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EDUCATION VERSUS ENLIGHTENMENT

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Most persons, when they see a book or an article dealing with what is popularly called education, at once take it for granted that its contents have no value for them. But the indifferent are of several classes. One class regard the subject not only as written to death but as laid in its quiet grave. Many of these are teachers. They may be called the Weary Ones. A very large majority of our teachers are young women. In the nature of the case very few of these will be engaged in the same occupation by the time they are forty. Their occupation being merely temporary they have little interest in their work and do not much differ from drudges. Not many years ago I heard one of these school-keepers say: "When I have been in the schoolroom all day I hate the very sight of a book."

Among the men the case is somewhat but not materially better. They may be called the Wary Ones. They endeavor to improve their minds, at least in a limited way, until they have reached the acme of their promotion; then they stagnate, cease to study and even to read. Thenceforth they adopt as their rule of conduct the familiar injunction "Hold the fort." Many of these men can be found who have no book in their library that has not been donated to them by the publishers. Not widely different is the case of many college professors after they have reached the age of forty. They read the same lectures over and over again until their manuscript is not indeed hoary with age but yellowed, if not mellowed, by time. More care is necessary on the part of those teachers who have charge of laboratory work. But this too can be shirked. A prominent professor in one of our leading colleges said some years ago: "The statutes of this institution require the members of the faculty to examine their students at least twice a year, but they do not require them to examine their papers."

A comparatively small number of teachers may be said to belong to the Wise Ones. Early in their career they form certain opinions or formulate theories, for the most part adopted from their teachers, which they imagine to be the final word on the subject. Accordingly, in order to be consistent, they never revise or change their opinions.

This state of mind is largely an importation from Germany. Many young men who studied in that country became imbued with the idea that it would only be necessary to pattern after the German model, in matters educational and all would be well. The war threw everything into discard, and we seem to have arrived at a status which will compel us to begin all over again. Everybody, or almost everybody, is dissatisfied, — the public, the teachers, and the learners. This state of distrust is unjustified. The German educational system is just as good as it was supposed to be. It would be difficult to suggest radical improvements or to produce similar remarkable results by any other method. German methods are correct: the ends towards which they were directed were intrinsically wrong. We should always keep in mind that it is the part of wisdom to learn even from an enemy. It is an uncontroverted fact that the German student who enters the university is better equipped with knowledge, and has a more carefully trained mind, than the majority of our college graduates. Because much of this knowledge has a merely sentimental value and was ornamental rather than useful, the Emperor conceived the idea of turning a large part of it, or rather the acquired mental efficiency, to practical use. But as he could not discard long-established customs — perhaps in this case he did not wish to do so — he essayed to turn use and went in new directions, and to cause the old to give way to the new very gradually. The movement was not necessarily wrong; the wrong was in the ends toward which it was directed.

After the reformatory impulse had made much progress, Loyola conceived the idea of founding an educational system by means of which it could be effectually counteracted.

For centuries the new system was admitted to be the best of the time, and even Protestants borrowed largely from it. We cannot withhold our admiration from the Jesuits for their zeal and self-sacrificing devotion. But in the course of time they began to turn their accumulated power and their organization to ends that had very little connection with education, and the Order paid the penalty. Like the Jesuits, the Germans, under the lead of Prussia, a country that never took the lead in anything good, began to direct their energies toward world conquest; and the result was what might have been expected. Just as the Jesuits placed a higher value on the church, that is on *theirs*, than on Christianity, so the Germans placed a higher value on political and economic supremacy than upon international justice; and the consequences were inevitable sooner or later.

Perhaps the most radical vice in the German educational system, as practiced under the reign of the late Emperor, was implicit in the teaching of its national history. The young were taught only so much of the history of their country as it was thought "expedient for them to know." As long as Germany consisted of a number of states that were often at war with one another, there was little inducement for the historian of one state to conceal or to justify the evil deeds of another. But after Prussia had gained the paramountcy, there was gradually brought about a sort of general consensus that unpleasant facts must not be placed before the youth of the land, or they must be explained away, or justified. The German people were fully aware of the ills their local patriotism brought upon them. Many of their writers freely acknowledged that their misfortunes were largely due to governments over which the people had no control. The Prussians, with all their admiration for soldiers, have a hard case to handle when they seek for military heroes among their rulers. Frederick the Great is the only name on their list which can be placed among the highest. But his career was darkened by so much perfidy, brutality, and selfish-

