THE YOUNG IN HEART

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Of all the myths and legends which have consoled or encouraged mankind, that which persisted longest, reappearing at intervals through many centuries, to be relinquished at last with sad regret, was the belief that somewhere was to be found an elixir of youth. Some of the more socially disposed of the Grecian divinities were thought to confer it upon their earthly favorites; and frequently the ancient mind appears to have befogged itself with dreams about the rejuvenating properties of vaguely situated rivers and fountains. Mediæval chemists and explorers alike made patient search for this elixir, so longed for by the race, so hopefully believed in; the discovery of America promoted a lapsing credulity. It seemed that in the New World, at any rate, would come to light the admirable secret which,

in spite of all the poking and prodding, had never been yielded up by the Old.

No doubt, the ill fate of Ponce de Leon dealt the theory its death-blow; at least, confidence was never again begotten of credulity. That sanguine adventurer, at the age of sixty, secured a charter from his government to discover and settle the island of Bimini, where, it had been reported to him, the fountain of perpetual youth cast its waters wastefully upon the earth, — with none but ill-natured savages to bathe in it and profit by it. Possibly, in making his preparations, he did not sufficiently consider how formidable might be savages who were fortified with perpetual youth. No sooner had he set foot on the island than these inhospitable and virile natives routed his following, and gave him the wound from which a short time afterwards he died. Thenceforth there was no important attempt to demonstrate the existence of a fountain of

youth. In another century the belief had faded.

This enlightenment of the popular mind, and this extinction of a popular yearning, have freed many wailful and bemoaning voices that had otherwise been still, and have permitted many minor cadences to reach the hitherto oblivious ear. So long as a fountain of youth was thought to be discoverable, no Disraeli arose to exclaim, "Youth is a blunder;" no Swinburne chanted drearily, —

"From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be,
That no life lives forever,
That dead men rise up never,
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea."

One is bound to suspect that they who now hold the dismal view of youth and life would have been the most eager volunteers to join Ponce de Leon's expedi-

tion. It is a not wholly unknown or reprehensible habit to declare a low estimate on what is out of reach. And it is the common failing of diffident humanity to imagine that the attainable is out of reach.

Even nowadays, when superstition has hardly a rag left, every man may be, if he will, his own Ponce de Leon — and with a better prospect of success. For there is a fountain of youth; it will be found in no undiscovered country — unless that country is the man's own heart. There, at some time, it has flowed.

Seven springs feed this fountain, — vanity, emulousness, generosity, anticipation, innocence, curiosity, and faith. The first early sentience of the child is the rod that strikes the rock and releases, one after another, these waters. Thenceforth they mingle in a clear, harmonious stream.

But then, in some seismic convulsion or plague of drought, one of these springs is diminished, or extinguished, or transformed into a moody intermittent little geyser.

Other shocks follow, and assail youth at its remaining sources. Sometimes the springs burst up, and spout afresh through the crust that has been forming over them; more often their outpouring is reduced and reduced, and the fountain of youth gradually perishes away.

Invariably, the first of the springs to be diminished or exhausted, is faith. The progress from credulous and superstitious childhood to fearless and open-eyed maturity is marked by the remains of defunct delusions. Some of these had been barely warmed to life, and were laid down without a pang; but when others, which had been of slow and tender incubation, were pronounced inanimate, there was a sorrowing heart and childish tears. These inevitable bereavements do not quell the enthusiastic spirit; but little by little, as they accumulate, they shadow its joyousness and awaken distrust and suspicion. We sacrifice our delusions without much suffering; it is otherwise when we are called on to

yield up our illusions. It caused me as a child no great pain to find that a man could not keep himself dry in a shower — as one of my fairy tales had it — by whirling a sword rapidly about his head; I had a wooden sword of my own, and when next the rain fell I made the experiment and was drenched. Probably I had never quite believed the story; at any rate, I was but mildly disappointed, and experienced no such grief then as befell me somewhat later in the overthrow of my first great illusion. To publish a book, and thus amaze and gratify my family, was my precocious aim. Finding, after various efforts, that I had not wit enough to make a book of my own, and having studied Latin prematurely, I conceived the idea of writing out a translation of Cæsar's Commentaries. This laborious task I ultimately accomplished — in secret, as I supposed; I covered some seven hundred pages with large puerile penmanship, and rendered every ablative absolute with slavish fidelity. When the

last word had been written, and nothing remained but to arrange for the publication of the work, I found myself too ignorant of business methods to proceed, and I took my father into my confidence. His astonishment and his pride in my mass of manuscript, the way in which he took it up and balanced it in his hands and ejaculated reverently over the number of pages, exalted me as if it had been the printed and bound volume he was holding; and then, as considerately as possible, he explained that, on account of the number who were in the field before me with translations of Cæsar, I could hardly hope to find a publisher. I was crushed; but my father called in my mother, and they made me feel that they appreciated my colossal achievement, even if the world was denied the opportunity. That day my father invited me to lunch with him at the club, and afterwards took me to a baseball game. So when my first illusion broke, I was floated tenderly down to earth.

But for several years afterwards I would occasionally pull out the drawer and look at the massive manuscript, with a compassionate sense that it deserved a better fate.

In common humanity it happens that the illusions of children, when the time comes for removing them, are dealt with, as was this first one of mine, not ungently; the very hands that plucked away the veil are often waiting to slip on another, almost as enchanting. But the grievous days approach when these loving ministrations must fail us, when the loss of illusion must carry with it bitterness and humiliation, and when, saddest of all, the comforter may no longer be at hand to give us the consolatory luncheon at the club, to sit with us sympathetic at the ball game.

When we first cease to believe in what we see, credulity is passing; when we first cease to believe in what we imagine, faith is taking flight. Experience teaches us that the strawberries in the bottom of the

box are smaller than those on top; but our benevolent imagination, loath to accuse the berry-man of fraud, reasons the matter out thus: if he put only the "average" berries on top, we would think that they were his largest, and that what were hidden must be quite contemptible; in trying to be candid, he would merely do himself an injustice. By this charitable argument, although we are emancipated from credulity, we are still linked to faith. But if some cynic informs us that our huckster spreads a few fine big berries thinly over the surface of a mass of wretched little ones, in order to sell the little ones at the price asked for the big — then our faith follows hard after our credulity; we go to another berry-man, and we go to him with suspicion. Experiences of this character tend to remove us from the ranks of the young in heart, and to enroll us, it may be, among the men of the world.

With faith depleted, it is pretty hard pumping for innocence. Unless, like Tho-

reau, one holds aloof from society, one can hardly preserve innocence undefiled. The simple ethics of one's early years have to give place to a more complicated code, in which self-interest and its corollary doctrine, that "charity begins at home," are the chief gospels. "All the morality I have," says one, "is never to do anything which could wound those I love, could they know of it, and always to do everything that might make them happy." That is a tolerably high ideal of conduct to maintain, yet it may not require innocence — a state of mind unspotted from the world. Always will innocence have charms,— especially for the predatory,— but it is not a useful virtue, and it is apt to promote disadvantageous associations in business. Most young men make haste to be rid of it, —and it can be eliminated without any serious loss of youth.

Lest these sentiments appear in tendency subversive of accepted morality, let me explain that the term innocence is here

used merely to define that condition which precedes in the individual the development of guile. The quite guileless person is the only innocent person, for he alone does not attempt to make use of others by veiled and indirect methods. And the innocence which precludes such attempts necessarily ceases to exist after the first hard blows at faith.

Yet some persons never accustom themselves comfortably to the conventional defensive methods of the world. Their unskilful subtleties are readily penetrated; they accept exposure as a humorous Nemesis, and seem undisturbed when they fail to carry off their small hypocrisies. With so light a regard for excellence in the practice of this art, they exhibit no acuteness in detecting the subtlety of other practitioners. Through all the shocks to faith which they endure, they never lose their willingness, their insatiate eagerness, to lend a trusting ear. They throw the door wide open, and mean to look over the

guests at leisure. They are thus hospitable, because with a generous disposition they unite a curiosity which does not resort to critical scrutiny, and an open-eyed habit of anticipation which finds in every one and everything some agreeable matter for conjecture or surprise.

Generosity, curiosity, anticipation — on the persistence of these depends the persistence of youth. Vanity and emulousness, though essential in some degree to youth, are not exclusively its attributes; they may thrive in the very oldest hearts. They may dwindle from the torrent to the trickle, even like faith, and it will not so much matter; but when a man ceases to be generous and to be curious, and when he is no longer lured on and on by anticipation, he ceases to be young.

He may have made the most of his opportunities, and yet arrive at this condition. He may even arrive at it by deliberate striving and intention, as others are brought to it by the natural urging of

temperament. For there are two ideals between which one may choose, — that of being always young in heart, and that of becoming as soon as possible a man — or woman — of the world.

Many men — and perhaps all women — of the world will resent as untrue and injurious the assertion that they are not young in heart. So much of their effort is given to maintaining the atmosphere of youth, that they may well be irritated by a criticism implying that, with some conspicuous exceptions, they have lost the spirit. No one so much as the man of the world — unless it is the woman — covets certain characteristics of youth, clings to them so tenaciously, — the vivacity, the appearance, the outward expression. But these are not fundamental qualities; and the very attributes which keep youth glowing in the heart as well as shining on the surface, most men and women of the world contemn. They are not necessarily worldly men and women, but they are of necessity

sophisticated; and that the young in heart may not be. For here is the paradox of youth: it is the time when one is learning, when one goes on eagerly learning; but as soon as one begins to take the lessons to heart, the heart is beginning to grow old. The young do not profit by experience: they seek it; they are unhappy unless they are in the midst of it; and emerging from it, they at once go caracoling off in search of more. If it has been a pleasant lesson, they say blithely, "Another good time salted down and put away where the devil can't get at it;" if it has been a harsh one, they dash the tears from their eyes, clap spurs to their beaten hope, and ride away singing — and never mind if the voice breaks; no one will be there to hear. The lure of the freedom and the beauty and the essential goodness of life ever leads them on, and the men and women of the world smile at them kindly and complacently.

They are bunglers; they gape open-

mouthed when it would be discreet to drop eyelids and pass on; they repeatedly justify the condescension with which those who have profited by experience regard them: yet in spite of this they are lovable, as no men of the world, as few women of the world, ever are. Their indiscretions, their mistaken enthusiasms, their awkwardnesses that hurt none but themselves, their ingenuous interest in life and in persons, win the affection — and one's whole affection can never be engaged by those at whom one may not sometimes humorously smile. The young in years respond to the young in heart, as they do not to the men of the world, — with whom usually they sit stiff, overawed, and constrained. Indeed, it is a weakness that youth never quite outgrows, to be always somewhat overcome in the presence of those who wear the air of large and opulent experience, or of those who are distinguished for noteworthy accomplishment. With all its superficial vanity and exuberant shouting,

youth is at bottom humble-minded and ready to have its gaze directed upward. It does not minimize or depreciate; it has a catholic respect for achievement; it is aware of its own limited and imperfect fulfilment of its tasks: and yet, even to the last, it strives with gallant confidence.

But, said Audrey, "I hope it is no dishonest desire to desire to be a woman of the world." Surely not; in denying to those who are of the world certain engaging traits of the young in heart, one must allow that they have their special merits and virtues. Perhaps they inspire a deeper confidence, if not so warm a love. Equal to the occasion, serene, unmoved by extravagant enthusiasm, discreetly refraining from violent expressions of prejudice and hate, they contribute a balance and a cool temper to life, and are worthy of the admiration bestowed on them by the young. They are the conservatives; the young in heart are the radicals. They concern themselves with securing a more comfortable

adjustment of existing forces; the young in heart are absorbed in creating new explosives. In law, diplomacy, and statecraft, we profit by the labors of the men of the world; in literature, painting, and exploration, we are debtors to the young in heart. Indeed, the pursuits in which men of the world show at their best are those in which the spirit of youth must inevitably droop. It will resist most hardily disappointment, failure, and sorrow; but in the blandly successful life it does not thrive. Enveloped in artifice and convention, breathing the atmosphere of tradition, and oppressed by the crowding demands of complicated petty problems, it is slowly stifled; it has not scope in which it may buoyantly expand. Youth grows strong with privation, and is invalided on a surfeit. The man of the world has experienced a surfeit, and, if he is a successful man of the world, continues to experience it. His anticipations are moderate, his enthusiasms are restrained. But ardent, crav-

ing youth, which, whatever its achievement, rejoices in it only for a moment and then, still panting from the effort, turns away forever and moves toward a future attainment that shall indeed be success — that is the spirit that expires in a world of equable and comfortable adjustment and of nice balancings. Browning's lines,

> " Grow old along with me,
> The best is yet to be,
> The last of life for which the first was made,"

translated into our common idiom, must mean, " Keep young along with me,"— for only so may the reader share with the poet that always bright and eager anticipation of unquenchable youth.

It is true that youth is given to excesses; no matter what a man's years, if he have a young heart, it will always be more urgent and compelling than his elderly head. Always he will lean towards extravagance in admiration, and splendor in indignation. Only the young are lov-

ers ; only the young can hate. Here, taken from Mr. Chesterton's admirable biography, is an account of Browning's last days — cited because it seems so well to illustrate the survival in age of the spirit of youth.

" During his last Italian period he seems to have fallen back on very ultimate simplicities, chiefly a mere staring at nature. The family with whom he lived kept a fox cub, and Browning would spend hours with it, watching its grotesque ways ; when it escaped, he was characteristically enough delighted. The old man could be seen continually in the lanes round Asolo, peering into hedges and whistling for the lizards.

" This serene and pastoral decline, surely the mildest of slopes into death, was suddenly diversified by a flash of something lying far below. Browning's eye fell upon a passage written by the distinguished Edward Fitzgerald, who had been dead for many years, in which Fitzgerald spoke in an uncomplimentary manner of Elizabeth

Barrett Browning. Browning immediately wrote the 'Lines to Edward Fitzgerald,' and set the whole literary world in an uproar. The lines were bitter and excessive to have been written against any man, especially bitter and excessive to have been written against a man who was not alive to reply. And yet, when all is said, it is impossible not to feel a certain dark and indescribable pleasure in this last burst of the old barbaric energy. The mountain had been tilled and forested, and laid out in gardens to the summit; but for one last night it had proved itself once more a volcano, and had lit up all the plains with its forgotten fire. And the blow, savage as it was, was dealt for that great central sanctity, — the story of a man's youth. All that the old man would say in reply to every view of the question was, 'I felt as if she had died yesterday.'"

After all, the excessive persons are the expressive persons; emotion is essential to expression, and the habit of expression promotes and intensifies emotion. There-

fore is expression the better part of life; it is the great generator of human sympathy. The old-hearted, outworn persons of the world are those who have the most persistent craving for fresh sensations, fresh impressions, and who, from laziness, selfishness, or diffidence, think it not worth while to communicate what is already theirs, and so suffer it to perish within them.

"I loafe and invite my soul,"

cried Whitman; if he had done only that, he would never have derived from life the enjoyment which made him a prophet. In the industry wherewith he recorded and interpreted those periods of loafing, rather than in his indolent baskings, did he exhibit his essential youthfulness. It is the lazy, diffident selfishness of age that shrinks from revivifying and interpreting experience, so that it shall please and interest another; it is the generosity of youth that is the primal impulse to expression.

And with this generosity a certain gal-

lantry is required. The faculty of expression demands the best that vitality can give. It calls for energy when one's mood may be relaxed, for sustained vigor and cheerfulness and an undaunted spirit in adversity. We have looked upon Browning as an exemplar in his old age of the excessiveness of youth; here let a nameless and far humbler writer serve to illustrate for us the gallantry of the young in heart. To an editor who knew him only through his work he sent a story, and with the story this letter: "Please pardon a personal note. Almost to a certainty, before I can hear from you about the inclosed manuscript, I shall have passed beyond this life. Will you, therefore, in case the story is available, make the check out to my wife?—and that would be all right if I were still here. Thank you for your past kindnesses; good-by." It was a story of brave adventure by ice and sea, written in a brave spirit. It was indomitable youth that faced clear sighted the imminent death, and

while awaiting it occupied itself — urged on, no doubt, by unselfish thought of another — with fashioning tales of manly courage and activity. One imagines the man of the world facing death with equal fortitude, setting his house in order and preparing for the end with serenity; one does not so readily imagine him engaging to the end in such gay and ardent accomplishment. It has been too foreign to him through his life.

The sorrowful reflection is that the vast multitude of human beings are neither young in heart nor men — or women — of the world. The lives of most people are necessarily so circumscribed that to be men of the world is not their aim, because it hardly comes within their conception; but there are few who have not at some time experienced youth, however prematurely the spirit of it may have withered. Those who could not be of the world, yet might be young, have made craven surrender of their youth in the struggle with exacting

care or in the preoccupations of responsibility. In their annual vacations, responsibility or grinding care allows them a brief reunion with the prisoner — whose face now they hardly know; then back into the cell goes youth, and the key is turned for another year. Can youth never be aided to elude the jailer and escape to freedom? It is worth a man's while to plot and sacrifice for this; for if he liberates and recovers his youth, he will enter upon the last stage of his journey marching as march the veterans when passing in review. That such daring rescues are possible, we know; we sometimes see men whose old age blossoms gayly, after years of barrenness; we see men who, after a lifetime of effort, have cleared about them a space where the sunlight may shine. How nowadays shall Ponce de Leon equip himself for his quest?

When it is said of a man that he has no outside interests, the phrase implies that he is self-centred, self-absorbed. He has put

away childish things, and he has put away youth also. In no objective sense has he an interest in life; he has an interest only in his own life, and the attentiveness and intensity of this interest are painful. No man can be really young who has lost what may be called the sense of externality, who cannot at the moment of unhealthy tension turn his mind to playing with some opportune irrelevancy or direct his eye to some incongruous scene, — who cannot, in other words, allow himself a certain humorous indulgence. Humor is the shield of the young in heart, as wit is the weapon of the man of the world.

This humorous indulgence or preoccupation with the irrelevancy that brings relief is often exasperating in those of immature years, and is then designated irresponsibility. Later in life, when a man has become too subdued to his task or too immersed in his own personal ambitions to be an ornament of society, his occasional return to irresponsibility would be welcomed. And

it is by relaxing in this manner, by "limbering up," by admitting inconsequence to an honorable place beside the haughty and firm figure of absolute conclusiveness, that senile decay of the heart may be arrested and youth be restored to lack-lustre eyes. No treason to the essential responsibilities is involved, no demoralized conduct, no neglect even of the most petty minutiæ. All that is required is a whimsical attitude of mind, and the appropriation of odd moments to project upon the fancy the irresponsible flight that may never be realized. For example, there is a certain slave of routine, who is in the habit of cheering himself with imaginary excursions. "I think," he says, "I will not go to the office to-day. Instead, I will buy a ticket and go South. Then I will telegraph the chief, 'Off for six months. Do as you think best.' What do you think he'll do?" And thus he whistles himself to his work and cheers his meticulous way.

It is unquestionably true that a life which has been devoted to narrow personal interests, and which was never much gifted with humor or fancy, cannot be quite rejuvenated. But some spark of youth has been rekindled if the man, though unresponsive to all that lies about him, acquires an interest in playing a part as well as in plodding forward to his little goal. A sculptor who was working upon a statue of Lincoln had a suit of clothes made, that should be the counterpart of those worn by the President. When they came from the tailor, freshly folded and creased, the sculptor sought for some one who might wear them and give them the proper semblance of use; and he found this man in an old farmer of the neighborhood. The farmer undertook the task for a consideration, and daily paraded about the countryside in the clothes that Lincoln might have worn. And gradually these garments clothed him with a new dignity; they invested him with an interest in Lincoln's

personality; he studied Lincoln's life and tried to conform his personal appearance more nearly to Lincoln's,—tried gradually to make Lincoln the standard in his speech, his thought, his acts; and from wearing the clothes in fulfilment of a contract, continued to wear them as the manifestation of his heart's desire, fondly imagining himself, not Lincoln indeed, yet in some remote way Lincoln's kindred spirit. There was something so innocent, so naïve in this impersonation, something so modest, too, that it evoked kindliness rather than ridicule; and as it certainly made the old man's life more full and interesting to himself, so also did it enlarge the human understanding and sympathy of his neighbors.

