II. Ventures in Common Sense

By E. W. Howe

THE FREE-LANCE BOOKS · EDITED BY H. L. MENCKEN

VENTURES IN COMMON SENSE

THE FREE LANCE BOOKS. II

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTIONS BY H. L. MENCKEN

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INTRODUCTION

This collection of aphorisms and arguments is made up chiefly of extracts from *E. W. Howe's Monthly*, perhaps the most curious as it is certainly one of the most entertaining of all the 25,000 periodicals now issuing in the United States. Retiring, in 1911, from the management of the Atchison (Kansas) *Globe*, a newspaper which, in a quarter of a century, he had brought up from the utmost obscurity to great influence and prosperity, Howe established his *Monthly* in order to soothe an old journalist's incurable itch to have his say. Here, even more than when he edited his daily, he had an organ all his own, and here, once he got into his stride, he began to unfold a body of ideas that gradually won him a national audience. He had been, of course, by no means unheard of before. Far back in the 80's he had written a novel that won the praise of W. D. Howells, and in the *Globe*, as I have said, he had wielded a good deal of power in

the Middle West. But in his *Monthly*, for the first time, he could throw off the taboos and hesitations that lie upon even the most independent of daily papers, and the results of this new freedom were quickly visible. Strangers very far from Kansas and its woes began to hear of Howe and to send in their subscriptions, and before long the *Monthly* began to be read in all parts of the country and Howe found himself a man of nation-wide reputation. I doubt that there is another periodical in America which shows so remarkable a subscription list to-day. The professorial mind, perhaps, soars above it, but among men of practical affairs as opposed to men of mere theories—that is, among bankers, manufacturers and the heads of big trading organizations—it has a truly amazing circulation. Oddly enough, it is also very extensively read by authors and editors, especially the latter. I scarcely know of the editor of a big daily, indeed, who doesn't glance at it now and then, and the same thing is true of the editors of the principal magazines. What primarily attracts the business men, of course, is Howe's persistent and often very adroit defense of their much maligned order, but what interests the editors is

the extraordinary charm of his naïve and confidential manner, his quite exceptional capacity for putting the plain thoughts of a plain man into such English that the professional eye immediately discerns its skillfulness and delights in its disarming persuasiveness.

Above all, what both classes of readers recognize in him is the rare quality of honesty—a quality, in fact, so seldom encountered in American writing that it would be stretching the truth but little to say that it is never encountered at all. Our Puritan culture, as every one knows, makes for many laudable virtues: enterprise, industry, philoprogenitiveness, patriotism, the fear of God, a great appetite for brummagem ideals, a high desire to be righteous, a noble gratitude for the fact that we are not as other men are. But one of the things it does *not* make for is that austere intellectual passion which exalts a bald fact above comfort, security and the revelation of God—one of the things it does *not* promote is common truthfulness. The American, indeed, always views the truth a bit suspiciously, particularly if it be the truth about himself and his; he seems convinced that it is dangerous, and perhaps downright indecent.

There is in him none of the Slav's habit of merciless introspection, none of the Frenchman's penetrating realism, none of the German's appetite for putting the bitter facts of life into hair-raising axioms. In his philosophizing he roams the superficial, leaping back almost blushingly every time his foot upturns the fundamental. It is words that always fetch him, not realities; he is the most abject slave of mellifluous and meaningless phrases ever on view in the world. And, since words and phrases, however lovely, have a way of failing when they are put to the test, he forces himself inevitably into a sort of preposterous dualism. On the one side is the moony philosophy he serves with the lip; on the other side is the harsh, realistic, Philistine philosophy he actually practices. On the one side is the ethic that meets the national notion of propriety; on the other side is the ethic that practically works. This disparity between what is publicly approved and what is privately done is at the heart of the Anglo-Saxon, and especially of the American character; it sets our people off from nearly all other peoples. It is the cause of the astounding hypocrisy that foreigners always see in us, both when we de-

nounce them and when we seek to court them, and it is the cause, too, of our national inability to understand those foreigners and their habits of mind.

That hypocrisy, to the foreign eye, bathes the American scene; even the more civilized varieties of Englishmen are acutely conscious of it. We posture as apostles of fair play, as good sportsmen, as professional knights errant—and throw beer-bottles at the umpire when he refuses to cheat for our side. We bawl about the malefactions of Big Business—and every man in Little Business is trying to gouge and rob his way into Big Business as fast as he can. We save the black-and-tan republics from their native Bryans, Roosevelts and Burlesons—and flood them with "deserving Democrats" of our own. We deafen the world with our whoops for liberty—and submit to laws that invade and destroy our most sacred rights. We profess a personal virtue that would shame the monks of Mount Athos—and have a higher crime rate than Port Said, and more prostitutes than London, and a more corrupt bureaucracy than Russia under the czars. We play policeman and Sunday-school superintendent to half of Christendom—

and lynch a darkey every two days in our own back-yard. Thus the curious dualism of the land. No wonder foreigners stand amazed before the incredible contrast between our pretention and our practice—men jailed for republishing parts of the Bible and the Declaration of Independence, notorious drunkards advocating prohibition on the floor of Congress, bawdy judges sentencing men under the Mann Act, shyster lawyers lifted into office as reformers, trust-busting politicians borrowing money from trust magnates, tax-dodgers exposing and denouncing tax-dodgers, uplifters picking the public pocket, *pleureurs* for democracy abolishing democracy, men imprisoned, knocked about, tortured in the land of liberty for daring to speak out for liberty.

What lies under all this, of course, is easy enough to see. The primary difficulty is that the American people, despite a century and a half of struggles for freedom, are still burdened by a crushing heritage of Puritanical pishposh, and that it forces them into efforts to obey rules of conduct which no healthy race could actually observe and survive. The secondary difficulty is to be found in the extraordinary timorousness,

the pervasive intellectual cowardice, which Puritanism carries with it. The thing needed is obviously a thorough overhauling of the outworn national code—perhaps its forthright abandonment and the formulation of an entirely new one, closer to the unescapable facts. But that is precisely what Americans seem least fitted for. The impulse that revealed itself in a Machiavelli, in a Montaigne and in a Nietzsche, and that shows itself even to-day, on a lower scale, in a Wells and a Shaw, is apparently not in them. Such a man, rising among them, would be smothered in distrust, and perhaps swiftly conducted to the calaboose; there is no country in the world in which iconoclasm is more perilous. Rather than grapple with the fundamental problem, the American prefers to confine himself to superficialities, and what he accomplishes on that plane is usually no more than a clumsy rearrangement of the old platitudes. A glance at even the most serious American newspaper is sufficient to show how shallow American thinking is—how much a matter of mere formulæ, most of them palpably unworkable and idiotic. And if that glance were not enough, a study of the gigantic liter-

ature of "inspiration," so peculiar to the country, would furnish proof enough. That literature is devoted ardently and fatuously to reconciling the dualism I have mentioned; it seeks to perfume the practical philosophy of the land by finding justification for it in the theoretical philosophy; it is a huge effort to reconcile the "good" man and the man who, Yankee fashion, gets on in the world. In politics and government the clash is particularly visible. There is no country in which legislation directs itself toward loftier goals and is more sharply flavored with pious purpose, and there is no country in which the manner of its enactment is more corrupt and dishonest, or in which there is a larger body of unenforced and unenforceable laws.

As I say, no voice is raised against this folly—none, that is, save the voice of the aforesaid E. W. Howe. A man thoroughly American, a man especially enmeshed in the Puritanism that is the national curse, a Middle Westerner of the Middle Westerners and by no means disposed to conceal it, he yet manages to get the method of the free spirit into his study of the phenomena that lie about him, and even into his examination of the thing that he is himself. This is the re-

markable fact that sets him off from the whole vast herd of other national sages: he is the only one who practices resolutely a relentless honesty, sacrificing every appearance, however charming, to what he conceives to be the truth. He is, no doubt, often in error; at times, indeed, he seems to me to lift error to the vigor of a fine art or a grand passion; but what I always get out of him is the feeling that, right or wrong, he is at least absolutely honest—that this is precisely how the thing appears to one frank and shrewd and highly reflective man. There is never any soughing of wind-blown theory in him; one never finds him arguing for a doctrine on the familiar ground that it is comforting. If he speaks for it, he is sincerely in favor of it because he has examined it, tested it, revolved it in his mind, slept over it, looked inside it—and when he is thus in favor of it, I have a conviction that the overwhelming majority of other reflective, worldly-wise, sharply observant Americans are also in favor of it—that his voice, in a very real sense, is the voice of the better sort of American people. Not, of course, of the American mob, nor of the tarlatan seers that ravish and soothe that mob. The American he

represents is of a quite different sort—the man who discerns the eternal realities in the mass of rumble-bumble, but is still a bit too timorous to be articulate. Howe is that man with his timorousness thrown off. He has found that, for all the barbaric taboos, there is yet an audience that likes to hear things discussed frankly, and to find its secret notions put into plain words—and he has learned, first among Middle Americans, that there is a lot of fun to be got out of addressing that audience—that iconoclasm, whatever its perils, is at least one of the most gallant and stimulating of sports.

Perhaps iconoclasm is not quite the right word. There is surely nothing in the doctrine of Howe that is very startling; what joy the man of meditative habit gets out of it, barring occasional delight in its broad, rustic humors, must be mainly the joy of simple recognition. It is all, considering it a moment, obvious enough; some of it is downright platitude. But nevertheless it is platitude of a special sort—the platitude, to wit, of fact, not of mere maudlin fancy. It stands diametrically opposed to the mush that passes so widely for the national philosophy; it is in direct opposition to all the current presump-

tions in politics, government and daily life; it flings itself violently at all of the prevailing false attitudes. And particularly at the false attitude of altruism, the bombastic bosh of what is called Service. Howe has no belief in this Service, now gabbled so raucously and by such palpable frauds. He believes in intelligent self-interest, and guesses, probably correctly, that self-interest is what actually rules even the loudest of the prophets of altruism, in politics, in the professions, in business, in government and in all the large affairs of the world. A sardonic fellow, he views the effervescence of contrary pretension with a patient irony, now and again letting fling with a dart. What he says is often simple enough—the obvious boiled down to its elementals—but he gets into it a sly wit that is a hundred times as effective as the most elaborate of controversions, and he gets into it a variety of honesty that is all but unheard of on the other side.

One day, seeking to introduce him to the readers of a magazine, I tried to put his general point of view into half a dozen plain propositions. This is what it came to:

1. The only real human motive is intelligent self-

interest; altruism is not only bogus, but impossible.

2. The first object of self-interest is to survive. The possession of money makes it easier to survive. *Ergo*, it is virtuous to get money.

3. A man who gets it is a better citizen than one who doesn't; what he does for himself also benefits the community in general.

4. The aim of all reformers is to get something for themselves. They pretend that it isn't; hence, even when they chance to serve good causes, they are liars.

5. Any American of average talents and decent industry can get enough money, barring acts of God, to make himself comfortable.

6. Any man who fails to do so shows an unfitness to survive, and deserves to be exploited by his betters.

7. The people have a remedy for all public abuses in their hands. If they fail to get relief, then the blame lies wholly upon their own credulity, emotionalism and imbecility.

So in brief. The thing, of course, is not quite so simple as that. Howe covers too wide a field to allow one to get him into a heptalogue. For one thing, he is too thoroughly an American, despite his chronic non-conformity, ever to stand free of certain of the fundamental national delusions. They creep upon him unawares, con-

quering him in strange guises. By the route of his austere rule of life he arrives back at a Puritanism that is sometimes indistinguishable from the general Puritanism of the land. The view of life as pure spectacle is quite beyond him. One observes him trying to attain to it, and always failing. Here the dualism that I have spoken of claims him in the end; he is an extraordinary Kansan, but still a Kansan, and hence not unrelated to the William Allen Whites. Thus he can see alcohol only as a viper; its uses for the tempering and romantization of life are incomprehensible to him. And thus he can see literature only as a feeble shadow of reality—worse, a false shadow. And thus he finds it impossible to rid himself of the notions that women who smoke should be registered by the police, that adultery is a mere matter of animal passion, that *Ayer's Almanac* is safer, saner reading than "Marius the Epicurean," that such a man as Brahms is of less value to the world than a country banker, and that a ten-acre field of alfalfa is worth all the fugues and sonnets ever written. On the æsthetic side, the Puritan is born deaf, dumb and blind; it is vain to expect him to develop his senses in the span of one

life-time. Howe probably goes as far as it is reasonable to expect. Poetry remains too much for him, but he makes certain concessions to the finer sort of prose, and at times even differentiates manner from matter, the work of art from the document. In music he inhabits a sort of Bad Lands. Here his nascent likes are quite as revelatory as his avoidances: somewhere or other he nominates "Siegfried" and "Lucia di Lammermoor" as the greatest of operas!

But it is not as a critic of the arts that he must stand or fall, but as an interpreter of the thought that goes on behind the curtain in America—the thought of plain men who begin to rebel against the prevailing buncombe, and to grope clumsily toward a sounder and franker dealing with the national problems. It seems to me that Howe speaks for such men better than any other—that he is, in more fields than one, almost the only spokesman they have. Under cover of his bucolic jocosity, he shows their rising suspicion of the shibboleths that have served the mob so long, and their growing discontent with the mountebanks who monopolize the political arena, and their slow, uncertain, still somewhat timid movement toward a saner and

more candid ethic, not brought romantically out of books, but deduced realistically from the facts of life as men must live it in the world. If, as I believe, such a fermentation of ideas is going on in camera—if the plain American of the more reflective sort is beginning to overhaul some of his primary assumptions and to look at the feet of his ancient gods—then one may plainly see, in the scoutings and forays of Howe, the direction that the main attack, when it comes, will probably take. It will hurl itself, first of all, at the present intolerable debauchment of politics by pecksniffian scoundrels, each with his gaudy phrase, his tin-pot ideal, his posture of dedication, his incurable knavery. And it will hurl itself, secondarily but no less certainly, against the cynical and degraded journalism now prevailing. Howe speaks of journalism with special authority; he has practiced the trade, in one form or another, all his life. It is thus curious to note that, in all his writings about American newspapers, he never makes an assumption about them save the assumption that they are wholly without any sense of responsibility, or of honesty, or of honor.

When I say that he represents a growing body

of opinion among plain men, I do not mean, I repeat, among what politicians call the plain people. There is, in essence, nothing democratic about his doctrines or his sympathies; he is, in fact, thoroughly anti-democratic at bottom, though he probably does not realize it. What I mean is that he stands for the thought of that higher stratum of men who, starting from the mass, have lifted themselves to a certain measure of security, and with it of self-respect and dignity, and who have thus come to view the national scene from a height which gives them some notion of its true perspective. They are men who have risen to a capacity for disillusion, which is the first step toward a capacity for free speculation; they are, in brief, what Howe is himself. Philistinism still hangs about them, but it is a Philistinism beginning to be ameliorated by a growing skepticism, and, what is more, by a nascent idealism of a new sort. They have got beyond defending self-interest as a mere noxious necessity; they have begun to discern its character as a positive good in the world, a potent agent of human progress, and as creditable as any other. To the mob such men must inevitably seem cynical and abhorrent, just as

they seem abhorrent to those classes that stand above and beyond them. Howe himself has tasted some of their ill-repute. Once a chautauqua impresario, observing his growing celebrity in the Middle West, conceived the notion of putting him into the rural chautauquas as a rival to Bryan and company. Howe fell in with the plan, went upon the stump, unfolded his ideas in all honesty—and made a flat and magnificent failure. The yokels, obviously, were not ready for him. His doctrines, so violently at variance with the mellow balderdash habitually emptied upon them, struck them as outrageous, and even as a bit heathenish. They tried to laugh, but couldn't. The chautauqua tour came to a quick end. One might as well send a Nietzsche to preach to Methodists. His sole point of contact with them was in externals. He, too, was a Middle Westerner. But he was a Middle Westerner of a decidedly novel variety.

The present book, it is needless to say, represents him only partially. Save in the case of his two tracts, "The Blessing of Business" and "Success Easier Than Failure," he has never put his notions into connected arguments; he prefers, like many a more pretentious sage, the greater

freedom of the aphorism. One must thus read him pretty steadily to cover the whole range of his ideas, and this, of course, may be best done in the *Monthly*. But what is here offered, if it does not present him either coherently or exhaustively, nevertheless gives fair specimens of both his matter and his manner. The thing that is most salient about his writing is its disarming simplicity—its appearance of casualness and even of carelessness. It is, in fact, nothing of the sort. To write in that way is an art like another, and by no means as easy as it looks. I daresay he finds it difficult enough at times, and sweats over a phrase as painfully as Walter Pater. Nor is the doctrine all mere obviousness. What it represents is the laborious disentanglement of the fact from the web of appearance, and that business is probably just as arduous upon the homely plane of practical philosophy as it is in the highest reaches of epistemology. Here the man must be considered as well as the bald idea. The salient thing is not that such notions should be reached and voiced in the world, but that they should be reached and voiced by a Middle American on his native heath, and that they should be broken to his

native ways of speech, and that they should win such a wide and warm response.

Edgar Watson Howe was born in Indiana in 1854 and got his schooling in Missouri. He became a printer at twelve years, married at twenty, and was editor and proprietor of a country weekly before he could vote. He became owner of the Atchison *Globe* in 1877, and conducted it for thirty-four years. When he began there were two other daily papers in Atchison, and one of them was edited by a popular war veteran who afterward became Governor of Kansas. But Howe gradually wore down all this opposition, and the opposition of rivals that were set up later on, and to-day the *Globe* is the only newspaper, daily or weekly, in the town. When he retired, in 1911, his profits ran to $25,000 a year, a very large sum in small-town journalism. He got out because he tired of the blazing eminence that belongs to a country editor. Every visitor to Atchison came to see him; every Atchisonian pursued him with requests and blandishments; the very darkeys on the street stopped him to gossip. So he made over his paper to his two sons, and started off upon a trip around the world. He has since

made another, and has traveled extensively in other directions. His accounts of his journeys, chiefly written for the *Globe*, have appeared in four books of travel: "Paris and the Exposition," "Daily Notes of a Trip Around the World," "The Trip to the West Indies" and "Travel Letters from New Zealand, Australia and Africa." I know of nothing quite like these volumes. They are amazingly garrulous and amazingly interesting. One starts to read idly, and then reads on and on. All of the things one customarily finds in travel books are missing, and all of the odd and intimate facts one is curious about are there—how one takes a bath in India, what the hotel tips are in New Zealand, the cost of a shirt in Cairo, the nature of the table-talk on an African coaster, all the queer stuff that other travelers omit.

There are nearly a dozen other Howe books. Two of the tracts I have mentioned, and also the novel, "The Story of a Country Town." A very characteristic volume, but representing the Howe of the *Globe* days rather than the Howe of today, is "Country Town Sayings," a collection of almost two thousand apothegms, most of them humorous and all of them extremely entertain-

ing. They have been plagiarized enormously, and some of them have passed into American proverb. Then there are two volumes of lay sermons, and a number of other works of fiction: "A Moonlight Boy," "The Mystery of the Locks," "A Man Story," "An Ante-Mortem Statement," "The Confessions of John Whitlock," and "The Hundred Stories of a Country Town." The long novel, "The Story of a Country Town," was greatly praised, as I have said, by William Dean Howells, and is still read after thirty years. A bit old-fashioned in structure and often marred by sentimentality, it is made remarkable by an extraordinarily brilliant picture of a Middle Western Puritan of the last generation—perhaps the most vivid portrait of the sort in our literature. In many other ways, indeed, the book shows a very high sort of skill. Its people are real, its background is sketched with sure strokes, and it moves and breathes from cover to cover.

The *Monthly* was started in 1911, and is still issued from Atchison. It began as a magazine of conventional form, but is now printed upon a newspaper press and resembles four pages of an

ordinary newspaper. The paper, once brilliantly pink, has been fading of late, and is now of a faint salmon hue. The editor writes the whole contents, barring an occasional reprint. For a number of years the subscription price was ten cents a year, and he offered to return the money of any subscriber who was dissatisfied. Now the price is twenty-five cents. It is curious that this cheapest of all American periodicals is chiefly read by well-to-do men; I daresay that an increase in the subscription to five dollars a year would not materially reduce the circulation. Reading it is a habit that becomes insidious and unbreakable. In its ten cent days I once subscribed for ten friends of the most varied sort—among them, a British Civil Servant, a dramatic critic, a very well-known American novelist, a pathologist, the editor of a large daily paper and a musical composer. All of them have read it ever since. More, they constantly talk of it; it seems to interest them more than any other periodical that they read; they are all eager to meet the editor. A great many other readers seem to have the same desire, for the Howe home at Potato Hill Farm, three miles below Atchison, is already a place of

pilgrimage. There, for eight months of the year, the composition of the *Monthly* goes on. Then, for the winter, it is transferred to Florida.

H. L. MENCKEN.

I

Women

1.

I dislike a bad egg, but that is no reason I should dislike a good one. There are foolish, bold and useless women, and I have a right to say I like sensible, modest, useful women better.

2.

Women are gentler than men; they are more patient, but not so fair. The fairest human being is an old man who, beginning with good intelligence, has fortified it with experience, education and age. Women have more prejudices than men; they cannot see the truth so quickly. If women ruled the world as unquestionably as men do, I very much doubt that they would be as fair to men as men are to women. The men have always controlled the courts, the armies, and every other element of strength; yet women have every right they should have. Men have made severe laws punishing

themselves for offenses against women, and enforce them. In every case where women are tried before male juries, the women get the best of it.

3.

Much is heard of the patient devotion to duty of women. It is wonderful, but not so wonderful as the devotion of men to duty. Women are complimented most frequently because of their devotion as mothers. This is natural; I have seen a wild, timid quail flutter about a dreadful man to distract his attention from its young. It was the mother quail; Bob White had flown away at the first alarm. Among the lower animals, there is little natural instinct among the males for the young. But probably seven men out of ten show a devotion to their home and their children that will, I hope, finally attract admiration.

4.

Women are more chaste than men because lack of chastity is less dangerous for men than for women. The strongest motive back of every safe, sane and respectable man and woman is not principle, but selfishness.

5.

Shiftless women are not punished as promptly as shiftless men; I know plenty of shiftless women who are "getting along" well, but I do not believe I know a single shiftless man who is at all prosperous.

6.

There is one class of men who need help, and never get it: the men who have worthless women folks. And after giving gallantry its due, we must all admit that there are millions of wives and daughters who are not doing their share in meeting the family burdens. Those of us who have good women folks should help our unfortunate brethren, when help is possible.

7.

For a man to let a woman impose on him, and make a fool of him, is not gallantry; it is folly. If a strong man is able to control a woman who is in the wrong, it is his duty to do it.

8.

The man who can call women angels in a new way succeeds best in love and literature.

9.

Of those in the leisure class most objectionable to plain people, women are the worst offenders. Rich men have usually come up from poverty, and know the value of the workers; but their wives and daughters are usually true aristocrats, and insolent. If such men would regulate their women folks better, they would get rid of much of the dangerous prejudice against them.

10.

