

THE NEW
DEMOCRACY IN THE
TEACHING OF ENGLISH

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THE NEW DEMOCRACY IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

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RAND McNALLY & COMPANY
CHICAGO NEW YORK

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To
MR. JOSEPH ROSIER
*Advocate and exponent of democracy
in education*

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THE INTRODUCTION

The three addresses in this volume attempt to treat the most important general principles underlying the liberalization and democratization of the English subjects in the elementary and the high school, with implications which reach up even to the college and university. They are to be thought of, not as an exposition of the entire theme, but as an argument for the fundamental ideas involved.

Two of the three addresses have been printed before. The first one in this volume, after being read under the title "The New Democracy in the Teaching of English" before the English Section of the Education Association of Western Pennsylvania in 1918, was printed in booklet form by the Board of Public Education of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with a foreword by William M. Davidson, superintendent of the schools of Pittsburgh. The address on "Democratic Ideals of Culture and Efficiency: Their Relation to English" was read before the English Club of West Virginia University in 1919, and printed in the November and December numbers of *Education* of that year. "The Palace of Pedagogy" was read before the West Virginia State Education Association in 1920, and since that time before other audiences. It has not before been printed.

The author has thought it best, in bringing the addresses together in this volume, to leave them substantially as they were in content, spirit, and style. They are perhaps somewhat controversial in attitude, and they may be at times somewhat conversational in tone. But to recast

them would not only be a work of some magnitude; it would, in the opinion of the author, rob them of whatever vigor and directness they have. For that reason he is presenting them here virtually as they first appeared, the only alterations being unimportant ones in phrasing.

He is the more willing to send his ideas forth in this form because he designs to publish soon a more complete and formal exposition of the theme, with the aim of indicating how these general principles may be applied in detail to actual schoolroom conditions. The present volume may therefore be regarded as but the statement of the author's creed and an argument for the spirit which he believes should animate the teaching of English.

The author gratefully acknowledges his indebtedness, for his general conception of democracy in education, to A. Duncan Yocum. He has obtained much, in ideas and inspiration, through books published by him, through personal discussion with him, and through service under him in the work of the National Council of Education's Committee on the Teaching of Democracy.

FAIRMONT, WEST VIRGINIA

January 15, 1923

W. B.

THE NEW DEMOCRACY IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

I. MAKING ENGLISH DEMOCRATIC

Democracy in government. A few years ago the American people was engaged in a war which had as its primary and avowed object the making of the world safe for democracy.

This slogan, "The world safe for democracy," clearly implies that we believe that democracy is the best and wisest government, and that America, the greatest democracy of the world, stands forth as the champion of democracy throughout the world—indeed, as the exemplar of democracy to the world. We are tacitly saying to all nations, "The principles and institutions of democracy are worth preserving, worth extending, and worth imitating." And this is well: we must, though in no arrogant fashion, set ourselves to the large task of convincing the world that democracy is the happiest, most successful, most reasonable form of government.

But the instant we step forward as the model of democracy, to assist in making democracy attractive and influential, it behooves us to turn our eyes inward, strictly to examine ourselves, our beliefs, our ideals, our institutions, to determine whether all is well with us, whether, in all vital matters, we are a genuinely democratic people.

Now, democracy is more than a government in which all are citizens, in which all have a right to vote and hold office. A democracy is a government which allows and

for one thing, overemphasized writing. Very few persons have need for much writing, while virtually all have urgent need for talking; yet we have ignored the claims and necessities of the many to satisfy the wishes of the few. Is this democratic? Or, consider the forms of discourse we emphasize. Many of us force our pupils over a steeplechase of story writing, of literary descriptions, of formal orations and debates, which, if of value at all, is of value only to the scanty few who are to be professional writers and speakers, the while we ignore letter writing, the telling of anecdotes and personal experiences, and the important arts of conversation and discussion, which are of inestimable value to all persons, regardless of what their vocation in life is to be. Is this democratic? The strongest reason for the making of expositions is that the process involved in finding and limiting a topic, and in gathering and arranging material, is of value to everyone, since it parallels the process of constructive thinking; yet we neglect this important contribution to the education of all in order to give to a small group training in mere verbal expression. Is this democratic?

Theme subjects. Or, again, reflect upon the subjects we assign for themes. Topics pulled bodily from literature: analysis of characters in Scott's romances, reproduction of stories, book reports and criticisms, debates on whether Brutus or Mark Anthony made the better oration; topics found by the "book-minded" English teacher in a text in rhetoric manufactured by a still more "book-minded" teacher, topics of interest only to those concerned with literary matters: these are the theme subjects most popular with high-school teachers

of English. Does anyone fancy that thinking on these subjects (if thinking it may be called) is of interest or of great worth to that vast majority of boys and girls who have no literary proclivities? But the English teacher—who would not be an English teacher if he were not genuinely interested in these topics—has found them stimulating and valuable to him, and he has his eye-glasses on two or three bookworms in his class whom he can hypnotize into a pretense of attention. So he goes happily on his way, unperturbed by the obvious fact that all this lies outside the charmed circle of the experience and interests of the average child. Is this democratic?

Rhetoric. Finally, observe how we stress the purely rhetorical qualities in our teaching of language and composition. With what complacency do we teach all the details of "purity, propriety, and precision," the various kinds of paragraph development and of sentence structure, the proper ratio of Latin and Anglo-Saxon words in the ideal vocabulary, and all the other glorious rubbish, which has but doubtful value even for the extremely literary student, while we pay but perfunctory attention to spelling, to pronunciation, to straightforward, natural, free expression, which has undoubted value for all. Is this democratic?

Literature. And what of literature, the other branch of English? Surely it is democratic? It may be; indeed, I believe it is more democratic than language and composition, and that it is yearly becoming more conscious of the desires and demands of the majority of average persons who constitute the student body. But we must further and more fully democratize it.

A caution. And yet, in our effort to democratize literature, there is one grave danger of which we must beware. Some would persuade us that all our education must be extremely practical and utilitarian: that anything which cannot prove itself from this standpoint must be banished from the curriculum, and that we must either make literature immediately and directly practical or give it up. This I utterly deny. "Life is more than meat and the body than raiment," whether one be a ditch digger or a Chautauqua lecturer. Democracy does not imply making everything useful; leisure, taste, culture, and the pursuit of happiness are as vital to the laborer in the fields as to the judge upon the bench. We must democratize literature, not by making it aridly utilitarian, but by selecting the kind of literature that will have the widest appeal among all classes. Literature is, by its very nature, cultural, as truly as composition is, by its very nature, practical. Literature arouses healthy, wholesome emotions and develops and guides them; it satisfies the craving for beauty, reveals spiritual truth, trains taste, and provides a fine, pure, permanent pleasure. Literature teaching is genuinely democratic when it makes its contribution of culture to all.

When we scrutinize the material, the purposes, and the methods of literature teaching, we discover that in many respects it, like language teaching, is undemocratic in the extreme.

Materials in use in teaching of the literature. In the first place, the literature generally placed in the course of study is not of the kind that will touch the emotions of most children, gratify their feeling for beauty, and perform all the other gracious services that literature should

perform. The list of classics to be studied for entrance to college, for example, or the list prescribed in almost any high-school course contains a large proportion of books and selections not suitable for the ninety per cent of unlitrary boys and girls. Take a certain popular anthology as a case in point. Of the three hundred and thirty-nine lyrics in this volume, it is doubtful whether more than one hundred deal with themes and moods and feelings of intrinsic interest to most children of high-school age. Or call the roll of authors. Spenser and Chaucer have much that is admirable for children, if well-chosen specimens of it were put before them, and if it were not locked up in an obsolete language. Shakespeare has much, Milton almost nothing, Dryden and Pope and Addison and Samuel Johnson very little, the early novelists nothing, Scott much in both prose and verse; and so on, down to and into present-day writers. We have only to reflect upon these matters for a moment to see that, of English and American authors of equal rank, some make a strong appeal to average children and are therefore in a sense "democratic," while others render the services of literature only to the elect few, to those reared in a more or less bookish home, to those with a literary learning, or, at least, leaning.

The old and the new. A similar situation is revealed when we observe the age-old battle of the books, the conflict between the old and the modern. In Dean Swift's satire and Sainte-Beuve's brilliant essay the ancients conquer. And so they do in the opinion of all authors and all teachers of English, and the few young people in high school and college who are pronouncedly literary in their tastes and tendencies. Personally we may care more for

Chaucer than for Masfield, for Fielding than for Bennett, for the *Spectator* than for the *Cosmopolitan*. But we of the literary gentry must beware lest we commit the most insidious of all pedagogical sins: the sin of imputing to our pupils the interests and inclinations and outlooks-on-life which we have now or had as children. And to this sin we are continually tempted.

Of course, some of the classic literature of the past is as much alive today as when it was penned; it is forever contemporaneous. It stands out like great mountain ranges; the world may travel along its foothills for centuries without getting out of sight of it. Literature is alive as long as it has life, and it has life as long as it influences life. But many of the masterpieces of classic literature, beautiful specimens of literary craftsmanship, have lost all significance except to the specialist in literary history or the lover of style. The virtue has gone out of them, their glory has departed. These writings we should unhesitatingly banish from the required courses in literature in all public schools. They make literature teaching undemocratic in that they appeal only to the highly specialized few.

Chronological organization of literature undemocratic. This leads naturally to another criticism of the literature in many courses of study: it is usually organized by chronology, so that the authors and periods may be studied in their time sequence. This also is undemocratic. Nine-tenths of our students care nothing about the lives of authors or the historical and literary backgrounds, and the knowledge crammed down their reluctant throats is almost never digested and metabolized into intellectual and emotional cellular structure. For nearly all it fails

to be cultural, it fails to be practical; yet we keep on teaching it because, forsooth, we enjoy it and appreciate it, and because a few of our students gulp it down when we serve it to them.

Our teaching methods objectionable. Our method of dealing with literature, after we have chosen it, is open to similar objection. We analyze it and dissect it; we examine it with microscopes and telescopes and stethoscopes, with audiphones and colorimeters. We weigh each fact on the apothecary's scales; we employ the metronome to discover whether the poetic feet be trochaic or iambic, and the yardstick to measure off tetrameters and pentameters; we chart the rime scheme of the sonnet and the Pindaric ode; we trace every allusion to the "last point of vision and beyond"; we pry and peer into the mechanism of every figure of speech to see whether it be metaphor or simile—and why.

Now this is pleasant fun for us who care for the niceties of literary style, and it makes a considerable contribution to that particular brand of education to which we may lay claim. This is the way to perceive the fine points of art; I would not discount its value—for us; and I should hesitate to recommend a teacher of English who could not perform all these pretty exercises. But very few of the students in our high schools, or colleges, for that matter, are interested in the technicalities of literary craftsmanship. What the great mass of students should get—all they can get—from literature is the stimulation of wholesome emotions, the invigoration of lofty ideals, the satisfaction of their instinct for beauty, and joy "that after no repentance draws"—in short, the content-aspect of literature, not the form-aspect. If the average

boy or girl does not get this from literature, he gets nothing, nothing of worth. And yet apparently we prefer to train a few of our kind of students to use the critical microscope than the many to use their eyes. Undemocratic again, aristocratic again.

In consequence of all this we are failing to train in the proper and natural reading habits, the habits that are of use when the children leave school. Assuredly they will not use the intensive method of studying literature when they leave school; if they read at all, they will read much, read rapidly, read the lighter forms. Our class teaching of literature fails to "carry over" into life, fails to "modify the behavior" of our students. And if we fail to establish a method and proper habits while the children are in school, we have failed in one of our most important functions, so far as the majority of children is concerned.

Literature which is too "literary." But let me make myself clear, even at the cost of repetition. I am not proposing to eliminate the classics and substitute Harold Bell Wright; I am not proposing to gallop through the miles of jejune, ephemeral stories and articles of recent literature; I am not proposing a method whereby we leave out thoughtful discussion and criticism of what is read. And I am far from proposing that we replace literature with informational reading-matter on the score that it is "practical." Not at all. What I am contending for is good literature, to be treated as literature, from which we expect the natural fruits of literature: taste and discrimination, steadily improving; increase in emotional sanity and intensity and range; nourishment of the appetite for the romantic, the beautiful,

the ideal: in a word, contributions to culture. But the mischief is that we have been putting before children literature that is too "literary," too mature, too sophisticated, dealing with themes too narrow in their appeal, so that the children have not been receiving these contributions.

Not that I would feed the children upon baby food, upon that which is merely "easy"; now and then it is good for them to stand on tiptoe. But we must begin with what the children have and are. Culture, like charity, begins at home. Little matter what we English teachers enjoy and from what we abstract culture. We may get more exquisite pleasure from our classics than children get from the more childish literature they enjoy—I for one am strong in the faith that we do get a far more exquisite pleasure; the nub of the matter is that most students cannot get our pleasure, our culture, from many of our favorites. Therefore I propose that we put before them that from which they can secure cultural rewards, rewards not so rich as ours, but the richest they can get.

Have I not adduced sufficient proof that our teaching of English, in both language and composition and in literature, is undemocratic in the extreme? Is it not evident that in almost every phase of our work we have our eyes fastened upon the few students (we call them the bright ones, the talented ones, whereas they are really only bright and talented in a special way, a literary way, our way) and pay but cursory attention to the multitude who are not literary-minded, perhaps not even eye-minded, and who therefore—the more's the pity—especially need our help?

Training leaders? "But," our classical friends protest, "a democracy must have leaders: we are training the leaders." Of course, a democracy must have leaders; Russia furnishes abundant demonstration of this. But two counterstatements need to be made. In the first place, it is extremely doubtful that we are training the leaders, even the leaders in the literary professions, by this method; in the second place, training leaders at the expense of the followers, which is the most effective of principles for nourishing aristocracy, is the most dangerous for a democracy. A truly democratic education trains both leaders and followers.

Facing the issue. We must democratize the teaching of English, we must have a broader appreciation of the needs of the "many-headed" crowd that throngs our schools. While the secondary school was aristocratic in the personnel of its student body, it could be aristocratic in purposes and curriculum, it could train the four per cent for the professions while it forced the ninety-six per cent of tradespeople to learn their calling through the long training of apprenticeship or the longer training of experience. But when "all the children of all the people" come to us for teaching and training, for preparation for *their* vocations, for coal mining or iron working or house-keeping or farming—and they have as much right to come as the elect—we should not serve out to them that which we have prepared for a far different circle of diners. We must teach them that kind of English which will give them efficiency and culture in their own walks of life.

I am not forgetful of what has been accomplished through providing special courses in English in high school and college for certain vocations, such, for example,

as business English and engineering English. This is good; but it comes far short of solving the problem of the democratization of English. The vast majority of those who are to form the "common run" of citizens are not affected by this. We must make the traditional and the required courses in English more democratic.