To every man who has labored ambitiously and long, there must come a time when he accepts the truth of Stevenson's words, "Whatever else we are intended to do, we are not intended to succeed; failure is the fate allotted." The convic-

tion need not affect a man's purpose or paralyze his efforts. But when it is reluctantly admitted, then is the time for him to discover that whatever disappointments await him at the end of the long road, at the goal towards which he had so steadfastly set his eyes, there are compensations lying for him on either hand. If he cannot discover this and is one of those who never had youth in their hearts, he will compress his lips more sternly, more obstinately, and in sullen rebellion continue on his way. Him we may respect, but he does not have our love. On the other hand, if he says to himself, "Well, I can't get what I thought and hoped, but there's something ahead that perhaps I can have, and I mean to keep on, — why, hello! — the road's a good deal more pleasant than I thought it; of course I'll keep on!" — when a man takes his disappointment so, and after the first dejection of weariness looks up from his resting place and smiles to see the buttercups brightening the mea-

dows — we respect him and love him also. He is coming into happiness when he thus recovers his youth.

The young in heart are happy — and what is more important, they contribute unawares to the happiness of others. They may not be so "interesting" as the tragic figures of life, or even as the morbid and melancholy; they do not present so many points of view from which to be studied, as they who are of the world; but they diffuse, wherever they are, a warmth and light of happiness. Men and women of the world have their mission of disseminating happiness also, and worthily perform it; yet the happiness within their gift is of a less elemental and pervasive kind. That which youth scatters so freely is of the spirit; that which emanates from the world requires for its appreciation a certain discriminating intelligence. The communication from youth is electric and instant, from the people of the world gradual and deliberate.

Yet at the last, one must hesitate to exclude the spirit of youth entirely from men and women of the world. It is surely true that they who are and who remain most thoroughly young in heart are untouched by sophistication, and that in those who are most perfectly of the world there is left no illusion of youth. These two extremes represent, the one, the most gifted, the other, the most highly developed of the human race. But there are a few — especially among women — in whom there is even to the end a fine balance between youth and sophistication preserved, a few who to the freshness of enthusiasm and illusion unite the tact and grace that grow with experience and the serenity that has succeeded faith. These gentle and sweet spirits, touched by the knowledge of the world, are yet more infallibly convinced of its goodness, and bear unconsciously within their lives the vision of two ideals.

II

LAWN TENNIS

LAWN TENNIS

THERE will probably be no quarrel with the statement that the value of any outdoor game is measured, not so much by the physical exercise it necessitates, as by the satisfaction and outlet it gives to the spirit of combat that troubles us. Those in search of exercise for its own sake, desirous of enlarging their muscles, expanding their chests, and improving their state of health, will be better rewarded by devoting themselves to calisthenics and gymnastics, to swimming or riding, than by the enthusiastic pursuit of any game. The symmetrical development of the body is not the usual result of games, any more than it is their primary object; and it need not disparage their value to make this admission at the outset. It is, however, an admirable quality which they all possess that they call for muscular activity in some form or

other, and that they cause it to be exercised with zest and enjoyment instead of as an irksome duty that one owes to one's person. And therefore, in estimating the value of a game, we cannot quite leave out of account the possibilities it affords for exercise ; supposing that in other respects there were equality, that game would be the best which called into play the freest use of the body.

As a matter of fact, there is no equality among games ; they do not all have the same effect on the character, they do not satisfy quite the same emotions or suit equally all temperaments, as is evident when one considers that different games appeal to different men. Yet in them all, modulated to various degrees of youth or age, strength or weakness, it is the element of contest that supplies the interest and performs the greatest service to the players. And that game which on the whole best satisfies the contentious spirit may be said to fulfil most completely its purpose.

LAWN TENNIS

I start with the proposition that this game is lawn tennis. I am not indifferent to the merits of golf, baseball, football, or any other outdoor game, but which of these demands of its *every* participant the direct, constant, and active opposition of tennis? "Football," you say at once; well, perhaps. Shall I seem to evade the issue if I submit the point that football in its most important manifestations is now a spectacle rather than a game, that except among schoolboys it is played not so much for fun as for a certain glory, that it is for us, as the gladiatorial combats were for the Romans, as the bullfight is for the people of Spain and Mexico, an amusement for the spectators rather than a recreation for the participants? I have often been struck by the satisfaction of college players when the season closes, and by their readiness after they leave college to drop football entirely. The game which so many are glad to have done with and which requires sacrifices that men beyond

a certain age are unwilling to make, does not serve most completely the purpose of a game.

In baseball the nine players on each team are not all simultaneously and constantly in action. If it is a "pitchers' battle," the three outfielders have a dull time of it, and the team at bat have long idle periods. It is a good game, it is the national game, yet one would hesitate to say that it meets more fully than any other the requirements.

In golf you can do nothing to harass your antagonist, outmanœuvre him, check him when he is winning, or lure him into pitfalls; you can strive to improve your own play, you cannot hamper his. There is no need of quick decision, there is no opportunity for strategy, the element of direct, aggressive opposition is lacking; therefore golf does not best fulfil the purpose of a game.

Hockey deserves wider and more enthusiastic recognition than it has yet won; in

its swift, unceasing action and its constant conflict, it comes near being an ideal game. But it is hardly universal enough; on each side there is one player condemned to a post of responsible idleness, which is only now and then enlivened by brief flurries. While the others are racing back and forth on the ice, the goal-keeper stands alone, freezing his toes. And because of this melancholy adjunct, because it does not permit to all its players an equal degree of activity and opposition, one must regretfully deny to hockey the palm. Yet there need never be any rivalry between tennis and hockey; the conditions that make possible the one forbid the other.

Now let us examine the case for tennis. That it is entitled to the place of supremacy among games seems to me no unreasonable claim.

First of all and most important: when you are playing tennis, whether in singles or doubles, it is always you and your opponent. You are not looking on, except

for the briefest moment; you are not getting any more rest than you wish, you are more often not having as much as you would like. From the first stroke of the game to the last, you are in constant yet always changing opposition to another player. Even in the doubles on the strokes that are your partner's, you are not a mere spectator; you are running backward, forward, keeping pace with him, seeking the position in which the next ball may be most advantageously received. Your decision must be instant; in the fraction of a second you determine whether you shall drive the ball or toss it into the air, place it on the left or on the right, rush to the net or run back; you must have an instinctive knowledge of what your opponent expects you to do and then, if possible, do something else. Once you have succeeded in outwitting him, the triumph is all yours; you divide the honors with no one. Tennis more than any other game has the qualities that gave the duel its

fascination; it is all eager and alive, two men at close quarters, feinting, parrying, thrusting, both alert for an opening to give the final *coup de grâce*.

Call to mind some long rally that you have had; remember how on one occasion when your opponent was playing deep in the court, you drew him to the net by a ball chopped skilfully just over it; how he returned the stroke, and how you next shot the ball down the side line, thinking to pass him. But he had anticipated the attempt and volleyed cleverly; then, instead of trying the cross-court shot that he was waiting for, you tossed the ball high over his head, and while he spun round and raced for it you trotted to the net, prepared to "kill" the lob that he should send in return. And just as you had hoped, it was a short lob; but instead of killing it, you decided it would be more fun to keep him running, and you turned the ball over into the farther corner of his court. He went after it at full speed and lobbed again, —

it was all he could do, poor fellow, — and again the ball fell short, again you had him at your mercy. Nor did you smash the ball this time; instead, you turned it off slowly into the other corner. He sprinted hard and reached it, only to pop it up easily once more. And now you gathered yourself; you saw out of the tail of your eye that he had turned and had already started back desperately toward the farther corner; and you landed on that ball with all your might, beat it to the earth, and sent it bounding straight at the place he was leaving. He made a miserable, futile effort to right himself and shift his racket; then you saw him walk slowly after the ball, with his head drooping and his shoulders heaving up about his ears, and you chuckled to yourself with huge approval of your own astute play, — "That got his wind, I guess."

There is a human amusement in making your antagonist run back and forth thus earnestly and desperately; but one has a

more exalted satisfaction in placing a shot so sudden, swift, and accurate that the opposing player has not time to move. Teasing your man, you feel your power over a particular individual; paralyzing him by a stroke, you experience a moment of omnipotence. "There," you say, "there I sent a ball that nobody could touch." In your sublimity you may even spare a moment's compassion for the poor wretch who stands rooted in astonishment, dazed by the bolt before which champions had been powerless. You say to him condescendingly, "I caught that just right;" you may even intimate, if you are magnanimous, that you do not expect to do the thing every time. But in your heart you are boastfully hopeful, you feel that at last you have found your game, and you believe that you have the man cowed.

And how is it when instead of driving your opponent before you and exhibiting a cleverness that seems really outside yourself, a supernatural precision of eye and

arm, you are going down to defeat? Is there any delight in that? From a wide range of personal experience I would modestly assert that there is. Although you realize that the doom is drawing nearer, although to avert it you put forth your mightiest efforts and only lose in strength and breath while your adversary seems to be renewing his inhuman power, you fight on, hoping even to the last that you may turn the tide and pull out a glorious victory. You make a stroke that spurs you on, you follow it with three that provoke your bitterest self-contempt, and you plant yourself with melodramatic determination in your soul and, doubtless, upon your face. "The Old Guard dies, but never surrenders;" was there no joy for them in their supreme, superb annihilation? It makes after all little difference to you emotionally whether your fight against odds is a winning or a losing one, so long as it is the best fight that you can put forward. To be in the thick of it, battering away

undaunted, is the fun. Even if your opponent so far overmatches you that the outcome is hardly in question, you may have as good a time as if you stood to win; for you go in resolved to break down his cool assurance, to make him show his best efforts, to unmask and damage his strategy and gain his respect; and while you are striving with all your pigmy fury to achieve this, you now and then must pause to admire the overwhelming strokes of his resourceful master hand.

It seems fitting here to consider the theory, often advanced and seldom disputed, that a sport is the better for an element of danger. If this is true, the advocates of tennis must be dumb. Nothing worse than a sprained ankle or a wrenched knee can befall a man on a tennis court; and these, however painful, are not heroic injuries. I once heard an eloquent and distinguished man in the course of a brilliant address declare that the occasional deaths occurring in polo, in football, on the

hunting field, are the price the Anglo-Saxon race pays for its position of headship and command. It was an impressive and inspiring oration; and this sentiment was echoed with a great outburst of applause. Yet it does not bear cool scrutiny. The football player will tell you that, once in the game, the possibility of injury does not occur to him; the polo player will say the same; after you have taken the first jump, danger in the hunting field does not beset you. Where there is no consciousness of danger, there is no bravery. In the heat of battle no man is a poltroon. Yes, but to take the first jump, to go into the game, it is urged — does not that compel and develop a man's courage? Only if he is physically unfit or dangerously ignorant; under other circumstances to enter a sport in which there is an element of peril is as natural for the boy or the man, and as little an indication of character, as to go to bed when one is sleepy or to eat when one is hungry. The

boy who is heavy and strong, and whose friends are playing football, will take up the game; the man who rides well, and whose friends are playing polo, will try his hand at it; and in neither case is there, on account of the physical risk, any access of courage to the novice. The football player is no more to the front when there is a runaway horse to be stopped or a woman to be saved from drowning than any other chivalrous and hardy man. It is not the element of danger in a game which trains one to fortitude and courage; it is the element of opposition, purely. He is the courageous man who in the crisis of the contest responds the more daringly and steadfastly the more he is tried; and that he may be at the moment in some remote peril of life or limb adds nothing to his stature, increases not at all the importance of the test. The injuries and deaths that sometimes take place in our rougher sports should not be viewed as glorifying these forms of contest; they

are deplorable calamities, with no mitigation. It seems to me beyond debate that the game which is entirely harmless in its play, which does not imperil the man, and which has none the less qualities that make for manliness, is the best of all games.

Certainly, of them all tennis is the most universal; small boys, girls, women, men of three generations, play it, and the crack has not very much more enjoyment out of it than the duffer. So long as a player feels within him possibilities of growth, he enjoys the game; and even when these fail, even when he realizes that he is slipping backward, he clings on, light-heartedly contesting every inch of the decline with some one of his contemporaries. "If I cannot keep pace with the advancing battalion, I shall not head those who are in retreat," cries your optimist; and so — because tennis players are generally optimists — you will see on any warm summer day veterans urging their old limbs

upon the grassy courts, crouching in their play with racket held stiffly, trotting with little, timorous steps, poking at the ball with the gesture of uncertain vision; and you watch them awhile and think perhaps in the pride of your youth, "There can't be much fun in that." And then, while you are looking on, they begin to wrangle about some point; they are suspicious as to whether or not that ball actually did strike the line; and such verbal vitality as those four old men will then display, congregating at the net, wagging their heads, and finally examining the ball itself for traces of whitewash! You do not doubt any longer that their tennis is something of extreme moment to them; and you wonder if with your own occasional slipshod indifference to your rights on doubtful points you do not show an unworthy slight regard for a noble game.

In fact, I think that a match between old men deeply in earnest is a spectacle

more inspiring to one's humanity than a tournament of champions. I do not mean that I would rather watch it; I do not deny that for a spectator in ordinary mood it is a slumberous proceeding. Yet if one is in an idle, reflective, kindly frame of mind, there is nothing so cheering to one's faith, so soothing to one's soul, so hopeful and sane and healthy, as the sight of these graybeards, — venerable enough when you meet them on the street, and now scampering after a ball with the single-minded passion of a dog or a child. Their squabbles and their laughter are alike pleasant to the ear; and when they stop between sets to rest and draw their asthmatic breath, you look at them admiringly, and hope that when you grow old you too may be this kind of fine old boy.

There is charm also, though of a different nature, in observing the young duffer. I know not why it should be so, but the strong young duffer in tennis is a more ungainly and grotesque creature than

any that is furnished forth in other sports. The golfer who swings without hitting the ball is an object of mild derision; his crestfallen appearance after so tremendous an output of power delights our hard American humor. In the same way the spectacle of an unskilful baseball player awkwardly muffing a "fly" has always a ludicrous aspect for the "bleachers." If we do not sit upon the bleachers, we withhold the ridiculing outcry, but our amusement is no less keen for being suppressed. The gingerly clumsiness with which a well-grown man will hold up a tennis racket, seeming appalled by the harmless instrument, prepares us to watch for his next entertaining capers. He poses himself with great care, gives a fine preliminary flourish of his weapon, and then taps the ball with a lady-like movement and laborious intentness of aim. It goes wild, and he screws his body to one side with a frantic instinct to correct the disappointing flight. I would not seem unsympathetic

with the duffer; how should I hope for mercy, showing none!

Given, as he usually is, to expletive and malediction, the beginner is never so rampant as he who has progressed a stage and is trying strokes. *Genus irritabile!* The duffer is determined to master the drive — that long low stroke that skims the net and then drops sharply, the stroke that is invaluable to one playing in the back of the court. Holding his racket conscientiously in the manner prescribed, he advances upon an easy bound, swings, leaping from the earth with both feet, and sends the ball flying over the club-house. Then what vociferation! He has not the contained solemnity of the veterans playing near by, or the absorbed anxiety of mien of the utter duffer; his interest in the game itself seems not so profound, and therefore is not so touching as theirs; he is animated too keenly by an egotistical desire for self-improvement.

When the duffer has at last attained a "stroke," it is too often only to become

its slave. There is so much physical satisfaction in making a clean, swift, forehand drive across court or down the side line that a player who has a moderate proficiency in this will try it under the most rash and ill-favored conditions. Running at full speed and just reaching the ball that he should lob, he will swipe desperately, and the occasional lucky shot that he achieves compensates him for the half dozen that he has sent wild. But in the score his errors are not forgotten; and at the end of the game he will perhaps wonder why so brilliant a player as himself does not more often win. Generally speaking, the player who cultivates a stroke lays himself open to attack at every other point; his backhand is liable to be weak, his game at the net is neglected, he becomes obsessed with the notion that if he can only get that stroke going hard and accurately, it will carry him through unaided. And that is why many a showy player goes down before one whose game is more slow

and dull to watch. For any high degree of proficiency, speed is of course an essential; but extreme speed is more often exhibited by players of the second or third class than by the most successful cracks. The supreme skill lies in the ability to hit a ball as well from one position as from another, backhand, forehand, volley, or half-volley, and next to that in adjusting the balance between speed and accuracy; even by long practice you may never learn to gauge the pace above which or below which you may not go without sacrificing precision or direction. This requires a genius for tennis, a native instinct, and an unusual power of coördination.

I have never seen a match between players of the first rank without having a slightly disappointed sense that their performance seemed less wonderful than it actually was. I fancy that to any one who has played tennis a little, such an exhibition falls in just this way short of

anticipation. The game is not a sequence of magnificent bursts of speed, sensational smashes, extraordinary rallies, although at moments these do flash and electrify ; it proceeds with an outward smoothness, ease and rhythm of movement, that by no means intimates the tension of the contest. The spectator is tempted to the remark, " It seems so simple ; why should n't anybody play that way ? " Every swing of the rackets is free, absolutely unstudied, propelled with the least muscular effort ; you feel that if you were to pick up a racket for the first time, that would be exactly the way you would naturally swing it. And the players seem not to be running about so very violently ; on the whole, not so violently as you yourself run when you play ; you watch them and do not understand how they manage this. One places the ball, you would say, definitely ; yet without much apparent exertion the other is there and has returned it. The explanation is that these players by instinct

and long experience know how to cover their court and economize their strength; anticipating every stroke, they are quick at starting; every movement counts, and they go through no unnecessary floundering; immediate perception does for them what sheer strength and speed can never do for the less gifted. In tennis, as in other matters, the highest achievements often seem spontaneous and casual.

Unquestionably the most distinguished exponents of the game that is both leisurely yet cat-like in quickness are the English gentlemen who took from us the International Cup. In contrast to their method of covering the court, even our best American players seemed to rush and scramble. The Englishmen moved with an unassuming stealth, and were not overanxious to receive the ball at the most favorable point of the bound. Our players obviously took greater pains to get into position. The English game was on the whole the more finished and perfect; the Ameri-

can game — in singles only — the more aggressive and compulsive. The Englishmen, playing at top notch and with all desperation, gave the impression of still having something in reserve; it was always clear when the Americans were straining every resource. In the American game there was more personality; in the English game there was more form. The qualities came out curiously in many ways — even in the matter of dress. In this respect the visitors were as precise as in their play, appearing always in the freshest white clothes, white even to their shoes, wearing their long sleeves flapping modestly about their wrists; the Americans, with their various drab flannels, their black spiked shoes, and their rolled-up sleeves, presented a more dangerous and less attractive appearance. The dilettante aspect of the English champions made their efficient performance the more astonishing to our eyes. They moved softly upon the grass with their rubber-soled shoes, instead of

tearing it with spikes according to our barbarous practice; they preserved unruffled through five hard sets the garden party look with which they first appeared; they almost made us feel that to perspire when playing tennis, if not actually vulgar, is at least undisciplined. With such refinement of appearance, the most scrupulous courtesy and sportsmanship were to be expected; and indeed one of the visitors performed the prettiest act of the tournament. When on a mistaken decision the umpire awarded him a point that was not his, he drove the next ball out of court, making amends to his opponent.

The gracefulness of the act was unusual, but the spirit that prompted it prevails widely in tennis, and it is this that gives the game so pleasant an atmosphere. Except occasionally for a hurried, excited "How's that?" when the player is uncertain whether a ball is in or out, there is never a word said to the umpire; and the times when one may see disgust, re-

sentment, even a passing surprise expressed on a player's face at a flagrantly mistaken decision, are so rare as to be memorable. I recall at least two matches of an agonizing closeness that turned on faulty decisions, yet on neither occasion did the sufferer betray by glance at umpire or spectators any sense of injury. In no other game, I think, are self-control and a readiness to put the best face on misfortune so generally the rule.

