

**THE CONFLICT BETWEEN
INDIVIDUALISM AND
COLLECTIVISM IN A
DEMOCRACY: THREE LECTURES**

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The Conflict Between Individualism and Collectivism in a Democracy: Three Lectures by
Charles W. Eliot

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CHARLES W. ELIOT

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University of Virginia
Barbour-Page Foundation

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THREE LECTURES

BY

CHARLES W. ELIOT

PRESIDENT EMERITUS OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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lecturer present in the series of lectures some fresh aspect or aspects of the department of thought in which he is a specialist; and that the entire series delivered each session, taken together, shall possess such unity that they may be published by the Foundation in book form.

PREFATORY NOTE

The lectures here printed were given orally from briefs at the University of Virginia in November, 1909. They have been written out in the summer of 1910. In writing them out some changes of order and a few additions have been made.

C. W. E.

ASTICOU, MAINE,
September, 1910.

I

IN INDUSTRIES AND TRADES

All through the nineteenth century a conflict was going on in all civilized nations between two opposite tendencies in human society, individualism and collectivism. Till about 1870 individualism had the advantage in this conflict; but near the middle of the century collectivism began to gain on individualism, and during the last third of the century collectivism won decided advantages over the opposing principle. Individualism values highly not only the rights of the single person, but also the initiative of the individual left free by society. Collectivism values highly social rights, objects to an individual initiative which does mischief when left free, holds that the interest of the many should override the interest of the individual, whenever the two interests conflict, and should con-