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// YALE LITERARY MAGAZINE.

VOL. LXXXII MARCH, 1917 No. 6

EDITORS FOR THE CLASS OF 1917.
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PERCIVAL GRAY HART ROBERT PAUL PFLIEGER
CHARLES MORTON STEWART, III.

BUSINESS MANAGER,
JAMES REED SANDERSON.

SHOULD STUDENTS STUDY?

UNDER this caption in the September *Harper's* appeared an article by President W. T. Foster which might be read with great profit by any undergraduate in this or any other American college. The immediate object of his investigation was the too general belief that a man's career is in no way affected by his scholastic standing as an undergraduate, and the still stronger feeling that it is a simple matter for anyone who so desires to compensate his omissions in college with a brilliant record as a graduate student. The fallacy of those legends he disproved swiftly, dispassionately and completely by a survey of the actual records, collegiate, graduate and professional, of a large number of students. It is positively startling to find how very small a percentage of those who drift through college pull themselves together sufficiently to attain success in their chosen walks of life, and it is pleasant to notice how large a proportion of those who have gone through college with distinction retain and improve that advantage through all the rest of their lives. The statistics themselves might be quoted here, but it is hardly fair to select portions of Mr. Foster's exposition without presenting his whole case, which is not here desirable. Suffice it to say that the unavoidable conclusion of his research is that post-graduate success is

in a very real fashion connected with undergraduate scholastic achievement. That is a phase of the question which should rightly appeal strongly to all those who possess the normal young man's desire for success.

But, after all, the more we look at the question the more evident it becomes that it has broader aspects incapable of being reduced to figures and proportions. It involves the very essence of our present purpose. Few indeed reach Senior year without asking the question, "Why are we here?", and many, and often fantastic, are the answers wherewith men satisfy themselves. A large number, perhaps the majority, would say, "To learn to know men." That is indeed a high and worthy ambition and one entirely in sympathy with the true function of a college when, and only when, it is so pursued as to run parallel to the pursuit of knowledge. The friendships that are made between men of self-respect in the course of work to which they are unreservedly giving the best there is in them, are very precious—so fine and so rare that it is almost profanity to believe that the mutual attraction of idleness can adequately replace it. If we are bent upon getting acquainted with men here, let us come to know their best selves, that part of them wherewith they seek and overcome and attain. If our friendships are to be worth having they must have a foundation of respect, and respect can be engendered only in the worthy and the serious things of life. It would be folly to deny that there is great charm in the incidental and trivial acquaintances that chance and propinquity bring to us. Yet how barren of human experience must be his four years who can carry from this place no more deeply rooted friendships than the delightful but mushroomlike affairs that grow about the tables at Mory's or on the way to and from the movies.

But the purpose to know men is hardly sufficient to explain our presence here. Knowing men is one of the great purposes of human life and one which extends itself into every aspect and department of our existence. Yet, without ancillary purposes, it is as powerless to give a man completeness or success as is sunshine to make summer with no leaves on the trees. In whatever walk we are cast there must be guides and motives

to our actions to make them effective. And with us at college the great motive should be learning, the great guide the course of study. It is so easy to ridicule the scholar—so easy to say shallow, semi-cynical things about the value of book learning, that we too easily forget that book learning is in fact a great asset the lack of which can be supplied only with long years of tireless labor. Not to grasp it while it is within our reach is the folly of sapient immaturity. Learning may not be the finest thing in the world but it is past doubting among the world's finest things and it would do us all good to remind ourselves of that occasionally. Whatever its comparative importance in the scale of things, its absolute importance to the college is paramount. The college exists to produce educated men, and if the dismal day should ever come when men came from the college without the ideal of education in them, the whole system will have served its purpose and be discarded with the other outworn inessentials of humanity. However attractive and fine may be the by-products of the college, we must never forget that its great contribution to civilization is education, and for that reason students should study *first* and play and make friends and be merry afterwards.

It seems as though the duty and the opportunity for study must present itself to the reasonable ambition of young men as a matter of the first importance. It is the biggest thing we can do here, and there is something radically wrong with any man who is not looking for big things to do in the spring of his life. We may amuse ourselves and others with the production of youthful art and youthful thought—a most desirable occupation, but one which can hardly become our mainstay because of the scantiness of our wisdom and experience. We may play brilliantly to be idolized by this generation and forgotten by the next. We may drift and make no mark on this generation or any other.—And the big things of the present age are beyond us yet. The fate of nations may interest us—it should, it does—but it is beyond our grasp. But we can learn! In these days of preparation for the mighty things of life, we can fill ourselves with the accumulated wisdom of our fathers so that, when our hour of testing comes our strength shall be the combined strength of all the generations of our forebears.

Three years ago Mr. Douglas wrote an editorial in the *News* entitled "The Dregs." Most of the Senior class will remember the bitter invective with which that ungentle handling of the intellectual lightweights of the college world was greeted. Yet, though there were many cries of protest, there was very little valid refutation. I have no desire to underestimate the many virtues of the unstudious, but my thesis, like Mr. Douglas', is, that be he who or what he will, if a man does not study, his place is not here.

Alfred Raymond Bellinger.

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LETTERS TO CHILDREN.