And this is of course a part of not taking one's game too seriously. It is no uncommon thing, according to reports, for the defeated contestants in a decisive rowing race or football match to burst into tears. I have never heard of a deposed tennis champion making such a demonstration. What is the difference? Is it that the tension is really so much greater in one form of sport than in another? Partly this, perhaps; but I am inclined to think the deeper cause lies in the fact that in tennis you go down to defeat alone or

at most with only one other; while in football and rowing your grief is reduplicated for all the comrades with whom you have met disaster, — who undertook with you some responsibility that at the time looms disproportionately great. Now it is a fine thing to experience sorrow in this way, even though to us on the outside the cause appears trifling; such suffering promotes one's sympathy and opens one's heart; and when we consider the humanizing influence of a defeat at rowing or football, we do not weigh too heavily the foolishness of the occasional hysterical outburst. And tennis has no such moments of dramatic awakening. Its after effects are comparatively mild. Even in the case of doubles, where you have another to be sorry for, defeat brings out a mutual spirit of good humor and acquiescence; you reproach yourself and your partner reproaches himself, but neither of you sits in gloom; there is a light touch in your mutual apology. And the game that is

permeated with so tolerant and gay a spirit seems to me better than the one that probes the deeps in men's souls. We must not suffer too much in our sports; shall we have no joy in life?

I am trespassing on my purpose in entering again for even a moment the field of controversy; but before emerging, and because it bears some relation to this subject of not taking one's game too seriously, I would point out that as yet there have been in tennis — in this country, at least — no squabbles about "eligibility" and "amateur standing," no noisy coaching from the side lines, and no professional teachers. A game which thrives, yet which offers no inducement to the "professional," is one that is played in a sufficiently lighthearted spirit.

This does not qualify the importance of the actual contest. Those who cannot throw themselves into it as if for the time being it were the most momentous thing in life, will never appreciate its delights

The overmastering, avaricious desire to win is always to be deprecated, but to be keen to play one's best and bear one's self steadily and valorously in the crisis should be the essential spirit of the game. To be sure, that is the spirit in which all games should be played; but tennis least of all permits any shirking of the issue. When the crisis comes, there is no chance for the weak-hearted to thank his stars that some one else than himself is called upon; and if he has the spark of manhood, he will not look too complacently upon defeat. Excitement and exhaustion may wear the player down, but he must set himself only the more resolutely to the task of playing better than he has ever yet done. The time comes when his heart pounds and his lungs are pumping for air; when he walks drooping and reeking under the blazing sun; but he must not allow his misery to engage his mind, he must not debate the question how much longer he can endure: he must bend all his intent-

ness of purpose, all the remnant of his strength, upon repelling the final assault of the foe. Of such importance is the actual contest, — and its importance ceases utterly when the last point has been played.

I am drawing for illustration upon an extreme case; in our ordinary matches we stop short of the point where suffering begins. We are leisurely, and we do not prolong our game until we are threatened with collapse on the court. But however leisurely our methods, however mild our strokes, tennis makes an exacting demand upon our faculties; the temper of the game is ardent, not phlegmatic. One of the best players this country has ever produced will come into the club-house between sets of an insignificant match, panting more with nervousness than with fatigue, trembling so that he cannot hold his racket steady, looking harassed, frightened, and desperate. He calls on his friends to fan him with towels, he tells them how scared he is, he holds the glass of water brought

him, in a shaking hand. Yet after the interval he will return to the court, make unerring shots along the lines, and show the most thorough command of nerves and muscles, even though between plays he is twitching with excitement. And after he has won, as is his usual custom, the game is of hardly enough interest to him to serve as the briefest topic of conversation ; he jumps under the shower, and then while he dresses he discusses with you where he had better dine and how he shall pass the evening ; he may even insist on reading to you from some precious little book of poems that he keeps in his locker ; although it is more likely that he will be throwing towels and accusing some one of having stolen his shoes.

The manners of tournament players in the presence of spectators are an interesting if trivial study. Some of them make it a point never to glance at the audience ; in idle moments they keep their eyes on the ground or perhaps toss them skyward

as they walk to their places. Others favor the crowd with an occasional stolid, inexpressive stare. A few have adopted an ingenuous, cheerful, confiding smile which they flash at certain junctures — as when they make a particularly bad shot. When they do something brilliant and there is applause, they look stern, even annoyed. Mannerisms wear off in some degree as the player becomes involved in the excitement of the game; but the grand-stand player never quite forgets himself. There will be the mute appeal to the heavens when his shot goes extravagantly wild, or the staggering display of exhaustion when he has crowned a long rally with a brilliant stroke.

But these are superficial trifles on which to dwell, and we shall err if we regard them too narrowly. Your grand-stand player is often as worthy a person as the man whom you would more readily define as of "sterling" character; pass by the weakness of a little vanity, and he is

perhaps as alert to opportunities, as keen in the game, as plucky a fighter as his more steady-going opponent. Indeed, we are in danger of trusting our games too implicitly as tests of character. With all our enthusiasm for our own particular sports, we shall do well to pause and consider whether on the whole the men of high attainments in these go farther than other men. The great football hero of fifteen years ago is still remembered; but since running the length of the field for a touchdown, has he done anything that is worthy of note? We Americans are inclined to set too high a value on athletic prowess of any kind; our newspapers thrust fame on heads too young to wear it, and there is sometimes a melancholy petty tragedy in the case of the man who is more widely celebrated at the age of twenty-one than he will ever be again. Very likely he is a person of good average abilities and persevering character, who will fill a worthy quiet corner and look back with pleasure

on his shining and triumphant youth; then there is no great harm done. But now and then one sees a man who played a game too conspicuously well and, doing so, fulfilled his destiny.

Tournaments and match play are by no means the only feature of tennis that should be considered; indeed they are perhaps the least important. There are a hundred people getting enjoyment out of the game for every one who enters a tournament. It does not trouble the boy that his court is not good or that his racket is ill-balanced and poorly strung; he marks out the lines with his own hands, pulls his own roller, and then plays the game, blithely indifferent to all imperfections. Many a suburbanite now has his cramped, sometimes his undersized court, where he engages in conflict with the neighbor on a Saturday afternoon; cities are finding it necessary to provide facilities for tennis in the public playgrounds; and young people gather there, bringing half-worn balls

and old rackets, and await patiently their turn.

There is, however, no advantage to be gained from playing under difficulties; the better the court, the better the fun. As your game improves, it ceases to be a laughable phenomenon if the ball repeatedly strikes some irregularity of surface and bounds off at right angles to its proper course. After a time you appreciate with exasperation what it means to have only three feet of space behind the base-line; you are sure that with a fair chance you could return those deep-driven balls, and you long for an opportunity to try. So you abandon your private court to the children and join a club. It is a wise move; not only are the courts maintained in better condition, but you also have the advantage of testing your game against a variety of opponents, instead of in repeated meetings with the same one or two. Your play improves rapidly—up to the point where improvement ceases.

It is no more than reasonable that lawn tennis should be at its best on grass. In this country, however, it is usually played on a surface of dirt or cinders; and certainly for the enthusiast, who is impatient for the end of winter, and does not put away his racket until after the snow flies in the late autumn, the dirt court is a necessity. It prolongs the tennis season by more than two months. When rain and mist and dew dampen the turf and make *lawn* tennis impossible, the dirt court is still hard and dry. It is very wearing on shoes and balls and rackets, it soils the clothes, it blisters the feet, it sends jarring vibrations through the system; but it enables us to play in April and October. We slip and slide if we try to turn sharply, we find the aggressive game at the net hardly practicable; yet with all its infirmities the dirt court is a most excellent makeshift. A good dirt court is preferable to a mediocre grass court; a poor dirt court is better than none at all. He who

has played on championship grounds and therefore declines a contest on his friend's home-made court is a tennis snob; happily, the type is rare.

The good grass court is a luxury and a delight. To throw off one's clothes on a hot summer day, put on the coolest and lightest of garments, and run out across the sunny lawn, where the afternoon shadows lay their quiet fingers; to prance there and rush about and breast the net, from which your adversary tries hotly to dislodge you; to hit out with the exhilarating sweep of arm and body, to feel the racket responsive in your hand, to see the ball fly swiftly where you would have it go; and through all the stress and sweat to be conscious of the kind sun and the quick turf and the green maples and elms that fringe the field — is not this one of life's priceless pleasures? He is happy who learns to know it in his youth; he is happy who finds that it does not fail him in his age. It is true that when we play tennis

we may not observe closely the trees or listen for the songs of birds or have leisure to admire the shapes and hues of floating clouds; no, tennis does not bring us into any definite relation with nature, but that is the inevitable defect of an engrossing game. Nor is it the most social of our sports. Golf is a conversational opportunity; in baseball, to coach from the side lines must satisfy the most talkative. But tennis is all strife, with no time for comment. In doubles you now and then exchange with your partner a word of advice, approval, or encouragement; in singles you ejaculate to your opponent "Good shot!" or "Hard luck!" Beyond this, intercourse does not go. It is, even in critical matches, a noiseless battle; the droning iteration of the score from the referee sitting on his high seat by the net, the soft thud of the ball upon the racket, the swift catlike steps of the players, convey no adequate intimation of the struggle. It is far different in atmosphere from

a rowing race, with the coxswains of the crews yelling madly through their megaphones; from a baseball game, with its shrill chatter; from a football game, with the quarterback shouting raucous signals in the arena and the inclosing myriads roaring out their cheers. Although it is so nervous and active, it is of all games the most silent and self-contained.

It is not, however, utterly unsocial. There is talk enough afterwards in the club-house; and even on the court players become in an acute and sympathetic though unspeaking way aware of one another. In the end tennis brings its followers into a more intimate relation with human nature. It purges them of their cares and their unhealthy thoughts and desires; it clarifies the mind and makes sane the soul; it satisfies the restlessness and contentiousness of the spirit and gives it peace. On the tennis court there are developed steadfastness of aim and purpose, a better temper, and a kinder heart; here, through

striving with your fellow man, you may learn to love him. Foes in sport are friends in spirit; if the hand of every man seems against us, and our hand against every man, let us spill our antagonism harmlessly upon the tennis court. Many a blue devil has here been crushed under heel, many an animosity has been softened. You cannot think altogether ill of any man against whom you have stood in a hard and fairly fought game; you may even come to think well of one whom you have hitherto held in slight regard. Likewise, in their humble way, do our international matches have a civilizing influence. The surest guarantee of a permanent peace among nations would be to have them striving keenly with one another in their games.

Some verses read at a tennis club dinner represent an effort to express, not too seriously, the best that the game does for its players:—

> One time the most of us, no doubt,
> Had open hearts for others;

We scorned the shield Distrust held out,
We met all men as brothers.

With years cool wisdom on us slips
The armor once declined;
The laugh grows idle on our lips,
Or purpose lurks behind.

Fearful to lose our little place,
We dare not venture far
To welcome others of our race,
Men of the self-same star.

Eager to win beyond our ranks,
We trample others down,
And pressing o'er them murmur thanks,
Our eyes upon the crown.

And yet we bear no enmity;
"It's life," we sadly say;
"We would be genial, open, free
To all men as the day.

"This armor that doth make us safe,
This visor to the eye,
We feel their weight, we feel them chafe,
We fain would put them by."

LAWN TENNIS

And when we come to our green field,
  Far from the strife of town,
Forthwith in gentleness we yield
  And lay that armor down.

The touch of flannels to our skin,
  Of grass beneath our feet,
Of sun at throat may help us win
  Safe past the judgment seat.

III

WORK AND PLAY

WORK AND PLAY

THAT more people know how to work than how to play seems to be a defect of education. All the punishments of childhood are for lawlessly following the impulse to play; and nearly all the rewards are for aptitude and industry in work. In some respects there has been a relaxation; the interest taken by most pedagogues in the sports of their pupils and the semi-official recognition of athletic prowess in schools are signs of a partial reaction. But it is only partial; the spirit of play is often suppressed before it becomes articulate; the spirit of work is from the first fostered and stimulated. To nearly all is it emphasized that on work their very being depends; but to only a few is it made clear that on play depends their well-being.

As a nation, we are, it is true, devoted

to sports and games, and therefore it would appear on the surface quite needless to point out the advantages of play. There is too much play already, in the opinion of many not illiberal persons; they say that our young men at college play more than they work, and they instance the general and often unhealthy interest in racing and bridge. Certainly it is but natural that the instinct for diversion, so often cowed and stunted by drastic measures in childhood, or perhaps given an equally unwise license, should be a groping or an unbalanced instinct, prolific of injudicious excesses. The unfortunate persons who commit these bring discredit on the art of play. For it is an art, of which games, even at their best, are only a crude and imperfect expression. They have their value; but play that requires for itself — as games do require — a special machinery and knowledge is not of the kind most readily available, is not the most cunning, and in that way most satisfying resource.

The man who is dependent on his racket or his bat or his pack of cards for his amusement, is doomed to pass many dull hours. Too few of us have learned how to play when we are alone ; too few of us have learned how to play with people who cannot use a racket or a bat or a pack of cards. The woman tending the plants in her garden is playing more profitably, it may be, than the admired pitcher on the local ball nine, who strikes out three men in an inning. She does not experience his sensational moments, but she is gayly occupied in a creative process, and that is play of the most soul-expanding kind. Moreover, it is play that is not dependent on youth and activity, but that may continue to serve one in feebleness and age.

The idea is current that action is the essence of play. Hence the extreme misery of the tennis enthusiast who with racket and court is ready to amuse himself, but has no worthy foeman ; of the automobilist whose machine is laid by for re-

pairs; of the house party of athletes on a rainy afternoon. The general failure to perceive that there may be a very satisfactory return in the exercise of observation, in the practice of imagination, or even in the loosening of one's reluctant speech, is excusable, for it is just the tendency to do these things that was so impressively punished when we were small. What is it that leads children to truancy from school, and to the other most heinous childish breaches? In nine cases out of ten it is not any imperative call to action, but merely a desire to See. A paltry and commonplace hill becomes a height beckoning with romance; and the child is not contented until he has scaled it and ascertained what the world is beyond. Nearly always this desire to see unites with it a belief in strange happenings and adventures, if one could only slip outside of the prescribed and familiar round; or again, perhaps there is the conviction that in violating the law, even though it is only to sneak away and hide

in a dark cellar, there is glorious heroism or martyrdom. To See and to Imagine — these natural faculties of man may be converted into a means of play, even as the child is trying always to convert them. If early experience and tradition had not taught us to associate a penalty with the employment of these faculties, we should not be so often at a loss for resources.

Mere idleness opens up for any one who has eyes to see and a mind to dream a playground of infinite variety. To sit, for instance, in a garden and watch a bumble-bee despoiling the flowers, blundering tentatively from this to that, at last grappling one with fierce ardor, bending it on its stem and showering down the gathered dew, climbing up and into the very heart of it, and then after a brief moment emerging and spurning from him the petals that he had embraced so amorously, — this, to him who observes it with a mind attentive to nothing else, is play. It may

be play to stroll along a city pavement, to cling to a strap in a crowded car, to talk to one's neighbor on a stool at a lunch counter. And to watch a man laying bricks, or to lounge upon a fence and observe the plowman driving his horses in the field, or to inspect any sort of manual labor, should always entertain one who is at leisure, and in whose personal experience such labor has never been more than a diversion. If a child's eye rests upon a carpenter at work, it is held in fascination. It is unreasonable and wrong that we should outgrow this interest of the child; the objects or occupations may become more familiar to us, but they should not seem stale; our interest in them, instead of declining, should only become the more expert. We should be detecting characteristics and comparing methods and gaining knowledge of a variety of men.

The disposition toward this sort of play is put down in early childhood with the frequent reminder, "You must learn not

to stare at people," or, "It is n't polite to point." It is repressed even more at the later period of school, when the boy is left no choice between close attention to books in the schoolroom and devotion to bodily exercise out of doors. The fact that the education of girls is generally so much more lax in both these respects accounts, no doubt, for the feminine "handiness" and flexibility at play; ten women for one man know how to amuse themselves with trifles, to find sport in an idea, delight in a conversation, and contentment in solitude. It is probably true that to attain their excellent frivolity they passed through a less wholesome and healthy period than the corresponding period in the life of the normal boy; so far as a man can judge, the typical school-girl is a capricious, vain, egotistical, and snobbish creature. Few things are more unsavory or depressing than the literature — fortunately not extensive — of girls' school life; nine tenths of the stories which undertake to describe

it deal with the inhuman treatment of schoolmates who are poorly dressed or "of inferior social position." A precocious faculty of observation seems usually to be of the detective sort, — quick to fasten upon unattractive and suspicious details. It grows charitable and broad with years, the biting comments of youth are gradually tempered, and sarcasm, which it had been a joy to wield, is reserved as a weapon to be but rarely used. The woman is equipped for the gentle, genial play of life by the sharpness of wits and eyes that she learned as a girl.

But the boy on emerging from school, where he has been so single-minded in his pursuits, soon finds that he is deficient in the faculty of observation. The acknowledgment is tacitly made to him by the advisory elder world that in this one vital respect it was necessary to bring him up wrong; and he is recommended now to remedy by his own efforts the deficiency that education imposed upon him. There

are not many harder tasks. He has been so bred to think of the main chance, to concentrate his thoughts upon his personal work and business, to be energetic, brisk, and active along one line, that he is unable to waste time to advantage; and when he is idle, it is with an unhappy and unprofitable restlessness. He cannot grasp the point of view, the whimsical, detached, casual, and inconsequent point of view that makes out of mere observation an amusement and a play.

Thus, in the matter of training the outward eye, education in a puzzled, half-apologetic way submits a tardy acknowledgment of failure. But of its failure to provide exercise for the inward eye before which passes the panorama of the unreal, the fanciful, it makes a boast. It deplores as much in man as in boy the tendency to dream; unsympathetic with the inward eye, it declares the day-dreamer to have a mind untrained, if not indeed diseased. Coeval with the admonition not

to stare and not to point the finger is the precept not to let the thoughts go woolgathering. How smartly comes down the pedagogue's rule for inattention in the class! How despairing is the mother's look when Johnny gapes with open mouth and meat on fork, stricken all forgetful of his food! There is, I am sure, in the scientific spirit now prevailing among parents and nurses less encouragement than there used to be to the pleasant delusions of infancy. Have you not been a child and insisted on hollowing out your mashed potato and making a lake of gravy in the crater? And was not the potato spoiled if the lake prematurely burst its banks? Also, when you had your oatmeal, could you bear it if it was not a perfect island,— dry on top and entirely surrounded by cream? My most intense antipathy was conceived at the age of seven for a kind lady whom I visited, and who arranged my oatmeal for me, diligently drenching its surface. Nowadays, I observe, children seem unfamiliar

with the simple diversions that I remember so pleasantly. It is partly, perhaps, that they are exposed to new-fashioned breakfast cereals which soak up cream before imagination can draw breath ; it is partly that they are so repeatedly warned by their nurses and mammas not to play with their food.

The atmosphere of discouragement that surrounds the play of children is not abated with the years. The enjoyment of dreams, the building of castles in the air, the escaping from the facts of life, especially from the unpleasant facts, to beguile one's self upon fancy and dalliance are disapproved and despised ; and I raise up my voice in protest. What a real and blameless pleasure, I exclaim, it is for the most of us to imagine ourselves greater, braver, finer than we are or than we shall ever be ! Entering a shop to buy a necktie, one may perhaps be interrupting the meditation of the salesman on how he should act if he were President, — how

gracious he would be, and benign and lovable, and withal how inflexibly independent and in crises stern. This use of his imagination doubtless gives him great pleasure, and it need not at all incapacitate him for selling neckties. The factory girl, watching her threads, dreams of being the mill-owner's daughter, driving in her carriage, and living in the big house on the hill. And she guides her threads as unerringly, as steadfastly, as if she felt the eyes of the foreman upon her. Perhaps it would be nearer the usual truth to think of her standing thus and dreaming, not of a bright future in which she is the centre, but of one that holds rest and ease and pleasure for her tired mother and gayety and promise for little brothers and sisters. And is one to be chidden for dreaming such dreams?