ness that it is no easy task to find much that is heroic in his career; for mere personal courage is not heroism. German writers are wont to indulge in fierce denunciations of the avarice and disdain displayed by Napoleon when in their country, but they always forget to remind their readers that the arrogance of the conqueror was largely due to his contempt for the pusillanimity and inefficiency of the officers. Moreover, about one half of Germany was usually on his side. Just as the Prussian military caste was responsible for the calamities that have befallen Germany as a whole, so the same brutal caste is responsible for deep disgrace into which the entire nation has been plunged. It seems that the plain people have at length had their eyes opened by the bitter lessons of experience.

It is greatly to the credit of the French that they suffered the Napoleonic legend to die. In the large number of communiqués that have been published during the last half dozen years the name of Napoleon has not once been mentioned. Yet he did much for the welfare of his people. He always had a certain fear of the future and some respect for virtue. Hence he now and then gave utterance to such reflections as these:—

“If success were not a chimera it would not be so alluring.” “Of what blunders are not the vanity and self-love of an ignorant man capable!” “Morality is in itself a complete code.” “So much the worse for those who do not believe in virtue.”

He was well aware that an irresponsible military caste tends to become effeminate. Hence he rewarded merit wherever he found it, sometimes even where it did not exist. He reformed the government from top to bottom. He was a liberal patron of art, not always with discrimination. For Frenchmen of the twentieth century the legend of Napoleonic invincibility was dead. The third of the name slew it in 1871. Not only do French school-histories exhibit little disposition to dwell on the career of the Great Corsican; they express regret that Louis XIV. was so fond of war, and deplore the ruthless devastation of

the Palatinate by his orders. This does not mean that Frenchmen are by nature wiser than Germans; it simply means that they have learned an important lesson from their own history.

In fact, the Germans, as distinguished from the Prussians, have for centuries been less warlike than their western neighbors. Notwithstanding the disgraceful record of the Prussian officers, illuminated here and there by deeds of valor, between the death of Frederick the Second and 1864, their successes during the next half dozen years so completely took away all their sense of the fitness of things that they imagined themselves invincible. They learned nothing, and forgot everything which it was of the utmost importance for them to remember. When late in life the Emperor conferred upon Bismarck the title of Prussian General, a most absurd compliment, he added: "All your past honors are trifles compared with the one I now confer upon you." When the citizens of Berlin clamored for a monument to Schiller, Wilhelm saw in the movement a revolutionary disturbance and remarked: "Schiller, Schiller — is there such a man among my officers?" When William the Indiscreet made the dedicatory address at the unveiling of a monument in Königsberg to the first king of Prussia he made no mention of Kant. This silence was in keeping with the policy of the royal family, whose fundamental principle it has always been to ignore every kind of merit except that of the soldier. Let us, however, give the orator a little credit for not mentioning the name of a man whom his ancestor forbade to lecture on either theology or philosophy.

The world has never before been a witness to so strange a mental phenomenon as the methods by which the German intellectuals sought to incite their fellow citizens against the British. Books, pamphlets, articles in periodicals, sermons, and public addresses without number — all were trained on England, denouncing her perfidy, her mercantilism, her envy, and her lack of idealism. Admitting the worst of these accusations to have been true, they come

with ill grace from a people who were inspired by the same motives in a much greater degree. Unfortunately the practice of "bowdlerizing" history is a common one in all countries. In this matter English historians are perhaps least guilty of all. For a century every English historian of note has indulged in the most severe strictures on his government. If they have burnished up the bright spots they have laid on the dark colors thick where they seemed to need it. We have persistently fallen into the error of writing our school histories for the purpose of promoting what is euphemistically called patriotism. Schoolbooks are written to sell, and people will not buy those that impinge on their cherished beliefs although they rarely know how they came by those beliefs. When our country entered the Great War a few years ago, writers appeared all over the country who assured our public that out of six of our school histories five or more are grossly unjust to Great Britain. A history that is acceptable to the North is generally an unwelcome guest in a Southern family.

