

OPEN THAT DOOR!

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# OPEN THAT DOOR!

BY  
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# OPEN THAT DOOR!

## CHAPTER I WALLED IN

The brave man carves out his fortune, and every man is the son of his own works.—CERVANTES

An author is of necessity a rather egotistical sort of a fellow, or else he would not trumpet abroad his name upon the title-page of a book. If we should measure this egotism by the size of the audience to which he hopes to appeal, we fear that the sponsor of this little book should make humble apologies in behalf of his phrenological egocentric bump. He who writes upon how to grow fat, modestly limits his audience to those who, from pride of appearance, or upon doctor's orders, desire to add to their avoirdupois. There is a similar modesty upon the part of those who limit their audiences by writing cook-books for the cooks, temperance appeals for the drunkards, novels for the seminary ladies, war books for the valiant, peace books for the pacifists. We (notwithstanding the fact that he fears to call himself "I" in the first chapter) acknowledge no such modesty. Every one wants to get the best of life. This general statement is as true as the more specific ones that every one wants to enjoy his dinner, his work, his family, and his friends. The desire to obtain satisfaction through the passing of the years is the prime motive in the actions of the male and the female, the fat and the thin, the long and the short, the stupid and the wise, the railroad president and the ditch digger. It is for this cosmopolitan, democratic crowd of you and myself and every one else that there is, or is not, a message in the following pages.

One of the most stimulating thoughts to which mankind is heir is the realization of the handicaps under which we are all laboring. This is a great thought in that it is so universal, so levelling, so powerful in making us truly appreciate that we are all brothers one unto another. The millionaire is a slave to his money; another man is embittered by poverty, a third carries the burden of an unsound body, a fourth of a selfish nature, a fifth of an unhappy family life, a sixth is overwhelmed by his own stupidity, a seventh by his sense of duty towards others, an eighth by

a sense of duty towards himself, and so it goes through the rank and file, the humble and the mighty. How many of us take the bit in our teeth, and have a glorious revel in enjoying every furlong of life's race-course? To run such a race is a hard task, as there is always some handicap hanging on our shoulders. We are afraid to knock it off. Oftentimes the burden is terrifically hard for the man who carries it to define, and yet, when you look into your inmost self you realize that the precious hours of life are slipping by without your cramming into them all the good things that you feel should be offered by a world in which there is the romance of other people's lives, the blue of the sky, the play of the sunlight, the success of your rivals. There seems too often a wall between ourselves and that romance, that sky, that sunlight and that success. There is indeed this wall between us and our ideal. If we break through it, there is another one that dares our courage to the assault and capture of our greater, enlarged ideal. This is stimulating and comforting, as each man and woman has to make his own assault; there is no one so lucky as to get the prizes of life without a fight, and no one so unlucky as to be without the desire, no matter how deeply it may be buried in his nature, to make that fight.

In what direction are you going, and what are you going to do when you get there? Are you plugging against an impassable barrier, or is there a way through for the man who does his best? Some lie down in the traces and quit. They have three satisfactory meals a day, work that is not too arduous, a warm bed at night, and, taking it all in all, that is sufficient; at any rate, they think it better than the attempt to break down any more walls. Perhaps they bruised their knuckles at the first: "George Washington, Thomas Edison, and the other heroes were not afraid of the blows at the first or at the score that followed, but we all cannot be great, and I am willing to subside with what is already my portion." Yes, that is the attitude of the slackers. They are in every walk of life—the stupidly content.

There are many others who say that if they could only lift the mortgage off their house, or buy an automobile, or get into society, or get promoted, they could pass untouched through the barrier that crushes them, and be ready to tackle the second with unheard-of power. They are sadly suffering under an illusion. When you take the spur from a laggard steed, you do not make him a thoroughbred.

Two thousand years ago Christ told us that unless we become as little children we cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven. That was a tremendous statement, and one of infinite truth. To find the reasons for our struggles and the means of carrying our burdens we must go to the boy of ten.

He is having a splendid time! Are you? From the moment he leaves his bed with a whoop and a hurrah, until the evening when he sinks to sleep exhausted

but happy, he has lived in a turmoil of adventure, wild dreams, and imaginings. The world has been a magic pleasure dome from which there were countless doors to be opened and beckoning passages to be explored. We have our troubles and sulk under their weight, he longs for them and so invents the game of Cowboys and Indians and glories in the battle; we become bored with a routine existence, he scorns such an attitude and fears that he will miss a great excitement if he but close an eye. If rainy weather or a particular mother prevents him from organizing a military campaign, fraught with danger and hardship, against the enemies in the next block, he stays at home and reads of battling with dragons. The world is forever a thing of wonder, a tremendous feast from which he is forever called before he has had sufficient courses. Hungry for life, he cannot find within the twenty-four half enough hours to fulfil his demands. A fishing-rod in his eyes is a magic thing with an incarnate life and power of its own; the dark pool contains a possible catfish, and what, by all the stars, could be more wonderful, more inexplicable, more mysterious and awe inspiring than a bearded catfish! Every new friend, old or young, is a peculiar individual of which he must ask a thousand questions to find out whether he be an engineer, a policeman, or a fireman, or whether he can spin a top or owns a collection of postage stamps.

What a lesson in the way of life is a lad of ten! He sees in life an opportunity, a vast opportunity for everything. No specialist is he—within the month he decides that his career shall lie in any one of a dozen, from that of the man upon the back of the ice wagon, to that of the President of the United States.

Why are the young so superior to their elders? Why, indeed, do we have to cast off our years to enter the Kingdom of Heaven? Ponce de Leon, in search of the Fountain of Youth, journeyed from Spain to the New World, and, weary of the quest, left his body to rot in the American wilderness. He need not have gone so far upon his travels, as in the point of view of the last boy whom he met before embarking from the shores of Spain there was this very Fountain which he sought. To break down all the barriers which hedge us in, to open a thousand doors entering upon undiscovered countries of ambition and delight, to forget time, to forget everything but the joy of living, to experience the thrill of carrying heavy burdens and the overcoming of obstacles, all we have to do is to see the world through the eyes of the boy of ten. It is the youth's relation to the world as he finds it that makes him superior to, and a more worthy inheritor of the Kingdom than is his father. The former's outlook is that of perpetual wonderment, of endless romance, of intensive interest, and wide horizons; the latter's too often is that of a blind man in a picture gallery. A lad lives acutely, never lets an hour "slip by," is ever willing for an assault against any battlement, and in that lies the secret of life.

Most things, to be sure, are "easier said than done," but after having found

that the proper door to open is that which leads to the world of fervid expectancies, experienced by the boy, we may at least *attempt* to find the key that fits the lock. Perhaps you have already found it! This is a good personal test—do you feel that your mind is a-tingle with the music that is played by the world in which you live?

It has been said that you can tell a man by the company he keeps—but there are far better methods! Find out his experiences when he walks along a city street, rubbing elbows with the crowd, dodging motors at the crossings, with every step he takes passing faces, human faces, passing windows behind which are woven the webs of human happiness and grief. What are his innermost sensations? Does he feel the throbbing pulse of men and women, or is his heart and soul dead and forbidding? Or else go with him upon a walk into the country—Spring or Fall—Winter or Summer—his talk and expression will show the stuff that is in him. Is he alive to the multifarious beauties of color, life, and movement that are about him, or is he the same gnarled, twisted parody of man who, when in the office, always thinks himself imposed upon, or in his home appears a misfit, uncomfortable piece of furniture?

Yes, there is a sublime religion in the joy of jostling your fellows in the workaday streets, there is a sublime possibility of growth in the soul of him who, when upon a journey in the country, breathes a deep and lasting draught of the joyousness of life. And yet, why does this religion slip from us, why at times do we refuse to grow? Why do we lose the tingle of living which is the very essence of the boy's sense of life?

One man will tell you that he is in a rut. He has worked until his youth is passed, and there is no further chance of promotion. A second has lost his money, and he is bitter against the world that took it from him. A third misses the companions whom he used to know, and with them went the color and the value of the world. A fourth has gambled with life's good things: has wasted his body and mind in his lust for women, wine, or food, or in his greed for gold. Perhaps, although not admitted, with the satisfaction of his desires women have lost their beauty, wine and food their taste, and gold has proved tarnished metal.

What is, at bottom, the matter with them all? And what is the matter with the men and women who have had worldly success, who have had all the exterior things that life could give them, and yet feel that this Earth is an unsatisfactory sort of pasture in which to graze? Why should there be sighs of discontent when above us the sky is blue, and in the world about us children are born of women, heroic deeds are accomplished, and tragedies met and defeated by the courage and love of our human kind?

The answer is in the fact that many of us lose the blessed heritage that was part of our youth: our sense of wonderment, our breadth of sympathy. To the

youth, every moment of every day meant an awakening to new things, an introduction to strange, exciting mysteries, whereas there are no such awakenings for the man who finds not the wonder in the windows bordering and the faces passing on the crowded city streets, or feels not, in the country, the subtle magic of Nature's workings.

You say the world grows stale; it is not the world grown stale that takes the lustre from life, it is your own sleepiness, the profound drunkenness of the lazy and the cold heart. It is the loss of a personal sympathy with God and man.

A loss of sympathy is a horrible thing. The loss of that sympathy which holds your heart engripped, and makes you feel part and parcel of this great, moving, turbulent, sorrowing thing we call the World, is as grievous a loss as can befall any man. It is worse than a separation from money, friends or family—it is the loss of an individual's personal stake in the world. And yet, we see men who have lost and are losing it. In them we see die that spark of life which has made them an integral part of all that lives. We see smothered the divine fire of humanity and godliness. If we consider Nature, including man, as one great spirit, we feel that those who have lost an embracing sympathy are apart from that great spirit, are drifting off into the barren deserts of bewilderment and decay. If we consider men as individual souls plotting their own destinies, we must see in those who have lost their intimate touch with the surge of their fellows' labors, and their sympathy to the power of beauty, pariahs, true outcasts, apart and alone.

How great is your appetite for life? How great is your willingness to break the shell of your prison and liquidate your heart? What prevents you from throwing open your arms to the universe, accepting and welcoming the embrace? The embrace of humanity is a glorious thing! It is the nectar of the gods. Be one with the world, be not a pariah; be part of the great wave, be not a stagnant pool.

But one hears answers, "I can't," "I don't want to," "I'm apart and will not mingle." Why can't you? Why won't you? Why are you apart? Is it because you are old and mummified? Have you lost your vision, have you lost your heart, has the world beaten you back, and does life roll too fast a pace? Has your understanding become blunted? Are you a snob upon a pedestal of derision? Are your eyes blind to the colors, your ears deaf to the music, your voice bitter in your companions' hearing?

Ah, let there be a way out of the prison—there is a door that will lead you to your youth. Within a man there is always the spark that can be made to brighten and to break into living flame. There is no understanding so dense, no spirit so sordid that it cannot be stirred to awaken to that sympathy for man and nature



that is the pass word to the Kingdom of Life.

"The Kingdom of Life." Those are perhaps hackneyed words, and yet how many of us seem to be the inheritors of the Kingdom of Death. Live bodies find no value in dead souls, so let us make our souls aflame and attain to a realization of life. Where is the match to strike the light, the key to open the door?

Through all the ages there has been a medium through which the hearts of men have been revealed. There has been one cauldron into which the riches of our richest and most godlike minds have been poured. It is the melting pot that has purified the sorrows and joys of men, since man had wit enough to know his pangs and jubilations. There is a vehicle which will bring us to a universal sympathy, if not an understanding, of our human kindred. There is a powerful tool, welded by man, with which we can awaken ourselves to an appreciation of our universe, from which we can obtain consolation in our difficulties, stimulus for our ambitions, tonic for our depressions. The medium, the cauldron, the vehicle, the tool is Literature.

Some men are afraid of books, and some are afraid of life; some do not understand books, and some do not sympathize with, nor care to understand life. Literature is the key to the door of life for those who wish to open! There is no wall cramping the ambitions, blinding the eyes, deafening the ears of those who seek their nutriment in the spiritual messages and solemn understandings of the greatest minds of the ages. The symbol of a man walking down the street with no heart to feel, nor mind to understand the happenings about him, is the relationship between two stones. To our knowledge there is no known communication between one and the other. Literature is the great communicator, the powerful disseminator of sympathies, the magnificent doorway through which we can pass to other men's hearts, and obtain warmth for our own in case ours are cold and comfortless.

God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. Perhaps there is not enough, for we all walk in partial darkness, but the tremendous sunburst that is here to lighten and revive is the lasting, printed word, handed on from generation to generation.