The habit is pernicious, I grant, if it seizes and delays one upon the brink of action. Yet truly it appears to me that those who are excessively fond of imagining

great and improbable prospects for themselves would achieve just as little were their love of these visions forever set at rest. There are some men by birth and temperament fit only for dreams; some by like circumstance fit only for action; and many more normally composed, in whom the capacity for each exercise might, if it were permitted, serve to offset and refresh the other. But it is thought feeble or unmanly to avail one's self of any such means of rehabilitation; we Americans, after our day's work is done, take our rest in further action, our relaxation in excitement. Yet were the many thousands for whom the theatre furnishes the most frequent evening's amusement to stroll or sit out under the stars, entertaining such thoughts and dreams as come, they would put their souls and minds into better order for the slumber of the night and for the work of the next day.

Perhaps the utterance seems inconsistent in one who contends that we do not

play enough. Indeed, the popularity of the theatre at the present time would no doubt be the first fact advanced to refute the criticism. The point is made that everybody goes to the theatre nowadays; the people who in a past generation would have been shocked by the suggestion sit now in the front row. Even the clergy have acquired a habit of recommending plays to their congregations. To be sure, these are generally the poorest possible plays; nevertheless, it is an indication of the yielding on every side to the universal imperative demand for amusement.

Thousands of flexible dancing girls with shrill voices, thousands of effeminate, capering young men, pass in review each season before a city's audience, and go twirling and grimacing on. The performances of these constitute perhaps the main interest for the great multitude of theatre-goers. Feeble wit, clumsy and shabby humor, meretricious music, are impudently combined; and the audience, con-

vinced by the tinsel of the stage, titters and listens and applauds.

The audience is amused; we must face that fact. And nothing could more eloquently demonstrate the helplessness of the ordinary American when withdrawn from his games or his sports and confronted with the problem of amusing himself. His eyes can be diverted only by the abnormal, the bizarre; the natural processes of life are dull and tedious to his failing imagination. Hence the theatre is the resort, the amusement, of the wholly unimaginative, of those who need to have the picture spread before them in all its details, so that they may comprehend it with merely the automatic effort of the senses. Unimaginative, they have no pleasure in reading, unless it is a flat-footed kind of fiction, over which they may drowse with no danger of losing the thread. They cannot call up clear visions in their own minds, nor can they grasp them from the picturesque and vivid page. A mental sluggish-

ness besets them. Removed from the excitement of games and sports, they are more often stultified than stimulated by play.

There is this to be said of Americans, however: because they have been well trained in methods of work, they get perhaps as much enjoyment as any people out of the periods of play that work itself affords. In purely mechanical labor there are no such periods, and that is why all those engaged in it should be permitted and encouraged to occupy their minds with dreams, and their eyes with what is characteristic and interesting in the ordinary movement of life. But in any work demanding mental initiative or action there are sure to be times of pure delight. This comes partly from the consciousness of success in solving the problem on which one has been engaged; the attitude of genial congratulation and special affection which one assumes then toward one's self holds a histrionic quality akin to play. Yet

this is unimportant compared with the hopefulness and zest of the actual performance, when for very interest one cannot have success or failure too closely in view. The plotting of a large financial scheme and the putting of it into execution; the writing at a man's best power of a dramatic climax; the grasping of the feature that will give a picture its subtle, notable distinction, and the painting it in with a few creative strokes; the first clear view to the end in an architectural problem, and the instant leaping to achieve out of commonplace and mere convenience beauty,— these and the like experiences are for thinking and active men the most incomparable play. Detained from finishing or from beginning the work that beckons joyously, one chafes with the impatience of the boy in the schoolroom on the day of his championship game; released, one plunges into the toil with the thrill and elation of the boy rushing to the strife.

The pathetic and yet the eternally cheer-

ful and assuring paradox is this, — that delight in performance by no means guarantees excellence of work. One may humbly imagine how Shakespeare exulted in Mark Antony's funeral address, striking it off perhaps in a couple of glorious immortal hours, now dipping his quill with a leisurely smile at his own cunning, now writing with a concentrated passion. Yet it is our privilege to know that Alberta Smitherson — spoken of as the coming authoress — made similar demonstrations, and felt something of the same emotion, when she composed the story that has just been rejected by the "Boudoir Magazine." It is certainly a bountiful provision of nature that in the capacity of men for enjoyment and delight there is no such wide disparity as in their power for creation and achievement.

Unquestionably, the nobler the work, the more refreshing must be its aspects to him whom it engrosses. It strengthens a man to feel that, whether he wins or loses,

his labor is not undertaken simply for his own profit, and that the question is a far greater one than merely that of success or failure. The old English astronomer, Halley, was one of the sublime among the world's workers; yet exceptional as is his story, it is only typical of the true men of science of every age. He was born in 1656; the last transit of Venus had taken place in 1639, the next would not occur until 1761. Yet it was this phenomenon that engaged his attention; he sought to ascertain what astronomers might learn from the celestial happening that he had never seen and could never see. As the result of his study, he left accurate calculations and directions which should enable the skilled observer of a transit of Venus to deduce from that brief event the distance of the earth from the sun, the magnitudes of the planetary orbits, indeed, the scale of the whole solar system, — of all which matters the world was then in ignorance. And when the transit occurred,

astronomers who had stationed themselves for it in Otaheite and in Europe followed the instructions that Halley had bequeathed them, and hence were able to make a contribution to human knowledge impressive enough to rank with the discoveries of Newton and Kepler and Galileo. The man whose fertile mind had prepared the way, and who knew that he would be silent in his grave years before his theory could be put to the test, had busied himself gayly and happily in the unfinishable task; no doubt, when he perceived whither his investigations were leading him, he could not have been more excited, more eager, had there been a transit of Venus scheduled for the next morning. And let us make mention, too, of those worthy followers who spent years preparing for the rare happening of a few hours, taking practice observations of a fictitious sun and a fictitious Venus, living and working, it might seem, to see the transit once, and again eight years later, with the overshad-

owing dread that cloudy weather might set all at naught and the phenomenon be unseen of mortal eyes for more than another century.

Life is both a usurer and a spendthrift. The weak, the maimed, the toilers under crushing burdens of poverty, disease, and despair, who are held to the most exacting interest on the loan of their few troubled earthly years, often meet the obligation with a more abiding conscience and honor than those dowered at their birth and attended always by a lavish fortune. We may not seek for the equity in an arrangement which imposes upon one man work that is all drudgery, and on another, who has the implements of play at command, work that is, much of it, play. There is no cant so unthinking and false as that which urges every man to work for the joy of working, — and which is cant even though it be uttered in stirring verse. In a city building there are seven men employed whose work is this: on Monday

morning they begin on the ground floor, swabbing corridors, washing windows, polishing brass and iron; and it takes them precisely till Saturday night to progress in this cleansing manner — literally on their knees — to the top of the building. Then on Monday morning again they begin on the ground floor, each one with a fresh cake of soap and with no variation in the week's task before him. It does not seem to me possible for a man to work thus for the joy of working.

Yet it is just this kind of dull, necessary obedience to an order or a routine that constitutes the work of nearly all humanity. Under such conditions, any message to man that urges upon him the pure joy of labor must have a very complacent and superior sound. If ever there lived a bootblack whose chief happiness was in producing the most lustrous possible shine on the shoe of his patron, what a poor-spirited little prig he must have been! how unworthy beside his confrères who rejoiced

to gamble away their pennies in the alley! It is, of course, not wrong for the bootblack to take pleasure in the lustre of his shine, or for the clerk to have pride in the neatness of his page; but if life holds for them no other pleasure quite so keen, they have lost the vital spark of manhood. And therefore it should be urged upon all those who perform the somnolent, mechanical labor of long hours, day after day, listlessly and well, as most of the world's work is performed, to dream dreams and see visions and hearken even in the midst of their tasks for some passing whisper from the spirit of play.

IV

THE SMOKING-ROOM

THE SMOKING-ROOM

The sanctity of masculine institutions is assailed. The male being's exclusive right to cast the ballot and to hold the office is challenged; with characteristic chivalry — in America — he lends to the challenger an indulgent ear; with characteristic generosity he makes unessential concessions. His privilege of drinking where and when he pleases — a privilege which he had enjoyed since remote antiquity — is curtailed; it is even sought to deny him the seclusion appropriate to potation. The Boston barroom, for instance, is deprived of the shutter and the curtain — ordinary decencies of life. The canteen is abolished; there is no Sunday beer. A mighty organization of persons of her own sex, unmindful of the services she has rendered to literature, seeks to expunge the British barmaid. The W. C. T. U. — defined by

some one as the We See To You Society —flourishes the lash. Everywhere woman is awake and vigilant — impressed as never before with the truth that her mission is man.

Easy-going and good-natured as man is, he has some power of resistance. Even though menaced by so formidable a foe, he feels no alarm for the future. He is secure in his independence so long as his possession of the smoking-room is not disputed. The function of this institution has been to expand and enlarge the man, to encourage expression and self-revelation, to promote in him the sense of latitude and freedom which his unruly nature craves, and without proper nourishment of which he droops mentally and morally. For rugged growth he requires much unhampered interchange with persons of his own coarse fibre. Women charge the atmosphere at once with the electricity of criticism, — to which the juvenile is of course most sensitive. A personable young gentleman

recognizes instinctively the critical spirit and instinctively seeks to propitiate it by engaging behavior. He may be quite successful in his effort, but none the less does he require a refuge where he may soothe his agitated nerves, where he may discard self-consciousness in the presence of experience. What the young man needs most is contact with his elders; likewise do the elders need contact with the young. Nowhere have the opportunities for this been so great as in the smoking-room. I am told that on certain new ocean liners women are privileged to invade this apartment. It is an invasion that can never prosper. The feminine sense of propriety is stronger than the feminine sense of curiosity — fortunately for the human race; after an inspection from the doorway the brethren will be ieft in undisturbed possession. Otherwise, the brag, the broad humorous narrative, the acute discussion must be conducted in a cautious undertone; the feminine presence is bound to devitalize

the company; and the flavor which with adventurous interest the woman is eager to taste, she dissipates by her intrusion. No gain in upholstery could ever offset the loss of that privacy, that atmosphere which causes strangers to confide in one another, which induces fellowship and provides for enlargement by observation and experience. Let rawness and formality of furnishing prevail, let the seats be clothed in gaudy coverings and fixed in an unbeguiling intimacy, let the carpets be adorned with numerous nickel-plated, shining utensils — in spite of all its ugliness the smoking-room is not to be superseded by any apartment which makes an appeal to the feminine taste and welcomes the feminine person.

The total abstainer may best record, with a discriminating pen, the progress of the banquet at which good wine flows freely; he better than those whose blood and brains are stirred by drink may separate the stages and bear away a clear

memory of broadening festivity. Those involved in subordinate parts of a great action make the least illuminating of chroniclers, except in so far as their own small contribution to the final fact is concerned. The non-smoker who yet frequents the smoking-room has, in the same way, better opportunities for gathering data for a well-rounded commentary, one that shall embrace all the phases of smoking-room life. The man who smokes is too soon submerged into a phase himself; for the commentator there is required a certain detachment and isolation. Therefore am I emboldened to offer my commentary.

One who sits in a smoking-room and does not smoke is at a serious disadvantage socially. Many a pleasant acquaintance I have seen made over an interchange of opinions as to the relative merits of certain brands of cigarettes or tobacco; this opening of opportunity has never been mine. One is congenitally a non-smoker, just as one is congenitally, it may be, a drunkard.

We are all predisposed to certain habits and vices, and the vice of not smoking is one for which I have inherited a predilection. Sometimes, when I observe the pleasures and advantages which other men derive from the slight embellishment of their breathing processes, I am tempted to rebel against the ancestral impulse. Indeed the non-smoker is in conversation a man without resources; he presents a naked and embarrassed front; his every effort is noted and charged against him; each shade of anxiety or apprehension, each glow of hope is advertised upon his face. He is a frank and emotional exhibit; whereas a cigar in the mouth can impart shrewdness to a stupid countenance, self-possession to one that should be disturbed, an air of mystery to the blank — in short, he who has the art of smoking has always at hand a mask. Yet if there are disadvantages and humiliations in being a non-smoker, there are also immunities. The non-smoker presents, it seems, the more forbidding aspect

to the bore. If he is of a contemplative habit of mind, he is not likely to have his musings interrupted by unwelcome demands upon his attention.

This, at least, is a logical conclusion, yet a recent experience compels me to admit that the statement is recklessly complacent. I was occupying a seat in a well-filled smoking-car; when a man got in at a way station and came down the aisle, I made room for him. Being interested in a newspaper, I gave him no attention until he said loudly and abruptly, —

"How are you going to vote?"

I replied that I was not going to vote for a conspicuously odious candidate.

"You 're not?" he shouted in amazement; then he added confidentially yet loudly, "Say, I 'm not, either. Why should I vote for him? Tell me that; why should I vote for him? What 's he ever done, I 'd like to know? Answer me that, will you?"

By that time I had concluded that this

conversational gentleman was in liquor, and I returned to the perusal of my newspaper. He continued in a voice which drew the attention of all the passengers in the vicinity, —

"Why should I vote for him? *He's* not a married man. *He's* got no children. Lives for himself alone. I'm a married man — wife and six children — and I support 'em and educate 'em too. Why should I vote for a man with no responsibilities? Answer me that—*if you please!*"

The demand was so emphatic, the subsequent pause so intense, that I found it difficult to fix my mind on what I was reading. I was aware that the public interest in the situation was becoming more marked.

"He says he stands for temperance. So do I stand for temperance. Temperance is a mighty good thing — always supported it. But — it can be carried too far. That's what he forgets; it's a good thing, but it can be carried too far."

I churlishly refrained from acquiescing in this sentiment. He was silent for a few moments — surveying me, I was aware, with extreme disfavor.

"Ain't you interested in what I'm saying?" he asked with loud defiance.

There was no doubt of the interest of the others.

"No," I said.

He did not reply; he turned his large bulk a little more towards me, and I knew that his eyes were coursing impudently up and down my frame. It was extremely difficult to keep my mind on the newspaper article. I glanced up and saw the faces of many men turned towards me, grinning, intent, joyously apprehensive. I resumed my reading.

"Say, do you know what I think of you?"

Now I knew perfectly well that he thought my manners were bad; but I said, without raising my eyes, "No, and I don't care to know."

The silence that ensued was ominous. I felt that he was gathering his powers of invective and that my fellow passengers were hanging over the backs of their seats, hungry for his vituperative words. At last speech came.

"I am going to tell you what I think of you. You may not like it, but I'm going to tell you just the same." He kept me in suspense for a dramatic moment. And then, in the most measured, honeyed voice, "I think that I would trust you with my life. I think that you are the finest, the most genu*ine* gentleman I ever saw. I think I would like to stand up and say to the people in this car that here is a gentleman I never saw before, but I would trust him with my life. That's what I think about you."

I thanked him. But he was in that obsessed and obstinate condition which demands reiterated utterance. He adorned me once more with adulation, and men rose from their seats and gathered round

us in delight. I was presented to them as the charming unknown. When I left the train — which was fortunately soon — my admirer accompanied me to the door and bade me good-by from the platform.

But this experience was for me exceptional; ordinarily I seem to repel rather than to attract the attention of the smoker. I have persuaded myself that there is no unflattering explanation of this, but rather that he who is without interest in tobacco lacks a primary and sympathetic interest for the lover of tobacco, and as an uncongenial companion is ignored. So he is left free to meditate and to observe and to listen. And although he is himself seldom the direct recipient, he is made aware that confidential and intimate bits of biography are being transmitted in corners and across tables; it entertains him to note the processes which lead so rapidly to such a consummation. Subtleties do not often prevail in the smoking-room — and usually it is the simple-minded, not the subtle,

who seeks a confidant. So abrupt are the introductions to the engrossing theme that sometimes the eavesdropper is astonished at the progress which in five minutes may be made by two well-disposed individuals. I was once reading in the smoking-room of a steamer; a stout gentleman with a placid, good-humored face relapsed into the seat beside me and lighted a cigar. He became in all respects at once a figure of such comatose contentment that I assumed speech would disturb him; I continued therefore with my reading, and he of course made no advances. Presently a dyspeptic, morose-looking, thin man took the seat on the other side of him, a most unpromising neighbor. But immediately the stout gentleman gave indications that coma was no longer contentment; he was stirring with an interest, an active desire.

"Sir," he said, intercepting the other, who was reaching for a match, "before you light that cigar, would you do me the honor to try this of mine? It's a spe-

cial importation, and I regard it as the finest cigar I ever tasted."

The thin man's suspicious glance could detect nothing but benevolence in that beaming face.

"You 're very good;" he accepted the engaging cigar. "It looks very superior; I 'll be glad to try it."

The fat gentleman watched the beneficiary during the first savoring puffs with infantile eagerness.

"Ah," he exclaimed in fine good humor after a moment of anxiety, "I knew I was n't mistaken; I knew you were a judge of cigars. I can always tell from a man's look if he knows cigars."

"Very perceptive," said the thin man. "A most excellent cigar."

"Nothing quite like a good cigar after dinner in your library, with a wife sitting there that does n't mind the smoke," ventured the fat man.

The thin man nodded; he was a reluctant talker.

"Ever since my wife's death, smoking 's not been the same to me." The fat man sighed. "I still enjoy it, but it ain't the same. You 're married, I presume?"

"Yes."

"Any children?"

"Two."

"I 'm not so fortunate. Been married twice, but no children. I heard it excellently well expressed the other day, — a man's wife is the bond, the children are the coupons."

"That 's one way of looking at it, certainly," said the thin man.

"I always carry a photograph of my wife — my second," observed the fat man presently. "I used to carry it in my watch, but I found it was getting scratched, so I had an envelope made for it; I keep it in that now. I 'd like to show it to you."

I expected him to search in his bosom; he drew the picture, however, from his hip pocket. The thin man took it gingerly, and inspected it.

"Oh — yes — very nice looking lady," he said at last.

The proprietor of the photograph was satisfied, and as he returned it to its envelope and then to its abiding-place, he remarked, —

"She was the mate for me — if ever a man had one. My second. Died six years ago. I've never had any desire to find a successor. Oh, I look at the ladies sometimes and mention the possibility to myself, but they none of 'em measure up with her — so I shake my head, no, no."

"Well," said the thin man simply, "I'm satisfied with my first wife. I hope I'll never have to think about a second."

So he had a human side after all; his unresponsiveness had been due probably to excess of caution. He and the fat man sat together often in the smoking-room thereafter; indeed if one entered and did not see the other, a look hesitating and disconsolate would cross his face. Tobacco and domesticity had created a bond. I

know not what further intimacies were revealed; generally the fat man was the talker, the thin man the listener; they did not join in any of the card games, they did not contribute to the ribald narratives that often delighted a corner of the smoking-room; they drew about themselves a little company of middle-aged, quiet persons, on whom the fat man beamed with the most unfailing good humor. Among them much sound doctrine was uttered, truisms and platitudes were given a solemn hearing; but always there was something naïve and quaint in their seriousness. Occasionally they engaged in literary discussion.

"Multum in parvo," said the fat man once. "That's my conception of Shakespeare. Multum in parvo."

"Shakespeare or the man that wrote the plays," remarked a heathen.

"There was a fellow out to Detroit published a book saying Shakespeare was all a cipher," commented the fat man. "The masterpiece of English literature,

according to this Detroit gentleman, was just a blind — turned out to cover up the tracks of the scandals of the time! Well, I don't believe it. And as for saying Bacon wrote Shakespeare — you might as well compare an elephant and a graceful gazelle — or Grover Cleveland's orations and Lincoln's Gettysburg speech."

"Ah," said the heathen, "but how do you account — "

And there the argument began. And where an argument begins, interest for all except the two disputants usually ends. Quite properly argument is not popular in the smoking-room. The person who delights in controversy seldom enlarges his audience. Once his tendency is revealed, people drift away from him to those whose forte is narrative. Or in preference they will even sit about and watch a man playing solitaire.