When I was a small boy I used to hear and read a great deal about our war with Mexico. I may be said to have been "fed up" on the exploits of our little armies. If I had read in a book what General Grant afterward wrote of that great war, that it was one of the most unjust ever waged, I suppose I would have put it where I never could find it again. President Polk's Message to Congress, in which he says, among other things, "Mexico has passed the boundary of the United States, has invaded our territory, and, notwithstanding all our efforts to avoid it, American blood has been shed upon American soil and war exists by the act of Mexico herself," reads almost as if it had been written by the German Chancellor in 1914. The English historian who takes the utmost pains to set forth as accurately as possible the unhappy relations that have long existed between his Government and Ireland — and there are many such — is at once stigmatized by the Catholic Irish as unfair, no matter where they may be. Yet the fact is that the Catholics in Ireland were never

treated as cruelly as were the Huguenots in France and the Protestants in Austria. If they had been, there would have been no Catholics in Ireland to make trouble in our day, because they would have been virtually exterminated, as they were in several countries of Europe. Most French historians estimate the proportion of the Huguenots in their country shortly after the middle of the sixteenth century at about one third of the entire population. Two hundred years later not one Frenchman in twenty was a Protestant; nearly all had been harried out of the country, or converted or perverted by force or by bribery.

That most people will read only what they think will be profitable is strikingly exemplified in much of our periodical literature. Although we are assured times without number, that character is the all-important qualification of a good citizen, our young people are urged with much greater insistence "to make money." This condition of affairs is demonstrated by those of our periodicals whose publishers aim at a large rather than a select class of subscribers. One of the most widely read in this country is literally filled with the biographies of men who have "made good." A began life for himself with half a dollar, and by the time he was forty was several times a millionaire. In five years B increased his salary from fifty dollars a month to fifty dollars a day. C worked as a common laborer, studying law every spare moment, then advanced from one grade to another until he was elected to Congress. D now owns the mine in which he worked as a boy and as a man. And so on through a list that appears every month with endless variations. We are assured that those men were all "straight." But suppose a young man discovers that he is not getting rich by being straight, and finds some one who achieved the same object by being "crooked," will he not yield to the tempter? It must be said, as a general statement, that our public prints, with only too few exceptions, do all they can to enhance the value of material things. At teachers' meetings the perennial theme of discussion is the inadequacy of their compensa-

tion and ways and means for increasing it. The president of a certain college—and he is far from being alone in the case—has for years been in the habit of telling his young auditors that he has always been the recipient of a good salary because he has a good education. People who know him and his career admit that he has generally received a good salary, but many deny that his good education has been the deciding factor.

The effect of this sort of teaching is mischievous in the extreme, and in two ways. The schoolboy who reads a biographical sketch of a man who educated himself with little aid from teachers and succeeded, is likely to conclude that he is wasting his time by going to school, and leaves it to start out for himself. Oftener than nine times out of ten he finds that he was mistaken. He realizes that to succeed by one's unaided efforts one must not only be endowed with exceptional ability, but with a perseverance in overcoming obstacles and a spirit of self-denial which he does not possess. But it is too late to retrace his steps and begin over again. On the other hand, many a young man who has completed a college course because he thinks it will pay in dollars, and later finds that his expectations are not realized comes to the conclusion that he has lost or misspent four or more years getting an education that is less valuable to him than the practical knowledge of the world gained by the boy who left school as soon as he could read and write fairly well. The young man who goes to college to get only so much education as he can turn into money as soon as possible may be depended upon to get as little as possible, though he is likely to blame the institution and his teachers for shortcomings that are his fault alone.¹

¹ A very gratifying and doubtless unexpected answer to the question "What Do Americans Read?" was printed in one of the issues of the Publishers' Weekly for January, 1920. It is there declared that the most widely read book which has appeared during the last two hundred years is Charles Sheldon's *In his Steps*. More copies of the Bible and of *Pilgrim's Progress* were printed,