A man may go to hell, and, after looking around, back out of it, and make another start, but a woman can't do it; when she goes to the devil, the devil knows a lot about her, and tells, and people won't forgive her. There are so many mean men that people can't keep track of all of them, but the people make a pretty good stagger at keeping track of all the foolish women.

11.

I sometimes fear that in one respect the ladies —God bless them—in trying to get a place in the sun, and their rights, are asking too much. Shall we be compelled to fight them finally? I

should very much dislike to be drafted, have a musket placed in my hands by an officer, and ordered to fire on them.

12.

I suppose there is no man who does not occasionally admit to himself, when he thinks candidly, that women very frequently make a fool of him, because of his big talk about Gallantry.

13.

I know what women expect, and give it to them without disagreeable argument; they'll get it, anyway.

14.

I admire women greatly, but I could go before the judge and convict some of them of insanity solely on the evidence of their Literary and Art clubs.

15.

A girl has big feelings at sixteen that she never recovers from. She is a queen in her own home and neighborhood, and attributes her undisputed reign to superiority instead of to youth and physical beauty. A boy blushes

when he remembers the days when he was fifteen to seventeen, but it is the glory of every woman's recollection. There are millions of uninteresting women who believe in their superiority because of the attention paid them when they were girls. If they are missionaries, or Christian Scientists, or settlement workers, or singers: whatever their specialty may be, they are able to feel "above you" because of their lost youth; they can show pity for your inferiority when they should admit their own. Men are rarely able to do it, but women always can.

16.

Our standards are undoubtedly changing: bad women do not go to hell as quickly as formerly; they hang around and make trouble longer.

17.

There never was a successful man of whom it was not said: "His wife (or mother) made him." You may think this is gallantry. It isn't; it is the meanness of the man's rivals.

18.

The love stories please the women, but scare the men.

19.

The spring campaign conducted by the dry goods men, the milliners and dressmakers to fool the women is nearly as ridiculous as the fall campaign conducted by the politicians to fool the men. Last spring, the feathers on women's hats stuck straight out; this spring, they stick straight up. This change was all the experts in Paris were able to do for the women during the winter. Doesn't it somehow remind you of what the Statesmen at Washington did for the men last winter?

20.

I will join any movement that will benefit women, as I will join any movement to benefit mankind generally, but I'll march in no Suffragette parade, and hear the men and boys along the sidewalk call me Sister.

21.

Frequently you meet a man who has no business among women. He can't take care of himself when with them, and should have a guardian to watch his movements when not at work or asleep.

22.

The first lesson taught women is to preserve the dignity of their persons; the first lesson to men is industry, politeness, fairness, temperance; and the first lesson to women is no more vital to women than is the first lesson to men. Both rules were made by parents, who had tried them out; the rules have been handed down century after century. Accept them, or be damned.

23.

A woman is greatly admired, and no one is disappointed if she does not write great books or plays, or found a successful business. But it is different with a man. He is expected to become president of a national bank with a large surplus and large undivided profits. His wife wonders that he is not called upon to run for Congress; and, after a few years of active work for the People, accept the presidency, when she will be mistress of the White House, and have her picture in all the papers, in connection with statements that she "made" her husband. All these things seem easy, to a woman, but a man finds much strong opposition in accomplishing

them. So if a man plugs along, and does only fairly well, his wife may conclude, after she has given him proper time to realize his Ambitions, that she married the Wrong Man.

24.

Your loved ones have a way of getting word to you about your duty to them. When my daughter was married, the women managed, through the Free Masonry which exists among them, to tell me exactly what she would require in the way of an "outfit"; what must be hand made, what purchased at the home stores, and what purchased in a large city. If you call women weak, it is because you don't know them.

25.

A good many women are taking an interest in politics, club work, etc., but may I express thankfulness, without taking any part in the controversy, that a much larger number of women are not? I am glad that a large majority of the women still manage to get their rights by means of the good old-fashioned diplomacy they know about, and without a riot.

26.

If you are a failure, your wife knows the Trusts didn't do it; she knows you have the same opportunities other men enjoy, and do not take advantage of them.

27.

We seldom hear the fact mentioned that Catherine II, of Russia, spent one hundred million dollars on her lovers. The worst story about Louis XV is that he spent a beggarly thirty million dollars on his mistresses. Catherine II dismissed one favorite after another, like a king, but one man, Potemkin, ruled her for sixteen years. History says Potemkin "eclipsed all others by the extraordinary union of qualities most requisite for success in Russia: beauty, daring, extravagance, ambition." . . . I should like to see a beautiful man; but Potemkin had other qualities, including tact. When he saw that Catherine was tiring of his beauty, and that he was growing old, he supplied her with other favorites, and was thus able to rule her. Think of a woman maintaining a House of Pleasure, and employing a man to seek out beautiful males for her amusement!

28.

A woman often pretends to be fooled when she is not. When she marries a worthless little man, she doesn't actually think he is a wonder: she expresses "confidence" in him, in the hope that it may do him good; but she knows, and is willing to take a chance with him. When a man marries, he thinks his wife is three or four times better than she really is; but men are abused so much that they often turn out better than wives expect them to. Men are a pitiful lot of chumps about women; but women know the men.

29.

Too many people have a notion that if they make a mistake in marriage, they can get relief in the divorce court. Divorce is like a second marriage: it is legal, but there are features about it that are uncomfortable. The best way is an old-fashioned "good match," a good family, and a good home.

30.

Every man is a natural polygamist, but polygamy was given up because it was not best for

the men; don't suppose for a moment that polygamy was abandoned because it was opposed to the best interests of women. For a time man tried free love, but the free love notion was soon whipped out of him. Temporarily it was very pleasant to steal the women of other men, but he soon discovered that such a rule meant that *his* women might be stolen. The system resulted in many fights, in which he was often injured and whipped. A man marries a wife and cares for her, not because he is a Gentleman, but because men, after long experience, have discovered that marriage is the best plan. Early man discovered that marriage was better than promiscuous mingling of the sexes, but for a long time he had several wives, who did his work; they were his slaves, as well as the mothers of his children. But his wives, although slaves, made him so uncomfortable with their bickerings that he was finally willing to get rid of all but one, and go to work himself.

31.

A Frenchman complains that our American women are cold. It is our proudest boast that they are not as loving as French women. This

foreign person also says there is not a single famous American love affair in literature. And again we are grateful. There are plenty of ardent love affairs in America: our cold women are warm enough in honest love affairs.

32.

The notion is growing among men that they would rather be bachelors than be made fools of by women. And in no country in the world are women encouraged in fooling the men as they are in this.

33.

If a man has no influence on his wife he is a poor stick. We talk a lot about a woman influencing her husband, and making a man of him, but no man ever made a success of marriage and of life who didn't influence his wife and control her. That's the law; a henpecked man is a violation of law.

34.

Every man has remarked the difference in the love of a wife and a sweetheart. Love is

not famous because of the love of wives for husbands.

35.

Why not cut the word "obey" out of the marriage ceremony? The best women pay no attention whatever to the promise, and the agitators make themselves disagreeable screaming about the word.

36.

The worst luck a woman ever has is her father, unless it's her husband.

37.

While I believe a man always gets what is coming to him, good or bad, it frequently happens that good and worthy women are buried alive.

38.

After a woman has looked at a man three or four times, she notices something about him that should be changed; and, after an acquaintance of a few weeks, she will suggest that the change be made.

39.

Increase in marriages rests with the men: every single woman in the world would be married off in a month if proper proposals were made to her. But thousands of men capable of supporting families are hesitating about marriage because of the growing extravagance of women. There is a type of woman universally respected; there is a type universally disliked. Increase the first class, and marriages will increase in proportion. The best marriage missionary is the wife who pleases a husband so well that he boasts about her, and invites his bachelor friends to his home to see how fortunate he is. To be mated is man's natural condition; when he balks at mating, some one has scared him.

40.

Women are forever saying they Expected So Much of their husbands, and that their disillusion was therefore Cruel. As a matter of fact, women say that as a means of Influencing Their Husbands for Good. Every bride has a father, and she has lived around him long enough to know a good deal about him. She *hopes* her

husband will be different, but she has heard other women talk enough to cause her to suspect that he won't be. Girls are not as afraid of men and mice as they pretend. We know as much about marrying as we know about life; there is no excuse to be disappointed about either.

41.

When a woman neglects her home, and engages in Charity and Uplift work, she has gone to hell in a Larger Way.

42.

From the dawn of language, women have grandly said to men: "I should think you would be ashamed of yourselves!" And the men have been ashamed, although they are more useful than women, and more reliable in the real essentials. Men are always better liked than women as customers at stores, as guests at hotels; in all the practical affairs of life. They are easier regulated, because they have been whipped more. And when it comes to usefulness, men lead by a big majority, in spite of the talk about them, most of it true. Men not only lead in producing the necessities of life; they

lead as cooks, milliners, dressmakers, although if women have studied anything, they have studied these things. Women give more attention to music than men, ten times over, yet the best fiddlers, song writers and piano players are men. Women have more sentiment than men, yet the most successful romances and plays are written by men, as are the best books of philosophy. Women are nearly all religious, while men are mainly skeptics, yet there is almost no such thing as a woman preacher. Women believe more in medicine than men, and use more of it, yet the men are the doctors. A woman runs every home. Who builds and supports it? A man who is ashamed of himself; a man who regrets that he is not as good as a woman.

43.

Are men as good looking to women as women are to men?

44.

If I happen to marry a woman with whom I naturally agree, I will turn out a good husband; if not, I'll turn out a bad husband. Find a man and wife who are compelled to "study" each

other in order to get along, and who "talk things over" a good deal, and say mean things to each other, and they'd separate if it wasn't for the children, or the name of it.

45.

A woman can handle a housekeeper, but a man can't; in seven cases out of ten, men who employ housekeepers, marry them.

46.

Marriage steadies a man; it gives him so much to do that he begins to realize the meaning of the word hustle. Some one once said that the best thing that can happen to a young man of eighteen or nineteen is to have a widowed mother and fatherless brothers and sisters left on his hands. Let him marry at eighteen or nineteen, and he will receive the same benefit. He is benefited in both cases by responsibility, by punishment.

47.

The world cannot be ruled by Love. Love is so generous it makes promises it cannot fulfill: it gives worlds when it is as poor as a church.

48.

Love is usually regarded as a divine thing every one should toy with, but it is a devilish little affair that should be closely watched. Rum and cigarettes, arch fiends though they are, have never bothered me; but love has been whipping me vigorously ever since I was twelve years old.

49.

Finally, I am sorry that I brought up the subject. I know nothing about it.

II

Politics

1.

Saving souls was once the most popular work; but now *saving the country* takes the lead.

2.

You often hear men talk of the old blind dependence on the Church. If the Church said women should be hanged as witches, the women were hanged. If the Church said there should be a Crusade to rescue certain shrines from the infidels, there was a Crusade: blind, unreasoning, bloody, terrible, in which the people made great sacrifices. If the Church said there should be an Inquisition, a Massacre, there was an inquisition and a massacre. All these things are a part of accepted history; also the Reformation, wherein church members declared they should have something to say, said it, and changed the old order. But they were a long,

long time about it. There was much unnecessary suffering and destruction before mankind came to its senses. Are these old events in church history more astounding than the manner in which men now follow political leaders? We have certain words now in politics more potent than the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, etc., ever were. We worship the word Democracy. Has any one ever taken the pains to look into its real meaning?

3.

One secret has been kept many centuries: the terrible worthlessness of the people collectively. Bad government is like a worthless young man whose folks are rich, and who put up money to hide his mistakes.

4.

One of the dangerous men in public life is the orator and writer who is sent on a Mission at public expense, and who returns with a false report.

5.

There is always a type of man who says he loves his fellow men, and expects to make a living at it.

6.

"Fooled again" has become an American aphorism. Americans detest all lies except lies spoken in public or printed lies. These we regard as Clever. Everybody regards the Public as something to coddle and deceive: a mob without much sense, and easily fooled. In every business transaction, you at least have the article laid before you, and are permitted to examine it. In politics, before you have a look at what you buy, you must wait until a year or so after the Convention adjourns. In more practical business, if your purchase is not exactly as represented, you may have your money back; if the count is short, it will be corrected; if you were promised fast colors, you get them, or a better pair of socks. A guarantee goes with every article sold by all men except statesmen, speakers, writers; their wares are sold with the expectation that you will throw them away, and try others.

7

Modern reform is machine-made, like matches or clothes pins. Capitalists hire editors and orators to write and talk the Reform language,

the object always being the same as in any other manufacturing enterprise: to make money and reputation. Every really successful Reformer has a fortune.

8.

When tax payers come out of the county treasurer's office swearing like pirates, the politicians keep out of the way. But in the spring, after the tax payers have forgotten their wrongs, the politicians begin working delicately. They bring in some big orator to talk Patriotism; the tax payers forget, and by the time the fall election arrives, the politicians are again masters of the situation.

9.

Politics is a profession as certainly as base ball. And a national election is about as important to the people as the final series between the victorious American and National league teams: both mean excitement, honors for a new lot of heroes, and no benefit except to a few winners. The only difference is that base ball is on the square; no base ball hero claims he is working in the interest of the crowd in the bleachers.

10.

Modern politicians have become as harsh masters of the people as were the old kings of infamous memory. It is possible, if not probable, that there is to-day as much extravagance and snobbery at Washington, capital of the world's most notable free people, as existed in Versailles when the Paris mob thundered at its gates to carry Louis XVI to the guillotine. And the same extravagance and snobbery extends to every state capital in the nation.

11.

The mission of parties is to keep the people divided into factions, that they may be unable to do anything for themselves.

12.

There is no longer need for the president of the Hoboes' Union to deliver stirring speeches; such speeches are now being delivered by government officials paid from the public treasury.

13.

How willing we all are to milk the State! We seem to believe the State is some great thing

like the boar in that famous Heaven of Heroes: although eaten every day, it becomes whole again during the night, and is ready to supply feasts without end. The State is only a tax gatherer, and waste of public money is a shame and burden to the poor. The tariff is a tax on the poor; so is the income tax, although it claims to exempt the poor man. The truth is, taxation has become a monster oppressing every one. We all try to put it off on others, but all must pay.

14.

You are reasonably safe from the lions, the tigers, goblins, burglars, Plutocrats, the Devil, but in all reasonable probability a Man Hunter has your name, and will call on you at first opportunity. See that you handle him with reasonable skill.

15.

The next time you see a picture of the President and his cabinet, look at it carefully, and decide if it doesn't look like a board of education in a country district.

16.

All the men know that agents must be watched; all the women know that lovers, in spite of their agreeable ways, are dangerous; but The People seem never to have learned that statesmen are dangerous: in this country there seems to be a unanimous opinion that finally a Statesman will appear who will have a plan whereby we may live forever without work.

17.

In the old days people had some respect for the truth; they didn't always tell it, but they were at least ashamed to be known as liars, and truthfulness was generally taught the children. Lately liars are our heroes and heroines. People live lies, and instead of blushing because others know they are liars, attempt to make others ashamed of the truth.

18.

When you hear that a certain man is so good that he wants to help everybody, you may depend upon it that he started the story.

19.

A government so cumbersome, extravagant and corrupt that half the people are required to govern the other half will inevitably result in revolution, and no government at all. Real reform means the simplest and least expensive government possible, in order that the people may consent to being governed.

20.

Our indignation amounts to nothing: if it had force and danger behind it, the politicians would be the first to take notice.

21.

I see a good deal of controversy in the papers as to the men who deserve credit for the Present Advanced Position of the World. Is the world occupying an advanced position at present?

22.

The people are always worsted in an election.

23.

Since 1776 we American men have been free to improve our public affairs. Everybody has

been in favor of everything high minded; there has been no king or aristocracy to threaten us; the Devil has had no representatives except cheerful volunteers. Powerful newspapers have clamored for a century and more for rights we have always had; and the result of it all is we have built up a rule worse than the rule of King George; the taxes King George imposed were a mere bagatelle compared with the taxes imposed by those who call themselves our Obedient Servants.

24.

As soon as the people fix one Shame of the World, another turns up.

25.

Our present system is founded on the saying that "to the victors belong the spoils." This vicious doctrine was founded in the days of barbarism and war. Spoil means theft; theft means victims. The business of managing public affairs in the United States is the greatest business in the world, yet we are trying to manage it economically and honestly by the spoils system; we put up a purse containing millions

and millions of loot, and invite the politicians to fight for it.

26.

How much a Statesman is like Santa Claus! We build our own roads, pay our own police force: attend to all the details of making the country prosperous, and give the Statesman credit. We all know the Statesman is a fraud, yet we whoop it up for him in November as enthusiastically as we whoop it up for Santa Claus in December.

27.

Formerly an American, when politics became so bad in old communities he could no longer stand it, might call his dog, put out his fire, and move out west, to make a new start; but the free land in the west has been taken up: the only thing to do now is to reform public affairs.

28.

When a reformer speaks of the wrongs of the people, he always speaks of the conditions prevailing just before the French revolution. Those conditions were thoroughly bad, but they do not prevail to-day. In that day, the nobles paid no taxes. Now the well-to-do pay taxes,

and the poor pay almost none. That is a very significant difference, and there are others; when the poor of this country do pay taxes, they pay a lower rate than do the rich. In the bad days before the French revolution, the king collected a tax from the poor in lieu of his right to select the better looking young girls from the families of the poor for his harem. No such thing prevails to-day: a poor girl is protected as carefully as is the wife of the President. In the old days, the poor remained poor, as a rule; there was no way for them to progress. In this day, a large majority of our wealthy people have been poor. A poor man may become president, as did Lincoln, and of all our presidents his memory is most popular. We have every right the French demanded before the revolution; we actually have no public wrongs except those for which we are ourselves to blame. But agitators howl as though we were ground down as were the French and Russians in the days of absolutism. It is a ridiculous, a false situation.

29.

The world is in a bad situation; the worst in its history. Who did it? Is it not true that pol-

iticians, poets and proletarians are more responsible than the rich men? Who precipitated the war? A proletarian, who shot a crown prince and his wife. Who rushed into war with too much haste, when a compromise might have been effected? A politician, the Kaiser, who told the Germans they were being attacked, and that it was the duty of the German people to save the other portions of the earth from ignorance, vice, idleness and corruption. The rich men have done many mean things, but, with all their meanness, they have accomplished some good. Will some gentleman tell of any substantial good the politicians, poets and proletarians have accomplished?

30.

Some men must be supported by the public. If they fail in politics, they engage in lodge work, church work, or charity work, for the salary.

31.

Silliness which would have broken a politician twenty years ago, now makes his fortune.

32.

We are now confronted with the necessity of remedying the remedies.

33.

When members of Congress divide a "pork barrel," and provide places and contracts for thousands of their followers, is it not as burdensome to taxpayers as was the action of Louis XV in spending millions on a House of Pleasure? The only difference seems to be that the French had but one master, while we have many; and each master has his little court to maintain.

34.

Leaders are willing to advocate adultery or amen, to win.

35.

People pretty generally cried: "Shame! shame!" last year; but conditions are a little worse this year.

36.

There was once a political party called the Know Nothing. It is time we had a political party called the Know Something.

37.

When the leaders want to rob us, they cover the real issue with a bait of flubdub, and we swal-

low it, thinking we are High Minded men with Souls and Ideals, only to find later that in feeding our Souls we have starved our Stomachs.

38.

The politicians are the head and front of all our public offending: they are our Upper Class who make fools of us.

39.

Put only honest men on guard; and see that they are heavily insured in a reliable bonding company.

III

Religion

1.

I once resented the fact that so many persons accept doctrines I know to be absurd, but do not now, and have not for a good many years. Religion is only one of many questionable things accepted by the people, and one of the least harmful. The good done by the church is enormous, and I know of little harm it does, except the annoyance caused by the over-zealous, and these are mainly a cheap lot who are annoying in many other ways. Dogmatic religion is dying as rapidly as it should. Ministers are stating new and better doctrines to take its place. There is almost nothing left of the old dogmas as they were taught originally, and the church to-day is largely a social center which attracts many of the best people in every community. Millions of church members believe no more in supernaturalism than I do, and I find them agree-

able, intelligent, and helpful in all the world's main affairs.

2.

I almost believe it wise to accept a creed, and belong to some orthodox church, although I have not found it necessary, and have never been a church man. But a man who joins an orthodox church, and is modest about it, will avoid many inconveniences in life. There are certain church people who are suspicious of those who are professed free-thinkers; and these make the free-thinkers as much trouble as is possible. This entirely disappears if a man joins some religious society, whatever it may be, and however cold his relations to his society may be. I have known many worthy people who were actually martyrs because they insisted on being free-thinkers in religion. There are thousands of strong, honest men who are less useful and prosperous than they might be because they constantly tease and vex church people. To join a religious society when you do not believe in its doctrine, or in what we know as religion in any form, is hypocrisy, of course, but millions are amiable hypocrites in other things, and a little

more in religion will not hurt them. Religion is organized morality, whatever else may be said of it. And, besides, most religionists have not the faintest conception of the faith they profess. Its outward forms are respectable, and they are not familiar with the dogmas taught by their leaders. The most absurd thing in the world, I have often thought, is any religious dogma, but church members mainly do not know it, for the reason that they have never taken the pains to inquire into their creed.

3.

The church has many faults, but it has no fangs any one may not draw. The Christian who says what we need is more Christianity is no more objectionable than the Democrat who says our real need is more Democracy. The trouble is, that the advocates of Christianity expect too much of it, and its enemies abuse it more than is just. That is the precise trouble with every other human thing. I hope never to hear another argument for or against Christianity or Democracy; I am as familiar as I care to be with both sides of both questions, and have

made up my mind. Further argument will only tire me.

4.

I do not wonder that many people are religious; the wonder is that all are not. Death is a dismal adventure, and an offer of help at that time of greatest need is alluring. Millions of people buy medicine. The argument for medicine is no better authenticated than the argument for immortality; yet thousands buy medicine who do not go to church. I know a puny woman who stopped taking medicine, and got well. Now she says prayer did it. As for me, I have never been able to get help from either medicine or prayer.

5.

Although I am not a church man, I do not like irreverence, or vicious and untruthful attacks on the church. There is nothing about religion to inspire hatred; it is the disagreeable actions of its followers that cause such hatred of religion as exists. As I grow older I become more tolerant. The first principle of government is that no man may have his way; so I listen to the wise and foolish babble, and make the best I can of

my own life. If there is any one human institution that has been regulated, it is the church. We have actually investigated it, and our actions fit our conclusions. Every man is free to accept or reject the church; the priests have no power to exact tithes. A man who is fanatical about his religion is punished as promptly as is a man who is fanatical in opposition to it, by public opinion. The faults of the church are freely admitted, and given the widest and freest publicity in public print and public speech. The mistakes of religion do not seem to me to be important. With all our religious hypocrisy, we continue to starve preachers. But we do not starve the politicians; they, on the contrary, are starving us. A man may apparently accept religion, and damn it. Occasionally I criticize the church. I mean no offense to any worthy man; and there are millions of such who preach or sit patiently in pews.

6.

