and by standards imposed upon the child from without.

By far the most important factor in securing spontaneous art-expression from the child is perfect freedom for the child and a sympathetic attitude on the part of the teacher and of fellow pupils. No attempt at expression should be ridiculed or scorned. "By doing, we learn," John Dewey says. When the children throw themselves eagerly into these new self-chosen channels of expression they show us at once how creative all humanity might become under the right conditions, and especially in the absence of unsympathetic public opinion.

Children at progressive schools dare to be themselves. They find no cause in their school environment for trying to be, or to appear, anything else.

[1] These three numbers of *Progressive Education,* together with a dramatic number, are now republished in one volume by The John Day Co., under the title: *Creative Expression.*

In fact, the whole activity of the school is planned so as to be in every possible way conducive to freedom and expressiveness. The sincerity with which the child conducts his intellectual, his active and his emotional life under these conditions is one of the most amazing results that the new education achieves.

4

When children are working for self-chosen goals, they work with enthusiasm. There is a natural eagerness in children which can be directed into useful channels in any type of school, but the most significant thing about the progressive schools is that in them the school-day of the child becomes a joy to him, and all work there is done with zest. This, I think, obtaining as it does in all the groups of children throughout a school, is unique in the history of education.

The enthusiasm of such children applies alike to their studies, their craft work, and the sports in which they all take part; and it is shared by the teachers and the whole school staff. Many of the children are so eager to be at school that they come long before the opening and stay as late as they can after the daily session has closed. Some even begrudge the length of the Christmas and Easter holidays. The eagerness these children bring to their work enables them to attain a mastery and depth in it which is, under other conditions, never reached by children of the same age.

When they take a subject in history or in geography on which they want to make research and upon which they intend to report, they read many books, go to the sources themselves and adopt a thoroughly scholarly method such as is followed in the graduate work of a university. How is it that young children are able to work in such a scholarly way? It is because they are doing what they like and like what they do. The gain both in actual knowledge and in mental grasp resulting from such work must be obvious.

The result of this daily life of enthusiasm is undoubtedly to make school work wholesome for the child. The restraints and compulsions, the deepening of hidden complexes which were inevitable under the old standardized and disciplinary type of education do not exist for these children of a new educational world. They are happy, zestful and poised.

5

When children work under such influences and conditions, their power of concentration is enormously increased.

No doubt most of us have at some time or other seen a child carrying out some distasteful mental task, and have realized how small is the amount of concentration a child under such conditions gives to his task, in comparison to what he is capable of giving when he is doing something he enjoys. He dawdles, looks about the room, fidgets, and obstinately wastes time. He is not interested; he does not elect to concentrate. You can lead a horse to water but you cannot make him drink. In the same way you can make a child sit down to his books but you cannot make him absorb knowledge from them.

Visit any progressive school and you will witness something very different. Here you will find children so absorbed in their work that they hardly notice the entrance of a visitor—more than likely they do not notice it at all. Some are at their desks deep in study; some at carpenter benches engaged in handicraft activities; others may be sorting materials for a project or checking up results. You may pass from group to group without disturbing their concentration. Like artists at their tasks, they are pleased to tell you what they are doing if you inquire, but they do not seize the opportunity to make of the arrival of a visitor an excuse to stop work.

When one realizes how little a great many children accomplish in school in proportion to their actual abilities and power, it is easy to see what immense progress will be made in heightening the cultural level of the human race when children—instead of wasting as much time as they can, and often feeling a real distaste for study—do all their school work with joyous concentration because their hearts as well as their brains are engaged in what they are doing. Such children will be infinitely better equipped, and their school activities will have achieved the desired task of developing them into

far more useful and highly cultivated human beings, than anything that was possible under the old systems.

6

Children in progressive schools express themselves freely. They do not feel that continual restraint which shuts down upon the personalities of children in other schools, and they are not subjected to standards unnatural and inappropriate to their stage of development. They do what they want to do because it interests them, and it is good.

They are spontaneous and sincere. They are free to question either the teacher or the textbook and to form their own opinions along lines different from the opinions of either. In the friendly and sympathetic atmosphere of their classrooms, with teachers who are comrades and guides on the path to learning, they do not hesitate to admit their ignorance or their failure to comprehend points that arise in any lesson.

It is well known that since, in the ordinary school, the main object of the children is to receive passing marks, they quickly learn to be insincere and specious. Their questions, their hand-waving, their answers, their attempts at recitation are all designed to have an effect on the teacher. They become very adept at sizing up the personality of their teachers, and at adapting their efforts and their academic work to the tastes and requirements of the pedagogic autocrats who rule them. As they continue along

their educational life, this scholastic insincerity becomes more and more pronounced. At the same time, sincere attempts at scholarship on the part of students in high school or college are often met with disapproval by their companions. This atmosphere is so strong in some classes as practically to make any real intellectual effort impossible.

Progressively educated children do not become insincere and cunning and sophisticated in that way. They remain what all children and young people are by nature—mobile, expressive, enthusiastic and delicately responsive to environment. The expression on their faces shows this difference from ordinary children.

7

It would be impossible to overestimate the importance, in the education of a child, of this constant atmosphere of sympathy and understanding. Such a social and intellectual attitude and atmosphere is especially helpful in developing the genius quality in man. The absence of such an atmosphere, while it may not be an insuperable obstacle to gifted individuals, does become a real barrier, cutting the average person off from full and rich development.

Progressive schools fully realize the importance both of atmosphere and of environment. The architecture and the interior decoration of these schools is carefully studied. The life of the child, so far as possible, is lived against a background of beauty and spaciousness. There are cozy nooks where

small groups can retire for either group or individual work. There are delightful libraries where they can browse. The out-of-doors is immediately accessible from each school and much time is spent in the open air.

In many progressive colleges to-day the so-called honor system prevails in the junior and the senior classes, as first instituted at Swarthmore College. Here students of sufficient average rank in freshman or sophomore years are freed from class attendance. They work at scholastic projects of their own choosing and meet with the professor for consultation, generally in his own home. Imagine such a group meeting in discussion before a cozy fire on a winter's evening—that is what education really ought to be!

At Rollins College, where one of the freest educational experiments with youth is being carried out, there is a "professor of books." This man, formerly a well known book publisher, receives students in his comfortable library. Here they can chat with him and with each other on literary subjects. Surely if books are to mean anything to youth, it should be on such an occasion and in such an environment.

In the progressive schools, the children decorate their classrooms themselves, design friezes for the walls of rooms or of corridors.

They keep animal or bird pets, either in the school room or the school yard. They create the liveliest interest, and the responsibility for caring for them is helpful to the development of character.

As a stimulus to creative work, the children see everywhere about them in the school rooms, the art work and scholastic work of other children. As with the children who freely visited Cizek's studio and achieved there the most remarkable results in art work, we invariably find that such an environment is most stimulating.

8

The atmosphere in the progressive school is at once harmonious and peaceful. There is no gulf between teacher and pupil, no hidden hostility. Sincere comradeship between teacher and pupils and between the pupils themselves is evident. It is really astonishing to see how a child coming into such an environment from another school will blossom and expand. The old inhibitions and fears vanish. The child ventures to be himself. The soul peeps forth.

The children really appreciate their opportunities. They know that the school exists entirely for their benefit.

Since their natural curiosity and thirst for mental adventure is never checked, they pursue their studies with a quite considerable and fairly conscious effort towards self-improvement. They rejoice in their growing knowledge, in their improved technique. They indulge in intellectual hobbies. These in turn become a further source of enrichment for the community life of the school. In the school assemblies each child demonstrates or lectures on his own par-

ticular interest or gives a musical performance for the benefit of the group.

Here we have already a perfect model of what, in the adult world, a social group would be, where each individual strives to enrich himself and the gains thus made are expressed for the enrichment of society as a whole. In order that this complete cycle shall find fulfillment it is first necessary that there should exist a group socially trained, tolerant of performance that is not the best, helping the individual towards self-expression by means of sympathy and appreciation.