## CHAPTER II

### AN OPEN DOOR

This world's no blot for us,  
 Nor blank; it means intensely, and means good:  
 To find its meaning is my meat and drink.

FRA LIPPO LIPPI

There is the Rub! Of how many of us can it be said that the World "means intensely and means good"? Do we unsatisfactorily stutter, and stumble, and barely exist through the three score years and ten that is our portion, or do we find in life a splendid activity that gladdens our heart and fills us full of the thorough-going ecstasy of living?

I have a friend who is a great athlete,—an oarsman, mountain climber, big game hunter. He exults in a life of action, of doing big things, and yet withal, he is a tremendous reader and one of exquisite taste and wide knowledge in books and authors. I asked him of the value of reading.

"Every time I read a great book," he answered, "I feel as if I had punched a hole through the wall," and so saying he crashed his large fist against a buttress of reinforced concrete. "I feel that my world has been made larger; where before I had only seen a blank space, now I see a new world, the world in which the author lived. I am that much more alive to my own."

He applied his reading to his daily life, and the world became for him a richer, more exciting place in which to live. No one wants to plod through the world in a blind, sleepy fashion. We all want to live as keenly, as vitally as possible. The roots of the present are buried deep in the past—to appreciate and have understanding of the present you must appreciate and have understanding of the past—to realize how small and one-sided is your own point of view, you must appreciate the thousand and one viewpoints that have appeared through the ages to the eyes of other men and women.

In beginning to form the habit of reading, the first thing to be realized is that books are intimately connected with the world in which we live. Their true value does not come from the pleasure you experience during the actual hours in which you are turning the pages, but (and this point cannot too vividly be borne in mind) in the reaction of you upon the world and the world upon you after having read them. If a book does not influence your point of view towards God, your fellow men, and your daily tasks and ambitions, you may feel assured either that the book is one of little worth, or that you have not absorbed its true meaning. When you hear someone say that reading is an excellent way to pass the time, you may feel sure that he knows little about books. The poem, the novel, the history, the philosophy are not to pass the time, they are to make more vital the hours of life. A book that is a book becomes part and parcel of your being,

and you must of necessity make it part of your life.

Authors are not for the library, they are for the street, the railroad train, the office, the open fields. Read them in the library, or even in bed, but live them in the city thoroughfares, or country roads or workaday places in which you make your life. No man can read the Journals of that mystic, nature lover, Henry David Thoreau, without having his next trip to the country one of greater pleasure. The colors and the sounds of the fields, the woodlands and the brooks will bring a new joy to his spirit. No man can read the novels of some great gobbler of life, such as eighteenth century Tobias Smollett, without finding the city life of our twentieth century more human, more satisfying, more exciting. No man can seriously read a religious poet such as Whitman or Wordsworth without becoming more deeply religious, more keenly conscious of the wonders of God and Man. And the Bible—surely no one can read the magic beauty and truth in the Prophecies of the Old Testament without feeling that he has met and talked with giants. These books bear directly on life—they make us think, love and experience in a way that we have never done before. The world becomes more thoroughly a magic place in which there are a thousand things to make life one glorious escapade, through which we may be thankful for the opportunity of living.

As some people believe reading to be a pleasant method of passing the time (without realizing that time is in truth passing them), so others believe that being "well read" is some sort of a social advantage. It is difficult to determine which is the more stupid and superficial point of view, that of regarding books as time-killers or as useful topics of conversation. The latter is probably the worst, as, in addition to its superficial aspect, there is its insincerity. The man or woman who reads a great book because it is "the thing to do" is not only a weak follower of fashion but a waster of valuable time. It is far better never to have read a book than to have read it stupidly and begrudgingly with the thought in mind that it will be a feather in your cap to be able to boast of having read it. Needless as it may seem to make a point of this, it is, nevertheless, the idea in the mind of many a man in college, and many a woman who joins a reading circle.

Some misguided supporters of the study of the ancient classics use as a plea that "every gentleman should read Greek." The insincerity of this defence can only be compared to the sighs of the woman who attempts to convince her neighbors that the beauty of a sunset appeals to her as it does to no one else, or the ecstatic murmurings of the young man at the art exhibition, who is arousing within himself a false enthusiasm, for some artistic cult that in truth means nothing to him.

We see this type of man or woman all too often. They are usually gushing about their latest emotional experience, when in fact they are incapable of having any. It is an insincere attempt to be the highest of the high-brows. Let us have

none of this! Let us realize that education and culture are splendid things to be highly prized, but only in that they make the individual who possesses them a richer, deeper, more sympathetic person.

A hobby, which has to-day become a fashion, is bird study. Far be it from me to disparage the movement seemingly alive in all our suburban districts, but let us make short shift with those who ogle knowingly through field glasses, when the motive behind the action is that in select company it is considered "the thing."

It is a safe warning never to read a book because it is fashionable. Never read a book because you think it will form an engaging topic of conversation; always read because you want to derive a sincere inspiration, an enlarged point of view. Within a library is encased the soul of the past, the meaning of the present, the promise of the future. From it we derive the entire tradition of which we are inheritors, the deeper movements of which we are a part, the prophecies of the future in which we and ours will live. This treasure is more worthy of respect than to be treated as the devourer of an idle hour, or the means whereby to keep "in the swim."

The cultured man is a man of broad understanding, of deep sympathies. A fisherman who knows his boat, his line and the bay in which he makes his livelihood may be a cultured man. He may have derived from his way of life and the tools of his trade the solemn truths that give him an understanding of the ways of men and the needs of the human heart; but another man who has gone through the University, "machinely made, machinely crammed," may be totally without culture in that he has never drunk at those well-springs of living which teach the mind the great underlying sentiments that rule the world. One may well be educated and yet uncultured, "well-read" and yet without the vision that may be derived from books. It is not the word but the spirit of the word that must be taken to heart and lived.

Matthew Arnold defined culture as a knowledge of the best that has been done and said by man—but the one who *opens that door* must have more than that knowledge. It is not enough to cram away facts in the corners of your brain. These facts must have a direct bearing upon your life. To have knowledge of the best that has been written, you must not only read a great poem but you must allow the thought or fancy to sink into and become part of your personality; of the best that has been done you must not only have knowledge of the courage and wisdom of the early Americans who broke the yoke of Great Britain, but you must apply their courage and wisdom to your daily life; of the best that has been said you must not only read one of Abraham Lincoln's great speeches, but absorb the quiet spirituality of the man who uttered them, and allow his personality to become part of yours.

Farcical moving-picture shows and talking-machine rag-time surely have their place, but can they enter the soul of man as can "the best that has been written, done and said"? The plays of Euripides and the words of Marcus Aurelius have for many centuries given deeper understandings and wider horizons to a multitude of readers, and it is probable that the intensity with which they have acted upon the individual is commensurate with the length of time that they have acted upon the mass. We do not believe that this can be said of the time-killing "movie" or the rag-time song of yesterday.

Let us enter the world of living through the world of books. It is from the printed page that we can best equip ourselves for a rich life of value to ourselves, our family and our neighbors. If you do not believe it, read some book that the world has acknowledged great. Having read it, live it in your eternal self, and you will have passed through the Open Door.

It is a rainy day at the seashore; I am writing in the reading room of a summer hotel. Without, the rain is sweeping across the bathing beach, the tennis courts are flooded, the golf course, without a doubt, is a swampy morass. It is a dreary sight for one who looks through the window pane. Our little world is upon a vacation, and all but the few who wish to tramp the beach in raincoats and gum boots must stay in-doors. And yet there is happiness, and I believe greater promise of the morrow. In one corner of the room there is a stripling of about thirteen, curled in a chair, absorbed in his book, which from the cover I know to be "Treasure Island." He is with Old Pew, John Silver, and the cut-throat buccaneers. On the morrow the sand-dunes for that boy will be places of mystery where weird and exciting fairy deeds might have been accomplished. The commonplace bathing beach will have new mysteries, as the waters that splash at his feet are the same that surround some sunbaked, South Sea Treasure Isle.

At the desk opposite me, a student with furrowed brow reads a calf-skin volume. I have noted the title: "The Speeches of Henry Clay." Perhaps this fellow is a young lawyer or an aspiring politician. He wishes to absorb the ideas of the silver-tongued "Harry of the West," the popular idol of seventy years ago, and to consider their bearing upon the tariff questions of to-day. He must agree with Napoleon Bonaparte: "Read and reflect on history; it is the only true philosophy." And there is a girl reading the poetry of Alfred Noyes, and a bespectacled, bearded old man with a volume of Pope. They have both turned to poetry to find the beauty and truth those poets have seen. How much will their spirits be affected, the one by the lyric note of our contemporary singer, the other by the didactic moralizing of the philosopher wit?

So it goes! The boy sees visions of pirates and adventure, the old man dreams dreams and seeks new truth; the young man desires armor for his life's

battle, the girl finds beauty, a refreshing and invigorating draught. It rains to-day but they will all be more richly endowed to welcome the sun and sea breezes of the morrow.

**CHAPTER III**  
**READING FICTION WITH AN EYE ON LIFE**

The world and life's too big to pass for a dream,  
\* \* \* \* \*  
you've seen the world—  
The beauty and the wonder and the power,  
The shapes of things, their colors, lights and shades,  
Changes, surprises,—and God made it all!  
FRA LIPPO LIPPI

Our good Brother, Lippo Lippi, has started off two of my chapters, and it is well that he should, as no artist had a keener appetite for life than had he. He grasped all there was of the best in life—color, love, work—and he enjoyed it.

Librarians, booksellers, and blatant advertisements assure us that we are a novel-reading public. The number of copies sold of this and that best seller are at first sight staggering, and even more so after having read the book! A certain novel becomes the fashion in the same inconsequential manner as does an especially uncomfortable type of collar—another season both are forgotten and something new is taken up. The writing, publishing and advertising of such books have become a purely commercialized art upon the part of the authors and booksellers. "Where are the snows of yesteryear?" sighed François Villon, "Where are the masterpieces of last summer?" sighs the meditative consumer of fiction. Almost every novel which has those qualities which publishers believe will appeal to an idle, amusement-loving populace is proclaimed in display advertising as "the greatest novel of the decade," "the great American novel," or in some other equally false manner. The author, the publisher, and even the readers know that such statements are utter falsities and yet the sale goes up into the hundreds of thousands. I often wonder what has become of the stupendous number of copies of a certain book the World was reading some ten years ago. It is

never mentioned; it is never read; it is seldom seen on anyone's bookshelves, yet the material volumes must be lying about somewhere. Perhaps such books are indeed as "the snows of yesteryear" and melt away when their day is done. One who wishes seriously to acquire the riches there are in books might well make it a rule never to read a novel until it has stood the test of time. What, by the bye, is the use of reading, unless you mean to get the best out of it? Walking is better exercise, conversation more sociable, gambling more risky and therefore more full of zest! Any story worth reading this summer must surely be worth reading five years from now. Life is too short, there are too many great books that are eminently worth reading, to spend our time wading through the ruck of tastefully bound, hurriedly illustrated, widely advertised novels that greet us every season. I repeat—Do not read a book that you may be in the swing of up-to-date conversation. If you do, you prove yourselves the gull of everyone concerned. Let time do your winnowing, and if after five years the people of taste are still talking of the book, you may turn to it and probably find something of true merit. You may say that with such a plan you will read but few modern novels. Quite true, there will be but few that stand the test of even five years, but how much better it is to conserve your energies and time for reading the great works of fiction that have stood the test of generations.

As in all other reading, novels should awaken you to a new life. You should choose those that have the truest effect upon your goings and comings after you have put them aside. You must agree that those treating of an impossible, untrue social condition, as some money-grabbing manufacturer of stories pretends to see it, will not have this effect. Neither will those of untrue chivalry and sentiment in which untrue ladies weep unnatural tears, and untrue heroes do impossible deeds. Such trivial falsities merely chew up the all too few hours allotted mortals upon this good ship, the Earth. Which then are those novels that are to be read not for the purpose of passing the time, but of holding up the time, and of making every minute more real, more full of meaning,—for that is the function of all great books?

There is a poem of John Keats beginning,

Lo—I must tell a tale of chivalry;  
For large white plumes are dancing in mine eye.

Perhaps these lines to every one do not carry the same magic beauty and promise of long-dreamed-of things that they do to me. The poem was never finished, and I, for one, deeply regret it, as surely we would have had a tale to set our hearts afire with the clangor of the mediæval tournament, or the lone quest

of a golden armored knight.

Sir Walter Scott told such tales in prose and his novels are of the greatest in literature. Honoré de Balzac told stories of French life in which there is nothing specially chivalric, nothing in that sense bewitching, and yet his tales, too, are of the greatest in literature. The terms Realism and Romanticism are used to describe two different aspects of art, music and literature. We will use them in considering the relation of novels to life.

