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WALTER B. PITKIN

A SHORT
INTRODUCTION
to the
HISTORY
of
HUMAN
STUPIDITY



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TO THE SUBJECT
OF
THIS BOOK

Strong with the brawn of centuries he swings
His mighty hoe and laughs upon the ground,
The vigor of the ages in his face,
Light on his back the burden of the world,
Who made his simple raptures and content,
A creature far too strong to grieve or hope,
Solid and plain, great brother to the ape?
Who loosened and let down this brutish jaw?
Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?
Whose breath fanned to a feeble glow this brain?

This is the thing that Nature made and gave
To struggle with unconquered lands and seas;
To dig, to hew, to fight for you and me,
Who trace the stars and search the heavens for power
And nurse illusions of Eternity.
Thus Nature dreamed when Nature shaped the suns
And marked their ways upon the ancient deep.
On all the planets of the starry universe
There is no shape more charged with hope than this,
More eloquent of Nature's stratagem
That moves unthought, unplanned, unseen;
No shape more promising of higher Minds,
Beneath whose vision you and I are apes.

Now we looked
And saw not far away the mainland
Where dwelt the Cyclops. And we saw
Smoke rise, and heard the speech of men
And bleat of sheep and goats Then came
The setting of the sun and darkness;
And there we slept beside the breakers.
But when the earliest dawn appeared
Rose-fingered, then I called together
My men and spoke to all:

‘Rest here,
Dear comrades, while with my own ship
And my own men I go to learn
What men these are—if wild and cruel
And ignorant of right, or kind
To every stranger and with hearts
That fear the gods.’

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SCORES of men and women in almost every walk of life have helpfully contributed to the cases discussed in our pages. Many will fail to find their memoranda, while others will see such in abridged form. The reason is that the Short Introduction itself has been compressed to its irreducible minimum, so that millions may read it. Had I used all of the excellent material revealed by our good spies and sharpshooters along the Cyclopean battlefield, the present volume would have infringed upon the History of Stupidity itself.

I wish particularly to thank Mrs. Herbert Bates and Harper & Brothers for permission to quote freely from that lovely translation of the *Odyssey* which Herbert Bates finished only a few months before his untimely death. To Mr. Bertrand Russell is due special gratitude for calling my attention to a most important psychic mechanism of stupidity which had escaped my attention. Excellent instances and references have also come from Lewis Mumford, Harvey Wiley Corbett, Oswald Garrison Villard, Joseph Jastrow, Harry Elmer Barnes, Horace Kallen, Earnest Elmo Calkins, Charles A. Beard, William Worrell, Silas Bent, Robert E. Rogers, George Sokolsky, Margaret Sanger, Herbert Bayard Swope, M. Lincoln Schuster, Gene Tunney, R. C. E. Brown, and Arthur Garfield Hays. Through the courtesy of the *Forum* magazine, the chapter, "Criminal" includes the substance of my article, "The Intelligent Criminal," published in the *Forum*, April, 1925.

About 125,000 words of the original MS. have been omitted simply for the sake of Gentle Reader, who otherwise might have difficulty carrying this booklet around with him. We have omitted entire chapters, often with a deep sigh. There were 10,000 words on Beethoven, for instance; then a wordy discourse on motion picture censors, a sketch of the Romanoffs, another of Ignatius Loyola, another on a few hundred bureaucrats, and a vast deal of appallingly dull documents about business men, peddlers, bankers, brokers, gamblers, and simple suckers. Some of the choicest incidents sent in by contributors had to do with these species, the best we can do is to acknowledge receipt of the same, our thanks, and the hope that all will eventually appear in one of the first thirty or forty volumes of the history which ought to follow this prelude.

INFORME INGENS
CUI LUMEN ADEPTUM

ΠΡΟΛΕΓΟΜΕΝΟΝ
PROLEGOMENON

INGRESS

MOTIVES

WHY should one of the few incorrigible optimists remaining on earth undertake a Short Introduction to the History of Human Stupidity? Is the venture foolish, and the adventurer stupider than all his many specimens? No. For the human race has reached an impasse from which it can escape only by fresh inquiry into its own shortcomings and imperfections.

Here we are, in this year of grace, 1932, masters of earth and air, fire and water. We fly faster than the birds. We dive the deeps. We disembowel mountains and chew forests to chaff. Over nature we exercise powers much vaster than our forefathers credited to the gods. But are we gods? Hardly! Demons perhaps. And of earth we have made Pandemonium. For every billion in coin value that ingenious men have added to our store, other men have destroyed a billion, sometimes in coin value, sometimes in human worth, by wars, tricks, speculations, gaming, fraud, chicaneries, plagues, lies, outrages, and—above all—mortal dulness. For every cunning fashion-work which some thinker has devised for making cheap the good usables, others who cannot think have profiteered and defrauded and mismanaged colossally, so that as fast as wealth piles up somewhere, decay and misery abound elsewhere in harmonious equations.

While the Texas cotton grower starves because his fields cannot feed him by reason of their abundance, the Hankow coolie goes naked. While the Kansas wheat farmer deserts his homestead and wanders, with pots and pans and brats, to the nearest city breadline for a square meal, mountains of wheat lie on the ground all over the Great Plains. While bankers complain of having a surfeit of idle money in their vaults, they refuse to lend a dollar to meritorious enterprises. While the ranks of the idle swell, governments spend tens of millions of dollars daily on guns and shells and battleships. While we increase school funds, build more and more magnificent school buildings, and train school teachers ever more intensively, pupils study worse, learn less, and grow up into shoddy citizenship, an easy prey for gangster lures, for criminal master minds, and a perennial market for worth-

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less stocks and bonds. While the pace of business grows faster, addicts devour more and more morphine, cocaine, and heroin until we Americans now attain the bad eminence of using more narcotics by far than any other people.

Some combinations of motives, perceptions, and methods have—so the statisticians tell us—cost, every year, in our own land alone, the equivalent of \$25,000,000,000. to \$30,000,000,000. in lost money, lost time, lost health, and lost happiness, through the channels of manufacturing and distribution and finance alone. Since we brought back our fighting men from Europe in 1918, we have thus lost or wasted a sum sufficient to buy every railroad—land, cars, tracks, and stations—every steamboat, every factory, store, farm, tool, machine, implement, automobile, horse, cow, sheep, hog, hen, electric light plant, telephone, and pavement now existing in these United States. Between the Civil War and the World War, inclusive, our fathers and grandfathers (aided and abetted by the female of the species, no doubt) squandered in like manner enough to equip half of Europe with homes, roads and factories. For all our boasts of efficiency and wealth, we are not much more than 25% as efficient and rich as we might have been if—

If what?

The answer discloses the motives of the present inquiry.

If our business leaders, our political leaders, our bankers, our voters, and ourselves in general had only been better informed, more thoroughly educated, less dull, less suspicious, less greedy, less poisoned with the gambler's diseased spirit, more far-sighted, and more completely aware of the kind of a world we inhabit as well as of the people who dwell here, we might have made more of our matchless opportunities. We might not now be sinking into the stale and unprofitable ways of the Old World, which, as we sink, moves like a blind and stricken beast still further downward into the bogs of Asia.

Does anybody deny this? If so, I do not know him. The world admits itself awry because people are awry. Well, what's wrong with them? Is it lack of religion? Or bad schooling? Or perverse emotions? Or ill health? Or inane traditions? Or corruption of customs and manners? Or superstition? Or poverty? Or ignorance? Or decayed endocrine glands? Or an obscure trend in mutations and chromosomes? Or something which not even the wisest has yet suspected? Surely somebody must answer the question. Until we come into the

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clear as to the nature, drift, and causes of our manifold faults, we cannot remedy them. We remain doctors scribbling prescriptions in the dark for patients we have never met.

Therefore, I declare, the next major enterprise of the human race should be self-analysis. It must begin with a search for the dominant influences in the crumbling and rot of the social-economic order. While bankers and butchers investigate the gold supply and over-production of meat choppers, those who concern themselves with human nature must investigate its peculiar contributions to the woes of this twentieth century.

We might well have launched our inquiry with a survey of human ignorance, or with one of ill will, or one of the errors rooted in institutions. We prefer stupidity, however, because it seems to underlie all the others and to spread its virus further and more subtly.

A thorough inquiry into stupid people and their acts has become a major issue of statesmanship. Hence no statesman will pay the slightest attention to it. But people who avoid politics as they would leprosy may be curious to know more about the matter; and, first of all, they may demand an explanation of my odd assertion. Here it is, in miniature. Its complete expression is this Short Introduction as a whole.

Scientists—and nobody else!—have discovered and invented so many revolutionary things during the past few generations that today, as we approach the middle of the twentieth century, we find the human race confronted with two major crises. One is the crisis of the Best, the other is the crisis of the Worst. Each crisis crops out in a dozen or more fields of human endeavor. We come upon it in our schools, in our hospitals, in our private endowments for the alleviation of poverty, suffering and ignorance; in our national policies, especially in so far as they concern the conquest of new areas to provide for surplus populations; in our dealings with the vast underworld of crime; in our efforts to cope with disrespect for law on the part of citizens not ordinarily regarded as criminals; in our efforts to secure sane legislation in place of fanaticism; in our struggles to solve "technological unemployment"; and, perhaps above all, in our thus far frustrated endeavors to purge the politics of democracy, which is thoroughly diseased with the poisons of the Cyclopean Evil.

Already the world suffers acutely from a serious unbalance at two points. We have an excess of Best Minds and Second-Best Minds,

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relative to jobs which utilize their high abilities. And we also have an appalling surplus of Stupids and Humanesques, relative to jobs which utilize their low abilities. The first crisis I have investigated as far as my own time and resources would permit;* among other things, it appears that, within the next thirty-five or forty years, the leading nations of the world will have trained between 2,500,000 and 4,000,000 scientists, technicians, and engineers; in that day, organization methods will have become so perfected that each worker will complete fully twice as many units of performance as is common today. Then too, the further subdividing and specializing of complex tasks will have reduced to a minimum the demands upon the ablest men. It is quite conceivable that some great surgeons will have clinics so transformed that their assistants will successfully handle all save one or two operations a month. Great engineers will have even less to do. And great teachers, in 1975, will not waste their precious hours talking to ten or twenty students in a chalk-dusty classroom but will speak to a million every morning over the radio-television; and will have all their best thoughts well canned in phonograph records—all of which will enormously reduce the number of great teachers required for educating any given number of people. Already we have, in the United States, more than 400,000 such high-grade people—mostly untrained, to be sure—who could and would work in the sciences and the professions, if only they could find agreeable and remunerative employment there. But they cannot, save only in medicine and dentistry—for which, of course, few are suited by mind or temperament. If we widen our inquiry to embrace the 10% of our total population having the best intelligence and all-around personalities, we find, by a series of computations too long to report here, that nearly 5,000,000 of these (of all age groups) will never be able to find adequate opportunities for careers.

At the other end of the scale what appears? Now you know—for the press has long been filled with the sad tales of the Machine Age and the "technological unemployment" it causes, along with the steadily dwindling number of workers needed for each unit of production or personal service. You likewise know that the subdividing of labor reaches the point where the "unit operation" becomes so simple that even morons can handle it well, in many instances. Every

* "The Twilight of the American Mind", N. Y., 1928, is entirely devoted to this problem.

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year the major industries approach closer to their ideal, which is a working staff in which about five men are high-grade experts and some ninety-five are common laborers who, after six or eight weeks of drill under a foreman, do their appointed tasks well enough.

Our shocking farm crisis is largely one growing out of mechanized production with a small fraction of the field workers required a generation ago. Whereas once nearly half of the total population had to sweat over crops in order to feed themselves and the other half, today one man easily supports himself and ten others, with modern chemicals and instruments. By 1975 one farmer will be supported by forty city eaters. And then the Man with a Hoe must move back to the caverns of his elder brother, Cyclops. The big world will have no job for him.

Here is a novel predicament of this human race. On the way to Utopia, our best and our worst suffer first and worst. Would we progress? Then somehow we must find ways and means of assuring the best of a fair chance of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, while we eliminate the worst in some manner which does not outrage the feeble, flickering moral sense of mankind. But what has been done thus far?

Well, our biologists have drawn into the fray sundry regiments of eugenists which are fighting under different flags, with no central generalship, hence somewhat vainly. Some attack the problem of the worst, some that of the best; nobody attacks the problem as a whole. One group works nobly for birth control—which is excellent. Another works for sterilization of the insane and feebleminded—which is also admirable, if well managed. Still another (and smaller) group seeks a method of detecting and encouraging genius. A fourth looks to the improvement of higher education as a way of salvaging that vast army below genius and above the racial average. A fifth group attacks crime, a sixth promiscuous immigration, and so on. But, so far as I can ascertain, not a soul has thus far given thought to the possible consequences of the slow, mainly invisible accumulation of blunders, errors, prejudices, bigotries, fanaticisms and crimes caused by dulness in the hundreds of millions of people who are by no means feebleminded nor insane nor psychopathic. The more deeply we probe into natural processes, the more we are overwhelmed by the spectacle of an infinitude of minute forces massing in the causation of ordinary events. The history of mankind is not written by a

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few geniuses, generals, and criminals. The extreme types of personality attract undue attention, get into the headlines, and are later exploited by biographers. But the stream of life down which they swim is a million times broader and deeper and older than they; and it is composed of trillions of drops of water, which in turn are made up of sextillions of molecules, and so on *ad ignotum*. So, it would appear to me, the statesman who dreams of an almost perfect society must some day be forced to observe, analyze and overcome the common frailties of the common people, among which no frailty is more pernicious than simple dulness.

SCOURGE

Stupidity can easily be proved the supreme Social Evil. Three factors combine to establish it as such. First and foremost, the number of stupid people is legion. Secondly, most of the power in business, finance, diplomacy and politics is in the hands of more or less stupid individuals. Finally, high abilities are often linked with serious stupidity, and in such a manner that the abilities shine before all the world while the stupid trait lurks in deep shadow and is discerned only by intimates or by prying newspaper reporters.

How many stupid people are there? In an absolute sense, the question is either absurd or gratuitous; for the strictest definition of stupidity implies that everybody must be enrolled under the blank banners of the dumb, while any other method of defining the characteristic must be relativistic. So I prefer to dodge a precise answer and say that at least three out of every four members of our species are, in some respect, stupid enough to deserve dishonorable mention here. That gives you a compact horde of some 1,500,000,000 people. To deal with its blunders, negligences, fallacies, superstitions, and other kinds of inferior conduct is as hopeless as to cope with a plague of grasshoppers. Smite them here, and a million leap up behind you. Burn the million in oil, and another ten million darken your skies.

Among the 1,500,000,000 stupid people an appalling number rise to bad eminence, especially in politics and small business. Indeed it is hardly too much to say that these two huge fields of endeavor always have been dominated by persons of conspicuous stupidity—and for biological as well as economic reasons, into which we shall

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soon be inquiring more closely. It has not been generally recognized, however, that the world of bankers is perhaps even more thickly populated with dullards; nor that these dullards make most small business men shine like little Leonardos by contrast. Thus our economic destinies are, if not dominated by inferior intelligences and emotional cripples, at least dangerously contaminated. And the more complex world affairs become, the graver this menace. A million pap-wits sitting in the chairs of directors, executive vice-presidents, department managers, credit men, and the like have, for many a sick year, been neutralizing the creative influences of superior thinkers—and never more flagrantly than during the past decade.

Few of these pap-wits are suspected. And so we arrive at our third point. It is a horrible by-product of man's amazing variability, this peculiarly elusive linkage of the finest traits with the worst. As we progress with the present survey, we shall find almost every splendid characteristic in individuals of the grossest stupidity. We shall look upon great artists like Beethoven and Whitman who turn out to be fatally dull toward many of the best things in life. We shall behold keen mathematicians, wide-visioned historians, and highminded statesmen hobbling through common affairs like cripples who use their wooden heads as crutches. We shall see nations flung into futile wars and ruined by the comprehensive blunders of leaders of indisputable ability. Everywhere the same monotonous spectacle! And, as each scene fades, the same monotonous thought arises: how marvelous that mankind has advanced as far as it has!

Fads, superstitions, cults, quackeries, swindles, and dull stupidities are holding their own, if not increasing, all over the Western world. They came to a fresh focus in the beginning of the World War and found fullest expression during the ensuing decade. If, later, they dropped out of public view more or less, that was no evidence that men had sloughed them. Opportunity was lacking for their mass demonstration. And not until the great financial collapse of October, 1929, did that vast galaxy of mortal frailties swing anew toward its zenith, there to blaze like a hundred suns. Again it exposed the incompetence of the most high. Again it laid bare the dull wit of many an august personage. Again it withered the reputations of thousands of financiers, economists, speculators, politicians, self-styled statesmen, and industrialists. Under its merciless rays, Big

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Business looked like small potatoes, while millions of dollars melted down to thirty cents.

When such a catastrophe occurs twice within twelve years, thoughtful men must study its roots and nourishment. A society which sinks to the depths thus often has something rotten in blood and brain. Unless it cures itself, it must die. And the first step in any cure is diagnosis. Hence this little booklet. It endeavors to analyze blunders, manias, and befuddlements, with neither praise nor blame. For isn't it stupid to hoot at people whose only fault is that their ancestors bequeathed them a shabby mesh of associative nerve fibres? And isn't it a dull pastime to ridicule the follies of other people who do what they do only as a result of miseducation, poverty, oppression and disease? As for praising or defending or apologizing for all such, that is still sillier: the way out of our present stupidity is the path of destruction. Somehow we must stamp out the inferior types. Somehow we must improve the neglected and mistreated. To this end we must, first of all, come to understand the infinite variety of stupidities.

As yet nobody has inquired into them. Men call deeds stupid which, on careful inquiry, turn out to be brilliant. Others extol deeds as heroic and brilliant which any critic may readily expose as moronic. To appreciate this confusion, look at a few events which occurred while this book was being written. Ask yourself at what point simple stupidity in each passes over into ignorance, or into malice, or into a blunder of reasoning, or into crass egotism, or something else.

While I ponder the stupidities of our best American stock, lol—the Daughters of the American Revolution pass resolutions opposing all reductions in armaments and calling upon Congress to strengthen both Army and Navy at once. The Congress passes a stiff high tariff which brings down the wrath and opposition of thousands of business organizations at home and abroad, and within a year ruins our foreign trade. Representative Hamilton Fish, Jr., gets money from Congress to investigate Communist activities.

As Chapter I was being blocked in, President Hoover assures the United States Chamber of Commerce that all economic troubles are over, "we have now passed the worst and with continued unity of effort shall rapidly recover"; and on the next day, up in New York, the worst financial collapse of this present generation occurred.

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In the midst of wrestling with the stupidity of clerics, we read in the papers about the good Bishop James Cannon being disclosed as a patron of a bucket shop firm. Then along came the Pope of Rome and thundered a pronunciamento against the skirts and underthings of modern woman. Meanwhile Wall Street stock gamblers went right on flocking to the astrologers for market tips. "Collier's Weekly" opens its columns to articles by Evangeline Adams, who later gets on the air in a big broadcasting station and says that J. Pierpont Morgan, the elder, used to come to her for advice.

Big Bill Thompson, mayor of Chicago, launches a campaign to stamp out the insidious influence of King George V in the Chicago public schools. European nations are spending about \$10,000,000 a day preparing for the next war.

The French Government is building two hundred forts along the German frontier. Our own Navy Department is sinking \$19,000,000 in another airplane carrier. And some fifty or sixty million Americans pay cash admission to see motion pictures about the Army and Navy which have been doped up by propaganda bureaus and handed out free. Rumania has just bought and paid for a railway tunnel supposed to have been dug by a firm of contractors but in reality made by Austrian soldiers during the World War.

Henry Ford says that in 1950 the American workingman will be drawing \$27 a day in wages. The Roman Catholic Diocese of New York forbids Abbé Dimnet to debate with Clarence Darrow on religion. The Secretary of Agriculture unearths a deep plot of the Russian Government to ruin American farmers by selling wheat short in the Chicago market.

The citizens of this country continue to spend every year for the schooling of their children barely as much as they spend on cigarettes. Some enthusiast paints the hammer-and-sickle sign of the Communist Party and the words, "Vote Communist!" on the walls of the Church of the Heavenly Rest, in Fifth Avenue, New York City. John W. Barton, a Minneapolis banker, tells the American Bankers' Association that the American standard of living is too high. The cosmetic manufacturers, being at cut-throat warfare among themselves, decide that they need a czar to rule the industry. A collector pays \$1,450 for a letter written by the mother of George Washington. Cardinal Hayes, Romanist prelate, recommends light

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wines and beer, as a means of cheering up idle, impoverished workmen through the present depression.

Rabbi Geller, of Brooklyn, declares in the public prints that the Hebrew philosopher, Maimonides, beat old Dr. Einstein by some eight hundred years with his theory of relativity. The British theatrical censor forbids the performance of "The Green Pastures" because it presents God on the stage.

The Duke and Duchess of York delay registering the birth of their baby, Princess Margaret, in order to avoid having her entered on the records as No. 13. The City of Chicago again runs out of cash and cannot pay its police and firemen. The French Government expels William Randolph Hearst because he published the Anglo-French naval treaty. Mrs. Adele O'Donnell, carrying her six-months-old child, walks for two days on the streets of New York without food, before going into a police station to ask for help in her penniless state.

While we were trying to decide whether to include the stupidity of financiers in this Prolegomenon, the U. S. Treasury Department announced that, to date of April 6, 1930, the World War and its immediate consequences had cost American taxpayers \$51,400,000,000. A few weeks later comes a dispatch from Pittsburgh reporting that John R. Gubo became enraged over the failure of his corn-cob pipe to draw properly, so he poured kerosene upon the tobacco and gave a long, strong suck at the stem; whereupon the barn in which he was working burned up, and Gubo died next day of his injuries. Meanwhile New York bankers went blithely on, lending money to towns, states, and companies down in Brazil, running up the total of American investments there to a neat round \$500,000,000—interest on which may some day have to be collected by marines with tear gas bombs, as Brazil stopped cash payment of her debts before we went to press.

Somewhere around Chapter XII, Mussolini announced, for the 183rd time, the re-establishment of the Roman Empire in Mediterranean lands. W. M. Stebbins, State Treasurer of Nebraska, admitted that he put up the cash for the campaign funds of the grocery clerk, George W. Norris, whom he wished to pit against the Senator of identical name in the hope of confusing voters.

Meanwhile schoolboards continued to compel high school students to learn—after a fashion—some foreign language, which they will

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never use, even if they truly learned it. Mussolini brings out a series of textbooks for all Italian schools, describing the Mediterranean as "Our Sea" and proclaiming that Italy "is great and strong and feared." Eighty-seven colleges go on employing athletic coaches for football and baseball at salaries higher than those of any professor.

At the same time, some clinics of our larger cities were filled with women suffering from sundry grave diseases all brought on by their efforts to reduce their weight so as to fit stylish gowns. Nearly a million farmers, having lost every dollar they invested in crops during the past year, are again planting wheat, corn, and cotton, firm in the conviction that the new tariff and the Republican Administration will enable them to make money next time.

Carol flies from his love nest in Paris to his hornet nest in Rumania, there to become King. Hitler begins drawing up the list of German patriots whose heads he will chop off as soon as he comes into power; Dr. Einstein's will be the first to roll into the basket. Raymond Duncan, in toga and sandals and with deep enthusiasm for Gandhi, trudges from New York's Central Public Library, at Fifth Avenue and Forty-second Street, to the Battery, pail in hand, to ladle up salt water (so he thought, but it was the thin soup of sewage) which he boiled until only the salt (and sewage) was left, all as a token of his esteem for the Hindu tax rebels. Several hundred American newspapers go right on publishing advertisements of palmists and clairvoyants and Swamis who guarantee to answer all questions about love, courtship, marriage and business.

As we progressed toward the stupidity of politicians, the Federal Farm Board suggested to Southern governors that, to bolster up cotton prices, one-third of the 15,000,000-bale crop be plowed under.

Now, faced by the worst winter yet of our stupid era, we come across Secretary Lamont's pronunciamento of many months ago—filed for future reference. The headlines announce: "Lamont Declares Decline Has Ceased." Here is his statement: "It is perfectly clear that business on the whole has ceased the marked decline which was characteristic of a number of earlier months, and there are some distinctly encouraging features." Meanwhile, as most of us Americans pull in our belts, wheat sells at the lowest price in three centuries; a friend of mine was offered a million acres of Arkansas land at fifteen cents an acre on easy terms; five banks in Toledo, Ohio,

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failed within a few weeks of one another, putting three hundred thousand citizens in tune with the infinite stupidities of our age.

Soon afterward, Henry Ford issued his ukase, "No garden, no job!"—thereby compelling his workers to fit into his almost perfect machine with almost machinelike dumbness. Many of them comply with the edict, however, for a hard winter is ahead for more than six million unemployed as it is. Which, of course, has little to do with the announcement of the Federal Reserve Board that at the close of business on September 2, 1931, the United States lacked but \$2,000,000 of having \$5,000,000,000 in gold, nearly half the world's supply. The President announces that bond defaults amount to something like \$1,500,000,000.

The gods are kind to poor authors. In the very week when we were rounding off the final pages of this epitome of morology, the English stopped using gold; news came that the Germans were far worse off financially than the sourest pessimist had previsioned; fresh rumors of secret war in Eastern Europe came trickling through our secret service; and in a few days the Japanese troops swung thousandwise into Manchuria, bent on conquest, while tens of millions of Chinese were dying of hunger and pestilence, in the wake of the most awful flood of modern times. During the same period employment agencies in our large cities announced that, for every white-collar job available, forty-five applicants showed up. Scores of towns in the Middle West and Southwest saw all their banks close their doors and money disappear from circulation entirely. In the midst of which comedy, Hal Huston, a citizen of Pennsylvania, shot himself to death, leaving behind a letter in which he stated: "Such a government is a disgrace to the world and must sink into oblivion. I am disgusted and ashamed to be any longer one of its loyal, patriotic subjects."

We disagree vigorously with Hal Huston. All he says about the stupidities of our countrymen and all other nationals is true. But his inferences are as feeble as his suicide. Being, as was said, incorrigibly optimistic, we admit without shame that the past decade has cheered us on our way more than any other equal span of human history. And why? Mainly because it has brought into dazzling daylight all the deeper weaknesses of human nature which have usually been hidden. Among these weaknesses, the most numerous and the most pestilential are the stupidities of men of action—the

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rulers, the executives, the administrators, the bureaucrats, and the salesmen. Running these a fairly close second are the stupidities of inaction in men of learning, in scientists, in engineers and in technicians, all of whom, knowing the better, have chosen the worse. For the past hundred years, the colossal expansion of material wealth and comforts has obscured the disabilities of those who have profited the most thereby. Few inventors and scientists whose ingenuity and intellect created that prosperity gained much: see the testimony of Thomas Edison here! The brains of the new era were neither rewarded nor given due public credit; the exploiters elbowed into the spotlight while they reaped 99% of the cash rewards. The ballyhoo of their own press agents soon persuaded them that they were great leaders, mighty thinkers, statesmen, philosophers—yes, even messiahs of the machine age. And the average man, reading only a few headlines of his newspaper, soon came to believe all this buncombe.

Today we behold the consequences of tens of thousands of stupid acts. Left with free hand to work their will, the men of action have proved what they can do. We see it. And we begin to think at last. Is this not a consummation well worth the price of the world's economic collapse? I for one believe it is. I go further. I look upon the years between 1914 and now as the first serious schooling of the average man. They compel everybody who is better than moron to consider the merits of his species. He begins to see that the most destructive force in the world is man himself. He begins to understand that all earlier cults, practices, attitudes and faiths, be they in business or in science or in art or in religion, probably are suspect; for they were evolved by people not a whit cleverer than these mighty captains of industry. And he craves a fresh self-analysis along with a psychograph of the great.

This, then, is the beginning of a new wisdom. Let us further it inchwise until it outspans the ell.

At this juncture you may protest.

"It's all very well," say you, "to parade these stupidities. But that

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proves nothing, of itself. For you might find as many instances of high intelligence in the very same current of events."

Well, I admit that an interesting volume might be compiled summing up the brilliant, the clever, the analytical and the inventive acts of people. It would be a Short Introduction to the History of Progress. Most of the material earmarked for its pages has already been assembled by anthropologists and historians. But would the highly intelligent acts outnumber the stupid?

Certainly not. For every enlightened act in human history, there have occurred fully a million deeds injurious to the race because of dull prejudice, a single-track mind, laziness, faulty reasoning, forgetfulness, pride, or malice. On what other assumption can we account for the heartbreaking sluggishness of human progress?

We know the enormous potency of intelligent acts. The most valuable, of course, lead to deliberately planned discoveries, such as Edison's long search for the filament of the incandescent bulb. Optimists may shout that achievements like this offset a million stupidities, but this pleasant belief will not survive scrutiny. We might show, in a manner acceptable to any public accountant, that, *for every dollar of benefit resulting from inventions and discoveries, there have been wasted, misused or even utterly destroyed, from two to ten dollars* Or put it in the deeper ratio of human satisfactions to human detriment: each good flowing from the intelligence of discoverers and inventors is offset by an evil flowing from some stupidity. Note well that I am not discussing the benefits resulting from accidental discoveries like those of Columbus, or the poor fool who first stumbled on gold in Sutter's Creek, California, or Edward Doheny, who, by sheer accident, was led to his colossal fortune by meeting a wagon with black stuff sticking all over its sides. It is fair to limit our comparisons here strictly to acts which flow from good thinking and from bad. Luck is out of the picture.

This simplifies my argument. For all of primitive man's discoveries and inventions were pure accidents, and not in the most trifling degree the outcome of foresight, planning, and clear headwork. Little as we know about the event, we can hardly doubt that nobody ever sat down and said to himself, "I shall try to discover the nature of fire and some method of producing the thing." Man hit upon fire by pure chance: a blazing tree, touched off by a stroke

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of lightning, perhaps, or a grass fire started by a spark flashed accidentally from flint striking flint, or a volcano, or some spontaneous combustion in a dried-out peat bog, on a hot day. The control of fire has been the greatest of all contributions to the welfare of our race, which, you must never forget, has dwelt under the chill shadow of polar ice, ever since our present civilizations arose.

Had we space here, we might show why luck must have led man to finding and using the wheel, to subjecting the cow, the horse, the pig and the dog to his will; and to many other basic triumphs over nature and the animal kingdom. We could still more confidently demonstrate the staggering accidentalism of most recent advances, particularly in the matter of the spread of the white race over the continents. How, for instance, was America discovered? The Scandinavians of the tenth century and later who reached Greenland and then the North Atlantic Coast were, by their own record, blown thither against their will by terrific gales. Columbus, the small-time adventurer, set out to find India and its gold. French fishermen set sail to catch codfish; following the immense schools, they came upon Newfoundland. The wild Drake went forth to capture Spanish galleons and their treasure; while hot on their trail, he chanced to circumnavigate the globe. Shall we credit these gentlemen with high intelligence? Shall we use them as evidence against our present thesis concerning stupidity? Not at all! Their achievements are all irrelevant here.

With all this in mind, let us return to the original criticism. Can we find as many intelligent acts as stupid ones in any given period or region? No. Are the consequences of the fewer supremely intelligent acts so broadly beneficial that they more than offset the evil effects of the many stupid acts? Again, no; or, at least, not proved! A full proof, of course, would fill more pages than are available in this brochure. So the best I can do is to cite a single line of evidence which may suggest the nature of the full demonstration.

It is physically impossible for anybody to act intelligently even one-tenth as often as to act stupidly. For intelligent behavior requires much time for the observing, analyzing, and final organizing of details. It is chained to facts and timed to the slow rhythms of logic. But the stupid act is free from all such cramping; it can leap onward like the hartebeest, touching nothing betwixt the point where it leaves the ground and the point where it returns. Unlike the harte-

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best, it comes down with a dull thud—but never mind that just now, please! There are few right ways of doing anything (some say there is only one, but that is not true); and there are a million easy ways of doing each thing wrongly. The intelligent man seeks the right way, which is hard to find. The stupid man lunges onward without pausing to study and search; so of course he finishes his task more quickly. Put the same fact in another light: the essence of intelligence is its careful considering of everything relevant to its problem, but the soul of stupidity is its leaving much out of its reckonings. So, even if the intelligent man worked somewhat faster than the dullard, he still could not complete so many acts

Add to all this the next statistical fact: even among superior intelligences, acts leading to significant discoveries, inventions or useful reforms are few and far between. Rare the man who contributes more than four or five distinct improvements to the funded skill and knowledge of the race in the course of his life. The U. S. Patent Office records indicate that not more than one invention in a hundred or so amounts to much; and, among the few which do, scarcely more than one in a hundred comes to full fruition. Over against this set the hundreds of millions of people who never do a bright deed in all their lives but consummate many a one which harms themselves or their neighbors, at least a little. Finally we look to the billion whose dulness is a blight upon the race; the swarms of India, China and Central Africa steeped in rum, opium, cocaine; listless and witless because underfed or misfed; and crushed with humid heat—a burden to themselves and a menace to civilization.

Sum up! Some two billion people now fill the earth. Among them fully a billion are drunk or insane or feebleminded or malarial or stricken with hookworm or tuberculosis or leprosy or venereal disease or tropical neurasthenia or malnutrition, hence stuporous or vicious (or both). Among the other billion not more than five or six million think and act with progressive intelligence, thereby adding something to the world's permanent well-being. The remainder of humanity is either too young or too old or too badly educated to avoid serious stupidities from time to time. Thus one high-grade person has the task of offsetting the brutish and the silly acts of three or four hundred low-grades.

Should we not wonder at the progress we have made?

Yet not even this tells more than half the story about the intelligent

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and the stupid. As I said, we all know the power of supremely intelligent acts. But does not all human experience also disclose the colossal destructivity of a single blunder in an otherwise well ordered life? One hole is enough to sink a boat. One little slip can bring on disaster. One brief oversight can lead to stupidities which slay. Here is life's deepest, most inclusive tragedy; here too our mightiest argument in favor of a worldwide crusade against stupidity.

A man may be blessed with all the splendid, admirable, useful traits and, for all that, come to grief through overeating at one dinner, drinking one cocktail too many in the company of the wrong lady, forgetting a single engagement, being late at a critical conference, introducing the wrong Mrs. Jones to the wrong Mr. Hicks. If living were a matter of averages, how little we should have to worry over stupidities! If a man's success, his character, and his influence were shaped, not from instant to instant for life or for death, but through some summation of qualities and merits, after the manner of a cosmic accountant, then nobody would ever go bankrupt as a result of one stupid investment; nobody would ever break his heart over the loss of a friend; nobody would ever be ostracized simply because he was once found drunk up an alley; and nobody would ever die as a result of just one little sip of wood alcohol under the name of gin.

Hide the fact as we may, truth is that each and every least episode in a man's career is a matter of life or death; and averaging things out is impossible. So a mere chemical trace of stupidity is enough to undo great deeds and end great empires in the long run. One misstep suffices to pitch the shrewdest and the strongest into the abyss. Twenty years of military genius could not save Napoleon after he left Smolensk for Moscow, as winter was coming on. Forty years of sincere hard work and clear ambition could not save Curzon after he went to India and made the blunder of flouting the Nationalist spirit there. Half a lifetime of study and striving was wiped out in a twinkling when Woodrow Wilson decided, in a moment of infinite stupidity, to attend the *Versailles Peace Conference*. The trap springs, the axe falls, the bullet speeds . . . and the end. Ends are always much briefer than the thing which ends.

So, say we, the warfare against stupidity is the battle for life. Sooner or later, perhaps, we all touch the wrong button, edge over an inch too far, tread upon darkness and find it empty space. But why not defer the moment of fatal insensitivity? Why not study all

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the causes and earmarks of the blunder, with the same cold objectivity shown in studying cholera and insanity? Why not admit, as we start the study, that we are dealing with one of the deadliest poisons?

More than half of the human race perishes in infancy and childhood. Among these are found the stupidest, more often than not. Thus we miss a fair chance to appraise the human race. In checking over my notes about youths and maids I knew in my own boyhood, I observed an unusual number of deaths induced by dulness. One of the most promising young pianists of my high school days lost out in his 'teens simply because he lacked the common sense to obey his father's warning not to drink water out of an abandoned well near the stables on his farm. The well had been boarded up for several years, and a sign had been nailed on the lid declaring the water unfit to drink; but our smart musician, one hot day, pulled off a board, lowered a tin bucket, quaffed therefrom, and the funeral was one of the floweriest in our end of the town. Two other youths, both well informed and seemingly brilliant artists in embryo, consorted with mulatto street walkers and died of syphilis in short order. Millie, the hired girl across the street from our college rooming house, sought to speed up dinner by pouring a cup of gasoline on the wood fire in her kitchen stove. Four collegians managed to swathe her in rugs as she writhed on the front lawn, a living torch; and, in a minute, she too had gone to join that great caravan of the simple. And so on and on: within a narrow circle of contacts during my early years, I find dozens like these. They force upon me the conclusion that, if the eugenists are thwarted in their noble campaign to exterminate the stupidest, Nature herself will come to our rescue with all her bludgeons.

Take a progressive point of view, and you will argue that two mortals out of every three who survive childhood lead stupid lives. Soar to the perfectionist's high perch, and you insist that 99% of the race is a compound of dulness, malice, and sensuality. But, no matter how you look at the facts, they always lead to a startling revision of history. And that is our present concern.

The inferior personality has always been a major force in shaping societies and culture. He has also been a positive influence, not a mere negation; for, while he lacks high abilities, he is by no means an assemblage of minus signs, but rather a bundle of energies which

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blow off and do all sorts of things. To class him with the idiot, helpless in his filthy huddle, is a profound error. He passed the hemlock to Socrates and nailed Jesus to the cross.

Consider him in only three of his many rôles: as a worker, then as a voter, and lastly as a worshipper. In the ages before man conquered natural power, the muscle of the stupid and the clumsy and the lazy did the work of the world. They did it unwillingly, slowly, and badly, even as today. Thus they set the snail's pace for the herd as a whole; for, like a subway crowd in rush hour, or like a public school, the backward retard the bright and ambitious; never do the bright and ambitious speed up the sluggards. In so far as prosperity derives from work, then, the race lingered in poverty for thousands of years longer than it would have, if scoured clean of its inferiors. Finally, the whole system of rewards and punishments for labor must have been determined largely by the able man's exasperation toward the incompetent—and, of course, conversely, by the incompetent's need of powerful stimulation in the shape of extra pay or a swift kick.

As a voter, the stupid man has scrawled his autobiography large across the tablets of history. Here his incapacity exceeds that of the worker; for in passing on the affairs of state he is confronted with problems far more intricate than those of the carpenter's bench. The larger the state, the more flagrant and disastrous his incompetence. Hence, the Roman Empire crashes, but the African grass-hut village continues unshaken by far disasters. Hence the British Empire passes ingloriously from the scene, but England carries on serenely, still the high hope of humanity. Until the advent of radio and long-distance telephones and airplanes, it has been the stupid citizen who has set the bounds of government and the areas of his nation. And in many other ways, some of which will later be sketched, he has made Athens what it was no less than Pericles; he has defeated the high aspirations of America's founders; and he will give a twist to the coming Russia that will startle both Stalin and the D. A. R.

As for the inferior worshipper, the whole account of early magic and religion must be revised to allow for the positive forces of stupidity as these have given shape to superstitions, bred fears out of ignorance, and raised silly hopes in the animal ego. The efforts of anthropologists to present religions as the first stirring of the

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scientific and moral spirit have overshot the mark. But of this we can say little here; for it is a long story, and dull.

Our presuppositions boil down to this: in every age and clime, stupid people have constituted one of the largest groups of inferior humanity, have been engaged in all lines of work, art, civics, and worship; have often dominated affairs under the lead of clever self-seekers; have been catered to by the latter and thus have indirectly written themselves into laws, codes, ethics, standards of taste, production techniques, and administration. Inertia, laziness, reluctance, fear, clumsiness, and sheer blundering have botched virtually all large, noble movements; and the historian cannot draw a truthful panorama of man's million years unless he exhibits that darker side.

It has been the fashion, of late, to tickle the reader with pleasant books reciting the wonders of man's progress. These make man out to be a little lower than the angels—just as the old theology would maintain. They are in harmony with the period of boom, hurrah, supersalesmen, and instalment buying. They have been bought in large numbers by cloak and suit salesmen—and carefully studied as far as page 6. But their vogue has passed. The world is back to hard pan. Since 1929 even some cloak and suit salesmen have learned that stupid folk still rule the world. Stupid presidents write messages to stupid parliaments. Stupid bankers lend millions to stupid investors. Stupid newspaper editors hide painful facts. Stupid taxpayers shell out billions of dollars for battleships, fortresses, shells, and stupid second lieutenants. Stupid manufacturers build factories three times too big. Stupid retailers sell third-rate goods at first-rate prices. Stupid New Yorkers vote for Tammany's criminal candidates. Stupid Russians let themselves be kicked around by doctrinaires and stuffed with black bread in the name of progress. All of which gives rise to the suspicion that, if our alleged civilization creaks and groans and cracks at the top under the strain of stupid leaders, presumably all earlier civilizations have suffered likewise. If so, then our own age must find a fresh view of them all, if only by way of consoling itself.

But a richer profit may be reaped from a survey of human dullness. There is only one way of rising above our stupidities, and that is, first, to analyze them down to the smallest atom and then to find methods of control through education, police, or chemicals.

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To do this we must call a spade a spade, a fool a fool. If we do not, we shall be in danger of hell fire.

LABYRINTH

Ought not the many brilliant studies of intelligence to be rounded off by a thorough inquiry into the varieties of unintelligence? In the immense literature of recent years, you find excellent researches in superior mental traits, and in inferior abnormalities such as idiocy, feeble-mindedness and the moron personality. But there appear to be no analyses of the Average Man and his Average Mind.

This seems strange. For is not the Average Man mankind's own largest problem? Are not his vagaries, his weaknesses, and his good traits the stuff out of which society as a whole must be fashioned? When he falls from grace, does not the world slump a little? And when he rises to new heights, doesn't the world lift a little? Why then ought not the psychologist come to the aid of statesman, economist, and business man, all of whose affairs turn on the pivot of mass normality? Why not scrutinize all kinds of wobbling pivots? Why not analyze each and every defection from sound sense, keen perception, and good judgment?

Led by such interests, I approached the unsurveyed territory of the stupid. It seemed the best port of entry for the explorer, inasmuch as stupidity appears almost universal. Geniuses display it. Superior men and women flaunt it. The Average Man is never without it. Yes, the trail promised much.

Hardly a day's journey along it, though, before it became a labyrinth. In talking over with friends supposed instances of stupidity, the oddest disagreements cropped up. Acts which had impressed me, at first glance, as thoroughly stupid were deemed intelligent by some people, while others were explained away as mere ignorance. That made me wary. I drew up a dozen or more significant records, some of which are printed in the following pages, and gave them to people whose judgment seemed to me acute. Still the same clash of judgment! I could not avoid the conclusion that there is no agreement as to what stupidity is. We all recite glibly enough the dictionary definition. But as soon as we face the conduct of real people, we interpret variously.

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I then reversed procedure. I invited some of these same people to narrate the clearest instances of stupidity which they had observed. And now it was I who deviated, all too often, from their appraisals. Yes, we are all bedevilled! Are we perhaps so stupid that we cannot recognize stupidity when it thrusts its dull face against ours? Have we acquired a blindness toward our own blindness?

This possibility lent zest to the research. But it was only a weak flavor compared to what ensued. For, as I drew closer to cases, the acts of the stupid assumed an entirely new contour and hue. And under my eyes their very nature changed subtly. Now, at the close of the most entertaining study I have ever pursued, I write "Finis" to all my previous notions about stupidity. And, let it be hoped, that same word serves to indicate the prelude of a new interpretation of the human mind. I am not yet out of the labyrinth, but at least I can read a few sign posts in its dusky maze.

TABU

Amazing the lore about the stupid! Amazing in its scarcity, in its meagreness, in its casual superficiality. Search all the poets, minstrels, prophets, soothsayers, and chroniclers, and you will find hardly more than a light line or two. It almost seems as though mankind had turned its back on this, its most terrible scourge, perhaps because even the dull wits of the stupid had ever sensed that the thing was a Gorgon's head, one fair sight of which would turn the beholder to stone.

In this, alas, the dull have proved right. For the dreadfulest chapter of human history remains unwritten as long as the learned refrain from investigating stupidities past and present. Even the pitifully brief Short Introduction which ensues here gives only a twinkling glimpse, only a monosyllabic cry. In the presence of such flashes the heart sickens, the intellect grows numb. The hideous discovery of St. Paul that "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise" halts with that observation. Only one great man, so far as we can discern in interminable annals, has ever pushed on ruthlessly and come to contemplate the scourge at close range. He was Gautama Buddha. He too, alone among the world's ranking thinkers, has properly appraised it. He finds only three

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cardinal sins: *raga*, or sensuality; *dosa*, or ill-will; and *moha*, or stupidity. Of these he regards stupidity as by far the worst in every respect. His entire technique of attaining Arahatship (Nirvana) was based upon the progressive extermination of the trio of "limitations." Contrary to the all too prevalent notion among Americans, Nirvana was not thought of as a state in which all desires and feelings were crushed; rather was it a positive state of blessedness attainable in this life.

The thinkers on record in the Old Testament lacked Buddha's deep insight, but they did realize the menace of the stupid.

For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by multitude of words Ec. V:3.

It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools. Ec. VII:5.

The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools. Ec IX:17.

The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself. Ec. X:12 and 13.

A foolish woman is clamorous; she is simple, and knoweth nothing. Proverbs IX:13.

Etc., etc., for some twenty or so proverbs.

True, all true, you say. Yet they barely graze the subject. It is touch and go, always. Thus ever down the ages. Can you find a learned man who has devoted years to the study of stupid folk? I have been able to locate only two, Dr. Max Kemmerich's "*Aus der Geschichte der menschlichen Dummheit*" and Löwenfeld's "*Über die Dummheit: eine Umschau im Gebiete menschlicher Unzulänglichkeit.*" Yet men have spent decades watching cockroaches, counting flies' eggs, diagramming the patterns on butterflies' wings, taking a census of bees, and putting mice through the Third Degree. How odd that all have evaded what Buddha, some twenty-five centuries ago, found to be one of the most important things in man's world? Is there not something of a mystery in the fact that our own little band of investigators toiled for weeks in the immense Central Library of New York City in search of whatever might bear upon human stupidity and found only a few short essays, skits, verses, and rather feeble jokes? Is it not of more than passing interest that, among scores of widely

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read, well informed friends and acquaintances to whom I turned for suggestions and leads, not a single one had ever collected information about stupid people nor had any literary references over and above the same half dozen which kept cropping up repetitiously? (This was not true, to be sure, of the cases they reported.)

Does it not strike you as significant that in the entire *Encyclopaedia Britannica* neither mention nor discussion of stupidity occurs? Is it not something more than chance that in all of Bartlett's "Familiar Quotations" we can find only a thin sprinkling of brief lines on the subject? May it not indicate that men shun what they know they cannot master? May they not have some curious animal instinct of leaving the stupid in peace, inasmuch as "*gegen Dummheit kämpfen selbst Gotter vergebens.*"—?

Not until all the material for this Short Introduction had been gathered and studied did light begin to break. And it was brought to me by the devastating words of Jesus, in his Sermon on the Mount:

"But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca (vain fellow), shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."

Then and there Jesus fixed the policy of Christendom for all time. Appealing to the meek and the lowly, he understood perfectly the fatal folly of telling them the truth about themselves. Doubtless too he had some insight into their extreme simplicity—for were they not all peasants and fishermen and peddlers and beggars and outcasts? Then too, he sincerely believed in the goodness and the power and the glory of the common folk. "Ye are the light of the world." "Ye are the salt of the earth." Out of them he was weaving a world movement. So with full awareness of the consequence of his words, he made tabu the very accusation of stupidity. And all who took the Sermon on the Mount to heart, then and since, have, in the larger sense, respected the tabu.

So, you see, we have to do with perhaps the deepest difference between the culture of the East and the culture of the West. We twang no minor chord on the harp of history. Rather do we force upon a reluctant and dying civilization the spectacle of its own most colossal stupidity—to wit, its unwillingness, during two thousand

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years, to admit, discuss and strive to conquer its own stupidity. Buddha saw stupidity as mankind's blackest plague, its interminable pandemic; and, seeing it, he set himself to study man's best methods of overcoming it. Jesus never understood its significance; on the contrary, while observing the main fact at least in part, he set high value upon the meek and the lowly (most of whom are dreadfully stupid) and discouraged their criticizing of human folly. So the Christian attitude tends to be one of glossing over dulness, sluggish thinking, blundering, and every other form of stupid behavior. The Christian regards the truth about a fool as a sort of indecent exposure and the truth-teller himself as obscene. Hence the empty shelves in the libraries where whole volumes dealing with inferior minds ought to be available. Hence too the rage of the stupid against even the simplest, honestest investigation of human intelligence: observe, if you will, the furious attacks upon psychological tests by the conventional moralists and religionists, especially during and after the World War. Hence, the swift decay of the cult of the stupid during the past half-century. The younger leaders of the Western world have disembarrassed themselves of such evil attitudes as that expressed by Paul in his words: "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. . . . The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain." We are ready to go back to the point at which Buddha dropped the problem of human stupidity and make a fresh start. We are prepared, with spiritual fortitude no less than with scientific curiosity, to cast off the shackles of Christian stupidity and to observe, record, analyze, and appraise the fool in his folly; that we may, by knowing it and him better, deliver ourselves from savagery and superstition.

The Tabu is hereby annulled.

Annul it though we may, men will persist in shunning morology. Other trends of the psyche sweep attention. For example, most instances of stupidity are dull; and intelligent people cannot endure long pondering over dull things. There is little novelty and excitement in watching thickheads as they rove from befuddlement to befuddlement. Nor is there any cash profit in it, nor any fame. Thus

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the ego is hedged about with many defenses against exposure other than the tabu set up by stupid egocentrics.

So, kind reader, scan these pages well! They may be the only treatise on this subject for another thousand years.

WORDS

The cleverest people would inevitably distinguish all varieties of stupidity most precisely. Stupid folk, on the other hand, would fail to see themselves as others see them and would blur all niceties here. So I elect to report the words and phrases used to describe modes of stupidity by the cleverest of ancients and the cleverest of moderns. First, the old Greeks; then the Japanese, who resemble the Greeks much more than most Westerners realize.

In matters of stupidity, the Greeks certainly had a word for it, no matter how subtle the shade of inframentality. But, if my informants can be relied on, the Japanese are quite as deft. To list the mere words here would, so it seems, serve no useful purpose. I prefer to discover in them the more striking tendencies of significance; for these alone may throw light on the problem of varieties.

Like other languages, both Greek and Japanese sharply distinguish four aspects of stupidity: first, *the lack of sensitivity* which resembles death, sleep, blindness, deafness, and torpor; secondly, *a state of confusion* in the presence of any affair requiring observation and decision; thirdly, *low velocity*, be it in the first sensory response or in some later phase of behavior; and, lastly, *an inability to cut through to the heart of a situation or problem*, which inability is, in all the keener languages, identified with bluntness or lack of a cutting edge, as on a knife or sword.

At different periods in the growth of wisdom, people distinguished these four aspects of stupidity variously. In the earliest times, of course, they were not held apart. Homer, for instance, tells us about the *καρόν βέλος*, the dull shaft that sorely needs sharpening to serve the warrior in battle before the walls of Troy. But when Herodotus wrote his strange history, men were using the word *καφός* to mean deaf or deaf and dumb. In the glory of Athens' prime, Sophocles applied the same word to the mind and then it meant stupid. Here,

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then, appear three of our four phase meanings in one and the same word, but at various eras.

It was also Herodotus who passed from the word *νοθής* in its primitive meaning of sluggish, slow, torpid, to its intellectual phase; he used the term in the sense of stupid. Shading away from this meaning, yet palpably related to it is that crisp word *βλάβη* whose early use referred to a slackness of body, such as in effeminate people or physical weaklings. Plato and Xenophon applied it to the mind, hence it became a regular term for stupidity. I suspect that there was often implied the lack of driving force which penetrates to the core of affairs. The regular word for slow is *βραδύς*; Plato and others often use it in metaphor to describe a dullard.

Our now popular word, *moron*, is pure Greek. It seems to be the most precise way of describing the inferior mind. Often it means a simpleton but again a merely stupid man who need not be a downright fool. Euripides casts it into the neuter to express folly. This is the regular meaning of the cognate noun *μωρία*, which also expresses silliness. Our own technical definition of a moron was, of course, never conceived by the ancients.

We cannot go into the many subtler nuances of Greek without annoying most readers. Plato alone uses terms to fit particular forms of stupidity more numerous than many another language in its entirety can boast. The stupidity that results from mere slowness in recognizing and learning has its apt name in the immortal dialogues, *δυσμαθία*; so has the variety that results from total failure to learn, *ἀμαθής*. The historians and the dramatists further distinguish many elusive modes in which we see, but not clearly, the various basic meanings variously compounded. Euripides and Thucydides speak of *ἀνοησία* as an all-around lack of grasp, while Aeschylus uses *ἄγνοια* as the sort of stupidity rooted in lack of perception or defective observation. To this brief catalogue any Greek scholar can add another quite as long.

The Japanese draw all these distinctions and many others to boot. "Don" means blunt, without edge. "Don-to" is a dull knife. And so "don-na hito" is a stupid person. Thus also with the synonym, "nibu"; it describes lack of cutting edge on a knife or sword, and the lack of mental keenness too. Oddly enough, the same word also covers all four of the phases of stupidity; sometimes it means lacking in sensitivity, again slowness of mind, again bungling, and again

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lack of penetrating powers. The Japanese have also an excellent term which stresses one aspect of stupidity that is not well differentiated in English; it is "manuke," or blundering, but in the special sense of missing the time and occasion. This, you see, resembles the French, "malapropos," but goes beyond the latter in emphasizing the stupidity that underlies such behavior.

It is significant that a race so alert and nimble as the Japanese should use many words to describe varieties of speed and sluggishness in mental as well as in physical behavior. But it is even more striking that they use "gu"—meaning foolish or stupid—as a humble word to describe oneself in polite conversation. Thus: "In the opinion of stupid me . . ." Then too, they regard it as clever in business dealings to affect stupidity, on the ground that stupid people prevail in the world and can be dealt with most easily by persons who seem to be like themselves. So deeply does this belief strike down into Japanese thinking that they use "shiremono"—a fool or dunce—to refer to a cunning fellow! Elsewhere we shall discuss this significant psychology. Let us leave Japan with the remark that there are eighteen or nineteen fairly common terms describing forms of stupidity in the language. Surely only a clever race could be so analytical.

The Romans were manifestly less clever than Greek or modern Japanese. Their speech doth betray them.

Our word "fool" comes from "bellows" by way of Rome. It means, then, a "windbag"; so it is by no empty metaphor that we speak of fools as windbags. The Italians said "folle," taking it direct from the Latin "follis," which is a bellows. So far as our subject is concerned, then, "fool" is a crudely drawn, colorful, but blundering characterization. A windbag is an empty head; but what causes the emptiness, and of what sort is the psychic vacuity?

From the Romans also we take over "stupidity" and merge in it the meanings of dulness, slowness, indifference, anesthesia, and inability to use what one knows. In this last sense we come upon a fresh contribution. From whom else could it have come but the English? It is a strictly pragmatic twist, yet profound. It has been most neatly phrased by the philosopher, John Locke, who in his *Essay on Human Understanding*, written in 1690, wrote thus of the mind: "It moves slowly and retrieves not the ideas that it has, and

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are laid up in store, quick enough to serve the mind upon occasions. This, if it be to a great degree, is Stupidity."

Now here is a feature which neither Greek nor Japanese observed. It is not insensitivity nor feeble perception nor mental confusion but rather slowness in turning to account what one already possesses intellectually. Later we shall discover that this is a form of stupidity in which the English excel. Moreover it grows in importance as our world becomes more and more complex. Slowness in sensing and perceiving is one thing; slowness in use is quite another.

People who have not yet discovered the human mind and its ways are always merging in their own thoughts ignorance and stupidity. Few races have as little insight as the Arabs into affairs psychic; and their language reveals this dulness. They use "jāhil" to mean ignorant and stupid; apparently the original sense was wild or barbarous, for the modern Moslems apply the term to the pagan Arabs before Mohammed. Another Arabic word which stresses a little the lack of sensitivity is "aḥmaq" The root meaning is uncertain, and the meaning may be fairly recent, for aught I know.

All over the world we find stupidity described as an animal characteristic. Yet it seems that the duller races do this most. I have not found any Greek nor Japanese nor English tendency toward this interpretation; if such exists, it is not common nor important. But the old Arabs, who themselves were not far removed from cattle, and the modern Germans, who are—to put it most charitably—heavy-witted, exhibit the slant clearly. An Arab who is vague, befuddled, and perplexed is "bahīm." The root here means "cattle" in both Arabic and Hebrew. The Germans are fond of saying: "dumm wie das liebe Vieh," "saudumm" or "viehdumm" This is not far removed from the French shading in "une bêtise," nor from that old English phrase, "as wise as Waltham's calf."

To the world's understanding of stupidity the Romans contributed nothing. In fact, they seem not even to have borrowed all the niceties of Greek, in spite of the fact that all they ever learned of culture came from Hellenic teachers. All four of the chief significances we have already found in Greek and Japanese appear, of course, in Latin. *Stolidus* describes a person who, in our old Yankee phrase, "is sot in his ways." It apparently goes back to a root, *sto*, that is common to the Latin and early Germanic tongues and means to put in place. The implication is that the *stolidus* is settled down

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in one position, like a great stone imbedded in ancient sod, and thus cannot be moved by ordinary forces. *Stupidus* seldom means stupid, in the English sense. It normally means benumbed, or deprived of sensitivity; thus it is used to depict one who is thunderstruck or confounded. But the cognate noun, *stupor*, is more often applied to insensibility that is native as well as occasional. *Obtusus* applies to a person who has been made blunt or dull; here is the earlier meaning again, you see, of a tool that lacks edge and cutting power, or penetration. There is another meaning, closely related, which reveals the *obtusus* as one who has been pounded to the point of enfeeblement; but this is a derivative interpretation. *Hebes*, a close synonym, shows the same two meanings.

These terms are all relatively weak, as well as fairly general in their application. That is, they describe mere dulness, without specifying the form in which it works out. Some other words, however, imply or at least suggest end results as well. Thus, the verb *desipio* describes a type of foolish behavior that is not based upon lack of primary sensitivity at all but rather on a breakdown of the intellectual functions. It usually means "to act without understanding" and is often used to depict a sick man in delirium. Later we shall find that many cases deemed stupid turn out to be the results of high sensitivity which have become jumbled or "senseless." This gives rise to an unfortunate confusion in interpretations. Another word, *socors*, applies to that sort of stupidity which terminates in mere negligence, sloppiness, and the like; another direction of effect is sloth. Then we come upon *stultus*, a general term for foolishness; and, strongest of all, *fatuus*, which comes close to our word, feeble-minded.

Finally, the Latins recognized that species of stupidity which arises from a defect in space-time perceptions. But they seem less clear about it than the Japanese, a more alert folk. An *ineptus* is a person whose thoughts and acts are misfits. He does either the right thing at the wrong place or time, or else the wrong thing at the right place and time. Hence he is tactless. I think it worth reporting that the Romans described a pedant as *ineptus*.

Both Greeks and Romans appear to have noticed one aspect of the sensitivities which we moderns overlook. They felt the deep analogy between the flavor of salt and the impression which a clever, witty, facetious personality makes upon us. This lay back of Jesus' remark to the multitudes: "Ye are the salt of the earth." It runs

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straight through Greek and Latin even into modern Romance languages. Even the Portuguese of today calls a person "*insooso*" when he deems the fellow dull or silly. This word, "*insooso*" is from the Latin, "*insulsus*," which is the negative of "*sulsus*." "*Sulsus*" means salted or salty, hence acute, witty, facetious, nimble-witted; so, you see, "*insulsus*" describes the dull, the witless and the slow of mind. The Greeks also felt the resemblance between sharp flavor in food and in personalities. Insipid things were, to them, strangely like stupid people. A flat mind surely gives off neither odor nor flavor. It cannot arouse positive responses in other people.

The idea of insensitivity is deeply imbedded in the North European languages. Our word "clumsy" is borrowed straightforwardly from the Scandinavian, "klumsa," which means "numb." Our word "blunder" appears in old Iceland as "blunda," meaning there to doze, to be drowsy. The suffix, "ren," is a frequentative; so, when added to the root, the word "blunderen" comes to signify to keep on dozing, to go on being drowsy; and the implied habit indicates a mental condition. The same word bobs up in Swedish and Danish.

This notion of insensitivity merges with that of lack of penetrative power in our word "blunt." This seems to come from the same primordial root as "blunder"; yet very early it developed the meaning of dull, in the sense used by Chaucer, "lacking a sharp point," hence not penetrating. Likewise with "dull"; we still preserve both senses in it. We say: "John is a dull fellow"—and "This axe is dull."

So, you see, while men have never been keenly sensitive to the structure of stupidity, nevertheless they have groped and fingered in a few directions, always toward some one phase of Cyclops which has proved significant. To complete the literary scene, we must invent a new language of Morology. The words of stupid men cannot encompass their stupidity.

BOUNDARY

Stupidity remains largely an undiscovered country whose boundries no surveyor has ever checked with tape and transit. While it is still much too early to read off its frontiers to an inch and compass point, we must and can give a broad account of the lay of its territories.

First of all, we must show how it lies with respect to its sister

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kingdoms, Ignorance, Superstition, Inertia, and Unintelligence. Into what alliances has it entered with these concerning intercourse and trade? What embargoes are in force? What manner of foreign exchange and tariffs prevail? Here are topographical and diplomatic questions which tax the lore and cunning of us all.

Consider the relation to ignorance, first of all. This seemed, at first approach, quite easy. But what a delusion! It is a thicket of problems. Penetrate these, and you come out on a bleak plateau swarming with ferocious enigmas. I thought I knew just what ignorance was, until I drew near to its big game fields. Do we not usually look upon it as mere lack of knowledge? I did. And the build of the word supports that notion. But the matter does not clear so readily.

Ignorance is a negative term. It means mere lack of knowledge. The lack, of course, may be variously caused. Failure to analyze it leads to serious misunderstandings. Let me list five common causes of ignorance:

1. I may never have had a chance to learn the subject of which I am ignorant;
2. I may once have learned it but soon dismissed it from mind because it did not command my interest;
3. I may have been misinformed about it;
4. I may have a resistant attitude toward it which has hindered me in learning; or
5. I may be constitutionally stupid and thoroughly incapable of grasping the subject.

Broadly described, these are given here in the order of their gravity. If I am unaware of facts only because I never happened to encounter them, I have an excellent chance of picking them up when I need them. But if I cannot assimilate them at all, I am permanently handicapped.

Now, much stupidity may be hidden under the second, third and fourth varieties of ignorance. For instance, I may have allowed something valuable to fade from memory because I was insensitive toward vital facts which, if sensed and appraised, would have interested me deeply. In short, lack of interest can be, in some cases, another name for stupidity. Again, I may resist learning something, primarily because of an attitude and its linked emotions, but, in deeper analysis, because of dulness toward the import of the matter.

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I resemble now the child who hates the multiplication table partly because mastery of it is hard work, but mainly because he is too young (or too badly taught sometimes) to perceive the enormous usefulness of it. Stupid toward its value, he resents it and so fails to conquer it. Even misinformation may turn out to be founded more or less upon dulness, though this is by no means common. It may be careless listening or reading or observing, the carelessness itself having dulness as one ingredient. To add to our troubles, any and all of these indirect stupidities may combine. Do you wonder, then, at our woes? If you do, scan a few cases like the following. Try to decide the formula of each.

The hazy borderline between simple ignorance and stupidity is traversed by a New York State farmer whose medical record was reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association by Dr. Henry S. Martin, of Warsaw, N. Y.* At the age of twenty the man was first afflicted with a growth between the shoulder blades. It was then about as large as a walnut and entirely painless; so he did nothing about it. For ten years it grew imperceptibly until it attained the size of a very large grapefruit.

Naturally, it then interfered a little with the heavy manual labor which a farmer must carry on. And it must have also been a nuisance in connection with his clothes and the daily dressing and undressing. Try pinning a large grapefruit under your shirt just between your shoulder blades; then you can form a clear idea of the tumor.

Physicians advised him strongly to have it removed. But the man listened to some of his farmer friends who assured him that he would die instantly, were the tumor cut off. Not once but many times during the ensuing years, medical scientists who heard of his case urged him to have an operation; but always in vain.

Thus passed forty years, during which the tumor grew very slowly at first, but later more rapidly, until it weighed 59.3 pounds and hung down his back like a sack of flour. It was twenty-one inches long and fifty inches in circumference. In order to walk, the man had to lean forward, for the sack of poison touched his hips. After he passed seventy, the thing began to spoil; ulcers appeared at the base, the growth increased fast, and his health was undermined. Finally when seventy-eight, he resigned himself to death; too weak to work, too

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burdened to move about, and too old to care much whether he lived on or not, he consented to go to a hospital and have the burden removed. This after fifty years!

He went into the ward at the Wyoming County Community Hospital on October 26, 1927, and came out entirely well on November 18. He had endured half a century of needless misery, all because he believed his neighbors rather than the physicians.

Unfortunately we have no psychological records of the man—which is a great pity. Were he a low-grade moron, we should judge him one way; were he of only slightly sub-average intelligence, the verdict would run otherwise. But, in any event, is it not plain that, linked with utter ignorance, an invincible stupidity ruled this simple personality? Yet where did ignorance leave off, and stupidity begin? Had he perhaps suffered at the hands of some quack, early in life and developed a fear of doctors? Had he seen a friend die under the knife, in an operation which everybody had declared easy and harmless? To diagnose his mentality, we should have to know his entire background of experiences with ailments and cures.

A city man reads in his newspaper that Missouri farmers intend to go on planting wheat, in spite of the collapse in world prices. He has learned that it costs these men nearly a dollar a bushel to raise wheat. But they must sell it nowadays for less than fifty cents.

"The poor fools!" says he. "No wonder farmers go broke!"

But, alas! The case is not nearly so simple. The Missouri farmer may turn about and call his critic stupid, with as brave a show of reason. For the problem of wheat extends far beyond selling prices. Thus, in Missouri, thousands of acres have been exhausted as a result of prolonged growing of corn. The soil must be built up, or else abandoned. Men cannot afford to forsake it, hence they must restore its fertility. But how? The cheapest, fastest and surest way is to plant clover, using wheat as the "nurse crop" for it; that is, the wheat is used to protect the young clover over winter. The wheat, being robust, stands the cold very well; it attains considerable height in the fall, thus sheltering the clover planted with it.

Again, erosion is a Missouri menace. Wheat helps to hold the soil which otherwise might be washed away in winter and spring. So in goes the grain on hillsides. The profit from the grain is a minor factor, you see. A man's farm is worth more than any return from a

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wheat crop. The grain is soil insurance, as well as a means toward rejuvenating land. So who is foolish?

Some of my learned friends have assured me that the stupidest utterance from the lips of an eminent man in recent years must be credited to Calvin Coolidge, who, in "Good Housekeeping," February, 1921, wrote thus:

"Men and women, in and of themselves, are desirable. There cannot be too many inhabitants of the right kind, distributed in the right place. . . . Certain laws of supply and demand take care, in normal times, of the coming and going of the alien I do not fear the arrival of as many immigrants a year as shipping conditions or passport requirements can handle, provided they are of good character."

The critics assert that this is the most bestial, vilest view of human life ever set down on paper. It matches the rabbit philosophy of India and China. It reveals, so they add, the profoundest stupidity.

I disagree. This is not stupidity at all. It is ignorance. Mr. Coolidge, a simple small-town lawyer, had the bad luck to talk about one of the most complex, baffling, and hopeless problems of statecraft, the phenomena of population. Nobody knows much about these, and those who do are not lawyers or politicians. True, all students of population agree that each region, each economic system, and perhaps even each soil-and-climate area has its own optimum of population, which, if exceeded, brings on disasters. But there is no reason why Mr. Coolidge should know this; you might as well condemn him for his inability to analyze earthquake waves into their components.

But, you say, it was stupid of him to talk thus about matters beyond his technical grasp. Again I object. It may be taken as virtually certain that Mr. Coolidge did not know it lay beyond his intellectual reach. If so, then once more the worst we can say is that he was doubly ignorant. But so are all people nowadays—from Einstein down to Evangeline Adams. There are no longer domains of common knowledge, no longer fields of simple truths known or knowable to ordinary mortals. Were we all to withhold speech except when we knew exactly what we were talking about, what deathly silence would enshroud this world of born gabblers!

Now for the hardest question of all. Where runs the boundary

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between stupidity and superstition? How much of the latter is mere ignorance, how much a dulness toward manifest fact? Here we come upon the vexation of anthropologists and schoolmen.

One out of every ten high school students in Atlanta, Georgia, admits that he believes in powwowism. Ignorance or stupidity?

Old Connecticut farmers believe that a dried mole, hung about a child's neck, will cause the child's teeth to grow in straight, white and strong. Ignorance or stupidity?

Hundreds of business men have consulted Evangeline Adams, the so-called "scientific" astrologer. Mere ignorance or stupidity?

Hardly a day passes without a tabloid newspaper in New York or Chicago printing an alleged news item about witches or the voodoo or spell casting. Ignorance or stupidity?

Everett Dean Martin knows a physician "whose scientific training is such that he has been a lecturer in a medical college, who believes that Heaven is located just a few miles up in the sky, beyond the Milky Way." Which outranks the other here, ignorance or stupidity?

A Brooklyn mother, in 1930, saw her son approach death while five physicians testified that his life could be saved by a simple operation. She refused to permit the operation on the ground that God had given her son to her and, if he wanted him back, she had no cause for complaint. She prayed steadfastly, while the city officials hurried to the Children's Court to force action. The mother fought to the bitter end, but in vain. The boy was sent to the hospital, was operated on, and promptly recovered. Was the mother a stupid fool, or merely an ignoramus, or both?

We must ask the same question about all of those tens of thousands of prayer meetings, masses, and other ritual hocus-pocus like the following random samples from our files:

When that brisk panic of 1921 struck our beloved country, Roger Babson lined up forty eminent bankers, manufacturers, and professional men to sign an Appeal to America. Admitting in the prelude that America was in a very bad way indeed, the forty wise men declared that "only spiritual remedies can cure the present ills of mankind"; so they called upon all people to unite in prayer. (Whether the people did so, is not a matter of record. But the subsequent economic events are.)

In the summer of 1931, a vast black army of grasshoppers made

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barren waste of the lush green crops of the Middle West. Whereupon farmers and their families, helpless and desperate against the plague, held an outdoor mass near Sioux City, Iowa, to pray for divine protection from the insects' ravages.

Let us stop here; for the catalogue is endless, monotonous and depressing. Can you, in any one of these instances, assert with clarity just where ignorance begins and stupidity leaves off? I cannot. All I know is that each event is some obscure blend of these two mortal defects. The underlying urge to live, the struggle for everlasting happiness, and the yearning of frail man to lean on some stronger power are, to be sure, active here; but they make men stupid just as they foster ignorance in a thousand and one subtle ways. Thus the maze grows more devious and darker; for human stupidity appears to be the spawn of elemental cravings no less than of elemental disabilities of function.

The psychologist, coming for the first time to our subject, probably shifts back and forth between two points of view. From one angle he considers stupidity as a phase of low intelligence, while from another he sees it as a phase of primary sensitivity. Whereas the biologist prefers to think of man's stupid conduct in the usual terms of end response, or manifest behavior, the psychologist shifts his glance to the moments of consciousness just preceding the final act; for he is more concerned with phenomena of the central nervous system than with those of the muscles.

An easy first classification, then, would be one which grouped under one head all those defects of the primary sensitivities of eye, ear, tongue, nose, and skin, and under a second head all weak systems of association and central integration involved in the higher functions of memory, imagination, analysis, language, and the like. For a while, at least, we shall follow this line of distinguishing varieties. But it will soon appear not so much wrong as inadequate. True, it points out levels of psychic organization to which correspond various sorts of dulness. But it fails to disclose what is, I now suspect, the commonest and most disastrous of stupidities, to wit, those which result from the interplay of many functions and many stimuli and many cravings.

Stupidities of the sort which ruin civilizations and distort cultures cannot be traced back wholly to a specific flaw in a nervous tract, nor even to an entire neural system. They are the result of immensely

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complex situations influencing a personality. Again we come back to the simple proposition that, just as general intelligence is the ability to cope successfully with new situations, so general stupidity is an inability to do so; and special stupidities are often (if not always) some special inability of this same order. In all instances, the situation is fully as consequential as the individual. This is why I insist that stupidity is a genuine historical factor quite as positive as intelligence or genius.

Because it is, in some manner yet to be defined, the opposite of intelligence and sensitivity, we sharpen our notions about it by glancing for a moment at the nature of intelligent behavior.

The boundary between stupidity and intelligence cannot be drawn with a straight-edged ruler. It is rather a no-man's land, a zone between two immense forces which sometimes are at war and sometimes drowsing through an armistice. We cannot say that any isolated ability, such as might be brought out and roughly measured in an intelligence test, puts a man on one side of the no-man's land or on the other. For in these, the highest fields of human skill and power, the interlocking of traits in a nice pattern of integration is extremely subtle. Two men who seem almost identical in their mental make-up may turn out to be far apart; and two who are outwardly unrelated may prove to be brothers under the skin.

Many single traits picked out as marks of high intelligence turn out to be no marks at all. A few psychologists regard high general memory power as one of the required ingredients, but it certainly is not. Specialized or preferential memory is commonly coupled with the dominance of a higher mental trait; but this may well involve either average or sub-average general memory. Many a mighty mind, like Benjamin Franklin's, cannot recall what it ate at the last meal, or where the Declaration of Independence was signed; or how many states there are in the Union, or which of the Great Lakes is the smallest.

Soundness of judgment has also been used as a mark of superior mentality. Nevertheless, it is a tricky thing. For it is, in large measure, a matter of objectivity: the extravert is infinitely more likely to see things as they are than the introvert, hence an extravert of low mentality may well surpass an introvert of very high *special* mentality in his appraisals of men and affairs, as well as in his self-

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appraisals. Any laundry apprentice is likely to show sounder judgments on a wider range of subjects than Beethoven could have exhibited.

General adaptability has also been taken as a measure here. But it is less reliable than memory or judgment. Ability to get along with people, to meet crises deftly and coolly, to conform to the laws of the land with ease, comfort, and success may or may not be the result of a high mental trend. It is, all too commonly, nothing more than a form of animal cunning. The easiest way to get along in the world without too severe mental or physical exertion! The way of the moral coward! The way of the dull conformist! I do not deny that it may be also the result of the shrewdest of analysis and planning: indeed I should be inclined to believe, on such insufficient evidence as is at hand, that in densely populated regions, where the pressure of social custom and the high tension of the struggle for existence conspire to make innovations and marked individuality difficult, superior men frequently analyze the situation and decide that they will prosper with the least friction if they assert their independent thinking and preferences as little as possible, or, if at all, then in some highly camouflaged manner.

I have heard of several instances like this among upper-class Chinese, brilliant Ghetto dwellers, and prosperous American business men. The stronger the herd, the less will the thinking man be inclined to oppose it openly; and the more he will adapt his nature to it so far as overt behavior goes. Some may call this hypocrisy, others will agree that it is sound sense. In any event, the adaptability thus revealed may also be found in inferior varieties of personality and therefore must not be employed indiscriminately as an index of intelligence.

Most of the errors in defining stupidity and intelligence fall into the two classes. A capacity which is an *important tool* of intelligence is mistaken for intelligence itself, as in the case of memory. Or else, an *end-result of outer behavior* is miscalled an act of high intelligence simply because the act is socially sound, useful, and "an intelligent thing to do." This last is, of course, a subtle rationalizing of a process which may occur without the slightest intervention or aid of reason. It is like the theory of an eminent physicist, now deceased, who maintained that dogs and cats must be blessed with an innate

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knowledge of integral calculus because they could run at the correct angle to head off a fleeing rabbit or mouse.

With these perils of easy misjudgment before us, let us now see what are some of the most outstanding traits which differentiate the superior intelligence from the stupid? First, the ability to solve problems. Most psychologists choose this trait as one of the surest tests of mental alertness, and we cannot overrate its importance. But we can exaggerate its simplicity. Truth is, we have here a constellation of traits, rather than a single one. And by this I do not mean that, just as there are many kinds of problems, so there must be many kinds of abilities used in solving them. This, of course, is true enough and universally recognized. No, I mean rather that within each typical problem we find several modes of behavior which, when properly integrated, make for success in solution; and that it is these which must be considered as the true primary traits.

What, now, are these? Consider the handling of a problem. First, it demands the *correct integration of perceptions*. The facts of the problem must be assembled before the thinker and seen in their relevant relations. Next, these facts, in their arrayed pattern, must *suggest to him the kinds of manipulation* which may be worth trying out. That is, the analogy between this and previous problems must stand forth vividly. Thirdly, in order to reflect rapidly enough to achieve results, the thinker must be able to reduce the facts and the problem alike to some kind of *conceptual shorthand*. He must use symbols freely and, in their use, not become confused as to their meanings and equivalences. Words, mathematical signs, diagrams, and highly abridged notes must serve here; so, too, may minute muscular adjustments, especially of the larynx. Fourthly, the thinker must be able, whenever necessary, to divide his problem; he must take it up section by section, aspect by aspect. And this involves a very high order of *controlled dissociation*. This function has often been called "abstraction" or "voluntary attention"; but neither term adequately describes its physiological uniqueness. What plainly happens is that certain extensive nerve tracts are somehow insulated temporarily against all inner and outer stimuli save a few very special ones, which originate *within the dissociated system itself*. It is this last which marks the operation off sharply from mere attention.

After a series of such partial solutions have been completed, the thinker has to bring the partial results together and relate them.

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This, of course, is an *integrative process* on the level of imagination and symbolic functions. To consummate it, much guessing may be needful. Many relational analogies must be recalled and scrutinized; and if these do not give the clue, then fresh analogies must be invented and tested. Here *free fantasy*, even of the most helter-skelter sort, proves invaluable. Broadly speaking, the larger the flock of fleeting ideas, the richer the final choice and the surer its adequacy. But there is danger here. It is the danger of being lured by some old favorite interpretation, or else by some startlingly new, utterly original one. The former is easy, pleasant, and may confirm the thinker in his greatly desired conviction that his habitual ways of thinking are proving quite competent to grapple with the new problem. The latter peril is graver to the younger man whose intellectual habits have not yet struck a taproot into his being. It encourages him to feel that he is about to revolutionize the world, to dazzle everybody with a complete novelty.

Now the thinker of superior powers will be on his guard against both dangers, as a matter of predisposed caution if not as a result of bitter experience at guesswork. He will tend to suspend final judgment as long as possible, and to eliminate his prejudices and wishes from the interpretations. In a word, he inhibits powerfully in the field of imagery, inference and analogy: but he does this without complete suppression of the matter. And one method of inhibition is to submit one's findings to others for testing before coming to a final decision as to their worth and meaning; while another less effective method is to repeat the entire investigation with certain appropriate variations.



To point this tale, stupidity will be regarded as any type of behavior in which any one or more of the factors of intelligence may be missing or, if present, then too feeble to cope with the new situation at hand. The deepest variety, then, is that one wherein the basic perceptions fail, as a result of some insensitivity. Then comes a second sort, almost as profound, wherein many perceptions, individually clear, cannot be organized so as to elucidate their meaning. The third kind fails to suggest ways of manipulating the situation; this plainly is due to weak imagination and, incidentally, to inexperience. The fourth is a dulness caused by a clumsy conceptual shorthand, poor language or other faulty symbols. The fifth is the stupidity of

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wavering attention and its inevitable confusion of unrelated fields of discourse. The sixth is defective dissociation of the significant factors and phases in the situation—this being, as was said, something more than flickering attention. The seventh is the stupidity of weak organizing of results into a final plan of action. The eighth is lack of imagination. The ninth is dulness in either failing to verify results or else testing these by inadequate methods. Possibly we ought to add a tenth in the form of bad logic; but it seems to me that blunders of inference usually flow from the third, fourth and fifth stupidities above mentioned.

Here, then, are the boundaries of the kingdom of the humanesque, in so far as it abuts upon Utopia. Here we find at least nine species of the stupid. These intermarry and blend in all sorts of combinations. Some hybrids have been favored by circumstances, others have been swiftly slain. Some rise to glory, while others are hunted by the police. The history of them all is the history of our race, in the main. To this

APXH
ARCHE

Within this lair
A man was wont to sleep, a monster
Who grazed his sheep far off, alone,
Nor ever mingled with his kind,
But lonely dwelt—lawless and evil.
And marvellously was he shapen—
This monstrous being, not like mortals
That live by bread, but like a peak
That rising rough with woods stands forth
Apart from other hills.

CYCLOPS

CYCLES

UPS and downs mark all careers, be they of small boys or statesmen or corporations or religions or reforms or farmers or peddlers. They appear in successes and failures, in peace and war, in population, in crime, and almost every other domain of action. And they strangely resemble the ups and downs throughout the animal kingdom. Often they seem regular, and the cycles of their flux perplex scientists.

The number of snowy owls, ptarmigan, and northern mice varies in a four-year cycle. Thus foxes are provided with such a feast that little foxes which otherwise would have starved grow fat and attain a ripe old age; so the fox population swells and shrinks symmetrically with that of its provender. Hares, muskrats, grouse, lynx, marten and wolves multiply and dwindle in a mysterious period of 97 years. Some animal diseases move in the same swing, which is singularly close to the short lunar cycle of 8.85 years and almost precisely half the period of the long lunar cycle of 18.6 years.

In the affairs of mankind, it is not the population cycle that stands forth to the observing eye nearly so much as it is the ups and downs in rainfall, in the size of crops, and in business prosperity. Who can resist the exciting correlations which Ellsworth Huntington discovers here? He shows from authentic records covering the past century that five major cycles of drought, farm crop failure, and business depression have occurred in uncanny symmetry. The droughts and farm crop failures occurred in periods of 18.6 years, while financial panics developed at intervals of 18.4 years. Though the panics seldom occurred in the same season with drought and crop failure, they always came only a little before or after them.

Now, what has all this to do with stupidity? More than anybody seems to have suspected. Whenever and wherever we find a creature's career dominated by environmental cycles, we know for a certainty that *the conditions affecting its welfare lie beyond its observation and control*. We know that the creature is a victim of circumstance. Relative to the determining conditions, it is passive, blind, and stupid. As fast as intelligence and energy develop, the creature studies itself and

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its surroundings, devises new ways of getting what it wants and avoiding evils, and thereby tends to break down those vast, slow whirlpools of happenings which sweep it and all its kind around in long eddies. In the life of reason, the pattern conforms to the will rather than to the orbits of sun and moon. As one wishes, so things happen. At the lower extreme, the careers of bacteria and other microorganisms may well be determined almost entirely by the cycle of cosmic events—let us say, in conjecture only, by the variations of the cosmic rays. Here, then, the underlying notion of the astrologer finds half-witted confirmation. At the apex of life—which has not yet been reached, by many a millennium!—men will lay out hundred-year-programs and carry them out in every essential, in spite of hell and high water. Then there will be no cycles save those of the will itself.

What will those will cycles be? Who can prophesy? The best I can suggest is that they will be mathematical functions of the range and intensity of cravings. But that is saying just a little more than nothing at all, unless you accept—as I do—the psychological hypothesis that the will of a highly intelligent, energetic personality truly transcends the four dimensions of space and time, uses these as means to ends, thinks, plans and acts on programs in which past and future are merely factors within a calculation and not at all the determiners of the calculator. Of this, more later.

The cycles of Nature, then, impose themselves upon all creatures that are either too ignorant or too dull or too weak to evade or overcome them. Stupidity thus appears to be only one of three inner causes of natural determinism. But as we progress with the analysis, we begin to discern its subtle influence in the perpetuation of ignorance and even in the blocking of human energies. We shall observe, not in a few but in many cases, mere dulness of eye, ear, memory, or reflective powers preventing the dullard from learning patent facts and priceless principles. Again we shall see it inhibiting acts and numbing muscles and stifling initiative. Ere we shall have reached the end of our scanty prolegomenon, we shall be overwhelmed with the thought that Buddha was right in ranking stupidity as the greatest of all mortal defects.

This Short Introduction does not purport to be a history; it can only guide us into the latter. So we rest content with the formulating of the following guiding principle which the historian must apply to and observe in the course of human events. It is, we believe, more

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accurate than Spengler's and more comprehensive. It makes room for the considerable truth in Spengler, without admitting his vast fund of wild speculation and unmitigated inaccuracies. It furnishes a legitimate mathematical-physical basis for the graphs of economic, social, religious and political movements without thereby encouraging eccentric simplifications which reduce the histories of nations and eras to pat formulas. Here it is, in briefest possible phrase: let it serve as the approach to our whole field of inquiry.

APPROACH

A metaphysician sees stupidity as an axiom. To a Berlin audience the great Einstein recently remarked: "In the sight of God we are all equally stupid and equally clever." To this all old theologies agree, as well as the New Relativity. It is self-evident. That man must have finite sensitivities no less than finite capacities for active response has been phrased a thousand and one ways in song and prose. Santayana has recently given his own happy turn to the thought as follows:

" . . . Not to retain any dullness would mean to possess untiring attention and universal interests, thus realizing the boast about deeming nothing human alien to us: while to be absolutely without folly would involve perfect self-knowledge and self-control. The intelligent man known to history flourishes within a dullard and holds a lunatic in leash " *

We might even go further—had we the foolish inclination to philosophize—and ask whether or not infinite sensitivity may not be a self-contradiction as well as a biological absurdity. Is not the act of sensing a thing based upon our differentiating it from something else present at the same moment? And how can such differentiating occur if we are equally aware of the differentiated things? Limited as we are to the workings of our own functions of attention, we cannot imagine with clarity an act in which a creature takes in everything in the entire universe at a single psychic gulp.

At this point the biologist takes up the argument. He begins by calling you to your radio for an experiment. He asks you to tune

* From an essay, "The Suppressed Madness of Sane Men," by George Santayana.

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in on your favorite program. As you do so, in comes a gush of music from Pittsburgh. This, he tells you, is nothing but a special transformation of quanta systems having a certain wave length and frequency. Next you tune in on Havana—another ripple of energy; then on San Francisco—still another ripple. Then the biologist remarks: "While you were listening to the Pittsburgh music, the ripples from Havana, San Francisco, and hundreds of other stations were zooming through your nervous system, no less than through your muscles, your eyeballs, your ear drums, your house, and the whole earth. Nor is that all. As long as you live, a trillion trillion trillion energy impulses sweep through you every day and night: some are the cosmic rays, the breakdown of hydrogen atoms in some lost galaxy; some are ultra-violet rays, some infra-reds. To you they are nothing, as long as you rely only on your natural sense organs. For these are not tuned to the infinites at large; they respond only to a few bands and a few intensities. Here then is the *stupor mortalis*. Here the final *stupor vitae*. Your nervous system is merely a small, woefully crude, bungling radio receiver adrift in a shoreless sea of atomic tides and currents. Just as your instrument in the parlor can pick up only certain wave lengths and frequencies, so with your brain and its attendant sense organs. Just as that same instrument cannot vanquish static, so with your intellect. Obscure outer forces make thoughts crackle and go indistinct. Just as some tiny defect in that instrument throws it out of kilter, so with your over-vaunted human mind. Relative to the realities of its total environment, it is on a parity with the worms and the insects."

And now let us descend from metabiology to the sensory-motor arc. In this we find solid proof of our guiding principle. Here lies, only half hidden, the key to the major mysteries of human stupidities and the cycles of fortune. Here is the basis of all vertebrate experience; here the specific limitation of our nature.

This arc has three phases, in a time-space order. First comes the sensory nerve and its receiving of stimuli from the outside world. Next comes the central nervous field wherein that incoming current is, first of all, linked to previous experiences and given a new character and a redirection. Finally, there is the motor nerve which conveys that centrally qualified impulse out into muscle fibres. All this is freshman psychology, of course. But, alas, its larger implications are not.

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Each phase develops its own weaknesses no less than its own excellences. The nerves of sense may be leaden, so that few items in the situation reach the brain; this is the original "*stupor*" of which the Romans spoke when, for instance, they said that a man who could have a tooth pulled without wincing had "*stuporem dentium*." In its completeness the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf have it. Our language is averse to calling this stupidity, yet it is just that in its original connotation; for stupidity is insensitivity, regardless of the psychic level on which it occurs.

We reserve the term for those insensitivities on the cerebral level—and inaccurately, I would hold. Yet these doubtless constitute nine-tenths of all the array of dulnesses. They include sluggish recognitions and recall, mixed and blank associations, superficial analyses and judgments, and inaccurate inferences, as well as the more innocent varieties such as absentmindedness and reverie. It is in the associative centers of the large brain that these occur; and they take place after the sensory nerves have transmitted to them the shock of outer events.

Lastly, in the motor field, inferior behavior manifests itself chiefly in two guises: first, as lack of power and then as lack of dexterity. The former is a matter of free energy, the second a matter of neural pattern. We term neither failing stupidity; the first is weakness, the second is clumsiness.

Now for our central contention—a guiding principle, remember! General intelligence is the ability of the individual to adjust successfully to new situations; that is, to escape disasters and, as far as is humanly possible, to force the world to give him what he wants, when he wants it, and where he wants it. By the same token, general unintelligence is the inability to accomplish this. All three phases of the sensory-motor arc are involved here. Let any one fail, and all fail. And if failure, what then?

Then man is the creature of circumstance. He lists with the wind. The snows of winter drive him down the gale with the sheep and cattle. In fly time he is bitten. The summer brings malaria and hookworm. All his ups and downs run in a crazy curve which integrates those of the storms and droughts, the waxing and waning of moon and tides, the uprush of insects and bacteria, the flux and fading of birds and beasts.

In so far as the events of Nature repeat, human history repeats itself

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throughout the eras of stupidity and weakness. In so far as the conditions of Nature on our globe arrange themselves in space, mankind scatters in the same design. Thus, for example, the entire race today shows a density of population everywhere in almost precise ratio to the annual rainfall. In this we do not differ from the molds and the lichens.

But this tells only half of the tragedy. The cycles of Nature are, for man, a vicious circle, thanks to the mechanics of natural selection. The harsh environment, in ways uncounted, perpetuates stupid men in numbers far greater than the clever, the dainty, the meditative and the imaginative. So breeding favors the thick-skinned—at least for the first million years or two—and nurture drills them in the arts of dulness. Escape is blocked except through wild chance. Forever and ever the curve of necessity returns upon itself, as a matter of super-statistics. Out of 1,000,000,000 careers, all save perhaps five or ten are thrown in times and places which hold the horde in bondage. A fair report of that bondage would constitute 99.9999% of genuine history; the other .0001% would be told in the tale of the tiny handful of men, scattered more thinly than star dust up and down the time track, who deviated from the type, improved themselves through self-drill, through inventions, and through cunning organizing of servants and aides. These few had finer sensitivities, above all; they saw, heard, smelled, felt things beyond the ken of the herd. Then too, they dissected these subtler experiences, sought out their ingredients, and juggled these into fresh combinations. Thus they became, little by little, masters over the spirits of earth, air and fire. For them thenceforth there were more ups than downs.

But the world even now remains on the whole in bondage. We get a useful perspective only after we have looked squarely at the many cycles of necessity which, since man set forth on his still aimless career, have favored the stupid and penalized the keen, the bold, the sincere, and the thorough. In none of the standard, orthodox historical works will you find such a report. True, a few historians would write it, if they could. But they lack data—and through no fault of their own.

So we turn to the spectacle of human bondage, our own style badly cramped. Few secret archives have been thrown open to us. Each dip into days long gone thrusts us into darkness. We shall therefore move gingerly, as historians. We gather strength and courage from

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the geographers, the climatologists, the physicians, and the bacteriologists, all of whom—though few realize it—know far more about man's past than most historians do.

At least four times—some say six or seven—during the last 500,000 years, ice has crept southward from the Pole and smitten mankind. Considerably more than 500,000 years ago, men were living who had risen to the skill of fashioning implements out of stone. Presumably those firstlings were much like ourselves in bone, sinew, and nerve. But how different their traditions, their environment and their opportunities! Can we form even a blurred picture of the life they led? Can we deduce anything about their types of stupidity and about the causes of these? Strange as it will surely seem, I think that we can form a clearer notion of this aspect of their mentality than of any other.

Before we attempt this, glance again at the gray panorama of frozen tides and crystal mountains which flowed back and forth to the ticking of the centuries. For here we come upon the first, as well as the most potent of all causes of human stupidity. I call it the first, with full knowledge that, long before all ice ages, man was born with brains hardly superior to those of his cousins who stayed up in the trees after he came down and learned to swing a club. This was his animal inheritance, his Original Sin. But it must remain outside of our present inquiry, for reasons obvious. We want to know what man did with this inheritance, how he changed himself or, trying so to do, failed; and why and why and why. We grant that, so far as we can observe at this distance, he could never have been anything but animal, to begin with. So why bring that up? But it does seem that since he set out to carve his career as a new sort of beast, no small part of his destiny has been in his own hands. And it is just this part which must fascinate us. The rest is automatism.

Around 500,000 B.C. the ice swept down—not in a day, not in a year, but in the course of centuries. Such lands of the Northern Hemisphere as it did not engulf it affected profoundly by chilling

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them, by inundating them with cold rains, by driving out animals, and by exterminating trees and plants so cruelly that men were forced to readjust their lives in order to win food, shelter, and the minimal comforts of existence.

Slowly this harshness passed. Thousands of years of gentle warmth ensued. Living things worked northward again. Then, around 400,000 B C. a new chill stirred in the north, and the cycle recurred, with all its hardship and devastations. Again the warmth. And this time it lingered longer, much longer! Nearly 250,000 years passed between the peak of the second wave of glaciers and that of the third. Man had his first great chance then. Around Heidelberg he made progress; and there his remains have been found in strata which pretty definitely mark his era.

How far did he rise in that long spell of sunshine and easy food? Does the Heidelberg Man whose jawbone was brought to light represent the summit of culture? Or was he perhaps one of the morons of his own epoch? Unfortunately, we have no way of identifying a moron by his jawbone except in the way he uses it to talk. So we remain in total darkness as to the level of civilization between the second and third glacial periods. It is not at all impossible that nations then rose to heights which are still beyond our own ken; for our own cultures and social forms are only 15,000 years old, all arising out of the discovery of agriculture. Let us not be too cocksure then about man's failure to build cities and master his environment during the 250,000 years known to us only through a jawbone or two!