Such a group the new type of school creates. It is the nearest to being a demonstration of a little kingdom of heaven upon earth that I know of in human society.

9

One especially important result of such a development of the social being in children is the awakening of their interests, we might even say the rousing of their consciences, to the wide problems that confront humanity—problems which can be solved only by corporate effort on the part of man.

Children are actually thrilled to face the problems of capital and labor; of production and consumption; of finding substitutes for the fuel and power-supplies for the future, for minerals and for lumber fast being depleted at the present enormous, ever-increasing rate of consumption. The possibility of discovering a new source of power, unlimited in

supply, available at low cost stimulates their imagination. At the same time, by the way in which they are encouraged to consider these problems as they present themselves, they fully realize that school-learning, far from being a dreary task imposed on children irrationally and to no purpose, actually is providing them not only with the means of grasping "what life is about" but also with the equipment for grappling with its problems. In the school room they no longer feel themselves cut off from the world. On the contrary, there they find by infinite discoveries and their own unquenchable enthusiasm, how much both collectively and individually it is their own concern.

The futility and the wickedness of war is easy for such children to understand. In their straightforward way, they refuse to accept the paradox that while it is our duty not to kill our fellow beings in time of peace it becomes our duty to do so in times of war.

At an early age, they find themselves already partners in this great enterprise of ours—The World, Inc.

10

The educator has not fulfilled his duty when he has educated merely for present needs. Humanity is not a static thing. It is changing constantly. Among the possible and potent factors of change is education. Great power and responsibility rest in the hands of those who would develop youth. How

can they accomplish the tremendously vital task of training the personalities under their care, not only to meet life as it is, but to help make life on this planet what it should be? Here we come to the end of the domain of knowledge. We cannot teach the young what should be done to solve the world's great problems, because we do not ourselves know. We are doing all in our power if we clearly indicate the problems. The rest we must leave, in faith, to the potentiality of youth, to those new powers which are ever unfolding in humanity.

We cannot see the solutions, perhaps, but there will arise in the coming generations more potent, more discerning souls. Else were our planet but a cemetery of dead hopes. It is for us to prepare the way for such creative souls; to aid them, not to hinder them with our traditionalism. If we cannot give them formulas and directions for the new achievements, we can give them inspiration and power. Let us hand over the living torch to new, fresh runners who will push on to heights barred to our failing feet.

And just as those religions have become most powerful which have demanded most from their adherents, so that education will be most successful which places the greatest responsibility upon its novitiates. Such responsibility changes the whole attitude towards study. It gives a motive for earnest and resourceful work. It makes youth an active participator in the empyreal enterprise to which he is committed. By as much as the soul of man is created

to aspire, to serve, by so much is education more zestful and joyous when it lends itself to great issues.

II

What, would you imagine, is the psychological attitude of children in these progressive schools? It is, naturally, a victorious attitude. The child who experiences the refreshing happiness of adequate self-expression can never feel discouraged. He is creating something daily and enjoys the sense of victory through his intellectual pursuits.

At the same time this does not mean the child acquires a victorious attitude at the expense of others. It is a complete realization of self that gives it to him. No triumph over others can create this feeling or give the same deep, quiet satisfaction. Indeed, to those socially trained in compassion and in sympathy and justice towards others, there can be little enough satisfaction derived from a victory gained by competition which, while it elevates one to a position of grandeur, automatically degrades the others to a position of humility.

It is true that the old jungle-man in us finds huge elation in such a type of victorious competition. But the truly evolved man seeks self-expression and satisfaction along totally other lines, through self-development and creativeness on the one hand and coöperation on the other.

Consequently the progressive school seeks to minimize, even wholly to eliminate any competition

between individuals. No prizes are given. Marks are recorded, to aid the school and the parent, but are not displayed before the children to prod them to competitive effort. There is no list of names in accordance with grades. There is no public prominence given to degrees of scholastic rank. In so far as possible each child is protected from a sense of failure. At the same time, the children themselves are delightedly aware that each and all of them have individual capacities. One child may be very adept at making things, another at devising ways out of mechanical problems, another at applying the principles of mathematics, yet another at prose-composition—and so forth.

The absence of the competitive spirit by no means implies that the children are intellectually mollycoddled. Those who are not doing the best work of which they are capable are faced with the fact. They are aided to achieve the utmost possible. But it is with themselves they compete, not with others. By means of daily graphs, they follow the progress of their own work and its development.

In much of the work done, the aim is for the group as a whole rather than for the individual. Group projects are encouraged, such as the writing and staging of a school play or pageant; the building, painting and decorating of a Viking ship or of a doll house; the making of a school garden. Here again, each individual finds his own outlet, and can carry into effect his own especial talent. In these projects the knowledge acquired in the necessary

routine drills proves its practical uses to all concerned. Mathematics and art work, history and the sciences—all prove of use in the most delightful way, and stimulate natural enthusiasm for more and yet more knowledge.

In such group efforts every care is taken to awaken the social instincts. The children find their keenest joy in the progress of the group project as a whole. Like good players on the athletic field, the victory they seek is for the whole group. They do not try to play to the gallery. Their satisfaction springs from the realization of power growing within them, and not from a feeling of domination or of relative importance or eminence obtained over their fellows.

12

Fortunate indeed is the child who gets this new type of education. In such schools we see each child growing and expanding from day to day, developing along all the diverse sides of his being.

Such children are, as has been said, easily to be distinguished among other children. Their faces are more expressive. Their manner is confident and well poised. They are sincere. They feel at home in the adult world because they have never been divorced from its interests and problems, because they have never known on the part of adults any other attitude than that of friendliness and comradeship. They have not been conditioned into fears and restraints.

These children are what all geniuses are, too—naïve, sincere, enthusiastic and fearless.

"It is the business of the school so to engage youthful interest that youthful energies will flower into creative channels."
—George A. Dorsey.

A great and marvelous transformation is taking place in the education of children. Activity and self-expression, not passive receptivity, on the part of the child is the new ideal. "Release the creative energies of the child" is the slogan of this new movement in education, with the complete all-round development of the child as its goal. This development is stimulated by the arousing of broad interests on the part of the child, by preserving its natural curiosity and its desire for knowledge, for growth and for achievement. It is permitted and encouraged to work as the artist does, from within out. Therefore such a child finds joy in its work. It is living daily on the creative plane.

This is the ideal life for children, as it is for adults. Now our task is to consider how this full and joyous expression of the individual's innate capacities can be carried over into adult life. If it proves possible, man will be a very different being

and live much more abundantly and joyously than he does to-day—just as the children in progressive schools are different and even look different from those undergoing the standardized educational processes.

CHAPTER 17

The World of the Adult

IT is a thousand pities that those of us who are adults to-day were deprived of the training and development which the new education is providing for numbers of children. The innate qualities of genius and inspiration within us would be infinitely more pronounced and better expressed if we had had similar opportunities.

But taking life as it has come to us, how can we make the most of it? How can we make it significant both for ourselves and for society? "The first and commonest of all arts should be living, and in it everyone should be an artist." [1]

So that we may become artists in life, the first and most important step is to see whether we can make our daily work express our real tastes and abilities. It is worth considerable sacrifice if we are able to arrange to do the work we truly desire to do. Certainly the battle for existence has to be fought, whether we enter the arena grudgingly and half-heartedly or not. But it can become an exhilarating sport when we fight it on ground we have chosen, along lines that our own abilities point out to us!

[1] *Singing Through Life with God,* by George Wharton James, Radiant Life Press, Los Angeles.

How tragic that so often it is through inertia, arising out of a wrong understanding of the situation, that so many persons drift into uncongenial employment and there remain, when it is vitally important that the working day should be—a million miles removed from the tedious drudgery it seems to those who have not found the means of expressing themselves—actually conducive to happiness!