How? By a square facing of the facts relative to the immense diversity of personalities, of natures, of motives and ambitions and desires and needs among our public-school students. By a recognition of the law that each separate fascicle of tastes and talents requires its own kind of education, that a person is educated by that which contributes to his own life and experience. By a realization of the fact that the training of Kate to be a housewife or Bill to be a plumber is precisely as important as the education of Kathryn to be a lady of fashion or Willy to be a preacher. By carrying out the doctrine that work is work, power is power, service is service, success is success, wherever found; that a given amount of intelligent activity is equal to the same amount of intelligent activity, whether in a doctor's office or in a railroad locomotive, whether in an editor's chair or on an office stool, whether playing the piano or washing the clothes. Then by a resolute remodeling of our course of study and a facing about in our aims and purposes; by adopting an elective, or at least an eclectic system.

Let us see what this means in practice. First, in the language-composition activities.

Democratizing language-composition activities. We should allow and encourage each child to find his own subjects for writing and speaking. When we first

attempt this, the class is at a loss; the children do not realize the richness of their lives and experiences and the potentiality of their possessions for language expression. But if we are patient and tactful, if we lead them for a time by suggestion, direct them by indirection, they soon find themselves and their powers and launch forth, each on his own fledgling wings, each toward his own goal. And oh, the joy they feel, as, with each flight, their pinions grow and strengthen and their skill in flying increases, as they see spreading out before them a wider expanse of earth and sky!

An illustration. Recently in his weekly batch of themes an English teacher found the following: a social letter; a business letter ordering dress goods from a supply house; an article for the local paper advertising an exhibit of Raemakers'¹ cartoons; a criticism of the four-minute speeches made in the local theaters; an editorial for the school paper; a comparison of the school paper with another one; a history of one of the literary societies for the yearbook; an exposition on "Why the Blank Car Is the Best Car for the Money"; an analysis of a new reference set just put into the library; a book report on *Christine*; an Easter story; an account of the Salvation Army campaign in —; a report of an investigation of how the students raised their money for the Y.M.C.A. fund; a humorous sketch, entitled "How We May Know There Has Been a Smallpox Scare in the Normal"; a study of the words misspelled by the class; an article for the school paper on the baseball prospects for the spring; and a sample page of history notes.

¹ The reader will remember that this was written in 1918.

I need not point out the advantages of this system. It is obvious that by thus allowing the students to express themselves on subjects of personal interest we encourage them to develop themselves in the directions indicated as best for them by their powers and experiences.

Democratic "forms of discourse." As to the forms of discourse, we should make few requirements and those in the interests of the greatest good for the greatest number. We should have enough story writing to determine whether any students have talent in this (and it is extremely rare); then we should encourage those who have talent to contribute stories when they feel a strong impulse, releasing the other members of the class from this form of writing. Literary descriptions and essays and formal debates and orations we should handle in somewhat the same way. The forms we should compel all students to pay attention to are: the writing of business and social letters, for this training is certain to be needed by all; the making of explanations, largely oral, emphasizing the compositional features of the work rather than the expressional features; and conversation and discussion, all-important and almost altogether neglected. And we should look as kindly upon a first-rate explanation of "How to Clean a Gun" or "How to Make Griddlecakes" as upon a patriotic oration or a short story—the chances are it will be a better thing of its kind.

Oral and written modes of expression. Moreover, we should spend much more time upon the various details of oral language than upon those of written language. This also has to do with the democratization of language teaching; for only a few need

extensive training in writing, while all need extensive training in speech. If one student wishes to give expression to his thoughts in talk and another in writing, we should sanction and encourage both. No matter if our themes deal with every conceivable subject, molded in every conceivable form. The points at issue are: Is the theme good of its kind? Is it natural to the person? Is it along the lines of his interests and powers? Is he urged on by a strong motive?

"Formal elements." A similar attitude should be taken toward the technical details of language teaching. Let us not busy ourselves with the petty niceties of literary style, of concern to a small number only, when most of the children need long-continued training in spelling, punctuation, pronunciation and enunciation, sentence structure, and the arrangement of ideas in a series of symmetrical paragraphs. Most children cannot hope to attain to literary excellence. Let us give this literary training to those who show promise, but let us not force the others over the same route. And if either class must be neglected, let us neglect the smaller class.

The problem of models. For the most part, classic literary models have no place in a democratic method of teaching language. We know that Franklin and Stevenson, that pair of "sedulous apes," trained themselves by the study and imitation of literary models, and that authors will continue this practice. But these are mature, studious men, zealous for literary success, endowed with native literary gifts, interested in subjects similar to those treated in the models they are using. Only a tiny group of students will be benefited by this aping of literature; the overwhelming majority do not learn language

this way. They learn it by expressional activity through guidance; and if any models are to be used, the most helpful ones are found in good conversation and in writing which is not so "literary."

Summary of doctrine on democratizing language teaching. Of course, no one is so foolish as to believe that we should allow a child to follow his own devices entirely in these matters. There is a body of minimum essentials to be mastered by all, whether they are interesting or not, because there is almost absolute assurance that they are needed and will be needed in the everyday life of every person. But we should permit and desire each child to speak and write on subjects interesting to him, in his own way, for his own purposes; and we should allot as much credit to one good piece of work as another. This is what I mean by democratization of the language-composition group of English.

Democratizing literature teaching. The same general principle is applicable to the teaching of literature—though in this subject, since the natural results are so hard to measure and the spiritual and cultural effects upon personality are so subtle, the principle is more difficult to apply. In general, the course in literature should consist of two kinds of work.

First, class work. A bit of literature can have no effect upon a child if it makes no appeal to him, if it fails to come home to his heart and bosom. The principles of democracy demand, therefore, that for class study no literature be required the theme and tone and emotions of which are foreign to the majority of the class. Each required selection, with certain exceptions, should be a classic, for nothing but a classic will justify and reward

intensive class study; but it must be universally interesting to young folks. *Silas Marner* and Burke's famous speech—to cite but two examples—are certainly not such specimens, while Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and many of Tennyson's poems as certainly are.

But it is doubtful whether there are many such specimens. Let us make out a course of class reading and study composed of those selections which are really democratic in their appeal, in that they produce results upon every member of the class—not necessarily the same results or an equal sum of results. Let us study these, not too intensively, seeking to emphasize the cultural and artistic and content phases. One day, or at most two days, a week throughout the course will suffice for this. And when we have provided this—the literary “minimum essentials,” so to speak—we should turn the students loose and let them follow their own paths.

Second, individual reading. A child, like an adult, has his individual tastes in books, and he has a right to their gratification, provided, of course, they are not perverted. What is one man's meat is another's poison. What gives cultural enjoyment to one fails utterly with another. This robust, athletic young fellow may prefer the out-of-door tale, the Indian story, the soldier story; that romantic boy may desire to race through Dumas and Scott; this girl may wish strong doses of Jules Verne or Rider Haggard; yonder quiet maiden may cleave to the immortal Louisa M. Alcott. Some children like history, others are fond of books of humor, some indulge themselves in poetry, others steep themselves in love stories. Any librarian, any student of human nature, can inform you

how varied, how heterogeneous, are the reading interests of children in their teens.

Guiding the reading. But I am not advocating an extreme hands-off policy. Children should not be allowed to read as part of their literature course anything that is not literature—not necessarily great literature, but sound, wholesome, good literature. The teacher must be liberal and catholic and democratic in her sympathies, willing to lower her strict standards somewhat and to accept as pleasant and profitable for others what she personally may find a bit trite or melodramatic. We must meet the children a little more than halfway, and then, as rapidly as possible, lead them on and up to higher reading levels.

Nor must we allow children to indulge themselves to the point of satiety in any form of literature. We must suggest and insinuate and guide, lead them on, always in the grooves of their interests, from book to book, from author to author, and see that each child is properly introduced to the vast array of good literature within the scope of his interests. Every book read must be approved by the teacher, but the teacher must be prepared to approve much that she personally does not fancy.

Most of this individual reading will be in fiction, much of it in recent fiction. This is desirable, for it is recent fiction that most of the students will read when they are students no longer, and we should attempt to train in separating the good from the worthless and inane. There should be much magazine reading, some of it in class; but we should include no magazine that is not healthful and sound. The children with literary

tastes will, of course, be encouraged to breathe the fine, bracing atmosphere of the great literature.

I would put before the students a library full of a variety of good books—many of them light, but all of them good. I would direct their reading through individual conferences, and once or twice a week I would have the class meet for reports, reviews, discussions, and exchange of book talk. Each child would be expected to read a certain number of books—not necessarily the same number, and not necessarily specified books. In this way each boy and girl would have an opportunity to gratify his hunger, to receive the particular training in forming reading habits which he needs, and to extract the largest degree of literary profit from his reading. That is what I mean by democracy in literature.

Some of my friends, when they have heard me speak in this fashion and have seen my own classes in action, have told me that I am degrading the teaching of literature, that I am putting the lofty, permanent classics on a level with the lowly, transitory productions of the day. Not at all. I personally happen to care infinitely more for some of the classics than for any modern books. I believe that some of them are masterpieces, matchless in their beauty, and that my joy in reading them is finer and subtler than the joy of the young fellow absorbed in his *Sherlock Holmes* or his *Penrod*. Moreover, I wish—sometimes, at least—that I could bring that young fellow, one of my students perhaps, to my appreciation of the classics. But I need not expect to, and possibly I should not desire to. His culture is not my culture, though his may be as genuine as mine. And besides, even though I love Shakespeare, may I not enjoy also the

Saturday Evening Post? I believe Shakespeare would have enjoyed it; I think I could prove it.

Will it work? If one warns me that this democratic freedom will not work in practice, I tell him that I have seen it work. If one tells me that this individual method requires more time and labor than the already burdened English teacher can stand, I tell him the teacher should approximate this ideal as closely as possible. The truth is, we can come nearer to doing all that I have proposed than we think, once we cut loose from the traditional, aristocratic material and methods that have hampered us. And at the same time we can encourage and assist the few literary students in our classes to go as far in their personal development as the unliterary go in theirs. This is true democracy in the teaching of English: that each student get from the English subjects that training and that life of most worth to him—to him, not to some one else.

If America is to represent democracy, it must present, in all her institutions and in all the details and departments of her institutions, democratic ideals and standards in action and application. It is clear that the English subjects in our schools are not, in substance or in spirit, completely democratic. It is also clear that they may be made democratic, so thoroughly democratic that their influence will permeate the schools and the world around and beyond the schools. So rich in democratic implications and possibilities are the English subjects, so potentially powerful for democratic education, that we have but to follow along the paths they point out and let them lead us to the goal.

II. THE PALACE OF PEDAGOGY

The Palace of Art. "I built my soul a lordly pleasure-house"—thus begins Tennyson's poem "The Palace of Art." A beautiful palace! It was erected upon a lofty plateau which rose sheer from the plain, and upon this plateau the poet-architect laid out four spacious courts, in each of which was a fountain. The palace was full of long-sounding corridors, full of great rooms and small, all varied, each a perfect whole. Rich tapestry and arras, depicting landscapes and legendary scenes, covered the walls, and here and there hung choice paintings, while in the floor mosaics shadowed forth allegories of life. Up in the towers were placed great silver bells which swung of themselves and made a sweet and noble music. In brief, all that imagination could dream and art express, all that might satisfy the senses and gratify the craving for beauty, was here. And in this palace the soul lived alone.

My soul would live alone unto herself
In her high palace there.

In the Palace of Art the soul dwelt apart, sequestered and secluded, holding no intercourse with the crude and plebeian things of the earth.

. . . . let the world have peace or wars,
'Tis one to me.

O God-like isolation which art mine,
I can but count thee perfect gain,
What time I watch the darkening droves of swine
That range on yonder plain.

—the "darkening droves of swine" being the men and women dwelling in the plains below the palace.

I care not what the sects may brawl,
I sit as God holding no form of creed,
But contemplate them all.

Aloft above the petty affairs of life, cloistered and serene, the soul existed alone, looking down in scorn upon the work and play, the hopes and joys, the fears and struggles of human existence, with interest only in the beauties of art and the truths of abstract philosophy. "It is all so trivial and sordid," I can hear her say; "all so mean and menial and materialistic, these problems of how to make a living, how to get food and shelter, how to build roads and till fields and tend cattle."

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth
Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,
Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,
And intellectual throne.

"As she sat alone"—that was the sole reason for the construction of the Palace of Art: that the soul might be relieved of the vexations and troubles of humble humanity and free to devote her mind to beauty and pure intellectual pursuits.

And so she throve and prosper'd; so *three years*
She prosper'd.

The Palace of Pedagogy. And while for three years she prospers, let me describe another palace, the Palace of Pedagogy. Builded by poets and philosophers, this palace like the other, set upon a hill, apart from the homes and haunts of men; dedicated to the service of beauty and high aesthetic and intellectual accomplishments; looking down in fastidious scorn upon the farms

and villages, the shops and stores, where labor and live the men and women of the valley—there stands the Palace of Pedagogy.

The lords and ladies who dwell in this Palace base their philosophy upon a few tenets and dogmas. These are the most fundamental: that there is but one success, one happiness, one culture, one great good, one education—that attained by those who dwell in the Palace; that this is to be attained only by the hardening of the will, the disciplining of the mind, and the training of the spirit to discern beauty and to learn a remote and abstract philosophy; that none except those studies and activities which are far removed from the ordinary, transitory affairs of life are worthy of the attention of a dweller in the Palace; that they who live in the Palace, though by nature and special training fitted to be the teachers and leaders of all the children of men, should deal with none but those who are destined for the Palace—should train artists but not artisans, poets but not advertising writers, portrait painters but not photographers, architects but not carpenters, sculptors but not stone masons; should teach the fine arts but not the useful arts; should prepare for the painful professions but not for the gainful trades. There must be no condescension, no lowering of pure and lofty standards to a mundane plane, no truckling to the wishes of the groundlings.

"If you desire to be educated," they say, "you must come up to us, we shall not come down to you." "Extension work?" That is cheap and shoddy. "Household economics and manual training?" They are "easy" and "common." "Popularizing knowledge?" That is undignified and unprofessional. It is better to learn how

Caesar built his wooden bridge in Gaul than to learn how to build a concrete bridge in America. The inmates of the Palace of Pedagogy stand for the "humanities," which seems sometimes to mean that which humanity does not directly and immediately need; they contend for a "liberal education," though they themselves are illiberal in the extreme toward all studies except a narrow group of studies, a narrow group which nevertheless they call broadening.

The "English Wing" in the Palace. But I intend to speak more explicitly concerning those who occupy a certain section of the Palace of Pedagogy, that which may be called the "English Wing" of the Palace. Despite all attempts to democratize the teaching of English, to fit it into the uses and usages of life, to render it definitely valuable to each individual, English still remains too "high-brow," too remote from the urgent desires and pressing needs of common life, too vague and visionary. Teachers of English think too much of preparation for life and too little of participation in life, too much of discipline and too little of deeds, too much of exercises and too little of activities, too much of books and bookish enjoyments and too little of life and living employments.