Again the ice came. Again it melted. Again it came. Again it retreated. And since the peak of the fourth glacial period only 50,000 years have elapsed. But we still live in that ice age. Do you realize that glaciers still cover lands far larger than all of the United States and Western Europe combined? Do you know that the cruelties of life, as lived today in half of Asia and half of Europe, are the direct result of the horrible fluctuations of climate which always go with the waning of an ice age? Do you appreciate that we have remarkably trustworthy records of the weather and man's food supplies in Southwestern Asia for about seventy centuries, all of which drive home one fact, namely the impossibility of man's settling down to an easy life for many generations at a stretch anywhere betwixt Persia and Italy?

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The fluctuations between heat and cold, between wind and calm, and between rain and drought were rapid and severe. In interpreting them, the modern reader must keep in mind the fact that even slight changes from year to year affected men before the Machine Age tremendously; the city dweller of our day, indeed, is quite unable to imagine those influences, unless perhaps he goes away back into the North Woods on a camping trip and endures either a hot dry spell or a fortnight of icy rains. Here is not the place to tell the tale of storm, flood, drought, freeze, and murderous winds. It has been well told by the great climatologists, such as C. E. P. Brooks, H. J. E. Peake, Ellsworth Huntington, E. Brueckner, and many others. The scene is ever the same: tribes driven out by hot winds that dry up the pools and burn the grass; tribes freezing to death in sudden blizzards; tribes caught on ice floes and swept to sea; tribes dying of thirst along the rim of deserts; tribes swept out of their narrow valleys by cloudbursts; tribes starving to death in a plague of locusts.

Is this all ancient, all rare, all of merely academic interest? Well, think so if you like—and brand yourself stupid for so thinking. And while you do so, let me inform you that more than 20,000,000 Chinese are, at this very moment, starving to death; that tens of thousands of American, Canadian, and South American farmers are ruined as a result of only one summer's drought; that, during the past five years, Europe has had one winter which was a farewell gesture of the Ice Age, slaying thousands from Spain to Finland in a prolonged cold spell which shattered all the records of written history; and that scarcely a year passes in that continent without some devastations by rain and flood which demoralize or totally destroy more people than ever lived at one time in ancient Greece.

Let me put it in another way. Sir Arthur Keith has computed with great care the probable maximum number of people who might live in the world without agriculture. This, mark you, was the state of affairs down to 15,000 years ago. Everybody lived on whatever was at hand—and died if there was naught to be so found. Now, it appears that not more than 15,000,000 or 20,000,000 people could subsist without the plow and the nurtured plant. Is it not rather significant that, even today, we behold a multitude as vast as that regularly dying of thirst or starvation—or of diseases and afflictions brought on by the vagaries of post-glacial climate which also regulate the natural food supply? This borderland of humanity it is which preserves for

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us the panorama of earlier millennia. The struggle for existence did not turn mainly around combat with beast or human foe; it turned around climate, the giver and the thief of food and water.

What has this to do with the rise of stupidity? Well, first of all, in a climate of treacherously shifting heat and cold, flood and drought, such as all of Europe and half of Asia have had for tens of thousands of years, if not for most of the last million, what kind of human had the best chance of surviving? Plainly a creature who, as contrasted to us of 1932 A.D., had the hide of a rhinoceros, the stomach of a hog, and the endurance of a water buffalo. Without a pang he slept of nights out of doors under a chill autumnal rain. Without a soda tablet, he ate roots down raw and esteemed tubers a rare luxury during the winter months. Fleas, lice, and mosquitoes may have vexed him, but they could not vanquish him. He drank muddy water after the aurochs left the pool. He ate rotten flesh which the wolves could not finish. And, at a pinch, he devoured his parents, indifferent to their diseases when a first-class famine set in. A tough customer, was he not?

In a word, he was enormously insensitive to a thousand and one stimuli which are too much for you and me.

But this very insensitivity is the beginning of man's career as a stupid genius. For what we do not sense we leave out of our reckonings. And what we fail to consider is the measure of our final stupidity, as will soon be demonstrated. So we are brought to our first painful discovery: *Those very powers of resistance which pulled our ancestors through the bitter half million years contributed much to the dulness and general slow wit of the race. Yesterday's virtue has become today's evil.*

In a sense, all this is an obvious corollary of the biologist's view of life. Only it happens to be one which nobody seems yet to have drawn. Its ramifications thread their way all through modern society. Look for a moment at its bearings upon the evolution of all those higher orders of intelligence which result in the sciences and the techniques.

Not until he learned to till the soil and wait through the growing season for his harvest could our ancestor safely remain in one place. He had to wander, ever on the trail of the next meal. Hence he es-

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tablished no center of culture and tradition, no school, no workshop, no town, no library, nothing which might help to concentrate and preserve the essence of each man's experiences for the benefit of those who were to come later. So his wisdom died with him, and progress in our sense was utterly impossible. For the machinery of catching and canning facts is beyond the nomad's devising. To a high degree, then, each generation started from scratch; hence each ended just about where its predecessors had ended. Hence the inbreeding of the insensitive was intensified for at least 400,000 or 450,000 years. Those who caught cold, those who had nerves, those who couldn't digest rotten fish, and those who could not outrun a wild bull and a sand storm dropped out early. And the marvel is that the eventual survivors rose even as much as they did above the apes up in the trees.

While we have no way of proving it, we cannot be going far wrong in assuming that primitive medicine did not develop to the point of usefulness until well after mankind had begun to settle in towns; for medicine rests firmly upon clinical cases, well recorded and pondered. This is just as true of shamans and witch doctors as of the newest metropolitan hospital staff. Such preventives, remedies, plasters and incantations, then, as the Heidelberg Man may have had were such a blend of dull observations, faulty inference, mad guessing, and simple misunderstanding that they could scarcely have changed the physical type of inheritance. Even today, at least 1,500,000,000 people live to adulthood in spite of doctors rather than through their aid. The medical practices prevailing throughout Asia, Africa and sundry sizable tracts in Europe and America certainly prolong the lives of nobody except the self-styled doctors who collect fees from the heirs and assigns of their patients.

Thus we come to the next aspect of primeval man, namely, the effect which the brevity of life had upon such little thinking as he did. We know that the span of life among savages is pitifully brief. Even the Chinese, who are far, far above the highest of primeval men, now live three generations to our two. Among many tribes a man is reckoned very old and worthy of special veneration if he has crossed his fortieth year. During the World War the British medical boards found, to their dismay, that the average Englishman in the Manchester district was, physiologically measured, old at forty also. His disabilities were many and serious. The median age at death in the United States, according to the 1920 records of life insurance

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companies, was sixty-three years. But a census enumerator of 15,000 B.C. would probably have found two-thirds of all people dying in infancy, one-half of the survivors passing from the scene in their twenties or earlier, and the sturdier fraction perishing mostly in their thirties. There is no sound reason for supposing that primitive man lived much longer than his first cousin, the gorilla.

* * *

Now for a somewhat different point of view. Look at Original Sin with a compass in hand. Consider the differences between men of the north and men of the south during those millennia of shifting ice. The polar cold did not invade the tropics; it did no more than cool their rims pleasantly, during the period we consider. So a different scene appears in the prehistory of tropical man. How much may be conjectured about it?

Our search will be thwarted unless we keep clearly before us a few key facts. The first of these is that aboriginal man was neither a child nor a moron, as so many people have supposed. The second is that variations of human types, especially on the mental side, must have been very great tens of thousands of years before the Nile Valley culture assumed form. The third is that, because most primeval groups were little more than enlarged families, inbreeding was a necessity; and even when, millennia later, exogamy arose here and there, it often led only to a diluted inbreeding; for, in terms of a ten-generation span, the blood of all strains within the small clan was thoroughly blended. The fourth fact is that, whenever a mentally superior individual happened to be born, the odds against his making the most of his capacities were enormous; the range of opportunities was limited to acts dealing with the necessities of life, so his thinking had to deal with a few immediate issues, such as finding food, outwitting an enemy, escaping from a blizzard, and so on.

Could a census have been taken of all the 10,000,000 or more citizens of the Middle Stone Age, the enumerators would probably have found the following conspicuous facts in the returns:

1. There were geniuses in those days;
2. But not one genius in 50,000 found a chance to turn his abilities to account;
3. There were imbeciles and high-grade morons, too; but nobody called them by such names;

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4. There were strong men and weak, cunning and dull, dreamers and practical souls; but these characteristics had few opportunities to become sharp and strong through years of practice; hence, to one another, all these really different people seemed more nearly alike than people now seem;
5. The ordinary man's primary sensitivities were exceedingly keen, and so too his memory for sights and sounds and smells; for around these his daily work centered;
6. The ordinary man's resistances to such physical hardships as going without food and water, going without sleep, recovering from a wound, and so on were enormous;
7. In regions close to the rim of polar ice, living conditions were severe; hence there only the hardiest and least sensitive survived. But in the far south, except for the equatorial jungles and deserts, life was very easy; hence the inferior minds and bodies managed to survive and to propagate down there, along with the superior;
8. In the long run, therefore, the average physique and mentality of northern tribes greatly surpassed those of the southern; and the deviation from the average was much slighter up north than down south. In other words, the early Scandinavian chieftain resembled his own followers far more closely than the kings before the Pharaohs resembled their slaves.
9. Our census enumerators found this to be true in 200,000 B.C.: only the tropical and sub-tropical tribes then had slaves and a highly differentiated social caste system. The tribes farther north resembled family groups, lacked a sense of caste, and—if they could have had such a thought at all—would have agreed that all men are born free and equal.
10. Among the warm-weather tribes, the imbeciles and high-grade morons were usually forced to do the unpleasant work for the clever; hence their lot was not enviable, but it was better than being dead—and that was the alternative, in south and north alike. Up north they didn't have the chance to take over the drudgery, for they died of their own stupidity too soon.
11. Because of favorable climate and a good food supply, the average span of life in southlands was somewhat longer than up north; but the difference was not great in years, for the northern average was raised by the superior hardiness of the tribes, while

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the southern was depressed somewhat by the large number of physical inferiors. Even so, the difference was enough to develop, in the south, an influential age group of elders who, simply because of their longer and richer experience, were able to control, guide and improve the younger much more effectively than was done up north. Probably ten times as many upper-class people passed the age of thirty-five down south as up north. And this meant the beginning of organized wisdom, organized tribal memories, monuments, inscriptions, formulas, rituals, recipes, ordinances, and written language.

12. In the south, men felt quickly the differences of intellect and general cleverness; they married more or less along the cleavage lines of class. Thus, by inbreeding through the ages, the mental and physical peculiarities of each class tended to fuse into a human type adapted to the kind of life out of which it had grown. Our census takers of 200,000 B.C. found the first clear signs of this in the primeval priestcrafts through which the elders of the southern tribes held sway.
13. In the south, again, the longer a man lived, the more wealth he accumulated, regardless of his social level. And the cleverer he was, the richer he became, too. This brought all the advantages to the clever old people. And they incorporated these advantages into the formal customs of their tribes. They had, by religious decree, their pick of the women, the first right to good food, and priority in everything else. Thus, in the south, tribal rule became largely economic. Up north, it was more a matter of personal prowess and cunning in battle.
14. The rich elders, in the southlands, were quick to retain the services of the youths of rare ability, wherever they found them among the common people. Thus the brains of the community were already moving up the economic scale in 200,000 B.C. The lower classes were losing their choicest children to the upper. Thus the intellectual differences between upper and lower were growing; at first imperceptibly, then at length much faster. Up north, however, this process was vastly slower; for wealth, even in its primeval forms, did not accumulate there. Men lived more from hand to mouth.
15. In the south many pandemic scourges held the lower working classes down most cruelly. Malaria, hookworm, typhus, rheuma-

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tism, and an unknown number of other diseases must have been as prevalent in the tropics and sub-tropics then as now. And it is highly probable that diseases unknown to us moderns scythed down early mankind much as influenza has thinned out the human harvest. These, together with minor insect pests and exceedingly bad drinking water and the depressing heat and humidity, degraded all save a tiny upper class. Fast breeding of short-lived creatures was the rule; so was low efficiency of the individual worker.

16. As the millennia melted away, tremendous changes in climate occurred; fertile regions dried up and turned to deserts, the ice receded and opened up vast expanses of pleasant land, old rivers rose and made swamps of giant size, while new trickles of glacial water fed sweet pastures where once was wilderness. But, during most of this time, the equator remained the equator, the tropics the tropics. It was the north temperate and north sub-tropical zones which experienced the mightiest transformations. There the migrations of tribes went on; there the process of natural selection reached its maximum. Tropical masses remained essentially constant in their degradation. Temperate peoples were bred upward erratically, slowly, yet surely. On the southward swing of the ice, certain superior northlanders moved south, seized the better lands there, enslaved the natives at least to the point of making the latter support them, and set up tribal villages in the great warm river valleys. During each period of conquest some of the abler natives found their opportunity to improve their lot by allying themselves with their new masters. It probably resulted from this that the native stock was robbed of its finest blood and so sank deeper and deeper into its stupors of drudgery, disease, and drink.

We now jump into our Time Machine and race down to 15,000 B.C.—or whenever it was that men began to till the soil, thereby making possible a stupendous increase in world population as well as a new order of social stability. In the span of a few thousand years—a mere split-second of history—what revolutions! The plow, and its plenty! The horse and dog subdued! Tools for hewing wood and beating metals! The wheel! Walls to protect the tribe against

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wild animals and human foes! Irrigation ditches! Then canoes and row boats, soon followed by the sail! Relative to the achievements of the world into which he was born, Neolithic man must be ranked as the greatest of all inventors no less than the most aggressive of all organizers and promoters. He did something, moreover, which threw all humanity out of step and still threatens our race. *He began changing man's entire environment faster than man could adjust himself to each change.* By an irony of fate, he so improved things and so complicated them and so energized them that they passed far beyond the sensitivities of all save a tiny band of leaders. In conquering Nature, man lost her.

To appreciate the full force of this tragedy we must now glance at the mentality of the ordinary man at the beginning of the agricultural revolution. He was a tough-skinned, dull-nerved, plodding, unimaginative savage who reached his prime in late adolescence and died just as he was beginning to catch a glimmer of what this whole business of life is about. In another phrase, *for half a million years the typical man at his best was a child mind with a youth's outlook on life. Being on the whole poorly nourished, his behavior approximated that of a poorly nourished adolescent.* Analyze the implications of this, and you come upon Original Sin.

Throughout this Short Introduction we shall initiate the study of a score of chapters. Many discoveries will be truths to the wise and vexatious nonsense to the rest. We shall find that the masses now living are lineal descendants of those prehistorical folk; that, as a herd, it has been inbreeding for thousands of generations; that it has steadily lost its few superior members to more favored classes and climes; that its peculiar stupidities invade almost every level of activity from the lowest sense organs up to the refined intellectual centers; that, while its eyesight, hearing, and other senses are inferior, its more highly integrative capacities of grasping space and time patterns are unbelievably feeble, sometimes sinking close to zero, as in many American Indians; that all appetites dominate those reflective functions and so cause endless stupid thinking; that, as a result, its individuals cannot manage themselves save on the lowest levels of conduct; that, as its perceptions are vague, it falls into the many stupidities due to the intrusion of fantasy upon fact; that, as a result of dull thinking on the one hand and the overlordship of animal cravings on the other, it clings to magic, astrology, palm-

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istry, clairvoyants, witch doctors, signs, omens, portents, and all the rituals that go with these; and that, finally, in hours of ease no less than in moments of worry, it tends to sink into revery and to brood over its ego, turning away from the unmanageable realities outside

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Much has been told about the dazzling opportunities for the able man in times of great folk movements. The frozen assets of the old home land will not thaw under the young aspirant's hot ambition; everything is set, possessed, crystallized. But let him follow a grass trail into raw wildernesses, and then comes his chance in life. When all things are unstable, the clever seeker comes into his own.

In this lies much truth. Yet it obscures a much larger one. We readily observe sudden ascents to fame and fortune. They flash like meteors, and in the darkness of our half-knowledge they fill our skies with their light. Nevertheless they are, relative to what happens to the masses of pioneers, only a pinwheel in the pyrotechnics of progress. The half dozen Empire Builders who laid out our trans-continental railways give the minstrels something to sing; but the millions who wandered forth from ten thousand villages in quest of a better living—oh, whither did they go? And who tra-la-las their lays? What their fame? Where their fortune? Cecil Rhodes still inflames young dreamers, but look upon the dusty kraals and the blazing plateaus of South Africa for the human tide of which Rhodes was only the white, splashing front surge. No. If we accept all facts, rather than the few dramatic items, we are forced to infer that, for every bold, brilliant man who profits by wandering, a city of common people find the usual careers of their kind. Some make good, others die by the wayside, but most of them fail to improve their lot.

This has many bearings upon our subject. In ancient times and in most parts of the world even now, forces which drive men out from old homes to new lands tend to perpetuate and enlarge the dull herd. In the great migrations, the stupid have a great advantage over the clever in at least one respect, which sometimes may prove decisive. A radical change in one's environment strains the mind

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no less than the body. Every habit is undermined—a cruel twist at best, a fatal one at worst. As the normal migration moves from densely populated areas into thinly settled, the typical migrant shifts from town or village to a wilderness, from well ordered householding to camp or shack, from the society of friends to a place of foes or a solitude reverberant with the howl of wolves. He alters his sleep, his diet, his hours of toil, and the very patterning of movements in daily work. Often he must learn a foreign language and strange customs of etiquette, dress, money, and business.

Now, a person of high sensitivity will suffer more than a dullard under such readjustments. (The emotionally unstable will probably suffer most of all, but we ignore him here.) For he feels each shock more deeply. The history of English immigrants into Canada has demonstrated this only too well. The great plains that lie between Winnipeg and Calgary have been the ruin of many an ambitious man and woman out of London and Liverpool. So too in earlier generations were the lands farther south one mighty graveyard of pioneers too delicate, too refined, too cultured to scale the ramparts of a wild continent. Whithersoever the white man has gone, he has left a quota of high-grades as a living sacrifice to the gods of progress. On the lonely trail have they died, in mud huts, under snow drifts, and between the jaws of great animals. But the thick-skinned, the iron-jawed, the heavy-handed, and the men with hoes have carried on. Not that all survivors were stupid; far from it. But the stupid had an easier time of it than many superior human types.

The dull man, as a rule, is more easily satisfied. Hence he will stay where keener brethren scorn to linger. Then too, he will stop off at the first place he finds tolerable, while the more finicky and the more ambitious and the more energetic press on to remoter dreamlands. Every student of the American pioneer is familiar with this fact, which can be read clearly all the way across the continent, but nowhere more vividly than in the lost valleys of our Appalachian southlands whose green silences have hardly yet been broken by the lewd auto horn. Glance a moment at the "hollow people" of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

These earn their name from the isolated valleys where they dwell. But the phrase describes their minds by happy accident; they are living voids, having the vision of Polyphemus. Not all the oculists in Christendom can fit them with glasses that show them the depths

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and distances of our world. For they are all the inbred offspring of males and females who wandered thither long before the American Revolution. Dregs of old Scotch and lees of old English, they paused at the first warm, cozy vale bewitched with purling brooks and aflutter with feathered game. Winter cold was brief and without cruelty. Why leave such an easy nook then?

It is reasonable to assume that, now and then, a sprightlier babe was born in the hollow, grew up discontented with a life that was little more than eating, sleeping, fishing, hunting, and just sitting around. The hour came that saw him no more thereabouts. But all his fog-minded kin stayed on and soon lost even his memory. Thus for some five generations. And what lives now in the hollow? Let Dr. Mandel Sherman tell us. As director of the Washington Child Research Center, he has been studying those forlorn Virginia pockets for some time.

Of the five communities studied, the lowest from the standpoint of culture had no means of transportation, no social activities, sports, toys, nor mail. In a generation not a single person had been to school for more than two years. And the community correspondence was conducted by the minister's son, who, alone among them all, had learned the great art of writing. The second group fared better in the amenities. There were two phonographs—and Sunday clothes for the special day. In the third community there was even a telephone—and \$12 worth of business in the little store, which proudly sold tobacco and a few cans of something-or-other. And Blue Ridge civilization reached its peak in Community 5, with good roads, mail, a school and church, and town organization run by intelligent small farmers.

On examination, the investigators discovered, of course, appalling ignorance in the most backward homes. The children did not know how to dress. They didn't know how to use a ball nor how old they were. To them a quarter-mile and a mile were simply "over that a piece." Distances and measurements left them blank. And the investigators found them hopeless failures in absurdity tests prepared for children of ten. "To the statement, 'A man said, I know a road from my house to the city which is downhill all the way to the city and downhill all the way back home,' a 15-year-old boy answered, 'Some one had to learn him the road.' To the one, 'There was a railroad accident yesterday, but it was not very serious; only forty-eight

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people were killed,' the comment was, 'He shouldn't have killed him.' "

Before the World War, a sprinkling of superior individuals was always found in such solitudes; but now no more. I have discussed the change with medical workers who know the territory and find that none of the more intelligent or ambitious poor whites returned to their native haunts after a taste of the larger life in army camps and at the front. Now the Appalachian country is a sinkhole.

This picture can be found all over the world, with minor variations of tone and mass. So live hundreds of millions of inferior personalities. So, during the entire career of our race, billions have lived and bred and set up their simple customs. Would it be a rash guess to say that perhaps one-tenth of the world's horde in our own age are akin to the "hollow people"? I think not. Certainly half of Asia and Africa are—so that settles the question.

Here, then, is the lump effect of all wanderings since man first turned his back on his birthplace. Like the soil picked up by a mighty river on its way from mountain to sea, the heaviest and coarsest human alluvium settles to the bottom first, while the finest is carried farthest. Find the great original centers of mass migration, then, and you can rudely measure the coefficient of stupidity in terms of distance and ease of movement away from those explosive points. Let me illustrate this law.

Central Asia, once fertile and populous, heaved and heaved skyward until its southern fringe became the loftiest of mountain ranges and cut off the rains from warm, wet India. Food grew scarce, so families had to trek or starve. For thousands of years, through all of which this desiccation advanced over an area larger than North America, gaunt men wandered away in every direction. Those who went north perished miserably. Many who went east and southeast came upon pleasant places, lush river valleys and deep, dripping forests, where they tarried an eon or two. A few of the hardest struck out southward into the frozen uplands of Thibet and beyond; and a handful—as we measure humanity in this geological scale—managed to crawl over the horrible Himalayas, clinging to slippery cliffs with their eyelashes, groping, stumbling, sweating, straining on and on until they looked down upon the Vale of Kashmir. Thenceforth the journey was soft. The Aryans became lords of northern India—and a hard-headed, hard-fisted lot they were, those survivors.

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Other wanderers went west and southwest; and, in the first few millennia, seem to have fallen upon milk and honey. But the drought trailed them thither. As it came, they pressed on farther west and southwest; thus there was always a frontier of powerful, bold, ingenious, and generally competent pioneers on some circle crudely concentric to—let us say—a point where the Kirghiz Steppes meet Mongolia. How this frontier fluctuated, from age to age, nobody knows. But we know it shifted with the desert sands. As they came in, pioneers went out, always leaving behind the stupid and the inert. The richest homes were always just beyond the reach of drought; thither went the superior people. You can mark their latest habitation on a modern map of Asia and Europe by striking a long arc from the Aegean Sea on the west over to Shanghai, in China, letting the curve run approximately through Gwalior, in northern India. Lay off, on either side of this arc, a zone one or two hundred miles wide, and you have the frontier of the superior people. Each successive zone to the north of it contains a lower grade of humanity, until you get to the Arctic Circle, where, for all practical purposes, you come to zero, not merely in Fahrenheit but in I. Q.

Do not misunderstand this pretty little geometrical design. It schematizes the status and locus during the millennia just before the rise of modern civilization in the West. The arc is, we may say, something like the median of four or five thousand years. Within that period the white men were starting to push into the highlands of India, the white highlanders of Sumer had not yet launched their great drives against the simple Semite nomads of Arabia; and the ancestors of our friend, Odysseus, had not yet turned wanderers. In that same broad time-belt, the eastern pioneers had erected what was, for its day and age, the most glorious culture ever, in the fair river plains of what we now call, in pity, China; but necessity had not yet urged the more restless to brave the treacherous typhoon waters of the Yellow Sea in quest of the dimly rumored isles of the rising sun. Japan was not yet.

All this simple distribution has been changed by modern man and his devices. You find the clever wandering all over the earth, on round trip tickets. You find the stupid everywhere, sometimes herded like sheep and shipped over oceans to toil for the clever—as of late in Detroit and Pittsburgh. The ancient rule no longer holds: as we have surmounted time and space, we have also stirred

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the scummy caldrons of our breed to their dregs and brought up strange fish. The plague of our day is that there is no escaping the stupid any more. Fly on the wings of the morning to the uttermost parts, and they shall be with you.

Ireland

The descendants of those shiploads of famished fugitives which entered the Golden Gate during and after the wild rush for gold like to call these immigrants lusty, forward-looking pioneers. The label will not stick. There is evidence aplenty to show, in support of my contention, that rapid currents of migration pick up and carry low-grade people as far as the first stopping place, where it drops them. Where dropped, they remain, an inert mass which by accretion builds up, may we say, a human reef athwart the brisker currents of mankind.

Out of Ireland were washed two muddy fluxes, one being carried around Cape Horn to San Francisco, the other over the Atlantic to New York and Boston. These three cities received the swarm and, against their wills, kept them. Largely as a result of this folk-wave, Tammany Hall arose, Boston became a dreary joke, and the working classes of San Francisco still live below the American standard. Vile as political corruption always has been in our country, these newcomers made it viler. As their descendants now are scattered all over the land, it may repay us to consider the original stock and its unique stupidity. If we can profit from the knowledge in no other way, we can at least learn much about the motives and character of wanderers, thereby disabusing our mind of a silly old American superstition.

The Irish were the last of the white race to linger in a state of genuine slavery, the very last to throw off the yoke and become free. I am not referring to recent political events. I think rather of the domination of the landlords for many generations, well down into the nineteenth century. Even the English historians more or less prejudiced against Ireland have declared that the condition of that sad land's peasantry was indistinguishable from slavery even as late as the days of the Land League, in 1879. This may be putting it rather

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strongly, but there is no denying the essential fact, at whatever date the year of deliverance may be fixed.

Ever since the Anglo-Norman invasion in the twelfth century, Irish chieftains were thugs and gunmen, grasping, murderous, ruthless. And Irish history was little more than a chronicle of conspiracies, assassinations, and treacheries such as you read about in the tabloid newspaper reports of the Chicago racketeers. Only the names and dates differ: instead of Capone and Ruffi and Nizzano, it is O'Neill, O'Donnell and Macarthy. The Tyrone gang does battle against the Donegal gang; and the national emblem is the shillalah, under whose blows the small peasant was thoroughly crushed.

To all this add the incredibly stupid oppressions by the English, the tale of which has never been exaggerated even by the most fanatical Irish patriot. The horrors of the war which Queen Elizabeth launched against the rebellious Desmond in 1575 match those of the half-wit Philip of Spain in the Netherlands. The Irish country folk were slaughtered in droves, while the survivors were stripped of food and shelter. Cannibalism returned. As that faithful eyewitness, Spenser, testified, "They (the Irish of that famine) looked like anatomies of death; they did eat the dead carrion and one another soon after, insomuch as the very carcasses they spared not to scrape out of their graves."

Now, there must be a profound stupidity in any person who endures every form of outrage and suffering year in and year out. Only a nature of singular insensitivity could carry on through the hardships and injustices endured by the Irish of old. Creatures who reacted keenly to cold, to hunger, to abuse, and to the slashing swords of thugs and foreign despoiler must have died out quickly, leaving behind only a brutal remnant of the racial stock. In no people do we see this trend more clearly than in the Irish peasants during the past five hundred years.

Take, for example, their incredible addiction to the potato, which Raleigh introduced in 1610. Give them full credit and allow every extenuating circumstance; the phenomenon still remains almost unique in folkways. The Elizabethan wars, it is true, did discourage every Irishman from planting the usual crops; for to plant such was merely to invite marauders. The entire population strove to exist from hand to mouth. And, because one man could grow, with his own sweat, potatoes enough to feed forty mouths, the poor devils

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concentrated on the tuber—which was soon to prove their fate. Then, too, it was easy to leave this crop underground and to dig only as many as were needed from day to day; so this thwarted the looters.

Now, from the end of May to early September there were no potatoes. For the old crop had been exhausted; if not eaten, then rotted in the ground. Summer was the period called “meal months” and invariably brought the peasants to the brink of starvation, no matter how good the previous crop had been. What would intelligent farmers have done? Planted a little of something beside potatoes, of course; the chance of guarding such against the thugs might have been slim but surely it was worth taking, when the alternative was famine. And what would prudent farmers have done, by way of further preventives of disaster? They would have sought other sources of food. And they would quickly have found it in the rivers and coastal waters; for there swarm salmon and many other delectable fish, all to be had by any angler or toiler with nets.

But what did the Irish do? Famines began on a vast scale and with horrible frequency in the eighteenth century, the first notable one coming in 1739, as a consequence of a winter frost which froze the tubers in the soil, then left them to rot as spring thaws came. From that year down to 1880—a span of some 141 years, or three full generations of peasants—crop failures, partial or total, occurred at short intervals, the evillest stretch being between 1831 and 1842, when six seasons of misery smote the benighted people.

Surely, one might think, after those awful eleven years, the potato growers would use their wits to alleviate their plight. Surely they would grow, in their exceedingly fertile soil, other crops. Hundreds of intelligent Englishmen, Irishmen, and others uttered solemn warnings. The accursed habit was widely exposed and castigated. Would-be benefactors and rescuers caught fish for the hungriest Irish, only to behold the latter reject the nutritious food with scorn. Everybody went on as before, planting endless potatoes and starving through the summers.

Nor was this the grossest stupidity. A worse one must be recounted. The peasants bred like rabbits, regardless of their misery. In 1785, after there had been several famines of varying severity, there were 2,845,932 Irish. In 1803 there were 5,356,594. Or, within a mere eighteen years, almost a doubling. The hideousness of it struck every

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wise observer, and many were the condemnations and warnings during the first decades of the nineteenth century. Clergymen and local officials exhorted the miserable barbarians. The Government uttered occasional advice. And with what result? In 1845 there were 8,295,061 Irish, nearly all of whom lived on potatoes! The rabbits hung their heads in shame.

And then came the inevitable. That was the year of judgment. The crop failed almost completely. The creatures died like flies. At one time the Government was feeding 3,000,000 victims, of whom almost 300,000 finally perished. The survivors were deported, but under a pleasanter name for the act. They "went to America."

Enough! Whoever wishes can write the history of the Irish Celt in this monotone of misery. It does not appeal to me. My purpose is served if these few facts make clear the existence of stupid wanderers in modern migrations. Vain it is to expect the new parts of the world to be peopled by the finest pioneer stocks.

In justice to George Bernard Shaw and others of his type of Irish, I add a footnote here. The primitive Celt is the Cyclops of this chapter's tale. But many people call themselves Irish who have little or no Celtic poison in their veins. My authority here is Mr. Gordon Wasson. He tells me that he made a careful study of the ancestors of every distinguished Irishman of recent years, as well as of many in earlier generations; and it appears that every man jack of the lot has little or no Celtic blood in his veins. All are chiefly English or Scotch. Some who declaim most loudly about their Irish blood possess least of it. And the most brilliant are all "garrison Irish," that is, descendants of those English who, at various periods in history, had been sent over to manage Irish affairs and who lived in the small Dublin colony, as far as possible from the Irish natives.

Similar statements have been made to me by various English students of the problem. They sound reasonable. In Ireland as in Spain, which we shall soon be inspecting, the early savages breed excellent hybrids when crossed with superior races. The mixing of strains releases previously dammed energies of mind and body. Stupidity, in short, is apparently the result of certain biological traits being Mendelian recessives. It is overcome either by being recombined so that the superior recessives crop out or else are subordinated and neutralized by fresh dominants. Some day a biologist must devote a lifetime to the questions this situation raises.

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HEAT

No human institution has ever stood up in a climate for which it was not originally fitted. The weather has always triumphed over religions, over marriage systems, over economic rules and regulations, over ethical cults, over everything else. And for reasons so simple that anybody ought to be able to grasp them at first sight. Climate is the environment. And then some! It is far more than mere environment; it is also the complete regulator of the flow of human energies, mental and physical alike. It works from within as well as from without. It works while we sleep no less than while we toil and play. Being a constant, it is forever being forgotten and neglected. Toward it we behave as little fish toward the ocean in which they swim. No fish, so far as library records show, appreciate how much they owe to the ocean.

To a degree which most biologists and insurance companies seem to miss in their observations, climate directly and indirectly determined the health and the life span of the masses of mankind—and will continue so to do until man learns how to control the weather to his own taste. It determines the number of bacteria and insects, as well as their virulence. It determines the fertility of soils and hence the kinds of food man has to eat. It even determines, in no slight measure, man's appetite for foods and drinks, as well as the amount he devours and imbibes. It determines the amount and kind of effort he puts forth in a day's work. And it determines his moods, in a score of devious manners. So a study of human types of behavior apart from a study of climate is like the play Hamlet, without the actor playing Hamlet.

The sun stupefies men in its own odd ways. Mere heat and light contribute little to the evil, in spite of certain learned opinions to the contrary. In at least two regions the white race has endured great heat and dazzling light long enough to prove neither a serious mental depressant. In tropical Queensland, Australia, and in the San Joaquin Valley of California the third generation of inhabitants show no marked impairment that can be traced to the sun itself. At worst, there is only a slowing down of general activity which follows from two seemingly contradictory effects of heat. In bedrooms hotter than seventy degrees Fahrenheit few people manage to sleep for more than five hours at a stretch. At the same time the heat

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dilates the superficial blood vessels, thereby drawing blood from the brain. This brings on drowsiness and retards mental operations. Thus the tendency is to sleep often in short naps. The siesta is inevitable.

Now, it cannot be denied that this slowing down of all cerebation constitutes a peculiar kind of stupidity, but it seems to be more serious than it really is, except when it is aggravated by other factors besides heat. White men in the sun can think quite as well as when in the cool; but they take longer to do so, or else they must be more powerfully excited. The trouble is that hot countries whither they go to live are fertile, existence is moderately easy, poverty can be avoided with trifling effort, hence few incentives to fast, hard thinking arise. It is, in brief, the indirect influences of the sun that stupefy us.

In the swing of centuries, no doubt, the clever fellow loses all advantage over the dull in a sunny, fertile spot. Like the companions of Odysseus among the lotos eaters, he tries of their food and becomes one of them. Only the exceedingly brilliant man rejects this course; and, as he is a man in a million, his dynasty remains tiny. Consider, please, the usual distribution of classes in old, populous tropical lands: is not the upper circle of ability and power very small relative to the middle and lower? Smaller, in fact, than in cooler lands? A cursory view of India, Africa and South America indicates this. Natural selection grades men downward where the sun is hot; so, though mere heat and light, as simple stimuli, fail to undermine the intelligence, their cumulative social-economic effects do so.

Hippocrates, in his treatise, "On Airs, Waters, and Places," remarks: "The inhabitants of Asia are known for their equable and gentle dispositions. These qualities are in agreement with . . . the mildness and uniformity of the Asiatic climates. To develop vigor and bravery, a climate is needed which excites the mind, disturbs the temper and compels bravery and hard work." To this broad observation modern investigators have added little more than confirmatory detail. But they have brought to light startling facts about another, far eviller factor of climate, Damp.

It is one of the deadliest foes of Odysseus.

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DAMP

The damp, above all in warm lands, causes as much stupidity as any single influence. It vies with the hookworm—and, if my own estimates and measurements are not seriously inaccurate—it wins by a length. Look at what has been proved by scientists, first of all.*

The limit of human endurance is passed when the air temperature attains and stays at ninety degrees Fahrenheit, with one hundred degrees of humidity. Even if a man does no work, he cannot live in that damp heat continuously. He swiftly loses weight, and the heavier he is, the more he shrinks. He suffers much more than if he were exposed to much greater heat for a few hours only. And his suffering seems to be connected with his pulse rate.† Usually the distress becomes intolerable when the pulse reaches one hundred and sixty beats per minute. This throws light on the statistics of suicide; the hottest days of summer regularly bring a sudden increase in self-destruction. It likewise makes more comprehensible to the dweller of the earth's cool belts those amazing changes of personality which take place in the white man who goes to the damp tropics.

British Army surgeons have made exhaustive studies of the effect of tropical climates upon whites in India and Africa. And our own Surgeon General's Office has carried on similar, though much less extensive, researches in the Philippines. The first American investigation was conducted in the summer of 1905 by Colonel Charles B. Byrne, Assistant Surgeon-General and Chief of the Philippine Division; and since then many advances have been made by others. The most important facts established by these many workers make only too clear the complete undermining of the white man's mind and body in Manila, where for several months of each year the daily heat remains almost as great as that of the human body.

In such heat the oxygen in a cubic foot of air is almost one-tenth less than when the air is at the more livable temperature of sixty to seventy-five degrees. Hence a man has to breathe in more air in order to live; and this is further aggravated by the heightening of

† See Department of Interior's experiments at the Pittsburgh Experimental Station of Bureau of Mines. "Some Effects on Man of High Temperatures." By W. J. McConnell & R. R. Sayers. Government Bulletin. No. 2584.

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all bodily processes by the heat itself. He breathes faster and his blood circulates faster. This generates an excess of heat which must somehow be thrown off. So his blood rushes to the surface of his body, where the sweat glands are abnormally stimulated. The hot air, however, makes radiation difficult and slow. The blood tends to remain near the surface till cooled; and the result is that more than one-third of the entire blood supply is to be found in the vessels close to the skin. This deprives the intestines, the brain, and other organs of their needful amount, and general malnutrition ensues. The outcome is "tropic neurasthenia,"* a grave condition of nervous irritability, easy fatigue, headaches, and eventual mental breakdown.

Now, on the face of the returns, this may seem to you a simple unbalance. But, as a physiological process, it is a new balance. Only when you judge it, from a social or moral point of view, can you fairly pronounce it a collapse. The mental and physical stagnation is the best adjustment which the human body can make to the cruel heat and damp of the tropics. It is unfair to compare it invidiously to the behavior of a body in London or New York. Given the environment, how can anything be of great importance? Why strive, when striving means quick death? In the tropics, the Buddhist and the Yogi are biologically wise; so too is the Congo black who gets drunk every sundown and dozes his days away in sodden dreams. To them the zeal of the northerner, be he yellow or white, is folly. And folly the zeal would be where the sun burns overhead.

Kipling knew what's what when he said of India: "This is a slack, *kutcha* country where all men work with imperfect instruments, and the wisest thing to do is to take no one and nothing in earnest." He might have said it of nearly every other warm, damp land. Our own West Indies, for instance. The tourist sauntering through these magic isles during the dry months of the winter sees in them a heaven and sighs for the chance to live there. Little does he suspect what the six to eight months of countless short, hot rains would do to his mind. Not even the hardy blacks resist them.

They turn senile at thirty, as the recent surveys in Jamaica by Professor Seagar, of the Rockefeller Chair of Hygiene at the Imperial College in Port of Spain, show. And this too in spite of the very short working period, of about twenty hours a week on the

* Fales. American Journal of Medical Sciences, April, 1907.

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average. Heart and blood vessels degenerate fast, so that, by forty, most negroes are gravely handicapped. They fatigue readily, and they simply have no minds in the Northern sense of that word. To be sure, some of their defects go back to other tropical influences such as an excess of starch in the diet and the inevitable craving for narcotics, particularly alcohol and strong tobacco. But the harmful indulgence in such things is itself largely stupid, not at all compulsory. Tropical neurasthenia brings psychic inertia: the victim of the damp heat cannot think clearly about his self-management. Once more the vicious circle!

We do not have to go as far as India or the West Indies to behold its sinister curves. Our own South exhibits them. For more than half the year the air in the Cotton Belt is heavy with moisture and shimmering with heat. And what of the typical Cotton Belt farmer? Recall that general intelligence is the ability to adjust successfully to new situations, while general unintelligence is the inability so to do. For the past ten years this farmer has acted with such consistent unintelligence that we have no other conclusion to draw than that he is a stupid clod. The evidence is thorough and patent. Let the first witness be E. C. Westbrook, of the Georgia State College of Agriculture. Bear in mind that he is talking about white men, not negroes.

For the past five years the College has been conducting experiments for the benefit of the cotton growers. These have been carried out on local tracts all over the State; they have consisted of plantings made with proved seed, of tillage done according to the best known methods, and of picking, ginning and baling according to scientific technique. Says Mr. Westbrook:

"The experiments proved successful. Farmers came from miles around to watch demonstrations and were shown how to produce 900 pounds of cotton to the acre at a cost of 6.1 cents a pound while they had been raising an average of 150 pounds at a cost of 20 cents. But they went right back home and continued farming as they always have done."

They act with the same moron stupidity when they sell their cotton, too. Sam Bass, secretary-treasurer of the Louisiana Cotton Co-operative Association, has testified that "the cotton farmer, out of sheer habit, still brings his cotton to town and disposes of it just as

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his grandfather did" And Henry Crosby, associate editor of the "Texas Weekly," asserts what everybody in the Cotton Belt knows: "The farmer knows little or nothing of grades of cotton. Yet this is a very important issue, since the range of price for different qualities is enormous. . . . The farmer comes to town, looks at the posted prices, may barter with the buyer, usually without success . . . and by nightfall sells for what he can get; and the next season he does not worry about quality."*

In a word, stupid, stupid, and then stupider. He cannot learn. Let him and his defenders call his behavior "pride" or "independence" or "conservatism" as they will; we know these are only camouflages for dulness. If pride there is, then it is the pride of a stupid fellow who cannot even see which side of his bread is buttered. Likewise with whatever other traits may be, in fact or theory, involved.

Not all of this stupidity can be attributed to humid heat as a primary cause. Natural selection has done much throughout the Cotton Belt, with its light, sandy soil, with its hookworm, and with its residue of slaves who have blighted the land for whites. Yet whoever has watched the toilers in cotton fields, as I have, during the summer blaze, can see with half an eye its awful poison.

As you compile your home-made atlas of stupidity then, get a rainfall map of the world. Mark off on it all belts of considerable summer precipitation where the average temperature of the season runs seventy-five degrees or more. Write across such belts the word "Cyclopia."

With the maps still before you, and pencil in hand, recall that regions of extremely humid cold are highly unfavorable to man, though they do not cause stupidity on anything like the scale found in hot countries. Mark all arctic, sub-arctic, high plateau, and high mountain lands off merely as unfit for high-grade inhabitants. Now look! How much of the land surface of this world lies outside of these chill regions and Cyclopia?

Less than half of our own country; less than half of Europe; scarcely any of Asia or Africa or South America, except Japan, a few patches in the highlands of India, a straggling of tiny plateaus throughout the Andes, and possibly one-quarter of Mexico. No

* This and the two previous citations are gathered from a series of interviews by the United

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wonder Odysseus and his clever companions must wander far to find homes!

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Most men dig their own graves with their teeth So runs the old saw. To this I add the Three Arts of Grave Digging: there is Overeating, Undereating, and Misedeating. The first I shall treat under the head of Self-Management, somewhat later, inasmuch as it appears to me primarily a stupidity of control, not a matter of nourishment. Furthermore, it is rare and cannot be alleged to figure largely in the evolution of mass stupidity, which is our immediate concern.

The other two arts, alas, are universal and perennial. Perhaps the largest empire of the stupid is the one inhabited by the underfed and the mised. Few people learn to select foods suited to their natures; still fewer are able to get enough food, be it good or bad. I judge by sample reports from experts when I venture the guess that more than a billion people practise these two black arts and are, to some measurable degree, dulled by them. To the temperate zone dweller it seems strange that most of the billion should dwell in warm countries where food grows the year around in abundance. But this is a commonplace among students of nutrition: usually the tropical man consumes too much starch, especially in such form as yams, while he never takes in enough vitamins and minerals. Then too, the heat enervates him, spoils his appetite, and so drives him to stimulate the stomach with burning red peppers, curry, raw rum, and fiercer edible flames. Visit a native restaurant in India or Mexico, if you wish a hot time.

But the cool zones furnish underfed and mised people aplenty. The great plains of Russia, Siberia, Africa, and the Americas are probably the worst regions in this respect; for outside of the towns where modern city ways have intruded the diet is both meagre and monotonous: black bread, sheep's milk cheese, bad tea or coffee, grease-poisoned potatoes and the like make it up. All observers whose testimony I have taken agree in the main that the unbelievable stupidity of the Russian peasant is conspicuously a result of his abominable menus. Not a few scientists have averred that the backwardness of the American Indians, if not also of their predecessors, was caused largely by their eating too much maize. Lack of fruit

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and vegetables has dulled the Mexican wit ever since Aztec days; and intestinal diseases caused by bad food have stricken Mexican sense and brawn appallingly.

Now, the curious thing about all this is that one does not have to stuff on maize or sour rye bread or pork grease, in order to be stupefied. When we say the Indians eat too much maize, we mean that, relative to all else they eat, maize bulks too large in their diet. When it does, they are likely to lose appetite and eat too little of everything. Wrong food thus induces undereating and so semi-starvation and its own peculiar stupors, which are definite and well measured. Dr Clemens Pirquet, who was in charge of the American relief work in Austria during and after the war, made the observation that it was difficult to persuade the underfed children to eat enough. Finally the relief workers undertook to compel each little one to finish all the food served before being allowed to leave the room; some children nibbled unwillingly all morning, before they got their meals down. Again the vicious circle!

Romantics who dream of a Golden Age believe that primitive man had the digestive organs of Cyclops. They imagine him in his damp cave such as the one in which Odysseus was trapped, seizing his human victims, dashing them

“To earth like helpless puppies. Forth
The brains flowed, moistening the ground.
Then limb from limb he tore their bodies
And made his meal, devouring them
Savagely as a lion bred
Among the mountains. Naught of them
He left uneaten—flesh or entrails
Or marrow bones. And now the Cyclops,
When he had filled that monstrous belly
With flesh of men, and followed this
With draughts of unmixed milk, lay stretched
Full length upon the cavern floor
Among his flock.”

Now, it is probable that a few thousand firstlings in each generation of five to fifteen million on earth did this. But the aspect of primitive folk all over nowadays convinces us that their progenitors were like them in the main, a race that slowly dug its grave with its teeth, perishing before its time, sunk in stupor. Do not forget that

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it is only within the last 15,000 years that men have tilled the soil. For the previous half-million years they devoured whatever was at hand. They wandered hither and yon, on the trail of the catchable beast and the ripening grains. For days on end they went hungry. On other days they made a killing and gulped until the skin over the belly stretched blue. Then they slept a week in gluttonous stupor.

Man gained a vital advantage over most of the animal kingdom when he became omnivorous. But what a price he paid for that blessed privilege! Eating everything—even clay and rotten fish, as the abandoned children of Italy still do—he lost all the nice discriminations which we find in nearly all other vertebrates, and so he lost a reflexly balanced diet. Everything went down the little red lane, whether needed or not. Plainly a creature that can eat anything is in graver danger of unbalance than one which can make away with only a few things. The former may have more opportunities of surviving in a precarious world; but he is more likely to survive as a bilious bellyacher, morose, temperamental, sour, and altogether obnoxious. For the more he eats wrongly, the more violently his endocrine system is thrown out of gear; and that disturbs all his emotions and attitudes. Stupidity in eating thus leads to all-around stupidity. *Man ist was er isst.*

From the days of the firstlings down to the coming of the plow and the towns, most of the world's population must have been sunken in the thick stupidity of a distended gut, a bloated bowel, and a sore stomach. Sometimes this was caused by under-nourishment, but more often by stuffing on the wrong foods. The less certain the food supply, the madder the stuffing—as in the classic example of the Tierra del Fuegians, who go for long stretches with nothing to eat and then, on the arrival of a deceased whale upon their beaches, do partake of the well rotted blubber until they fall in a heap, there to lie, well poisoned, for days on end.

To what extent do you suppose the social and political stupidity of Americans is a matter of food? Would that I could answer that question with assurance! All I know is what the dietitians, doctors, and statisticians tell me. Their reports are ominous. Harken to a few of the more thunderous passages.

Conservative estimates show that at least four and a half million American school children are suffering from malnutrition, more

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than half of them, strikingly enough, in country schools.* Dr. William R. P. Emerson † has studied both pre-school and school children, and finds that at least one-third of these are badly nourished. And, thanks to the stupid food habits of well-to-do Americans, malnutrition is often found among the poor little rich children of Park Avenue's best. ‡

And how is it with adults? Well, the United States Public Health Service § found that, while one out of every three men examined for the selective draft during the World War was rejected for general unfitness for military service, 40,000 of these were defective in height, weight, chest development, and so on. On this basis, the Public Health Service estimates twenty per cent of all Americans—some 24,000,000, if you please—suffer from some form of malnutrition. The Life Extension Institute || alone finds six per cent of industrial workers examined were badly under weight.

As you consider these figures, remember that at least ninety per cent of all such malnutrition cases are wholly preventable. Nobody knows how many such lead to tuberculosis—but surely a huge percentage—most of them avoidable with proper information and supervision.

Stupidest of all eaters are the women who starve themselves for the sake of fashion's form and line. Thousands of girls and old dowds commit this imbecility, according to many physicians. Many end up with tuberculosis or pneumonia—which is better than they deserve. Lack of food did not make such half-wits; they achieved that level as sucklings, no doubt. The sooner they and their breed die off, the better for the rest of us.

Shift your point of view. Look upon the last million years with just one central query in mind: What has kept things going? The answer is easy. Hard work, and nothing else, has enabled some men

* United States Children's Bureau. "Standards of Child Welfare; A Report of the Children's Bureau Conferences, May and June, 1919." Children's Bureau Publication. No. 60, pp. 238-48, 250. Washington Government Printing Office, 1919.

† *Ibid.*

‡ "The Role of Fatigue in Malnutrition of Children." Borden S. Veeder. *Journal American Medical Association*, September 3, 1921.

§ United States Public Health Reports, April 29, 1921, Vol. 36, No. 17

|| See "Health Building and Life Extension." Eugene Fisk. p. 189

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to go on living in a harsh world. Hewers of wood and drawers of water have done the world's work, while egomaniacs have striven to seize loot and inhabit palaces. Sowers of seed and tillers of earth have kept off famine while robber barons have lorded it over fertile valleys and employed press agents to proclaim their glory. The genuine chronicle of civilizations is never written into the official archives, still less is it sung by the minstrels—who were mere publicity hounds seeking a dole from the gentlemen whose fame they warbled. Mankind has drifted down a dark, sluggish river of sweat and blood and tears. Its billions of toilers have been like Nature herself, speechless, unanswering and hardened against pain, frustration, and obscurity.

Here, then, lurks the primordial stupidity. Those who had the fibre to endure this grimy struggle could only be thick-skinned, slow of fancy, and as calm as a granite cliff. They could not feel as we, still less dream and scheme. They lived within the compass of their day's drudgery, well adapted to it and breeding fresh generations to fit that hard frame. Nevertheless, though cut to the pattern of hardships, many millions still must toil to the point of fatigue; and, when weary, they grow dull. Nowhere do you find more of such than on the farms of the world.

How quickly people forget revelations of the rural slum! Time and again, whole counties have been exposed by wrathful reformers: once it was Vermilion County, Illinois; then it was Putnam County, New York; and again it was Adams County, Ohio. Ever the same panorama of stupidity, degradation, disease, and a general bad smell. Ohio farmers and villagers sell their votes for two dollars—a few impudent fellows demand as high as ten, in a close election. Thug-gery, blackmail, syphilis, gonorrhoea, peonage, incest, witchcraft, hexing, and all the other ways of the anthropoids gone wrong flourish from Maine to California. No metropolis is a whit eviller than any random collection of hamlets and countrysides having the same total population; and few great cities are so evil.

Every great realist in literature has drawn the same picture, shading and tinting to suit to local scene. Read Turgenev, Tolstoi, and Gorky for the truth about the Russian peasant and villager. Read Flaubert, Maupassant, Balzac, Zola, Bazin and other French writers, if you would get something close to the facts about the

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French country lout. For a glimpse of the Scotch, peruse George Douglas, and for considerably more than a glimpse of the Irish bumpkin consult George Moore and John Synge. Arnold Bennett has been, if anything, much too kind in his drawings of the hemmed and hedged spirits of the northern counties of England. Galdes and Valdez have drawn with firmer line and deeper etch the stupid Spaniard of the open. And Björnson vies with Ibsen in disclosing the ugly dulness, the superstitions, the fanaticisms, and the blank existence of Scandinavia's famed rurals.

Why are these tillers of the soil so dull? One of a dozen causes is overwork. The farm wife drudges, even today, from twelve to sixteen hours a day. The children of the sugar beet peasants in Colorado and Utah and Michigan often weed the rows under a burning sun fourteen hours a day. Lives there a milkman who is not up before dawn and plugging away until after dark with his cows and bottles? The Man with a Hoe is with us still, even though his hoe has been traded for a two-row cultivator drawn with a second-hand tractor.

It would be absurd to suggest that fatigue is the main explanation of our stupid peasantry. Elsewhere we shall show that, over all other influences, and far exceeding them in scope and vigor, is the old, old natural selection which drives the sensitive, the ambitious, the self-seeking, the quick-moving, and the sociable varieties of mankind off the farm, leaving behind those who can and will slave away for a pittance in loneliness. I have sketched this trend briefly in an earlier volume.* So I will pass it up with a reference to those appalling revelations of the farmer's wife in a recent study by the Department of Agriculture. A house-to-house investigation of the lives of 10,015 women in moderately prosperous farms brought out that their average working day is 11.3 hours—and in summer it rises to 13.1 hours. Out of every one hundred women eighty-seven never take any vacation; they slave on until they drop dead. Six out of every ten have no pump in the kitchen; they must walk some distance to haul and fetch water for the family wash and cooking. One woman out of every four has to help with the cows and pigs and horses; one out of every five must also lend a hand with the harvests, while one out of every three works regularly with milking and churning.

* "Twilight of the American Mind." N. Y., 1928. p. 279, etc.

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What sort of women can endure this? What sort will endure it? Only heavy-witted, heavy-handed creatures. Clever girls, sensitive girls, and pretty girls flee the country. In some counties nearly half of the farm wives are of subnormal intelligence, in the opinion of field workers and school teachers.

Women of Cyclops! And they breed back to Cyclops, true to form! So the level of rural life sinks steadily toward its origins, the change being accelerated of late by the unforeseen effects of big machines and the collapse of world prices for farm products. Behind it all we find, as a determiner of natural selection, this weariness of flesh and spirit.

The town workers know it too, but in milder guise. It is caused chiefly by pure monotony of effort rather than by long hours and muscular overstrain.

Such overstrain in early years lays the heaviest burden on man. The child who is overstrained grows up almost as dull as the ill-fed. The boys and girls who toil ten hours a day in city slums and in cotton or beet fields sink into chronic stupidity. And it is probable that the bright suffer more than the naturally dull.

My own records and experiments bear out this point—that fatigue has a more marked and worse effect on intelligent than on stupid people. Relative to their abilities, the former suffer far more from exhaustion. Becoming tired, the dull get duller—but only a little. The superior, on the other hand, experience such a marked drop in both efficiency and speed that their output deteriorates astonishingly. With adequate relaxation, both stupid and bright regain their normal abilities. But the superior swing back to their usual level of achievement more quickly. Here, as in other cases, they respond more rapidly to change, new situations, and shifting stimuli. More sensitive than the stupid to fatigue, they likewise surpass the dull in their speedy recovery with rest.

Elaborate investigations have been made as to the effects of depriving people of relaxation suited to the kind of work they are performing. The Royal Canadian Commission of 1907 that studied fatigue in telephone operators of Toronto found that, after two hours of steady work at the switchboard, the ordinary worker began to show signs of exhaustion; and in a little longer time, varying considerably with the physique of the individual, the second stage developed, in which such behavior patterns as responding to a call by

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making the proper wire connection in the switchboard started to break down. And at least half an hour's rest was needed to restore fully the functioning of such a pattern.

The attention rigor that comes with fatigue must be familiar to everyone who has ever been thoroughly exhausted. It begins very gently in the form of a mere effort to check the breakdown of a crumbling behavior pattern. You set out on a long walk, go miles farther than you had intended, and turn around to hasten home before darkness overtakes you. Pretty soon, your feet drag, and you stumble against stones in the road. The behavior pattern of locomotion is failing you. You fix your attention on the act of walking. You make a deliberate effort to move your muscles so that your feet will swing clear and smoothly forward. For a while this helps. But, as you grow more and more weary, the muscle habits of your legs disintegrate rapidly; and you have to concentrate on your every motion so intently that it engages your whole mind—and incidentally exhausts you very fast, from the top down. Now, strict attention is normally maintained only through a greater or less degree of suspension of all other voluntary activities than those involved in the act of attention, and also through a lessened acuteness of sensory organs not similarly involved. So here, you no longer see and hear things that you would ordinarily perceive. You do not turn out of the road promptly and accurately, when an automobile overtakes you. And you run at every moment the risk of injury as a consequence of your imperfect adjustment to your whole environment.

Here we come upon one of the most fruitful causes of misfortune in the industrial world; this clumsiness and dulness of wit that fatigue causes through attention rigor are perilous to the workman who toils around machinery. He becomes less mindful of his own movements and less sharply aware of the risk he is constantly incurring. The statistics of factory accidents reveal the significant fact that the number of mishaps increases steadily from the beginning of work in the morning up to noon hour; then, after noon rest and its stimulating meal, the number falls back almost to the low level of early morning, and then steadily rises again up to closing time.

Thousands suffer from fatigue brought on by some tiny deficiency in the secretion of the endocrine glands. Normally these function at specific rates which vary from person to person. If, however, the organ of the endocrine gland is over-stimulated, its secretion is

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abnormally increased, and, when the excessive stimulus continues for a long enough period, the reserve is used up. And fatigue and exhaustion quickly follow. Not until the normal rate of internal secretion is restored will recuperation set in.

The effect of smoking on fatigue is less certain. Experiments indicate that muscular capacity diminishes with the use of tobacco to a maximum of 11%.* Furthermore, the ability to co-ordinate reactions decreases very much. While we have no evidence proving that fatigue results directly from the over-use of tobacco, we do know that it is often an indirect effect. Heavy smoking slows down both speed and accuracy of work enormously. Non-smokers can work under pressure with far greater ease than can chronic tobacco users, who concentrate poorly, have poorer memories, perceptions, associations, and co-ordinations. Heavy smokers cannot keep up a steady, swift pace of either mind or body without feeling a marked strain. And they can never equal the speed and accuracy of the non-smoker. If allowed to work under no pressure, of course, they are not affected by strain. But once they are forced to hit a faster pace than mind and body, retarded by the effects of tobacco fumes, can comfortably hold, they feel fatigue no less than the non-smoker who is genuinely overworked.

Now, how does all this affect stupidity? Well, consider the fact that we Americans in 1930 consumed nearly 120,000,000,000 cigarettes, more than 6,500,000,000 cigars and more than 333,000,000 pounds of tobacco. Also bear in mind that, thanks to our appalling negligence of preventable diseases, which we shall later discuss, the year 1930 saw a million of us suffering from malaria; another million from hookworm, to say nothing of another million constantly under medical care for venereal disease, and other millions who suffer from such minor defects as bad eyesight, poor hearing, defective teeth, and so on. Then remember that probably a large majority of these sufferers from major or minor defects were among the 41,000,000 or more gainfully occupied workers ten years old or older, and therefore susceptible to fatigue in some form.

We have no way of knowing, of course, to precisely what extent the blunders, stupidities, disasters, and fatalities in American life are due to fatigue alone. That it plays a staggering part there can

* "Tobacco and Physical Efficiency." Schrupf-Pierron. New York 1927.

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be no doubt. And when fatigue from overwork is combined with the effects of narcotics, disease, or susceptibility to disease, endocrine defects, minor ailments, nervous strain, serious personal difficulties and troubles leading to worry and added strain, we can count the loss in billions of dollars and millions of hours of lost or useless work.

Certainly, too, the blunders of the World War—as of every other war—were oftener than we can conceive the result of fatigue and exhaustion borne to the breaking point. At no other time—in no other situation—must men be so swiftly alert to bewildering, chaotic, and deathful change as when embroiled in the caldron of war. Then it is quick thinking, swift action, speedy and accurate decision and judgment—or death. Stupid and superior alike perish from the blunders of war-exhaustion.

Weariness causes much more stupidity in the Old World than in the New. We go in so extensively for labor-saving machines and methods of team work that, within a few decades, our industrialists have lifted much of this particular burden from the toilers' shoulders. With each passing year, the factor plays a slighter rôle in dulling the mind's edge. So we drop it rather brusquely. But our last word is an emphasis upon the prodigious rôle played by weariness during the past half million years. Once again we are driven to wonder at the progress man has made, in the face of those inward poisons and tensions which multiply his stupidity.

Cyclops has always been sick. Tough as he is, he cannot withstand mosquitoes, hookworms, and the unseen bacteria which infest his air, water, soil and very bowels. When he is ailing, his comforters come to assure him that he is a superior person, for Nature has so ordered it that her plagues and pestilences exterminate the weak and the deformed, leaving only the rugged and the fair to carry on. At this Polyphemus grins, blinks his one eye, and takes another swig at his flagon of heady wine.

Stupid fellow! To believe such nonsense! That is not how natural selection works at all. True, the very weak usually go under in an epidemic, while the very strong pull through. But how about those

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who are not extremely frail nor extremely lusty? Well, each disease affects this large majority in its own peculiar manner. Pneumonia cannot slay the badly overworked. Typhoid plucks off some of the most robust first. Influenza beats down to an early grave the restless and the energetic who cannot bring themselves to relax and lie quietly in a warm bed. And so on. No single formula tells the truth about all.

Least of all is it arguable that most of those who defeat disease are superior mentally. Even if some were so before the affliction came, they lose that merit in the struggle. This is the dreadful tale we now must tell. No man has ever sung it before; and few will find heart to repeat it. I know nothing more disheartening in the whole career of man and humanesques.

The gist of the message is this: the race has not yet learned how to conquer the causes of disease, and one of the chief reasons for its failure is that diseases make men stupid, hence ignorant, hence slothful, hence incompetent as scientists and physicians. For every man who has died of some plague, two others have lived with shattered bodies and attenuated minds. After convalescence comes dulness—and, alas, it lingers in many a man up to his last breath. Here are a few pages from the dark record. Eventually it must be enlarged to a fat volume.

Stupidity is brought on by any of the following defects:

1. Defective adenoids
2. Defective tonsils.
3. Carious teeth.
4. Mild epilepsy.
5. Mild syphilis.
6. Various forms of heart disease
7. Malaria.
8. Hookworm disease.
9. Influenza.
10. Advanced tuberculosis.
11. Most kidney diseases.
12. Almost any marked sensory defect such as blindness, deafness, etc.
13. Rickets.

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14. Endocrine diseases.
15. Various severe physical injuries.
16. Various intestinal auto-intoxications.
17. Cerebral meningitis.
18. Scarlet fever.
19. Pellagra.

Then, too, it is all too readily induced by many bad ways of living, among which the commoner are:

1. Prolonged malnutrition, especially in childhood.
2. Alcoholism.
3. Drug addictions of certain types.
4. Prolonged masturbation, apparently.
5. Physical exhaustion from overwork.
6. Prolonged emotional excitement.

This is by no means a complete catalogue of disaster. Any physician could cite other ailments entailing their own stupidities after recovery. The list aims chiefly to embrace common, worldwide afflictions whose mental effects have been noticed by many students, and whose secondary effects upon the health, wealth and happiness of both the sick and the well are easily detected.

Were we to calculate the price we pay in stupidity for the diseases which ravage the world, our minds would go numb at its magnitude. Preventable illness in the United States alone today sickens even the sturdy who reflect on its meaning. Each year a million of us Americans suffer from malaria. Seven hundred thousand of us are ill from tuberculosis. Another million or more are enfeebled by hookworm. A hundred thousand of us have smallpox. Twenty per cent of our adult male population suffers from syphilis, from whose terrible effects thousands of children are permanently handicapped. Dr. Ray Lyman Wilbur estimates that "thousands of women are sterile or semi-invalids because of gonorrhoea. There is much paralysis, locomotor ataxia, and mental disease, and there are many handicapped children because of syphilis. All of this is correctable, and should be corrected. It is a scientific error, if not a crime, for a child to be born with congenital syphilis." Twenty-six thousand Americans are ill each year from typhoid. Nearly six thousand die.

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Eighty-nine thousand suffer with diphtheria. And more than eight thousand perish from the same disease.

And what is the picture in the rest of the world?

More than half the total population of the world today living on two-thirds of the earth's habitable surface is in constant peril of infection from "the most common parasitic infestation of humanity in the whole world"—the hookworm. Popularly known as "lazy man's disease" because of the apathy and languor of its victims, this dreadful scourge imperils the minds and bodies of at least 1,052,766,000 people living on nearly 20,000,000 square miles of the earth's total fertile area of some 33,000,000 square miles.

The disease, which is especially insidious in the tropical and sub-tropical lands, is caused by parasitical intestinal worms which are expelled in the feces of infected people on the soil, and which enter the bodies of new hosts usually through the skin of the feet. Dr. W. G. Smillie, of the Rockefeller Foundation, describes the symptoms of the disease, which, he says, is manifested by "disturbances of the digestive system, progressive anemia of the chlorotic type, physical weakness, debility, greatly impaired nutrition, cardiac weakness, and degeneration and edema; and it is also progressive, a gradual increase in the number of worms bringing with it a corresponding increase in anemia and in the severity of the symptoms."

The mental effects of hookworm are equally severe—and one of its most striking symptoms is mental logginess. Infected persons tend to have very sluggish mental and physical reactions. They take little interest in what is happening around them. They are dull and apathetic, have difficulty in concentrating, and, when spoken to, seem not to hear. When asked to do things, they comprehend as through a fog, and gradually and slowly accomplish what they are requested to do.

A typical hookworm victim had this illuminating conversation with his physician, which clearly illustrates the characteristic mental sluggishness of the infected person: *

What is your name?

Umph?

I say, what is your name?

What is my name?

*"The Hookworm and Civilization," by Walter H. Page. *World's Work*. Vol 24, No. 5

Yes, what is your name?
Juana.
Juana what?
Juana Maldonada.
What is the matter with you?
What is the matter with me?
Yes, what is the matter with you?
I get tired.
Where do you live?
Who—I?
Yes; you, where do you live?
Over there. (Pointing toward the mountains.)
In what barrio?
In what barrio?
Yes, in what barrio?
El Aoneaute.

This patient was normally neither stupid nor defective, and when cured responded with intelligence and alacrity to similar questions.

Now, when you realize the stupendous fact that in the tropics *at least 95% of all persons of both sexes over twelve years of age engaged in agriculture* are, in greater or less degree, infected by the hookworm parasite, you have some conception of one profound and staggering cause of the world's stupidity. The infection of city people is less severe, though even here it is a constant menace to every phase of progress toward civilization. Some tropical countries are a sodden mass of stupidity from king's palace down to peasant's hovel, as is Egypt, with her 9,000,000 sufferers from hookworm and bilharziasis. There progress is an idle dream.

As if the hookworm were not enough, malaria lifts its clammy head to mock us.

Malaria plays havoc with the mind. In the fever phase, it renders the patient thoroughly unfit for any mental activity and may even befuddle him to the point of incoherence. In regions where the disease reigns, the inhabitants sink to a horrible stupidity. They exist in unbroken, dull misery, their minds and bodies are equally listless, and nothing can be done to elevate them medically or culturally as long as they continue to live in the poisonous environment.

Malaria touches the black man lightly, both in body and in mind. He is relatively immune to it. In Ceylon, for instance, about twenty-four whites die of the disease for every one negro, while in Sierra

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Leone nearly one hundred and ninety white succumb for every black. Is this in any way the cause or the effect of differences in the central nervous system associated with high and low mentality? Nobody knows.

But in India, conditions due to malaria are unspeakable. Let the annual report for 1928 of the Ross Institute and Hospital for Tropical Diseases speak for itself. The report discusses Bengal only, but many other parts of India suffer just as dreadfully.

"Malaria is steadily spreading through many parts of Bengal. Within living memory hundreds of villages have been decimated; thousands of acres of once prosperous and highly cultivated land have been abandoned; populous towns have been reduced to the status of miserable fever-stricken villages; stately mansions have as their sole inhabitants the wild pig and the leopard; and the jungle is creeping in to reign once more over a land from which it was driven thousands of years ago. The malaria of Bengal may well be described as a great tragedy."

Malaria is the chief cause of death in Mysore, Kadur, Shimoga, and Hassan, where field surveys have been made. We can safely say that there are more malarial Hindus than there are human beings in all North America.

And in South America, except for the highlands of the Andes, which are sparsely peopled, about nine out of every ten persons suffer either from hookworm or malaria.

Alas, we shall never know to what extent the horde of stupid folk in Europe and their offspring in America are the progeny of syphilis. Not long after the crews of Columbus returned from their voyages, the disease burned over the Old World like a prairie fire in a high wind. It has been supposed that this was the first appearance of the plague in Europe; but Leon Ducheyne has abundantly demonstrated that it prevailed at least two centuries earlier. Chinese medical records reveal it as common in Asia before the Christian era. Nevertheless the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries seem to have suffered from it much more than earlier or later generations. Probably the tremendous increase in world travel just before and after the discovery of America spread the affliction much faster. At the same time, its virulence was fiercer, inasmuch as it smote peoples previously free from its taint.

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How can we escape the conclusion that tens of millions of Europeans were robbed of their native intelligence during those centuries? The mental level of the entire continent must have dropped appallingly. For see what syphilis does to the human mind. Children born of one or two syphilitic parents are often idiots, imbeciles, or morons. When the inherited poison is less violent, the offspring show general mental retardation from birth onward. If the disease is acquired rather than congenital, the mental retardation is severe according to the age at which infection occurs: the earlier the age, the worse the retardation. In the Middle Ages, this effect must have been much worse than nowadays; for, in the first place, the onslaught was fiercer because the race had previously been free from the curse and so had built up no resistances against it; and, in the second place, nobody knew how to treat the disease even by way of softening its shocks, so the full force fell upon the nervous system.

Physicians sometimes declare that everybody of European stock has several syphilitics in his ancestry. They base this sweeping generalization upon the century-long mixing of races and nationalities, upon the interminable invasions of countries by immense armies, all of which swarm with syphilitic soldiers, and upon the international prostitute, long a European institution. We need not go full length with this hypothesis. Enough to concede that some slight degree of syphilitic ancestry is highly probable in the vast majority of people of European stock. This leaves us with the painful question on our hands: just what dilution of syphilis suffices to make a child merely dull? Some day we shall know the answer, thanks to accumulating genealogical studies by joint staffs of biologists and psychologists. For the present we rest content with rough guesses. My own conjecture is that the 25% of the European and American population whose intelligence just surpasses that of the morons may easily represent the price the modern world is paying for *spirocheta pallida*. If you think differently, sit down with pencil and paper and calculate the ramifications of diseased blood through fifteen generations in a country like Spain or Ireland, where remote crossings of families occur continually.

Not a few physicians tell me I am much too conservative. They point out that at least 5,000,000 adult males in our own country are now suffering from syphilis (and possibly many millions more); that the proportion in Europe must be very much higher, as most

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European authorities also maintain; and that Asia, Africa and South America are simply sinkholes of venereal disease. Finally, they add, the record in our own generation is vastly better than in any previous one for many centuries, thanks to the newer methods of treatment. Well, I shall not protest too much; the case stands clear, in any event. Syphilitic stupor can be seen any day in any large office or factory. I have often witnessed it and been bewildered—until the truth leaked out. You can witness it in every high government office here and abroad, in every church organization, among priests no less than among pimps. Yes, it is not wholly lacking among eminent medical men! There have been, in recent years, at least two famous cases in those pure ranks.

We pass over, through sheer weariness of flesh and spirit, the gentler but stubborn stupidities of bad adenoids, tonsils, teeth, and bones, with which school teachers are painfully familiar. We spend millions a year trying to educate little children thus afflicted—and we waste every dollar. And we shall doubtless go on wasting it, for are we not all smitten with the witlessness of a hundred diseases? Add the effects of all these, spread them over the world population, and is it not marvelous that so many as a handful of mortals have escaped with clear minds and keen nerves?

Perhaps at some later time, when the Complete History of Stupidity comes to be written, we shall seriously investigate the influence of disease-borne stupidities in wrecking civilizations, races, and empires. This task will fill several years and keep busy a large staff. For there is a deal of widely scattered evidence to be collated and construed.

I have often, when in an irresponsible mood of speculation, wondered whether some day medical scientists may not be able to prove that the backwardness of many Asiatic peoples has been caused by two independent phases of disease; first, by the after-effects of dozens of diseases ravaging the continent of Asia for tens of thousands of years intermittently; and, secondly, the changes in blood and hence in nerve tissue brought on, in the hardy survivors of all those diseases, by immunization reactions. It is well known that the Chinese exhibit physiological resistance to various diseases far greater than Europeans. May this not entail a less sensitive neural structure or a slower function? I raise the question and leave its answer to another decade.

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Then, too, consider the Russians. To what extent may their retarded mentality be one effect of the endless epidemics which have started in Central Asia and swept westward? Look at the course of influenza, by way of example. The outburst of 1918, somewhere in Siberia, which finally slew about 18,000,000 people all over the world and weakened the bodies and minds of some 60,000,000 more was, I dare say, one of 50,000 which smote the race since dawn days. Who lived through these horrors? Surely people blessed with some marked toughness of body, if not of mind. Did that toughness carry with it dulness too? That is the problem which must be solved much later.

DRUGGED

Man is the only animal that deliberately makes itself stupid by eating and drinking narcotics. This horrible perversion of wholesome beastways has, on the most cautious estimate, doubled the amount of stupidity in the world; and has cost the human race, in dollars and cents, a sum far greater than the value of all the houses, stores, factories, mills, and public edifices in the world. In blunders, acts of cruelty, egomanias, megalomanias, lunatic drives, and similar acts, the price we pay for this self-abuse exceeds and eludes all statisticians.

Look first at the deadliest groups of stultifiers, such as opium, cocaine, heroin, and morphine. For every single grain of these which sick men need on medical orders, stupid men devour or inhale or inject nine grains for no other purpose than to make themselves still stupider and to enjoy the pervert pleasures of stupor. And, of all peoples, we Americans drug ourselves worst. Listen to the U.S. Treasury's special report of 1919 on "Traffic in Narcotic Drugs." The proved consumption of opium is as follows:

	1/2 to 3/5 grain per capita-year.			
Austria	1/2	3/5		
Italy	1	"	"	"
Germany	2	"	"	"
Portugal	2 1/2	"	"	"
France	3	"	"	"
Holland	3 1/2	"	"	"
United States	36	"	"	"

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So, you see, for every grain which an Austrian consumes, we use 72 grains!

Bear in mind that this is merely the amount which appears on various records. The smuggled volume is unknown; yet all experts agree that it far exceeds the legalized. The opium council of the League of Nations, a few years ago, gathered the best estimates of sundry investigators the world over and found them converging pretty closely on the figure of 8,600 tons a year. Now, a ton of opium is a lot of stupor. Were we to allow every man, woman and child on earth a dose of 450 milligrams annually, the whole world would need only 786 tons of the stuff.

The number of addicts has been grossly exaggerated; it is doubtful whether we have more than 200,000 of them. But the number of those who drug themselves at fairly long intervals without succumbing utterly to the narcotic must be enormous. Among my own circle of acquaintances I know a score or more—nearly all of them women—who take a stiff shot of cocaine or some similar drug whenever they get into a little trouble or have a headache. (Clinics testify, by the way, that women are attracted to drugs much more than to the milder stupefactions of alcohol.) It may well be that as many as 3,000,000 or 4,000,000 Americans use dope enough to lower their general level of sensitivity considerably.

Now for alcohol. Americans drink around 2,000,000,000 gallons of beer and 200,000,000 gallons of hard liquor every year. Hard cider and wine are hard to measure, because farmers and other country folk make so much for home use, prohibition or no prohibition. But we probably should add at least another 100,000,000 gallons to the sea of alcohol in which stupid Americans swim loggily. This amounts to some 4 gallons per capita-year of spirituous liquors for all adults and nearly-grown youths; and about 26 $\frac{2}{3}$ gallons of beer for each. So, you see, things have not changed for the better since pioneer days, when self-abuse via the stomach was tremendous; witness the old estimate by native sons of California that fully one-half of all the gold taken out of the state's hills and riverbeds went into the hands of saloonkeepers before it even started for San Francisco. If this is a statistical fairy tale, at any rate, it contains more truth than fiction, as all students of early America can testify.

Can we convert all this prodigious intake of narcotic devitalizers into units of stupidity? After a fashion, yes. In calculating the po-

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tency of the drugs, let us start with the known fact that as little as 1/4th grain of morphine taken daily for three or four weeks suffices to fix the habit, in many cases. For a non-addict, five grains of opium keep the stupor going for twenty-four hours. Using similar unchallenged observations as to liquor, we arrive at something like the following table of potencies:

1/2 grain of opium, cocaine, etc. keeps one profoundly stupid for 1 hour.

1/2 pint of whisky, gin or other heavy spirituous liquor does the same.

1 pint of wine does the same.

1 quart of beer does the same.

To the officially recorded consumption of drugs, add 50% to cover the smuggled and secretly manufactured stuff. Now spread all narcotic consumption over the 75,000,000 adult and almost adult population; and what appears?

Each such American is stupefied 108 hours a year from dope; 64 hours from spirituous liquor; and 106 hours from beer and lesser malts. From all three forms of self-abuse he keeps himself profoundly stupid for 278 hours a year. Could we but estimate the secondary stupidities of his hang-over, then we would come closer to the true horror. For one hour of almost every working day (due allowance made for Sundays, holidays, and summer vacations) this hypothetical average American is so stupid that he can think clearly on nothing whatsoever and can do nothing that demands even low-grade dexterity or poise.

What if, in that hour, he is called upon to act in a crisis?

Read our history for the answer.

After this panorama, it seems rather silly to bring up tobacco. Smoking more than 100,000,000,000 cigarettes a year, we American adults and older adolescents burn up about 1,333 of these petty poisoners per capita, or nearly four a day. This is hardly enough to grow hysterical over; but add to it the fact that, when we add pipe tobacco, cigars, and snuff, we use up nearly ten pounds of tobacco a year, the experts on stupidity must sit up and take notice. For that amount surely dulls many an hour in the life of every smoker. And that, indeed, is exactly why men and women smoke; they want to "let down," they sigh to relax after hard work or worry. Almost any one of them loses the keen edge of sensitivity after five or six

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cigarettes, after one cigar, or after two pipes. But nobody, so far as I know, sinks into a profoundly stupid state, even after hours of smoking; we become nauseated long before we lose our heads.

So we deal here with much smaller units of stupidity. Maybe six cigarettes, one after another, will result in a gentle stupidity—say just enough to cause a man to be outwitted in a delicately calculated business deal, or just enough to make a young lady seem dull and uninteresting, hence undesirable. Assume this, just for fun; then each one of us 75,000,000 Americans who have reached the age of discretion and self-abuse induces in himself about 222 hours of this soft half-wittedness. Cigars and pipes will add another 75 hours to this. Total, 297 hours. So we have, in all, about one hour each working day for mild stupidity and another hour for the profound stupidities previously mentioned.

Even so, we are the soberest of all great people except only the Japanese. "All Africa is drunk after every sunset." So declare Coudenhove and other authorities on the black continent. Two-thirds of South America is never fully sober; this is the testimony of scores of business men, diplomats, and scientists of long experience in Latin America with whom I have discussed the matter. Russia is one long twilight of vodka from which only a few superior people ever emerge. Italy and France hiccough gently as they seesaw up and down between midday wine and evening brandy. Even with their beer and ales diluted to a shocking state of wateriness, Germany, Holland and England reel along, not quite drunk but with a bleary-eyed view of everything. The West Indies are an endless sleep in a gutter running with rum. China and India drowse on in a bastard Nirvana of opium, morphine, and rum.

What wonder, then, that these two billions are mostly sick, crippled, foolish, ignorant, depraved, superstitious, or impoverished by wars, conspiracies, feuds, and frauds? What wonder, also, that good souls yearn to reform drunkards and drug addicts? We are not fond of moralizing—usually a stupid enterprise—but it is easy to sympathize with all who would try to make the world bone-dry, even though we believe that their efforts are doomed to total failure.

Men drug themselves—be it with opium or with tobacco, with rum or with a mellow pipe blend—because of their own inadequate personalities. Inadequate to what? Sometimes to their own ego and its ambitions; sometimes to the demands of love life; sometimes to

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the strain and worry of the job; sometimes to the choking wet heat of summer; sometimes to the depressing isolation of mining camps; sometimes to the death of a son. . . . Has anybody ever listed everything to which a man may find himself inadequate?

The tragedy of the whole sorry mess is that those who are most fiercely urged from within to drug themselves are the very opposite of stupid; they are hypersensitive, at least relative to the situation provoking them to narcosis. They feel things keenly but lack some skill or some opportunity that makes for a well-balanced life. So they crave to forget, to escape, to find a pleasant self-deception in some disordered dream. Of the several hundred heavy drinkers I have known well, not more than a handful failed to reveal, early in our acquaintance, the familiar signs of a maladjusted mortal. This is the verdict of the clinics, too. The rare and shining exceptions were men of immense energy and high ability who drove hard through their day's work and drank by the bucket in order to relax, forget their office, and fall asleep early.

KILLER

During the hundreds of thousands of warm years between the ages of ice, the river valleys of Europe and Asia were a twilight of jungles through which elephants and rhinoceri leaned their bulk, munching paths through the greenery, as still as shadows. Over endless plains beyond these rivers there drifted such herds of bison, deer, and horse as hunters may dream about in drunken nightmares. They were herds like that awful one which, within the last generation's memory, ran itself to death down in the Kalahari Desert—a herd of tens of millions of creatures which flowed over Africa like a swarm of grasshoppers.

And what of man in those days?

He had not yet learned to till soil, plant seed, and await harvest. So he lived off the land; and, because he became omnivorous, he outlived many a creature of more limited tastes and digestive powers. He had little or no skill in making tools and weapons; so, when those herds encompassed him and ate the earth bare, he had to loiter about the edge of the multitudes, pick off luckless stragglers, mostly sick beasts or aged, and devour their bleeding flanks on the spot. In the

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terrible droughts, when the herds disappeared in quest of far-off water, man had to grow bolder in his assaults and swifter in the chase. When winter overtook him, he hid in caves and fought off the great wolves of the forest, braining them with stones as they leaped at him. If food ran low at winter's end, he trapped strangers and ate them; and, if no strangers showed up, reluctantly he consumed his grandparents.

Throughout the Early Stone Age he became skilled in making and setting traps for little creatures. He lay still in trees and seized birds as they dozed. He crept up on fish in pools, after the manner of the sly cat. By the Middle Stone Age he had become a mighty hunter, most fearful of all the killers. For now he was fashioning chisels, hammers, needles, spears, arrows, and other paraphernalia of overwhelming things. The hour of fear had passed. Henceforth, in bands well armed, he sallied forth against the woolly mammoth and made barbarian barbecue. He swooped down upon the bison undaunted. And when food was scarce, he turned his new weapons against other men who vied with him for possession of provender. The unarmed lost out, the killer lived and fattened.

When there was nothing else to do, the killer practised at killing. He taught children the use of weapons. On gala occasions he showed off his skill before admiring throngs. The arts of necessity were exalted to the playful. And play became show-off. Soon after learning to feed his belly, the killer learned to feed his ego.

It is reasonable to suppose that, with the coming of agriculture, the killer quickly enlarged his power and prestige. For, above all, tillage enabled a hundred people to exist where only one had been. Men settled where the soil was richest and easiest to work. Towns sprang up. Within a few generations, we may feel sure, the occupants of the fat lands had to fight off the envious and hungry in the surrounding barrens and steeps. He who has not goes forth to get. He who has stands fast and fights off those who have not. The faster people bred, the thicker grew the ring of hungry foe around each fat plain. Hence the fiercer the battles. But—and now we reach a crisis in human events—the villagers generally won, when the odds were not too overwhelming against them; for, by the mere act of living in personal contact, with fixed abodes, they had become a gang, with gang leaders and a fine array of gangsters ever ready for a fight to the finish. Their nomad foes, on the other hand, were unorganized and

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aimless except in their common eagerness to seize the rich food supplies of the villagers.

Thus began the slow dominion of the town over the country, which is not yet complete—but probably will be within a few more centuries, surely before 2,500 A.D. It was the gang who founded civilization. It is the gangster who still maintains it. And the nature of his task is such as to make him utterly insensitive toward blood and suffering. As a killer of animals he must lack squeamish tendencies. As a killer of his own species, he must be cold and hard indeed. So, for the past half-million years, natural selection had favored those human types which either enjoy slaughter or else indulge in it without qualms. I speak now of the herd, you understand. But how about the leaders? Must they be as brutish as their gangsters?

The question is by no means as simple as pacifists would like to make it. Al Capone (to take the shining example which the newspaper headlines have conspired to make inevitable) surely is endowed with mental abilities far above those of the ordinary citizen who buys beer from his corporations; and he is still further above his feeble-minded gunmen who spray Chicago's streets with bullets from their automobile running boards. Likewise with most village gang leaders since 10,000 B.C. How else could they head gangs unless they excelled the average gangster in strength and in cunning?

There is much new evidence from the laboratories to support the view that, while not all men of superior physique and health are highly intelligent, nevertheless the highly intelligent are, as a group, emphatically superior to the sub-intelligent in these respects, as well as in stature. All recent research about geniuses and college graduates of high ability and outstanding business successes converges upon this conclusion. So far as our present arguments go, it makes no difference which is cause and which effect: perhaps gang leaders were those who ate the most nourishing food and came from homes which offered them sundry advantages in learning tricks and in exercising one's wits, and perhaps again the reverse may have been the case. At all events, leaders have always outshone underlings.

But does this imply that, since the rise of village gangs, the leaders have multiplied and have diffused their high mentality through the herds? If so, then—as some militarists have warmly argued—war serves nature's highest end, the improvement of our species. From

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each brawl better men emerge. A pretty theory, but purest nonsense.

War tends to wipe out the intelligent far more rapidly than the stupid. Nobody has ever demonstrated this more vigorously than David Starr Jordan, who devoted many years of his long and brilliant career to the subject * With H. E. Jordan, this eminent biologist investigated the after-effects of the Civil War on the population of Virginia. Two counties were intensively analyzed, while several others were more broadly surveyed. The findings were submitted to fifty-five Confederate veterans of high character and intelligence. Jordan sums up as follows:

1. The leading men of the South were part of select companies, and these were the first to enlist.
2. The flower of the people went into the war at the beginning, and of these from 20% to 40% died before the end.
3. War took chiefly the physically fit; the unfit remaining behind.
4. Conscripts, though in many cases the equal of volunteers, were on the average inferior to the latter in moral and physical qualities, making poorer soldiers.
5. A certain rather small number ("bushmen") fled to the hills and other places to avoid conscription. Others deserted from the ranks and joined them. These suffered much inconvenience but little loss of life.
6. The volunteer militia companies, having enlisted at the beginning, lost more heavily than the conscript companies who entered later.
7. The result was that the men of highest character and quality bore largely the brunt of war and lost more heavily than their inferiors. Thus was produced a change in the balance of society by reducing the percentage of the best types without a corresponding reduction of the less desirable ones, a condition which was projected into the next generation because the inferior lived to have progeny and the others did not.

Thus with every great war, except perhaps those in which most soldiers have been slaves. "Those who fight the most survive the

* See especially his books, "The Blood of the Nation," "The Human Harvest," and "War and the Breed." Then too, "War's Aftermath," from which we quote.

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least." Officers are weeded out twice as fast as privates—for obvious reasons. And—also for obvious reasons—officers tend to be superior mentally. So here, as elsewhere, the stupid win.

In the World War they won as never before. When the History of Human Stupidity is undertaken, long after this prelude has been forgotten, one or two volumes will be devoted to a survey of the fall in intelligence in the warring countries; and, while we cannot anticipate the statistics, we have no hesitancy in forecasting a dismal graph. It will be strange indeed if it does not show that the France of 1914 was at least 25% less stupid than the France of 1932; that the Russia of 1914 was perhaps 30% more intelligent than the horde of Stalin; that the England of 1914 was fully 50% shrewder, wiser, keener, more alert, and generally better than the sorry swarm of pallid beggars and loafers now living on a dole and great memories of empire.

Nor were the men of 1914 half the men of yore. Certainly the Englishman of 1914 was not the Englishman of Queen Elizabeth's glorious day—or else all records are false. Surely the Frenchman of 1914 was a dull reflection of the man who struck down the decadent denizens of Versailles. The scrub breed grows scrubbier after each great war. Downward the course of empire takes its way. And in time it comes back to its beginnings, the Man with a Hoe, who, staring at the mountains which rim his fertile plain, sees Cyclops leading home his sheep.

Spain

The red downward course of the killer is seen nowhere more vividly than in Spain. Here you may still see the prehistoric man working fields in his prehistoric way. He uses a pointed stick tipped with iron to plow his soil, and the implement barely scratches the surface. And yet agriculture is far and away the largest and most important industry in the country!

You may also witness the drawing of water in the prehistoric manner. Roughly hewn wooden wheels having earthen pitchers tied to their rim are turned either by the women or by donkeys harnessed to a revolving shaft.

Who but a man of the Early or Middle Stone Age could go on

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thus, when all around him other people do things in new and better ways? Spain has not been cut off from the world as China and Japan were for centuries. Her people have been free to come and go; and aliens have visited her by the tens of thousands for business as for pleasure. Her Basques and her Catalans are hard-working folk, the Basques in particular having marked business sense in a simple way. Yet they change not, except under pressure from the ruling classes, who are far more French and English than they are Spanish.

Should we not observe here that every period of Spain's prosperity—and there have been several such—has been one in which some non-Spanish race ruled the land with a firm hand? The first and by all odds the happiest era fell in the first and second centuries of the Christian calendar; then it was that the Romans took charge of the mines and developed them to the utmost for the sake of Cæsar's legions. Many great administrators went from Rome to Spain in those days; and there Trajan and Hadrian were born, though not of native stock, be it added. In those days three or four times as many people dwelt in the land as now do. And all lived far better than the modern. Again there was the long half-millennium of Arab culture, which, in some ways, surpassed the Roman. When it was driven out by brutish fighters and fanatics, Spain sank back into her natural state of ignorance, superstition, poverty, and self-satisfaction. Of late the English have been gaining economic control there and will, in time, develop a new prosperity—perhaps after two or three generations

Having meagre knowledge of the Spaniard, I find it perhaps too easy to accept the common opinion that he is incomprehensible to people of the North European stock. Fortunately, though, we may find the streaks of stupidity in his make-up without pretending to any thorough understanding of his entire personality. Like the color of eyes and hair, a stupid action pattern may easily be identified even though we know little else about the individual. So I shall take my chance of characterizing, in part but not in whole, the modern hybrid of many primitive human stocks which is now called by the census enumerator Spanish. The wide gaps in the description all represent pure ignorance on my own part. But, as few readers can fill the gaps, the latter do not distress me greatly. For the Spanish psychology is admittedly a puzzle even to those who know Spain well.

The Spaniard is the purest specimen of high-grade Stone Age

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man surviving in all Europe, just as the west coast rural Irish are the best low-grade types. The key to understanding Spain must be found in the fact that its people have not yet grasped the elements of group life, city life, and work. All observers remark the indolence of the Spaniard, his haughtiness, his amazing poise and ego, and his feeling of caste. But what do all these traits indicate as a group? In what does their healthy integration consist? That's the serious problem.

In certain respects, Keyserling has come close to solving it, just as in other respects he lapses into the silliest Teutonic theorizing.* He is at his keenest when he declares:

"Every Spaniard stands solitary and alone, like Don Quixote: this is how everyone must feel in the desert. . . . He knows he must live out his own life, that in the last analysis no one can help him. Hence his cult of manliness, of manly worth, and, in its extreme form, of the passion for empire over men (over men, not women, not things!) As a man dependent on himself alone, the Spaniard neither offers nor seeks pity. . . . Thus it is hard for him to grasp the concept of justice in its Western sense; self-help alone appeals to him as being sensible and dignified. . . .

"Personal courage is everything. To such a mentality, abstract justice can become comprehensible only when it emerges as the expression of the Inquisition idea. In this case it is precisely the personal passions of the will to live and the will to power which come to the fore. Nothing was ever more popular in Spain than the Inquisition; every movement for justice inevitably ends up, in Spain, as an Inquisition."

Keyserling later adds that, in Spain, "the primeval basic tones of earthly life sound forth in perfect naïveté, conditioning life to a degree no longer known anywhere else on earth." This is a piece of deep insight, but not at all original with Keyserling. It agrees with many earlier impressions and studies. The Spaniard has no capacity for abstract thinking. In this he stands at the pole of humanity opposite to that occupied by the ancient Athenian and the modern German. He does not think of himself as spirit but as flesh; he is of the earth earthy. All his psychic processes focus upon his own individual existence—whatever that may chance to be. While Western Europe

* See his book, "Europe," pp. 75-94, Inc.

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and America have been sweeping along toward a double goal—complete conquest of the physical environment and utter organization of individuals into social systems for the control and enjoyment of that environment—the Spaniard has stood still, rooted on the spot where stood his sturdy ancestor of the Early Stone Age.

More penetrating than Keyserling, as well as more scholarly, is Salvador de Madariaga, who aptly describes one of the deepest characteristics of his own race when he says, of the Spaniard: *

“We have seen that he does not enter into things by halves, that he is always his whole self wherever he is. It is therefore natural that he should not enter into things unless he feels they are worth while. This observation throws a new light on the habitual indifference of the man of passion. His indifference is only apparent. At bottom life circulates in his individual being, and it is this very sense of the life-stream ever present in his person which constitutes, as we have seen, the essential feature of his psychology. While the aim of the Englishman is to act and that of the Frenchman is to understand, the aim of the Spaniard is to live and let himself live.”