Balzac is considered the father of modern realism. This is partly due to the fact that he presented in a forceful manner the principles upon which he worked. He desired to put the life of France, city, provincial, military and official, within the covers of his books. It is interesting to remember that he wrote at a period in which men were perhaps more interested in the reason and purpose of human life than they had ever been before. Those scientific discoveries, which were finally to lead the way to our present theories of evolution, were bringing men to a realization that the religious dogmas upon which they had founded their faith were weakening. It was difficult for a thinking man to believe that the world had been made out of whole cloth, but a few thousand years before. Science was in the air; faiths were shattered. Balzac turned to man to determine anew his nature. His was the huge task of presenting man in all his loves and hates, purposes and motives, works and joys. He attempted it, and there has been a great army of writers following in his footsteps. Their aim has been to give a realistic cross section of certain aspects of life, allowing the reader to draw inferences as to its meaning and his personal relation to it.

This is realism. It is most unfortunate that in our country the word has become synonymous with books of a sordid and erotic nature. Realism in literature should show us life as it is, and as life is neither all sordid nor all erotic, neither should literature present only those aspects. The function of this type of literature is a great and important one.

The supreme realist has a God-given power of seeing and feeling the forces and emotions that make up human living. He sees and examines life as if under a microscope, and with this peculiar power he must have the faculty of expression. You may ask how we can apply the words contained in such a novel to our own life? We all feel that there is a great advantage in "understanding life." We try to analyze our own and our friends' ways of living. Let us go to great novels and see what we find there.

Was it a child who said, when going through the British Museum, that he liked the sculpture better than the paintings because he could walk around the sculpture? He spoke more wisely than he knew. The same simile may be applied to the realistic novel. In reading it we may walk about and examine life. From day to day, as we live things happen so rapidly, the world is passing before us



so fast that, unless you have a supreme intellect, it is impossible to examine the pageant but from one point of view. You can but look at the front of the picture. It is flat, there is but little perspective.

The genius with the gift for fiction such as had Tolstoy, Balzac or Smollett can encase civilization within the covers of a book. You may read and understand. There is something static. You live a thousand lives by proxy, you enter a hundred homes and have converse with the hearts of men and women. Instead of seeing but the front of things, we walk behind and take in life from every angle. The characters in the drama of life are under a microscope through which we are privileged to look. Tolstoy presents life as it was in Russia forty years ago, but human hearts that are cosmopolitan and eternal, Balzac, the France of the forties, Smollett, England of the eighteenth century. We learn the ideals, the struggles, the way of life of different civilizations, of different ages.

We find that our point of view is a narrow one, that our place in the Sun is perhaps a very small corner, and our hearts and minds are enlarged to a deeper sympathy with all men, a finer understanding of all ideals and practices.

Instead of living in the little village of our own outlook, instead of weighing all experience and action by our own, we arrive at a higher, more cosmopolitan point of view. Whereas we might think that ours is the only century in which people flock to the cities and live material lives of rush and money-grabbing, we find the same thing true of Smollett's England of one hundred and fifty years ago; instead of condemning the woman who cannot get along with her husband we have a broader sympathy for having followed the career of the splendid Anna Karenina in Tolstoy's novel of that name. We break the shell of our petty selves which has made for so many misunderstandings and prejudices. We must not pride ourselves upon our own motives and civilization, until we have at least made an attempt to understand those of others.

Since the days when Nathaniel Hawthorne condensed the spiritual aspects of New England in his immortal "Scarlet Letter," there has been a scarcity of American novels of any high realistic calibre. Ernest Poole has recently done brilliant work in "The Harbor," in which he presents the ideals that have guided a young man of our day and generation. Yet, here we are, in a strange world indeed—the greatest spirits hurling themselves into the strife of ninety-mile-an-hour living, only to be tossed aside to make way for younger and harder workers, more efficient thinkers. The strange growling beast of a great American city, the wide acres of efficient irrigated farming, with the workers in each, have yet even partially to be interpreted by the genius of fiction. When it has been done by the great seers, we will find answered many questions which puzzle us to-day. Not the mirror but the cosmic microscope must be used as the tool. It will not be done by one man; it will take a literary army—let the advance guard come with

our generation!

And of Romance—what will we say of the tales which take us away from the dusty world of every-day duties and responsibilities, into a magic turmoil of brave deeds and devoted lovers? We must not forever be muddling about in the mundane sphere in which we make our bread and butter—we must at times for wealth and happiness gaze through

Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam  
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

We of the Anglo-Saxon race have a glorious heritage in the Waverley Novels.

Sometimes, we are told that Sir Walter Scott is becoming a memory, and that of the past generation; but many feel, and I am of that number, that the author of "Ivanhoe," "Kenilworth," "Quentin Durward" and the score of other yarns which have charmed youth and age for now well-nigh a century has a permanent place in our literature, perhaps only surpassed by William Shakespeare. Lucky is the boy or girl who has grown up, and the older persons who still sojourn with the Knights and Ladies, the Kings and Queens, the Highland Fairies, the human serfs who march in an endless, enduring procession through the pages of the Prince of story tellers. For such readers the Past is hallowed with a magic circle that defies tawdriness. How pleasant it is for one who lives in a roaring city to be able by reaching to the book-shelf to forget the affairs of the day and to live in the pomp and pageantry, the heroics and devotions of the Past. The lover of Romance may well say to the reader of modern realism, "Why read of slums, of offices, and city suburbs when you may ride out with Prosper l'Gai in Hewlett's 'Forest Lovers' or be partner in countless intrigues of love and swordsmanship through a dozen of Alexander Dumas' yarns'?" Why indeed?—we sometimes wonder.

It is a marvellous gift, that of the man who can look back into the past and make it alive and breathing for the readers of the present. It is dangerous to take Dumas and Scott for our guides to true history, as they have too often twisted the facts in order to spin a good tale, but as revealers of the atmosphere of history, they are unsurpassed even by the greatest historians, and if we have the atmosphere we have a rich and splendid background in which to place the facts. We may sojourn in ancient Carthage by reading Flaubert's "Salammbô," in Rome by Sienkiewicz's "Quo Vadis," in Pompeii by Bulwer Lytton's "The Last Days of Pompeii," in early England by Scott's "Ivanhoe." Even those scornful individuals who pride themselves upon being "men of the world" have something to learn if they have only studied their own time as it goes fleeting past. For facts let us turn to the scientific historians, but for life to the historic romances.

Let us find justification of each tale, not in its historical accuracy, but in the fact that "it helps the ear to listen when the horns of Elf-land blow." It is for this that we will read them,—that we may awake refreshed as from a plunge in the springs of Mount Olympus. If they do not revivify our jaded senses, and awake our tired vision to the beauties of character and nature of the world in which we live, we may lay them aside and be sure that the author does not measure up to the proper standard. The love of a story is deeply ingrained in the human heart. The baby, before he can read, listens, fascinated, to the paraphrase of some classic fairy tale related by his mother; the minnesinger of old in the mediæval castle charmed the tired fighters with tales of greater love and chivalry; the medicine man recounted to the savage tribe the sagas of their ancestral struggles and triumphs; we all love to hear the man talk who has been to strange lands and seen strange peoples. It is the cry of human nature for accounts of the doings of men in worlds in which we live not that makes the tremendous demand for the novels of the day. Let us remember, however, that the old story tellers, the medicine men and the mothers with their infants at their knees told tales that really fed souls in warming the hearts and awakening the intellects of their eager listeners. The plumed knight buckled on his armor with more vigor, and attempted, the next day, to outdo the deeds of the minnesinger's hero; the child lived in fairy-land and found a background for his playing and dreaming; the savage warrior felt more keen to go upon the warpath to uphold the tradition of his ancestors who were watching him from their places in the Happy Hunting Ground.

These stories were of the staff of life to their hearers. How many of the novels you read bring nothing but the means of wasting an hour? Grown people to-day must find their stories in books: there do not frequently come in our way travellers who have been overcome with the mystery of far-off places; we have no longer medicine men who sing of the glories of our ancestors; we perform must turn for our minnesinger to the printed page.

Let that page be worth while! Insist upon reading a story that means something; either that gives you a more sympathetic understanding of your fellow men, or an inspiration and refreshment by allowing a glimpse through that "magic casement" which opens to the world of Kings and Princes, Castles and Feudal Keeps, or to the mountain where dwelt the Giant or to the seas upon which sailed the Pirates of your boyhood.

When novels reveal unknown vistas of beauty and delight, or present ideas that jog our thoughtless complacency, they are of the stuff that intensifies and glorifies existence. They keep a man's mind from being commonplace and mongrel. Let us all be Kentucky thoroughbreds in the way we look upon the world. Chafe at your bit, stamp the ground and be eager to get away at the front when the barrier goes up. Anyone can be an "also ran." A good story is often tonic

enough to turn an "also ran" into a winner!

## CHAPTER IV

### HISTORY AND YOUR VOTE

We are much beholden to Machiavel and others, that write what men do, and not what they ought to do.—BACON

One of the greatest evils into which a democracy may inadvertently slide is an indifference upon the part of the populace to the political issues of the day. We have upon several occasions in our history passed through periods of almost unlimited commercial prosperity during which everyone has been too much absorbed in the pursuit of power and riches to give a thought to the affairs of government, with the result that our state and national affairs have lapsed into disgraceful conditions of inefficiency and moral laxity. Such periods have paved the way to corrupt boss rule and throttling machine politics.

Ignorance, which always comes with indifference, and yet is most pernicious when most active, is another extreme and vital danger. It must be evident to every thinking man or woman, that a nation whose political destinies are in the hands of the people with their almost universal franchise should be made up of voters who are alive and thinking. "Read and reflect on history; it is the only true philosophy," wrote Napoleon Bonaparte in his instructions pertaining to the education of his only son, the King of Rome. The great Emperor must have realized that his phenomenal success in ruling men and establishing law had as an important part of its foundation his knowledge of the affairs of men in the past. Without suggesting that we should all be Napoleons, it seems true that our political fabric would be infinitely more stable, if the rank and file of American citizens should feel it a duty "to read and reflect on history."

With our ever-increasing number of ignorant Southern European immigrants, who have come from countries where republican forms of government are practically unknown, it seems that our inherited tradition of a republican democracy will be undermined through ignorance, unless, indeed, these new citizens be given an understanding of our history and the meaning of our systems.

To-day many specious types of radicalism, that are for the most part pleas-

ant Utopian dreams of the future, standing upon no foundation and drawing no nutriment from the past, are thundered about most seriously. In life and in statecraft there is one great teacher,—Experience. A man weighs the advisability of a certain step by his past experience, and this must be the basis of thought when determining matters of political science. A reader of American History may find food for thought in comparing the manner in which the half-baked political theorists of to-day come to their conclusions with that of the great American statesmen of the past. To-day we are opportunists. Instead of weighing experience and testing the future, we jump helter-skelter at what seems of temporary value. In dreaming of the future you must remember the past or your dreams are futile. Emerson somewhere tells us, that when you are drawn into an argument upon moral values, you should always ask your opponent whether he has carefully digested his Plato. If he has not, you may placidly refuse to continue the altercation, as he to whom Plato is unknown is unfit to talk with a thinking man upon problems of higher morality. I believe that in like manner we could close the mouths of many trumpeters of social uplift through sumptuary legislation. Ask them if they have carefully read their histories. If they have not, and probably the accent will be on the "not," you may safely snub them, by insisting that they turn to the past, before they have the right to ask people to listen to their talk of the present and the future.

At the time of the founding of our Republic, in Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton we had three supreme *students* of government. Perhaps more than to any other one cause the success of our "American Experiment" is due to the profound knowledge and scholarly attainment of those three men. Upon them rested the responsibility of founding a government "of the people, for the people, and by the people" that would neither be subverted by the wiles of a demagogue or the power of an oligarchy, nor become chaotic through the unrestrained influences of the proletarian populace. To Jefferson we owe the Declaration of Independence, to Madison a great part of the thought and the wording of the Constitution, to Hamilton the body of the Federalist Papers. Their thought was not the thought of the minute, but of all time. In all their writings we can see their thorough grasp of the faults and virtues of the governments of almost every nation in past ages. They knew, as too few of our public men know, that the future cannot be made out of whole cloth, but must evolve from the past. They had studied men and the political needs and powers of men. The result has been the establishment of a government that has stood the shock of almost a century and a half, a period during which almost all other civilized governments have been the prey not to peaceful but to violent evolution. Upon the passing of the great Revolutionary triumvirate we were fortunate in having men of the intellectual calibre of John C. Calhoun, Henry Clay, and Daniel Webster. They

were thinkers as well as great orators, students of the past as well as guardians of the present.