The source of most of the false doctrine and mischievous method in English teaching is here: many English teachers are residents of the Palace of Pedagogy. They conceive of but one desirable kind of life, their kind; of but one desirable type of education, their type. Enthroned high above the practical affairs of the world, they have not a vision of or sympathy with those who live in the plains and valleys. Being ignorant of life, they ignore life.

"You wish to speak and write? Very well; train yourself through story writing, the making of essays, orations, descriptions."

"But I wish to learn how to converse, to discuss, to write letters, to use language in conducting the business and social affairs of my life."

"Nay; there is but one type of expression that merits attention, the literary type; you must prepare yourself for conversation by writing expositions."

"I wish to learn to read."

"Very well; here are Shakespeare and Milton, Wordsworth and George Eliot and Henry James."

"But I wish to learn to read newspapers and magazines and to know what is the best in modern fiction and poetry."

"Nay; there is but one type of reading, the 'classic' type. It may be that through temperament and experience you are not able to derive pleasure or profit from the reading of these masterpieces; nevertheless this is all that is read in the Palace of Pedagogy, therefore all that is worth reading."

It is this detachment, this remoteness from life, this obliviousness to the daily and hourly desires and demands of life, this abstraction in the purely rhetorical and aesthetic aspects of English—it is this that holds back English teachers from their richest service and finest enjoyment.

Value of English for life. I should not be a teacher of English, I think, if I did not believe that English, the right kind of English, has a tremendous value for life. And I should not be a critic of the teaching of English if I did not believe that the English which has been taught and is being taught in most places is not the right kind

because it fails so frequently to have a value for life. Life is complex, not simple; life is multiform, not uniform; heterogeneous, not homogeneous. And English has been taught as if all boys and girls were to be dwellers in the Palace of Pedagogy, concerned with literary art, whereas to the end of time ninety-nine per cent of the boys and girls will be dwellers in the valleys and plains below the Palace, workers in the farms and shops and offices and kitchens, and concerned only with the lighter forms of reading and the more practical phases of speaking and writing.

Let me be specific, for I have no desire to rest my indictment on loose, unsubstantial charges and denunciations. What is the English which the average boy and girl, the dweller on the plains, should be taught? As I try to answer this, bear in mind that what I shall now say applies only to elementary and high-school English. Later on I shall have something to say of college English.

Fundamental English needs. The fundamental English needs of those children who are to remain in the valley dominated by the Palace of Pedagogy are not many—though for that very reason they are urgent.

Rapid silent reading needed by all children. First, children need to be taught to get the thought rapidly, easily, and accurately from subject matter that is within their scope, whether it be informational or literary. This does not mean that they are to be taught to read aloud artistically—far from it. We must come to see, we must have it seared into our minds, that only the few, the literary few, the future dwellers in the Palace, can be trained to read literature, especially poetry, aloud, with any degree of effectiveness. Oh, the years we waste in the elementary and high school trying to make accom-

plished oral readers of those who never, by any means whatsoever, can be trained to read aloud anything but plain reading matter from a book or newspaper! The old definition, "Reading is getting and giving the thought from the printed page," has done infinite harm. Reading, the common, practical reading of life, does not include nor imply *giving* the thought, either in oral reading or in dramatization or even in reproduction. If we could be persuaded to give up this futile business and devote the time we should save to training children in getting the thought quickly and fluently, we could hope to accomplish this, the first duty of the English teacher.

Knowledge and appreciation of literature. Second, the children of the valleys and plains should be brought to care for good literature and to know what is good literature. Our present system fails pitifully in this respect. I contend that it fails largely because the dwellers in the Palace of Pedagogy, the high priests of literature, attempt to bring up the children on a narrow diet of classics. It sounds perverse, but I must say it: their aims are too high. Only those who are destined to dwell in the Palace can breathe the atmosphere of the supreme classic literature. And yet most of the required reading in grades and high school is of the classic type, far beyond the taste and appreciation of boys and girls. Perhaps, if they were wisely guided, they might in their maturity come to enjoy these masterpieces—for masterpieces they are; but it is folly to expect puny youngsters to scale the heights of art and wisdom of Milton and Shelley and Browning, of Thackeray and Hardy and Hawthorne.

Yet there are some of the classics which, by virtue of the themes and content and the personality of the authors, belong by right to all children. Shakespeare is theirs, and Scott is theirs, and Cooper and Mark Twain are theirs, and Dickens in part and Tennyson in part, and scores of scattered selections, prose and poetry, old and modern. All children should arrive at a loving appreciation of this classic literature, because it deals with those aspects of life, those ideas and feelings, those events and personages, which are of paramount interest to them. I say *all* children should love such classic literature. That they do not is because of our bungling method of presenting it.

Errors in presenting literature. *a) Analysis.* Our favorite blunder is presenting this literature as fine art, to be studied and analyzed as specimens of art, instead of as documents of life, romantic or realistic, to be observed and reflected upon as fragments of existence. Are we reading a sonnet? Instead of finding and admiring the fundamental ideas, the new points of view, the truths in the poem, and allowing ourselves to be stirred by the emotion, we must split up the fourteen lines carefully into octave and sestet, we must examine the architectonics, must diagram the rime scheme to see whether it be Italian or Shakespearean—all of which is of interest largely to sonneteers, to students of literary craftsmanship, to those who will become inmates of the Palace on the hill. Are we taking up a drama of Shakespeare's? Instead of reading rapidly through the play, following the story, and comparing it with life as the children have observed life, getting acquainted with the characters and watching them act and react upon circumstances

and upon one another, noting passages of wisdom and eloquence with which the pages of Shakespeare are so generously strewn; instead of treating the play as a cross-section of human existence, we must study the sources of the plot and conjecture why the author modified them, we must learn the architecture of the play, the exposition, rising action, and so forth, we must admire the playwright's skill in character grouping, we must try to determine why characters use prose in one place and blank verse in another, we must count the number of rimes and run-on lines to enable us to tell in just what year this play was written—all matters of interest to the technician, to the student of the art of stagecraft, to the dwellers in the Palace, but of no concern to the inhabitants of the plains.

Teachers of English need not try to ignore the fact that the average pupil, that is to say, the unlitrary boy and girl, does not care for and will not profit from the discussions, the dissertations, the desiccations of literature, the fine points and the nice problems of literary style, the never-ending distinctions between the tweedledums and the tweedledees of the writer's art. Having selected that literature which because of its content and its style is of the kind which will come home to the hearts of children and young people, we must regard that literature as areas of life rather than as specimens for literary analysis, we must drive straight to the essential qualities, the main issues, the vital matters of thought and feeling, of story, character, and situation—this to the end that we may enrich and enlarge the lives of those who are to run the shops and stores, to manage the offices and homes in the valley, not that we may coach initiates

for the Palace of Pedagogy. This does not mean, of course, that we are to read everything at the same rate of speed. Whenever an important thought, a lofty truth, a subtle point, is couched in involved language, whenever any difficulty stands between the reader and some vital idea in the reading, naturally we must slow down our pace. But what is so exasperating is to see a teacher eternally reining the class in, keeping the boys and girls for three weeks on *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* when it is obvious that they could exhaust its possibilities in three days, or spending a month on *Julius Caesar* when a third of that time is all-sufficient. Does it not strike you as queer—to put it mildly—that, though in two hours we can appreciate and understand *Julius Caesar* as we see it played, we must devote weeks to studying the play in class?

b) **The history of literature.** Another of the decrees handed down from the Palace of Pedagogy and imposed upon the children of the plains is that all must study, long and unflaggingly, the history and development of literature and the biographies of authors. Even for the boys and girls who are preparing themselves for occupancy of the Palace of Pedagogy this is of questionable value, since usually they are forced to take up the study of authors and the history of literature before they have done sufficient reading of the literature itself. As for the children of the plains, it is time lost and energy wasted. One needs no further proof of this than the fact, obvious to all, that children who have been thoroughly drilled—and grilled—in the history of literature remember but the tiniest fractions of what they have studied, and usually remember these fractions

wrong. They forget the characteristics of the different periods, they forget the chronological sequence, they forget the epochs to which the authors belong, they forget the analyses of books and styles, they forget the events in the existence of authors—if, indeed, the meditative lives of authors can be said to have events. It is amazing—and amusing—to see the blunders that graduates of high school and even of college make in the details of literary history a few short months after they have flung away their textbooks. The knowledge that is acquired with such drudgery is so unrelated to the affairs of the world that it cannot be used. And how shall knowledge that is not used be useful?

It is not as if the study of the history of literature and the biographies of writers were generally interesting. The life of Daniel Boone is more generally interesting and much more inspiring to young people than the life of Joseph Addison; the lives of Stanley and Peary, of Nelson and Napoleon, of Edison and Burbank, of Florence Nightingale and Father Damien, than the lives of Milton and Wordsworth, of Keats and Shelley, of Irving and Poe. What of value is there to any but the literary gentry in the learning of the three periods of Chaucer's life, of the long development of drama which culminated in Shakespeare, of the difference between Pope and Dryden, of the manner in which Doctor Johnson ruled his petty senate, of the interminable quarrels of Cooper, of the length of time Hawthorne lived in Salem? Why are the lives of authors more worthy of compulsory study by all pupils, regardless of their inherent interests, than the lives of painters, of musicians, of mathematicians, scientists, or captains of industry? Why? Merely because those

who dwell in the Palace of Pedagogy, being themselves interested in the lives of authors, have agreed that this knowledge is indispensable to culture, to a liberal education, and, holding positions of authority, they have decreed that it shall become a part of the curriculum.

The better method. I have said that the second duty resting upon teachers of English (the second clause of the contract we have made with the public) is to indoctrinate children with a love of good books and to train them to a degree of discrimination in books. We shall not do this by a line-by-line analysis of classics, by a precept-upon-precept study of the laws and principles of art, by a here-a-little-and-there-a-little survey of the history of literature and the careers of literary personages. This is what we should not do. What is it we should do?

The field of literature. I propose that we search out all the desirable literature, all the good books which, by virtue of their subject matter and their style, are suitable and profitable to children and young people; that we read these books with them as rapidly as an intelligent appreciation of the most important qualities and most striking features of each specimen of the literature permits and suggests; that we read primarily for life, not for art; that we read scores and hundreds of books instead of a meager and miserly few; that each child be allowed to read, according to his interests, from a generous list; that our reading comprise the best of modern newspapers, magazines, fiction, and poetry; that a good book be appraised and admired as a good book, no matter when or by whom it was written; that we build up principles of criticism and canons of art surely and gradually, through the children's reading and observation, and that we place

a premium upon that quality which is most desirable in a critic: sincerity, integrity; that as interest manifests itself we read something of the lives of authors we like and obtain a few glimpses of the backgrounds of modern literature. I propose that we break down the traditions which fence us in to pasture upon a few books—and those better suited to adults—and that we range freely over all the good, wholesome reading available for young people.

Books are of several grades of merit. Dwellers in the Palace of Pedagogy would have us believe that there are but two kinds of books: the books which they call "classic" and the books which, if they were not afraid of slang, they might call "classy." As a matter of fact, one can distinguish in the field of fiction at least six grades of books: first, the supreme classics; second, the good, serious, carefully written books, of sincere purpose and sound art but not great enough to rank among the classics, such books as *Mr. Britling Sees It Through*, *The Harbor*, *The Crisis*, *A Certain Rich Man*; third, the light, ephemeral books, worth reading once, and once in a while for entertainment, books of the romantic sort, such as those of Zane Grey and Rex Beach; fourth, the sentimental, insincere, melodramatic books of Harold Bell Wright and Ethel Dell; fifth, and slightly below these, the mawkish, inane love stories and crime stories of Bertha M. Clay and Nick Carter; sixth, the depraved and depraving sex stories, such as those of Elinor Glyn and, at his worst, Robert W. Chambers. There are at least these six classifications of novels, with gradations between. One can find as many groups of magazines, from the *Atlantic* down to *Snappy Stories*; and in the poetry and drama of today there are three or four distinct levels.

Now if the dwellers in the Palace of Pedagogy will have dealings only with the reading material of the first class, how shall immature boys and girls learn how to discriminate, to choose the best and shun the worst among the other classes? And it is the literature of the other classes, the recent books and magazines, that crowd upon our attention everywhere. There appear each year scores of books and a liberal dozen of magazines which are well worth anybody's leisure time—light reading, perhaps, but thoroughly good, thoroughly healthful and salutary. But—and here's the pity of it—these are buried out of sight beneath the hundreds of inferior books. I would start with the better of the light modern books, and, as the child grows older and his taste becomes finer and more dependable, I would lead him on to the place where, of his own free will and accord, he will select the higher and sounder reading and reject the shoddy and the sentimental. As long as we confine ourselves to the classics and ignore all other reading, so long will boys and girls give the classics up and give themselves up to random, reckless perusal of whatever chances to make the most urgent and direct appeal. Perhaps in the library of the Palace of Pedagogy is to be found no literature but the classic; but in the bookstores on the plains, below the fine and the trashy, the sincere and the flashy, occupy the same shelves and sell at the same price, and there is no one, least of all the salesman, who knows or cares what is genuine. It is for this state of affairs that we must educate our children. Only the one literary child will cleave immediately and forever to the classics; the ninety and nine, when released from the required reading of the schools, either quit reading altogether or revert to

the haphazard reading of whatever tickles their fancy. Do you doubt that? Talk with high-school graduates, with college graduates, about their reading and see how untrained and untutored they are in modern literary questions. No, we shall never bring the average boy and girl to care for books or to know what books to care for until we have given up our notions about the sanctity of the classics and the inanity of books below the classics.

I have written at length and with fervor upon this topic because I feel it is of great importance. But I must hasten on.

Use of English in everyday life. The third duty devolving upon teachers of English, if they are to equip children for life and not for art, for the everyday business of existence and not for the elegance and "culture" of the Palace of Pedagogy, is to train the children in the use of their mother tongue in the common language forms and activities. Even the residents of the Palace engage more freely in talking than in writing; and in the valleys and plains almost all work and play is carried on through oral language intercourse.

Voice training. Obviously, our first duty is this: to train boys and girls to talk fluently, effectively, successfully. This includes enlargement and enrichment of their speaking vocabulary (not their reading or their writing vocabulary), training in pronunciation and enunciation, in voice production and control, in the forms and the conventions of social speech. We have spelling classes in the grades, and that is commendable; but correct spelling is not nearly so important as clear, distinct articulation. Nor can we evade our responsibility by the assertion that children will learn to articulate

anyhow without our training, for the plain fact is that they do not learn. How many muffled, piping, throaty, nasal voices we hear! How lazy and slack our vocal muscles grow! We do not have sufficient vocal energy to utter "probably" or "suspect" or "geography," we slur the vowels in unaccented syllables, we may mind our *p*'s and *q*'s, but we drop our *g*'s and ignore our *r*'s. I am not making a plea for rich, cultivated, musical voices, however warmly I admire them. I am speaking of voices that are adequate for the ordinary business and social demands—voices that will carry ideas, not mere gibberish, over the telephone; voices that can make themselves heard above the hum of factory wheels or the buzz of a roomful of conversation; voices which, when lifted in discussion in club, lodge, grange, or labor union, will be audible and intelligible to all in the group. The elementary and high school might well take a part of the time now given over to the mechanics of writing and use it for training in the mechanics of speech.