2

There is one thing we must never doubt—that *we can accomplish anything we feel the urge to do.* I am not speaking of idle dreams, wandering discontents and wishes here, but of a deep and personal desire springing from the core of one's being. If we heed its commands, it will never mislead us: it will carry us to the summit of our highest ambitions. As it grows more intense, it will plainly indicate to us what our vocational path really is, what work we are best fitted to do and consequently what work we shall find real happiness and fulfillment in performing.

Once there was a girl, child of Polish and Russian immigrants, who tended sheep barefoot in the plains of Alabama. The human environment about her was ignorant, peasant-minded. But as she tended her sheep, she dreamed of the day when she, too, would be wise and full of knowledge like that professor who had recently lectured in the town near by. He appeared on her limited horizon like a strange deni-

zen of some other planet. The world from which he came—the world of books and of learning—was the world to which she aspired. Her playmates laughed at her ridiculous notions and pointed her out in scorn as the girl who wanted "eddicashun." Yet to-day that girl is a graduate of Columbia, the author of a well-known book on education and the brilliant editor of a widely read educational magazine. The urge within, and that alone, enabled her to span the huge gap between her background and her present attainment.

Let me repeat, we can accomplish anything we feel the urge to do. We all have within us the capacity to achieve what our souls desire. It all depends on the extent of our will power, and our ability to sacrifice unimportant things for the all-important goal. This alone is the measure of our achievement. No obstacles are too great. No matter what our past mistakes may have been, no matter how the false years may have misled and neglected us, it is never too late to start anew, never too late to attain to that complete expression of the self which alone makes for richly contented living.

3

It is not our present circumstances but our desire which governs the future. Provided our desire is vivid, and our will vital, we can at any time in our lives cease to be the slave of circumstance and begin to be master of our destiny. The story of the past is

filled with the achievements of men who only entered into their real life-work when well advanced in years. Julius Cæsar is perhaps the classic example of such late development. Man about town, profligate and bankrupt for millions, he was past middle life before he found himself and gave expression to his true Self at an age when most men think their time for progress is already over.

There are many other instances of a like change taking place late in the life of an individual, among all types of people—great reformers, saints, writers and artists. William De Morgan, the novelist, Gauguin the painter, are well known names in the list. Quite recently, a widely best-selling book, *Lives of a Bengal Lancer,* came from the pen of a man who after nearly twenty years as a professional soldier dropped that career to become an author.

I know a woman who, after long years devoted to expert mathematical computation, fell into unemployment in her fifties at the end of a long period of illness and nervous breakdown. She drifted about from one sort of employment to another, until already past sixty she found an ideal vocational outlet for herself. She opened up an entirely new field —that of lecturing to children in public schools. The way in which she presents the stories of great men in history as character lessons in self-restraint has been acclaimed as unique in this field. One might say that her real life's success is just beginning.

My own father, at the age of seventy, said to me one day: "Boy, I am looking forward to the next

twenty-five years of my life just as eagerly as you are; planning for it, living in the interest and hope of it." He spoke truly, for he had no sense of being in any way limited by his age, and his best days, as it proved, were still to come.

"What man has done man can do." There is no reason for any of us to make excuses that it is "too late," or to think that we are already past our prime. The doors of achievement are never closed at the command of Time. They remain closed only to those who have not the faith and the courage to knock until they open.

4

In choosing one's life work, it is important to study one's own temperament and habitual inclinations. We should never let ourselves be side-tracked into uncongenial occupation without putting up any resistance. Our own instincts are the best guide along the road to achievement. For instance, those who crave adventure and movement are by no means necessarily excluded from them in our present civilization. Indeed, the latest vocation of all—that of navigation in the air—is perhaps the most thrilling of any. And there are many other outlets for self-expression of the active and adventurous kind. Thus a friend of mine who was extremely fond of hunting and of outdoor life, with a particular interest in animals, served his apprenticeship in the game protection bureau of the Department of the

Interior. He became chief game warden of the United States. His progress did not cease there. Such was his love of nature and his interest in animal life that he felt impelled to set down in writing his many impressions and experiences. His articles and stories have met with favorable reception by the magazines; he is rapidly developing both literary ability and reputation, and has been offered the editorship of a sports magazine.

Among other outlets for people of this type there is forestry work, field work in agricultural extension of state and federal government, the collecting of specimens abroad for the department of agriculture, and many opportunities in connection with scientific exploration. For those who crave travel, there are all sorts of commercial posts in various countries and official positions in the consular and diplomatic service and the department of commerce.

What might seem like tremendous obstacles are overcome by those who really pursue their own desires. One college youth whom I met in Paris, finding that his funds would not permit him to stay as long as he wished, contrived to finance himself by guiding American tourists through the Louvre. An American girl in Tokyo whose funds suddenly gave out in the recent stock depression, felt that she could not bear to leave this foreign land which she had come to love. As she had a gift for hairdressing and had often done it for her own friends, she set up a beauty parlor for American tourists in Tokyo. This has become quite successful, and enables her to gain

a livelihood and remain in the place of her choice.

If, instead of adventure and travel and an active life, what we most want is to attain to a large income, then the wise course is to enter the world of business, choosing some field, not overcrowded by competition, where there are good possibilities in the way of future development. As an example of what may be done from the humblest start along such lines, there are Charles A. Stone and Charles S. Webster, who, when they were students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology years ago, decided very wisely that electricity had a great commercial future. They specialized in that direction. They were the first students to graduate in electrical engineering, and started out in jobs which gave little enough financial return. Living in the strictest economy, concentrating on the task they had set themselves, they gradually forged their way to their unrivaled position in the electrical and financial world to-day.

For those whose tastes are strongly intellectual, the teaching profession offers a natural outlet. The rewards as regards salary are meager, and even as regards social eminence are often limited in a society like ours, where wealth is what gives power and prestige. Nevertheless, it is a most satisfying profession for the man who, above all else, loves the things of the mind. Especially does it bring happiness and fulfillment if one loves contact with youth and feels it an inspiration to be granted opportunity to aid in the development of growing generations.

5

Often it happens that there seems to be no vocation which exactly fits the need of an individual. This is not a discouraging factor for an artist-in-living. On the contrary, he goes ahead and creates the job he wants. One ingenious man, for instance, not so long ago invented the business of making up slogans for industrial concerns. He went around the country, offering ten slogans for two hundred dollars to every imaginable kind of business organization. He was so successful in creating catchy phrases that eventually he came to earn an income of around one hundred thousand dollars a year.

Floyd W. Parsons tells us in his *Adventures of Earning a Living* of all sorts of original ways of making a livelihood. One man in New York fixed up a system of electric toy railroads in his basement, and makes a living by giving instruction on railroad work to classes from private schools. Another man with a mechanical bent devised a curious machine for exercising, stretching and developing the hands of musicians. So expert has he become that he can tell the kind of instrument a man plays merely by inspecting his hands. It is by no means unusual for musicians to pay him five hundred dollars a month to keep their hands in perfect condition.

The making of miniature airplanes is another of these new industries. Four million dollars is by now invested in this business. One firm manufactures air-

craft kits for the use of those who make miniature planes.

There are people both in this country and abroad who make a living by taking other people's dogs for a walk. But I think the most original line of business I ever heard of is that of a man on the Pacific coast who buys walrus whiskers and sells them to the proprietors of Chinese restaurants for toothpicks!

One acquaintance of mine manages a concern that teaches airplane navigation by mail. This seemed to me an incredible undertaking, until my friend, piqued by my skepticism, showed me the material they send out to their students and begged me to study it and see for myself that most of the technique of airplane management can be taught by mail. Arrangements are made with local airports so that students thus prepared by mail can get actual practice in the field.