No sane man doubts anything God has promised, or anything God has revealed. Skepticism is doubt that God ever made the revelations or promises attributed to Him. If the people

knew God had made a revelation or promise, and knew it as certainly as they know that an eclipse of the sun will happen at some time in the future agreed upon by astronomers, there would be no such thing as an unbeliever. It is not a fault to refuse to believe the story of a traveler that yesterday he walked along the road with a man who had no head, and who talked intelligently and entertainingly from his vest pocket; indeed it is a virtue to refuse to believe in a happening that is unnatural, and that has never been duplicated in human experience, and is denied by all history. I doubt nothing that God has actually revealed. He has revealed the changing seasons; he has revealed the wonderful heavens; he has revealed the wonderful earth on which we live. I believe all this implicitly, and everything else taught by leaders who can prove their contentions; but many pretended revelations of God are not revelations. Whatever message God wishes to send the world is unmistakable. He is more explicit in his messages than man, and man has given hundreds of messages to the world which are accepted by men of all nations and conditions. When men quarrel over a message said to have been sent by God,

it is proof positive that God never sent it. God revealed why night follows day, and investigation shows an exactness that is marvelous: no heavenly body has ever been an instant ahead of its schedule time, and not one instant behind it. But when a revelation or promise is attributed to God, and it cannot be demonstrated by man, man says reverently: "We know this is not a revelation of God, because it is not true." That there are many pretended revelations of God, we know without question: the evidence of this fact is that every nation has had ignorant men who claimed to have received messages from Him. No two of these false messages are alike, so all of them must be false. It is a peculiar thing about these false talks with God that they were proclaimed by ignorant men: every false prophet in the past has been an ignorant man.

7.

A good many years ago the doctrine of Evolution was announced. It was in opposition to generally accepted ideas, and therefore opposed by the most powerful organizations then in existence; teachers in every hamlet and neighborhood fought it viciously; warnings were sent out

that the new doctrine was unclean. But in spite of this opposition, the doctrine stood the acid test: investigation proved it, and to-day no man of intelligence and information doubts it. The history of Evolution is the history of every other great truth: it will demonstrate itself, however vindictive and active the opposition may be. And no intelligent man is warranted in accepting any doctrine or faith that does not prove itself as did Evolution. If your faith is opposed to experience, to human learning and investigation, it is not worth the breath used in giving it expression.

8.

Martin Luther was a religious Socialist, yet there are those who now declare he did religion harm rather than good. We Protestants are Socialistic Christians, and criticise church authority so liberally that the Protestant church is without power. You must have observed how well a Catholic priest controls his congregation, and how a Protestant preacher fails in the same task. Every Catholic service is crowded: the average Protestant service is attended by a few women and children, but the men remain at home, and make fun of the preacher. The Reformation

was a religious reform, and we overdid it, as we overdo all reform. Who does not know that the Reformation was the beginning of the break-up of the church? It wasn't the infidels who broke down church authority; it was the Protestants: the religious Socialists. I am the son of a Methodist preacher; I believe in the religious freedom we enjoy, and for which we have the Protestants to thank, but I also know that what we call the Reformation broke down the church.

9.

When half the people believe one thing, and the other half another, it is usually safe to accept either opinion. The Democrats are as good as the Republicans, and the Catholics as good as the Protestants.

10.

Preachers say the people fight religion. It isn't true. The attitude of men toward religion is naturally friendly. Men not only think favorably about religion, but millions of them think it a sin not to become hypocrites, and pretend to believe when they do not.

11.

I am not an Agnostic; *I know*—and I say it with modesty. Others know life as well as I do and better. I have lived a long time, and my real problems have always been simple. Being selfish, I have solved them with all available intelligence. The simple rules of life you discover every day are as unchanging as the rules governing mighty Saturn, and you can safely assume that if you intelligently attend to your little affairs, Saturn will attend to his.

12.

There is no one living I wish to consign to hell; I wish no punishment for any one beyond the punishment necessary to enforce the precept that all should be polite, fair and useful men and women.

13.

A favorite charge against the people is that they are slaves of superstition. There is little in it. Superstition is dead, whatever may have been the case in the days of Cotton Mather and John Calvin. But the church isn't dead, nor will it be in many years to come. If the church

should be outlawed to-morrow, millions of people would meet in secret, and risk persecution for the pleasure of indulging in rites they enjoy. But there is actually little superstition.

14.

No other institution is talked about so much behind its back as the church.

15.

It seems to me I never knew a man who really loved the Lord. Some fear Him, but few love Him.

16.

The world is full of hypocrites who have never fooled any one.

17.

The attention of honest church people is hereby called to the wolves who join the church, and then want to take charge.

18.

A man of considerable sense may engage in prayer, to show off before women and children, but if a man should be chased by a bear, and

drop on his knees to pray, instead of running, I should doubt his sanity.

19.

The doctrine of immortality is accepted by every one who accepts it on the testimony of the poets, and in defiance of the world's most learned men. Poets are prophets whose prophesying never comes true. The poets have never done anything for the people except to increase their sentimentality.

20.

Many a man has professed to hear a call to go out into the world and preach, but I never knew one who heard the call to come in.

21.

Public opinion is usually wrong, to begin with, and remains wrong from a few weeks to as many centuries, but, in the end it is always right. Nearly every good law is an old law, and common in every country. Good laws are the result of long experience; they are as necessary to human society as oil is to machinery. Laws based on sentiment will finally fail. If men could not successfully combat the doctrine of

literal hell, there would be a revival in progress in every community all the time; not to save sinners, for there would be no sinners, but to praise the Lord. Give men a religion which will demonstrate itself—as clearly other human facts demonstrate themselves—and it will not collapse. No doctrine that is true and important, and meets the needs of men, was ever known to fail.

22.

The fool with whom I have least patience is the fellow who says that were it not for religion, the world would be less moral; that without religion a man has no incentive to be honest. I do not believe in dogmatic religion, but no man believes more in the simple virtues than I do. I fear a cross dog more than I do the devil; but the manner in which law and public opinion punish evil doers is sufficient to cause me to wish to behave. Morality did not originate with religion. The churches should teach their dogmas, and stand or fall with them; they should not falsely claim to be the custodians of morals, since this causes many persons to imagine that if religious dogma fails, morality fails.

23.

When a tradition is thousands of years old, anything may be added to it with impunity, and ridiculous contentions proved to the entire satisfaction of its adherents.

24.

Look after the lower life carefully, and the higher life will take care of itself.

25.

I don't understand how a man can believe in Socialism and not in religion. There is exactly the same reason for believing in religion that there is for believing in Socialism: both doctrines are appeals to big chiefs for unnatural favors.

26.

The Christian Scientists made one grave mistake in promulgating their doctrine: they offered to prove it here on earth, whereas the adherents of older faiths are smart enough to say: "When you die you will see that we are right."

27.

You people who see things where they do not

exist, who hear messages that others cannot hear, who can read things between the lines—you have no idea how you are laughed at.

28.

The greatest sermon ever delivered consisted of only five words, to-wit: "Honesty is the best policy." It is preached millions of times a day in every quarter of the earth, and is being more generally accepted as the world becomes more learned and civilized.

29.

Am I blind, and staggering around amid beautiful things I cannot see? Where are they? I'm not stubborn; I want to see, and acknowledge whatever is fine, and true, and important, and useful.

30.

One of the greatest slanders is that there has been a fall of man. The truth is that man has ascended from a very low beginning until he now knows more, and is more humane and decent, than were the gods worshiped by the ancients. I have mingled with men a long time,

and know they are entitled to praise instead of the abuse they receive.

31.

I do not care for the prophet who speaks in parables; plain English is hard enough for me to understand.

32.

In the course of time all men will accept morality as they accept a roof over their heads; as a better, more convenient and easier way of living. Wise men of old knew this, as do the wise men of to-day. The plan of frightening the fools to behave better has its uses; if a fool can be made better by deceiving him, and promising him rewards at a time so remote he cannot know he has been deceived, I do not object. So far as I know, there may be a secret work in theological schools admitting that the base of it all is to teach fools morality. Intelligent men accept the truth of morality as unreservedly as they accept the truth of arithmetic; they stumble at times, and are unable to work all the sums in the book, but they know the rules are true, and that when they subtract four from ten, the result

is inevitably six. When the world learns as much, morality will have been achieved. But progress is slow because we are compelled to wait for the fools to catch up.

33.

There is incessant preaching. The newspapers, public men, ministers, fathers, mothers and school teachers are all lined up. Why are we not all converted? What is the flaw in the argument that causes so many of us to reject it? Are the preachers themselves doubtful of their doctrine?

34.

People have discovered that they can fool the Devil; but they can't fool the neighbors. The people with whom you live watch you relentlessly; the Devil often sleeps, but when one neighbor has his eyes closed, several others are watching.

35.

Some people call it Original Sin; others call it our Animal Nature, and some call it Devilishness; but rich and poor alike are born with a Common Streak. The best people the world has ever known have decided to fight the common

streak rather than encourage it. So literature and law are written in language above the Common Streak, and we call it Idealism. But no people will ever get entirely away from the Common Streak; the best they can do is to get rid of as much of it as possible, and hide the remainder.

36.

Trying to live a spiritual life in a material world is the greatest folly I know anything about.

37.

Give a Methodist religious freedom, and he will inevitably find his way to a Methodist church, where he will exercise his freedom in being the sort of slave he admires. I am in no sense a church man, yet I never pass a Methodist church that I do not think of it as *our* church. When a new Methodist pastor is appointed in my community, I wonder if I shall like him; although actually I shall never hear him preach, and probably never see him. If I hear he is a great pulpit orator (this is usually said of all of them soon after they take a new congregation), I am proud, and think *we Methodists* have the real doctrine, and the real men behind it. And

when the inevitable row develops, and I hear my brethren are trying to get rid of the pulpit orator, I take sides; usually I am for him, because I haven't seen him and haven't heard him. The explanation is, my father was a Methodist, and so were our neighbors when I was a boy. I heard of the South Methodists and Campbellites saying mean things about us, and I dislike them to this day. There was an old quarrel about a *discipline.* We had such a book, and didn't care who knew it. I don't know how it is now, but in that early day it was said among Methodists that the Campbellites had a discipline, but denied it. I supposed then (and now) that the word *discipline* referred to a book giving the church doctrine, and that the Campbellites denied having one because they pretended that every man was a free agent, and got his doctrine from his inner consciousness; from prayer, and from communing with the All High. I may be entirely wrong, but that is the idea I had of it then; and it is the idea I have now. One of our members claimed to have seen a printed *discipline* in the hands of a Campbellite; the Campbellite was reading it in private, and our man, by the merest chance, saw it, and detected

that it was issued by authority of the Campbellite church. Our man who claimed to have seen the Campbellite discipline was named Shackelford; a noted liar. *But I believe his story to this day;* it was in accord with my prejudice, and I wanted to believe it. The Campbellites believed in immersion, or complete baptism; we believe in sprinkling. While I believe neither in baptism nor sprinkling, to this day I believe more in sprinkling than in baptism.

38.

Sincerity is worthless unless backed by intelligence and knowledge. The most sincere people are the Adventists. They sincerely believed the world would come to an end on a certain day. So they destroyed or gave away everything they had. But those very sincere people were badly mistaken.

39.

My Bishop is any man who is living a better life than I am living.

IV

Man

1.

Every man who has a horse killed by a railroad train demands twice its value, and gets it if he can; usually there is a disreputable quarrel, and then a settlement, in which the complainant receives about what he was entitled to in the first place. There is no exception to the rule that all men who make demands ask too much; this much may be said with truth in support of universal rascality.

2.

It is often said of a man who tells a lie: "He is honestly mistaken." No, he isn't; he *knows* he is a liar. All liars know they are liars; the only way to reform liars is to convince them that telling the truth is easier and more profitable. Telling a lie never hurts a man's conscience; it is the punishment that hurts.

3.

Every man expects somebody or something to help him. And when he finds he must help himself, he says he lacks Liberty and Justice.

4.

A man once said: "I am not my brother's keeper;" and has been abused through the ages for a perfectly true and just remark.

5.

Many troublesome men give as an excuse for their conduct that they are in advance of the times; but I never knew a man who was actually ahead of his day and generation.

6.

If you want to exercise your will power, and be proud of it, exercise it in getting rid of some of your foolish habits: that will give your will power a chance to show how strong it is.

7.

A modest man is usually admired—if people ever hear of him.

8.

There are millions of worthy men who believe they have performed their public duty if they cheer every fine sentiment in the newspapers, and enlist under the banners of every fine-talking leader: they think they are good men if they denounce a lot of wrong that does not exist.

9.

Most men who want to do good, want it done at the expense of others.

10.

I have read many times of a certain modern man who gave his life for the benefit of mankind. The story commonly told is that he was young, happily married, successful in his profession, and in good health. Yet he gave up his life that other men might *know* one fact—one fact about one disease. No such man ever lived. Every martyr believed he would be able to escape martyrdom. There never was, and there never will be, a man who knowingly accepts pain and death for the good of mankind. All such stories are told by men who are making a

pretense of doing more for the world than they really are.

11.

If a man succeeds in life, he must do it in spite of the efforts of others to pull him down. There is nothing in the idea that people are willing to help those who are willing to help themselves. People are willing to help the man who *can't* help himself, but as soon as a man is able to help himself, and does it, they join in "talking" about him, and making his life as uncomfortable as possible.

12.

In this age of freedom and impudence it is a wonder any man confesses he is a bad grammarian; he might easily claim that he is right, and Lindley Murray wrong.

13.

A man who does not fool himself seldom cares much about fooling others. But the man who claims to have seen a ghost wants everybody else to believe in ghosts.

14.

Most men are willing to make a bluff, and take the risk.

15.

Financial sense is knowing that many men will promise to do a certain thing, and fail to do it.

16.

Man is still a savage to the extent that he has little respect for anything that cannot hurt him.

17.

Nearly every man likes to think he is such a devil that it is proper for quiet, inoffensive people to pray for him; indeed, he thinks it not beyond reason for some good person to *die* for him. Still, he does not imagine he is altogether a bad fellow: he thinks his instincts are good; that he has a good heart; that on occasion he would do a great deal for others—he even has visions of becoming a reformer, and saving others.

18.

Every man who says he is not selfish is a liar; all are selfish. The man who says to the world

that he desires only its good, is a liar; a greater liar than I am. And I am a liar; all men are. But I have conquered untruthfulness to an extent; to an extent greater than many of those who pretend much more. I tell the truth nine times out of ten; and am ashamed of the tenth slip. I habitually and cheerfully give freely to those less fortunate; more so than many who announce that they are without sin. I will not lie about myself: others do it habitually, and call their lying virtue. No man's talk about doing good is greater than his accomplishment in doing good. I know what men are; I know two different machines cannot be made in the same mold. I know what has happened when a child is born; what will happen as he lives and when he dies. You liars do not fool as many as you think: I know what is said about you behind your backs, and it is usually the truth.

19.

What a rascal a man is willing to become in a horse trade! And men are equally unreliable in every other transaction in which they have a direct interest. Does a lover tell the truth? No more than the horse trader in recommending his

animal. Does the merchant tell the truth? Look at his advertisements for the answer.

20.

Many fairly honest men are unjustly accused of crimes by rivals. If accusations were accepted by judges and juries, without cross examination or evidence in rebuttal, we have not a virile male citizen in the United States who would not be in the penitentiary. The idea of a rival is to cripple his adversary by abuse, and catch up with him.

21.

The hypocrisy in religion, in sentiment generally, is as nothing compared with the hypocrisy men display about their jobs. Was there ever a workman who did not contend he knew his trade better than the foreman? Was there ever a man who was satisfied with his wages? The man who receives ten dollars a day is as dissatisfied, as greatly wronged, as much of a slave, as the man who gets but five, and talks as bitterly about economic injustice. And after the workman becomes an employer, his hypocrisy slips to the opposite field of activity: he declares that when

he was a workman, he was not forever watching the clock and grumbling about his pay. He also enlarges his field of hypocrisy; if he is making only five thousand dollars a year, he says that but for unjust laws he would be making ten or fifteen thousand, as his talents warrant. But when he finally enjoys the larger income (as he often does, because of residence in a country of great opportunity and liberty), he still abuses his rivals who have greater ability, greater virtue or greater industry. When a man talks of liberty, the rights of man, democracy, etc., he is really talking about his job; and when he talks about that, I wouldn't believe him under oath.

22.

No man is smart, except by comparison with others who know less; the smartest man who ever lived had reason to be ashamed of himself.

23.

The average American, when he gets out of bed in the morning, is ambitious to do something for himself; but his public attitude is to Do Something for Others, and all day he talks a good deal about laying up treasure in heaven,

although actually busy in laying up treasure for himself here on earth. And in his sordid ambition to do something for himself, he is not always as careful to be honest and fair as he should be.

24.

Every man is a natural polygamist; the sexual lure is stronger in him than any other: he would act like a woods bull were it not for his knowledge that he cannot afford such conduct. So he lies like a gentleman to the ladies, and pretends to have no such instincts.

25.

All men are liars; I am as certain about you as I am about myself.

26.

Men are very proud of Gallantry. Yet it is no more than the strut of the turkey gobbler.

27.

All arguments are Salesman Arguments. A man tries to sell you something you do not want; if you buy, he makes a profit. All other arguments are equally selfish. Men do not argue

to benefit you; they argue to benefit themselves. Learn to protect yourself against clever talkers and clever arguments.

28.

When a man has given you a dime, he says it was a dollar, and that you were not as grateful as you should have been.

29.

Many a man is saved from being a thief by finding everything locked up.

30.

What is the real secret of the universal hatred of the rich? We *say* it is because we know the rich acquire their fortunes by methods we would not adopt, but that is merely another of our lies —we know the well-to-do average as high in honesty as the poor men. What, then, is the secret of our hatred of the rich? It is probably envy first, and second a desire to rob the rich. If not a desire to rob the rich, then it is a desire to handicap them, so that we may at least be their equals in the race for the world's prizes.

31.

You often hear people compliment a dog. A pig is complimented for growing satisfactorily, on a certain amount of food. Horses are admired, and said to be perfect specimens. The prize steer attracts attention at a county fair, and is admired without reserve. But there never was a satisfactory man.

32.

When a woman pretends to be a Saint, it may at least be said she is modest; she pretends to no more than that she does not eat as much as a man, or chew tobacco, or swear, or own a shotgun. But when a man goes into the Saint business, he wants to save everybody, reduce taxes and railroad rates, have Universal Love and Peace, and get rid of everything else people complain about.

33.

Every man is better for being watched. Put your affairs unreservedly into any hands, and your agent will exact the best of it, when he might have been fair if watched and frequently checked up.

V

The Poor

1.

There is not now, and has never been among us, a general disposition to impose on the poor; there are no laws in the United States discriminating against them. I did not mean, of course, that individuals in all classes are not imposed upon by other individuals every day and hour, but in this one class is as badly off as another.

2.

In theory, it is not respectable to be rich. In fact, poverty is a disgrace.

3.

When I speak of the poor, I do not mean the old or the sick; I mean the shiftless, of which we have a great number. I shall never have the same respect for the shiftless man that I have for his brother who is reasonably industrious and

frugal, and who frequently becomes useful not only to his family, but to his community. No one can persuade me that the men who earn ten dollars a day are not as honorable as those who earn four, and I believe the ten dollar a day men are a little more capable than their four dollar brethren. And if the ten dollar a day men are promoted, which is happening to them constantly, I do not believe them less worthy than they were when working for less. Nor do I think there is any useful thing accomplished by our American plan of forever exalting the poor, and crying down the well-to-do. I do not believe it is any easier for a poor man to get into heaven than it is for a well-to-do man. A thousand well-to-do men will average a little better in usefulness, integrity and industry than a thousand average poor men. I believe this because in our fat country extreme poverty indicates an individual below the average, unless it is accompanied by old age or misfortune. The most useful men the world has ever known have been well-to-do, with very few exceptions. Let any man perform a useful service for the world, and the world will pay him for it, as it should. I believe—and every man of ordinary honesty

and intelligence believes—that a man who behaves, saves, and works hard is entitled to progress in his finances with age, and to provide for his days of inactivity. If he does not succeed in this in some measure, the world blames him, and he blames himself. When we properly train children, our ambition for them is that they may become not only polite and worthy men and women, but successful in life; one result is as much in our minds as the other. You never knew a father or a mother who warned their children to avoid becoming well-to-do. If we have a son who is spoken well of by his employer, and is promoted because of good habits, how proud we are of him! How the neighbors praise him! He is pursuing precisely the course expected of a good boy. Yet this is the course which, if persisted in, will result in his becoming well-to-do, and possibly rich. How apparent, then, is that meanness which declares that such a man, when he has become elderly, and properly rounded out his life, is a thief.

4.

When country-town idlers gather in the shoemaker's shop, and discuss the questions of the

day, they always give the poor the best of it. Every convention does the same thing; so does every orator and writer. The trouble is, the poor cannot be given the best of it. We can't enjoy rights, and refuse them to others; much less can we demand more than is fairly coming to us, and refuse others their just rights.

5.

I wish we could pass laws benefiting us in innumerable ways; it is so easy to pass laws and adopt resolutions, but all effective laws must be based on common sense. A mob may burn the factory, and I do not deny that there is a certain satisfaction in seeing such a fire, but it is the satisfaction that comes from intoxication, and punishment will inevitably follow. We might easily pass a law ordering the bankers to loan us all the money we want without interest, with the privilege of renewing our notes at will. Such a law, if it could be enforced, would end all our financial ills; but the actual result would be to close the banks, and destroy a useful financial system on which worthy and intelligent men have worked for centuries. This is the decision of the Supreme Court of Nature, and all human

courts, passions, prejudices and mobs must bow to it.

6.

We are all a rather worthless lot. Therefore why not encourage the people to amount to more, rather than to less? When a man shows a disposition to save his money, and keep out of the poor house, why do we hate him? Why do we so universally praise those who do not do as well as they might? Why not criticize them more, and the worthy less?

7.

When a mob takes possession of a city, and begins to burn, a certain proportion of the people have a thrill of delight. Just what percentage love to see property destroyed I do not know, but it is probably larger than any of us imagine: if those in favor of burning the big institutions of the country should hold up their hands, you would certainly be startled.

8.

I know the poor from the inside, having long been one of them, but never have I known of a law oppressing me because of poverty; on the contrary, I have always observed that the laws

rather gave me the best of it. I have not encountered in a long life a generally accepted social custom intended to impose on the poor; on the contrary, custom has always begged me to acquire an education, and offered me abundant and honorable opportunities to improve my financial condition. The poor, for whom there is so much sympathy, are really taking the country; their children are usually taught industry, and often acquire good habits, and as a result become rich. Look at the history of nearly any rich man; you will find he began on the very lowest round of the ladder. On the other hand, the children of the well-to-do are nearly always spoilt, and consequently make a failure of life. This is so notoriously true that Edward Bok lately wrote a book entitled "The Blessing of Poverty." If the poor of this country are being ground down, it is being done mainly by those who came up from poverty.

9.