Vocabulary building. And the children of the plains need more practical and constructive work in vocabulary building. We go about this in the wrong way. We assume that children enlarge and enrich their speaking vocabulary through reading and the study of literary diction. No doubt those who live in the Palace of Pedagogy and those who, because of their special temperament and upbringing, are bound for the Palace do carry a great many words over from their reading to their speaking. But the vast majority of the boys and girls and of men and women construct their vocabulary almost entirely out of the words which they hear. The words we speak are the words we hear spoken; few of us, and none except

those of the pronouncedly literary type, get any substantial addition to their stock of words through reading. It is therefore folly to attempt to build up a vocabulary by studying words found in books. Constructive vocabulary work is based upon three principles: First, begin with ideas which the children have, not with words which you want them to acquire; then lead them to discover and appropriate the word which names the idea they have. Second, through all the oral work of the school, train the children to employ the specific instead of the general word, the concrete instead of the abstract word, the sheathe-tight word which reveals the precise shade of meaning instead of the Mother Hubbard word which covers everything and reveals nothing. And third, train them to add to their vocabulary the picturesque, rich-flavored, emotion-laden words of the vernacular.

Idiomatic speech. The language of literature contains no diction superior in expressiveness and forcefulness to the best examples of animated, idiomatic speech. The *best* examples, mark you. I know how tame and dull, how anaemic and lethargic, how devoid of grip and vigor, is the language in which we usually try to express our thoughts and feelings. This is because we are either afraid or ashamed of the natural, racy, humorous, homely language of life, because we have been repressed and restrained by the regulations of literary correctness and elegance, because the pedagogs from the Palace have forced us to use the proper, sedate, cultivated language or the bookish, stilted, pedantic language with which they talk—or “converse,” I should say. Scores, hundreds of words full of force and color and warmth are heard by the children on the streets and playgrounds, in the stores

and homes adjacent to the schoolhouse, but woe be to that sacrilegious urchin who dares utter them within the cloistered domain ruled over by the teacher.

Slang. I should like to express myself fully on the subject of slang, of colloquial and provincial and idiomatic English, for I am convinced we have the wrong slant on this question. Because we have held up literary, or rather, bookish, language as the model for everyday intercourse, and because, naturally and properly, slang and colloquial diction are barred from literary and bookish language, we have jumped to the conclusion that slang and colloquial speech are linguistic crimes, always to be condemned and punished. The pedagogs in the Palace assert that slang is coarse and vulgar. Some slang is coarse and vulgar, and many words in thoroughly approved usage, not slang at all, are coarse and vulgar; naturally one should avoid all such words, whether slang or not. But many words which we stigmatize as coarse are, in reality, strong, vigorous, direct, vulgar. “Beat it,” “that’s the limit,” “I’m on to you,” “punk,” “swell,” “swat,” “scoot,” are brusque, terse, forceful modes of expression; they are, to my way of thinking, better conversational English than their more staid and dignified literary synonyms. “Cut it out” is more graphic than “eliminate it,” “butt in” is more expressive than “intrude,” “spill the beans” is more picturesque than “injure the cause.”

The pedagogs inform us also that “slang impoverishes the language.” Why, of course, if a girl calls everything “swell” and a boy terms everything “rotten,” neglecting the synonyms that express the finer shades of meaning, they do impoverish their language, they make it poverty-stricken indeed. But this tendency is not peculiar to

slang; many persons weaken their language through overworking certain words which are in well-established usage. We can, and many of us do, overwork "nice" and "fine." I met recently an intelligent woman who was "impoverishing her language" by calling everything "sweet." Almost everyone I know overworks the word "thing," employing it as synonymous with "idea," "thought," "plan," "point," "cause," "circumstance," "situation," instead of reserving it to designate a material concrete object. This is "impoverishing the language": to use frequently a broad, general, inexact word when we should use a narrow, specific, precise word, whether that general word is a waif from the music hall and the back alley or a highly respected child of Noah Webster's own lineage.

And in this connection we need to remember that slang has enlarged and enriched and strengthened our language, that thousands of words and phrases now in established use, rendering stout and gallant service in expression, have come into English through the door of slang. In fact, the refreshing and renewing springs of language are, first, creative literature and, second, colloquial speech. Our patrician language would find its blood running thin and its vital forces ebbing low, if it did not continually bring into the family the strong, crude offsprings of plebeian slang.

But of course I realize that a slang phrase often becomes so popular that it displaces many useful words. "I'll say so," "You said it," "What do you know about that?" wear us out with their mere reiteration. Fortunately they wear themselves out and disappear like popular songs and novels—without leaving any trace

upon the language. The fact of the matter is, many young people bandy about current slang phrases just to be in style, to be up to the minute, precisely as they wear the latest monstrosities in clothes. Some of our youthful friends wear nothing but the extremely and strangely modern in clothes and approve and use nothing but the very latest Parisian models in slang. Of course, that kind of slang and that kind of dressing are silly; but still I doubt whether we would seriously consider doing away with slang—or clothes—because some young people show no discretion in their use. Some one—doubtless some wiseacre from the Palace—has suggested that slang be not used by anyone under forty years of age. That would solve it. In the same way we could remove all the risks from dancing, automobiling, bathing, even from courting and marrying.

No, seriously, we must teach children to use common sense and discretion in slang as in other arts and activities. We should regard slang as we regard other language phenomena. Some slang is cheap and coarse, some slang is rich and vivid; some slang is inane and pointless, some slang is apt and striking, and no slang, however novel and picturesque, should be permitted to become the dominant quality in our speech. I would not warn against all slang—I would warn against undesirable and excessive slang. I would not discriminate against slang; I would discriminate among slang expressions.

"But slang is not proper," say those who speak the refined language of the Palace of Pedagogy. Not proper? "Proper" means "appropriate." Of course, slang is not proper, because not appropriate, in a sermon or an oration, in a serious essay or a business letter. But in intimate,

familiar, happy-go-lucky talk, slang is not only proper but highly commendable and desirable. Do not let us be overawed and browbeaten by those who, speaking the literary dialect of the Palace of Pedagogy, regard that as the only authorized language. Doubtless their dialect is good, perhaps it is better than that spoken on the plains; but those who live on the plains speak and will speak a dialect more to their liking and more like them. Let the pedagogs, instead of tabooing all slang and colloquial language, condescend to descend and help us to search out what is the most desirable, the most expressive, and the most effective slang, and assist us to establish that.

The blunt truth is that even yet, despite the progress we have made in the teaching of English, most English teachers still think in terms of writing instead of in terms of talking. In nearly all schools much more attention is paid to written than to spoken language. Naturally, therefore, we place before children ideals and specimens of written discourse, and deceive them and ourselves into believing that formal written language is the natural and normal and customary language.

Literary bias in English teaching. This accounts for the literary trend and bias in our teaching of the English language. Instead of taking snatches of lively, animated talk as models and endeavoring to teach children the principles and secrets of good talk and to train them in the practice, we set before them specimens of the classics and urge them to imitate these. Our rhetoric texts are full of discussions of literary language, literary style, literary forms. If it is a question of effective use of words, the Palace pedagogs resort invariably to literature

for models. Are there no examples of good diction in the conversations and discussions in which we take part, in advertisements in newspapers and magazines? If it is a question of good social letters, we place before the pupils some of the letters of Phillips Brooks or Charles Dickens—charming letters, to be sure, but literary letters. If it is a question of story-telling, we teach the literary method of telling the story, with the climax last, instead of the newspaper method, with the chief point in the first paragraph. We think of all language forms and activities as literary forms and activities, whereas literature is but one of the many molds into which language pours itself. Shall we say that the only desirable and legitimate manner of using colors is in portrait painting, or that the only permissible manner of employing tones is in singing? Let us leave the literary artists to their trade, our only natural relation to them being that of readers and admirers, and let us set to work to learn the practical arts of language expression needed for the everyday business of living.

Types of language activity. The older rhetoric books presented exhaustive analyses of what they termed the four forms of discourse. You remember them: narration, description, exposition, and argumentation, always in that definite order. And you remember you got the impression that these were the only possible forms of discourse; it was all predetermined, it was natural law, inevitable, unchanging, like the four seasons of the year; there could not, by any conceivable accident, be a fifth. And then some one, perhaps a deserter from the Palace of Pedagogy, discovered a fifth form, the letter; and after a time it began to find a place in the newer rhetoric books. But,

we were assured by the pedagogs on the height, this was not a "pure" form of discourse; it was "mixed"—which in some manner subtly discredited it. Perhaps the lords in the Palace would not have vouchsafed it even this much courtesy if they had not reflected that literary personages write letters, some of which could be used as models. But this is as far as we have gone. These, we are assured, are the five forms of prose discourse, including this troublesome, mongrel form, the letter.

Now I am willing to concede that, from the standpoint of literary art, these are the forms of discourse. But here is the crux of the whole problem: the teaching of English—by which is meant the teaching of the English language—is not primarily or even largely a matter of teaching literary art. It is a matter of teaching those forms or types of language activity which are most used and therefore most useful in life, in the everyday, workaday experiences and circumstances of life.

Five forms of discourse? There are at least eight. I must name them and discuss them briefly, in order to clarify my position.

Conversation. Conversation is far and away the most important form of discourse, or, to use a better term, type of language activity. There are laws and principles of conversation quite as fixed, quite as firmly based, as the laws and principles of exposition or argument, and, to the dweller in the plains, infinitely more valuable. These must be learned and followed by him—or should I say "her"?—who would become a good conversationalist. But they are not learned and followed; to assure ourselves of that we need only to look around us, or rather to listen around us. It is fatuous

folly to contend that, since we must all talk, we shall learn to talk by sheer dint of talking. We learn to do, at least we learn economically to do, not by mere doing, but by thoughtful, progressive, guided doing. The most natural, the most convenient, and the most efficient way of teaching the laws and qualities of good conversation and of training in the art of conversation is by making conversation an integral part, indeed the central part, of the work in English. And it is equal folly to contend that conversation cannot be taught, that it is a natural talent, that talkers are born, not made. No matter how richly gifted or how poor one may be in this regard, he will learn with less waste and more haste by studying the principles of the art and practicing under guidance, or, better yet, by practicing under guidance until he is led to discover the principles of the art. This type of language activity may not be so valuable to those who dwell in the Palace of Pedagogy; but it is invaluable to those who, in the plains below, carry on and carry through much of the work and play of life by means of talk, and who should therefore learn how to talk efficiently and effectively.

Discussion. Discussion is one of the necessary tools of a democratic society. Through discussion we make decisions, render judgments, work out plans and campaigns, pass laws, solve problems. A Boy Scouts company preparing for an outing, a group of bankers investigating a business proposition, a committee of teachers trying to find ways and means of increasing salaries, a labor union deciding whether it shall declare a strike, a ladies' aid society planning how to raise money, or a political party planning a campaign—all these employ

discussion as the means of clarifying opinion, balancing arguments, influencing judgments, planning the work and working the plan. How very important that discussion be taught and taught well! And yet it has not been taught; for the most part no effort has been made to teach it in school or elsewhere. It can be taught, and it will be taught, as soon as we see clearly that preparation for the vocation of living in a democracy involves preparation for that form of language intercourse most essential in the solution of the problems of a democracy, as soon as we tear loose from the dominating influence of that domineering hierarchy in the Palace who think that literature and literary technicalities are more important than life and life's realities.

Explanation. Not exposition, be it noted, though of course the two words are synonymous. "Exposition" suggests the essay, the article, the textbook, the sermon, the address, the lecture, the ambitious and erudite and somewhat literary type of discourse. We use explanation when we give some one instructions on how to go from one place to another, how to serve a "cut" ball in tennis, how to discard in whist, how to make a birdhouse or a bird's-nest pudding. We use explanation when we show or tell some one how to take a kodak picture, how to mark a ballot in voting, how to drive an automobile. We use explanation when we tell about a book we have read or a plan we have made, when we pass on to others ideas and information, from whatever source they have come. "Explanation" implies that some one has a bit of knowledge or experience which some one else wishes to share. It implies a direct contact between speaker and hearers and a genuine social desire to tell and teach

on the one hand and to hear and learn on the other. It is usually brief and informal, and it is often accompanied by chart or diagram or demonstration.

Every day of their lives the boys and girls, the men and women, on the plains employ explanation in their dealings with one another. Nearly always they fail to use it skillfully. How should it be otherwise? They have never been taught. And it is a difficult and complicated type of language activity. The dwellers in the Palace of Pedagogy themselves are often clumsy and awkward, as witness their attempts to make clear to the average mind a truth in science, history, and art. But they at least can learn, they can discover and set forth the fundamental laws and principles of explanation, and they can elevate explanation to its rightful place as one of the democratic forms of discourse. But first they must see clearly that exposition, with its rigid and frigid rules, its pedantry, its formality, its impersonality, and its literary and bookish cast, that exposition, however highly honored in the Palace of Pedagogy, must be renounced for explanation, with its flexibility and informality, its true social motive, its practical and specific nature, and its objective result. - The only test of explanation is, Does it explain, explain briefly, skillfully, economically, and thoroughly, anything, no matter how lowly and humble, which one person knows and which others do not know but wish to know?

Informal argument. For the solemn treaties on argumentation compiled in the library of the Palace of Pedagogy we should substitute useful directions for the carrying on of informal argument. The day of the studied, set debate has almost closed; for that matter,

it never dawned upon the average dweller in the plain. Literary societies and debating clubs have become almost extinct in our schools; forensic contests of the Lincoln-Douglas type are rarely staged. The kind of arguments that most people, at least most of those who live in the plains, engage in, is the free, unfixed, informal argument arising from conversation and discussion. We have no selected debaters, no remote and impersonal question, no appointed judges, and no decision except that recorded in the minds and rendered subsequently through the beliefs and actions of those who hear and weigh the evidence.

