

THE REAL WORLD.

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It is a sense of its meaning which makes life real. What but so much impedimenta are the facts and their theory, which one endeavors in his pursuit of an education to master, if he have not found his bearings in the real world? Life is the soul's adventure into the world of reality, an adventure through grave perils toward the goal of the highest good.

“The mountains that enfold the vale
With walls of granite steep and high
Invite the fearless foot to scale
Their stairway to the sky.

“The restless, deep, dividing sea
That flows and foams from shore to shore
Calls to its sunburned chivalry
‘Push out, set sail, explore!’

“And all the bars at which we fret,
That seem to prison and control,
Are but the doors of daring, set
Ajar before the soul.”

Yesterday, when we were little children, the real world was a wonderful world of *things*, just commonplace, everyday things, which had for us still the spell of that Heaven which lies about us in our infancy. In those kindergarten days, simply to catalogue the names and note the uses of things, to collect and treasure things, to share or barter things, filled up the real world for us. Who has not vagrant memories of those first trips abroad into the great world? It was a world of houses and

barns, and dogs and cats, and green trees and yellow moons, a world of wagons and trains and peanuts and mud-pies—a helter-skelter, indiscriminate world of things, where people might figure, yet beyond the inner circle, only as so many dolls in a play world. Well, was childhood right, when it opened its eyes wide before the mystery of things and was satisfied?

The physical sciences lead us back to a new interest in things. They declare to us that the eyes of childhood were uncomprehending, that their seeing was the merest beholding of appearances—sight, but not insight; they tell us that behind the face of things, in the heart of things, lies a world of wonder unimagined. For behind the world of the untrained vision lies the world of the trained vision, a glorious world of material phenomena, a populous microscopic cosmos, an unbounded telescopic universe. Yet beyond that world of trained vision, and making it possible, lies the scientist's real world, the world of hypothesis, where insight is born. It is a world of law, minutely detailed, complex and constant.

This world of component phenomena behind the mask of things, revealed in the laboratory to the trained observer, was a world unknown to childhood. But the marvelous development of the physical sciences has torn the mask from the face of things, and bids us peer within. Childhood never dreamed that the world was half so complex or so wonderful. How vast it is! Edward Irving mentions a variety of spider-web so fine that a pound of it would reach round the earth; but he remarks incidentally that it would take 500,000 tons of it to reach the nearest fixed star! There are both the world's marvels in combination—the wonder that its reality is so vast, the greater wonder of its infinitely delicate texture. Sometime ago a writer in *St. Nicholas* illustrated the wideness of the "world" in this way:

“ ‘Suppose,’ said the orator, ‘though ’tis a
 thought stupendous,
 Suppose a baby one year old with arms of the tre-
 mendous
 Length of ninety-three odd million miles,
 Should, in a freak of fun,
 Reach up and touch the sun!
 That child would be
 253
 Years old,
 I’m told,
 Before it learned
 Its hand was burned!’ ”

What a world it is! This age, which flatters itself as the age *par excellence* of Science, is somewhat wont to think that it knows the heart of reality. But is this world of Science the real world? Childhood was naive and simple, and its world was correspondingly so, and all fringed about with mystery. It had no theory of things, only the simple, discrete things themselves. Science is sophisticated, and here is the world of things co-ordinated. Which is the real world? Would the world of Science do for the soul of a little child what the naked world of things does? Could it?