It is a profitable study to read of the youth of great statesmen. Almost invariably you will find them as young men such as would to-day be sneered at as "book-worms." Napoleon, Pitt, Gladstone, Cavour, Mirabeau, the great Americans and many, many others before they entered public life were profound followers of the goddess of learning. It is not surprising to find that many of them obtained wisdom and enthusiasm from the pages of Plutarch's "Lives of the Ancient Greeks and Romans." It was in Greece and Rome that we find the origins of most of our laws and institutions, and in the lives of the men who helped to establish them we may read of the tests and needs in their development. Considering the studies of great men it is always amusing to read the calendar which, upon the request of Mr. Madison, Senior, it is said, Jefferson arranged for the working hours of James Madison, Junior. Please note that Madison's health broke down from overstudy while at Princeton, and it is not to be wondered at, for here is the schedule: until eight in the morning he should confine himself to natural philosophy, morals and religion; from eight until twelve, read law and condense cases, "never using two words where one will do"; from twelve to one, read politics in Montesquieu, Locke, Priestley, Malthus, and the Parliamentary Debates; in the afternoon relieve his mind with history, and when the evening closes in, regale himself with literature, criticism, rhetoric, and oratory.

In those days they indeed believed in thoroughly equipping themselves for public life!

A few years ago there was an agitation afoot in favor of establishing the systems of the Initiative, Referendum, and Recall. In the North, the South, the East, and the West it was hailed by the spellbinders as the cure-all for corrupt legislation and undesirable laws. It was argued that citizens, who did not have enough political acumen to elect honest and efficient representatives, would have enough to become their own law-makers. In the height of the political campaign Nicholas Murray Butler, the President of Columbia University, published a small book entitled "Why Should We Change Our Form of Government?" The author presented the hazardous risk that our profoundly important representative system would run of being subverted into a chaotic absolute democracy by instituting laws that would deprive the executive, legislative, and judicial departments of their independence and prestige. The republican forms would lapse back two thousand years to those democratic systems of the Grecian states that too invariably paved the way to the despotism of tyrants or the chaos of mob rule.

The title of the essay was rather startling to those who had been advocating the new measures without having thoroughly analyzed their true meaning and import. The distinguished scholar brought clear thinking to bear upon the

situation, whereas before it had been befogged in the spread-eagle oratory of demagogues, and the catch-as-catch-can subtleties of ignorant theorists. Clear thinking, President Butler's and that of others, won the day and the measures are now well-nigh forgotten. I mention this as but an instance of the value to our nation of men who have political and historical knowledge with the ability to think clearly upon the important points of our social progress.

I heard President Wilson, some months before he entered upon his distinguished political career, address in an informal manner a group of University students. He said in part (my quotation is rather a paraphrase, as I would not dare to transcribe from memory the words of the most perfect stylist of our time): "Gentlemen, in many European countries in times of national crises and disturbances the nation looks to the Universities and the question is asked, 'What do the young men of the Universities think?' In America unfortunately this question is rarely asked, as all realize that the men at the Universities *do not think*."

This is a bitter arraignment of the intellectual life at our universities, and if the speaker's conclusion was correct the same must to a great degree be said of the intellectual life of our nation. The public's antipathy to broad political matters is the most dangerous vice that can undermine a republic, and it is the one that is most seriously affecting ours. It would be extraordinary, if it were not so pathetic, the way in which, without taking toll of the experience of the past, without drawing analogies nor seeking wisdom, we go muddling, blundering on into the future.

That there is nothing new under the sun is perhaps more true in matters pertaining to political problems than in any other branch of affairs. History repeats itself, repeats itself, repeats itself, as if it never grew tired of begging the world to learn true lessons. In proportion as the number of our citizens appreciate that truism and sincerely pursue its corollaries, we will have a sound political condition.

When Aristotle, a wise man in his generation, said that it was in the nature of human institutions to decay, he knew whereof he spoke. It is painfully apparent to the student of history and governments. What were the seeds of decay that smouldered and finally undermined the Grecian democracies, the power of Carthage and of Tyre, the world-embracing Roman Empire, the Venetian Republic, the Holy Roman Empire, proud Spain of Charles V, and France of the seventeenth century? Has the English Empire run its course to make way for the more vital power of the Germanic People? In each and every one of these decadences, if we wish our national life to retain its pristine spirit, there are lessons to be learned by the United States of America. Our experiment has not necessarily met the test of time. Our nation is not liable to be the exception from those that have slid down the path to ruin. There is a Germany, despotic yet powerful, that

perhaps must some day be met in mortal combat; if the danger lies not there, perhaps it will be another. In any case our loins must be girt with power and strength, our citizenship must be hardy, our political fabric solid.

To retain our virtues, to preserve our national life from decay, is the responsibility upon the shoulders of our generation. It is for this that we must "read and reflect on history" and apply it directly to life. What an analogy may be drawn between the Roman Usurpers in the time of the Empire's decadence throwing money at the street crowds to obtain their support, and our modern politicians bidding for the old soldier vote by passing absurdly extravagant pension bills! This mulct of the treasury is now on the wane, but is the new power in politics, the labor unions, going to obtain legislation and favors because it can poll a large vote upon election day? Such things are signs of decadence. Must we not learn from the French Revolution that its failure as a constructive force was due to an attempt to legislate morality into existence—and yet we continue to pass as laws measures that have truly been dubbed "amendments to the Ten Commandments." How many of the great nations and institutions have had their backs broken through too excessive centralization, yet, to-day there are but few individuals and no political party that stand in opposition to our ever-increasing tendency towards federalism, in contradistinction to community government. Until the outbreak of the World War, England, Germany and Russia each had a terrible internal problem: England attempting to Anglicize Ireland, Russia to Russianize Poland, Germany to Germanize Alsace and Lorraine. There was this thorn in the side of each nation: by brute force they were trying to denationalize another country. England was failing after three hundred years of wasted men and resources, Russia was covering a volcano that had smouldered for generations, after over forty years Germany had as ugly a wound to nurse as in the beginning. Yet with these examples, good Americans, with confident smiles, for three years have been laughing at the Democratic administration on account of their Mexican policy. "Conquer Mexico," the wiseacres say. Yes, conquer Mexico the way England has tried and failed to conquer Ireland!

The political value of history lies in its disclosures of the defects that have brought on decay, and the stumbling blocks that make trouble. In reading history we must keep our eyes on the present. It is unreasonable to believe that our government is an infallible one, or that our national existence, maintained with the most stable governmental authority, combined with the widest possible latitude for the liberty of men, is any more infallible than the many other systems that have met with disaster in the past. The reading of history is valuable, in that it enables us to have those visions of the future that will be fruitful in that they are moulded by our experiences in the past. Such visions, inculcating power of judgment, are never more requisite than in these days in which the blind pacifist,



the quack reformer, the misguided theorist, and the wide-promising demagogue are abroad in the land. We must study our lessons of the past that we may spurn those governmental cure-alls evolved, according to Alexander Hamilton, "in the reveries of those political doctors, whose sagacity disdains the admonitions of experimental instruction."

American history properly forms the most fruitful subject of study for Americans, and yet one must have a wide background to obtain the proper crop. One must soon be led to the investigation of our legislative, executive and judicial functions as they developed through the evolution of constitutional government in England. The democratic models traced to the Grecian states, the seeds of "sans-culotte" philosophy that Jefferson and Tom Paine brought from France, the thought of political scientists such as Plato, Machiavel, Locke, and Montesquieu open fields in which every reader may learn lessons that will guide his judgment in the ever-important problems of the day.

A citizenship educated to a knowledge of the past is a bulwark that will defend the integrity of our nation. Such a citizenship is in truth an ideal in that it is unobtainable, but it is a splendid ideal and one that should be our guiding star. In a government such as ours it is intolerable that an educated man should cast his vote by habit, and yet how often do we hear the opinion expressed that such and such a man would vote the straight Democratic or Republican ticket no matter what the platform, no matter who the candidate? This study of political parties is itself fruitful. One hundred years ago the Democratic party was the party of decentralization and "laissez-faire," but to-day, since the Bryan influence has had such sway, it eclipses the Republican party as the exponent of centralization and paternalism. There are, however, thousands of voters who continue to vote the straight Democratic ticket, believing that the party stands for the same principles as it did when their fathers first voted. This is but an incident of man becoming an indifferent, incapable political animal. Too much of such indifference is a fatal disease to a country of universal franchise.

History has no business in the closet! "History and your Vote," gentlemen,—and now, in several states, you of the fairer sex,—is a phrase worth remembering upon election day.

## CHAPTER V

### CLIO'S VINTAGE

History after all is the true poetry.—CARLYLE

To the one who drinks of the wisdom of Clio, the Muse of history, there will come manifold riches other than the accrued satisfaction of well-weighed political judgment. A knowledge of history, in its broadest sense, may well be said to be the essential foundation of all cultural education. The movements in science, philosophy, music, literature and the plastic arts are all inseparably intertwined, and they have as their controlling background the political actions of men and the economic forces that move peoples.

It is as impossible to thoroughly understand the poetry of Wordsworth, Shelley or Byron without having an appreciation of the political and economic events of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Era, as it is to conceive of the Epics of Homer without the Trojan War. The music of Bach and Haydn has as its foundation the reasonableness in religion, philosophy and political thought of the eighteenth century, as the music of Wagner and Chopin the unreason and rampant individualism of the early nineteenth. The books of the Cromwellian period reflect the illiberality and severity of the Puritan parliaments: the books of the Restoration reflect the French upbringing of Charles II. Wars and rumors of war, famine and years of plenty, new discoveries and great invasions make up the life of the world, and it is of this life that literature and music are made. We could indefinitely cite instances of the influence that history has had upon the arts, but in this chapter let us consider history as an art, history as literature.

No historian who deserves the name should write "dry" histories. The greatest historian is he who has an inspired passion for delving into the past, and the ability to interpret it in its living, human aspects. The "scientific" student who considers his mission that of arriving at the precise facts is not an historian but a "dry-as-dust" recorder. He is useful, however, in providing the material that will enable the true historian to cast illuminating spotlights upon the centuries that have gone before. Mr. William Roscoe Thayer, one of the most distinguished of our American historical writers, tells us that "Hi *story*'—let us not forget—is five-sevenths *story*." The historians whom we want to read are those who tell us the dramatic *story* of the past. Two-sevenths of their ability should, perhaps, be their infinite patience and intellectual honesty in gathering, sorting and weighing documents and other sources of information, but the other five-sevenths must be that ability which is the genius of the story teller. Someone has said that every historian must be his own "dry-as-dust," his own bespectacled investigator of authentic facts,—if the rest of him is an impassioned teller of tales we have a supreme historian. Gibbon, before the days of elaborately prepared source books, before the days of thoroughly indexed libraries, ransacked

the learned treasuries of Europe and Asia Minor for information; to this infinite patience there was added in his character the gifts of the artist and the dreamer. The result, after ceaseless labor, was the monumental, yet fascinating and comparatively reliable, "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," a book that is acknowledged the acme of historical perfection.

A few months ago, a woman of intellect, a wide traveller, an omnivorous reader, a mother of a large family, an efficient manager in whatever she undertook, was asked the name of the book that had made the most impression upon her life. Without a moment's hesitation she replied, Carlyle's "History of the French Revolution." Upon questioning her, we found that she had read the two large volumes three times, and with each rereading there had awakened in her the sentiments aroused by the greatest dramatic tragedy, the most intense human story.

Carlyle was not a scientific historian, he did not write histories for other historians; he wrote as one whom God directed to put upon pages of flame the characters, the drama, the magnificent incidents, the cruelties, the braveries, the cowardices, the heroisms of "the truth that is stranger than fiction." It is indeed more interesting to read of what men have done as depicted by the historian, than what they might have done as depicted by the second-rate novelist!

If you have not read the "French Revolution," read it at once! The author has taken the most dramatic period in modern times and he has treated it as it deserves. It has the power of tragedy, whose mission is, according to Aristotle, "to purify the soul through fear and terror." Your soul will be enlightened, you will be made to feel, as all great history makes you feel, that life is played upon a wondrous highway, and that the sights and works upon the way are of the sort to make you live in a trembling condition of wonder and expectancy. The city crowds will have new meaning: men and women, for having once been participants in the terrible cataclysm of one hundred and twenty year ago, are still of the stuff to accomplish strange deeds, and to fulfil undreamed-of destinies.