I have in mind two brothers who are exemplifying, in a practical and striking way, the two theories of education above referred to. Both of them graduated from the same high school in one of our largest cities. One of them was an average student, while the other so distinguished himself that a friend of his father gave him a four years' scholarship in the State university. The other at once went into business and in a few years was drawing a salary of fifteen thousand dollars a year. But the other had hardly started in his life work. After receiving his degree he entered the service of the Y. M. C. A., where he still is. His salary a few years ago was one fifth of his more fortunate brother's, as most people would assume. Yet the fact is that the influence of one of those men will be an uplifting and reforming agency, not only as long as he lives, but for all time. The other will be forgotten, except by his personal friends, almost as soon as he is laid in the grave. Great wealth is a great blessing to the world, if rightly used, but the chief uplifting force in all ages has been the men and the women who had little to give except their own labors. Riches are more likely to beget selfishness than altruism.

It is a humiliating thought that is forced upon us when we reflect that the world has virtually made no advance upon the principles involved in education as laid down by Socrates. We have, it is true, to some extent amended his theory, but we can hardly claim to have greatly improved it. Benjamin Jowett remarks, in one of his essays upon Plato, that on the whole we have made no advance upon the thought of his time except in so far as we have profited by experience. The twentieth century has unfortunately but it is doubtful whether more copies of the Bible were read through. Besides, Dr. Sheldon's book has been before the public less than a quarter of a century. Many people purchase a Bible "just to have it in the house." On the other hand, the buyer of *In his Steps* expects to read and he reads it. This report of sales refers only to books printed in the English language. While nearly all Americans read periodicals—perhaps chiefly the younger generation—they also read books that are worth while.

demonstrated that it has not profited greatly even by experience. "Knowledge comes, but Wisdom lingers." There have always been men, and many are still living, not to mention whole nations, that have refused to profit by the bitter lessons of the past, and have imagined that they could ignore or circumvent the moral law without paying the penalty. "For every sin is punished here below"; or, to translate more accurately Goethe's well-known dictum, "For every guilt-incurring deed is its own avenger." Schiller expresses the same conviction when he declares it to be the curse of every evil deed that it continually begets its like. Socrates was firmly convinced that it is never allowable or expedient to do wrong even to avenge a wrong. Plutarch wrote three treatises on the education of boys, in all of which he lays the strongest possible emphasis on right conduct. He exhorts all teachers to ignore or explain away the immoral doctrines contained in the poets. As there were no other reading-books, these could not be dispensed with. Albeit, long before Socrates the Hebrew prophets began to warn their people against the calamities which their iniquities would bring upon them. The burden of their message is: "God is righteous and demands righteousness in his people. The righteous nation he will save; the unrighteous nation he will destroy."

A writer in the *Harvard Theological Review* points out that

"The Hebrew prophets have had the greatest influence upon the religion of the world. They were the most important factor in the transformation of the national religion, and their utterances have been the strength and consolation of centuries. And, though they had moral passion in abundance, they were fundamentally thinkers. They were the first philosophers of history, and their utterances were lofty because their thoughts were lofty. They saw their God actively directing the destinies of nations, and conceived the unfolding of a divine purpose to be the highway of history. Amos rises to the magnificent conception of Jehovah as the world-ruling God of justice; for Hosea he is the universal father; the first Isaiah is a

statesman seeking to conform the foreign policy of his fatherland to the divine plan of which he assumes to be the interpreter, and Jeremiah reaches the thought of an inner law and a human instinct for God. The second Isaiah is literally carried away by the glory of his religious idea, and his trumpet tones calling his people to encouragement and trust thrill the reader even in these far-off days."

Ezekiel takes great pains to convince his people that the iniquities of the fathers are not visited upon the children; that if they repent they shall enjoy his favor. He insists that every man is responsible for his own acts and for those alone; that the children's teeth are not set on edge because their fathers have eaten sour grapes. So small a part does Moses play among the prophets that his name is mentioned only a few times, and by more than half not at all. If these wonderful books were not always bound up with the Mosaic portion of the Bible, hardly anybody would suspect that they had any connection with each other. In fact, nearly all the prophets seem to be laboring to convince their readers and hearers that the era of Moses is past and that a new era has dawned. One needs to do hardly more than to glance into the so-called Sacred Books of the East or the Koran to be convinced of the exceptional superiority of the former. In those books everything depends upon the most scrupulous observance of ceremonies; in the prophetic books, ceremonies and symbols, burnt offerings and sacrifices, count for nothing at all. Time and again the people are warned against attaching any importance to the observance of rites and usages, and urged to practice right conduct and to lead upright lives.