Lack of capital need never be a real handicap in any enterprise of such a kind. If one has an idea that really contains something of use and value for humanity, one can always either borrow the necessary amount for a start from friends who have faith in one, or one can start in a very small way indeed and build up the business as it goes along. It was by the latter method that Alice Foote MacDougall, when she found herself suddenly a widow with two children to support and no income or life insurance, took to selling coffee and home-made candy around the offices of Wall Street. As soon as

she had by this means accumulated a sufficient sum, she opened a little coffee shop. Thus she continued until she had built up a chain of restaurants in New York and a coffee and tea business which includes the whole country in its scope.

Real faith in one's destiny, a real desire to achieve no matter on what level, will carry one to one's end. If the opportunity does not seem, at the outset, to present itself, then it is for us to create opportunity!

6

In venturing upon a new enterprise or in hewing one's way to success, it is quite apparent, I think, how much one is in need of a wide range of friends. The soundest piece of advice to give to youth might well be: "Make all the friends you can in every walk of life, in every age group." We might point the example of Franklin, who unhesitatingly sought those who had the power to help him along in life.

I do not mean, by this, that it will ever be admirable or, in the long run, even useful to be insincere or a social climber. It is on the contrary a question of using to the fullest extent such opportunities as come to you. A friendly attitude towards others creates friendliness in return. Remember, too, that men and women of real achievement whose advice can be invaluable to youth, and with whom it is always fruitful to associate, invariably enjoy and encourage the admiration and interest of young people. Do not be overbashful. Ask questions, seek

advice. Everyone likes to give advice. And men and women of real attainments out of their rich knowledge of life can give really inspiring advice to their juniors. There is no greater pleasure for the older generation than to help forward intelligent youngsters.

Great men of all ages—philosophers, artists, writers, statesmen—have always delighted to gather about them younger men and women who display promise. Fine and intelligent people know that they are thereby serving humanity, and therefore have no small envies or fears of being "used" or of having their ideas stolen. Learning and culture has often, indeed, been kept alive during the dark ages of history by this very instinct on the part of the ambitious young to seek the help and inspiration which their forerunners and elders can give them.

It is well known how often successful authors are hospitable to those who make a literary pilgrimage to their homes because of earnest admiration for their work. However busy they may be, they are always open to sincere admirers with the courage to approach them. It is perhaps less well known, but no less true, that such men go to infinite trouble to help with criticism and advice, and by more practical means too, young writers at the beginning of a career. Nor are writers alone in this helpful and cooperative attitude: the same holds good of the ablest men in all the professions, and in the world of commerce.

As for friendships among contemporaries, we may

profess to joke about the phrase so often used about "making useful contacts," but everyone in his own experience knows the advantages that come from just this thing—and knows, too, that it is seldom that the advantages remain on one side only.

7

Let us be assured that if, while keeping our goal always in mind, we begin by doing the first thing that comes to hand with earnestness and thoroughness—keeping our eyes open for every new opportunity—we shall move forward and on until at last we find ourselves doing the work we really love to do.

Edwin W. Broome, now superintendent of schools in Montgomery County, Maryland, was promoted to be assistant-superintendent straight from a clerical position. Though he had not had the educational training which normally leads to such a position as he now holds—he had not even had a college education—he seemed the best man to try in an emergency because he knew the administrative details better than anyone else. This was just such a chance as Broome had been waiting for, for he had secretly rebelled against the standardized methods then employed and longed to have a chance to introduce reforms. He pitched into his new work with real earnestness, while at the same time acquiring the necessary educational training at evening schools. So well did he train, so original and creative are his

methods, that he is now recognized as one of the outstanding educators of the country. He has helped to raise Maryland educationally from twenty-eighth to fifth in rank among the forty-eight states. When he speaks at superintendents' conventions, other men lean forward eagerly to catch every word he says.

8

In searching for a channel through which we can express our truest and deepest desires, it may be that we find that the right way is not through our daily work. However energetically we do our work, with no matter what enthusiasm we pursue the tasks that bring us our livelihood, it is possible that for some of us the means to creative living is not here. If that is so, at least the hours outside work are ours to do with what we will. By utilizing our leisure to develop and express our creative abilities, we can amply compensate ourselves for frustration along other channels. Here is room for following our inspiration and fulfilling ourselves. We need only look into the life-histories of eminent men in many walks of life to feel convinced of the possibilities that leisure presents—great success came to many of them solely as the fruit of well-used "spare time."

If we feel that we lack the requisite degree of education, there is endless opportunity for pursuing our intellectual tastes and improving our minds. Extension courses at universities, public lectures, libraries lie open to us. Cultural magazines and the

radio bring their offerings of knowledge and culture. The newspapers themselves, intelligently read, will provide us with a breadth of knowledge which no lazy college graduate could equal.

Once more, it is important to remind ourselves that education does not end at commencement. As the word itself might suggest to us, often—in the widest sense—it only begins there. What we have done before is merely a preparation. Life itself is a splendid teacher, and the means of increasing our intellectual attainments lie everywhere about us.

The movement for adult education is making headway everywhere. In England, it has for some time past achieved wonderful results in serving the needs of those who, possessed though they were of high intelligence, had been deprived of the opportunity for higher education in youth. The avidity with which the English working-class has seized this opportunity has proved beyond doubt the native capacity of the human race for self-improvement.

In our own country, adult education has been considered rather as extending the culture of men and women of fairly good education. Some universities go out of their way to provide their alumni with means of continuing their cultural development. They prepare syllabuses for directing the reading of alumni, and some of them also offer either summer courses or a week of intensive work in the middle of the year specially designed for the alumni.

One interesting example of the innumerable educational opportunities which can be provided for the

public is shown in the program of the Extension School of Adult Education of New York University. These courses are offered at various centers readily accessible to the population of greater New York. The following description of what this Extension School has to offer is most tempting: "The Extension School of Adult Education offers courses for those who have completed their regular education . . . but know the advantages of being well-informed. These courses do not call for entrance requirements. They are—An Introduction to the Music Dramas of Richard Wagner. An Approach to Shakespeare. Abnormal Psychology. Some Problems of Modern Social Life. Orient Culture. Contemporary Literature. Problems of Philosophy. Problems of World Government. What the Modern Writers Are Doing. A Survey of Symphonic Music. Psychology To-day. Social Science Series. The Modern Poets. Philosophy of the Modern World, etc."

In the United States, many members of the group which would be deprived of higher education in England have managed to work their way through college. It is calculated that the enormous amount of thirty millions is earned annually by self-help students in this country. Every university has its employment bureau which finds work for such students. In addition, many students think up devices of their own for paying their way. At my own college, Dartmouth, famous for the number of its self-help students, a boy who had worked as a barber before coming to college set up a barber shop in his room and earned his way along by cutting the hair of his college mates. A country boy made money by selling apples which his father shipped from the farm.

When I was doing graduate work at Harvard, I found an amusing diversity of jobs. One led me into the beautiful homes of Back Bay, circulating a petition to save the trees on Commonwealth Avenue. Another job was that of checking the number of passengers who got off street cars at certain stops in Cambridge, as a guide to the Boston Elevated Company in fixing the places for the stations on its new subway.

9

We should never forget for a moment that there is no such a thing as lack of opportunity for self-culture. We do not need even to look back along the past to the cramped beginnings of such rich careers as those of men like Dickens—a poor boy in a factory—and Lincoln, on the farm, to remind ourselves that there are no obstacles too great, no conditions too unpromising for the man who really desires to develop his innate powers. All around us to-day are men and women who have achieved much from little. If we remain where circumstances put us, "the fault lies in ourselves not in our stars." Study Shakespeare's tragedies and you will find that in every case the human failures result from faults or limitations in the characters themselves. The world's

greatest dramatist knew thoroughly the occult laws which govern human life, and the Shakespearean men and women stand out as builders of their own destinies.

We may well draw inspiration from considering the careers of men and women of our time who have from small beginnings striven successfully to develop themselves; but we must not think that we ought to try to make ourselves into lavish imitations of them. Each human being knows his own desires, and is inspired to unique activities. The individual himself knows what he wants and why he wants it; he himself is the best judge of his own goal and alone knows where happiness and fruition lie for him.