Has it occurred to you what a relatively small and insignificant number of familiar acquaintances we are able in our daily life to have? How many men and women do you know who have guided the destinies of nations, led great armies into the field, or are to meet death in their attempts to overthrow the tyranny of a despot or a bigot? In history we may meet them, and become acquainted with their problems and struggles. The past is a select drawing-room into which we all may enter. We may derive inspiration from the same wells that prompted the Crusaders to set out time after time in their well-nigh fatal effort to drive the Moslems from Jerusalem; we may absorb the spirit that moved Cromwell's Ironsides; we may appreciate the pettiness of our own weaknesses and vexations in comparison with the odds against which some of History's heroes have fought

and conquered. It is pleasant to live in the court of Louis XIV and to talk with kings and princes through the pages of St. Simon's "Memoirs"; it is a spiritual tonic and excitement to follow the careers of the Indian Missionaries through Parkman's glowing pages! It is in truth more downright "fun" than doing most things!

Undoubtedly it is true that Napoleon's ruthless ambition brought devastation to the lands that he conquered, and sorrow to the nation whose young men he led to the cannon's mouth, and yet I sometimes think that greater than the Code Napoleon, which he instituted, is the inspiration that his career has been to the young men of all countries. How many boys have dreamed their vision of the future when following the work of the little Corsican, who at the age of twenty-seven led the armies of France across the Alps to crumple in a series of whirlwind campaigns the proud power of Austria. And there was William Pitt, the Younger, who at twenty-four became Prime Minister of England, one-armed and half-blind Nelson at Trafalgar Bay, Lincoln, the rail-splitting President, Olive, Garibaldi, Hampden, and how many another has been a light that beckons our future soldiers and statesmen?

In every epoch of history we will find new horizons opened that will enrich and broaden our daily life; in every vital struggle we will find individuals and peoples who have acted in such a way that we should hope to be guided by them in our struggles and ambitions; in the failures of the past we may obtain moral lessons for the present and the future; in coördinating our forces and forming our judgments we will obtain a training for our minds which will be of use to every man in carrying out the enterprises in which he is engaged.

Dr. Johnson well said that the traveller brings from his journeys that which he brings to them. It is indeed pitiful to be in Paris and to see countless American tourists rushing about "seeing Paris." What a difference there is between those who bring to the storied city on the Seine a familiarity with her past, and those who bring nothing but time and money to spend. For the first, there are human dramas lurking in the shadows of Notre Dame; Quasimodo, the strange dwarf in Hugo's great romance, still swings on the bells of the belfry; the narrow streets and turbulent cafes may still contain the instigators of the Reign of Terror and their shouting mobs of "sans culottes"; Camille Desmoulins may still be visualized in the Café Royal plucking the leaves to make his tricolor cockade. At every turn, in every ancient building, there are rich historic memories that may feed the traveller who has prepared himself.

And the others, to whom history is a closed book! How barren and incompetent are their wanderings in Paris, London, Vienna, or any other old world city! To think that one can appreciate the historic gathering places of the human race without having knowledge of their past is as absurd as to believe one knows the

woods when one cannot appreciate the beauty and wonder of the wild life that makes of the woods its dwelling place. Go among the trees some day with one who has studied and absorbed "the woodnotes varied"! Wander about the Quais of Paris, or the Temple Inns of London, with a man who has read history with a human interpretation, and consider upon your return the increased wealth, you carry in your mind!

We cannot all be travellers, but it is always safe to store up material against a possible future; although I have never read far into the history of China, and though there is little possibility of my ever visiting the land of ancient civilizations, I am sure I could derive much pleasure and obtain a better understanding of our Occident if I followed a course of reading upon the varied fortunes of the different dynasties that have ruled the richly storied Eastern nation.

Our history books teach us valuable lessons in the art of living,—and this is assuredly the most important of the arts! As a man who brings something upon his travels besides his pocket-book and luggage comes home with rich experiences and memories, so does the man who approaches life with something more than a hungry stomach obtain from life more than he otherwise would. The greater variety of experiences we have, the more we know of the affairs of men, the richer our understanding of the forces that have ruled the world, the more replete with ecstatic living is our daily life. If the best of life is to be won by living in the world keen and alive to everything that moves, or thinks, or glitters, a great share of riches must go to the man who has studied and thought in other realms than those which immediately surround his own dwelling house.

In Philadelphia I sometimes watch the hurrying crowds of business men go scurrying underneath the shadow of Independence Hall. I wonder if these crowds are in any true sense aware of the important and heroic deeds that were accomplished in that building. I am sure that if they did their movements beneath that shadow would be rich in living experience. At political conventions, I sometimes wonder whether the delegates are aware of the vast consequence of the long governmental tradition which they, as delegates, have been called upon to uphold, and I feel sure that those who do, fulfil their responsibilities with a quickened sense of their weight and human moment.

On the observation car of a twentieth-century flyer the road-bed is so smooth, the rails so even, the power so terrific, that the past as an industrial development that has cast aside the stage coach, the prairie schooner, the pony express, makes one alive to the romance of the present. Down on the beach of a popular New Jersey summer resort when the water is dotted black with bobbing civilized bathers, look out over the waves and wonder at the change of but four hundred years. In a moment your mind can travel back to the Spanish castle and see Columbus begging the gold that would enable him to equip his ships to sail

westward into the unknown sea. Romance cannot be dead so long as men work, and strive, and play.

There is an art in reading history as there is an art in writing it. The writer who tells us of a battle with the same lack of imagination as the recorder who prepares mortality statistics must be compared to the reader who crams his mind full of dates and uncoördinated facts without drawing from them the riches and lessons of experience. The true historian and the proper reader of history must find in the past a world of enlightenment, an enrichment that magnifies, clarifies, and makes living the present. It is better to have studied a minute epoch, the history of your county or town, with a human understanding than to have unintelligently digested the careers of a hundred heroes, the military movements in fifty campaigns.

Do not turn from the eight bulky volumes of Gibbon's masterpiece with the fear that they are dry and useless, but begin them with the determination of finding an enlightenment to your vision of inestimable value in "the art of living." The dates of battles, the names of individuals, the data about which life revolved, are only of value in that they are the framework upon which you can hang the true meaning of the past—the evolving germ of the present. The Song of Solomon is not to be read because it is the Bible, but rather because it is a love song of which the world can never grow weary; Motley's "History of the Dutch Republic" is not to be read because it is recommended in the schools and colleges, but because in it you will find the unrolling of a human drama that will quicken your pulse and strengthen your faith in men.

Read the record of the past with the desire of obtaining a deeper understanding, an enlarged vision, an inspired ideal, a rich experience, and you will have become proficient in the art of reading history. You must have often thought upon the difficulty of determining exactly what you want. What do you desire life and your exertions to give you? In reading history perhaps you will be helped by finding out what Christ wanted when he died upon the cross, what the Pilgrims wanted when they left comfort and sailed to strange lands, what Stanley wanted when he buried himself in darkest Africa. Clio has had many wooers, from Thucydides to Carlyle and George Trevelyan, and their offerings form a treasure trove which must not be neglected.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE POET AND THE READER

I myself but write one or two indicative words for the future,

I but advance a moment, only to wheel and hurry back in the darkness.

I am a man who, sauntering along, without fully stopping, turns a casual look upon you, and then  
averts his face,

Leaving it to you to prove and define it,

Expecting the main things from you. WALT WHITMAN

What is poetry to you or me, as we rush to make the trolley car or suburban train? To get to the office on time seems the main chance, and yet returning home in the evening are we so tired that the funny page of the evening paper fulfils our entire intellectual and spiritual need? In asking this let me ask another question. Day in and day out, in work and play, in sorrow and anxiety, in pleasure and enthusiasm, what is life worth to you and me? We Americans are not much given to philosophizing about life, we prefer to live it. Whereas the intelligent Russian argues about the reason for and the meaning of action, Americans are prone without thought to throw themselves into the mill of violent living, to go at top speed until the gears break down, and then sometimes to say with Kipling's Galley Slave,

—whate'er comes after, I have lived and toiled with Men!

Our answer to the question "What is the meaning of life?" is simply "The living of it." "Work while you work, and play while you play" may be considered our national motto. In short, for every minute of our existence we want to have "sixty seconds' worth of distance run." To live acutely is our pleasure, to work our hearts out and revel in the doing of it is our end. It is thus, to use an expressive phrase of the vernacular, that "we prove something." And it is this fact which strengthens the paradox that the American, the man of action and bustle, must draw his greatest source of living in the realization of the spirit of singers.

The poet is he who has drunk more deeply at the well of experience than has his fellow men. Many a profound poet never writes a verse, for when a man of temperament is deeply moved he writes a poem within his own heart. It is for some to transcribe their emotions into words whereby their feelings may be communicated from one man to another; but it is for others to be without the gift of verbal expression and the poems must remain within. How many times in life

is your soul afire with enthusiasm, drunk with beauty, stricken with sadness, or overflowing with the meaning or portent of experience? At those times you are a poet, whether or not you transcribe the reflection of your heart upon the written page. The man who sings within is a singer whether or not he gives his song verbal utterance. These hours of poetic ecstasy make life a thing to be cherished. The sources of such ecstasy are manifold—the love of man and woman, or parent and children, religious communion with the Spirit, comradeship, work, pursuance of duty, speed, health, beauty, the joy of the builder or artist, attainment to a higher understanding, sadness, hope,—from such springs come the bubbles of the wine of life, heartening the cherished hours. Our greatest poems are those that have never been written—true experience is poetry, and experience is an open door to life.

Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough  
 Gleams that untraveled world, whose margin fades  
 For ever and for ever when I move.

The poetry found in books is experience, directly or indirectly, through the agency of verbal expression, transferred to the printed page. The great writers of poems are those who have undergone spiritual experiences of greater intensity than those which come within the range of us lesser mortals. In their poems we partake of their life, of their ecstasy in the presence of beauty, of the richness of their imaginings, of the depth of their spiritual natures.

You and I, when we hear the wood thrush sing, are moved with the music of the notes, and are possibly carried away into the bosky woods where the richly patterned bird in his evening song pours his heart to Heaven; but when Keats hears the melody of the nightingale, his nature so acutely attuned to the harmony, the message of peace and solitude, is swept away in such an ecstasy of heartfelt longing for that same peace, that same solitude, that his own heart pours forth his song, in words no less musical, in cadences no less rich than the notes of the feathered songster. His experience is preserved for us in "The Ode to a Nightingale" and we may read and derive the same fascination that he felt.

Matthew Arnold somewhere tells us that all great poetry has one or both of two attributes: "Natural Magic" and "Moral Profundity." Whatever these two phrases may mean upon first sight, after examining their true import it will be appreciated that the greatest English critic did not consider poetry a thing for the closet, or sentimental matter only to be read by the melancholy lovelorn to his sentimental maid. The effect of the natural magic of a summer's night, of the sea breaking upon the wind-swept coast, of the sea gull's flight, is apparent and



valued by everyone. What are most holidays other than periods during which we absorb appearances and sensations, that enter our personalities and remain part of ourselves during the succeeding year of work? "Natural Magic" is that which acts upon us as a holiday influence, compounded perhaps of beauty, mystery, fear or sentiment, which for the moment or for eternity gives our minds entrance into a realm of new and pleasurable things. Read Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" and you will find the essence of natural magic. You enter a realm, indeed, of magic and witchery, for

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan  
A stately pleasure-dome decree:  
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran  
Through caverns measureless to man  
Down to a sunless sea.

Do those lines charm you? They charm most of us and the cadence of the words, the confused picture of Xanadu, have become our own,—riches with which we would not care to part.

Every time I read them the blunt edge of life is worn off, living regains its sharpness, I have to an extent experienced an ecstasy, taken a holiday.

It is hard to define the exhilaration of a canter across the meadows upon a crisp October day, or the impulse that surges through you as you look to the ocean breathing the sea breeze, or the sense of religious comradeship that grips you when in the midst of a crowd, great with a single purpose,—but this is all of the true stuff of Natural Magic. Your sensations are not of the minute, but of all time, as they have vivified your soul and become part and parcel of your personality.

It is so with the poets who sing you a song or breathe a sentiment that is not oral, not didactic, not purposeful, but of the stuff that thrills the spirit of man,—their charm is impossible to define, it must be felt, and for having felt it, your spirit is of a color different from what it was before. As Corot's landscapes painted in the forest of Fontainebleau are said to express the emotion of the painter when in the presence of nature, so does the lyric poet of magical gift express his feelings, lay bare his soul with its emotions and vacillations. The sadness and sensuous mystery of Edgar Allan Poe, the marvellous ability of Tennyson to fit the most exquisite words to the most subtle incantations of beauty, the thrill of romance in Shakespearean England as depicted by our contemporary, Alfred Noyes, the appetite for sensuous delights of Keats, the tuneful, heartfelt songs of the Cavalier poets—these are of natural magic, of delight to the human soul, of the spirit of art.