The story-teller is the magnet of the smoking-room. Strangers making the acquaintance of one another desire to be

entertained and to be thought entertaining. Narrative is the resource of most men in this situation; only a few are endowed with the talent for casual, inconsequent, amusing talk, spontaneous, illuminating comment, the tact and restraint for letting pass a tempting but inappropriate opportunity, and the intellectual opulence that can in an exigency provide a flow — that does not merely leak out in occasional sparkling interjections. I think that men who combine these happy qualities are often deficient in the embracing geniality which is essential to leadership in the smoking-room, and that they may sit subordinate and overlooked. They shine perhaps more brightly in other realms.

As his intimacy with his auditor increases, the story-teller tends to introduce personal experience into his narratives; they become less often the small change of current anecdotes, more and more often the vehicle for self-revelation or advertisement. One cannot sit long in the smok-

ing-room without hearing raised somewhere the bragging voice. There are a vast number of men who never outgrow the boyish wish to impress the stranger, who even predicate upon success in this matter the possibility of maintaining intercourse with him; they must in the beginning assert their importance. Once they have demonstrated that, they may turn out to be modest persons enough, neither self-centred nor disposed to monopolize the talk. There was a man I once knew who could not be an hour in the company of any one without imparting the information, shyly and awkwardly, that he had won a medal of honor for bravery in the Civil War. Having liberated this fact, he would relapse into his unobtrusive, quiet personality, receive the ideas of others with humility, venture his own in a deprecating way — a submissive soul, conscious always of his limitations. Once in his life it had befallen him to achieve something supreme; thereafter he

had served, perhaps, a "faithful failure." It seemed fitting enough that he should proclaim his solitary triumph, if he chose, and so protect himself from what would otherwise inevitably be a slighting estimation, perhaps exclusion. The ordinarily successful man is as apt to recommend himself by similar methods; but as his achievement is of a more conventional sort, allusion to it may be more gracefully brought about. That he enjoys a large manner of life, or that he numbers persons of title or celebrity among his friends, or that he is improving an already prosperous business, he may indicate with a certain indirectness of which the Civil War hero could seldom avail himself. The man who resorts to such methods for the promotion of his social interests, in the smoking-room or elsewhere, must often be troubled by a dim perception that his capital is small. His actual achievement on which he prides himself, to which he refers for guarantee, may be a constant

producer of revenue, yet as an achievement be as momentary, as obsolete as the veteran's act of valor. The business man's success is often based on one admirable creative episode, let us say ; thereafter it declines upon inglorious routine. And the early confidence that is shared with the stranger as to income or imposing intimacies with the great may incidentally proclaim a rather shrinking, shame-faced consciousness of subsequent inadequacy. The feeling that one must put one's best foot forward and if possible get a running start, imparts an aggressive demeanor to some essentially cautious and conservative souls. So if one's impression of the smoking-room is of a place reverberating with the inordinate self-glorification of its occupants — as sometimes is the case — let it be charitably remembered that though the mouth be bold and blatant, a heart that is anxious of acceptance is often throbbing in the throat.

Sometimes indeed the brag is so ingen-

uous and so conjoined with confession as to be quite disarming. A big man of the type of the prosperous barkeeper — diamond rings and shirt-stud, stubbly pompadour hair, heavy red jowls, and little eyes — was, on a return trip from Europe, expressing his bewilderment at the American eagerness for travel. "London, Paris, and Vienna — I seen them all, and what is there in one of 'em that little old New York can't beat in a showdown? I'll dance a clog for joy when I hit the Broadway pave again. There's just as good stores along that fine little thoroughfare as there is on Regent Street in London, Rue de la Paix in Paris, and what-you-may-call-it in Vienna. And if you get stung in America, you get stung by a self-respecting, independent Christian, not by a grovelling worm that don't throw no more chest than a Chink. Gee, I wanted to trample on some of them fellows sometimes. In England I felt ashamed of my Anglo-Saxon blood, to see how full-grown men

could act. The hotel porter holds the door open for me when I go out, and he says, 'Thank you, sir.' I tell a cabby to drive me to the Carlton, and he says, 'Thank you, sir.' The waiter passes me the bread, and when I take it, he says, 'Thank you, sir.' 'Look here,' I says to one of these fellows, 'you've got a bad habit of thanking a person in advance. Wait till you get it. Or are you trying to be funny?' Well, I always thought the Germans were an upstanding people. But the only word I heard all over Germany was 'Bitte.' When I 'd get into the hotel elevator the guy in uniform — a family man with sideburns and moustache — would say, 'Bitte,' and lift his cap to me. Lift it, mind you, clean off his head, not just tip it. And before he 'd let me out of the cage, he 'd always have to say 'Bitte' and lift his cap again. It was an awful waste of time and manners. I knew there was n't anything sincere about it — just a play for graft. I like a pirate that comes

out into the open and puts on a front — the way we do at home; give me the newsboy that calls me 'Charley' and asks me for a match. And say; you talk about comforts! Out to my house I've got a big room with a great big porcelain tub and nickel fittings and a tiled floor and a needle shower, and when I get back there I'm going to shut myself in and turn on all the faucets and just splash for about two days. And I'm going to have griddle cakes and waffles for breakfast. And I'm going to ride up and down all day in a sky-scraper elevator — one that goes with a jump and makes the blood sort of blush up all through you when it starts. I'm going to have excitement and comfort every moment. I'm going to carry my own bag and not worry myself sick for fear I have n't enough foolish money in my pockets to pass round to every one that wears a uniform or a dress suit. I'm going to spend my Sundays down to my place on the beach; the house ain't a French cha-

teau, but it 's practical and to my mind it has considerable ornament. Sundays there we can auto in the morning and play bridge in the afternoon, and have cocktails before lunch and dinner. Ever spend a Sunday in England? Oh say! Spare me!"

"Well, that 's right," agreed another American. "But you must acknowledge that there are some fine old buildings and ruins, such as we can't show."

"Ruins! Me and my wife drove out from Warwick one day — say, why do they call it 'Warrick' when they spell it with a *w*? — and took in Kensilworth Castle, is it? It was an awful hot day, and it was certainly the most ruined thing I ever saw. After about eight minutes I says to my wife, 'Well, what 's the use? We 'll forget it all any way in a week — so let 's go and have some beer.' So we got into our carriage and had the coachman drive us across the road to a little inn; they sold postcards with views of the ruins there, and I bought a handful and told

my wife to send 'em off to her friends so they'd know what we were seeing; and while she done that, I unbuttoned my vest and put down four bottles of beer."

Laughter followed and then an interval of silence, upon which emerged from another corner of the room an enthusiastic, fluting voice, saying, —

"My dear fellow, 'Pelleas and Melisande,' with Debussy's music, is the most ravishingly beautiful, the most enchanting thing I ever saw or heard." —

The smoking-room of a steamer is a place of contrasts and of various activities. The dominating element is likely to be a noisy sporting fraternity. The bridge-players and the poker-players establish early a fellowship which is cemented by the opportunities to gamble on the daily run of the ship. Others of more sober tendencies find relaxation in solitaire, in checkers or backgammon; there is no game so dull that it will not draw critical spectators. An informality prevails which makes it

quite proper to look over the shoulder of a player and derive an opinion as to his mental processes, or to benefit him by a friendly suggestion when he is puzzled in his solitaire. With the same freedom an exuberant victor will issue a challenge to the crowd; an unconquerable checker-player, who by his astonishing skill and fertility had attracted a group of admirers, was encouraging a fresh opponent: "Well, well; it looks to me as if here was some one who knew something about the game — but let's try this. Hello! that's a crafty move, isn't it? I guess he thinks he has me in a hole — but I wonder what will happen now. — What! going to let me take three of your men for one of mine; do you think that's good policy? But you're right — seems to be no other way out of it for you, is there?" In two or three more moves he had annihilated — with compassionate comment — his antagonist; and the little audience stood by sniggering.

"But I'd like to see some one lick you," observed a spectator. "You *are* so darned cocky about your game." The champion laughed. "If you feel that way, I 've got to do something to be popular. Steward! Ask the gentlemen what they 'll have."

It is true that the good humor and geniality of the smoking-room are not universal. Pretty nearly always there are individuals or groups of individuals who take a furious dislike to one another at the start; and out of these instinctive enmities ill-natured gossip is sometimes born. Particularly is this true of the youthful; their standards of conduct and of manners are very unyielding, very high; the faculty in which they excel is that of condemnation; and in the leisure which they have for criticism they endeavor to substantiate their immediate prejudices and antipathies. Nothing is more amusing or irritating, according to one's philosophy, than their positive conclusions with regard to the character of those whom they do not

know; nothing is more agreeable than the enthusiasm with which on a little knowledge they recant and retract.

One aspect of the smoking-room is to be touched upon as lightly, as regretfully as is compatible with truth, yet not with entire deprecation, — that aspect which it wears at times when men are grouped together in a corner, heads down, listening intently, while one speaks in a subdued voice. The smiling silence, then the loud guffaw — no doubt it is true that only man is vile. Yet I believe that in a mature audience no serious harm is ever done by the story that arouses honest laughter. The potency of such laughter is for good, no matter what its origin. If the "smoking-room story," as a certain type of narrative has been labelled, does not provoke honest laughter, it has done harm — to the narrator if to no one else. And when, in the expressive vernacular, a story of this sort receives a "frost," the lesson administered is stern; the humiliation is

enough to make others wary of risking a similar rebuff. A somewhat forward person never, I thought, during the whole voyage quite regained his normal assertiveness, which he lost on the second day out — Sunday. He was sitting that morning in the smoking-room; some one asked him if he was going down to the church service. "Oh yes," he answered comfortably and loudly, so that all might hear, and he continued, "I go to church every Sunday; I don't mind it at all. I go with my wife; I like to sing the hymns and see the ladies in their Sunday toggery; and then afterwards on the way home I leave my wife and stop in at the club; quite a lot of the boys have the habit of doing that; and we sit round and swap stories for an hour before lunch. Pick up some mighty good ones now and then." And forthwith he related to the company a specimen. It was received with gravity; the narrator flushed; it was all very painful and salutary.

The smoking-room is indeed a school

of manners. Its devotees are not fastidious, but neither are they of blunted sensibilities. The vulgar learn from the gentle, and the gentle learn from the vulgar. The art of smoking tends to cultivate a spirit of generosity; there is a brotherhood of feeling which provides tacitly that he whose tobacco pouch is full shall share with him whose pouch is empty; and this generosity in dealing with material possessions accompanies a generosity in dealing with ideas. No place is more democratic; nowhere do men more earnestly seek to meet each other upon common ground. The smoking-room inspires one with contentment in masculine resources. The more one habituates one's self to its atmosphere, the more pleasant and satisfying does it become. The spell of feminine society grows less and less potent to the smoking-room philosopher. His comfort is provided for, a little play goes on before his eyes, indeterminate and fragmentary but amusing, the characters

of those who are in reminiscent mood unconsciously unfold, oddities, eccentricities, and absurdities are revealed, enthusiasms that animate the heart of age and grievances that vex the heart of youth entertain him with their humor; and if in his preoccupation with these trivialities,—the sum of which may mean an appreciable wisdom, — he neglects more and more those finer moods that may never be awakened in the smoking-room or in the companionship of those who frequent it, — well, he is generally a rubicund old bachelor who had his ideal of charm long ago and pursued it till it vanished.

V

CYNICISM

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One of the seeming waywardnesses of our human nature is the respect for a cynic that lurks in nearly every heart. The respect is not for his character, certainly not for his disposition; but it goes out to him as a man of intellect, and is often disproportionate to his ability. To hear that a man is cynical is to accept him as of superior intelligence. There is a universal deference to what is universally deemed an unlovely and undesirable attitude of mind. The entrance of the cynic into the drawing-room produces an air of expectant interest; his rancorous comments are received as admirable wit. So, at least, according to the contemporary novels of society; so, even, — though in a somewhat less obvious and artificial manner, — according to one's own observation. We all find more interesting the person who discusses his friend's fail-

ings than him who dwells upon his friend's virtues. We do not like the cynic better, but we regard him as the more penetrating and the better informed.

Hence we find him excellent company. For instance: Brown takes pains to make a pleasant impression on those whom he meets, and, in the ordinary relations of life, gets on with his acquaintances and friends very comfortably. When, therefore, the cynical observer shrugs his shoulders and intimates something to Brown's discredit, the idea has for those who know Brown the charm of novelty, and adorns him with a new interest. Having never before held him in discredit, they feel that his detractor has got below the surface. The conviction is strengthened by the cynic's air of mental reservation, his unwillingness to utter definitely what he knows, his manner that implies, "Oh yes, all very well, but I could tell things if I would."

This, however, is not the only cause that contributes to the general deference.

If one man declares a person to be charming, fascinating, or delightful, and another pronounces him disgusting, repulsive, or intolerable, who makes the more profound impression? The language of enthusiasm is emasculate compared with that of hatred or contempt. A sufficient reason for the undemonstrative nature of the English-speaking race lies in the effeminate quality of the adjectives that denote admirable traits. Some of them can hardly be uttered without a consciousness of a loss of virility. One has only to contrast with them the hearty gusto of our vocabulary of dislike and depreciation to perceive the tremendous advantage that the cynic enjoys.

His very name supports his pretensions to a superior intelligence. "Cynic," for all that it meant originally "doglike," is an aristocratic word. One is not prone to think of coal heavers, sailors, miners, as cynics; it has probably occurred to but few that their grocers and butchers are cynics. The word is erudite and Greek;

the presumption is that the man designated by a term of such distinguished lineage is of education and intelligence. We have a habit of deriving ideas in this illogical way. The cynics in the humbler walks of life are not regarded as cynics, but as men soured and disappointed. And when we hear of one that he is soured and disappointed, we do not instinctively pay tribute to his intelligence.

Is there, then, no wisdom in cynicism, no virtue in disbelief? Does the undoubted suggestion of intelligence which the word implies rest entirely upon such trivial and empty grounds? Unquestionably the inner respect which persists, notwithstanding the superficial condemnation, proceeds from a dim recognition of certain useful services that cynicism does perform. An attempt to discover these and set them forth fairly need not disturb even the most believing.

A reasonable cynicism affords recreation to the mind. A man may always, with

advantage to his mental health, indulge in a cynicism as a hobby; he may, for instance, be cynical of women, or newspapers, or party politics, or the publishers of novels, and be the better for it. But he is in a serious state if his cynicism includes women *and* newspapers *and* party politics *and* the publishers of novels. Then, indeed, is his outlook bleak and barren, and in all probability he lives and works only to malign ends.

Nearly all sane, normal people, however, enjoy one cynicism by way of diversion. It is, indeed, essential to character to have some object at which to scoff, swear, or sneer. Cynicism is never a native quality of the mind; it always has its birth in some unhappy experience. The young man finds that the girl who has gathered up for him all the harmony and melody of earth rings hollow at the test; and he drops his lyrical language and becomes cynical of women. The citizen of Boston has naturally grown cynical of newspapers.

The candidate for public office who has been definitely retired to private life by being "knifed" at the polls distrusts party politics. A man reads the advertisement of a novel, then reads the novel, and thenceforth is cynical of the publishers of novels. Yet these misfortunes have their salutary aspect. The disappointed lover, generalizing bitterly upon the sex, is not always implacable; a cooler judgment tempers and restores his passion, gives it another object, and so guides him to a safer, if less gusty and emotional love. The citizen of Boston, the betrayed candidate, the misled and disappointed reader, all have for their condition, even though they know it not, a valuable compensation; for the very experience that has brought them to this pass of reasonable cynicism has stirred their indignation; yes, in spite of their seeming inertness, indignation is now smouldering. And this is a great force; slow though it may be to start the wheels of machinery, it is still an important fuel

in keeping alive the fires under the boilers of civilization. The faculty of it becomes dulled by disuse, and is the more alert and righteous for a little rasping. How impressive and commanding a quality in a man is that of a great potential indignation! It is essential to the chieftain. He may never show more than the flash of an eye, yet that will serve. And such power of indignation never came to one who had not penetrated some large bland sham, and learned thereby to hate and disbelieve all its seductive kindred.

In supplying one with a theme for indignation, the turn toward cynicism furnishes also an additional amusement and charm. If a man is in the habit, for example, of expecting nothing but tales of murder, suicide, and scandal on the first page of his newspaper, he becomes actually pleased at the rich daily reward of his expectations. "Scurrilous sheet!" he cries, striking it with open palm. To behold, morning after morning, its recurring of-

fensiveness and hypocrisy, to feel that there are less discerning persons who approve of the very features that make it despicable, and to exclaim to himself, "So this is what the public likes!" brings him each time a curious satisfaction. Perhaps it is merely the satisfaction of a small gratified vanity, but it enables him to begin his day in a comfortable frame of mind; he is prepared to snarl only at newspapers. It is desirable that every man should have a small vanity gratified daily; it keeps him in good temper with himself and the world. And to observe small vanities and foibles in others performs this service, since a man always absolves himself from sharing the weaknesses that he sees.

Yet cynicism has a more valuable end than merely to amuse. It is a means toward sturdiness and independence in a man; it quickens his activities, and prevents a too ready acceptance of existing conditions. It is almost necessary to important achievement. The reverential

frame of mind is inefficient when confronted with the world's work; too much in the problems of life demands not to be reverenced, but to be cursed. There can be no useful and permanent building up without a clearing of the site; old foundations and débris have to be swept away. The man of reverential mind, who has no touch of cynicism, is unfit for this work. He is unfit, for instance, to serve as district attorney in one of our large cities, — as useful a function as an educated man may perform, yet one in the performance of which the man of entirely reverential spirit would be harmfully employed. The reverential spirit, contemplative of the established order, crowds out capacity for initiative; the cynical spirit, scouting the established order, stimulates initiative. Of this spirit have been the great reformers, men for whom Swift, in defining his own life, has supplied a motto: "The chief end of all my labor is to vex the world rather than to divert

it." It was characteristic of Cromwell that in dissolving the Long Parliament he should display a wanton cynicism. "My Lord General, lifting the sacred mace itself, said, 'What shall we do with this bauble? Take it away!'" The scorn with which he disposed of the revered symbol of majesty was in itself symbolic; as the Cavalier had been cynical of the Puritan's piety, so was the Puritan cynical of the pomp and trappings of the Cavalier.

The great rulers, like the great reformers, have had the cynical sense, and have in the same way derived from it, not paralysis, but an effective recklessness. Louis XIV, most brilliant of monarchs, observed in making an appointment to office, "J'ai fait dix mécontents et un ingrat." And he continued to appoint whom he pleased. Frederick the Great was the pupil of Voltaire; and when a Board of Religion came to him with a complaint that certain Roman Catholic schools were used for sectarian purposes, he bade them remember

that "in this country every man must get to heaven his own way." The ruthless cynicism of Peter the Great was supplemented by the splendid constructive hopefulness from which issued his saying, "I built St. Petersburg as a window to let in the light of Europe."

Yet we need not go to history for illustration; even in one's own experience it is not difficult to note the efficiency which a vein of cynicism, properly combined with other qualities, gives a man. Those who are regarded as successful, or as being on the road to success, are cheerful, hopeful persons, with just this slightly cynical outlook. Those who have failed, or are failing, are just as surely the utterly cynical, the decayed, querulous, and embittered, or the supremely reverential, who have too much respect for things as they are to undertake any alteration. These are the indolent; they may work hard all their lives, yet are they none the less indolent mentally, and unalert.