The real value of biographies is the evidence they provide, of *the belief each individual has that latent within him are unique powers*. In no case has a man become great merely by trying to be "like" another great man. Greatness rather is achieved by the development of this *unique* thing which is the genius each one of us possesses. We thrill at the adventures and the progress of the great men whose lives we read, chiefly because they strike in us a responsive chord, as we realize from their example that it lies in us also to struggle, to overcome difficulties, to push on to that ultimate success which we visualize for ourselves and of which we alone are the true judge. The genius within us is similar in kind to that of the great ones of the earth, though lesser in degree. As they lived richly and expressively, so should we live.

In reading of them, we feel an inspiration as of intimate companionship with genius in the throes of creation. This very feeling of exhilaration, this breath of air from a higher altitude comes to us as evidence that we too can climb, along our own self-directed path; can be creators, and can truly and fully play the part of man.

10

When we sincerely listen to the inner voice, we draw on unfailing wisdom. Our judgment is not wrong. We know that it does not so much matter what we want to do, as that we *want* to do it. It may only be that—content enough with our present method of earning a livelihood, and yet not judging this to be our supreme achievement, we harness our hidden energies and release our highest desires in other directions during our leisure hours. And so, instead of jogging alone like some wretched animal in a treadmill, we find whole worlds of interest, new fields of endeavor continually opening before us.

A woman of my acquaintance, not a college graduate, possessed of scanty education and having a large family of children, managed to pursue intellectual activities by dint of much reading. She was already over fifty when she became interested in the Baconian theory. After reading many books on the subject she became convinced that Bacon wrote the Shakespearian plays. She studied indefatigably. She read all the history she could lay her hands on deal-

ing with the Elizabethan period and the lives of all those mentioned in the Baconian books—Queen Elizabeth, Bacon, Exeter, Burleigh, Leicester and the rest. She became an authority on the subject. Her ideas may have lacked balance, but they certainly did not lack zeal nor was she short of material in an argument. People of far greater intellectual and educational attainments than this woman could not refute her conclusions, for they lacked the highly specialized knowledge she had acquired. She was asked to lecture on her subject. Her days were not long enough for further study of this fascinating interest of hers. Her intellectual life became richer with every year. Until the day of her death at the age of seventy-three, life held real romance for her because she believed that Francis Bacon was the author of those plays which in wisdom as well as in style surpass everything in secular literature unless it be the wisdom of Plato and of Aristotle.[1]

II

The man of achievement plans his days so that no time is wasted which could be devoted to the fulfillment of his destiny.

Act yourself as if your life were important and it will become so. Plan each day as do those who are achieving great things, and you will achieve more, and more significantly, than you now do. You will

[1] This woman was my mother; and one of the most fruitful acts of my whole life was choosing to receive life itself from her.

find life growing richer and more full of meaning. You will not ask to be freed from the struggle of life: you will ask for more life, more responsibility, more opportunity for creativeness.

I cannot imagine a better remedy to suggest for those who are either temporarily or profoundly discouraged than that they should read the life of Noguchi [1]—a characteristic genius of the highest type. Let them follow him from his peasant origin in the fields of Japan, handicapped by low birth, poverty, ignorance and with a maimed left hand. Now he strives for an elementary education. Now one of those opportunities which are never lacking comes his way—he is made drug-boy to Dr. Watanbe, and decides that he is going to be a doctor and of use to mankind. He works his way through a private medical school. He makes friends who pay his fare to America. See him now in Philadelphia, almost at the end of his rope, winning as if by magic the friendship and patronage of S. Weir Mitchell and becoming his laboratory assistant. See him, after a year of work in the Staatens Serum Institute at Copenhagen, returning to America as assistant in the newly organized Rockefeller Institute. He publishes a work on the serum diagnosis of syphilis which makes the name of Noguchi run around the world. Follow him to the greatest triumph and achievement of his life—the discovery of syphilis as the cause of paresis and locomotor ataxia. Now the

[1] *Noguchi*, by Gustav Eckstein, Harper & Bros., New York, 1931.

peasant boy with the burnt hand is one of the world's greatest and most honored men.

As we study Eckstein's life of this remarkable Noguchi, we can see how genius achieves, not by continuity, but by a sort of indirection. It feels its way now in this direction, now in that. It apparently idles at times in complete irresponsibility, then dashes into self-chosen tasks with a white zeal that consumes days and nights like fire. It is impatient of interruptions, of social amenities which would deflect it from its path; it is careless of health, of money, of life itself as it wrestles from destiny the greatest boon existence has to offer—Great Achievement.

Such is the life of genius. We are not all supermen, it is true. But all of us have a capacity to achieve worth while things; and to all of us opportunity is given, if we are in the right way to seize it. If we remain inert and sluggish, we must not blame destiny but ourselves. Who among us could have been given a start in life less advantageous or less apparently strewn with opportunities than a Noguchi or a Lincoln? Such men who overcame all things teach us how to live.

"In what alone is ours, the living NOW."
—Wordsworth.

Suppose it is true that we find ourselves carrying on life in a world of limitations and constraints. Work seems mere drudgery. The hours of leisure stimulate us for the moment but fail to enrich life sufficiently, leaving us more exhausted, less well-balanced than we were. We lack the equilibrium which is the birthright of every living creature. Without it there may be pleasure but there is no true and refreshing joyousness.

What is the cause of so tragic a discrepancy between what we need and crave and what Destiny has assigned to us? Is something the matter with us? Or is the Universe unkind?

The fault is in ourselves, not in our stars. The law of existence is growth through struggle. It is true that life is full of obstacles, but they are meant to be overcome, not to stop us dead. It is not the fault of the Universe but of ourselves if the struggles we are faced with do not stimulate us to growth and development.

First make every effort to find the sort of work which is suitable to your powers, for work which is in some degree a form of self-expression can never become drudgery. It brings with it both inspiration and creativity. Then organize your leisure, use it to the best possible advantage for the enrichment of your daily living.

Never postpone effort or look forward to happiness and fulfillment in some hypothetical and distant future. Do not seek your joys in remote "castles in Spain." The only time we can ever possess is the present, the only locality we can truly inhabit with joy and satisfaction is the one in which we exist at the moment. However long we wait, the future forever becoming the *now* will still stretch beyond us; and however far we roam, the distant will have become the *here*. The wise man, the brave man, therefore says to himself: Here and now I take my stand. Here and now I fight to make life richer, nobler and happier.

CHAPTER 18

A Creative Society

NEVER has the world felt a need for original and creative thinking and living as it does now in this age of transition. Humanity as a whole is so accustomed to seeing the conditions around it changed and improved, has so thoroughly adopted the habit of moving on from one new thing to another, that it is nowadays ready and eager for any forward step. The whole world to-day prizes inventiveness and creativeness, the ability to assist the progress of the race.

With society as a whole so keenly appreciating, almost worshiping, genius when it is able to recognize it already expressed in achievement, nevertheless we still fail to appreciate that same originality and creativeness when it is as yet only latent and in embryo in the individual. One of the greatest present necessities is for society to develop the vision and sympathy necessary to enable it to detect genius that is as yet only able to manifest itself in aspiration and promise. It is at the early stage that talent most needs aid, just as it is by providing it with the necessary encouragement and help at an early stage that genius is best able to contribute its gifts to society for the good of all.

When a Lindbergh flies into fame out of the blue and astounds the world with an outstanding achievement, his great quality is immediately recognized and every possible resource is afforded to him as an aid to further achievement. This kind of recognition cannot, however, be regarded as a really magnanimous expression on the part of society as a whole; it is, rather, the obverse side of the same grudging, uncoöperative and selfish attitude which makes it neglect genius until, all unaided, it forces itself by its actions upon general attention. After the gifted individual has fully demonstrated his ability to contribute to humanity, it is mere practical common sense which influences society to put opportunities in front of that individual so that by further achievement he may contribute still more to human progress.