When Shakespeare wrote,

Where the bee sucks, there suck I:  
In a cowslip's bell I lie,

he had no moral to expound, he merely sung from his heart with the beauties of nature and the ways of fairy-land as an open book before him. If we wish (and there is no rightful reason why we should not) to drain the very dregs of living for the richest drops of wine, let us enrich, make more virile our enjoyment by seeking nourishing draughts of experience from the poets who have expressed those sweetest joys on earth in poems that have cleansed the souls of men for generation upon generation.

There is the other phrase of Matthew Arnold, "Moral Profundity." It is when we seek wisdom from the poets that we find this attribute. When the greatest of them give us their innermost thought, not the record of experiences, but the essential deductions from all their experiences, we have their true wisdom. When Wordsworth in "The Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey." wrote the words,

Therefore am I still  
.....well pleased to recognize,  
In Nature and the language of the sense,  
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,  
The guide, the guardian, of my heart, and soul  
Of all my moral being;

or when, in his "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality," he wrote,

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar:  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home:

and when Shelley wrote,

We look before and after,

And pine for what is not:  
 Our sincerest laughter  
 With some pain is fraught;  
 Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

or when Tennyson, in "Locksley Hall," wrote,

This is truth the poet sings,  
 That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

those men formulated in exquisite language truths that have never been more intensively expressed.

Probably most readers of poetry have already considered these two phrases, and those who have, I feel sure, will agree that they are useful in making for a clearer understanding in our estimation of values. To read intelligently, to get the most out of our books, we should certainly attempt to formulate the various aspects of life the different poets represent, their relation to the time in which they live, and their excellencies when they stand before the bar of the reader's judgment.

Very few great poets produce poetry of but a single aspect. Shakespeare wrote the magical fairy jingles and yet created the stupendously profound character of "woe-entangled Hamlet"; Tennyson composed many a lilting tune in words, yet as a moralist he presented the most sincere thought of his generation. When we feel philosophic and thoughtful, we turn to the poems containing solemn truths; when weary, jaded, and off color, we turn to the honey of romance, the witcheries of sensuous beauty,—and regain our lost edge.

A single phrase may have natural magic, and yet may express a thought for which during years of our life we have been vainly groping. The poetry of thoughtful content is probably that which has meant the most to men, as upon the philosophy of such religious poets as Dante or Whitman many a man has braced his faith; yet we must remember that much of the wisdom of sages is expressed in as magical language as we have in our cherished heritage.

Let us not, however, be academic about our poets, let us not balance one against the other, let us not be carping about metre, subject matter and critical phrases, let us go to them for what they can give towards making this world a more marvellous place in which to dwell.

If Kipling makes you feel the glory of work, of the hard, terrific work in which we rejoice, if he gives you the call of the road, the wanderlust, and you hear,

—the song—how long! how long!  
Pull out on the trail again!

if Bobbie Burns with his songs of Scotia gives you a human sympathy with mankind, an appreciation that for all his foibles and impossibilities "a man's a man for a' that"; if Byron fills your heart with the divine discontent that in a sweep of glory lands you above and beyond the commonplaces of every-day existence; if Wordsworth makes you see Nature as you have never seen her before, if he makes a meadow of buttercups appear in a new light, with unsuspected meaning, with hitherto unseen color and grace; if Keats attunes your heart to a deeper appreciation of a form, a fragrance, a musical harmony; if Milton's solemn cadences inspire you with the depth of that great Puritan's spirit; if Shakespeare unbares your own character in revealing the inner springs of his eternal heroes; if Longfellow in "My Lost Youth" brings back to you the home of your boyhood, and you see again

The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,  
And islands that were the Hesperides  
Of all my boyish dreams;—

if you can say with Walt Whitman,

Logic and sermons never convince;  
The damp of the night drives deeper into my soul;

or if there is a man unknown except for one poem that still stirs you with the sentiments that you love and honor—if these, I say, have thus met your requirements, each and all of them are *great* poets to you, they have opened a door to a life richer in content, deeper in import, more vastly worth living.

There is no danger that the poets will ever be in need of readers. The musical expression of thought or sentiment is as old and fundamental as is human nature. The sailors singing their chants as they pull in their anchor, the negro laborers whom we have seen singing a song as they unload the railroad ties, or put the heavy rails in place, the Western range rider calming the steers, and quieting his own nerves through the lone night watches, the sagas and harvest songs of simple people in all lands, are facts that establish the part that poetry plays in the workings of the human heart. In reading poetry you will obtain no credit for upholding a tradition, as the tradition will stand of its own vitality; but in *not* reading it you will miss one of the most bounteous sources of inspiration, you will pass by the richest treasure house, you will neglect the supreme opportunity

for a thorough life that the art of man has put within your reach. When you do read, do it for all time, not for a moment. If the muse is to give you of her best, you must feel after sharing her store as did Wordsworth when he heard the Highland Reaper singing,

For old, unhappy, far-off things,  
And battles long ago:

as he tells us,

The music in my heart I bore,  
Long after it was heard no more.

The poem but begins after you have read it—the experiences that come after are the ones that count. Let us remember the simile and hold the music in our hearts as a reservoir of powerful beauty that will carry us over the stupid, the heavy, the unpoetic bumps of the days' doings.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE CHILDREN OF PAN

For I'd rather be thy child  
And pupil, in the forest wild,  
Than be the king of men elsewhere,  
And most sovereign slave of care;  
To have one moment of thy dawn,  
Than share the city's year forlorn.

THOREAU

The enthusiastic nature poetry of James Thompson, called "The Seasons," came as a shock to that inbred lover of the city streets, the taverns and town activities, Doctor Samuel Johnson. In these poems, the Doctor found that natural objects which before had hardly been worthy of attention were made to appear beautiful.

We must believe that after having read "Spring," "Summer," "Autumn," and "Winter," upon his infrequent excursions beyond the environs of the great metropolis he saw new beauties in the hitherto common-place landscapes, responded to the color in the fields and hedgerows, became interested in fantastic cloud effects, heard music in the streams, the waterfalls and in the songs of birds. For how many of us have arisen new sources of joy in Nature's beauteous wonderland at the instigation of poets, essayists and novelists who have seen and read with loving eyes

Of this fair volume which we World do name.

In an ardent conversation upon the power of certain poets a friend told me that the Anglo-Saxon world looked at Nature through Wordsworth's spectacles. He maintained that the reaction of nature upon even those who have never read a poem by this poet was influenced by his poetry; Wordsworth's interpretation of Nature had so permeated nineteenth century religion and literature that it was impossible for even the casual newspaper reader to escape it. We do not directly acknowledge our debt, but the garden clubs, the bird-study societies, the suburbanite who throughout the year will spend an hour and a half in the train, in order, on the way to the station in the early morning, to obtain the pleasures of Nature's awakening, and her retirement upon his return at twilight, and the Saturday afternoon golfer who, after holing his ball, looks beyond the course at the green whispering woods and rolling hills, expands his chest and murmurs "This is the life," are all unconsciously paying part tribute to the poet who wrote,

The world is too much with us; late and soon,  
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:  
Little we see in Nature that is ours.

We need a love of nature to-day, as we have never needed it before. In the terrific complexity and speed of our external existence we crave the quiet, internal stimulus to meditation and dreams that comes from the Great Mother's intricate, manifold, yet untempestuous method of doing things. From the close hatches of the city where the noise, the smells, and the turmoil seem all man-made, we must get away to the fields and blossoming pastures to find our souls alone with ourselves and the Great God Pan. To those who answer the call of the wild, or even the call of the suburban garden, there come new strength and new conceptions of beauty, to apply to the work of the world to which we have lent our hand. The

call is being answered,—man goes back to his own. We see it on every side: no one in any walk of life seems so humble or satisfied not to desire some day to own a farm; most summer resorts where there were formerly many a "flanneled fool" have now become "Adamless Edens," for our young men have answered the call of the Red Gods, and have packed their kits for the trail that leads to the tall timbers of solitude, of balsam, of camp fires and dreams.

Any book or poem that gives you a keener appreciation of the crimson of the sumach, the whispers of the wild things, the glory of the sunrise or of the all-embracing broadmindedness of Nature, will have done its part towards bringing literature into perfect accord with life. If my friend speaks truly in saying that Wordsworth has influenced two nations' outlook upon the world, those poems, laughed at by some for their quiet simplicity, have indeed arisen to the highest realm of literature and have become soul of our soul, mind of our mind, flesh of our flesh.

There are others—Wordsworth is not alone in his glory.

Henry David Thoreau, the perfect child of a cross country ramble, is my favorite. To write immortal words, it is said that a man must have an immortal passion, whether it be for beauty, or his God, his neighbor, his country, his lady, or himself. Thoreau sunk the love of all else in his passionate devotion to Nature. His Journals, kept year by year with ever a spontaneous freshness, are little else than an ecstatic love song dedicated to his mate,—the lake, the woods, the fields, the apple orchards, the winds, the colors, the birds, and all that lived and grew about his haunts near Walden. A lover sees a beauty in his lady's eye to which all the world is blind, and Thoreau senses a magic in an awakening Spring to which the senses of us lesser mortals are comparatively blunt.

His sincerity of appreciation was one with his marvellous power of observation. He did not have the scientific attitude of mind as had that fascinating Frenchman, Fabre, who wrote the biographies of insects in a way that makes you tremble at the wonders that go into the making of the life of a fly. Thoreau would have scorned the aquarium and cage methods of Fabre, not because of the lack of interest in the results, but rather on account of his love of Nature, naked, wild, and free. Upon the shortest ramble he saw myriad happenings, from the unusual frost crystal upon the web of a spider to the most subtle changing with the varying temperature of a bird's note; but it is all discovered without the microscope, without thought of entomological or ornithological records. A man should be afraid to say that the woods are a dreary place in which to walk upon a winter's day—let him read a page from the Winter Journal of our author and he will find that the book of Nature is never closed for him who has an eye in focus for her mystic letterings.

I say that Thoreau is my favorite and how could I deny it, since there is

many a winter's day in the city when I am sick of the asphalt and the bricks, and yet unable to leave them, that I can turn to any one of his pages and be carried by his words to my favorite woods or stream, to the longed-for fields and roadways? And in other seasons when time is more prodigal, and nature so bounteous that there seems to be a glut upon the market, my senses, that might grow befogged, are given a tonic in a paragraph that makes the drowsy summer atmosphere seem pregnant with beauty and fascination. If you are cooped among the chimneys and elevated trains, Thoreau will bring you to the country—if in the country, he will multiply the pleasures of your walk, your ride, or fishing trip. He stimulates the best of life that is in you, and that is all we can ask of any literature.

Nature from one point of view or another has always been one of the chief inspirations of the poets. If you examine the literature of the human race since the days when Solomon sang "And the voice of the turtle is heard through the land," you will find the various aspects of the seasons, the songs of the individual birds, the beauty and sentiment of flowers, and even the habits of the different species of fish, continually reflected in prose and verse. America has been especially blest with men we must term literary naturalists. We have spoken of Thoreau, but there are also Audubon, Wilson and our elderly contemporary, John Burroughs.

Wilson and Audubon are especially famous for their magnificent colored plates of the birds of North America, but I ask all nature lovers to go to a public library and secure the prose works of these two great ornithologists. There you will find as interesting reading as will come to your hand in many a day. They were both pioneers in science, art and exploration; both children of nature, more at home in the forest than in the city; both enthusiastic, thrilled worshippers of their feathered friends whom they have so brilliantly preserved in their cherished portfolios. Because their work was accomplished one hundred years ago, before our birds were charted and when journeys of scientific exploration, even into the mountains of Pennsylvania, were made with almost the same difficulty as is now caused in the exploration of the most jungled South American river, the naïve spirit of the explorer, of the elemental pioneer, is in their every page. There is ever the surprise, the uncertainty, the joy of life and study among unknown and untrammelled things. Theirs was the joy of children who for the first time discover a blackbird's nest in the far-off meadow and their joy is communicated to us; we become children of delight, as when lying upon bur backs on the edge of a flowery field of clover we watch with fascination the darts of kingbirds dashing from the top of the nearby chestnut after the myriad insects.