T. H. Huxley once wrote:—

"That man, I think, has a liberal education whose body has been so trained in youth that it is the ready servant of his will, and does with ease and pleasure all that, as a mechanism, it is capable of; whose intellect is a clear, cold, logic engine with all its parts of equal strength and in smooth running order, ready, like a steam-engine, to be turned to any kind of work, and to spin the gossamers as

well as to forge the anchors of the mind; whose mind is stored with the great fundamental truths of nature and the laws of her operations; one who, no stunted ascetic, is full of fire and life, but whose passions have been trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience; one who has learned to love all beauty, whether of nature or art, to hate all violence, and to esteem others as himself."

This is a clear definition and a good one; but it is incomplete. It almost entirely ignores the very important fact that man has a heart as well as a head. Most men are governed far more by their feelings than by their reason. Every civilized country furnishes abundant evidence of the truth of this statement. It is dotted with asylums, with almshouses, with homes for the aged and the imbecile, and with other eleemosynary institutions. The scientist, pure and simple, would say that it is a kindness to put to a painless death incurables of all kinds, as well as old people who have passed the period when they can be of any possible use to anybody, including themselves. Yet nobody proposes such drastic measures. Although it would save a great deal of money, nobody proposes such action or begrudges the payment of his share. In fact, as science has advanced it has shown continually greater solicitude for the unfortunate in mind and body.

We may affirm with entire confidence that the intellect is passing more and more under the domination of the feelings, controlling and guiding but not suppressing them. Everybody is at times prompted to give the beggar a dole, and is constrained to call upon his intellect to reflect whether a gift would not do more harm than good. So effective is the appeal to sympathy that in some countries, it is true less now than in former days, begging is a regular and profitable occupation. Quite recently a good deal of money has been collected, by appeals to sympathy, the greater part of which remained in the hands of the collectors. The early church, heeding the exhortation of its Founder, that the poor would always be with them, con-

sidered it a part of its obligation to care for widows and orphans. As is usually the case under such circumstances, their kindness was often abused by the unworthy. Mr. Huxley himself was a striking exemplification of the incompleteness of his definition. He is known to have been a man of almost exceptionally kind heart, as were also many of the men who shared his views, such as Darwin, Spencer, Mill, the "saint of rationalism," and others. Once when Spencer was asked why an act of cruelty aroused his indignation, he replied that he could not help it. Mill's case is particularly interesting and instructive in this connection. So completely intellectual was his early education, that the reader of his "Autobiography" is sometimes prompted to ask whether there was no mother in his father's household. Yet in mature life his passion for a woman so completely overpowered him that he deified her, and attributed to her merits and capacities that no one else could see or discover. Many a criminal has escaped the just penalty of the law, owing to the sympathy of the jury or the judge. In his defense Socrates assured his judges that he would not appeal to their sympathies, as many were wont to do by bringing into court their kinsfolk and their children. The ancient Greeks, especially the Athenians, notwithstanding their exceptional mental endowments, were a highly emotional people. Although they were not cruel by nature and never tortured their victims, they were sometimes led astray by their prepossessions to commit acts, under the sanction of law, that were grossly unjust. Hence the Socratics, especially their two great expounders, Plato and Aristotle, eliminate the emotional factor almost entirely from their system of education. The dictum of Thucydides seems to have been universally adopted by their countrymen, that the woman is best of whom least is said either for good or evil.

Few people are aware that a little knowledge rightly used may generate a large amount of enlightenment. Abraham Lincoln furnished a notable example. A recent biographer of him writes:—

“Lincoln, to an amazing degree, is the books he read. They furnish the one explanation of the amazing marvel in the annals of the writer that a man who wrote disreputable doggerel in his twenties, commonplace addresses in his thirties, the turgid and stilted speeches of the commonplace congressman among whom he sat in his forties, as he drew near the end of his fifties wrote the greatest threnody in our tongue or in any language — his Gettysburg address.”