What is most needed is help and encouragement and opportunity for the young genius struggling to break through. We need to establish means whereby potential originality may enjoy the appreciation and sympathy it needs when its gift to the world exists as yet only in the realm of ideas. Society must develop more perception and faith, so as to guide it in extending those practical aids that the creative individual needs before he attains his full expression. As conditions are now, as a rule only the hardiest souls and the stoutest physiques manage to struggle through to success; and the more original their ideas and the more unique their potential contribution, the harder it is for them to find the right outlet. It is

not difficult to imagine how much ability is lost to society in this way, simply because of the obstacles against which the talented person has to struggle under present conditions.

All praise to those few generous and humanitarian souls who stand by to help the struggling genius in his chrysalis days—as Weir Mitchell helped Noguchi at a time when some said: "He is a genius," and others said, "He is crazy!" The world as a whole gains immensely by the contributions of such men as Noguchi. Surely it ought not so often to be left to the rare farsighted individuals to help them along when society itself reaps such rich results. It is society which should provide the help.

2

It is the duty and the function of society to envisage and to accomplish the fullest and most complete development of the individual. The haphazard generosity of single benefactors and patrons should obviously not be the sole means of developing the genius quality in exceptional youths. It is for society to search for and recognize exceptional gifts and talents, to offer the means and opportunities for their development. To this, if we are not to continue the present wasteful method, we must come. As H. G. Wells says: "The world of the future will hunt with a fine toothed comb for genius in its midst."

Already Soviet Russia is putting into operation a

broad national program of aptitude tests as the basis of choice for individual careers. These examinations are given as early as the age of eight, and are repeated from time to time throughout the school course. There are careful tests for musical aptitude, and those who receive high scores are drawn off into special institutions where they are educated entirely at the expense of the state, if that is necessary. "The choice of an occupation is already much more the result of these tests than of casual individual preference or family tradition," writes Bruce Bliven in the *New Republic.*

Such aid as is extended to the individual by society as an act of social responsibility and magnanimity will pay ample returns upon the capital and the effort invested, since the discoveries and the achievements of genius contribute immeasurable wealth to society. It is impossible even to estimate the degree to which men of outstanding talents can carry human existence along the road to progress and betterment. Any effort expended in assisting them is like putting water down a pump to bring up more water—one cupful expended to start the flow is repaid by copious returns once the machine is working. As the farmer plants in fertile soil a seed which bears a hundred-fold, so could society enrich itself by undertaking to develop the individual.

3

The new education, which especially fosters the creative side of the child's nature, is admittedly more expensive than the old. Yet how can we consider the cost in such a case, when expenditure has such a productive aim in view? All public expenditure is fundamentally nothing but community effort. We can build schools as magnificently as we choose once the conscience and the energy of the community are enlisted in such a noble effort.

The average expenditure per capita for education in the United States at present is about one hundred dollars a year. Now progressive Bronxville, New York, with its gifted Superintendent Beatty, spends three hundred and fifty dollars a year for every child in its city schools—so Colonel Devereaux, chairman of the school board, boasted to me. I asked him to what extent the people of Bronxville were behind Beatty in his progressive educational methods. "One thousand per cent!" was his reply, which shows to what an extent this particular community is sold on the idea of affording the maximum opportunity to its children.

The increased cost of progressive education lies chiefly in salaries for intelligent, cultured and creative teachers who must be more numerous than in the old type school with its forty or fifty pupils to a teacher. Progressive schools try to limit classes to sixteen or twenty pupils. It seems to me that here is a wonderful field for really humanitarian effort, and

an invaluable contribution to society on the part of married women or single women of means.

An enormous number of gifted teachers have, in this country, withdrawn from educational work when they married. When their own children grow up, or if they have few or no children, they crave again the rich experience of aiding child-life to develop and blossom. In many states at the present time they are not allowed to take positions in schools, because it is felt they would displace young graduates from the normal schools starting out in their profession. Yet it is undeniable—as to my knowledge at least one superintendent has freely admitted—that the married woman whose aim is not to make a living for herself but who really loves the work of education so much that she longs to return to it, is in the majority of cases a far more capable teacher than the young girl who, often enough, has taken up teaching merely as a handy profession for the moment but who really has her eye all the time on matrimony.

In any case, it is evident that among children to-day there is a vast wealth of human material that awaits and needs richer development than is forthcoming in our present-day stereotyped and overcrowded schools. The creative teacher is needed even more than improved equipment and buildings and devices. We must hope that society will feel the need to concentrate on this all-important work of adequately developing children, and that the means to achieve this will be found. Any effort expended in

this direction will have the finest and most richly rewarding results for society.

4

The effect of education, of scientific discovery, of invention and learning is cumulative. The speed with which humanity progresses is ever accelerating. It needs but a little more human ingenuity and scientific research applied to the problems of production and distribution for us to arrive at a point where mankind can be freed from the curse of labor, and all of us be in a position to earn a livelihood without undue constraint, pressure or sweat of brow. One single discovery that would give us cheap and universal power—more efficacious and potent than anything known at present—would when applied make such a change.

Already the worker toils for less hours than once were necessary to provide him with his needs. When the needed work-period is further decreased, the individual will find more and more opportunities for developing his real tastes and proclivities and for giving them some form of creative expressiveness.

5

It is often objected that children brought up to indulge their creative tastes will be unable to fit themselves into the industrial and commercial machinery of life existing at present. When these dis-

cussions about the new education arise, we must not forget that once the same argument was used when the then revolutionary suggestions were put forward for providing the workers with any education at all. It was argued that it would unfit them for work! Now it is undoubtedly true that children educated in a progressive way will, when they grow up, balk at many things which the individual to-day accepts submissively as inevitable. Is it not more than possible that this very power to object, this refusal to submit tamely to things as they are, strengthened as it will be by a vision of what life might be and ought to be for all of us, will operate like a new leaven in forcing a change for the better in human living?

It cannot be denied that many of our present human institutions are ill adapted for creativeness on the part of the individual. I conceive that in the future these institutions through which the human race expresses its energies will be utterly different. There will be more room for the expression of individual abilities and tastes. The sacred dignity of personality will be at once respected and fostered by society. H. G. Wells, looking ahead fifty years, foresees such a state of affairs:[1]

"Some fifteen or twenty years of growth, education and preparation there would have to be for everyone, and the rest of life would be free for creative work, for graceful living, for movement

[1] "What Will This World Be Like Fifty Years from Now?" *Liberty Magazine*, October 17, 1931.

and experience. . . . Every human being born into that world of plenty will learn from the beginning of the varied loveliness of the life before it, and of the expanding drama of human achievement in which it has to play its part. Its distinctive gifts will be developed. It will be taught another history than that of kings and conquerors and armies. It will do its fair and definite share in the productive or other necessary work of mankind, and for the rest it will be released to accomplish whatever possibilities it has of innovation, happiness and interesting living."

Not only will this future world afford more opportunity to each individual for creative living, but it will also provide that appreciation of originality and of creative work which is so essential for the encouragement and happiness of the artist and the creator. As Walt Whitman said: "Great poets need great audiences." An atmosphere of sympathy and appreciation is most conducive to creative effort. In the past, it has been left to private patrons—such as helpfully influenced the work, for instance, of men like Phidias, Raphael, Michael Angelo, Goethe, Beethoven and Wagner—to provide this stimulus of appreciation and help. Society itself in the future will become more sensitive and kindly towards individuals of outstanding abilities and great promise. It will possess the means and the ability as well as the will to be quickly perceptive of this genius quality in child and in adult alike, and will help talent to fruition by its attitude of appreciation as well as by direct practical assistance.

6

There is another influence which will render the society of the future far more conducive to creativeness in the arts and in the sciences than it is at present. I refer to the increased mingling of national and racial cultures which comes from improved means of communication and from a heightened sense of world-consciousness. We may anticipate that this cultural interplay and exchange will increase continually until what amounts to a world-culture will have been established, with the evolution of an international auxiliary language assisting in its spread.