The Spaniard therefore lives, as this brilliant analyst says elsewhere, “in a state of improvisation.” He follows only the inner urge, which is never—save accidentally—focussed on things or power or glory or other individuals. Today he may doze for hours in the shade; tomorrow he may up and off on a long round of vinous pleasure; and on the next day he may read the history of the Alhambra until his eyelids droop. Outer and visible pattern is not. Integral and subjective in the large biological sense of these two words, he stands alone, lives alone, exults alone, fights and dies alone; and with his passing no other creature is concerned. Life is a drama in which he is his own producer, manager, actor, orchestra and spectator.

But this is animal. It is the free flux of an organism which has not yet reached the point of differentiating its appetites and interests so that it moves in an individual direction. It is man before the glaciers came down. It is man of the days of Cyclops, as simple as the sunrise, as straightforward as the west wind. In him is none of the cheap ego of the inferior Italian, none of the feline cunning of the

* “Englishmen, Frenchmen, Spaniards.” 1928. p. 45.

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debased Greek, none of the fanaticisms, vagaries, ruffianisms, and other flaws of action or intellect which French, English, Germans, and Russians show. The Spaniard's most terrible defect is that of primitive man in general, a complete lack of a vital time sense. Detached from all interests such as are imbedded in wealth, business, industry, and material progress, he stands superbly but fatally indifferent to the morrow. And when he says "mañana," he often means "never." He is, as Madariaga says, a vagabond adventurer fond of the long chance. And, this scholar adds with amazing penetration, the race is hostile to technique; "for technique binds men to things."

In other ways, too, our Spaniard of purest stock reveals the primitive animal. He hates details, organizing, planning, and all forms of co-operation for practical ends. When he turns to thinking, he cannot analyze nor invent; he always contemplates and intuits. Esthete and dreamer, yes; logician and creative thinker never. Madariaga declares that the Spaniard thinks while speaking; he improvises as he moves from intuition to intuition. He cannot think according to a plan nor by foresight. I take this to mean that the Spaniard thinks only as he breathes; it is one phase of the whole act of living, not a dissociated or hypertrophied function.

Contrasted to the leading people of Europe and America, then, the Spaniard is much healthier, better balanced, more natural in the sense of preserving, using, and unifying all of man's primordial endowments. He is not a mechanic, not an engineer, not a school teacher, not this, not that, not anything except a complete individual living a concrete life in a concrete manner. Thus live lions; thus elephants; thus common dogs, though the high-strung collie often disintegrates nervously just as the Western man; thus tigers, though, in the opinion of some experts, these giant cats often go insane.

A whole man, then, but on a low level! In his integrity we Western deviates must envy him, for he is a sounder creature than we. Yet in his level few of us admire him, for he stands on a plane between ourselves and Cyclops. In spite of ourselves, we drive toward other ends and see things from the perspective of our strange line of march. The trends missing in Spanish nature are, to us, the most important; even though they slay us (as they seem to be doing), we cling to them. As a group they sweep us onward toward the mastery of nature and the conquest of ourselves. To master nature, man must

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develop immense skill and power in handling objects, from the wing of a butterfly up to a battleship. He finds this possible only through analysis of space-time relations and all that these involve and imply. In a word, logic, mathematics, physics, chemistry, and engineering. But all these capacities are lacking in the Spaniard.

He has never yet been fired by the prospect of subduing the forces of earth, air, fire and water. Why not, I wonder?

Is it because he has never had the possibilities of such a career exhibited before his eyes? Hardly that! Over and over, non-Spaniards have proved it to him, but the proof never reaches the center of his being. For more than 1,200 years his eyes have beheld other races improving themselves in his own land by conquering the soil and the ore beds beneath it. First came the Romans, then—long after—the Arabs out of Africa, which was then drying up and forcing its inhabitants to seek life elsewhere. The lesson they spread before Spanish eyes is worth repeating in outline here.

Those Moorish invaders were shrewd business men, not at all fanatical. They wanted prosperity and cared nothing about converting the subjugated people to the True Faith. The peasants and the Jews, having long endured persecutions and extortions at the hands of the Spanish, welcomed the Arabs and found life far easier under them; for all they had to do was to put in an honest day's work and pay their head tax. In return they were left in peace to enjoy the fruits of one of the finest agricultural systems ever developed.

These Arabs brought with them rare skill in tilling and watering the soil. They covered the hills of Granada with orchards of orange, fig and pomegranate. They planted thousands of mulberry trees and built up a silk industry of the first magnitude. Every peasant's house was covered with rich grapes. Sheep grazed all over the higher, steeper places. The broad plain of the Xenil, some thirty-seven leagues in circumference, was metamorphosed into a vast irrigated garden. Sugar was raised in immense quantities, far beyond domestic needs; so that a rich export trade was created. Toward the close of the tenth century, all these engineering improvements and scientific husbandry were supporting an immense population. In Cordova a census of dwelling houses was taken and showed some 200,000 of them. So it is not unreasonable to infer a city of about 1,000,000 people!

All this was observed and envied by the Spaniards for many gen-

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erations. This high prosperity must have been visible and famed for fully seven hundred years, from the eighth century down to the fifteenth. But did a single Spaniard take the lesson to heart? Did the land beyond the rule of the Moslems imitate their agriculture? Far from it. Nor is this the worst indictment of the Ibero-Celt. No sooner had the last Moslem been overwhelmed, after the surrender of Granada in 1492, than the victorious Spaniards allowed the whole fruitful region to sink into disrepair, neglect, and eventual ruination. Spain became largely a desert—which she still is, a place as horrible as the bleak plateaus of Central Asia. Roads faded into paths, paths into mere marks across the wastes. Once thriving cities withered, went hollow of humanity, and finally crumbled. The stretch between Toledo and Madrid, once green, rich, and thickly peopled, became a dry desolation dotted with three or four wretched Stone Age villages. The Aurignacians had come into their own again.

And there they still are. Did the Moslems exhaust the fertility of the soil? Not at all, as recent soil studies have proved. The Spaniards never even lifted a hand to continue the good works of the hated infidel. They still have to import their sugar, though the infidel grew more than enough for himself and them, ages ago! They cannot mine their own rich mines. The English came in and did that for them. Indeed, the substantial prosperity of modern Spain is the work of foreigners. A vast deal of her most fertile acres still lie idle. (The census hides this fact and is not to be trusted; much of what the Government classifies as "productive area" is not under cultivation at all.) A Spanish engineer is almost a contradiction in terms. So is a Spanish business man. You might as well speak of an Aurignacian mathematician. Englishmen financed and built the railways. Americans put in the telephones. The good hotels are owned and run by foreigners; the bad ones by natives.

The same insensitivity to mathematics and to the management of affairs appears in its darkest garb in the ancient Spanish attitude toward work and money. It is notorious that the modern Spaniard differs little, if at all, from the primeval in his firm conviction that the only proper way to become rich is to loot or else to find treasure. The Spaniard has ever been a highwayman, a thug, and a plunderer of weak peoples. He has ever been insane over lotteries and the search for buried gold. He cannot create wealth. He can only seize it where it may be found and taken—by luck, if possible; and, if not

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by luck, then by violence. He cannot invent tools, machines, nor methods of managing himself or other people so as to better his lot. He has not the dimmest sense of progress as it is conceived by us northerners. He refuses to change, probably for the best reason in the world; he cannot!

The simon pure, autochthonous Spaniard can show to his own credit nothing worthy of note in all the centuries chronicled by historians. He has not brought forth a single constructive thinker in philosophy. Calderón? He attempted a great philosophy in "La Vida es Sueño." Yet he worked out magnificent ideas feebly and indistinctly. In drama, where his achievement was higher, he went lost in ornament and embellishment. And furthermore, he was born of a Flemish mother, and not, therefore, pure Spanish.

Spain has not produced a single scientist of even second rank; nor, until Cierva lately appeared with his extraordinary autogiro, one engineer whose achievements would win him honorable mention in any other Western nation; not one genius in medicine or surgery; not even a half-genius in any social science; not one great farmer; not a great colonizer, though Spain once held more colonies than any other country; not a great navigator nor shipbuilder.

No Spaniard has ever produced one measure of great music; for great music has in it, as one ingredient, a certain mathematical fantasy. Its ratios, its series, its subordination of classes, and its total pattern possess a structure beyond the imagining of an Aurignacian. On the other hand, few people can surpass the Spaniard in the primitive song-and-dance music. Here his creations are heavenly. They fuse, in fashion elemental, the sway of the body, the tap of the foot, the toss of the head, and the lyric cry which comes from hot flesh. Not quite so primitive as the spontaneous wail-wiggle of the negro, it still belongs to the same prehistoric stratum of the psyche.

When I speak of the lack of creative ability in fields requiring mathematical and logical capacities, I do not refer to writers like Cervantes nor to painters like Velasquez, nor to any recent literary artists, such as they may be. In the field of analysis, either of natural facts or of pure mathematical relations in the higher types of creative genius, there has never been a single Spaniard. Or if there has, he is too obscure to be even moderately well known. And even were he cited, it would be important to investigate his ancestry. In all probability, he would reveal other than pure Spanish heritage.

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In the past thousand years what have been the two greatest achievements of Spain? The answer is easy. "Don Quixote" and the Inquisition. "Don Quixote" is a faithful self-portrait of the Spaniard as he would like to be. The Inquisition is a faithful portrait of the Spaniard as he truly is. Having drawn two pictures of himself, his genius halts, utterly exhausted.

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We observed, in an earlier discussion, that the men of old died young. During the half-million or more years before agriculture began, the wandering tribes had a hard time reaching food and shelter. The sick, the crippled and the aged dropped along the unmarked path. The young and the rugged went on. They found sustenance but paid a high price for it, in the loss of worldly wisdom that fell by the wayside when the elders died. The child mind ruled the world throughout that vast span of years, and that is one of the chief causes of the unprogressiveness of the Man before the Hoe. For progress comes only through the accumulated lore, cunning, and skill of many generations which are preserved in memories, then in memorials, and are handed down intact from old to young.

Farming made this possible. For farming meant sure food in one spot; and on that spot men settled down, built houses, fashioned tools, and built their traditions into the very stones and loam. As contrasted to the hardships of nomad days, life became easy and soft. When a man grew old, he still could potter around his garden, herd the sheep, and huddle close to the fire when the nights grew bitter. His sons and daughters no longer had to leave him behind to perish miserably—nor did they have to eat him. So he carried on and on. . . .

That was some fifteen thousand or more years ago. Today, what a different scene! The world is ruled by old men and their old notions, while the young work to pay the price of this dubious luxury. True, the elders have contributed much to the rise of cultures—and only a fool would deny the value of their services. But, along with their peculiar abilities, have come disabilities whose magnitude we are just beginning to measure. These it is which here concern us; for they lie at the root of the stupidities of the pre-senile and the

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senile. The picture is not at all pretty; it rasps all finer feelings. But it must be drawn.

Men begin to lose their powers of fresh thinking and constructive action much earlier than has been supposed. And they lose these completely much later than has been thought. In other words, the period of decline is long, and the decline so gentle, in the main, that onlookers fail to notice it and guard against it until some disaster ensues.

As early as the thirty-fifth year the brain starts shrinking. In the average, it loses about one hundred grams before sixty-five. Spinal fluid increases considerably. The endocrine activities all start to subside, gently as a rule, sometime around forty-five. The sexual functions drop first and fastest. Among the sense organs, taste dies first. Large areas on the tongue and in the lining of the mouth completely lose their sensitivity. The end of the upgrade is reached by the ear soon after the thirtieth year; its keenness wanes measurably thereafter and tends to decline progressively but slowly. As the skin dries and toughens, it loses its fine receptivity, too; and, as you know, the normal skin starts to become mere hide in the early forties.

The fading of perceptions has lately been studied from a fresh angle by W. R. Miles and Bronson Price, at Stanford University. These psychologists tested seven hundred and twenty individuals whose ages ranged from seventeen to ninety-two years; they found that the ability to perceive objects starts to decline as early as the seventeenth year, strange to say. The first decline is very slow and very long; it continues, almost imperceptibly, up to the sixty-second year or thereabouts. Then the slump is fast. At fifty a man perceives things around him about as well as he did when fourteen. At eighty, he does it no better than a six-year-old.

You must understand that this is not a matter of eyesight alone; it is a matter of noticing and identifying things as such, in one's surroundings. It is the sort of perceiving that comes into play when you walk into a room, glance around quickly, step outside, and then tell somebody what you noticed there. It measures in one important manner the speed and accuracy with which you size up a new situation. This ability, as you know, is a prime requisite in running a business or in managing a government; it is the key to success in such high-speed operations as running a war. But who runs great businesses and governments and wars? As will soon be shown more

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fully, men well past fifty; men between fifty-five and seventy, as a rule. The average age at which a person is admitted to the pages of "Who's Who in America" is fifty-one; so it is not unreasonable to assume that the leaders must be somewhat older, for a man becomes prominent in his field before he rises to the top of it. If we call the leaders men of fifty-six to sixty-five, our error will surely be trivial. Taking this estimate, then, we find that American leaders probably perceive things (and size up strange situations) no better than a child of ten or twelve years. True, they will reflect upon what they have perceived in a superior manner; but the results of reflection will be limited by what they saw and heard.

Memory weakens very slowly in early middle age, then a little faster; by sixty it usually shows marked deterioration, especially for proper names and for recent events. What was learned early in life sticks longest. This is why, as people grow old, they naturally come to live more and more in their own past. The present means little to them, for they are stuporous toward it. And very old people become little children.

The energy level declines in an uneven curve, usually beginning just before forty. The slump at first is very slight, then sometime in the late forties or early fifties a sharp dip occurs; after that a moderately long, low plateau of half-power, then in the mid-sixties a second drop. In early middle age, energy surplus has been consumed; henceforth all that man can muster must be used to maintain body functions. None is left over for free play, hence little survives for even the simple pleasures. So life becomes, in a new and often tragic sense, a bitter struggle for existence. And man centers his thoughts and efforts more and more upon himself. The ego fills a larger segment of the mental horizon.

Here, then, is a picture of progressive stupidity. It is masked, especially in superior men, by a growing interest in mere ideas, words, phrases, literary turns, abstractions, theories, and other language functions. Why? Because these require little energy. They substitute for the heavy, complex, stubborn realities of business, politics, and society. All great philosophic systems are products of middle-aged minds. So are most of the fictions of diplomacy and statecraft. So are most political platforms in which national ideals are professed. So are most moral disquisitions. Though the middle-

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aged and the senile do not realize it, all such trends result from a craving for minimal effort and from a regression from immediate realities.

While the world jogs along in easy prosperity, ageing men cause us little trouble. But what havoc they play, the instant vast changes compel new views and fresh programs in business, politics, diplomacy and industry! Two colossal, heart-rending instances of this all too frequent social tragedy fall within the memory of all readers: the greater one is the World War, the lesser, our recent worldwide economic depression. What a volume might be written on the price of senile stupidity in these two vast events!

Virtually every powerful leader in Europe of 1914 was well past his prime. And not a few were ready for the padded cell wherein incipient senile dementias are tenderly nursed. Consider these specimens: in the summer when the World War broke out, the following statesmen, generals and mere politicians were of the age given:

Clemenceau was 73
Hindenburg was 66
Moltke was 65
Kitchener was 64
Foch was 63
Joffre was 62
Sukhomlinoff was 62
Asquith was 62
Wilson was 58.

Scarcely a man of first importance in the political or military management of the war was in his forties: the two shining exceptions were Ludendorff, who was forty-nine, and Winston Churchill, who had just turned forty.

Here, then, is plainly one of the 999 reasons why everything in the world was botched by this war of dodderers.

Of this short list the oldest was by all odds the gravest injury to mankind at large. The old Tiger lived up to his name and reputation, as all the honest histories disclose. A wild animal in pants, he ruled by brute force, by feline cunning, and by that stupidity of the French peasant which in Clemenceau, was raised to the *n*th power. His mind had stopped growing half a generation before the war—and it never had been much of a mind. But what it lacked in quality, it

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made up for in physical energy. Europe has paid a pretty price for this man; millions of corpses and billions of money. And what did he accomplish? He saved, for the nonce, a cunning plutocracy and a dumb peasantry which call themselves France.

Kitchener and Papa Joffre were old fools, never anything else save in their youth, when they were young fools. It has been seriously asserted by observant Englishmen that Kitchener was the stupidest man who ever became famous; and it is hard to refute this exalted claim. In the presence of his memory, all the donkeys salute. The ablest historians of the war among the English no less than in other lands agree essentially in the verdict that almost every act of Kitchener's was tainted with stupidity that was partly native, partly acquired in the bureaucracy which he so long adorned, and partly pre-senile. It is the last phase that interests us for the moment. The man had lost all touch with life. He was living in a dead era when the Germans swept down upon Belgium.

When Kitchener took control of the War Office in August, 1914, his biographer, Reginald Viscount Esher, tried to be charitable toward the old man. But Lord Kitchener "was no longer the K. of K. of the Sudan and South Africa, and he only as yet was aware of the tragic fact. . . . He was imperfectly informed. He had no knowledge of the organization of the Army or the methods of Parliamentary control, and all that these things mean in the administration of a public office. In this novel sphere he was baffled and lost confidence in himself." For which lack he compensated with senile pig-headedness.

There is hardly a more perfect illustration of middle-aged stupidity than Lord Kitchener's stupendous blunder in ordering the wrong kind of shell for trench warfare during the World War. Living in the memories of the Boer War in 1900, Kitchener insisted on using shrapnel, admittedly useless for modern warfare. He was repeatedly warned of its futility, and of the need for high explosive shells which would dynamite their way through enemy trenches. Kitchener persisted with his antiquated weapons, which barely grazed the German fortifications. In a single series of battles during 1915, the Germans mowed down the British by the thousands, losing themselves, thanks to modern weapons, but a round two hundred men.

Lest I appear to be picking unfairly on the soldiers, let me add that so-called statesmen and business men in late middle age botched

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things equally. Where can we find a more illuminating specimen of pre-senile thinking than Woodrow Wilson's famous (and, thank Heaven, futile!) fight at Versailles to insert into the Covenant of the League of Nations a clause proclaiming the equality of all religions? According to Dr. E. J. Dillon,* Wilson declared that "as the treatment of religious confessions has been in the past, and may again in the future, be a cause of sanguinary wars, it seems desirable that a clause should be introduced into the Covenant establishing absolute equality of creeds and confessions."

Although Wilson had long taught government to college boys at Princeton and had even written some passable textbooks on the subject, he apparently did not know that such a proposal was silly simply because it would have required a change in the British Constitution first of all. As Lord Robert Cecil tactfully remarked at the hearings on the clause, that Constitution now forbids a Catholic to become king or to sit as Lord Chancellor in the Upper House. Nor did this schoolmaster realize the tremendous charge of political dynamite in his pious wish: it would have stirred up a score of old controversies in France, where the relations of Catholics to the state have long been a source of vexation; it would have given the Flemings a fine chance to start a fresh row in Belgium; and the Italians would surely have ended up in a fist fight or worse.

How did Wilson come to make this religious issue one of the main contentions? The psychology of his age and temperament alone explains it. He was close to sixty-three years old at Versailles, and his energies, never high, had slumped so much that his friends were anxious. Ever a verbal idealist, his retrogressions had accelerated from the moment he was compelled to face immense, incalculable realities. For this he deserves no censure; as well blame an octogenarian for losing his last tooth. Lacking the physical, intellectual and moral drive to look facts in the face and to wrestle with the evil spirits which infested Paris in the guise of statesmen and reformers, Wilson lapsed into a play of gentle ideas. Centuries have passed since religious wars have ravaged the Western World; and, as every student of modern affairs can testify, even the old-time religious wars were largely masks for economic struggles. It is only among savage and barbarian herds, like the Arabs and Jews of the Near East, that

* "The Inside Story of the Peace Conference," p. 489, etc.

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men fight for creeds; and even they fight more for cash than for Heaven's high cause. Wilson's thoughts went back to the school histories of his own youth—probably under the deft stimulation of sundry keen Zionists who hung on his flank like leeches. Just as Kitchener, in senile memory, insisted upon shrapnel and rejected high explosives for war, so Wilson rejected the realism of a thoroughly disillusioned world and ordered the high explosives of religious zealotry for the days of peace.

Wilson, in this respect, was not half so bad as several hundred other politicians, bankers, promoters, and industrialists before, during and after the World War. All of them were shown up most cruelly in the light of that supreme stupidity, and mainly because it plunged them into totally strange situations calling for fast thinking, fast acting, nimble negotiating, and a shift of attitude to fit each turn in the fortunes of war. When we prepare our final History of Stupidity, we shall have trouble condensing into fewer than ten volumes the tragic-comedy of the middle-aged and elderly patriots who, by pooling their dulness and their enfeebled personalities, managed to shatter and pauperize Europe for a century.

In fairness those volumes must be followed by one or two which exhibit the price that industry and trade, the world over, pay for the domination of pre-senile presidents and senile chairmen of the boards of directors. If the facts can be published without undue offense to the thinskinners, they will convince the most skeptical that we must gain control of the rich, the powerful, and the egotistical captains of industry, to deliver ourselves from economic danger. What can be done about them?

Our answer will be rendered at the close of this prolegomenon, when we consider the problems of statesmanship arising out of human stupidity.

Mind ripens only through use. Each act adds something to the structure of nerve. Each hour of inaction withholds achievement. So we should expect people who, through any concatenation of events whatsoever, are seldom stirred and seldom given outlet to remain dull and clumsy. They must resemble children who grow up

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alone in dark cellars; such minds as they have are mere white sprouts groping toward light like those on the imprisoned potato.

For the past 10,000 years or longer this has been the fate of Russia. And, I maintain, nobody can understand Russia past or Russia present except by beginning at the beginning and observing the extraordinary inadequacy of stimulation in the normal environment of that accursed land. In the primer of psychology, Russia stands for Rust. Let us see how.

Who talks about the Russians in the way we may fairly talk about the Japanese or the Swiss betrays his ignorance. Russia is not a race. It is not a nation. It is not a tradition. It is not a civilization. It is not even a climate. It is merely a place. And such a place!

Not a race! Rather scores of races in a jumble of tongues and customs: old Slav, Ural-Altai folk, Mongols, Turks, Germans, Tatars, Turko-Tatars, Turko-Mongols, Slavo-Teuto-Turko-Mongols, and a thousand and one lesser bastardies and brothel-babes, not to mention that now deposed handful of Scandinavian-Teutonic despots who, for generations, looted the peasants and called it governing. And then, of course, the Jews and Mohammedans. And, away over in eastern Siberia, the vast, slowly moving herd of Chinese, who have, for years, been oozing across Mongolia and Manchuria into the Soviet country by the thousands and tens of thousands. How can we speak of all these in a single judgment? Impossible, of course. Among them must be all sorts and conditions of men.

Russia is not a nation; this is admitted by its present form of central government when it calls itself the Union of Soviet Republics. Its peoples differ among themselves so greatly that genuine political unity is out of the question for many, many years yet to come. This, of course, does not imply that the Soviet régime may not prosper. It merely indicates that whatever success it attains and retains will be on some other basis, probably that of a benevolent despotism—one of the nicest of all governments, while its mood lasts.

Each racial group has its own culture and traditions, of course: did you know that, for a round century, one of the purest German districts in the world has been along the Volga? Catherine the Great brought in sturdy Lutheran peasants by the tens of thousands toward the close of the eighteenth century, and their descendants are still

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there. So with many other peoples. Nobody knows how many millions of German origin live in Russia; but you may be sure that most of the business and industry of that country is in their hands. And we must be on our guard against including their achievements under the head of Russian deeds. It was the Germans who first attacked and vanquished the locusts which were a plague in Russia; the Germans who got after the snakes which infested Central Russia to a horrible degree; the Germans who first handled famine relief and took precautions to protect the natives against more famines.

Well, shall we abandon our survey of Russian stupidity? No. We may adopt a policy of definition which others have found useful. We may speak of the Russian as the rustic Slav who tills the soil and dwells mainly in tiny villages all over the rich black soils of western, central and southern Russia, as well as the grain lands of Siberia. As an anthropologist would certainly argue, this man is the very soul of Russia; and not all the polyglot fringe of the Soviet Republics has broken down his racial type nor changed by a hair's breadth his mentality. He outnumbers all other stocks hugely. He is ethnically pure to an amazing degree. In his communism he is fixed and firm, without ever thinking of it as a political system. He never emigrates as an individual; it is the village as a unit which thinks, decides, and moves. Within the range of agriculture he proves highly adaptable; he becomes a fisher, a hunter, a fruit grower, a cattle rancher, a market gardener, or a grain farmer with ease. A complete, all around man of the soil, in short! This sets the radius of his attention and interest. It indicates also the domain of his stupidities. As he constitutes fully 80% of all Russians, you see that, in some wide, rough fashion, the entire political career of Russia must reflect his abilities and inabilities.

Before we look at these, we must toss into the hat a few odds and ends of fact about prehistoric Russia which help us understand this Slav. The tides of mankind have washed many times back and forth across what is now called Russia. Away back at the close of the fourth ice age, the climate was much warmer and pleasanter than it now is; and the rainfall was more favorable to grass and forest. The land was a maze of lakes. The frightful marshes which now cover so many thousands of square miles in the north did not exist; instead the whole land there was one or two hundred feet higher

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above the sea level, hence well drained and, in the warmer climate, most attractive to man

Thus it came about that our species multiplied and prospered there, conceivably as late as 10,000 B C—though this date is highly conjectural. The remains of prehistoric men around those old lakes reveal an enormous population; it may even have been the world's center of population for many thousand years. Plenty of fresh water, plenty of wild berries, seeds, and grains, plenty of animals! But, above all, plenty of room for primeval man to play about in, without rubbing elbows ungently with strange neighbors!

Now, during the past 10,000 years or so, a slow doom has been creeping over the face of this region. The south is slowly but steadily drying up, the north growing colder. The desert seems to have encroached faster upon man than the northern chill; but both have unmistakably been crowding in on Russia. Look at your map of Asia and European Russia, and you will see the longest stretch of desert and half-desert in all the world, running roughly from Manchuria westward through the colossal Gobi desolation, thence across Turkestan, and slowly fading out into half-fruitful lands throughout Asia Minor. South and east of this latter region the desert grows much worse; its blight has fallen, in recent millennia, upon the once thriving Mesopotamia and, much earlier, upon practically all of Arabia. The whole dreadful thing is of a piece with the Sahara, all is the result of a single change of climate caused by a single main set of changes in the earth's surface and air.

Whether the cold of the north is the beginning of a new ice age there or merely one phase of those long swings of temperature which mark off the historical period into eras of ups and downs, nobody can say. But our immediate argument can stand without that information. For all I wish to impress upon you is that, first, most of the migrations out of Asia and northeastern Europe for the past hundred or more centuries have been caused, in the first instance, by famine or water shortage brought on by increasing cold in the north and increasing drought in the south; and, secondly, that the present Slavs are a very high type of Stone Age humanity, as compared to the present Spaniards, Italians, Greeks, and Norwegians, but they linger fully 5,000 years behind the best of the present Western stock, chiefly as a result of their appalling isolation and the extreme fixation of their minds and efforts upon village farming.

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This fixation, no doubt, is mainly one result of the isolation; the moujik of the steppes sees nothing else to attend to but the dirt beneath his feet. Go whithersoever he will, he sees nothing but dirt, dirt, and dirt. So how can he change his mind?

Here we lay hands on the key to Russian stupidity, which is deep and pervasive, though infinitely less sinister than the stupidity of the Spaniard. We all know that lack of stimulation makes people dull. The mechanism of this is now fairly understood. The nervous system grows and refines its interlacing cell patterns with use. Within certain low limits, it will develop under only slight stimulation; but it never reaches a high level without considerable variety and intensity of experience. Then too, such experience must come early in life. The child must see, hear, taste, feel and smell many things, hearken to talk on all sorts of topics, observe many kinds of people, and visit strange places. He must apply himself to a variety of studies and exercise his muscles in many ways. Now, apply these commonplaces of psychology to your analysis of the typical career of a moujik's child in a lost farm village of the black lands a hundred miles from a sizable town. Think especially of his first twenty winters. These are little more than a series of hibernations. Indeed, in a few parts of Siberia, the moujiks practise *latka*, or "winter sleep," in a manner startlingly like the bears. The entire family remains in bed about twenty-two hours out of every twenty-four. An immense urn of tea is lighted up for the whole winter, and around it are placed hunks of black bread, all within reach of the sleepers. For a minute or two daily each member rouses enough to sip tea and nibble bread; then back to sweet dreams of Nirvana! Naturally, as no work is done, and as everybody sleeps on top of the huge horizontal porcelain stove, little energy goes lost; hence little need be eaten. When spring arrives, everybody is well rested. But how about the mind? It sinks into a stuporous inactivity and stays there.

The moujik is the world's prize sleep walker. He never quite wakes up. When he strives to think, he muddles everything in much the same way as a man just aroused too quickly from slumber. This accounts largely, though not wholly, for his gravest weaknesses, his profound lack of logic and his poor observations in matters to which he is supposed to give his best attention. Manifesting a simple love of the soil as well as a fundamental knack of working it, he remains

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one of the stupidest agriculturists in all the world—always barring the few shining cases like the Spaniard. He is not to be mentioned in the same class with the Chinese. And here is a morsel of evidence, which might be supplemented by thousands of others.

He cannot sustain his efforts properly even in the simplest of necessary activities on the farm. He neglects weeding or hoeing at critical moments. When bugs come marauding in his vegetables, he sits dully or else asks the priest to bless the patch. But perhaps the most amazing stupidity of all is his failure to discover the effect of manures on crops. The Western reader will have difficulty in believing this; but it is a well-known fact that, prior to the Soviet régime and its tremendous educational drive, thousands of peasants in the Volga region always carted off the manure from their stables and dumped it into the river! And this, after 10,000 years of farming!

Moujik stupor appears best perhaps in the amazing fondness for sitting all day doing absolutely nothing. In railway waiting rooms, on village greens, in homes and shops during the winter, the peasant can ever be seen utterly motionless for hours at a stretch and looking blankly at nothing at all. Sometimes, when a degree more alert, he sits in active revery; and there is no daydreamer in all the world who can hold the pace as long as he. In fact, most of what he supposes to be facts are day dreams.

Another form of this same stupor is mental stubbornness. No matter what opinion the moujik may have come to accept early in life, he fixates upon it and becomes insensitive to every suggestion leading to another view. Here is a true story illustrating it.

A keen German farmer near Kharkoff worked a rich tract adjoining a Russian's. The grasshoppers descended upon his wheat, one hot day, and would have eaten every blade, had the German not resorted to a clever trick. He fastened a light rope between two horses, started the animals down opposite sides of the wheat field, the rope stretching across the grain and hitting it smartly as the horses walked along. This knocked the grasshoppers off the blades. At first they returned to their pleasant perches and went on nibbling. But after they had been dislodged several times by the rope, they arose in a thick swarm and settled down on the wheat in the next field.

The Russian had been watching this operation in his best vacuous manner. As he perceived the pests swarming on his own field, what

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did he do? You might have thought that he would have fetched horses and a rope and beaten the creatures off. But no! He rushed off, fetched the village priest, and had the field sprinkled with holy water! Strange to relate, the grasshoppers stuck to their job, and the moujik went wheatless that season.

I tell this simply because it typifies the mentality of this naturally gifted but thwarted race. Perhaps I might round off the tale by telling you of the custom which prevailed in the four bookstores at Kharkoff as late as 1840. The Russian in search of learning and literary entertainment who sought volumes in those establishments had to pay for them by pound! In the Russian mind, whatever had weight and was for sale must be sold like vegetables! There's conservative stubbornness for you!

Does this trait contradict what I said a moment ago about the Slav being a highly adaptable farmer? Not at all. His range of sensitivity is bounded definitely by the soil; to it and with it he will do almost anything, in so far as this means merely trying to grow any sort of crop or handle any kind of live stock. But he will do none of these many things alertly, none with creative intelligence, none with initiative. Owning the greatest single tract of rich farm land on earth, the Slav has worked it for 10,000 years without having contributed a single noteworthy improvement to any branch of agriculture. He has not designed a tool nor an implement. He has not hit upon new types of fruits or grains. He has not found fresh and better ways of tilling or of harvesting. The Chinese, the Igorots of the Philippine mountainsides, the Italian, the French, the German, and—above all, of course, the American—have all outstripped him in his own exclusive field. And, mind you! The Slav has had little else to do in all those millennia. In his only specialty he is a failure. What better proof of stupidity than that fact?

If the Soviet régime can vanquish the monotony of the Russian steppes and the winters, we may see the vastest release of human energies in all recorded history. Until these primary causes of stupidity are removed or greatly weakened, the Slavs will not compete with the peoples of Western Europe in any of the higher activities of civilization. True, they may wreck the world's lumber market and drive thousands of wheat growers out of business elsewhere; but they will do even this only by working for low wages and living close to the coolie level. Not all the acumen of the three chief non-

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Slav people who do the heavy thinking for the Soviet can change this inevitability.

They cannot change it simply because the moujik has rationalized his own weaknesses and has fashioned a philosophy of life which beatifies his stupidity. Tolstoi brought together the ancient faith in sweetly simple phrase. He made clear that "inactivity is the metaphysical principle of Russia which preserves us from the most noxious ills." The safe and easy way of life is to sit at windows and drink tea; thus alone can men sleep "with easy, sinless dreams."

To the genuine Slav the ideal life is one in which there is no striving, no struggle, no fight. Here is the root of Russian pacifism; it is not brotherly love, in any active form; it is psychic inertia. The peasant lacks all ambition, for he lacks the vision of better things no less than the capacity to manage an upward movement. He sleeps as no other man sleeps; he sinks into the stupor of vodka in week-long stretches; he shuns the day's task as a pestilence; he allows his brother men to do as they like, not because of a fierce passion for personal liberty but solely because he lacks energy and conviction to impose any custom or standard upon other people. Being thus inert, he is foredoomed to fall victim to any despot who comes along. Against tyranny he has no weapon save the slow accumulation of mass rage which, once in a generation or two, explodes in volcanic fury—and quite as unintelligently as Vesuvius.

And all because he grows up in an environment which stimulates him feebly or monotonously, holding him prisoner to the frozen dark for half of his life. When he escapes this prison, he expands and proves the high quality of some blood strain in him. But as long as he remains trapped between his Arctic tundras and his southern deserts of dust he serves as the greatest tragic demonstration of earth's power over the human spirit.

Can he remodel this horrible climate, this mind-wrecking landscape, this infinitely monotonous mischance? If so, he may become the greatest of us all—after a thousand years. The scientist and the engineer would probably say that Russian stupidity will pass as fast as Russians build modern cities and move into them. So, for the good of the world, let that enterprise be speeded, no matter how foolish its by-play of politics.

If deliverance is possible, it must be exceedingly slow. The past decade proves that. When the full account of the Soviet efforts to

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train the peasants as scientific grain farmers is published—as it will be within a few more years—all that I have been saying will be amply confirmed. The supreme rally of 1931 has already failed, as was anticipated by most experienced observers. As this little prelude of ours goes to press, news comes from Moscow that the peasants have not been able to raise even the usual amount of wheat; so Russia has stopped exporting the grain, to protect her people against famine again! This, mark you, in a year when three times as many acres as ever before were planted. This, in a year when, for the first time, thousands of new tractors, handled by American and German mechanics, hauled thousands of new combines all over Siberia and European Russia! What went wrong, aside from a slightly unfavorable spell of weather? The people themselves!

This is the sincere testimony of the keenest American experts on the spot, such as Jean Walker, who served for years as instructor on tractors and combines at the Russian State Experimental Farm at Berkhut; it is the unqualified report of Hickman Price, Jr., who went to study all the major wheat operations of the Soviet during 1931, taking with him a most unusual experience as a large-scale wheat farmer in Texas. It has been echoed over and over by the competent, and denied by the incompetent and the propagandists.

The select students on the Russian farms display innate stupidities toward even the simplest mechanical problems. They are trained in the farm schools for two years under American and German experts; they go out to work on the great State farms, knowing virtually no more than before they left their native villages. They mishandle tools and machines so terribly that tractors spend about 50 minutes in the repair shops for every hour of field service! Nor do these young men warm up to the task. They remain apathetic, listless, vacuous. They prefer sleep and tea and rum to all the machines on earth. And, like most utterly stupid people, they think they know everything about wheat growing much more thoroughly than their foreign instructors.

The astonishing fact is that few Russians know how to grow wheat, though they have been at the job for thousands of years. The best of them—apart from the best of the kulaks, of course—rank with the poorest Americans. If ever their descendants become competent at anything, it will be because Westerners have remodelled cities and climates, so ending the fatal monotony of the steppes.

ΨΥΧΗ
PSYCHE

MOROS

THE dark has its spectrum, no less than the light. Its lines are many. They differ sharply as does yellow from green; and what, to the physicist, appears as a mere increment of pulsations per second produces totally new effects. Just as one color of light fattens and multiplies a species of bacteria, while slaying another, so with one narrow band of darkness.

Stupidity is like this. Itself a darkness, it is none the less a graduated array of specific differences in energy. Each sort works in its own way, its blunders to perform. But we find no smooth transition from one kind to the next which can be expressed in the equations of quantity. We are not denying that such equations exist; but if they do, we are much too stupid to descry them in the murk of our labyrinth.

Let us rid ourselves, then, of the stupid man's notion about stupidity. It is not a simple, homogeneous quality which exists, in sundry degrees of dilution, in various people. It is a resultant activity—quite as positive as magnetism or acidosis. Its components, its velocities, its coefficients of diffusion are numerous; and each medium in which it works shows its own set of constants. To see some of these many factors and conditioners is our next task—and one which, like most others, can only be approached here, not traversed.

No man can perceive the different curvatures of three lines, each one inch long, the first being an arc of a circle having a fifty-foot radius, the second an arc of one hundred-foot radius, and the third an arc of five hundred-foot radius. The organizing powers of the optic tract do not extend to that degree of nicety. So far as I know, no psychologist has yet tested people in this matter; but my own experiments on myself and friends show that the limits of perceiving curvature lie far, far below the cases I have given. For most observers, one-inch arcs of circles having six-foot radii appear as straight lines.

No man can perceive, within appreciable limits of error, the amount by which two highly irregular areas differ, if both are—let us say—more than ten square yards total—the area of each being

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any part of that total. Nor can he see the individual points in a dotted line without also seeing the line, provided that the dots lie fairly close together, as they usually do. Nor can he see a series of dots as a line, if they lie ten feet apart, while he stands within ten feet of the nearest one.

Now, there are literally thousands of such special, odd, mightily significant *limits of primary experience*. They serve to define, on that same level of organization, the stupid, no less than the brilliant. Which limits do we select as those encompassing the stupid? Which forms, visual, auditory, abstractly geometrical, and tenuously logical, fall outside of the stupid man's perceptions? Such questions cannot be answered unless we accept and keep clearly in mind, as we go on, the utter relativity of sensitivity types. We must also remember that quantitatively slight variations in the elements organized give rise to stupidities which differ as yellow from green. Nor is this all. Our troubles have scarcely begun. Types of stupidity vary in a still profounder transcendental fashion which, at bottom will some day be proved identical with the laws of space-time physics.

As in physics, so in psychology: the events within a given field are functions of that larger whole within which the field lies. What you perceive is determined by your whole "world of meanings." It is one resultant of all the forces at work within your body and mind. When you look at a field of snow under bright sunlight, you see the white of the snow. A physicist sets up his instruments, and proves that the light reaching your eyes is much redder than you say it is. Does that prove that you do not see the white snow? Not at all. You are experiencing something much larger than the patch of light waves which pass through the instruments. You are looking at a snow field; you know it to be a field covered with snow and exposed to bright sunlight. The colors you see are relative to that totality; nor is that all. They are also relative to the entire time-space class of related experiences of other snow, other places, other lights. Thus with all experiences, great and small.

Plainly then, a man's effective intelligence depends upon the number, the variety, the intensity, and the organizing tendencies of all items he experiences from day to day, throughout life. No single function, no single congenital endowment, no single kind of training ever constitutes mentality. The whole is ever greater than any part—

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and usually greater than the mere sum of such parts, taken arithmetically.

Just as in chemistry, so here: a seemingly slight difference in the order, the arrangement, the distances, the velocities, accelerations, masses, and other features of atoms results in totally different substances and behaviors, whether these atoms happen to be in a test tube or in a nerve cell of the brain. The quality and power of one man's experience derive from an infinitude of events most of which occur on levels of organization and in orders of magnitude far beyond our direct observing. Not until we hit upon new tricks of bringing such into our range of scrutiny can we get at the ultimate facts about stupidity. For stupidity is merely a name for a host of peculiarly limited experience patterns. These patterns vary among themselves enormously: one appears in Beethoven, another in Mussolini, a third in Russia's last Czar, a fourth in Verlaine, and so on forever and ever. No two designs at all alike, except in their end results—a failure to take in certain important events and conditions.

To compare patterns in terms of elements alone would serve no useful purpose. We must find out how they build up, just as the chemist endeavors to do with his atoms. True, we cannot advance far with this study. But let us go as far as our own ignorance, stupidity and invincible laziness permit.

The last word on stupidity will not be written until personalities under investigation have been first analyzed into constituent traits and then made manifest as an integrative combination. There seems little prospect of our subject being exhausted for several centuries to come, inasmuch as normal people behave in more than half a hundred distinct manners, each of which may fairly be regarded as a trait. To trace the interweavings of any such number is, of course, far beyond the ability of any living man. I should swell with pride, were I able to discern accurately the interplay of even four or five major traits.

As I have discussed these factors of personality elsewhere,* it must suffice here to suggest what the more important are and how they sometimes combine. This will serve only one purpose, that of demonstrating the extraordinary difficulty of making a thorough analysis of any case of stupidity. I think it will explain to many of

* See "The Psychology of Achievement." N. Y., 1930. Especially Book I.

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my kind contributors the puzzle which so many of them have mentioned in writing me: they have expressed surprise at the difficulty in getting at the bottom of many seemingly stupid acts. The pattern often melts into something strange while being inspected. Why?

Because a stupid act is—if not always, then often—the resultant of an unknown number of traits; and among the latter we are fairly certain of finding most of the following twelve varieties of traits:

- 1—deficient sensitivity of eye, ear, nose, etc.;
- 2—inferior *general* intelligence as revealed by
 - a—sluggishness in learning new facts;
 - b—slow recall and recognition;
 - c—unsound judgment, usually limited as to range;
 - d—inability to handle complex situations;
 - e—difficulty in concentrating;
 - f—a closed mind, sealed against suggestions and novelties;
 - g—lack of lively imagination;
- 3—inferior *mechanical* intelligence;
- 4—inferior *abstract* intelligence as shown by
 - a—weak symbolic thinking, in any medium such as language or mathematics;
 - b—inability to detect and manipulate abstract relations in the environment, especially space and time;
- 5—weak *social* intelligence as shown in
 - a—habitual misunderstanding of people's attitudes and motives;
 - b—tendency to treat all people as if they were exactly alike as personalities;
 - c—tactlessness;
- 6—clumsiness, especially as linked with hand and posture (usually a mere contributory factor, not a basic cause of stupidity);
- 7—weak interests, few interests, or unorganized interests;
- 8—defective training (which may lead to almost any of the other eleven defective characteristics);
- 9—certain ailments and susceptibilities of infection, causing special dulness;
- 10—low, poorly discharging energy interfering with the proper timing of many functions;
- 11—various defects of temperament, too numerous to list here; each

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defect involving some phase of one of the primary emotions, such as

- a—too great frequency of its arousal, thus causing a general upset and confusion of mind;
- b—too great breadth of stimulus field, leading to undue excitement over many petty or irrelevant causes;
- c—excessive strength of emotion;
- d—persistence of a mood unfavorable to clear thinking and adaptive behavior; and

12—perturbing traits of the ego, some of which are

- a—defective "drive" or "urge," sometimes excessive to the point of monomania, sometimes totally lacking as in dementia praecox;
- b—excessive introversion, resulting in total stupidity toward outside affairs;
- c—excessive extraversion, resulting in total lack of feeling for situations involving people, their interests and their rights;
- d—reclusiveness, shutting in oneself against the world, to the point of losing vital contacts and so acting on insufficient evidence.

A cursory glance through this catalogue of imperfections will convince all save the stupidest that, just as Boswell had to devote most of his life to assembling and digesting old Dr Johnson for biographical purposes, so here: we should fritter away years if we strove toward a complete analysis of a fairly complex stupid individual. And stupidity, alas, can be quite as intricate as genius—perhaps even more so.

I think we make headway fastest if we watch the integrative process first and later inspect the elements which combine within it. This reverses the pedagogue's rule of telling the simplest first; he errs, for the simplest is the hardest.

Look first at it as a synthesis.

Men often suppose that some single conspicuous factor in a total

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behavior pattern must cause the superiority or inferiority of the latter. What marvelous eyes a champion rifle shot must have! What keen vision a great aviator must possess! And yet, alas for our assumptions!—the U. S. Army tests indicate that many of the best marksmen have less than average keenness of eye. And Dr. Conrad Berens, examiner for the Department of Commerce, who issues licenses for interstate flying, brought out the odd fact that Clarence Chamberlain, the famous transatlantic aviator, estimates distances so poorly that Berens came within a hair's breadth of having to score him as incompetent to handle an airplane safely. Thirty bad points in the total score set up by the Department of Commerce would have disqualified Chamberlain, and he received twenty-five bad points.

What all this proves is that the method of scoring men by the point system is dangerous as well as unjust, unless it is carefully controlled with common sense and understanding. Deaf men make good auto drivers, in spite of the obvious presumption against them. Slow thinkers often make the best records in the long run, even in fields where rapid thinking is an advantage. What counts most is the entire vital equilibrium and not any single item in it. Balance is greater than either pattern or power. Balance embraces both pattern and power. Balance is more important than all the things which are balanced. Woe to the observer who ignores it and concentrates on the details alone.

What is this balance? What this vital equilibrium? We understand it as the basis of stupidity best if we plunge full tilt into its broadest, deepest nature, as seen by biologists and physiologists.

Integrative action is the highest of all functions. It is the function of adjusting the organism *as a whole* to its environment *as a whole*. Thus it stands forth, on the one hand, as the precise opposite of the simple instinct (or reflex) and, on the other hand, as the master and administrator of all instincts, feelings and attitudes. To be more precise, I should say that it tends to become master and administrator; for in no human being has it ever succeeded in thoroughgoing domination. We all fail in some way to regulate life from moment to moment in such wise as to give due weight to each and every wish, habit, and outer circumstance. The environment is much too vast and complicated to be thus skilfully reckoned with; and the human

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brain is unfitted for such a supreme task. This does not mean that nobody can effect a satisfactory adjustment in life. It means simply that the most satisfactory adjustments within mortal power leave out of account many important factors.

Let us imagine what a man would be if he were unable to integrate his behavior. We can form a pretty clear idea of such behavior from experiments on dogs whose brains have been removed, and also from those extremely rare cases of babies born brainless. Some of these monstrosities have lived as long as six months, during which time their lives were virtually unintegrated, save on the lowest vegetative level, where the integration takes place through the autonomic nervous system.

A man with absolutely no integrative structures interlocking his various higher organs might, of course, possess all the organs of a normal man. He might have perfect eyes, ears, nose, skin nerves, and muscles. But each eye would live its own life, uninfluenced by what the other did. Each would roll in its socket independently, just as babies' eyes do. He would constantly be looking at two separate objects, instead of co-ordinating both eyes on one object. Likewise with his ears; each would hear by itself, and neither would tend to co-operate with or correct the other. Still more remarkable would be his conduct when hungry, thirsty, or tired. If food were placed in his mouth, he would chew it and swallow it. But if it were not placed there, he would quickly starve to death; for if his eye saw it ten feet from him, the eye would not stimulate his legs to move him toward it and his hands to seize it and thrust it into his mouth. He might recall with great vividness that what he saw was food, but not even that thought would lead him to it. Somebody might shout to him that it was food and that he might have it; but, as his ear would have no connection with his eye or his muscular system, he would hear the message yet do nothing about it.

Such a creature would be a mere collection of living cells and organs. He would not be an organism, save in the lowest sense of the word. For he could never react, as a complete individual, to his environment as a whole. All his conduct would be piecemeal. All his sensations, feelings, and moves would be local and momentary. They would have, conceivably, a slight local memory; that is, each eye might acquire its own habits, each ear might develop certain traits of hearing, and so on. But there would be no exchange of

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experiences, no coupling of impulses. And in the struggle for existence he and all his kind would be speedily defeated. For even the humblest of the lower animals now thriving would surpass him in cunning and adaptability.

Do you not see now the biology of stupidity? The stupid creature is, in a special sense, an inferior organism. (In another special sense, we are all inferior organisms.) Observed as a specimen of vital equilibrium the creature, we add, is unorganized to such a degree that, measured against commoner, more successful, rugged individuals, it is chaotic, bewildered, always being caught unawares, and eventually trapped in some disaster which more efficient men or beasts would easily have dodged.

Let us get down to cases. Look at Verlaine, that strange French poet whose tragic groping through the labyrinths of life illustrates integrative behavior of an order only a hair's breadth above the moron. In him we see, combined with unmistakable powers, an appalling incapacity to organize these into anything distantly resembling a pattern of life. The outcome was, as is well known, a career of dawdling, of wild impulsive outbursts, of childish yielding to temptations, and of inevitable physical and moral degeneration. It was only within the rather narrow field of esthetic reactions to colors, sounds, and the grosser sensuous delights that his integrative powers amounted to anything; and there they produced eighteen volumes of admirable verse whose lucid simplicity shines forth in strange contrast to the man's personal conduct.

Verlaine seems to have loved his mother deeply; his own writings and not a little of his conduct toward her show that. Nevertheless he bled her unscrupulously for funds to gratify his craving for liquor. And he did not hesitate to berate her and even threaten her, when it seemed diplomatically wise. In all this his behavior was infantile. He showed no foresight. He was unable to co-ordinate his various impulses into a smooth-working scheme. And it is not at all impossible that his love for his mother never developed beyond the baby stage. Surely this would account for the glaring inconsistencies in it.

His quick temper revealed total lack of normal inhibitions. He went to jail for two years because of his attempting to murder his close friend, the poet Rimbaud. He quarreled demoniacally with his wife, who left him in fear and horror. He raged against his

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mother, whenever she made a feeble effort to deny him his exorbitant demands. He assaulted her friend and protector in a drunken fury and landed in jail again.

It is sometimes said that Verlaine was a complete pagan. This is unfair to the pagans. Verlaine was no pagan, in the sound sense of that term. He was a psychopathic personality out and out, a chronic dipsomaniac, a degenerate dupe of the cafés and dives of Paris, and a child-mind which could do only one thing well, and that was to give perfect expression to his unfulfilled wishes. Seen from this point of view, his matchless religious verse in *Sagesse* (1881) can be understood. They do not reflect the man as he was; they simply project into startlingly clear and delicate word patterns all that he was not and all that he craved to be but never, never would become. They are as perfectly integrated in their word pattern as his life was imperfectly integrated in its behavior pattern.

His fatal defect, together with his dipsomania, inevitably led him further and further from the world of men. He developed an abnormal timidity, akin to chronic stage fright. Indeed, it would not be hyperbole to say that Verlaine found all the world a stage and all his moves in it made chaotic by a kind of stage fright toward everything. One can readily find much, even in his earlier years, that shows a profound world-fear; and this is not at core incompatible with his monstrous rages. The latter were defective adjustments to worldly affairs, and after they were over they impressed upon the poet his own unworldliness to such a degree that, when not drunk or mad with cravings for alcohol, he shunned places and men. This is quite enough to explain many of his aimless wanderings, which at times amounted to hoboism. And it does explain some, though not others.

You will find it well worth while to compare, item by item, the personality of Verlaine with that of Francis Thompson,* the English poet. The basic resemblances are close, on the whole. The two men suffered from the same kind of defective integration; both had the same inner concentration, with its powerful focussing around word-effects; both had the same fear and dislike of the world, shunning it to the utmost; both were clumsy and inept; both fell victims to their appetites; and both sought refuge in the consolations of the

* Thompson is described on p. 214.

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Church of Rome. True, their weaknesses seem to have sprung from different causes. But that does not concern us for the moment. The fact to be stressed is that they were poorly organized.

All this has been told, not to prove anything, but merely to exhibit that profound stupidity which is founded upon a defective vital equilibrium. We are now ready for the main question: what makes a good organism, what a poor one?

There are two phases of organization; one has to do with the *elements* that are organized, the other with the *patterns* and *processes*. Were we now writing a general treatise on psychology, we should have to pause for long and devote several hundred pages to these ingredients of the well-ordered (or disordered) personality. But we must press on into the jungles of stupidity. So we can only outline the situation.

ELEMENTS

The elements we organize fall into two large groups: first, the members of our physical bodies, our arms, legs, and muscles in general, as hung on a scaffold of bone and gristle; secondly, the influx of excitations coming in through our sensory nerves and entering that strange field within the large brain where they reverberate for years and recombine endlessly in patterns uniquely personal. Physical movements, sights, sounds, flavors, smells, memories, fancies, thoughts, analyses, perspectives, emotions and attitudes—these are the stuff which is processed, combined, blended, condensed, sterilized, crystallized, and infinitely transformed into some kind of unitary behavior which, as seen by innocent bystanders, comes to be called personality.

Each element has its own degree of strength, its own natural vigor, endurance, and tang. This degree can fairly be called its index of sensitivity, if you like. As we measure man against man, we find that the human race as a whole shows distinct common tendencies in its index system. From these we arrive at an objective method of interpreting stupidity. The elements may be roughly grouped under five heads. So grouped, they reveal a normal order of strength, in fully three-quarters of the observable human race, which embraces

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chiefly the peoples of the Western world who have been studied from many angles.

The normal order is as follows:

1. Motor sensitivities are by far the strongest. Here we include, along with the usual kinesthetic experiences, all responses to movements perceived in the environment. The eye, for instance, usually detects minute motions on the very rim of its visual field, even when it cannot identify the object that moves. So too with the skin's capacity for picking up exceedingly slight movements over its surface.

2. Organic sensitivities come next; with some people, they are a fairly close second. They include the appetites and aversions, the attitudes and the emotions, the vaguer feelings of well-being, ill-at-ease, depression, and the like.

3. Contact sensitivities rank third. They include chiefly taste and smell, as well as the sexual group.

4. Distance sensitivities rank a poor fourth. Here the eye proves much more receptive than the ear.

5. The sensitivities of recall, fantasy, and analysis are by all odds the feeblest among the masses.

It may assist you in learning this rating if you keep in mind that it is neatly reflected in popular taste. It corresponds to the order of preference shown by the masses in all ages and climes toward objects of simple pleasure and entertainment. What do we find here? The following ratings:

1. Song-and-dance, pantomime, dramatic acting, lively ritual full of movement, and a variety of athletic games plainly come first in herd esteem.

2. Adventures, entertainments, sports and other activities or spectacles which thrill one, such as the gladiatorial combats, wrestling and boxing matches, amusement park stunts like looping the loop, the scenic railway, shooting the chutes, and so on; hair-raising ghost stories, blood-curdling murder mysteries, news reports about gunmen, burglars, hurricanes, fires, and the like; and, of course, sex "thrillers."

3. Food, drink, and sexuality, in their immediate enjoyment, as contactual experiences.

4. Visual spectacles apart from thrills; that is, scenery, travel pictures, color effects in stage settings, and so on; also, in the auditory realm, music detached from dramatic values in language and action

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—that is to say, not “song-and-dance” but the compositions of Bach, Brahms, Chopin, and all those who eschew “program music.”

5. Intellectual reflections, conversation, arguments; the free play of creative imagination in any field.

Now, in finding this the normal order of sensitivities, we also pick up a clue as to the placing and grading of stupid folk. Two sharp breaks appear in the order. The first falls between the third and the fourth fields of sensitivity: the second appears between the fourth and fifth fields. Purely visual and auditory sensitivities are, in fully nine out of every ten persons, very much duller than the motor, the organic and the surface contact sensitivities. What's more, they grow duller and duller early in life. very young children surpass youths, youths surpass adults here, as a rule. (This age difference, however, is still more marked in the sense of smell.) To make matters much worse, almost everything in our new environment conspires to dull eye and ear. Before we pass on to more intricate affairs of psychic process, let us drive this home by instance and example.

Half-blind

Cyclops never had the keen eyesight which later people have attributed to him. The notion is widespread that savages surpass civilized men in their vision. But psychologists have put an end to that belief. R. S. Woodworth's studies of the Philippine hill tribes, at the St. Louis Exposition, in 1904, demonstrated their mediocre eye. Many other observers find similar dulness and generally construe the seeming superiority of the savage to his longer and stronger habits of outdoor vision. The Indian in the Canadian Rockies spies a wild goat on a glacier across a valley so wide that the white man beside the red sees only a bluish dazzle. The Tahitian, swimming the warm sea, detects a great fish fathoms down beneath him, while his white companion sees nothing but water. The old Cherokee, sleeping under the stars on the great plains, is roused by the flicker of lightning on a horizon where a civilized gentleman beholds only the dark. But all these sensitivities are the heaping up of years of looking for mountain goats afar, detecting great fish in the deeps, and peering down sky for the coming tornado. Let the civilized man devote as much time to such tasks, and he will see them as well.

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All men, savage and otherwise, are half-blind—taken billionwise as a group. Subnormal vision is appallingly frequent—so much so, indeed, that it makes me wonder why oculists selected the standards they use as normal.

But never as well as the lowly cat. Erich Murr, of the Zoological Institute of the University of Königsberg, has made brilliant experiments which show that to certain lights the cat is forty times more sensitive than is man, and to certain others at least eighty times more. Cyclops at best can never see the thin thread of light which still arouses vision in cat-eyes. He stumbles through darkness where the feline sees clearly. Alone, he blunders with one eye through life.

Think over the following facts of records. In the great Army draft of 1918 some 21.7% of all men rejected had defective eyesight.* Every survey in the industries and schools bring out even worse states of vision.

Among our children—a host of some 45,000,000 in all—at least 15,000,000 have eyes bad enough to require glasses. Probably there are tens of thousands more who see just badly enough to make them dislike much reading, hence avoid books and good, solid periodicals, so that they grow up ill-informed. To be sure, much poor reading is not caused by imperfect eyes but by imperfect brains; it is a mental flaw and hopeless. Could somebody pry into cases by the thousand, however, I am sure he would find most poor readers who are not subnormal minds are handicapped in their eyes alone.

Indoor work and artificial light combine to ruin vision. Probably the steady decline of physical activity in both labor and play adds its bit to the debacle. The motion picture may join in, though I doubt whether it is serious, now that most theatres have completely eliminated the flicker and dazzle from their screens. Worst of all, in my judgment, is the enormous amount of reading required of millions of workers from clerical rank up to the Big Boss. More and more, everything is put into print first; and the weary eye must scan the office bulletin, the house organ, the manager's weekly letter, the trade journals, the newspapers, and what else not, simply as a part of the job. The effect is double: first, it strains the orbs; then it sours the temper and makes all type hateful.

* Gertrude Seymour, "The Survey," April 27, 1928

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In recent investigations of reading done by business men, I ran across many of the latter who admitted that they had given up virtually all cultural reading simply because of the painful pressure under which they labored in covering the daily news, orders, tips, and trade discussions connected with office duties. Hardly a man in this group of a few hundred made the slightest pretense of keeping abreast of the times, even by a thorough perusal of newspapers. Thus, week by week, they dull the edge of their sensitivities toward world trends and human relations. Thus they groove themselves in a little deeper, becoming mere drudges for a price. Much social stupidity springs from poor eyes and overtaxed eyes. So too does much lack of perspective—of which more later.

Half-eared

Cyclops is half-eared too. And medical statisticians bear tales hinting that our hero is losing some of his feeble contacts with the world of sounds. They say that partial deafness is increasing strangely all over the world. Europe and America test school children every year and find the trend of scores for hearing downward. What causes it?

Many changes in man, in his work and in his world. They weave a thickening web over the ears and slowly muffle the shouting and the tumult. Of late investigators have been finding many things which ruin the keenness of hearing. Noise does it. So does diet. So does fatigue—hence the kind of work one performs. So does worry. So does loss of sleep. So, it would seem, does mere lack of interest in what one hears. So, once more, we see how one stupor begets another, and that pair a third, and so on until Cyclops is blinded and deafened and benumbed within the darkness of his own cavern.

Noise plainly shatters the ear. And the entire world has become bedlam: auto horns, factory whistles, boat sirens, street megaphones, screeching brakes, rattling cars, yelling hawkers—and then, at length, jazz, that awful *reductio ad surdum* of all listeners. Din undermines the nervous balance and benumbs the auditory tracts. The tumultuous trades breed deaf toilers. The hearing of subway and elevated railway guards fails early, like that of riveters. And, as people have flocked into industrial towns, all have suffered in some degree. Recent studies of noise in New York City and elsewhere prove this only

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too well. But they also show that many other conditions less suspect are quietly deafening us all. Look at a few of them now.

Keen ears depend, to a surprising degree, upon general health and nutrition. This has lately been shown by Dr. Dana W. Drury, of Boston, in his extensive audiometer tests on five groups. The Harvard football squad at the end of the playing season had by far the best ears. Next ranked the boys in a high-grade private school where special care of physique and diet is maintained. Third in keenness were the children at an institute for the blind, where again the best of attention is given to food and bodily welfare. The fourth group was one hundred Boston public school children, who heard somewhat more poorly than the blind. Worst of all were the crippled and deformed children in a Massachusetts institution.

Otologists tell me that several types of progressive deafness vary from day to day with the general physical and mental condition. Loss of sleep dulls the hearing, while a long rest whets it promptly. Likewise with over-eating and under-eating, with drinking liquor, with smoking, with worries, and similar upsets. I am also informed that mere laziness and lack of interest in listening to talk or to music often injures the hearing; physicians say that the patient who can be aroused to give ear to what is going on around him maintains acuity of hearing much longer than one who remains listless. Here we may be reversing cause and effect; the patient showing indifference toward sounds may do so as a result of a central nervous inertia connected with the defect in his auditory centers. There may be, for instance, either a time lag in auditory associations or else an energy drop somewhere along the nerve tracts.

The ear has some obscure linkage with stupidity. It is either the cause or the effect of mental level to an extent far surpassing any other sense organ. Probably there is more than a grain of truth in the popular idea that deaf people are "dummies." The most carefully devised psychological tests show that completely deaf children are retarded, on the average, about four and one-half years; that is, a fifteen-year-old displays the mentality of a normal child ten and one-half years old.

Fortunately there are very few stone-deaf people—scarcely 50,000 in the entire country. Fortunately, too, the partially deaf are immensely better off, not only in their ability to establish contacts with people but also in their language skill. Children who lose their hear-

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ing after the age of six seem to have grasped language so well that subsequent deafness does not retard their intelligence severely. This, as you will notice, goes to support my general argument that poor control of language is a mark of profound stupidity.

But even the partially deaf often lapse into stupidity as a result of picking up precise vocabularies slowly and being handicapped in the use of language. The speaking vocabulary, of course, serves as the solid foundation for the later and larger reading vocabulary; but partially deaf children are avoided by normal playmates simply because of the effort of loud, repetitious conversation. Thus the tools of thinking never grow sharp.

We should expect, then, that partially deaf people would be stupid in social relations most of all; and then too in the finer, more dexterous use of language especially in creative thinking. As usual, we speak of general tendencies, not of the shining exceptions—of which we find a number among the seriously deafened. Again we should expect a slight, diffuse dulness in many fields resulting from the ramified injuries which lack of social and linguistic practice have upon all modes of thinking and acting. The less people hear, the less they experience; hence the narrower the foundations of practice and judgment.

What a tragic absurdity, then, is our whole new and much touted economic revolution! During the past three generations, tens of millions of workers have been systematically fatigued, ill fed, half-starved, exposed to hideous screams of steam, grating of files, thunder, yells, and clatter; torn from the quiet backlands of Cyclops, deprived of the simple food of the Man with a Hoe, and thrust into a factory system alien to their dreams, they have all been dulled, not in one way alone but in a score. And, unless some unforeseen change for the better comes soon, they will sink still deeper into stupidity.

The rising generation seems to be sinking. Recent investigations under the auspices of the White House Conference shows that about 3,000,000 children in our land suffer from defective hearing. As these have been exposed to no factory noises nor other vocational tumults as yet, it seems reasonable to expect that, twenty years hence, most of these 3,000,000 will be considerably deafer while other millions now keen will hear less and less keenly. A sorry prospect!

I am somewhat prejudiced in favor of the hypothesis that the American passion for jazz dissonances and shrilling is largely a by-

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product of esthetic stupidity brought on by noise. We do nothing *pianissimo*. We dwell in a *fortissimo* environment. We lack all harmony in our personal lives, as in our economic and social activities; so there may be some obscure linkage between sensitivity toward ratios, proportions, balances, and progressions, on the one hand, and music presented in such mathematical forms, on the other hand, that, as the former wanes, the liking for the latter also passes. This thought is left for your further consideration. Maybe somebody will have evidence ready by the time we begin work on the history of human stupidity.

This much, however, stands as truth: compared to the person who is attuned to the relations and inner structure of music, he who prefers loudness and harsh effects and defective rhythms is stupid esthetically. For he requires more potent stimuli. That is another way of saying that he is less sensitive.

We might go on with a discussion of the other sensory elements—the senses of taste, touch, and smell. Yet in the history of human stupidity these count for so little that we may well pass them by. There are so many larger things to contemplate! The play of the imagination, logical thinking, the weaving of mathematical relations, the immense systems of language—in these we gain a higher level of mind. Curious their stuff, and perplexing.

Fantasy

“He hasn’t a spark of imagination.”

So men most often describe a stupid fellow, and keenly too. For this sort of insensitivity narrows the perceptions and higher flights of thought more severely than the loss of both eyes. Consider what imagination brings us. Consider what life would be without it.

The totally unimaginative man—if such has ever lived, which I doubt—would live in the Here and Now exclusively. The domain of his stupidity would embrace all of yesterday, all of tomorrow, and all of elsewhere. A large territory, that! Nozzled down to the swiftly moving point of that Here and Now, his sensitivities would be intolerably keen—assuming that his energy equalled our own normal fund. For, you see, its sole outlet would be the channels of sense—eye, ear, nose, tongue, skin, and mucous membranes. No esthete of

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our kith and kin could thrill so deeply as this strange being, in the presence of sky and cloud, of bird and fish, of damsel and wench. Withal he would apprehend only form and hue, only scent and flavor. Those subtler meanings which root in the origins and destinies of things would never penetrate him. Let him have, if you wish, simple memory; it would enrich him but scantily, for it would come into service only as an aid in immediate perception. Looking upon a horse, he would be able to perceive it as the same beast he saw a week before. Beyond that, nothing.

He would never dream but might, during a sleep, experience faint bodily sensations such as warmth under his blankets or a cramped foot. Nor could he plan his future. Of necessity he would practise the precept of Jesus: "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. . . . Take no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." So his entire life would run on, a purely moment-to-moment affair, chaotic, visionless, infinitely stupid.

Not even a high-grade moron lives on this plane. An idiot exists below it. The rank and file of men called stupid possess considerable imagination, but of a sort which calls for careful description and differentiation. Its contents are peculiar, but fortunately familiar to every reader. Let us approach it by way of a general analysis of the function.

I find four kinds of fantasy worthy of special consideration here: simple reverie, make-believe, logical reflection, and creative imagina-

Reverie

In simple reverie images arise, linger a while, then melt away into nothingness. This is the idle day-dream. In make-believe the things appearing are dealt with as if real: the little girl pretends that her dolly is a caller, or she may even pretend that dolly is present and talking with her, when dolly is far away. In logical reflection the thing fancied is dissected, classified, rearranged, related to other things real or imaginary; and slowly a system of conclusions evolves which may or may not prove valuable. In creative imagination, something is invented—be it a sonnet or a mechanical nosewiper. There

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need be no logical reflection here; in fact, the testimony of creative thinkers usually shows that the novelty bobs up in a flash, full panoplied.

The ordinary mortal indulges a great deal in simple revery—too much, in fact. The images here are a chaos of memories, after-scenes, faint attitudes, and wishes. They lack direction and design. Whoever watches in secret the still hours of ape or gorilla cannot resist concluding that these anthropoids muse along on this level. So too do dogs, and maybe cats. Here also Cyclops dreams An unprofitable business, all this! It gets to no end. It merely comes and goes, like the flicker of sunlight through wind-shaken leafage. But the clod, knowing nothing better, fancies that this is the very essence of intellect. He accepts the defense of the New England villager of notorious stupidity who ran for the office of selectman. Learning that people were sneering at his abilities, he declared to a group of voters: "I hear you don't believe I know enough to hold office. I wish you to understand that I am thinking about something or other most of the time."

Sometimes the dolt goes even further: he stoutly maintains that he is a good thinker because he always thinks about good things, an artist because he thinks about works of art. This stupid boast has, strangely enough, been supported by many Cyclopean thinkers from Plato onward. It has been, I fear, responsible for a deal of false culture and perverted education, though perhaps no finer ideal can be set up for dullards. And dullards must be schooled, lest democracy fail.

I hope you have already detected the close resemblance between this aimless revery and a certain low type of esthetic pleasure. In revery whatever floats past is more or less enjoyed on the wing (True, there are gloomy reveries too, but that does not change my point.) There is contemplation without any reference to an end and aim—which fulfils Kant's requirement for an object of beauty. May it not be, then, that the higher order of esthetic pleasure may spring from this revery and even be a transfer of its attitude and method from mind flux to world flux? I think cases can be found which illustrate the transition from elemental revery to the esthetic state. Both modes of activity appear in this phase, of course; hence, to the observer who has given little thought to such off-the-beat matters, the case is most confusing.

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Make-believe

The second of the four kinds of fantasy is make-believe. The stupidities it engenders elude us unless we toil long over them with a magnifying glass. So we dismiss them all too curtly in this Short Introduction.

Make-believe is a hang-over from childhood. In those early years it is lusty, largely as a result of the youngster's being as yet unable to distinguish between inventions and realities. It is in the dream that make-believe carries over most smoothly into mature years. It will not endure sunlight, as a rule, but night softens the outlines of its errors. Through its gloom wishes become horses on which the dreamer rides on and on until apocalypse. When dawn breaks, Fact thumps on the door and rudely shatters the shadow world with an alarm clock. Only two important varieties of adults continue make-believe in a serious, orderly fashion: they are the professional storytellers and the victims of systemic self-deception, be they paranoiacs or merely eccentric introverts.

Proof that the ordinary citizen loves make-believe but cannot indulge in it successfully enough to make it good fun? Look, please, at the immense popularity of short stories, novels, plays, and motion pictures! Above all, the "talkies." These supply a deep need in dull humanity. Call this need the escape from realities, if you will; but do not forget that the particular escape that pleases must be one in which the fugitive departs for a country whose every detail is like that of a real world, while all that happens fulfils some abiding wish of his Romantic realism, in short; the stuff being real, and the movement hopeful.

Most people prefer a good talking picture to a stage play. They also prefer it to a silent movie, nine times out of ten. Drama old-style has long been dying a natural death, for it has lost touch with reality in several ways. Ever since the passing of primitive pantomime recitals of minstrel and the ritual dances which reproduced events almost literally, the drama has developed under severe restrictions. Its equipment has been absurdly crude. The conventional stage, the lights, the paint and powder of make-up, and all the rest turned the whole affair into a mere language; it became a system of symbols—nowhere more completely than in China—which the spectator had to learn and accept as he accepts, in chemistry, H₂O as

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the symbol for water. Now, for an imaginative onlooker, this is usually easy and enjoyable. But the simpler fellow who depends on eye and ear has a dull evening.

The swift and enormous vogue of talking pictures was this simple fellow's response to an art that gave him a hundred times more reality than the finest of stage plays. I know whereof I speak here, because I happen to be one of those simple fellows who, in matters esthetic, depend almost wholly upon the sense percepts for pleasure. All symbolic art—be it in sculpture or verse or novel or drama—not only leaves me cold but irritates me (or sometimes moves me to boorish laughter). In fantasy, so far as drama is concerned, I am 100% stupid. As the herd, so myself here: and I might cite a hundred plays that bore me on the stage but fascinate me on the talking screen. But one allusion is enough. Take "Street Scene."

Elmer Rice, who wrote the play, detests the movies. He thinks the screen version of "Street Scene" is "about as good as a movie can be"—which isn't saying much, from his point of view. He condemns the picture's lack of unity and rhythm. "You can't get those qualities in when you're shown a close-up at one moment and a mob of six hundred people in the next." Almost in the next breath he remarks: "The movie crowd in Hollywood won't do with the pictures what the pictures can do best—and that's fantasy." In that last word he reveals himself as a child of dream land, as most great dramatists and novelists are, even when they think themselves realists.

Now, to my eyes, the talking version of "Street Scene" is—putting it cautiously—at least 10,000 times more exciting and lovely than the stage stuff—which is little more than a clumsy child's pottering with colored blocks and rag dolls. I have not seen five plays in all my life which I have enjoyed half so much as any of a hundred of the best talking pictures. Being a slave to percepts, I naturally spend my amusement funds on them; and I get more of them per dime in the pictures than elsewhere. This explains the billion picture lovers all over the world. In ten seconds of a talking picture our kind receive more impressions than in ten minutes of the swiftest stage play. When we behold in one shot of "Street Scene" six hundred yelling, pushing human beings—all real, live creatures, mind you!—we are more impressed than when, on a tiny floor hung with colored cloth, we see a dozen or a score of bedaubed, dressed-up actors symbolizing a great mob. The thing is so simple that great dramatists simply can-

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not grasp it. Anyhow, to write a great play, one has to have a lively imagination; and so one belongs to the other school of taste. Ordinary spectator and extraordinary playwright never meet. The stupidity of the former prevents it scarcely more than the stupidity of the latter in failing to understand what people want. The expert in make-believe is constitutionally blind to certain realities.

Now for a serious perversion of make-believe.

We cannot understand the interplay between thwarted responses and man's general behavior until we have noticed the subtle invasion of his supposedly controlled thinking by the figments of fantasy. Here is a subject which merits much more attention than it has received. There can be no doubt that many of the balancing acts in normal men and women become eccentric, puzzling, and defective through the unconscious persistence in them of several faint substitute adjustments provoked by an initial thwarting. This is notoriously common among children and certain sub-intelligent adults. And we now know that it is one of the chief perturbations in dream life during sleep, when all controls of the commoner sorts are weakened.

The extreme of this tendency is seen in the after-effect of dreams. This was first observed in hysterical persons by Féré* and has since been repeatedly chronicled. Here the patient develops a peculiar set of symptoms during his hysterical attack. All or many of these prove to be, so to speak, the prolongation of acts seen in dreams. In other cases they are reactions to such dreamed events. It is a mistake to suppose, as some investigators have, † that such dreams are the *adequate* cause of their reflected behavior as symptoms. The hysteric has something seriously wrong with him; and one of the worst of these defects is this very tendency toward prolongation of any experience or attitude or overt act. He cannot stop what he once starts to do. So, when he carries on his dream acts into waking hours, he is merely doing the regular thing. Carrying over the dream content is, *as an act*, a symptom of hysteria; but the particular content must not be called a cause of the symptom. For any content whatsoever is likely to be thus prolonged. The prolongation is the true symptom.

Normal people do not prolong their dreams in this manner, save in the rare instances of young children who sometimes reveal an in-

* "Brain," Vol. 9, p. 488, ff.

† See Waterman, "Dreams as a Cause of Symptoms," Journal of Abnormal Psychology, Vol. 5, p. 196.

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ability to distinguish between dream life and waking life for a few minutes after arising. The usual effect of dreams on waking conduct appears in the moods, especially in those which pervade us when we rise of a morning. Almost everybody, I suppose, has observed in himself the curious—and usually distressing—persistence of such depressions, anxieties, objectless fears, forebodings, excitements, and exaltations. While some of them are pleasant, most have a strong tinge of anger or fear, often so cloudy and undirected that we are at a loss to understand our feelings.

Here is not the place to pursue a study of such persisting dream moods. I would only call your attention to the general fact that *the extent to which fantasies and their moods affect the conduct of waking life is an important characteristic of the balancing phase of personality.*

One specimen will suffice here, and fortunately I have a good one that deserves careful consideration.

An odd, pathetic instance of psychic balancing through self-deception is seen in the attitude of Philip Wesley toward his feeble-minded son, Arthur. Wesley is endowed with a singularly acute mind and has succeeded almost brilliantly in his profession. When his first son was born, it soon became evident to both parents that he was not normal. He proved incapable of learning to talk. When five years old, Wesley invoked the aid of various specialists, some of whom declared the child to be feeble-minded, while others stated that it was too early to pass such a sweeping judgment. Wesley naturally scoffed at the former and sided with the latter. He and his wife then set about the task of teaching their child words and speech.

Making no headway in this, Wesley insisted that it was because they did not know how to teach. This, you see, was plainly enough an effort to preserve his own life-balance, an integral part of which was his love of Arthur, his acceptance of the boy as normal, and his wish to spare his wife the agony of possessing a defective child. In admitting his own incompetence as a teacher, Wesley did not disturb his own equilibrium, for he had never thought of himself nor acted toward himself as a teacher. He was in no wise upset by thinking of himself as an incompetent pedagogue, any more than he would have been by regarding himself as a failure in legerdemain or acrobatics.

He employed a teacher specially trained in handling backward

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children. In three years of patient, intelligent effort, this woman made not the slightest progress with Arthur. And she finally left in despair, after telling the mother that the boy was a hopeless case. Wesley refused to accept this verdict. He told everybody the woman was disgruntled. And he sent Arthur to a private school for "backward children."

There it was clearly proved that the boy was both feeble-minded and afflicted with laryngeal defects of a serious nature. He could utter only semi-articulate noises at best, like a well-trained dog. It was this lesser flaw that gave Wesley his desired chance for happy self-deception. He now took the view that his son's difficulties were entirely in his larynx. He assured his friends that of course the boy could not learn to talk, and that all he needed to become mentally right was some language like the deaf mute's

The parents promptly strove to develop such a language. They studied Arthur's natural gestures and cries. They associated in their own minds each of these with some situation and some wish; and, in the course of some months, they constructed a set of linguistic signs and sounds all their own. As a matter of fact, these number about fifteen all told and are scarcely more than the grunts and hand waves which a hunter might employ in talking to his hounds. But Wesley stoutly maintains that "Arthur now talks with us exactly as well as his brothers do. He's just as smart as they are."

Friends have accepted this graciously, for they know what it means; and no harm can result from the amiable lie, while the truth would bring bitterness or worse.

The mechanism here is singularly simple. The man's wish to have the son become normal has been thwarted. In the course of long efforts to make the wish come true, he progressively makes an artificial set of criteria for judging the boy normal. The boy's noises and gestures have come to be accepted as the only relevant and significant facts; and these are all interpreted in terms of the sign language Wesley has invented to make the boy seem normal. Such a mechanism usually belongs to dreams or to insanity. Here it does not at all.

Is not the apparent stupidity here plain? Shall we call it real or mere appearance? It is largely a matter of precise definition. My own inclination is to agree with the man's friends, who declared,

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years ago, that he had gone deaf, dumb and blind when in his son's presence. This is genuine selective stupidity built up by a dominant wish. There are millions of similar cases of "wishful thinking" and "wishful perceiving" like it. As it lies on the borderline between sanity and insanity, we shall not concern ourselves further with its kind.

Logical Reflection

The third fantasy is logical reflection—a nauseous name for a fine trait. Yet it happens to fit as trimly as a hangman's noose. The act reflects something definite, a situation, a problem, a mystery, never a mere flitting image. This gives it solidity and usefulness. Next, the reflecting casts the scene through the prism of intellect; the objects appear in their relations, and all are analyzed in some manner, from some point of view which is sustained. In reverie, there is neither analysis nor inference. In make-believe the sequence is esthetic or artistic. But here it is pure reason, with all the sequences in some sense logical.

The value of this activity depends upon the factual adequacy of the material upon which it works. Its results may easily prove worthless, silly, or positively harmful if the thinker plays about with airy nothings. If stupid or vicious in his choice of subject matter, he may make a fine show of logic yet end up in a froth of futility. For logic merely sets forth the implications of accepted propositions. Its entire nature unfolds in this implicative relation. In all other respects it is indifferent to that which implies.

I mention this ponderosity because we must understand that a man may be utterly stupid in logical reflection while brilliant in his choice of subject matter, or he may be quite the reverse, a marvelously keen analytical musser but a perfect fool in picking a topic over which to muse. This circumstance leads to endless confusions not alone in himself but in those who appraise him and his findings. Ponder well the thousands of rigorous reasoners who, since time began, have in fantasy analyzed such matters as the creation of the universe, the omnipotence of a god and his reasons for creating man as he did, the origin of matter, perpetual motion, the number of angels that can stand on the point of a needle, and what lies just

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beyond the point where space ends. Or consider Sir Oliver Lodge and the ectoplasms.

Would anybody deny that this once brilliant scientist is capable of logical reflection in its higher levels? Certainly I would not. His career as a physicist gives the lie to all doubters. But as he grew old, after his beloved son Raymond had perished in the World War, he turned his powerful intellect to the spirit field. The subject matter became pathetic, but the mind went through its smooth mill-work and yielded a grist of hypotheses and concatenations even as of old. The content of the fantasy sank into piteous subjectivity, notably in the "communications" from Raymond.

The usual scene is the reverse of Lodge. By necessity most men concern themselves with useful matters most of the time; but, alas, they cannot manage the logic and mathematics of such in fantasy. Though census enumerators will not come to my aid with mile-long tables of frequency and distribution, I venture the guess that more people are stupid in this respect than in any other. And I maintain that this incapacity retards the world's progress past all finding out. For mastery of nature rests on mathematics—which in turn rests on logic mainly.

a Space-Time

The destiny of nations has repeatedly been decided by some one man's stupidity in matters of space and time perception. This happens oftenest during wars; for then it is that days, hours, and even minutes make all the difference between defeat and victory, while one mile of miscalculation, be it in the range of guns or in a day's forced march or in the location of a supply base, changes the course of civilization for ten generations. Turn whithersoever you will—to England, to China, to our own land—the scene is always the same. It seems to be our common heritage from the men before the Ice Age.

Look first at the English.

When we come to study the peculiarity stupidities of the British, we shall notice in larger magnitudes what we now touch on in miniature, namely a certain baffling insensitivity to the flow of time, together with an inability to measure, relate, equate and differentiate periods, lapses, and intervals. We may fairly say of the entire course

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of English history what Lloyd George proclaimed in his tragic speech before the House of Commons on December 20, 1915:

"Ah! Fatal words of this war! Too late in moving here! Too late in moving there! Too late in coming to this decision! Too late in starting with enterprises! Too late in preparing! In this war the footsteps of the Allied forces have been dogged by the mocking spectre of 'Too late!'"

Unwittingly he echoed the verdict of history on his own people at all times. But for this Cyclopean dulness toward the vitalities of time and the price of a minute, there would never have arisen the United States of America. We should now be living as citizens of a Confederation of English-speaking Peoples, in absolute domination over the rest of the world. And there could never have been a World War, if my private soothsayers can be trusted. Even if the British generals in America had been only half-awake in matters of time and space, but especially time, our patriots would not have had a fighting chance.

There is the preposterous behavior of that half-wit child of Cyclops, General Howe. Mute the strings of history's lyre as you wail his lay. 'Tis sad indeed.

Throughout the Revolution, General Howe's campaign was characterized by the most ludicrous delays, incompetence and lethargy. His military commission virtually became a *débutante's* coming out season. Yet for six full years, the blunders of Howe and the stupidities of other generals were ludicrous beyond belief. Had the British forces been intelligently directed and managed, they could have easily defeated both French and American armies. Yet poor discipline, dull lethargy, intellectual confusion, and bewildering inaction, as well as notably poor marksmanship, turned the possibility of incredibly easy victory into humiliating defeat.

As West, so East. A comic history of the Orient might be written, stressing nothing beyond its heart-breaking, preposterous, animal-like blindness to the world of four dimensions where Dr. Einstein roams at will. Perhaps we shall consecrate to this subject one or two volumes in our History of Human Stupidity. For this, our little curtain-raiser, one instance must suffice. It will startle you to learn that the whole modern development of China has turned upon one act of this particular sort.

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China's greatest general of modern times, Wu Pei-fu, had an army of half a million which dominated all North China and exerted considerable influence in the South. Most Europeans in China looked upon him as the genius who would, in time, bring all of the Chinese together under a single, well organized government.

In 1924 he planned to crush that bandit-tuchun, Chang Tso-lin, overlord of Manchuria. Everything at the time was in Wu Pei-fu's favor, according to competent observers, right up to the hour he prepared to move his forces northward. He had full control of all the Chinese railways, so he assembled locomotives and cars for the journey. Packing men and supplies aboard, he sent them up to Shanhai-kuan over a railroad which is single-tracked in some stretches and double-tracked elsewhere. Unfortunately, neither Wu Pei-fu nor any of his aides were endowed with sufficient sensitivity of places and times to calculate the details of such an operation. To a Westerner what happened sounds like a tale told by Alice fresh back from Wonderland. Wu Pei-fu kept pouring trains and trains and trains into the section until the entire trackage was a solid, immobile mass of engines, cars, and wondering soldiers.

Nothing could move anywhere between the Great Wall of China and Tientsin. So, you might suppose, Wu Pei-fu must have issued prompt orders to withdraw the latest out-bound trains and to cancel all further trips over that line. But no! The troops remained in the jam from the autumn of 1924 until late in 1926! Let that fact soak in for a minute! For almost two years the soldiers lived in the cars and, as no supplies could be shipped through to them, chopped up parts of the cars for firewood and consumed whatever they could find in the commissary's freight cars. When winter came, the engineers failed to draw off water from the locomotive boilers, so the boilers burst in the first big freeze.

As soon as the news spread south, up came the Nationalist army and met with no resistance. In that hour the course of China's destiny was changed for many a weary year. You may argue, if you like, that the great general failed because he was not accustomed to the use of railways. But that strikes me as pretty feeble reasoning. It might be sound, had Wu Pei-fu tried to change the signal system or the valves on the locomotives; but he did nothing more than remain blind to the rate and capacity of cars moving over certain well defined tracks. It is probable that, along with his space-time

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stupidity, there went a still deeper defect of mathesis, such as we see in all Asiatic peoples. The most elementary statistical computations may have been Greek to him. But that does not alter my interpretation.

Some day a psychologist will collaborate with a historian and bring out a radically new World History which will demonstrate that the course of cultures has been shaped quite as much by defective space-time perceptions as by diseases or religions. Toward the close of this Short Introduction, we shall return to the subject and point out that no inconsiderable fraction of stupidity in trade, industry and finance is caused by this same Cyclopean frailty.

Space stupor, though as a rule closely related in its consequences, at least, to insensitivity to time, is sometimes revealed alone. "Did you ever hear," asks Ernest Elmo Calkins, "about the citizens of a European village who rowed out into the lake with their choicest possession, the bell from the tower, and sank it to keep it out of the hands of an invading army? To mark the spot where they dropped it overboard, they cut a notch in the side of the boat."

This wins first prize as the finest specimen of spatial stupor in the arena. Let us hope it is history. On the chance that it may turn out fictitious, let me play safe by offering as second prize a case for which I can vouch with considerable assurance. While it lacks the simple charm of Mr. Calkins' specimen, it has the merit of bringing out the very essence of space stupor and the difference between that and the time stupor. Study it well, please.

During the critical weeks of the Italian campaign preceding the disasters of Caporetto, in October, 1917, the Best Minds in command of the Italian troops sent to Pershing a hurry call for extra long and heavy trench timbers, to be used on the mountain sides. I do not happen to have the original memorandum given me by the American who was ordered to find and ship the timbers; but, as well as I can recall it after more than a decade, the beams were to be eighty feet long and about one foot square at the end. You cannot pick up such timbers easily.

My friend, the American who had to locate them and consign them at top speed, did some fast work. Somewhere near New Orleans he found hundreds of beams. Then he sought a ship that could be requisitioned and hurried to New Orleans to pick them up. Only one vessel within hundreds of miles was available, and

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that was summoned off its course, rushed into New Orleans, its hull emptied at high speed, and the mighty trench timbers hauled aboard.

My friend turned these details over to an important citizen, one of those dollar-a-year patriots who, being unable to die for his country because too old, gladly rushed in and gave it his very best. The next my friend heard of the affair was a sulphurous cable from G. H. Q. which more than implied that he was the seventh fool son of the seventh fool son of a fool. All of the timbers had arrived in Italy several feet shorter than ordered. Not one could be used in the mountain trenches!

Investigation ensued, as usual. The dollar-a-year patriot admitted that he had sawed off a few feet. Oh yes! What else could be done? The sections in the hold of the steamer were only sixty-seven feet long. The timbers wouldn't go in; but, as it was a rush order, he got them in all right.

"Did it not occur to you to ask first whether the timbers would be serviceable in shorter lengths?" he was asked.

"No. I was in too much of a hurry to think of such things. You said I had to get the steamer out of harbor in forty-eight hours. And I did."

"Did it occur to you that one of the steel cross walls in the hold might be cut out with an oxy-acetylene torch in a few hours?"

"No. You see, I just had to get that boat loaded and on its way in forty-eight hours."

And there he stood. From that proposition he could not and would not budge. Rush orders were rush orders!

Now here we see one of the deepest traits of stupidity. It is the incapacity to see a situation as a whole. It is the fixation upon one important factor in a situation, to the point of blotting out all else. But how did it happen that the patriot strictly observed the rules of time and completely overlooked the rules of space which imply that eighty-foot timbers are cut to size and needed in that size? I think that, underneath it all, the man was simply stupid by nature regarding dimensions, measures, shapes, and the rest of Euclid. That is a common variety of humanesque.

One important species of sloven seems to be created by a profound stupidity toward time and space values. There are, I am sure, many other varieties of that detestable animal, but none which disorganizes everything for the innocent bystanders with such regularity. Based

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on a constitutional defect, this particular sloven is incurable. If a man, he makes a mess of whatever business he enters, unless protected by fond relatives or broadminded private secretaries. If a woman, she becomes the despair of her parents and later of her husband. In a near-genius like Francis Thompson, whose tale we shall recite at some length, the defective survives only under strict, benevolent guardianship.

Whoever has trained children in the use of simple tools knows what a painfully large percentage of the human race suffers from space-stupor. Boys will drop a saw anywhere. They will, when asked to measure off exactly $1' 9\frac{1}{4}"$ on a board, mark off $1' 9"$ —or perhaps $1' 6\frac{1}{4}"$. Repeated instructions about the angle at which nails should be toenailed on a given job fail; the youths will tilt the nails too far or not far enough. True, we find all degrees of dulness in such space perceptions and space adjustments; but the number of cases showing slow improvement or practically no progress remains astonishingly large.

This stupidity does not seem to be linked with "high" or "low" mental traits generally. For I have observed high-grade morons whose sensitivity toward space relations surpasses that of the average man, and I have also known near-geniuses especially in music and poetry who act as one might suppose idiots would act in their physical movements and manipulations. Turn, please, to the record of Francis Thompson.*

In its last analysis, space-time stupidity roots in insensitivity to mathematics. From the President of the United States, who hoped that "economies" would wipe out a probable 1931 deficit of a billion and a half dollars without added taxes, to Flora, the moron maiden we now introduce, the world wags on, ever stupid toward number. Cyclops is impervious to mathematics; he can barely count his one eye.

What is mathematics to Cyclops? The query makes a pleasant entry into a large and vexed subject. Let Flora speak. The strain on

* See page 214.

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the moron mind of doing the simplest arithmetic is as great as Santa Claus' burden on the night before Christmas. Let Eleanor Wembridge* tell you about Flora, who sparred in vain with a book agent.

"Start a home library with 'Flames of Fervor,'" urged one. "Greatest deeds done and who done 'em—for less than a cent a page." Flora was dazzled—less than a cent a page for so much print! She made a five-dollar installment payment, and had nothing left to pay on the grocer's weekly bill, for she had paid a like amount toward a fur coat, the same on the rent, and Chuck (her husband) had retained five dollars for his own. Four times five makes twenty—surely not difficult for a normal mind. But a moron cannot grasp its significance rapidly enough to come to a decision before the agent has disappeared around the corner.

You recall, no doubt, the standard example in arithmetic which every fourteen-year-old school-child is supposed to be able to solve: If two pencils cost five cents, how many can you get for fifty cents? . . . But neither Flora nor any of her moron friends could master the problem. We knew they could not because we had asked them. Flora's answer was twenty-five because two into fifty is twenty-five. Her friend Lucille's, on the other hand, was a hundred, because two times fifty is a hundred. . . . Another friend, Annie, ventured a still more generous estimate. She said: "Five times fifty, because five cents times fifty cents is five times fifty—whatever that is." Chuck himself answered ten, because, "You get two for five, and two times five is ten." It will be observed that all of them knew that *something* must be done in the way of arithmetic, and that their arithmetic was generally correct—except for the fact that they could not select the right process to employ. A simple problem was to them as Relativity is to the rest of us. If our household accounts depended upon a real understanding of Relativity, we should be precisely in Flora's case, for her capacity to live within her income depends upon simple arithmetical analysis. If she and her friends had been low-grade feeble-minded, they could not even have multiplied their twos and fives. But they were only morons.

It was certainly essential that Flora, out of Chuck's weekly twenty dollars, should save a little for the future, so another example suitable for a fourteen-year-old was set for her. "If you have twenty dollars a week, and spend fourteen a week, how long will it take you to save three hundred dollars?" Flora, who had a sense of humor, could not at first get past the joke that she should ever save anything. "A lifetime," she answered—"and a long life-

* "Life Among the Lowbrows," pp. 6, 7.

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time." Then, "Three hundred times fourteen." "Three hundred times fourteen *what?*" we persisted, and Flora answered "dollars." The example was written out for her, but she had completely lost the connection, and when she was again reminded, "But how long a time would it take to save it?" she answered, as if through the telephone, "2025." What she meant by that we shall never know. We know only that the firms equipped to solicit business with the mentally unsound will find Flora out and use the courts to collect their bills. We know also that with such arithmetical equipment her savings account will never be large.

Will you hoot at me if I say that the gulf between Flora and most of our so-called civilized ancestors is startlingly narrow? Will you call me a purveyor of fiction if I add that many a man of eminence, though he might smile at Flora's woes with the junior multiplication table, could sympathize with her and recall errors of his own scarcely less astounding to us?