There is, indeed, what may be called the cynical sense, not to be confused with the sense of humor, though akin to it. It is this which enables a man to keep out of the stock market, and even more, to look without jealousy on the achievements of those who are in the stock market. It is the antiseptic sense. So far from promoting envy, malice, and uncharitableness, it is allied with sympathy. For sympathy means understanding, and there can be no true understanding if one does not detect the weaknesses as well as the virtues; without this cynical sense, one has not humanity. It gives a man a lively and discriminating interest in life; it guards him against the paralyzing vice of hero-worship, — which is a virtue only in the young and immature, — and against the more sinful fault of arrogance toward the dejected and beaten. For just as it enables him to see how trivial are even the greatest achievements of human ingenuity and labor, with what little loss the work of even the best

and wisest might have been omitted in the progress of the world, so, also, it prevents him from being unduly scornful of those who have accomplished—for all that appears on the surface—nothing. Seeing a man who has failed, the cynically minded wonders what accidents of birth and circumstance imposed his fruitlessness upon him; seeing a man who has succeeded, the cynic wonders if he had done so without the innumerable reinforcements of chance. If this view tends toward fatalism, so does it also toward democracy.

Yet one's cynicism must always be tempered in its sentiment and limited in its scope. A man may profitably be cynical of women, yet his faith and loyalty to at least one woman — his mother, or his sister, or the woman he loves — must be unswerving and unquestioning. A man may not be cynical of children or with children. He cannot be cynical of friends and keep them. He must not grow cynical of himself, for then nothing remains.

And the danger of cynicism is that once admitted into a man it may grow, appropriating one after another of his channels and outlets, narrowing his hopes and enthusiasms, until finally it rots the man himself.

Reasonably limited and kept within bounds, it is a source of strength to a man rather than of weakness; it gives him an independent and self-respecting point of view; it berates him if he tends toward a weak sentimentality; it is the companion of a cheerful levity. Take their cynical outlook away from Heine and Goethe and Victor Hugo, from Swift and Johnson and Franklin, — and how flavorless would be what remained! How insipid would be a literature in which wit and humor had to disport themselves entirely among the pleasants facts of life!

VI

THE QUIET MAN

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At college it was always easy to create a prepossession in favor of a man by recommending him as a "nice, quiet sort of fellow." In the case of the athlete who had demonstrated his vitality and manly qualities, the reason for this prepossession was clear; the declaration of his friends was an assurance that his head had not been turned by his achievements, and that he was modest and unassertive. But it always seemed to me singular that so negative a statement should so generally have guaranteed the worth of one of whom little else was known. Even in the larger world outside of college, the same guarantee holds good; let a stranger in a city have but one friend who makes it known that he is a "nice, quiet sort of fellow," and he will not lack for a welcome.

Yet many of the primary and obvious

reasons for quietness in a man are not prepossessing. It may be that he is a weakling; bullied because of his lack of strength in the Spartan age of boyhood, he has had fixed upon him the habit of timidity and self-effacement. Or he may be stupid, yet with just enough intelligence to perceive his dulness and so to be dumb. Or he may by nature be one of those passionless, unenthusiastic, indifferent creatures who find sufficient occupation in buttoning on their clothes in the morning and unbuttoning them at night, eating their three meals and going through the daily routine work or routine idleness to which necessity or circumstance has accustomed them. The classification is incomplete; there are quiet men who are not weaklings, who are not stupid, who are enthusiastic, men of firm will and steadfast purpose. But if we pass over these for the present, it will appear that the self-control practised by quiet persons had oftentimes better give place to self-abandon, and that many a

man is respected for his restraint when he should be pitied for his diffidence. There is, for instance, the case of one whose quiet ways have resulted from a sense of physical inferiority in boyhood.

No matter what victories may be attained in the development of character, the point of view and the manner that were fixed in the early formative years are never quite discarded. The boy who has less strength than his fellows, less athletic skill, and yet admires and longs for these possessions, invites only too often demonstrations upon himself of the vigor and prowess that he covets. A boy likes above all things to show his power over another boy; and the most instant method is by putting him down and sitting on him, or by seizing his wrist and twisting it till he howls, or by gripping the back of his neck and forcing him to march whither the tyrant wills. Once the unlucky weakling is discovered and his susceptibility to teasing exposed, he becomes

the plaything of his stronger mates. The amusement is the greater if he resents it with spirit, the keener if he has a sensitiveness which is hurt by the abuse, the more frequently invited if he has the fatal admiration for deeds of strength, and haunts, in spite of its terrors, the society of those who can perform them. His spirit is not crushed, but it learns discretion; his sensitiveness grows into a shy and morbid pride; he likes to look on at better men, and to know them, but he finds it wise to be inconspicuous, inasmuch as to draw attention to himself usually means to suffer from a display of the very abilities which he admires.

And out of this what results? He acquires the habit of looking on and being socially inconspicuous. He may have energies that in the end win for him eminence, but he will probably be to the end a shy and quiet man. It is not necessary that a boy should be a weakling to arrive at this development; some trifling pecu-

liarity, a curious quality of voice, or a nervous and easily mimicked laugh, or an alien accent may suffice to create in him an undue tendency to hold his tongue. I know one man who attributes his "cursed quietness" to an ailment of the throat that he had when a boy, and that made his speech husky and often liable to break down. Another thinks he is quiet because he never could sing; nearly always in any gathering in which he found himself, there was singing, and he, utterly without the musical sense, sat and contributed nothing. This inability in expression extended even to his speech; he could not manage his voice to tell a story effectively, and though no one has a keener appreciation of the humorous or dramatic, no one is less able than he to realize it in his talk.

Then there are the humble-minded people who fancy themselves too dull or too uninformed to be interesting, and who cut themselves off from sharing freely with

others their thoughts and opinions. Often they do themselves scant justice in their modesty, and win all the more on that account the regard of the few who come near enough to know them. But they are always understood of but few, and they are bottled-up people, a nervous, self-conscious, timorous folk, of pleasant disposition and much sentiment, who seldom cut any large figure in the world.

The others, who really are dull and without being oppressed by the knowledge preserve a befitting retirement, constitute perhaps a majority of the quiet men. To be dull is certainly not to be disliked; and yet I question if any one of this numerous, agreeable, and necessary company quite fills out the original mental picture summoned by the recommendation, — "a nice, quiet sort of fellow." For the phrase suggests a man who has reserves of thought or knowledge or moral force. Indeed, we often follow up the designation, as thus: "A nice, quiet sort of fellow, with a lot

to him." On closer acquaintance, we are likely to find that his quietness proceeds from lack of strong convictions rather than from moral force, or from mere empty-headedness rather than from thoughts too deep to share. We come to think him a man with a receptive habit but little assimilative power. He listens but does not learn. It seems to be a sort of mental and moral dyspepsia from which he suffers.

Let us suppose, however, that it is neither lack of ideas nor ill digestion of ideas which renders him a quiet man, but that he is indeed a person "with a lot to him." Then, usually, he is the man of one idea. It is rare that he has versatility. He is the small inventor or the mechanician, whose mind on being diverted from the study of wheels and cogs can in no other sense be diverted; it is cold alike to Shakespeare and to baseball. He is the young poet of good impulses and a little talent, toying with his lyric and indifferent to the science of the stars, of the green and grow-

ing things about him, and to the business and endeavors of his active fellow men. He is the lawyer who makes a career out of ingenuity in splitting hairs; he is the business man who carries his ledgers home with him at night; he is any man who, by his devotion to an abstract principle or problem, or to a material fact, neglects his relations with nature and with men. If the principle is important and appeals to a missionary and reforming conscience, and if the man has power, he is not admitted to fellowship among the quiet, but according to one's point of view is hailed as a hero or denounced as a crank, a nuisance, or a fool.

Of the many small people involved in their struggle with one idea, and abandoned to their solitary interest, Emerson has supplied a phrase that may be appropriated for definition. They are Mere Thinkers, as contrasted with Man Thinking. In them the human element is deficient. They may have an absorbed interest

in their one pursuit, perhaps even a kind of dry and laudable enthusiasm; in their narrow range their souls may have conflicts with the devil and issue worthily; but they are not the men of rich and generous nature, whose ideas take form in action, and who in action strike out fresh ideas. Man Thinking is man alert, versatile, living, — which is to say, finding constantly new interest in the things and beings about him, and developing himself more and more by the contact. From the ranks of Man Thinking emerge most of the strong and virile, the men of burly laughter, observing and remembering eye, and careless, wide-ranging talk; the unhoarded, chance-flung anecdote, the unconsciously graphic phrase, the crisp expression of a truth shrewdly seen drop from the lips of Man Thinking, not from those of Mere Thinker. One Mere Thinker in a million may some time evolve by mathematical and intellectual processes a machine of more than mathematical, even of human

value; yet even then it is Man Thinking who will perfect it, and manufacture it, and advertise it, and sell it, and secure to the world at large — and to Man Thinking in particular — its benefits. So Man Thinking is never quiet; he is bustling, urging, cajoling, threatening, flinging his arms about, or battering with heavy, hostile fists; and in his leisure moments pouring out prodigally, for whoever may pass, his amazed or delighted or pained impressions, — just like an earnest, excited child.

And meanwhile the quiet man, — Mere Thinker. Hear Emerson: "Meek young men grow up in libraries, believing it their duty to accept the views which Cicero, which Locke, which Bacon have given, forgetful that Cicero, Locke, and Bacon were only young men in libraries when they wrote these books. Hence, instead of Man Thinking, we have the bookworm. Hence, the book-learned class, who value books as such. . . . Hence,

the restorers of readings, the emendators, the bibliomaniacs of all degrees."

The narrowness and inertia of the quiet man are frequently moral as well as mental. He is firm on the point of certain things which he will not do, but his virtue is too likely to be of this negative quality; and while his noisy and active brother is blundering about, learning what life is, perhaps heaping up sins and offences, yet also building himself in his heedless, casual way monuments of good, Mere Thinker, with eyes upon the ground, treads the barren path of the dull precisian. Since he is quiet, he receives credit for virtues if he does not exhibit boldly their antithetic vices. Loyalty and steadfastness and a good domestic nature are the excellent qualities most often attributed to him. Yet as to the first of these, can any one doubt the truth of Stevenson's words: "A man may have sat in a room for hours and not opened his teeth, and yet come out of that room a disloyal

friend or a vile calumniator" ? The quiet friend may be as faithful as the vociferous, but there should be no presumption in his favor, for his very habit of life is insidious, and tends to breed the germs of doubt if not disloyalty. The looker-on is usually the man dissatisfied with idleness and critical of the activity of others. Because it might draw upon him comparison to his disadvantage, he does not utter freely his carping criticism of the active ; but he bears in mind how much better he himself would do this or that if it were not for some forbidding circumstance. And this habit of comparing himself with others, which is one of the common recreations of the quiet man, sometimes, no doubt, begets the envy which makes it easy to betray.

Even his unquestioned domesticity may not be so comprehensive a virtue. To support some one besides himself in decency and honor is not all that a man should strive to do, though it is much. He should

also feel the obligation to bring gayety into the lives of those whom he loves. It is possible for some men by sheer earning power to provide their families with opportunities for travel and amusement and adventure. But the earning power of the majority is limited in these matters; and all the more is it necessary then for the man to bring variety and a cheerful activity and liveliness into his house. The fact that the routine of the day has been dull does not excuse him for being glum and silent at his evening meal. And too much of the quietness in the world is but the habit of a listless and brooding selfishness.

It would be wanton to make these exposures and not offer a remedy. Here is a suggestion for the quiet man: "Learn to make a noise."

It is not enough that he should celebrate the Fourth of July each year in the customary manner, — though he may find even that barbarous observance beneficial.

Taking an active part in the romps and play of children is a resource that, if open to him, he should embrace. Probably he has so schooled himself to inexpressiveness that he cannot at once emerge out of the secondary place into which he is relegated at social gatherings; but three or four times a year he should, at whatever cost of courage, insist upon being heard. The advice to make a noise need not be taken literally, — though such interpretation would lead few quiet men into serious error. It may serve the purpose if the man develops a strong outdoor enthusiasm, or a keen spirit of rivalry in games, for either of these will introduce into his existence that element of *life* that he most needs. If he can acquire some undignified accomplishment, — if he can learn to sing a "coon song," or to play upon the mouth organ, or to dance a clog, or to recite "Casey at the Bat," — he will have made an advance in the art of living such as none but a constitutionally shy and quiet

person can understand. Perhaps, with the best will in the world, he can attain to none of these things; he may then find a means of grace in the occasional revels and merry-makings that are not denied even the most quiet. Failing all else, and being quite out of conceit with himself, let him go tramping in search of adventure, — in the city by-streets at night, or through the countryside. But there, again, does the quiet man become aware of his misfortune; adventure evades him; and while his assertive, unappreciative brother, on going downtown in the morning, may have a romantic encounter with a runaway automobile occupied by a beautiful lady, or with a tiger strayed from a circus, he may roam the world and meet with no runaway automobile, no tiger, and, alas and alack! no beautiful lady. Even so, let him persevere; preparing himself for adventure, he may almost attain the habit of mind of the adventurous.

But never, I fear, will he fully attain it. There will always be the horrid, harassing doubt — never shared by the truly adventurous — as to whether he would, indeed, bear himself heroically. To illustrate the point, I must make a confession; I am a quiet man. Although I have often prepared myself in mind, I have not yet set out upon my quest of adventure. But no longer ago than yesterday, one of my direct, unquestioning friends plunged into it; and ever since I have been miserably torn with inquiry as to whether in his place I should have been so prompt. Riding on his bicycle along a village street, he was aware that a wagon overtook and passed him at unusual speed, but he thought nothing of this. He had dismounted, and was entering a gateway when he heard a great hubbub behind him; and looking round he saw men running, with cries of "Stop him! Stop him!" and in front of them a man speeding along on a bicycle. My friend stepped out into the street and

opposed a threatening front; still the fleeing rider came on. And then, just as he was about to whiz by, my friend hurled his bicycle into the rider's path; the two machines went down with a crash, and the hero flung himself valiantly upon the groaning wretch, who lay crumpled amid the wreckage. "I 've got him!" cried the hero to the breathless, gathering throng. "Got him!" they answered, with here and there a sneering accent of profanity. "We yelled at you to stop the fellow in the wagon." "Yes, the fellow I was chasing," added the unfortunate captive. And indeed, it appeared that the driver was the miscreant, having knocked down a woman and made off; and the bicyclist had merely been one of a humane and inquisitive mob.

Now, my agitating question has been, Should I, too, thus boldly, peremptorily, and efficiently have hurled my bicycle? For the life of me I cannot tell. So many reasons why I might have done so occur

to me, and then again so many considerations which might have stayed my hand. A fleeing criminal — one's public duty — and yet on such uncertain grounds — to wreck him so utterly, to damage him perhaps so irreparably! All I am sure of is that I should have opposed a threatening front.

And this, I imagine, is the chief affliction, the shame of many a quiet man, — the dread of finding in some important moment that the reflective habit has produced paralysis. Even if he breaks through the net of qualifying considerations and acts efficiently, he has the humiliated feeling that he has made a great mental to-do over a matter that some one else would have gone about without debate. Moreover, he shrinks from using his faculties in unconventional ways; again I must serve as *corpus vile* for purposes of illustration. A man who had been my guest overnight decided the next morning, which happened to be Sunday, that he

desired a cab. From the back window of my lodgings, which are on the fourth floor of the house, he descried a livery stable, and opening the window he shouted lustily in the Sabbath stillness the name of the proprietor. Now, although we have in our rear a livery stable, our neighborhood is prim and even fastidious; the houses in our block are occupied by families with highly conventional notions of propriety. In some dismay I pulled my guest's coat-tails, whispering that I would send out for a cab; withdrawing his head for a moment, he replied, "This is quicker," and then again thrusting it forth, continued to bawl. At last a stable boy answered him; he gave his order, specifying the number of the house with painful distinctness; after which he turned to me and complimented me on the convenience of my situation and the needlessness of a jingling telephone. In my scheme of life, a cab is the last of all extravagances; yet even if it were not, or

if I had found myself in the direst need of one, I am sure it would never have occurred to me to employ this simple, primitive method of securing it. Quietness tends to unfit one for the use of rudimentary instruments.

It is time, after these frank confessions, to rehearse some merits of the quiet man, and particularly to dwell upon the admirable qualities of some quiet men. It is hardly necessary to summon up here the kindly and perhaps not more than three-quarters fallacious banality about the constant need of good listeners. We must persuade ourselves of some less negative excuse for our existence. I dismiss from consideration also the splendid quiet hero of romance, the Imperturbable ; whenever I have discovered an air of the imperturbable in a man, I have also discovered an offensive self-complacency, and I am unable to do justice to this particular flower of the species.

Perhaps the most worthy office that the

quiet man performs is that of the comforter, or at least the sympathetic confidant of grief. He who is stricken in spirit, and must utter his sorrow, turns less readily to the exuberant than to the silent friend, whose speech is apter with eyes than with lips. It matters not very much if such a man has the weakness that must so often be imputed; let him be but a true friend and a quiet one, and the sore in heart will take some comfort in him. If he has not the weaknesses, but is stanch and strong, a walk with him in the open air, whether in the biting winds of March or over the sunlit fields of May, or a talk with him before the winter fire, may put vigor, as well as the first sense of peace, into the soul.

As such a friend is a resource in time of sadness, so on happier occasions he need never be a kill-joy. No merriment was ever stifled because one of those bidden to share it could contribute nothing but appreciation. That quality the quiet

man must have. It is the noisy or the active one who, even while giving life to happy gatherings, is most dangerous. Some blurted truth, some reckless jest, some too searching inquiry or too downright, blunt debate may strike dead the gay laughter and transform cheerful, open-hearted contentment into a suffering desire to escape. Quiet men may rarely be charged with breaches of tact, careless and inconsiderate speech, the little slights that gall the sensitive, the little failures to be diplomatic where diplomacy were honest as well as kind. Quiet men are not the busybodies; quiet men were not, I am convinced, the comforters of Job.

And the best of them are deserving of nearly the best that we can say. Not quite the best; one can hardly believe that the great Elizabethans, for instance, were quiet men. But out of our own acquaintance let us pick the few who, without an impressive show of energy and activity, perform in the most truly workmanlike way

work that they seem willing to let pass unnoticed. They do not spend a great portion of their lives in efforts to attract attention to their achievements, to their skill; they do not despise popular appreciation, but they find the courting of it unimportant and unworthy; therefore they move upon the performance of their tasks, unfretful if they are neglected, keeping to themselves the trials and perplexities that they encounter, patiently overcoming and accomplishing. They may not win so many or so varied experiences and gifts from life as the reckless and ranging adventurer; theirs is not often the genius that builds the greatest and most enduring monuments; yet nearly all that has the charm of fine and perfect workmanship, nearly all that is subtly and beautifully conceived and exquisitely wrought, in manufactures, in machinery, in painting and music and literature, bears testimony to the serene vision, the unremitting toil of the quiet man.

VII

"IN SWIMMING"

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LATE in the afternoon, when the boys grew tired of playing baseball, some one would say, "How about going in now?" or, more often, give a whistle and hold up two fingers of one hand, the universal sign of natatory purpose and invitation. Then my heart would sink. At that age I never got tired of playing baseball — and I could not swim. Once they were headed for the river, it was useless to protest; and I followed them, as disconsolate and envious a nine-year-old as there was in the land.

We crossed the railroad track at the foot of the meadow, and ran down the path under the arching willows and oaks of the bank to the river beach. There, while the others were undressing, I would stand and scale stones out over the water with an assumed indifference, deaf to their

urgings that I should come in with them and try to learn. They treated me with a compassionate kindliness, — not unlike that with which the heath-dwellers in "The Return of the Native" assisted the unfortunate Christian Cantle to acquiesce in his incompetence, — and when they found that I could not be persuaded, they would ask me, one after another, to keep an eye on their clothes. I do not know from what source they feared molestation, and I never was aware that any of them carried valuable property which might tempt a passer-by to crime. Their injunction may have been thoughtfully designed to restore to me some measure of self-respect and make me feel that, even though I could not swim, there was still a place for me in the world. At any rate, I took the responsibility with some seriousness, and preserved a sharp watch over all the articles intrusted to my care, occasionally nailing down a fluttering shirt with a stone, or pursuing a hat that had been

started on a bumping expedition by the breeze.