I don't know what should be done with the man who cannot get a job, or cannot hold one when he gets it. He has always been a problem, and always will be, on the hands of those

who are able to work. But I do not believe we should hang those who find work, and who perform it with reasonable satisfaction. The men who find work are very largely in the majority. They are responsible for every creditable institution we have; for every school house, home, church, university, railroad and factory. If in a community there are a thousand people, nine hundred of them find work without difficulty, and progress from apprentices to journeymen, foremen, superintendents; some of them are called as general managers. The nine hundred include the best people in the community; they own all the best homes, they build the school houses and the business blocks, waterworks, lighting plant and sewer systems. They build the factories and gradually enlarge them. They have moral rules and enforce them. They produce the newspapers, and their sons become the lawyers and doctors. Occasionally one of them becomes governor, congressman, or judge. I make no charges against the hundred unfortunates; but I do insist they are no better than the nine hundred who have found work, and attend to it with regularity and patience. I insist that the morals of the hundred are no better than

the average morality of the nine hundred; that the nine hundred have as much intelligence, and are as patriotic and kind, and more useful, than their unfortunate neighbors, the minority. I admit that among the nine hundred will be found many who will cheat, and who are not as truthful, polite or moral as they should be, but there is not the slightest evidence that the average among them, in the respects named, is not as high as among the hundred who live in little houses down by the depot, or in little houses scattered around the town. I am of the opinion that the average of intelligence and morality is higher among the nine hundred than among the one hundred. However, I do not insist upon this, but certainly no one will deny that in the respects named the two classes are at least equal. So it would be disastrous to turn the management of affairs over to the hundred, for thereby we should gain nothing of value, and lose a great deal of value. This plan will not work; we must give it up.

10.

If nine men out of ten are able to find work, what excuse does the tenth man offer that he

cannot? I do not know; I have never talked with the tenth man: I have only seen his wails in print. But his explanation must be lame in some respect. It is at least certain that the tenth man lives after a fashion, and it must be admitted that the little work he does get comes in a way from those who have themselves found work. The employer may not pay enough, but he pays something, and has been known to pay wages as high as ten, twenty, and even fifty dollars a day for good work. We cannot be reasonably expected to reduce the available comforts of life, meager enough under the best circumstances, to oblige those who will not make reasonable efforts to secure the few blessings we have. The little we amount to is due to the efforts of the ninety men out of a hundred, and we simply cannot agree to burn our houses and all live in smaller and less comfortable houses, simply to oblige the ten per cent who have been unable to find work. Such a course would not be majority rule; it would violate every principle of common sense and fairness. So I wish the unhappy nine out of a hundred would get a new argument. The argument they advance has not only become tiresome, but it is so foolish and unfair as to be

a clear waste of time. I do not object so much to the speciousness of the argument as I object to its age.

11.

We are all a bad lot, but the workers are the best of a bad lot. I speak of the *average* man, and the average man has a reasonably good job, pays his debts, maintains a family, educates his children, and manages to save something. It is from the homes of the average men that come the boys who distinguish themselves, and make the big successes which irritate us all so much. It is from the homes of average men that come the good girls who distinguish our womanhood.

12.

In a large majority of cases poverty is not due to injustice or low wages, but to shiftlessness. One of the things we *know* is that millions of poor men in the United States have become well-to-do and lived respectable and useful lives while about it. This means that there are no conditions in this country grimly calculated to keep the poor down. And another thing must be admitted: every poor man who has become

well-to-do has been reasonably industrious and temperate, and reasonably fair and polite; not a single one has been actually shiftless. We have a tremendous number of men who are successful in a greater or less degree, and few of them are particularly brilliant. So don't be discouraged if you are dull; you live among dull people, and their processes are not beyond you. There are only a few essentials to remember: industry, temperance, politeness, fairness, and such helpfulness in community and world affairs as is reasonably possible. It doesn't pay to be too stingy; and it doesn't pay to be too liberal. It doesn't pay to be too mean; and it doesn't pay to be too good.

13.

The greatest fallacy of all time is that the poor man need do nothing to help himself; that the reformers will take care of him by means of resolutions and conventions. The poor man, in popular literature, has never been to blame for anything, particularly for his poverty; the rich man has robbed him, and there is nothing to do but make the rich man give it back.

14.

Benjamin Franklin is quoted as saying: "After seeing European civilizations, I would never advise an American Indian to become civilized, for all civilizations seem to have but one object: to depress the multitude in order to exalt the few." Franklin may not have said it; men have a habit of inventing sayings by Franklin, as they make up sayings by Lincoln. But if Franklin said it, he nodded occasionally, as did Homer, and said foolish things. The object of civilization has never been to depress the multitude for the benefit of the few; the contrary is true, and he who does not know it is a poor philosopher, whatever his name. Civilization has always been struggling for the masses.

15.

Why did the master succeed in life better than the servant? You know, and I know, that so far as human laws go, the two men had exactly the same chance; but Nature gave the servant a handicap that no human effort, individual, or combined, can remove. The master made his own way; the servant made his: we fought them

both, but were unable to keep the better equipped man down. It's the inexorable rule, and we might as well accept it. God Almighty did it, and He will play the same trick on mankind as long as time endures.

VI

Business

1.

The first principle is life; the second is maintenance of life. The thing of greatest human interest and importance, therefore, is the production and distribution of food, the manufacture of necessities; or what we call business. Religion, education, art, politics, are all secondary to it, since we live because of our work; and without life we should need neither salvation, learning, literature, nor anything else. Business is nothing more than food-getting; incidentally it means founding a home, a family, assisting in building a school, a road, a street, and, finally, appreciation of a painting, a book or a sermon.

2.

Of living creatures, business men are nearest sane; their philosophy is as accurate as their multiplication table.

3.

If you can forgive the magnificence of a successful politician, why are you unable to forgive a successful business man? Every time I strike a match, or turn an electric light button, or use the telephone, I am indebted to a business man, but if I am in debt to any politician, I do not realize it.

4.

All should have ideals they cannot quite reach; all should be a little high-minded, and accomplish some of the greater good, but it is business men who know these things may be made professional and mischievous. In thousands of years there has been no advance in public morals, in philosophy, religion or in politics, but the advance in business has been the greatest miracle the world has ever known.

5.

A man writes me: "We hear every day of the tremendous rascality of business men." Yes; and in many cases it is mere idle gossip. If a business man detects a customer in a mean trick, the customer gets even by telling what a great

rascal the business man is. . . . I don't deny that a thousand tricks are played every hour by business men; that is a part of humanity, but I do contend that the better class business men are more honest than the average of men in other professions, because they have discovered that honesty, fairness and politeness pay. Millions of others have not yet discovered it.

6.

Of all our citizens, business men are the shrewdest, best educated, average highest in all essential particulars, and are our best philosophers. By business men, of course, I mean all those who engage in the essential callings of life: farmers, bankers, mechanics, merchants, manufacturers, etc. The really contemptible bag of tricks is the collection with which literary men, artists, preachers, professors, women and politicians habitually misrepresent business men. This arraignment of the superior class by the inferior class is mere envy, selfishness and meanness. One of their favorite arguments is that they could easily make a fortune if they were willing to adopt the "dirty methods" of business; I know one fellow who preached this doctrine a

long time, finally engaged in business, and within two years landed in jail. You know of such cases; they are very common. Another favorite statement with them is that no man engaged in business can be honest. This they harp on a great deal, although it is notorious that the great business fortunes have been made by superior fairness and politeness; the merest amateur in life knows that honesty is the first essential to success in life. To say a man cannot succeed in business honestly is as absurd as to say a woman cannot succeed in life unless she is a wanton. For a man to be known in his community as tricky, impolite and a tippler is almost as serious as for a woman to have a child out of wedlock. The world demands certain things of the people, and it punishes men as freely as it punishes women: there is said to be a double standard, but there isn't.

7.

The business man knows the weakness of propositions, the danger signs, the failings of men; he knows how much statements should be discounted, and herein lies his value to the world. Business men have as beautiful dreams as ar-

tists, but they have learned where the absurd begins.

8.

Every great improvement in the world's history is due, directly or indirectly, to the munificence of some man successful in the world's affairs. Every great charitable institution is founded on the surplus earnings of active men who did good while earning their money, and, having learned philanthropy, closed their lives with a burst of it. The men of great learning did not build the institutions in which they teach, although nearly all of them unjustly criticize the men who did.

9.

Business is the definition of the greatest of all words, *Industry*, and no man can prove he is industrious unless he has some measure of success to his credit. The real hero is the man who, in spite of a poor home, poor schooling, and residence in a poor neighborhood, becomes a successful and useful citizen; who somehow acquires politeness, education, and appreciation of the world's important lessons. The real meaning of democracy is that any one living under such a government may become a gentleman; that all

have the privilege of outgrowing ignorance, poor birth, poverty and incivility. I care nothing for the accidental rich, but for those good workmen who rise by sheer merit, I have honest admiration. There are a few unworthy sons who have inherited wealth, but we should not, because of them, unfairly criticize their worthy fathers, who were first industrious, fair and polite, and finally successful. There are only a few of the shoddy rich, but there are millions rich in character, usefulness and industry, and with enough success to their credit to be envied by the shiftless. The history of four thousand successful American business men being investigated, it was found that all but seventeen of them began life poor; that all but a pitiful forty contributed largely to their several communities. So it seems that the great American rewards are for the sons of poor men who are first industrious, well-behaved, successful, and then as useful as selfish men may become. It is snobbery to pretend that character may not accompany success. The talk that the greater the rogue the greater the fortune originated with thieves, and they have failed to make their doctrine good.

10.

Look at the average community, and consider what business men have done for it; the teachers, preachers, statesmen, writers, artists and orators, however creditable they may be, have not done as much. Men investigate money problems with all the practical sense and experience at command, but in everything else they are sentimental; and sentiment is neither honest nor careful. There is trickery in every human transaction, but it is an absurdity to believe that only business is tricky, and needs watching. Business is the most dependable thing we have because it is watched with greatest care, and because business is discovering that honesty is the best policy.

11.

Our plan of permitting the industrious to accumulate a competence is right; there is more to it than the fact that fortunes are made; the men who make money are, as a very general rule, also capable, industrious and useful, and our most dependable citizens. There are objections to the system which permits a man to accumulate more than he needs, but the system has more advan-

tages than disadvantages, or men would not maintain it century after century. First among its advantages is that it is an incentive to every man to become a respectable and useful citizen. The system is at the foundation of our civilization, and we should not abolish it because of an occasional fortune put to bad use. For every fortune wasted, thousands have been of the greatest service to humanity; for every fortune made by speculation bordering on dishonesty, thousands have been made by useful and honest work.

12.

Churches and conventions have fought for the inferior man since time began, but he is still where he was at the beginning, and always will be unless he helps himself, which he may usually do. If a man is lazy, shiftless and unreliable, there is no power on earth that will make him prosperous and respected.

13.

We do not cut the throats of successful men and divide their property because we doubt that it is the best way: we are willing to do it, but

have a suspicion that successful men are, after all, useful.

14.

I believe in any system the people have tried a long time, and found expedient. The plans men have adopted are better than plans they have talked about, and neglected to put into effect because of doubts of their utility. There is something wrong with every doctrine the majority does not put into effect. I do not believe that mankind, after experimenting with life thousands of years, finally adopted the worst system, and steadily refuses to put into effect a better. I am a believer in the people. Whatever they have worked out in their homes, in their places of business, and on the highways and markets, I believe in. If I had young children, I should rather have them taught by the better class business men than by statesmen, orators or dreamers of any other kind. The principles of business are just; they give every man the same chance; we know of no other real democracy. Business is fanatical in nothing. The superior common sense and fairness of business men is the force that will finally make the foolish old world sensible, in case such a thing is possible. Give a

politician great responsibility, and he goes crazy; the same test sobers a business man.

15.

Business men try many experiments, and reject those that fail. Some of our greatest pests are advocating doctrines that should have been abandoned centuries ago, because of flat failure. The world is compelled to admit, after centuries spent in searching for good things, that most good things are old.

VII

Literature

1.

A writing man is something of a black sheep, like the village fiddler; occasionally the fiddler becomes a violinist, and is a credit to his family, but as a rule he would have done better had his tendency been toward saving, industry, and what we call business. A fiddler's notions about practical things are notoriously bad; the notions of a writer or orator are apt to be. When you go to hear a fiddler play, you do not seek him later, and ask his advice about matters of real moment; you know he is notably weak in such things: for advice about your affairs of importance you call on a banker, merchant, manufacturer, farmer, mechanic, or other expert. So it doesn't make much difference what the literary men say in their writing; their idea is to entertain: to make you laugh, or cry, or indignant. For instruction, go to the professors in the Uni-

versity of Fact: indeed, you needn't go to them: they'll look you up.

2.

There is a great library of books; every man of reasonable intelligence will look into it, to see what it contains that may be of value to him. And its value is not anywhere near as great as has been intimated; probably seven-tenths of it is rubbish, although much rubbish is curious and interesting. Select the wisest and best man in your community, and he knows more than Adam Smith; with his years he will have acquired a practical philosophy better fitted to your needs than the philosophy of Marcus Aurelius. There are a number of things you do not know. Who knows it better? Those who have lived longer, had more experience, and have greater and clearer brain power. And there are plenty of such men in your community willing to talk, if you will listen, and get rid of the disposition to tell what *you* think.

3.

A certain popular type of book never changes, except the title and the characters. Some of these books are thousands of years old: others

only a few weeks. The villain is a rich man who robs the poor. Does a poor man discover a gold mine, or other valuable thing? The rich man no sooner hears of it than he rides over in his automobile, or is carried on a litter by slaves, and takes it. No formality; he simply takes it. Such things are not done: I have lived a long time, and have known of no such thing. But that is always the way the book states it. A poor, honest man has a case in court, with justice on his side. His opponent visits the private office of the judge of the court with a roll of bills, and comes out with a sneer. Next day justice is trampled in the dust again. In my life I have personally known no judge who took bribes. Many of them were swayed by popular clamor, and were weak, as are others, but they have been as honest as the rest of us; very much more honorable than thousands of those who appear before them. In these books, the hero is always the same thing: a Good Man whose heart is sore because of the distress about him. And thereupon he becomes an idler, and makes speeches, and gets into trouble, from which he emerges triumphantly (except that one leg is gone; shot off by Capital), and marries a lady who has

been conducting a Mission, and doing great good down in the slums. I know no such man or woman in the life I have lived, and I have always lived with good people. Usually the rich villain ruins every good girl he takes a fancy to, and if her father and brothers object, he slaps them; in some of the older books, he orders them to jail, and tortures them; this theme has been used hundreds of times, and is always false. In the life I have known and lived, when a girl is ruined, it is by a young man usually as worthy as she is, and he is made to marry her. And if they behave thereafter, the people respect them, and give them every opportunity to live it down. If the rascal is married, he is shot by a father or brother, and the unwritten law releases them. I am tired of such books. They are not life; they serve no decent purpose; they annoy me as a red flag annoys a bull. By-the-way, who knows that a red flag annoys a bull? We are always talking about it, but did you ever personally know a bull to take after anything red?

4.

My opinions are formed not because of what I read, but because of what I have experienced.

My experiences are true; what I read may not be.

5.

There was a time when the people said of books: "I suppose they are literature." But lately many of the household deities of long ago have been voted tiresome. I lately saw a list of twenty books that some noted Professor of Literature says every one should read, but practically no one reads them. Every little while another man decides what are the best books. Pay no attention to him, and decide yourself.

6.

The very best books never inspire me as others pretend they are inspired by printed pages. The best books are almost an annoyance, they fall so far short of what good books should be. I have waded through hundreds of pages of standard literature without finding anything of actual value.

7.

The reader is bold, and wants a spade referred to as a spade, but the writer believes it is better to give the reader mental exercise by com-

pelling him to dig for the meaning. This is said to be the excuse for the study of Latin; it gives the student mental exercise.

8.

Did Shakespeare, or Goethe, or Whitman, or Buddha, or Tolstoy, or Confucius, or Rousseau, ever teach you as important lessons as you learned from your parents, from your worthy and intelligent neighbors, from the leading men of practical affairs in your own country and age? *They did not,* and you know it.

9.

We hear much of the decline of Literature. There is a good deal of nonsense in the talk. I thank the gods we have no such man now as Byron.

10.

Every writer tries to invent sentences that will be remembered and quoted, without regard to their truth.

11.

Successful writing is saying that which others wish to say, but cannot; it is rarely saying that which has not been thought of before. How

often you think, on reading a striking sentence: "I have thought of that a thousand times!"

12.

I admire the clever writers, and am entertained by them. But I deny that they are a moral force; they are mere entertainers, as are strolling players, circus performers and musicians.

13.

I do not believe in the abomination called New Thought; it is as objectionable in philosophy as rag time in music. Half you read is literary rag time. I write no new and profound symphonies, but I persistently sing the old songs the world has accepted as a basis for human conduct. I produce no literature, thank God; I never have and never intend to. The opinions I express are not mine: they are, except when I am mistaken in interpreting history, the opinions of the world. I do not know of a single new thought I accept; I do not know of an old one I reject, if it has been accepted many years by a majority of the men of intelligence. An opinion is not worth the breath wasted in expressing

it until it is a hundred years old. And there is enough proved to meet all requirements.

14.

Charles Dickens had perfect style, unlimited imagination, ready-made; he was born with a certain number of great romances in his system, as a hen is born to lay a certain number of eggs. When his clutch was exhausted, he was helpless as a hen in moulting time: old and exhausted, he wrote "Edwin Drood," and admirers of his genius are still wondering at its dullness, compared with "David Copperfield," "Great Expectations," "Tale of Two Cities," and other books written in his prime. He was so smart in his best days as to be almost a monstrosity: the term "average man" did not apply to him, as it does to you and to me. He was so great that writers ever since his time have been envious; in every estimate of him you find mean digs associated with praise. If there is one thing greater than well-directed Effort it is haphazard Heredity. Not only poets are born, rather than made: all unusual men are. Genius is like lightning: it is apt to strike anywhere: few great geniuses had great parents.

15.

The pen is *not* mightier than the sword; and mightier than either, and more necessary, is the hoe.

16.

No man may write interestingly and keep within the bounds of your beliefs. He must occasionally go so far as to pleasantly shock you, and cause the uncomfortable feeling that a good man cannot follow him all the way. The author who aims to write nothing offensive to anyone presently writes only hymns and leaflets explaining the Sunday school lesson; and then only children read him; and they read him because they fear they will be scolded if they do not. Only interesting writers are actually read. But an interesting writer with wrong opinions is not necessarily mischievous. If I come across a book really worth while, it does not change my beliefs; if the author attacks an opinion I hold, he confirms it, and I have the added pleasure of thinking: "Here is a smart man, and a good writer; but how blind he is in the presence of Truth!" A mere book or newspaper article does not change your opinions. The blood you in-

herited has much to do with them; your experiences in life gradually form them, and you cannot change in an hour or a moment to oblige a good writer or talker. So I beg that you do not neglect good writers because you have heard they have false notions.

VIII

Philosophy

1.

Philosophy is common sense. If it isn't common sense, it isn't philosophy.

2.

Every man must build up a philosophy of tried principles he can rely upon. And the strength and extent of his philosophy will be the measure of his success in life. His limitations make up the boundary beyond which he cannot go. When he reaches his limit, he cannot stop and howl for assistance, because it will not come. All the help he receives must come from himself. And the first principle in this philosophy is that you have no rights you do not enforce.

3.

I don't understand causes and theories, but when the same things happen year in and year out in my life, and I read that the same things

have happened regularly in the lives of others in the past, I am finally able to understand results. The essential facts of life are as apparent as that people eat three times a day. Quit bothering with theory; deal with results. Facts honestly and intelligently accepted develop other facts. A fairly intelligent man may look at fifty people as they pass him on the street, and tell their histories close enough for all practical purposes. There are no mysteries. Where does the wind come from? It doesn't matter: we know the habits of wind after it arrives.

4.

There are a million things I do not know, but what I do know, I must know for myself. And, as I am selfish, I do not neglect anything that seems to be true, important or useful.

5.

What is philosophy but the teaching of our oldest and best men and women? The writing of Socrates is nothing save the best teaching of those with whom he associated; I have read his philosophy, and it impressed me not as new doctrine, but as a simple repetition of what I have

heard from the best of my associates all my life. This is true of any book of philosophy; of any clever book: the author learned from those around him.

6.

When I think of the wonderful things that are undoubtedly true, and of the wonderful things yet to be discovered, I not only blush because of the little I know, but marvel because so many people manufacture wonderful experiences, instead of studying the wonders that are undisputed. If we love the wonderful and mysterious, we find both in abundance in the natural sciences. One of the world's great books was written about a country community; about the natural wonders surrounding a village. Within five miles of where you live, there are enough strange things to keep you wondering all your life. Probably in your dooryard may be found enough to employ the intellect of a strong man; one of the great discoveries in science was made by a man in cultivating the ordinary garden pea.

7.

The word philosophy really has but one meaning: the man who has the best knowledge that

may be obtained of a subject, is the greatest philosopher in considering that subject.

8.

It is agreed that we need plain living; but we need plain thinking more, since it will generally lead us right when we are threatened with going astray. Your own experience is worth more than the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, and dozens of others of equal note.

9.

An example of foolish philosophy is the statement that no man may serve God and Mammon. Every man serves both; there is no other way. The word Mammon is generally abused: it means nothing except the money a man saves to send his children to school, to build a home, to increase and enlarge his business, to live a little more comfortably than his less thrifty neighbors. And while he is doing this, he is serving God acceptably. Doing a good is a side issue; no man can devote all his time to it; he must pay a good deal of attention to Mammon.

10.

Most philosophers are poor; so most of them give the poor the best of it.

11.

I am never much of a philosopher when my luck is bad.

12.

The chief cause of our troubles to-day is that the wisdom of our wise men is being put into effect. What we need is the common sense of the common men.

13.

People make a great deal of the word "thinker." "He," they say of some one they admire, "is a thinker." I never knew a man who was not. Every man thinks over his small affairs, and comes to certain conclusions. And that is all there is to philosophy. The trouble is, few men think as clearly and sensibly as they are capable of doing; we are all apt to be stampeded by big nonsense.

14.

Every man should understand that of certain things it may be said: "This is true," and that of certain other things it may be said: "This is speculation."

IX

Newspapers

1.

Editors formerly poor are now rich and powerful; and instead of being dishonest men, they reek with virtue. They are not only good men; they are too good; they demand a perfection in business that they do not equal in their own business offices. It is absurd to say that these powerful, rich and intelligent editors are corrupt. They are as honorable in their dealings as other business men; but their greatness and power have turned their heads, and they have become insolent in demanding that the people dance attendance on their excessive virtue measures, and give freely to their too-liberal plans for community and social betterment.

2.

Probably the most insolent American is the big editor who has acquired a big circulation,

a big advertising patronage, a big building, and a big fortune. Being rich himself, he advocates all sorts of public improvements, that they may become monuments to his memory; as the preacher insists on building a new and unnecessary church as evidence of his activity. The big editor is more insolent with his power than the rich are with their money, and pursues his enemies with a viciousness that will in time, I hope, be prohibited. He is the patron of all other visionary ladies and gents, and joins them in private consultations about the slowness of the people, and their lack of proper enthusiasm. Although always praising The People in print, the big editor really feels superior to them, and harshly criticizes them in his private conferences with fellow uplifters.

3.