As we look back upon the half-million and odd years which the human race has thus far spent on our orb, we confess amazement at the dulness of our ancestors toward the fundamentals of that fundamental science, mathematics. Our own civilization, notably that of the past half-century, is so predominantly mathematical that those of us who have grown up in it have difficulty in imagining the pre-mathematical world. We are doubtless wrong, in one sense, when we yield to the temptation to call our ancestors stupid in mathematics; for their shortcomings seem to have been caused less by inferior sensitivities toward number and space relations than by an inability to hit upon a system of writing numbers so that they could calculate easily. The distinction is vital.

Among the Greeks at least a few great mathematical thinkers arose. There is, for one, the brilliant Archimedes. Another is Apollonius, regarded by Laplace as one of the great minds of all antiquity. But neither of these geniuses was able to multiply or divide numbers which any sixth-grade child handles with ease! And why not? Simply because they had not the slightest conception of a workable system of notation! They had never devised a way of indicating different values for a number by its position. They never realized that 1, immediately left of a decimal point, might stand for unity, while in the second position left it might stand for 10, in the third position 100, in the fourth 1,000, and so on.

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Still more astonishing was their total incapacity to realize either the necessity or the method of symbolizing zero. So all of the operations in arithmetic which to us are so easy remained hidden mysteries to the ancient world. And no practical progress was possible, for it all depends upon calculations. The discovery of zero and a way of writing it in the positional pattern of modern numbers never became well established until the sixteenth century in Europe; and each stage of the advance in this revolutionary device of our culture was made by pure chance. No genius thought out zero. It came as an accident in the use of the abacus, where it indicated an empty column in the crude calculations.

So, if we are to be wholly fair, we must say that the entire human race is stupid with regard to mathematical relations and always has been. We must add that this, the highest and most fruitful of all sciences, has arisen mainly out of pure chance. But for the blind luck of a handful of men, one in India, where the positional arithmetic was devised, one in Arabia, where our number symbols and the term for the empty space on the abacus arose, and a few later thinkers in Europe, we would all be as backward as the poor Athenians in the days of Pericles, unable to calculate even our grocery bills. Taken as a whole, the human race is mathematically moron.

It has been ably argued that the cause of this stupidity is an inordinate interest in and sensitivity toward objects of sense. This venerable opinion has lately been repeated by that brilliant mathematical writer, Tobias Dantzig. He remarks:

"Greek thought was essentially non-algebraic, because it was so concrete. The abstract operations of algebra, which deal with objects that have purposely been stripped of their physical content, could not occur to minds which were so intensely interested in the objects themselves. *The symbol is not a mere formality; it is the very essence of algebra. Without the symbol the object is a human perception and reflects all the phases under which the human senses grasp it; replaced by a symbol the object becomes a complete abstraction, a mere operand subject to certain indicated operations.*" *

I fear this is fictitious psychology. A man may be enormously interested in concrete objects and still think in abstract symbols

* "Number, The Language of Science." Tobias Dantzig. N. Y., 1930. p. 80.

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about implicative relations. True, he might not be able to advance so far as another who was immersed continually in his mathematical fantasies; but he could hold his own pretty well. No, the Greeks did not think algebraically because—they didn't think algebraically. They were merely stupid, precisely as 99,999 out of every 100,000 mortals are, in the presence of pure implication and quantitative relations. Interest in the sense world did not make them thus; the limitation roots in the first and all-inclusive of mental functions, that very one which we shall soon be discussing in the chapter called "Spotlight." One word about it here, and then you must wait for fuller insight until you have reached that passage.

Mathematical and logical stupidity roots in the barren soil of primary attention. Man can attend to only one thing at a time; and, even when dealing with items apparent to eye or ear, cannot organize and handle more than three or four at once inside of a single setting or object. When he deals with items of fantasy he is still worse off; rarely can he attend for long in that form. Even competent mathematicians cannot think through, in imagination, unaided by machines and other external devices, more than three non-cumulative variables in any single problem. What this means in practice will be evident when you observe that most real-life problems involve scores of variables, most of which are non-cumulative.

Nowhere do we behold man's profound mathematical-logical stupidity more lucidly than in the public schools and the ranks of newspaper readers. Here we contact with the masses of humanity—and what a spectacle! During the past few years I have investigated the notorious incompetence of school children in arithmetic and language, with a view to discovering some of the underlying psychic causes. After a few conferences with teachers and an analysis of the commonest errors, it suddenly appeared that an amazing number of boys and girls, mostly between eight and twelve years, cannot grasp the simplest relations in the simplest practical problems of adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing. Mind you! This is not a difficulty in reading symbols; it centers in the perceiving of the relations.

Such a mathematical imbecile may, for instance, be placed in front of a mass of wooden balls, some of which are red and some white. He is told, in simple phrase, to place two red balls in one box at his left for every one white ball which he places in another box at

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his right. With a struggle he may do this. But complicate the task one degree more, and he is lost. Ask him to start putting one red ball in one box and two whites in another box, and thereafter to double each number with each placing, and his day is spoiled. In all this no fantasy is involved. It is purely a matter of using one's eyes in connection with one's mind (if any). And the point I wish to stress is that weak fantasy alone does not explain man's incompetence in this fundamental science of numbers.

In a single glance the normal man cannot detect the number of objects in sight, if they exceed six or seven (A few mathematical prodigies, like Johann Dase, the German freak whom I have elsewhere described,* perceive as many as thirty in a flash with unflinching accuracy.) Under this severe limitation, how could he be expected to manipulate larger quantities "in his head"? This, too, is merely a tiny phase of his stupidity; for in real life most situations involve the vastly more intricate phenomena of order, sequence, grouping, and pattern—in a word, the characteristics of space and time, taken singly and taken together. This closes his mind to virtually all of the natural sciences, as well as to "pure" mathematics and statistics.

Proof? What subject in public schools is always regarded as the hardest? In which do pupils fail oftenest? Mathematics, of course. This is true all the way from the primary grades up to engineering schools: it may surprise you to know, for example, that some of the latter are forced to drop more than half of their students for no other reason than their inability to handle calculus. Would you blame this on poor teaching? Then your own statistical method is weak, for scores of methods have been used, their results verified and analyzed, and the clear implication drawn: while some methods prove much better than others, no method will carry the average man far along the road toward insight into science; for, as Lord Kelvin said, "You do not have science until you have number; and, when you have number, you have science."

Those who write for Cyclops and his offspring know that no newspaper, motion picture, nor radio program can interest the public in statistical information unless the latter can by some ingenious trick be converted into pictures. Thus, you cannot get by with even such a simple statement as this: "During the past eight years Japan's

* "Psychology of Achievement," p. 448, etc.

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population shows an annual increase slightly more than double that of our own country." But a comic strip in which a Japanese is set beside an American and each proportionately enlarged from picture to picture clears up the mystery for many readers. Unfortunately, fewer than .01% of all significant correlations can be thrown onto the screen or printed page in this manner. To state a simple proportion in bald language is to baffle at least seven out of ten readers. And a compound proportion is absolutely unprintable.

We find a third, even more startling proof of the mathematical imbecility of most people. It is the entire history of business. As we shall devote some space to it in a later chapter, a word here is all that can be allowed. To manage any factory, mill, office, or sales force, much calculating must be carried on—and not on a single occasion but as long as the concern is kept alive. Trends in prices of raw materials must be correlated with trends in production costs; both must be quantitatively related to trends in demand, and finally with velocities in change of demand. All sorts of intercorrelations must be computed also—and here we pass miles beyond the mind of the typical business man. Though he may subscribe to a dozen trade journals and engage statisticians to explain affairs to him, he assimilates only a morsel of the indigestible truths. The result? It is written in blood and tears across the whole world today. You have heard the ruin wrought by stupid bankers, stupid promoters, stupid merchants, stupid supersalesmen, and the others; and perhaps you have attributed them mainly to malice, or to prejudice, or to pervert patriotism, or to partisanship, and some other attitude. In this I think you err; for underneath all such attitudes runs a thick, firm substratum of dulness as to quantities, movements, forms, classes, types, and correlations which blurs all thinking.

Illogic is Nemesis. It chains Cyclops forever to his stinking cave.

Had we time and space, we might go on indefinitely through the realm of logical reflection trapping specimens right and left. More numerous, they, than the insects of the Amazon—yes, and deadlier to man! Not a home, town, state, nor institution which has not been poisoned by some of them. The logical imbecile known as Mary Baker Eddy tainted thousands of weak minds in her day with such maunderings as: "There is no pain in Truth, and no Truth in pain, thus we prove by the rule of inversion." "God is good, so good is God." (Why she did not add that elephants are quadrupeds, so quad-

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rupeds are elephants, I do not know; a magnificent zoology might thus be erected.)

While the silliest instances of defective logical reflection probably are found among clergymen and speculative physicists (some of whom are thinly disguised theologians with a flair for mathematics), we run up against discouraging varieties of it among all the professions, some of which we shall consider. Let me end now with a comment on a popular theory about the long-range consequences of human thinking—a popular theory because flattering and optimistic. It is the theory that, in spite of man's decrepit logical imagination, he manages to work everything out for the best by dint of trial and error.

That genial soul, Ed Howe, assures us that, during the past hundred thousand years or so, people have tried out every conceivable way of eating, drinking, dressing, buying, selling, living, loving, praising, condemning, fighting, and keeping their health. The ways which the more intelligent section of our citizenry now follow are the best, not on theory but rather by trial and error. Out of them men have winnowed and filtered as much of ignorance, stupidity, and bungling as is humanly possible. They are as nearly perfect as any manways can be.

What a charming outlook! Would that we could all enjoy it! The chief flaws in it are two: first of all, people haven't given all ways a trial; and, secondly, when they have tried out a way, they have done so in such a stupid, inaccurate, hit-and-miss fashion that no clear conclusions about its worth could be reached. Where, for example, has there ever been an intelligent test of adult eating? I have searched for it in vain. There have been dabbling experiments with soups and creamed cauliflower and waffles—but tell me the ten best recipes for any one of these. Consider drinks, soft and hard. There are more blends undiscovered than discovered right now. For every known cocktail there are a thousand never concocted. When you advance to the dim realms of industry and business, Howe's doctrine becomes ludicrous. Where and when was the credit system given a test under scientific conditions? How much is known about variations in instalment buying? Has any bank ever evolved a well proved method of lending money? Every business man knows the answer.

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Turn to the affairs of society at large? Has there ever been a genuine test of the democratic system? If so, I cannot find records of it. Look at ethics: how far is the Golden Rule valid? Has anybody tested this out by trial and error? No. And marriage? Has not society always fought the trial-and-error method here? How about our schools? Where are we to look for the final results of this vaunted procedure? In New York? In Vienna? In Oshkosh? And in what book have they been brought together, for the glory of mankind?

Turn whithersoever you will; you can find no accumulation of wisdom such as Ed Howe describes. Why not? First of all, because people cannot learn much from trial and error unless they subject their experiences to careful analysis at the time of the event and whenever its later relevance appears. But most people lack the forceful fantasy to do this. They learn pretty much as rats and guinea pigs do. Secondly, to make trial-and-error, even on this low level, fruitful for the race, its results must be brought together. In spite of the thousands of books on business and industry, hardly a morsel of the whole range of man's experience survives in imperishable, communicable form. The courts of Hammurapi may have learned ten thousand truths about ways of handling criminals; but the cuneiforms in clay have not passed them down to us. Julius Cæsar discovered ten thousand more truths about managing soldiers, but his great books give us only a fleeting glimpse of his trial and error. No, the thought that wisdom has accumulated like the snows atop Greenland is a pleasant fiction—no more. For every truth that comes down, there are dragged along in its wake a hundred blunders, superstitions, and twisted ideas. The propeller of Progress churns up mud as it noses through the shallows of our humanesque culture. For every inch of headway, a ton of mud!

Creative Imagination

So we arrive at the fourth kind of fantasy. (Surely you hadn't forgotten it.) It is creative imagination. It is often—almost always, indeed!—confused with constructive imagination of the sort found in many young people during those early years when they love to potter with tools, to make bows and arrows, and to draw pictures

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on the walls while mama wails and the paperhangers exult. To suppose, as several distinguished educators do, that this mania for manipulation is at heart the same as Beethoven's urge to write symphonies is an extraordinary confusion, yet one which is all too easy. The child is merely developing muscles; the thing done is subordinate to the doing. He does not aim at creating, he aims at moving thus and so. Then too, imagination plays a petty rôle in his procedures. He goes about making something essentially the same as what he has seen about him. Teacher draws a horse on the blackboard, so he tries it. From horse to cow, from cow to hen, so runs his supposedly creative flight. It is all ninety-nine parts muscle to one part of fantasy. So I cannot take it seriously here, important as it is in other connections.

Genuine creative imagination always evolves something profoundly original—often so much so that only veteran critics can smell out the origins of some of its ingredients. Schubert spins his melodies. Chopin makes melancholia audible. Einstein constructs a gauzy scheme of space-time. Edison devises incandescent lamps and talking machines. All this is the real thing. How far from the cave of Cyclops!

As not one man in 100,000 is born with more than a chemical trace of such heavenly powers, why discuss them in a cosmic bill of complaints like this one? On we go to more fruitful meadows.

Architect

Architects neatly demonstrate synthesis and relativity. In the fictitious absolute sense, all architects who succeed at all are brilliant; for their work involves a considerable grasp of general business methods, of landscape gardening; of home, factory, shop and office requirements; of interior decoration, and of engineering, no less than of architecture itself in the limited sense. Ever being called upon to design structures for new sites, new purposes, and new clients, they must be versatile esthetically and intellectually. Yet, relative to superior abilities, they exhibit amazing stupidities—all because, relative to their problems, even these abilities often prove inadequate.

The architect suffers further from too much visibility: all his blunders and oversights are forever exposed to the naked eye of

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every passer-by. A stupid author is soon forgotten by all save reference librarians. A stupid lawyer soon disappears from the bar. A stupid professor simply holds his job until old age overtakes him with a pension. But, alas, an even slightly stupid architect is pilloried on his own pediments and portals; be these of marble, then his ill fame endures as long as marble. Witness the Prince Albert Memorial.

In discussing this large problem with Harvey Wiley Corbett, I was guided to the fundamentals. Every structure has an inside and an outside. It is also placed somewhere. It is calculated to endure for at least so and so many years. It must please those who pay for the designing. All these elemental factors must be integrated with the money permissible to expend upon the structure and the local building laws. Each of these factors is, in reality, not single but inordinately complex. So the wonder is that architects ever succeed to the point of satisfying everybody. (Perhaps none ever has!) Nor should we be amazed at the ludicrous stupidities which bob up now and then.

Consider the stupidity of the old Army and Navy Buildings in Washington. The exterior design had been developed specially for cast iron fronts; a New York architect had won considerable renown for his grace and skill in that style of construction, which made necessary the casting of repeating units of decoration in heights limited to one story, for anything larger would have been too heavy to handle, while non-repeating units would have proved too costly. He won the contract but was called upon to build, not of cast iron, but of granite!

Consider the main buildings of New York University, which face away from the highway—only because the architects somehow failed to inquire where and how the highway would probably be placed. Consider the high school in Asheville, N. C., that went up and was opened before somebody found that the library had been omitted. Consider the buildings of the Columbia University campus group, with walls thick enough to withstand the mightiest earthquakes of Chile or Japan, costing enough to erect a first-class college, and perhaps pay for some of its faculty, too; consider also the height of these same edifices, mostly seven or eight low stories, in a city whose fame rests largely on skyscrapers—and justly so because of its insularity and high cost of living. Consider that splendid new business block in London which has, well hidden away behind a

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forest of pillars, a single, small, slow elevator. While Harvey Wiley Corbett and Irving Bush were ascending in it, Bush remarked that any American building of the same size would have a huge battery of elevators. The elevator man, overhearing this criticism, rose to the heights of sarcasm. "In Hengland, we tike only one at a time."

When architecture wed politics, fearful and wonderful hybrids sprang from the *mésalliance*. Look upon almost any group of government structures built before the World War. Either they are absurd copies of some Greek temple or else of the Washington capitol; or, if neither, then nothing at all. As they have been well derided a million times, let us not waste breath over them. We close with the Denver Post Office, a mass of solid granite and marble, if I recall aright. When it was opened a Federal officer (and friend of mine) was assigned to a suite on the third floor. He tried to mail some letters and found neither mail box nor mail chute. He had to walk down to the ground floor, then out into the street, then several hundred paces, around the corner, until he came to the Post Office entrance, where he disposed of his mail. Some months later, a thoughtful, remorseful government sent a squad to chisel out of solid granite and marble the forgotten mail chute! Did they think of placing the chute against the wall? Not they! Chutes should be countersunk, according to Federal specifications; so they hacked and hewed and blasted and filed until they made holes deep enough to hold the conveyance.

Mark you! I am not ragging the architects. I bring them on the stage as a demonstration of man's fatal limitation in the presence of such a maze of space, time, and quantity factors as are involved in building an edifice which must suit the buyer and his purse, no less than the laws of geography, climate, and society. There are few great architects simply because there are few super-men.

Language

"Why drag in language in a Short Introduction to Human Stupidity? Isn't that a stupid blunder?"

Some readers may have muttered thus betwixt their teeth as they caught this chapter title. An explanation is in order—from me, not

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from them. For it does seem far-fetched to discourse on the nature of language. But the act can be amply justified.

Language guides us in many significant ways through a study of intelligence and stupidity. Not wholly reliable, it serves us pretty well on the whole. Note, first of all, that language ability is a specific function, no less than the behavior of eye or ear. The brain physiologist tells us that "the linguistic ability of an individual depends *directly* upon the degree to which the intermediate temporal area of the cerebrum is developed." *

Next, the psychologist reports that language is the result of a highly complex integrative process in which the entire central nervous system and the muscles, especially those of larynx and tongue, share. To think without using language is almost impossible. To think without using any muscles also is. But it is easy to use language without thinking at all. Hence, we infer, language functions are subordinate to intelligence (and stupidity) but not entirely fused with the latter. This asymmetry gives rise to many peculiar relationships which must be inspected.

Mental operations of all kinds involve the muscles. Thinking, musing, entertaining a wish, following the remarks of a speaker, and all other cognate processes project themselves into the muscle fibres, where either visible motions or else the tensions of inhibited motions result. Now, the most highly organized field of such operations is language. Into its mould all thinking and all fantasy, all speculation and all argument are eventually poured. And it is not to be wondered at that our ancestors considered the study of language the foundation of all culture, or that certain contemporaries maintain that there can be no intellectual life apart from words actually uttered.

Suppose that we ask what this discovery of modern psychology means as to language. Can we avoid the conclusion that *language must represent mentality much more fully than has generally been supposed?* I do not see how we can. For if the inference is not true, then there must be many important mental processes regularly carried on which seldom or never appear in symbolic sounds and signs. And as language develops richly in child life long before social

* See Talney & Riley, "Forms and Functions of the Central Nervous System." N. Y., 1921, p. 875, etc.

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restraints such as tabu and conventions affect its structure and movement, the psychologist cannot take refuge in the supposition that any *linguistic function* becomes implicit and hence unobservable. The only things which tabu and convention can ever control are isolated words, specific allusions to persons, things, or events, and the like. Grammar, syntax, range of vocabulary, and other functions cannot be attributed to anything other than the spontaneous activities, first, of babies as they babblingly experiment with their tongues and, secondly, of adults striving to communicate with one another. (I purposely disregard here the emotional and appetitive utterances of infancy and savages, inasmuch as all these take place prior to language in the modern sense.)

Students of languages who have ceased to be mere philologists and have turned their faces toward the living forces which create words and sentences are bringing to light a wealth of material which confirms my belief. As yet they have not perceived the psychological bearings of their investigations, but they have set nearly all the signposts for the guidance of him who would fare forth in search of human nature. The masterly research of Jespersen in the evolution of language* is packed with facts which need only a slight increment of interpretation in order to bring out many intimacies between intelligence and the uttered word.

Because the use of language involves, even in its lowest levels, a variety of integrative processes, it must be considered briefly here. The subject, unfortunately, is so large and so new that I dare offer only a hint or two as to how it ought to be approached and what we may expect to find in it. As a worthy problem for a decade or two of study I herewith commend it to the psychologists, especially to the behaviorists who make the larynx a verbiform appendix of the brain. While they work away at it, let us press on to the phenomena of stupidity and language.

High skill in using language usually indicates superior intelligence, lack of skill usually betrays some important stupidity. One of the highest positive correlations between intelligence and other traits occurs between it and the score in English composition. It may not bore you to glance down the lists of three independent tests, each by a thoroughly competent investigator.

* "Language." New York, 1922.

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In Book's tests * these correlations with I. Q. of high school students ran as follows:

With chemistry	52
With English composition	44
With mathematics	37
With Latin	26
With history	25

In Bright's tests, also with high schools, † it runs thus:

With English	72
With Latin	75
With algebra	50
With handicraft	36

In Burt's tests of grammar school children, the I. Q. correlates as follows:

With English composition	63
With arithmetic	55
With reading	54
With handwriting	21
With drawing	15

What do these numbers mean? Any one between 35 and 50 indicates a fairly good but not tremendously significant parallel between general intelligence and the trait indicated. Any one between 50 and 60 begins to be significant of a marked trend showing some inner connection. Any over 60 is emphatically high and reveals a strong linkage of the traits. It is rare for any correlation of this general sort to run above 80. Those which do often turn out to involve language abilities: thus we find extremely high correlations between mental age, on the Binet scale, and the ability to understand sentences, in the Thorndike tests. The correlation rises here to 84. Highest of all is the correlation between mental age and vocabulary;

* See "Indiana Univ. Bulletin of Ext. Div.," Vol. 4, p. 100

† See "Journal of Educ. Research," Vol. 4, p. 44, etc.

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it shoots up to 91. This means much for our present inquiry; it means that language reflects one's level of intelligence (and stupidity) almost perfectly. Almost, I say. To do it perfectly, the correlation would have to be 100.

Before we go on to larger matters, let us exhibit the exceptional relation: there are cases in which high language skill is not associated with correspondingly high intelligence. Though few, relatively viewed, they are curiously distributed in places where one would least expect them—among literary folk! Many years ago, when first I was thrown into close touch with all sorts of writers, good, bad, and otherwise, I was sorely puzzled over these freakish types. At length I was vexed to the point of launching a subterranean investigation up and down Grub Street, yea even into the suburbs of Parnassus. And what I found!

The mediocre intelligence, the emotional instability, and the low culture of most literary persons have been all too clearly revealed by several informal inquiries among well established authors. Literary agents, critics, and several of my acquaintances in the publishing field have reported to me, from time to time; and it appears that about six out of every ten authors believe firmly in ghosts, in clairvoyance, in palmistry, and in astrology! Margaret Deland has publicly declared, before a gathering of psychologists, that she pins her faith in a spirit realm to the strange antics of her ouija board. Another dainty feminine scribbler regulates her whole life by numerology; but, for some reason to me incomprehensible, she grew furious when I asked the privilege of mentioning her name in this panorama of imperfections. Three thoroughly competent novelists, on the borderline of the best seller's paradise, admit that they never were able to master the multiplication table past the sixes and sevens; and they proved their magnificent stupidity to me with examples. Once I introduced, under the deceit of a game, a series of elementary logical fallacies such as are given to college freshmen as exercises. Among those present, three or four popular authors were unable to detect anything wrong. The rest of my investigations cannot be told, simply because it is a monotonous recital.

Not one man in a hundred ever achieves a thoroughly objective communicative language. By that I mean that usually some shreds of baby-talk, infantile idea, and purely subjective musing are left both in vocabulary and style of expression. Shades of meaning beyond the

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grasp of listeners persist. Words whose meanings have been originally misunderstood are used for years uncorrected; as I recently noticed in a brilliant thirty-year-old who was saying "that fact mitigates against my going there." Even experienced writers cherish microscopical vestiges of such introversive and infantile habits. Among the rank and file of the race, however, such trends indicate, to some extent, a constitutional cramping of style—more bluntly, a stupidity toward meanings.

Most people are constitutionally unable to use language in its higher refinements. They live at the mental level intermediate between that of the primordial savage and the superior 1% of modern mankind which has created the subtleties of grammar, rhetoric and style. The rank and file of school children here as well as throughout Europe think and speak and write in those "inseparable, irregular conglomerations" which, as Jespersen has well said, characterize primitive language. We do not call the average language by such a ponderous name; we say the common man thinks, reads, and talks in catch-phrases and slang. But that amounts to the same thing

Not quite so far down the scale as that charming pair of beauties, Flora and Lucille, to whom Eleanor Wembridge has introduced us, in "Life Among the Lowbrows" Nevertheless, you may glimpse the common man's language sense in and through the word tests of the young ladies.

"It is hard to discover just what words convey to morons with such a background. Flora when questioned says that 'lecture' means 'getting hanged,' while Lucille says 'It's the chair.' . . . Flora says 'skill' is 'you do it,' which isn't so bad. Lucille says 'You do it to fish'

"'Not scale, but skill,' we repeat. 'In your head,' she answers, which seems perhaps on the right track, until she adds 'a bone.'

"'Not skull, but skill,' we insist patiently. 'Fry in it,' she tries again, and we give it up. For purposes of ordinary conversation, words of that abstraction are too hazy for Lucille.

"Cotton is 'wood-like' to Flora, but 'comes from animals' to Lucille. ('Like coal,' she adds, to make it more clear) . . . Brunette, says Flora, means 'blondes'; regard means 'guard-like'; civil is 'civilized' or 'big.'

"'Why big?' 'Because the Civil War was big.'"

Let's admit that Lucille and Flora live in a haze much thicker than that which encompasses our high school students. But even so,

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don't you see a solid resemblance between their sense of language and that of the high school senior who writes "The agent displayed psittacosis in discovering the motives of the crime"? Or: "The uprising was helped by the speech of an aspirin at every corner"?

But the hapless students are scarcely worse than many of their teachers. If taxpayers realized the linguistic stupidity of these civil servants, a howl would resound from Wall Street to Walla Walla. Out of every 100 English composition teachers below the college level, it is safe to rate at least 40 as stylistic imbeciles and as high-grade linguistic morons. Of the remaining 60, possibly 20 write and speak well enough to handle the common run of communications, such as letters, simple news reports, and untechnical digests; but they are dull to the niceties of phrase and turn. If one out of the 100 shows positive style and wide flexibility, it is a wonder my eyes have yet to contemplate.

For some fifteen years I offered, at Columbia, advanced composition for professional and near-professional writers. Two courses handled fiction, one dealt with magazine articles. Every year a sprinkling of high school teachers sought admission on the ground that they yearned to get the craftsman's touch. (Few of them had even mastered the touch system on the typewriter.) I let in the most promising, and—oh, woe is me!—I usually found that it was I who was let in. Unfortunately, I did not keep segregated records of achievement; but I did preserve scores of papers for many years. From these I now cull a sentence written by a high school teacher of English composition. You must take my word for it that this is typical in every respect; from any of several hundred MSS. similar effusions might be drawn. Torn, as it is, from the hot heart of drama, it loses some of its life. But you wouldn't notice the loss much, I'm sure.

This sentence was the third revision, made after I had all too tenderly chided the author for a certain involution.

Just twenty-two days later the wedding had taken place,—without Betty as bridesmaid, as per the usual schooldays' agreement—had been the one thought of which she was most conscious throughout the ceremony! "I will make him the very best wife I possibly can", she had resolved in moments of unresponsiveness, and the splendid integrity and understanding trust on his part had aroused in her the natural loyalty and spirit of fair play, so that it was

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only an affair of a few months until she had purposely to think back, as now, to conceive of the period when she had not been very, very much in love with this very best of men and kindest of husbands, most congenial of friends and superlative father for a small son and daughter,—having reached which culminating and up-to-date point in the reverie, she smiled whimsically to herself, let drop the diminutive sock she had been darning and her eyes sought the distant blue hills across the sunkissed bay down which her Betty's ship must steam to lie at anchor before the town!

And now, at last, you know why high school boys grasp language as they do. Meagrely endowed with intelligence, they are drilled by meagrely endowed minds only too often. They bring little to schools in their heads, and little is added to that little. Their first years fail to establish sharp, precise distinctions in meaning; so their basic vocabulary is infirm and therefore cannot serve well in carrying the vast superstructure of adult language. This circumstance I regard as the most significant, not alone in education, but in the entire management of human affairs. Its bearing upon problems of stupidity cannot be exaggerated. So here we pause while I delve into the statistics of vocabulary and its underlying logic. If I can make clear one or two established facts in this obscure field, you will see the relation between language and the Cyclopean mind in a new light.

Language is quite different from what people casually suppose. And one of the deepest differences lies in the relation between basic meanings and the vast system of superimposed derivatives. Does this sound frightfully confused? Then let me illustrate it simply. I have found hundreds of fourth and fifth grade pupils who fail dismally in elementary arithmetic partly because they have never grasped that the common meaning of "plus" or + is conveyed by such expressions as "the sum of," "add to," "together with," "combined," "and," "with," "more" and so on. They do not see that "minus" is a relation expressed by "the difference between," "take from," "subtract from," "less," and the like. School teachers are driven mad by pupils misconstruing such a problem as this: "Find the difference between 8 and 4." The learners proceed to add 8 and 4. When asked why they did so, they reply mournfully: "It says 8 and 4, doesn't it? 'And' means 'plus'."

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Now, such children have not yet mastered the basic vocabulary of mathematics. That is, they have not grappled with the concepts of addition, subtraction, and so on to the point of subjugating them thoroughly. Hence they blunder the instant they enter the realm of derivative meanings and variants. Their House of Numbers is built upon sand; every wind and rain shatters the frail shack. All their lives through, they think in the same fog as that which swathed the youthful contemporary of our good aide, Professor Robert E. Rogers,* who recalls what he believes his "first instantaneous glimpse of what stupidity really means at the age of five, in the first grade. In the geography class we had been told that 'the earth is round like an orange.' We had been told to reproduce the sentiment on paper. The little girl next to me wrote 'The round earth is an orange' and called it a day. At that moment, I think, I recognized, although I probably did not know the word, what 'stupidity' means. . . ."

Now, in all subjects from mathematics to cosmetics there is a small basic vocabulary which embraces the fundamentals. It must be completely mastered ere one can combine and rearrange the terms and relations it defines with freedom and accuracy. A seemingly trivial error in the foundation throws immense masses of the superstructure out of plumb. It is somewhat as if you were to learn all numbers except six; or as if you learned all arithmetical operations except subtracting, and then endeavored to handle the work of a public accountant. Or it is as if you learned all parts of speech except pronouns and struggled along thus in conversation.

When a well educated man assures you that he cannot convey to you what he means, you may be reasonably certain that he is plagued with an imperfect basic vocabulary. When he asserts that most of life eludes language, he usually combines with a truth a grave underestimate as to how much words can express. Owen D. Young has repeatedly set forth this opinion—as, not long ago, in his St. Lawrence University commencement address. He says he has discussed the inadequacy of language with many distinguished lawyers, engineers, and other professionals, nearly all of whom agree with him that they—no more than he—can say only a small fraction of what they wish to express. Young declares that even the most skilful at-

* *Boston Evening American*, July 13, 1931, in an advance discussion of this book

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torneys, who spend their lives wrestling with comma, phrase, clause, and qualifier rarely are able to reduce to writing more than 5% to 10% of their intentions.

Most of the language deficiency observed by Young springs from defects in basic vocabulary which have been, in turn, caused partly by abominable training but still more by constitutional stupidity. I am not suggesting that the able lawyers and engineers Young consulted are dolts; I only insist that their linguistic sensitivity is, in various special directions, limited, relative to the things they would like to utter. They are in the predicament of a man who, with no training in mechanics nor in its technical vocabularies, is suddenly called upon to describe the design and functioning of a linotype machine. He might be pardoned for insisting, after a few days of bitter struggle, that language breaks down in the presence of such intricacy. Nevertheless every least detail of the machine can be precisely reported in words—mostly in untechnical words at that. The amateur fails through lack of perhaps ten or fifteen concepts in mechanics. Thrust these beneath his workaday vocabulary, give him time to think them through, and he will describe the linotype glibly.

This stupidity toward language becomes more and more serious, as civilization progresses. Discoveries and inventions multiply the things to be described by word, and they compel subtler expressions, more precise terminologies. At the same time the sheer multitude of novelties inundates us, drowning even the most capacious intellect. In all this what becomes of the ordinary man? Plainly, he perceives and conceives relatively less and less. The law of diminishing returns applies to language no less than to sense perceptions and economic relations. Somewhere around 2,000 or 3,000 words the common demands of daily conversation are met; somewhere around the 20,000th word a man stops acquiring a larger vocabulary for reading purposes, because he finds that the extra effort is not repaid in benefits. Only a few people who traffic in words rise to a vocabulary of 40,000 or 50,000 words. Yet even such a one represents less than one-tenth of the absolute contemporary vocabulary. By the year 2,000 it may represent only 1%.

Now, hitherto culture has been transmitted largely through literature; and the substance of the ordinary man's world has been embodied in histories, essays, novels, reports, and the like. Today litera-

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ture, even in its broader sense, does not encompass more than .0001% of science and the technologies. At the same time ordinary people are reading relatively less and less of the significant matter, and they read that little poorly. Most of them have not even a hazy picture of what is going on in the world of statesmen, engineers, chemists, psychologists, and agronomists. (How many of them even know what the devil an agronomist is?)

Each domain of modern knowledge has its own basic vocabulary, in terms of which indefinitely many special relations and entities can be adequately described. Nobody knows how many words belong in each such basic system, nor how many basics there are. But, relative to the gross working word list, the basic in each domain is small. Thus, in geography, it may well be that 500 key concepts do not exist; as few as 200 may serve the entire science. In geology, probably twice as many occur; in physics, certainly still more, yet not one-tenth as many as appear in the special vocabulary of a college text-book on physics.

Now, our alleged educational system scarcely grazes these many rich territories. Draw at random any 1,000 recent college graduates; quiz them on 1,000 key terms in any twenty fields also chosen at random. How many of the young men and women will score 25% accuracy? Not more than one out of five or six. And it will be a miracle if one scores 80% right. Nowhere does the "cultural lag," as Ogburn well calls it, disclose itself more nakedly than here. The so-called educated classes, taken as statistical groups, still think and speak the language of the early nineteenth century, insofar as they work in the clear; but, like the poor negroes who dote on big words like "pusillanimous" and "reverberatory," our little A. B.'s and Ph. D.'s patter along, at teas and seminars, in grave discourse about relativity and points west, just as if they knew what they were saying. Personally, I get much more fun listening to the darkies converse about "dis yeah heterogenerous bunch of anaphylaxative who said Ah was fired from de compensation of wuk."

The language stupidity of Americans flares up whenever they read or talk. It is notorious that our people are wretched at conversation. All sorts of explanations and apologies have been proffered: Hilaire Belloc attributes it, as I recall, to the devastating velocity of our daily lives, which forces us to grunt in monosyllables and to hit only the high spots; André Maurois traces it back to "an unconquerable

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shyness and a prodigious self-distrust." Every observer agrees with Maurois in his further remark that "in no other country will you find such impotence in self-expression." In my opinion, the probe must drive deeper if it is to touch the fountain of dull speech. Why are we so distrustful of ourselves in conversation? Chiefly because we are so badly equipped with the fundamental ideas which illumine and organize the passing show. The instant we open our mouths, we discover the vacuum. So quickly we hide it in shame.

As with conversation, so with reading—only more so. Millions of people dislike serious reading. More millions read even newspapers so slowly and so inaccurately that what should be a pleasant duty turns into boredom. I have studied the habits of many hundreds of educated people and find, to my own amazement, stupidity rampant. Dull eyes and dull minds conspire to this inglorious end. As I have dealt with this phase of literary stupidity elsewhere,* let me pass it by with an allusion. Business men who have had a college course will read a newspaper at the rate of four words a second and retain only the most obvious narrative features. Details not in narrative form go in one eye and out the other. An intelligent reader covers such material at the rate of five, six or seven words a second and retains at least one-third of the details. The same inferior adult will get hardly one-tenth of a fairly difficult book passage. He commonly takes in one word at a time; so he never assimilates the longer sweep of thought. He lays the volume down, dizzy, irritated, tired.

Here we pause for a moment to glimpse the American scene as a whole. Stupidity in language increases, it would appear. Hence general stupidity increases; for, remember, thinking apart from language is, if not wholly impossible, almost so. There is both an absolute and a relative stupefaction: our schools have lost their grip on elementals and no longer give the average youth and maid a thorough basic vocabulary, so a generation of fuzzy thinkers has grown up and will soon be running affairs—probably into the ground. At the same time, the environment grows huger, more baffling, an ever greater labyrinth of physics, chemistry, physiology, state laws, business rules, trade customs, etiquette, city planning, . . . Poor Cyclops! Well may he sigh for his good old cave, and the woolly rams, and the great fire smudging away drowsily!

* See "The Art of Learning," p. 139, etc. Also "The Art of Rapid Reading," throughout first quarter of book.

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On stupid misunderstandings due to stupider language all the lawyers of Christendom thrive. The inmost negotiations of the League of Nations have been shot through with this same blundering of word and phrase. Schoolbooks simplify and adorn it, making a virtue of verbalism and setting a high price on patter. Newspapers spill over with it, writing words like Bolshevism, Christianity, Justice, Progress, Charity, Capitalism, Labor, Economic System, Civilization, Business, Law and Order with no more insight into meanings than is possessed by the electric sign whose thousand bulbs flash the merits of Smithkins' Silk Sox in well formed sentences of press-agent prose. Yes, it is all a charge of the Light Brigade! A very light brigade! Sooner or later, these poor stupid fellows will be shot down—all because they don't know what things mean.

Will civilization then end? No, indeed! As to that, I am still an incorrigible optimist. Give me time, and I shall come up smiling!

What we have found about the stupid language of our contemporaries makes me wonder about the past. Surely in most times and places men have been even stupider than we in this respect. Philologists assure us that the current languages of Western Europe have progressed further than any others toward clarity, flexibility, and compactness. So, would it not seem that the thinking of more primitive peoples must have been dangerously restricted by their symbolisms of speech and writing? If the mind leans so heavily upon vocabulary and grammar, must it not muddle sorrowfully through the day's affairs if it has a poor language?

I have long believed this. And it has seemed that a new psychological analysis of all languages might be worked out which would give us a more or less objective measure of the intelligence and stupidity of those who use any mode of expression. Just how to attack such a task is a puzzle, to be sure. I am not at all convinced that the way I am going to come at it here is profitable. But it is worth a try. So we approach the psychology of language from the point of view of its integrative processes. Before we can do this, though, you must know what such a process is.

So we pass on to this very large subject, after which we shall return to the inmost psychic structure and function of this, man's highest, most distinctive activity.

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Grammar

In all we shall say about language and stupidity it must be clearly understood that we hold no brief for the exploded theory that a deep inner connection exists between race and language or between culture and language. Long ago Franz Boas put that notion out of court, and out it will stay, so far as we are concerned. But this need not prevent our scrutinizing a language for its typical sensitivities and insensitivities; and our inferring from these that the particular people who gave the language form must have possessed, in some considerable degree, the characteristics apparent in the grammar, vocabulary and common style. A culture, as Boas correctly maintains, flows from innumerable influences other than language; most of these are not psychological but topographical, bacteriological, meteorological, and what not.

The grammar and general word type of a language, however, is overwhelmingly psychic. Boas, I believe, was the first to emphasize the fact that, as far as observations guide us, grammar arises as an unconscious form. Not one person in a million would ever become aware of moods, tense, gender, and syntax, were it not for school teachers. He would go on talking, just as he goes on walking, innocent of all anatomy and calisthenics. Meanwhile the structure of this grammar would limit his thinking in many ways, none of which would ever be apparent to him. He might suppose that he was analyzing situations "objectively" when, in fact, he was merely analyzing that phase of them which happened to be presented in the categories of his native grammar. Thus the deepest design of all his thinking would take shape from the design of his language.

Why shouldn't we expect, then, types of stupidity in grammar? A cursory inspection of a score of languages has convinced me that each reveals a peculiar combination of mental traits in those who use them. Compare, for instance, the outstanding peculiarities of such widely divergent languages as Chinese and Bantu.

Chinese

Chinese involves the reader and listener in a severe mental effort. Being virtually uninflected, it uses its monosyllabic words unchanged

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in every conceivable combination of meanings. Thus the word *jen* means man, man's, men, the man, the man's, the men or the men's. And a simple sentence like *yu jen tsai men wai*, which means literally "have man gate outside," can actually be used to say: "There is a man outside the gate," or "There are people outside the gate." To make matters worse, there are no words formed from simpler words by affixes, as in English "baker" from "bake," "brewer" from "brew." But these deficiencies shrink into insignificance beside the astonishing horde of homophones, which make Chinese unbelievably difficult for a foreigner and for the ordinary coolie.

A homophone is a sound which has many meanings, as that of the word "reed" in English, which may mean either "read" or "reed" or the proper name "Reid." The modern Mandarin dialect of Peking possesses fewer than five hundred syllables or basic sounds; and foreigners commonly feel as they listen to it, that the speaker is repeating the same sound almost continuously. There are, in fact, nineteen sounds, which recur in it in a wide variety of meanings. In ordinary Chinese, there are sixty-nine words that are pronounced "I," fifty-nine that have the identical sound "shí," and twenty-nine that are "ku" and thus through the list

As this became intolerable many centuries ago, the Chinese invented the device of tones to distinguish words. But this helped only a little. Today a man can use the language only by means of many special tricks of making clear what he is talking about. He uses two words instead of one, like "look-see" for "see," or "take-go" for "take away."

This is perhaps enough to show the chief peculiarities of the stimuli which reach the eye of the Chinese and set his linguistic mechanisms going. What now about the reactions of these latter? Is it not clear that they have to establish many more connections than the English-speaking, English-thinking mind does? On this point let me quote that excellent authority, Bernard Karlgren:

"It consequently makes exceptionally strong claims upon the interpreter's 'guessing faculty,' and the chief syntactical expedient of Chinese, word-order, only to a certain extent compensates for the lack of formal marks of the relations of the words within the sentence. Not only, however, do the Chinese suffer no inconvenience from this uncertainty, but they rather foster it, and take the extreme course of disdaining to produce even the measure of lucid-

ity attainable by the observance of word-order. The Chinese sentence, compared with the European, is highly brachylogical. It reminds us most of the language used in telegrams, in which we have to express ourselves in as few words as possible, e.g., 'going New York important business tell Jones forward trunk Liverpool Monday.' While we do not as a rule leave out any of the two fundamental elements of the sentence, subject and predicate, the Chinese find it beneath their dignity to express them both if one of them can possibly be understood from the context. An Englishman refusing to buy a certain thing, will say, 'I won't buy it,' thus carefully expressing both subject and object ('I' and 'it'). The Chinese will reject both of these as superfluous, and say simply *pu mai* 'not buy.'

"This *sketchy* nature of Chinese, its want of clear and adequate structure, put serious difficulties in the way of learning it. There is nothing for it but to translate word for word—in case of ambiguous words, trying one sense after the other—and thus endeavor to draw conclusions from the context as to the purport of the sentence. The case is therefore not analogous with that of Latin, for example. There a capable schoolboy, who has the ordinary grammar at his fingers' ends, can always with help of a dictionary and relying upon formal analysis tackle any sentence (provided that its subject-matter is sufficiently familiar to him). But it is possible for an expert sinologist to be nonplussed before a Chinese sentence, uncertain how it has to be interpreted." *

This makes Chinese documents very short. Thus, the Gospel of St. Matthew contains in the original Greek about 39,000 syllables, in German 33,000, in English 29,000, but in Chinese 17,000. As a rule, such brevity indicates intellectual progress; but only when short expressions are accompanied by various simplifying devices. These fail in Chinese; and the result is that the masses of the Middle Kingdom have a feeble grasp of their own tongue, and show a marked inclination to use another. Thus, in South China, the natives of adjoining villages regularly employ Pidgin English when conversing with one another.

Homophones and terseness, working in combination, make classical Chinese utterly unintelligible to an educated native when read aloud to him, unless the reader adds explanations of the text as he goes. Usually it is the local meaning of the homophone which he

* "Sound and Symbol in Chinese." London, 1923, pp. 90-91

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must elucidate; but sometimes it is the abbreviation, which is often carried to an absurd degree.

Unfortunately the intellectuals revel in this terseness and multiple equivocation and complete formlessness. The result, while amusing to those who play with the words, is discouraging to the learner and injurious to the evolution of the language. Karlgren reports a multitude of violent elliptical tendencies and periphrastic techniques in classical Chinese which demand, both in the speaker and in his auditor, a highly integrated mental activity. A few cases will convince you of this. "Shi ju pu ju shi ch'u" is literally, "Miss enter not like miss go-out." Not very illuminating, is it? To one familiar with the tricks of Chinese, this might naturally be translated, "To neglect to imprison is worse than to neglect to release." But it does not mean that at all! It is a judicial maxim and means, "It is worse to imprison an innocent man than to release a culprit." The legal scholar who framed the adage assumed blandly that anybody could guess that he referred to an innocent man in the first half and to a guilty one in the second.

Terseness being cultivated by the *literati* as the supreme virtue in writing, they evolve such monstrosities as this complimentary remark: "ming hia ting wu hu shi." This, again literally, is "name under fix not-have empty scholar." Surely no Western mind could ever guess what the speaker was driving at here. Karlgren confesses his despair, and I do the same, after a dozen wild tries. The Chinese genius who uttered it intended to say, "He is a scholar who well deserves his fame." As with sentences, so with phrases. Thus "ji pen" is Japan ("sun root"), and "ping" is soldier. To say "Japanese soldiers," then, one ought to say: "ji pen ping." But does the Chinese newspaper reporter say that? Not at all. He is not paid according to the space he fills, it would appear. For he usually writes, "ji ping," which means "sun soldiers." And so on, to the confusion of youth, coolie, and foreigner.

I need not inquire into the reasons for such preposterous brevity. It is the mentality revealed in the process which alone concerns us here. And in the main it is clear enough. *In the speaker or writer it imposes at each moment an artificially high selective operation. And in the listener or reader it requires a still higher interpretative activity in which memory and guess-work figure largely.* Literary Chinese is the product of minds which, it might seem, find such a joy in these

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superior integrative processes that they run wild with them. In this it is the complete opposite of Bantu.

What mental traits can have produced these strange linguistic habits? It will not do to say that religious or other esoteric forces have created them, for this dodges the question. Such forces exist only in human beings. They are individual acts of mind and body, not mysterious emanations of a "social consciousness" or any other hocus-pocus. Grant that the ancient *literati* and priests of China may have developed linguistic mannerisms of their own and exalted them into something like the ritual of a cult; this does not alter the fact that each mannerism was, in its primordial reality, a deed of a man and can find its explanation only in the nature of that man. So let us look at the Chinese scholar as he thinks and writes his peculiarly defective articles.

This much is clear enough. His dominant interest cannot possibly be clarity, so far as his hearer or reader is concerned. As he inscribes a character, he cannot be asking himself, "How will my public construe this?" Rather does he remain within the circle of his own thoughts and set down some shorthand indication of these somewhat like the private notes which you or I might jot down at a lecture, by way of a reminder. Having heard the lecture, you may easily recall it in its entirety simply by glancing at the notes; but somebody else who had not been present would get nothing from your disjointed inscriptions.

Now, from an outsider's point of view, such lecture notes appear esoteric. But they had no esoteric motive. They are mere mnemonics. So with the Chinese scholar. I doubt very much whether his literary shorthand has any esoteric motives. It is closer to known facts to assume that *the Chinese is a complete and thoroughgoing individualist in the psychological sense of this term*. His thinking, like his outer adjustments in general, is more frankly egocentric than those of either the Black or the White races.

All that we know of the Chinese since the dawn of history confirms this. And even today, in spite of prodigious efforts by missionaries and business concerns, virtually every man in the country is, in the Occidental sense, unsocial. For him the community does not exist. His relations to people outside of his family are purely practical and more or less shrewd. He looks upon politics as purely a business: and thus it has come to pass that in China it is considered

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regular and proper to make as much money as one can by holding public office and giving fat jobs and contracts to one's relatives. No people of importance in all the world have as little interest or faith in government and social activities as the educated Chinese. They live true to Confucius' adage: "What the superior man seeks is in himself; what the small man seeks is in others."

The tremendous vigor of the belief in spirits is, of course, a familiar egocentric symptom; and the stubborn ancestor worship of the Chinese is a virulent form of it. Here we find profound social stupidity which is linked with another trait not yet mentioned, namely esthetic contemplation, at which the Chinese far excel most Westerners. A peculiar introversion results from this blend; and we see its worst outward manifestation in a grammar (or lack of it) which calmly ignores the listener and reader.

Bantu

What a different scene unfolds when we turn from Eastern Asia to the steamy equatorial jungles and sun-baked plains of Central Africa! The mental processes which produce the languages of those hundreds of black tribes to whom Bleek, the first thorough student of them, gave the name of Bantu, are extraordinarily simple.

The psychological mark of Bantu is that absolutely nothing is left to guesswork, nothing to interpretation, nothing to any selective mental function in either speaker or listener. And, as if that were not enough, the subject of discourse is, psychologically speaking, repeated in every word. This, of course, is accomplished by a most elaborate system of grammatical concord which can only be faintly envisaged in an illustration or two.

The Zulu word for "man" is "umuntu." If you now wish to speak about a man, every word, either in the sentence wherein you mention the man *or in the following sentence*, having any reference to the man, must begin with a letter or a syllable that refers to and reminds our auditors of "umuntu." Thus, to take a specimen sentence from the first searching study of Bantu, "A Comparative Grammar of South African Languages," by W. I. Bleek:

UMUntu	Wetu	Omuchle	Uyabonakala	siMtanda
man	ours	handsome	appears	we love

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The capitalized letters in the first sentence are all what Bleek has called concord signs: that is, they indicate that the subject of the sentence is "man." If the sentence were about men instead of a man, all these concord signs would be changed to ABA or BA or B. Now Zulu is one of the most highly developed of the Bantu languages; and these concord signs are shorter and more highly conventionalized than in primitive Bantu. To get at the psychology of the negroes who speak these unusual tongues, let us look at some of Sir Harry Johnston's instances of the more archaic forms. He finds—as might be supposed from all that is known of primitive affixes—that the concord signs are themselves abbreviations of earlier complete words; and that some dialects now extant reveal these vanished words clearly enough to make a reconstruction of them accurate. Thus, in the speech of the Uganda peoples, he finds this structure:

"They these-they-person they-bad they-who-kill we-them-fear"

Here are five words, each containing a complete "they." And the sentence means: "They are bad people who kill; we fear them." Now what sort of mental process is here being carried on, first in the speaker and then in his auditor? The subject of discourse is kept constantly in mind, *not by an act of memory but by repetition*. As Livingstone said, "Such interminable repetitions impart energy and perspicuity to each member of a proposition, and prevent the possibility of a mistake as to the antecedent." What the missionary failed to note, though, was that this mechanism must have grown up because the people who used it needed such a cumbersome crutch to lean on in all their mental journeyings. It is inconceivable that many men would long continue to use or to need a score of recurrent references to the subject of the sentence they were constructing or listening to, unless they found that they were muddled when such references were omitted. I regard it as a fair inference that any language built on the Bantu pattern, namely, with the pronominal prefix as the basis of concord, is the product of a mind that integrates poorly and cannot carry a moderately complex proposition in thought from moment to moment.

It may well be, too, that the lack of mental interests which regularly accompanies low integration has helped to perpetuate all the clumsiness and verbosity of reference, not only in Bantu but in other

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languages having similar structures. Just as children love to play with sounds and repeat phrases endlessly, so may primitive people actually fill in their otherwise empty hours and minds with babble. The longer the babble, the better it serves. We find not a little evidence of this in the speeches and stories of tropical savages: but the best testimony comes from primitive song, which is droned on and on by the hour without a change of tone or phrase. Here again we come upon a nice adaptation. Where no purpose can be served by conciseness, which involves mental work, a language that makes the least demand upon speaker and hearer is the best one.

Black

Turn from Bantu to the larger world of negroes, and you quickly come upon one of the deepest differences between race and race. We see it, at first approach, as a difference in the ability to organize experiences. It is a difference in the integrative action of the nervous system. Most conspicuous in grammar, it can be found in every other activity. The stupidities peculiar to the black man can all be traced to it.

I have been interested in collecting facts on this point because it has been neglected by anthropologists and psychologists—not deliberately but rather because of the difficulty of studying it except under the normal living conditions of the persons investigated. The higher integrative life of Zulus and Swahilis cannot be inspected in the laboratory.

Here is one of the most puzzling anomalies in the mentality of the ordinary Central African native. Whites who have lived in his world many years agree on two points: first, that he has an unbelievably wretched practical memory, and secondly that he is the greatest linguist on earth. He forgets what he has said or done a few minutes after the act. He cannot remember the names of rivers, mountains, chieftains, or other objects. And yet he will pick up a strange language in a jiffy. Hans Coudenhove, who has spent twenty-one years in Equatorial Africa and knows the blacks as few men do, says:

“It has happened to me, not once only, but repeatedly, that I have come among a tribe accompanied by men who had never

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heard its idiom; and, before a month was over, they were, without a single exception, able to converse fluently with the inhabitants, and that even when that particular language differed from their own as much as does English from Italian

"But not that only; although I speak very indifferent Swahili, —a language which it is very easy to learn to speak badly, and almost impossible for a European to learn to speak faultlessly,—new servants who entered my employ learned to speak it in a few weeks simply by my talking to them. That they learned it from me was quite evident from the fact that they acquired all my mistakes!"*

Surely this is contradictory, you will say. As a matter of fact it is not. *When we inspect the behavior more minutely we find that there is high momentary integration but virtually none from moment to moment.* If you ask an African the name of a river, he will not stop, scratch his head, and say that he has forgotten. He will make a quick answer. Ask him ten minutes later, and he will make a second answer quite different from the first; and so on. This can point to one only thing: any item in the river scene before him arouses any reaction he may have had with reference to any other river. Many past experiences, as wholes, are revived with much liveliness and with little or no law and order. Pure chance rules his mentality. He has not integrated his responses to the precise situation; he has integrated them solely to the vaguest common denominator, to wit, water-flowing-between-banks. This factor is enough to revive indiscriminately the name of any river, or even words accidentally heard in connection with water.

The ease with which he learns a new language is plainly a consequence of defective integration from moment to moment, coupled with high integration within the moment. The man who adjusts his entire life to his whole personal and social environment develops a highly selective linguistic memory. The signs and sounds of the community's language become so closely integrated with all his daily acts that the latter can be separated from the former only with the greatest difficulty. Indeed most men of high integrative powers incline to identify words with ideas, with the result that their thinking becomes largely linguistic and to that measure separated from reality.

* "African Folk." *Atlantic Monthly*. February, 1922.

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Some students of human nature, notably John Dewey, believe that this tendency is one of the most serious obstacles to sound scientific thought; and there is much to be said for that view. If the man of weak integrative capacities escapes this peril, it is only to fall into many worse evils. And one of these is the quick forsaking of one set of symbols for another.

Nothing could be, in the long run, more wasteful of human effort and less effective as a means of mastering one's environment than the African's willing skill in picking up a new language whenever and wherever he hears one. On the one hand, it means that he submits weakly to the customs of each new group; and, on the other hand, it increases the number of different responses he makes to one and the same set of facts, thereby tending to weaken the integrative force of each response. The man who, on seeing a dog, is moved to make just one vocal response, "dog," has an easier time of it in organizing his behavior than the man who, on seeing the same dog, is simultaneously stimulated by many competing inner impulses to say *dog-hund-chien-canis-kulb-numa-chenda-uguru*.

Effective integration in the higher planes involves always the holding open of two or more paths of discharge, pending consideration or the arrival of a fresh fact. The negro is incapable of this. As Darwin noted long ago when among the aborigines of Tierra Del Fuego, so with the African: he is unable to understand an alternative. If you ask him: "Shall we march forward this morning or shall we stay here and give the bullocks a rest?"—the poor fellow is lost. "Either-or" is quite beyond him. And this goes back in some measure to his weak inhibitions. He is wholly a creature of impulse, and this is why, as Coudenhove remarks, "all Africa is drunk after sunset." He drinks whenever he can get liquor and as long as the supply holds out. It also explains the enormous frequency of suicides among the blacks, even the little children; in a fit of rage or fear, the impulse to have done with everything overpowers the wretched creatures.

This inability to integrate over a time span is beautifully illustrated by an experience of Coudenhove's, which he quite fails to understand. It is worth quoting in full.

"Negroes do not feel as we do, or, if they do, they show their feelings in a different way. I once had a Kikuyu servant, an excellent fellow, named Tairara. We were camped for some time in the

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Mwele hills, in the Sayidie Province of British East Africa, and the village, a market-place, was periodically visited by Waduruma and Wanyika, who came from a considerable distance, to get, by barter, what articles they required. Tairara had already spoken to me about one of his sisters who years before, had been kidnapped from her native country and taken to the coast. And one day, sure enough, just as in a story-book, the two met in the principal street of Mideli. The emotion of Tairara was genuine and violent, and, I must say, most affective. He sat on the ground, holding with one hand the hand of his sister, who was standing near him, while, with the open palm of his other hand, he kept beating the ground; and, all the time, tears were streaming from his eyes. The sister showed much less emotion. She looked, if anything, rather embarrassed.

"Well, I left them in this position. What followed, however, was the curious part of it. From that day onward they took no more notice of one another than if they had been strangers! I saw them pass each other a week or so later without exchanging even a word; and when I asked Tairara how that was, his reply was to the effect that they had now met, and that the incident was closed. . . .

"To the native, there is a time for grief and a time for pleasure, *which may alternate without transition*. Also, natives are, I believe, able to produce emotion at will; at least, the women are. At the wakes after the death of a relative or acquaintance, their wails are accompanied by genuine tears; yet both before and after, they are absolutely unconcerned, as if nothing had happened." *

It would be hard to find a better specimen than this. Tairara was overjoyed to find his long lost sister and did the natural thing in that moment. *But the moment was sufficient unto itself. It did not carry over into the next.* What was past was past forever. On the morrow, sight of his sister did not touch off the great emotional response of the yesterday. His sister had become just like any other woman walking around the village. The white man may be pardoned who has difficulty imagining this; and we respectfully refer the matter to those who believe, with Voltaire, that anybody can understand the feelings, thoughts, and conduct of anybody else without much trouble. In the psychological sense, Tairara had no past; he only had the present.

To his record let me add that of a Texas negress which exhibits

* *Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1922.

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the same short memory and swift emotional detachment from the past, but under social conditions which would have led even the most depraved white woman to a different course of action.

Aphrodisia is a worthy washwoman of San Antonio with ten children and some fifty pounds of excess flesh. Partly because of her lack of physical charm, partly because of her weak conversational powers, and partly because of her poverty, she was long barred from the best African society, to her own deep anguish. The negro is a herd-animal; when barred from the herd, he is wretched. And this unhappy woman languished, a pariah, until she was about fifty years old. Then an amazing stroke of luck opened the doors of the élite to her portly person.

Her husband was murdered in a sensational manner. This made her overnight the most prominent colored lady in that part of the world. Forthwith she was invited to parties and picnics; and her humble home swarmed with fashionable callers. She was introduced to everybody as "the widow of the man what was murdered."

The limelight hypnotized our heroine. She had to dress and act her new part of social lioness. So she drew her savings from the bank and bought clothes. She even took to wearing corsets and, of course, she invested heavily in ointments guaranteed to remove the kinks from her hair. Life became merry, though somewhat expensive and strenuous. One cannot scrub dirty linen all day in Texas weather, at the age of fifty, and then dance through the night.

Thus passed five years. And with the passing her popularity waned somewhat; for the memory of man is short. But she was not cast forth from her new social circles. She merely retired into the background more and more. In the midst of this growing obscurity, the gentleman who had slain her husband was dismissed from prison and returned to town, where he instantly became even more distinguished than Aphrodisia. It was written in the books of fate that he should meet the widow of his victim at a party. They were formally introduced. Lion bowed to lioness. And a great love ensued.

The ten children of Aphrodisia, being more under the spell of the white man's morals than their mother, grew indignant over her passion for a man who had killed their father. They reproached her bitterly. But their mother only shook her head firmly and said: "That's perfectly all right. Mr. Harris, he done apologized for what he done. Apologized like a perfect gentlemen."

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Naturally this romance enormously enhanced the lady's fame and might have led to glories undreamed of, but for the fact that one evening her lover sauntered in, somewhat inflamed by an inferior grade of beverage, and attempted to shoot her head off without warning or argument. By some feat of brawn learned over half a century of washboards, the lady dodged him, upset him, and so thoroughly discomfited him that he blew his own brains out on the spot. The disconsolate double-widow is now wearing deep mourning; jet black with a single red, red rose And again she leads society.

Study the events carefully, and you will see how Aphrodisia's quick fading of sentiment, her tendency to live from moment to moment, and her inability to feel the incongruity in her accepting her husband's slayer as a lover all reveal amazingly weak integrative action.

The defect is in the negro blood itself. Hence as this blood is diluted with white, the defect disappears.

To avoid futile dissensions, I wish to go on record at once as maintaining that there are virtually no blacks in the United States, hence that the peculiar defects in higher integrative processes which are here described will seldom be found outside of Africa, some parts of the West Indies, and a very small area in our own Black Belt which has been isolated ever since Colonial days. Those whom we call negroes are scarcely closer to the African than our Iowans of white stock are to the Saxons who first invaded England. A dozen strains have been mingling with the original slave blood and have already evolved what Edwin R. Embree fairly calls a new race.* Ever since the first Dutch trader brought into Jamestown the first twenty black slaves, in 1619, the Africans crossed with Indians, with Huguenots, with Puritans, and—much later—with all of the Asiatic and European peoples who came to America. During Colonial, Revolutionary, and early nineteenth-century days, the whites felt not the slightest repugnance toward intermarriage—or, let us say more accurately, toward interbreeding. Presidents and cabinet members are said to have had many children by black mothers; and practically every Southern family conceals, with stupid pride, its dark-skinned relatives. The resulting 12,000,000 brown people are largely of white origin and show few characteristics of their African blood.

* See his significant volume, "Brown America, The Story of a New Race." N. Y., 1931.

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E. B. Reuter has shown, in admirable detail, the enormous superiority of the mulatto over the full-blooded negro.* Out of one hundred thirty-nine eminent blacks in our country, he finds only four full-blooded negroes. Virtually all those who have prospered in business are mulattoes too. These figures, taken by themselves, are open to suspicion on various statistical grounds, which we need not here consider because Reuter has avoided their latent error by investigating the intelligence of negroes in other lands where our own peculiar social and economic conditions do not exist and cannot distort the evidence. Wherever the negro has interbred with the white, the mulatto shows the same superiority; be it in the West Indies, in Brazil, or in Africa. All this is precisely in accord with intelligence tests on negroes in the army and in the public schools.

It is the almost universal testimony of plantation owners and manufacturers in the Black Belt that few negroes will make a sustained effort to improve their own lot. Even when opportunity comes their way and all the conditions for seizing it are right, they do not take the initiative. They reveal in a thousand and one ways *their inability to look ahead and to organize behavior now with respect to tomorrow and next year.* The time-span of their integrative efforts is brief. If a negro wants a pair of shoes, he works until he has the price and then stops. If he needs a dollar for lodge dues, he puts in a morning of indifferent toil—and then is done. In the rural districts of the Cotton Belt, many farmers who are in no wise prejudiced against the blacks on racial grounds assert that it is physically impossible to persuade a healthy negro to work more than one day out of three throughout the year. Work, indeed, is regarded as a disgrace. It is woman's lot.

Here, somebody who has read anthropology will remark that the trouble goes back to ancient customs and must not be construed as a reproach to the individual. For thousands of years, has not the African male left all the menial drudgery to his women? Can you expect him to slough such an old, deeply rooted practice in a few years? This, of course, is a feeble argument. The custom itself is nothing more than the behavior of millions of blacks who survived in the terrible equatorial jungles and plains because of their pecul-

* "The Superiority of the Mulatto." *American Journal of Sociology*, 1917, XXIII, 2. Also his book, "The Mulatto in the United States." Boston, 1912.

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early high physical resistance and their low mentality. Foresight, planning, organized effort, and high initiative are all vices in the Congo country; they cause a man to worry, to strain himself, and to forget the hungry lion in the bush behind him. And in the tropics, worry and carelessness of life and limb are fatal. Such potential geniuses as may have been born among the African blacks all died thousands of years ago. The survivors are the people who had the shrewd sense to take life easily.

As for the Georgia negro, three or four generations removed from Africa, it is nonsense to acquit him of all personal responsibility because of old tribal customs. Conformity to a custom which works to the individual's obvious disadvantage is plainly a sign of mental frailty. Nowhere in the world have men possessed of foresight, energy, and health abided by tradition when it kept them poor, humbled, or otherwise uncomfortable. Always have they outwitted the ways of the herd, if not openly then secretly. And the cleverest of them accomplish this by the neat trick of gaining control of government and changing the laws to suit themselves. Much of the crime and new legislation which harass us Americans can be traced back to the activities of men who want to have their own way, contrary to what the herd says or does. Law breaking and law making are the two complementary phases of this same desire.

If our Southern black could see himself in his environment, could look ahead, could plan, and could execute plans, he would long ago have lifted himself from his slough; perhaps by revolution, perhaps by migration, perhaps by sheer thrift, perhaps by a racial boycott which would have driven the whites out of his states. He has done nothing of the sort. He has left all such moves entirely to the mulattoes, quadroons, and octoroons. These are the people who have created all the trouble of late because of their dissatisfaction with their lot and their resolve to get what they want. And it is the white blood in them that breeds that discontent which is divine.

All these facts lead to the conclusion that *the greatest differences between white and black reside in the degree and quality of integrative action. And this difference is, in the main, hereditary.* Furthermore, it is one which cannot be seen through a microscope; for, as will now be shown, it is a matter of infinitesimal structure and energy discharge.

Negroes live on an energy level much lower than that of the white

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man. This neglected point was brought out in a hookworm investigation conducted by Dr. W. G. Smillie and Dr. D. L. Augustine, who discovered that "the negro children examined had a markedly lower vital capacity than the white children of the same age and sex."

We need not go into details of physiology to make clear the significance of this low vitality. Suffice it to say the black man cannot extract from the air the energy-yielding oxygen so fast as the white man, nor can he burn up such energy as he has picked up so fast. To a physiologist, this indicates that less energy was used, per unit of time, in developing the central nervous system; hence the final structure is probably not so highly elaborated as in the white man. For the amount of energy going to the formation of any part of the body is one of the chief determiners of its structure. The layman may ignore such obscure considerations and still discern the results of inferior energy in negro behavior. Let him watch the typical Southern black, be it on his sandy cotton patch down South or in some northern slum to which a labor agent has transplanted him.

The black man gets under way slowly and he wearies fast. No amount of coaxing with high wages will change him. Like his old white mule, he simply cannot be driven for long. Many a southern farmer can testify under oath that he has never been able to keep a black at steady work, no matter how easy, for three months on end. He can testify, too, that many a healthy black free from syphilis and hookworm fags after six or seven hours of labor which leaves the white man fresh. It is notorious that the employer who tries to speed up the negro by offering him double wages only succeeds in making the fellow work half as long as usual. It is also notorious down South that the black man will cheerfully toil in order to raise cash for a pair of shoes or a shotgun or some tobacco; but, as soon as he has bought the wished thing, he quits. The acutest discomfort seems to flow from speed or persistence of effort. As it appears all over the black man's land, among the healthy and the young almost as plainly as among the less fortunate, may we not attribute it charitably to poor endowment? I think so.

To what kinds of stupidity does this profound inferiority lead? Almost any kind, at least indirectly. But, above all, to an inability to take in larger situations. No dog ever saw a landscape. No imbecile ever heard "the surge and thunder of the *Odyssey*." No creature like Tairara or Aphrodisia can perceive, as a single affair, a business

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transaction or any other human negotiation which runs on and on for days or weeks. The thing has no unity, any more than the earth over which an ant crawls has, for the ant, the unity it possesses in the mind of the astronomer.

This act of taking in things as wholes is perception. It is seeing *things* instead of mere flecks of color or mere noises. It is grasping hour-long events instead of meaningless instants. To lack this ability is to be destitute of the very foundation of intelligence. It is to be insensitive to the sweep and flow of the universe and all that is therein. No other stupidity approaches this kind in the depth and breadth of its devastations.

Long before Cyclops came along, Africa swarmed with creatures that ate at any hour, having no order, drank whatever was wet, having no taste, could comprehend the difference between an inch and a league only as Cyclops could grasp the difference between a dozen sheep and a score; could fall asleep any time, though never exhausted from toil; endured with serenity body lice, mosquitoes, rats, and worms; and yet was happy in his capacity to forget all sorrow, suffering, injustice, and loss in a trice, no less than in his unbroken stupor concerning the morrow. Cyclops had little trouble with those early sons of Ham; their stupidity was so colossal that they were smoothly disposed of.

So much for the elements of stupidity. Now how about patterns and processes? Plainly the patterns of organization result from the play of process upon element, of kinetic energy upon potential fields, of flux upon sediment. What the Jacquard loom, with its roll of punched paper, does to thousands of cotton fibres, when it transforms these from mere thread to a cloth of lovely design, so the integrative activities of man work upon the half-raw stuff of experience, using the muscles of the body as the loom itself. The parallel is not perfect; otherwise man would be only a loom, or the loom a man. But it is much more than flimsy analogy.

What, now, are some of the processes giving rise to patterns? We touch only on the most important. First and foremost comes that primary selecting of items that occurs in the act of attention. Let's

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call that spot-light. Then comes the crucial process of dominance and subordinating—which some biologists, notably Child, now believe is the very essence of body designing.* On the mental side, this comes into awareness in many guises: now as focussing and blotting out, again as a heightening of tensions and a waning of them in subordinated fields; then too as interest, boredom, and apathy. If this puzzles you, have patience! The mystery will soon enough be cleared.

Another aspect of process comes out in the range of organizing elements. Some creatures cover a wide field in each adjustment they make to the situation of the moment, while other creatures reckon with only a few. When the adjustment is mainly a matter of handling objects, this phase of process shows up as range of dexterity. On the psychic side it appears as range of perspective; and here it reveals much concerning stupidity.

Still another aspect is the speed of organizing; this is part of the time-phase of processing. The other part is seen in the duration of processing, or persistence. Some creatures bring together experiences slowly, some fast; some organize their behavior quickly, then cease promptly, while others organize slowly but continue for a long time after the adjustment has been brought to pass. Hence flows a rich variety of energy types of personality, among which we find many peculiarly stupid forms.

Now for a glance at each process. But first a word of warning. There is one process which, in a fashion, involves every other one and strangely confuses the scene. Unless you are on guard against its queer reversals of form, it will hoodwink you. I refer to the "vital equilibrium" or process of balance.

Thus do physiologists describe the checking of one process by many others at certain critical points, which we may here call, for short, the moments of surfeit.

Man must preserve a certain vital balance in all his affairs. When exhausted, he must rest. When hungry, he must eat; when thirsty, drink; when long idle, work or exercise. He must not do any single thing very long; for he is a creature of variety, requiring a balanced ration not alone for his stomach but no less for all the cravings of his larger personality. His plan of living must be built up around

* Charles M. Child "Physiological Foundations of Behavior" N. Y., 1924

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such a balance. The more intelligent he is, the more deftly he frames a program of hours to that end.

Now, among other things, he must beware of exercising his sensitivities too long and too severely. He cannot stare the sun out of countenance with impunity, nor harken for a year to the nightingale. All good things come to an end; but if they run on, they turn to evil. Each has its own cycle of action and rest, of presence and absence, of joy and satiety. So it follows that each phase of sensitivity must be followed by a phase of relative insensitivity; and this latter is, while it lasts, a genuine stupidity.

It is no mere negative entity. It is as positive as sleep itself. It is a genuine moment in a cyclic function, serving a high life purpose. We come then to the mildly startling conclusion that *the normal healthy creature needs many moments of stupidity exactly as he needs hours of sleep. Nor does there appear any way of living which might dispense with such.*

Walk through an art gallery for two hours on end, studying each picture. At the end of that time, is there any power or interest left in you for the further eyeing of painted canvasses? If so, you are a freak. The normal man has gone artistically blind ere the first hour has passed. His eye must rest, and so must that part of his brain which has been aroused by the eye. During the rest, his sensitivity is exceedingly low; we may call him esthetically stupid toward all objects of vision.

Sit through two hours of symphony. Is your ear keen toward the sounds? Could you endure two more hours? Probably not. Could you sniff rare perfumes for two hours and still crave more sniffs? Or sip coffee for two hours and still detect the finer blends with your initial pleasure? Of course not! Any prolonged experience comes, sooner or later, to its saturation point at which dulness sets in. We are fed up.

Gourmet's Torpor is a pleasant and useful form of epicurean stupidity. It is that low level of sensory response which men reach at the end of a rich meal washed down with excellent wines. In it, even an after-dinner speech sounds as if it meant something. The listener accepts the verbiage as if it were a rare cheese. Ten minutes later, he cannot recall what sort of cheese it was—save that it went down easily, it might have been water.

Clever propagandists and lady lobbyists understand that their

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victims are most susceptible to wheedling and charms while in this condition. The ancient technique of super-salesmanship embraces the by no means black art of stuffing the prospective buyer with delectable victuals until he is so dull that he cannot resist the feeblest exhortation to purchase. In our own day, business men have grown wiser; they forbid their buyers to fall prey to salesmen by the gastric route and strengthen them by giving them an expense allowance to buy all food and drink for the salesmen. Then the buyers nibble a cheese sandwich, while the foolish salesman stuffs his stomach and empties his mind.

A somewhat deeper torpor ensues after good cigars and a drink or two. Hence the persistent popularity of these tools of the salesman's trade. They make it easier to sign up orders. Greenhorns, on the road for the first time, suppose that they narcotize would-be customers for the purpose of establishing a friendly relation. But they soon learn that friendship cannot enter into many transactions, whereas nicotine and alcohol must.

This same instinctive reaction against surfeit appears on all the higher intellectual and esthetic levels. Montaigne observed it and approved it when he remarked: "Ne plus sapias quam necesse est, ne obstupescas." Which, in plain American, may be rendered: "Don't know more than you have to, lest you become stupid." Are you not familiar with this *stupor intellectus* in your own experience? In reading a solid book, does not a moment come when something within you rebels at further perusal? It is not boredom but more nearly a vigorous rejection of excess. I have often noticed it while I have been toiling through dull reports packed with poorly organized statistics. And I am sure that millions of high school and college students know it only too well; for they display amazing skill in rejecting facts before the latter have a chance to get under their skins.

A little knowledge is a dangerous thing; but too much at once becomes a mental emetic. Bear this in mind as you inspect supposedly stupid people. They may fool you. They may be, in their apparent dulness, wiser than you.

And now on to the special processes within this larger vital equilibrium.

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Spotlight

Attending is the motor phase of primary sensitivity. So we must study it as an integral part of the phenomenon of stupid behavior. For the deepest of all constitutional defects is inattention that is based either upon insensitivity or else upon an incapacity of the muscles to focus upon a sensed object. Lack of sensory power we usually recognize as blindness, deafness, and the like. Lack of focusing power has no common name save "mind wandering" or "inattention"—neither of which is precise.

When the normal man attends to something, he closes all other paths of sensitivity as far as possible and he exposes himself freely to the thing on which he focusses. To do this, he must adjust his body in a specific manner. Attending is a pose. You hold your head in a certain position in order to see, hear, smell or taste most effectively the object of your interest. In doing this, however, you must at the same time establish an anesthetic condition in yourself toward everything beside the object attended to. Children cannot do this, nor can low-grade adult minds, except with reference to a few familiar and exciting situations.

Attention is the step from the simple physiological to the psychic balance. It is begun by physical shocks and body tensions, and it develops into a field of percepts with affective tones, such as pleasure, displeasure, nausea, excitement, depression, lust, hate, and so on. The "laws" of attention are all in reality laws of balance, power, and pattern. They cannot be understood as psychic processes. They become intelligible only in so far as we see, in the act of attending, a movement of the entire organism toward or with reference to something.

Every peculiarity of this operation, in short, is determined by

- 1—The person's *momentary condition*, or vital equilibrium;
- 2—His total set of habits (more or less well integrated) which constitute his *behavior pattern*; and
- 3—The *specific energies* which are streaming in upon him in the form of external stimuli or are flowing within him in the region of susceptibility.

Here, as in all other cases, it is the momentary condition which scores most heavily as a determiner of the shift in attention. As a

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rule, it is the momentary condition with regard to one's surroundings that influences the process most often and most deeply; for attention has evolved as a function of man's outer adjustments, rather than as a device for supporting his inner balance. Most people cannot clearly attend effectively to their own mental flights. Indeed, there is some reason for believing that, when we find a person who attends easily and repeatedly to his private internal equilibrations, we are in the presence of an abnormal, if not diseased, specimen.

Our bodily state with regard to the weather, the available food supply, friends or enemies in our immediate vicinity, sights, sounds, odors, and contacts of the instant's work or play probably controls nine-tenths of all shifts in our attention. It likewise determines the specific "negative adaptation" in which we ignore objects and themes and problems. Here we see in clearest form the power of the vital equilibrium. Things present and affecting us by sight or sound are regularly switched out of the attention circuit so long as they "do not count"; that is, so long as they neither upset our balance nor aid in correcting the moment's disturbance. Note well here that this side-tracking is not accomplished by consciousness, nor by any act of will. It is as automatic as breathing. We read a book in a room where a clock is ticking loudly; and in a moment no clock ticks for us. Or we are reading a dull and pointless bulletin on something that does not interest us; and of a sudden we find that the page has vanished from our eyes, and we are listening to a violin concerto coming in over the radio near by.

Another significant tendency is the regular high velocity of shifts in attention. Our "primary" attention—namely, that which is directed to sense shocks in the form of light, noise, smells, etc.—flits from object to object faster than our interest moves. And it is wholly beyond our power to check its flitting. Strive as we may, by act of will, we cannot prevent its wandering. This instability of focus can be accounted for in only one way: it means that the creature which keeps most constant touch with everything in its immediate surroundings has a mighty natural advantage over the creature which narrows its interest successfully to a few things. Survival of alarms is most likely if you are a versatile extrovert; and least probable if you happen to be a single-tracked introvert. In the long run, survival is determined mostly by our instant-to-instant adjustment to our surroundings.

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In adjusting to the environment, it is one's total behavior pattern that directs attention after the primary life-supporting adaptations have been made. Up and down, hither and yon the spotlight shifts. But it does not move itself. The living creature moves it. The curve of the motion is the resultant of everything in the creature. The spots at which the light halts, however, result from seer and seen alike. And that fact complicates the process past all pleasant study.

Consider the spot itself. What can be in it? What is noticed there? The answer leads us to the inner throne room of Cyclops.

Half-wit

What can Cyclops see with his one eye? A peculiar field of half-vision which artists soon discover, to their sorrow!

So feeble is the ordinary man's perceptual grasp that he cannot take in two things at a time, even when both are, in reality, integral parts of acts which he himself commonly performs. Take, for instance, speech and gesture. Experienced actors know that few in a typical theatre audience ever catch the significance of the pair when given simultaneously. Let Ina Claire testify here. She once remarked to Karl Kitchen:

"I learned one very important thing about the art of acting from Cyril Scott. It is: never do but one thing at a time. For instance, don't make a gesture and speak at the same time. For the audience will watch your gesture and miss your speech."

This rule has been put to the test thousands of times. It works. Try it for yourself. Every veteran editor and motion picture specialist knows it. As Arthur Brisbane once phrased it:

"You must send your ideas through your readers' minds like freight cars through a tunnel. One idea at a time! And each one tightly coupled up with the idea just before it and just behind it!"

Nor does this tell the whole story. Things are even worse, alas! The same general rule holds for longer sequences of attention. The dullard cannot take in two or more ideas, pictures, or arguments in the course of fifteen minutes; and the greater the difference between the

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presentations, the harder he finds it to grasp either. Only long experience drives home to one this extraordinary limitation.

Even the superior man can attend only to objects of the utmost simplicity. There is a rough law of inverse squares here. Suppose he looks at a large sheet of paper on which various pictures or other visual objects may be hung in any desired positions. He finds it four times as hard to concentrate long on one object, while another is in sight too, as he does to concentrate on it when nothing else is present. He finds it nine times harder when three objects in all are on the sheet; sixteen times harder when four are within eye range, and so on—always in this rough progression but not precisely so.

The man whose attention processes are inferior goes utterly lost when confronted with more than three or four objects in the same field of attention. Cyclops at the three-ring circus is as unhappy as he. When much is offered, nothing is taken. The mechanism jams. Make three dots fairly close together on the sheet of paper, and he perceives a triangle. Make six at random, and he sees nothing. Hand the half-wit office boy one parcel, tell him to take it over to Mr. Smith, and he may deliver it promptly to Mr. Smith (perhaps even to the right Mr. Smith). Give him four parcels, tell him to take the small, round one to Smith, the long, light one to Jones, the fat, heavy one to Robinson, and the thin one in blue wrapping paper to the Goofenberg Toothpick Reclaiming Corporation; and probably he will fail to deliver even one properly.

A tiny area in the optical center of the brain handles all the organizing of seen items. We gain new insight into stupid perceptions when we observe what disease does to that region. A curious "cortical blindness" develops in which the sufferer sees details but neither structure nor design. Here is how it works out. Two German psychologists, Gelb and Goldstein, had the good fortune to find a perfect case for testing. Their reports, together with Koehler's enlightening comments on it,* are my sources.

When asked to attend to a drawing, the patient could fixate upon no more than a tiny fraction of a single line. In order to take in the drawing, he had to run his eyes back and forth all over it many times, and even then he formed only a vague, inaccurate perception

* The original monograph appears in "Die Zeitschrift f. d. gesamte Neurologie u. Psychiatrie," *cl.* 41, 1918. Koehler's discussion is found in his "Gestalt Psychology," N. Y., 1929, p. 169 ff.

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of the whole. How poor it was appeared in an ingenious test Gelb and Goldstein devised with his name.

First they wrote it on a blackboard. The patient deciphered the first letter and guessed the others. Then the psychologists marked in a few lines across the letters, and now the poor devil could not decipher anything! Yet to a normal eye the name was fully as visible as ever. To him, each least section of the superimposed marks, perceived separately, became a factor in his guessing; the result was that nothing intelligible developed. It was just as if somebody had slipped in a few extra numbers to a problem in arithmetic at which you were working; and you assumed them to belong to the problem as a whole.

Koehler acutely points out that this case disposes of the extreme behaviorist hypothesis that all perceiving and understanding is a matter of organized movements *and nothing else*. This patient went right on moving his eyes just as he did when he guessed forms and names correctly. But it helped him not at all; for movements as such could not select and eliminate items from the field. Moving is one event, selecting is quite another. And all organizing involves selecting no less than moving.

Now, this function of organizing perceived items into wholes shows all degrees, velocities, and spreads. The diseased variety just described stands at one end of the scale, while at the other we find geniuses like Einstein who carry in clear thought a mass of details, relations, and operations of higher mathematics vastly too complex for any common man to grasp. Between disease and genius are arrayed the many lines of the psychic spectrum. Of these we are, for the present, concerned only with those which fall anywhere below the median and the very low pathological varieties. Just where the boundaries of stupid perceiving fall, nobody knows; much inquiring must be done ere that can be settled. I am sure, however, that many citizens go through life, working, making money, loving, marrying, raising families, and being decently buried, with startlingly feeble vision.

Here is a case which I had under intermittent observation for several years. An amiable youth, aged fifteen, joined a small group of boys whom I was teaching to handle a tractor and farm implements. Eddie—as we shall call him—had all of the ordinary appearances of normal brightness save one: he regularly drove the tractor

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too close to fences, stones, field corners, and people. I warned him repeatedly to allow more space for swerving and turning, but he seemed unable to follow the hint. It then occurred to me that perhaps he had poor eyesight—and an examination proved this to be so. He was fitted with glasses and, for a while, seemed to handle the tractor better. But when the next farm season came around, he exhibited a fresh variation of his infirmity that gave me pause.

By chance I observed that he became confused over three other boys who were walking slowly in different directions across the path of his tractor, some paces ahead of it. He turned this way and that, then stopped dead. It would have been physically impossible for him to have hit any one of the three, for he was travelling only three miles an hour, while the boys were keeping their eyes on him. That suggested that Eddie was afflicted with inferior visual apprehension that was not due to poor eyes but rather to a poor brain. This led to further tests. They showed unmistakably that the lad was able to orient himself only in a field a few yards wide and containing a few objects, none of which were moving. At best he was able to adjust his movements to such a field in which only one thing moved.

A few years later he improved enough to drive a car moderately well, but never in thick, fast traffic. Thick, slow traffic was ideal, of course; for in it he had to move in one, fixed direction, under police guidance. Apparently everything further than thirty or forty feet away seemed to him a vast, blue blur of ill defined things; and moving objects close at hand utterly befuddled him. Is it to be marvelled at that Eddie has become a third-rate carpenter who is usually out of a job?

I do not hold Eddie up to you as a model of average stupidity. I exhibit him only by way of emphasizing the half-vision which plagues all men from genius down to imbecile. This half-vision it is which, more than any other process of organizing, gives rise to practical blunders in the affairs of trade and state. As we shall repeat over and over, man finds himself in a world containing thousands of things with which he must reckon, would he succeed uniformly. Yet he is so designed and equipped that he can attend to only one thing at a time. He can think through only one phase of one problem in one field of inquiry at a time. As he thinks, on rushes the world, dragging in its wake all of the thousand and one vital affairs, chang-

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ing them on its orbit. Is it to be wondered at that our best laid schemes gang aft agley? Relative to our world, we are all half-wits. To do anything well, we must do only one thing at a time. But while we do that one thing, the world goes on doing a trillion things. This is the curse of Cyclops. Can a race arise which shakes it off? As yet no sign of it appears.

Levels

We shall begin our analysis of levels of organization with a three-fold differentiation of the attention process. This does not mean, of course, that the process may not involve four, five, six, or even a dozen variables. It merely means that I, the stupid author, and you, the clever reader, would both go lost in a maze of combinations and permutations, were we to push our analysis further.

Here, then, is the limit of our endeavor. Three independent variables determine the pattern of attention, hence the chief types of human sensitivity. They are:

1. The intensity of concentration upon the focus;
2. The complexity of the domain of response; and
3. The velocity of attention pulsations within the domain, as well as from the latter to other fields in the course of attention shifts.

This sounds much more formidable than it is. It becomes quite simple when illustrated through extreme types, like the following eight.

1. Strong-complex-fast attention;
2. Strong-complex-slow attention;
3. Weak-complex-fast attention;
4. Weak-complex-slow attention;
5. Strong-simple-fast attention;
6. Strong-simple-slow attention;
7. Weak-simple-fast attention;
8. Weak-simple-slow attention.

Now for illustrations of these.

1. Roosevelt fairly represents the first type. His attending was

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naturally strong; that is, he put his mind to a new subject with great ease and held it there as long as there was any point in doing so. He attended to complex situations, if not so well as some geniuses, at any rate far more skilfully than the average person. (I do not allege, of course, that he could think through such situations with high analytical technique. That's another story) Finally, he was able to shift his attention from one field to another with extraordinary speed and freedom from strain.

2. Darwin shines here. And so too does Henri Poincaré, the great mathematician. They possessed Roosevelt's gift of high concentration. (Poincaré, to be sure, had it in a peculiar form and under odd limitations) Both excelled Roosevelt in their powers of thinking about complexities; here Poincaré must rank with Einstein. But both shifted slowly, even painfully, from their narrowly defined favorite subjects. They simply could not hop all over the universe in the course of a day's reading or an evening's conversation, as Roosevelt loved to.

3. This is fortunately rare. It occurs only in disease forms. A man with superior intellect but low in energy might suffer from certain forms of over-active thyroid which would cause his attention to flick feebly from object to object. Yet the particular things he might prefer to notice could be highly complex; and these would hold his mind more firmly than simpler things.

4. This you behold in the dull, plodding grind who, by dint of poring all night over lessons, manages to squeak through school with a grade of "Fair." To attend to his studies he must force himself ever. His one gift is a capacity for attending to complex subjects—let us say, geometry and economics. Within the lesson, his mind moves sluggishly from point to point—but it does move.

5. The successful single-track mind serves here as the best specimen. Above all, the narrow specialist in some field that is fairly simple. Let us say, a very great bee-keeper or fancy dancer or juggler. Not for such the wild adventuring up and down the universe, in the manner of Leonardo. They stick to little fields, but within such they attend with speed and vigor. So do they come to excel.

6. The unsuccessful single-tracker serves here as model. Though his interest is strong within the little field, he attends too slowly to make progress.

7. Now comes the fickle child. With him, too, a variety of high-

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grade moron who fools most people by a curious alertness, talking with everybody about everything. He cannot keep his mind on any one thing long enough to master it. Nor can he attend effectively to anything complex, though he will do this for a fraction of a second. But he maintains the appearance of intelligence by seizing upon all sorts of things briefly and saying or doing something about them—though what he says and does is foolish. Every social worker has met such a chattering simpleton of vast amiability whose emptiness is hidden by his noise.

8. And at length we reach the feebleminded. Now the listless stare, the aimless eye, the quick forgetting of needfuls. Staring long, it beholds little. It cannot leap from thing to thing, it must crawl almost as if feeling its way in the dark. A sentence of six monosyllables taxes its comprehension largely because the span of its attending embraces only three or four monosyllables.

Each of these eight species develops its own peculiar anesthetic zones and stupidities. We understand them best if we look more closely into the processes which make for speed and sluggishness, for complexity and simplicity, for strength and weakness of concentration. But, alas, we shall understand them only by touch and go; for the integrative processes are far too fast and too intricate to be grasped through the crude attention process of man. Until somebody invents a device for observing the inmost events of nerve cells, we are condemned to watch them with the wretched, wavering, thin beam of our little spotlight. So, unhappy reader, the rest of the present section will be no more than many brief flashes in the dark.

The highest integrative behavior is that in which a man, sensitive to everything in his environment which his species can detect and appraise, interprets everything from moment to moment in the light of all past experience, takes toward each thing an attitude which, in due time, passes over into behavior which yields him the highest possible satisfaction, under the given conditions of space and time.

Need we add that history has record of no such personality? Choose any list of eminent men, test their careers scrupulously, and you will not find one which comes within hailing distance of this

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ideal. Probably Goethe comes nearest, with Leonardo some stretch behind him as a result of the strange, painful division in his nature. Our own age may have nobody to rank with these twain, for we are specialists by necessity and outside of our specialties skimmers by way of relaxation. The Industrial Revolution forced all who would thrive into the expert's narrow but deep grooves.

Our skilled workers must nozzle their energies down to needle point, in order to excel; hence they never range far in experiencing and organizing experiences. In the trades, the one-act player earns the highest wage, while in the sciences and professions the single-track mind has long triumphed, though in the past few years a firm reaction against his limitations has set in. At no previous time in man's history has it been possible to observe a variety of personalities like the present myriad of good and faithful servants, each having one talent and playing the market with it for all it is worth. Never before—and, I hope, never again—did scientists have such a chance to watch the stupefying effects of this narrowing of man's range.

Not that specializing always stupefies. Far from it. Though thousands of workers become stupid on the job, other thousands do not. And it is our problem to ascertain what accounts for the difference here. Fortunately, we are aided by the fact that many people narrow their lives under no compulsion whatsoever. They do so out of their own natures, and these throw light on the entire business of specializing.

Oddly enough, the average man's feeble versatility protects him against the peculiar and dangerous stupidities of the narrowed soul. He has many traits, none powerful; many interests, none overwhelming; and he craves variety with a minimum of physical and mental exertion. Being forced to stick at one task all his day may prove irksome, but it seldom undermines him. But with many superior individuals a danger arises. For these nearly always possess a few dominant traits which give their own design to the range of interests and activities. To understand the resulting forms of stupidity, let us glance at the effects of such domination of a single trend over all others.

In a man close to the theoretically average or median type of sensitivities, dominance plays little or no part in the shaping of his main system of habits. For such a person lacks strong dominants. He has many sensitivities, all mild and all intermittent. His normal

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balance, therefore, is one in which he responds to a wide variety of things a little and to nothing at all with great vigor and persistence.

But let a man be born with even a moderately superior sensitivity, and it will surely assert itself to the point of draining ever more and more energy into its channels. In time it will become the focus of many habits, some of which will be related to it so obscurely that only a careful observer can detect the connection. How this works out has been skilfully demonstrated, though with a trace of exaggeration in some details, by the English character psychologist, A. F. Shand, who, in his book, "The Foundations of Character," goes so far as to maintain that "every sentiment tends to form a type of character of its own." He shows us how the personality of a miser assumes shape and power.*

"The miser's tyranny over those subjected to him seconds his parsimony, his industry, his vigilance, his prudence, his secrecy, his cunning, and unsociableness, which are the essential means of his avarice. He is secret because he is suspicious; he is suspicious because he pursues ends to which other men would be opposed and because he has no counteracting trust or affection. He is cunning because he both suspects and tries to outwit others. He makes a pretence of poverty that no claims may be made on him and that he may justify his economies. He is unsociable because he is secret and suspicious, being engaged in the pursuit of an object of which others do not approve and which alienates them from him."

Here is a dominant appetite. In most people of "strong" personality we find dominant sensitivities of a different sort. One has an ear for music and spends hours tinkling on a piano; another has an ear for noise and takes up the kettledrum and saxophone. One responds keenly to color and builds his life around it by becoming an interior decorator. Another tingles at the sight of lively rhythmic motions, so ends up as a teacher in a dance hall. Still another is fascinated by the way the wheels of a machine go around, so he ends up as a garage mechanic. And so on and on and on.

In each such career, the dominant sensitivity sooner or later drains the energies that might, under other conditions, flow elsewhere and thus create around its own subordinated field an immense anesthetic zone. Allow music half a chance to have its way with a musically

* See p. 123 (first edition) for this and following citations.

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inclined person, and ere long he will become insensitive toward politics, botany, and the low price of auto tires. He will tell you that he has no time for such silly matters; what he ought to say is that he has no free energy for them, as music and the activities which serve it use him to capacity.

Here then is the iron chain which binds the specially sensitive person to the chariot of Cyclops. The keen sense attends to its special objects, becoming interested in pursuing these objects, nozzling one's energies upon that pursuit, inhibiting whatever does not work toward that end, and thus blotting out most of the universe. The world's lustiest stupidities—though not its commonest—are of this species. So we must now inspect the outstanding specimens

We shall begin with the man whose range is mainly limited to his inner experiences—he is the introvert. Then we glance swiftly at a less sharply branded type, the man wrapped up in outer affairs; just because these are so varied, the extravert type is also. After that we turn to the man whose range of interests is fixed around his own ego. Next will be summoned to court a peculiar sub-variety of the egotist, the man obsessed with the urge to force other people to conform to his ideas and wishes—he is the fanatic. Last appears the narrowed expert, the extreme “single-track mind,” with its perilous variation of Cyclopean vision

Introvert

To be insensitive to all the conditions and events of the world around us is to be supremely stupid. So, at any rate, would a biologist or a eugenicist be compelled to argue; for how could a creature keep alive and well in an environment it neither perceived clearly nor managed for its own ends? And what is inferiority if not incapacity to endure?