Philosophy peers over the shoulder of Science into the face of things and proposes its four conundrums: “What? Whence? Whither? Why?” It would know, not things alone, but their cause, their trends, their end. It believes that there lies at the heart of things a deeper meaning than Science has discovered, that, after all, the meaning of things lies neither in the child’s fancy nor in the scientist’s hypothesis. So the philosopher sits in his arm-chair and endeavors to construct, behind the scientist’s world of things, an ultimate world of reality—a world where, perchance, the streets are categories, the houses pure mental constructs, and the people either

sensations or pure ideas. What about your world of things, anyhow? Does not John Locke say that substances (in other words, things, the material of science)—substances are a combination of qualities plus an unknown somewhat? He avers that our knowledge is conversant only about ideas, and thus brings about a distrust of *things*. Bishop Berkeley wipes things clear off the slate, declaring that all objects are congeries of ideas, nothing more, and that the sensations we get are the effect of the operation of other minds. David Hume is entirely skeptical, declaring that what we call a mind is nothing other than a bundle of related perceptions. Thus he remarks, “when I enter into what I call myself, I stumble upon some particular perception * * * *”, and can never catch myself apart from such perception * * * * Where am I, or from what causes do I derive my existence * * * *? I am confounded with all these questions.” Awakened by Hume from his “dogmatic slumbers,” Kant inquires critically concerning the process of knowledge, and at length declares that we know only phenomena, that so far as the *Ding an sich*—the Thing-in-itself—is concerned, we can in the nature of the case know nothing. Reid, the founder of the Scottish School, the school of Common Sense, declares that knowledge gives us immediately the reality that lies beyond experience, that when you put your foot on the ground what you stand upon is just ground, nothing else. The Scottish School returned from its “rescuing expedition” with a precious bundle of intuitions, everything the fathers were wont to base their faith upon, saved as reality. John Stewart Mill, however, persisted in skepticism concerning the substantiality of the material, and preferred to define matter—that stuff from which *things* originate—as “the permanent possibility of sensation.” But why continue this running commentary? I have said that Philosophy propounds four questions: “What? Whence? Whither? Why?” We have had a glimpse of

the variety of her answers to the first question; we should hardly expect to reach greater unanimity in her answers to the other questions. The late William James has admirably summarized the heterogeneity of philosophical opinion in the following paragraph:

“For what a variety of opinions have objective evidence and absolute certitude been claimed! The world is rational through and through, its existence is an ultimate brute fact; there is a personal God, a personal God is inconceivable; there is an extra-mental physical world immediately known, the mind can know only its own ideas; a moral imperative exists, moral obligation is only the resultant of desires; a permanent spiritual principle is in every one, there are only shifting states of mind; there is an endless chain of causes, there is an absolute first cause; an eternal necessity, a freedom; a purpose, no purpose; a primal unity, a primal many; a universal continuity, an essential discontinuity; an infinity, no infinity. There is this, there is that; there is indeed nothing which some one has not thought absolutely true while his neighbor thought it absolutely false.”

I suspect by this time you are mentally ejaculating, “Give us a rest!” That is just what the latest-born child of the philosophical household is impertinently crying out to its elders. Pragmatism is saying, “We asked for bread, and you gave us a stone; we’ll just sweep the whole heap of them into the sea of oblivion.” For “What is worth while?” cries Pragmatism. “Why, manifestly, just so much as you can use in your business, and no more; just so much as has a cash value, and no more.” Is all this philosophy, then, but sheer waste? “O, by no means; not more than the ‘growing pains’ of childhood are sheer waste.” Now we may not be Pragmatists; but we cannot help asking whether the philosophers’ world, with its pale adumbrations of reality, its articulate, not to say reticulate, logic, is, after all, the real world. Could it ever do for the race what the world of the physical

scientist has done? Have not the physical sciences harnessed the clouds, tunneled the mountains, fed the nations, given us our magnificent material civilization, and even conserved for us, just by so much, the higher spiritual values?