A group of persons is led through discussion into a topic upon which there is a difference of opinion. Perhaps it is a question of what kind of class pin to buy, or which of the local newspapers is best, or where to go for a class picnic, or who is to blame for an automobile accident, or what kind of electric wiring to use in a building. Consider now what are some of the requisites for a satisfactory argument. There must be a leader, either the naturally dominating personality of the group or the president of the class or club or organization. This leader must be unbiased and fair-minded; he must be strong enough to keep the argument moving toward a conclusion, yet tactful enough to subordinate himself; and he must be desirous that the truth prevail or the expedient plan be adopted. Each individual in the group must be led to express himself forcefully and frankly, yet temperately and courteously, advancing the arguments on his side and repelling the arguments on the other side. There must be no wrangling, no quarreling, no resorting to mere assertion and denial, in the "'tis-'tain't" manner of children. Everyone must be taught to recognize valid

evidence and sound reasoning and be trained not to rely upon merely personal opinion. No one must be permitted to bully his opponents or to filch more than his fair quota of time. There must be no unmannerly interruptions. All must be taught to marshal their arguments logically and almost on the spur of the moment, and to avoid repetitions, arguments in a circle, and diversions from the subject at issue. The points on both sides of the question must be adduced, misunderstandings cleared up, the facts revealed. And out of this must come knowledge, action and reaction, conviction, judgment, decision, and, whenever feasible, action—concerted action—those in the minority acquiescing in the will of the majority until such time as they can change it.

"What a pretty theory," says some one. "But do you ever find such ideal informal arguments in life?" Of course not. We find disputation, bickering, quibbling, misunderstandings, and dissensions, personal animosities aroused, prejudices confirmed—leading to nothing except confusion of mind and purposes. That is what we find. But need it be so? If we will give our young people systematic instruction and training in these matters, if we will thresh out in the schoolroom and school organizations the thousand and one questions that arise, assisting the pupils not only to discern the truth and take the desirable action in the particular cases in dispute but also to perceive the broad, basic principles underlying all argument, can we not go far toward securing the kind of informal argument I have been discussing? Not that we shall reach perfection, of course, for human nature is human nature; but we shall have a far better type of reasoning and argument than we have had hitherto and

a far more satisfactory method of molding public opinion and making decisions.

Speech making. The ability to stand before one's fellows and speak to them pointedly and movingly on topics of interest to them is much coveted and richly rewarded in a democracy such as ours. I do not mean professional and oratorical public speaking, such as that practiced by the lawyer, the preacher, the lecturer, the politician. Certainly this has great value, but it requires a certain talent which, though not necessarily of a very high order, is possessed by a limited few. School training in this kind of speech making, therefore, should be given only to those who reveal undoubted gifts. The kind of public speaking which should be taught in school is the kind practiced by men and women in the customary life of the plains. At meetings of labor unions, granges, fraternal organizations, church societies, Rotary and Kiwanis clubs, women's clubs, it is the person that can speak most forcefully and fluently on the problems that demand solution who is most likely to become the leader, to influence public sentiment and sway it according to his will.

Not everyone can become an effective speaker even in these humbler forms. But there is no one who cannot become more effective than he would otherwise be, by being given directed experience in school and by being encouraged to speak on occasions that arise in class and school organizations; and, since it is a certainty that the average person will be frequently placed in situations in life where he wishes and needs to deliver his mind to a group of his peers, surely we must incorporate speech making into our course of study in English. We should

not set up lofty standards of oratory, as do the pedagogs in the Palace; we should be content if we succeed in training the boys—and certainly in these days, the girls—to speak frankly, clearly, briefly, directly, with some degree of charm and persuasiveness and personal magnetism, or at least with some degree of intelligibility and intelligence. The only trustworthy test is, Did it get over to the audience? The speeches the children make may seem puerile and amateurish to the literary crew in the Palace, whose standards have been set high by Burke and Webster and those great orators who produced literature, but it is the kind of speech most practiced and most practical in the ordinary affairs of life.

Story-telling. Here again I believe we gain something by substituting the term "story-telling" for the older term "narration." For it is *story-telling* that the dwellers in the plains find most useful and desirable. Only the specially favored, the elect, can create and write narratives; everyone tells stories. A literary short story is a work of fine art; even among people of decidedly literary tastes and talents, even among the inmates of the Palace of Pedagogy, there are but few who can construct the literary story. In all my years in school, both as student and as teacher, I have known only a few really good, publishable short stories to be written by students, though I have read hundreds of attempts. Do we want good short stories? Let us read the magazines. And let us leave the fine art of literary narration to those who have the talent, the while we train our pupils in the humbler sister craft of telling stories.

What kinds of stories? The three kinds which we all have to tell: anecdotes, humorous, striking, apt, and pat;

personal experiences, stories of what we have seen and heard and done; and children's stories, for there is hardly one of us who is not called upon at some time to tell the centuries-old classics of the nursery to our sons and daughters, our nephews and nieces, our younger brothers and sisters, our boy and girl friends. There is a special art in telling each of these three types of stories; there are certain fundamental principles to learn and methods to practice. Most of us tell stories ineffectively and awkwardly and crudely, missing the fine points and delicate touches and subtle effects; yet most of us could learn how to do it fairly well provided we were given instruction and experience. Surely here is a pleasant task for the English teachers, if only they will break loose from the traditions of the Palace of Pedagogy, if only they will occasionally unhitch their wagon from the star of fine art and put it to the humbler uses for which, after all, the wagon was intended.

Letter writing. I need not emphasize the importance of letter writing of both the social and the business type. Even the pedagogs in the Palace have laid down their arms in this engagement. But we are half-hearted in reaping the fruits of our victory. Surely, since the writing of letters is virtually the only kind of writing done in the homes and places of business on the plains, we ought to give pronounced and prolonged training in the writing of letters. But we don't. We do a little desultory and dilettante dabbling in this important art, we put up a sheepish and half-furtive pretense; but it is felt to be a concession to the radicals and utilitarians, and as soon as the bare *letter* of the law has been observed the teacher leads her class straightway back to the familiar and

traditional fields of expositions and short stories and literary descriptions. We don't really teach letter writing; we merely putter about, touching the subject here and there, but failing to establish thoroughly the principles and train in the practice of this type of language activity.

Various written forms. Then there are the written forms, such, for example, as note taking, making reports, keeping diaries and records and household and office accounts, drawing up petitions, writing announcements for posting and printing—prosaic, unpretentious types of writing, but how necessary! And how neglected! From the standpoint of education and of life, it is more important to train a pupil to write out a report of a committee of which he is chairman, write it legibly, clearly, correctly, effectively, than to require him to write an essay or an oration or a character sketch or a book review. These homely, bread-and-butter species of writing may not be needed in the Palace of Pedagogy; they are incessantly demanded in the plains and valleys below.

Importance of oral English. So much for the types of language activity which should supplant the four forms of discourse of the old-time rhetoric. Six of these types are predominantly oral. And this is as it should be. If anyone will honestly follow, for a day or for a month, the life of a student in school or an adult in even a profession, to say nothing of an adult in a trade or in industry, he will be struck with the constant and inexorable demands made upon him to use the oral types of language and the infrequent and evadable requests to use the written types. Any English teacher who tries to base his teaching upon the actual day-by-day lives and needs and

social desires of his pupils rather than upon the ex cathedra assignments from a textbook will discover that there are hundreds of occasions for using the different kinds of oral language and but rare occasions for using those of written language; and, moreover, he will have valid reasons for teaching the oral forms, whereas he must invent excuses for dealing with the written forms. And if this is true of life in school, it is trebly true of life outside of and beyond school. For in school, in the business of teaching and learning, we employ, naturally and legitimately, more writing than any of us—unless it be those who live in the Palace of Pedagogy—will ever have occasion to use out of school. We must realize the paramount importance of oral expression. Some of us have come to believe that half of the time available for English training should be given over to oral English; we shall come to believe that a much larger ratio of time should be devoted to it. The pedagogs in the Palace will oppose us, since the oral types are, for the most part, not so literary, so artistic, so elevated and dignified, and not so easily reduced to rules and formulas as the written types; but nothing short of this will allow us to teach sensible, practical, functional English.

English in the higher institutions. Up to this point I have been discussing elementary- and high-school English. Let me now glance at normal-school, college, and university English and see its bearing on our problem.

It might seem that here we are poaching on the preserves of others. The higher institutions of learning, we might contend, may very well be left to their own devices. They can work out their own ideas and plan their courses of study, and in general it may be assumed that they do it

well, much better than we could do it for them. When a student, now mature enough to have graduated from high school, elects English, especially when he majors in English, he indicates clearly that he has, or thinks he has, a literary temperament and a special interest in English, and that he desires a higher and a special education in English. He thus joins a small, select group, far different from the large, unclassified mass of boys and girls in the high school. The arguments we have been urging have no validity here. By all means let us wish our young friend Godspeed in his Anglo-Saxon, his pre-Shakespearean drama, his history of literature, his courses in exposition and narration. "I too have been in Arcadia"; it was my good fortune to travel through that country. And then as student of English I believed, and now as teacher of English I contend, that no country is more spacious and noble and hospitable and delightful than the country of books and writing.

But this is not quite the whole story. A goodly number of those who attend normal school, college, and university come out to teach—English among other subjects—in high schools. They are certificated by the state and employed by the state to teach and train the youth of the state, all the youth of the state, the multitude of boys and girls who will not and should not specialize in English, who desire and need instruction and guidance in the common, practical business of speech and the humbler, lighter forms of reading. Now, what if these graduates of higher institutions have not had any education in English except in Anglo-Saxon and Middle English and the classics and in the literary and artistic modes of expression—what would happen? What does

happen? Our graduates, now metamorphosed into teachers of English in the "poor man's colleges," the high schools, the schools designed to train the "common run" of citizens and to prepare for the unimposing but important pursuits of life—our graduates forthwith move, bag and baggage, books and student lamp, to the Palace of Pedagogy on the hill, and there begin to impose upon the boys and girls in the plains the same kind of cultural, aesthetic, literary English which they themselves have had. Does this not happen? And thus we go on perpetuating the un-American, undemocratic system. We call for teachers to train the boys and girls in the fundamental matters of reading and speaking, and the higher institutions respond by sending us pedagogs nurtured in the traditions of the Palace on the hill. It is vain to talk of a democratic high school as long as we have an aristocratic college and university.

I shall not undertake to prescribe what English should be taught in the higher schools. But this I know, or I think I know: that some of the English work in college should deal specifically with the subject matter and the methods involved in the teaching of high-school English, and that those who intend to teach English should take this work. Among the courses which should be offered are: modern literature, including fiction and poetry and the modern newspaper and magazine; oral English in its various forms; and sound, progressive courses in the teaching of high-school English. If there is not sufficient time for such courses and also for the traditional cultural courses in English, the latter must give way, as being not so essential to teachers of high-school English. Surely this is not an untenable position.

One other indictment I have to bring against the English course and the English teachers in normal schools, colleges, and universities. Nearly all these schools require what they call Freshman English, which every student, no matter in what department he is enrolled or in what subject he is specializing, must take. In my judgment we have no shadow of right to require Freshman English unless we make Freshman English of undoubted and specific value to every Freshman, no matter what his interests are and his vocation is to be. Now, in general, Freshman English is open to precisely the same objections which have been brought against high-school English. It consists of writing in the four traditional forms of discourse, with little attention given to the oral phases of English, and of general "survey" study of literature, with readings in the classics, no time being allotted to newspapers, magazines, and contemporary literature. That specialists in English or those particularly interested in literary matters should be required to take this course seems reasonable enough; but when we require it of students of law, of medicine, of agriculture, of engineering, we are saying in effect: "There is but one kind of reading that is important, the reading of the classics; there is but one form of expression, the literary form"—which is, word for word, the creed of the pedagogs in the Palace. Can a kind of English not be found which will be more valuable for the future farmer or business man or dentist than these required courses in the history of literature and the biographies of authors and in the scribbling of literary exercises? If this is the best that English can offer, then English as a required subject is doomed. As a teacher of English literature and language I yield to no one

in my conviction that English can be made educative and profitable for all; but as a teacher of American boys and girls I stand firmly for this principle: "No course in English should be required that does not possess demonstrable general value for all and specific value for each."

I have been speaking of the Palace of Pedagogy. The old-fashioned college is the training school for the Palace. The college is where the dogma of formal discipline still holds sway, where the pretty conceit of a liberal education still has admirers, where the ideal of a static, stately culture reigns supreme. In no department of the old-fashioned college except the department of education does one find a democratic theory of education. The professors of English, of history, of languages, of science, of mathematics, still cleave to an obsolete, aristocratic philosophy, based upon the theory that there is but one kind of education, of success, of culture, of life: their kind. They set themselves, with a conscience and a resolution worthy of a better cause, to the task performed successfully only once in all history: *they would create man in their own image!* This is the very essence of the pedagogy of the Palace.

The Palace of Art and the Palace of Pedagogy. But I must return to Tennyson's poem, "The Palace of Art." The poet built his soul a lordly pleasure house, where she could live alone, high above the "darkening droves of swine that range on yonder plain."

And so she throve and prosper'd: so three years
She prosper'd: on the fourth she fell,
Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,
Struck thro' with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,
God, before whom ever lie bare
The abysmal deeps of Personality,
Plagued her with sore despair.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude
Fell on her, from which mood was born
Scorn of herself; again, from out that mood
Laughter at her self-scorn.

So when four years were wholly finished
She threw her royal robes away.
"Make me a cottage in the vale," she said,
"Where I may mourn and pray."

"Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are
So lightly, beautifully built:
Perchance I may return with others there
When I have purged my guilt."

"Perchance I may return *with others.*" I would that all mankind might dwell on the heights, in the Palace of Art, in the Palace of Pedagogy, that all might breathe that air serene, be free from drudgery and ignorance and the grinding cares of existence and the disheartening tasks and petty problems of everyday living. But until that blessed day comes, the poets must descend from the Palace of Art and the teachers from the Palace of Pedagogy, must build them "cottages in the vale," "houses by the side of the road," yea, in the midst of the villages on the plain, and there they must instruct and awaken and elevate and inspire the common sons and daughters of man in the commonplace work of man. This is the task to which we are called and challenged. Perchance, after we have purged away our guilt of egotism, of aristocracy, of intellectual pride, "perchance we may return with others there."

III. DEMOCRATIC IDEALS OF CULTURE AND EFFICIENCY: THEIR RELATION TO ENGLISH

Purpose of discussion. To determine whether the English subjects are essentially cultural or practical is the purpose of this discussion. But before we can judge whether the principles of culture or of efficiency should be predominant in the teaching of the English subjects, we must examine minutely our two major terms. Many of the misunderstandings and misconceptions we have labored under, many of the blunders we have made in education and life have been due to feeble and crooked thinking, to lazy acceptance of hazy catchwords, to traditional notions—heirlooms from a remote past. In this address, therefore, I propose to devote a great deal of my attention to a consideration of the general principles, then make but a brief application of those principles to the teaching of English. What is culture? What is efficiency? And what relation do they bear to the group of English subjects and to their democratization? These I conceive to be the vital questions.