Grant this, and you come to look upon the introvert as the stupidest of men, in precise proportion to his inwardness. Such is the opinion of many psychologists and psychiatrists. Some of them even go so far as to regard any strong introversion as a basic defect. We need not go as far as that here; but we must see the main evidences for such a harsh view.

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The introvert habitually attends to something "in his mind." In so doing, things and feelings merge into "a new psychic fact." The phrase is Jung's, and most apt. So, to quote this psychoanalyst again, "The object is not given that importance which should really belong to it." The person cannot dominate objects, for his handling of them is always confused by his feelings and attitudes toward them. Hence he tends to be alarmed by new situations, even harmless ones; and he is bewildered to the point of panic in a crisis. If forced to act, his decision is stupid. In his more formal thinking, he develops a pleasantly colored theory and then fits facts into it, after the usual habit of metaphysicians and religionists, who are nearly all extreme introverts, or else grossly maladjusted extraverts who have turned to the inner life because of outer failure. Jung cites Darwin as the perfect specimen of the healthy extraverted intellect and Kant as the equally perfect specimen of the healthy introverted. Darwin pursued facts as a hound hunts rabbits. All his theories were simply the objective implications of what he found in the world about him. As for the German metaphysician, the precise opposite was the case. His life was absorbed by inner contemplations. He analyzed himself and all his psychic processes, after his fashion.

Unfortunately most introverts do not gain such magnificent control of their inward trends as Kant did. It is their fate to live with themselves alone and to find themselves poor company. The seeds of madness are strewn all too thickly across the fallow fields of their souls. Kempf says:

"The tendency to affective introversion may become so excessively developed that the individual gradually loses practically all interest in the environment. The asylums contain many such individuals, who contribute no spontaneous effort to improving the environmental conditions. They are characteristically socially indifferent and spend their existence in a dream state. Their timid, retarded movements, meager, monosyllabic replies, total lack of spontaneity, and oblivious deliberateness, demonstrate the extreme degree of the autonomic indifference and the peculiar, almost unchangeable postural muscle tonus. They are easily recognized, as they wander along, looking at nothing, arms hanging semi-rigidly at their sides. They never laugh out loud, except to themselves, their voices lack resonance and at best they respond to a humorous situation with a faint little smile. They make no friends. When such individuals strive to establish their social

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equality, they become irritable, unstable and inclined to incongruous, impulsive acts. Every spontaneous movement makes them extremely self-conscious as if with astonishment at themselves. The introverted individual seems to be uncreative, in proportion to his introversion, whereas the extraverted maniac is often ceaselessly creative."*

Scores of distinguished poets and artists exhibit all these dangerous traits, sometimes to such a degree that one wonders how they avoided the madhouse. Consider Francis Thompson.

This strange pseudo-genius was an extreme introvert. All his reactions to the real world were grotesquely abnormal. The man literally did not have the sense to come in out of the rain; he would walk the streets, ill clad and shivering, in a driving raw storm and never make for shelter, even when shelter was at hand. Like the negroes, he had no system of sleeping, eating, and working. He would sit up all night, when the spirit moved him, and he would forget his meals altogether. Everard Meynell, who rescued him from suicide and oblivion and later gave us the best biography of the strange visionary, says that "Thompson mismanaged his food, his work, his rest, and was utterly careless of his health." † The inevitable followed. Thompson sank early into invalidism and utter wretchedness, took to opium for relief, starved to the point of death, was salvaged by friends, and during the fruitful years wavered between dreamy asceticism in a Capuchin monastery and the miseries of tuberculosis, which finally killed him.

His social adjustments were all those of a complete introvert. He was totally unable to project his thoughts, feelings and wishes into conversation; nor could he ask favors, express opinions on worldly affairs of any sort, or take his stand in favor of his own philosophy of life. At meals, he sat like a dumb animal, frequently quitting the table without having finished his food and without a word of excuse to his host. As for his insensitivity to his surroundings, let Meynell himself testify.

"His inattention in the Edgeware Road was out and out; one marvels that he ever turned the right corner, and not at all that

* "The Autonomic Functions and the Personality" Dr. Edward J. Kempf. *Nervous and Mental Disease Monograph Series*, No. 28 1918, p. 115

† "Life of Francis Thompson." New York, 1913, p. 288.

he was knocked down by a cab. But instinctively his eyes would open in fair presences; the things that made poetry struck through his closed lids, as daylight through a sleeper's. But inattention in the Edgeware Road made the place blank as a railway tunnel. He could look upon the raiment of his sitter in 'Love in Dian's Lap,' and pay his compliments, but never a word had he for the bonnets of mistress or maid upon the highway. Riding in an omnibus he would not know whether Plaire or a Sister of Charity were at his side.

"He was constantly alone; and, often as I have met him in the streets of London, I have seldom surprised him in a conscious moment. He would walk past, looking straight before him, and if he was always late for his appointments, and took longer, by several hours, to get home at night than the average man, it was because he would retrace his steps, and go to and fro upon a certain beat as if indefinitely postponing the evil moment when he would have to confine himself for food or sleep." *

Like other defectively integrated personalities, Thompson was blessed—or cursed—with a prodigious literal memory. He could quote verses, sections of books, long reviews by the mile; could cite page and line; and seemed to have all this mental baggage constantly on deck, ready for disembarking with it on the instant. But, again like the under-integrated, his use of all this was in flashes. When he did use it in conversation among his few intimates, he scintillated but did not shine. The sky was full of meteors but void of stars. It is significant here that his patrons who took him into their homes recall that Thompson's talk through the evenings beside the fire were brilliant and charming, but they cannot remember any details. What the man said vanished almost with the saying of it. To a psychologist, this has only one sure meaning: the conversation lacked all point and pattern, was disjointed, and hence did not hang together in such a manner as to make it stick as a whole in anybody's mind. Thompson failed, on the one hand, to direct his talk to his hearers in a personal way and, on the other hand, to organize it around some thesis or emotion of his own. Either method would have lent it endurance.

Last of the strong introversive tendencies, his inability to sense the passing of time must be noted. Too little attention has been given to this peculiarity, which, in my own observations, stands out boldly in nearly all thoroughgoing introverts. To it is to be traced, in no

* Op. cit. p. 276.

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small measure, those disorderly habits of eating, sleeping, and working which are the curse of the introvert. As a child, he could not learn to be ready for any occasion, be it dinner or a walk or a party. He would dawdle over dressing, over a toy, over a thought and quickly lose all contact with the external world. Thus on into manhood. He could not keep an appointment, however urgent. He was always "begging for ten minutes more" in even the pettiest situations.

What causes this? We find the clue in a wealth of testimony about the man. His primary sensitivities were not normally connected with one another. Even in their simplest reflex action, they did not integrate as yours and mine do. Meynell tells us:

"When a cart jolts by, the noise of its wheels comes to him long after—or before—he troubles to move out of reach of the shafts. The yell of the driver seems to have no part in the incident. He knows not if it came from that or from another quarter. He sees things pass as silently as the figures on a cinematograph screen; one set of nerves out of time and on another plane, respond to things heard . . .

"Time matters as little to him as the names of the streets, and the very faces of the clocks present to him, not pictures of time and motion, but stationary and dead countenances. Noting that the hands of one have moved, he wonders at it only because its view of the passage of time is so laughably at variance with his own. Had it marked a minute since he had last looked, or a whole day, he would not have been surprised, but the foolish half-hour it told of is absurd. His time leaped or paused, while the clock went on with lying regularity. . . ."*

All this, of course, was the root of his indolence, or of what passed for indolence. He was notoriously unable to arise when he wished to, to eat when hungry, or to keep an appointment. Meynell says that he would, in good faith, "emerge from his room upon a household preparing for dinner, when he had lain listening to sounds which he thought betokened breakfast." And, to break this accursed habit, Thompson used to scrawl warnings to himself and stuck them up around his room. "Thou wilt not lie abed when the last trump blows," was one of them. But little good they did. He was not built to obey them. No amount of drill under a martinet could ever have hammered orderliness and punctuality into a man whose eyes and ears

* Op. cit. pp. 69-70.

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could not co-operate in moving his body out of the way of an approaching vehicle. And nothing short of an internal reconstruction of nerve and muscle fibre could have remedied that astounding insensitivity to the passing of time.

His own uniquely imperfect integrative processes betray themselves in one of the minor but interesting literary devices of his poems. He was fond of inventing his own words, as he wrote, often with excellent esthetic effect but often needlessly. He had at times an amiable mania for odd combinations of familiar words into new. Thompson invented these profusely and employed them as naturally as the commonest old Anglo-Saxon monosyllables. This shows a lack of interest in his readers that borders on artistic impropriety. It does not mean that he rebelled against the usual and accepted. It indicates his unusual indifference toward people, coupled with an intense feeling for the symbols that suggested themselves to him as he brooded over his lines.

So much for the more familiar introversive marks. We come now to the infantilism in the man which reveals, beyond all doubt, the painful fact that his central nervous system, in some of its grand divisions, failed to develop properly and left him partly on the level of childhood. Like Beethoven, Thompson was unable to control his muscles with normal dexterity. His fingers were clumsy, and his bodily movements more so. Some intimates have marvelled that he ever grew up. It is more than possible that this motor defect bred in him early a fear of physical objects and an ensuing negative adaptation which took the form of flight. In both mind and body he came to shun the world. In mind and body he remained largely a child. Witness these facts.

“His toys he never quite relinquished; among the few possessions at his death was a cardboard theatre, wonderfully contrived, seeing that his fingers never learnt the ordinary tricks of usefulness, and with this his play was very earnest, as is attested in a notebook query—‘*Sylvia’s hairs shall work the figures.*’ That he was content with his childhood, its toys, and even its troubles, he has particularly asserted. ‘*I did not want responsibility, did not want to be a man.* Toys I could surrender with chagrin, so I had my great toy of imagination whereby the world became to me my box of toys.’ It is remembered by a visitor to the Thompson household that at meal times the father would call upon the children to

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come out of their rooms. But they, for answer, would lock their doors against the dinner hour: they were playing with the toy theatre. Francis went on playing all his life; his sister kept her heart young in a convent. And there is no discontent in this particular memory of early loneliness. He says:

"There is a sense in which I have always been and even now remain a child. But in another sense I never was a child, never shared children's thoughts, ways, tastes, manner of life, and outlook on life. I played, but my sport was a solitary sport, even when I played with my sisters; from the time I began to read (about my sixth year) the game (I think) often meant one thing to me and another (quite another) to them—*my side of the game was part of a dream-scheme invisible to them*. And from boys, with their hard, practical objectivity of play, I was tenfold wider apart than from girls, with their partial capacity and habit of make-believe."*

Is not the pattern of personality laid bare by these confessions and his friend's anecdotes? That child cry: "I don't want to be a man!" And his contentment in his private dreams! Plain enough, all this! All his imaginings were highly emotionalized, largely because his anger, his fears, his loves, and his curiosities—if any he had—could find no outlets toward the external world through those abominable defective motor nerves of his. These literally shut the man up in his own skin to a degree which no normal reader can imagine.

This outward blockade of immense energies detonated by tonic endocrine action inevitably produces tremendous nerve shocks. These shocks seem to spend themselves in almost any part of the organism, depending upon the local and momentary supplies of available free energy to be touched off.

What was the essence of Thompson's wretched maladjustment? Simply this: he craved to live his private dream life, untroubled by the world and its affairs; but, when he tried to live thus, he nearly died of starvation, of exposure, of physical neglect, and of every other misery that arises from a refusal to face one's environment. Like all other introverts, Thompson defied biological necessity and lost.

How might he have won? Only through luck. Such luck as came in the form of the Meynells, much too late in life. A fairy godmother

* Op. cit. pp. 8-9.

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might perhaps have taken him under her wing when he was a little boy and have sheltered him from wind and weather and mankind. She might have left him alone with his dreams. Among these pretty nothings the poor creature could at least have lived on; but still he would have remained infinitely stupid, useless, uncreative, and less than half a man.

The introvert's hell and purgatory are laid out in grand circles, after Dante's best design. From the mute, vacuous inmates of asylums up to men who turn subjective only in flashes, we find innumerable shades and degrees of worldly dulness. In our major work on human stupidity we shall have to devote several volumes to the more important varieties.



In Thompson we see an extreme introvert. Few introverts owe their stupidities to the precise pattern of interests which we find in this remarkable personality. A man who turns inward upon himself can find all sorts of queer things to focus on. So far as we are concerned, it makes little difference what he prefers; in any case, the act of narrowing makes the stupidity much more than the thing toward which one narrows.

Some psychologists now regard all introverts as pathological. That may or may not be. But one thing is sure: they are abnormal in their relations to other people, just as the egotist is; and they do many foolish things while shut in from the big world.

Extravert

Let us here be brief—for a change. The extravert is easy to describe and not nearly so interesting as the inward-looking person. Then too, his stupidities are obvious and usually free from the dark windings that mark those of other mental types. Finally, American business swarms with the type; that makes it hardly more interesting than an earthworm.

The extravert concentrates by preference on things around him. Usually—but not necessarily—he regards human beings pretty much as things. The peculiarities of the sentient, laughing, brooding biped elude him; he lumps them together with sticks and stones. Hence flow his worst blunders, especially when he happens to be blessed

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with superior mechanical intelligence, which tends to strengthen his naive view of men as mere machines.

Thus we come to Henry Ford.

He is the perfect model of the old-style Michigan farmer, except for his superior mechanical sense. His mind centers upon and lives in things, things, and things: wheat, manure, fences, trees, firewood, axes, hammers, oil cans, monkey wrenches, and hack saws. He began life on a farm and then went to town and became a machinist. No man can devote the first half of his earthly sojourn to tools without becoming himself a tool of tools.

Ford has never been able either to understand people or to get along with them. In one respect he is the perfect opposite of Owen D. Young, who likes people almost as much as most people like him; and this difference between the two men roots entirely in the trait we are now discussing. Young is an inward-looking personality who advances from intuition to intuition; in this one insignificant sense, there is something comic in his heading a huge manufacturing corporation. He feels the inadequacy of language, as we have elsewhere shown; and he has a curious hypertrophied charity toward all men based largely on a sincere conviction that neither he nor they make themselves clear by word or by deed. How different the great Henry!

It is well known to those close to him that he has the Midwest farmer's ingrained distrust of strangers and of acquaintances who give signs of becoming intimate. He has been heard to say that he must be on guard against new friendships. We may be sure that this is not merely the echo of many bitter experiences with the friends of yore—with Horace and John Dodge, with Alexander Malcomson, with Norval Hawkins, with James Couzens, and with ever so many others. It strikes more deeply. It is the man. Friendship is something which, as yet, men have been unable to formulate in the equations of mechanics.

A farmer turned mechanic, Ford has thoroughly proved, in a way which only a psychologist or else an expert in combustion engineering would be likely to recognize, his utter extraversion unsupported by reverie, make-believe, or creative fantasy. It is a matter of record, to which a thousand eminent engineers and manufacturers can testify under oath, that Ford has never invented anything of large or lasting value in automobile designing. So far as I know, the man has

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never tried to deceive a soul on this score; I have never found a statement by him in which there was the remotest intimation that he personally conceived and perfected any main features of the famous old Model T. And I have it, on the authority of several of the greatest mechanical engineers, that, whatever the Michigan farmer may have contributed to the car, it was not comparable to what Edison has done in any one of a hundred fields. Edison was highly extraverted, but he had a curious disorderly creative imagination unsupported by mathematical ability. It rose to supreme genius. Ford's mind is, in every essential except business organization, commonplace.

We would not aspire here to write Ford's biography; the job would be too dull for us. But extravert stupidities are intriguing, in themselves, mainly because they throw light on America's economic evolution during the past three centuries. In the upbuilding of this country we have been sharpshooters, trail blazers, scouts, trappers, game hunters, lumberjacks, miners, farmers, herders, coopers, carpenters, blacksmiths, mechanics, machinists, storekeepers—in a word, men whose attention has been shackled to the rude materialities of an untamed continent. Ours have been the sins of extraversion. They show up at their worst in our relations with and acts involving people, as human beings. Ford serves us well in demonstrating this trend partly because he rises far above the ruck of tradesmen, peddlers, salesmen, and corner grocers in that they stink of greed and petty fraud, whereas Ford—past all reasonable doubt—has little or no interest in piling up millions. If the trait swayed him earlier in life, it has long since been swamped by a genuine, insistent, clearheaded passion for tinkering with metal until it runs. Back of all this there glows a tenderness for things earthy; and it is this trait, probably more than anything else, which attracted to his banner the masses of rustics and villagers in 1922 and 1923. They sensed their own kind just as one dog whiffs another dog from afar. Those who could not detect the affinity otherwise, picked it up through his tractor and his many remarks about improving the farmers' lot.

What kind of stupidities does such a mechanical extravert commit most often? As I said, stupidities turning around the deeper human relations. Witness the trip of the *Oscar II* loaded with pacifists, cranks, schemers, and spies, bound for war-plagued Europe to get the boys out of the trenches by Christmas. Ten nations were at war.

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Ford knew less than nothing about their peoples, their emotional and intellectual backgrounds, or about the economic and social tides and eddies which had swept them all into the supreme inanity of battle. Nor could he ever have mastered such facts; for he is blind to other psyches.

Witness again his famous assaults upon the "international Jews." Was there ever a more preposterous cock-and-bull story than the one run for months on end in the columns of the "Dearborn Independent" describing, with alleged minuteness of proof, the conspiracy of Jewish bankers and promoters to stir up nations against one another, for their own private profit, and to force liquor down the throats of an unwilling, sober world? In fairness to Henry we must add that he ended up with a handsome, though belated apology, coupled with an admission of vast ignorance and misinformation.

Wild though the comparison may sound at first, Ford and Beethoven have at least one resemblance: it is their stupidity toward the workings of the ordinary mind. The causes of the stupidity are opposed: Beethoven misunderstood people because he lived in the secret world of tones, while Ford dwells in the noisy, greasy, hot, hard realm of steel, lathes, and overalls. Man overruns these domains by many a mile. Only a morsel of his nature can be seen within either domain singly.

Ford has many famous companions in his stupidity. Some of them will be paraded under aspects, such as the single-track minds, the experts, and the men of narrow range. Professors of physics, chemistry, astronomy, and engineering spend their lives over matters remote from the spirit of man. Hence their efforts to deal with that spirit lead them only too often into appalling blunders. Here, I suspect, we reach the root of the immense and all but irreconcilable conflict between man, the social animal, and man, the economic animal. Life is not money, nor money life. Producing is not consuming; nor can the interests of producers and consumers ever be harmonized by lopsided minds. The statesman who will some day deliver us will be neither a Henry Ford nor a Woodrow Wilson, neither a tool juggler nor a word juggler; he will be neither an Edison nor a Steinmetz, neither a man of dominant mechanical fantasy nor a man of dominant mathematical imagination. He will be a nature well balanced as between inward and outward trends.

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Bigot

The bigot is "obstinately and blindly devoted to his own church, party, or belief." Thus far we go with the lexicographers. But when they say that to be bigoted is to be "prejudiced, intolerant, and narrowminded," we waver in our loyalty to the dictionary. We take exception to the second adjective. If every man who cannot or will not tolerate something is a bigot, then bigot means bigoted. Perhaps old man Webster and his successors had in mind only the tolerating of people who hold religious beliefs at variance with one's own; but, if so, then they unfairly restrict the meaning.

Every mature person who has learned much is intolerant of many things—and should be, too. I am one of many millions who will not tolerate people who defoul drinking water by bathing in city reservoirs, people who play saxophones all night long in a tenement full of sleepers, people who get drunk and throw beer bottles at passers-by, people who swindle widows and orphans, people who refuse medical aid when they have smallpox, people who spit on the floor, and several thousand other sorts of stupid, nasty, perverse mankind. To be civilized one must be intolerant in the right way, and in no other. A person who calmly endures everything is not even a good savage; he is considerably lower than most morons, and a social menace to boot.

To be a genuine bigot, in the uncomplimentary sense, much more than intolerance is needed. One trait I regard as indispensable; it is the stupid, stubborn refusal to listen to the other side of the case. Here is a specimen from that greatest of Fundamentalist leaders, the peerless William Jennings Bryan. At the trial of John Thomas Scopes, who was fined \$100 and costs for teaching evolution down in Tennessee, Clarence Darrow put Bryan on the witness stand, and the following illuminating remarks ensued. Darrow put each question, Bryan made reply.

- Q. You have never in all your life made any attempt to find out about the other peoples of the earth—how old their civilizations are, how long they have existed on the earth, have you?
- A. No, sir, I have been so well satisfied with the Christian religion that I have spent no time trying to find argument against it.

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Q. Were you afraid you might find some?

A. No, sir, I am not afraid that you will show me any.

Q. Mr. Bryan, do you believe that the first woman was Eve?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you believe she was literally made out of Adam's rib?

A. I do.

Q. Did you ever discover where Cain got his wife?

A. No, sir; I leave the agnostics to hunt for her

Mr. Darrow asked if Mr. Bryan believed that Eve's troubles began because Eve tempted Adam to eat the fruit

Q. And you believe that is the reason that God made the serpent to go on his belly after he tempted Eve?

A. I believe the Bible as it is, and I do not permit you to put your language in the place of the language of the Almighty. You read that Bible and ask me questions and I will answer them I will not answer your questions in your language

Q. I will read to you from the Bible "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, 'Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.'" Do you think that is why the serpent is compelled to crawl upon its belly?

A. I believe that.

Q. Have you any idea how the snake went before that time?

A. No sir.

Q. Do you know whether he walked on his tail or not?

A. No sir, I have no way to know

The essence of the bigot's stupidity, we would maintain, is the closed mind. Immense zones of fact are excluded from even the lightest consideration. No Trespass signs stick up everywhere. In time, therefore, enormous ignorance must result. And the process works equally well in reverse, too. Whatever keeps people ignorant is likely to bring on bigotry—though it need not do so; for in the last analysis the bigot must be cursed with a certain emotionality at which we shall look soon. Let us seek, before we go further, the larger influences making for ignorance. Perhaps these may throw light on stupid bigots.

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Where do most Americans get their opinions on subjects removed from their immediate neighborhood and business? Mostly from newspapers, and a little from magazines. From books scarcely anything, and from ministers not a whit save in the peripheral hog-and-hominy zone. Scott's tests in Chicago and my own in New York show that high-grade professional men spend about fifteen minutes a day over their morning papers, while the average person probably gives double that time. The average man beats the superior man in time, partly because he reads more slowly (rarely more than 6,000 words per hour), partly because he lacks skill in skimming, partly because he has a weaker selective drive and tends to dabble at everything, whereas the high-grade man picks and chooses items; and partly too because he has more time for miscellaneous reading than the superior man. My tests of decidedly inferior people verging on the moron types, while still incomplete, suggest strongly that they devote much more time to their papers, are much more deeply impressed by what they read, but do not cover much more ground, in terms of wordage, than higher intelligence groups do.

Roughly, then, what we find is this: the higher the cultural, mental, and economic class, the less time it spends on newspapers and probably (but not certainly) the less it is *relatively* influenced by what it reads. Of this we shall make little here. We look rather to the quality of the influence. And what this is will become apparent when we answer the question: Which parts and what fraction of the daily paper are read in the high-grade man's quarter-hour and in the average man's half-hour? We are now about to make a remarkable discovery.

Taking as our basis the proved reading velocity of the average and sub-average readers (as demonstrated by experiments in the reading of news columns and motion picture titles), we find that these people as a rule cover about 3,000 words in an ordinary newspaper; seldom as much as 5,000 words.

This amounts to something between 2% and 5% of the total reading matter in a typical newspaper. Only one sentence out of every twenty-five or fifty is read by any single average reader.

Which sentences are read? Broadly speaking, we find that in the news items the headlines are read rather extensively but the text is not; and in the entertainment items certain preferred texts are read closely.

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Editorial and critical columns are read almost never by the average reader of the large circulation paper. The one possible exception to this tendency is the Sunday paper. Here the heavily featured special writers receive most of that scant attention.

These conditions, let me insist, do not appear in papers of quality circulation. And, of course, they appear in a limited form, in those periodicals which try to combine mass appeal and class appeal. I shall ignore all such complicated phenomena, as they do not alter my contention, which is that at least 95 out of every 100 newspaper readers peruse not more than 5% of the details about the daily events of the world which are printed in their newspapers; and that the amount printed is only a tiny fraction of the essential facts about those same events. Your typical literate American thus assimilates one-fiftieth of one-fiftieth of such events as are reported; and his paper reports perhaps one-fiftieth of all events which might be reported each day.

So the newspaper takes a snapshot at reality as it whizzes past. It holds this up to the reader, who takes a snapshot of this snapshot. And on this he builds his knowledge of the world outside of his own personal business and neighborhood. Note well this qualification. It will prove significant.

Now, what is likely to happen to an ordinary mortal who, about 730 times a year, once every morning and once every evening, gets snapshots of snapshots and then passes snap judgments on each? (Not even as much as the Zulus and the Tuaregs force upon their young.) There is only one outcome. The law of habit formation works inexorably. In all matters outside of his immediate neighborhood and his business he tends to accept news flashes as adequate pictures of world events. He comes to regard headlines as realities. And, in the realm of moral judgment, he accustoms himself to gauge the right and wrong of reported acts in terms of a few emotionalized platitudes which he is forever seeing (in bold face capitals) in the snapshot editorials of his daily paper. The bigger the world grows, the more complex its affairs become, and the busier our reader himself is in his own affairs, plainly the more he leans on such snap judgments; and the less live interest he has in matters outside of his own home and office. Hence as our world progresses and our citizens thrive, most of us get further and further out of touch with the *mass* of world events. And such contact as we may have with them becomes ever

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more casual, unsure, sketchy, and tabloid. As I have been saying for many years, the news world is going tabloid, whether it wants to or not. What I now add is that the average mind and the average morality are also going tabloid, in all extra-mural affairs.

This is the precise opposite of what is going on within each man's sphere of work and personal living. Work is becoming more technical and more scientific every day. Personal relations are being more intimate and are being understood more surely. The street sweeper and the bank president alike fall victims to efficiency experts. And all persons in the higher walks of life are rapidly coming around to the belief that their most intimate problems are best solved by an elaborate diagnosis at the hands of psychiatrists, physicians, bacteriologists, and eugenists. Science is expelling the adage, and technique is exterminating the copybook maxim wherever men of superior quality are in charge of affairs. No good newspaper office is run on the principles set forth by its own star syndicate editorial writers. No successful newspaper owner runs his own private affairs along lines laid down by the sob sister and heartache adviser whom he pays five hundred dollars a week. Nor does he ever make an important move in his business affairs on the basis of information gathered exclusively from his own news and editorial columns. Not he!

But how about the man of average or sub-average intelligence and emotional stability? Now the scene changes. Science and technique have touched him, but only in the sense that the steam roller touches the road it is smoothing. He is not fond of research, of analysis, of experiment, or of large ventures for fun, love, or money. The range of his thoughts and acts is much narrower than that of the leaders. (Whether it might be widened by training is irrelevant here.) Hence he is much more deeply influenced by his newspaper habits, both in his intimate affairs and in his judgments of things afield, than the superior man is. Destitute of all moral training, he succumbs utterly to snap judgments about snapshots, except in a few rare intimate matters of his own private life such as wage earning, liquor, and sex. And this makes him, first of all, a bigot, and then—goaded on by the newspapers—a fanatic.

A bigot is a man emotionally devoted to some over-simplified set of ideas or practices. His mind is narrow, be it by nature or by training. He grasps a few notions and thinks they are the whole thing. But

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this mere belief is not enough to make him a bigot. You must add emotion. He must scorn or despise those who believe otherwise. And he must resent efforts to improve his opinion. His must be a closed mind, if he would be a first-class bigot. Is he a fanatic? Does he turn into one? Hard questions! Let us up and at them.

Among every hundred good bigots selected at random, you will find some sprinkling of persons who are much less stable emotionally than the rest. Their instability assumes the form of violent outbursts when they are crossed, contradicted, or criticized. They strive to impose their will upon other people, above all upon those who oppose them. These are the true fanatics. How large they are as a class nobody knows. The United States Census does not help us here. But their number is legion. And, contrary to the general belief among cultured people, they are by no means confined to the moron world. Indeed, they rarely crop out among morons. One of the surprises of post-war intelligence and mental hygiene tests is that there is little or no positive correlation between intelligence and emotional stability. A man of very high intelligence may have no control over his fears and rages, while a poor dub of a white-collar clerk may have the poise of a diplomat in such adjustments.

Of the dozen or more rabid fanatics whom I have personally known and watched, one of the most obnoxious is a brilliant scientist whose achievements are recognized and admired all over the world; and another, strange to say, is a skilled technician in a difficult line of manufacturing. It is the existence of highly intelligent fanatics that makes the situation in America so grave today. Were all of our virtue-mongers and censors and prohibitionists morons, what a simple job it would be to put them in their places! But, alas, hundreds of them are scientists, college professors and corporation presidents, just as many of our high grade criminals are.

Nevertheless the mass of bigots and fanatics is to be found in the middle and lower ranges of our population. And we have now to ask how their bigotry and fanaticism are aggravated by the typical newspaper. In our answer we must consider separately the psychology of praise and the psychology of blame. And we must again divide the

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latter into the psychology of fear and the psychology of anger. First of all, though, we must describe a curious psychic relation between the world of human affairs and the average newspaper reader. It underlies the whole fanatical movement.

The world of human affairs has increased in detail and in complexity far beyond the average man's ability or desire to know it. And daily it is outrunning him still further. The relative difference between his immediate, intimate world and the whole world of human affairs increases steadily. The result is that his positive knowledge of the larger world is *relatively* slighter today than ever before. This means that the larger world is less real to him. It is growing more and more like his dream world. And he often tends to deal with it as he deals with his dream world. He makes it a place where his infantile cravings come true.

In earlier times the average man could not play with the larger real world thus. For he lacked the political and economic power to do so. Today he possesses that power more or less. This is why politics and public morals have both become the playground of ignorant people obsessed by childishly simple notions. A large part of the 2,000,000 laws under which the United States suffers has sprung from such infantile cravings in men who have lost all touch with the larger realities.

What, now, spurs such fanatics to action? First and foremost, fears or rages which have been stirred up in them by something which they or somebody else has read in the paper. A snapshot of a snapshot, in other words. And a snap judgment about that snapshot of a snapshot! Whom the gods would destroy they first make tabloid readers!

If these people never heard about such disturbing affairs, they would not be aroused to action. If they could hear enough about them and take time to study them, most of them would either do nothing or else something more or less sensible. The disaster grows neither out of complete ignorance nor out of thorough understanding. It grows out of hopelessly inadequate information which, by an easy fiction, and habit, comes to be regarded as adequate. The power of this fiction is at once tragic and ludicrous.

Many a time have I listened to my distinguished University colleagues as they discoursed extemporaneously on the news of the day over the luncheon table. With hardly an exception these gentlemen

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—most of whom profess a fine scorn for American newspapers—accept what they have read at face value and in all their remarks plainly assume that the snapshot they have taken of the snapshot in their favorite journal is substantially a correct picture. To cite only one comic illustration, you can still hear at the Faculty Club estimable citizens of high scientific and academic standing recall how a Mr. Coolidge saved the city of Boston by his bold and brilliant handling of the police strike in that city! I heard this only two months ago. And I have also heard in those semi-sacred halls that Lenin was forced to abandon his law for the nationalization of women because of his fear of American retaliation! Were I put to it, I think I could dig up a hundred cases almost as funny as this one.

Emotionalized ignorance, however, cannot explain more than one grand division of fanaticism. All sorts of quirks in the environment create minor varieties; and in no country are there more such quirks than in our own. When we come to prepare the History of Human Stupidity, fully one long volume will have to be devoted to the peculiar adjustment psychoses which we find here and the forces in the surroundings that evoke them. Just one glimpse of these, and we move on.

The tremendous power and vogue of fanaticisms in America can largely be traced to intense practicality and striving for success. A fanatic is a man who, being unable to comprehend any point of view other than his own, is strongly moved to impose his own convictions on the world. He differs from the mere bigot in that he is impelled to make everyone practice what he preaches. A bigot is simply narrow-minded. A fanatic is a man of action.

Now, to America in the past century have been drawn millions who came seeking fortune. Aggressive personalities of every shade have come to our land, and these have become our dominant type. Success is their god. But success is attained by concentration, undivided interest, sticking to one's task, bending all of one's efforts to the single clear end. Hence the man who is by nature endowed with a highly integrated nervous system has a tremendous advantage here. And the more opportunities our country offers, the more will such a man seize. The more he seizes, the richer and more powerful he becomes. The richer and more powerful he becomes, the more newspapers, magazines, publishing houses, politicians, churchmen, and

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workers will he surely dominate or influence. And in doing this he shapes customs and traditions.

We in America have more powerful fanatics than all other lands combined, so far as the records show. So we must expect little sympathetic imagination among the ruling classes. Today, as in the time of Christ, you must seek it among the meek and the lowly, among the poor and the outcast. And you must do it for Darwin's reason—natural selection. What makes for material success interferes with insight and fellow feeling.

When Christ said that it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, he plainly had in mind this psychological law. For the two highest virtues in Christ's opinion were brotherly love and charity, both of which grow out of sympathetic imagination. To enter the Kingdom of Heaven one must become as a little child; that is, one must be ruled by one's feelings and not by the passion to achieve or to possess. This philosophy of life has always been understood by thousands of simple folk who, measured by Dun and Bradstreet or by Nietzsche, are failures. It has always been either misunderstood or hated by nine out of every ten success-hunters. Between these two groups there never can be a fundamental understanding.

In saying this, I am not praising the proletariat nor holding the rich up to scorn. I merely record a biological fact which you may verify for yourself and find in it any moral significance you wish.

Among the many special influences making America the breeding ground of the world's stupidest bigots and fanatics, there is one which, I think, has been overlooked. At any rate, I find no references to it. It is the emotional effect of close contact with antagonistic religions, morals, business methods, and personal tastes. Nowhere else have so many irreconcilable customs and standards been brought into obnoxious juxtaposition. Fools call America a melting pot. It is more like a witches' caldron into which all manner of strange, noisome, malignant, nauseous ingredients stew. Four and forty scums are gathered into a broth here. The Neolithic Celt from Ireland's west coast lives next door to Pappadoulous, the cutthroat from Athens. The Early Bronze Age mountaineer from Spain toils on the docks beside a Russian clod from the upper Volga. Those who are mentally superior and emotionally well poised grow friendly, take all comers for what they are worth, and slowly merge into a new Ameri-

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can type. But unhappily, there are tens of thousands who are not of such high quality. During the past thirty or forty years, they have gained on their betters; the level of the immigrant stream has lowered steadily. At the same time these inferiors have spread more and more over the country and so have been thrown into contact with all sorts of emotionally unstable dullards of earlier stocks, some of these even pre-Revolutionary. The small towns of the South, since 1910 especially, have taken in the vanguard of this horde. Even Texas has caught the first ripples here and there. Much of California is inundated and perhaps ruined for all time by this Cyclopean alluvium. Vast areas of the once glorious Middle West have become as dull, as dirty, as sodden, and as European as the slum cities of Belgium, the sinkhole of western unculture. And now sets in the clash of stupid temperaments.

The early American Cyclops turns in rage against the early Irish Cyclops. Pole leaps at the throat of Russian Italian flashes stiletto against Greek ribs. Southern Baptist runs African Methodist out of town. Old German Jew despises and discriminates against the Galician "kike." Code against code. Creed against creed. An all-around running fight for existence which has been brought on by the new realization that, in a polyglot, mongrel, bastardized country made bloody by the savagest competition, one's dearest beliefs and firmest habits are jostled and scorned by aliens. The ego is wounded and outraged by this discovery.

Since the World War, this trend has grown much worse, mainly as a result of the growing harshness of competition as our country approaches its saturation point of population and industry. D. A. R., Security League, Knights of Columbus, Menorah, the Society for the Advancement of Atheism, the Association of American Astrologers, the Chiropractors, the American Legion, and all the rest, even when they are not themselves officially battled for existence, feel the stress and strain of internecine fanaticisms as never before. The more emotional the groups become, the stupider their acts.

Directly after the World War, this emotional strain was at its worst, as you can see by turning back to the yellowing pages of the statute books of 1919 and 1920. Some philanthropist may endow a member of my staff with instructions to search all post-war legislation for cases of fanaticism brought on, in one manner or another, by

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that great "war to end war." *The result of that noble act will fill a dozen volumes and start a riot.*

Does the memory of man run back to the infamous Lusk bills introduced before and passed by the New York State Legislature in April, 1920, the heyday of "100% Americanism"? One of these incredible measures set up a secret police whose function was to discover by stealth and trickery citizens who questioned or privately rejected various tenets of the American government or Constitution, quite apart from any overt act on the unbelievers' part. A second bill in the group empowered the State Board of Regents to censor and close at will any private school, even though it was receiving no public funds and was therefore free from all official surveillance and control. This same bill imposed a heavy fee upon every private class of any sort and required such to be licensed. A third bill subjected school teachers to the imbecile whims and prejudices of a board of examiners who would have power to cross-examine them concerning their political, social, and even moral opinions and, should these not be to the liking of the board, to dismiss them from public service.

New York State was not a shade more fanatical than many another, though it won much more publicity by virtue of its press. Noble Wisconsin enacted a "pure history law" some months later which will long endure as a monument of solid ivory. It compels the state superintendent of education to hold a hearing when any five citizens file a complaint that a school book duly adopted anywhere in the sovereign state "falsifies the facts regarding the War of Independence or the War of 1812, or defames our nation's founders or misrepresents the ideals and causes for which they struggled . . ." These five citizens may be morons. They may be illiterates. They may be a gang hired to "get" the author and his publisher, so that a rival book may be substituted on the adoption list. I have never heard of the repeal of this titanic stupidity; but then, I do not read Madison papers. Somehow the hunch keeps welling up in me that the commonwealth that brought forth Van Hise and LaFollette cannot have kept this seditious perversion on its statute books all these years. For the law itself defames Wisconsin and America more than any textbook ever could.

Have our fanatics grown gentler since those 100% days? Perhaps. At all events most of them have grown pettier, if one may judge by the common run of news—which is all I have to go by just now. But

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the warfare against free speech becomes ever more bitter. As for the petty trends, we understand that a huge national campaign is under way to forbid cigarette smoking. It will, saith rumor, roll up a luscious campaign chest—maybe millions of dollars—contributed mainly by the Dry fanatics who are casting about for new worlds to conquer. Some of its advance guard have been caught sniping away out on the skirmish lines, where all has hitherto been peaceful. Hark to the opening gun! Michael Kelleher, a Park Avenue butcher, slapped Mrs. Pearl Barton and knocked a cigarette from her lips as she sauntered along the street on July 3, 1931. Magistrate George DeLuca fined Kelleher \$25.00. But will that hold back the mighty flood of uplifters? Not if we know our America!

The stupidity of fanatics is often revealed in their abnormal and unreasonable persistence in attacking problems which are quite beyond their abilities. A recent study of Dr. Edgar A. Doll and Cecilia G. Aldrich* made at the Training School at Vineland, New Jersey, illustrates this foolish persistence of the inferior. These investigators found that "The normal children seemed to recognize their own limitations more quickly than did the idiot children. Once having found a task too difficult, no amount of urging could persuade them to continue their efforts. The idiot child, however, could often be urged to continue trying regardless of the apparent futility of his efforts."

Thus Calvin Frye, cataleptic satellite of Mary Baker Eddy. † Superstitious and illiterate, he would try to rid his teacher of her persistent fears that someone was plotting against her life. And, as Bates describes him, "After sitting up all night with Mrs. Eddy, combating her fears of arsenic, consumption, or epyzooty, Calvin would say over and over, 'No thoughts of poison or hate coming here.' Again and again he turned for aid to Mrs. Eddy's central principle, 'The bigger the error, the greater its nothingness.'" On and on with doglike fidelity to the ailing and crotchety old lady, he persisted with a task far beyond anyone's ability, and with mumblings and phrasemaking tried to cope with the inevitable.

And here, good reader, we reach a new insight into the course of human history since Cyclops sallied forth from his cave. Have you

*"n."

next Sutherland Bates. *Harper's Magazine*, February,

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not often wondered how so many ineffably stupid beliefs, customs, practices and laws could have arisen and been perpetuated? Does it not seem more than strange that, for every intelligent, well-planned affair in the course of human events, there have been a score of blunders? Well, part of the mystery can now be solved.

"Keeping everlastingly at it brings success." And who adheres to this course? Above all, the stupid fellow who, once in his life at least, has been aroused to some enthusiasm, or has burned with some flame of righteous indignation. Seeing with less than one eye the perils, obstacles, and complications ahead of him, he plunges onward, knife in teeth, torch in hand. He has been exalted. Life now has a tingle stronger than the kick of rum. The Cause sustains him, transforms him, enlarges his power, and lends him importance. At last he is Somebody! Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war!

As the banners of his blear-eyed army swing past, the Timid Soul with a Ph D. degree stands on the curb and wonders whether he can summon up nerve to ask his boss for a five-dollar raise in pay.

Liberal

Liberalism is the last refuge of the stupid. Thither rushes every fool in trouble. He leaves patriotism to the scoundrel seeking safety, for the fool knows—in spite of his folly—that liberalism is founded on the rock of truth and is almost impregnable. If ever a census enumerator penetrates this temple, I suspect that he will find dwelling there five sons of Cyclops for every intelligent inmate. Worse luck for the latter!

The stupid man, finding himself in danger of being penalized for his blunders, clamors for the right to think and do as he pleases. "I am honest!" he yells. "I am a sincere believer! As an individual, I am entitled to be treated as sacred. I am an End in Myself. You have no right to suppress me."

Inevitably, in a world where most people are profoundly stupid and forever messing things up, this has proved highly popular. Indeed it is perhaps the deepest cause of the so-called Christians' openly or tacitly rejecting Christ's doctrine of illiberalism and hurrahing for Paul's wily opportunism. If there was one thing which Christ stressed more than anything else, it was the thought that "a good tree

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cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Over and over, this theme recurs in his remarks. Witness the parable of the wheat and the tares: the latter are bundled and burned, while the good grain is saved. Witness again: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away." Witness again: "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." Witness again the parable of the two houses, one founded on rock, the other on sand. But you weary of the obvious

Jesus, the great pragmatist, clearly understood that everything must be judged by its results. No fool has any moral right to claim the respect, protection or aid of other people merely on the ground that he is sincere. Allow him that, and he will become a chiropractor, killing people sincerely; or a Christian Scientist, slaying his own children by forbidding entry of doctors to the sick room; or a Moslem lunatic murdering infidels in the holy name of Allah. Against such liberalism, the fanatic has a sound position.

The fanatic has the immense virtue of trying to practise what he preaches. He is the healthy, wholesome type of upward striving man—quite apart from what he happens to believe. He fits into the eternal struggle for existence that goes on among creatures, ideas, habits and institutions. He knows, in his own limited way, that whatever is worth cherishing in one's heart is worth battling for out in the world. The progress of mankind is due entirely to this relentless competition of zealots. True, there are many ways of fighting for a cause, some of them heinous, others doubtful, a few noble. So we judge fanatics from case to case, largely in the light of their methods. But that, mind you, is quite another story. So too ought we judge the liberals—and men of shrewd sense do. But the dyed-in-the-wool liberal objects to this, for he maintains that the very heart of his own philosophy is freedom of speech and action. His own action, then, whenever consistent, is in substance inaction, so far as the control of other people is concerned. Where they do things, he talks. He tries to

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keep human society on the linguistic level. And therein lies his imbecility.

The perfect specimen here is Kerensky. Notice the broader outlines of his tragic-comic career.

Kerensky

Insofar as Kerensky was capable of any clear thinking, he plainly adhered to the academe's doctrine of the omnipotence of ideas—particularly when these were cast into well-turned phrases. From what little I have been able to gather about his personality through various foreign observers (most of whom have been either critical or hostile), the man seems to have been what that astute correspondent of the *London Observer* dubbed him, "a theatrical and hysterical poseur." Lenin's biographer, Valeriu Marcu, embroiders this portrait in bright stitches, thus:

Kerensky would gladly have ruled as *Imperator*. But he lacked two attributes of the Napoleonic: the *virtus* of the ancients and the eagle quality of success.

If he spoke of final, decisive, draconic measures, all that men heard was a hoarse voice, and all they saw a threatening forefinger. His heroics had behind them neither a great idea nor the argument of bayonets. Yet he symbolized one sort of dictatorship—that of impotence. With a tireless rhetoric never before equalled this Minister . . . tried to frighten the Revolution with the generals and the generals with the Revolution.*

As far as it goes, the picture seems fair. But it leaves out several key lineaments. First of all, Kerensky was a thorough Russian—with the typical motor inferiorities of that strange breed. Not a man of action, in the Western sense, he was still energetic and, in a certain fashion, ambitious; but, above all, he was fond of showing off. It may or may not be significant that he became a lawyer and practised in Petrograd; surely a verbose exhibitionist could not have chosen a clearer medium for his ego than that degenerate profession.

* "Lenin." N. Y., 1928. Translated by E. W. Dickes, p.

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At any rate, he became the William Jennings Bryan of the Social Revolutionary party and, in 1912, was elected to the fourth Duma, where he excited the members with his fiery speeches. His fame spread, for the Russians succumb to oratory quite as easily as do the hill-billies of our own land. By the time the Revolution spread, he was its hero. In July, 1917, as War Minister, he set out to organize the great offensive against Germany. He picked a group of sub-orators and other propagandists to harangue the soldiers with him. And what a noise they made! All the Allied newspapers printed black headlines declaring that this mighty leader, Kerensky, was marshalling millions and would crush the Huns. The Huns were almost killed, it is true; they nearly died laughing at these monkey-shines; for they watched that pompous windbag wring huzzas from the uniformed herd, watched the herd as it yelled "On to Berlin!", and watched the whole episode subside into the universal nothingness which is Russia, as soon as Kerensky left the front. Three weeks later, the former empire of the Czars blew up like a bubble and passed from the scene as a world power.

Now, let us, as we proceed to inspect the liberalism of this man, make fair allowances for the adversities of his position. Never before was a great nation in blacker chaos than Russia before Lenin; whether any man could have pulled it out of its sloughs may be doubted. But surely Kerensky's extreme liberalism made the confusion only worse confounded and hastened the ultimate crash. For many years he had been actively proclaiming freedom of speech and action. Some of his most ardent orations turned around this noble thesis. When he came into power, he undertook to rule according to his lights. To the dull privates in the trenches, he boomed: "You are the freest soldiers in all the world. . . . The rule of force has passed. . . . Say what you like, do what you like! . . . We want to respect one another without the knout, without the stick, and to carry on our State affairs differently from our former despots." When soldiers and sailors in the Petrograd garrison mutinied and were imprisoned, it was Kerensky who released them with a noble phrase.

But the apex of his liberal lunacy became visible between July and October, 1917. Concerning it, George Sokolsky writes me as follows:

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"Then it was that the Bolsheviks were organizing for a forceful seizure of the Provisional Government. Kerensky, who was the head of that Government, knew of their acts, *as did everyone else in Petrograd*. Kerensky permitted this organization to continue, and he even tolerated Trotsky's propaganda among the troops in the city.

"Any clear thinking person would have seized Lenin, Trotsky, and other Bolsheviks during August, 1917, and would have shot them. At that time the political situation was such that the popular response to such an act would have been slight. Observers, at that time and since, have viewed Kerensky's conduct as indicative of stupidity, but it appears to me to have quite a different characteristic.

"Kerensky's career had been a struggle for democracy and freedom of speech and particularly of action. Having achieved the position of head of the State, how could he go back on his whole career by shooting his opponents because they differed with him? Those who believe that Kerensky was stupid also believe that he was cowardly; but I met the man and am convinced that he was neither, but rather suffered from ingrown ideas which inhibited positive actions such as were required at the time.

"His failure made the Communist Revolution possible."

This strikes me as coming very close to the bull's eye. His liberalism dulled his mind to the exigencies of the desperate situation; to that extent at least, then, he had grown stupid through faith—as so many others have done. His attitude, furthermore, was fixed in the easy ways of inaction. His mind functioned through the larynx; he was a word-man. So his failure to seize and execute the Bolshevik leaders was not cowardice at all but rather a deft, natural fusion of his two strongest traits I would disagree with Sokolsky in that I prefer to call such inhibited behavior a special form of stupidity. It has the essential mark, insensitivity to vital factors in a situation. True, it may not have been constitutional insensitivity. But then, less than half of all human stupidity is such.

I have selected Kerensky as a specimen here because his career presents, in monstrously exaggerated form, the stupidities of the liberal. In all history you may never find so gross a train of misadventures as his. Nor will you find such a thorough repudiation of liberalism as in Lenin, who swept the feeble spouter from the stage. As he once said, ruthlessness was the greatest of all duties, once one was convinced of his course. He despised tolerance. "To tolerate

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bourgeois newspapers is to cease being a Socialist," said he in a hot speech. Himself the greatest of fanatics, his triumphs proved that fanatics need not be stupid. They also demonstrated, by indirection, that liberalism, while it may serve a worthy purpose in the piping times of peace and prosperity, is ill suited to crises that call for firm, well-directed action. Any order is better than chaos, any leadership better than anarchy. There are enlightened liberals who understand this, and they are not at all stupid. But it is their misfortune to attract the fools who, finding themselves in danger of suppression on account of their stupidities, whine for mercy in the name of personal liberty.

Ego

Years ago, men found big diamonds in South Africa; and from all over the world fortune hunters flocked to the new Kimberley fields, all crazy to get rich quick. Among them was a clever professional juggler, who quit his stage job in London and joined the big stampede to the Kimberley fields. There he had the usual ups and downs of the prospector, but finally, between juggling and finding a few stones, he picked up money enough to retire with a comfortable income for life.

He put all of his savings into one magnificent diamond and sailed for dear old London. On the steamer he divided his time between showing off his diamond and his skill as a juggler.

"I never miss 'em!" he bragged. And he proved it by juggling the diamond all over the deck. One morning, seeing that the other passengers were beginning to be bored, he devised a Bigger and Better trick. Diamond in one hand, he leaped to the rail of the upper deck and balanced himself there on one foot. Then he juggled his diamond high in air, from hand to hand, while the steamer wallowed in a long, deep sea.

"I never miss 'em," he whooped. And then the sea, as if to utter Nature's everlasting answer to Man, sent along a sodden green roller. The ship lurched. Juggler and diamond went overboard and were never seen again.

So ended another stupid ego. And so begins our little preface on the infinite variety of its species.

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Stupidity in some of its most comic and often most disastrous forms derives from too much ego. The ego benumbs our sensitivities to all attitudes, all modes of appraisal, and all principles of conduct which in any way belittle our personalities. Whenever, as Kipling said of the ape, "there is too much ego in his cosmos," a man loses all perspective. And with it goes his sense of humor. The egocentric "struts sitting down." In all gravity, he says and does things which send observers into hysterics. You recall the Wall Street elevator boy, who was discovered reading the Life of Napoleon. He was asked how he liked it. "Very much!" he replied seriously. "I'm impressed by the number of ways Napoleon resembled me!"

Thus always with the egocentric. He wears the largest blinders ever devised as a part of any animal's harness. And usually, he begins, early in life, to value himself far beyond all else. His pride has one and only one vantage point. He views the cosmos always from the same perspective.

Charles Sumner reveals the typical pattern, as Gamaliel Bradford has skillfully shown.*

"In Sumner's case it was a placid, complacent satisfaction, a solid, foursquare assurance that the world needed him, unshaken by doubt and undisturbed by diffidence. The world did need him, but perhaps not quite so sorely as he thought.

"It is difficult to find any break in this self-confidence. The vast extent of Sumner's speeches and correspondence would seem to open a wide door into his inner life. I have examined these writings with a curious eye for any intimation of self-distrust or even of self-criticism. I have searched in vain. He does, indeed, accompany presentation copies of his works with perfunctory apology. When he is elected to the Senate, he accepts with no enthusiasm; but his hesitation is not from doubt of his ability, but from unwillingness to relinquish other pursuits. On one occasion only, in the whole course of his life, do I find him acknowledging a 'sense of weakness, inferiority and incompetency.' And where was this? In the presence of Niagara Falls."

We may think, at this juncture, that Sumner was at least one-millionth of a degree less stupefied by Nature than our diamond juggler, who heeded not the Atlantic. But when we read on, we

* "Union Portraits." Gamaliel Bradford, N Y, 1916.

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wonder whether perhaps the juggler was not the saner of the imbecile pair. For Bradford tells a strange tale.

"Even of Sumner one can hardly credit the story that, at fifteen years old, when his mother reproved him for being late to breakfast, he quietly remonstrated, 'Call me Mr. Sumner, Mother, if you please.' But the whole man—the big voice, the six feet odd of luxuriant platform manner—rushes before you in the reply to Colonel Higginson's mildly expressed doubt as to a certain decision of the Supreme Court. 'I suppose I know more about judges than any man in America,' and again in Lowell's stinging comment: 'I advise you to listen to this,' Sumner used to say, when he was talking about himself (as he commonly was): 'this is history.'

"In fact we have Sumner's own, hardly impeachable evidence that he posed even when he was alone 'He once told me,' says Noah Brooks, 'that he never allowed himself, even in the privacy of his own chamber, to fall into a position which he would not take in his chair in the Senate.' This, I think, it would be hard to beat, in all the records of history." *

In petty personalities the ego becomes merely comic. Gaze upon that noble Irishman, Lord Talbot of Malahide, a descendant of the great Boswell, him who wrote the finest biography of all time. When Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, the famous American rare book collector, sent his Lordship a cablegram offering him \$250,000 for the Boswell papers then in his possession, our nobleman stalked into the American Consulate at Dublin carrying the cablegram "as one carries a soiled handkerchief" and asked: "Who is this person?"

The consul informed him.

"Please tell him not to correspond with me," commanded Lord Talbot. "We have not been introduced."

"High Society" is little more than a device for fattening dwarf egos. The tinier the ego, the more strenuously it builds up its social status. The peak of any social pyramid is no larger than a pinhead.

In the Kaiser, his egomania was always infuriating. In sublime self-esteem, he once insisted to his grandmother, Queen Victoria, that she address him in private as "Your Imperial Majesty." The old lady lost her temper over this imbecility. "To pretend that he

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is so to be treated," she wrote in a letter which G. E. Buckle published last year, "is perfect madness. If he has such notions, he had better never come here."

This the All-Highest War Lord who many years later fell victim to his own colossal egotistic stupidity. One of the commonest of all stupidities rooted in the ego is an insensitivity to the abilities of one's rivals. The militarist, whose conceit is abnormally sustained by seeing himself in gilt braid daily and by beholding the array of his soldiery at drill, succumbs to this mental disease more often than anybody else. To this, Kaiser Wilhelm was especially susceptible. And today, some competent strategists declare that the psychological origins of the collapse of the Prussian fighting machine in the World War are to be found in the assumption of the generals Ludendorff and Hindenburg that the Allies would be too stupid to discern the profound schemes of the Kaiser's geniuses.

Thus the consensus of German opinion before America entered the war: "Americans would never enter the war; they could not raise an army; or get it across the ocean; or be of any value as soldiers." Then, when disaster followed blunder, Maximilien Harden, the German Socialist editor, wrote bitterly: "Why this unexpected defeat following performances so grand? Because a military commander, intoxicated with isolated success, flushed with the omnipotence of Cæsar, twice failed to conceive a proper estimate of America as a factor." *

Such insensitivity to rivals is revealed in the business man. Inflated with pride, he overlooks the cunning of his competitors, proceeds along the lines of some plan of his own which strikes him as devilishly clever, and then tumbles into the hands of a receiver—because the other fellow had a better plan.

Insensitivity to the most obvious facts which do not coincide with the egotist's wishes and plans often leads him at a running pace to ruin. Thus with the president of a company who stands before his board of directors, bellowing, "We'll put this thing over or know the reason why." One such, indeed, recently crippled his business for years as a result of just this imbecility. He vowed he would carry out a plan to sell some three-quarters of a million dollars' worth of stock. He did not need the extra capital, but he had planned on the

* "Colossal Blunders of the War." William Beaver Woods, pp. 110, 112.

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sales campaign, and campaign he would have. The cost of distribution of the stock, he was warned, was abnormally high. He would be wise to delay for some months. Would he revise his plans? Not he! No! His energy and his genius would put over the campaign. He'd succeeded before. He would do it again. None should stop him. Whereupon he proceeded, wrecked his business, and has put himself back thousands of dollars and several years of business progress.

The simple ego falls hard for flattery. And the stupider its owner, the harder the fall. The pleasure of being openly praised makes men insensitive to the larger situation. It puts them at a grave disadvantage in an encounter, as every shrewd salesman knows. Hence it is a favorite device of the employer who wishes to speed up his workmen. And flattery is skillfully practiced by subordinates who have need of their employers' good will. An ounce of blarney is often better than a foot-pound of work. And it carries the clever far with the egotistic stupid.

Said Abraham Lincoln: "A drop of honey catches more flies than a gallon of gall." And he practised what he preached with infinite cunning; no man ever flattered others right and left with more deftness, rarely overstepping the limits of truth in his oily remarks. His honey caught thousands of flies. And Lincoln seems to have been honest enough to admit that the captives were insects.

Mark Hanna was a subtle genius at the art of flattery. Even his bitterest enemies succumbed to his skill. As did the ego of a sturdy opponent.

William Beer, a New York business man back in the days of Mark Hanna, had developed a potent dislike for the Ohio political boss and for everything which the boss represented. He went to the Republican convention in 1896 to fight Hanna tooth and nail. And naturally enough he resolved to shun the monster of corruption. But shrewd politicians persuaded him, after he arrived on the scene of battle, that he had more to gain than to lose by coming to grapples with Hanna in person. So Beer yielded and went over to the Southern Hotel in St. Louis where the cunning ruler of the Republican party sat sipping mineral water. As Thomas Beer tells the story,* William found Hanna, the instant introductions were over, taking full charge of the conversation and chatting at friendly length about

* See his book, "Hanna," pp. 137-8.

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Beer's father, the Ohio judge, and about an uncle in Ashland. This flattered the young man so much that he capitulated and became an ardent henchman of Hanna's through all the fierce years of free silver and ignobler causes. His ego succumbed to the subtle flattery! The great Hanna knew his family and spoke well of it! What matter a few little national issues, after that?

But this stupidity of the ego cannot compare for an instant to that recounted so gleefully by that canny Scot, Andrew Carnegie, in his autobiography.* As a poor lad in Scotland, he picked as his first commercial enterprise the easy business of raising rabbits, doubtless because of their skill in multiplying. At the outset a grave problem arose. Where and how was he to get the food for the bunnies? That would be a heavy job. And Andrew was not the boy to enjoy hard work; he liked to encourage others to do the sweating. To retain the services of others runs into money; and in Scotland people do not enjoy working for nothing. What would they accept instead of money?

Only a Scot could have answered this riddle. And no Scot save Carnegie could have answered it so skilfully. He secured the services of several lads in the neighborhood, "the compensation being that the young rabbits, when such came, should be named after them." The ironmaster adds that many of these toilers "were content to gather dandelions and clover for a whole season with me, conditioned upon this unique reward—the poorest return ever made to labor."

If any reader can send in a more extraordinary case of the stupid ego, let him do so. (I agree to name the case after him, as a reward.) Were those little boys rare fools? Not at all! Carnegie used variations of this same cunning trick all through his ascendant career. And many a factory manager and railway president has imitated it. In order to arouse a locomotive engineer's enthusiasm for his job, they print his name on the engine cab. To make a Fifth Avenue bus conductor feel important, they impress his name upon a brass badge and allow him to wear it. (There are other less pleasant reasons for this latter practice, I am told.)

The commonest and mildest form of stupidity caused by the ego is the habit of talking too much. In almost every man-to-man encoun-

* See pp. 23-24.

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ter, save only certain situations in which a voluble salesman is engaged in persuading a housewife to buy something she doesn't need, the ordinary mortal yields to his craving for self-expression with little or no regard for the possible effects of his words. He gives himself away. He commits himself to projects and expenditures. He loses friends. He makes enemies. He gains a reputation for being loose-tongued, gossipy, back-biting, windy. It is only as a polite conversationalist that he may shine. But that butters no parsnips.

Almost every brilliant leader in business, industry, finance, politics, and even science is close-mouthed, if not taciturn. Like von Moltke, who is said to have mastered the unique art of keeping silent in fourteen languages, the senior John D. Rockefeller usually let the other fellow talk on and on while he himself listened. As his associate, E. T. Bedford, remarked of him, John D. "always encouraged his partners to talk. We seldom knew what he was thinking, but he always seemed to know what we were thinking." Of the same pattern was the elder J. P. Morgan. Likewise Elbert Gary, former head of the United States Steel Corporation. And towering above all, putting the Sphinx herself to shame, was the speechless, monosyllableless George F. Baker, the banker who was interviewed but once in ninety years. For every exception to the rule like Theodore Roosevelt, you find a dozen Calvin Coolidges and Herbert Hoovers.

Talking too much is the commonest variety of egocentric stupidity only because few people can write. Were more of our species gifted in the use of prose, publishers would have to erect barricades against the onrushing army of would-be authors hurling MSS. whose chief content would be little more than Portraits of Ourselves. Nature has blessedly spared us such an onslaught. Yet she reveals the half-hidden menace by bringing into the ranks of successful authors a shockingly large number of stupid egos who, because there are millions of more or less stupid readers, find audience.

When a man is so stupid and so ill informed and so crudely bred that he has nothing else to write about, he yearns to put himself on paper. Among perhaps ten or twelve authors whom I have personally known to be singularly stupid, half of them spend most of their time scribbling open or veiled autobiography. The feeblest of these humanesques imitate Pepys in form—but never in substance, for Pepys had something to say in his diaries. Next above these

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fakirs I would rank the pseudo-philosophers who ponderously announce that they are about to set forth a new ethics—or what not—and then proceed to a ludicrous rehash of stale ideas none of which have been quite grasped.

Of these, by all odds the most famous is Walt Whitman. He merits a freshly carved obituary upon his almost forgotten tombstone.

Whitman

This extraordinary humbug occupies a unique niche in our hall of fame. More ingeniously than anybody before or since his day, he cashed in on the exuberant stupidity of his fellow countrymen. A lazy, incompetent, utterly stupid fop who, before he hit on his fat racket, wore a frock coat and a high hat and carried a cane, when he dropped in on harassed newspaper editors to sell his trashy articles or to beg for a job, Whitman developed his stronger introversive trends with the years. By no means so lost in his own reveries and dreams as poor Francis Thompson, he nevertheless manifested from his earliest childhood some of the more dangerous incapacities. Little by little, these gained the upper hand.

He was a vegetable, first and foremost—and he later discovered a way of capitalizing his brotherhood with the turnip. As a small boy he was the despair of the household. He slept from ten to fourteen hours a day. Later, when his brothers and sisters were married and had their own homes, Walt used to hunt them out, whenever he lost a job and went broke (which was often); under the roof of charity, he would sleep all morning, while everybody else was up and at work.

The owner of "The Daily Aurora," who once engaged him as editor, declared that "Whitman was the laziest man who ever undertook to edit a daily paper." Men in the office stated that he would drift in around noon, dawdle around a while, then go to lunch for an hour, then to the Battery, if the weather was fair, to watch the boats. Job after job was lost because he was worthless. At length he bethought himself to try carpentering in a village. But even at this he was a total failure, as his best friends, including John Burroughs, admitted. He made bumptious pretense of being an honest toiler, yet he could not drive a nail straight nor saw to the line.

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So, too, in all major integrative activities, as we might expect in a man who was one of nine children, the youngest of whom was an imbecile and the oldest a lunatic. Can anything be more obvious in Whitman's writings—taken as a whole—than their formlessness and lack of logic? True, he mooned, brooded, took attitudes, and showed feeling—but that's quite another story. Add to this his asexuality, and the foundations of his later personality are laid, ready for the years to erect the final dizzy superstructure trimmed with gargoyles cut in solid ivory. The man was only half a man; he shunned women, not in fear but solely through lack of lure and lust. And—as several keen critics have pointed out in recent years—all of the patter about sensuality in his poems was mere compensative fantasy, a trickle of weak, wishful thinking, a sign for potency that was not. The testimony of many close friends is unanimous regarding his eunuchoid nature; so too is the indirect evidence of his disciples, notably the good Dr. R. M. Bucke, who was also one of his executors and biographers, has given us the most accurate picture of Whitman's nature in the symposium volume, "*In re Walt Whitman*" (Philadelphia, 1893). Bucke had long associated with the poet and watched him, evidently with an observing eye and mind. Here is his summary, a little condensed: I italicize the most revealing lines.

"His favorite occupation seemed to be strolling or sauntering about outdoors by himself, looking at the grass, the trees, the flowers, the vistas of light, the varying aspects of the sky, and listening to the birds, the crickets, the tree frogs, and all the hundreds of natural sounds. It was evident that these things gave him a pleasure far beyond what they give to ordinary people. Until I knew the man, it had not occurred to me that anyone could derive so much absolute happiness from these things as he did. He was very fond of flowers, either wild or cultivated; liked all sorts. I think he admired lilacs and sunflowers just as much as roses. Perhaps, indeed, no man who ever lived liked so many things and disliked so few as Walt Whitman. All natural objects seemed to have a charm for him. All sights and sounds seemed to please him. He appeared to like (and I believe he did like) all the men, women, and children he saw (*Though I never knew him to say that he liked anyone*), but each who knew him felt that he liked him or her, and that he liked others also. *I never knew him to argue or dispute, and he never spoke about money.* He always justified, sometimes playfully, sometimes quite seriously, those who spoke harshly of himself or his writings, and I often thought he even took pleasure

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in the opposition of enemies. When I first knew him, I used to think that he watched himself, and would not allow his tongue to give expression to fretfulness, antipathy, complaint and remonstrance. It did not occur to me as possible that these mental states could be absent in him *After long observation, however, I satisfied myself that such absence or unconsciousness was entirely real.* He never spoke deprecatingly of any nationality or class of men or time in the world's history, or against any trades or occupations—not even against any animals, insects, or inanimate things, or any of the laws of nature, nor any of the results of those laws, such as illness, deformity, and death. He never complained or grumbled either at the weather, pain, illness, or anything else. He never swore. He could not very well, since he never spoke in anger and *apparently never was angry. He never exhibited fear, and I do not believe he ever felt it.*"

To this penetrating account, let me add a few lines from Whitman's "Song of Myself," in which he gives honest voice to his primitive likes.

"I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-contained.
I stand and look at them long and long;
They do not sweat and whine about their condition,
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins
Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with the mania of owning things,
Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lived thousands of years ago,
Not one is respectable or unhappy over the whole earth."

The poet early earned the reputation of being one who concealed his inmost thoughts and feelings from his friends. Even his mother believed that this was his lamentable eccentricity. She said that "he came and went as he pleased, when a boy, taking everything for granted and accounting for nothing." In some instances these concealments are, plainly enough, the regular tricks of the introvert; but in most they are not so easily explainable. How about Whitman's consistent failure throughout his life to like or dislike particular persons? How about his extraordinary disregard of money, which he never mentioned? And his indifference to argument? And his lack of all anger and fear? This is much more than a mere "fusion

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of the percept with feeling into a new psychic entity" which, as Jung puts it, goes to make up the mental stuff of which the introvert's experiences are formed. *It is a lack of the usual emotional reactions of rage and fear toward persons. And with it goes a peculiar lack of normal motor reactions, especially in social relations. He also lacked the normal aggressive behavior of the erotic male. His outer adjustments were overwhelmingly of the submissive-esthetic type. This leaves no other major functions except the vegetative to rule him.*

The tiny spark of aggressiveness in him glowed ever so faintly in his habit of writing anonymous letters and reviews about his own poems; and, once right oddly, in his using John Burroughs' name and youthful devotion as a mask behind which he wrote about himself most eulogistically. As Frederick P. Hill, Jr., has recently demonstrated, Whitman was the author of the "Notes on Walt Whitman as Poet and Person" which Burroughs sent forth as his own first book in 1867.* In it Whitman did not attack persons; he only praised himself and disparaged movements and institutions (about which he knew less than nothing). But even this weak drive for recognition was, as will be shown presently, only a phase in the one positive, creative urge of his strange nature, to wit, his narcissism.

His defective motor, cerebral and sexual equipment led to his failure as a free lance writer, as a newspaper man, as a carpenter, as a school teacher, as an art critic, and as a public lecturer. They cut him off from most normal, pleasant external affairs in the world of work and in the walks of society. They drove him back upon himself. Stirred with no rage, stricken with no fear, he sank softly, sweetly, naturally into the soft humus of the ego, struck root and blossomed.

At the age of thirty-five, he publicly avowed that he would devote the rest of his life "to faithfully express . . . my own physical, emotional, moral, intellectual and æsthetic Personality." No man who had preserved his social contacts and his perspective toward the world at large could have uttered these words. They come from a stupid introvert who has lost all sense of proportion and relative values, including his sense of humor. They reveal the lusty drive of

* See "The End of a Literary Mystery," *American Mercury*, Vol. 1, p. 471, ff

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a limited personality to preserve his vital equilibrium in the face of grave limitations.

Beethoven, cut off from the world, had a masterful intellect and the powerful urge of the normal male toward a healthy love-life. In his effort to find a readjustment, he became tremendously creative. Whitman, being vegetative, created nothing; he knew neither noble rage nor noble fear nor noble love, and he had no visions. Instead of progressing into new realms of beauty or truth, with sword and fire, he sank into the company of the cows. His entire life was a consistent denial of all the more refined tastes and standards of human society; and his writings are one interminable, unargued, and longwinded repetition of what he thought and felt. His notion of democracy was the herd life of cattle. His concept of happiness was the joy of the turnip growing in moist, warm earth. And it is the supreme comedy of errors that he has become the idol of many highbrows who, from a great distance, have mistaken the moo of the Whitman steer for the roar of a lion.

Introvert that he was, he never once caught a glimpse of that great "democracy" which he would sing. He saw it through a green mist of buncombe, and the mist itself was his own exhalation. He thought that the "true, noble, expanded American character is to be illimitably proud, independent, self-possessed, generous and gentle. It is to accept nothing except what is equally free and eligible to anybody else. It is to be poor rather than rich—but prefer death rather than any mean dependence" A careful survey of American conduct since the Civil War fails to reveal even a chemical trace of this character.

In his short but pungent exposure of the old fraud, Harvey O'Higgins sums up thus:

normal emotions of America. "The home, the fireside, the domestic allurements are not in him," says John Burroughs. "Love, as we find it in other poets, is not in him." They are not in his poetry and they were not in him. He neither felt them, appreciated them, nor understood them. What he chiefly voiced was his own egotism—swollen to the dimensions of his country—his own morbidity, his own introversion. These are not typically American nor democratic, and the democracy has never accepted him.

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True. But thousands of introverts accept the man. His dream life mirrors their own. There will always be a Whitman cult, perennially recruited from the wan ranks of sub-erotic bookkeepers, anemic college professors, and literary fakirs. Not until introverts no longer read and write shall we be rid of the Steer that lived on Leaves of Grass.

Glory

"Glory is the measure of all things, the crown of all virtues." This thought of Froissart's has fired many a stupid soul to great deeds and has cost many a nation dearly. Its dynamics are vicious. Singularly stupid people are prone to excessive egocentricity. As self-centered creatures, they yearn for careers that lead to glory, while, as stupid creatures, they display weak judgment and often plunge into work for which they are not at all fitted. Indeed, they may even do worse: the stupider they are, the vaster their ambition is likely to be.

Indirectly, perhaps unwittingly, Spengler has done us all a service in forcing to the front the everlasting antagonism between the aggressive egocentrics and the rest of the world. He believes in them all, in the egomaniac, in the dynamaniac, and in the kydomaniac. He thinks they create mighty cultures urged on by "the belief in his star which every born man of action possesses and which is something wholly different from the belief in the correctness of a standpoint." Like Nietzsche, Spengler worships the aristocracy of power as only a weakling can worship strength. But in his worship, Spengler lays bare—I think unconsciously—the menace of that very power he adores.

Over and over again, he depicts the triumph of the intellectuals over the aristocrats; and he interprets this as the inevitable decay of societies. To him the peak of prosperity, splendor, and human worth is attained in the feudal lord. He sees purity of race in the manor, mongrelism in the sprawling towns. Decay follows when wealth and power are spread throughout all classes. The city is cancer of the race. The city undermines all tradition, which is "itself cosmic force at highest capacity." The city, with its allied factories and shops and exploitation of the herd, is the ruin of a great state

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For a great state is, says Spengler, nothing but the domination of the best blood.

A little more observation and common sense might have transformed this hypothesis into a precious contribution to social science. For Spengler sweeps up many a truth in his broad, coarse net. Unhappily, having hauled it ashore, he seems quite unable to sort his findings. So he fails to see that the decay of the aristocracies and petty principalities was due, in no slight degree, to a web of stupidities in their ruling classes. The web eventually entangled and crushed them. Most of their stupidities were egocentric. They thought they were the people, and wisdom would die with them. They sought power and glory ruthlessly, and so ended impotent and inglorious. Fancying themselves lords of the earth, they were in truth only little children playing house.

Such studies as have been made under control conditions indicate that this is a common tendency. Inferior minds overrate themselves more than superior do. Dull boys aspire to the White House, while boys competent to serve as President of the United States are either too clever to be trapped in such a fatal misadventure or else too modest to take such a career seriously. When the ambitious man is a downright moron or worse, his lust for glory and his conviction of omnipotence rise to temperatures that start a conflagration.

Enter Philip II of Spain. Since his day, Spain has lost every war she fought. And the glory that blazed before the eyes of this conscientious, hard-working, abstemious man whose body and habits were those of a monk and whose mind was a bureaucrat's? It was *gloria in excelsis*, the glory of God and his holy church whose leader he, Philip of Spain, was. Philip's one ambition was to extend and strengthen the power of Rome in its savage war against the Protestants. In this he seems to have been amazingly impersonal. Compare him to such a Bombastes Furioso as Garibaldi or Mussolini, and he seems barren of ego and glory-love. But this does not change our opinion of him, for his urge had projected itself outward as in many another religious zealot.

In the pursuit of his high career as agent of heaven, Philip committed so many major stupidities that we are at somewhat of a loss to choose specimens. Two, however, shine forth with peculiar glamor; the first because it did as much as any single act to help the

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Protestant cause in the Netherlands, and the second because it ended Spain's sea power forever.

Among the thousands of stupid acts committed by Spaniards, who hold the world's record for dulness, it is hard to find any which equals Philip's long pondered decision to kill Lamoral of Egmont, Prince of Gaveren. As all of the stupid king's advisers, save only his own sister, the Regent, well knew and repeatedly declared, Egmont was a man on whom he could count implicitly to help maintain the Spanish authority in the Netherlands during the Inquisition. The sly, shrewd Granvelle, who managed the King's affairs for so long throughout the earlier years of that bloody period, found it impossible to believe that his royal master could perpetrate such a colossal blunder. For Egmont favored the Inquisition with hot enthusiasm, believed naïvely in Philip, and refused to follow William of Orange in his retreat to Germany and his cool planning of a revolt against Spain. What was even more to the point, Egmont was a simple soul idolized by many Dutch burghers and thus useful as a cat's paw in politics.

When Philip sent him to the scaffold, contrary to his best advisers, he elevated the wretch to a mighty romantic figure in the minds of the common people and inordinately strengthened the cause of the rebels.

The Tragedy of Glory would be incomplete without a brief account of Spain's greatest disaster—the terrible defeat of the Spanish Armada. The final responsibility lies squarely on Philip's shoulders. He had an unshakable confidence in his ability to manage every last detail of his kingdom. He firmly believed that the king could do no wrong. An ardent Roman Catholic, he convinced himself that he labored always for "the service of God"—in the course of which duties he was led even to attempt the regulation of the diet and habits of the soldiers and sailors on the Spanish Armada.

On the success of the Armada's attack on England depended the Habsburg Dynasty and increased authority and power of the Catholic Church. Through its failure, the entire course of European events was changed, and Spain sank to the pauperized mediocrity from which she has not yet escaped.

In 1588, as Philip prepared to send out the great Armada as the supreme stroke of his imperial policy, he was confronted with the necessity of selecting a new Admiral of the Fleet to follow Admiral

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Santa Cruz, who had died early in the year. Philip made the bewildering choice of a nobleman, the Duke of Medina-Sidonia, whose inexperience in affairs of the sea was equalled only by his honesty in protesting against the appointment.

The Duke promptly wrote Philip the following astonishing letter : *

"My health is bad and from my small experience of the water I know that I am always sea-sick. I have no money which I can spare. I owe a million ducats, and I have not a *real* to spend on my outfit. The expedition is on such a scale and the object of such high importance that the person at the head of it ought to understand navigation and sea-fighting, and I know nothing of either. I have not one of those essential qualifications I have no acquaintances among the officers who are to serve under me. Santa Cruz had information about the state of things in England ; I have none. Were I competent otherwise, I should have to act in the dark by the opinion of others, and I cannot tell to whom I may address. The Adelantado of Castile would do better than I. Our Lord would help him, for he is a good Christian and has fought in naval battles. If you send me, depend upon it, I shall have a bad account to render of my services."

Was ever disaster more completely prognosticated than in this remarkable letter, which Philip was pleased to disregard? The reluctant Duke accepted his compulsory appointment with humility, writing the King that "Since your Majesty still desires it, after my confession of incompetence, I will try to deserve your confidence."

Try he did—but disasters followed one another in swift procession. The fleet was entirely unprepared. The meat was putrefied. The water had turned poison, having stood under a hot sun for weeks on end. Men were deserting by the hundreds. "Nothing had been attended to, save the state of the men's souls, about which the King had been so peculiarly anxious."

We cannot here give the familiar details of the catastrophe. Following the worst possible plan, Medina-Sidonia and the divided fleet were helpless in the encounter with the British. Beaten to the

* For complete details of the Spanish Armada, see Froude, "Spanish Story of the Armada." The letter, addressed to Phillip's Secretary, Idiaquez, February 16, 1588, is published in "Duro," Vol. I, p. 414.

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west coast of Ireland, they limped back to Spain, whose naval power was now nothing but history.*

But here is the cream of the jest. The enraged Spanish accused Medina-Sidonia of "cobardia y continual pavor y miedo de morir, avaricia, dureza y crueldad." And the humbled Duke wrote his King, "En las cosas de la mer, por ningun caso ni por alguna via trataré dellas, aunque me costase la cabeza." He soon, however, recovered from his lowly meekness. Not only did he continue as Lord High Admiral, but he was rewarded in defeat by being appointed Governor of Cadiz. And with a fine spirit of forgiveness tinctured with the essence of sublime stupidity, Philip raised Medina-Sidonia to the rank of Supreme Commander in Politics and War.

Italy

So much for one design of glory. Now another claims our thought for a while. It is commoner than Philip's kind, always has been commoner, and—for many generations to come—will be commoner. For it arises in little folk, not in kings and pontificals. It is the glory craved by the inglorious Being, then, in its psychic essence, somewhat like food for the starving and quinine for the malarious, there is a wholesomeness about it even when it leads to abysses. And when it becomes unwholesome, at least we can sympathize with it and sorrow over those whom it smites, as we do with Italy, which seems to me to be the clearest clinical specimen of a land made stupid by its strong, fierce animal urge to survive and to keep alive ancient glory in a world whence that glory has long since fled. Some day a poignant book will be written about the tragedy which the next few pages skim more lightly than a swallow.

The longer one reads the chronicles of events in the peninsula now called Italy, from the earliest times of record down to the present hour, the more amazing it appears that there should be any—

* Recently discovered manuscripts allege that Sir Francis Drake had an easy victory over the Spanish Armada mainly because 17,000 out of the 26,000 sailors aboard the latter were desperately seasick. Being unable to hold up their heads, they could not give battle to the Englishmen.

What if this is true? Then it only confirms in a fresh manner the infinite stupidity of the managers of that titanic fiasco. Men who put to sea must not be victims of its pitch and toss. A good sailor keeps down his meals. How did anybody happen to select seasickish folk for such a great adventure?

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body there surviving whose intelligence equals that of an average high-school boy. From that dread hour in 218 B.C. when the hordes of Hannibal surmounted the Alps and eased their war elephants down into the green valley of the Po, under orders from the Carthage Chamber of Commerce to wipe out their new competitor, every force of man and nature has been almost continuously at work to perpetuate the stupid and to destroy the intelligent. The unfortunate people scarcely ever had more than a moment's respite from catastrophe: if it was not an invader, it was a rebel; if not a rebel, then a swindler; if not a swindler, then a border ruffian; if not a ruffian, then an epidemic; if not an epidemic, then a famine; if not a famine, then a drought; and, if none of these afflictions, then plain politics, which, especially after the imperial period dawned, became so corrupt that the worst modern sinkhole, such as Rumania, seems dainty by comparison.

Soil, weather, and land slope made Italy a half-desolation thousands of years before the Romans went forth to war. Long, hot, dry summers burn up the fields, turn the roads to rivers of dust, and drive people indoors. Mountain ranges cut the region up into tiny valleys and plateaus, with short, steep streams which flow only half of the year. Hungry peasants slave to get food; and, having wrung it from a miserly soil, find it suffices only for themselves. The margin of profit is thinner than a razor edge. The government bureaucrats tell you proudly that seven out of every ten acres in Italy are "productive"; and, as statisticians talk, they can prove their contention. What they do not tell you—and often do not know—is that the basic foods of a healthy race grow feebly on most of that acreage, or not at all because of the tininess of the fields. The great races of the world grow tall and strong on grains and in the milk and flesh of cattle, hogs, and sheep. But outside of the marvelous Po valley, finest farm tract in the entire Mediterranean basin (which isn't saying very much), the Italians get virtually none of these fundamentals. They grow grapes, olives, hemp, oranges, lemons, mulberry, chestnuts, figs, walnuts. . . .

Trees and vines! Vines and trees! No great machines can as yet prune them nor pick their yields. Cyclops was luckier than these wretches of Italy, for on his island all things grew untended, while he had great flocks and herds. The Italian is lower than Cyclops, as an economic animal; for all his brawn and brain are enslaved to

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his belly Sixteen hours a day must he sweat to fight off the wolf. His is the fate of the poor Hindu and Chinese peasants; from cradle to grave, the quest for food overshadows all else.

Nor does the Italian's poverty end there. His land has, by the grace of God, no coal, no iron, no limestone to speak of; no copper; only a little lead and zinc and a vast deal of sulphur (suggesting a proximity to hell). It would, in brief, be hard to find a nation making pretense to greatness whose natural resources are inferior to Italy's. The scars of this pauperdom run white and ragged across her face. Some of them are three thousand years old. The deepest go back to imperial days, when starving peasants poured into Rome and brought worry to the rulers. Riots, wars, lootings, conspiracies, frauds past all counting have begun in the gnawing bellies of that impoverished herd. And, could we but dig up the true records of the millennia, we should surely find that the unmentionable corruption of Italy's politicians and voters, ever since the original decay of the Roman Senate, was a by-product of starvation. I should incline to hold this view even regarding the low point in the curve of morality during the 16th and 17th centuries, when all the cities of the country were handled with even more stupid criminality than prevailed in Chicago during the reign of Big Bill Thompson. One must travel through the countryside of Italy and talk with the peasants; one must know something about farming and, in the light of that knowledge, contemplate the back-breaking, heart-rending drudgery of the men, women, and children, as I have done under the July sun, in order to see the history of Rome and later Italy in something like its veracious perspective.

What has all this to do with glory? We come to that now. Mark well two trends; one in the people who accept their fate, the other in the people who rebel against it. The former must be, by nature, a submissive pack—perhaps even worse, mere curs. Thus with the poor devil whose spirit was broken somewhere away back in the chromosomes of his great-great-great-great grandparents, after twenty years of physical and mental exhaustion. The South Italian peasant is the yellowest dog in all Europe; that made him, long ago, easy prey for bandits, extortioners, and petty political bosses. The Mafia flourished for centuries among these curs. Left to their own pitiful devices, the curs would still be cringing under the lash; only the iron will of that glory-addict, Mussolini, delivered them a few

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years ago. But their cousins in America remain in the old stupid tremor. Proof? Almost any day in "Little Italy," be it in Boston or Chicago or New York.

Recall, if you will, the gangsters who, from a speeding car, shot down five Italian children in Harlem, while trying to pink an enemy who had been "put on the spot." Rewards totalling \$25,000 were offered for the identification of the slayers. Did informants rush up claiming the fortune? Hardly! Nobody would open his mouth. Even the parents and relatives of the slain and wounded children refused to tell what they had seen. And Mrs Rosa Bevelaqua, one of the bereaved mothers, said: "My people will not talk. We are afraid the slayers will come back later and kill our husbands and our brothers and our sons."

Where is the glory in all this? Wait! It wells up in the second type of Italian and finds its support in these curs. Out of every thousand men who have had the ill-luck to be born in Italy, perhaps a score have been firm-fibred, aggressive rebels. Instead of succumbing weakly to their abominable environment, they have fought it; and, among all who have fought, a few have triumphed. Now, it is a singular fact which, so far as I am aware, has never been duly emphasized, that the career of Italy has been, more than that of any other nation, the career of a few glory-mad egocentrics. And the doom of Italy has been also their doom, a doom of magnificent stupidity.

These egocentrics, in the main, have been the most elemental. Theirs has been, at core, the pure animal ego fighting to prosper in barren places. Theirs has been the self-assertion of the strong man who must fight to the death for the sake of life. If this seems improbable, may I urge you to review, from a psychological point of view, the events in Italy since the Lombards poured over the Alps into the plains of the Po, during the fifth and sixth centuries? Dismiss from consideration the names and dates of rulers, battles and treaties. Strike through to realities and recreate the run of human affairs as vividly as you can from the broken, blurred chronicles. Ever the same panoramal Hungry swarms crowding in upon weaker hungry swarms, slaying the latter, seizing their fields, and staying there until larger, fiercer, hungry swarms sweep down upon them and repeat the monotonous cycle of disaster. Magyar and Saracen, in the tenth century, repeated it. From Charlemagne's passing to the

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last days of Otto the peninsula was without food, law, order, and peace—a hideous anarchy in which every man was for himself, if strong; and some strong man's slave, if weak.

The strong man had none to lean on save himself. Out of his own nature he had to summon all power, all cunning, and all enthusiasm. What sort of fellow, then, was likeliest to get along in such a dreadful inferno? Palpably one who believed in himself and in his eventual glory; one who stopped at nothing in gaining his ends; one who had the knack of exciting the stupid peasants to follow him and of beating the unruly into submission. In short, the perfect gangster. Not a gangster of the Capone type; for that one is never lured by glory in any form but only by money or blood lust. Rather a gangster like any of the hundred thousand little noblemen who, between the fifth and nineteenth centuries, built castles on hilltops and crags, swore allegiance to pope or to emperor, according to the side of his bread which was the more thickly buttered, donned elegant trappings, rode forth full panoplied to round up the simpletons at work in near-by fields, and eventually whipped into shape a gang strong enough to rustle food and "taxes" for the whole outfit. He hired village craftsmen to design for him a flag, a coat-of-arms, a motto, and a war-cry, as slogans used to be called. With these paraphernalia of magic, our strong man elevated himself from a mere human to an Institution in the eyes of his stupid followers.

The history of Italy has been a history of such gangsters. Most of the latter, being only a little better than their best henchmen, came to grief at the hands of greater gangsters with larger bands of assassins and more thrilling war-cries. These big fellows were correspondingly more egocentric and insane with glory; sometimes, beneath all this, they were also power-mad and money-mad on a grandiose scale, though some of the most remarkable showed hardly a trace of these traits. Garibaldi, for instance. He was the purest survival type, a simple fighter without a single brain cell usable for anything but brawls and slaughter. He sought glory in battling for Liberty, though the old fool never knew what that was. It served merely as a popular slogan, symbolising what every down-trodden, vacant-bellied Italian dreams of—doing just what one wants, having just what one craves.

Today Italy is gripped by this same gangster-glory and its self-glorifying gangsters. The psychic mechanism is so simple that few

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can see it—for the eye of man usually skims blindly past the utterly simple. In the new economic world order, Italy is, *relatively measured*, lower than ever before in her history. Though she has improved her lot immensely during the past fifty years, yet all other nations have improved their own far more; and half a dozen have rocketted ahead so far that Italy has lost sight of them in the parade. At the same time, what little prosperity the hard-toiling Italians managed to build up during that same period of reconstruction has been swept away by two events, the World War and the post-war inventions in industry and agriculture.

Relative to her ability to endure losses, Italy was one of the saddest victims of the war. Her low-grade soldiery and generalship were bad enough, yet only a drop in the bucket. Caporetto's horrors were spectacular, but nothing beside the collapse of Italy's markets and finance caused by the Versailles Treaty and the swift transformations in industry and nationalistic policy the world over. The war debt, the barrier of foreign tariffs raised against her few products, prohibition in America ending her sale of wines and liqueurs to us, the inflation of currency, the crushing burden of interest on loans made abroad, the infinitely stupid colonial program in North Africa which has cost Italy billions of gold lire and never will return even one lira of genuine profit; the inventing of rayon which ruined the thriving silk industry, the tremendous expansion of citrus fruits, figs, dates, walnuts and almonds in the West Indies and the subtropical United States, undermining the sorrowfully weak export trade of Italian peasants; and a score of other new trends have reduced intelligent lovers of Italy to despair. Could they take control of the government, they would launch a firm policy of retrenchment. They would bring the country and its people back to a healthy equilibrium, heedless of patriots' clamor and the dead hand of precedent.

But that is not the way of the glory-mad egocentric. When trapped, animals fight back. When thrust into an inferior position, the strong man in Italy always goes the way of the animal; but to that way he adds a purely human embellishment. He ennobles the struggle for existence with a dash of glory. Thus he releases vast energies in his followers, through some as yet ill comprehended mechanism of the endocrine glands. The more desperate his predicament, the hotter

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the rush of glory to his head. The hotter the glory, the more terrible the stupidities which ensue. Witness Mussolini.

Italy used to lose by emigration about 150,000 people net every year; some 600,000 would leave annually, while around 500,000 would come back. This efflux has been cut to a trickle since the World War; for other nations are embarrassed with a surplus of their native unemployed and cannot welcome aliens. So population in Italy has been leaping. Its lean acres now contain more than 344 humanesques to the square mile. China's 18 most thickly populated provinces hold only 244 people to the square mile, while British India contains only 225. (Do not set this alongside England's 701 people per square mile; for the English have vast fertile possessions on which to draw for trade, for food, and for succor.)

In the face of this welter, Mussolini shouts for glory and commands more millions of people to go forth in wars for glory. Ever since his access to power, this old-fashioned despot has held his course. He taxes bachelors heavily and fights birth control at every turn. Why? Here is his answer, rendered in his well-known thunder, on May 26, 1931.

"We must be ready at a given moment to mobilize 5,000,000 men and be able to arm them; we must strengthen our navy and also our aviation, in which I believe more and more, and which must be so numerous that the roar of its motors can drown out every other noise on the peninsula and the surface of its wings hide the sun from our land. Then tomorrow, when, between 1935 and 1940, we shall be at a point which I would call crucial for European history, we shall be able to make our voice heard and to see our rights finally recognized. . . .

"Gentlemen, if Italy wants to count for something, it must appear on the threshold of the second half of the century with a population of not less than 60,000,000 inhabitants. . . . If we fall off, Gentlemen, we cannot make an empire, we shall become a colony. . . .

"Every couple should leave behind it its own equivalent plus x , that is, at least three or four children."

So, in the span of twenty-five years, the Duce would add 20,000,000 to his horde, for the sake of becoming an empire. Well, he may get them; for he rules a pack of curs; and he trains them well.

As we dash off the closing lines of this literary episode, Prince

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Boncompagni Ludovisi, Governor of Rome, announces a five-year prize contest in breeding brats. Citizens in good standing may compete. The winners must have brought into the world at least three children within four years previous to January, 1932. Preference in awarding prizes for multiplicity of offspring will be given to the poorest Romans who already have the largest families and are, at the same time, loyal Fascists. Thus the Governor makes doubly sure that only low-grade brats will be bred. News reports indicate that nobody will have a chance to win the fat rewards unless at least ten children can be scored to his fecundity. This makes it appear as if only morons would win this sexual marathon. Late figures reveal an excess of 229,000 such births over deaths between April and November, 1931.

This is as it should be. For Mussolini wants the horde of brats for glory's sake—nothing else. He does not seek the good of the Italian people, for that would force him to reduce the country's population to about one-half of its present figure and to abolish army, navy, and unsound industrial ventures, of which Italy now possesses altogether too many. To the end of glory, the Duce is drilling his rising hordes with firm pedagogical touch. He has lately rewritten all the schoolbooks in tune with the infinite stupidity of his imperial program. Early in 1930 the new series of State texts for elementary grades appeared. By now their effect must be visible. Naturally, they begin with the glory of ancient Rome and wind up with the glory of Mussolini.

The primer in the series tells the story of two little children, Bruno and Mariolina. They are too young to join even the Fascist children's societies, but oh! how they yearn to grow up and enroll! Their father spends most of his time going to Fascist meetings, to war veteran reunions, to the unveiling of monuments, and to parades on national holidays. Whenever he comes home, he pins a flag on each child; and the family goes through the Black Shirt ritual of salutes and mumblings.

"Italy," says Grandpa, "is great and strong and feared."

"What luck that I am an Italian!" exclaims Bruno.

On May 24th they celebrate the anniversary "of the war we waged and won before the others." The father then explains that "the greatest victory, the decisive victory was gained by us at Vittoriove-

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neto. It was so great that it put an end to the World War that lasted four years."

(Maybe you never heard of this battle. Probably you can find a professor of history somewhere who can tell you a little about it.)

Then, of course, the grand old Latin phrase, "*mare nostrum*," is lugged in to describe the Mediterranean. "Italy is a maritime country. God has so willed. The Mediterranean is our royal highway."

And so on. You might almost imagine you were reading something written by the D. A. R., except for the wrong name of the country here and there.