When the many different racial temperaments and diverse types of inspiration combine to create universally, instead of as now in a national or even local way, there will be a new and powerful stimulus towards new artistic and scientific vision and achievement.

Already the familiarity which travel and cultural intercourse bring about, as each race becomes increasingly aware of the achievement of other races, has given rise to that imitation which is the sincerest form of flattery, because it is a fruitful and inspiring assimilation of ideas from the outside which act like an inspiration to the recipient. The Occident, coming keenly to appreciate the peculiar genius of the Orient, is increasingly influenced by its attitude to life, its philosophies, and at the same time is constantly affected by an increasing appreciation of its art-

forms, not only in the realm of the fine arts but also in applied art; so that an oriental sense of beauty has entered into our choice even of living quarters, of our garments and our table wear. At the same time, while the Orient is being influenced by occidental art-forms, it is even more strikingly occupied in absorbing the scientific culture of the West. Science and art are above race and creed—as we can readily appreciate when we again recall the example of Noguchi, the Japanese peasant boy, in coming to this country and making himself a foremost bacteriologist, sacrificing himself in the cause of Western science.

This merging of all the many racial and national cultures, which we foresee, will undoubtedly produce the greatest creative period the world has ever known. Every individual will have a richer and more expressive life, while at the same time there will be more opportunity, more inspiration, more appreciation for the exceptional individuals. It is a joy to conceive the wealth of human living there will be when the future brings about this reign of international education, culture and progress.

"An educated nation is one that has learned to pursue its interests to the point of a true and catholic culture, and to discover that every man has a contribution to make to the great society in the service of which he attains to freedom."

—Basil Yeaxlee.

It is an unarguable fact that if the individuals who compose society live more richly creative lives, society itself will in every phase and expression be richer and more creative. Already scientific research and the use of machinery are bringing vastly more leisure into our lives. It becomes, therefore, a sheer necessity for men and women to find ways of making adequate use of these leisure hours. Unless we employ them for the enrichment of our lives, this freedom will be only a disadvantage to us, a cause of degeneracy. The whole world is seething with unrest, with change, with the working out of new social and economic patterns. From this vast and fiery melting pot let us hope a new civilization will arise, with an increase of dignity, prosperity and happiness for the individual, together with the springing up of marvelous new expressions of culture and of genius for the common enrichment of our social living.

CHAPTER 19

Intuitions and Inspirations

GENIUSES are people of strong intuitions and pronounced affinities. In this respect, as in many others, they are androgynous, combining qualities which we usually regard as typically female with others that we consider typically male. We find in the poets especially—in Goethe, Shelley, Tennyson and others—a power that seems almost supernatural or prophetic, of intuitionally grasping great truths. These men from sheer poetic insight into life foresee discoveries and changes which only later, as the result of endless scientific research, actually come to be carried out in practice.

Intuition has long been realized as an important factor in life. It is a recognized trait of the feminine temperament, by means of which women seem able to arrive at just conclusions by some immediate process of a mysterious kind unlike the laborious process of ratiocination which the male usually follows, yet which is so clear-cut and directive that many men find it wise on their part to look to it for counsel and guidance.

In the dream-life of natural or of opiate sleep, and to a less degree in reverie and day-dream, we can admirably study the workings of the intuitive or

subconscious mind. Here in this strange world—where we see without eyes, hear without ears and travel without a body—we often experience memorable instances of mental creation which take place with incredible swiftness. We have mentioned elsewhere, in another context, one instance of the creative ability of the subconscious mind in the example of Poincaré, who would go to sleep with a mathematical problem unsolved and wake up with the solution clear in his mind. There are countless such examples. Robert Louis Stevenson found the material for essays and central incidents for stories in his dreams; Coleridge composed *Kubla Khan* in a subconscious state; Tartini dreamed that he heard the devil play a sonata which he himself afterwards gave to the world as his "Devil's Trill Sonata." This ability of the sleeping mind to work with clarity and unusual insight is well recognized in such popular phrases as "The night brings counsel," and the advice we give to others, as well as ourselves, when in perplexity, "Sleep on it!" Human beings have always felt instinctively this wonderful power within each individual which, if utilized and developed in the right way, will guide him unerringly towards his desired goal. The intuitions which come to us in sleep are of a kind with those "hunches" to which so many brilliant men admit.

Whence comes this inspiration and power which wells up from the subconscious depths? Is it from the deep self within us, possessed of greater powers

than is our conscious being? Or is it a mode of contact with some outside Force?

2

Plato's theory of inspiration is worth our consideration. Let us recall once more what this man—one of the three greatest minds that has existed on earth—believed to be the origin of inspiration. He tells us in the *Phædrus,* that the human consciousness of truth is an intermittent illumination of man's inner being from the archetypal world of Reality, where Truth, Beauty and Goodness exist in their sublime perfection. To men who are sensitive and susceptible, visions come from time to time from this creative world of Ideas. The poet and the seer are seized by a Force outside themselves, greater than themselves, and thus are able to pass on to humanity nobler visions of truth than are afforded to those who endeavor by mere ratiocination to puzzle out the nature of life and the meaning of the universe.

Modern philosophy has tended to discard the idealism of Plato and to substitute a rationalistic attitude towards the universe. Pragmatism, as proclaimed by James and Dewey, asserts that there is no Ideal world, that there is no perfection anywhere as yet in the universe, but that what we have in the present stage of our existence is a universe in the making. This universe is what we make of it, no more and no less.

So practical a philosophy has found ardent accept-

ance in a country like America, dedicated to progress through activity. The idea of a universe already perfect appears to the pragmatists as something displeasing, stagnant and uninspiring. To their way of thinking a universe which calls for heroic effort on the part of man, before perfection can be achieved, is better fitted to inspire courage and enterprise.

3

Is it not possible that there is truth in both concepts? Can we not conceive that there may exist *somewhere* perfection, though the material universe as a transitory phenomenal concatenation of events is still in the making?

Recent investigations and discoveries on the part of scientists, both in biology and in astro-physics, more and more bring us to a concept of a universe progressing definitely according to some plan. Among the men who influence us to adopt this belief, Michael Pupin vividly presents the idea, in his *New Reformation,* that there is an ever present, ever creative Force in the universe which harnesses chaotic multiplicity into a working unity.

May it not well be, therefore, that in the main the concepts of the idealists and of the pragmatists may both be true and capable of harmonious adjustments each to the other?

The universe is in the making—yes! We have both the opportunity and the obligation of perfecting it. But the Plan is there, already existing as a

potentiality and as a constructive force; and when we strive wisely we work in accordance with the blue-prints of Destiny!

4

If we accept this point of view, we might well consider the genius as the individual who is more responsive than others to the Creative Force. He is a sensitive mirror, reflecting light; a radio-set vibrating more truly than others to impulses from the Cosmos. Bucke suggests this in his *Cosmic Consciousness,* when he describes the lives of poets and thinkers whom he considers to have been inspired by contact with the Cosmic Force—such men as Francis Bacon, Isaac Newton, William Blake and Walt Whitman.

Abdu'l Baha, Persian seer and interpreter of the world-wide Baha'i movement, explains how it is that the cosmic rays reach man, in the form of spiritual and creative guidance. The Divine Power of the universe—that Power which we call God—must remain incomprehensible and impenetrable to man. It can never be directly perceived. But its force reaches human beings, just as the force of the sun reaches the earth, by emanation and radiation. The Spirit which makes contact with the spirit of man is this radiant messenger which bridges the gap between unknowable divine Reality and man. If the mirror of man's heart be unsullied, receptive, then the light reflects strongly from it. Only if the mirror of the

heart be tarnished, dull and dusty is little reflection possible. That is why some individuals strongly reflect the creative force of the universe and others but weakly. "This spiritual force," says Abdu'l Baha, "is the energizing factor in the life of man." By its means are manifested the various expressions of man's genius in the realms of art, of learning, of science and of achievement in general.