The Sword breaks out every few years, and makes trouble for awhile, but the Pen makes trouble night and day, and cannot be suppressed or curbed. Is the Pen mightier than the Sword? It was the Pen that suggested armies, navies, and war.

4.

The newspapers exaggerate the poverty of the poor and the riches of the rich; they exaggerate the importance of the Old Flag; they exaggerate the importance of our schools and churches, the patriotism of old soldiers, and the importance of a Free Press. In advocating truth, they are untruthful; in advocating justice, they are unjust; in teaching fairness they are unfair; in their eagerness to attack wrong, they accuse honest men of wrong doing; in fighting demagogues, they become demagogues; in sympathizing with the poor, they are unjust with those who have worked their way out of poverty, and are the best friends of the poor; in their devotion to the public, they often demand so much as to become enemies of the public.

5.

People dearly love the newspaper story that a poor man was sent to the penitentiary for stealing a loaf of bread, with which to feed his starving wife and children; and the story is printed regularly, although no such incident ever occurred. There never was a court or jury that

would impose such a sentence; there never was a baker who would prefer such a charge, or a prosecuting attorney who would prosecute it; there never was a policeman who would arrest a man for such an offense.

6.

A few years ago Yellow Journalism was regarded as piffle; as a fad that would soon die out. It is an accepted fact now that all journalism is yellow.

7.

The most violent abuse is found in print. The editor who abuses public men, the street railway, the electric lighting company, or other public service corporation, writes it: he does not tell his enemies to their faces that they are thieves, for that course might result in a knock down. The public speaker is usually complimentary; he talks face to face with his victims, and runs no unnecessary risks. But the man who writes in a secluded room, gradually increases in violence until you wonder some one does not assault him. The abuse in print, terrific and untruthful, and which attracts no pro-

test, is one of the amazing things of the present time.

8.

The liberty of the press you are so fond of has become nothing but liberty for writers to abuse you for not carrying out schemes often foolish. For most martyrs and reformers are writers; every big feeling theorist drifts inevitably into the writing game, where the liberty of the press protects him in his vicious assaults on the people.

9.

We Americans talk a great deal about our intelligence. Have you not observed that we are really much like parrots? Go on the streets, into an office, a railway coach, a home, a shop, or stop a farmer on the highway, and you hear precisely the same talk. Something a noted orator has said; something an editor has written: Nothing the talkers have thought or believe. From Maine to California it is the same thing; no one has an opinion not supplied by the newspapers. The editors are as bad as the people. I can show you examples of every newspaper and magazine in the United States printing ex-

actly the same things. In all big cities, where two or more newspapers receive the same Associated Press report, carbon sheets are placed between thinner sheets, and the telegraph man, with one operation, takes a copy for all the papers interested. These copies are called flimsy. That's what the people get from Maine to California: flimsy. The sayings of the chiefs are prepared in New York or Washington; we all get flimsy copies, and accept their ideas; we do not seem to have any of our own. The chiefs decide that a certain thing should be done. Orders go out to the people in flimsy, and next day, in every office, home, shop, factory, street and highway, the people talk about the order, and arrange to carry it out. If the people are slow in obeying the order, Committees are appointed to bullyrag them. The newspapers print their names in big type as slackers, and they are displayed in yellow on big boards erected in prominent places.

10.

People have been saying for years of Socialism: "It is bound to come." They haven't discussed whether Socialism is a good or bad thing: they have only discussed the certainty that it is

bound to come, because the flimsy said so. All the people know of Socialism is that it is in the flimsy every day, has been a long time, and is bound to come. It never occurs to them that they have a right to decide whether Socialism shall come or not; it never occurs to them to doubt what the flimsy says, or that the flimsy may have a wrong opinion. So they repeat everywhere: "It is bound to come." Under such circumstances, of course, it *is* bound to come, whether it is a good or a bad thing.

11.

Every day the flimsy announces public extravagances that cause conservative men alarm; extravagances unnecessary, foolish—a mere waste of money collected from an over-burdened people. Some one decides on these programs of waste, the announcement is put in the flimsy, the people talk about it, and that is all there is of it. You think you are a free citizen of a free republic. As a matter of fact, the flimsy tells you what to say, and you say it; the flimsy tells you what to do, and you do it. We should quit a lot of nonsense, but instead the flimsy is ordering new nonsense every day.

12.

Many newspaper statements begin: "It is said—" And everybody knows anything may be said.

13.

A few years ago the town in which I live paid $1.50 a thousand feet for manufactured gas. Then natural gas was discovered, and the price reduced to twenty-five cents, with free gas to schools and city buildings. Gas at twenty-five cents was a great blessing; as low a price as the distributing company could afford. And we had a contract covering twenty years. But within a very short time the newspapers began referring to the gas company as a Grasping Monopoly. The politicians at once saw the opportunity to raise another disturbance, and accepted it: the politicians can do nothing without the newspapers. The gas company was helpless; it was attacked by a mob, and the result was that the company went into the hands of receivers.

Then began a reign of corruption unexampled in history. It is estimated that the receivership cost a half million dollars. Scores of lawyers had a hand in the robbery. At one time three

different receivers were acting, and each receiver had attorneys representing his interests. The case was heard in twelve different courts, and extravagant costs accumulated in each. One judge allowed receivers and lawyers such extravagant fees that the governor of the State referred to him in a public speech as a thief. In the fight against the Natural Gas Company I have never known more perfect devotion to the people's interests than was shown by the newspapers and politicians of all three parties. They devoted their best energies to an effort to reduce rates; they abused the gas company as fiercely and unjustly as any reasonable man could ask; they did all it is within the power of earnest reformers to do; they "put ideals into public life," as the Good Man is forever saying all should do.

And it may be added that the people did their part; they held mass meetings to view with alarm the slow advance of corporate greed; they rewarded several of the most active champions in the fight for the people's rights: I know of nothing, indeed, that the people, the reformers or the representatives of a free and untrammeled press neglected in their efforts to secure gas at less

than twenty-five cents per thousand. The best fight that could be made was made; therefore let us calmly look over the battlefield of this particular Armageddon, at the end of three years of struggle.

The editors and the reformers have received their reward; either they got part of the half million dollars the people paid as the expense of the row and the receiverships, or they have the satisfaction of a good fight well fought; but what have we, the People, to show for it? Nothing whatever except that *we are now paying* 78 *instead of* 25 *cents* per thousand for gas, with a prospect of a still further advance.

X

Professors

1.

We have many thousands of modest and useful teachers who attend quietly to their business, and have great influence at the fountain head of character and learning. All these I respect and admire. But I scarcely know a writing professor who is not a dangerous disturber; more dangerous than the ordinary Anarchist, because more respectable. These professors write almost exactly alike: they demand the same big programs. A few are able to rattle the chains a little more effectively than others, but in the main their writing is about the same: you cannot tell one essay from another. If you read what one writing professor says about the slavery existing in this country, it is practically what they all say.

2.

Every man who has received the Higher Education is resentful because it has not done as

much for him as he has always believed it would do. The truth is, unless a lot of practical sense is mixed with an education, it is of no great value. I have observed that the really great men of learning also have much practical sense, and that their practical sense is of the greater value. The best educated person I ever knew made a complete failure of life.

3.

In his writing the professor is able to quote the original Greek or Hebrew—by referring to his books—but I know plenty of men who do not even use capital letters or punctuation marks properly who know more of importance, and who have accomplished more. There are plenty of men who know little grammar or Greek, or Hebrew, but who know life, and who have as good hearts and heads as the most accomplished scholars, and know vastly more of the whirlpool in which we exist.

4.

Only one man out of, say, a dozen makes a success of an education. It is a mistake to suppose that a man is educated because he has spent

a long time in college. I have personally known many men who spent years at the best educational institutions who were the dullest men, and the least educated men, in their communities. Occasionally a man remembers most of the college teaching he has been exposed to, and becomes a teacher, but even then he is not always accepted as a tower of intellectual strength in his community. It often happens that men who have never been to college are thought as well of, or better, and are actually as useful.

5.

I do not doubt the importance of a college education, but I do doubt that after a man has acquired one, he is directed by heaven to rule adults as he rules children in his classes.

6.

I have never known a university professor to be decently fair in his comments upon those who succeed except as teachers or writers; they are as bitter as theologians because of lack of success. Members of both classes knew what they were doing when they began learning their

trades. They had a choice of professions, as other men have. It is their own fault that they chose theology or professorial careers. They knew they are not, as a rule, well paid. And, having chosen their beds, they should lie on them with more grace.

7.

Martyrs, reformers, professors, poets, Christs, Buddhas, Mahomets, writers, have finally become oppressors; they have preached foolish propaganda until the rights of the people have been infringed. Many things done by these people are an insult to the boast that we have freedom; many things they have led us into throw doubt on the statement that we possess ordinary intelligence. Martyrs, reformers, welfare workers, theorists, over-educated fools of universities, writers, and saviors of one kind and another, have become meaner masters than the old kings ever were; their expensive and foolish experiments more burdensome than the old kingly extravagance, and the only hope for relief is for the plain people to assert their better intelligence and morals.

8.

It is the duty of certain people to teach music, literature, painting, psychology, sentiment, idealism. It is the duty of certain other people to teach farming, the trades, commerce, law, finance, sociology, philosophy. Of the two, those in the second class are rather more vital than those in the class first named. And those in the second class owe a duty to the young quite as vital as those in the first class. The young lady in the parlor taking a music or drawing lesson is not as important in the family life as her mother, who is in the kitchen preparing dinner. The mother knows it; she should not submit to being browbeaten.

9.

Speaking for myself I am becoming tolerably tired of professors intimating that I am sordid and stingy, and have no ambition for world betterment or progress, and that they must direct me, and decide on the taxes I must pay to carry out their plans. I have been drilled in the old-fashioned notions of liberty and majority rule until I believe in them, and have come to feel

very strongly that I should have something to say about my own affairs, if not about public affairs.

10.

A man whose genius runs to the ability to acquire great knowledge and speak many languages is rarely a philosopher. The thinker cannot devote all his time to acquiring the great fund of information a teacher must possess. A philosopher need not be a scholar: Epictetus was not only an unlearned man, but a slave. The effort necessary to acquire a great education, drives out something else. The unlearned are sometimes very capable. The Arabs had little education, but they came near capturing the civilized world at one time; they would have done it, probably, had they not weakened themselves by adopting the bad habits of educated men. So if you haven't an "education," don't be discouraged. Pick up a little information every day, and you'll soon know enough to get along better than a school teacher.

11.

For centuries we have been told that there is not enough idealism in the world. There is at

least enough now; I sometimes fear too much. In the old days of chivalry, mad knights rode madly at imaginary dragons, and became so much of a nuisance that, with a book, a witty writer laughed them out of existence; but at least the Knights of the past did their own fighting and paid their own expenses, whereas the modern knights call on the people to pay the cost of new crusades undertaken.

12.

It is proper that the professors tell the facts they encounter in their studies, but they should permit the people to draw their own conclusions. Educated men are useful because of the *facts* they are familiar with; most of them fall into the error that their *opinions* of the facts are as important as the *facts* themselves. Let a careful man propose conservative common sense, and at once the Intellectuals are on his back, with charges of stinginess, meanness, and lack of appreciation of Democracy, Christianity, and of the home and fireside.

13.

The world has always been oppressed with Big Questions. To all intents and purposes,

there are none; anything too big for the people to understand doesn't make any difference. I do not understand Greek; very well, I have no use for it. If a man will gain a reasonable understanding of the subjects within reach, and practice them with common sense and in the light of experience, the big things they discuss do not actually concern him. What is beyond the Milky Way? I don't know; but it doesn't make any difference to little you or me: the answer does not concern us. Some know, but the knowledge is of no practical use, and gives them no advantage; while astronomers have been learning what is beyond the Milky Way, you have been learning something else of greater or equal value. Why do the seasons change? It is enough to know they always do. The things of actual importance are simple, and easily understood.

XI

The People

1.

I have observed that The People are classified in two ways. When the statesmen and critics want to gain their consent to a big measure, they tell how noble, liberal, high-minded, patriotic, self-sacrificing, progressive and good The People are. But when the big program has been agreed upon, and money must be provided to carry it out, the tone of the statesmen and critics changes; they tell how slow, mean, narrow, sordid and unprogressive The People are. . . . The explanation is, I think, that every man believes he belongs to the class first named and that his neighbors belong to the mean, unprogressive, narrow, stingy party. State a big compliment for the people, and every man will extract his share of it; abuse the people, and every man will place the blame on his neighbors.

2.

The people have every right they are entitled to, for the reason that they have all they can get.

3.

We are always talking about equality and democracy. How much do we believe in it? Isn't it a fact that nearly everybody feels superior to somebody? Do you suppose for a moment that your great statesman, author, artist, or commercial chief doesn't feel superior to those who made him famous? If we really believed in democracy, we would not pay a farm hand (as we used to) $30 a month and board, and a congressman $600 a month.

4.

I can't give the man working for me as much as he thinks he is entitled to: I can only pay him what he earns, and my obligation to him is no greater than his obligation to me. I am entitled to as much credit for giving him work as he is entitled to credit for working; I am as much a working man as he is, as honest, and equally entitled to protection and respect.

5.

There may have been a time when employers were over-bearing, but they are not now; they have been punished so much that in nine cases out of ten they are willing to make every possible concession.

6.

I do not object to labor unions, although I do not believe they are as useful as is generally believed; anyway, when I belonged, they did me no good. I have been treated as unfairly by my union as I have ever been treated by an employer. Union men have cliques, and the weak are oppressed. . . . My contention is that the labor unions are over-doing a good idea, as every other good idea is overdone. Many of its policies have become unfair.

7.

The most persistent scream to-day is: "Shorter hours." What we need is not shorter hours, but longer hours. No man can make a real success in life working short hours; every man who gets along in any calling works more than union hours. Short hours is the trouble

with most people who do not get along. Investigate the men in the bread line, and you will find this is the trouble: short hours of work, and long hours of dissipation.

8.

When I am on my death bed, I shall feel gratitude for many favors. My life has not been satisfactory, but I know I have been favored a thousand times. I have always had abundant opportunity to do better than I have done; my failure is my own fault, not the world's. In the main, the people have been as just with me as I have been with them. I have been compelled to watch them; they have been compelled to watch me. The closer I have been watched, the better I have behaved. And you've had the same history. In spite of the curse of life, I have found much in it to admire. Most assuredly I have never lacked opportunity. There has never been any discrimination against me. And something—luck, nature, God—has saved me from a thousand beatings when I deserved them.

9.

All of us receive much kindness and appreciation

tion for every vicious attempt to do us harm. Very many of us are tiresome; we talk too much; many are slow about paying their bills; probably all give themselves the best of it in small things, and few of us do as well as we might. We are gossipy, and tell white lies; we haven't as much sense and thrift as we should have, but I have never in my life been robbed by a real thief. I have been wronged in little ways frequently, but could have avoided most of that had I been careful. A just criticism of people is that they are guilty of many little follies and meannesses they might reform to their own advantage, but those who do not balk at the jail or open disgrace are rare.

10.

There are so many critics in the press and on the platform that heaven knows enough fault is found with the people. The really unusual thing is a compliment without a string to it. And there are a million things to compliment unreservedly. In the storm of indignation and fault-finding, you often are almost shocked to see thousands of decent men and women, or communities that are upright and progressive, and

institutions honestly and progressively managed. There is so much fault-finding that you expect to find the country going to the devil, and thieves and incendiaries on every street and cross road. People actually find too much fault with themselves and their affairs. There is actually much to commend everywhere.

11.

You often hear people say, "The Kicker always gets the best of it." The Kicker is a man who is always demanding more than is properly coming to him, and who is often given an extra herring to get rid of his noise; but there is nothing in the popular belief that he gets the best of it. He may, in small things, but the best men in your community are not Kickers; no man ever made a fortune by Kicking. Fortunes are made by men who are polite and agreeable. A Kicker is a man marked in every community to be avoided, and given the worst of it whenever possible. A Kicker may be given three for a quarter when the regular price is ten cents straight, but he can't kick his way into a big position or into real success in anything.

12.

What is the particular thing the people are doing that is most harmful and foolish? It would be interesting to know, but probably we never will know, since what some say is civilization's greatest blessing, others say is its greatest curse. So every one must decide for himself; and woe unto him who makes a mistake.

13.

Most of the talk about helping the under dog is sentiment; the under dog does not actually receive much help.

14.

I should like to see the people support something without being driven to it. Imagine the people generally saying a twenty million dollar fund is needed for the Y. W. C. A. because of the importance of its work. Imagine them agreeing on a treasurer of the fund, and voluntarily sending in subscriptions for the full amount! When this happens, I shall believe many things I do not now believe.

15.

The best people of this country are really as cowardly as they claim to be brave; that which is accepted as friendly public sentiment by agitators, is frequently only cowardice. Every time there is useless, unfair and damaging rioting, the Good Citizen remains indoors, hoping that the trouble will "blow over." But the tough citizen is on the street, yelling, breaking windows, and stoning or shooting whoever is not on his side.

16.

In this land of plenty, we die of over-eating, and call it Starvation.

17.

Every good citizen not only takes care of himself and others, but does something for the government. The man who, on leaving school, learns a trade or calling, and advances in it; who learns the importance of politeness and fairness; who marries, and looks after his family; who assists a little in the general progress; who builds a house or factory or improves a farm;

who learns a little every year; who is not a nuisance to others, but of some help to others, has been successful.

18.

We Americans have boasted so much of Freedom that lately we almost expect it to make a living for us.

19.

I like average people; those who are willing to be polite in return for politeness; those who will match my sobriety with sobriety; who will respect my rights as much as I respect theirs. Ever since I can remember I have been learning lessons of importance, taught by parents, teachers, editors, pastors and worthy people in every other walk in life. I have heeded these lessons, and when others do not I refuse to respect them.

20.

The man who first called us the Common People was nearly right.

21.

I have never thought much of the ability of the people to look after their public affairs, but

had I heard, twenty years ago, a prediction that they would descend, cheering, to their present low estate, I should have denied it.

XII

Fools

1.

A man with a little sense owes a duty to the ignorance and impudence of the fool. A fool's mental weakness entitles him to charity as much as a physical defect; put a penny in his cup, as you drop a penny into the cup of a blind man.

2.

When I say that the world is full of fools, I mean no sweeping disrespect to the human family. Foolishness is the general condition, and it is the main business of men to acquire more wisdom and more comfort. Millions of fools are good fellows, and faithful to many commendable ideals. They could greatly benefit themselves by acquiring more common sense and knowledge. I have a good deal of sympathy for fools, naturally; I am one myself.

3.

The Lord is very kind about forgiving people; but if you have been a fool, and injured yourself, forgiveness will not do you a particle of good.

4.

You are entitled to any number of fool opinions; but there is a certain elemental wisdom every one must possess, or suffer.

5.

Why do the stupid so persistently insist on stupidity? They meet people every day who conduct their affairs with reasonable intelligence; they never read a book or newspaper without finding condemnation. Yet they insist upon it day after day and year after year, although nothing in nature is stupid. One would think the stupid would finally be able to learn a little, as do the most stupid animals.

6.

Great care is necessary in hiding your fool streak; people have sharp eyes and sharper tongues, and love to catch others in foolish tricks they sometimes play themselves.

7.

The popular notion is that it is all right to rob the fools. But it will finally become necessary to rob them less, and teach them more.

8.

I complain of bigotry on both sides of every question. In every discussion cheap men hurl the word "bigot" at each other, and both are right. Every fool is a bigot; so is every criminal, every anarchist, every disturber of any kind. There is danger in piling up false evidence in discussing your affairs; that is bigotry.

9.

I know noted men whose dullness is astounding; but they know enough to be reliable. Good conduct is the base of all prosperity: not religion, but good conduct for its own sake. I do not say this as a man who thinks he is holy and wise, and makes no mistakes, but as a weak man who has made many, and has observed that the better he behaves, the better he gets along.

10.

The world is bound to go the limit in stupidity: everything indicates it. Therefore my proposal is to find out what the stupid want, and do it. Not half way, but all the way. The thing they all want is a division of property. Let property be divided, and every one given another fair start: no advantage to any one. Let the stupid also hold a national convention, and agree on what will satisfy them as to rights, liberty, etc. And then let it be given them in full measure. And after every one has had exact justice; when every one has exactly the same amount of money, when every one has exactly the same chance, let a law be adopted providing that the first man who complains of injustice be hanged as an example to all others.

11.

Quit your foolishness, and you can beat your luck. It's the only way.

12.

I have sympathy for the modest fool, but none for the one who has the band play a piece, to at-

tract a crowd, and then proceeds to make an ass of himself.

13.

A fool will not only pay for a cure that does him no good, but he will write a testimonial that he was cured.

14.

In the hands of a fool the ballot simply entails the expense of counting; it merely leads the statesmen into disagreeable controversies as to which shall control the greater number.

15.

In private life, a fool finds his proper level, but in public affairs he is encouraged by those who would rob him.

16.

The world taxes you for being a fool. Don't pay the tax.

17.

Many a man thinks you a fool who doesn't say so. Americans do their criticizing in private; they "jolly" you to your face.

XIII

Industry

1.

A lesson with which I have been greatly impressed is that which shows the care everything worth while requires. No man can succeed at anything and be idle, shiftless and thoughtless. The careless, indifferent man is sure to fail. If I read of a man who has succeeded at farming, it is a record of long hours; of keeping everything in its place; of watching little things; of doing everything at the right time: and all this in addition to being fair, agreeable, temperate, and giving a certain amount of time to public affairs. I regularly read *The Country Gentleman*, and it depresses me sometimes because of the tasks its writers assign. If a man succeeds with a garden, with chickens, with anything on a farm, he must work hard, and be careful; I have never seen a record in its pages of a lazy or shiftless man succeeding. If a man succeeds in the law,

in merchandising, in any town trade, it is the same thing: he must work long hours, and watch out constantly. Even the man who succeeds as a disturber must practice oratory unceasingly, in order that he may move his hearers to contribute liberally when the collection is taken, or turn out to vote for him when there is an election. He must study hard, in order to be well-informed in mischief.

2.

I talked lately with a man who had retired from business. He said he at first tried to be idle, but couldn't do it: as a result of idleness, his affairs as well as his body became clogged up, and he was compelled to hustle to keep things straight.

3.

Less work is the poorest philosophy in the world; yet it is the base of the present reform movement. The present clamor is for the people to work less, and pay less attention to habits of thrift and sense. The foundation of the new philosophy is for the State to look out for everybody while we are all having a good time. But the State can't do it: those who get along must

work long hours, and watch all corners carefully. It is an impressive lesson. I recommend it for thought.

4.

The late Czar of Russia was lazy, and trusted everything to Experts in Efficiency. And you know what they did to the Czar. Peter the Great was a worse tyrant, but he worked hard and watched all the corners, and died a hero and tyrant.

5.

There is no man so poor or foolish that better conduct and more industry will not help him. The best conduct and most persistent industry will not make any life entirely agreeable or successful, but these simple virtues never fail to help: they are always better than idleness and viciousness.

6.

Not only the wicked suffer; the weak suffer, as do the inefficient, the careless, and the impolite. The notably wicked go to jail; the notably careless go to the poor house.

7.

