

**THE COLLEGE COURSE AND THE
PREPARATION FOR LIFE; EIGHT
TALKS ON FAMILIAR AND
UNDERGRADUATE PROBLEMS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649308545

The college course and the preparation for life; eight talks on familiar and undergraduate problems by Albert Parker Fitch

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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**THE COLLEGE COURSE
AND THE PREPARATION
FOR LIFE**

EIGHT TALKS ON FAMILIAR
UNDERGRADUATE PROBLEMS

BY

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BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge
1914

L.B. 1831
7/18

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Published October 1914

TO
F. D. F.
WHO IN UNWEARYING AND GENEROUS LABORS
AND NATIVE NOBILITY OF SPIRIT
HAS LIVED BESIDE AND FOR ME
A BEAUTIFUL AND EFFICIENT LIFE

304013



APOLOGIA

No man can fathom the heart of a youth. He who thinks he can, is, of all men, the most incompetent to deal with youth's problems. But, because I believe in youth, I know something of its amazing and moving manifestations. I know its capacity for idealism and the capacity for pain that often goes with it. I know the passion, at once the glory and the peril of youth, which leaps and surges in its veins, and also the poignant moral suffering that accompanies passion, as truly in youth as in middle age. I know that strange deification of sorrow, made by those whom sorrow has not yet really touched, and the heroic struggle with insurmountable obstacles that youth will make and love. I know the intolerance, the incredible carelessness, the ruthless judgments, the unconscious cruelty, the transparent sophistries, the sloth of body and mind, the yielding to the appetites of the flesh, almost at the moment when rejoicing in the visions of the spirit, to which youth is ever prone. But, deeper than all this, I know that at its heart and in the long run, youth lives in high places and its feet are eager for the mountain-tops. Modesty and

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simplicity and sincerity, a noble mixture of reserve and frankness, the will to do right and the hatred of pretense, these lie at the bottom of nearly every beginning life. Not infrequently the heart that is most merry and inconsequent is also most sensitive and shy. And here, I suppose, is the only apologia for these talks and the themes, most ancient yet most fresh, with which they deal. They are written by one who loves youth and reveres its problems, and thinks that to be young is the divinest thing in the world — by one who believes in the native dignity and worth of young human nature and sees, beneath the amazing and baffling inconsistencies of youth's life, its essential decency, its unconquerable idealism, its shining possibilities. Whatever of value or insight these pages may possibly possess is due to that mingling of solicitude and faith which many of us, whose feet have walked longer upon this earth, feel for those who have just begun to tread its surface. And, surely, it is only they who are themselves lovers of youth who can perceive and understand its problems, for they alone are able to re-live them. Neither the preacher nor the patron is tolerable or valuable, for long-continued contact, with beginning lives. They seek instinctively, among their elders, for the comrade, older, indeed, but still eager and respon-

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sive, one to whom the disciplines and disappointments of added years have not brought the dimming of the imagination, nor the loss of the power to think one's self back again into the free and joyous morning of human life. That comrade I would most ardently desire to be. And hence these ensuing chapters, which were first spoken informally before the undergraduates of Williams College, are not, I hope, essays of the didactic and moralizing sort, such as teachers and preachers might impose upon their passive and receptive hearers. They are just friendly talks of one man with some younger men. They are intended not so much to edify and instruct as to interpret and reveal.

A. P. F.

HOME'S ACRE,
CORNISH, NEW HAMPSHIRE,
15th July, 1914.