What is culture? The reader need not fear that I shall attempt to mark out the exact limits beyond which culture may not extend, that I shall try to build a tight, high fence around it. To define culture too straitly is to deny it altogether. It is too spiritual to be embodied in substantial rules; you cannot cork up this genie in a bottle. It is easier to recognize culture than to analyze it. Yet I must, so far as I am able, resolve it into its elements; I must break up this warm, clear beam of

sunlight into all the colors that compose it. Clear-cut thinking on this subject were not possible otherwise.

But before I attempt a positive determination of what are the component elements in culture, before I attempt to answer the question, What is culture? I wish to attack the question, What is culture not? For concerning culture there are two prevalent errors that bar the way of our analysis.

Cultivation not culture. The first error is that culture is polish, politeness, good manners, observance of the laws of etiquette. Culture is no such superficial, artificial thing as that. Good manners depend upon fixed rules, which are altered, like fashions, as ways and customs and modes of living come and pass, which hold sway for a limited time in a circumscribed sphere. What was "good form" a century ago may be "bad form" now. What is "good form" in the city is not necessarily "good form" in the country. It is impolite to speak to a stranger in a crowded city street; it is impolite not to speak to a stranger in a lonely country road. Cultivation is not culture; often it is not even indicative of culture. The crass farm boy who fails to lift his hat to a lady may have more true chivalry in his heart than the urbane gallant who knows all the pretty ways of social usage. Surely, culture is not such a petty, ephemeral matter. It does change, to be sure; it grows and develops from century to century, and it takes various shapes in different countries and civilizations. But it is not a mere mode, a fashion, a style, a fad; it is deep-rooted, it is fundamental and elemental. Let us not confound culture with good breeding, though we should not the less appreciate good breeding and all that it implies.

Knowledge not culture. The second misconception is that culture is knowledge, usually interpreted as knowledge of the "liberal arts" subjects, of the humanities, of belles-lettres. According to this view, you must be steeped in literature and history, you must be able to read in at least one foreign language, you must have "gone through" geometry, you must be able to prate of books and authors, painting and music, else you are outside the pale. You may be an estimable person, useful, influential, but you are not cultured. Now there is a modicum of truth in the foundation idea of this conception of culture, just enough truth to beget error. Certain subjects do contain more cultural food than others and may thus contribute more generously to the development of culture. But knowledge is never identical with culture, however closely related it may be. One may attain culture with surprisingly little knowledge of the so-called cultural subjects, and one may fail to attain culture after a lifetime spent in the acquisition of the humanities. In truth, the setting up of a narrow, prescribed list of information as containing the sum and substance of culture, as including "that knowledge which is the common property of all cultured persons," is subversive of the first principles of culture. Pray, what is it that makes the knowledge that *agricola* is the Latin word for "farmer" more precious and powerful in life than a knowledge of farming? Why should knowing about the Rosetta stone be more contributive to the enrichment of life than knowing shorthand? or knowing what kind of clothes Queen Elizabeth wore be more significant than the ability to make one's self a dress? No single mind can now take all knowledge as its province;

no one should arrogate to his subject or group of subjects all the grace and beauty and benignity and humanizing influences of knowledge. Culture can bloom and flourish on the scantiest of learning. What counts is not so much the contents of one's mind as the state of one's mind. Let us not confuse knowledge with culture, though we should by no means despise knowledge of any kind, whether useful or pleasant.

Other misconceptions of culture. Along with these two cardinal errors we must place a number of other narrow and twisted ideas of the quality of culture. A gentleman of the old school was wont to assert very dogmatically that you could always tell a cultured person by the elegance and correctness of his language, adding that a truly cultured person never uses slang. Piffle! It is said that one who cannot write a good social letter is uncultured. Stuff! Some one else says you must have traveled widely before you may call yourself cultured. Nonsense! These are the blunders of the intellectual aristocrats. Culture is nothing so definite, so obvious, so recognizable; it does not reveal its presence through such crude tests. The moment you erect artificial standards of this sort, you cheapen and stultify the very idea of culture. None of these is of the true and authentic nature of culture, though each may, or may not, make contributions to it or give evidence of its existence.

Democratic culture. What, then, is culture? Or, to put the question somewhat more suggestively, what is culture in a democratic country like America? For, obviously, democratic culture and aristocratic culture are diverse, and, obviously again, it is the democratic ideals

of culture which we wish to set up and approximate to as closely as possible in our day and world. Greece had her culture, Rome had hers. Each race, each epoch, sets before itself, more or less consciously, certain individual and social ideals of taste, conduct, character, a certain philosophy of life, a certain standard of personal, civic, and moral virtue. When we speak of a man as "cultured," we mean, in the last analysis, that he sums up within himself these national and racial ideals. Let us understand, therefore, that in the discussion that follows I am using the word culture as meaning democratic culture, the culture which we prize in our modern American civilization.

What, then, is culture, the culture of our democracy? Its elements, I think, are five: appreciation of beauty, a rich, emotional nature under control, many-sided interest in life, sympathy, and a well-trained mind. I shall discuss these elements in the order in which I have named them.

Appreciation of beauty. First, a feeling for beauty, an appreciation and a full recognition of its gracious influence in the life of men. And by beauty, I hasten to say, I do not mean mere prettiness, mere shapely form or musical sound or fragrant odor or bright, well-harmonized color. A farmer is cutting the purple asters and goldenrod that grow in his fields, and a poet passing by groans at the wanton destruction of beauty. But the farmer may have in his mind's eye a vision of broad fields of wheat, may see that grain feeding hungry children; he may discern a beauty far finer than that of the poet; he may be mowing down surface prettiness to make room for essential beauty. How beautiful are the gossamer

hammocks which the spider hangs, during the night, over the herbs and weeds in the fields! But not so beautiful as the delicate and intricate organism by which the spider, which we deem ugly, spins its web. A butterfly hovering above flowers is lovely, yet not so wondrously beautiful as the metamorphosis of the worm into that same butterfly. Beautiful was the deathbed of Tennyson—the majestic figure reposing in peace and resignation upon the bed, the soft moonlight beaming upon him and upon the volume of Shakespeare on his breast. Yes, but not so nobly beautiful as the death of a young American soldier writhing in the slime and muck of a Flanders battlefield in the midst of the hideousness and filth of war.

Not that I would decry prettiness. Flowers, birds' songs, moonlight nights, murmuring streams, these have also their mission, their ministry to the hearts of men. But we have so narrowed our conception of beauty that we have shut out all but this type of beauty and are prone to condemn those who do not recognize and appreciate this type. If one dare say that he does not enjoy music or poetry, if one is blind to the glory of the sunset or of a forest tree in its autumn transfiguration, we call him dead to beauty, we say he has no appreciation of the finer things of life, whereas he may have more feeling for the truer beauties of existence and human relationship, for the deeper harmonies of life, than have we professed worshipers of conventionalized, poetic beauty. I do not assert that he does have; I say he may have. Nor am I suggesting that everything is beauty, for I know better. What I am endeavoring to say is that beauty is pervasive, multifarious, that she assumes as many forms as Proteus; we affront her by narrowing her manifestations.

Beauty is fitness, beauty is proper relationship. There is a beauty of use, a beauty of conduct, a beauty of service, a beauty of morality, a beauty of truth, far finer and more exquisite than the beauty upon which we devotees of culture have lavished so much sentiment. I verily believe that no one is cultured who does not have an intense appreciation of beauty, and who does not labor that beauty may prevail, but it is no petty, integumentary prettiness that I have in mind.

A rich, emotional nature under control. Nor do I call that person cultured who does not possess a broad, rich, emotional nature, and that nature balanced and poised, under control. One must be sensitive to life, must react to its stimuli, its glory and sordidness, its comedies and tragedies, its hopes and fears, its beauty and ugliness. He must be eternally aware of them, and respond with the appropriate thrill of happiness or chill of grief. The fount of his tears must flow, his cheek must blanch with fear, his heart swell with grief, his muscles grow taught with indignation, his teeth set with resolution, his eyes glow with aspiration. The cultured person has a wide gamut of emotions, and his heartstrings vibrate readily to every touch. He feels, feels keenly, strongly, deeply. He whose emotions are atrophied through disuse, he whose bosom is so hard that the arrows of life cannot penetrate it, lacks one of the intrinsic elements of culture.

But it is necessary that this strong, virile, emotional temperament be under control. We know very little about the education of the emotions, but I think we know that it consists in encouraging all the elemental human feelings and at the same time purifying them, guiding them. There are those who fancy that culture is calmness, apathy,

who think it ill-bred to display feeling, who shrink back from anything "common" or human, anything likely to ripple the surface of their lives. This is mere repression. Such persons stand upon the bank of the river of existence, with their boats drawn up on the shore. This is the glory of life: to be swept along by the powerful current of vital human feelings—to love, hate, aspire, fear, laugh, weep, worship, pity—yet to control our course, yea, to make the current serve to carry us whither we would go. And this is one of the masculine factors in true culture; culture is sterile without it.

Many-sided interest in life. The third element in democratic culture is not unlike the second. The cultured person has an expansive interest in life; he thinks nothing human to be foreign to him. It is an erroneous idea that the cultured man or woman is detached, impersonal, a star that dwells apart. He inhabits not the palace of art but the house by the side of the road, and into it he invites all kinds and conditions of men, and from it he emerges to mingle freely with his fellows. He can hold converse with the old on death and immortality, with the young on love and romance, with the minister on the arts of pastorship, with the hunter on the pursuits of the chase, with the farmer on raising chickens. Though absorbed at one moment in one interest, he can leave it at will and plunge himself into another, perhaps diametrically opposite. The cultured man cannot be a bigot, a partisan; he has too many points of view, can stand in the shoes of too many others. He does not travel continually the same road, is not tied down to a monotonous routine, is not confined to one field of thought or one round of activities, does not bore you with reiteration

of his one song. It is not so much that he contains all knowledge as that he is accessible to all knowledge. It is not so much his full mind as his open mind. One sure indication of the cultured person is the breadth, the diversity, and richness of his scope of interests.

Sympathy. Sympathy is the fourth element in democratic culture. Here again I wish to enlarge the conventional meaning of the term. By sympathy I mean more than pity: I mean fellow-feeling, rejoicing with them that rejoice, weeping with them that weep. Sympathy implies fellowship, ability to put one's self in the other man's place, to understand his thoughts, to get his angle of vision. There is no more certain proof of lack of culture than selfishness, self-seeking, self-absorption, plunging ahead to gratify one's desires and ambitions regardless of the rights and feelings of others. The cultured man or woman is considerate of other persons, even of the lower animals, because he has imagination enough to enable him to apprehend their states of mind and because, through his kinship with them, he feels for them and with them. Let us not confuse this with mere politeness, mere grace of manner, deference, courtesy. True sympathy goes deeper than that: it is related more closely to benevolence, charity, love. Would you know the cultured man? Does he grieve when his friends are stricken with sorrow? Does he rejoice when his friends make merry? Does he fear with them, love with them? Does he lose himself in them? Can he play with the children and cheer the bed of the aged? Is he kindly, compassionate, tolerant, catholic in his sympathies, and democratically indulgent? This is the man of culture: he who obeys the Golden Rule most implicitly.

A well-trained mind. The fifth attribute of the cultured person is a well-trained mind. There is only one way to train the mind: to employ it in real activities, to engage it in genuine, vital experiences, accustoming it to reflect upon these activities and experiences, to learn from success much and from failure as much as is possible, to judge, compare, contrast, to remember what is significant and to bring what one remembers to bear on any present problem, to discern clearly the roots of the matter at issue and to ignore what is extraneous, to project one's self outward and forward in imagination. To do all this long enough is to insure a well-trained mind: nothing else will produce it. No formal set of mental gymnastic exercises will suffice, nothing but educative activities often repeated and reflected upon will serve. Memorizing Latin declensions, conning geometric laws, tabulating the succession of English kings or of Revolutionary War battles, learning the names and dates of authors and their books: this may produce well-filled minds, not well-trained minds. Studies can train the mind only in proportion as the studies deal with actualities, of personal import to the student. Thus studies become experience, life material, upon which the mind may reflect, even as upon the events of one's own existence.

No one is cultured if he lacks this kind of mind. He may be amiable, attractive, "nice," but, lacking a well-trained mind, he lacks one of the dynamic factors of culture. It is not necessary that the mind be trained logically. It need not be disciplined in school. It may have little of the learning which is traditional in our curriculum; but it must be a mind capable of conceiving clearly, judging justly, balancing fairly, remembering

freshly, imagining vividly, concentrating sharply. Such a mind does not in itself constitute culture, for it sometimes is the possession of one who is utterly hard and selfish, impervious to all the finer phases of life. Democratic culture requires all five elements: a feeling for beauty, an emotional nature strong but controlled, varied interests, wide sympathies, a well-trained mind. And these must be fused into perfect union with one another and interfused with the individuality, the intrinsic, temperamental quality of the person, so that the culture of no two beings, though composed of the same elements, is alike.

Summary. I presume this analysis of culture has pleased neither the old school of thought nor the new. The old school men will contend that I have minimized the knowledge element in culture. I can hear them quoting Matthew Arnold and Walter Pater and others of my friends and acquaintances, to the effect that culture is the knowledge of the best of the past, that culture is the sharing in that learning that is possessed by all educated persons. This is the culture of aristocracy, not the culture of democracy. Let me repeat that no one is capacious enough to comprehend all the vast extent of human knowledge, that there is no certain knowledge that can be singled out as exclusively cultural, that culture is more an attitude toward knowledge, an interest in all forms of knowledge, and a humility in the presence of true knowledge in any form. Culture implies rather that a stream of knowledge has flowed through the mind, depositing a soil which is alluvial, instinct with generous thought, capable of engendering gracious feelings and beneficent deeds. Doubtless the native richness of

the stream is important, but yet more important is the contour and nature of the region through which the stream flows.

And some of the modern educational philosophers may take issue with me because I have claimed too much for culture. I have claimed much for it, for it is, according to my analysis, the finest flower of human personality. But however desirable it may be, however much I may admire anyone who possesses more of it than I do, it is only a part of one's equipment for life, only one of the strands in the cable by which man tries to climb toward the ideal. Culture, as I have defined it, does not include—though assuredly it does not exclude—those essential qualities which we call spiritual: bravery, humor, religious fervor; and it takes no account at all of the other group of powers that we group under the title of efficiency. Culture is whole and perfect within itself, we need not broaden it to comprise all virtues in order to justify it; but the human being who possesses only culture, even in its brightest effulgence, is not whole and perfect within himself. To it must be added efficiency, modern efficiency, democratic efficiency.

Culture and efficiency not to be confused. I have no patience with those who insist that culture and efficiency are but different aspects of the same quality, reverse sides of a coin. They are not the same. To use the terms of geometry, they are complementary, not identical. They are not incompatible—in fact, they are so frequently blended in the human personality that it is sometimes impossible to fix the limits of either; but they are nevertheless widely different in nature, methods, purposes, and accomplishments. Let no one

persuade you that culture leads inevitably to efficiency, or that efficiency grows into culture. Much of our obfuscated philosophy in education has resulted because, perceiving that everyone needs both culture and efficiency, we have "clashed the two together," have tried to obtain both by the same means, the same education, have endeavored to make the cultural subjects practical and the practical subjects cultural.