John Burroughs, whose essays have been a joy upon many an evening and a stimulating remembrance upon many a tramp, with a similar freshness and unworldliness carried on the tradition of the earlier men. From his fruit farm upon the Hudson he continually sends us messages to forget our tea parties, our



moving pictures, our country clubs, and really to find ourselves in the discoveries of beauties and life in the growing, nesting, and flowering things about us. One of the happy thoughts that we derive from him is the knowledge that to obtain the beneficence to soul and mind we (poor suburbanites tied to the necessity of earning our daily bread in the city) need not follow the "Long Trail" to the ends of the world of the furious globe trotter, Rudyard Kipling, but must only take store of the things at hand, find the same happiness in the quiet, civilized, thoroughbred-cattled meadow as we would hope to find up against a rugged blow in the Northern Seas off the coast of which "you've lost the chart of overside." You do not have to go so far from home to know the world. Thoroughly know the garden that you cultivate, study all that happens along the hedgerow upon the way to the station, and you will be richer than he who has racketed with half blind eyes from the Yukon to Patagonia,

Or East all the way into Mississippi Bay,  
Or West to the Golden Gate.

In conjunction with the reflection of nature in books, I mentioned our scaly

friends, the fish, without paying due homage to the king of all philosophic fishermen, Izaak Walton. How many devotees of the gentle art of angling have made of their own the wisdom, the beauty, the thoughtful content of the fisherman's classic, "The Compleat Angler"? A man once said to me that the next best thing to taking a walk was to read the accounts of Walt Whitman's rambles upon Timber Creek. I answered that upon the days you could not go a-fishing, you had best read "The Compleat Angler." I hold to this! Will not the men who stand by the trout, the bass, the salmon, the weak fish, or the gallant tuna and tarpon, and the boys who put their faith in the catfish, the sucker, the eel, or the perch, fall in together and be one in believing as the Venerable Izaak believed,

O the gallant fisher's life,  
It is the best of any!  
'Tis full of pleasure, void of strife,  
And 'tis beloved by many;  
Other joys  
Are but toys;  
Only this  
Lawful is;  
For our skill  
Breeds no ill,

But content and pleasure.

There is many another writer who opens the door to the traveller who wishes to enrich his enjoyment of Nature as it is to be seen along life's highway. I mention but a few who may give you new worlds for which you would not trade a mint of silver. Have you ever gone with Stevenson upon his walking trips? If not, do so, and perhaps you will agree with him that it is pleasant to have a companion upon your journeys; as Lawrence Sterne expresses it: "Let me have a companion of my way were it but to remark how the shadows lengthen as the sun declines." If you prefer to be alone, Hazlitt will tell you that no companion is necessary, as thoughts need no companions: "I want to see my vague notions float like the down of the thistle before the breeze, and not to have them entangled in the briars and thorns of controversy."

Or have you read the books of the Homer of the Insects, the Frenchman I have mentioned, Fabre? There is a treat ahead of you—he wrote of the crawling, burrowing and flying things of his beloved Provence, and if there is anything in this realm more interesting than his records of observing the daily lives of the House Fly, the Praying Mantis, and many another beetle, cricket and creeper, I have yet to find it. To say that you must immediately line your room with aquariums, jars, and boxes, in which to preserve and watch the births, loves and deaths of all the spiders, whirligigs, and butterflies that come within your reach is relating the result in its mildest form that this author has had upon me. Such books introduce you to a thousandfold intensity of existence, as every great book must.

Intensive agriculture is heralded as the saving factor of human progress. Let us make a plea for truly intensive living. As the crops that come from a rich, well-cultivated soil are bountiful, so is the life that is the product of a fertile mind. A poor crop is a superficial existence of discontented pleasures and shallow unhappiness; a rich crop is a life in which the heart and mind are at least attune to the joy which may be derived from the living of it,—brave when courage is needed, patient when patience is a virtue. The word "culture" is sometimes derided as a synonym for pretentious high-browism, but let us remember that the farmer respects the word "cultivate," as he knows that it is necessary if he wishes to make the harvest a season of happiness and rich reward. A man's harvest season is his every minute of existence—his bounty is the depth and pleasure of that existence. Our future life is or is not a "great perhaps," but our present life is assuredly a reality. It is *here*—what are you going to do with it? If you can make every day a day of intense interest you have won the greatest battle! You have stormed the world's richest citadel! The Children of Pan, who have loved

and written of Nature, charm and transport you to a world of infinite interest. They offer rich fertilizer that gives promise of a bumper crop—Open that Door into their Realm.

## CHAPTER VIII

### MEN BEHIND BOOKS

Every word man's lips have uttered  
Echoes in God's Skies.

ADELAIDE A. PROCTER

Books contain the accumulated store of human thought and scientific attainment—this is a treasure without which there would be no civilization—yet in addition, we may say that the most potent inheritance, that books vouchsafe, is the personalities of the great authors who have inscribed their souls within them. Personal character affects our lives as does nothing else. In the back of the mind of every one there are men and women who, we appreciate, have been the makers of our souls. Most often it is a mother or a father, sometimes a teacher of our youth, or a friend and fellow worker of whose nature we realize we have absorbed a part. Contact between human personalities is the most profound mover for good and evil. A preacher may declaim against sin for ever and a day, but you know that your great friend who scorns sin has infinitely more influence upon you. The greatest doers of good are men and women who lead others by the examples of their own lives. It is unfortunately not given to many to come into intimate personal contact with the most supreme human souls, but fortunate we are that many have extended their personalities without limit into the future, by truly encasing themselves in books that will remain as the leaven and inspiration of all ages and all peoples.

I have a number of volumes upon my shelves that I choose to consider not as books, but as men. Instead of printed pages, cloth bindings, and labels, they are living personalities with whom I can pass an evening. The reading is over, and I have within me the character of a great human being. As have my Mother and Father and the old fisherman, whose knowledge of the sea and storm beaten coast fed my boyish spirit, they have become part of me. The greatest books are

those that present the greatest men. It is not the artistry of telling a story or writing a poem that really counts; the sincerity and intensity with which a man, whom we may call our "guide, philosopher and friend," is revealed forms the most cherished treasure of our bookshelf. In sorrow, in dejection, in need of mental or spiritual sustenance, when the joy of living is blunted, when lazy, discouraged or annoyed, you can go to these great fellows, converse with them and return again to the world with a bird's-eye view, an enlarged vision, a quickened spirit.

Have you read Walt Whitman? *There* is a glorious human being—so magnificent, so all-embracing in his love, so turbulent, so large in his personality that to know him, to feed upon him, you must become submerged in his book, his soul,—"*The Leaves of Grass*." Of this volume containing his poems he himself said,

This is no book;  
Who touches this, touches a man.

You do indeed touch a man! A great spirit who saw in all things God; a Democrat who saw in all men the spark of the divine; a leader who raced out to the farthest reaches of the soul and beckons and begs you to follow; a lover who embraced all, the prostitute, the poet, the lowly, the exultant, Christ himself, in a spirit of human fellowship; a physical giant who gloried in his sex and makes you consider sacred the relationship of the sexes; a nurse who brought upon himself paralysis by caring for the wounded in the Civil War; a prophet who could no more believe that the spirit of an individual man could die than that it had never been born. Perhaps you think I write extravagantly—I do not—I but attempt to present what the personality of Walt Whitman has meant to me, and to many, many others. I but ask that you go to the "*Leaves of Grass*," and come in contact with that man to whom so many look and say—"A great part of myself is you, Walt Whitman! My life has been renewed since first I touched your hand."

Tolstoy! There is another one who believed in humanity and God,—there is another who has put a huge, rugged, loving soul within books. Probably no one has so influenced the humanitarianism of our day as did this bearded old warrior from Russia; but it was the deep human sympathy of the actual living Tolstoy that moved the world, not the arguments he deduced nor the warnings he gave. He was always a moralist,—even in his masterpiece "*Anna Karenina*" it is not the story he tells, but the human love which he reveals that has made the eternal monument. Afraid of nothing,—the Czar, convention, hatred, oppression,—he lived his life according to the dictates of his own conscience, the most punishing conscience that has ever been the attribute of a master soul. If you do not know him, read his short story "*Master and Man*." There you will find enunciated, in

a manner as poignant, as powerful, as even that of the Sermon on the Mount, the doctrine of happiness found in living your life for others. Selfishness, pride, materialism, the sins that spoil the world, cannot stand in the way of the burning words of Tolstoy. Your conscience will receive a stiffening medicine, your sympathies for the sins and sufferings of your neighbors will deepen to bed rock, and your life will become proportionately more true, more happy, more Christian. Six years ago in the lowly hut near the Caucasus, when the mighty soul of Tolstoy left the body, the World missed a leader, a lover, a prophet—but his word still remains, and the doctrine as told by him of universal betterment through love and human sympathy will reach mankind whilst there are men left to read, and to communicate.

We all know the poems of Robert Burns, most of us know something of his life. His life and character are revealed in his poetry. He too was a lover, but a weak rather than a rugged one. We love him for his very weakness. His heart was his strength and his undoing. He loved until his heart would break, ruthlessly and impetuously, and of his sufferings, his remorse, regrets, and forlorn hopes he sang. In this cruel world, where might so often makes right, what a benediction it is to read a poem written from the depth of a simple, sorrowing, yet deeply human heart upon the suffering that he has caused the "wee sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie" in turning up her nest with the plowshare. As with all the personalities that are "great" in the deepest sense, his was one that felt a companionship for all that lives upon the earth, and from his sympathy for the drunken, the heart-broken, and the meadow mice, and his joy in patriotism, true lovers, and beautiful roses, we derive a depth of sentiment that needs must mellow our hearts. A brave spirit in a weak body had Bobbie Burns—he drank and was unfaithful, but he felt deeply. We love him for his depth, we sympathize with him in his weaknesses. As a friend he purifies rather than stimulates our souls, but he is a true friend and a loving one.

François Villon, the greatest ballad singer of all time, the tavern lover, the vagabond, the heavy-hearted sorrower, the lighted-hearted laughter, the bosom companion of thieves, cut-throats, chattering grisettes, old courtesans, rioters, and brawlers of the narrow streets, Cathedral shadows, Seine banks of mediæval Paris, was another of those great-hearted human lovers who had the gift of telling his heart secrets in words of wondrous beauty. By twentieth century standards Villon's actions, thieveries, and suspected murder, would have been neither moral nor proper, but by the standard of all ages, in all true hearts, his feelings towards the people among whom he moved will stand the test of the most austere morality. He loved all men and women for the best that was in them, he did not scorn them for the worst. He was unselfish and true to his friends, and more than that we cannot desire. Where there is hypocrisy there is vice; where

there is selfishness there is lack of Christianity and humanity; our tavern poet, François Villon, had neither of these, and if you want a friend who will make you see the good in the bad, the beautiful in the ugly, go to your bookshelf and become acquainted with the fervid soul of this ancient ballad singer.

When you are too contented, when your mind feels squidgy with good living, or sultry from the summer heat, go to another man,—George Gordon, Lord Byron. They say that Byron (with Scott) is nowadays out of fashion. "They" are mistaken. The author of *Childe Harold* and *Don Juan* will never be truly out of fashion, so long as there is a flare in youthful hearts, a discontent in ambitious minds. He is the poet of a great revolt, a kicker at the traces, and then again he is the singer of the bleeding heart, of lost causes; he hurries you across the seas upon his speeding bark; he tops the crags of human loneliness and leaves you desolate. His songs are of the rollicking wine of life with its excitements, its depressions, its sentiments of hatred, beauty, joy. For youth he is the poet of liberty, of intense individualism; for age the poet of thwarted desires, for everyone he has a chestnut burr to put beneath dull content; his mockery is for stupidity, dryness, stagnation. Get under the crust of his effusive egotism and you will meet a sombre, lonely, sensitive individual, who needs you as a friend and who will be to you a hypodermic stimulative.

How different a one from this poet is his contemporary, the essayist, Charles Lamb. The essays we love the best are those that reveal the point of view, the little personalities of the writer, and no man of letters ever had a more magnetic personality, or knew better how to preserve himself in little literary gems, than did the author of "The Essays of Elia." Lamb spent his days in the South Sea Counting House transferring figures from one great ledger to another. But his evenings with his books, his family and his friends! Ah!—there was a companion! A booklover whose enthusiasm, for musty duodecimos has become a classic allusion, a punster whose puns are sometimes good and sometimes bad, but always original, a relisher of good conversation, a man of many petty weaknesses, a lover of good food, with a taste for old wine, and with an infinite appreciation of the fads and foibles of himself and others, he seems to have been altogether the most lovable individual with whom it would be possible to scrape up an acquaintance. Read but one hundred pages of his essays and he becomes your chuckling, appreciative, inimitable companion. Every old book shop, every roast pig, every glass of rich wine, every threadbare clerk stooping over his ledger—these and many such will take on fresh and romantic aspects for the friend of Elia.