Yet Lincoln's mentality was not poetic. Ideas did not *come* to him by inspiration and almost unconsciously. At an age when he was still a rather ordinary speaker and writer, men like Burns and Byron and Shelley had reached the zenith of their fame. The secret of it is that Lincoln was always in quest, not merely of knowledge, but of enlightenment. He was an unwearied and unceasing seeker after wisdom; and he found it, as all men find it who diligently seek and with unflagging zeal. “I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize.” An honest and earnest striving to reach the goal has its value, its high value, even for those who make but slow progress. Lincoln's range of reading was very limited, but it suggested thought. While it did not greatly increase knowledge it made knowledge a living reality. One of the most successful lawyers in New York once told me that when a boy he got into his hands a copy of Mill's “Logic” and read it. Although he understood little of it, he felt that it was worth understanding and read it again, this time with more profit. When he had read the work a third time he understood it thoroughly, as he believed. How few young men would have the courage to persevere in a labor of this kind! An ex-member of the State Legislature, and a fairly successful business man, said to me not long ago: “I never read anything.” Yet this man is not without influence on the affairs of the community and even of the State.

An English historian once wrote: “It is amazing with

how little knowledge and sense the world is governed!" He might have added: "It is no wonder that from time immemorial it has been badly done." A man of fairly extensive knowledge is impressed with this fact times without number and day after day. The flood of words that flows from the mouths of our Congressmen, and is poured broadcast over the land at the expense of those who care nothing for it, often reveals a depth of ignorance that is sometimes amusing, sometimes appalling. From remote ages the least qualified have been most eager to rule. When the trees went forth to anoint a king over them, the olive and the vine and the fig refused, but the bramble was willing to take the responsibility. Perhaps such a government is more nearly representative than one conducted by wise men. Only an ignoramus can properly represent a constituency of ignoramuses. If such a constituency once in a while chooses a man who is both educated and enlightened, the choice is accidental rather than deliberate. The greatest merit of Lincoln was his readiness to listen to arguments, to hear the other side, even on matters regarding which he had fully made up his mind. Although abhorring slavery, he was willing to restore the Union without abolishing it if there seemed to be no other way of accomplishing the end. Such men have come to the front once in a while in all countries, but not often. In England, Peel and Gladstone are the best known examples. And while it may be said of Gladstone, to use a homely simile, that he knew more in a minute than Lincoln knew in an hour, the latter eventually acquired as much wisdom as the former. It may also be said, furthermore, that the American raised himself to the same high moral level upon which the Englishman was born.

Another distinguished American furnished a striking exemplification of the difference between education and enlightenment. Of George Washington the historian Lecky wrote:—

"It was always known by his friends, and it was soon acknowledged by the whole nation and by the English

themselves, that in Washington, America had found a leader who could be induced by no earthly motive to tell a falsehood, or to break an engagement, or to commit any dishonorable act. Men of this moral type are happily not rare; but there is scarcely another instance in history of such a man's having reached and maintained the highest position in the convulsions of a civil war and of a great popular agitation."

The sting of this quotation, like that of the scorpion, is in its tail. It is sad, indeed, that men of the highest probity have rarely been able to maintain a high position, even if they attained it. Yet so far as education was concerned that of Washington was little better than Lincoln's. If Mr. Lecky were living now he could not truthfully write that "in Washington, America had found a leader," etc. Nearly all of our literature dealing with Washington and the "Fathers" is pervaded with the singular fallacy that it extols the men of old for exhibiting almost superhuman prescience, while at the same time warning us that if we do not educate we shall forfeit the noble legacy of political wisdom which they have bequeathed to us. We may well ask, How many of the men who utter those dolorous warnings or eulogies are aware that what is called higher education scarcely existed in this country in the eighteenth century, while public schools did not exist at all? The tenth college in the United States was founded in 1783, while those that preceded consisted of a president and one or two tutors. Of the few colleges set in motion before the end of the century, only one was in the South. John Marshall, who had more to do with giving the Constitution the interpretations now generally accepted than any other half dozen judges combined, was almost wholly self-educated. He learned law by practicing law. Moreover, nearly all of it was English law. This document that is hailed by most Americans as the very quintessence of political wisdom was so fiercely assailed that its adoption, by some of the States, was long a matter of doubt. It is probable that not more than one fourth of the male inhabitants voted on the question. Many could not because they

were disqualified by various disabilities, and others were indifferent. Surely no man who has sufficient knowledge to make his judgment worth anything would affirm that during these last hundred years we have gained neither in knowledge nor in wisdom.