The difference between the two will be made very evident by a brief analysis of efficiency. We shall not need many words, for concerning this phase of our subject there is not much probability of misunderstanding. In this analysis I shall examine efficiency at its highest and best in our modern and democratic world, ignoring the sinister associations connected with the term but not necessarily a part of it.

What is efficiency? Efficiency implies, first of all, ability to make a good living, to get on and up in the world, to work at some calling skillfully, capably, with deftness and without friction and waste; to succeed, in the material sense of the word, that is, to make money, hold good jobs. As society is now constituted, this means mastery of some one gainful vocation—it matters not what, though, of course, some vocations demand more intelligence or manual skill or physical strength than others, and some vocations are more remunerative.

In the second place, efficiency implies certain work habits and qualities. Industry, inventiveness, energy, perseverance, patience, thrift, ambition, ability to work rapidly and easily, to eliminate useless motions, to discover the speediest mode of working well—these are some of the most important of work habits and qualities.

Now, this demands intelligence, it demands a well-trained mind. To be sure, in some kinds of work a man may apparently be efficient through sheer skill or brute strength, but even here ingenuity and shrewdness count. And in the higher callings notable efficiency is not possible without a finely trained mind. It need not be a capacious mind, it may be a narrow mind—that depends upon the vocation—but it must be keen, alert, logical, able to cope with every situation, to follow up every ramification in the business in which it is employed.

Physical health and vigor is the fourth factor in the efficient life. This includes all that has to do with preserving and improving bodily well-being, such as play and recreation and practical knowledge of the body and the laws of health.

Finally, efficiency in most vocations is not possible without ability to get on with our fellows. We may not be interested in them especially; but as our success depends upon our power to deal skillfully with those with whom we are brought into contact, it is evident that to be efficient we must study human nature and cultivate certain social graces.

Culture and efficiency contrasted. Surely it must be evident that culture and efficiency, as thus analyzed, have but few points in common. Culture deals with the spiritual, the emotional, the aesthetic; efficiency rules over the realm of materialism, of direct practicalness, of immediate utility. Culture enriches the personality; efficiency, the person. Culture regards life as an exploration; efficiency, as a business transaction. Culture is aesthetic play; efficiency relates everything, even play, to work. Culture asks, "Is it true? Is it beautiful? Is

it fine and noble?" Efficiency asks, "What are the facts in the case? What does it cost? Does it pay?"

The circles of culture and efficiency overlap, it would seem, at only two places: both claim a well-trained intellect, and both establish relationships with human beings. But culture prizes more highly the broad, sympathetic, catholic mind, the mind open to all truth and beauty; whereas efficiency prizes more highly the canny, practical mind, the mind well stored with useful facts. And with regard to contact with life, culture goes out from itself, wanders somewhat aimlessly in attractive by-paths, searching—though never directly—for beauty, for the grace and glory of life, for emotional and aesthetic experiences. Culture regardeth not the harvest, except indeed its beauty, seeketh not her own. Culture is centrifugal. But efficiency is centripetal. It relates everything to itself, ignores all that has no immediate bearing upon profit, is impatient with beauty for the sake of beauty, though it cultivates that beauty which is negotiable. In culture it is what we think of other men that counts; in efficiency it is what other men think of us.

Or, consider the attitude of the two toward morality. Culture says: "Be honest, for honesty is an aspect of honor, of truth, of beauty; an honest action is in tune with the harmony of life." Efficiency says: "Be honest, for honesty is the best policy." Culture says: "Be courteous, for courtesy comes from the heart; it is an emanation of love, good will, benevolence." Efficiency says: "Be courteous; it's good business."

Let us not be deceived in this matter. Culture and efficiency are not the same, not even similar. They face in opposite directions. If occasionally they meet at

a common equator, yet at their extremes they are as far apart as the poles. Culture cannot be practical; efficiency, though it dons the clothing and the manners of culture, remains efficiency.

Both culture and efficiency essential in life. But it does not follow that, because culture and efficiency are not the same, they are not both essential in life in democratic America, or that they may not both be acquired by the same person. Or, to state it positively, the well-rounded, evenly balanced, full-grown individual, the happiest, most useful individual, is he who combines within himself the five qualities of culture and the five qualities of efficiency: he who can make a good living, be thoroughly efficient, take part in practical affairs, and at the same time live a full, rich, varied life, attaining a fuller measure of culture every year he lives. Happy is he if his vocation permits and encourages him to view existence from both angles, to travel as far east as west. In no calling, indeed, whether the ministry of the gospel or the ministry of the coal mine, need one renounce the joys and values of either the aesthetic or the practical. But since some vocations lean too far in the one direction or the other, we must needs restore the balance by readjusting avocations. Life demands both. We should work and we should play—not work in order that we may have leisure to play, not play that we may have health to work, but work and play because both are necessary to fulfill our natures, to perfect and complete our lives.

The school's contribution to culture and efficiency. And if this is true, it follows that school education, which is training and preparation for complete living out of

and beyond school by means of complete living within school, should make contributions to both culture and efficiency. (I say "contributions," for it is evident that school can give but a small portion of either.) I would not have John cultured and Will efficient; I would have both John and Will both cultured and efficient. I prefer one man with two eyes to two men each with one eye.

Three principles, far-reaching in their effect upon the curriculum and methods of teaching, not only of the English subjects, but of all the other subjects, may be based upon the preceding truths:

First, the school curriculum as a whole should be made up of those activities, subjects, and parts of subjects that contribute to both democratic culture and efficiency.

Second, the school curriculum should contain nothing else, except, perhaps, certain moral and civic ideas and ideals not comprised in either of our major terms.

Third, each subject or part of subject should be closely scrutinized to determine whether its material and methods may be expected to add something to democratic culture on the one hand or to efficiency on the other. There should be no confusion of purposes or values. The two kinds of education should be kept absolutely separate; if they mingle, let them mingle in the personality of the students, not in the methods of the teachers.

These three principles, if applied to the course of study, would work great changes in nearly all the subjects. Our task now is to determine their application to the English branches.

Application of culture and efficiency to English teaching. Fortunately—in some respects, unfortunately—English

divides itself naturally, inevitably, into two distinct groups, the one cultural, the other practical. I say "fortunately," for it allows the English teacher to give her pupils education in both departments of life. I say "unfortunately," for too often the English teacher, not recognizing the dual nature of her task, attempts to make all the work practical or all the work cultural, or selects the wrong parts of it for the one purpose or the other. More of this presently.

The second principle, that we exclude everything that does not add some educative increment to the lives of our pupils, would enable us to eliminate from English a considerable quantity of material which clings to the curriculum only because we have false ideas of culture. From literature it would cut loose a sodden mass of information about authors, dates, literary periods, it would banish much memorization of poetry and all cramming for examination in literature, it would do away with all that part of our literature material and method which has to do with the acquisition of conventional and traditional and pseudo-cultural knowledge. It would eliminate the intensive study of forms, of vocabulary, the insistence upon knowing the meaning of every word and the significance of every allusion; for nothing in all this adds one cubit to our stature in any of the five essentials of culture, and assuredly contributes not one iota to our efficiency. It would strike many of the classics from our list of literature to be read in school, because in content and spirit they are so remote from the lives of present-day boys and girls that they cannot impress upon them either cultural ideals or practical rules of life. In the language group of English subjects

our principle would permit us to reduce spelling to that limited extent which is needed in the actual writing of life, to reduce grammar and rhetoric to that small fraction which functions in the written and spoken language of communication, since only this contributes to efficiency, and nothing in these subjects contributes to genuine culture. We should then have left in literature all that has an appreciable effect upon true culture, we should have left in language all that prepares us for an efficient life.

The third principle bears directly upon one of the most important and puzzling questions of English teaching: To what extent should the English subjects be cultural, to what extent practical? This question entails a minute examination of the nature of the content and methods of the English studies.

The nature of literature and literary artists. Let us consider literature first. What is literature? What is there in this subject which we may reasonably expect to make a contribution to democratic culture or efficiency? To answer it bluntly, we can get out of literature what the makers of literature put into it; no more, and, of course, not so much as that. What, then, are the purposes of the makers of literature? What material do they work with? What do they strive for? What manner of men are the creators of literature? What manner of creation do they offer us?

The creator of literature is intent primarily on the discovery and revelation of beauty. If we except some of the most radical realists, all literary artists are, first of all, seekers after the beauty of life. They construct their poems, their stories, out of the materials, the stuff,

of human existence, but they select only that area of existence which is beautiful, using the ugly and sordid and commonplace only to point out its hidden charm or to sharpen the contrast between ugliness and beauty. James Russell Lowell perceives the beauty in a dandelion — beauty that our dim eyes, though they have gazed upon the flower hundreds of times, have not seen; and always thereafter we also can perceive the beauty. Shakespeare may show the ugly degradation in the character of Macbeth and may put before us the beastliness of the witches, but he traffics in this ugliness only that he may the more clearly reveal the beauty of the fundamental laws of conduct. Fielding may insist upon our knowing Blifil, mean, narrow, spiteful, selfish, hypocritical, but only that we may discern more vividly the honest worth and sincerity and simple human charm of Tom Jones. Beauty of content, beauty of expression, this is the artist's guiding aim; beauty of scene and circumstance, beauty of manners, beauty of motives, of thoughts, and of conduct, beauty of truth, sensuous beauty, ethical beauty.

The creator of literature is remarkable, in the second place, for his emotional range and his emotional intensity. Are not artists notoriously high-strung, palpitating with enthusiasms, sensitive to emotional stimuli? Do they not veer continually to the shifting gusts of passion? William Cowper lies awake the night through, laughing at the thought of John Gilpin and his ride; Keats almost faints with ecstasy as he broods over the loveliness of a flower; Wordsworth remembers for a lifetime the emotion kindled in his heart by the sight of the little Scotch girl; Dickens weeps bitterly as he foresees the death of Little Nell.

Your true artist is an Eolian harp, which sounds to the lightest touch of life's breeze. A literary artist without keen sensibilities, quivering nerves, instantaneous and violent reaction to the emotional situations in life, is unthinkable. And yet, no matter how impetuous his passion, he must guide and control it, else he cannot produce art; he must not only ride, he must guide his Pegasus.

Another quality that characterizes the creator of literature is his never-ceasing interest and curiosity about existence. Most of us accept life without reflection, we take it for granted, we are passive, inert, lazy, listless. Like horses, we wear blinkers, so that we see only the stretch of road just before us; like falcons, we are hooded, so that we perceive but a tiny segment of earth and sky. But the literary artist gazes in all directions, wonders about everything, ponders everything, follows up every stream to its secret springs, snatches the masks off the masqueraders. He is the eternal Adam—a new creature in a new world, curious, inquisitive, interrogative; he must give everything a name of his own choosing. Nothing is staled by usage, every incident is an adventure, every day a new era. Chaucer travels forty or fifty miles in company with a score of people, some of them commonplace, some of them coarse and crude, only a few of them persons that you or I would care about or be interested in, no odds how long we traveled with them. But Chaucer has no peace of mind until he has studied and understood each member of the group, winding through the labyrinth of word, manner, and deed till he has penetrated into the secretest and sacredest recesses of personality and temperament. He is curious about

them—that is all. He cannot help asking, "What manner of men are these? What is below the surface?" Robert Browning casually opens a book containing the record of a murder trial, sensational, tawdry, sordid, such a story as you and I often glance at in the newspaper. But he is curious about it. Who is guilty: the man, the woman, the lover? What is the truth here? And out of it he evolves the *Ring and the Book*, in which he reveals the truth from every angle, as each person involved in the story saw it. All literature bears witness to the keen interest that the makers of literature take in human life, in all the facts and facets of existence.

And they have not only interest in the scenes and situations in life, but sympathetic fellowship with the characters that "strut and fret their hour upon the stage." None but Maupassant and a few of his followers remain aloof from the personages they have translated from the world to the pages of their books. A Shakespeare feels kinship with a Lear, with a Falstaff, a Hamlet, a Shylock, with a Rosalind, a Beatrice, a Juliet. He pictures them forth, divergent and heterogeneous, without prejudice or personal bias, with sympathetic appreciation because each is a member of the human tribe to which he himself belongs, because each one is Shakespeare, Shakespeare is each one. A Whitman enfolds every class of humanity within his brotherly arms; an O. Henry or Edna Ferber are near of kin to laborers, clerks, shop girls, show girls. The very beasts of the field and forest are adopted as members of the clan of Burns, Thoreau, and Uncle Remus. In this all-embracing, all-comprehending sympathy literary artists are unique among men; they and children are the only true democrats.

Finally, literary people are so constituted, so endowed that they can read intuitively the riddles of life, can lighten

The heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world.

By virtue of the celestial radiance within them, they cast an illumination into the darkest mysteries of life and death. The universe is confused, formless, chaotic; good and evil, joy and sorrow, beauty and ugliness, divinity and bestiality, lie mixed, it would seem, inextricably, without apparent plan or order. What is life for? What is our relation to our fellows and to God? Why does God suffer crime and grief, sickness and sorrow, to disturb his world? What does it all mean? Hosts of vital questions throng our minds.

The creator of literature is the creator of order out of this weltering chaos. He does it by abstraction, selection, and recombination. If I may compare great things with less, it is like the child's game of jackstraws. We tumble down upon the floor a handful of sticks of different shapes and colors, mixed, shapeless. The literary artist draws out the sticks one by one, placing those of like color, of like shape and size, in their separate places; and out of this material he may fashion whatever may seem good to him. Or, if I may compare great things with greater, God has sent the artist, as He sent His great Son, to guide us through the wilderness of this world, to show us the way, the truth, and the life.

Great books are full of great truths. Not facts, though facts are held as in chemical solution within books. The maker of literature needs but few facts, and those only as hints, or as points of departure. Bryant sees the water-fowl flying overhead. The only essential fact is that

of birds' migration; but from this he induces the universal law of human helplessness and divine guidance. Tennyson hears the Killarney echoes. The fact is the physical nature of echoes; but from this meager and unpromising fact he discovers anew the universal law of undying human influence. Holmes sees a nautilus shell. The fact is the peculiar configuration of the shell; but it is sufficient to reveal to him the universal law of man's aspiration. Bare facts are of no value or interest to the creator of literature; he is one of the few mortals not gulled or browbeaten or obsessed by facts.