Hungry Joe, of New York, had a notion that the only way to make money was to be dishonest. He was smart in many ways, but, having been denied the blessing of a training in a country community, he believed stealing was the thing; he was brought up in a tough district in a big city. You know what happened to Joe, in spite of his cleverness; when he was hanged, he had nothing to show after a long life of crime except a suit of clothes, and that was given him by the sheriff.

8.

I have noticed that every little while people come to see Abe King, my worthless neighbor. I have wondered why any one wants to see Abe, and took occasion lately to find out. It seems they want to speak to him about his soul: he is not religious, and they want him to join the church. I should say it is more important to speak to Abe about his worthlessness. He is the most shiftless man I ever knew. I wonder if any one ever spoke to him about it, and begged him to do better?

9.

A loafer never works except when there is a fire; then he will carry out more furniture than anybody.

10.

Abuse of money is abuse of industry.

11.

One man may make much of a garden, while another will neglect it. The industrious, thoughtful man will weed and prune, water and cultivate, destroy natural enemies, and encourage natural advantages. He may easily know what is best to do; millions of men gone before have demonstrated the rules by which he will inevitably succeed or fail. Life is as simple a problem as a garden. Its rules are known beyond question; no one need go astray. Industry, fairness and common sense bring certain inevitable results; idleness, carelessness and impoliteness bring certain inevitable results: there is no more doubt in one case than in the other.

12.

Every time I see a man wearing a society pin, I think a new emblem should be devised by the

government, and awarded for merit. Say a man is a good citizen, works industriously, pays his debts, has a family and takes good care of it, and does his share in all worthy enterprises at home. Why wouldn't it be a good idea for the government to issue an emblem of some sort to that man, so that when he is seen in a strange place, people will know he is all right? Badges of honor are issued in war. Why not in peace? A man who has lived a long time, and earned the respect of his community, is a hero, and should be rewarded in some way. Even sleeping car conductors wear badges indicating that they have rendered long and satisfactory service. When a man is nominated for the legislature, he is called Honorable, but there is no distinction for the modest good citizen. Why not create a button for him, and add a star as he progresses in age and well-doing? When you travel, it would add a feeling of security if you noted that the man who sleeps over or under you wears a button indicating that where he lives, he is rated as safe.

13.

In the business of baseball, scouts travel over the country looking for young players who are

promising. In your business as well as in baseball, if you can do anything particularly well, a Scout will call on you, and offer you a better job. Seven-tenths of the big men of to-day, in every calling, have been picked up by Scouts in small villages or on farms. Don't say you haven't a chance, because you have: a Scout is watching you every day, and you are promoted as you deserve. A good clerk in a country town is fought for by the merchants; a good farm hand is fought for by farmers, and he is soon picked up by a Scout who has a farm to sell at a low price, on long time. And the more modest and capable you are, the more apt a Scout is to find you. But you can't fool a Scout: he knows good work.

XIV

Liberty

1.

The Americans have talked so much about their liberties that they fooled me; I confess I thought they would do something terrible to those who interfered with their liberties, but it turns out that they are extremely docile.

2.

Those persons who talk most about liberty want liberty to do something the rest of us have decided they have no right to do. We have no liberty except liberty to behave ourselves. And that is a right no one questions, or we wouldn't have that.

3.

It is a bad sign when a man writes a great deal about slavery and lack of liberty: it is a sign that he objects to work, and wants to break a lot of rules worthy people have adopted after centuries of experimenting with life.

4.

It is to the discredit of mankind that it has been fighting thousands of years for liberty, when liberty was its first and natural gift. The most primitive tribes of men practiced liberty and democracy. Their wisest and oldest men consulted together for the best interests of all, and thus they had the simplest form of democracy. Kingship came as a result of civilization; and it began by a man saying he had seen a vision, and received a message. No man is so dull that he cannot appreciate the absurdity of working for another man for nothing; and no man is so dumb that he cannot understand that he need not do it. If the other man says he has a divine message, then the second man can at least ask him to prove it. If the man fails to prove it, then the second man knows enough to consult with his fellows, and, repairing to the house of the message-receiver, smite him lustily, and thereafter proceed with his affairs according to democratic rules.

5.

We are always hearing that the people are slaves. The people are only slaves to bad habits

from which they may free themselves. If you are a slave, you may write your own emancipation proclamation. Freedom from bad habits beats any other kind of freedom.

6.

How we love the word Liberty! Yet how many men, women and children have been saved by lack of it! In every house a signboard might be erected reading: "No liberty in this house!" At the entrance to every town, a signboard containing these words might be erected: "No liberty in this town!" And you will find a policeman at every corner to carry out the orders on the signboard. In New York harbor, a huge signboard might truthfully read: "No liberty in this country!" Why have we judges, jails, police officers? To punish those who think they are free to do as they please. Why is there a switch in every home? To punish children who think they are free. We are not free; it was never intended we should be. A book of rules is placed in our cradles, and we never get rid of it until we reach our graves. *Then* we are free, and only then.

7.

How well the animals take care of themselves! They know what is "good for them"; we do not. I never knew an animal, outside of man, to have a bad stomach. Fat people, thin people, bad teeth, bad stomachs, smoking, whisky drinking, are all unnatural: all the result of Freedom.

8.

There may be more art, and more general learning, but I doubt if there will ever be more average prosperity or liberty for the people than they have now. In days to come, men will speak more fondly than ever of the Good Old Days.

XV

Sentiment

1.

I suppose you think it a compliment to have it said of you: "He is full of sentiment." It isn't; it is equal to saying that a little eloquence will make you believe what is not true.

2.

Sentiment is a word of doubtful value. If I love my children, that is not sentiment; that is a natural and true human attribute. It is not sentiment if I am fond of friends who have been kind to me; it is not sentiment if I love my country and the people of my particular race: that also is a natural fact. It is not sentiment if I am attracted by a good or beautiful woman. Sentiment (I quote the dictionary) is "*a tendency to judge by feeling rather than by reason or rule*"; and this is exactly what most people do too much of. People have so gorged them-

selves with sentiment that the world is suffering delirium tremens in morals.

3.

Those who speak of patriotism, religion, love, women, honor, or the fellowship of man, always exaggerate; literature and oratory cannot speak truthfully of truth itself. In nearly every printed page there is an idealism that is mischievous.

4.

Our government, if it ever goes to pieces, will fail because of sentiment run mad; because we not only insist upon more than we are entitled to, but because we insist upon more than we can get.

5.

Loving everybody is polygamy. I care for no friend who loves his enemy equally well.

6.

Old Tom Paine and old Bob Ingersoll roared at the church. The church isn't the culprit: *Sentiment* is the real rogue.

7.

Because water does not run up hill is no reason it cannot be made to, the sentimentalists say.

8.

In one of those dreadful books which tell of beauty in hundreds of pages, a writer says: "I would rather die, cut off in youth, having pulsated with the heart of a world-ideal, than live forever—hibernate—shut off in thought and sympathy from highest resolves of the human family." There was a time when those who didn't care for that sort of thing at least said nothing in opposition; now they are vigorously attacking it. Nobody now cuts out a piece of this kind for scrap books; if they cut it out at all, it is to show to others who will join with them in making fun of it. We read much of the changes going on in the world. The wide-spread opposition to foolish sentimentalism is one of the most marked.

9.

There never was universal love; there never will be: it is doubtful if such a state would be desirable. Men hustling to do better than com-

petitors they do not love have done much for the world: much more than the "great souls" who dream of universal love.

10.

The less a man amounts to, the more sentimental he is; the stronger his disposition to believe that what he thinks is the truth, and that whatever another says is a vicious lie. A man of intelligence always listens to the other side; he wants to know what there is in it. He is not forever saying, "*There is a good deal in it,*" when there is nothing in it.

11.

Sentiment has failed, but there is evidence mountain high that industry, temperance, fairness and politeness are the sum of science, philosophy and plain common sense.

12.

Every man thinks he must exploit certain great falsehoods, for the reason that if he does not, other hypocrites will say he has no Soul.

13.

Any one who is idle, and claims to have Higher Ideals, can bluff a worker. The worker is ashamed of being busy, although that is about the only thing a man has a right to be proud of. The women keep the men humble by charging that they love money more than they love principle, although the money the workers strive for is really corn, and clothes, and houses, and education, and everything else we all require, and struggle for as a matter of right and necessity. The worker provides the wagon and the oxen to pull it; he walks in the dust to drive, and the king and queen who ride comfortably talk about the dirt on his hands and the selfishness in his rotten heart. They claim to be superior because of their willingness to Uplift him, and he admits the superiority. When a ship starts on a dangerous voyage, who is the pilot? Always a man who has worked up from a common sailor to be captain. He can whip any man in the crew, and has demonstrated that he can do it. He knows more about navigation than any other man in the crew, and has demonstrated it. Who is in charge of the ship of state? A preacher, and

the crew is made up of those who cannot fight, swim or swear.

14.

People steeped in sentiment are never fair. They believe that those who contend, however mistakenly, for anything known as "a good idea" partake in a measure of the goodness taught in the idea, and that those who oppose it are disciples of the evil one. The man who has failed in individual betterment excuses himself because he favors *world betterment.*

15.

Watch the next sentimentalist who appears. His mission is possibly to rob you, certainly to bore you, and never to love or benefit you.

16.

A man engaged in screaming that he has a big heart and mind, and desires to convert the heathens, rescue the poor from oppression, and rid the world of ills that are at least natural, if not entirely imaginary, is really no better than others, and usually not so good; he is prejudiced,

unfair, and behind his propaganda is a well-defined plan to benefit himself, so he soon begins attacking other men who do not believe as he does. They reply in kind, and there is a dreadful mess; he proves his opponents are hypocrites, and they prove he is another. Meanwhile the people look on with interest, gradually take sides, and the row spreads to every hamlet and to almost every family. Finally the sword is substituted for the pen, and a row is on, the like of which has never been seen. It is no more than the plain truth to say that the base of every great row is over-wrought sentimentality. It is the base of every noted and mischievous lie; it is responsible for the lamentable fact that more foolish lying is going on to-day than ever before in the world's history. It is responsible for the fact that there is almost no such thing left as a reasonable, truthful man.

17.

Every man is taught he should do a certain amount of blubbering, or he will not be esteemed as having a good heart.

18.

You have perhaps observed that the sentimentalist is always looking for New Evidence. Let another sentimental publication be announced, and he will subscribe. If a sentimental lecturer appears, he will attend. The explanation is, the sentimentalist's philosophy is in constant need of encouragement, being without sound basis. Left to himself, he will soon begin to doubt, so he must have constant encouragement to keep himself cheering his folly. On the other hand, common sense demonstrates itself so completely that there is never any doubt about it. Its followers find evidence of their faith in their own communities, among their own neighbors; in every day incidents. Every natural thing proves common sense, so the disciple of common sense does not need to hear new lectures, or read new books, to encourage him.

XVI

Conduct

1.

There is nothing to my system of ethics except that the better a man behaves himself, the better he gets along. The doctrine is simple; it is true. Since all human thought, like all human action, is based on self-interest, why is not the dullest man able to appreciate that industry, fairness, politeness, temperance, are his greatest selfish interests? No man should be so much of a fool as to doubt that which is proven every day of his life; that which is written in old books, and in the lives of the old men he knows.

2.

What I write I offer as mere suggestions; I hope no one will accept it if it is mischievous or mistaken. I try to be an honest man, but let me declare with emphasis that I pursue this policy because it pays. I try to be fair, polite and

trustworthy not because I want to go to heaven, but because I want to get along in the easiest and most comfortable way; and all experience has taught me that practice of the simple virtues is always dependable in making progress.

3.

If a certain simple course in life pays better than any other, and is easier than any other, why not adopt it? If you are naturally a roughneck, be a hypocrite, and pretend to be a gentleman. Why? Because it pays. If you are naturally a loafer, note that ninety-seven per cent of those about you have tasks, and succeed as they perform them with efficiency, politeness and fairness. Be a hypocrite and get busy; you will find busy men have better times than idlers. The tramp doesn't enjoy life as much as the man who has steady work, attends to it, and knows the joy of promotion; of the increasing respect of his fellow men.

4.

A man succeeds in life in the degree that he is industrious, honest, polite, intelligent and or-

derly; this is as certain as that man is born of woman—or any other material fact.

5.

The fact that good conduct is of first importance is never actually in question. No one doubts it; thieves do not. All parents teach it; it is taught in all schools, and in every shop and business place. Learning is not necessary in acquiring the simple lessons of life, although learning emphasizes them. We teach our animal servants every lesson we teach ourselves. Horses, and cows, and dogs, are taught manners, and, beyond their power to learn, we control them with fences and halters. If an animal becomes a menace to life, and is dangerous, we confine it, or put it to death, as we do dangerous men. There are many confusing teachers, but as to the simple facts, no one need go astray: we know them as we know we live.

6.

The first excuse of every professional teacher of morality is that the people do not know the importance of good conduct, and that he is a noble man in imparting the information. The

people do know; the dullest domestic animal knows, and hurries out of the way of a blow when found in a place it does not belong.

7.

I never knew a loafer, thief or drunkard who did not apologize for his conduct, knowing that he was an exception to the general rule. I never knew a community where the ordinary moral standards did not prevail, nor one which did not improve a little from year to year.

8.

When my affairs go wrong, I know the only possible remedy: *it is to behave better.*

9.

The thief pretends to practice the habits of respectable men; fallen women, when in public, try to behave as decent women do. Virtue must be valuable, if men and women of all degrees pretend to have it.

10.

The man who must be told his duty every day, or every week, is a poor excuse; a real man

should know his duty, and the importance of being faithful to it. There are millions of men browsing along the edge of dishonesty, and looking longingly into the forbidden field. The trouble with these men is lack of intelligence; the greater the fool, the greater the likelihood that he is dishonest. Honesty is largely a matter of information, of knowing that dishonesty is a mistake. Principle is not as powerful in keeping people straight as a policeman.

11.

How are your personal habits? I once knew a man who married a woman on short acquaintance, and she left him in a week: she said his personal habits were so bad that she would rather die than live with him. Another man I knew became engaged to a girl, and after a very moderate association with him for only a few weeks she said she could not stand his foolish talk and actions, and broke the engagement. Some mothers have habits so tiresome that their own children dislike them in secret; in the close association of home, office or shop, those around you should be considered. Look yourself over.

12.

Any one who bets on his judgment against the judgment of the world, will be punished for folly. In everything in which man is interested, the world knows what is best for him. It has learned from experience, best of all teachers. Millions of men have lived millions of years, and tried everything. The results of these experiments have passed down from the first to the last generation. Everywhere there is an undercurrent of truth that any one may take advantage of; whatever hypocrites may say, there are enough burned children to warn you to keep your hand out of the fire. One trouble with every one is Conceit; we all have a natural disposition to know it all, and to trust our judgment against experience. Look over the next fool you meet; even you can tell him how to avoid most of his troubles. Those persons who teach sentiment—who make hope better than it is—are doing harm; and there are millions of them. Good judgment and good taste are big chiefs which will never fail to help you.

13.

Feel ashamed of all your misdeeds; not only of those the people have caught you at.

14.

Most men believe an outrage has been committed when an opinion is expressed that does not agree with what they have been thinking. This is not the right attitude: if you have believed that the sum of two and two is three, you should feel obliged to a man who knows, and can prove, that the correct answer is four.

15.

How universally we wear clothes! And "clothes" mean certain well-tested forms of utility we always carry out: collars, underwear, shoes, hats, stockings, etc. All are matters of experience: whatever is better will appear in course of time, as a result of further experience. So it is with our morals, customs, laws: they are the best we can do. In the main there have been no changes in centuries: we have different "styles," but in the end a coat will afford so much protection, and no more, as a law will afford so much protection, and no more.

16.

You lack ordinary sense if you believe roguery pays. There is not one man in a thousand capable of being a successful rogue, while any one may succeed as an honest man. A successful rogue must have unusual cunning: unusual nerve. The man capable of being a successful rogue could succeed a thousand times easier as a worker and honest man. The average man's capacity is for straight endeavor; the world is organized on that plan. Every man's hand is against a rogue; every man is willing to reward a neighbor who is safe, reliable and useful.

17.

The importance of good conduct is emphasized in every day's events; indeed, in every hour's events. Certain things are dangerous, and we have all learned to know them. Who does not know about poison? Who has not heard of the inconvenience resulting from drunkenness, shooting a man, or the trouble a lie or theft causes? If all the teachers of morality should quit to-morrow, the people would not go to perdition; on the contrary, they would con-

tinue in about the same old fashion. More men are needed to teach by good example, but the other kind of teachers have become so numerous that the people are stumbling over them, and grumbling viciously.

18.

How weak I am; and how well I know strength pays! How I realize the inconvenience and loss of carelessness; yet I am a most careless man, though I long to be orderly. If I try to be careful, and put things away in order, I hide them, and never know where they are. Baseball players talk about the "breaks." It seems to me the "breaks" are always against me, and in favor of the other fellow; I have no "luck," and am whipped much more frequently than I am petted. But when I fairly investigate this theory, I find there is a well-defined rule back of all my hits and misses. I have certain worthy ambitions that would do credit to the mind and heart of any man, but they are beyond me: I know it. Who is to blame? My inclination is all right; my mind and soul have been whipped into line; but I drag about a weak body I cannot control. Who is to blame? My ancestors.

I often think of some of my acts: "*That* is like Uncle Nate"; of others, "Father used to do that"; of still others: "*That's* my Grandfather Irwin sticking out." I can't reform these people; most of them are dead and gone: so I do the best I can with my handicaps. I *say* I do the best I can. As a matter of fact, does any man do that? I have made several disastrous mistakes that were inexcusable. I certainly didn't do the best I could in these instances, but I *thought* I did at the time: I looked everything over, and came to the worst conclusions possible. Why? Because I didn't give sufficient weight to plain common sense, of which I believe I am an advocate.

XVII

War

1.

It is not inconceivable that millions of people like war; I can easily understand how it may be fascinating to all concerned, except to privates in the actual fighting ranks. Even many women love the excitement; their pictures are printed in the papers when they enlist for the various kinds of service they can perform, and the leaders, to encourage them, say the women won the war for Home and Liberty. Millions make great profits from the war; others make fame. Most of the newspapers see their circulations and profits increase because of the excitement. Welfare workers are given a prominence they never had before. Meanwhile, the poor devils who were compelled to do the real fighting, or pay the expense, are terribly punished for a holiday for the non-combatants.

2.

Leaders have always been able to bring on a war by telling the people how brave they are, and how easily they can vanquish the enemy. The people will one day realize that they are not very brave, not very efficient, and that whipping an enemy is a disagreeable task.

3.

The recent war was the most tremendous movement in history. Its intent was to destroy men and property; to starve women and children. Did you ever hear of a movement of equal world-wide extent to help men? There never was any such. It is a sad commentary on men that the greatest movement they ever engaged in was to kill each other, to starve women and children, and destroy what has been accomplished in civilization.

4.

For centuries we have been worshiping a Sacred Bull. Lately the Sacred Bull has been crashing around in the world's china shop, and viewing the wreck has sobered us.

5.

A fisher or hunter is, of course, a liar; but there is not much to lie about. A few more fish or a few more rabbits than the truth; there is not a great deal of interest in any such experience. But war: *there* is a subject to be *interesting* about. There is a background for any scenery the man of genius cares to suggest. I don't suppose there ever was a man who told the truth about a battle. When a theatrical man brings out a play, you *expect* him to lie about the cost of the production; likewise we expect a man who has been in a battle to make it as horrible and interesting as possible.

6.

The people are forever asking too much: failing to get it, they often go to war, and destroy what they have.

7.

Tempests, earthquakes, are a part of nature, and we may at least guard against them to some extent; and they have not been so numerous that the world's population does not increase rap-

idly. Epidemics, wars, are preventable; our efforts will help, if directed simply and naturally.

8.

The people never respond so easily and promptly to the propaganda of leaders as they do when there is a patriotic issue, and leaders are always bringing it up. The dullest man loves to be told that his great heart throbs for the oppressed everywhere; it causes him to glow as nothing else does. He is as keen to bring liberty to the world as missionaries are to bring the cross to heathens. There is a thrill in patriotism found in chivalry, music, gallantry, bravery, devotion, etc., and men are easily influenced with this theme.

9.

One day, while sitting on my porch at Potato Hill farm, I saw Bert. Raulston's rooster pass in the road. He was going down to the chicken yard at the farmhouse, and I followed him, wondering why he was visiting us. I soon found out. My brother Bruce, the farmer, has a rooster who rules the chicken yard. The other roosters fought him until they found they could not

whip him, and then declared peace by keeping out of his way. But the best rooster among Bert. Raulston's chickens had possibly heard of my brother's prize chicken, and, when I arrived in the barnyard, they were at it, hot and heavy. They fought for an hour, resting at intervals, but finally our rooster drove the interloper away, and chased him up the road until he disappeared. Our rooster won the fight, but he did not seem to feel well for several days; he had been badly punished. A week or two later, while again at the farmhouse, I saw another strange rooster come walking into the barnyard. The rooster was stepping high, and looking carefully about. He was seeking a fight, and soon found it. The strange rooster belonged to Abe King, and was rather a better rooster than that sent over by Bert. Raulston. Our rooster and Abe King's fought at intervals all day, but finally the stranger was compelled to retreat, and return home. But, while our rooster had won a splendid victory, he had been cruelly punished. For days he rested out in the hay, and we saw little of him. There was nothing in either encounter except a fight: no principle; simply punishment for the three best chickens in the neighborhood.

If our rooster is compelled every week or two to whip the best rooster in the neighborhood, I plainly see the result: he will finally be compelled to give up the championship belt. He is being overloaded.

10.

Fights of this character go on not only in every barnyard in the country, but in every store and office. Whoever has opposition has a fight on his hands. And it is men and roosters who have opposition. At one time during my business career, I was fighting three roosters at one time; three newspapers in my town were abusing me. Several out-of-town roosters have fought me; not because I had offended them, but because it is the disposition of roosters and men to fight. There was no great prize in my barnyard; no great prospect of advancement, but I was compelled to fight as though fighting for a kingdom. And how I have been battered up! The punishment that hurt me most was the evident enjoyment the other chickens found in seeing three roosters on me at one time.

11.

After fighting the world all day, a man is too often compelled to fight his women folks at night, and the preachers on Sunday. For the preachers often abuse the men as unfairly as the shiftless abuse the industrious; and so do the women.

XVIII

Old Age

1.

People do not like the old, and are not kind to them; the old suffer greater wrongs than the poor. The greatest thing in the world for the old is Rainy Day Money; there is more comfort in it than in love and duty combined.

2.

How good we all are, in theory, to the old; and how in fact we wish them to wander off like old dogs, die without bothering us, and bury themselves.

3.

Most people claim to be younger than they really are, which seems to me to be the cheapest of all follies. You know my age, if you have taken a look at me, and I know yours; and I do not try to fool people about other things, for the same reason.

4.

I should say youth is a thing not to be proud of, but rather a thing to be grateful for.

5.

My principal trouble is age. What is the remedy? There is no remedy. And there is no remedy for other natural human ills. We can't get rid of the terrors of death and of birth, and we can't get rid of poverty.