5

What is the practical application of such a doctrine for each one of us? It is this: that we should consciously strive to increase our receptive ability, to make ourselves channels of the Creative Force. We should actively seek inspiration and guidance in all our undertakings, in order that we may reflect Beauty, Truth and Goodness from a source higher than our own level of existence. Thus we may become co-workers with the Divine Planner in building a better universe. We can find the source of true inspiration. We can become agents of the power behind evolution, of the energizing factor making continuously for progress and perfection throughout the cosmos.[1]

6

It is remarkable with what apparent ease the true genius achieves those things that lie within his

[1] Ouspensky in his *Tertium Organum* says: "Man, not striving toward evolution, not conscious of its possibility, not helping it, will not evolve."

powers. He may work with great industry and application. But for all that, it is not industry, as Anatole France has pointed out, which creates great literature, for example. It is not the study of rhetoric. It is not scholarliness, nor hard work. In addition to all these there must be some added factor, some mysterious force in the absence of which it is impossible for ordinary mortals lacking this gift to come to comparable achievement, no matter what effort they put out.

What are we to conclude from this? The lesson is not necessarily by any means one of discouragement. We are not to be resigned to a life of mediocrity. On the contrary, it gives us a shrewd hint that we should more eagerly follow the guidance that is granted to all of us, that we should strive with all the power within us to follow just that line of activity which, if we heed the voice of intuition, lies before every man and which expresses his innate powers. It is when we do just the thing we are most fitted for that we too find inspiration and fulfillment in our work; and achieve with relative ease and joy—each according to his unique and special talents—just as the genius does.

The genius has strong affinities for people, for things, for ideas. He seems to possess an intuitive power to reach out and absorb from the universe exactly what he needs for his own self-development and for his work. As the flower knows how to absorb from the soil its hue and fragrance, so should man be able to sink his roots deep into life, find

there what he craves, and bring up easily and joyously the nourishment he needs for his particular fruition.

That is what I mean by creative life. Such a life is dependent, not upon the magnitude of our talents, but only upon the perfect expression of that which we have within us. It is a matter of quality, not of quantity. We can all live creatively, and we shall do so when we turn our mirrors to the sun and reflect to the utmost of our capacity.

7

Let us beware, therefore, lest our mirrors should become veiled by the dust of the world—by sensuality, by vanity, by selfishness or by inertia. Success, when it too much intoxicates us, becomes an obstacle to the free working of intuition. It may even dim inspiration. That is why, in the lives of many men of great achievement, we note a deterioration in later life. The quality of their work becomes poorer instead of richer, after success has made them more worldly, more conceited, more trivial.

The truly great man, however, remains ever humble, ever lowly. The more considerable his achievement, the more carefully does he hold himself poised upon that precipice along the edge of which success inevitably leads us.

Abraham Lincoln was the supreme example of humility in high places. What the world most respects in him to-day, as the leader of a great nation

at a time of great national confusion, was not so much his ability to make quick and drastic decisions as the quality he had, combined with his other gifts, of humbly and patiently feeling his way through the fogs that surrounded him, of bringing order slowly into the unutterable confusion of his time. Lincoln relied always on some higher guidance: sought it consciously and was aware of it definitely as a ruling force in his life.

Humility is essential if we are to maintain a permanent contact with the Creative Force. "The ocean, by lying low," says Lao-tse, "receives all things into itself."

8

Of all the factors that make for creative living, then, we would name as most important the right cultivation of our intuition, the clarifying of our affinities. Let us courageously feel our way towards those things which fundamentally attract us—here is the line along which all our efforts towards future success must be directed. Once we have found the line of march, we must do as Grant did—"fight it out." It is useless to strive forward *until* our plan of campaign is sufficiently conceived and our goal in view. Intuition is the greatest aid we have in helping us map out our campaigns. Will power is the commander which then marshals our forces to victory. Combining harmoniously intuition with will, we can

accomplish great things both for ourselves and for the world.

Let us beware of that day when will and desire struggle to become dictators at the expense of intuition. Then we shall find ourselves in danger of wasting energy and vitality in activities that are ultimately of no account, or that are even detrimental to our true progress. The classic example of such a wrong adjustment of values is Napoleon, at the time when the intoxication of success and grandeur obscured his judgment and led him to invade Russia. Again, in modern times there was Woodrow Wilson who, having held Europe and America for a time in the hollow of his hand, failed to realize the volcanic force of political opposition that was to burst forth when the restraints of military rule were removed. We must ever follow faithfully our true intuitions.

"But God has a few of us to whom He whispers in the ear."

—Browning.

We have never attained to truly successful living until we have found adequate expression for the Self within us. Once we plant our feet on the path to true progress, the path which our own individual

destiny deserves, it is amazing how we move ahead, aided as though by some invisible force when we strive forward with all our might. Edison, greatest inventor and achiever of our epoch, once said: "There is a great directing head of people and of things—a Supreme Being who looks after the destinies of the world." All who achieve greatly realize this truth—that the individual who works for and contributes to the progress of the world has behind him the whole force of civilization and of the Cosmic Will. These creative souls come to realize themselves as channels for a Power they cannot name, but from which they know their own power and their success are derived. By intuition, they know how to make contact with that Power. Never neglect your intuitions, for by their means you will be led to discoveries and achievements far beyond the scope of your own personalities. This is a seeming miracle. Yet, just as humble parents may be the means of giving birth to a great hero, so our minds and our souls may give birth to lofty ideas and to great achievements which far transcend the limitations of our personalities.

Keep intuition as your guide. It is the most precious gift bestowed on man. Like the magic sight with which characters in fairy tales are endowed, it penetrates to the reality of all things. By its power we can even penetrate the future, and guide our personal, our national and our universal destinies. What the world most needs is that everywhere, and for all time, men of intuition as well as of will

should be set at the head of affairs. Then human organizations on every level and in every sphere of life would attain to harmony, true efficiency and ultimate perfection; then we should behold upon our earth the Golden Age of the philosopher, the Utopia of the humanitarian, the Divine Civilization of the prophets.

EPILOGUE

The Two Great Needs of Man

WE trust that this book will help to reveal to the reader the richness and versatility of the Self within him, and the possibilities of limitless development in the direction of creative expression. *Discovering the Genius Within You* covers but one side of life, that of self-development and self-expression. Yet the writer feels the need of further explanation of man's nature and needs, in the direction of harmonization with those other Selves who together with us compose humanity. How to get on wisely, happily and successfully with our fellow men is an art in itself—an art fully as important as the art of self-development. Therefore, in a companion volume to this one, we shall treat of man, not as the lone seeker of cultural and spiritual treasures, but as man the comrade—man in his human relations towards the family, towards the world of business, towards social and civic organizations. Unless man's individual powers find expression in accordance with the laws of harmony, his life will be unhappy, his profession a failure, and his achievements crippled. But blessed with the double art of self-expression and of harmonization, each individual should be able to win through to success and happiness.

Other Books
By Starwood Cobb

The Jade Necklace of Lin San Kwei
What is Love?—Verse
What is God?—Verse
Sage of the Sacred Mountain
What is Man?—Verse
The Donkey and the Elephant—Verse
Tomorrow and Tomorrow
Symbols of America
The Way of Life of Wu Ming Fu
Character—A Sequence in Spiritual Psychology
Patterns in Jade of Wu Ming Fu
Security for a Failing World
New Horizons for the Child
The Wisdom of Wu Ming Fu
The New Heaven
Simla—A Tale in Verse
The Essential Mysticism
Ayesha of the Bosphorus—A Romance
The Real Turk
The Destiny of America
Islamic Contributions to Civilization
Poems to Live By
Life With Nayan
Radiant Living
Trouble—How to Avoid It
Wings of the Spirit
The Importance of Creativity
The Magnificent Partnership