Dealing as he is with the offspring of fifty generations of down-trodden peasants, and with a nation which lacks a large, vigorous middle class such as those of Germany, England, France and the United States, Mussolini is having an easy time with his despotism of glory. Such troubles as he encounters spring from sordid matters such as tapping Wall Street for fresh loans, finding a market for grapes, concealing his financial juggleries from international bankers (who have long known in a general way about them), and hunting up new industries for his millions of idle men. As long as he can thrum glory and keep these desperate millions marching and countermarching, singing and chanting rituals of Fascism, and forgetting the pangs of hunger in the exciting prospect of a war whose glory will outshine Cæsar, the human tide will swell.

The hour of glory must come, in time. When it does, France will be waiting. And not long afterward the wolves will come prowling down the manless slopes of the Appenines; and a she-wolf, grown fat on the dead flesh of glory, may suckle another Romulus and Remus.

Thus do stupid men rise above their dull selves to higher things. Through glory the inferior animal escapes from his own sodden round of empty existence. The Ego, its glory, and general witlessness are the three fates of common folk. Together they weave the shroud of Cyclops, embroidering it with beauty. They give it to him as an emperor's mantle and send him forth to war. You will never understand war until you have grasped the weaving patterns of these three fates.

Never was truer word spoken than Major General James G.

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Harbord's observation in a speech before the American Legion at Syracuse, N. Y., on September 4, 1931. He said, in part:

"A large number of honest but, in my opinion, misguided people believe it possible in this twentieth century to bring about that permanent peace which has been the dream of all ages, but which the Prince of Peace himself failed to achieve two thousand years ago.

. . . .

"In truth there is in war itself something beyond mere logic and above cold reason. There is still something in war which in the last analysis man values above social comforts, above ease and even above religion. It is the mysterious power that war gives to life, of rising above mere life."

The two main points here scored are firmly founded on all that we know about human nature. There is not the remotest prospect of bringing to pass a permanent world peace so long as the now dominant human varieties persist. Their chief traits cannot be organized around the modest humdrum of universal quiet and order. They are ruled by fierce egomanias, by ambitions of the wildest range, by superstitions, and—perhaps most of all—by sheer dulness in learning. As they control the schools, in large measure, no less than the public purse, how silly to expect a social revolution until their power has waned! And is it not idle to sigh for that waning until most of them have died off? I think so.

Harbord's second point strikes much deeper. It will linger on for centuries after egomaniacs have been driven from power by an infuriated middle class. Few people see it clearly. I wonder whether the General does, in spite of his unmistakable recognition of its bolder outlines. Men—that is, certain large sections of humanity—do, as Harbord declares, value war above ease, and even above religion. They feel in it, in some befuddled manner, that "power of rising above life." It is the supreme stimulant that brings escape from life. There is no other way of life which so surely excites those who are too dull to be aroused by ordinary matters; no other which so briskly creates the illusions of glory among those by nature inglorious; no other which bloats the little ego with the winds of conceit; no other which gives vent to animal stenches under the guise of patriotic perfume. Beside it, religion is skimmed milk. Beside it, opium ranks hardly higher than a cigarette.

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You who love peace, cease fancying it will come through a League of Nations or a World Court or the scrapping of guns and battle-ships. Learn the bottom truth: war will never end until we have bred out of the race the poisoned strains of glory-loving egotists, along with the half-wit herd they must use for their own mad ends. Between this mire of militarism in which our world wallows and the blue uplands of Utopia there lies the No-Man's-Land of Cyclops.

Single-track

The single-track personality goes through life forever a Cyclops. But his one eye is queer. It sees things which other people miss.

To be a single-track, two conditions must conjoin. First, one must be born with a freakishly strong trend. Secondly, full opportunity to develop it must arise. When this occurs, the single-track mind will be blind to certain situations and hypersensitive to others.

The highly accentuated personality encounters many troubles. As a member of a heterogeneous group, he is hopelessly out of kilter.

The danger of the single-track personality lies in the fact that hell and high water cannot change his narrow point of view, nor will his nature permit him to make satisfactory adjustments to situations beyond his single interests. Do not confuse him with the bigot. The latter closes his mind through ignorance and emotional instability even to information vitally affecting his field of bigotry. John Roach Straton's mind was preoccupied with the theory of evolution, but he closed his mind to all its phases. He never even read Darwin. The single-track, on the other hand, is open to everything pertaining to his dominant interest. Beyond this he is profoundly insensitive, and his stupidity may lead to disasters affecting many others than himself.

Take a look at Professor Manuel Jones.

In a huge warehouse along the water front of New York City there lie, dust-covered and almost forgotten, thousands of boxes. They contain hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of useless radio apparatus. Not even junk dealers will buy it; the cost of removing it is too great. Some day the owners will weary of paying storage charges. They will bring up fifty trucks, haul the boxes to the nearest dock, and dump them all into deep water. And they will

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pray that Professor Jones, who filled them, may follow them to the bottom of the sea. But he won't! I understand that he now occupies a chair in a great university from which he can be ousted only by death. There he is rapidly forgetting the boxes.

When radio first became popular, a small but enterprising company decided to expand. One of their first moves was to employ a brilliant physicist, our own Manuel Jones, who had made important discoveries in radioactivity. Forthwith they turned the building over to the distinguished professor, gave him full power to use it as he chose, and forgot him in the heat of a sales campaign.

The physicist was a single-track scholar. He was also proud of this new opportunity. Promptly he turned his laboratory staff into servants, while he bent every effort to invent a wonderful radio apparatus. Ignoring other specialists, indifferent to the sales angle, he bent every effort toward a new invention.

Weeks later, he rushed over to the main factory with his new discovery.

"What's the capacity of this factory?" he asked the superintendent.

"Around forty thousand a month, if we put on steam."

"Then make forty thousand of these," said Jones.

The superintendent gasped, and objected. "But where will we sell them?"

To the single-track Professor Jones, such a minor matter deserved no consideration. The superintendent was adamant, and refused to make the instrument. Jones wired the sales manager as follows: "Have perfected marvelous new instrument. Factory superintendent refuses to make it unless you authorize. Insist on production, otherwise resign immediately. Kindly wire him orders."

The sales manager, in the thick of a campaign, wired the authorization. He notified his retail dealers that the great Professor Jones had made the greatest invention yet. He urged them to sign up at once. With ordinary business shrewdness, the retailers waited to see a sample. And it was just as well. For when the sample came along, half a dozen of its features were hopelessly out of date. There was one new improvement which has since been used on a large scale. Otherwise the invention was hopeless.

The corporation was nearly ruined as a result of the stupidity of a single-track personality attempting to deal with a situation beyond its native interests. The professor knew physics. But he didn't know

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business and sales problems. Nor was he interested in them. We are not here concerned with the sales manager's blunder. He has doubtless learned the high cost of single-track stupidity.

Do not confuse the stupidity of the single-track personality with that of the expert. While the latter may have but a single dominant interest, more often than not he has wide interests in a variety of fields, with outstanding information and skill in one. His stupidities are not due to narrow tendencies which make him, by his very nature, insensitive to everything beyond his specialty. They rather grow out of the mistakes and blunders in assigning false relations and values to useful facts.

The stupidities of the expert derive as a rule from insensitivities due to experience and training. Here, of course, he differs profoundly from the single-track. Often, too, he blunders because his employers expect him to achieve the impossible. Or because they are convinced that, because a man knows one field thoroughly, he may transfer his knowledge to other fields with skill and success.

Narrow and special training tend to limit the expert's perspective, of course. And this is why, as Laski comments, "he tends to confuse the importance of his facts with the importance of what he proposes to do about them." * He is not alone in his frailty. For he is egged on, especially by us Americans, to advise on and solve every problem from inventing slogans for the toothbrush industry to planning cities and building cathedrals. With a faith that leads us to worship of the specialist, we too often attribute infallible omniscience to the distinguished expert in a single field. We commit the ancient fallacy of mistaking the part for the whole. We establish a new doctrine of special infallibility which many experts, being human, accept without question. When experts blunder, therefore, there is usually a dual stupidity. Special knowledge blesseth him that gives and him that receives only when both parties of the contract know how limited it is.

Speed

Individual differences in speed of thinking and reacting lead to varying degrees of stupidity. A man who observes too much, leaps

* "The Limitations of the Expert." Harold J. Laski. *Harper's Magazine*, December, 1930.

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too quickly to conclusions and judgments, and acts too swiftly on the basis of these, may be quite as stupid in behavior as the dullard who is his diametrical opposite.

All of us think and act on the basis, first, of the number of facts which we consider, and secondly, on the number and variety of their relations which we recognize. And a tiny difference in the velocity of observing and relating facts may lead to the cleverness of one man and the stupidity of another.

As I have elsewhere pointed out,* we see the effects of varying velocity by a simple and arbitrary arithmetical illustration. Suppose on the average a slow man absorbs but two facts an hour, while another, but three per cent speedier in his ability to observe and relate what he absorbs, can take in 2.06 facts an hour. At the end of a year, the slower of the two will have perpetrated dozens of stupidities which the slightly faster, in the same situations, would probably have avoided. For the latter has piled up in geometrical progression a cumulative mass of relations, conclusions, judgments, decisions on the basis of the but slightly more facts which he has taken in. For every addition to one's store of knowledge results in profound shifts in his total integrative behavior, and therefore the intelligence or the stupidity with which he acts. Plainly, the more things a man has in his mind while reaching a decision, the greater the variety of relations he can observe among them; so his field of insights is larger.

As we discuss this problem of velocity, bear in mind that many of the stupidities which we have already discussed have been caused by too slow thinking and acting. People can be slowed down by many kinds of diseases, by fatigue, narcotics, damp heat, and malnutrition. And often behavior which gives evidence of low intelligence and dull thinking is caused by one of these factors.

We must here guard against an error which some psychologists committed in their early searches for an intelligence test. We must not identify alertness with high integration nor with intelligence. Mere speed of response does not tell the whole story. When there is high velocity, the probability of correspondingly high integration is great. But when the person reacts slowly, we dare not infer poorly organized mental processes until we have looked into some other

* "The Psychology of Achievement." 1950.

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matters, especially the size of irradiation fields around each element in the given stimuli, and also the persistence of reverberations there.

It is possible for a highly integrated mind to respond slowly to a problem which an inferior mind settles with much nimbleness. This will occur when one or more of the factors in the problem happen to have been highly integrated with other matters extraneous to the problem but still related in some genuine manner to it. I have watched this in the behavior of highly trained scientists and have made informal tests with them, usually without their knowledge. As a rule, the more familiar they are with the wider background of the problem, the more extensively do they check over inwardly its remoter qualifications. Some of them tend to express the latter conversationally while they think; and the effect is often disconcerting to the innocent bystander who does not know what is transpiring. They hem and haw. They hedge. They ruminate. They start a sentence and then mutilate it with a dozen qualifying clauses. They even disappear into the cellars of their private stock, whence eventually they emerge with some rare vintage of theory or observation.

In one instance, it appeared that an eminent mathematician was extraordinarily slow in carrying on the simplest arithmetical operations simply because the act of multiplying and dividing easy numbers was retarded by all kinds of "fringe associations" about the nature of the operations, the theory of number, and so on. In a biologist, questions which even remotely touched upon any aspect of life induced similar retardations, while few others induced any. In a chemist the secondary reactions often diverted him from the original question altogether. Unless reminded of it later, he would never revert to it.

Another behavior is often mistaken for inhibition of judicial acts. It is extremely slow judgment caused by slow secondary associations. To the ill informed observer, many a man is credited with great patience and impartiality when he ought to be debited with mental sluggishness. Sometimes this sluggishness is enhanced by low emotional responses.

Jim Teake is an extreme illustration. His mind is logical and orderly, but he makes little headway because of delayed associations. I was long puzzled by this. Nobody could do business with him over the telephone, nor in any short talk. He had to hear a proposal, discuss it aimlessly for a while, then sleep on it, come back to it,

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discuss some more, sleep again, and then begin to shape up his reactions. Part of the mechanism was odd. He had to repeat every item of the problem whenever he came back to it afresh. He could take nothing for granted. That this rooted in slow associations has been repeatedly proved by a curious mannerism of his. I have observed, in talking with him, that, from half an hour to an hour after I have mentioned something to him, he will suddenly come back to it and make remarks about it, even though we have long since discussed and dismissed the subject. On other occasions, this deferred response was carried over to a later day, and with the result that he had quite forgotten the original situation and who had made the remark which instigated his chain of thoughts. In all innocence he would state something as his own idea and wax enthusiastic about it, quite unaware that he was merely developing a thought he had heard. This has caused trouble for him. People have accused him of stealing their ideas and brazenly claiming them as his own.

Here is no genuine inhibition, no patience, no emotional restraint, no impartiality. It is simply low velocity. And it creates a dangerous stupidity in emergencies where quick thinking is indispensable. This Cyclopean trait is identical with that of the man who is regarded as a stupid conversationalist at formal dinners but who thinks up delightful replies and sallies an hour after he has left the festive throng. My friend has, more than once, come to grief through a delay of only a few minutes in situations where normal men negotiate and close deals with a stop watch in hand.

He is luckier than society, however; for society labors under a handicap every minute of day and night, throughout the ages as a result of men's attitude and behavior toward the slow of mind and body. In this handicap you behold the high price of human stupidity. Look now upon the great god, Lag!

Lag

Far deeper, more pervasive, and probably more serious than the "cultural lag" is one which is caused by social adaptation to differentials of human velocity. This sounds incomprehensible. It is not, as a simple illustration from real life will demonstrate. I invite you to watch the dense throng of people leaving a motion picture theatre

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or a baseball park or a railway platform. Here is what you can see, if your eyes are sharp, and your wits on edge.

Many people rise from their seats and advance rapidly toward the exit. As they near to it, however, they converge. Before they form a dense mass, see what they do. Here is one youth who walks fast. Suddenly he reaches a fat old lady. To get around her, he must slow down, lest he bump into others and be still more greatly retarded. The space between the fat old lady and the nearest wayfarer is just wide enough for one person to squeeze through without jostling either or both. So our brisk youth must manoeuvre carefully. This slows him down, so that a still more impetuous citizen behind him is retarded too. Thus, two factors develop through this convergence: a narrowing of interstices and a slowing down due to each individual's desire to avoid jostling his neighbors. The tendency, therefore, is for the stream of humanity to approximate the velocity of the slowest moving individual well up in front; and to break up into subordinate masses each of which bulks behind such a slow vanguard.

Now, please compare this stream velocity with that of, let us say, water that is forced through a fire hose, or grain that is sucked up through a feed line from freight car to elevator. Here a relatively uniform force acts on each unit, yet there are individual differences due to slight differences in initial position, size, weight, and like factors. Do the drops of water tend to assume the speed of the slowest? Do the grains of wheat slow down behind the slowest? Rather not. Collisions occur. The fastest particles bump into the slow and impart to the latter something of their velocity. The trend, therefore, is toward the average of the total system.

It is only when people lose their essential social nature that they speed up according to the simple laws of matter in motion. If you happen to see a stream of people stampeding out of a theatre that is on fire, the scene is more like that of the hose and the grain chute. The swiftest of foot and the strongest jostle the slow. They even knock them down and trample upon them in their mad flight. The slow still retard the swift, but now it is according to pure physics, not according to a social control. This brings me to my point.

All human progress depends upon a vast unorganized or feebly organized mass of men in motion. To progress is to pass beyond the existing state of human affairs, especially beyond current standards

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of living. The velocity is measurable in time and in sundry qualitative units derived from those living standards. Then too, it appears in many dimensions. When we approach a social group in motion, we are usually surprised at its sluggishness. We may find within it many brilliant individuals, many energetic leaders; yet, taken as a whole, the movement from an inferior to a superior existence level resembles the snail's. Why? *Simply because all members of the group are inhibited by purely social forces from either accelerating the slowest of their number or else eliminating them.* This occurs in every dimension of velocity, especially in that of mind. Society itself is its own fatal brake.

This began in the days of the nomads. As the tribe packed up and headed for green pastures far away, did it march at the pace of the swiftest runner? Not at all. Then at some average velocity? No. It slowed down for the elders and the lame. Only when things grew desperate, did such men return to simple animality, and advance by the rule of "every man for himself, and Devil take the hindmost."

Later, especially in the East, family ties became the center of all ethics; then the velocity of human progress dropped to a vanishing point, for each and every family paced itself to the stride of its slowest mind and slowest body. Thus did China commit suicide. The brilliant son had to work to help brothers and sisters who might better have been eaten by tigers, whose teeth would have been dulled by their moron flesh. The half-wit fourth cousin always had the right to walk in and demand food and shelter—and the family must care for him. By the endless multiplication of such acts, the entire nation slowed down and eventually stagnated.

Americans have thus far gone the way of China, thanks to the Christian brotherhood-of-man poison. Visit a public school of the old standard sort. A haggard teacher instructs fifty children, among whom there may be ten or twelve bright and a score of thoroughly dull wits. Teacher assigns a lesson. The bright pupils learn it easily in ten minutes. The slow minds toil over it an hour or longer—and then grasp only its larger outlines. While dear teacher repeats, exhorts, and drills the lesson into the slow minds, the bright pupils must wait. The total loss of time among the bright is staggering. Out of 25,000,000 public school pupils, the ablest 2,500,000 lose at least 200 hours each school year because they must drop to the pace of the

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inferior pupils, just as the fast boy on the railway platform must slow down because of the fat old lady ahead of him. A loss of 500,000,000 study hours per year may be the difference between Utopia and the United States.

All our politics show the same dreadful retardation of the able by the incompetent, the thick-headed, the obstinate, the bigoted, and the fanatical. Every legislative body, from village up to the Congress, swarms with nincompoops; hence the action of society at large depends not only on the folly of such but—what has hitherto been ignored—upon their slowness. The velocity of 10,000,000 high-grade American business men and professional workers and others is cut to at least one-quarter of what it might be by the maunderings and fritterings of the social scum which seeps into the council chambers and hall of statecraft. That again may be the difference between Utopia and the United States.

The billions of dollars spent every decade on the care of the insane, the feebleminded, the psychopathic and convicted criminals represent, in slight disguise, the same retardation of the best to the slow pace of the worst members of society. Because it costs more than ten times as much per capita-year to care for moral and physical and mental defectives as it does to educate normal children, we must be sacrificing tens of thousands of the latter on the altars of infamy. If it costs \$500. a year to support a half-wit in a state institution, but only \$60. to give a child of normal mind a decent schooling, how escape the conclusion that we handicap the worth-while in order to be polite and kind to the worthless?

It is my contention that, for every vicious person whom society must combat with force, there are fifty or more citizens whose dullness effectively slows down progress and, in the long pull, probably hampers the race as a whole much more seriously than the thugs and slayers. So, you see, the stupid man—who, nine times out of ten, is slow in some important respect—is a major issue of statesmanship today, when the race between civilization and catastrophe starts.

Persistence

There are two ways in which persistence reveals and measures one's integrative powers. One appears during the effort to integrate, the other appears after the integration has been accomplished.

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I have long watched the former process in children and college students and am almost persuaded that in it we have perhaps the surest *rough* measure of mental ability. That it can never be more than a rough gauge appears as soon as you note that identical effects may derive from many other inner forces, such as pride, desire to surpass rivals, and so on. When these are eliminated, the value of the measure is enhanced.

Give a person some problem, which makes necessary the establishing of some new relations. It may be as simple as learning to count by alternate two's and three's, or as difficult as learning to transpose a sonata from one key into another at sight. How steadfastly will your worker stick at the task? How many trials will he make during a given period, in his effort to reach the right result? If, after his time has expired, will he come back to the work in spite of orders to the contrary? Will he struggle over it in his sleep? The extent to which he does such things measures his integrative persistence. It shows you the variety of his mind within the given field. And it also shows you the flow of free energy there. In some instances it will even show much about his high equilibrium; how easily he is thrown off balance by some little catch in the problem, and how he strives to "find himself" after being confused or distracted.

Unfortunately this is all very complex and swift. But it is not at all hard to watch and appraise it roundly in the natural conduct of people. One schoolboy will sit staring at his task blankly. Another will put down a lot of words or figures, all wrong, and scratch them out one by one. A third will dash off a brilliant guess and let it go at that. A fourth will think a long time and finally set down the right answer. And a fifth may think a long time, consider many possibilities, and end by putting down nothing because he has reckoned with more factors than the problem itself demands. Each of these modes of behavior clearly points to a distinct way of relating matters and hence to a highly complex mental peculiarity. Broadly speaking, *the more extensively a person strives to relate a given fact or problem to all relevant matters in his experience, the more highly are his mental functions integrated.*

The second variety of persistence develops *after* an integrative process has been completed. This might be called organized memory, but the term has its drawbacks. It is the ability to carry all the de-

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tails of a plan, a program, a system, or a technique in mind, even after dismissal.

The longer the time over which the details of some project are carried clearly in mind, and the more complex the pattern of these details, the higher the integrative action. Seldom do we find it developed as in Beethoven, who said of his ideas:

"I carry my thoughts about me for a long time, often a very long time, before I write them down. Meanwhile my memory is so tenacious that I am sure *never to forget, not even in years*, a theme that has once occurred to me. I change many things, discard and try again until I am satisfied. Then, however, there begins in my head the development in every direction and, insomuch as I know exactly what I want, the fundamental idea never deserts me—it arises before me, grows—*I see and hear the picture in all its extent and dimensions stand before my mind like a cast* and there remains for me nothing but the labor of writing it down, which is quickly accomplished when I have the time, for I sometimes take up other work, but never to the confusion of one with the other."*

One might reasonably doubt the composer's veracity here, but for the complete substantiation of his amazing declaration in his notebooks and in the testimony of his friends. Indeed, I might cite several instances of even higher persistence of a pattern. There are well authenticated records of Beethoven's having been requested to have music ready for his publisher; and of his having no time in which to plan a revision of a composition already in his mind except during hours when he gave lessons; and of his actually having thought out all the revisions while instructing his pupils.

All that we know of memory and integration should lead us to expect a fairly close connection between this kind of persistence and the higher orders of ability. A man who thinks out some scheme, be it of music or of metaphysics, and on returning to it after the lapse of a day, a week, or a month, discovers that he cannot recall it accurately unless he goes all through his original operations surely did not integrate powerfully in the first instance. After having connected his items, he pulled out some of the connecting wires.

In common business practice, shrewd employers tend to judge the worth of their executives by the ease with which they carry around

* "The Life of Ludwig van Beethoven," by Alexander Wheelock Thayer Vol. III, p. 126.

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intact elaborate office rules, confidential policies, relations with various customers, and the like. And still more do they judge such men by the natural application of such remembered complex adjustments to daily duties. In the field of journalism, it is well recognized that the men who make good are those who catch on very quickly to "the feel of the shop." Now this, in a modern newspaper, is an extremely complicated thing. It means a precise sense of the entire editorial and business policy, a large part of which cannot be reduced to formal regulations or posted over the reporter's desk. It is very much like the unwritten policy of a government which the successful diplomat intuits and applies, almost without thought, to each problem that presents itself. Merely to grasp such a thing betokens high integrative power; but to use it in new situations without effort betokens much higher.

The typical clerk or unskilled workman, on the other hand, is easily detected by his tendency to work out each order, each problem of his day's duties from moment to moment. Let anything bob up that he has never dealt with before in precisely the same form or manner, and he will hesitate, ponder, and calculate, while the man who has "the feel of the shop" will act instantly. The man with the clerk mind may possess the associative mechanism which enables him to connect all the items of a plan, as they are given to him. But plainly he does not have a sufficiently strong flow of energy through those tracts to revive the functioning of the entire pattern whenever a single item of it is subsequently given.

This brings us to the supremely important fact, namely: *the interlocking of power and pattern in the highest mental types. An elaborate pattern may be established with relatively little power; but it cannot be used on an instant's notice, without the labor of reconstructing it piecemeal, unless the cortical cells that determine it radiate their discharges copiously over the whole integrative field.* Simple understanding thus differs from intellectual alertness in that the former has pattern with little power, while the latter has strong pattern and high power.

Every teacher sees this in every group of students. A boy may win a high grade in his class because he can remember dates and names in history; but, advanced to a higher class, he sinks to mediocrity because he cannot keep five or six laws of chemistry in mind while performing a laboratory experiment. The psychiatrist is also fa-

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miliar with the same difference between the normal person and one suffering from dementia paralytica. The normal person can use, in one way or another, all of his faculties; but the dement, while possessing all of the single faculties of the normal person, is unable to make them work together. He cannot integrate them to the point of causing them to function. He has, in short, the pattern of intelligence, but not the energy to run it. Hence the abnormal lack of persistence in everything the dement undertakes.

The average man persists in unfinished tasks usually not longer than twenty-four hours. If, at the end of this cycle, he has not completed his job, as a rule it is dismissed from his mind.

We recall unfinished tasks about 90% better than completed jobs, as the significant experiments of the German psychologists, Lewin and Zeigarnik have proved.* Give the average man a long series of simple assignments, mental and physical, for head work and for handwork. Interrupt him in half of them, and allow him to follow through with the others. Some time later, quiz him about all the jobs, and he will, as a rule, be able to recall 19 which he did not finish for every 10 which he did finish

As the investigators remark, this indicates that the stress under which we labor while solving a problem persists until the solution is either attained or else definitely abandoned as hopeless. Usually we do not finish a job at one sitting. We plug away at one on one day, then go to bed, rest, and pick it up on the next day. The first step in resuming work is to recall where we were at with it. Now, curiously enough, this twenty-four-hour cycle marks the period within which this law of recall operates. That is to say, if we wait longer than a full day before asking a man about the jobs, he tends to recall all of them more and more alike, regardless of whether finished or unfinished. In other words, it looks as though, in the centuries of natural selection and adaptation to work, men had built up a memory mechanism on the day-to-day basis. A job dropped for longer than twenty-four hours is a job dismissed.

Contrast this average man, now, to the superior and then to the stupid. The superior man commonly shows annoyance over a task left undone. Nor is that all: he cannot drop it from his thoughts. Let him go to bed tired, still will he thresh about in the dark wrestling

* "Psychologische Forschungen." IX 1927.

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with it. If he happens to be enormously intellectual, all this may exhaust him; and he will be able to pick the problem up exactly where he dropped it, even though a month has elapsed.

The stupid man reverses all this. He cannot pick up the details at all. He has to start afresh. He may even be unable to recall the exact nature of the problem two days later. Every factory and office manager observes this tendency. It is well known that more accidents occur on Monday, following the two-day holiday than on any other day in the week. Clerks and stenographers show similar stupidity. Tasks left undone on Saturday must often be completely re-attacked, even to the preliminary instructions, simply because the workers are unable to remember what they started out to do. I have heard many a clerk remark, as he agreed to work overtime, that by staying at night and finishing a job he would save himself and his employer hours of time and unnecessary repetition.

Here we arrive at one of the lowest levels of stupidity. It has been characterized in the old saying: "Out of sight, out of mind." If you will recall what we discussed when talking about the four varieties of fantasy, you will infer that people who persist poorly in any task and hence blunder through it may have plenty of physical energy, yet lose their trains of thought because of their inability to carry it in imagination. They tend to lapse into day dreams or make-believe, never into logical reflection. Like the moron, they learn everything afresh at each new encounter. So they cannot progress far.

Every politician and newspaper man knows that Cyclops behaves thus. "The public has no memory"—so runs the old journalists' saying. Nothing sticks. Nothing is followed through to its logical end. Nor can we hope for better social conduct as long as Cyclops breeds in every tenement, yes, and even in the fashionable avenues. Editors raise hue and cry over thievish aldermen, contaminated milk, and fraudulent public contracts. A few cranks write letters to their newspapers about it. Within ten days the whole affair has sunk into the ooze of oblivion. Early next morning a fresh scandal must be paraded.

Critics love to curse the newspapers for this stream of sensationalism. They do not realize that Cyclops could not keep his mind on one subject until it was cleaned up, even if he wanted to. As I write these lines, the most powerful drive ever launched against the underworld of Tammany Hall, under the expert leadership of Judge Seabury, has brought to light horrors and abominations which, if dealt

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with by an enlightened citizenry, would be pursued until every last scoundrel contributory to them was shot or hung. Yet, though the inquiry continues as we speed our chronicle, it has disappeared from the front pages, not once but many a day. Probably, before this book has gone into the fortieth edition, all the old district leaders, crook judges, shysters, gunmen, racketeers, and collectors will be back on their jobs, and little Jimmie Walker will have a fresh line of wise-cracks. Cyclops cannot stick.

Do you recall the single exception to this weakness of his? He can stick only if he can find a strictly personal cause—a bread-and-butter one is best—which arouses his hot emotions. Then he finds a new joy in life and turns fanatic. So, it would seem, the only way to keep the masses active in American politics is to arouse them to some popular fanaticism.

Emotion

Emotions involve their own special stupidities no less than sensitivities. For they are all *directions of behavior*. Call them, if you wish, action patterns; but be sure to add that the pattern is headed toward some typical outcome. If you omit this from your consideration, you will never grasp the mechanism of emotions. For, as William M. Marston has clearly shown,* in each of the primary forms, an emotion is never a mere feeling and seldom a mere attitude but a rush of energy; and the only way one emotion can be clearly marked off from another is by observing the situation toward which it is directed. This, we must add, is precisely what a biologist uncontaminated by old psychological theories would tend to assume. Each effort to adjust ourselves to something or to somebody sets up an organizing of energies and their discharge. The basic act is this integrated release. Our awareness of it is the typical emotional experience, or feeling.

Marston's interpretations are, on the whole, most satisfactory, in spite of a few subordinate theories which seem open to doubt; so I shall follow his account of the primary emotions. He finds four of these, as follows:

1—Dominance, or "an outrush of energy to overcome opposition";

* "The Emotions of Normal People." N. Y., 1928.

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2—Compliance, or the act of “yielding to and accepting a force as inevitably just what it is”;

3—Submission, or the act of “giving the self helplessly, without question, to the dictation of another person”;

4—Inducement, or the act of “making oneself more completely allied with a person over whom one wishes to establish control.”

All sorts of names, more or less pat, have been attached to these in literature and common speech. Dominance, for instance, is called aggressiveness, self-assertion, initiative, will, determination, pioneer spirit, superiority complex, and a score of other things. None of these are precise terms, though all touch upon some form or phase of dominance. Compliance goes by the name of caution, conformity, timidity, openmindedness, candor, humility, respect, and so on. Sometimes liberalism and tolerance are applied to acts of compliance, most ineptly. Submission goes by the name of willingness, docility, meekness, obedience, altruism, servility, benevolence, and softheartedness. Inducement, finally, is hazily referred to as persuasion, captivation, seduction, convincing, alluring, charming, magnetic, and leading.

The first important stage of an emotion is an attitude. How does this differ from the full-fledged emotion? Merely thus: *in the attitude the adaptive pattern takes form but the energy appropriate to its execution is not as yet discharged*. It may be lacking in this energy for any one or more of three causes:

1—The person may lack the adequate energy; or

2—The energy discharge may be slow, arriving a few seconds or minutes later; or

3—The energy may be held by some other special inhibiting force, such as fear or uncertainty as to the wisest course of conduct.

Thus, in the attitude, we “get set”; but we do not go until the energy flow picks up. Plainly then, it is in and during the attitude that we do all our thinking and planning. Hence the immense importance of understanding this early stage. There is much in the saying, “as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he”; it is less than the whole truth but more than a half-truth. The design of behavior is the chief determiner of the subsequent act, provided that the situation has been perceived and appraised correctly. But there is the rub! And it is this limitation which leads to an infinite variety of stupidities. For, it shall be my thesis, no matter what attitude a man takes toward a

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situation, he thereby sensitizes himself toward certain of its features and dulls himself toward others. For the whole process is selective.

How serious the benumbing? It all depends on the whole situation, of course—and that goes too for the man himself, his fund of energies, his range of general sensitivities, and his experience as a whole. The oversight may be petty and comic, as in the lover who, panting over the beauty of his beloved, swears it outshines Cleopatra, though the sweet young beloved has two warts on her nose and a receding chin. Or it may be Napoleon on the road to Moscow. What a spectrum of colors gay and drab! Let us turn our spectroscope at a few of the lines.

We begin with the crude forms of dominance, some of which are hard to distinguish from exhibitionism at times, and from paranoiac delusions of grandeur and persecution at other times.

Napoleon

Napoleon I is the prime example of profound dominance. In the early period of the French Empire, he ruled powerfully, but with often an egoistic naïveté. Later on, especially after 1808, his dominance grew complex; and its consequences were terrible and tragic.

We have much evidence that Napoleon was "pituitary-centered." Hence his extraordinary intellectual ability. On the other hand, disturbances in the gland, to which he was susceptible all his life, led to the "brain storms," the attacks of vomiting followed by "stupor verging on unconsciousness," which overcame him at the most critical junctures in battle.

At his best Napoleon's mind was mathematical, logical, and extraordinarily retentive. Yet an insufficient secretion of the post-pituitary made him unscrupulous and insensitive to misery and suffering.

As early as September, 1805, at the height of his power, Napoleon was seized with a kind of fit after dinner, says Talleyrand, and fell to the floor in a near-convulsion. Soon revived, half an hour later he

was on his way to war, and a few months later triumphed at Austerlitz.

His enormous energy probably did not decline until he went to St. Helena. At its prime through Austerlitz, Jena and Friedland, thereafter his ability began to decline. He showed weakness of judgment. He began to grow fat. And his projects grew likewise. They became grandiose and daring, but they lost the careful planning, the mathematical logic and the precision of earlier campaigns.

When, in April, 1812, war with Russia seemed inevitable, he completed the mightiest project of them all. He would invade the Czar's land with an army of 600,000, and either defeat the enemy in a single terrible attack, or else go on to Lithuania, rouse them to rebellion, settle there for the winter, and proceed to Moscow in the following summer.

Every plan went awry. The Russian people hated Napoleon. At best, Napoleon's army was made up of war-weary, reluctant fighters—mostly soldiers of his allies, on whom he was forced to draw. Their half-hearted spirit couldn't match the vindictive patriotism of the Czar's well-trained 400,000. The Russians refused to join in decisive battle, as Napoleon had not foreseen. Instead, they withdrew into the interior, retreating farther and farther into the barren Russian steppes. Alexander was keen enough to see the imminent disaster to the *Grande Armée* of a Russian winter, greater in its havoc by far than gunpowder and slaughter. Napoleon grew uneasy.

On June 24, 1812, his reluctant troops began the crossing of the Niemen River. In the unendurable heat, the Russians continued to retreat. But they knew their land. It was ominously bewildering to Napoleon. His men wilted along the way, and died of sunstroke. The crops were green, and his horses, having nothing else to eat, dropped of colic. His brother Jerome, in charge of the right rear, made blunder after blunder. For five days, while Napoleon was established at Vilna, he heard nothing from this incompetent. A cold, drizzling rain soaked and chilled the disheartened troops. Horses died by the thousands. For more than a week it rained. Finally came the news of the miserable failure of Jerome to cut off the Russians. On July 17, after disastrous delays, Napoleon began the long grim march to Moscow.

He captured Smolensk, but still he failed to crush the enemy. Had he halted here, Napoleon might have avoided disaster. He held a

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key position in Russia. At last the Polish provinces were free, and the grateful Poles would support him in later attacks. It is conceivable that the occupation of Smolensk could have led to the new Europe, fashioned to his plan. Yet in the face of colossal obstacles, Napoleon marched on to Moscow, knowing nothing of the terrain that lay ahead. Winter was on its way.

The *Grande Armée* pushed on to Borodino. After frightful slaughter, Napoleon won an indifferent victory. In the midst of battle, he was attacked by his listless stupor. He bungled badly, yet he fought—and won. A week later, what was left of the *Grande Armée* took possession of Moscow. Half a million had gone down in disease or battle. A hundred thousand were left to deadly disaster. Moscow burned. The city was deserted. Food and shelter were destroyed. French and Russians pillaged alike. Russian peasants attacked in fury. The enemy army retreated to the south. Napoleon had to fall back. His men were in chaos and without supplies. It rained and snowed in blinding sheets. Exhausted troops stumbled on through snowdrifts and desolate country. They dropped—and died. And when, in the middle of December, the straggling remnants re-crossed the Niemen, half-starved and worn out, they made Germany—and stopped.

Napoleon, the egotist, went on to France. Half a million dead lay strewn behind him. Yet the mighty insensitive ignored misery and woe. And he announced to the French that "the emperor has never been in better health!"

Throughout the Moscow campaign, Napoleon revealed stupidities of which he never before had been guilty. Yet they were all of similar pattern. His energy and his drive were still enormous. His will to dominate and his tremendous ego still ruled his plans. Yet his attitude toward his projects had dangerously shifted. He refused to consider all the factors in his mighty schemes. Long habit, it is true, led him to expect to conquer. Dazzling victories had satisfied his ego. As his power grew, his judgment weakened. He was blind to the dangers of 800 miles of desolate Russian steppes. He used more force than wit in doggedly following the elusive enemy. His energy was great. His attitude was bad. Half a million men paid the price of his stupidity.

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Criminal

A criminal is one who strives to have his own way in matters and manners forbidden by the people who enact laws. This striving is thus, in a sense, a form of dominance. Now, crime is purely a legal concept. It is not a moral one. Many a criminal act has been highly moral, from every point of view; and many an immoral act is in no wise criminal. Put this same fact in another form: not all efforts to dominate a contrary-minded group are criminal or even immoral; the acts are *pronounced* criminal by the group, through one and only one medium, namely the written law. A million citizens may shout that it is a crime to discharge a workingman penniless after twenty years of service; but that does not make the employer who does so a criminal. The judgment must be drafted and recorded in the books of law; and, normally, it must be supported by an enabling act.

You must keep these elementals before you as you consider the alleged stupidity of criminals. Otherwise confusion ensues, as it repeatedly has in the discourses of distinguished sociologists and lawyers. How often have they declared that criminals are either insane or feeble-minded! This doctrine has been taught in colleges. It remains unchallenged in many quarters today. Yet it is nonsense.

Our criminologists have drawn conclusions about *criminals* from facts known about *convicts*. They assume first of all that most criminals are convicts; or, if they are not, that convicts are fairly typical of all criminals. Now such sweeping assertions about our lawbreakers are silly in so far as they make easy generalizations about prison surveys. And the public is seriously misled by even the most scrupulous of biometrists like Goring, whose brilliant analysis of thirty-seven traits in 3,000 English convicts is a classic. Here is his conclusion:

“On statistical evidence one assertion can be dogmatically made: it is that the criminal is differentiated by inferior stature, by defective intelligence, and, to some extent, by his anti-social proclivities; but that, apart from these differences, there are no physical, mental, or moral characteristics peculiar to the inmates of English prisons.”

And now listen to William J. Hickson, Director of the Chicago Psychopathic Laboratory. After studying more than 40,000 Chicago convicts, he discovers nearly all to be “emotionally insane.” Prac-

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tically all crime is dementia praecox, and the rest is paresis except for about one case in every hundred which arises from some physical injury to the brain. Crime due to abnormalities of the intellect Hickson regards as extremely rare save when such mental twists occur in combination with diseases of the cerebellum; and then we find the financial crook of supreme cunning.

Hickson declares that all criminals regularly betray themselves by "slips of the mind" of various sorts. Mental and motor coördinations break down, now in their visual imagery, now in their ability to draw a simple geometric form, now in their response to simple questions. Hence we easily ascertain whether an accused man is a criminal by applying mental tests.

As ninety-nine out of every hundred criminals actually tested in Hickson's laboratory suffer from grave defects of the brain, Hickson infers that 99% of *all* crime is caused by such cerebellar afflictions. Thus he agrees in substance with Goring that the criminal is a true type marked by defective intelligence. Hickson goes beyond Goring in asserting that the mental defect is primarily cerebellar and emotional rather than cortical and intellectual.

In any case, they arrive at the conclusion that all crooks are boobs. This fallacious reasoning errs in judging the part as the whole. These scientists have the all but incurable tendency of thinking of only one thing at a time. They assume that all criminals whom they study are typical of the entire criminal group, when, as a matter of fact, conclusions like those of Hickson and Goring are based on studies of only those criminals who were caught and convicted.

Now, arrests from all causes run around 2,000,000 a year in the United States. Only one arrest in four results in conviction. Many of the acquitted are, of course, innocent; but many others are either guilty or else they have been apprehended in place of the true offenders. Of the round 500,000 convictions, more than 300,000 are mere drunks, disorderlies, and tramps.

Fewer than 200,000 guilty of felony are convicted every year. Among other studies, the Metropolitan Life analyses of 1923 showed that, out of every 146 homicides in our country, only 69 indictments were found; and of the 69 indicted, only 37 received prison sentences. Recently the special committee of the American Bar Association brought out forcibly that the man who plans a burglary in New York City has thirteen chances to one of escaping all punishment.

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He who commits any kind of felony whatsoever there has odds of seven to one in his favor.

The American Bankers' Association appraises the losses from crimes against property alone at about \$3,500,000,000 per year in the United States. Credit frauds run close to \$400,000,000 a year. We cannot say how large the average credit fraud is, nor how many frauds are committed in the course of a year by one and the same swindler. But, for reasons too technical to enter into here, I feel reasonably safe in setting \$1,000 as a very high figure for the average credit fraud. On this basis, we find 400,000 credit frauds perpetrated annually; and I am sure I greatly underestimate the total, in order to be conservative. Other types of crime against property must run far below the credit fraud average. From what is rudely known of larcenies, we may guess that \$500 is a very liberal average of all kinds of thefts, swindles, arsons, and so on. For the number of petty knaveries involving less than \$100 each is prodigious and must pull down the average very far. Taking \$500 as our general average, we find the appalling total of around 7,000,000 crimes against property every year in our country.

But there sit in prison, for all crimes against property, fewer than 70,000 felons. By a first approximation, therefore, we find only one conviction for every hundred crimes against property. This estimate must undergo several well known corrections which bring it down to something like a ratio of one to forty. This, you see, resembles the proved ratio in the case of homicides in our large cities.

Now, crimes against property are most closely watched and fought by immense and astute organizations of business men, bankers, and private detectives. The victims have money with which to war on looters and swindlers, and they have the brains to use their defense funds well. But where wealth, intelligence, and powerful economic interests do not combine in an attack on crime, the ratio between committed offenses and convictions becomes ludicrous. It is a crime to attempt suicide, but fewer than 50 convicts wear stripes for it. Incest is a crime and known to be much commoner than nice people like to admit; but fewer than 200 Americans sit in cells anywhere for it. Seduction is a crime for which fewer than 100 are serving time. Adultery is as common as gambling, in all probability. Technically it is a crime, but only 1300 adulterers bemoan their careers in prison. Perjury has been generally regarded as a crime of peculiar

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loathesomeness until recent years; but only 250 perjurers are in American prisons. And astonishingly few indictments for it are brought. For every perjurer—occasional amateurs or persistent professionals—who is indicted, there must be several hundred unknown. A prominent criminal lawyer tells me that, in his opinion, the odds in favor of the perjurer in the typical American court today are at least 250 to 1. A guess, let us grant; but not at all a wild one in the light of our crime statistics.

Now let us compare these various ratios with the known intelligence ratios. What do we find? An astonishing fact. Taking offenses and offenders at large, the prison population cannot embrace at any time more than 1% of the total host of offenders and probably does not make up more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of 1%. Of that total one half of the total prison population are habitual criminals of subnormal intelligence and the other half are mostly juveniles and occasional offenders of slightly subnormal intelligence.

As compared with national intelligence ratios, the ratio of criminals in prison to those never caught shows a startling resemblance to the ratio of markedly inferior minds to all minds that are average or better.

The percentage of criminals locked up is much smaller than the percentage of inferior minds in the country at large. All extensive intelligence tests show that the poorest 10% of any large groups (random or selected for other traits than intellect) is a pretty inferior aggregation of mortals (The Army intelligence tests showed that forty-seven out of every one hundred soldiers were in some respect slightly or greatly subnormal.) Now the number of adults and minors above fifteen years may be taken roughly at 67,000,000. The stupidest 10% of this mass comprises some 6,700,000 persons. This group of the poorest minds is more than thirty-three times larger than our total group of imprisoned felons. Compare this with the fact that there are about forty times as many felons uncaught as there are felons in prison. And you are now ready to consider the main question here, which is this: what is the probability that a study of the one caught criminal in forty will reveal the psychological nature of the other thirty-nine who get away?

Here we see the worthlessness and harmfulness of generalizations such as those of Goring and Hickson, and all other criminologists who have lately startled the world; for their conclusions are based

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on studies of the huge sub-intelligent classes of our population. The convict is the unsuccessful knave. And he is unsuccessful, in the main, for the same reason that most other striking failures in life are; he is a dub, a half-wit, a simpleton. He is drawn mostly from the bottom five per cent of all criminals, and his intelligence is precisely what we should expect in that subclass.

Now, how can we expect any intelligent criminal to worm his way into a prison? The competition from below is frightful. And the more closely we inspect the statistics of intelligence and worldly success, the plainer it becomes that our crook aristocracy need never hope to see the inside of any incarceratory except in the capacity of warden or Governor of the State.

Success in any line depends chiefly upon three large and loose factors, namely intelligence, energy and opportunity. This is equally true of undertakers and underwriters, of yeggs and yodelers. As these three factors really are composites of hundreds of "chance" elements, we find that the normal distribution curve depicts success and failure pretty well. In the criminal world as elsewhere, fully 75% of the bad actors hover around the median; that is, they are neither very successful nor very unsuccessful, neither brilliant minds nor dubs, neither Rooseveltian dynamos of creative crime nor jellyfish. The other 25% divide pretty evenly on both sides of the Fence of Mediocrity. Half of these show high success and half show dismal failures. If you like, you may subdivide to the point of noting that some 2% of all crooks achieve extraordinary success while 2% sink to equally extraordinary fizzles; and at the opposite ends of your field of distribution, you find one man in a thousand who is sheer genius. At the positive end, he is a genius of success, the true Man Higher Up like Napoleon; and at the negative end, he is the perfect criminal lunatic who cannot draw a breath without getting into trouble with the police.

All that can be proved about crime and criminals in America goes to show that success-and-failure here either follows the normal distribution or else is skewed toward the positive (success) end. Hickson, Goring, and all the others prove that most of our jail birds are mentally and physically defective. But these jail birds constitute between two and three per cent of the probable number of persons who, in the strict technical sense of the word, are criminals. Inasmuch as the probable percentage of seriously subnormal persons in

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the total criminal group is between five and ten per cent, it is clear that the convicts simply represent those inferior criminals who, because of imperfect wit, strenuousness, or opportunity, have failed in business and gone into the hands of a receiver.

To infer from their mentality anything about the great, solid, up-standing 90% of our hard working, sincere, thorough, conscientious, and highly intelligent gunmen, yeggs, badger gamesters, procurers, United States Senators and Cabinet Members is to betray a mental defect worthy of the bottom five per center. The intelligent criminal never gets caught except by an act of Providence, which usually turns out to be the slick move of a competitor. He will never be measured for his mind or a striped suit. For the odds in his favor are much better than they run in any of the more conservative businesses and professions.

I find a second line of supporting evidence for my opinion in a comparison between the U. S. Army prisoners in guard house and the prisoners in Leavenworth. The former have been locked up for petty offenses only, such as stealing from camp mates or hitting the top sergeant with a mop behind his back. The Leavenworth inmates are in for something serious—say manslaughter, forgery, or rape. Now, it appears that the I. Q. of the petty offenders is considerably below that of the Leavenworth boys. Does this not indicate that stupid people are always getting into scrapes over trivial irregularities but are seldom attempting anything that calls for planning, secrecy, capital investment and the drilling of accomplices? Does it not show that they are not clever enough even to avoid capture and conviction in minor brawls and clashes with the law?

Now, I am tempted to extrapolate here. As the gravity and gross magnitude of the offense increase, so must the mentality of the perpetrator. He cannot even make a try at a big crime unless he has a keen mind, considerable imagination, and skill in organizing. Has anybody ever caught any of the leaders in the world drug ring which operates in London, with its American headquarters in Montreal? There is a criminal gang with brains probably superior to those of nine out of ten bankers and college presidents, if we may judge anything from the ease with which they have evaded detection and arrest for many years, while hundreds of public and private detectives have done their best to catch them. Or again, the really great international blackmailers who operate at Monte Carlo, on the liners, and in the

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genteelst of clubs: have they not devised several fool-proof methods of squeezing rich people—methods known to the police for many years, yet unbeatable?

People who know only what they read in headlines think that the acme of knavery is the thug like Fred Burke, long called, even by police, "the most dangerous criminal in America." Yet, compared with hundreds of clever scoundrels who have never been haled to court, this Burke is a mere simpleton, even though he did elude the detectives for years, slaying more than a score of people meanwhile. Burke, you may recall, is the "master trigger man" of the Chicago gangsters; he was trapped in a lonely farm house in Missouri—and all because the stupid fellow had been buying small orders of goods with bills of denominations larger than people back in the woods had ever seen, and had never left his motor car while shopping but had sent his bodyguard in to make purchases.

Such a "slip of the mind" fits Hickson's hypothesis patly. Let us grant that he may have a substantial truth, then, about the people who end up in jail. But, please, don't insult the highbrows of the underworld by classing them with dolts like Burke. We stand ready to defend against all comers the thesis that:

1—Permanent success in crime is, in all probability, fully as common as permanent success in the jewelry business or in high school teaching;

2—Relatively as many people succeed in criminal careers as in non-criminal careers;

3—Just as success is hardest where competition is fiercest, so in crime: some fields of it are more difficult than others, probably the hardest being those in which the stakes are highest;

4—Criminals of the cleverest type know that the smoothest way to avoid trouble is to pass laws which either authorize or somehow protect their criminal acts; hence our most successful criminals are those who pack legislatures with their henchmen and enact statutes which give them something for nothing;

5—The stupidest criminals are those who openly oppose the police or the men higher up who dominate criminal politics. What happens to them has lately been demonstrated. I close my case with a report lately completed and published by Mr. and Mrs. Sheldon Glueck, who ran down, with magnificent thoroughness, the careers of 500

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criminals after their discharge from the Massachusetts Reformatory.* They found that the social reformers had been all wrong in their charitable guesses about ex-convicts. Of those 500 whose affairs were laid bare, no fewer than 400 were still committing crimes from five to fifteen years after the prison gates had opened to release them.

What conclusion can be drawn from this? Certainly not the one which Dr. Richard Cabot reached, when he declared that the Gluecks had adduced "a damning piece of evidence against the reformatory system in general." No doubt reformatories are all badly managed; but all I can read in the histories of the 400 who went on with their careers of crime is, first of all, that they were originally stupid enough to get caught; and, secondly, after having been locked up for some years, they learned nothing and thus went right on with their same old stupid behavior. The clever criminal seldom is caught; and when he is, it occurs through some odd mischance which he could not have foreseen. But the stupid criminal bungles his job and lives on the taxpayers for a season, after which he is still quite as stupid as before.

It is absurd to expect a reformatory to convert a half-wit who is bent on beating the police. And is it not foolish to expect the police to trap anybody save the very half-wits who steal women's purses and pick street fights and climb into bedrooms and clumsily forge checks? I think that, if we are going to condemn the reformatories for failing to cure this bottom grade of evildoers, we might as well go the whole way and curse the insane asylums for their failure to train statesmen.

Here we end: we find the criminal to be nothing more nor less than an emotional type that, in itself, is quite normal but, because it strives to dominate in affairs where conduct has been formally regulated by the larger public (or else by criminal lawmakers), is condemned and hunted down. Sometimes it is the larger public that chances to be wrong in its rulings. Sometimes it is the criminal lawmaker. But where stupidity lies, no man can say except by scrutinizing cases.

* See their book, "Five Hundred Criminal Careers" N. Y., 1930.

Fear

Fear is a mode of dominance much too complex to analyze here. Even more than the fine frenzy of overwhelming self-assertion, the imperfect effort to win out which brings on the fear causes the worst kinds of stupidity. Some are so bad that we say the frightened person is in a panic and loses his head. The description is correct. Fear is one of the most dreadful stupefiers—some people go further and attribute to it most of the major ills of the race, from militarism to sexual neuroses. Sometimes the victim loses all effective coördinations and becomes as helpless as a paralytic. Again he dissociates, fixating on some one feature of the whole situation somewhat after the manner of a hysteric. At other times he fixates but with no discernible dissociation, as the French have done since the World War.

So deep and so abiding is the Frenchman's fear of Germany that all perspective and all flexibility of action have gone lost. A hundred episodes showing this may be found in the public records. Here is one of recent date. Since early in 1931 Germany has been on the verge of financial disaster. Ominous signs have long pointed to the possibility of her complete collapse. On July 13 came the news of the great Darmstädter bank.

Well did the French politicians know the gravity of Germany's situation. Yet when Dr. Hans Luther attempted to negotiate a French loan with Premier Laval, he was countered with a demand for the virtual political subjection of Germany as a primary condition for financial help.

Most of the evil acts of France since 1918 root in fear hysteria, for which we do not blame the French people. They are, as a people, singularly susceptible to fixation of idea; indeed, as we show elsewhere,* they are, even when free from intense emotions, the slaves of their own notions. This implies a certain partial dissociation from concrete realities, quite the reverse of the English habit of fixating on concrete affairs of the hour and missing the long-range aspects. So, whereas the English, in their efforts to get along, adapt themselves swiftly to changing conditions, the French become obsessed with an idea and, if the panic of fear seizes them, they become oblivious to everything beyond that idea. The complete specimen here

* See page 393.

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is the old Tiger, Clemenceau, who, in 1870, fixated on the crushing of Germany, and never quite escaped from that abnormal mentality. His colossal dominance concealed the fear, but fear was hidden in it none the less.

At the crisis in his tragic career, Woodrow Wilson succumbed to a panic of fear which led him into a series of disastrous stupidities. In the days before the Armistice, he penned that fatal open letter urging all voters to support only Democratic candidates for Congress. Every babe in arms then understood that Wilson needed sorely the support of Republicans. Millions of voters had begun to worry over the President, some for one reason and some for another. The charitable excused his strange moves as the results of inhuman overstrain. But the country's temper was dangerous, and any man in his clear senses would have schemed warily in its presence. Mutterings in quarters hitherto friendly arose within an hour after the publishing of the open letter. Within a week, the rumble grew to thunder.

Let us grant that the next blunder was partly caused by resentment toward the Republicans for their yells of rage over the open letter. Nevertheless, a statesman of poise would have subdued his feelings for the sake of a larger victory. Frozen above the ears by fear of political defeat, Wilson made a fool of himself and guaranteed that very debacle. A Peace Commission was to be appointed. It was to represent, not Wilson, but the United States. Whatever decisions it might reach would have to pass the scrutiny of the United States Senate, which alone has the power of ratifying treaties. Wilson acted as if he had never heard of this detail in American government; for he named as members of the Commission not a single Senator nor a single Republican.

Thus the dulness of years welled up in a tidal wave which, soon thereafter, engulfed him.

Timid

In its mild, chronic form, the mode of dominance which we call fear becomes a faint persistent timidity. It causes its owner much trouble, for it can lead to acts nearly as stupid as those brought on by intense panic. Consider an all too common type of it, the money lender.

In prosperous times, the gambler menaces the whole economic

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structure; but in depressions, the banker takes over that unsavory rôle. His timidity, trained in the more dignified form of caution, should have been most active in checking lunatic speculation during big booms; but, through lack of intelligence, he is unable to rise to that occasion and be firm with other people's money. Then too, the bluffs, the hurrah boys, the 1,000% profiteers, and all that odorous gang know how to overawe the timid soul. They excite him with tales of quick gains, fast turn-overs, political tips, and all the other hokum; and if he still stands fast against their wiles, they bluster somewhat and hint of going to a more progressive financial institution. Usually that disintegrates what chemical trace of courage he may possess. How the scene changes, though, when troubles come!

Customers in trouble come as humble petitioners. This gives the timid soul a chance to compensate. He acts like the cowardly big boy in the presence of little boys. Now he scowls, mumbles in his beard, glares, shakes his head, even sneers at pleas for loans. All this, of course, harmonizes with his deeper fear of losing money. How pleasant, then, to play the part of a powerful personality! Ignorant people praise him, while the country sinks deeper and deeper into poverty. At the very time when powerful stimulants must be administered in order to give a wholesome impetus to industry and trade, the banker freezes all his cash reserves. Is there a field which cannot summon its cloud of witnesses? Metropolitan real estate has suffered hardly less than the acres of the western wheat farmer. Lawrence B. Cummings, vice-president of Douglas L. Elliman & Co., one of New York's most important realty firms, recently told the American Construction Council (at the Biltmore Hotel, New York City, May 11, 1931) a little about the truth. Said he, much too politely:

"There are, however, two artificial obstacles to the normal recovery of real estate. One is the attitude of the average banker, whose knowledge of real estate is limited as compared with his knowledge of other securities. Through timidity, engendered probably by this lack of understanding, the banker has withheld deserved support of worthy real estate developments. This attitude is reflected in the insistence of certain bank examiners that the real estate investments be struck from the list of the bank's assets."

Otto Kahn reaches like conclusions in an excellent analysis of the entire credit situation, made some four months after Mr. Cummings'

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remarks on real estate loans. He went so far as to assert that timid bankers were throttling American business and deferring recovery. True, many bankers offer sincere, well reasoned defense of their refusal to lend during a great depression; and, in some measure, they have right on their side. But there are too many records of excessive fear on their part which can be arrayed against them. All in all, they have shown absurd panic in a situation that calls for at least a trace of courage.

I can confirm this unpleasant fact personally. During 1931 I served briefly as adviser to a gentleman who found himself in a painful situation as a result of having invested too large a fraction of his fortune in metropolitan lots and apartments. Though he held equities in excess of \$600,000 in a dozen or more parcels and owned an interest in two factories appraised at not less than \$150,000, he was unable to obtain a loan of \$25,000 from any of six major banks. True, there were a few legal complications arising from the fact that much of his real estate was held in partnership; but, even with all that written off the books, he could still show clear assets of more than \$250,000. What did the bankers say to that?

"We have an agreement among ourselves," said one who became perilously frank, "to divide every appraisal by five when considering a loan nowadays."

"But the appraisers make allowances for depressed valuations, before they turn in their figures," I remarked. "If, as one of the best appraisers actually did with this property, they trim their figures by 30%, for safety's sake, do you cut that to 20%?"

"Yes. We have to be very cautious these days."

If this is not stupidity founded on cowardice, then our whole brochure has been written in vain.

Compliance

The compliant attitude results in its most screamingly funny stupidities whenever a group of people assemble and pass resolutions on some weighty matter. This does not regularly occur if the subject is trivial or merely sentimental; it requires an issue on which the participants differ seriously, even to the point of being emotional. The psychic mechanism proceeds as follows.

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The first member of the group ardently desires Plan A. The second member advocates Plan B. The third fights for Plan C. What, now, if all three happen to be compliant in the matter? The likeliest outcome is that each man yields harmoniously to the wishes of the other two. "After you, Alphonse!" "After you, Gaston!" As each gives way to the others, what results? A plan sterilized, a vacuous and hazy program containing something like the least common denominator of all three good plans, with none of their specific virtues.

Consider a recent instance of this—cited here only because of the status of the personalities concerned and the vastness of the issues involved: the final sets of resolutions passed in 1931 by the United States Chamber of Commerce and the International Chamber of Commerce, at their spring conventions in Washington and Atlantic City. The noble aim was to define the position of the heads of big business throughout the world toward the economic crisis and the main political-social influences underlying it. More than 1,000 leaders of trade, finance, and industry assembled, pondered, read papers, debated from the floor, and then—the mountain of Mind and Money brought forth two dead mice. The smaller and deader of the two came from the International Chamber. It proves to all obstetricians and internationalists the futility of big business men in a situation like that confronting us all today.

From 35 nations came the mighty men of barter and babbittry, affable, well bred, ever eager to please. Supposedly more experienced and better trained in business than anybody else on earth, what did they evolve in the course of their dinners, teas, dances, and intimate chats? Precisely zero. Their resolutions are too long (and silly) to reprint here: let it go with the remark that they did not graze a single real issue nor propose a single procedure. On trade with Russia, not a peep. On tariffs (which even little boys now know are a world menace) scarcely more than the politely concealed belch of an old dame with dyspepsia. On disarmament the usual pious wish that everybody would please be good: not even a mild plan, such as the Cecil group's proposal for a flat 25% cut in arms by all nations, was recommended. On war debts, some empty babble to the effect that "the integrity of international obligations is not inconsistent with an impartial examination of the effects of these obligations on international trade, if warranted by changed economic conditions." When carefully translated, this is the bray of an ass. But

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the deepest, loudest, most musical bray resounded in the declaration which comes closest to saying something: it was resolved that national budgets ought to be balanced, but with no increase in taxes. This translates into the old rhyme.

“Mother, may I go out to swim?
Yes, my darling daughter.
Hang your clothes on a hickory limb,
But don't go near the water”

What the bards of babbitttry would sing was a plaintive lyric for deliverance from income taxes. And that at least isn't compliance; so we shall not score it against them. Giped from one end of America to the other for their blend of stupidity and cowardice, they at least serve one useful purpose: their infertile cogitations show the evils which flow from compliance in group actions. A minute record of the convention would reveal the usual deadlock of genuine opinion, with rather strong feelings on all sides of every major issue. In such a situation, no well-mannered gentleman would be so rude as to attack and crush another well-mannered gentleman's wishes in a public resolution. So the world muddles along without the aid of sweetly compliant folk—as usual.

Softly compliant men have cost America a pretty sum, for from their weak, conciliatory conduct flow many stupidities of State. This emotion led to the Spanish-American War.

President McKinley was a kindly soul, but like many another he found it difficult to arrive at decisions. McKinley, it is true, genuinely and honestly hoped for peace at the time of the Spanish-American War. And, as Walter Millis shows, “Though it would have been difficult and politically dangerous, it might not have been impossible for a courageous and strong-willed statesman to have asserted a policy which would have escaped the conflict. But President McKinley, in his successor's famous phrase, had ‘no more backbone than a chocolate éclair.’ President McKinley for a time did nothing.” Hoping for peace, he still prepared for war. When finally driven to a decision, however, he still straddled the fence. “A friend encountered Mr. Roosevelt one evening, coming away from the White House in a state of boiling indignation. ‘Do you know what that white-livered cur up there has done? He has prepared two

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messages, one for war and one for peace, and doesn't know which one to send in! " *

Again and again McKinley's characteristic fuzzy-mindedness delayed his decisions. ". . . up to the very last he seems to have toyed with the idea that he could still conduct an armed intervention without beginning a war. When on this same afternoon the President at last gave the word, it was a word devised in that peculiar ambiguity which was so striking a characteristic of his statesmanship. Mr. McKinley ordered a 'blockade.' But a definite order had finally been given; Mr. Long despatched it by telegraph to Admiral Sampson, and the fleet which had been swinging so long to its anchors in the harbor at Key West was at last unleashed."

Grover Cleveland, writing to Secretary of State Olney, on the day after McKinley's declaration of war, made the same point about his kind but weak-kneed successor:

"With all allowances I can make . . . I cannot avoid a feeling of shame and humiliation. It seems to me to be the same old story of good intentions and motives sacrificed to false considerations of complaisance and party harmony. McKinley is not a victim of ignorance, but of amiable weakness not unmingled with political ambition. He knew, or ought to have known, the cussedness of the Senate and he was abundantly warned against Lee, and yet he has surrendered to the former and given his confidence to the latter. The Senate would not hesitate to leave him in the lurch and Lee will strut and swagger, I suppose, as a major-general and the idol of the populace. Roosevelt, too, will have his share of strut and sensation, and Miles will be commissioned General of the Army." †

And finally, lest you doubt Mr. McKinley's lack of self-reliance, consider the means whereby he decided at last that it was right, honorable and just for the United States to annex the Philippines. The General Missionary Committee of the Methodist Episcopal Church was meeting in Washington a year after this decision had been made. The President had been receiving their delegation, which was about to depart. Suddenly he stopped them.

"Hold a moment longer! Not quite yet, gentlemen! Before you go I would like to say just a word about the Philippine business.

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. . . The truth is I didn't want the Philippines, and when they came to us as a gift from the gods, I did not know what to do with them. . . . I sought counsel from all sides—Democrats as well as Republicans—but got little help. I thought first we would take only Manila; then Luzon; then other islands, perhaps, also. I walked the floor of the White House night after night until midnight; and I am not ashamed to tell you, gentlemen, that I went down on my knees and prayed Almighty God for light and guidance more than one night.

"And one night late it came to me this way—I don't know how it was, but it came: (1) That we could not give them back to Spain—that would be cowardly and dishonorable; (2) that we could not turn them over to France or Germany—our commercial rivals in the Orient—that would be bad business and discreditable; (3) that we could not leave them to themselves—they were unfit for self-government—and they would soon have anarchy and misrule over there worse than Spain's was; and (4) that there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the very best we could by them, as our fellow men for whom Christ also died. And then I went to bed and went to sleep and slept soundly."*

Luckily, the Lord and American imperialism were in accord. And we promptly set out on our program of righteousness thanks to God's aid to the undecided McKinley, who fain would please everybody.

This amiable complaisance of poor old McKinley is a popular weakness among Americans. It seems to me far more prevalent here than anywhere else. Those who suffer from it call it nasty names, while those who get its benefits call it good nature, kindheartedness, and service. McKinley was made to order for dominant spirits like Mark Hanna, who picked him for the White House dummyship. Probably nine out of ten American corporation lawyers, engineers, Congressmen, and college professors display much of that same sweet subservience to the strong. Every foreign observer notices it.

The newer religion of "Service" is, at heart, this form of complaisance, although its devotees strive—and many of them quite sincerely, too—to make it a creed of loving kindness pure and simple. But nine out of ten business men are not investing their capital for the sake of humanity; they are out for profits—and why not? Their

* *Ibid.*, p. 384

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ancestors, selling goods to a thoroughly stupid and ignorant public, were able to amass fortunes by adulterations, fraud, and the deft chicanery of salesmen. *Caveat emptor* was engraved deep on their aegis. But times changed. People slowly learned things, grew finicky, insisted on their money's worth; and finally, with the twentieth century's coming, millions of them demanded service—but with a small "s." The traffickers did not like this at all. It ran counter to the gospel of fat profits from fatheads. But a few leaders saw how to make money by rendering service—so their press agents capitalized it. And thenceforth it was spelled "Service," which was indeed capital. It was purely and simply an act of complying with a growing public demand. Now the consumer ventured—albeit feebly, at first—to dominate the scene. And under pressure of fierce competition business men yield, making a virtue of the new necessity.

Compliance runs still deeper in the American nature. At its evillest we see it not in business but in politics and in matters touching civil liberty. Here the spectacle fairly baffles the foreigner no less than the old style American who preferred that good old flag motto, "Nemo me impune lacessit" to the slimy palaver of Service.

Submission

The submissive person, remarks Wm. M. Marston, freely and pleasantly abates his own will and urge in order that he may be directed by another, stronger person essentially like himself, at least in so far as the trends involved in the submissive act are concerned. Introspectively, he wants and likes to yield helplessly and without question to the other's dictation. He has the clear conviction that the dominant person wants him to do something good for himself, something which he would truly like to have or be; and usually he also believes that the dominant person can aid in attaining it more quickly or more deftly than he, the submissive, can do it by himself.

Marston also shows, in many case studies and experiments,* that the commonest form of submission appears in the yielding of adolescent girls to their own mothers. Italian girls seem particularly prone to this attitude; the worst case of an adolescent ruined by

* See same work, p. 255, etc.

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mother domination in my own personal records is that of an American-born daughter of a Neapolitan woman. At the age of twenty, this girl first came into my hands for reeducation and quickly drove me to despair; for I could not break down her utter surrender to her mother's slightest wishes. She still enjoyed this abject existence, in spite of her intellectual conviction that it was harming her career. She was exactly like a drug addict who likes the stuff while taking it and, in between doses, sighs to break the odious habit.

This almost universal pleasantness of submission probably goes back to infancy. The babe in arms is ever submissive to those managerial acts of nurse and mother which he comes to enjoy. Thus the fusion of pleasure with submission readily tends to encourage further experiments with the attitude. The child readily falls in with the rule of Dear Teacher, as soon as he goes to school. Of course, if Dear Teacher fails to maintain the agreeable domination to which the child has been accustomed, the spell is soon broken. But, in our own country at least, the mere fact that nearly all elementary teachers are young women makes it hard for the pupil to shake off the submissiveness. Mother, too, is a young woman; and it is a psychological fact that all of us incline to submit readily to agreeable people who closely resemble either ourselves or those whom we already hold dear. No statistician will ever calculate the flabbiness of our present generation due to nothing but sweet docility in the first five or six years of school. Spineless Americans—and we have millions of them—are a plague; yet we have only ourselves to blame, for we have not only feminized their education but we have, at least until quite recently, Jesusized it too. Of this latter, more presently.

Another reason why so many young people early become submissive is found in their natural fund and flow of energy, especially on the higher psychic levels. Submitting is the Easiest Way—even when, on some lower level of activity, it may be strenuous or uncomfortable. As this point has, so far as I know, never been duly appraised, if even recognized, it must be elaborated. For it contains the life blood of the soldier, the monk, and the merely stupid man who lets others run him always. The ramifications of low-grade blunders and blindness remain a mystery until the peculiar economy of submission is thoroughly comprehended.

Look, first, at the little girl—aged five, let us say—whose mother sets out to train her in the ways of sweet obedience. If she is very

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energetic, this little girl, while mother is frail or languid, there will be little submission. So too if the little girl is precocious and inquisitive and skeptical; let mother ask her to obey, and she will ask why and how and when and to what end—until mother is either exhausted or else loses her power to command through failure to make clear the reasons for the order. If, however, the little girl is either distinctly less strenuous than her mother or less intelligent and alert, mother has a great advantage, thanks to the relative wisdom and power of her greater age, to say nothing of stature and prestige.

Consider, first of all, then, the thoroughly dull little girl. She struggles with her shoe lace until worn out. The trick of looping eludes her wit and fingers. When all worn out, she whimpers; then mother runs and soothes her "Let Mumsy fix the naughty shoestring, dearie." The little girl then relaxes comfortably while mother adjusts the shoestring. An hour later, the little girl wearies of trying to print the letters of the alphabet; she breaks her lead pencil point, musses up the paper, gets her S's and E's backward, and gives up. Again mother comes to the rescue. Again our darling dullard relaxes and watches mother make the letters.

This is the easy life. It appeals to Young Stupid mainly because learning to do things for oneself requires endless, wearisome trials and errors, if one's wit is sluggish. It is hard for an intelligent person to appreciate the strain and annoyance of such efforts. Our best image of it is, I think, the blank fatigue into which a fairly good student falls after hours of wrestling with a problem which is a little beyond his grasp. Florence Mateer, whose wide experience with backward children gives her "the clinical hunch" in this matter, emphasizes the energy shortage accurately. She says:

"There is an innate difference hard to describe, but all who know defective and normal children often recognize this qualitative difference before any quantitative test has demonstrated its presence. It seems as though with some the evolutionary nisus had spent itself with the effort necessary to bring into being, with others there is no energy to meet the demands of speech, with others concrete stimuli can evoke satisfactory responses but there is not enough motive power to meet the demand for response to the faint stimulations made by abstract ideas, theories, principles, etc. But the normal child is entirely different. He lives only as the incarnation of activity. He is activity, innate, flooding, spilling with every

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new stimulus, responding with growth to every new demand made upon him."*

The description throws together under one heading the energy which is required for sensing and that used in dealing with the perceived situation. So far as our present topic is concerned, this is fair enough; Mateer touches the heart of the stupid child's problem here. For all practical purposes, it makes little difference whether the child possesses simple sensitivity with no supporting motor energy for experimenting, learning, and applying new experiences, or whether he lacks even the neural energy which sustains the sensitivity alone. In either case, he is blocked.

What, then, would his natural economy be? It is clear. His entire animal drive would seek satisfactory life adjustments with minimal energy; and that, for the stupid one, means chiefly minimal mental effort. A healthy stupid person does not resent physical labor; on the contrary, he enjoys it up to a certain point. It is only when the work baffles him that trouble ensues.

The healthy, well muscled person of marked general stupidity naturally tends to adopt the submissive attitude in all matters requiring mental effort beyond his abilities. And the poorly muscled or frail or sickly person does likewise in situations requiring physical exertion beyond his abilities. Frail and sickly stupid people are therefore doubly submissive.

This is the Easiest Way for tens of millions. It always will be, too. Here is the origin of the lure of Church and State, of monastery and army, of hierarchy and bureaucracy. By and large, we may sum up thus: the Church is the Easiest Way for frail and sickly stupid people, while the State is the Easiest Way for healthy, active dullards. I am not speaking about the few dominant leaders of either institution; I refer only to the appeals made to the masses. That means, of course, that the generalization comes closest to complete accuracy when applied to congregations, not to clergymen; to privates, not to generals; to followers and underlings in all branches of civil and ecclesiastical service, not to evangelists and archbishops and bureau chiefs.

Unequivocally the thinkers in Church and State accept this interpretation. Read Loyola and Machiavelli on this, if you wish.

* "The Unstable Child." N. Y., 1924, p. 55.

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Soldier

An Austrian army officer of the old régime wrote, many years ago, a book on "The Morale of Troops in Peace and War" which later military authorities have often quoted * as a model. Among other vigorous truths bluntly stated for the enlightenment of sergeants and second lieutenants, we find this:

"Live and let live is a poor motto for an army. Contempt for one's own comrades, for the foe, and, above all, for one's own self, are demanded of everybody by war. It is much better for an army to be too savage, too cruel, too barbarous, than to be too sentimental and too reasonable.

"If a soldier is to be good for anything, he must be the exact opposite of a reasoning and thinking creature. . . . He must develop absolutely peculiar standards of morality. The recruit who brings to the barracks the common ethical ideas must get rid of them in a hurry. He must learn to place victory above everything else."

The argument goes on to show that, in the first instance he must submit absolutely to the authority of his superiors; and, in this submission, he must become a killer. Superficially this is a paradox, a flat contradiction. But it is not an impossible psychic duality. The case resembles hypnosis somewhat; once the hypnotic spell is established, the person can be commanded to perform many things seemingly preposterous. The very surrender of thinking and will, however, is exactly what makes all things possible under the spell. I can even believe that a stupid private might succeed if promoted to top sergeant. True he would then be giving orders to his squad, but all his orders would, in reality, originate in a mind higher up; so, in the final analysis, the orders would be mere transmissions. The power to dominate would not well up in the sergeant himself.

The psychology of the common soldier is so well known that we need waste no space on it here. What is not well known, though, is that natural selection works continuously to attract into the ranks of the regular army the husky sub-average mind and to repel from them the frail and the sickly dullard as well as the domineering, the egocentric, and the perfect salesman or diplomat. (We cannot dis-

* "Friedens—und Kriegsmoral der Heere," by C. V. B. K. See also Hamou's references to it in "Psychologie du Militaire professionnel" 1896, p. 41.

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cuss conscript armies simply because this form of artificial selection drags all sorts and conditions of men into the barracks.) Some of the finest soldiers, sailors and marines in our own service have come directly from institutions for feeble-minded. They are clean-cut chaps and personally charming, as a rule; the surly and the brawlers cannot get by. When given a chance to make the most of their abilities, I find few happier, more agreeable fellows than these.

In a fiercely competitive world, their species fits best of all into a military system which relieves them of all mental effort, feeds them, clothes them, protects their health more effectively than most civilians protect theirs, pays them all they are worth, and, after a life of submissiveness, pensions them off handsomely. Army officers tell me that very few soldiers in the regular army ever desert, and that a large number of them enlist over and over, thereby showing their good sense and their satisfaction. With careful sorting, America could easily find submissive young men to fill a standing army of five million.

Under-dog

Submissive and over-compliant people usually display stupidities all their own. Is it nature or nurture that produces such? As usual, it is both in some unanalyzable integration. Many a man is born an under-dog, to be sure; but his yellow streak broadens and brightens under certain circumstances which first thwart him, then crush him, and finally benumb him. These circumstances often fuse within themselves the evils of climate, soil, beasts, the herd, and other hostile natures peculiar to the region. So, in the large sense, they are geographical. When we pass beyond this Short Introduction to a serious study of local stupidities, we shall have to search the map for the many natural boundaries of national, racial, and community dulness. And, first of all, it will be the dulness of the under-dog that will concern us; not because it is the key to the whole matter but rather because it is, in the first place, most conspicuous and, in the second place, of tremendous social and political importance. For the present, we must content ourselves with indicating sketchily the problem, its approaches, and sundry possible explanations.

Where in the important regions of the world today do we find

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conditions favoring the submissive personality? This question has never been answered, but it deserves much attention; for it is bound up with a host of consequential problems in politics and social ethics. No student of geography, climate, and populations can doubt that certain places seem to produce an inordinate horde of passive souls. Dewey has noticed this in China, and so have many other intelligent travelers. It has been repeatedly chronicled by Westerners who have inspected parts of India and Siberia. And thousands of people have commented upon the astonishing submissiveness of the Austrians.

In China, density of population seems to favor the ordinary man who is himself inclined to take things as they come. Surely the masterful personality there has a slim chance of outer success if he sets himself in opposition to the established order at any point. For the sheer mass of opponents he arrays against himself is almost surely fatal. This has been the history of every reform, good or bad, and every attempted dictatorship in China for centuries. Not one in a hundred succeeds even partially. Mastery by flight is also restricted not a little by the fact that there are few solitudes to which one may flee and establish a new state of affairs. There is refuge in the Buddhist monastery or the robbers' cave, and nowhere else. Where population presses thus, the easiest of all outer adjustments is the social; and this is China's curse. The family, the clan, and the village dominate the Chinese mind and behavior.

In India, of course, humid heat combines with overpopulation to the advantage of the submissive mortal. It is so much easier to live long and keep your health in that dreadful peninsula, if you sit stone-still beneath the banyan tree and watch time pass. Thousands of generations have thus multiplied the submissive and, at the same time, enabled the very few surviving aggressive egotists and other power-seekers to intrench themselves.

As for Siberia, there is some sense in the conjecture that the effect of the steppes is partly psychic and partly alimentary. The appalling monotony of the featureless plain stretching away to all horizons, coupled with the heavy monotony of black bread, tea, and grease dishes, drives the masterful man to flight. How can he linger where there is nothing to conquer save the landscape and nothing to be won save coarse food and a small annual sum from the sale of crops? As for the socially and artistically inclined persons, the steppe is the lowest circle of hell. They must go mad or else flee. I have no doubt

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this is why most of Russia's flatland population linger centuries behind the rest of Europe mentally and politically. But the matter requires much investigation before anybody can claim that as proved.

Austria presents a more fascinating web of human problems, partly because it belongs to our own world of affairs and partly because the causes of her submissiveness are most obscure. The bald fact, however, stands forth clearly enough, except to those who look through the glasses of prejudice. For generations, this country has ranked nearly at the bottom of the list in the production of masterful and social personalities of acknowledged superiority. Nothing proves this more neatly than the extraordinary comparisons drawn by Ellsworth Huntington in his latest study of racial and regional characteristics.*

Using as his source of data the Encyclopædia Britannica, Huntington has investigated the whole list of eminent men in Europe since the year 1600. He finds that, for every 10,000 of gross population, Italy has produced more than three times as many great men as Austria has. Scotland, with about one-tenth of Austria's population, can claim 648 outstanding personalities as against Austria's paltry 125—or about fifty times as many proportionately. So too with England, France, and Germany. Most striking, however, is the comparison with Switzerland, which abuts on Austria, contains many persons of the same general racial stock and yet has produced proportionately nearly ten times as many notables as Austria.

All this becomes doubly significant when we observe that, among the 125 great men of Austria in three centuries, the array of soldiers and politicians is inordinately high. The thought must occur to everybody at once that *this is precisely what we should expect in a land where the masses include an inordinately high number of submissive men and women*. For, obviously, as these increase so does the opportunity of the few masterful aggressive personalities who find their best field of endeavor in war and politics. Hence, in a land where there are few strong figures of any sort, the fairly potent militarist and statesman stand out.

So much for the great. Now for the small. The huge and obvious manifest percentage of Austrians appears to have been submissive to a degree that has aroused the contempt of masterful observers.

* "The Character of Races." N. Y., 1924. See especially pp. 231, 354

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Among the mountain Swiss and the north Germans this fact passed into common talk long, long ago; and the near-by Balkan people have for a similar length of time, looked down upon the Austrian as a worm hardly fit for fishbait. You probably recall Bismarck's famous line: "The Bavarian is an intermediate form between the Austrian and Man." Well, it can be matched over and over in the local lore of all peoples who have come into contacts with the Austrian peasant and the lower classes of Vienna.

Two political events of first magnitude have proved the truth of this opinion. The first is the amazing career of the Emperor Francis Joseph, whose ruthless despotism and supreme contempt for his subjects, in the larger sense, are paralleled only by the unbelievable docility of these same subjects toward this amazing medieval boss. The second event is the carefully calculated policy of Lenin toward the Austrian masses during his brilliant campaign of propaganda. This astute political genius sent agitators into every other land, to win converts for Bolshevism; but he wasted no breath on the Austrians. From his own personal acquaintance with them Lenin knew it was useless to harangue such cattle. The instant his agents stopped talking, any policeman could drive the herd back into line. Before the World War, it was as it has been ever since. Any petty official has always been able to kick them around. Even the tram conductors curse and bully them in a manner which would be resented by the herds in the New York subway. The Austrian endures dirt, fleas, sickness, poverty, abuse, and injustice with the same apathy. During the World War, this bewildered our American observers there. Look, for instance, at the Viennese, during the war and after. As Alonzo E. Taylor put it:

"The complacency and uncomplaining patience with which two million people during the past winter in Vienna endured cold, darkness, and hunger were a continuous marvel to the Americans in the city. A famous Viennese physician stated to the writer that it was not complacency but stupidity. . . . A more natural and generous interpretation is to assume a predominance of the artistic over the practical nature. The Viennese do not seem to realize their position. They think only of the glorious past of their city and do not realize that the discussion in Paris concerns merely whether they are doubly or trebly bankrupt."*

* *Saturday Evening Post*, Jan. 3, 1920.

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Mr. Taylor's charitable interpretation does not acquit the Austrians of stupidity. It merely says the same thing that Bismarck said in sweeter words. People who are unable to apprehend the situation in which they happen to lie are more or less unintelligent—that is, if they have been given a reasonable time for apprehension. And people who live in the glories of their own past may be excellent esthetes and even passably good second-rate artists—no great artist ever lives in the past; but they cannot be rated as thinking beings. And if they accept hunger, cold, and abuse without resentment, they are not even high-grade animals.

All this submissiveness may be pathological. I have heard competent medical men advance the theory that the prevalence of venereal diseases and plagues in the Danube Valley is responsible for the inertia. But this hardly convinces me, inasmuch as many other Danube peoples similarly infected, exhibit no such lackadaisical attitude. Look at the Magyar and the Serb, for instance. No, the origins lurk in darkness; and we cannot seek them out now.*

Do not conclude from all this that all such submissives are failures. This is the fallacy of many observers. Many a passive Austrian leads a jolly life. He dwells on the surface of things. He enjoys his beer, his incredibly dull newspaper, his skat, his summer jaunt into the Tyrol, his *verein*, and the free music in the gardens. Around these primitive delights he organizes his life. From the larger world he withdraws, not in the sense of fleeing it as masterful persons might; but simply in the sense of ignoring it. As I am now using the terms success and failure, thousands of these Austrians are successes. It is only when we view them objectively, against the vaster background of all terrestrial life and the struggle for existence, that we may speak of them as Bismarck did. The race may be a ghastly failure, but its personalities may still attain serenity and happiness. Character may rot, while the man flourishes, untouched by the scorn of alien herds.

Hitherto America has been, on the whole, a poor habitation for submissives. (I ignore, of course, the era of slavery down South, during which the docile blacks flourished as never before nor since.)

* I do not deny the great influence of climate in Austria. But in spite of Huntington's remarkable correlations between regional achievements and climate, I remain doubtful as to the amount of fact thus explained. The climate of Austria seems to differ from that of the Swiss cities and many German sections too little to be the adequate cause of such inferiority.

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Our empty, raw continent, for some three centuries, favored the hustler, the hard hitter, the hair-trigger scout, and the pioneer farmer-hunter. Woe to the man who gave in sweetly to friend or to foe! He hadn't a chance. Sooner or later some slick scoundrel came along and plucked him clean—or else cut his throat at dusk along some miry road.

But the scene changes. Our society becomes populous, organized, fixed, and adapted to all sorts and conditions of men. Once upon a time, within the memory of man, there was room at the top. Today there is much more room at the bottom. So we must expect the submissive to survive in ever growing swarms, to find a comfortable though menial existence somewhere near the bottom of the money scale, and there, by dint of multiplying, eventually inherit the earth, as they did long ago in Asia and most of Europe. The coolie has lifted his impassive face above the standing wheat. The fields are full of his kind. Tomorrow, he will rule the fields. (That is, unless we hit upon a plan of civilization.)

As we bring to an untimely end this discussion, may I warn against a possible misunderstanding? We have spoken of submissives, especially in the Old World. I would not have the conclusion drawn that everybody who accepts the harsh living conditions of China, India, Italy and Japan is predominantly a submissive person. That is not true. While millions of submissives are there to be found, many other millions appear in whom there is no trace of that devitalizing attitude. They may be described in a phrase as survival types which adapt either through apathy or through anesthesia supported by opium and morphine. We have touched on the drug addict elsewhere. Keep in mind that he is ever to be found as the side partner of the meek and the lowly.

Inertia

Inertia, as such, is neither stupidity nor the necessary cause of it. But so subtle is the link between the two characteristics that people commonly assume them to be one. Sluggishness passes for dulness, a slow response for the inability to respond. The careful reader can already detect the thin wedge of error here. He must, ere this, have learned from our prefatory pages that psychic energies are only an

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immeasurably complex form of physical and obey the same laws, though in forms scarcely recognizable. He knows that the precise relation between the system of personality receiving a new impression and the latter itself is essentially like the relation between a large volume of chemicals in some emulsion and a tiny drop of a new chemical poured into the same.

The receiving mass may react to the incoming trickle in a flash, as when mercury fulminate is detonated in the presence of blasting powder; or it may react so slowly that weeks pass before the result appears in its totality. Again, the volume of each substance, the temperatures, the pressures, the degree of ionization, and many other conditions enter into the process. Thus in the domains of human experiences and reactions; many things other than genuine insensitivity may lead to feeble response or no response at all. This, you will remember, was the difficulty we came up against at the very outset of these inquiries, when we found cases wherein we could not differentiate stupidity from ignorance or both from some fixation of habit. Now that we have learned more about processes, range, and levels, we must return for a moment to that problem.

First let us acquit of all stupidity, in the invidious sense of the term, those who are from Missouri, the healthy, cautious doubters who must be shown. They irritate us many a time. We cannot resist the suspicion that they must be dull, for they admit themselves to be incapable of seeing the merits of a belief or practice which seems to us utterly obvious. In this opinion we betray our own ignorance of the part which the most delicate ordering and arranging of experiences plays in sensitizing us to something new.

The new school of sociologists has been correctly stressing of late this very fact in the broader field of discoveries, inventions, techniques, and the rise of special sciences and industries. Ogburn, above all, in his enlightening study, "Social Change," makes much of the inner necessity (almost Hegelian at times!) that regulates the sequence of men's higher intellectual and creative affairs. First there had to be the gas engine before an automobile was possible. Then there had to be a highly refined design of gas engine before the airplane was possible. Discovery of X rays and radium inevitably preceded the mathematical elaborations of the wave theory and the experiments resulting from these which soon led to radio and now

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are about to give us television. And so on. To all of which I would append, as footnote, a series of ditto marks for psychology.

Consider the glacier-like speed of mind in the Mexicans who live within a stone's throw of the United States. Fifty yards or so from their back doors they see the active progress of buzzing civilization—in California and in Texas. They need but cross the bridge over the Rio Grande to watch the evidence of vast industrial development—good highways, easy transportation, new modern buildings, electricity, sanitation, the means of simple and fast communication. Yet does this modern panorama influence their own way of living? Not at all. They live on—happy and filthy—content to follow the ways of primitive man.

The Mexicans of Juarez, but a few hundred feet from El Paso, Texas, are pleased to continue life as they lived it in the Old Stone Age. Blissfully insensitive to the filthy, germ-laden air, quite impervious to narrow, dirty streets, they bargain and trade at their open markets where ancient meat lies open and exposed to sweepings, garbage and lean, flea-bitten dogs. Women and children with pock-marked faces straggle through the streets. Sometimes even a victim in the throes of smallpox—his face a mass of open sores. Ancient hags sit begging on curbs, their jaundiced faces and skinny hands upturned for a couple of pesos dropped into scrawny palms.

Many of these creatures, to be sure, are beyond all learning. But some suffer from nothing worse than psychic inertia in its evillest form. They require a year to reach conclusions which luckier natures attain in a few minutes. New experiences percolate their nervous systems so slowly that they seem never to make headway. They are fifty times worse than the English—who are famous also for their leaden learning.

For many years in the early 19th century, Willet introduced a daylight saving bill in the British House of Commons. Always it met with rude defeat. Daylight saving? Laughable! Of course such a silly scheme could not be of any possible use. In vain Willet said it had been successfully tried before—even in Ancient Rome. There each hour was lengthened beyond sixty minutes in the summer, and shortened again a like amount in the winter. Ireland, too, had used daylight saving. In 600 A.D. the Irish used a dual system of sun dials. The hours of the summer set were eighty minutes long. In the winter, each hour was but forty minutes long. Willet explained

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and argued in vain. The House of Commons simply couldn't get the point.*

Most Americans believe that daylight saving is an ingenious scheme which we recently devised. Thanks to the pressure of war, even those duller of citizens, our state and federal legislators, adopted the system. Yet in 1784 Benjamin Franklin publicly advocated the scheme, to economize on candles. But he talked to deaf ears.

The inability of the British to adopt what seem the most obvious methods for industrial progress is, in this case which Sir Herbert Austin bemoans, sheer psychic inertia. It is but one phase of the British habit of "muddling through." One of the most successful of English automobile manufacturers, Sir Herbert some months ago addressed the Institution of Automobile Engineers, of which he is President. He complained that the British method of taxing on the basis of engine capacity was a serious drawback to industrial progress.

"How much this outdated method of calculating horsepower for taxation purposes has cost the British nation in lost export trade it would be impossible even to estimate. Designers are still obliged to keep the bore-stroke ratio disproportionate for economic results. The American manufacturer has benefited enormously by our persistent folly and is able to produce his vehicles considerably cheaper by the adoption of a shorter stroke and larger bore." †

Too late did Sir Thomas Lipton, that magnificent, lovable old sportsman, discover that outworn shipbuilding methods and techniques can never compete with the most up to date developments of modern science. And the British, indeed, are beginning to wake up to the larger significance of the Grand Old Man's defeat, in the last America Cup race.

As Charles Selden makes clear in the *New York Times*, ‡

"Was not the snapping of that halyard and collapse of the mainsail suggestive of the breakdown of Great Britain's economic system? A good many people think so.

* Had the British adopted daylight saving when Willet proposed it, they would have gained in 100 years 240,000,000,000 hours, assuming that but two people in each family gained two hours a day for 120 days of each year. The gain would have been in savings on illuminating costs, in better work by daylight, and in health.

† As quoted in the *New York Times*, October 7, 1930

‡ September 20, 1930

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"Can the British individualist type of manufacturer and merchant continue to hold his own against a chain-store world? Can his country continue to be a free-trade D'Artagnan among nations surrounded by unscalable tariff walls with any greater success than that which attended human muscles aboard the Shamrock against the winches of the Enterprise? There is justification for the simile in current political discussion, for Stanley Baldwin, the Conservative leader, accuses William Graham, the Labor President of the Board of Trade, with his European tariff truce plan, of trying to compel Britain to fight with sword, bow and arrows against nations armed with modern heavy artillery."

The English are opportunists plagued with inertia. They are conservative but not reactionary. Like Sir Thomas Lipton, when they once are fully convinced of their oversights and mistakes, they willingly shift policies and scrap old ideas to take advantage of their new knowledge. Never antagonistic to the new, the English are merely slow in changing.

This whole matter of psychic inertia leads us into many fascinating speculations. Low velocity is not the same as no velocity at all, even if the former escapes the observer altogether. We probably find, up and down the animal kingdom, a million distinguishable speeds of nervous response. We incline too readily to interpret the very fast as reflexes and the very sluggish as stupidity or total lack of capacity.

Both conclusions may be utterly askew. To the spider, as she sits in her web at my window, eyeing me from afar, I may well appear to be as inanimate as a granite crag. I return the compliment by calling the spider an insect whose entire life is only a series of automatisms. May we not both be all wrong? I have, as I have watched spiders and ants and bees, often wondered whether or not, between stimulus and response, these marvelous little personalities might not pause, ponder, analyze, conjecture, experiment inwardly, and then act pretty much as we do. *Relative to the velocities of their general behavior, the lag during this delayed response might be no more than .0001 second.* To our glacial wits, this seems no lag whatsoever; yet it is quite long enough to deal with any new situation in a new way provided that it contains no more items than might be expected in the perception field of an ant or a spider.

All psychologists and literary folk who have speculated over the

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minds of insects seem to have overlooked the time-space relativities. They have not noticed the exceedingly simple space-complex with which the insect deals; nor have they made due allowance for the speed of nervous responses. Nowhere have I come upon the suggestion that the domain of response reckoned with by a spider contains so few items that perhaps relatively elaborate mental operations may be carried on concerning it within the—to us—simple nervous system of the creature. The psychic mass of the field to be changed by thinking is such that the inertia within it approximates an infinitesimal, relative to our own human psychic inertias.

I regard the whole question touching the mind of lower animals as thrown wide open by the newer findings of psychophysical relativity. A colony of ants may—for aught we know now—develop, reject, and battle over a dozen economic systems while our half-wit Congressmen are belching away over one clause in Schedule K of the tariff.

Be all this as it may, of one thing we must be pretty sure ere now: we cannot settle with finality this intricate business of stupidity until we have learned the dynamic interrelations of velocities, masses, numbers, and configurations within the nervous system and all its processes. In other words, our problem is of a piece with all psychology of personality.

Cupid

Little Cupid is a dunce. Who knows it better than the harried high school teacher who has spent his life trying to interest maids and youths in intellectual matters during the heat of adolescence? When the young first lose their hearts, their heads go along into the discard too. When they grow up and marry, they seldom take their brains with them to the altar. For the erotic urge lives entirely below the cerebellum. Once thoroughly wed and settled down, the honeymooners begin to recover their wits, not by choice but by necessity. The stupider they are by nature, the less they regulate their love life. Would the romantic young lady challenge this? Then allow me to turn to the pages of history. The year is 1919, the place, central and eastern Europe.