6.

At thirty, sons think they can improve on the conduct of their fathers, but in the end find insurmountable difficulties, as their fathers did. And then the sons become old, sit in the chimney corners, and are scolded by sons in a manner almost as humiliating as a whipping.

7.

Don't be conceited because you are young and good looking. Remember that you will soon lose both. Remember that the young are flattered as Socialists, or members of labor unions are flattered, and that there is a good deal of mean talk behind their backs.

8.

Did the Oldest Inhabitant really know Columbus and Ponce de Leon, as he claims? Did he kill as many bears and Indians as he says he did? Will he finally claim to have known Jesus? He is the oldest man in town, and no one is able to dispute him. Stories of the past, when well told, are always popular. Did the whale swallow Jonah? Whether it did or not, the story is a good one, and will never be forgotten. The stories of the oldest inhabitant finally become history.

9.

Professor Eli Metchnikoff has long interested me; it was generally said of him that he was one of the first dozen of the world's ablest men, judged by education and natural intelligence. One of his contentions was that death between the ages of sixty and eighty was not natural, and that it should not be uncommon for people to live to be one hundred and fifty years old. Yet this man died in Paris lately at the age of seventy-one, after a long and painful illness. Metchnikoff had all that education and natural

intelligence may give any man, yet in his own case, after persistently following his health formulas, he missed his guess by seventy-nine years!

I am not laughing at the man; I admired him greatly. He enjoyed the undisputed distinction of being as intelligent and well educated as any one living; it was agreed that only eleven others equaled him in these respects. It is a distinction greater than that enjoyed by any general, poet, artist or statesman of the past or present; but with his greater equipment, his guess was as poor as yours or mine. He was right in the opinion that the human mechanism should last longer than it does. I know that, and so do you. The trouble is, we are born of short lived parents; had our parents "taken care of themselves" as they should, they would have lived longer, and we might live longer. If the race would begin now, and live sensibly for a thousand years, it might not be uncommon, at the end of that time, for people to live to the age of one hundred and fifty years. But it is not possible now. Metchnikoff himself lived a sensible life, but the follies of his ancestors killed him at seventy-one.

10.

Millions of people are now drinking buttermilk, because of Metchnikoff's claim that the principal agent in senile decay is continuous auto-intoxication of the body through putrefaction in the large intestines, and that this may be successfully combatted by the continued use of sour milk. People who do not know much constantly tell me to take this or that for my headache; there is a babble of good advice about everything from men and women who probably do not know what they are talking about, because they lack sense and education. But here comes Eli Metchnikoff, one of the twelve of the world's most intelligent men. In addition, he had as good an education as a man can acquire; he had the advantage of laboratories, of elaborate experiments of every kind; of association with the world's scholars. He had access to the best books, and had a mind which enabled him to extract such value as books possess; he made long journeys to other countries, to study conditions and results. So far as man may be sensible, here was a sensible man: he was equipped to know all a man may know. This unusual

man told me buttermilk was a good thing; that if I drank a quart of it every day, I might live to be a hundred and fifty years old. And there doesn't seem to be anything in the buttermilk story, since Metchnikoff drank sour milk many years, and died at seventy-one!

11.

You must be your own philosopher, teacher and friend. Metchnikoff, a colossus of natural intelligence and education, was unable to do anything for you. Build up a little philosophy of your own, based on simple truths of which there is no doubt, and live up to it the best you can. What's the use of life after sixty or seventy, anyway?

XIX

Fame

1.

One of the noted men of the world is Georg Brandes. I only know he is noted; I have never read a line he has written: nothing of his has ever come in my way. A famous man in my small collection is Dr. Samuel Johnson. Why is this man in my mind? Do I admire him? I do not. Have I read anything he has written? I have not, although I have tried to read "Rasselas," and failed. The principal thing that interested me in his history is that he was once invited to breakfast, and remained at the house as a guest twenty years, although members of the family tried to get rid of him, and finally succeeded, when he was too old to follow them.

2.

When the Centennial Exposition opened, 1876, an original poem by John G. Whittier was read,

and I still remember a line of it, although I do not care for poetry. Whittier's fame will live long. But how about the millions of unknown men who created that great exposition of busy men and their deeds? There are a hundred thousand unknown men better entitled to fame than Whittier; busy men, workers at more useful tasks than poetry. One of them was the man who invented the process of preserving vegetables. Another, the man who invented the process of condensing milk, and keeping it indefinitely in cans. And what a great and unknown fellow that was who invented the process of refrigerating sheep carcasses, and shipping them in refrigerating ships to the markets of the world from Australia! He made a continent prosperous, and reduced the price of meat for millions of people. Yet you do not know his name, nor do I. Whittier was really nothing more than an amiable old gentleman given to verses. What did he ever do to place his name so high on the roll of fame? He wrote of the falling snow, and the merry prattle of children, but let us consider more justly those men who feed and educate the children, and break through the snow drifts.

XX

Critics

1.

We all devote too much time to criticism. You exaggerate; I exaggerate. Often this exchange of criticism, foolish and unwarranted in the first place, results in a fight; it has resulted in men being killed; in men being hanged, or going to the penitentiary.

2.

The word "critic" sounds well, but it really doesn't mean as well as it sounds. It describes, I sometimes think, the meanest trait in human nature. Don't become excited over your opinion that a certain thing is worthless. Your neighbor may like it; you are only one of millions of critics. Criticism has been overdone; it has become largely devilishness. The most merciless critic I ever knew—and, I may add, the ablest—has been a charge on the county

many years, as an inmate of the poorhouse. And not a single one of those he criticized is in the poorhouse with him. But how mercilessly he flayed people who were really doing fairly well! Express your disapproval of bad actions certainly, but the man who makes a mistake of any kind will be punished; you needn't worry about that, if that is your motive. And the critic who criticizes too much, is punished: never fear as to that, either. Insist upon the best possible service from the government, from the corporations, from every one; but, in the name of decency, do not make foul, untruthful charges against worthy men who are doing their best; who are really doing well: who are doing better than you are doing. The people have many sins to answer for, and they never sin so needlessly and viciously as when they are pawing the earth and bellowing as critics.

3.

Don't be so critical as to hate everybody.

4.

A man is never so fair as when he talks face to face with those he is disposed to criticize.

5.

We the people criticize the critics; we do not accept criticism from them.

6.

I saw a very good thing in a magazine the other day: a writer wrote a criticism of a critic. There should be more of that sort of writing: critics are becoming very absurd.

XXI

Thrift

1.

I am not a rich man; in this prosperous age I cannot be classed as well-to-do. But during a long life I saved a little for old age. I know it was my duty to deny myself in youth that I might not later be a dependent. I know I did better than the man who frittered away his substance and time. If there is any apology to be made, let it be made by those who wasted their time, failed to save a little, and are now public charges. I not only take care of myself; I take care of others, and that is the first duty of every man. I have been robbed by many, but have not robbed any one. I have never speculated. The little I have has been accumulated a dime at a time. For years I struggled to pay insurance premiums. Now the dimes are coming *my* way, almost two for one. Any one may do it; it is the duty of every one to do it. I know

I am a better man than the loud-mouthed loafer who says I am a skinflint; and, what is better, my neighbors know it. I am that terrible thing, a Landlord: that is, I own a farm, and have a tenant. What do I get out of it? Less than two per cent. on its cost. And the government pays more than four per cent. on Liberty bonds.

2.

How is a fortune made? In seven cases out of ten, this is the process: A young man finds himself with a wife, and a family of children coming on. He works and saves with a view of providing for them. From an expert workman, he becomes a proprietor in a small way, and works long hours. He discovers that the more reliable he is—the better his word, the more temperate and industrious he is, the more he helps his community—the more his business grows. In the course of time, his little business becomes a big business, because of being well managed. Finally, along toward old age, he becomes well to do. And at forty and fifty, he practices fairness and politeness more steadily than he did as a young man, having discovered with advancing age that these qualities are more important than

any other. At forty, fifty or sixty he is more reliable than he was at twenty or thirty, when a small business man or a high-class workman. In short, his fortune is made by long devotion to work and to good human principles.

3.

What is the object of saving? Nearly always to provide for sickness, old age; to educate children, to provide the requirements of life, to build better homes, business houses, to pay taxes for colleges, and other public buildings; to help the weak and unfortunate. In the name of common sense, can any one object to this? Is not a man with savings a better and more useful citizen than his neighbor who is always a community problem: who not only does not help the community, but does not take care of himself? Why the general disposition to criticize the frugal, thrifty man, and weep for the shiftless? Is it not worse than hypocrisy, folly and meanness? Is it not mischievous in that it encourages many to become unnecessary burdens on the community? Is it not a denial of a worthy principle we teach our children?

4.

In every mother's talk to her children, she includes the importance of thrift. We have as much contempt for the spendthrift as we have for the drunkard. Life is a very serious business; we know saving is as important as industry or politeness or fairness; it is an essential part of life, this saving your money, and avoiding becoming a public or private charge in your old age. We know that the man who saves a reasonable part of his money is the most useful citizen; he is most likely to contribute to worthy things. He rarely gives as generously as the soliciting Committee demands, but he gives something, which a man who has saved nothing cannot do. Every development in the history of the country is due to thrifty men; men who work diligently, and save something. We all know these things. Then why do we so generally abuse those who have taken the advice of their mothers? The girls are taught chastity; the boys thrift. Yet we do not say a wanton is better than a virtuous woman. When we say to a boy: "Become a good man," we mean thrift as much as we mean fairness, politeness, industry, temperance. When we say to a girl: "Become

a good woman," we include the hope that she will be chaste; chastity is thrift: good conduct for its own sake.

5.

Success should be praised instead of condemned; it is a creditable goal we are all working for, and it is a mistake to apologize for failure. Millions of people who are not successful now will achieve it in ten or twenty years, and they should not befoul their own nest before they leave it.

XXII

Greatness

1.

There is the case of Bronson Alcott. Why was he great? Books have been written about him; people have been bothered to contribute money to save a house in which he once lived. The man was a failure, and ridiculous: he makes this admission himself. He was a dreamer, a visionary, and none of his dreams or visions came true: he never benefited anybody, and did nothing for himself. Yet Bronson Alcott is one of America's great men. Ralph Waldo Emerson praised him, and neglected hundreds of men more worthy. "He expects heroism and poetry in all," Emerson said. "As pure intellect, I have never seen his equal. All he sees and says is like astronomy, lying there real and vast. He was the most extraordinary man and the highest genius of his time."

All this praise was undeserved. One of

Bronson's "great works" was the collection of a mystical library of a thousand volumes, and not one of the books was worth the paper on which it was printed. Another of his "great works" was the founding of a colony to attract young men and women and families "desirous of access to the channels and fountains of wisdom and purity." This colony was a wretched failure; his associates in the colony, and members of his own family, criticized him severely for laziness, and for lack of everything a real man should possess. Every neighborhood in which Alcott lived had plenty of modest and unknown men who could do useful and valuable things Alcott and his association of philosophers could not do.

He seems to have been constantly surrounded with men of sense, and refused to learn from them. He had a worthy wife and a brilliant daughter, but regarded them with disdain. Alcott was constantly collecting money of which he made no sensible use. While he engaged in his dreams of mysticism, his wife and daughter performed hard physical tasks usually assigned to men, and made his living. He associated with peculiar people like himself, who claimed their nonsense was something new and important.

Nothing seemed too excessive to prove their emancipation from conventionality; which means that they refused to work, and looked upon worthy tasks as mean: they demanded that people "honor projects without feet and hands," as Emerson said.

While his wife was always overworked, Alcott was forever looking beyond his own household for Opportunity to Do Good. Although he was always talking of a Love Colony, and saying big things to attract compliments from Emerson, many openly stated that his conduct was despotic and mean. He referred to his movement as "The Newness," but many openly charged that his conduct was old meanness. Noted visionaries visited his colony, and he delighted to talk with these people about his and their superior cultivation. These people objected to everything their neighbors did; and the conduct of their neighbors was very much like yours.

One member of the colony of which Alcott was the head would not wear clothes; another man lived an entire year on crackers, and the next year on apples. The colonists objected to trade and barter; to the manner in which you make a living. They didn't believe in keeping cattle;

they denied everything mankind has found to be true, important and convenient, including milk. They began the day with a music lesson; after that, the men mainly talked philosophy, while the women did the work; the little work the men did was done wrong. Emerson said "these men ought to be maintained in their place by the country, for its culture. I think there is as much merit in beautiful manners as in hard work." Yet it is admitted that Mrs. Alcott and her two daughters, aged eleven and twelve, were drudges in the Colony, in order that the lazy frequenters of the place might indulge in fine manners and conversation.

The idlers, of course, wrote much, and published when editors could be imposed upon. "This morning after breakfast," one of their writers said, "a conversation was held on Friendship and its laws and conditions. Mr. Alcott places innocence first; Larned, thoughtfulness; I, seriousness; Lane, fidelity." Think of four robust loafers taking a music lesson the first thing in the morning, and next engaging in a long and dreary conversation about Friendship, instead of going out to work!

The value of the Conversations did not seem

to be great. One of the Fruitlands philosophers, a man named Lane, said: "After I heard them talk a few minutes, I'll be cursed if I knew whether I had any mind at all." The Conversation about Friendship was held on the morning of July 13. The following morning the same idlers had a Conversation on the Highest Aim.

2.

In the evening, there was another Conversation; wherein a man named Hecker talked rather roughly to Mr. Alcott. He accused him of lack of frankness; said he had a too decided tendency toward Literature, and not enough toward Fruit. It seems that Mr. Alcott lived in a place called Fruitlands, and taught that fruit should be his principal diet, but Hecker called attention to the fact that there was almost no fruit on the place, owing to shiftlessness, literature, too much talk, etc.

"This," said Hecker, "is not the place for my soul."

Hecker later said he was received at Fruitlands (where there was no fruit) because Alcott thought he (Hecker) had money. Hecker said, also:

"Fruitlands was a place where Mr. Alcott looked benign and talked philosophy, while Mrs. Alcott and the children did the work. And Alcott persevered in this exercise until his latest day. He was naturally and constitutionally odd. He was a consecrated crank, as were Emerson and Thoreau. Alcott was unquestionably one of those who like to sit upon a platform, and he may have liked to feel that his venerable aspect had the effect of a benediction. His idea was human perfection."

I am obliged to Hecker for saying Emerson and Thoreau were Consecrated Cranks; it saves me the trouble of expressing that opinion.

3.

Louisa Alcott, the noted daughter of Bronson Alcott, wrote a diary at Fruitlands, and in it appears these notations:

"Father has gone away to preach. We all went to the barn and husked corn."

The farming operations of the philosophers were equally shiftless. "No sooner did a crop show some sort of promise," says one historian, "than they turned it back into the earth again." One of their notions was that it was a sin to use

barnyard manure to enrich the soil. And they cultivated the ground with spades instead of plows, in order that oxen and horses might have their rights.

Alcott once appeared in New York, and, being asked what brought him there, replied: "I don't know; it seems a miracle I am here." But it was during this visit to New York that he produced some more of the "Literature" Emerson admired so much: he said only a few of the inhabitants of New York were alive: his objection to them was that they did not live perfectly, as he did.

Money had been collected by the followers of Alcott to pay the expenses of the visit to New York, but this was exhausted by the time he was ready to return home. He went aboard the boat, however, and being called on for a ticket, said he had no ticket, and no money.

"But," he said to the ticket collector, with the genial smile his associates learned to thoroughly dislike, "I am willing to pay my passage by addressing the passengers and crew with a little Conversation in the saloon."

While Mr. Alcott was wandering about in this vagrant way, and causing ticket takers to indulge

in rough language, Mrs. Alcott and her daughters were working in the fields. Mrs. Alcott lacked, one of the cranks said, spiritual insight. But it is agreed that she worked her fingers nearly to the bone, in spite of the fact that the philosophers were always grumbling at her. They had decided that no lamp should be used at Fruitlands, because the oil contained animal fat, but Mrs. Alcott asked: "How can I sew and mend without light?" She was busy in the fields during the day, poor woman, owing to her shiftless husband and the shiftless loafers he attracted to his house.

A sane man who happened along attests that Mrs. Alcott was "one of the most refined persons I ever knew. She told me that in 1843–44 she feared for her husband's sanity; he did such strange things without seeming to know how odd they were; wearing only linen clothes and canvas shoes, and eating only vegetables."

Mr. Alcott once retired to his room, and refused food for days; he almost died of abstinence and grief. He realized that his plan to provide a Holy Place for mankind was not only a failure, but ridiculous. But he kept saying: "Emerson understands me; only Emerson, of

this age, knows me. Well, every one does not find *one* man; many are they who live and die alone, known only to their survivors of an after-century."

Emerson did *not* understand Alcott; he wrote of him later:

"The plight of Mr. Alcott! The most refined and advanced soul we have had in New England; who makes all other souls appear cheap and mechanical. Yet because he cannot earn money by his talk or his pen, or by school keeping or book-keeping, or editing, or any kind of meanness—nay, for this very cause that he is ahead of his contemporaries, is higher than they, it is the unanimous opinion of New England judges that this man must die!"

How people of this class love to write this sort of thing about each other! It is the "Literature" they love.

Alcott, about this time, confessed in a poem called "The Return" that he was insane. Posterity may decide whether Emerson or Alcott was right. Another piece of "Literature" he thought up was that the milk belongs to the calf, and that the chicken has a right to its existence as well as the human infant; therefore he would not eat

eggs. Even the canker-worms that infested the apple trees were not to be molested, he said; they had as much right to the apples as man had.

4.

Not only Emerson wrote odes to this man Alcott. Thoreau called him "the guest of angels; a mounting sage."

James Russell Lowell wrote of him: "He shames the higgling market place; hear him but speak, and you will feel the shadows of the Portico."

Alcott had a better appreciation of himself. He wrote:

"Let me never attempt again what is beyond my being's powers."

And after the Community had been broken up, and the world was laughing at the Conversations, and the wreck of the New Eden, one of Alcott's fellow cranks said:

"The world has decided pretty truly."

A man of sense visited Fruitlands, to laugh at the inmates, and said:

"Alcott would have been sent to a lunatic asylum had he not already been in one."

Alcott and his followers haunted reform con-

ventions, where they were soon voted nuisances, owing to their advanced notions. Had he been a drunkard, he could not have made a more complete failure of life; yet Emerson, Thoreau and Lowell wrote tributes to him.

And how harshly this same trio of sages criticized plain, useful and sensible men and women!

5.

The world is full of Bronson Alcotts to-day. You may find a Bronson Alcott in every community; a nuisance, yet loudly announcing that he is superior to useful, sensible and worthy people. Why should we make heroes of these foolish men? Why not declare the truth about them now, instead of hereafter? Why submit to their untruthful and foolish abuse? Why submit to the unnecessary trouble they cause?

XXIII

Materialism

1.

Every man on the face of the earth lives by the doctrine of materialism, whatever may be his pretensions. We know nothing but materialism; all else is but a guess, and a poor guess at that. Every sane man regulates his affairs by the doctrine of materialism; he believes it because human experience has brought us nothing else. And a doctrine that is accepted more universally than any other, no one need be ashamed of: if there is to be any blushing, let it be for theories that centuries have failed to verify.

2.

A materialist is one who believes in the known history of the world, proved by long experience and investigation, and does not believe in fables which have never been proven in a single instance. If you do not believe a woman can sit

in her office in New York, and, for a fee of two dollars, cure a sick man in Minnesota, you are a materialist. If you believe men are born according to a well-known law, and live and die according to the same law, you are a materialist. If you believe in making the best of your opportunities, you are a materialist. If you believe there is always answer to chloroform when applied to a man's nose, and doubt that hypnotism is an equally practical and effective agent in surgery, you are a materialist. If you believe an industrious man should prosper more than an idle one, you are a materialist. If you have an important message to send, and send it by means of the telegraph, or the telephone, or by mail, instead of telepathy, you are a materialist. If you believe in social order, and security from the idle and vicious; if you believe in every principle tried out in human experience, and found best for all, you are a materialist. If you believe in parents directing children, you are a materialist. The notion that adults know more than children, came from human experience: the adult knows that fire burns, that water drowns; and shelters the child from these destructive but useful agents. If by a life of worthy industry, you accumulate

a modest competence for the days when you are no longer able to work, you are a materialist. If you believe in education, in progress, in bettering the average condition of everybody by accepted methods, you are a materialist. If you provide Christmas gifts for your children, and know that Santa Claus did not come down the chimney at night and leave them, you are a materialist. If you are careful and intelligent, and know that many promises and statements are untrue, you are a materialist. If, when you loan money, you accept security, you are a materialist. If you believe in industry, experience having taught you that idleness is punished; if you fear to tell a lie, or do a dishonest act, because you have learned that honesty and truthfulness are better, you are a materialist. If you refrain from shooting a man when angry, you are a materialist.

3.

Materialism is the base of science, which is knowledge, and whoever denies it butts his head against a stone wall.

XXIV

Friendship

1.

Most people expect too much of friends. I may have once expected a great deal, too, but I do not now. I have not only learned that if I expect a great deal, I will be disappointed: I have learned that I have no right to expect it. And I have my share of good friends, and appreciate them sincerely. You should be ashamed to impose on any one so generous as to be fond of you; expect no more of friends than you give. Impose on friends, and you will lose them; that is human nature, and we will never be able to rise above human nature. If I ever impose on friends they may be sure I experience great shame and humility, as I deserve. If you have anything undesirable to sell, and apply first to friends, that is meanness, and they will notice it. If you criticize friends severely, it usually means you have been expecting too much of them.

2.

Instead of loving your enemy, treat your friend a little better.

3.

We are all looking for Appreciation. It is a misfortune to get more than you deserve. If your friends believe, or pretend to believe, you are stronger than you really are, you are apt to get the idea yourself, and attempt a fight with a foe too stout for you.

4.

This much may be said about the enthusiasm of people: They praise friends as lavishly and untruthfully as they abuse enemies.

XXV

Revolution

1.

For centuries we thought that by means of Christianity we could induce those with a large store to divide with those who had little or nothing. This policy failed, and we have adopted another war cry: Socialism. Under this banner all the world is again assembling for a descent on the rich valleys of the enemy.

2.

How the Russian revolutionists loved each other before they had anything to divide! They were all Brothers; Comrades. . . . But as soon as they won, they engaged in a row over the spoils that shook the earth. They could not agree as to what was coming to this Brother or that Comrade, so they began cutting the throats of each other; there wasn't much in the Comrade and Brother talk, after all.

3.

Only a few men are willing to actually revolt, and throw up barricades and set fire to things as a protest; but nearly every man is a mental anarchist.

4.

I do not blame a man for rebelling occasionally; in fact, I recommend it. Every man must at times read the riot act, and make his language good and strong; indeed, it sometimes happens that a fight is about the only thing that will do any good. But after your rebellion, return to your work, and attend to it patiently and carefully, for that is what is actually coming to a man. There may be much leisure for a woman, but not much was ever intended for a man. Therefore a man should not start a newspaper or society to protest and scream. The only thing for a man to do is to make his slavery as easy as possible.

5.