DIARIES and letters, allusive, confidential, intimate with tiny detail are the femininely charming of literature; broken reflections, as in my lady's mirror, over a gleaming shoulder, of the passage of life spelt with a small and personal "I." Says James Howell, "It is a quaint difference the Ancients did put 'twixt a letter and an Oration, that the one should be attired like a Woman, the other like a Man." Surely they move with an air of mystery and carry adorable secrets. Some letters have a way of seeming veritably to *whisper* to one—to stand a-tiptoe to exchange a never-to-be-repeated confidence. Even their comings and goings are more gracious than is common with downright Man. Note how they smile up from the heavy-faced assemblage of printed-matter and notices at the breakfast table—parted lips, one might almost imagine, withholding and revealing—the bar of prospective opening, getting through greeting and small-talk—deliciously anticipatory—creating a pause in thought before reading, as the pause in conversation as the sex enters the room. One finds a milder thrill in cutting the unbroken wrapper of a late magazine: like making a new acquaintance, reputedly literary, "interesting" according to report: Certainly a sober sort of delight, contained and well within bounds. But opening a letter....Remember Emily Dickinson, shutting and bolting her door against interruption, retiring "the furthest off, to counteract a knock." Imagine any one taking such precaution before cutting leaves in the latest Geological Survey.

Children's letters and letters to children from age, when it has kept alive its old-time delight in pure nonsense and perhaps the sympathetic interest in the affairs of youth are the equal of the best of the self-conscious correspondence of maturity. Dip anywhere into Mr. Dodgson's utterly charming letters—

My Dear E——

Though rushing, rapid rivers roar between us, (if you refer to the map of England, I think you'll find that to be correct) we still remember each other and feel a sort of shivery affection for each other....

"Shivery"—a delicious phrase, and doesn't it seem to *whisper* —to stand a-tiptoe (if an elderly gentleman can be conceived standing on tiptoe to a little girl!) with a quaint urgency and impressment to be heard? Lewis Carroll is the undisputed Prince Charming of the Child-Wonderland. He sparkles — bubbles continually with inconsequential gaiety—pure Greek in sunshiny disregard of Time and the Gods. He is of the true aristocracy of childhood. Witness the complete social ease. This is written on a piece of brown paper, torn from some bundle he was carrying—

"Yes, my child, if all be well, I shall hope, and you may fear that the train reaching Hook at two eleven will contain,

Your loving friends,

LEWIS CARROLL AND C. L. DODGSON."

And he could afford to be stern, and refuse engagements. His social standing was assured—

MY DEAR GAYNOR—

My name is spelt with a "G", that is to say "Dodgson". Anyone who spells it the same as that wretch (I mean, of course, the Chairman of Committees in the House of Commons) offends me *deeply and forever*. It is a thing I can forget, I never can forgive.

As to dancing, my dear, I *never* dance unless I am allowed to do it *in my own peculiar way*. There is no use trying to describe it. It has to be seen to be believed. The last house I tried it in, the floor broke through. But then it was a poor sort of floor—the beams were only six inches thick....Did you ever see the Hippopotamus and the Rhinoceros at the Zoölogical gardens, trying to dance a minuet together? It is a touching sight.

Give any message from me to Amy that you think will be most likely to surprise her, and believe me,

Your affectionate friend,

LEWIS CARROLL.

It is a chastening experience to read Lewis Carroll's letters—one thinks of one's own last essay in that direction, when one patted the neighbor's child on an (justly) exasperated head, and inquired about its dollies—the child's one response to this, being, apparently a desire to go somewhere and kick a tree. But there is many another scholar in this wide field, to be found in the most surprising places. Lord Jeffrey of the *Edinburgh Review,* writes to his granddaughter (one may find it in that pleasant gentleman's most pleasant little book, Mr. E. V. Lucas' "Gentlest Art"), Lord Jeffrey writes to her with an allusiveness and ease springing only from the most genuine culture—reveals an astonishing familiarity of acquaintance with all the dogs and

children of the neighborhood. And the Bishop Walsham How (an unmistakable Gilbert and Sullivan name, an advantage to start with) writes most eloquently in the same vein to the children of the Reverend Daniel Tyson,

> "Now the Bishop he craftily planned to arrive
> At the nursery door at a quarter past five."

But he found them "not at home," and the result was poetry, in the best literary tradition.

Dip once more into the spring of Hippocrene—The writer will stand warrant that it is exhaustlessly fresh and diverting. Charles Dickens, author, as you may know, of Nicholas Nickleby, writes to Master Hastings Hughes:—

> RESPECTED SIR:—
>
> I have given Squeers one cut on the head and two on the neck, at which he appeared very much surprised and began to cry, which, being a cowardly thing, is exactly what I should have expected from him, wouldn't you? ....I have carefully done what you told me in your letter about the lamb and the two "sheeps" for the little boys....Nicholas had his roast lamb, as you said he was to, but he could not eat it all, and says, if you do not mind his doing so he should like to have the rest hashed to-morrow with some greens, which he is very fond of, and so am I....
>
> Fanny Squeers shall be attended to, depend upon it! Your drawing of her is very like except that I don't think the hair is quite curly enough. The nose is particularly like hers and so are the legs. She is a nasty, disagreeable thing, and I know it will make her very cross when she sees it, and what I say is, I hope it may. You will say the same, I know, at least I think you will.
>
> I meant to have written you a very long letter, but I cannot write very fast when I like the person I am writing to because it makes me think of them, and I like you and so I tell you. Besides, it is eight o'clock.... So I will say no more besides this—and that is my love to you and Neptune. And if you will drink my health every Christmas Day, I will drink yours. Come—Respected Sir, I am
>
> Your Affectionate Friend,
>
> CHAS. DICKENS.
>
> P. S. I don't write my name very plain, but you know what it is, you know, so never mind.

Rather less courtly and dainty than the delicate fancies of our Prince Charming of Wonderland. One must remember that Charles Dickens is writing to Young England, sturdy, square, with a hatred of sentiment and a love of cricket, probably, and properly. Besides, Lewis Carroll liked little girls, and Charles Dickens little boys, and you see there is a difference.

And the other side of the mirror, the right side, in which one may see childhood full-face, and not by broken reflections and indirection, as in the letters of the lovers of it—Let Marjorie Fleming answer from the accumulated wisdom of eight-years,