A widely prevalent error into which our age has fallen is to regard illiteracy and ignorance as synonymous terms. Such is far from being the case. For more than three hundred years the average Englishman has been illiterate without, however, being ignorant, unless he was a tiller of the soil. The same affirmation may be made of other seafaring peoples, especially of those dwelling around the shores of the North Sea. In the smallest village in Great Britain, at least one man had his domicile who had visited foreign countries. When he returned to his native habitat he became a center of interest to his neighbors, who listened to his narratives of travel and experience. His knowledge was often more accurate than the information in books, and his recital far more vivid than when read from the printed page. Besides, it does not follow that a man who can write, will do so except at very rare intervals. If he is a common laborer his fingers are so stiff as to make the use of a pen a hard task. Moreover, what is there for many, very many men to write? In Germany illiteracy is virtually non-existent; in Belgium it is the rule rather than the exception. Yet during the recent war the people of the latter country conducted themselves far more creditably and humanely than the former. When our recruits began to be called to the colors, the officers in almost all the training camps complained bitterly that a considerable proportion of the young men who came to them were not only unable to read and write but even to understand the words of command in the English language. Yet it was never laid to the charge of those men that they failed to perform creditably the tasks assigned to them. The American soldier to whom was given the credit for performing the greatest achievement of the war is a Tennessee backwoodsman, although he is not entirely illiterate. At

any rate he seems to be a man of superior type. Napoleon fought and won his battles with soldiers only a small proportion of whom could read and write, while the better educated Germans fled before them like frightened sheep. When men are inspired with a great idea and judiciously directed, they overcome obstacles from which, in their calmer moments, they would shrink back in dismay.

Writers upon education are wont to dilate largely upon the well-known dictum that "knowledge is power," meaning generally the knowledge that may be acquired from teachers. First of all we should be told what is meant by power; for power may be destructive as well as constructive. If I were to say that dynamite is power, my statement would be almost the equivalent to saying that knowledge is power. Power is latent in dynamite: so it is in knowledge. Power, in order to have any value in education, must be wisely used. If our educational curricula do not teach the right use of power to its possessors, they would be better without it, as would also the entire community. A man who knows nothing about dynamite, who has never seen the compound, will certainly not make a bad use of it. In a sense, therefore, we have here a case where ignorance is bliss. Our much-vaunted and fiercely defended freedom of the press is a power that is often prostituted to the vilest purposes. Because, under our laws, a publisher cannot be prosecuted for printing what is not clearly subversive of public morality, we have among us men who make it their special business to mislead a certain portion of their readers, to cater to their lowest passions, and to advocate the most dastardly doctrines, solely because they find the business profitable. The men who are most successful in this nefarious business are endowed with exceptional literary ability or business perspicacity, so that they are able to dress up their falsehoods in the most attractive and alluring garb. This sort of knowledge, if it can be called knowledge, serves no other purpose than to corrupt those who are not qualified to distinguish truth

from error. The press is a great power, but it is far from being a power for good only.

If we are at times prompted to take a gloomy view of present conditions, reference to the tablets of memory or to the pages of history will convince us that they have been worse, not unfrequently far worse. In this country they were worse for two or three decades immediately succeeding the close of the Revolutionary War. They were worse for about twenty years immediately preceding the inauguration of President Hayes. The ominous feature of those days, not yet far off, was the feeling of hopelessness and helplessness that prevailed in the minds of the men and women who were ready and even eager to engage in uplift work to the extent of their ability. The moral and religious agencies lacked organization and means. All these drawbacks have been overcome. Terrible indeed is the picture of the demoralization that prevailed in Athens during the plague, as drawn by the graphic pen of Thucydides. Beginning with Hannibal, Italy has many times been more fearfully ravaged before the twentieth century than since. Under the hordes of Attila much of Europe was turned into a solitude. During the Hundred Years' War, between England and France, the latter country may have suffered less in material things than recently because the means of destruction were less efficacious, but the people probably suffered more grievously. The Thirty Years' War denuded some parts of Germany of half its inhabitants, and others of two thirds. In England the Black Death wrought fearful ravages. It left London, a comparatively small city, with a hundred thousand less inhabitants, and in the whole of Europe the shortage is supposed to have amounted to twenty-five millions of human beings. In 1665 about two thirds of the people of London were supposed to have been carried off. The highest estimate of the killed during the course of the recent war is less than five millions; which number, however, does not include those who perished from starvation and malnutrition. Besides, the population of Europe at the begin-