The people have been taught rebellion so long and persistently that they have escaped from the rebel leaders, and are rebelling against many

things as good as we can make them. The Protestants taught us to rebel against Catholicism, and now we are in open rebellion against Protestantism also. The Republican leaders, in teaching us the folly of Democratic claims, have caused us to see the folly of Republican claims.

6.

There is smothered rebellion in every nation, state, city, village, neighborhood and family, but it usually smolders because the wisest men have discovered that playing with fire is a dangerous thing. Are you able to rebel as you sit before your fire, thinking over your affairs, and return to your weary work next morning with the knowledge that rebellion does not pay? If you are in rebellion, make the best possible terms with life, take a whipping, and in future obey the rules a little better. Those not in open rebellion are accomplishing more than the rebels.

7.

In case there is ever a revolution in the United States, I hope it will be a sensible one. That will be a novelty in world history. Such a revolution would be bloodless; the fools would escape

punishment, except that they would be compelled to go to work. The New Revolution would sweep over the land, and teach more temperance, industry, politeness, fairness, modesty, efficiency, and more of everything else long experience has demonstrated to be of value. But as soon as a fool proposed another plan for more human betterment than is possible, the Revolutionists would say to him: "Now, now, now; we've tried that"; and gently force him back to his work.

8.

There are a great many bosses in the world; you find them in every store, school, office, shop, home, and on every farm. It is a rare man or woman who is not boss to some one. Let me beg you to be a fair boss. It is the easiest way to do your work. Rudeness and unfairness to those under you foment revolution. This day when all the world is excited about individual rights is a particularly bad time for a bad boss. Any one who administers authority unfairly is a scoundrel, whether he reigns over a half dozen or a thousand. Every divorce suit is a revolution; every child who runs away is a revolution against a boss. Friends quarrel because one

or the other has been over-loaded; even parents revolt because children are not reasonable bosses. There are many revolutions of this kind of which the world never hears.

XXVI

Sociology

1.

Sociology looks like a big word in print, but it really means nothing more than human experience. Countless millions of men and women have studied it, from actual contact with life. When a mother tries to bring her children up in a way to make them as healthy and happy as possible, with a view of making them good men and women, that is sociology. Everything connected with human life is sociology. And in studying this science, the millions of students in actual life have finally admitted the facts, although many of them have had theories they wouldn't trust.

2.

Sociology has studied every human problem a million times, from actual contact with the problem millions of times, and to-day we have

certain rules of human conduct as well known as that the sun will rise in the east to-morrow morning. No one need go astray on conduct, if he is willing to accept the human experience of countless centuries; the experience of men and women everywhere who have been trying to get along as comfortably and easily as possible. And the theory of one man, however smart he is, is not equal to the experience of millions. Accept experience as your guide, and you cannot go far wrong. And in every neighborhood you will find intelligent, fair men who have traveled the Long Road, and are willing to point out the easiest way; to say nothing of libraries of books everywhere, all agreeing on the simple facts of life.

3.

There is a natural disposition in every one to burn his clothes, and run wild, and this is encouraged in what is called social psychology. You may not know what social-psychology means, but you need not be ashamed: no one does.

XXVII

Children

1.

I lately called at a home where I believe I was welcome, and where I had been invited, but was compelled to leave speedily because of the bad behavior of a child, which made so much noise that conversation was impossible, and, in addition, kicked me as well as his parents. One of the conspicuous faults of Americans is that their children are not well brought up. The children of no other race equal ours in impudence. This is important because proper rearing at home controls the child's future. We can never greatly improve until we improve our children. If you are bringing up your children properly, I congratulate you; but many children are not being properly brought up. One of our gravest problems is idle and impudent children.

2.

The affection of a baby for its parents is a beautiful thing, but a change comes. At what age does a boy first refer to his father as the Old Man? At what age does a girl first observe that her parents are old-fashioned, a little stingy, too particular? All this is very natural and human; parents should recall that they were once children and began picking at their parents somewhere between eight and twelve. . . . When a man marries a woman he loves, there comes a time when he finds fault with her, and it makes him feel very wicked. Probably children experience the same feeling when they first begin to find fault with their parents. But after a time, wives and husbands, and children, become bolder, and invent stories on their relatives. . . . I have been a husband and parent. I have been unfair; I have been the victim of unfairness. It is one of the human problems about which nothing can be done.

XXVIII

Provincialism

1.

It is a misfortune to be born in a big city, and absorb its artificial and vicious ideas; a big town is a disagreeable necessity, like capital punishment. Most vicious notions originate in the big towns; the mean men in the country learned their viciousness from newspapers, magazines, circulars and letters sent from the city.

2.

If the example of cities prevailed, we would soon have no morals and no modesty. The provinces, jeered at in cities, save the country. Provincialism is the best thing in the world.

3.

It is in the cities that women as well as men are most ridiculous. It is in the cities where the birth rate is smallest; where the extreme

fashions originate. It is in the cities where women smoke and drink; it is where most bottle babies are found. In cities criminal operations are most common. All these things spread from the cities and large towns. It is in the country, or in small towns, where you find longest hours, and the best children. It is in the country or in small towns where old-fashioned common sense is most prevalent; it is to the people in the country and small towns we must look for the regeneration.

4.

Country people should live more comfortably than they do; they should not wait for bond swindlers to teach them the importance of sewers and waterworks, or wait for the magazines to teach them the importance of politeness and progress. Why do we not build good roads, heating plants, waterworks, sewers, railways, at first cost? Must we be urged into everything by rogues who make fifty per cent.? Cannot we understand the importance of honesty, politeness, without hiring a man to preach to us every Sunday? Cannot we provincials think of patriotism until a chautauqua lecturer calls our attention to

it at fifty cents a head? Are we compelled to take a magazine to learn that we should love our homes and our wives and children? Are we so slow in giving to charity that professionals are compelled to hold us up like road agents, and keep from forty to seventy per cent. of the proceeds? Is it necessary for half the people to be idlers and leeches in order to force the other half to do what is best for them?

XXIX

Rumor

1.

All my life I have remarked the ease with which disreputable and untrue stories about the men originate among reputable and worthy women.

In our neighborhood there is a young man named Dan Hart, and he lately had the misfortune to quarrel with his lady. Mrs. Hart also has a temper, and she went to the home of her uncle, with whom she had lived before her marriage. She had occasion to return home next day, after some of her clothing, and her aunt, Mrs. Tom Woolson, went with her.

Mrs. John Harris, a respectable and worthy woman, told me that Mrs. Henry Wolf, another worthy woman, told her (having the story direct from the lips of Mrs. Tom Woolson) that when Mrs. Woolson and Mrs. Hart went to the Hart home, they found Dan lying dead drunk on the

ditry floor, beside a negro man, with whom he had evidently been carousing. The entrance of Mrs. Woolson and Mrs. Hart aroused Dan from a drunken sleep, and, seeing his wife, he abused her in the most shameless manner, using obscene as well as profane words. Whereupon Mrs. Woolson grabbed Dan, and shook him violently, saying:

"Haven't you a spark of manhood?"

The story went all over the neighborhood, and there was talk of tarring and feathering Dan. I have known Dan Hart since he was a little boy, and had never heard of his drinking. So I said I didn't believe the story, but was alone, I believe, in discrediting it. Whereupon Mrs. Harris said to me, indignantly:

"Do you doubt the word of Mrs. Woolson?"

"No," I replied, "but the story has been confused or exaggerated in some way, as is often the case when women talk about men."

This angered Mrs. Harris, and she proceeded to prove the truth of the story by going direct to Mrs. Woolson.

Mrs. Woolson said nothing of the kind had occurred; that she had never said any such thing. Thereupon Mrs. Harris went to Mrs. Wolf, from

whom she had the story direct. Mrs. Wolf said she had never said anything of the kind, but Mrs. Harris' sister, who is visiting her, said Mrs. Wolf did say it, in talking of Mrs. Hart's wrongs.

2.

The incident interested me, and happening to meet Mrs. Woolson, I asked her what really occurred. It seems she really went to the Hart home with Mrs. Hart, where they found Dan sick in bed, and not on the floor; he had worried greatly about the separation. Mrs. Woolson says the meeting of Dan and his wife was really pathetic; that both cried, and said they didn't know what was best to do. Mrs. Woolson says Dan looked so wretched that she pitied him, and, having known him all his life, sat on the edge of the bed, and stroked his arm. At the time, Dan's wife was standing at the foot of the bed, weeping. No negro man was anywhere about the premises; there was no evidence whatever that Dan had been drinking, and Mrs. Woolson did not grab and shake him, and ask if he lacked even a spark of manhood.

3.

Here is another terrible story on a man untrue in every particular. How did it originate? The women who told it are excellent women. With women, men are the enemy; I suppose they abuse them as a nation abuses a people with whom it is at war, with old stories told in other wars.

XXX

Selfishness

1.

A man who is truly selfish distills nothing from his brain or heart that is not somewhere near the truth. He knows a stone is not bread; when he marches, he wants to get somewhere; after celebrating forty or fifty birthdays he believes in old age; after he attends a hundred or more funerals, he believes in death; a selfish man not only knows the weakness of others, but also admits his own. A selfish man will not rob you, because he knows you will make a disagreeable fuss about it, and that the fuss you make will do him more harm than the robbery will do him good.

2.

The word Principle is a fancy term applied to a very commonplace thing. A man is honest because of selfishness; and usually he calls his selfishness principle.

3.

Every man is more or less of a trickster when his interests are opposed to yours; you cannot depend on what people say when they describe an article they have for sale, and which they hope to induce you to buy. A man who works all day will meet hundreds of people with schemes more or less fraudulent, and if he reaches bed time with what is fairly his own, it is because he has sense and experience, and is cautious.

4.

A man is usually more careful of his money than he is of his principles.

5.

When I hear of a quarrel, I know what it means: two men trying to get the better of it, and the quarrel will be settled when each man agrees to take what he knew he was actually entitled to in the first place.

6.

You must constantly be on the defensive; politely but firmly. You have certain things

coming to you by right; it is your fault if you do not get them. Many are trying to rob you; no one is looking out for your interests, if you neglect this important duty.

7.

Others will not do much for you, and they will do much against you unless you watch out. The capital I is a good trade mark; hide it, except when it should be conspicuous, but realize its importance.

8.

Plenty of people think selfishness means greed. If a man lays up fuel for winter, *that* isn't greed; *that* is selfishness. Selfishness means behaving yourself in as many ways as possible. It is a selfish man who does not wish to be known as a drunkard, a liar, a lout, a loafer.

XXXI

Advertising

1.

I have lately been reading the advertising of a soup manufacturer. His vegetables are picked when the morning dew is on them, by young maidens who have just washed their hands and put on clean frocks; great scientists and great cooks, noted the world over, study formulas for soups, and they are tested by noted epicures, that the people may have something new, something better, something cheaper, something delicious, something that will build up the body along proper lines. I bought a can of the soup for nine cents, and could hardly eat it. I did get it down, but it was so indigestible that I spent a restless night. There are millions of American women who can take a ten cent soup bone, a few vegetables, and make better soup. The cook whose subject I am does it regularly.

2.

You may say you easily protect yourself against extravagant advertising of this kind. But the trouble is, the extravagance of this soup advertiser has found its way into politics and religion; and you cannot protect yourself from either. Seven of ten references to patriotism and religion are cast in soup advertising language, and while we laugh at the extravagant language of the soup advertiser, we do not dare laugh at the extravagant language of the patriot or the preacher.

3.

I often wonder the big advertisers of the country do not hold a convention, and discuss this question: "Have we gone crazy? Do we advertise too much?"

4.

Much advertising doesn't pay; it is largely parade: boasting.

XXXII

The Miscellany of Life

1.

I tremble when any one begins a statement by saying: "Candidly, I want to say," etc. It usually prefaces something disagreeable.

2.

I've been ashamed of myself many years because of neglect to accomplish certain things. But lately I am feeling better about it: I have concluded that *the tasks I didn't accomplish, I couldn't accomplish.*

3.

Always remember that if you work at a wrong plan, you are neglecting the right plan; the plan that would accomplish results.

4.

I don't give a curse for the finest theory in the world if it won't work.

5.

I know men who are carrying heavy crosses they might get rid of. Your martyrdom is often an unnecessary, foolish annoyance to those with whom you are associated. That which you regard as a disagreeable duty, is often not a duty at all; either you have deceived yourself, or you have been deceived by another; and in neither case did you make much of a struggle for common sense.

6.

I have been fooled so often that now I nearly always look the second time.

7.

I never go on the street that I do not see unfortunates who have tried the fire, and been burned. I have made many mistakes, but believe every one was the result of accepting my own judgment in defiance of much good advice. Every time I have caught hell, it has been the result of pursuing it.

8.

Every day something inevitably goes wrong. Fix it, and as soon as possible. Don't fret over

a trouble that might be easily removed. Fixing it may cause a little trouble or pain; but fix it.

9.

The only way to successfully remedy a wrong is to successfully oppose it. Indignation does no good unless it is backed with a club of sufficient size to awe the opposition.

10.

Frequently we speak of human follies when we mean human habits. A naturalist, in describing animals, speaks of their habits, and properly. Our follies are natural habits that distinguish our kind of animals.

11.

There is a certain weary look that appears on the faces of those who are bored. Look out for the weary look when you associate with people.

12.

For a hundred years or more, the facts about life insurance have been known, yet more than half the people deny them. The members of a lodge decide that life insurance should be

cheaper. Impassioned speeches are made, and enthusiasm grows because another attempt is to be made to cripple the only safe and honest method of life insurance. A plan is adopted that has failed many times, and, in a few years, hundreds of thousands of hard-working men lose their money: every man who denies the truth not only loses the time he devotes to denying it, but also the money he invests in his false doctrine.

13.

There are no affairs in life worthy of the word tremendous. Nations are only aggregations of men. The problems of a million are the problems of a hundred, and the problems of the hundred the problems of a dozen.

14.

The other planets are possibly inhabited: there is really no reason why they should not be. Did the people in some of them get a better start than we did, and have they common sense?

15.

We hear much of the word Opportunity, and reverence it. There is also opportunity to make

a fool of yourself, and it comes along every few minutes, while opportunity to make fame and fortune drags along with leaden feet; and when it arrives, half the time you don't know it.

16.

The dog never tells us of his habits, since he can neither talk nor write, yet we know his habits thoroughly. And we know men and women still better, from more intimate association. But how we are all amazed when one writes frankly of life! We act as though the habits disclosed would have forever remained buried in mystery had this fellow kept quiet.

17.

When a doctrine was wrong in the first place, liberalism and new thought are both useful and commendable in considering it; but when a doctrine was true in the first place, it needs neither new thought nor liberalism.

18.

There are so many shameless liars writing these days that I find satisfaction in telling the truth when I can discover it. So many are

rude that I find a satisfaction in being polite; so many are slow in paying their debts, and making collectors trouble, that I prefer to pay promptly and politely.

19.

In these days of bitter enemies, if you are not in the penitentiary, it is the best evidence you do not belong there.

20.

I sometimes think that while I have very bad luck in getting into trouble, I have fairly good luck in getting out.

21.

We often speak with scorn of plagiarism. What a palpable plagiarism breakfast is! Sleeping is another; dinner is another, and so is supper.

22.

When we set a trap for a fox, we bait it with something a fox likes.

23.

I have heard the question asked thousands of times: "Is life worth living?" It doesn't make

any difference whether it is or not; we have it, and must make the best of it. And so long as we do not blow our brains out, we have decided life is worth living.

24.

Many men able to cheer are unable to think.

25.

If an agent does not hope to rob me, why doesn't he let me alone? Why does he take the trouble to call on me?

26.

It seems to me I know a hundred ways in which nature might be improved, but I have never been vain or foolish enough to attempt to change it.

27.

A man looks mighty shiftless when sitting on his front porch at 11 o'clock of a week-day morning.

28.

It is a matter of regret that many low, mean suspicions turn out to be well founded.

29.

Some people say there is nothing in luck. There is everything in it. How about Caruso? He didn't begin with a voice like mine (in my youth, among other bad habits, I was an amateur singer), and by means of persistence and hard work develop into the greatest tenor the world has ever produced. That voice of his was good luck. Some men are natural-born blatherskites; rather good fellows, but they talk too much, frivol too much, are too fond of practical jokes, and do not hammer away with proper persistence at their work. Other men are born with a disposition to be patient, saving, sensible in a modest way, and fairly honest and polite. These are the real Lucky Dogs: they have more luck than men who do brilliant stunts, carry great loads of whisky and morphine, and see things that aren't so.

30.

Every fighter who wins is something of a bully, and unfair. We read of the good young man who interferes when virtue is insulted, and beats up the villain; but that is not the true story.

31.

The sexual instinct is certainly natural, and the foundation of all life. It is as respectable as the desire for food, and possibly a social scandal is really no more reprehensible than a case of dyspepsia. We do not eat our food carefully, and only to maintain life: we eat for pleasure, and like gluttons. And it may be said to our credit that while we have no laws to prevent dyspepsia and stomach troubles, we have a great many laws intended to punish those who are not careful and orderly in their social relations.

32.

There used to be an American rule that the bigger the hotel, the colder the ice water; but lately it has been discovered that ice water may be uncomfortably cold.

33.

I try to have no plans the failure of which will greatly annoy me. Half the unhappiness in the world is due to the failure of plans which were never reasonable, and often impossible.

34.

Real love is better than the love in literature; I've tried both. We cannot permit love to run riot; we must build fences around it, as we do around pigs.

35

In Washington, D. C., the expert town builders have reveled in Art and public money. And there are dozens of cities more beautiful; built by ordinary people at their own expense. In every town you will find men who know as much as the great experts, and, with much quarreling, they manage to build and beautify; many with such cleverness as to shame the great experts who have had nothing to bother them when doing their best.

36.

We have a dog which greatly amuses us. When he's in, he wants to go out: he thinks maybe something is going on outside. But there rarely is; and, after looking around awhile with great interest, as if expecting a bear to appear, he wants in again. I was that way, at his age: I was always expecting some great thing to happen, and marveled that it did not. I believed

anything told me those days, but I am skeptical now, after many years of seeking, and seldom finding.

37.

The least profitable profession in the world is that of the thief. There never was one who made a success at it. He can't marry unless he marries a prostitute; he can't build a home, because he must always be ready to run away. He cannot know the joys of honest friendship; he cannot be elected county treasurer, to the legislature, to congress, or to the presidency. He is a man without a country; without hope of success; a stray cur constantly in the presence of thoroughbreds with good homes and friends.

38.

Every user of city water should be put on a meter. Most of those who have a flat rate waste water from pure wantonness; every man expects too much from the water company, the electric lighting company, the gas company, the railroad company, the street railway company; the outlaw streak in him shows itself in demanding more than he is entitled to from the public utilities. Put him on a jury, and he will, in seven cases

out of ten, give an excess verdict in a suit for damages, from a mere spirit of deviltry; because he likes to mildly exercise the power of the mob and the outlaw. Children waste water; it is an instinct born in them. The only remedy is a meter. The same thing is true in everything: we will waste in everything until we realize the expense of waste.

39.

After a young man begins studying the Higher Branches in college, he forgets the simple, important things he learned in the eighth grade.

40.

In discussing humanity, we cannot confine ourselves to the present, which is a mere moment in history: We must consider the past and the future. What is the mob howling about to-day? It doesn't make much difference: to-morrow it will change its mind, having had time to consider new and better evidence.

41.

When you meet a stranger, let him do the talking; and when he goes away you will know all

about him. He will throw a glamor over his history, but you can see through it.

42.

Watch everybody; those who are honest may be careless.

43.

When people are doing well in a financial way, they might as well express it frankly; thus: "I have more to waste than ever before in my life."

44.

You know how unreliable you are; well, your word is probably as good as anybody's.

45.

I have never seen a painting or statue that impressed me as much as a wild crab apple tree in early bloom. Nature is always more interesting to me than art representing it.

46.

Several years ago I observed an unnatural growth on my body, and worried about it. I recalled a famous saying that any unnatural growth, even if no larger than a pea, should be

cut out. And I dreaded an operation; I was cowardly, and feared the knife. But I frequently thought with shame of those braver men who took things in time, and went through an ordeal. That growth has entirely disappeared; Nature has somehow been kind to a coward. It often is; I have often deserved punishment and escaped it, after being thoroughly scared and chastened.

47.

The longer I live, the more I am convinced that there are plenty of reasonably decent, agreeable and sensible people. So I shall associate with these, so far as it is agreeable to them, and let the others go.

48.

Getting enough to eat, and then getting rid of it, are two of the great problems of life.

49.

It is easy to be introduced to strangers, but you must make your own good impression; that is a matter no one can attend to for you.

50.

Let any one provide a whip, and he will use it.

51.

An English woman once told me that English men treat their women as contemptuously as they treat Americans.

52.

Pessimism is always nearer the truth than optimism.

53.

We all talk of the influence of a good mother on the life of her son; but a good father is of equal or greater importance. A father knows more of the real problems that will confront his son; some of the lessons instilled into a boy's mind by his mother are too sentimental, and he finds it necessary to unlearn them.

54.

I don't care for gossip; I rejoice that thousands of indiscreet persons escape without my hearing of their indiscretions; providing they have been sufficiently scared to make them more careful and worthy in future.

55.

The long and short of it is, whoever catches the fool first is entitled to shear him.

56.

When I meet a particularly polite, modest, worthy, capable man, my own imperfections overwhelm me, and I resolve to do better. You are that way; most people are.

57.

You never knew a devil who didn't advise people to keep out of hell.

58.

The ideal man never existed, though he is still a specter around schoolhouses, and in the minds of women. A man who really does pretty well should not be criticized because he does not compare favorably with the hero of a poem.

59.

Every man, in speaking of himself and his wares, exaggerates up; in speaking of his rivals, he exaggerates down. The result is falsehood.

60.

All men are said to adore actresses, wine, cards and race horses. There are millions of worthy men in this country who have never

tasted champagne or spoken to an actress. I have always admired the men, because most of them are a hundred times better than their reputations. Men untruthfully abuse each other, in their fierce fights in making a living, and women accept this abuse as truth. When I get to heaven, I intend to stop the music a moment, and pointing to the enormous bass section in the choir, I shall say triumphantly to the sopranos and altos: "I told you so! Sing louder; your voices are drowned by the basses."

61.

When a real estate or oil stock agent appears, the average man will promptly discount the boomer's statements as much as they deserve; but let a political or religious boomer appear, and the average man will accept his statements: at least, if he knows better, he is timid about disputing them. It is important that we know the truth in religion and politics; a mistake in either may lead to greater disaster than a bad investment in real estate or oil stocks.

62.

History tells of a man who amounted to a good

deal in spite of a shrew wife, but much ancient lore is recorded because it is startling rather than true; I don't believe the statement that there was once a man who was half horse, either.

63.

One of the commonest things in life is for a man to tangle himself up in unnecessary difficulties, and then lay the blame on others.

64.

I'm very tired of Mr. Greatheart, who, in his ambition to help everybody, helps nobody. Mr. Greatheart does not discharge his duty to humanity; the man who modestly does a little good is a better citizen.

65.

The greatest humiliation in life, is to work hard on something from which you expect great appreciation, and then fail to get it.

THE END