Famine came. Millions of people starved. The miserable creatures

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of Russia, Poland, and Austria ate weeds and grass; and when these had been consumed, they pulled up the roots and gulped them, too. A horrible thirst ensued, so they drank water until they developed "starvation dropsy." They bloated hideously. Their bones became so brittle that they cracked under a trifling blow. Great ulcers festooned their outraged stomachs

Would not a reasonable person, caught in such a horror, save his energies to the utmost? Would he not assume no responsibilities beyond those of finding food? Would he not abstain from every act that might cause more suffering? You might think so. But that did not occur to the degraded bipeds of those benighted lands. They bred like insects. Babies were born by the tens of thousands to mothers who had not eaten a decent meal for a full year; born to women who were crawling around like sick sluts, too feeble to lift their heads. Thousands of these hapless infants came into the world naked and remained so; for their parents could not find even a rag to cover them. The luckier were wrapped in old newspapers and were fed on grass—so that they died promptly, for the glory of God.

Then along came imbecile Americans, who, within a year or so, had collected from their countrymen about \$30,000,000 for relief. They flocked the starvelings into their emergency kitchens and fed them long enough to give the babies strength enough to develop rickets, influenza, and other able-bodied ills which mercifully slew the majority and unmercifully left a few to live on crippled for the rest of their days.

So, you see, love is not only blind, but deaf and dumb as well. To turn from stark tragedy to cool statistics, we find evidence aplenty that stupid people fail miserably in the rational control of their sexuality. This is not saying, mind you, that the stupid are over-sexed while the intelligent are under-sexed. That is not true. On the contrary, some facts can be cited to support the view, held by certain investigators, that superior people are highly sexed. We are discussing just now the type of control exercised over one's love life, not the intrinsic vigor of the latter.

The controls are weak in most young people regardless of their mental level; but, even among the young, the more intelligent control themselves much better than the stupid. To be sure, the matter is complicated considerably by emotions; the picture is not nearly so prim and precise as we might hope it to be. Nevertheless, the corre-

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lation is fairly high, with bad breaks here and there. But when we look at adults, the line between sheep and goats runs pretty straight and black. The high-grade control themselves well, the low-grade not at all.

To show this, I shall report a family history which will also serve a later purpose. It reveals not only the fool in love; also the perverted social thinking of the people who financed the fool in his loving.

Rochester, New York, is one of the finest cities in the land. It has exceptionally intelligent citizens at the head of affairs. As the world wags, it is prosperous and progressive. Laboratories, museums, auditoriums, hospitals, and social welfare organizations abound. From the dusty archives of the latter, one of their directors, Carl R. Rogers, and his assistant, Mitchell E. Rappaport, have lately exhumed the chronicles of a family which, I grieve to testify, discloses the social imbecility of sundry unnamed good souls who have been practising the brotherhood of man in Rochester.* Read the records and weep.

Consider the case of the Smiths. In 1907 Raymond Smith, a shiftless young painter, met Daisy Schuyler, frowsy heroine of this tale. Raymond had previously lived with a young woman whose family was known as "the dirty Dentons," but when she left him to take up residence with a Brooklyn Negro, he was well pleased to accept Daisy as a substitute partner. Raymond had a daughter named Grace, and Daisy brought along her three-year-old Gladys, fathered by Daisy's alleged husband, now deceased. By 1912, Raymond Jr., Steven, and Nora had been added to the family line. Up to this time the family was self-sustaining.

It was in the winter of 1912 and '13 that the Smiths came to Rochester. There were frequent moves to dodge the rent while Mr. Smith kept up a futile search for work. In February a neighbor requested help for the family, and a church worker went to the home. The worker pictured Mrs. Smith as a well-meaning, industrious woman, too proud to take the milk and clothing that were offered.

During the following summer Mr. Smith not only worked but began payment on a house into which the family moved. It stood in an alley, but was roomy enough. At first, Mrs. Smith kept it tolerably clean. This seems the high-water mark in the Smith fortunes. During the winter the family was again given assistance, and this story of

* The full report appears in the *Survey Graphic* for September, 1931, p. 508. The summary is about half the original's length.

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summer prosperity and winter poverty was repeated in the four following years, with variations only in the types of assistance.

Meanwhile the birthrate showed no decline. The years 1915-1919 saw four new claims upon charity added to the Smith family: Robert, Isabelle, Laura and Clarence. The fact that all four of these were destined to fill places in schools for the mentally defective was as yet mercifully concealed from the organizations which were striving to keep the family clothed and fed.

In 1919 the fecundity of the second generation was first expressed. Grace, now eighteen, came home from Buffalo, bearing her first-born child, illegitimate, to be sure. A few months later, Mr. and Mrs. Smith, as yet unmarried, had occasion to congratulate sixteen-year-old Gladys on her simultaneous marriage and confinement. Gladys at this time left the family hearth for her husband's home, and we cannot continue in this story the saga of her adventures. She and her brood were well cared for by charitable organizations until they left the city.

From 1920 to 1922 the children in the Smith home grew from seven to nine. The older children were known for their rowdy behavior, stealing, and general lawlessness. One of their more playful escapades was to throw watermelon rinds at the sleeping baby of their next door neighbor while Mrs. Smith sat on the porch and laughed. According to the public health nurses, the children were in miserable physical condition in spite of much free care. All were enuretics (there was no physical basis for it, doctors said) and the filthy condition of the home with its front yard heaped with junk was noteworthy.

Mr. Smith was now a confirmed panhandler. He succeeded always in obtaining relief, yet we know that he was making payments on his house and was even putting money in the bank. He purchased a player piano while the children's shoes were being supplied by charity.

John, whose birth occurred in January 1923, came at a critical time. Social agencies had grown weary of well-doing which brought no results—wary also of a mother who was now described as "obviously subnormal" and a father who would not work even when jobs were obtained for him. The case was taken into Children's Court in an effort to remove the children on a plea of insufficient guardianship. The family was placed on a month's probationary oversight.

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During this period the children continued to steal, stay away from school and torment their neighbors. Consequently, all the children except baby John were committed to the childplacing agency. The baby was left with his parents, for it was felt the care of one child and the possible return of others would be an incentive to the Smiths to maintain a suitable home. The burden would be one commensurate with their ability.

The experiment started off auspiciously. Mr. Smith obtained some work. He "bought" a car, by the simple process of making a \$10 down payment, and he was successful even in borrowing money for the license plates. At least one notable excursion was made in this car. The pair drove to a neighboring town and were married.

Surrounded now by the cloak of legality and harried by her sister-in-law for her neglect of her children, Mrs. Smith appealed to the childplacing agency for the return of Clarence and Fred. An optimistic investigator found the home conditions had improved, and the return of the two boys was authorized. These two youngsters, borderline mental defectives, brought the family group up to five. The load was too great for Mr. Smith. While supporting two, he kept the family ark above water; loaded with two more it began to sink, and Mrs. Smith, within six weeks of her marriage, was sending out one of her usual SOS calls: "We are married now and have some of the children home will not be able to get milk for the baby after today just as soon as he goes to work will let you know I am only asking you this for my poor childrn sake will thank you very much from Mrs. R. G. Smith."

The old story of intermittent work and relief began again. Mr. Smith resisted every effort to find employment for him until threatened with a charge of vagrancy; then he secured work as a taxi-driver for some time. A taxi-drivers' strike, however, put him back on the charity lists. Mrs. Smith, meanwhile, was allowing the home to slide into an unimaginable state of filth and disorder. Her first legitimate pregnancy ended in a miscarriage in 1925. At the time of the birth of the thirteenth child in October 1926, the home situation was again a neighborhood scandal. A night visit would have disclosed Mr. and Mrs. Smith sleeping with the new baby in one bed; three dirty children huddled together on the uncovered mattress of another bed; the third bed completely surrendered to the bedbugs.

One last effort was made to prod the Smiths into decency. From

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February to August 1927 the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children gave intensive supervision and more relief was obtained, but home conditions improved very little. Father was more cantankerous than ever before. He said the public nurses were "a bunch of old maids snooping around interfering in his business." He and Mrs. Smith refused to take seriously the "childish prank" of seven-year-old Clarence who, in a vicious moment, pushed a neighbor's small boy over a one hundred-foot cliff. The four-year-old victim miraculously escaped serious injury, and the Smiths insisted that "Clarence was just in fun," and "it was only a joke." For the first time in their history Mr. and Mrs. Smith quarreled excessively. He even beat his wife, feeling, perhaps, that she could not leave him now that they were legally man and wife.

In August 1927 the end of the experiment of family supervision was written by a court order which committed the four youngest Smiths to the childplacing agency. Perhaps the most astounding fact is that Mr. and Mrs. Smith separated as soon as they were relieved of their responsibilities. Mr. Smith disappeared, but his erstwhile companion became, at the age of forty-three, a street walker. She developed an infatuation for a disreputable young man and with him left the city. At Christmas time, 1927, came a letter from Mrs. Smith written from another state, asking for money and inquiring about the children. After this there is no trace either of her or of her husband. Raymond and Daisy may have to their credit other achievements in parasitic living, but we must let their fame rest on their accomplishments here.

The thirteen living children of the Smith family constitute a noteworthy legacy to the community. Their records provide a living proof of the fact that the "short and simple annals of the poor" are neither short nor simple. We cannot tell, but can only suggest the chronicle of the children's growth.

Grace and Gladys have been mentioned. Sexual promiscuity, an illegitimate child, a forced marriage, aid from local charities—such are the items that crop out in their records.

Raymond, Jr. and Steven, the first born of the present union, have continued the rowdy careers which they started so early. Both were frequent runaways, both were involved in stealing. Steven was a vicious, boastful lad, an enuresis problem even in adolescence. The theft of an auto at last put him into a state school for boys at the age

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of sixteen. He was eighteen when released, and whether he has continued his delinquencies we do not know. The last word on Raymond was received a year ago in a letter from the probation department of a near-by city. He was then in court for auto stealing. Both these boys were of low mentality. Raymond was classified as borderline and Steven as dull normal.

Of the remaining five children permanently committed to foster home care in 1923, one is definitely defective, three are borderline defectives. Nora is a good sample of this low grade quartet. Removed from her own home at eleven, five years of foster home care accomplished little. Petty stealing persisted. Enuresis was a problem until adolescence. All attempts to train her in habits of work, reliability, and truthfulness have been failures. A strong sex interest led her into serious sex delinquency, and at the age of sixteen she was placed in a school for wayward girls. The school authorities acknowledged failure after two years and returned her to the community. A working home was found for her, but her attitude and behavior were so poor, and her work habits so slovenly that the experiment was a complete failure. She was then placed in a state school for defectives, although the certificate of mental defect was based on her social failures rather than on her test ratings.

Robert, Isabelle, and Laura have duplicated, as nearly as possible, Nora's history. Robert has also specialized in runaways and sex perversion. Isabelle has added bowel incontinence to enuresis. Robert is in a school for defectives, Laura is now waiting for acceptance in the same school, and Isabelle will certainly require such care within a few years. Of this whole group only Gloria shows normal intelligence and behavior.

So much for the saga of the Smiths. Like John Brown's soul it still "goes marching on." What have the Smiths cost? What is the price of this monument to community care for families that are socially unfit? Very briefly the bill may be itemized as follows:

Relief up to 1927, without any charge for overhead or for donated articles	\$ 1,730
Medical care including hospital and nursing costs, figured very conservatively. No charge for doctors' services	1,292
Psychological and psychiatric examinations ...	440
58 years of foster home care for the children @ \$350 per year	20,350

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ing the end of the tale of the Smith family I hear indignant citizens protesting that all these nauseating details about moron sexuality are as far removed from genuine love as Dr. Einstein is removed from Jimmy Walker, Mayor of New York. Of course, morons are degraded; but why drag them into a chapter which purports to deal with the noblest of all human emotions?

Well, there is a good reason for dragging them in. The Smiths of Rochester manifest in extreme form the impulses and consequences of love and sexuality which we find in nearly all people of normal and better than normal mentality. Among such the overt acts of love are inhibited, repressed, suppressed, disguised, and otherwise made inobservable. So most investigators have had trouble getting at elementals; and all sorts of erroneous opinions prevail about that highly complex and potent urge.

The hidden pattern of love, from its rawest to its subtlest, acts to insensitize people toward most of the important matters of life. At the same time, by a loathsome irony of nature, the excitements of love serve to broaden and vivify the entire personality, often making it more sensitive and abler. Get this straight; the two processes occur at different times and places. Each is linked with a distinct phase of the love cycle.

Marston has shown that love involves two primary emotions, in special form and with special integration. There is inducement first of all, and then there is submission. The woman induces the man, primarily, and, if successful in her efforts at captivation, she persuades him to submit to her. The man surrenders in the sense that he satisfies the woman sexually. But the woman wins him only by giving him pleasure, too. So the relation is, in part, reciprocal. She gets her maximum satisfaction by satisfying him most; and *vice versa*.

Now, how has this to do with stupidity? Alas, it ties in with it in too many ways. For it is the very essence of the love relation that the lovers go lost in each other; that each focusses unerringly upon delighting the other. (I speak, of course, of the rich, full form here.) As long as this persists, the lovers are insensitive to all else. Like Paolo and Francesca, "that day we read no more." Again like Dante's famous lovers, they are blown about forever, in each other's arms, in an infinite void. This utter absorption is, to the innocent bystander, usually comic—when not a trifle disgusting. It has about it some faint flavor of a body function which, like the alimentary, is most taste-

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fully carried on in privacy. At any rate, so it seems to us of Puritan ancestry.

So long as it dominates, the lover behaves like the "single-track minds" whose stupidities we have already reviewed. The more skilful and sustained the loving, the blinder and dumber the individual becomes toward everything else. The infatuated man neglects his business, drops friends, and overlooks sundry duties. The infatuated woman often sits around in a stupor, or talks with obvious absent-mindedness; and she often commits blazing indiscretions which, on close inspection, turn out to be caused by insensitivity to phases of her whole situation. Many a grave crime has been perpetrated "for love's sweet sake"—and not exclusively by morons, though they act thus on slighter provocation than normal people.

No man has ever managed himself with complete intelligence—and perhaps none ever will. Most of us resemble more closely the gentleman recently reported to the American Medical Association by Dr George de Tarnowsky. This patient came to an Illinois hospital apparently suffering from a fifteen-year-old stomach ulcer. Under cross-examination, he admitted that his trouble began as a result of pushing two needles into his abdomen in an effort to kill himself. The X-rays revealed the needles; these were removed, and the man was sent on his way rejoicing and well.

For stupid self-management, this takes the prize. If, on the great day fifteen years earlier, our hero had wished to pass from earth's drab scene, why did he not finish the job—with a gun or a chisel or something else handy? If, on the other hand, the pangs of the two wounds opened his eyes to the advantages of longevity, why did he not rush to a doctor, tell him he fell on the needles while sewing on a pants button, and get himself tuned up for the next forty years? Why, in the name of all morons, did he continue in mild misery for so long?

Well, let him that is without dulness among you cast the first stone! Every emotion plays in upon everything that a man knows and thinks he knows; and all the limitations of sensitivity cramp his style also whenever he sets out to manage himself. As if that were not

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confusion enough, his appetites surge in upon the turmoil of impulses and completely befuddle him. In extreme cases, a single craving enslaves him.

Most men dig their own graves with their teeth. So runs an old saw—and all too truly. Stupidity in managing one's diet and digestion is one of the strangest perversions in our species. So far as we can observe, few other animals misbehave as we do in their eating and drinking. Taking people as we find them, the world over, we must admit that most of them are lower than the animals in their food habits.

In pronouncing them stupid, however, we must guard against befuddling ourselves over cases which are shot through with disease, malnutrition, and evil home training. That makes the task hard indeed. It restricts us, in this Short Introduction, to a few simple categories, the plainest of which is the imbecile eater who, having been thoroughly warned by physicians and friends, ponders their advice and goes right on poisoning himself. He takes as his model that incredible figure, the Emperor Charles V, big boss of the so-called "Holy Roman Empire" from 1519 down to the hour when he literally ate himself to death. Let that charming clinical biographer, Dr. MacLaurin, tell us about this great gut that called itself a man. In his book, "Post Mortem," this Australian surgeon who died all too soon presents an unforgettable sketch of gourmand stupidity.

After the Emperor had abdicated, he could do nothing but sit around, shivering under an eiderdown blanket even in the mid-summer heat, and foaming his rage at his gout, which had so crippled him that he could hardly open a letter and could no longer sign his name to one. Seeing the end, he "heroically sat down to eat himself to death."

"It is doubtful whether Charles enjoyed his chosen method of self-poisoning, for he had lost the sense of taste, and no food could be too richly seasoned for his tired palate. Vast quantities of beef, mutton, venison, ham, and highly flavored sausages went past those toothless jaws, washed down by the richest wines, the heaviest beers."

Naturally an ageing intestine could not carry this load long without chemical aid; so, for months before he died, Charles gulped senna, the best stuff in sight in a world lacking Epsom salts. The

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senna probably did its bit to hasten the ruin which Bright's disease had begun. The great man passed on—to those Happy Eating Grounds where souls may stuff yet endure forever. Dr. MacLaurin comments upon the Emperor's career thus:

"It is seldom that we can trace so well in any historical character the course of the disease from which he died. If Charles had been content to live on milky food and drink less, it is probable that he would have lived for years; he might have yielded to the constant entreaties of his friends and resumed the imperial crown; he might have taken into his strong hands the guidance of Spain and the Netherlands that was overwhelming Philip; his calm good sense might have averted the rising flood that ultimately led to the revolt of the Netherlands; possibly he might even have averted the Spanish Armada, though it seems improbable that he could have lived thirty years. But Spain might have avoided that arrogant behavior which has, since that day, caused so many of her troubles; with the substitution of Philip for Charles at that critical time she took a wrong turning from which she has never since recovered." *

According to none other than James Fenimore Cooper, himself a doughty glutton at times, our own great-grandfathers did not fall far behind the parade of trenchermen. Their tables groaned under the hot burden of game pies, corn bread, four and twenty blends of sausage, thick steaks, custards, brandy sauces over puddings, and buckets of ale, claret, sherry, and brandy. "The Americans," declared Cooper, "are the grossest feeders of any civilized nation." And that was certainly true well down into my own boyhood. For never can I forget the Cyclopean meals which were, thrice daily, swept down the eager gullets of my rustic relatives on their great, rich farms in Western New York State. Breakfast consisted normally of a two-quart pitcher of milk, a pot of coffee, ham and eggs, furnished with fried potatoes and ten or twelve pancakes, then a magnificent steak to which were attached an individual plate of piping hot biscuits and three or four varieties of home made jams. As for Sunday, well, it is not within the credence of twentieth-century man to recite that menu.

And now, just for contrast, look at the opposite stupidity in self-management which has of late grown popular in our land of limit-

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less imbecilities. Contemplate the Fools of Fashion. No, not all of them! That would fill several more volumes. Look only at the super-fools who sacrifice health and happiness to the mandates of some crafty modiste

Thousands of stupid women never learn to care for their bodies. Read the testimony of some 20,000 women who wrote in to a woman's magazine in 1925 and 1926 about the disasters into which they had been brought by their efforts to reduce their weight and otherwise improve their figure. Here are a few samples of the mass of evidence submitted to the Adult Weight Conference at the New York Academy of Medicine in February, 1926.

The wife of a well-known New York physician wanted to reduce but her husband refused to put her upon a diet, whereupon she began dieting herself and lived almost exclusively upon orange juice and milk. She managed this by having her "meals" when her husband was away. She became slenderer and slenderer, a mere nothing, and her husband discovered that she had tuberculosis. She is now in a sanitarium but her case is doubtful.

A young girl of nineteen who weighed 116 pounds tried to reduce her weight in two weeks to 100 pounds in order that she might wear the same size dress worn by a girl chum who weighed just one hundred and considered it a disgrace to weigh more. The girl put herself upon a diet of bran biscuit and lemonade, and reduced, but fell ill of fever, kidney trouble and nervous breakdown. The doctors said it would take her two years to get back her original strength.

A society woman in her attempt to keep slender frequented a beauty parlor where she was rolled and pounded. She now has cancer of the hip.

An actress had a fat double chin cut away, but the operation left her so scarred and disfigured that she will not even appear socially much less on the stage.

Another woman tried to massage her chin and produced a growth upon her throat.

A girl of twenty-five, engaged to be married, and believing that she was plumper than her fiancé admired, put herself upon a strict diet of no breakfast, a glass of water for lunch and a small chop and a slice of pineapple for dinner. Her fiancé knew nothing of this and when he took her out to dinner, as usual twice a week, she ate, but then went home and took an emetic. In three months she was in a

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sanitarium suffering from a severe nervous breakdown and unable to take food. Doctors tell her it will be a year before she can be married.

American women love to abuse their bodies in many other ways, some of which are not subject for polite conversation. Let us end the sorrowful exhibit with one petty stupidity in which men share the dishonor.

Otherwise intelligent and civilized human beings show a stupidity of which the most primitive savage and the dumbest peasant would not be guilty in submitting to constant foot trouble brought on by improper and ill-fitting shoes. Silly female nit-wits constantly cramp their feet in footwear outrageously small and barbarous in looks. But addle-pated shop girls and flimsy witted ladies of leisure who suffer that they may be adorned have their counterpart in stupid males. Here are the results of the government's foot and shoe inspection* of the infantry near El Paso in 1916, where 30,359 men were inspected. Of these, only 5,417 wore shoes of the correct size. Six thousand nine hundred and six wore shoes one-half size too small. Fourteen thousand four hundred and twenty-nine suffered in shoes a size or more too small. And 3,511 others wore too large shoes. As a result, the inspectors found such defects as corns, jammed and crowded toes, bunions, over-riding toes, ingrowing nails, hammer toes, callosities and displacement of the large toe to be common, despite the fact that by the exercise of a minimum of intelligence these disabilities are entirely preventable.

What can we expect of a nation which cannot manage its belly nor its feet nor its fat? Why hope that it can ever manage its mind? Or its own business? Or its neighbors? Silly emotions, especially submission to vogue and compliance with the supposed wishes of one's associates, combine with appetites to perpetuate the major stupidities of society and business. They succeed on a grand scale largely because few men are able to understand either their own natures or those of other people. Could they once gain insight into the mechanisms of personality, they would find it fairly easy to deliver themselves from costly blunders. What hinders them?

A host of deep, stubborn, and inextricably snarled insensitivities toward human beings. We now look at a few score of these.

* "Health Building and Life Extension," p. 257. Quoting "Making the Feet for Military Service." by Arthur S. Jones. *The Military Surgeon, A* 1917

ΨΕΥΔΟΠΑΘΕΙΑ
PSEUDOPATHEIA

PSYCHAGNOIA

WE NOW shift to a fresh outlook and turn our gaze downward upon the plains of mankind, seeing the same creatures as before, but in another perspective.

At first, you will recall, the vista was that of time. We glimpsed man aborning and a dying down the millennia. We noticed, above all, the forces round about him which made him stupid; the heat, the damp, insects, bacteria, and the struggle for food and survival amid a world of beasts and foes. That spectacle viewed, we next peered into the heart of the individual, into his bloods and glands, into the dark-nesses of his brains where we watched him spin his conceits. Psyche posed before our camera, sometimes pleasantly but more often not. After many exposures, we began to grasp the Form. Then we were ready for our next venture, now at hand.

So here we turn to the stupidities of men which arise from attitudes toward and dealings with others of their species. What a startling change comes over the scene! Man, in his battle with nature, was one thing; in his inner growth still another; and now, behold!—he seems to assume a third nature as he confronts other men and women, be it in love or in business or in politics. It is a much weaker nature than either of the other two, a nature so stupid that we wonder whether we see aright. Man, the social animal, appears to have sunk below the apes. Is it because he has risen so far above the apes' environment? Or is there degeneration here? Or perhaps the sickness of a sea change that comes over him as he moves onward and upward to levels as yet untrodden?

At any rate, in dealing with his fellow-man, he piles dulness on blunder and heaps the whole into chaos. What price do we pay for man's stupidity toward man? Well, here is part of the bill rendered.

The labor turn-over in our country amounts to something like 250% a year. That is, our 40,000,000 workers are fired and re-hired about 2 1/2 times every twelve months. Business experts estimate that the cost of rehiring a worker varies from \$40 to \$200. This cost represents partly the expense of teaching the man his new work and

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partly the damage he does while learning. It is generally believed, on the basis of various records and tests, that nine-tenths of this enormous turn-over is due to bad management. Most of this bad management turns out to be the result of sheer ignorance of human nature. Executives and foremen do not know what they can and what they cannot do with men in order to attain given results. Because of this ignorance about \$4,000,000,000 a year is wasted in quarrels, in firing, in seeking new men, in useless strikes and lock-outs, and so on.

I regard this loss as the smallest of the major penalties we all pay for our ignorance of human nature and personality. It is petty beside the 201,000 annual divorces, most of which result from the inability of men to understand women and the inability of women to understand men. It is petty, once more, when contrasted to the wretchedness caused by married people sticking together when they are hopelessly incompatible and ought to separate. It is a mere trifle when measured against the deformed lives of little children who are being raised by parents who totally misunderstand them and each other. Late surveys indicate that three out of every five cases of juvenile delinquents are caused by unhappy or broken homes. And this does not include the thousands of children, totally misunderstood by their parents, who are forced into unnatural lives with, perhaps, the best of parental intentions. We cannot estimate the cost in misery alone—to say nothing of economic loss—of the ruined careers of hundreds of thousands who have drifted into lines of work for which they are, by nature, poorly fitted, all because we lack the specialists and the public machinery for gauging and guiding the young into vocations that suit them.

Nor can we grasp the terrible price we pay for man's stupidity toward man in our corrupt and villainous politics. How naïve of us to believe that a political scheme may one day successfully embrace the whole mass of mankind!

The inhabitants of Cohoes, New York, do not understand themselves or Cohoes well enough to manage Cohoes so that it achieves a civilization. The inhabitants of New York City speak so many tongues that they cannot even converse with one another. They cherish so many diverging, savage, and barbarous superstitions that they cannot think communally. Eight out of every ten of them are too

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ignorant to grasp the details of even one department of the municipal government. And the result is that the place is managed so ridiculously and so corruptly that it would have gone to smash long ago, but for the fact that thousands of millionaires and billionaire corporations are on hand to be taxed and bled.

Here we come to the high cost of international misunderstanding. The people of the five continents and the seven seas are a hundred-fold more heterogeneous in race, religions, morals, and personal interests than the people of New York City. They are also immeasurably more ignorant and degraded than even the lowest New Yorkers. Let this mob of mobs unite in any political unity whatsoever, and there can be only one result. The immense majority of low-grades will promptly be organized by the unscrupulous and the misguided, and they will either fight interminably among themselves or, more probably, they will unite—as they are now doing all over the world—in a conspiracy of honest graft to overwhelm the few high-grades.

The heaviest items in our bill cannot be converted into dollars and cents. They take their toll in everything from child beating to war.

At no time is the ordinary citizen called upon to learn how to distinguish personality traits. He may live to be a hundred years old without once having been under any practical necessity of analyzing the ingredients of any human being's behavior. So, if you call upon him suddenly to do this, he is lost. You might almost as well request him to analyze coal tar into its chemical components offhand. What he normally does is to form a total impression of a man in essentially the same way we all form impressions of a Greek temple, a painting, or a sonata. The quality of this total impression is then imputed to whatever items within it which you may ask specially about.

Years ago Thorndike noted this tendency in the judgments of the employees of two large industrial corporations. He found that "the estimates of the same man in a number of different traits such as intelligence, industry, technical skill, reliability, etc., etc., were very highly correlated and evenly correlated. It consequently appeared probable that those giving the ratings were unable to analyze out these different aspects of the person's nature and achievement and rate each in independence of the other. Their ratings were apparently affected by a marked tendency to think of the person in general as rather good or rather inferior and to color the judgments of the qualities by this general feeling."

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I have made a somewhat more devastating test along the same line on more than 500 writers who have studied characterization under me during the past fifteen years. While I have never compiled statistics of this test, I know the general outcome, which is striking. The form is simple enough. The writer is first asked to prepare *at leisure* the fullest possible description of somebody he has known well over a long period—the longer, the better. He is not warned that any further test as to the accuracy of this account will be made. He usually assumes that this is a simple literary exercise, even though he is distinctly requested to make no effort at "fine writing." From two days to two weeks may be consumed thus. I then take his report and make a list of all the traits and physical characteristics mentioned in it. I cross-examine him as to what evidence he has to support his statements. I ask him to recall some specific act in which, for instance, the person described behaved in a manner indicating that he was slovenly, or unkind, or tricky, or faithless.

Rare indeed is the person who, with all the time at his disposal to make answer, can specify definite acts which thoroughly substantiate his first general judgment. Most of the victims of the quiz manage to recall fewer than half of the total needed. And virtually all of them cite a few acts which, on closer scrutiny, prove nothing at all about the trait alleged. If my memory serves me well, there have been only three persons out of the 500 or more who have emerged from the cross-examination with a perfect score.

The normal man shows six stupid tendencies in judging other people. Here they are:

1. The tendency to appraise people by "sympathetic insight."
2. The tendency to judge people in terms of crude sensory impressions and the feelings they arouse.
3. The tendency to exaggerate obvious behavior, and to judge people by externals.
4. The tendency to judge people in terms of the narrow range of our own daily habits.
5. The tendency to judge people in terms of knowledge gained through one's own contacts alone.
6. The tendency to select some facts and to ignore others according to our temperament.

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Let us now look at each of these humanesque handicaps. They are a mighty aid to charity, if nothing else.

SYMPATHY

"Sympathetic imagination" or "sympathetic insight," while hard to define with nicety, is well known in the main. It is "putting yourself in the other fellow's place." It is the attitude on which the Golden Rule is based, and the perplexities which men have always found in applying the Golden Rule arise from the central difficulty—of recreating in oneself the attitude and the experiences of someone else. Most people fancy this is an easy exercise. They agree with Voltaire, who remarked:

"Whoever has imagination and insight can find in himself the full knowledge of human nature; for all men are alike at bottom, and the differences of shade do not alter fundamental differences."

This doctrine is not founded on any proved facts. When Voltaire endeavored to understand a man by this method, he was perceiving and judging him in terms of all those potent native trends and habits which the great encyclopedist had developed in his own intense life. We have a pretty proof of this in Voltaire's remark, made on several occasions: "I have never been able to understand how anybody could be cold. That is too much for me." As he uses the term "coldness" in its sense of "unemotional," you will readily understand his inability to intuit cold people. He was a human volcano in almost continuous eruption; and his rages flamed fast and furious, searing victim after victim.

Every person's imagination is specific and limited. Insight, however we may define the word, is even more so. When we try to "put ourselves in the other fellow's place," we never succeed in experiencing things as he does. Obscure habits, feelings, and attitudes drawn from our entire past interweave in the "feel" we finally get for the "other fellow." These never emerge into clear vision. The result is subtle self-deception.

Do not suppose that your imagination differs from that of your neighbor merely in vividness or merely in the objects around which

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it plays. The difference is much deeper than that. It goes back to primal differences in the sense of pleasure, in pain and in cravings. These, in turn, derive partly from ancestral heritages in the germ-plasm and partly from the climate, the food, the social customs of one's place and time. That they are the major limiting factors of each man's "sympathetic insight" is readily proved.

Herodotus tells of a Persian soldier in the army of Xerxes who confided to a fellow-guest at a banquet that he was experiencing the bitterest pain possible. He knew for a certainty that Xerxes would be crushed. And the unspeakable agony of it was *πολλὰ φρονέοντα μηδένος κρατέειν*. He could foresee clearly the many disasters to come, but he was powerless to forestall them.

Dante, on the other hand, has quite another view. He writes:

"Nessun maggior dolore che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria . . ."

The greatest pain is that of remembering happy days when one is wretched. Now can you imagine what would happen were the Persian soldier and Dante to seek a mutual understanding? The soldier is sickened by his own helplessness in the presence of a doom he clearly sees. The Italian is crushed by past pleasure recalled in the dark hour. The Persian looks forward, the Italian backwards. These two must ever be stupid toward each other. A man who suffers most over pleasant memories is built on a pattern very different from that of a man whose blackest depression is over anticipations.

Differences much greater than this one abound in the domain of sensory pains. Many Malays are insensible to flesh wounds which would bowl over the ordinary white man. The Chinese often display similar lack of feeling towards diseases which cause exquisite agony in a European. Conversely, no healthy person can truly feel the suffering of a neurasthenic in whose wakeful ears the drip of rain becomes a torment. How wide, then, is the gulf between a Moro chieftain and an American lady with "nerves"! For what we can imagine in the way of physical pain depends largely upon the kinds of pain we have experienced.

"Sympathetic imagination" is primarily a form of individual fantasy and emotion. But innumerable items of sense, perception, recall, appetite and special habits all figure in each act of imagining. Thus,

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all the tendencies which blur our judgments of people combine here. Fantasy with respect to any given object is ever moulded by every other kind of adjustment we make to that same object. So every prejudice, as well as every other psychic handicap, corrupts us when we strive to "put ourselves in the other fellow's place."

The accuracy of sympathetic insight varies with the degree of identical nature and nurture in the observer and the observed. Thus we have four main levels of affinity, so to speak:

- 1 Close resemblance between two persons, both nurture and nature,
- 2 Close resemblance in nature but slight resemblance in nurture,
- 3 Slight resemblance in nature but close resemblance in nurture, and
- 4 Slight resemblance in both nature and nurture.

The degree of reciprocal understanding is greatest in the first and diminishes down the list in the order given. As nature and nurture are almost identical in certain kinds of twins, we may expect these to "feel" each other's personality with great ease and spontaneity. And this is what happens, as you may learn from various minute reports on them by Galton and others. Their tastes, emotions, attitudes and general mental behavior are so astonishingly alike that they behave almost as one organism *

What has been learned about heredity warns us not to expect many children of the same parents to exhibit this same high affinity. Though they grow up under the same home influences, they differ sharply in their inherited tendencies towards rage, fear, sex and all the complex emotions and attitudes. Each difference enhances their stupidity in imagining the inner lives of their brothers and sisters.

Have you not seen profound misunderstandings between brothers spring from a genuine difficulty in getting the point of view taken by each? I have, and often, too. One of many cases that comes to mind now is that of two men, now in their early fifties, who have never been able to get along with each other except in the most formal and cold fashion. The elder brother is blessed with incredible energy and "drive." When hardly more than twenty he was working

* Perhaps the clearest recent instance is that reported by Gesell, on the Groeenvor brothers, in the *Scientific Monthly*, April, 1922.

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sixteen hours a day joyously, thrusting a finger into half a dozen businesses at once, and pulling a plum out of each. He has held this pace without relenting once. He enjoys it. It is his inner nature. He has never had any deep interest except in running factories. His mind is a cross between that of an engineer and a capitalist. Just the pattern of mind which has been foredoomed to great financial success in America during the past twenty-five years. He runs everybody, takes advice from none, and sees neither virtue nor pleasure in any way of life other than his own. All his immense powers are nozzled down like water in a fire hose. They shoot in just one direction, and whatever they hit they knock over. So today he is worth many millions.

The younger brother is an artist and thinker. His father, being wealthy as well as broadminded, had the good sense to allow free rein to the artistic trends in this son. Today the latter ranks fairly well in a highly special field of art. A quiet fellow, gentle, retiring, given to musing for weeks at a time over a new idea, and fond of serious reading in philosophy, psychology, and art, he spends his days in a studio and cottage far out in the country.

Both brothers are thoroughly healthy. Never once have they quarreled, so far as I can learn. When they meet on the family reunions at Thanksgiving, Christmas and mother's birthday, they chat amiably, ask each other what he is doing now, play a game or two of billiards, go out to look at father's newest fancy dogs, and part at the day's end with the polite request, "Run over and see me soon. So long!" Further they have never gone. Further they cannot go. In talking with the younger about the older, I have been impressed by his sincere desire to "understand Charley" and his mild distress at being wholly unable to do so. As for Charley, he does not hesitate to express his deep sorrow over "poor Ed." Poor Ed has never amounted to anything, but he can't help it. And what luck that Dad has plenty of money to care for the unfortunate! Ed has a fine streak in him though, Charley will admit. He never seems envious of the fellows who do the big things of life. And so on!

It is a little odd that the brothers resemble each other strikingly and, apart from the energetic "drive," walk, talk, and gesticulate somewhat alike. They grew up together as boys and went to the same academy in New England. Not until college days did their natures vary widely; then the elder went to an engineering school, while

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the younger took a few desultory courses in art. They afford a beautiful illustration of the little which environment and education can do to make two essentially different persons alike. Fundamentally their nurture has been the same; but their natures lie a world apart. Each remains forever stupid toward the other.

Persons having but a slight resemblance to each other both in nature and in nurture have a hard time understanding one another even in the simpler relations of life. The overlap of their fields of fantasy is too slight. The worst cases in our divorce courts are often all too perfect demonstrations of total psychic alienation. They make a fine Sunday School lesson on the dangers of marrying out of one's mental, emotional and cultural class. The husband who resembles his wife in neither nature nor nurture is pretty sure to have a hard time of it, sooner or later; or, if he doesn't, his wife will. The first misunderstanding induces angers, fears, or suspicions; and these tend to establish new habits of resistance or avoidance. What little sympathy may have first existed quickly is blocked by these new emotions and their collateral behavior patterns. So things go from bad to worse.

The stupidest and the cruellest practice in our very stupid and cruel system of marriage and divorce is that of trying to patch up a peace between husbands and wives who differ thus widely in both nature and nurture. An artificial and compulsory truce is infinitely worse for all concerned than open warfare. And immediate separation is best of all.

Certain things lead to greater stupidities in sympathetic imagination than others do. The order of their importance is by no means fixed and universal, but it does assume a rude pattern. If you will construe it as a very loose approximation, the following sequence may help:

1. Native emotional differences.
2. Native differences in mentality.
3. Native differences in health usually rank very close to the mental and sometimes outweigh the latter.
4. Native differences in free energy or flow of spontaneous effort.
5. Sex differences come next, but with much overlapping in the emotional and free energy fields.
6. Age differences are of great importance and must be listed

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here; but they include all the above five and cannot be logically separated from them.

7. Differences in experiences during infancy
8. Differences in childhood experiences.
9. Differences in adolescent experiences.
10. Differences in adult vocational and social experiences.

We shall not attempt a full discussion of all these here. Most of them will be considered somewhere. Let me dismiss the matter now with a few illustrations.

The sweet old lady who sews trousers and cravats for the Congo chieftain in her favorite missionary school exemplifies human misunderstandings at their full. In her comfortable Boston home, she sorrows for the poor heathen, while the poor heathen—so far as he thinks of her at all—probably smacks his lips as he thinks how good she would taste in a large, well-flavored soup. Lady and chieftain differ wholly in nature and nurture. Neither can understand the other essentially. No sincere humanitarian can truly “feel” the mind of an equally sincere cannibal, any more than an advanced American feminist can enter into the emotions of the little Hindu widow who gladly mounts her husband’s funeral pyre and burns to death. Whatever common nature the two may have inherited has been neutralized, for all practical purposes, by differences in environment. And if they chance to have had no common nature in their emotions, mentality, health and energy, they are further apart than the stars.

The stupidity of him who lives by the Golden Rule often leads to the bleak failure of noble purpose, for the simple reason that the Golden Rule builds on a silly psychology. A survival from pre-scientific days, it assumes that, first, people know their own minds, and secondly, that they can penetrate the minds of others. Both assumptions are usually mistaken, and when applied to practical affairs lead to minor disaster, as in the case of an East Side hat manufacturer.

He once tried, with complete consistency, to apply the Golden Rule to his workers. He had a sizable factory in a dingy, noisy, crowded street, where most of his employees had to live because of transportation difficulties. He studied the situation and was brought to realize that the environment was one which would wear him out and deprive him of great advantages if he were obliged to live in it

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And he arranged to move his entire plant to a pleasant little suburb in New Jersey. Around the new establishment he erected charming little cottages with front yards and pretty gardens. And to this Elysium he transported some two hundred families.

Within a year his workers were moving back to town, even at the price of their jobs. Bewildered, the kindly man made an inquiry and found that these people of the slums had grown to like the crowds, the noises, the neighborhood gossip, the clubs, the movies, the street organs, and all the rest; and they would not readjust their lives to a more wholesome way.

The factory finally went back to the slums, too, and there it is today.

This is the way the Golden Rule works. It failed. Why? Because no employer, however aided by hygienic experts and housing specialists, can discover the right move by putting himself in the place of his employee and asking himself what he—the imaginary employee now—would like best.

There are only two courses open here: one is to ask them what they want themselves—trusting not at all to your own imagination—or else make an objective research of the facts and base your policy on these. Had the employer followed the first course, it is possible that many of the workers would have voted to move to the country, for they would be ignorant of their own reactions to such rural isolation and would think, as many others have, that it would be heaven. Had the employer followed the second course, some psychologist might easily have told him something about the laws of habit and group life, and he would have turned a deaf ear to the workers who begged for a country home.

MENTALITY

Two kinds of individual differences in mentality stand out as obstacles to reciprocal understanding. One of these has to do with the *speed and nicety of learning*. The other is the matter of *grasping the relative importance of things learned*. It is a pity we have in English no wholly adequate names for these processes and abilities. Speed and nicety of learning has been called "wit" by John Locke and others, "learning" by William James, and "intelligence" by

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sundry recent psychologists. But none of these names seems wholly satisfying. The trait is acquisitive velocity in perception and memory organization. It is the ability to observe and retain details of experience. You behold it at its best in people of quick eye and photographic memory. They forget nothing that has ever been brought to their attention. Furthest removed from them are the feeble-minded, who can learn virtually nothing.

Now, it would be absurd to expect a feeble-minded person to grasp in any intelligent manner the make-up and the psychic life of, let us say, a man like Macaulay or John Stuart Mill, both of whom could take in an entire volume of difficult reading matter with less effort and in a shorter time than a half-wit can learn ten lines in a school primer. And hardly less absurd is it to maintain that Macaulay or Mill could truly comprehend by sympathetic insight the psychic color, pattern and slow drift of the half-wit True, they can understand him much better than he can understand them. But at best they must fall far short of insight.

So too must all others who, being neither monsters of learning nor feeble-minded, differ considerably from one another. You may observe this almost anywhere and any time. How hard it is for the learned academic to grasp the ways of the slow minded farmer or white collar clerk! How impossible for the swift wit of H. L. Mencken to appreciate the less nimble and fast forgetting minds of his favorite target, the Great American Boob!

Look now to the second major trait of mentality, the ability to grasp the relative importance of things learned. Here we come to the greatest of all individual differences. It is the difference between wisdom and folly. It also accounts largely for the difference between the realist and the idealist, between the opportunist and the doctrinaire, the extravert and the introvert, the liberal and the fanatic.

What counts here is not the speed and nicety of learning. It is rather a matter of perspective. Large facts are accepted as large, small as small, trivial as trivial, momentous as momentous. This is the very essence of sagacity. And you may find it in a very slow learner as well as in a fast one. Doubtless the highest sagacity occurs most often in conjunction with swift and accurate learning, inasmuch as this latter trait alone can furnish the sagacious man with copious facts about himself and his world. Nevertheless, many a man whose fund of knowledge is meagre uses that fund with genuine wisdom.

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Witness the ignorant man who knows he is ignorant and seldom ventures in opinion or in act beyond his bounds, yet within these always sees clearly.

Supreme sagacity involves two traits. One is seeing things from a point of view and in consistent perspective. The other is knowing what that point of view and perspective are and making due allowance for them in final judgments and decisive acts. In other words, the truly great wise man knows himself and his idiosyncracies quite as clearly as he knows the world. He can put himself in his place. On the other hand, this self-knowledge does not blur his objectives nor paralyze his action as mere introspection so frequently does. This means that the very wise man can be neither extremely introverted nor extremely extraverted nor extremely esthetic, but must blend all three of these tendencies.

At the opposite extreme what appears? Complete inability to treat an important fact as important, a trivial one as trivial. Complete inability to appreciate one's own point of view and perspective. Hollingworth has acutely pointed out that this is the typical behavior of the psychoneurotic. He remarks:

"Failure in sagacity will thus imply a disposition to react to a present total situation by singling out *some* detail of it and reacting to this detail by *some* total reaction previously associated with a whole in which the detail figured. . . ." (The psychoneurotic becomes dizzy on hearing an opera air, vomits at the mention of a man's name, is sickened at the sight of a flower stem. . . .)*

That is, he may once have sat in the front row of the top balcony at the opera and have grown dizzy as he looked down at the stage. Thenceforth anything connected with opera music revives the dizziness. His behavior is dominated by accidental and trifling associations. His life is much ado about nothing.

In between him and the sage lie all degrees of wisdom and folly. The greater the difference between any two individuals in this range, the less easily can either comprehend or sympathize with the other. Of the pair, the wiser surely understands his inferior better. And it seems probable that very wise men may penetrate lesser minds almost to the core of their being. As there are very few such men, though,

* "Psychology of Functional Neuroses," p. 60 et seq.

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this fact does not vitiate our general contention about man's ignorance of man.

I have said that differences in sagacity underlie the familiar misunderstandings between pronounced extraverts and one-sided introverts. This deserves comment. A man whose attention is strongly directed towards externals must have a perspective radically different from that of the man who constantly dwells on his own inner life, his feelings, fantasies and cravings. Each perspective may be definite. Each may therefore present all things in some well organized pattern. Each may have its own consistently maintained standards of value. Hence we cannot say that one is superior to the other so far as the organization of experiences is concerned. When we look to self-knowledge, though, we come upon a pretty reliable measure of extravert and introvert. And in it we also find the basis of their profound intellectual antagonism, as well as their inability to understand each other remotely.

Inevitably the thoroughgoing introvert exaggerates the importance of the psychic and the personal. No less inevitably does the unrestrained extravert underestimate it. And to this extent both are deficient in sagacity. Such an introvert, if inclined to reflection and analysis, moves toward a constellation of ideas which are best typified in the philosophy of Kant. He tends to regard each inner experience as totally different from the physical order in which he lives. Personality, to him, is the one absolute reality. Time, space and matter are mere accidents, or perhaps by-products in the timeless and spaceless life of the Ego. He cherishes the pleasant conviction that his personal nature took shape before and apart from all experiences since birth, and that, in its deepest characteristics, no experience can alter it. Logically, then, he believes in some predestination, though it need not be of the Calvinistic brand.

He is never an esthete. He cannot lose himself in the joys of sense; or if he can, in rare moments of abandon, he despises them and himself all the more bitterly. His interest in other people is likely to be weak, if not wholly lacking; and so too with his interest in society. Most of all is his contempt for all manipulation of objects. To him the mechanic and the inventor are mysteries devised by the devil to perplex honest folk.

How can such a man comprehend an utter extravert like Henry Ford who truly lives and thinks exclusively in the realm of iron,

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steel, gasoline, rubber and lead? Such objective minds look upon men as machines and upon the state as a factory. They contemplate life as a jumble of physical forces which, if reduced to order and well harnessed, create happiness. They regard their own pleasures and pains, hopes and fears as chemical processes under their skins, all capable of being managed precisely as any chemical can be in a laboratory. To their inner experiences they impute no more cosmic importance than to any other oxidation or electrolysis.

Each nature of well-adjusted introvert and well-adjusted extravert finds its happiest outlet and activity in its own peculiar way. The extravert attends by preference to the outer objects, while the introvert attends to his inner life. Let each live and learn as he likes, and the outcome is easy to predict. Steadily the sense perceptions, the emotions, and the subtler mental habits of the pair will diverge until neither man comprehends the other.

Now, educate your extravert in one manner which intensifies his natural extravertive trends, while you train your introvert so as to intensify all his congenital subjectivity, and you get the utmost difference, the fullest psychic incompatibility when both reach adulthood. Consider this case. Nowhere will you find a wider breach than between the scientific psychologist and the extreme mystic-romantic. The better each has been trained in his own bent, the further apart are their thoughts and aspirations. Between them argument is futile. You might as well hope for fruitful results from an argument between George Bernard Shaw, the vegetarian, and the King of the Cannibal Islands over the evils of flesh-eating.

What, for example, can a person imbued with the spirit of the modern laboratory say to a man like Middleton Murry? How can he reply to Murry's sincere assertion that "modern psychology is a pseudo-science of the most clumsy and pretentious kind"? Or to his doctrine that the one true "science of the soul" has been attained by Keats, who described in "The Vale of Soul Making" precisely how a soul is made? *

Here you behold that utter and irremediable incompatibility of insights and outlooks which is the plague of our modern world. If you give intensive training to a natural esthete, artist, saint, mystic or romantic, any one of these will end up far removed from the sort

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attained by an innately analytical and inquisitive extravert mind. Yes, much further removed from the latter today than in any earlier age, and just because each type has come to fuller bloom, thanks to our richer opportunity for self-development. Nurture widens the breach which nature first made ocean-wide.

Or, again, what is there to say to Chesterton in such a puzzling flight of insight as this?

It is beyond all my own sensitivities to grasp Mr. Chesterton in his supreme moments of moral and religious paradox. Here is one of a hundred illustrations.

When I read his dazzling elaboration of nonsense entitled "Heretics," I came to this passage in the essay on "The Negative Spirit":

"A young man may keep himself from vice by continually thinking of disease. He may keep himself from it also by continually thinking of the Virgin Mary. There may be question about which method is the more reasonable, or even about which is the more efficient. But surely there can be no question about which is the more wholesome."

I paused and said: "Of course there can't be any question about that." But—fancy my bewilderment!—a Chesterton admirer told me a few hours later that Chesterton meant it was more wholesome for the youth to think about the Virgin Mary! And I had supposed he meant the opposite. After twenty years or so, I still cannot conceive of a mind that would regard the Chesterton method as anything but a form of erotic perversion.

For many years I was firmly convinced that Chesterton was a practical joker who pulled his paradoxes to delight a public. One day somebody assured me that the Englishman was one of the ablest defenders of the Faith. So I tried to read him in a new light. At length I gave up, convinced that, at the core of the creature, there must be something—maybe an endocrine secretion, maybe an infantilism, maybe a secret credo—which I am constitutionally unable to grasp or even to graze with a finger tip.

Nobody who has observed at all widely doubts that sex differences count heavily in shaping the total personality pattern and hence in

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limiting each individual's sympathetic imagination and increasing a thousandfold his liability to stupidity toward the other sex. Unfortunately, though, there has never been even a superficial investigation of this matter. So far as I can learn, no book has ever been written which attempts, however feebly, to describe actual connections between specific erotic behavior patterns and specific temperaments, attitudes and trends of fantasy. Indeed, there are only three or four reports of the erotic patterns themselves; and these are bald case histories devoid of interpretation. In this year 1932, when all biologists and all psychologists agree that sex trends shape personality in many important ways, no scientist is publicly investigating cases, no scientific institution or endowment is willing to finance such an investigation openly, and few reputable book publishers dare announce a book on such a subject, even in their medical lists! Is it to be marveled at that we know precious little about personalities, when such conditions prevail? The trickle of research in this immensely significant field is all carried on secretly; and few workers are aware of those others who seek the truth here. All I can say about this subject is that, in general, we must expect that the greatest of all differences in sympathetic insight will occur where we find the greatest individual differences in physical pattern, in specific energy outlets, and in the general type of physiological equilibrium. We shall not here go into the question of sex differences, except to show how these foster the stupidities arising from "sex antagonism" and similar misunderstandings between male and female.

Women tend naturally to color their pictures of themselves, of other people, of the world, and of life with hues and shadings quite unlike those favored by ordinary men. Here is the basis of the normal misunderstanding between the sexes.

How profound this may become, when an intelligent woman begins to rationalize her own emotional-appetitive patten, may be seen in the curious notions about "sex antagonism" entertained by many advanced feminists. To be sure, these feminists are not average women; they are superior to the average in intelligence and simply different from the average in various other respects. Nevertheless, they develop views that are, in all probability, mere exaggerations of normal trends. Here is a recent instance.

Dr. Beatrice Hinkle depicts men as terrified by women. Before the convention of the Child Study Association of America, on

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October 25, 1925, in New York City, this distinguished psychoanalyst and translator of Jung said:

"An overwhelming fear of woman lies deep in the soul of man and is the cause of the sex antagonism *about which he is always talking.*"

I have italicized the last words because they are diagnostically important. In all my life I have never heard a man talk about "sex antagonism." Not one! And I have discussed all kinds of topics with all kinds of men—rather more than most psychologists and psychoanalysts have. But I have heard many feminists talk at great length about it and wax eloquent, if not furious.

Where did Dr. Hinkle get the notion that men are always talking about "sex antagonism"? Surely from no records! It is a pure rationalization of a craving in woman herself, nothing more. Dr. Hinkle further remarks in the same address that "men are in a panic because of woman's struggle for greater freedom." For signs of this panic I have searched in vain—in clubs, in newspapers, everywhere. All the men I have ever talked with about the emancipation of women have been either singularly uninterested in the matter or else have shrugged their shoulders and said, "Oh, let the women do what they like!" Indeed, most European and Oriental observers complain that the American man is altogether too lenient, good natured and extravagantly liberal with his women folks.

Again, the same authority writes about the disastrous effects of marriage upon women and declares that proof of "the submerging effect of marriage on women is afforded by the numerous instances in which wives separated by death or otherwise from their husbands have blossomed suddenly into happy, capable and useful individuals" * Beyond a doubt, there have been such cases; I know of several within my own range of contact. But Dr. Hinkle seems unaware of the necessity of proving "the submerging effect of marriage" by a survey of all cases of marriage rather than by citing a few favorable instances. Looking at the national statistics rather than at isolated cases, we find that the death rate among widows is very much higher than among other women, be they married or single, in corresponding age groups. In other words, Dr. Hinkle's cases

* "The Chaos of Modern Marriage" *Harper's Magazine*, Dec. 1925, p. 5

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are the rare exceptions. The rule is that women who are delivered from marriage bonds by death fail to blossom. They cannot adjust to the free life of the ideal feminist.

Now what has all this to do with the limitations upon the sympathetic imagination? Well, it is the attempt of a highly trained scientific mind in a woman's body to understand the attitudes, thoughts, and emotions of ordinary males. As such, it is rather a flat fizzle. And, so far as I can see, it fails chiefly because this scientific woman, like many others, can no more perceive objectively certain aspects of masculine personality than an ordinary man can perceive objectively certain aspects of feminine personality. Never the twain shall meet, when it comes to those complex and enormously subtle integrations which grow largely out of primordial sex differences. If a mature woman as highly trained as Dr. Hinkle can believe such nonsense about "men's overwhelming fears of women," what may we expect of untrained women?

Likewise with differences of age. Nobody maintains that a five-year-old child can put himself in the place of his father or his mother; and we all know how enormously difficult it is for father or mother to understand the five-year-old's outlook. Now and then you come upon a rare adult who does preserve intact many of his own childhood experiences with singular purity; but the normal tendency is toward a blurring and an oblivescence. We see it in the perennial misunderstandings between the older and the younger generations. Each age loves to believe that there is something wonderfully new in the clash, but that notion is naïveté sweetened with egotism. The lack of adequate insight here is a normal constant due to age differences.

I shall not discuss the way in which all our various kinds of experience from youth to old age qualify our sympathetic imagination. For this is an old, old story with which most of us are only too familiar. The people with whom we grow up, the various school teachers who have moulded us with birch or balm, the jobs we have tackled, the mishaps we have encountered, the good luck that has come our way,—all these inevitably play some part in making some persons easy to comprehend and other people quite incomprehensible to us. And just because no two persons accumulate precisely identical experiences, we must always expect some little—perhaps utterly immeasurable—differences based upon such irreducible variations

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in life patterns. For the psychologist they probably must always remain surds, their origin and their composition alike undiscoverable as well as unanalyzable. Here is a domain of stupidities which science will never conquer.

NONSENSES

Our eyes, ears, and noses play sorry tricks on us. Often they make us forever stupid toward people. Their first report often fixes our attitude for all time. In our likes and dislikes, clean hair scores more than chastity, and well-brushed teeth outrank germ-free blood. A sweet breath exceeds a sweet temper. Care in coughing usually makes more friends than the noblest disposition or the most brilliant mind.

These preferences came out sharply in a series of experiments performed by F. A. C. Perrin.* They agree substantially with occasional notes I have taken on college students and their reasons for liking or disliking one another. They all go to show that most of us still judge one another as do cats and dogs—chiefly by the nose. Of all the organs and functions of the body, the nose is the most intolerant. It plays a part in shaping human friendships and enmities out of all proportion to its importance. Mind controls it only with great effort.

The poise of the body, the gait, the way a man cares for his finger nails, the lift of his eyebrows, the quality of his voice, the tint of his skin, and a hundred other petty details of behavior also enter into our first impression of the man and crystallize it. Rarely do we know how strongly such items influence us. Hence our difficulty in countering them. This is why the first impression tends to be very much like our final one in so many instances. People who know little of their own mental processes often boast of this fact; they credit themselves with "intuition," whereas they ought to debit themselves with "sensation." They do not penetrate their acquaintances in the least. Quite the reverse! They construe every later discovery in the light of their first impression.

If this impression is strongly favorable, they show friendship toward the person; and this usually induces the person to behave good-

* "Physical Attractiveness and Repulsiveness." *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, IV, p. 205. (1921)

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naturedly toward them, with the result that the observer sees in him only good qualities. If the first impression has been decidedly antagonistic or one of disgust, the opposite sequence of events ensues. The "intuitive" observers show their dislike or repugnance in their conduct, which in turn moves the disliked person to some more or less similar attitude; and then they see only his bad side. By virtue of this action and reaction, coarse and greasy skins lose young lady stenographers about as many jobs as are ever lost on account of brain lack or finger ineptness. That this is true has been shown by actual experiments conducted in employment agencies. Let it be said in justice that the male in search of employment suffers equally with his sister worker. Prospective employers simply feel repulsion toward coarse, greasy skins, and though all unconscious of the reason for the dislike, they show an unfavorable attitude which leaves both employer and prospective employee utterly "out of sympathy." It is difficult to seek out the cause of this repulsion caused by a comparatively minor skin trouble, and yet it can easily be seen as traceable to some fundamental functioning of the sensory tract.

Sometimes the cycle takes another course. The great strength of our reaction is taken as evidence that it reveals the truth. "I hated that woman the minute I set eyes on her," a lady once remarked to me. "There must have been something radically wrong with her. How else could she stir me up so?" This is quite plausible—until you know that the antipathy may have had any one of a hundred causes in the past life of the lady herself. It may even have sprung from a long-forgotten experience of early childhood. There is no regular connection between the intensity of one's feelings and the "truth" that one feels, but the temptation to believe that there must be is very strong. And it makes for cruel misunderstandings and stupidities.

Here I have in mind a certain renowned chemist. During a particularly intensified period of research he worked with some powerful chemicals that stained his hands a dirty yellow. His laboratory reeked with obnoxious odors, and because of his long hours there these seemed to permeate his very person. Certainly the odors hung in his clothing. About this time, too, he was attending many minor social affairs and meeting many persons. He has laughingly told me that the disgust of his new acquaintances was all but audible. They would turn from him at the sight of his yellow hands and at the

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faint odors of his laboratory. And yet each and all undoubtedly knew the man to be one of the greatest chemists of his time.

Everyone knows that persons are continually being surprised at learning "how ordinary great men are." Well, this is not so surprising. We build up romantic notions about this or that one of the illustrious; and then we see or talk with him, and judge him by some motion of the hand, by the fact that he hasn't shaved for ten hours, or by the startling discovery that he ought to use a toothbrush. Those who were admitted to Theodore Roosevelt's presence during his administration immediately judged the man "most human and likable," because the President was apt to forget both himself and those present and go prancing excitedly, angrily—and "humanly"—up and down his office floor. Many the impression the man made by his sometimes indiscreet talk; many the impression that will endure until the impressed has gone to the grave. The fallacy in this doctrine that first impressions are surest lies in the fact that they are merely so strong that we mould later ones to them.

While many sense reactions towards people are part of man's nature, many more are the creations of circumstance, local customs, and accidental habits. To analyze one of these latter would require an impossibly intimate knowledge of the person's entire career. Why does one man suspect every lean and hungry Cassius who approaches him, while placing childlike trust in the honesty and all-around uprightness of every grinning fat man he meets? Why does one woman abhor short men and lose her heart to every tall broad-shouldered one who looks like a clothing advertisement? Why do some of us (despite all literature to the contrary) admire brunettes while others of us adore blondes? Whatever the answer is, we may be confident that most of it will be drawn from sundry pleasant and painful experiences with various people. These contacts, themselves long forgotten, have left a residuum of feeling which is revived, often most inappropriately, when we encounter a stranger resembling the loved one or the hated one in some absurd triviality of his nature.

Here the simple sensory response diminishes to a psychic point which, so to speak, becomes the center of a huge system of integrative acts. Sometimes the system is chiefly esthetic, sometimes social, sometimes intellectual, sometimes religious, and what not. A host of near factors enter, only to raise new and greater difficulties.

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These larger esthetic responses are appallingly hard to analyze. And nobody knows less about them than the person in whom they occur. They seem so simple, so self-evident, so intense, so genuine! They must report some profound truth! The person who enjoys the esthetic experience does not hesitate to link it up with all his moral, religious and philosophical judgments. Here is one of the funniest instances of such linkage that I have ever encountered. It is the serious statement of two well meaning authors who are trying to teach our rising generation morals. (God help the poor little dears!)

The authors, Wilson and Fairley, reveal their personal esthetic responses frankly in a sweeping condemnation of all savages. Here are their exact words:

"The Savage is in every way inferior to civilized man. The same things are true of the human species and of human society, only that here the intelligent co-operation of man has been directed, not upon other creatures, but upon himself. The human body has been developed and made more beautiful and stronger. You can easily see this by comparing the savage with the civilized man. In the matter of beauty the contrast is striking. The ugliness of the savage man or woman is due largely to the unrestrained riot of base passions which disfigure the countenance. We do not have to go to savage communities to see that, but among savage people we always see it. In the matter of strength the savage is also inferior. When the two races are brought into collision it is always the civilized man who prevails over the savage. But this physical development is subordinate to the intellectual or spiritual development. Ages of intelligent effort have built up a larger brain, a stronger will, a more beautiful soul" *

Here is the nonsense of the senses carried to its absolute limit in a rationalization that must stand for many years as a gem of mighthought. Evidently the authors have some strong primitive reaction against Negroes, Malays, and Chinese, presumably based on odor, on simple color and form perceptions, and on a hodge-podge of false teaching. These original tendencies have been reinforced by habit, of course; until now, in adult years, the authors find themselves less able than ever to enjoy the sight of the noble red Indian's face or the profile of a Bantu damsel. To harmonize all their experiences, esthetic and moral, they then construe the Beautiful as the Good, find that good-

* Wilson and Fairley Talks to Young People on Ethics. N. Y., 1924

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ness causes beauty while naughtiness makes an ugly mug. Let us wonder what they would say to a Chinese coolie who told them that he thought their own faces as ugly as two mudpuddles! That would complicate philosophy not a little, wouldn't it? Can the poor savage ever have any sympathetic insight into Wilson and Fairley? Can these authors ever gain insight into the simple savage? Not in a thousand ages!

Now here we have simply an extreme instance of a universal tendency. Tastes invade and alter men's judgments in affairs far removed from simple esthetics. There's the rub! And the degree of invasion is invisible to him who judges. Far more than most of us like to admit, our mature tastes are an outgrowth of our animal sensitivities and standards drilled into us during childhood, especially by teachers. And once our tastes have pervaded our entire range of judgments, we then crave mightily to justify all our likes and dislikes. And this only too often blocks us when we try to see other people as they are.

We might go on for a hundred pages listing instances of stupid misjudgments of people based upon sundry obscure esthetic impressions which have later been rationalized for the sake of supporting the judge's private taste. How many times have you heard, for instance, that a receding chin marks a weak will? Well, "a weak chin" is scarcely a safe guide to character reading. For it is often caused by rickets during childhood. Nor is a "strong jaw" a reliable sign of a powerful personality, as it often results from nothing more mysterious than proper food early in life. Again it is the result of endocrine disease. The strongest jaw I have ever seen was attached to an Irish girl whose personality was about as vigorous and upstanding as a dishrag. One of the weakest chins I have ever gazed on was the exclusive possession of a Wall Street speculator who was a holy terror in his own office, driving everybody at top speed, domineering his business associates, and generally having his own way. Psychologists have checked up on many surface characteristics like "weak chins" and find that all of them have been misjudged by stupid observers.

As long as men do not like the looks of such features, they will find a justification for their dislike; and we cannot prevail against them. So it would seem that the only way to rid the world of this silly error is to rid it of the sons of Cyclops who commit it.

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APPEARANCES

The Allies came within a hair's breadth of winning the World War at the outset. But for the stupidity of the British officers in judging a strange Frenchman by his physical appearance, millions now dead might be still alive and happy.

At nine in the morning, on the third of September, 1914, the onrushing German cohorts were sweeping around Paris. They were almost within sight of the city. Kluck's army, at the extreme west of the invaders' line, was crossing the Marne, in the final act of encircling the French capital, when a staff officer in Lanzerac's army found on the body of a dead German officer orders from the German Headquarters which revealed that, as Kluck moved onward, he was seriously exposing the German flanks to an attack.

When this news reached Galliéni, the new military governor of Paris perceived in a flash the new set-up and its possibilities. He told Papa Joffre, his superior, how they could trap the German right flank with a swift operation. Dull old Papa Joffre could not see it but he did agree to give it thought. Galliéni, who, above all other generals in the warring armies, had a keen sense of time and a grasp of space relations startlingly like Napoleon's, rushed off to persuade the British commander, Sir John French, whose forces lay in Kluck's direct path.

French was not at the British headquarters in Melun, when Galliéni raced up in his dirty motor car. Archibald Murray, chief of staff, was not around either; so Galliéni had to establish contacts with whatever British officers he could find. Let us make fair allowances for the frame of mind in which these officers then happened to be: they were depressed, somewhat confused, and considerably disillusioned over the efficiency of the French army. When the car drew up, Galliéni chatted with some of them and had the thrill of hearing them declare that, if they had known what a miserable pack of frog-eaters these French were, they would never have entered the war.

After that pleasant introduction Galliéni started arguing in favor of a quick coup against Kluck. The British eyed the stranger; "a most unmilitary looking" fellow, "bespectacled, untidy, with shaggy moustache, black buttoned boots and yellow leggings," as Captain B. H. Liddell Hart describes him at that moment. "Little wonder,"

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he adds, "that one eminent soldier with a pungent gift of humour remarked that 'no British officer would be seen speaking to such a damned comedian.'"

The British frowned haughtily upon the proposals of this damned comedian. They showed "great repugnance." Gallieni waited three hours for French to return; then he had to speed back to his Paris post, in temporary defeat. Only by good luck and high pressure, did he manage to persuade dull old Papa Joffre a day too late for the big stroke, but still in time to win the so-called Battle of the Marne.

It is pretty clear to military experts that, if Archibald Murray, chief of staff who scowled on this comedian had been openminded and free from imbecile sensitivities toward a man's clothes and barbering, Gallieni could have won him over to fast action. And then? The German army would have been trapped; Moltke, who was very blue over the whole situation anyhow, would have been in full flight all along the center. And the Allies would have been . . .

Ah well! Dream on! For dreams are no further removed from realities than is man's inveterate stupidity in judging by appearances only.

Our daily habits face toward externals. Engaged as we are in continual struggle for food, shelter, safety and health, we deal with objects more often than with inner natures. Curiously too, we deal with objects almost wholly through their surfaces. It is only the food and drink we swallow and the air we breathe that we handle more intimately. So we have few chances to learn the insides of things, be these things mountains or book agents. And when the rare chance comes, we cannot profit by it, for we lack dexterity.

Thus we fall prey to our elemental habits in the struggle for existence. A banker who has spent years over foreign exchange cannot analyze me offhand any more skilfully than I can rattle off to him a glib interpretation of the day's prices of lira, yen and rupee. Sizing up a man requires immense experience no less than training. It is an art that cannot be picked up over night. Practice is indispensable. Some unscientific men who have studied people earnestly for many years acquire the knack of penetrating human nature and often amaze psychologists who have worked exclusively in some narrower field.

How gross the superior man's ignorance of human nature is can

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scarcely be fathomed. I have often made the attempt, only to come to the end of my sounding line without hitting bottom.

While carrying on work in personnel management some years ago, I found the chance to interview a number of successful manufacturers about the ways they sized up candidates for important posts in their factories. One man attended chiefly to the candidates' shoes and the way he managed his feet during the interview. Another considered the color and manner of the candidates above everything else; and he confided to me the great secret that all great business executives have steely-blue orbs (I have since found that all of them have, save those who have black, brown, gray, green or variegated eyes) A third man said he used the method of a friend of his, which was to usher the candidate into a room where there was neither chair nor hat rack, and then to say to him briskly: "Hang up your hat and sit down." What the candidate did was a sure revelation of his character. More recently, the Yellow Cab Company of Newark, through its employment officer, announced that it did not hire red-headed men as taxicab drivers—because all men with red hair, while above the average in intelligence, were "too speedy" to be safe-and-sane chauffeurs

A friend of mine detests the habit of chewing gum. The mere sight of a chewer leaves him in almost savage condition. He will not talk to people while they chew gum. He regards the vice as a sure sign of unspeakable vulgarity. No gentleman, no well-bred person will ever put a cud in his mouth! And so it goes on. Someone somewhere can always construct an ensemble personality about the color of a woman's lipstick or the cut and weave of a man's sack coat. A letting down in a man's appearance is supposed to contribute toward a break in character; whereas the truth of the matter is that, if break there was, it probably occurred long before the business of "letting down" Grooming today means something, yes; it means prosperity, as a rule. If it meant more than that, we would be a chameleon race, taking on new personality color with each minor shift in our fortunes and tailors.

Now behind all such ludicrous clairvoyances as those just mentioned you find a notion that men are simple objects like desks and cigars, to be appraised by some one or two little marks. And this, I am sure, is more often than not a natural result of long dealing with simple objects like stocks, bonds, automobiles and carpet tacks,

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during workaday hours. Happily or unhappily, a man's core is not at all like that of a carpet tack.

There is, undeniably, some foundation for this illusion of likeness among humans but not enough to warrant broad inferences. Our gross exteriors are much alike, just as are the gross exteriors of all the smooth pebbles in the bottom of the river. Like all of the pebbles we have all been acted upon by the same forces of air, water, weather, and food. In our own class we may all act in highly stereotyped outer fashion, as at a church dinner; but we display no evidences of our inner behavior *because the situation does not warrant either such behavior or display.*

As with our commonest situations so with the manifest behavior of the people who survive to exhibit themselves in them. Consider the billions of human beings who die between the first week of embryonic life and the tenth post-natal year. Consider also the millions who die of some mental or physical defect in later years, or who go into seclusion or are locked up in jails or killed as public menaces. How unlike the normal adult! And how differently they would behave in his situations! The "normal" man, then, is just one small sub-variety in a huge class containing many other sub-varieties; and the conclusions we draw about his life and activities are about only those who survive certain narrowly-defined conditions.

Conspicuous people alone shape the popular opinion about the groups to which they, in some sense, belong. You set out to observe the English, let us say. What do you do? You read books and essays about the English. You study English history. You visit London and scan it from a bus. You chat with clerks and waiters, with lords and ladies. You ask the English what they themselves think about themselves. You ask other tourists what they think about the English. You may study trade statistics and population curves. In time you make up your mind; the English are thus and that, they differ from the French thus and from the Germans so.

Now fully 95% of your eventual verdict has been—whether you are aware of it or not—derived from conspicuous Britishers and their conspicuous acts. The great poets, the great dramatists, the great journalists, the great statesmen, the great merchants, the great criminals, the great lawyers, the great scientists—these are the people who fill the front pages of the newspapers, who write those same pages, who write books and are written about in books, who turn

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the course of empire, who embroil the nations and snatch them from the burning, who enrage or delight the herd with speeches, and who draft the policies of war and peace no less than the programs of prosperity and failure.

Some men become conspicuous by accident, others by the will of some power behind the throne, others through cunning, others through crime, others by dull, hard work; still others through bribery, others through servility, and others by simple seniority of rank in a vast bureaucracy. How expect then any important resemblance among all the conspicuous? Would you find the American race disclosed in the least common denominator of Abraham Lincoln, U. S. Grant, Horace Greeley, Whistler, William James, John L. Sullivan, Harry Tracy, Al Capone, Rudy Vallee, Al Smith, Herbert Hoover, George Gershwin, Jane Addams, William Randolph Hearst, Nicholas Murray Butler, Aimée Semple McPherson, and Knute Rockne? No, the conspicuous man usually deviates from all others and owes his publicity to his deviation. What is ordinary, common, universal obviously cannot stand out and attract attention, still less win applause or curses.

A nation or a race discloses itself in those ordinary, common, universal characteristics. Hence it is all but impossible to discern these in the eminences. I admit that they may be present there, but how deeply overshadowed by the traits and circumstances that make for fame! It is only in such things as the common speech, folk customs, trade practices, popular morals, preferences in food, drink, play, exercise, books, motion pictures, and other herd behavior that we come to grips with any large number of people.

Men reveal their social stupidity when they declare or assume that a people is reflected in its great men. They are ignorant of the psychology of fame and, on a deeper level, unaware that many different kinds of human relations give rise to fame. Was the ordinary Mongol like Jenghis Khan? Was the common French peasant of the eighteenth century a faint image of Napoleon, or of Diderot, or of Voltaire? Was the shopkeeper in Stratford-on-Avon during the days of good Queen Bess a miniature Shakespeare? Was the peon of Castile a mute, inglorious Cervantes? These questions seem to answer themselves.

What if we attempt to judge people we have never seen by those indirect appearances of them handed down in books? The result is

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usually grotesque. Read almost any famous argument by the lusty champions of the Nordic myth. Thus McDougall belittles the native curiosity and boldness of the Latins and extols the Vikings.* He tells us that Roman sailors rarely ventured in their ships beyond the Pillars of Hercules; but "the barbarous Vikings in their smaller ships sailed to Iceland, Greenland, and America . . . Here then is further evidence that in the Mediterranean race the instinct of curiosity is relatively weak."

With this argument you can prove anything. Thus, you can take the liveliest and most aggressive of all modern pirates, the Moros of the southern Philippines and the Cantonese rivermen, and you can show how they sally forth into strange waters and loot lustily, while the soft and decadent inhabitants of the Great Lakes never sail their ships out of this fresh water into the great oceans. Or, if you prefer, you can demonstrate that our Pennsylvania farmers are inferior in adventure and curiosity to our Georgia Negroes inasmuch as the former rarely wander from home, while the Negroes are migrating northward by the thousands. Psychologists who fain would speculate over the meaning of Viking and Roman behavior would do well to begin somewhat nearer home. Let them observe the motives of the millions who have poured into America through Ellis Island. They will discover that virtually all of such immigrants are job hunters, while a few are refugees. Men hunt jobs usually because they are either out of work or employed in highly unfavorable surroundings. So with the Vikings: they bred fast in a sterile region from which the younger sons had to flee or starve. And they could not well flee save by boat. The Romans, on the other hand, lacked every motive to explore the open oceans. They had more wealth, more trade, and more power than they could manage within the Mediterranean basin alone. Even as it was, they committed the universal error of Big Business and expanded too rapidly.

The Nordic champions persistently fail to understand that a seemingly minor change of environment can reverse the outward expression of a trait, or that, with such a change, the social usefulness and the survival value of the trait may also reverse. For instance, a white man of the noblest moral traits in whom there has never been evident the faintest tendency toward unfairness or brutality may become a

* "Is America Safe for Democracy?" New York, 1921

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tyrant and monster after he has lived for a year or two in a land where the average temperature and humidity runs a little higher than in his northern home. Now which shall we say? Was he "at heart" a tyrant and monster all the while, concealing these evil trends when he felt comfortable and "laying bare his soul" when he moved south? Or was he always a noble spirit, now temporarily "not himself" because of the sticky heat? The question forces into the open the whole absurdity of the now fashionable prattle about instincts. The native and permanent characteristic in such a man is, of course, neither "nobility" nor "brutality." It is a physiological disposition—nothing more, nothing less.

Likewise with the value of traits. A slight change of climate can turn almost any trait from an asset to a liability. Take "aggressiveness" again, as a fair sample. In cool latitudes and heights it usually serves man well. But as soon as he has transplanted it to the tropics it becomes a menace both to himself and to others. Read, if you will, any of the grim records of enterprising white men who have gone from Europe to Africa or Southern Asia in quest of wealth and power. Damp heat makes many of them murderers and drives others to abuse and torture the natives with a viciousness which they themselves cannot later understand.

Likewise with most other traits. Their utility varies with a thousand and one factors of weather, food, transportation, population, density, prevalence of diseases, and heaven knows what not. To assume that they always represent the same inner attitude or potency is to misunderstand the whole matter of social adjustments. If the social sciences have anything to teach us, it is that *individual nature almost never emerges in social customs, for social customs are mass adaptations to gross environmental factors.* To find in them any personality is about as futile a hope as that of discovering the chemistry of saline solutions by sailing the seven seas for seven years.

Oh, painful thought! Nearly all we learn, in our formative years, about people long ago and people far away comes from second-hand, third-hand and fourth-hand accounts by poets, politicians, and hack writers, all of whom read into the characters they describe traits drawn from supposed acts of the people as a whole over long periods. Do we know anything about the ancient Greeks, or about the Romans, or about the eighteenth century French? Sometimes I wonder darkly.

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HABITS

The tendency to judge people in terms of our own daily habits is universal. It is, in short, human nature. My activities must be the basis of my appraising the activities of other people. I have no other instrument of judgment. My strongest activities must be those which are most extensively practised. Hence it is that the way of daily life tends to become the way of seeing human nature.

Now our own age, being peculiarly industrial, commercial, technical and scientific, leads us to habits of outer and inner behavior correspondingly different from those which have prevailed in earlier times. Let us glance at the most conspicuous changes.

Above all others, I would place the narrowing of the range of daily habits in the industrial laborer of our factory and mill towns. The toiler who, for nine or ten hours a day, repeats some simple, monotonous operation with tool or machine inevitably knows himself less thoroughly than did the old time worker who had to try himself out in many ways, now chopping wood, now fashioning his own shoes, now building his own house or shed, now teaching his children the three R's, now slaughtering pigs for the winter's pork. The more things a man has done, in play or in earnest, the better he is likely to know himself. Seeing himself under many conditions, noting his failures here and his successes there, observing his various aptitudes and shortcomings, he is better posted on himself than any factory drudge or white collar clerk could be. Given two men of about the same intelligence level, one of the old type and the other of the new, and you will normally find the former shrewder in his estimates of himself and others than the modern is.

With the industrializing of the world comes an indeliberate falsification of life. Of late the business world has been hiring psychologists to solve its grievous problems of workers' morale and workers' morals. In their proper zeal to render the services for which they are paid, some of these scientists have industrialized their psychology instead of developing a psychology of industry. And the ignorance of human nature that emerges in this process is something wonderful to behold. One recent writer pleases every employer with the assurance that "laziness is a disease of the will." He then sets out to solve this problem—how much must a man work in order to escape the judgment of being lazy? And by a simple comparison of the total

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population with the number of wage earners in it, he finds that each worker must support 2.5 persons. This much labor, then, represents the moral dead line. "Anything less manifests a degree of idleness open to censure or an inquiry into its causes. Herein lie the social principles which determine the minimum of work a man must perform in order to escape the charge of lazy parasitism." *

Before we have done with these studies, it will appear that it is just as vicious to condemn every healthy man because he is not a producer as it is to condemn him because he is not a Methodist, or not a coffee-drinker, or not an acrobat. It will, I hope, also appear that laziness is no more a disease of the will than intelligence is; and that the attempt to brand any trait as good or bad is to disclose an ignorance of man's makeup that is fraught with perils innumerable. It is but a little step from branding the unproductive man as evil to accepting Lenin's doctrine that "man as a producer is more important than man as a citizen." If Marx and Bolshevism ever prevail in America, they will do so with the support of big business, its success magazines and its psychological fictions.

I am not one of those who see in such tendencies a sinister conspiracy of millionaires to shackle the honest toiler. I find in them nothing more than a natural consequence of twentieth century habits. When the world becomes a factory, men think of one another in factory terms, of course.

While the world has been turning into a factory, schools have been running merrily on as little treadmills for intellects. Innocent boys and girls by the millions are put into these treadmills and spend years there improving their minds, or such minds as they have. They must learn the names and dates and places of things and persons innumerable, most of which are as inconsequential as they are multitudinous. They must learn algebra, which they never use. They must read, analyze, and criticize scores of so-called classics, most of which are dull and empty, if not downright trash. And they are drilled in the noble lie that all people who sigh to succeed and be of some cosmic importance must know a lot.

Such is the inner resistance of the normal youth that he comes through this treadmill without serious injuries, if he happens to fall under the influence of one or two exceptional teachers blessed with

* "Controlled Power" Arthur Holmes. N. Y., 1924, p. 16, et seq.

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insight But he is not likely to have such luck. He probably is put through the paces by a series of teachers who treat him like a mere mind, not like a person. They judge him entirely by his grades, by his attention in classroom, by his speed in memorizing and catching on to what they tell him His joys, his sorrows, his secret aspirations, his difficulties with father or mother, his sinister fondness for fishing on rainy days, and all other complications of real life he must check at the outer door as he enters school. And the result has been told many a time by students of mental hygiene. The learner develops a hatred toward school and all knowledge; or, worse yet, he becomes inwardly warped and poisoned to the point of disease and after a few years of struggle in the world which his schools never taught him about, he slinks into some doctor's office for treatment.

All this, of course, is the aftermath of an educational system that was proper to the middle ages and improper to everything else. It is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the ancient theological doctrine that learning has to do only with the realm of the intellect and not with the realm of spirit and its faiths. To explain how and why our schools have persisted in this dark and vain course is not our present business; but we must note that, when all is said and done, the blame rests squarely upon our intellectual classes and their pernicious rationalism This latter tendency is their natural bent, as well as their vocational habit That is, people who are born with exceptionally strong memories and inclinations to learn, rather than to do, will drift easily and successfully into the profession of teaching. They enjoy books and book lore; they find nothing simpler, nothing more thoroughly comfortable And so, in their sympathetic imagination, they see all the world's youth doing the same thing. They themselves thrive on it; why then shouldn't everybody else? They themselves are not bothered with wild emotions or vain dreams of pomp and power; they shun all such perturbations. And so should every other thinking being. Thus the false stress on many knowledges which runs through all our schools today is, in no small measure, the result of the intellectual's ignorance of common men The specialist in knowledge probably knows even less about the world at large and its people than the shrewd ditch digger does. For his own inner narrowing cuts away immense segments of life which the ditch digger experiences, even though with slight understanding.

The mind that thinks most clearly and with the highest general

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satisfaction is only too often as neutral toward the things it thinks about as the mathematician is toward his multiplication table. Indeed, this neutrality, being the very triumph of intellect, is fostered by the thinker in all his relations toward the world. Excellent when it has to do with the topics of physics and chemistry, it becomes a defect when human beings are under consideration. People are not neutral and never will be. To treat them as if they were is to mistreat them. And it is, strictly, a fallacy as well. For the intellectual who ignores or repudiates the intimate personal phases of his students' lives, while trying to "improve their minds," is making assumptions about those minds which are all wildly contrary to fact

Vocational habits blur the sympathetic imagination. Like every other human function, one's sympathetic insight is open to all sorts of influence through habitual use and disuse. The more a person tends to live within the circle of his own private thoughts, memories, and musings, the harder he makes it for himself to penetrate other personalities. And the longer he remains shut up with himself, the feebler must his response to other natures become. Some of the world's supreme geniuses whose achievements have been largely due to their creative reverie and fantasy have lived within themselves so narrowly that they have been totally incompetent to grasp even the simplest attitudes and motives of other people. Of the scores of instances that might be cited here, I usually prefer to mention Beethoven, simply because we have such a wealth of evidence about him. The personality of this supreme genius reveals how nicely his dominant drive toward musical fantasy managed all his other trends, subordinating them to itself so thoroughly that Beethoven literally lost all effective contacts with the outer world of society and business before he was thirty years old. In the realistic sense, the man was totally devoid of sympathetic insight. He inhabited a world all his own into which nobody penetrated. And he left others to live their own way in their worlds, except on a few disastrous occasions.

Contrast to Beethoven any man who has succeeded at a job in which he is forced to deal with all sorts of people from minute to minute. His success is mainly a matter of natural selection, with practice making perfect his native trend toward social relations. Encountering thousands of personal responses, such a man builds up an immense system of perceptive and judicial abilities which often surprise observers.

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Many a policeman "sees through people" more quickly and more surely than a psychologist ever can. So too with many a credit man, many an insurance adjuster, many a country doctor, and many a judge. Do you realize how varied are the contacts with people which a patrolman in a large city enjoys in the course of ten years? Or how often he has to advise, warn, censure or oppose a thousand and one varieties of the human species? Unless he is a fairly clever man, he will bungle his job; and, being clever, he will perfect himself in many versatile habits of dealing with people. Thus, little by little, will he acquire insight into hidden impulses. To be sure, the country doctor and the judge delve more deeply into the lives of many souls and, because of their responsibilities, generally attain richer understanding. None the less, I would trust an old policeman of average intelligence much further than I would trust many another man of superior intelligence, when it comes to sizing up somebody.

There are other occupations which draw to them workers who by nature and by early training dislike and avoid personal contacts. Here we must group most kinds of labor that are carried on in solitude, be it by necessity or through the worker's own choice. The sheep herder, the trapper, the lonely farmer, the astronomer, the mathematician, the closet scholar in almost any subject whatsoever, the microscopist, the musical composer, the painter, and many others do their special work most advantageously whenever and wherever they are least embroiled in human society, its foibles and its pleasures. And conversely, men inclined to shun their fellows for any reason at all will show some preference for callings such as these, so far as their abilities allow. Wisely they seek to avoid the opportunity for the stupidity they would reveal in dealing with other people.

William Howard Taft's marked preference for high judicial posts, as distinct from politics and general administration, was born of this very insensitivity to social situations. Before this excellent citizen found himself in the U. S. Supreme Court, he was repeatedly getting into hot water (or worse) as a result of this peculiar stupidity. Unlike the attorney who shines as a trial lawyer or as a politician, Taft was remarkably endowed with cold objectivity in most human relations. A funny book might be filled with the lighter consequences of his total lack of feeling. Here are two brief episodes which would have to be included in the work.

Taft was asked to deliver a memorial address at the tomb of his

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illustrious predecessor, Grant. Before a distinguished gathering, in which were many old friends and admirers of Grant, Taft calmly discussed—among other things—the unfortunate drinking habits of the late lamented General and President. Apparently, the honest old soul did not even perceive the ripple of horror and indignation that ran through the crowd. It was not until he returned to Washington and was confronted by a bewildered bevy of confidants that he began to feel that something had gone awry. A newspaper editor told him that he had committed an unpardonable stupidity.

"I don't see why," Taft retorted plaintively. "It's a matter of public knowledge that Grant got drunk. It's even in some of the history books."

The beginning of the breach between Roosevelt and Taft, according to some people on the inside of that painful affair, is to be found away back in a letter of sincere thanks which Taft wrote to Roosevelt after Taft's election as president. As you recall, Roosevelt picked and pushed Taft into the White House; so Taft expressed his gratitude promptly. Toward the close of the letter he said (in substance, the original text not being available): "I owe you more than any other man alive, except my brother Charlie."

Roosevelt blew up. He stamped up and down, in his usual manner, bellowing: "What? He puts that big fathead, that old moneybags ahead of me? That old fool who only gave him money? And I made him President of the United States?"

So the war was on.

Surely Taft was merely writing as a judicial mind; he paused to weigh and compare all his friends and what he had received at their hands. Then he set down his findings. That, we all know, is excellent on the bench but sometimes obnoxious in the parlor. The relation between judge and courtroom differs not a little from that between man and man in polite society. That was one of the many things which good old Taft never could sense. His stupidity was of the common social type and, according to some of his friends, profound.

The influence of personal contacts in corrupting our judgments has not been duly measured.

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One of the greatest blessings of our present age is the new physical freedom it has brought. People can move about at will now as never before. They can escape enemies, old gossips and Paul Pry. They can hold themselves aloof and live their own lives with few confidences and betrayals. The glory of the great city is its magnificent privacy. It affords an escape from the herd—an escape which even herd creatures sometimes enjoy. City dwellers live here today and there tomorrow. They enter and leave neighborhoods and groups, all without friction. All of which is excellent in many respects but bad in one that here concerns us.

A city man has fewer human contacts than the villager. He sees others and is seen by them in few relations and aspects. At his office, one small patch of him emerges. His pool-room acquaintances see him as a pool player; his dentist sees him as a man with certain teeth and a habit of paying his bills slowly; his lawyer sees him only as one in trouble. In a village these many observers check up their impressions. The office boy there sees the dentist, both see the lawyer, all see the pool-room crowd; and thus habit is added to habit, trend checked against trend. And from such summation, crude though it be, there grows a picture of personality that is infinitely more reliable—even in its unreliabilities—than the broken glimpses and impressions which most of us get in the cities.

To this assertion let me bring personal testimony. When I began collecting material for these studies, I naturally surveyed the persons whom I knew best. My contacts lay in three fields, the newspaper world of Park Row, the academic world of Morningside Heights, and a little corner of the world of printers. In the first and third worlds I had access to confidential trade and credit reports over a period of years. With the high confidence of youth and ignorance, I prepared to penetrate a score of personalities which struck me as significant as well as fascinating. The list included saints and scoundrels, near-geniuses and plodders. All these were well known to dozens of shrewd business men and quick-eyed reporters. Their daily lives were all a matter of record. Their church, social and business connections were many. What, then, could have seemed easier than to assemble the items of their careers, together with the judgments passed by their friends and foes, and forthwith to weave all the findings into neat pictures?

Alas and alack! Out of the entire list, after several years of inter-

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mittent inquiry, there emerged only one unequivocal and reasonably complete portrait; and only one more which was well on the way toward accuracy. Over and above these what? A jumble of contradictory statements, many of them dogmatic, and a thousand confessions of nescience. Concerning such superficial habits as paying one's bills and going to church and practising the rules of etiquette, there was naturally much clear evidence. But as my inquiries receded from these highly conventionalized practices and probed the emotions, the private attitudes, and the philosophies of the men under observation, the fog thickened; and my informants went lost in it.

My more intelligent witnesses frankly admitted that they did not know the man in question at all, in the sense of my inquiry; they knew him only as a buyer of newspapers or as a bad debtor or as a polo player or as a stock speculator or as a doting father. Several of the shrewdest observers had literally known the man under scrutiny only as a fellow commuter on the same Westchester County trains.

Thus in general. But you may readily discover more astonishing instances. In our largest cities men meet and transact business with one another year in and year out as total strangers. The oddest case of this in my records is the testimony of W. W. Heaton, Harry V. Day, and James H. Waterbury, partners in the New York Stock Exchange firm of Day and Heaton. This firm was wrecked by the secret irregularities of one George R. Christian, a fourth partner. To the assistant district attorney in charge of the investigation, the three defrauded gentlemen swore that they knew absolutely nothing about Christian's habits of living, his friends, nor his business methods. This sounded as though they were trying to shield the fugitive, but subsequent events proved that they were not. They had entered into partnership with a total stranger and had never sought to understand him.

Call this stupidity, if you will. But if you do, then call all city dwellers more or less stupid; for the whole art and business of city life consists of getting along with people you know only in the most superficial manner. The Day and Heaton case is matched by thousands in ordinary neighborhoods. Clergymen assure me that they encounter many people who know not a soul in New York and who are as lonely as the poor Swede who, dying in a hospital ward at Bellevue in 1924, left his life's savings—seven hundred dollars—to

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the only person he knew, a man he had met three or four times and rather liked.

Several credit men tell me that the enormous losses suffered by small businesses and investors in America arise partly from just such inadequate human contacts. And these are probably worse here than in Europe, because of the multitude of races, languages and nationalistic groups that make of almost every large American city a collection of villages all alien to one another.

Some four hundred persons, during the past fifteen years, have offered to describe to me, for analytical purposes, the people they have known intimately and whom, in their own opinion, they have come to understand. Not one of the four hundred has been able to marshal ten such characters. A few score have presented five. And the great majority have stopped at two or three, leaving these rather roughly blocked in and far from unequivocal. If my own experiences represent the usual and ordinary, then it is safe to assert flatly that *the average American adult does not know more than one person thoroughly enough to see the personality hidden behind the clutter of conventions and strictly business forms.* And I fear that millions of our citizenry do not know even one.

All this makes for quackery. For in the kingdom of the blind, the one-eyed man is king; and he can hang on to his job long after his sight has failed, simply on the strength of past performances. The literature, the correspondence schools, and the self-professed experts in character reading, personnel management, personality training, will power, and allied accomplishments now flourishing in Europe and America can be compared only to the traffic in amulets, charms, and indulgences during the Middle Ages. Inevitably all this seeps into the common talk, the common thinking, and the common literature of the day, there discoloring every subject.

By way of innocent recreation, I used to clip articles from the best newspapers and magazines dealing with some aspects of personality and character; and, over the entire period of about three years covered by the clippings, not more than one article out of four could be taken seriously by any reader with moderate knowledge of modern science. About the same fraction was unadulterated rubbish. In collecting material for these present studies, I read thousands of articles, monographs, and books of all sorts, from the psychological and medical journals down to the drivel of the fake

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character readers and religious fanatics; and, while some of them revealed a thorough understanding of some special topic related to individual psychology, not a score gave me cause to believe that they were the fruit of comprehensive knowledge. An unbelievable number of effusions from our best publishing houses ranked with the following letter addressed to *Collier's Weekly*.

To the Editor of Collier's:

Although I have read *Collier's* for years and can place myself as an admirer of Heywood Broun, you couldn't, with your illustration purporting to be from a photograph of Mr. Broun in his boyhood, fool any one who has taken my class in reading people on sight. Mr. Broun is in biology a nutritive cerebral type, and the young man in the picture is not. Just look at the right ear lobes of both. Also look at the shoulders. These things never change from birth.

The picture, of course, was of Broun; but it will not shake the character reader's self-confidence. For the less we know, the surer we all are of what we know.