When the half-past-five train burst thundering out of the cut a hundred yards up the river, all the boys made for deep water, or, if they were too near shore for that, modestly immersed themselves, — all except one young Indian, whose practice it was to come scrambling ashore and there dance defiantly, waving his arms and yelling while the train passed. This performance was always rather shocking to me; even while I admired its daring. One day the Indian's mother was on the train, and recognized him from the window, and for a week thereafter he did not go in swimming, but sat with me, like Fido, by the clothes.

As often as I had the opportunity, and could be sure there were no other boys to spy upon my infantile efforts, I used to sneak down to the river and give myself swimming lessons. Whether the fault was mainly with the teacher or with

the pupil, I do not know; but I had begun to despair of ever learning, when one day I stretched myself out recklessly upon the water and began to swim. I was so amazed to find myself afloat that after a few strokes I felt I had better stop and think about it, so I dropped my feet and groped for bottom; to my infinite horror it was not there. The current of the river, probably more than my own efforts, had carried me beyond my depth.

I beat the water desperately with my hands, trying to regain the swimming position, and went under. My fright, after the first terror at not finding bottom, was quite inadequate. When I came up strangling and saw the shore slipping by, the rock on which I had laid my clothes more distant than before, I thrust crazily with arms and legs and determined that nobody, and least of all my mother, should ever know of my narrow escape. I accepted escape as a foregone conclusion, even while realizing the peril. Somehow

I got ashore, choking and gasping, and made my way back to my clothes. There, while I sat on a rock and recovered myself, I reflected with some pride that I had achieved a new importance. I had almost been drowned, and I had learned to swim. A disposition to test the reality of my acquirement, and ascertain if I might rely on its permanence, impelled me to enter the water again. In the exhilaration of confirming my discovery, it soon became a pleasure to take a risk. I enjoyed the sensation when, a few days later, I interrupted the ball game by giving a whistle and holding up two fingers of one hand.

The largest percentage of drowning accidents to boys occur, I am told, in rivers. From my own experience I am convinced that if a lake or the ocean is accessible, a river should not be chosen as the scene of one's elementary swimming lessons; but where a river is the only water at hand, a boy had better risk being swept away by the current. No doubt in most

cases he will take that risk, even though his parents concede only as much liberty to swim as the mother in the nonsense rhyme was willing to allow her daughter. One of the pleasures that I find in summer travel is to watch out of the train window, as we skirt the banks of streams, for the boys bathing, standing waist-deep in the water, or, with only wet heads above the surface, stemming the current in momentary rivalry. In these glimpses the pleasure is perhaps not wholly that of personal reminiscence and sympathy; I think the veriest hoodlum of the village, seen stripped and in a woodland setting, may be the Pan in one's fleeting vision of Arcady. Some persons I have heard cry out against the publicity of such bathing; to me the sight seems as innocent as the pastime. Cows knee-deep in streams are the painter's favorite subject for a pastoral; if I were a painter, I think I should choose almost as often boys bathing in a brook.

To be picturesque is not, however, the swimmer's aim, and except for its picturesque effect river bathing is not very satisfactory. The bigger the river, the more dirty and unpleasant and unsheltered is it likely to be; the smaller the stream, the more certain in the summer months to become a mere dribble in which one crawls about hunting for a spot where it may be deep enough to swim. Or if it is not disqualified in either of these respects, its current will cause annoyance; one grows weary of always having to quarter against it, of never being able to lie peacefully at rest without being whisked off to a point which is inconveniently conspicuous or from which return is undesirably laborious.

The utmost luxury for the swimmer would be always to have freedom of choice as to where he would swim — whether in pond or lake or ocean. Then he would be able each day to adapt his swim to his mood. For swimming may be variously operative on a man; desiring one remedy,

he may find himself refused it by the perversity of the element — served with the wrong prescription. He would like a swim as relaxing as a Turkish bath, and he is in for a boxing match. For instance, it is a hot, oppressive day; you have been doing concentrated mental labor for some hours, and you wish to turn, not to vigorous exercise, but to a soothing employment, a languid, indolent use of the muscles which will leave you in a mood for sleep. But your available swimming tank is the Atlantic Ocean, in a latitude where the temperature of the water never rises above fifty-eight degrees; and the day is windy and overcast; you put on your bathing suit and stand on the beach looking reluctantly at the breaking waves. The wind chills you a little, and although nothing is more distasteful than to nerve yourself for an effort, you do it; you take a breath and run into the icy water — and oh, the torture of that entrance! The cold waves dash at your ankles and then at your

knees, and then, while you are reeling, they grip your waist and wrestle with you for a fall — which you grant them with a shuddering relief. You go under, lips compressed, eyes shut, and shoot up again to the air, crying to yourself, "Thank Heaven, that's over!" Then you kick out and strike out and writhe round in the waves in a furious effort to get warm; you can't do it swimming on your breast, and you turn on one side and draw up your knees and lunge out and gasp; and then a wave cuffs you in the head and gives you a stinging earful, and you leap up in angry, sputtering remonstrance. You do not grow appreciably warmer, violent as is your endeavor, rough as is your buffeting; you are bounded up and down, and pitched into the smother of breaking waves, and slapped and doused and insolently abused, until you work yourself into a passion and plow through the turbulent sea with venomous puffs that might be translated, "You will, will you! You

will, will you! Take that now — take that — take that!" Thus you are provoked to an insane contention and excitement, when a few moments before your whole inclination had been toward a meditative floating upon a warm and tranquil pond. But for all your furious bravado, for all your mighty exercise, your teeth are already chattering with cold, your vigor is stiffening in your veins; and you are glad to turn and be helped ashore by the waves that you had presumed to defy.

Then, when you rub yourself down and dress, you begin to glow with an ardent energy, with legs a little tremulous, perhaps. You had desired mere relaxation, and you have been violently stimulated. But the spirit to be up and doing soon fades into an impotent restlessness, and from that you pass into the comatose indolence which was your primary desire. There is, perhaps, some subtle detriment to the temper when one has to experience such probationary stress and tumult in

order to attain the repose into which the dweller by a pond may gently slip. Thoreau would have been a more irascible person if he had had to do his swimming off the Maine coast instead of in Lake Walden.

Yet the placid dwellers beside quiet lakes may not claim entire advantage of opportunity over the turbulent sea bathers. They know the soft delight of swimming; they miss its stormy joy. It is agreeable to be one of them when the only demand made by your body is for rest; but when both your spirits and your vitality are high, the unruffled smoothness of the pond, even though it is overhung by the springiest of springboards, does not quite meet your longings. You can run and leap and dive and rush in sprints through the water, but you are aware of a disappointing tameness; you are playing in a dead, unresponsive medium; you are not sporting with a resourceful, lithe, and sinewy adversary; you cannot conjure up the excitement and ar-

dor of battle which grip your imagination with the first plunge into the swelling ocean. The greater buoyancy of the salt water exalts the swimmer's spirit and quickens his vitality; the gentler drag of the inland lake wooes him to a luxurious listlessness. As you buffet the ocean waves, you can exultingly feel and exclaim, "Aha, old man, you 're trying to down me — but I 'm still on top; put that in your pipe and smoke it." And so, proud wrestler that you are, you swarm up one billow and down the next, grappling to your heart all the while a personified adversary, and laughing with triumph because in spite of his struggles he cannot get you down and put his knee on your chest. It is something to emerge panting and dripping from these contests, and strut upon the sand, and mentally credit yourself with one more victory.

Quiet inland bathing offers you no such extravagant opportunities to be a *poseur*. If the water is warm, you loll in it at your

ease ; your mind is soon stupefied by the sensuousness in which you are enfolded ; the interest of your sleepy eyes does not extend beyond the gentle ripples that widen away from the slow, submerged strokes of your arms. After a while you roll over on your back and drowsily execute at intervals a languid "shoo fly" leg motion, while you look drowsily up into the void. Now and then you will raise your arms and flap them down through the water like a pair of sweeps; it is only a tired sort of effort. And finally, in the supreme abandonment of indolence, you lay your head back, far back, until the water creeps up about your eyelids; you stretch out legs and arms motionless, and lie, breathing tranquilly, sensible of no other movement in the world than the slight flux and slip of the water upon your heaving chest. Then may you realize, perhaps, something of the lark's sensation when, with wings outspread, it hangs suspended between earth and sky. He who has never thus

suspended himself idly in still water, with fathoms below him and infinity above, has missed one of the sensuous delights of existence. Unfortunate man, who goes to his grave believing that there is nothing better than bed for weary limbs and a jaded brain!

The consequences, of course, are hunger and torpidity. The bath in the quiet pond does not make you feel "freshened up" — unless you flout its allurements, dive in, scramble out, and roughly rub yourself down. I cannot be sympathetic with any one whose moral rigidity thus denies him a Sybaritic indulgence. In the cold, loud-sounding sea I may be his comrade; but let him not insult with such hygienic tentativeness my luxurious inland pool. He must give himself to it trustingly, with no reserve, willing to be wooed into idle dalliance, to eat the lotus and smell the poppies and mandragora of life. If he dares no experience that may slacken the tension of his fibres, physical or moral,

let him avoid the seductive inland pool. For not only does a surrender to its embrace leave one too indolent to work; it even purifies the zealot who sets too high a value upon work, and it insinuates before him an ideal of play. After the first somnolence has worn off, he will be active for further exercise, for sports and games; he will show a keen interest in being amused; but for toil he will have aversion. Fresh water swimming is for those who have never had, or who have put aside, scruples against idleness; for the promotion of the "strenuous life" we must have the water cold, and we must have it salt.

It depends partly upon the individual, and again partly upon the place, whether swimming is more to be enjoyed as a solitary recreation or as a social diversion. There are some unimaginative persons, incapacitated for solitude under any circumstances, who would never resort to a lonely swim except in the last despair of

ennui; and I believe there are a few morbid persons who shrink from displaying themselves in bathing suits and abhor the more informal freedom that sometimes prevails among swimmers. But disregarding such abnormal types, we may broadly lay down the principle that a lonely swim in the ocean is a cheerless undertaking, and that a lonely swim in a small inland lake is a delight. In excluding the ocean as a fit resource for the solitary, I would not deny that he may find satisfaction in an early morning plunge; but that is hardly "going in swimming." There are, to be sure, a few moments in the life of a man when in his own exultant bigness he may stalk grandly and alone into the sea and hail it as his intimate playfellow, and breast it with a single valiancy — when he may imagine himself in the likeness of deep calling unto deep, just as, if he happened at that juncture to be mountain climbing, he would leap from crag to crag and personify the live thunder. But these occa-

sions arise rarely in the lives of ordinary mortals; and they are to be seized at the instant; their duration is seldom above half an hour. If the lawyer could strip off his clothes and plunge into the lonely ocean the moment after he had completed the masterly argument that was to disrupt a trust; if the doctor who had struggled day and night sleeplessly to bring back the moribund to life, and had come at last staggering to victory, could in that weary happiness of power launch himself uncompanioned on the waves; if the speculator who, to general panic and his own large aggrandizement, had turned the market topsy-turvy could souse himself, chuckling like a boy at his prank, and find the ocean comrade for his laughter, — that would indeed be the sublimation of climax. But as our Napoleonic moments are few, so also are our Napoleonic moods transitory; after a brief half hour there come the questions: "Is it so complete?" "What next?" "Has destiny nothing more?" At

the psychological moment the ocean was remote or unavailable for solitude; by the time we can get down to it and the beach is all cleared for our majestic entrance, we begin to look about for the encouragement of companions. We do not like to feel insignificant; and nothing makes a man more sensible of insignificance than striking all alone out into the boundless sea. If there is but one unknown head bobbing in the waves a quarter of a mile distant, it will give him heart for his mimic wrestling; but if there is no one to share the absurdity of the play with him and dare with him the oppressive grimness of infinity, he soon comes ashore subdued.

Indeed, even in its most benign moods, the ocean has for the lonely bather a dubious geniality; it does not encourage trifling. It is only when the exuberant and boisterous crowds are gathered on the sand and frolic in the waves that there is created an atmosphere of light-hearted forgetful-

ness which makes the swimmer's sanguine imagination quite free to play.

And these exuberant crowds — how they contribute to the interest and gayety of your swim! As you go lunging through the water, rudely shouldering your huge adversary, you view the other swimmers and the promenaders on the beach with a heartening enjoyment. The man just entering the water, flinging up his arms as he treads warily, the woman out on the raft who is learning to dive and who flops flat under the surface with a splash, the swift swimmer who glides by with a long overhead reach of a brown arm that rises and dips and rises again, rhythmical as a gull's wing, — such little glimpses give a zest to the elemental experience through which you are passing. You find it pleasant to loiter for a time in the midst of such buoyant and vivacious effort; you like the shrill voices and the strident laughter; your eyes sweep the beach with a moment's interest in the gay parasols, in the bunchy

bathing suits of the hesitating women, in the gaunt, dripping forms of the emerging men. Then some human porpoise rolls lazily by on his back, with white toes and a comfortable amplitude projecting above the surface, and you feel that you have loitered long enough; you must not be outstripped by such lumbering freight. So you turn and go about your business,— the conquest of the vast wrestler who has been nudging you all the while. Far out beyond the diving raft, and beyond the other bathers, you meet him and try conclusions; you test upon him all your art and skill; you turn on your side and shoot yourself at him like a projectile; you grapple with him hand over hand; you tread him down with your feet; you duck under and trip the wave that he sends to quell you; and then you swim under water and come up suddenly and take him in the rear. There is never a moment when you are not getting the better of him in spite of all his roughness; and though at the end

you have to call it a drawn battle, you know that morally the victory is yours. And on your way in from that gallantly fought field to rejoin those more timorous bathers whose champion you may swellingly imagine yourself, you stop at the raft and take a final dive, just by way of a farewell fillip to your gnashing adversary.

Occasionally on a hot summer afternoon I resort to a city beach which is inclosed for men alone. It is the most democratic place I know, and one of the most humorous. Clergymen, doctors, lawyers, shopkeepers, plumbers, motormen, teamsters, and, I dare say, criminals, enter the bath-house, put off their clothes, and pass out upon the other side, equal not only before the Lord, but also in one another's sight. Each man wears suspended by a cord about his neck a small brass check bearing the number of his dressing-room; — and he wears nothing else.

From either end of the bath-house a

high board fence juts far out into the water, and shelters the bathers from exposure to the fastidious world. It is a scene for Teufelsdröckh — so many "forked radishes with heads fantastically carved" performing on land and water so many exercises — "while I," exclaims the Philosopher of Clothes, "— good Heaven! — have thatched myself over with the dead fleeces of sheep, the bark of vegetables, the entrails of worms, the hides of oxen or seals, the felt of furred beasts; and walk abroad a moving Rag-screen, overheaped with shreds and tatters raked from the Charnel-house of Nature, where they would have rotted, to rot on me more slowly!" And it must have been after being made partaker in some similar scene that he declared in enthusiasm, "There is something great in the moment when a man first strips himself of adventitious wrappages; and sees indeed that he is naked, and, as Swift has it, 'a forked straddling animal with bandy legs;' yet also a

Spirit and unutterable Mystery of Mysteries."

According to the hour, the warmth of the day, the height of the tide, the bathers vary in number from fifty to five hundred. They are of all ages and of all figures; among them some, by the baked brownness of their skins, may be distinguished as habitués of this beach; they lie on the sand, sunning themselves by the hour, tanning themselves all over with a scrupulous uniformity. At one end of the beach three or four play handball against the fence; others are jumping and running; there are usually one or two attempting complicated acrobatic feats. One dignified old gentleman I once saw stand unperturbed for some minutes in the middle of the beach, gravely performing with his empty fists a variety of Indian club and dumb-bell evolutions; and near by a stout person with bushy white side-whiskers was making repeated efforts to touch his toes. It speaks well, I think, for the

manners of our men that the most whimsical of these performances evoked nothing more than passing glances and considerately hidden smiles. I know of no other place where in the interest of health a man may so companionably play the fool. And after he has done that to his heart's content, and sunned himself sufficiently on the sand, the luxury of his swim out into the bay where a fleet of sailboats is at anchor, and distant green islands with gray buildings lift their heads, would be considerably less if he were clogged by a bathing suit. The "return to nature" which has been so much agitated of late, and which is recommended chiefly — to judge by publishers' prospectuses — for its renewal of "red blood" in the system, requires from most of its devotees a sacrifice of time and comfort and a forsaking of civilized life. An afternoon at this quaint beach, where human nature stripped to the skin is primitively beguiling itself in sun and air and sea, satisfies my own pre-

adamite cravings and spares me the inconveniences usually suffered by those who respond to the call of the wild.

It has been a grief to me that the most enthusiastic swimmer whom I know has always contemned this favorite resort, — a prejudice which I set down partly to the fact that he is British and an unbudgeable creature of habit. He fortifies himself, however, with argument. "When you swim in the ocean," he says, "let it be in the ocean, and not in a miserable inclosed bay fringed by a city." So every summer afternoon, rain or shine, he takes a boat down the harbor, and after an hour's sail lands at a well-known beach that has the desirable outlook upon unlimited sea. I accompanied him on one of these excursions; his fingers were fumbling at his buttons before he left the boat. "I 'll be waiting for you on the beach," he said, as he shut me into my compartment at the bath-house; and though I was expeditious in the hope of denying him that satisfac-

tion, I found him not only waiting as he had predicted, but waiting with an air of intolerable impatience. There was no trembling on the brink for me that day. Into the water I went perforce, with a rush and a splash, close at his heels; it was cold, and I pressed out at a rapid stroke. He held his lead; after we had gone some distance and my teeth were chattering, I suggested that it was perhaps time to turn back. "Turn back! I have n't started yet," he replied scornfully. As he is not young, but an experienced scientist and philosopher with a full gray beard, and I have considerably the advantage of him in years, I was nettled by his answer, and resolved to stay with him in his folly; no doubt he would soon be calling on me to save his life. But at last in those arctic currents I surrendered my pride; "I 'm going back," I announced. "All right," he answered, and continued on into the Atlantic.

Half an hour later, when I was all

dressed and waiting, he waded ashore and walked up the sand, the brine dripping from his gray beard, his arms pink and glistening, — not a quiver of his frame. "You do pretty well for a city swimmer," he said kindly.

Even with that concession from him I am aware that he should be writing this paper, and not I. My only justification is my feeling that the inexpert dabbler in an art may sometimes bring to the interpreting of it a keener zest of longing and a more ardent estimate than the past master who has penetrated all its mysteries.

It seems somewhat remarkable that swimming should have had such scant appreciation in literature. The poets have astonishingly neglected it — astonishingly, I say, for it supplies one of the most sensuous human experiences. Byron, to whom, of all writers, one would naturally look for a sympathetic treatment of the theme, gives it only a few mediocre verses. Clough has dealt with it mock-seriously;

Swinburne has experimented with it, — and achieved one memorable line, —

"The dreaming head and the steering hand."

For Shakespeare there was an opportunity, — in "Julius Cæsar," — but he ignored it. Homer might have been eloquent, but with his hero Ulysses three days in the water and half dead, he could not enlarge on swimming as a pleasure. Shelley and Keats, poets of sensuousness, make no poem about swimming. Walt Whitman, though both rhapsodist and swimmer, was never inspired to rhapsodize on swimming. The most appreciative and suggestive words on the subject have been written by Meredith in "Lord Ormont and his Aminta," in the chapter entitled "A Marine Duet." "The swim was a holiday; all was new — nothing came to her as the same old thing since she took her plunge; she had a sea-mind — had left her earth-mind ashore. The swim . . . passed up out of happiness,

through the spheres of delirium, into the region where our life is as we would have it be: a home holding the quiet of the heavens, if but midway thither, and a home of delicious animation of the whole frame, equal to wings." Matey was pursuing her. "He had doubled the salt sea's rapture, — and he had shackled its gift of freedom. She turned to float, gathering her knees for the funny sullen kick." There is a true descriptive phrase! "Their heads were water-flowers that spoke at ease. . . . They swam silently, high, low, creatures of the smooth green roller. He heard the water-song of her swimming." But it will not do to extract sentences from their setting; I will make only one more quotation. "The pleasure she still knew" — returning to shore — "was a recollection of the outward swim, when she had been privileged to cast away sex with the push from earth, as few men will believe that women, beautiful women, ever wish to do."