In the thick of Philosophy's questions—I do not speak of answers—issues the affirmation of Religion that there is a yet deeper meaning in the heart of things than ever Philosophy's interrogations could unfold. Religion finds that it must not only ask the same questions as Philosophy, it must for practical ends answer them by faith, and upon the foundation of that faith rear life's superstructure. Nor is this postulate of a religious meaning of things the late-born child of human need, for from the far-off ages man has been constitutionally religious, and has surely won his way from the realization of things to the postulate of a Creator, from the sense of defeat to faith in a Helper, from the consciousness of sin to the rebuke of a righteous Omniscience, from the night of sorrow to the bosom of the God of all comfort. For the most real of all worlds is that world of experience where compulsion in events raises the issue of causation; where a shattered hope, as of some never-to-be-won good, brings a prayer for help; where a stained conscience compels the agonized cry for forgiveness; where a crushed heart raises a plea for comfort; where the whole synthesis of experience issues in a face lifted to the heavens and a heart crying out for the clew of things, the religious meaning of the world. Faith enters within the veil to find that Person who is at once the Power that creates, the Father who forgives, the Mother who comforts, and the Friend who helps.

“If I lay waste and wither up with doubt
The blessed fields where once my faith
Possessed itself serenely safe from death;
If I deny the things past finding out;

Or if I orphan my own soul of One
That seemed a father, and make void the place
Within me where he dwelt in power and grace,
What do I gain that am myself undone?"

Here they are, then, these four: the naive world of childhood, the matter-of-fact world of Science, the metaphysical world of Philosophy, and the mystical world of Religion. If I ask which is the real world, it may be insisted that we are not quite prepared to dispense with any of them. Very well, then, let us say that our world of concrete things tends to manifest itself as a scientifically ordered whole, that it implies metaphysical reality, and demands the religious explanation.

Will you go back with me now to that inchoate world of our childhood? It was a *ready-made world*. Language and law and religion were here when we got here; and we can recall the tussle we had in getting adjusted to them. Then, too, the roads were surveyed, the fences built, the fashions set, when we got here. For aught we knew, things had always been so; indeed we were quite sure of it. Had you told us of Adam or Abraham, we should probably have imagined them as traveling from Eden to Ur in Pullman cars, killing their game with Winchester repeating arms, and cooking it with gas; or, perhaps, as living in a modern city flat, and sending their little children—if there were any little children—to a model kindergarten. Founded upon the common mental and social conventions, life seemed solid enough!

But the hey-day of our childhood passed, and with it went our dear old ready-made world. First of all, and soon enough, we learned that it is the business of little folk to grow up, and that growing up carried with it the delectable privilege of laying aside knickerbockers and pinafores. Into what a world of change we were ushered! The fashions changed first—I believe that they changed first, I am sure that they changed most often;

then our ideals changed; we no longer wanted to be peanut salesmen or balloon vendors, janitors or plumbers or hackmen. The whirl of change gathered momentum; both ourselves and our surroundings changed; we grew up, and the style of dress, the types of architecture, the methods of transportation, the means of manufacture, the ways of farming, became something other than they were. The world put on a new dress, socially, industrially, politically; won a new conscience, lived a new life. The laws of the land changed, so that from over-protecting infant industries it seemed expedient to define corporations, to tax them, and to classify them into good and bad; the hypothesis of Science changed, at least once or twice, as when the ions put the atoms out of business, and who does not remember the scientific brain-storm which blew up in the wake of radium? Even Religion, in spite of its proverbial inertia, changed the pattern of its phylacteries and the stripe upon the borders of its garments.

To be sure, not all of us are aware that anything besides the seasons and the tenure of political office change; but, since the days of Heraclitus, every philosopher has known that everything is in movement. We fondly endeavor to imagine that some things may be excepted; just as the planter upon the shores of the Father of Waters trusts that the levee will keep the yellow flood back from his domains, only, at length, to see the devouring element creep up and up, and sweep out and out, till the last square inch of his holdings lies beneath the yellow tide! We do not like the nebular hypothesis for the very nebulousness of its starmist; nor do we like the dictum of the prophetic scientist who hypothesizes about a time when our more or less favored descendants shall migrate from the temperate zone, and this great belt of the world's richest life become the ice-bound desert of the North. We fondly have recourse to certain postulates of thought which, at any rate, we

say, did not grow up with the race, but always existed. For example, there is the Time concept and the Space concept. But the psychologists are now referring the origin of the Space concept to a close dependence upon physical structure, and the Time concept back to certain rythmical physical processes. This being true, neither of them is ultimate, but both have grown up in experience, as other conceptions have. What a stupendous notion is that generalization of continuous process with which Science today faces the world—a conception covering all phenomena and all time, yet only a terrifying thought for him in whom there has been born the religious conviction that in God “we live and move and have our being”—

“That God which ever lives and loves;
 One God, one law, one element,
 And one far-off, divine event
 To which the whole creation moves.”