ning of the present century was doubtless much greater than at any previous time. Between 1894 and 1907 India lost six million people from the plague. The extremely primitive modes of transportation made it well-nigh impossible for one part of the world, or even for one section of the same country, to help another even if its people desired to do so.

The fact that most forcibly impresses the mind of the reader of these gruesome records is the feeling of helplessness on the part of the authorities and of heartlessness on the part of those who escaped. The only way to safety known was to get as far from the infected as possible. The ravages in India would have been many times worse but for the vigorous counter-measures taken by the British Government. Until not much more than a century ago hardly anybody knew what to do under such conditions. Despair seized everybody, not less the well than the sick. In our day the remedy is to meet disease and conquer it, not to flee from it. Very encouraging, too, is the sympathy for the unfortunate, from whatever cause. Very few people now ask: "Am I my brother's keeper?" Almost everybody takes the relation and the obligation for granted. The following item appeared in a newspaper, dated at Atlantic City, in January, 1920:—

"The budget of the Interchurch World Movement, to be used in co-ordinating the energies of the Protestant denominations for the evangelization of the world, was approved to-day at the conference of fourteen church leaders here. The budget calls for the expenditure of one and one-third billion dollars in the next five years in America and in the foreign field, in the financing of hospitals and homes, liberal awards to struggling colleges, for the fighting of social and industrial unrest, and for better wages for ministers and missionaries."

This item takes no account of what has been done during the last five years by various eleemosynary agencies. It is almost exhilarating to an American to note the response of his countrymen to the call for aid, no matter from what

quarter it came, and that they propose to continue it for years, perhaps for all time to come. Very pathetic it is to read from time to time the question of those in want or distress: "When will the Americans come?" and the confident expectation that "The Americans will help us." The Rockefeller Foundation alone has expended many millions of dollars for the study, prevention, and cure of disease in almost every part of the world, but especially among people who would not or could not do anything for themselves.

The twentieth century exhibits another phenomenon that is altogether without precedent. Never before has the possibility of entirely abolishing war been seriously considered. That a war would inevitably break out here and there, now and then, was as much taken for granted as the recurrence of earthquakes and equally unpreventable. Such a feeling of helplessness is no longer cherished by the most far-seeing men. The terrible efficacy of modern implements of war has probably not been without its influence, but it has not been the determining factor: it simply gave added impetus to a movement that already had gained considerable force. Small wars may still occur, but they are likely to be of short duration. Nearly all past wars have been dynastic; and as there are no longer any hereditary dynasties in power, their opportunity for mischief has passed forever. The men who set in motion the recent war were firmly convinced of the truth of the maxim that the victory goes to the men who get to the critical point at the right time with the largest force. When too late they learned their mistake to their unspeakable dismay. The statement was true, in a general way, when the fighting was done with similar weapons on both sides. Recently, however, the means of destruction have been made so terrible that both those who are to do the fighting and those who are in charge of the government will shrink from facing them or compelling others to face them, lest in the tide of battle which is so prone to turn unexpectedly they may be overwhelmed with their own

devices. Still we need to beware of depending on mere formulas or so-called slogans for betterment. Not so very many years ago we were assured that manhood suffrage would be the remedy for most of our social and political ills. When that had been granted and many evils still remained, universal suffrage began to be advocated. That, too, has so far proved a disappointment. Of prohibition much was expected that has not yet been realized. The futility of depending on statutes alone is proved by the large number of our laws. The Protestant churches have come to a full realization of this fundamental fact. They are seeing their duty and their responsibility as they never saw it before, and are trying in every way to educate the public outside of the schools and apart from the regular agencies. There is no uplifting force so powerful as enlightened public opinion.