As to the truth of this, let some woman who is a swimmer testify; if it is true, the full, adequate appreciation of swimming can never be written by a man.

VIII

BRAWN AND CHARACTER

BRAWN AND CHARACTER

When Robert Louis Stevenson was asked what lack in life caused him the keenest pain, he answered, "The feeling that I 'm not strong enough to resent an insult properly, — not strong enough to knock a man down."

With civilization at a point where the resort to elemental weapons is practically obsolete, it might seem that there was something antiquated and unreal, more imaginary than genuine, in this complaint of the frail-bodied Stevenson; probably in all his life, as in the lives of most gentlemen nowadays, he was never confronted with the alternative of knocking a man down or accepting a wound to his pride. If the occasion ever arose and he had to charge to the feebleness of his body his failure to sustain his dignity, the recollection might indeed tinge him with bitter-

ness; but it is difficult to believe that the gentle and lovable Stevenson argued from an actual experience of humiliation.

Yet it is not alone the painful memories or the logical apprehensions of ill which awaken the most sensitive realization of defencelessness and fill the soul with the haunting dread of incompetence. From a clouded childhood such a distrust is usually derived, rather than from the isolated blunders or failures, however monumental, of later years. Stevenson, the petted and fragile child at home, went finally to school; and it hardly needs a biographer to tell us how the high-spirited, imaginative boy, who liked to shine, met with repression from the stalwart, obstinate young Scots. In their rough sports he was never a leader; that was mortification enough to one of his spirit; and it was not the full measure of his mortification. With his imperious outbursts, his flashing temper, his physical weakness, he afforded some of them rare sport.

His school-days were miserable to him, and miserable school-days are likely to affect permanently a man's outlook. Perhaps not any one bullying episode of which he may have been an impotent victim, not any one instance where he stood solitary to one side, while the school acclaimed their champion, remained to give a special vengefulness to that longing of his mature years, "If I were only strong enough to knock a man down!" But the feeling of inferiority lingered in him after he had passed the period when inferiority of that particular kind ceases to be reckoned important; in this one respect his standard remained that of the immature boy.

Weaker than his fellows and high-spirited, he came to be reckless of such strength as he had; with bravado and imagination he recompensed himself for the niggardliness of nature. The weak who are poor-spirited and without bravado do not disguise that they are timorous or furtive, subservient or cringing; and weakness

does very often impose poverty of spirit. In its attenuation there may be a sharpening of wits and hence a success in life — of a kind — achieved by craft or duplicity or deviousness, and guarded by a suspicious vigilance; the man of spirit scorns a success so won and so preserved. If, like Stevenson, he was born a weakling, his path is indeed laborious and must be hewn out of the very rock of adversity.

But the man of great bodily vigor, who in his boyhood was of conspicuous strength among his fellows, — how does he ever fail of leadership and eminence in whatever career he chooses? The early self-confidence that he has developed must be tremendous, — the discovery that in all the affairs of boyhood which are truly accounted of moment he is without a peer, — able to overthrow any one in wrestling, to swim longer, to run faster, to bat a ball farther than any of his comrades, — this gradual unfolding of his powers must cause such a youth to tread the earth with

a conscious greatness. Why should he ever be afraid? and what is it but fear that withholds any of us from large achievement? His imagination does not implant in him doubt and distrust, his mediocre rank at school and his dulness at his books cause him no misgivings, for at his time of life excellence in these matters is esteemed parrotlike, and distinction in them is contemptuously awarded to the weak. It might be expected that the self-confidence acquired in early years through a mastery of all one's contemporaries could never quite forsake the most unlucky; that a man with such a history would rise from each overthrow stronger, like Antæus, for having touched the earth, — with courage undiminished and some gain in wisdom. Yet for every Antæus there is perhaps also a Goliath. Whence to these unhappy giants come their Davids?

Only part of the truth may be furnished by the most obvious reply, — that a man whose principal regard has been to main-

tain physical supremacy over his fellows finds himself less well equipped for the struggle as it becomes less and less manual. Accustomed to a rudimentary enforcement of his boyish personality, he often has no great readiness in adapting himself to the subtler methods employed by the aging world. The weaker and more studious among his contemporaries are able now to match craft and knowledge against his ignorance, — and he can no longer retaliate by a triumphant demonstration of his superior weight.

Such an attempt to account for the clenching of the humble clerical pen in the fist, discouraged at forty, that had been redoubtable at fifteen, for the languid dulness of the eye that once had overawed a little world, for the sluggish gait and the shabby dress of him who in days past had stepped alert with the champion's zest in life, will perhaps be rejected by the philosopher as inadequate — at least as comprehended in a larger cause. Nowadays lack of prepa-

ration does not sufficiently explain failure; the most ill-equipped business man or professional man, if he has a genial assertiveness and a willingness to represent shoddy wares and spurious talents as genuine, need not despair of attaining a meretricious success. Self-confidence is older brother to an easy conscience and a tendency to "bluff;" and these imply a facility in amassing riches. Yet almost daily I pass on the street a giant of sixteen stone who can still put the shot and throw the hammer, who in figure and bearing seems designed for one of life's larger destinies, and who would gladly embrace success, however ignoble, instead of posing for a pittance as an artist's model.

Young men and boys of great bodily strength are usually more intent on exercising their power than on accomplishing a purpose. In the habit of mind and action so engendered lies the great impediment which in after life may balk them of the fruits promised by their early vic-

torious self-confidence. The easy display of their prowess wins them such admiring regard that achievement seems superfluous and unprofitable; they attain to eminence by methods which do not tax their effort and which are as ephemeral as play. Meanwhile, their more feebly constituted contemporaries, seeking for distinction, have to occupy themselves with less spectacular action; the office, the library, and the laboratory claim increasingly the interest of those who are ambitious; and already purpose is shaping itself in their minds,—purpose of accomplishment and not mere purpose of competition; books are germinating, steam engines and electric motors are being devised, law and medicine and architecture have begun to awaken some constructive thought. Yet building, however hopefully, for the future, they envy in their cloistered preparation the wanton vigor of the strong. They are learning to husband and concentrate their energy while their large-framed friends are liv-

ing from day to day in a sort of opulent diffusion.

The tendency of the strong is not so much to work definitely towards some purpose as to keep constantly testing their strength in whatever competition offers; variety and excitement are what in their vitality they crave, and so long as they may be active they care little what monument they leave behind them. For a few brilliant exploits there is much waste and much triviality; they cast about continually to prevail over some new person or some new obstacle without regard for the intrinsic value of the struggle. Consistency and conviction are virtues on which they seldom make a stand; erratic liveliness often speeds them with warring impulses along a primrose path.

A classmate of mine at school excelled in strength nearly all his fellows. His strength indeed possessed him as it were a devil. He was as willing to exhibit it by hectoring the weak as by tussling with

those who could put up a defence. It is fallacious to assert that the bully is always a coward. This boy was in many respects an egregious bully, but he was without fear. I think that in his roughness with the smaller boys he was also without malice, without any particularly cruel satisfaction in causing them humiliation and pain. It was merely, I believe, that he had an excess of animal energy which must always be expressing itself, and the added human desire for seeing some visible response to its expression.

There came into the school a "new boy,"— timorous, girlish, and pious, — one who, with a devoted mother and sisters, had probably led a too sequestered life. Young Hercules cut his finger one day and swore; and the new boy, who was close by, turned his back and crossed himself. Unfortunately Hercules detected him in this; thenceforth, whenever he saw the new boy he would emit the most unwarrantable and shocking oaths, and call others

to witness the effect. Finally, this diversion became so entertaining to a number that boys who had never adopted profanity resorted to it for the sole purpose of annoying their new friend; and a favorite amusement was for half a dozen to surround him and then swear busily about the circle in order to see him turn and turn and make without concealment — as indeed he was courageous enough to do — his devotional, deprecating sign. The persecution of him did not, I am sorry to say, stop with this; and there was some abuse of strength on the part of Hercules which, if it was not very brutal, must measurably have saddened the newcomer's life.

But one night Hercules came up when another fellow — about as strong as himself — was endeavoring to put the "new kid" into a snowdrift. And then the rest of us were startled. "Stop that!" cried Hercules, and rushed to the rescue. "You let that boy alone!" He seized the jocular bully by the collar and swung him round;

the intended victim wriggled free, and after a brief struggle the two strong boys fell into the snowdrift, with Hercules on top. The other was his friend, but there had been no playfulness in the assault. Neither, I suppose, had there been much chivalry. At least I cannot say that the new boy was thenceforth emancipated from the persecution of Hercules or could depend upon his championship; and I imagine it was simply the sudden raging need of exercising his strength against some one that had driven him to intervene.

Poor Hercules! He was of the kin of Goliath rather than of Antæus. He went about challenging the world in his restless energy of the moment; always he was demanding some fresh test for what was in him of the elemental man; always he was rebellious, irresponsible, and roaming. He met his death in an act of futile gallantry. His excess of physical strength and the challenging spirit with which it imbued him were surely his undoing.

Sam Parks, the labor leader and felon, is not yet forgotten. He came to America at the age of twenty, an illiterate Irishman, strong, domineering, and prone to use his fists. In the lumber camps of Canada and Minnesota he made a reputation as a "slugger." When he took up the trade of an ironworker, his methods of asserting himself continued as drastic as in the lumber camps. "He cleaned out champion after champion," says a newspaper biography of him. "He was a natural born tyrant. A man who would n't bend to his will got slugged."

In New York there were eleven different unions of ironworkers. "Parks joined as many of them as he could and then proceeded to consolidate them all. . . . With all the unions merged into one, Parks became a dictator. He encountered rival after rival, but thrust all aside. His favorite weapons were his fists. He surrounded himself with a gang of indolent ironworkers, the thugs of the trade. Opponents of

Parks were simply slugged. Ironworkers who refused to strike at his order were waylaid and beaten. . . . He extorted money from employers, stopped work when and where he pleased, started it again as he liked, made men of wealth get down on their knees to him. . . . The idea that his power could be broken never occurred to Parks and his friends. Parks was warned, but, drunk with power, he ignored the warning. He knocked one adviser flat on his back for presuming to suggest that he go slow. He forced his way into the presence of employers, whether they wanted to see him or not, cursed them, laid down the law to them, and enforced his wishes."

And then, in the height of his power, this bully and "grafter" was haled away to prison. Brute strength and the overweening confidence that flowed from it and the lust for power need not have wrecked his career, though they might have made it unenviable. The incessant

egotistical desire to prove himself always the better man, without the constraint of a moral issue or a worthy creative purpose, was that which overthrew Sam Parks, and it was a direct consequence of his strength. And there are many educated men who have the moral sense that he lacked, but who perhaps have no more definite object than he — no other aim than always to be powerful, as by reason of their strength in younger days they had been; and these men may go astray, not so deplorably as he, yet to an end of futility because of their eagerness always to match themselves against others, and their belief that competition vindicates itself and implies progress and productive achievement.

The competitive instinct is the strongest of all the instincts of a healthy boy. He wishes to test himself in relation to the other boys of his acquaintance; he must be forever pitting his strength and daring and endurance against theirs. This keenness to strive and to excel is the starting-

point for all useful masculine development; but it is a stage in development that must be outgrown. If it continues the ruling passion after manhood, it is to the man's detriment. For when the boy grows into the man, it is time that he should have erected in his mind his own standard, and that henceforth he should measure himself in comparison with that alone, and not with the stature of other men. One need never outgrow the sense of satisfaction in getting the better of a difficulty; but the mere sighting of a difficulty on the horizon inflames none but the unsettled and drifting with the desire for conquest.

It is soaring into Utopian realms to assert that one should never have a sense of satisfaction in getting the better of another man; but it is no absurdly lofty or unpractical notion that he who finds in such achievement a sufficient end and cause for labor may strive to no purpose, even though his days are full of contest

and victory. At the risk of seeming to hold a narrowly ascetic doctrine, I would assail that common phrase, "the game of life." In its suggestion of emulation, light-hearted or grim according as one's game is tennis or football, it is misleading. All of us have our human adversaries who are to be thwarted; their defeat, however, is an incident, not our chief concern. Our affair is the discharge of the duties wherewith our involuntary entrance into life has burdened us, and the fulfilment of that purpose to which each of us in his imagination is kindled; and so far as we are animated only by the competitive spirit of the game we miss the point of living. Our legitimate pleasure in overcoming need be none the less because it is subordinated to the pleasure of achieving or creating. Our fiery zeal for conquest need not be extinguished simply because it is held under a more grave constraint.

The insatiate appetite for competition begets in a man a corroding egotism. In

the prideful desire to display one's self at the expense of others, to win the plaudits and the prize, one grows impatient of all but the showy hours. From the repeated excursions to match one's strength gallantly in contest, one returns with reluctance to the intervals of obscurity in which most of the genuine and permanently productive work is done. The further testing and demonstration of one's powers before an audience becomes a more imperative desire; the impulse to perform patient creative labor languishes.

They who have come victorious through the competitions of youth will naturally be those most ardent to pursue life as a game, for in the conduct of a game they are accustomed to success. And in them egotism will most dangerously thrive. It will not be morbid and introspective, like that of the invalid; it will not be so paralyzing to the energies; but it will lead to misdirected and scattered effort. It will be egotism of the sort that urges a man to

compete with others in excesses, to earn a reputation for his ability to outstay his comrades in a carousal, and be fit and ready for work at the usual hour the next morning. He will become the egotist who squanders himself in unessential seeking and arrogant assertion, who seizes the office and ignores the duty, who is the bandit in business and the pillar in the church.

It would not be fair to predicate of all such egotists an athletic and victorious boyhood, any more than to doom all athletes to so degenerate a fate. At the same time the descent of the hero is easy, — especially of the premature and precocious hero. Temptation besets him insidiously, for the egotism of the youth who by reason of his physical powers lords it over his fellows is by no means an unattractive quality and subject to rebuke. It is very different from that into which it may lure him in later years. There are indeed few traits more charming than the unsophisti-

cated egotism of the athlete; and here there need be no reservations, — the professional athlete of mature years may be included as well as the callow amateur boy.

By comparison, the egotism of the artist or the poet, which is commonly accepted as the most monstrous, is but a shrinking modesty. The poet or the artist is quite objective in valuing himself; it is indeed himself only as a creator that compels his admiration and reverence. But the subjection of the athlete to his own person is absolute; he admires and reverences himself as a creature! The care with which he considers his diet, the attentiveness with which he grooms his body, the absorbed interest that he gives to all details of breathing and sleeping and exercising are, in comparison with his thoughtlessness about all that lies beyond, touching and ludicrous; the very simplicity of him in his engrossed self-study wins the smiling observer. And if he is a good-hearted boy or man, as one so healthy and so single-minded usu-

ally is, and is responsive to the admiration of others as well as of himself, he confers much happiness. No doubt innumerably more persons would choose to grasp the hand of John L. Sullivan than that of George Meredith; and the day of this opportunity would be to them a memorable one and innocently bright with bliss.

As an illustration of the pleasing and ample egotism of the athlete, I would quote from a newspaper account of a friendly visit once paid by a famous pugilist to the most famous of all pugilists in our generation. Robert Fitzsimmons had been informed that John L. Sullivan was ill; whereupon he donned "a neat fitting frock coat and a glittering tall hat," and drove in a carriage to see him. He found him in bed; "the once mighty gladiator had lost all of his old-time vim and vigor.

"The two great athletes were visibly affected. Sullivan raised himself on his elbow and looked steadily at Fitz for some few seconds. 'How are you, John?' said

Fitz when the big fellow showed signs of relaxing his vice-like grip."

John was depressed. "'It's Baden Springs, Hot Springs, or some other sulphur bath for me. I never did believe much in medicine. This world is all a "con" any way. Why, they talk about religion and heaven and hell. What do they know about heaven and hell? I think when a guy croaks he just dies and that's all there is to him. They bury some of them, but they won't plant me. When I go,' the big fellow faltered, 'they'll burn me. Nothin' left but your ashes, and each of your friends can have some of you to remember you by. Let them burn you up when you're all in. It's the proper thing.'"

Fitzsimmons dissented from this view, and in his warm-hearted, optimistic way set about cheering up his dejected friend. He recalled their exploits and triumphs in the prize ring; and Sullivan was soon in a happier frame of mind. Oddly enough,

in this friendly call upon a sick man, Fitzsimmons was accompanied by a newspaper reporter and a photographer, — one of those chance occurrences which enrich the world. "Sullivan noticed the camera which the photographer carried, and asked what it was for." Unsuspicious and unworldly old man! "He was told that the newspaper hoped to get a photograph of him and Fitz as they met, but that as he was abed of course such a thing was impossible.

"'Impossible! No, I guess not, my boy. If there's any people I like to oblige, it 's the newspaper fellows. They will do more good for a man than all the preachers in creation.'"

Fitzsimmons acquiesced. "And then the great John L. lifted himself to a sitting position and put his legs outside the bed.

"That was the most pathetic incident of the visit. With fatherly care Bob Fitzsimmons placed his great right arm behind Sullivan's broad back and held him com-

fortably while the latter arranged himself. When everything was apparently ready, Fitz glanced down and noticed that a part of Sullivan's legs were uncovered, and the picture-taking operation had to be postponed until the sympathetic Fitz had wrapped him carefully in the clothes. It was touching."

Of course it was. And if the ingenuous description fails to bring appropriate tears to the reader's eyes, it must at least reveal to him the simple charm of an egotism to which a reporter brings a more stimulating message than a preacher, and a venturesome photographer a more healing medicine than a physician. But transplant that egotism; let it inhabit the soul of a clergyman, and where would be its simple charm?

In "Fistiana," a volume belonging to the last century, there is a chapter entitled "Patriotic and Humane Character of the Boxing Fraternity." It is, no doubt, a tribute well deserved. "To the credit of

the professors of boxing they were never 'backward in coming forward' to aid the work of charity, or to answer those appeals to public sympathy which the ravages of war, the visitations of Providence, the distresses of trade and commerce, or the afflictions of private calamity frequently excited." Among the objects of their generous assistance are mentioned "the starving Irish, the British prisoners in France, the Portuguese unfortunates, the suffering families of the heroes who had fallen and bled on the plains of Waterloo, the famishing weavers. . . . The generous spirit which warmed the heart of a true British boxer shone forth with its sterling brilliancy; all selfishness was set aside; and no sooner was the standard of charity unfurled than every man who could wield a fist, from the oldest veteran to the youngest practitioner, rushed forward, anxious and ardent to evince the feelings of his soul and to lend his hand in the work of benevolence."

The reader of such a panegyric may indulge a brief regret that they who in youth devote themselves with success to athletics ever turn their attention to other matters. Only by continuing in that simple and healthful occupation may they preserve untarnished the special charm which clings to heroes, the special egotism which is without offence. The President of our country is favorably known under an informal appellation; but even the most genial employment of that name diffuses no such affectionate intimacy and regard as are embraced in the variety of pet terms for a champion, — whether he is "old John," "John L.," and "Sully," or "Bob" and "Fitz." And had these champions taken into any other pursuit the characteristics which have endeared them to the world, — the same childlike and blatant egotism, the same sterile spirit of competition, — how little human kindliness and popularity would they have enjoyed!

BRAWN AND CHARACTER

It gratifies some of us to be pessimistic about brawn. The theory pleases us that to be conspicuously strong in youth is to be exposed to a temptation which lesser boys are spared, — a temptation to go through life competing instead of achieving. It is true that some of this competition will result in achievement; it is true that achievement never results except from competition; but it is not debatable that he will go farthest and achieve most whose eye is upon the work alone, who rejoices in the contest only as an incident of work, not as a matter memorable in itself. Only in that spirit does one come through undismayed, eager to press on, indifferent to the complacent backward look. Those men of brawn and sinew at whom we gazed spellbound in our earlier years, — perhaps it is harder for them to attain to this spirit than it was for Stevenson.

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