But which is the real world, the static world of our childhood, or the dynamic world, *the world of process*, which maturity recognizes? Just as certainly as the life of the person moves forward from its budding-time in childhood, just so certainly does this world in which we dwell move forward; it is itself a becoming world, just as we are becoming personalities. Not only has our understanding of the material universe been a process, the movement of the universe itself has been a movement upward. Are you a modern Joshua, enamored of a static world? Well, just where in their course would you have the sun and moon stand still? At what stadium in its past development do you wish the world had stopped? Of course the individual must not be interrupted; you would not have the race doomed to perpetual babyhood—babyhood in wisdom, in skill, in achievement, in character. Do you wish the progress of the race in morals had ended

in the days of Abraham, when polygamy and concubinage were in good standing and full fellowship? Of course not! Perhaps you would have stopped the pendulum in the palmy days of the later Cæsars, when those Roman autocrats exercised a not too benevolent despotism over the known world, and democracy was unborn. Absurd! Well, perhaps, you would be satisfied if the turning and overturning had stopped in the good old times when slavery was in vogue; when the mass of men, white men, had not the remotest dream of personal freedom. But you object. You want the child to grow up, the marriage relation to be single and unsullied, the plain man to have his voice in government, the white man—and the black, too,—to be free!

Why not frankly admit that the world in which we live is a world of process, God's process? The physical world is being made over, the personal world is born anew with the rise of new appreciations, the moral world is being reconstructed by the development of a new conscience. This turning and overturning lies in the very nature of things; the nature of things is, we persistently believe, *teleological*, working toward definite, though perhaps distant, goals.

It is neither of commanding importance nor of consuming interest what aspects the total process bore ere humanity became a factor in it. The consuming interest lies in the determination of humanity's relation to the process, whether man is upon the plane of the lower orders—a mere effect, or whether he is also a creative cause. Experience yields the apparently indubitable answer that man is a free creative agent, not simply plastic stuff in the hands of environment, but rather creative of environment itself. This is the faith of manhood, not only that the world-process is teleological, but that man is himself a conscious and purposeful factor in making the world over. We are joyously aware that things will be other than they are, and better, just be-

cause we live and labor, that our effort enters into the sum total, which could not be what it shall be but for us. It is not so much that we have made the physical world over, though the extent of this transformation upon the continent of North America, for example, is most amazing and reveals not only the discovery and utilization of values, but their creation as well. It is not simply that we have been able to get a new interpretation of the world which has made it over, as the Copernican hypothesis did. It is chiefly that the thought and sweat and blood of men issue in the creation of new material and spiritual values, which are embodied and perpetuated in organization and technique, in human codes, institutions, and conventions. Thus we have made over the whole round of physical life; our food, our dress, our occupations, our wants, our comforts, our security, our opportunity are achievements of human creative energy.

In the inner realm of ethical and religious values this is even more marked. The martyr blood of moral missionaries has fertilized the soil from which all great reforms have sprung. There could be no hope of that day when the world shall have the vision of God, when it shall know no stain of sin and no lure of temptation—legalized and institutionalized as it is today in the licensed rum business and the “regulated” social evil—that time when the moral safety and purity of the little child shall be the prime concern of government—I say that there could be no hope of such a time, did we not know that there are men and women in the world today—vicarious souls—who will spend and be spent for these ends. The meanings of life lie in that made-over world to whose inbringing we may contribute if we catch the vision and have a heart for the task.