Thomas Carlyle was an historian and philosopher who wrote his name over every page of his work. His was the voice and the soul of the Old Testament prophets, who railed at men from the depths of their bitter yet anxious hearts. The Preacher of the Nineteenth Century, when he spoke the world lis-

tened! Have you read "Sartor Resartus"? Among his works this is even the most personal. It is rough and jagged in style, turbulent and confused in arrangement, but behind it all, or rather under it all, is revealed the spiritual message to his age. The message is Carlyle's own personality: his bravery, his sincerity, his fine hatred of muddle-headed thinking, of credulity, of cant; his love and admiration for the fundamental greatneses of human nature, his belief in an omnipotent God. He wished men to believe, and the thunder he bellowed in his endeavor still re-sounds. His soul was a battery of twelve-inch guns directed against the forces of ignorance and hypocrisy. It is to the reading of "Sartor Resartus" that many men point as the turning stake in their spiritual lives. It was not in the book that they found their spiritual bulwarks, but in the soul of the great Scotchman with whom they came in contact.

There is our own Emerson, whose admiration for Carlyle was probably only outdone by Carlyle's admiration for him! "Self Realization," "The American Scholar," "Friendship," "Politics"—how many of his essays have become part and parcel of America's loftiest thought and action. The metallic acuteness of his personality was not of the kind with which you can become familiar, but its very aloofness holds our respect and devotion. The austerity of George Washington in public life can only be compared with the cold distance at which this philosopher holds us, and yet upon their pedestals we recognize them as men from whom the best in American character has derived nourishment. In every sentence of his every essay, we feel the soul at peace, the intellect enthroned, the power of will predominant.

A man without friends is a man without life, and I have but told you of some of my boon companions. Never to have shared in the fellowship of the great spirits who are preserved for us in books is to cut one's self off from the most rewarding of human relationships. The chums of our boyhood, our companions at college, too often drift away to distant parts, or diverge from us in pursuits other than our own; although remembrances of our times together are sacred and of sweet recalling, too often they are of the past and renewal forever impossible. The friends of our books, however, are forever with us, they cannot die, they cannot depart, they remain fresh and vigorous, hearty sojourners upon our road, forever willing to lend a hand over the rocks and bumpy places. Without disparaging those with whom I sit before the fire, and chat, and smoke, I must confess that I value equally with them the friends of eternal character that exist there in the book-case. They lighten the path of life; they are ready for converse when my spirit calls.

Go to the greatest books for your most enduring friends, but upon having formed their friendship do not leave them in the study, but carry them within your spirit to your business and the marts of men, and in holding their con-

fidences burning in your heart you will find yourself a more thorough human being.

## CHAPTER IX KEEPING UP WITH LIFE

Reading is the key which admits us to the whole world of thought and fancy and imagination, to the company of saint and sage, of the wisest and wittiest at their wisest and wittiest moments. It enables us to see with the keenest eyes, to hear with the finest ears, and to listen to the sweetest voices of all time.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

If in the minds of some readers this little book has helped to break down the futile distinctions and to show the real relation between the man who reads and the one who enjoys life, between the thinker and the man of action, it has done all that the author dared hope. Let us look upon our library not as an end in itself, but as a means to an end. It is a mistaken ambition to read as many books as possible within a year, or to attempt religiously to read the complete works of a number of authors. The man who buries himself in his library and exists only in the books therein is an unsocial, stagnant creature; but the one who reads as a means of attaining to a more productive life among his fellow men is the one who has gained the true riches of literature.

The world is a world for workers, not idlers. We live in America in the twentieth century, and we are of but little use to the general machinery if our minds are forever sojourning with the mediæval knights or gossiping in the by-ways of London with Charles Lamb and his contemporaries. Literature for you and me who live, and toil, and hope to obtain joy in the doing of it, must be vivifying nourishment to apply to our living and toiling. Great books and all true education provide this nourishment or else they would not be worth the price of a comic supplement.

Poetry, fiction, philosophy and history are not alone for old maids and retired business men who desire comforting, amusing solace to while away the hours until the race is run, nor alone for college professors and writers whose business it is to read, abstract, and judge,—they are truly, have been, and always



will be for the minds of men and women who need and use the spirit of them in their work, their play, their sorrows, and their joys.

When Francis Bacon wrote "Reading maketh a full man," he did not mean "full" to imply a great accumulation of facts and dry-as-dust learning. Bacon was a philosopher, scientist, essayist, of the first order in each, and yet a leading statesman in his age. His mind was "full" in that he had probably as had no other man in England absorbed all the literature and science of all the centuries that had preceded him; his was the fulness of the reservoir from which could be drawn an endless stream of resource with which to undertake new political enterprises, of strength to maintain his position and of philosophy in the face of losing it. He was a literary man in that he knew the literature of the world, a man of letters—he wrote masterpieces, a man of action—he virtually ruled Great Britain. This is the threefold thread of life that we may all have as our ambition,—the connoisseur, the creative artist, the productive worker.

After having considered the bearing the reading of books has upon life, let us consider the bearing that living has upon reading and writing. Elbert Hubbard carried out this thought in his little book upon William Morris, the English poet. Morris, as you may know, was a weaver, a blacksmith, a wood-carver, a painter, a dyer, a printer, a furniture manufacturer, a musician, and withal a great poet. Hubbard said: "William Morris thought literature should be the product of the ripened mind." We have looked at Bacon as one whose literary output must have been the product of a mind that had manfully grappled with worldly affairs, and here is a further list that the Roycrofters give us: "Shakespeare was a theatre manager, Milton a secretary, Bobbie Burns a farmer, Lamb a bookkeeper, Wordsworth a Government employee, Emerson a lecturer, Hawthorne a custom-house inspector, and Whitman a clerk."

The professional man of letters, except in rather rare instances, is by no means the man who erects the most enduring literary monuments. Literature must come from elemental life to have the true relationship to the affairs of men. We could increase Elbert Hubbard's list to an almost indefinite length—the author of the Gettysburg address had the weight of a nation upon his shoulders, Thoreau was more interested in observing the changing seasons than he was in writing books, Tolstoy was a soldier, an economist and farmer, Balzac an unsuccessful publisher, Bunyan a preacher, Pepys a high government official, Oliver Wendell Holmes a doctor, and countless novelists and poets of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries hard-working, hard-driven newspaper men.

Leisure does not make great literature,—all that is effective must come from interior or exterior experiences, and acute observations. The most effectual reading is that which is done in the light of personal experience, with one's eye upon unliterary activity. There is an endless chain, of which the links are the subject,

the artist, the reader and his life as reflected by the author's treatment. To live in a world of books and to have as their profession the spinning of other volumes is the life of too many of our writers. On the other side of the shield, we of course see readers whose lives are entirely absorbed in the volumes they read without an outlet to the practical activities of existence. How tiresome it is to have a bustling man or woman tell us that they have not the time or that they are not literary enough to read great books. They of course, being good Americans, have plenty of time to go through stacks of worthless novels, and absorb a half dozen continuous serial stories in our monthly magazines. I say it is tiresome, and it is foolish, as with a moment's thought we can realize that books are essentially for the man or woman who is most deeply immersed in life.

Break down the barrier between literature and life?—there is none! I have a certain friend who has more to do within the twenty-four hours of the day than has anyone else I know. Politics, municipal corporations, railroads—these are apparently his life—absorbed in men and affairs. And yet if I run across a book that especially appeals to me, I go to him and ask his ideas upon it. He has probably read it and with his greater experience in the actual turmoil of living than I have had, he can enlighten me with a dozen new points of view upon the book under consideration. He interprets it in the light of his experience, as the author had written in the light of his.

It was said that during President Wilson's first winter in the White House, society in Washington was much exercised as to how he passed his evenings. It later developed that those evenings in which he was not absorbed in official business were spent in reading poetry, preferably Wordsworth, to his family. Washington stood amazed! Perhaps there is no truth in this story, but the ingredients are certainly there, which, if brought into conjunction, would make a true yarn. The active helmsman of the ship of state, with innumerable matters weighing upon him, seeking wisdom and spiritual fibre from a great poet; Washington society, without much to do, yet frightfully busy, amazed at his wasting or dreamily passing his hours of possible recreation!

Many another great public man has well appreciated that books are not for the closet but for life. Theodore Roosevelt is the apostle of strenuosity, statesman, ranchman, hunter, and yet a writer upon a wide range of subjects and an omnivorous reader. The plays of Shakespeare were the school books and college education of our rail splitter, Abraham Lincoln. A great English liberal, Charles James Fox, would charm the House of Commons for hours with his oratory, go to Brooks' and lose a fortune at cards, and then home to his bed to read the Plays of Euripides,—probably to absorb wisdom and courage for his thinking and gaming upon the following evening. Of the men and women to whom books mean life, we could go on with our list indefinitely, not only through the ranks of kings

and queens, soldiers and statesmen, financiers and merchants, but sea captains, mechanics, farmers, clerks, and coal miners. In every walk of life we find the true philosophers, the true adepts in the art of living, seeking sustenance from the printed page.

Go into a public library, and study the faces of those who are reading there—ambition, inspiration, delight will be expressed by those who have found *the open door*, the way to riches and plenty. Observe the homes of your acquaintances! Cicero said that books are the soul of a room, and we may expand this epigram in saying that the use of books in a family brings all the members into a communion with each other, creating an atmosphere far removed from that of the home in which books are infrequent sojourners.

Oh no, it is not the professed gentleman of literature with the pedantic knowledge and bookish phraseology, but the men and women who seek explanation of and relief from sorrow, stimulus to higher attainment, pleasure that mellows activity, to whom the authors are truly the path of life. Those whom you see on the elevated trains reading Shakespeare, the ranchman with his pocket edition of Dickens, the country doctor who hates to buy an automobile as when driving his old buggy he could read his Boswell upon his round of visits,—they are the ones to whom the poet can truly say,

You will hardly know who I am, or what I mean;  
But I will be health to you nevertheless,  
And filter and fibre your blood.

You need never be afraid of becoming intellectual. To be sure it is somewhat the fashion in America to think that a man who reads Meredith should be a college professor or the editor of a book review—but this is only a fashion and held to by the most stupid. It is smart to laugh at good books and "culture," but it is the same sort of smartness at which all Europe has been sensibly sneering for a century. Reading should not be a profession; those that make it such invariably become world weary, book weary, at sea in an ocean in which life is necessarily a more vital thing than they are able to swallow. Do not give your life over to your library, but make of it an electric battery with which to vivify life. It can be done, and is done by the great and the little, the sorrowful and the joyful, the leading warriors in the battle for civilized progress.

Call upon the supreme minds of past ages to support you in the strife of this and they will prove stalwart, faithful legions. Read as is your need and inclination; not as a duty, not as a feat, but as an acknowledgment that you are glad to win the best and most helpful of friends. Aristotle said that all men desire

knowledge. If knowledge means deeper human sympathy, a more profound enlightenment, a richer, happier, more productive life, let each one of us admit that the attainment of knowledge is in truth our endeavor. Let us try the experiment of finding this knowledge in the volumes of the deepest, the most intensive livers.

Make the book you read to-day play a part in the world of to-morrow, and you will rise above the reader in the closet who carps and criticizes, thus cutting himself off from the work of men. You will disprove all statements about the lack of practicability of education, the other-worldiness of books.

\* \* \* \* \*

There was a boy who wandered out along an unknown highway into a far country. The way seemed sombre, foreign and meaningless. His questions were unanswered, his desires unsatisfied; there seemed no by-paths into which he could turn in the hope of finding a solace or a reason for his journey.

A never-ending vista without rhyme or reason lay before him of flat, uninteresting solitudes, only broken by dark pits or rugged obstructions which he had either to circle about or climb over or under. They always annoyed and provoked him, as there seemed no set plan for meeting such difficulties, no apparent purpose in wandering on. He knew, however, that there was no turning back, he had to stagger, and stumble, and plod forward, ever forward.

It was the way of life, and it was a meaningless road, a disappointing journey undertaken with great expectations.

After a deal of suffering, impatience and profound discouragement, he came upon a great Palace standing in his way. It was the first that he had ever seen, and he wondered at it.

With hesitancy he determined to walk about it and to follow the beaten road, uninteresting but familiar, which he felt must stretch beyond. He spied, however, a small door at the side of the great barred gate and he determined to enter and to see what could be found within. The panel yielded to his timorous push, and he found himself in a mighty hall where there were wondrous things!

Many another wanderer had already arrived, and many others were to follow,—there was a happiness, a purpose, a vitality in life that had been sadly lacking upon the road of his journeying. Wisdom, riches, the answers to his questions, the reasons for his arduous pilgrimage lay before him. He grasped them and was content.

\* \* \* \* \*

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