The man of letters is rarely a profound scholar, rarely skilled in logic, trained in reason. But he is a penetrating observer, he compares and contrasts closely, he induces and deduces unerringly, he can recall his knowledge and experience and apply it to the matter at issue, he can trace cause and effect, he can fathom purposes and motives, and, above all, he can imagine with extreme vigor and vividness; and when he has done all this, he can put his intellectual accomplishment before us in such a manner that we are moved to thought and reflection. His presentation of truth is the more mind-stirring because he embodies it in stories, in persons, in concrete situations, clothes it in attractive language, warms and colors it with feeling, and allows it to express itself in suggestions. Inasmuch as the material of literature is drawn from life, then reshaped to resemble life, it engages our interest and reflection even as does life itself.

Literature contributes to culture. These five qualities the maker of literature possesses in abundance. This is what he puts into his literature—all he can put into it,

because his writing is life as seen through his personality. This is what he has to offer us; through this and this alone can he influence us, touch us, teach us. Does literature contribute to culture or to efficiency? The question answers itself. The five qualities we found in culture we find as the preëminent qualities in the creators of literature and therefore in literature. Literature contribute to efficiency!—to making a living, to working deftly, skillfully, to getting on well with people! Literary men, who are pathetically unsuccessful from the efficient man's point of view, laughably impractical, idealistic, romantic, fanciful—will you engage these men to teach your children the secrets of efficiency? Nay, they make contributions to culture, or they have no place in our education or life. Any attempt to attain efficiency through literature, as I understand and have defined the term, is farcical; it frustrates the cultural purposes and fails to realize the practical purposes of education. The only possible effect literature can have upon the efficient man is to give him relaxation that he may work the harder, and this is possible only because the library is a different world from the office.

It is our insistence upon securing practical results from literature that vitiates our method of teaching this subject. We are too eager to figure and handle profits, too greedy for immediate and tangible returns on our investment of time and labor. In our desire—natural enough, of course—to assure ourselves that our pupils are "getting something out of literature," we require them to memorize passages, retell the ins and outs of intricate plots, pass examinations on the meaning of words and on the details of authors' lives—facts, facts, facts, facts that have

no relation to culture and no relation to efficiency. Oh, the futility and falsity of such facts! Do we compel a man to take an examination after he has heard a recital of music, or seen the mountains or the sea, or taken a walk in the woods, or passed through a dark grief, met a great man, married a wife, fought in a battle, or had any other emotional experience? Culture grows inaudibly, imperceptibly. Perhaps we may never be able to certify that a certain poem or story has had effect upon a reader; no more can we certify that a certain portion of a piece of beef, eaten and assimilated, has furnished cells to the thumb on our right hand. All we can be sure of is that suitable literature, satisfying our taste and containing food elements, will, when digested and metabolized, become, gradually but inevitably, culture and character. The teacher of literature must have a firm and fervent faith in the ultimate effect of literature upon life—always provided the literature is of the kind that will supply the reader with real experience.

Literature makes no contribution to efficiency. Are there, then, no material profits from literature? A person gets on better in the world, makes more money, holds higher positions, if he can use his mother tongue effectively. Do we not enlarge our vocabulary, rectify our mistakes, refine our style by reading literature? I believe that reading literature has no appreciable effect upon the language, spoken or written, of ninety-nine out of a hundred readers, and that the hundredth person, in endeavoring to secure this value, is likely to lose most of the other values. We do not learn to spell by reading literature, we do not learn to punctuate, to paragraph, we do not carry words over from our reading vocabulary

to our speaking and writing vocabulary; even when we memorize passages, the words are so imbedded in the context that we rarely use them separately. In my judgment, the two kinds of intellectual activity engaged in, in reading literature and in expressing thought, the states of mind, the attitudes, are so divergent, so antagonistic, that we cannot transfer the profits over from one set of books to the other. We should not use models of literature in teaching children to speak and write, because when they speak and write we should desire that they be absorbed in the practical business of speaking and writing; they will get nothing from models of literature that they would not get much more easily and economically and fully from models of everyday speech and writing. I know that Tennyson and Stevenson and scores of other authors patterned after their predecessors; but these were literary men engaged in literary work—of course, they could get value from models of literary art. I know that most teachers can derive some language value from literature; but we also are literary folk in our way, else we would not be teaching. I am speaking here and throughout about average young people, the vast majority of whom are not literary at all—this is the true democratic standpoint. Of all the thousands of boys and girls I have taught, in the grades, high schools, normal schools, and other schools, only a half-dozen were pronouncedly of the literary type. The English teacher busying herself with facts, with dates and names, the pupils using up their time in searching out definitions, tracing out allusions, studying the style, sentence, and paragraph structure—that teacher, those pupils, are interfering with the one value that literature can give—and

a very great value it may be—in the useless endeavor to secure benefits that literature is not designed to give, cannot, from its very nature, give. Oh, yes, you can make a book of literature practical—and you can use the book to drive a nail, but it injures the book and doesn't drive the nail very effectively.

Literature can contribute to culture—note *can*, note *contribute*. Some of us English teachers are prone to over-emphasize literature as a cultural force. It can, at best, make contributions, provide a part of the necessary food and exercise. In so far as the literature read helps to beget in the reader these five qualities that characterize culture, in so far as literature produces improvement in these respects in his attitude toward life, toward persons in the actual world, in so far as it becomes real experience, to that extent is it a cultural force. And in order that it may be a great force the absorption of the cultural properties in literature and their application to life must be continued through years. Most of our pupils would get larger cultural returns from literature if our methods of dealing with literature were not so pitifully wrong; but, no matter how perfect our methods, there would be still a number of our pupils who, by reason of temperament or "set of mind," can extract but a minimum of culture from literature. They may get it from some other art or from nature, they may get it from experience, from contact with the realities of life, from parents and friends, from farming, teaching, traveling, from falling sick or falling in love. There are some persons who must work from without in, who change themselves subjectively by acting objectively, who must get their culture as they get their education, by physical

activity, by affecting people. Now, you cannot alter a book. Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* may influence you, but you cannot, except in a quibbling use of the term, influence *Vanity Fair*: it is fixed for all time; so that those who derive power almost altogether by the exercise of their own power over others can get little from the book. Let us recognize this fact. Let us be humble in the realization that culture does not abide with us or alone in our subject. We know how great is our own indebtedness to literature for what culture we possess, we know how admirably fitted literature is to communicate culture to others. I would magnify and glorify literature for its gracious offices; but that same literature has taught me how diversified and myriad-minded are the children of men, and from how many sources they may draw the elements of beauty, charity, faith, power, and inspiration.

Is the language group cultural or practical? And now, what of the other group of English subjects, the language group: composition, grammar and rhetoric, and the forms of oral and written expression, with all the details involved in each? Are they cultural or practical? Let us examine each one separately—but as briefly as possible.

Composition, whether oral or written, has as its chief purpose the selecting and organizing of ideas on a given subject according to a preconceived plan, for this is what we do when we really compose. Its chief value, then, is that it gives training in constructive thinking: the finding, limiting, and stating of a theme; the collection and examination of material and the inclusion or rejection of parts of this material, depending upon whether they are or are not useful in the development of the

leading idea; the arrangement of this material in such a way as to bring out this leading idea; and finally the expression, oral or written—this last being, in many respects, the least important part of the process. This, observe, exactly parallels the process of constructive thinking in any subject. Obviously, long-continued repetition of this round of activities under guidance—provided always the subjects are recognized and felt to be real situations and problems of life—will assist in training the mind to think.

But a well-trained mind is a requisite both in the cultured and in the practical man. Does composition then contribute both to culture and to efficiency? Theoretically, yes, but practically no. Only a small proportion of students can really compose—that is, think through—any but narrow, practical, commonplace subjects, those subjects immediately before them, directly concerning their lives. They cannot create, they can only compose, and that only in a limited field; they cannot grapple with the larger truths of life, they must deal with facts, concrete, material facts. We try to make them cultured by having them write short stories, literary essays and descriptions, orations, even poetry, in the fond belief that they can attain culture in this way. But not one effort out of a thousand, from high-school boys and girls at least, is worth writing or reading. The energy expended is therefore largely wasted; it accomplishes nothing, is abortive. Failure in that which we undertake of our own initiative may sometimes be educative; but failure in a task imposed upon us is depressing, debilitating; it secures for us nothing, in education or culture. What we can get from composition is some

degree of mental training of the kind and on the subjects needed in the efficient life—logical, practical thinking on useful subjects, in the forms of expression most used, and therefore most useful, in ordinary life. Doubtless this has some bearing on the ultimate development of culture—I believe it has; but the practical value is paramount, and the other value will be secured most certainly, if it be secured at all, as a by-product.

Grammar and rhetoric consist of the analysis of the laws and principles underlying expression. Neither subject is of any but the slightest value in developing our appreciation of beauty, enriching our emotions, giving us wide interests or keen sympathies. As for mental training through these subjects, the thought processes are so restricted that they provide no general training, and the subject matter is of such a nature that it is valuable as knowledge useful in the practical affairs of life or not valuable at all. We should include in grammar only those facts and rules that have immediate and unquestionable influence on correct language (and that would make but a tiny volume), and in rhetoric only those facts and laws that concern the common forms of expression used by the common person in the common business of life. We should eliminate the rhetoric of literature as out of place in a subject that prepares for efficiency, and we should introduce the rhetoric of literature in the classes in literature, as belonging to the world of culture.

I am aware that there are those who say that attempting to produce literature in the rhetoric and composition classes increases the students' appreciation of literature and that therefore this activity has cultural value. My

own experience has led me to believe that this production of imitation literature must be continued for a long time before it increases the students' appreciation of literature, and even then it is appreciation only of the outward forms and of the difficulties of creating them. If we have two periods for teaching literary appreciation, we should not spend one period in reading literature and the other in writing imitations of it; we should spend the first period in reading literature and the other in reading more literature.

As for the forms of oral and written language, pronunciation and enunciation, spelling and punctuation, and the rest, they have but a borrowed value, they have importance only as they are needed in expressing the content; if the content is practical, the forms are practical. The only compelling reason why we should spell correctly is because we are thus rated higher in the estimation of others. If we spell incorrectly, we impair our standing, our chances for success. Observance of these forms and conventions gives, at most, but the faintest, most untrustworthy indications of culture; it may be found where no culture is, and it may be absent from the finest culture; while, on the other hand, the relation of these forms to efficiency is close and unmistakable.

Literature, cultural; language group, practical. The language subjects, then, are, in my judgment, entirely practical subjects, as truly as literature is entirely cultural. We should hold them apart rigidly. If they are fused in the teaching methods, they will be confused in their values. We should teach these subjects at different periods, we should credit them separately, we should, if possible, have them taught by different teachers, or by a

teacher with a dual personality, one who has business-like, practical efficiency and rich, genuine culture.

These are my articles of faith, thus set forth at length. Should the English subjects be cultural or practical? The English subjects should be cultural and practical—the one branch cultural, the other branch practical. Neither culture nor efficiency is sufficient to make the complete, symmetrical, well-equipped individuality; neither should be the sole aim of school education. English teachers should hold themselves happy that their subject lends itself so naturally to the great fundamentals of education. Let them not perpetuate the mistake of trying to make both departments of their subject both cultural and practical, but rather hold the one sacred to culture and the other as sacred to efficiency.

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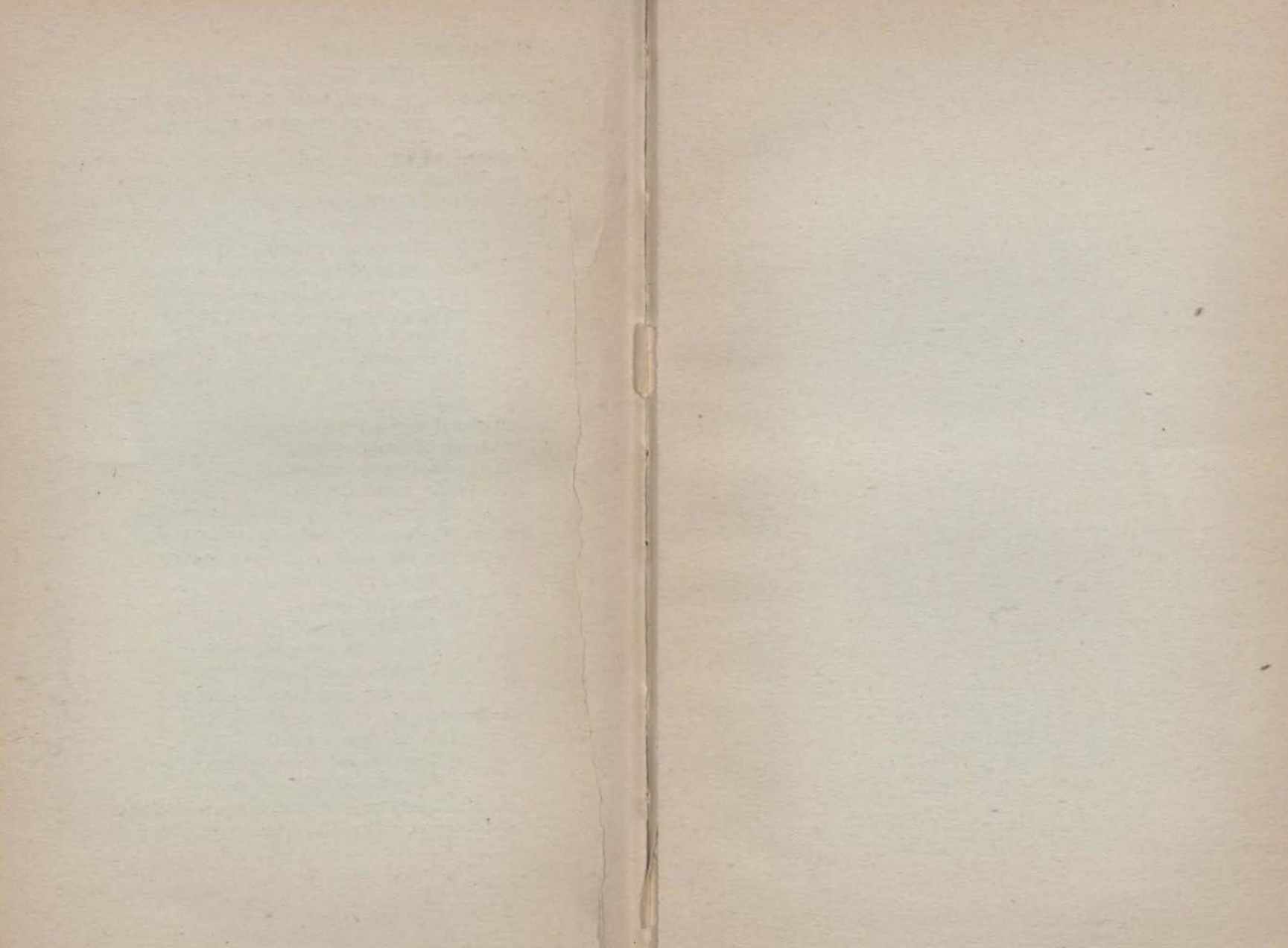
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