“The future works out great men’s purposes;
The present is enough for common souls,
Who, never looking forward, are indeed

Mere clay, wherein the footprints of their age
Are petrified forever.”

“Say not the struggle naught availeth,
The labor and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been, things remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase, e’en now, the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light,
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly;
But westward, look, the land is bright!”

Man *has* made the world over. From the days of primitive society and primitive religion, man has made the world over, until, upon the whole, it is a better, a purer, a safer, a saner world than ever it was. But the end is not yet, for God is making the world over, and not alone the vision of a better world, but the power to work it out, were born in the human breast of His Spirit. Man is making the world over, and I glory in it. But God is making the world over—this is the heart of our religious conviction—and we are humble before Him, and anxious to be in line with His purposes. In our weakness when baffled, in our uncertainty when perplexed, we build by faith upon His unchanging power. And we dare to be-

lieve that the real world is His world, the world yet to be born, the world at its goal.

From this antithesis of the world static and the world of process, let us now turn to another, the great philosophic antithesis between Matter and Spirit. In the days before Kant, the two great camps were definitely lined up, the sensationalists declaring that the ground of knowledge lay in sensations only, the rationalists averring with equal dogmatic insistence that ideas are the only reality. The common man is not interested in the debate. He is an inevitable dualist. Yet, owing to the very nature of his experience, though he recognizes the immediacy of the physical world in experience he locates his supreme values in the spiritual world. He recognizes, and that is the least any of us can do, that this physical world is such as not only to permit, but even to foster and promote the formation of character; and he fails to find a sufficient reason for the physical world apart from its relation to the spiritual.

In the course of this discussion we have passed somewhat indiscriminately to and fro, from spiritual to material and back, and we had the warrant for so doing in the fact that mind and physical organism are so related in experience as seemingly to play into each other. But we may now pass from that physical world of fact to the spiritual world of meanings. This spiritual world is a world of persons, and it is a world of meanings just because it is a world of persons. Personality is the great reality creative of all values. It is the realization of other persons and conscious adjustment to their rights which constitutes us moral persons. We are born with the endowment of individuality, but we achieve personality. We achieve it in intimate correspondence and interaction with other persons; and we recognize as the loftiest plane of personality the level where it becomes vicarious. In another's words, "Love and devotion are the tremendous facts of life. Wherever the person is,

they appear, as does gravitation where the particles of matter are * * * * * We find our joy in giving, as God does, * * * * * and he that loveth is in very fact 'of God,' and well on his way home."

Thank God that the world of spirit is a world of persons! It makes us feel at home. For only in a world of persons is there language, or interchange of soul, is there friendship or the reality of love, is there appreciation, gratitude, or trust. What a moral wilderness were this world without its human inhabitants! father, mother, brother, sister, teacher, friend, lover, God—all gone out of it! I should want to leave it, too, alone in its bewildering loneliness. The old definitions of personality were too individualistic, the new give due recognition to the social nature of the self, and show that the greatest sin in the world is the ignoring of other persons.

But the life of a person is equally defined by its power of surpassing itself, its ability to draw continually nearer an ever expanding ideal.

"Man knows partly but conceives beside,
Creeps ever on from fancies to the fact,
And in this striving, this converting air
Into a solid he may grasp and use,
Finds progress, man's distinctive mark alone,
Not God's and not the beast's; God is, they are,
Man partly is and wholly hopes to be."

Let us, then, recognize that man is unconquerably futuristic, a believer that "the best is yet to be, the last of life for which the first was made." At the same time, to a much larger degree than we have thought, both man's present and his future are socially determined. The "social mind" is not a dream; it is the gravest reality. It expresses itself in conventions and institutions; it moulds personality from its inception; it imposes the limits of personal freedom; it provides the media of in-

tercourse and prescribes its rules. How many of us are brave enough to affront Madam Grundy? To be sure, she has not a monopoly of the social mind, though she often assumes that she is the whole thing. Not a small part of the pains of budding manhood and womanhood in the period of adolescence are due to the necessity of recognizing the prerogative of the social mind, the power and sway of conventions and institutions. The fact, then, that this world of persons is a social world means that "no man liveth unto himself," that he could not if he would. We are in no small degree the creatures of yesterday and the creators of tomorrow, but we are also creatures and creators of each other. Our interests are so bound up together that, even should we dare try it, we could not realize our own freedom, nor secure the future of our children, nor enter into the inheritance of the saints, without the help of others. Society develops personality as we know it, shapes the child's potential future, and makes worship the helpful reality that it is in common experience.

Now there are some people who, in such a world as this, dare take the purely egoistic view of life, dare get all they can of education, wealth, culture and refinement even, just to hoard or to spend upon themselves. There is no virtue in my personal recognition of the existence of a social mind, unless I bring my mind into harmony with social ends, the great ends for which humanity exists. Even the little private virtues which I so complacently cherish may otherwise turn out to be vices. The truth is beginning to dawn upon us in this generation, thank God! that we must be socially saved or we shall be individually lost.

When I say that this world of persons is a social world, I must further say that it is a religious world. I do not mean to repeat as a shibboleth of optimism the couplet from Pippa Passes:

“God’s in his heaven,
All’s right with the world.”

I mean merely that the world of reality of which we are a part is such as not only to permit but even to demand a religious interpretation. For I should say, with Tennyson:

“He that has lived for the lust of the minute and died, in
the doing it, flesh without mind;
He that has nailed all flesh to the Cross till Self died out,
in the love of his kind—
What is it all, if we all of us end but in being our own
corpse-coffins at last,
Swallowed in Vastness, lost in Silence, drowned in the
deeps of a meaningless Past?”

The cold agnosticism of Mathew Arnold, as in “Dover Beach” he interprets life’s great movements as

“Confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night,”

will not satisfy the human heart. The soul cries out for God: “Oh that I knew where I might find him! * * * * * Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him * * * * * *But he knoweth the way that I take*; when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” In spite of the invisibility of God, and in the face of the problem of evil, the soul goes on its quest for Him, and declares life empty of meaning without Him. And

“Sometimes comes to soul and sense
The feeling which is evidence
That very near about us lies
The realm of spiritual mysteries;

The sphere of the supernal powers
Impinges on this world of ours."

There are moods of the soul when we could almost join
with Coleridge in asking

"What if all animated nature
Be but organic harps diversely framed,
That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps,
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the soul of each and God of all?"

At any rate, the religious view is that this world is
God's world, that He is working out His purposes with it,
that He will have His way with it; and that the same God
who holds our times in His hands, cares for us, loves us,
suffers with us and for us. Here at length we have the
view-point which gives us the real world in its unity.
Take away God out of His world—the Christian God—
and

"The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not one rack behind."

But, leave us faith in God, and we shall labor and wait
until He shall rule whose right it is.

"Had we no hope
Indeed, beyond the zenith and the slope
Of yon gray blank of sky, we might be faint
To muse upon eternity's constraint
Round our aspirant soul. But since the scope
Must widen early, is it well to droop,
For a few days consumed in loss and taint?"

O pusillanimous heart, be comforted,
And, like a cheerful traveler, take the road
Singing beside the hedge!"

The hope we cherish carries us stoutly forward toward that more real world, our world of consummations, which ever lies beyond us, and ever lures us on.

I have said that we can rest only in God; but we come to God through Jesus Christ. "He is the supreme channel in history for the communication of God * * * * * Through Him was expressed the type toward which personal life should move, and in Him was exhibited the eternal patience, and sacrifice, and love of God. *He is the clew!*" In Him the becoming world and the world at its goal were one. And His world of spiritual values, of personal devotion, of moral unity, of communion with the Father, is the only world in which our souls can rest. Illumined by the Spirit of Jesus, we repeat the confession of our faith: "Thou, O God, hast made us for Thyself, and our souls are restless till they rest in Thee!"