Almost everybody is willing to pass any judgment on total strangers or to devise any political scheme involving a revolution in human nature. Consider, please, the outpourings of amateur psychology on the famous Leopold-Loeb case in Chicago. All-wise clergymen who had never seen Leopold or Loeb unhesitatingly declared that these young personalities had become abnormal because they were atheists. All-wise reformers asserted with equal promptitude that the boys had degenerated because they had been allowed too much spending money. All-wise editors chorused that it was contempt for law bred of the prohibition amendment which must be blamed. All-wise worshippers of the Semitic myth hastened to point out that such cold-blooded souls could only be Semitic.

Like all other knowledge, a genuine understanding of man and his ways comes only after long observations, much testing, and a rigorous analysis of seeming facts and seemly hypothesis. It matures precisely as a physician's medical insight matures; namely, through prolonged dealings with flesh-and-blood people. I care not how brilliant, how logical or how deeply informed a man may be in the lore of numbers, in geometry, in physics, in chemistry, astronomy, history, or any other subject—if he has not studied persons as persons

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his opinions on human nature are certain to be as inaccurate as are my opinions on the Einstein theory and early Chinese pottery.

There are four degrees of intimacy which serve as bases for corresponding types of judgments about people.

- 1—Hearsay,
- 2—Casual social encounter,
- 3—Specialized contact, and
- 4—All-around contact.

1—Hearsay includes both gossip and casual reading. It is the sort of contact which you have had with President McKinley or with Mussolini. On the borderline between hearsay and the casual social encounter I would put the impressions we get of a motion picture actor when we see him flashed on the screen. We are not actually meeting the man himself, but we are receiving impressions much richer than any mere talk or reading about him could ever be.

2—Casual social encounter includes all sorts of contacts in which both parties behave conventionally, meet and quickly part. The perfect specimen is being introduced to Mrs. Vangrump, the eminent clarinet player from Stockholm, at a tea given in her honor. You have never heard of the lady before. You did not even know that there was a world-famous lady clarinet player. All of a sudden your hostess is murmuring the lady's name in your ear, and you are bowing, and mumbling something about how you dote on claret—no, on clarinets, pardon! You converse with Mrs. Vangrump two minutes and eighteen seconds, then pass on to the tea and macaroons. In this brief surface-to-surface meeting, however, you do gather a multitude of impressions of a kind that would come with difficulty through the printed page or the talk of gossips.

This emphasis on the obvious externals is partly the inevitable result of something much deeper in human nature, to wit, the course of attention and interest. Our contacts with the world are all established by eye, ear, nose, and skin; and the more sensitive these are, the more nicely we adjust to our surroundings, other things being equal. Our sense organs tend to be good servants in appraising the ordinary physical objects and conditions with which the ordinary man has had to deal for the past million years or two. But this very efficiency makes them bad masters in judging people, as we have just

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been seeing; and the way the sense reaction sways our attention aggravates the whole matter.

Thus, any obvious resemblance among members of a group tends to obliterate individual differences in the minds of the stranger from afar. The American tourist on his first trip to China is bewildered to find that all Chinese look alike. When he journeys in the Congo, he discovers that all blacks look alike. Conversely, any outstanding individual peculiarity he may note in a person among people with whom our traveler is familiar is likely to be pounced upon as the brand of a type. I have frequently noticed this tendency on ship-board. There are gathered many passengers of the same racial stocks but from widely different environments and vocations. Their faces, their speech, their gait, perhaps even the stains, callouses, and distortions of their hands exhibit their trades and habitats. You see the Old Salt, the Pious Missionary, the Scarlet Woman, the Reckless Gambler, each set in sharp contrast to the other by the circumstance of voyaging. Being novel to the tourist's eye, each personal detail is magnified for the moment and made the center of lively attention, with the all too common result that individual characteristics and differences are completely ignored.

3—The specialized contact is the kind which a grocer has with an old customer, a doctor with his patient, a chauffeur with his employer, a teacher with a pupil, an artist with his model, a locomotive engineer with his fireman, a sales manager with his secretary, and so on. The relationship is fairly limited but, within its range, intensely developed. The grocer knows what his customer likes to eat, how he pays his bills, and what he likes to chat about while in the store. The doctor knows his patient's physical condition, something about his diet and general habits of life, and his financial status (sooner or later). The teacher has a fairly clear idea as to the pupil's alertness or lethargy, quick wit or dulness, honesty in matters of study, punctuality and manners. You may guess at once that some of these specialized contacts reveal little while others may reveal much. It all depends on the kind of contact. So, in a sense, it is dangerous to lump them together here as if they represented about the same degree of penetrative judgment. We shall be on our guard, though, when we come to interpret them.

4—The all-around contact is rarer than you may suppose. You might reasonably imagine that you find it in the relation between

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parent and child; but not once in a hundred times does it develop there. Nearly every child soon learns to keep some of his hopes, dreams, activities, and human relations secret. Sometimes he starts this practice because he finds that mother or father disapprove of them. Sometimes there is no disapproval; then he does it just because he wants to do something and be somebody "all his own." The craving for exclusiveness and total independence! How mighty it is in some children!

Among biographers who have justly achieved fame, few have gained the complete intimacy of their subjects which is needed for an analysis of personality that is at once scientifically sound and a work of art. Even those occasional biographies of wives written by their husbands and biographies of husbands written by their wives impress me most by what they miss. While the marriage relation offers immense opportunities for the acquisition of personal knowledge, few men and women are able to make the most of the chance. As I shall show elsewhere, emotional and temperamental obstacles arise to block the enterprise.

To attain the best substitute for an all-around contact we usually must combine the impressions and experiences of many observers. I believe that the best mass of material about a single personality available for biographical analysis is that which we have about Beethoven. Most of it lies deeply buried in his letters and musical notebooks and in that amazing monument of bad writing and good fact-gathering, the biography of A. W. Thayer. This last is a faithful but disorderly collection of the experiences of many men in their relations with Beethoven.

"A prophet is without honor in his own country." A politician often wins an election with a big majority everywhere except in his home town, which votes him down. A distinguished author draws plaudits from the élite of the world, while the boys back home snicker at him and wonder how he ever fooled folks that way. Many a hustling young business man has learned that he can get little credit from the banker who has known him ever since he was running around in short pants sucking lollypops, but has no trouble in borrowing a hundred thousand dollars from a financier in a distant city who has heard little about him but much about his business. What underlies these peculiar and disconcerting facts?

It is no mystery. People who do not know a man intimately over

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a long period of years tend to judge him in terms of his achievements, especially those which have attracted attention to him. This means that great men tend to be judged by their great deeds, scoundrels by their most notorious misdeeds, artists by the artistry which made them famous. To know a man solely through his highest acts is to favor him greatly. To know all the petty facts about his nasty ways as a baby, his silliness as a small boy, his ludicrous adolescences, and his fumbling in business or art as a "rising young man" is to see him more fully, to be sure, but to have a vision of him in which the worst neutralizes the best, the little the great, and the mean the noble. The more detailed the picture of anybody, the less any one phase, feature, trait or accomplishment dominates the picture.

Truth is, few men can even perceive the broader pattern of a personality when it is before them ready for inspection. This, incidentally, is one of several reasons why most people enjoy novels so intensely, especially novels which portray characters well. The author reveals to his circle of admirers complexities of human nature which they seldom are able to observe and judge clearly without his aid. Slight divergencies of temperament, background, or social status are enough to blind most of us to certain qualities in people who differ from us, as the following case cited from the Army records by Harold Rugg shows.*

Captain X stood forth conspicuously wherever he was. He was the subject of a rating test given to thirteen officers who had been associated with him at various times and had come to know him about as well as any two persons not members of the same family are likely to be known to each other. These officers had to assign a rank to X with respect to twenty character traits, such as physical abilities, leadership, intelligence, conscientiousness, and so on. On each of these twenty scales X was rated by somebody as "the poorest man I ever knew." Three officers placed him at the bottom in sixteen of the scales. They stated that he was so poor that they did not hesitate a moment over ranking him as low as possible.

Now, what did the objective and properly controlled tests of this "inferior, incompetent good-for-nothing" show? First, as to his record. A few years before these tests X had been selected as Rhodes scholar by a midwestern university whose faculty esteemed him a

* "Is the Rating of Human Character Possible?" *J of Ed Psych*, 1921, p. 37

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man of all-around excellence and promise. He went to Oxford and made such a fine showing there that he was excused from some examinations. After he joined the Army, he received, along with 151 other officers, three psychological tests. In these, which were written out like a formal examination, X scored highest. In the Army Alpha tests he scored 206 out of a possible 212. In the two forms of the Thorndike alertness test he also scored very high and finished the tests well within the time limit.

Now, plainly, something is wrong here. What is it? Well, the man had some nasty streaks in him. For he was said to be "impossible to live with," "rotten," "yellow," "conceited," and "a knocker." And these traits interfered with the accurate judging. Bear in mind, please, that they upset the estimates of thirteen officers, not of just one. Then you form a pretty clear idea of the difficulty of detecting behavior patterns.

Here, in a nutshell, is the difficulty and here too the error. People are prone to take some single feature of a total pattern as the "essence of personality." Usually the feature is one that stands forth conspicuously and is unpleasant to the observer. Less often it is a conspicuous and pleasant one. The feeling tone of it dominates the entire pattern at the moment of perception; and thus it becomes the focus of the judgment. Captain X probably was "impossible to live with," in the opinion of some of his army associates. But the traits in him which made him thus may have been, in reality, a very small fraction of his personality and no more its "essence" than the style of hat he wore.

The circumstances of a personal encounter make all the difference in the world. A contact under misapprehension, a contact in the midst of some emotional outburst, a contact with a person we regard as far superior to ourselves, and almost any other outwardly conditioned contact will generally influence our observations and judgments of the person encountered. This is a commonplace, but the principles at work in the phenomenon are not. They should be studied at length. So far as I know, they have never been looked into systematically. So I shall have little to say about them.

We know, of course, that every strong emotion tends powerfully to narrow the total adjustment, just as every urgent appetite does. Love is blind, but so too in another manner is the infuriated man; so too the frightened woman, the disgusted father, the suspicious

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buyer. Or, to say the same thing in another way, when we desire something intensely, our behavior tends to focus on it and on ways and means of getting it; when we wish to avoid something, we concentrate on methods of avoidance; and when we are in a rage over something, we make a special business of attacking some particular person, institution, or—if these be lacking—the handiest chair, dog, cat, or stenographer. Hence our perceptions of persons are for the moment gravely restricted.

Both hearsay and first impression judgments tend to exaggerate unpleasant factors and minimize the pleasant. One slight dislike often neutralizes half a dozen favorable features. Here is one of human nature's most annoying defects, a source of immense though usually petty injustice. The principle at work here seems to be an esthetic one. We integrate a series of brief perceptions and their feeling tones into a single multiple response; and any trifle that mars the total effect suffices to make the latter unfavorable. It acts like a hair in an otherwise perfect soup, like a wart on the tip of a raving beauty's nose, like a missing tooth in *Mona Lisa*, like the faint rattle of a window frame during a rendition of a Beethoven symphony. The perfection of the whole is shattered by minute imperfections much more easily than it is established by great merits.

This is why we hear more unfavorable opinions about people than favorable. The law of probability is to blame. The chances that any given individual will have no trait or minor characteristic that clashes with all his pleasant aspects are perhaps no better than one out of a hundred. And they grow poorer as the number of our contacts with the person increases. "No man is a hero to his valet," not because his noble traits prove, on closer inspection, to be illusory but rather because the quality of heroism is, at core, an esthetic-dramatic one in most cases and it is sadly blurred by snoring, cursing collar buttons, spitting on the floor, burning the bed blankets with cigarettes, and leaving the safety razor blades on the wash bowl. Not disillusionment, then, but neutralization. What a world of difference between the two!

One of the most amusing sets of individual judgments about a man which I have encountered deals with Paderewski, the Polish pianist. By pure chance I have heard and read the personal impressions of Col. E. M. House, John Dewey, three professional pianists and five newspaper correspondents. The pianists claimed to have known

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Paderewski personally, one of them having once visited the great virtuoso. The correspondents had met him and talked with him during the stormy days of the Peace Conference. I hold no brief for any of the opinions uttered by these ten persons. But I do state, for your benefit, that all ten are mature and highly trained observers, each in his own field and his own manner. Of the ten sets of judgments, the most naïve, as far as I can myself judge the matter, are those of Col. House. You may read these for yourself in *Harper's Magazine*, December, 1925. The most consistent and elaborate set was uttered by one of the correspondents, who was in the fortunate position of being able to talk freely with Paderewski for many months on all sorts of topics. But—and here is my point—the divergence on nearly all essentials is complete. Here are a few illustrations:

Col. House: "Paderewski's ultimate claim to fame is beyond doubt. He is a genius in music as well as in statecraft."

Correspondent A: "Paderewski was the one perfect boob at the Conference. Everybody was laughing at him."

Dewey: "Paderewski is the worst type of the old Polish reactionary, without the faintest comprehension of world issues. He was merely a cat's paw in politics."

Pianist A: "Paderewski has never been able to achieve the highest distinction even as a concert hall pianist. His hands are far too weak. And, of course, he does not even rise to the class of third-rate composers. But I think he has proved brilliant as a statesman in leading poor Poland out of her troubles."

Col. House: "Paderewski's genius as a musician cannot be disputed."

Correspondent B: "Paderewski owes everything to the energy and ambition of his wife. Without her, he would have remained for all time an obscure concert hall performer. She is the pants-wearer in that family. He is a soft, dawdling esthete who takes orders meekly. That's one reason the politicians used him so easily."

And so on and on! Muddle without end!

I once took all these judgments, deleted Paderewski's name from them, mixed them in with other nameless judgments about other people, and gave the batch to a small class in psychology with the request that they sort out all the slips which might apply to one and the same individual. Are you surprised that not one member of the

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class properly collated the Paderewski slips? How could it be done, in the face of such crass contradictions?

A similar chaos appeared in judgments I collected about Roosevelt, McKinley, Harding, Wilson, Coolidge and several other prominent Americans. There was noticeably more agreement about Roosevelt than about any other person; but such agreement as there was fell far short of unanimity. Practically all the persons rendering judgment had come into frequent contact with the men they judged; and all were distinctly superior in their general abilities.

All this is quite consistent with the findings of many other investigators in other fields. Parents, for example, have proved to be very poor judges of the personalities of their own children, partly because most parents know few children other than their own and hence cannot judge what is ordinary or extraordinary in a child of a given age; and partly as a result of various natural biases which we shall later discuss. School teachers judge children much more accurately than parents do; but they too cannot estimate the abilities and trends in children nearly so well as simple mental tests reveal them.

It all reduces to this. Judgments about single traits which can be and have been observed functioning in relative isolation from other traits are very accurate. You can come fairly close to the truth in estimating a boy's arithmetical ability if you have watched him add, subtract, multiply and divide frequently. But you cannot predict his behavior if fire breaks out in his bedroom when he is asleep, or if he finds \$1,000 in small bills on the sidewalk, when nobody is looking, or if he is arrested on the charge of murder. All these are large, enormously complex situations that evoke conduct wholly different in pattern from that of adding three and seven.

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Now let us descend into Chaos, a wild country lying between Limbo and the Promised Land. Here dwell workers, merchants, peddlers, money lenders, gamblers, thieves, manufacturers, jobbers, and brokers. Taken as a group, they are famous just now for being the world's worst failure. Only a few years ago, held in high esteem by many, they became, almost over night, the despised and rejected of men. What caused their monumental failure? Was it malice, or ignorance, or stupidity, or something else?

Would that we might answer this question! Would that we might even give as much of the answer as we are able! But we cannot. Custom and law thwart us. For, believe it or not, among us Americans it is criminal libel to deride in print a man's business ability. This completely ruins the following pages. For no serious student of stupidity can spend more than a few hours investigating the conduct of business men, be they in our billion-dollar corporations or behind the counter in a hot-dog stand, without realizing that at last he stands in the presence of stupid incompetence so vast and so deep that only a great poet could incant the truth about it. A few months of inquiry advances him to the hypothesis that, relative to opportunities, most American business men probably know less and have achieved less than any similar class elsewhere. The hypothesis may turn out to be wrong; but it rises to one's mind none the less. So do many events in economic history.

Chaos, by its very nature, assumes an infinite variety of formlessness. To classify these would be a triumph of inanity. Let us be content to observe that two sorts have figured largely in recent human affairs. One is the chaos which results when a stupid, ignorant, but ambitious person meddles with immense forces which he cannot understand, still less manage. The other is the chaos which ensues shortly after stupid bigots, fanatics, egomaniacs and plain cranks strive to impress upon society a fixed, changeless order—be it an order of morals or of business or of finance or of politics. Never before were things more thoroughly in flux; hence never before were

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the possibilities of a first-class chaos richer. Yet even these have been multiplied manifold by the coincidence of the first named chaos. That is to say, the modern world is a maze of forces which interpenetrate with shameless promiscuity. Only the keenest eye can detect where one begins and another ends; and none can see the web of life as a whole. Now, in this maze which changes with every sunrise, many little fixers are busy, endeavoring to stay the flow and to press people into a frozen mould. Thus one chaos is cross-bred with another chaos. And what of the spawn?

Let us be charitable about it. For the two deepest, wholesomest impulses of life are at war in its blood. The urge to improve men's living standards—which is part of the broader urge to progress—has created the maze of forces which we call the modern world. The urge to secure safety, peace, quiet, and economic stability, together with justice, lies at the bottom of the widespread effort to systematize, to slow down, and to reduce to form and order all men's affairs—with the result that governments become despots, while well meaning reformers become maniacal persecutors.

When we come, some day, to the writing of our long planned History of Human Stupidity, we shall devote several volumes to the history of these two conflicting impulses in man, the powers of Change and the powers of Routine. We shall try to exhibit, in an array of authentic cases, the peculiar stupidities into which able men have been led through excess of zeal either for some improvement or else for some conservation of a good already attained. Pending that inquiry, we shall merely sketch in the flimsiest outline compatible with the high scholarship of this prolegomenon; beginning with the first great business régime, Rome, we shall leap lightly from age to age and culture to culture, pointing out airily as we flit the more conspicuous surges in the rising tide of stupidity.

ROME

Would you study man's economic stupidities? Then spend a few months over the history of Rome. It is the primer indispensable in this department of wisdom. For the Romans were, so far as we know, the first great people to erect a tremendous political system upon trade and finance. They invented economic imperialism in its strict

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sense. To be sure, despots and gangs had always sought wealth by hook or by crook; but the Romans sought it by system and by law. The difference is tremendous. Let us keep it in view as we look at the mentality of the Roman under the Empire.

The best thing that has happened to mankind since the last glacial period was the fall of the Roman Empire.

The gravest disaster that has befallen our race in some 50,000 years was the fall of the Roman Empire.

How reconcile these verbal contradictions? Only by studying the intelligence of that political colossus and its larger stupidities. In no peoples can we find a more baffling blend of sensitivities and insensitivities than that manifest in the Romans from earliest times down to the end of their mighty drama.

But to draw that picture we should have to enlist the services of Guglielmo Ferrero and a staff of ten archivists, translators, epigraphers, and simple Ph.D.'s. Another ten volumes would have to be added to this pamphlet of mine, which already shows signs of undue distention. So let us fall into the summary once more, at the expense of that rich and scholarly precision which we envy most when we can emulate it least.

The Roman psychology stands forth sharply, thanks to the volume of literature that has come down to us describing every phase of life as the Latins lived it. Perhaps no people of high importance in history can be more clearly understood than these, if one is willing to work hard over the annals. And, whoever seeks an understanding of human nature will find all such labor fruitful.

There is a deep sense in which we may say that the Romans became the first exponents of Big Business and followed through with their conception of it to the bitter end. But before we explain this, we must first notice the more obvious characteristics. First of these was a conspicuous lack of imagination, creative fantasy, and free play of intellect. Every classical scholar points to this and contrasts Latin to Greek. Their literature and art were wooden, mainly stiff imitations of the Hellenes. Not a trace of inventiveness among them; they produced no mechanical geniuses, no mathematical geniuses, no supreme engineers. But they were quick to perceive the merits of other people's ideas and to turn them to cash account. Sensing the worth of Greek thinkers and art, they employed Greeks as their teachers, branch managers, traveling salesmen, and technicians.

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Some historians could easily be tempted to aver that the Roman Empire was the product of Greek intelligence serving Latin Big Business. A good case can be made for that thesis.

The second characteristic was profound conservatism of a special sort; the conservatism of the man who is quick to "learn from experience" and sure that "history repeats itself." They had a profound instinct for "law and order." They believed in their own past. The future was, to them, merely a repetition of that past. Hence they had no conception of progress—though, in this respect they differed not a shade from all other early people, the Greeks included.

The third characteristic was at core a derivative of the "law and order" passion. They loved system. They took downright delight in drawing up minutely phrased statutes and ordinances. So far as I can discover, they were the chaps who invented the diabolical method of keeping minutes of the proceedings of official meetings and public conventions. They must bear, to the end of time, the heavy burden of blame for our own "Congressional Record." An integral part of their system became, in the earliest days of the Republic, the precise subdivision of political powers and duties; and out of this grew the delegation of those same powers and duties to specially fit individuals or groups. Here we come upon the unmistakable signs of Big Business, the elaborate hierarchy with delicately graded responsibilities from the President down to the office boys and the scrub women in the factories.

What the Romans themselves were unable to realize for many generations was that this Big Business system, which was headed by the Roman Senate down to the days of the Empire, constituted a perfect aristocracy effectively blocking the theoretically republican form and trend of government. It was founded upon a vague, ill defined urge for Efficiency and Results. The Roman eye was ever fixed on the Main Chance and the Best Bet. It gazed with scorn upon the crude, brawling crowds which ruled the Greek Cities through demagogues and professional sophists; it saw that such absurd democracies never got anywhere but wasted its efforts in debates, resolutions, fist fights, petty intrigues, and headless wars. The Roman lips twisted in contemptuous smiles and muttered: "Cui bono?"

The fourth characteristic was a normal one much intensified and clarified. The Roman wanted what he wanted when he wanted it.

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He strongly objected to passing a dividend. He lived always in today. His deepest maxim was: "Da mihi hodiernum, tu sume crastinum." "Give me what's coming to me today; you can take yours tomorrow." When he was talking for publication, he rephrased this into dignified speech and said: "Dum vivimus, vivamus." "While we live, let's live." Now, this philosophy of life was the mainspring of Roman behavior, public and private, for centuries. A firm belief in the good things of life, wealth, comfort, ease, play, banquets, the circus, and a pleasant social status, found expression, for the first time in human history, in a worldwide commercial organization whose branch agencies, district managers, auditors, accountants, sample rooms, advertisements, factories, farms and merchant ships finally came to surpass in magnitude the combined arrays of our own U. S. Steel, the duPonts, Henry Ford and General Motors.

The Roman Senate became, as early as the third century B C, the board of directors of this first super-corporation. Trade followed the flag, and the flag followed trade in those days. Sometimes the Senate sent out armed men first to clear the way for the branch agency. Sometimes it set up the branch agency first and then sent constabulary to protect it. But always the prime mover was money and what money buys. In the healthy centuries of Rome, the military merely served Big Business. The land never had a Napoleon.

Whenever the Romans conquered a new area, they did their best to set up the Best People in business and put the others on the pay roll. Here is the key to half of the triumphs of the Roman Senate between 400 B C. and the final crumbling of its power. For instance, when Rome conquered the surrounding cities of Latium, the Senate immediately granted limited citizenship to all the defeated people, gave them full protection in carrying on business, and allowed them to marry Romans. In a word, it let everybody in on the future profits. There was not the slightest attempt to hold the vanquished Latins under military rule. At the same time Rome regularly sent out sizable bodies of emigrants into these cities, along with sundry officials.

Here is not the place to rewrite, in fifteen volumes, the history of Rome from a psychological point of view. We must leap to conclusions, and leave scholars to clamor for the minutiae of evidence in vain. In somewhat raw form, the Roman possessed all the keen sensitivities of the modern business man; and, in much rawer form,

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most of his insensitivities. Far more clearly than any earlier type of Post-Glacial man, he seems to have appreciated the advantages of material welfare and the surest methods of organizing people so as to attain it. Even his early religious outlook was material. The gods owed him something in return for the sacrifices he made to them; and, to win divine favors, he must pay value for value. (Here I take issue with Breasted's view that this was a legal conception of religion. It was economic, no more, no less; a genuinely legal notion would have been based on justice or social necessity or some such thought.) So he became the world's first Practical Man.

His stupidities were all those of the Practical Man. He was a short-range opportunist. And the greatest genius his race ever produced, Julius Cæsar, embodied the set of traits of the normal Roman in this phase of character. Cæsar never once glimpsed a long-range plan. He acted for the immediate advantage of himself. Even his most brilliant stratagems in the great campaign in Gaul were all moment-to-moment scheming. True, as a young man, he had a fairly clear ambition to become the Pericles of his country, as Ferrero has shown. But the deeper Latin pragmatism, the craving for wealth and its comforts, soon turned this poor youth into the ways of Easy Money. And it is only in terms of Easy Money that his subsequent career can be understood.

"Da mihi hodiernum, tu sume crastinum." That was Cæsar, but projected upon a grandiose panorama. He borrowed huge sums, outwitted creditors, turned against the nobles and became the leader of the radicals, sold out to Crassus, trafficked in a dozen rackets with a thousand racketeers, and slowly built up a huge system which finally got out of hand and crashed about his ears. Thus, on a small scale, with every Roman—among whom you must not count, on penalty of gross blundering—those millions of *cives Romani* and slaves of alien stocks who in time outnumbered the Latin twenty to one. It is of the Latin we speak now; not of Roman citizenry at large.

This craving for quick profits, first, last and always, soon brought on social ills from which Rome never recovered. All that is familiar history. The Roman Senators and their friends in power skinned all the lands of the Mediterranean. They tilled millions of acres to the point of soil failure. And they did nothing to rebuild it with fertilizers, as the Chinese, at that very same era, were doing; nor

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did they lift a hand to aid the impoverished peasants. Recall the hot words of Tiberius Gracchus spoken in 133 B.C. to the common folk who elected him tribune: "The beasts that prowl about Italy have holes and lurking places where they make their beds. You who fight and die for Italy enjoy only the blessings of air and sunlight. They alone are your heritage. . . . You are called masters of the world, but there is no lump of dirt you can call your own."

Now what does the stupid business man always do when periods of depression come as a result of his own materialism? He starts bread lines. He makes the government pay doles to the unemployed. He saddles upon the general public huge enterprises such as road building, housing projects, and the erection of government edifices and deftly spreads the cost of these over many years, through bond issues, so that he himself will have to pay only a small fraction of the penalty for his own blunders. At the same time he declares that times are really prosperous, that the depression is "purely psychological," that if everybody will rally 'round the flag and sing lustily, all will soon be well. He gives charity shows and big games for the idle. He grows lenient toward street beggars. Beyond these feeble palliatives he cannot see. Ask him to plan preventive years for a generation ahead, and he merely gasps—or sneers at you as a visionary and crank.*

Naturally, as wealth means power, this Practical Man dominated Roman affairs in those days just as he dominates affairs elsewhere in our own age. And, lacking imagination, he solemnly glorifies himself through personal press agents and in school books. He conceives Utopia as a place where the able rule the incompetent, where a strong police force always preserves the *status quo nunc* without any riots and arrests; where taxes are paid promptly, all bills are collected within thirty days, the sewers never clog, and no wild fanatic utters blasphemy against gods or the government. Like Julius Cæsar, he uses his power with sincere kindness and shrewd eye to the indisputable fact that the cream of profits flows fastest from contented cowards.

But what if there are not enough contented cowards to support every Practical Man in the manner to which he has been accustomed? Then trouble starts. The Practical Man grows surly. He will not

* Anthropologists inform me that some of these practices have been observed in modern tribes of North America and Europe.

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work for a mere pittance. Not he! At first he resorts to what euphemism terms cutthroat competition. That includes squeezing his workers, doublecrossing, violating gentlemen's agreements, buying concessions through bribery and thus technically outlawing his rivals, indulging in usury, and even resorting to thuggery at a pinch.

This was Rome at its best. In that vortex of stupidity we see Brutus lending money to the hard pressed city of Calamis at 48% interest, while a banking house with which Cæsar did business lent to one of the Ptolemies at 100% interest. The borrower in this last case had trouble paying, so Cæsar kindly assisted his fellow crooks of Rome by fixing up a batch of war contracts so that the bankers, by taking them over, cleaned up more than enough to cover their bad loan. It has been maintained with a fine show of evidence (which I am incompetent to judge) that Cæsar, when First Consul, stole 3,000 pounds of gold from the Capitol and hid the theft with a mass of gilded copper. Whether he pulled this scurvy trick or not, we know he was fully capable of it.

It is far from silly to argue that Rome fell as a direct result of social-economic stupidities. But if we so hold, we must add a saving clause; we must concede that there were five or six parts of ignorance for every part of stupidity, and that most of that ignorance was unavoidable. For knowledge of the world as a whole underlies all economic ability; so the latter improves apace with the former, never faster, often more slowly. The Romans did the best they could and must stand as the prototype of modern economic imperialism. They failed because they were, above all else, insensitive toward the social aspects and influences of trade and finance. It is only within the last few years (speaking as historians must of time) that anybody has begun to appreciate the dynamic unity of man, the consumer, and man, the producer, and man, the gambler, and man, the thrill-hunter. Another generation or two must pass before economic practices can be brought abreast of the new insight. So let us not be too austere in our condemnation of the Romans. Our business men and industrialists disclose not the faintest symptom of having learned anything from the fall of Rome, still less of having applied such learning to their own affairs. In the new doctrine of Service we see the beginnings of a change—but scarcely more.

You have looked upon the worst of Rome. Now contemplate the best. The Romans had not the first glimmering of progress, as we

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moderns think it. They concentrated on the present as if it were the all in all. While this attitude narrowed them in one respect, it gave them a broad and deep foundation of Law and Order. Indeed, many people think of Roman Law as the greatest achievement of the ancient world; and, while I would personally disagree, I must admit that it was a long stride toward better things. In her colonies perhaps more than in the capital, Rome made a solid beginning of *jus gentium*, or—as Gaius and Justinian both called it, “the common law of mankind,” out of which, slowly, a worldwide system of dispensing justice will in time emerge. It began in 367 B.C. when the Licinian laws created the Peregrin Praetorship, whose purpose was to see to it that disputes between foreigners doing business in Rome and Roman citizens were fairly settled. (True, other factors contributed to *jus gentium*; but we are not writing an essay on Roman Law, so we ignore them.) Largely as a result of having foreigners from all parts of the known world invoke principles, codes, and customs of their homelands before the praetor, the latter became familiar with all laws and, in the best Roman fashion, took over the best ideas. In time, almost every section of the Empire added something to Roman Law. Localisms were blotted out. The foreshadowing of a justice which knows neither boundaries nor race was at hand. So the Western world advanced a long stride.

Out of this Law there arose most naturally a keen logical analysis of ideas. Rome's colonial governors and their aides in administration probably took the lead in such intellectual practices, for they were daily confronted with the adjusting of differences between the agents of Empire and the colonial natives. Lacking in originality the Romans compensated by precision to the point of hair-splitting. And when the Cæsars had vanished, the tradition of ideas lived on and, in time, began France.

FRANCE

Of no nation is it harder to speak in smooth generalities than about the modern French. Tens of thousands of Americans think they know the French. Have they not toured France? Have they not lived for years in French villages during the World War? We must admit that they have. Yet their experiences disqualify them as wit-

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nesses of character. For the summer tourist gets one freakish slant on the people, while the soldier in the A. E. F. got a still queerer, less significant one. A tourist sees the sights. What are they? Moth-eaten cathedrals, American Bars, open air cafés, absinthe, Montmartre. . . . All about as revealing of the French people as Coney Island is of Americans. As for the soldier, all that he saw was under the most horrible, the most artificial, the most hysterical, and the most distorting circumstances—a nation being bled white and crushed under military law.

Back of all these obstacles to vision lies a difficulty in the French social structure. The country is a house divided against itself, in one sense, and a dual personality in another sense. It is Paris and the provinces. The two differ much more than New York and the United States; yet the divergence is of the same order in both cases. For centuries Paris has drawn to herself the rich, the fashionable, the smart, the brilliant, the egomaniac, the dynamaniac, the kydomaniac, the conspirator, the refugee, the eccentric and the pervert. First all these came from the provinces, then from all over Europe; and in recent times also from the two Americas. The provinces, on the other hand, have been thoroughly purged of their freaks, their madmen, their gunmen, and most other exciting and conspicuous humanesques. By that same measure have they gone violet, shrinking ever deeper into the shadows of the simple, the normal, the quiet and the serene. Where is life stiller than out in the open fields of France? Where is it of lovelier simplicity? I do not know. Where is it sillier, nastier, cheaper, and more tawdry than in Paris? Only in New York.

To sketch the larger Gallic stupidities, then, one must dabble away at two pictures. Of these by far the more important is the French peasant, for he is still far and away the largest, most powerful class and, in several ways dominates the life of the nation. He keeps France in the eighteenth century, while the rest of the Western world lives and moves either in the nineteenth or the twentieth. The second portrait must be of the Parisian. But which Parisian? There's the rub! The upper intellectual group is perhaps the safest to pick. Surely the upper *bourgeoisie*, whether in or out of Paris, must be ignored, for that class is only a projection of the peasant against a screen of gold. Surely, too, the new industrial class must be left out

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of the reckoning, for as yet it means little in the personality of France. Tomorrow it may become the dominant—but we write of yesterday and now.

So on to the peasant!

He sleeps next to his manure heap. Up at dawn, he drudges until dusk. He seldom bathes. He never reads a book nor a magazine. He would be dazed, were a friend to suggest that he take a week off and visit London or Rome. In all his life he has never seen a genuine newspaper, for there is none in all France. He wears the same suit of clothes forty years, patching it endlessly. His farm tools, such as they are, are used until the last thin shred of metal falls from the handle. He suspects all strangers and every business proposal. He is jealous of a neighbor's success and gloats over a neighbor's bad luck. Let an agronomist come to his village with a suggestion for growing a crop in some new way, and our Man with the Hoe ignores him. Nothing good can come from beyond the horizon—that is the maxim which lies in the peasant heart, deeper than words.

His attitude toward women sums all these other traits up. To him, the female of the species is simply a farm implement considerably more valuable than his scythes but well below his horses. You may have heard the old story about the peasant who sought a wife simply by holding the hands of each candidate for a minute or two. After he had selected the lady, somebody asked him the meaning of his strange technique.

"I want a wife," said he, "with cool hands, so that she can make good butter."

Need we add that our Man with the Hoe is anti-social in the deepest sense? Neither priest nor politician can rule him. He will not get together even with his fellow peasants in any effective program. He still lives and moves and has his being in that old, old agrarian individualism which was, in many respects, the finest way of life before the Industrial Revolution. His outlook and behavior pattern were finished centuries ago. Seen in the perspective of history, he stopped growing long ago; and he is therefore out of place in our modern world of industrial-social progress. Almost as much out of place, indeed, as the Chinese, with whom Paul Morand, in his *Hiver Caraïbe*, has vividly compared him thus:

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"There is a striking likeness between the Chinese and ourselves; the same passion for economy in making things last by repairing them endlessly, the same genius for cooking, the same caution and old-world courtesy; an inveterate but passive hatred of foreigners, conservatism tempered by social gales, lack of public spirit, and the same indestructive vitality of old people who have passed the age of illness. Should we not think that all ancient civilizations have much in common?"

With the last suggestion we agree heartily. Natural selection leaves its brand with startling uniformity on what it allows to live under given conditions. Peasants, the world over, are much the same; for they have sprung from stock which has adjusted itself deftly to primitive farming which varies little from land to land. The peasant of China's river valleys resembles the *ryot* in the Ganges Delta; and both resemble the men you see all over France, hoeing, weeding, driving horses, and peddling their greens in the village mart. Their hands are ever in the dirt. Their livelihood comes from the dirt. Why then should not their hearts be in the dirt too?

You cannot understand rural France unless you first absorb this truth. Then you see how it happens that the lovely countryside is the Frontier of Filth. Her tillers of the loam are insensitive toward dust, slime, spittle, dung, and sexual dregs. Few cats and dogs will endure surroundings which French peasants seem to enjoy. The horribly unsanitary state of peasant homes and villages is thus founded on a genuine stupidity: it is not mere poverty, for poor people can be neat and sweet—as the more Northern people of Europe are, even though much less prosperous than the French peasants.

The small business men of France are almost entirely the offspring of peasants—if not the sons, then the grandsons. When they move to the village, they take their peasant minds with them. In their midst Calvin Coolidge would be despised as a profligate. Thrift is carried to the point of insanity. And shrewdness becomes knavish on the slightest provocation. *Caveat emptor* is the only safe rule all over France, whether you are buying jewels in the Rue de Rivoli or saucisson at Les Halles. Hardly a restaurant or hotel in all France that does not cheat its own customers, if the head waiter or the clerk sees an open chance. To be sure, when you pass well beyond the zones which have been occupied by the spawn of peasantry,

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the scene changes; and the closer you come to the true cosmopolitan in Paris, the less you see of this rapacity. We are talking now of the common run of petty trade, which constitutes more than nine-tenths of all retailing in France.

The apologist may tell you, at this point, that peasant and small business man are pinch-pennies because they are poor, like the Italian field worker. But this is not true. There is less poverty in the French countryside than in any other farming region of equal size save only California. While there are few wealthy country folk, nobody starves. Is not the fertility of soil famous? The French have, since time began, been plagued with boundless good luck in their physical environment. Two thousand years ago, Strabo contemplated the Gallic scene and was moved to remark: "Such a happy disposition of places, arranged so as to resemble the work of an intelligent being rather than the effect of chance, suffices to prove the existence of Providence." Rich mines underneath richer fields; a clime cool enough to stimulate yet seldom hot enough to depress or enervate; easy access to any part from any part; rivers and springs, hills and vales, glens and dales all disposed as if in some superpark—what wonder that France was ever being invaded by the hungry and the forlorn and the fugitive? What wonder, too, that those who found foothold in that heavenly land subsided into a state of bliss? Why should they toil more? Had not God wrought all for them? Yes, why even think? Why visit other lands? Why read the deeds and thoughts of foreigners? As well expect the angel Gabriel up in Heaven to take the *New York Times*.

Being a nation of small peasants, in the main, the French are singularly self-sufficient; hence they lack strong motives for leaving their homesteads or for involving themselves in grandiose adventures of business and politics. They are not on the make; they are static. Generations ago they attained a simple economic balance which the Industrial Revolution has not yet upset. In the historian's eyes, the masses outside of Paris and a few northern factory centers still live in a social order which passed from the scene in England and America long, long ago. Their dominant wish is to preserve the ancient régime; so it is that, when they rationalize it, they construe everything in terms of justice. For justice is a static concept; it is a bookkeeper's notion of paying everybody his just dues and keeping all accounts balanced.

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This explains why the French masses cannot grasp the English and American passion for progress. Progress can never be harmonized with justice. At best a rude compromise may sometimes be set up. For progress, if it means anything at all, implies more or less continuous change from something good to something better; and, behind this change lies the deeper flux of events, the shifting environment. It is only in recent decades that men have discovered how fast and how complex this environment's transformation can become.

This narrow self-sufficiency which rationalizes all its own characteristics, good and bad indiscriminately, has been woven into the schools of France, where it perpetuates provincialism and ideology quite as thoroughly as the Chinese schools fix and transmit mandarin minds. You cannot understand the peculiar menace of France until you know a good deal about the *lycée*. The technical excellence of these schools makes them a danger to Europe.

The *lycée* is, in a sense most inexact, a high school. But no American child could survive one day in a *lycée*, for the students there must use their minds at peak capacity—and that is *tabu* in America. Then too, the teachers are scholars of the highest type possible among specialists; and this lends an intellectual atmosphere to the classroom which turns the little American stomach upside down. For the work is mainly with ideas and their clear expression.

The amount which French students must write and rewrite and then rewrite again staggers the American imagination. Not even our best schools of journalism impose half so much on their would-be professional writers. Even more amazing is the mass of detail to be committed to memory by rote. Only the old Chinese schools can match the *lycée* here. There is no class discussion, no spontaneous querying, no informal learning. All is cut and dried. All is prescribed by the government authorities in Paris. All expresses one clear idea of culture and nothing else. Each instructor, down to the youngest, is an incarnation of that one clear idea. For the French are ruthless monomaniacs in drilling and selecting her *agrégés*, who are to serve as professors in the *lycées*. The result is close to Utopian perfection, if we mean by this the accomplishing of what one sets out to do. But in terms of human welfare, I fear, the outcome is less happy. France breeds an inbred stock of ideologists. The more these inbreed, the further they depart from the stream of life.

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We cannot take time to describe the details of *lycée* work. Enough to say that the student spends hundreds of hours imitating passages in Molière and Corneille; more hundreds of hours analyzing these passages down to their ultimate structures and functions; and more hundreds of hours writing essays on themes dealing with French life, history, and thought. Always the emphasis is upon skill in dissecting and presenting ideas. Logic and literary style dominate everything else. Surely nobody in his senses would decry such drill, if it were rounded off with broader views, informal learning, conferences, and sundry other things which the world citizen of today needs. Such fault as we find with it is the same as that which the ablest Frenchmen have long since found; we only echo their judgment when we say that it stupidly narrows the students to formal ideas, to classical French points of view, and to logic-chopping. All these trends, you see, accentuate and harmonize with the peculiar provincialism of the peasant.

The Iowa hog farmer who reads his newspaper after chores in the twilight, before tuning in his radio for the day's pork prices in Chicago knows fifty times more about the world at large and all its harassing issues than does the editor of, let us say for precision's sake, a newspaper in Lyons or Brest. The little shop girl who, riding home on the last commuter train, scans her tabloid sheet from first to last is better informed about the realities of the hour than many a mayor of a French city or many a professor in a French academy. For it is well known among international journalists that the people of France have no access to news, and apparently no interest in gaining access. From an American point of view, the typical Frenchman is an ignoramus whose intellectual conceit makes him a menace.

The Arabs have an old saying: "He who knows not and knows he knows not is a wise man. Follow him. He who knows not and knows not that he knows not is a fool. Beware of him." Well, by that token, the French must all be shunned. For, though they know nothing about the world, they don't know how little they know. It is odd and significant, by the way, that they do not even know what a newspaper is. Nor is there any word in the French language that means what we of the English speaking peoples mean when we speak of a newspaper.

The French have their *journaux*. What are they? They are dailies without news. In the course of an entire year, all these sheets of

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Paris combined do not disclose as much about the events of the regions beyond northern France as you would find in a single edition of the *London Times* or the *New York Times*. Truth is, they are jokes. And mostly bad jokes. They do not even cover the news of Paris. You might study them all your life and still learn nothing about what went on within five miles of their editorial offices

It is a symptom of the endemic ideology of the country that the first page of a *journal* is normally filled with opinion and fiction. Much of the opinion is fiction, and not a little of the fiction is so classed only as a matter of opinion; but we let that pass. Essayists regale you with such effusions as "Memories of Abyssinia," "The Theories of M. Didoac," or "Paris in the Spring." The heavier sheets go in for philosophical analyses of art, industry, government, and metaphysics.

Nothing can shake the editors from this course. Not even a world war! Will you believe when I tell you that, during some of France's dreadfulest crises at and after Versailles, not a line of type appeared on the front page of Paris *journaux* about the Washington Conference, or the collapse of the Briand Cabinet, or whatever happened to be going on? Readers still saw, on the news stands, sedate headlines about Victor Hugo and the Evolution of Romanticism. World news is usually boiled down to a few lines and packed together on some inside page. It reaches the poor simpleton who reads it in such a form that he can extract no significance.

Most *journaux* are nothing more than political house organs. They are launched by some partisan group, financed by whatever interest wants to empower that group, and run solely as a means of advertising the group's program and assailing all its critics. To imagine its parallel in our own country, you would have to conjure up the picture of—let us say—Andrew Mellon, in his zeal to prevent higher income and corporation taxes, giving Bernarr Macfadden funds to buy the poor old *Evening Post* and to print nothing but essays on finance in it. But our mind reels.

Being totally ignorant of affairs, the French swallow the stuff passed out to them in these *journaux* as if it were pure food. They have childish self-confidence and infantile self-righteousness. No Baptist bishop was ever surer of his own rectitude and reserved seat in heaven than the typical Frenchman. It is a fixed idea that France is right and everybody else wrong. In the whole country there is

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no sincere and competent self-criticism through the daily press. You find it only in a few books written by Frenchmen who have lived much abroad.

You now see how France has become the best hated nation in the world, save only America. She is the only land whose attitude toward world affairs combines the arrogance of a Christian martyr, the self-righteousness of a missionary, the swollen ego of a paranoiac, and the stupendous ignorance of an illiterate monk. Pathetically out of touch with everybody and everything beyond her own frontiers, she still craves to have her way with the big world of two billion people. She dreams of moulding Europe to the French plan, pitifully unaware that the latter is no more suited to the temperaments and the exigencies of the twenty peoples involved than it would be to America. Her statesmen are almost as far removed from realities as were the readers of the old *Figaro*, under Calmette's editorship.

Melville E. Stone, long the head of the Associated Press, used to tell of his conversation with Gaston Calmette, editor of the Paris *Figaro*, concerning fake news stories. On the day when Stone chanced to be lunching with Calmette, the *Figaro* printed an alleged cable dispatch from New York City describing in horrid detail the massacre of several people by Indians, right in Broadway.

"Why," asked Stone, "did you print such a crazy tale?"

"Ah," said Calmette coolly, "there are, in Paris, sixty thousand brainless women—all of the demimonde—who read the *Figaro*. These silly items amuse them."

He might well have added that most foreign items appearing in all French newspapers, even though not pure fiction, give readers who rely upon them an understanding of world affairs scarcely more accurate than that conveyed by Calmette's first-page rubbish.

Now let us move onward and upward from the Man with a Hoe to the substantial, more or less educated upper classes of the cities and Paris. As we advance, let us not forget that the men one encounters in the fields of provincial society, the law, politics, literature, and science have, in spite of personal differences of nature, the broad, ancient background of France. They have at least a thousand years of culture, of tradition, of common suffering and common glory back of them. As André Maurois remarks, they spring from "the oldest and most stable block of humanity in Europe."

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What is their outlook on life, as a whole? Maurois has beautifully sketched it.* Here are his main points.

The first characteristic which has created differences in the French and Anglo-Saxon viewpoint is a heritage of Roman civilization. It is the Frenchman's respect for a written contract. I do not wish to assert that the Anglo-Saxon has no respect for contracts. But for him a contract is something flexible, something that can be changed or something that changes itself. Often he dispenses with a contract and relies on the impulse of the moment. It was an Englishman who invented the expression "gentlemen's agreement." It is also true that it was an American who replied that in times of panic "there are no longer many gentlemen."

But the American stands with the Englishman in refusing to permit himself to be rigidly bound by previous decisions. To a Frenchman a contract is an instrument sacred in itself, and to be altered only with the utmost caution. One must have lived in a French province to understand the part played in family life by the notaire, an utterly different person from the American lawyer. One must have witnessed the drama of changing a phrase and of choosing a word, and one must then imagine this legal spirit carried into the domain of international politics to realize what must have been the terrible disillusionment of the French as they saw the Versailles Treaty, the Dawes Plan, the Young Plan, documents signed by all the nations and solemnly guaranteed by their allies, successively becoming more fluid and intangible and melting away in their hands.

When the Hoover proposal came up for discussion in the French Parliament Senator de Jouvenel remarked: "How can nations be induced to disarm if they are not first persuaded of the sanctity of contracts? All that is snatched from justice is handed over to violence." The French Senate applauded this utterance, nearly all the papers quoted it, expressing as it did the settled conviction of every Frenchman. May I add that, in my opinion, it also expressed a conception generally held to be just? Civilization begins, in the chaos of the universe, when one man can rely on the solemnly given pledge of another.

Naturally, a Frenchman understands very well that there are circumstances which make it necessary to change a contract. Especially in settling questions so difficult and so ill understood as those of international economics may negotiators commit errors. But a Frenchman holds that the slightest change in a contract should

* The excerpts are drawn from the *New York Times*, Aug. 2, 1931. A few unimportant abridgments have been made.

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be made only after mature deliberation or after all those who will be affected have been consulted. He asks also that the modified or abrogated instrument be replaced by another or that the advantages expected from the modification be set down as clearly as possible. He wants a document which can be preserved, referred to, and, if need be, invoked, and which will be the embodiment of mutual trust and justice. One must have heard a man of the people say: "My mind is at ease; they have given me a paper," and one must multiply this sentiment 40,000,000 times to understand the necessity of treating contracts with respect in dealing with the French and of clearly explaining for the benefit of French public opinion why a closed question is reopened and what the future holds in store.

I know that this last point is the most delicate of all. The Anglo-Saxon has no natural liking for a plan. A Frenchman delights in picturing the future course of events. The Englishman and American are content to live from day to day. This is apparent everywhere. The English gardener lets nature take its course and creates a semi-wild garden. The French garden is the result of design—an arrangement of the mind.

I shall argue that this faith in written words is a supreme stupidity. It reveals a whole constellation of insensitivities, most of which we can explain as environmental anesthetics. First and foremost comes the Frenchman's insensitivity to—and almost total unawareness of—the enormity of changes all over the world. Having elected to shut himself up within the boundaries Gallic, he has never given his eyes a fair chance to see what is going on abroad. But even if he had travelled, it would only have been as a tourist who, seeing the strange, puts himself on the back as being better than those dirty foreigners. As a nation, the French know less and care less about the world at large than any other important people, east or west. Now, what has this to do with the French faith in a scrap of paper?

Simply this: the conditions under which promises may be fulfilled have been, for at least half a century, expanding further and further beyond all human control. Tomorrow is already the Great Unknown. And the ends of the earth may be, for aught we know, just around the corner. Methods of business and diplomacy which succeeded in the days of the Old Régime, when men could sit around an entire winter and split hairs, while affairs awaited their decision, are now a menace. In the middle ages, men had little else to do

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beside talk; and rarely did events force them to accelerate. There was a natural symmetry between thought and action; so the contractual procedure had merits which it now lacks altogether. This, by the way, has much to do with the collapse of the written law and the decay of the bar.

But there is much more to the French mania for dialectic and marks on paper. Environment tells only half of the tale. The other half roots in some obscure chromosome. Long before things began to whirling madly, the French displayed more intellect than intelligence. At no time could they accept new conditions or face realities in the raw. They suffer from the disease of dichotomy, a pernicious anemia of the mind similar to cancer in that a cell of fact tends to break down into two and only two elements. One is Either, and the other is Or. The disease is sometimes called the "classic spirit." Thus Taine, in his brilliantly erratic study of the old France, "L'Ancien Régime," says:

"To follow out in every inquiry, with complete confidence, and without either reserve or precaution, the method of mathematics; to abstract, define, and isolate certain very simple and very general ideas; and then, without reference to experience, to compare and combine them, and from the artificial synthesis so created to deduce by pure logic all the consequences which it involves. this is the characteristic method of the classic spirit." *

This ends in the habit of simple dichotomy. A is always either B or C. A citizen must be either for us or against us; either radical or conservative. So French religion, politics, and even business have always tended to split into two extreme camps. It has always been the Bourbons against Robespierre. Everything must be unmitigated; it is either out-and-out Black or else out-and-out White.

So France has ever been the land of obsessions and fanaticisms and grandiose theories which never work out. It is the land of those absurdly artificial landscapes around chateaux wherein everything is made so utterly subservient to a preconceived design that Nature vanishes.

Now, these same traits which almost wrecked France politically have always brought disaster in their train on the field of battle.

* "L'Ancien Régime." Paris, 1876, p. 262.

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The French militarists, relying on their rationalism and ideologies, have always been the stupidest. They have never been able to assimilate the genius of the obscure, sinister little Corsican who came in upon them, took them all over, and used their nation to his own egomaniac ends. Napoleon's traditions never took root in French minds. The French generals have studied and aped him; but the effect has always been like that of a monkey which dons man's pants. They reason beautifully about action—but cannot act rightly nor promptly. One might write a history of the sorry rôle of French militarists in these terms alone, and not go wrong by far.

Just before the outbreak of the World War, there developed in France—and especially among her leaders—a curious, striking, and ominous over-confidence. For more than forty years, French military tactics had been based on the initial defensive, to be followed by a decisive counter-stroke. The French built up therefor their fortress system, leaving great gaps for the counter-stroke. In 1914, however, the French leaders were arguing for the offensive, partly because the more courageous aggressiveness seemed to them, in their bold intellectualism, in keeping with the French character; partly because they had enormous confidence in the extraordinary "75" gun, and finally because they could safely assume the offensive with the support of their allies, Great Britain and Russia.

Preoccupied with the new conception, the French militarists, under the leadership of Joffre, worked out a new plan. "It was based," says Capt. Liddell Hart, "on a negation of historical experience—indeed, of common sense—and on a double miscalculation—of force and place, the latter more serious than the former." Not only did they plan to open the offensive with no more than a force equal in strength to that of the enemy, ignoring the fact that the Germans were well fortified on the frontier while the French were not, but they also *underestimated by half* the enemy strength, including in their estimate only the active German divisions. Furthermore, they were completely mistaken in assuming that the heaviest of the German attack would be made through Alsace Lorraine rather than through Belgium, an inexcusable error in view of the most obvious military preparations which Germany had long been making on that frontier.

Did nobody advise these ideologists of the errors of their scheme? Yes, indeed! None other than the ablest man among them, Michel Let us see what happened to him and his earnest recommendations.

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In July, 1911, General Michel, commander of the French Army in the event of war, met with the War Council of France. He reported that he was convinced that if Germany attacked, she would come by the northern route, through Belgium, and urged that the War Council prepare against this eventuality. The British General Staff had come to the same conclusion. For Germany had built railroads to the Belgian frontier, and had set up far more sidings than were needed for peacetime use. Plainly these would be used for the invasion of Belgium by her army. The French War Council, however, knew better. Of course the German army would use the southern route, through Alsace Lorraine, and certainly preparations should be made on the frontier of the south. Politely the Council thanked General Michel for his pains, and promptly they threw him out, putting Joffre in command.

The French then made every preparation to protect themselves against German invasion from the south, leaving the north quite deserted.

At the opening of the war, the great German army invaded from the north. Meanwhile Joffre and his thousands were concentrated on the south. A scattering of French and British guarded the Belgian frontier, outnumbered three to one by the invading deluge. All day and all night the Allies retreated, while Joffre desperately began to wheel his armies to meet the German onslaught. Whole cities went down before the attack. Capturing French territory as they hammered mercilessly on, when Joffre's armies finally did draw up for the defense, they rushed ahead in mass formation, remembering the first rule of French military tactics, "The best defense is attack."

Here is borne out the truth of Dimnet's comment on the French mind. "Preference for ideas, especially general ideas allowing simplified visions, is a French trait, even when terrible consequences may be the result. . . . To dance on a volcano is a decidedly French phrase describing a French attitude. Ideas count more in France than facts, and as long as education is at one with the national bias to prefer the art of living to the struggle for life, this one-sided view will go on." *

So, before that appalling battery of German machine guns, on the open field and at the complete mercy of the enemy, the French sacri-

* "Art of Thinking," p. 74

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ficed 300,000 military gallants to an idea. Keeping well in mind the hypnotic phrase—"the best defense is attack"—without entrenchments, brave in their uniforms of blue and bright red, the French rushed forward, to be pelted down by the greatest number of machine guns ever assembled by a single army in the history of the world. And the tragic and costly blunder goes back finally to that French belief that "*ce qui est conçu clairement est vrai.*" It took the first great disaster of the war to reveal to France that reason had played her false—and turned to treason instead.

Who saved France from herself? The muddling British, of course. More's the pity, too; for, in the long swing of human events, it will almost certainly turn out that the delivery of the Gallic horde was the worst thing that happened to Europe in many a generation. The world has outgrown France and all that she represents. It is not the fault of France. It is merely the march of mankind. Her social and economic system must go under; could her brilliant upper class only accept this as their fixed idea, what a boon to humanity!

They will not. They cannot. So, as we brush off the closing pages of this little sketch, France threatens world peace far more seriously than ever the silly old Kaiser did of old. Many a peace lover is breathing in secret: "*Gallia delenda est.*" The French rulers are iron in their determination to preserve this charmingly primitive agricultural society in a world gone industrial. At every point conflicts arise between the old régime and the new. The old will pass, but not until the last peasant has been shot down or wiped out with poison gas. For the French are constitutional die-hards. That is the tragedy of Europe today. For every embryo Briand in France there seem to be ten embryo Delcassés; for every Rolland a swarm of Esterhazys.

Intellect, running amok, brings the world to chaos.

ENGLAND

The men who have piled up England's immense wealth have rarely been endowed with economic intelligence. Most of them have been inferior business men. Their success can be readily traced to a galaxy of good breaks. The brilliant work redounding to England's credit has been mainly conceived and executed by Scotchmen, such as Lipton and Carnegie and Strathcona. (A few Americans, like Selfridge,

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have done their bit, too.) The English have been, on the whole, either ruthless adventurers or suave swindlers or simple pioneers or prospectors or smart Alecks or insufferable fools. When we begin the History of Human Stupidity, after this Short Introduction, we shall devote a thick tome to cases proving this uncharitable contention. Here are a few samples, just by way of showing that we know whereof we speak.

James the First, King of England, through magnificent stupidity, wrecked England's chief industry which, until 1614, had brought the country its principal revenue. The Dutch, though famous for their dyes, had no looms with which to make cloth, and therefore imported their goods from England. Why not, argued the King, require English cloth makers to dye their materials in England? Such a simple procedure, he figured, would bring taxes from both dyers and from import duties on dyes. But James did not figure on the Dutch, who promptly set up looms of their own, stopped importing cloth entirely, and consequently ruined England's most profitable industry.

A bright fellow, the great King James! But was he a whit brighter than the English cloth makers, some of whom must surely have been consulted in the matter? I fear King and subjects were cut from the same cloth and dyed in the same vat. Certainly every generation of English business men since his day has been equally dull of wit. We leap along, in our sampling, to the rather famous case of the British merchants and the American colonies.

Was British insularity ever more aptly revealed than in their muddled management of the spirited colonists who were virtually prodded by stupidity into revolution? Historians differ as to whose was the responsibility for the English policy toward the belligerent Americans. Some lay the burden on George III, whose hoity-toity notions about royal prestige never turned him into a submissive servant or a shrinking violet. But George was not a true Britisher, coming of a German family, despite his much quoted phrase from his first speech to Parliament: "Born and educated in this country, I glory in the name of Briton."

The Beards' * interpretation of the policy which drove the colonists into rebellion seems to me the sounder. Though they agree that

* "American Civilization, and History of the United States," by Charles and Mary Beard.

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George III did favor many of the restrictive and irritating measures imposed on the Americans, they find that the "laws were drafted by or for English landlords and merchant capitalists who as a rule looked upon the colonies as provinces to be exploited for the advantage of the metropolis." The Parliamentary representatives for these influential though benighted industrialists, therefore, regarded the trade of the colonies as "the property of the metropolis, to be monopolized by its citizens and made subservient in all things to their interests."

The slightest plaint from landlords and merchants often led to further legislation favoring them and very harmful to the now embittered colonists Benjamin Franklin spoke up in meeting when colonial money was prohibited. "On the slight complaint of a few Virginia merchants," he said, "nine colonies had been restrained from making paper money, become absolutely necessary to their internal commerce, from the constant remittance of their gold and silver to Britain . . . The hatters of England have prevailed to obtain an act in their own favor restraining that manufacture in America. . . . In the same manner have a few nail makers and a still smaller body of steel makers . . . prevailed totally to forbid by an act of Parliament the erecting of slitting mills or steel furnaces in America; that Americans may be obliged to take all their nails for their buildings and steel for their tools from these artificers."

The Boston Gazette, of April 29, 1765, was just as indignant. "A colonist cannot make a button, a horseshoe, nor a hobnail, but some sooty iron-monger or respectable button-maker of Britain shall bawl and squall that his honor's worship is most egregiously maltreated, injured, cheated, and robbed by the rascally American republicans."

Annoyance followed irritation in exasperating and wearing succession. When the New York assembly objected to forced search and seizure of prohibited or smuggled goods, with true British stubbornness Parliament suspended its legislature until it turned more amenable. Yet the British well knew the American attitude toward the general writs of assistance, expressed with indignant vehemence by one James Otis, who delivered himself for five hours thereon. "What a scene does this open!" he declaimed. "Every man, prompted by revenge, ill-humor, or wantonness to inspect the inside of his neighbor's house, may get a writ of assistance. Others will ask it from self-

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defense; one arbitrary exertion will provoke another until society is involved in tumult and blood."

The Townshend ministry tried to straddle the fence. Burke once said that to please everyone was the ambition and object of Townshend's life. Yet the minister's personal stupidity was but an individual reflection of British middle-class muddling. "To render the tax palatable," Burke said of him, "to the partisans of American revenue, he had a preamble stating the necessity of such a revenue. To close with the American distinction, this revenue was *external*, or port duty; but again to soften it to the other party it was a duty of *supply*. To gratify the *colonists*, it was laid on British manufactures; to satisfy the *merchants of Britain* the duty was trivial and (except that on tea which touched only the devoted East India Company) on none of the grand objects of commerce. To counterwork the American contraband, the duty on tea was reduced from a shilling to three pence. But to secure the favor of those who would tax America, the scene of collection was changed and with the rest it was levied in the colonies. . . . The original plan of the duties and the mode of executing that plan, both arose singly and solely from a love of our applause. He was truly the child of the House. He never thought, did, or said anything but with a view to you. He every day adapted himself to your disposition; and adjusted himself before it as at a looking-glass."

The British indeed cannot imagine danger in advance. American riots should have been red flags. The Sons and Daughters of Liberty were actively rebellious. The homes of high royal officers were destroyed and burned. British goods were boycotted. The Daughters of Liberty busily worked to speed up domestic industries and to refuse to buy taxed foods. British taxation methods were denounced as "illegal, unconstitutional and unjust." British merchants were threatened with bankruptcy; workers were losing their jobs. Benjamin Franklin pleaded the cause of the colonists, supported by Pitt and Burke. Grenville, then minister, announced that "America must learn that prayers are not to be brought to Cæsar through riot and sedition."

In vain did Edmund Burke try to point out to the King and Parliament their blundering follies. He insisted that the acts of Parliament which the colonists found intolerable must be repealed; that they must, indeed, be treated on an equal basis with England. But Burke

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addressed true Britishers. Parliament was adamant. Lord Germaine found the Boston tea party not an ominous danger signal, but "the proceedings of a tumultuous and riotous rabble who ought, if they had the least prudence, to follow their mercantile employments and not trouble themselves with politics and government, which they do not understand" Lord North and Pitt agreed. So the war was on, and what I regard as the greatest catastrophe of the white race occurred. The English-speaking people split, and the finest of their lands were exposed to the rabble of a hundred herds. The decay of America began with the Boston tea party, thanks to the almost feebleminded men of money in England. And England's doom was sounded in that same hour. That titanic misjudgment has cost the white race not fewer than 20,000,000 lives and \$300,000,000,000 thus far. It made possible the rise of the Hohenzollerns and the World War. It made possible the Civil War in our own land. But why go on?

Did English business men learn anything from this loss? So far as I can see, they did not. They did not even learn the geography of the Americas. Proof? In 1825 the South American republics, freed from the yoke of Spain, became a great new market for European mills and factories. The British put their heads together, went into a wooden huddle, and shipped to the steamy tropics of Brazil, Paraguay, Venezuela and Colombia cargoes of skates and warming pans and woollen underwear!

The ghastly failure of the great trading venture came within an inch of precipitating a financial panic in London. Did that teach them something? Did they start studying the Americas, the rest of the world, the basic conditions of trade? Not at all. For the next two generations they piled up fortunes simply by cashing in on new territories which their countrymen had occupied and built up by hook or by crook, and by taking a proper advantage of England's natural monopoly in coal and her naval supremacy. Down to the World War, English business leaders made no appreciable effort to attack their problem in a scientific spirit. They developed nothing comparable to the trade research staffs of Germany and France; nothing distantly resembling the immense technical schools of the continent and America; nothing to be mentioned in the same breath along with American trade associations and German cartels.

I was an attaché with the American Commission at the Inter-

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national Exposition at Paris throughout 1900 and well into 1901. I had the good fortune to be thrown more or less into contact with certain groups of British exhibitors there; and I had a peculiar opportunity to observe their methods, not in a single case but—what is usually most difficult—in large groups of firms, all of which were large and famous. Their attitude bewildered me. Several of London's greatest jewelers and watchmakers had excellent displays; but some had no salesmen on hand, while the French, the Germans, and the Americans maintained their finest staffs and, as a result, sold hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of orders, while some of the London exhibitors did not dispose of goods enough to pay for their booths and night watchmen. (This I had on their own statement at the time.)

A Manchester manufacturer of heavy machinery occupied a huge space near my own station; I came to know him fairly well—too well, indeed. It was novel machinery and, so far as I could then judge, worth demonstrating and trying to sell; else why should he have spent thousands of dollars shipping it thence, setting it up, paying for floor space, and all that? How did he handle it? He employed a young French girl to hang around a few hours daily; late in the morning and through the mid-afternoon only. He himself showed up two or three times a week, for an hour or so each time. He had nobody on hand competent to explain the machinery and its merits. In the course of six months, fully a hundred potential buyers inquired about it. Because I was near at hand, many of them came to me, after searching in vain for a salesman. It happened that the machinery interested me, so I told as much about it as I could and then referred everybody to the manufacturer's hotel address, which was not posted anywhere around the exhibit. (Not even the firm name was on display, I might add.) The only machinery sold during the Exposition was sold through me—and the noble Briton swindled me out of my commission on that, too! All of which helped to enlighten me concerning Big Business at a tender age.

Three times later I had occasion to be concerned in one way or another with British business on the tight little island, and each time found its ways just as loose as the island was tight. I am still convinced that perhaps one-third of British stupidity is alcoholic. Here is one typical case. A group of Midland capitalists picked up a vast, seemingly rich tract of land in the Mediterranean region with the

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intention of developing it in several ways, according to its sundry potentialities which were mineral, agricultural, residential, and hydro-electrical. As there was no consulting engineer in all England competent to inspect and report on such a peculiarly varied property, whose size was enormous, the general manager of the company searched for one in America and easily found his man, who happened to be an acquaintance of mine.

The mighty men of business decided that they could get all they wanted out of the engineer in one consultation; so they had him come to London—not to the tract! There they talked things over with him and were pained to learn that he would say nothing definite. He insisted that he would have to take several assistants to the land and look it over with the utmost care, as millions of pounds sterling were at stake, and furthermore it was known that certain conditions of soil and climate were somewhat obscure. The directors turned down his proposal on the spot. They said they knew they had a good thing and needed no such costly hocus pocus. Anybody could see what fine soil and sunshine the place had; as for geological peculiarities, they had been most authentically informed by some of their London friends.

Now, mind you, the company had immense funds on hand for further development. It was no pinch of poverty that led to this decision; it was nothing but immense and invincible stupidity. Not a man on the board was able to perceive and appraise the situation, when the engineer described it. And the result?

Within four years, the company had spent over a million pounds sterling and lost it all. The soil turned out to be hopeless for agriculture, as conceived. The mineral rights were a joke. The possibilities of home building all hung on the farming and mining. So that rosy prospect went glimmering too. Then—and only then—did these British bulldogs emit a faint yelp and call for the engineer. He put in several months on the job and reported that, if they wished to sink three hundred thousand and odd more pounds sterling in the venture, they might salvage it all; but he would not care to assume the responsibility; and so, good bye!

It is notorious that English business men cannot look ahead any more than most others of their countrymen. There is something almost pathological in the short range of their vision. No English firm would dream of making trade surveys to cover several years in

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the future. It rests content with the day and the evil thereof. Nor can it take the point of view of other individuals and businesses. English individualism is founded on this insensitivity; at root it is not a virtue but a psychic defect. The irony is, though, that superior Englishmen have made a virtue of this stupidity, not in a cheap, hypocritical manner but rather in an extraordinarily enlightened, sensible fashion. In our own age and the next, plagued by the insect vice of over-socialization, this inability to take the other fellow's point of view becomes a saving grace. Indeed, it may be the one force that blocks the imbecilities of nationalism, communism, and all the minor powers of darkness.

Its weak phase, however, is what concerns us in submitting these previews. Let us wind up, for the present, with a case showing how England herself has been nearly ruined by her stupid industrialists. She had gone to war in 1914, to save poor little Belgium, according to the Grey ballyhoo. Long before the German submarines started to throttle her, her ship builders and exporters were making colossal fortunes with war orders. The swine had their front feet deep in the trough; yet such was their swinishness that they cast an envious eye overseas, saw Americans getting ready to fill war orders which they themselves were unable to accept because their plants were running to capacity twenty-four hours a day, and grew surly over the good fortune of others. What did they do about it? They summoned their lawyers—the first necessity when one wishes to pull a dirty trick. They instructed their lawyers to draw up order contracts for all sorts of ship steel and naval equipment with a cunning clause inserted to the effect that the company signing the contract, in the rôle of seller, would bind itself to accept no orders other than British during the period of the war or as long as the contracts from British buyers remained unfilled.

A flood of such contracts poured into every important American rolling mill and foundry, during 1916 and 1917. And they accomplished their primary aim, which was simply to prevent the United States from building up a merchant marine while the British were engaged in a devastating war. No material could, in that period, be sold to any American buyer interested in seeking foreign trade with his own bottoms. Had we not entered the war, this would have continued; to the crash, America would have been lacking in freight vessels—and we should have been spared the billion-dollar loss and

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humiliation of our Shipping Board. (But we dare not credit British greed with this.)

Then came the majestic stupidity of America jumping into "the war to end war." The submarines were already whittling away at the British merchant fleet most alarmingly. We needed great fleets instant. Where were they? The British could not furnish them; they had not enough for themselves. Our plants, when urged to start construction, protested that they could not do so, because their hands were tied by those British contracts. They would be glad to commence with American vessels at once, but law was law.

The Government looked into the situation. It found that many great plants loaded with such contracts were working on only one shift a day. (As late as mid-summer of 1918, this was the case with some corporations as well organized as Bethlehem Steel.) The clever British shipbuilders, you see, were not calling for ships from America at top speed. They were not going to encourage Yankees to put in new equipment and train for mass production of boats, not they! They would hold the fellows down, just as the great, shrewd King James the First held down the wicked Dutch dyers; just as those shrewd industrialists and statesmen of the Townshend ministry held down the enterprising Colonists of North America, by taxing their rivals out of existence!

So these bright boys of Briton were undermining the sea power of the Allies and bringing England rapidly to final disaster because they could not see beyond the tips of their rheumy noses. Our own Federal investigators quickly diagrammed the predicament to Balfour, who cancelled all the British orders. Thus and thus only were the English delivered from themselves. So the kingdom of the blind went on, for a few more years.

To me, the most preposterous example of English myopia is found where the purest, finest stock of the Anglo-Saxon race has had a free hand to express itself. That is in Australia. The example is the railway gauge. Its story is too long for full recounting here; but the point can be summed up. In 1847, soon after the standard gauge of England—4' 8 1/2"—had been determined, South Australia adopted it. On June 30, 1848, the Colonial Office strongly recommended to the governors of New South Wales and Western Australia the adoption of a uniform gauge, with a view "to the probability of meeting, at some future, though probably distant period, of the lines, not only

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in the same settlement, but by a junction of those constructed in the adjacent colonies." The governors were further advised that the best expert opinion in England favored the use of the standard gauge throughout the Empire. Immediately a welter of arguments, theories, schemes, and simple foolishness arose. Private companies built their own gauges. Government engineers built others. English concerns built standard. And chaos spread its net over the stupid continent.

On June 14, 1883, two railway systems of different gauge met at a bridge over the Murray River, at Wodonga. Passengers from New South Wales bound for points in Victoria had to climb out of their cars, drag their baggage along to the Victoria train and get aboard. Freight had to be hauled out of Victoria cars and trundled over to the New South Wales cars. Even the Australian mind began to suspect that something was wrong. The cost of shipping sheep, wool, and biped muttonheads from one part of the country to another was almost doubled at each colonial boundary.

So they began to hold conferences over it. There was a big one in 1885 at which solemn resolutions were passed stating that five gauges were a nuisance and must some day be abolished. That did not seem to reduce the costs and discomforts much. So another conference was called in 1897—after twelve years, kindly notice! That got no further. Thereafter, every year or two, another conference. The last one about which I have read was held at Canberra, in January, 1929. All that came of it was a request that engineers submit more figures as to the cost of paralleling the present wide-gauge roads with standard-gauge tracks between the largest cities.

I am informed that nothing came of that conference. Australians who have studied the absurdity declare that since the stupid scheme of "every railway for itself" began, more than eighty years ago, the losses in time and money caused by trans-shipping, breaking cargo, and poor railhead connections at the boundaries exceed by manyfold the total value of the railways themselves. This does not seem exaggerated, when we consider that the entire rail system (or chaos) cost about \$1,350,000,000, with equipment. On an eighty-year average, a loss of only \$17,000,000 annually would, without adding interest charges, equal the total cost of building and equipping all the railways. The annual receipts from freight and passengers run usually between \$200,000,000 and \$250,000,000. And it is certain that the losses due to many gauges run well above 10% of this total; so that, if

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we were to allow interest on losses, the Commonwealth and its citizens have paid a pretty penalty for their stupidity, in no case a sum less than some two billion dollars

So, you see, the deep traits of the Briton lie deep in the blood, even unto the fifth and sixth generations, no matter under what skies they dwell. We have been observing the traits as they work out in business. Now let us look briefly at them in other fields.

Siegfried * has made a penetrating analysis of the British character whose relation to her peculiar stupidity we shall discuss. Here are the outstanding traits which he has observed. By all odds the most significant of these is the fact that the Briton "has so often succeeded in spite of mistakes that he has come to look upon these very mistakes as factors in his success." This (says Siegfried) is the real meaning of that extraordinary expression "I'll muddle through!" Furthermore, he goes on, the Britisher cannot learn much from other people's experience, for these hardly interest him. He is never curious. He has but a superficial admiration for foreigners, is honest, benevolent, and frankly egoistic. He is a sportsman. He is straightforward, never blasé, and shows an "ignorant disregard for others, caused by a capacity for forgetting which is almost akin to unfaithfulness." The British are urban people. They do not understand peasantry. They have magnificent energy, and as Siegfried keenly observes, it is largely due to this marvelous quality that they do not need to be successful in order to persevere. Their extraordinary insularity renders them utterly "unable to look at a question from the point of view of anyone else, and that is all there is to it. Remind them that you are there, and they will take account of you. Otherwise you do not exist."

"British indifference," says Siegfried, † "is possibly only retarded sensibility. He does not imagine dangers in advance, and it is only when danger is absolutely upon him that he perceives it. In the same way he forgets it as soon as it is past, because he does not look back any more than he looks ahead. The inborn conservatism which one finds in all classes and parties may come from this incapacity to picture anything intellectually unless it is either in the present or in the immediate future."

We cannot agree with Siegfried in his claim that the British do not look back. Indeed, some of their greatest blunders and stupidities

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seem to be caused by too much hind-sight and a stubborn incapacity to learn from their mistakes. Field Marshal Sir William Robertson, appointed Chief of the British Imperial General Staff, remarked with some bitterness that "It is no exaggeration to say that every mistake we had made in our wars with France more than a hundred years before had been repeated (in the Dardanelles.)" This quality of the Briton, however, we shall discuss later.

British lack of foresight, on the other hand, is illustrated time and again. Lloyd George sums it up in two words—"too late." The English openly admit their habit of "muddling through." Dixon * makes the same point "As a nation we are incapable of coming to a decision, and when ruin stares us in the face save ourselves by a lucky stroke at the last moment. No one knows what we may do or what to make of us"

When we consider this peculiarity of the British character alone, we find in the Titanic disaster the outcome of that quality of lack of foresight and that curious genius for being "too late."

On April 14, 1912, the world was shocked by the news of the greatest maritime disaster of modern times. The great liner Titanic, of the White Star Line, on her maiden trip to New York from Southampton, crashed into an iceberg in the North Atlantic and sank, with a loss of 832 passengers and 685 of the crew—1,517 in all.

Here are the details from the official report † of the tragedy. As you read them, however, keep in mind the fact that there was no cost limit in the building of the Titanic, so that every last detail of construction, fitting, and inspection should have been attended to with minute care. Yet the oversights and deficiencies were appalling.

The total passenger list was 2223. Yet there were lifeboats for only 1176. The Titanic was fitted with davits enough to handle 48 lifeboats, while the ship carried only 16 lifeboats and 4 collapsibles. Here, however, the stupid and lax regulations of the British Board of Trade were partly responsible, for they required no more. Yet there was further negligence, explainable but inexcusable. Every lifeboat was without a compass. Only three of them had lamps. Their masts and sails were bound with twine. Yet a witness reported that no one had knives. Had the sea been rough, probably not a single boat

* "The Englishman," W Macenle Dixon. N Y., 1931

† Report of the Committee on Commerce, U. S. Senate, together with speeches thereon by Sen Wm. Alden Smith and Sen. Isidor Raynor Washington, 1912.

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would have reached the water without being damaged or destroyed. The Titanic's supposedly water-tight compartments were, in fact, not water-tight. Thus the five forward compartments of the liner were flooded almost immediately, and it quickly sank.

So much for the equipment.

The Titanic's tests and inspection were unspeakably lax. On the first of April, the liner was tested for only six or seven hours. Most of the crew arrived at the ship only a few hours before it set sail. There was but one drill, lasting about half an hour. The crew was not given a list designating the positions of each member until several days after the Titanic left Southampton.

From this point it is difficult to assign responsibility for the tragedy. The Titanic's captain had spent forty years on the sea.

We know that on the third day out, the Titanic's wireless operators received ice warnings. At least three of these were personally given to the commander, the first message warning that icebergs were within five miles of the Titanic's course (The disaster did occur near this vicinity.) The S. S. Californian sent this message to the Titanic: "We are stopped and surrounded by ice." The message was received by the wireless operator of the Titanic but an hour before the tragedy. He briskly wired the Californian: "Shut up, I am busy. I am working Cape Race."

Titanic officials, therefore, knew that ice was dangerously near. Yet the official report reveals that the officers held no general discussion, called no conference to talk over the warnings, and paid no attention to them. There is little doubt but that the captain and President Ismay, both of whom were eager to make a new record on this maiden voyage of the world's greatest liner, knew the seriousness of the situation. Indeed, after leaving Queenstown, the vessel's speed had been steadily increased. The first day she ran 464 miles; the second, 519; the third, 546. Despite the warnings, the speed was not decreased, nor the lookout increased, although the officer of the watch was ordered to keep "a sharp lookout for ice." And the Titanic steamed full ahead, and just before the collision made her maximum speed of the voyage—24 1/2 miles an hour at least.

At 11:46 the lookout reported to the bridge and the officer of the watch, "Iceberg right ahead." The quartermaster was ordered to put the helm "hard astarboard." He reversed the engines. But too late. The Titanic struck ice.

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Never was confusion worse confounded. No whistle blew. No alarm was sounded. No passenger was warned. Fifteen or twenty minutes later the captain went to the wireless room. He ordered the operator to send out a distress call. And at last he gave orders to clear away the lifeboats. But no one knew what to do. None knew from which deck the boats were to be loaded. Nor how many of the crew were to man each boat. Nor how many passengers could be carried in a boat. Lifeboats were not filled to capacity. On one side, only women and children climbed in. On the other, women and children first—then men. Not a drop of water in the lifeboats—nor lanterns—nor food—nor compasses. There was no way to raise the sails, and a witness reported that no one aboard could manage a sailboat. As men boarded the boats, they were asked if they could row. In a panic to save their skins, they said they could. Yet once aboard, they were helpless. And on at least one boat, women had to take the oars—or perish.

And at two-twenty—three terrible hours after ramming into the iceberg—the great Titanic disappeared, going down with her captain and fifteen hundred passengers. The British muddled through, as usual.

Only a few years later, the Titan himself went down, in the World War which his leaders could not clearly foresee nor manage when it burst. Not even yet has the whole truth about English muddling from 1910 to 1920 been printed; nobody suppresses it, yet it remains untold simply because the volume of it exceeds the output of all reporters. The survivors of the holocaust still carry on in their old, old way, which Galsworthy so deftly describes as "the curious, damp, blunt, good-humored, happy-go-lucky, old-established, slow-seeming formlessness of everything." *

A new age is here, an age in which he who muddles is doomed. Science drives out happy-go-lucky. Formlessness spells bankruptcy and death. Then what of England?

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Relative to the domain of response, mankind shows a more or less symmetrical, progressive stupidity as he moves away from esthetics

* "A Sheaf," p. 200.

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toward economics. The simplest field of sensitivity is that of a single sense organ; the most complex in normal conduct is the realm of production and distribution. The former demands for proper appreciation nothing more than a well built sense organ and associative centers around it. The latter demands an unknown number of refined sensitivities toward all the major facts and principles of psychology, geography, and mathematics.

"Unless drastic measures are taken to prevent it, the capitalist system throughout the civilized world will be wrecked within a year. I should like this prediction filed for future reference."

Reputable newspapers here and abroad have published this statement as having been addressed, in a private letter, early in 1931, to Governor Moret, of the Bank of France, by Governor Norman, of the Bank of England. Many American bankers look upon the alleged prediction as being a little more than a half-truth, yet a significant diagnosis of an unparalleled situation. Some Wall Street firms echo the published query of C. F. Childs & Co.: "Are we politically dumb and economically stupid?"—as they contemplate the desperate state of affairs.

One of our keenest economists, Wesley Mitchell, said not long ago: "The real mystery is not that the economic machine—if we are to continue calling it that—now and then gets out of order; the mystery is that, most of the time, this machine runs after a fashion."

Let us go a little further. What evidence have we that the so-called machine ever runs? I, for one, am unable to find such. True enough, people manage to make a living; but what has that to do with the economic system? Do you think this a silly question? I do not. It seems to me that it strikes at the heart of the whole business. In order to demonstrate that the money and profit system works, even intermittently, we must find facts, we must point to events, we must disclose end results of its working.

Because so few people grasp numbers, the world is flooded with inaccurate statements, forecasts, and promises, some honest but mostly dishonest. American business men are duped daily by the ponderous inaccuracies of mathematical wisecracks, some of whom masquerade as Investment Service experts, "consulting economists," statisticians, and what not. The honest forecasters usually can be distinguished from the rascals by one peculiarity: they append to their prophecies such a swarm of provisos and "ifs" and "unless something unfore-

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seen intervenes" and similar strings that, in strict logic, they are saying nothing at all. (They grow furious if you tell them this to their faces; so please keep quiet when one is within conversational range.) A few others who are honest turn out to be merely ignorant of the deeper fallacies in statistical technique, especially those connected with the methods of sampling and the application of extrapolation in fields where the number and nature of all limiting factors are hazy.

No man living knows more than half of the limiting factors in any basic economic event. And those who know some of them are unable to calculate variations in a time series. For there is hardly a field outside of certain limited areas of physical and chemical action where real events can be expressed mathematically in their sequences.

The cold facts lend no support whatever to the pleasant opinion that American business men lead the world in ability, initiative, and actual accumulation of profits. The growth of world commerce since 1800 explodes all such theories. Between that year and 1913 all the people on earth enlarged the volume of their business from \$1,479,000,000. to \$40,420,000,000. That is, in 113 years since the beginnings of the United States and up to the World War, world trade grew about twenty-seven-fold. But how about our own trade?

If our business men were at all superior to those of other lands, how could they have failed to increase their trade much more than the rest of the world? They had, for their field, the richest unexploited continent suited to the white race. (Africa is far richer, but a poor home for our sort.) They had plenty of capital, plenty of labor, plenty of everything. What did they accomplish? Well, in 1800 the total commerce of these United States was \$162,000,000. In 1913 it had risen to \$4,279,000,000. That again is almost precisely a twenty-seven-fold growth. So, you see, our business men merely held the average pace of all nations.

There is, to be sure, a partial defense of this poor showing. World commerce is computed by adding exports and imports. It is, in reality, merely foreign trade. But, as everybody knows, our own land developed a colossal domestic trade in the century before the World War as a result of its fast growth of population and individual wealth. So we ought to credit the American business men between 1800 and 1913 with considerable acumen and enterprise, even though they prove to be only average in world commerce.

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I do not accept this defense. It is spurious. It is no achievement to sell bread to a hungry man. It calls for no remarkable ability to sell a lot to a homeless family with money. I would allow a business to plume itself for its superior salesmanship only in so far as its profits (not sales!) from year to year conspicuously surpassed the rate of population growth *and* the rate of increase of individual income *and* the decline in buying power of the dollar, if any. How many American businesses have grown faster than these three variables? We all know that few have. Just as the effective wage of workmen, in terms of buying power, has increased only slightly for a full generation, so with *relative* profits of business. And this demonstrates that our business men have not been cleverer than their contemporaries in other lands, any more than have our workers.

The good old cry, at this point, is: "Americans have always led the world, in the important inventions. They have put over in a big way every new idea. The rest of the world trails our business leaders."

Well, well! Let's look at a few much exploited cases.

The chain store? You call that typically American? Too bad! It was an institution thickly overgrown with moss long before Woolworth and the A & P ever came along. Sir Thomas Lipton was running a chain of more than 600 stores some forty years ago.

The automobile? Americans merely cheapened it, in order to make more money. As a youth in Detroit, I left the town when it had two or three contraptions of laughable crudity—the original Olds car, the first Haynes, and their like—and went to Paris, where the streets were plagued with taxicabs dashing hither and yon emitting smell and honks. And nearly all important motor car inventions, from the original gas engine of the German, Otto, on to the latest needle bearings, also German, have been merely borrowed (or stolen) by slick Yankee traffickers.

Radio? Ask Mr. Marconi about that!

Aviation? Did you know that the Wright Brothers tried for years in vain to raise a little money with which to build their airplanes? No American banker, no American manufacturer, no American speculator would take a chance on such a wild novelty. They were too smart for that, those clever boys! So the Wrights had to leave America and go to France, where they had no difficulty in interesting capitalists, as well as the Government.

Airships? All German! Down to the minutest detail; even the

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motors we use in our mighty helium ships are Maybachs. No American could ever design their equal. And, if he did, no shrewd business man would back him.

Industrial chemistry? In origin mostly German.

Well, enough! The tale is long and full of pangs! And the last few years have brought it to the lips of business leaders.

For the first time in my days, eminent leaders are speaking forth boldly about Americans' economic stupidity. I need draw no indictment of my own; that would be a waste of time. Our wisest bankers and statesmen have done the job well. More than a decade ago, Edward N. Hurley, when chairman of the Federal Trade Commission, found that 100,000 corporations out of the round quarter-million which turned in reports to the government showed no net incomes whatever. Further inquiry led him to the painful discovery that "one-half of all the people in business in this country do not know from day to day whether they are making or losing money." And only 40% of our so-called business men have even a rough estimate in their minds; the others are a total blank.

More recently, as a comment on the collapse of 1929, several critics of wide economic experience have come around to the opinion which the intellectual classes have held for many years, namely that business men, the world over, gave complete, incontrovertible proof of their stupidity in 1914.

Melvin A. Traylor, president of the First National Bank of Chicago, in an address on "The Human Element in Industrial Crises,"* sailed into Big Business in a vigorous indictment:

"The world began its march toward the tragedy of 1930-31 in 1914," he declared. "Why have we failed? . . . We have not failed because of ignorance of economic theories, but because of our utter disregard and defiance of all economic laws. Ambition, stupidity and greed have defeated policies, and trouble has been the result. . . . I cannot escape the conviction that the dawn of the present situation broke over the world in July, 1914, and it came not from ignorance of the ultimate results of the chosen course but because of a complete break-down of world political sanity. There was no lack of a knowledge of the consequences, but rather a lack of courage to face the

* *New York Times*, May 6, 1931.

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facts, to throttle national prides and to demand common counsel in an honest search for the basis of peace. Such a search might have failed, but, unfortunately, history does not indicate that it was honestly made."

We shall soon return to analyze this indictment. First, however, let us see just how stupid business men were in tolerating, if not encouraging the World War. Call in the accountants! Let us go over the books of this bankrupt old world and see what losses it took in that great transaction.

The most careful estimates of the cost of the World War are those worked out by Ernest L. Bogart, under the auspices of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. The direct costs of waging war by all combatants together amounted to \$186,333,637,097. The indirect costs, such as loss to civilians, losses in production curtailed for specific military reasons, losses to neutrals (a small item in the grand total), and the capitalized value of the men killed in action, amounted to \$151,612,542,560. The grand total of direct and indirect costs thus comes to \$337,946,179,657.

Professor Bogart has been too cautious, too conservative. For, on April 5, 1930, our Treasury Department gave forth officially that the money cost of the war to date, for the United States alone, has exceeded \$51,400,000,000. This includes many items which Bogart purposely omitted from his calculations. For instance, the interest on war debts for the past thirteen years, the upkeep of the Veterans' Bureau, war risk insurance and soldiers' compensation, as well as the payment of allowed claims to enemy aliens for seized property all appear in the Government statement.

The report repeats the well known fact that about sixty-six cents out of every dollar spent by our Government goes to pay for wars past or future. Scientists in the year 2000 will doubtless rate the U. S. A. as of 1930 A. D. as 66% stupid. Much too conservative, gentlemen! Much too conservative!

It is not far from the bull's eye to put the true final cost of that little fracas of Post-Glacials at \$600,000,000,000 on or about January 1, 1950, when the interest on the last remaining war debts will have ceased to be a world burden. And now we are ready to ask what might have been done with this sum of money, between 1914 and today. Any investor with cash to place in an enterprise would ask this, were he not hypnotized, bamboozled, sandbagged, or psychically

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castrated by hard ideas and mob persecutions. To be sure, no banker in 1914 (nor in 1932) could have given him any highly intelligent answer to his question. For bankers are Post-Glacials. But scientists could answer it in a dozen ways, all sound.

Let me show you a few ways, beginning with the stupidest and hence the one most likely to have been acceptable to bankers and investors, had it been put to them by a supersalesman. Our country is committed to a policy of economic expansion in Latin America. The methods thus far used to this end have caused us much trouble and immense outlay of money, mainly for Navy appropriations, every dollar of which earns us a true net annual dividend of five dollars' worth of ill will and suspicion. Suppose we say, just for fun, that we ought to expand south of Key West and the Rio Grande in a manner calculated to please our future employees down there and to preserve every friendship we may acquire. In brief, instead of hiring thugs and dressing them up in Navy uniforms, what if we viewed the despised Spiggoty as a human being entitled to the best personnel management which our industrialists have devised for our own factory workers?

We might—in this fairy tale—have done for all Latin America on a heroic scale what the former president of Peru, Augusto Leguía, did on a small scale before his enemies deposed him. He launched irrigation projects, built highways over the Andes, and started to develop the rich regions east of the mountains. Land thus handled paid its entire capital cost in the first year's harvest, as you may verify for yourself by studying impartial reports made by American experts on the scene.

We might, first of all, have bought outright all the best *undeveloped* lands south of the Rio Grande, together with such developed tracts as might be available to us at a price within reach. I do not mean that we should have picked farm lands alone. That would be far too stupid to be allowed in even a pipe dream like this. No! We should have bought any acreage that looked productive in any manner: oil lands, coal lands (of which there seem to be none or very few), hydroelectric sites, rubber forests, tropical hardwood jungles, coffeelands in the high plateaus, cacao tracts in the Amazon basin, banana belts, plots for sisal and other fibres, and all the other innumerable kinds of profit-making acreage not yet yielding dividends.

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As land prices run, we could have purchased, on a spot cash basis between 1914 and 1920, nearly one-third of the entire area of Latin America—and that the best acreage of all except the few highly favored spots already developed—for a little more than \$4,000,000,000. That would have left us a round \$47,000,000,000 of the unused war chest for developing Latin America. Spend a billion or two on highways, so that motor buses might now be running from

COUNTRY	ITS PRODUCTIVE AREA	ACRE COST —SPOT CASH	TOTAL
Canada	.. About 1,000,000 sq mi	\$10 00	\$6,400,000,000
Mexico	.. Under 400,000 sq mi	2 50	640,000,000
Central America	.. Around 33,780 sq mi	10 00	216,192,000
Venezuela	.. Less than 196,937 sq mi	2 00	252,079,360
Colombia	.. Less than 220,423 sq mi	5 00	705,353,600
Cuba	.. Less than 20,000 sq mi	25 00	320,000,000
Ecuador	.. Less than 25,000 sq mi	2 50	40,000,000
Peru	.. Less than 70,000 sq mi	2 00	59,600,000
Bolivia	.. Less than 50,000 sq mi	2 00	64,000,000
Chile	.. Less than 50,000 sq mi	5 00	160,000,000
Argentina	.. Less than 300,000 sq mi	5 00	960,000,000
Uruguay	.. Less than 50,000 sq mi	2 50	50,000,000
Brazil	.. Less than 1,000,000 sq mi	1 00	640,000,000
Paraguay	.. Less than 40,000 sq mi	1 00	25,600,000
Grand total investment for land			\$10,893,824,960
Primary cash cost of waging war by the United States			22,625,252,843
Balance for operation and development of the above regions purchased outright			11,631,427,883
Extra cash, as spent between 1914 and 1930 by the U S for post-war costs, about			28,775,000,000
Total available between 1914 and 1930 for the development of Latin America			40,406,427,883

Buenos Aires to Boston Spend another billion on railways, a third on waterways, docks, and barges so that immense fleets might now be plying between the Amazon's upper reaches and the docks of St. Louis and New York. Spend a fourth billion on hydroelectric power from the Andes, especially in Chile, whence long range transmission lines might now be carrying millions of KWH clear across to Montevideo. And still there would remain so much money unspent that we should have to cast about for other major projects.

One of these might be the purchase of the best 1,000,000 unde-

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veloped square miles of Canada, especially the Northwest. At the highest conceivable price, all that could be picked up for \$6,400,000,000 cash. And without a doubt half that sum would have obtained it in 1914. Or even one quarter of it.

And still we have scarcely nicked the Big Money! Enough still lies waiting to hire every literate and semi-literate Latin American at a salary of double his true earning power, namely at one-tenth of what he asks as wages. And with that, the whole Latin American problem now confronting us would have vanished in thin air!

I know such an act by the United States Government could never have been perpetrated; and, if it could have been, it would have been stupid from start to finish. All I aver is that, for all its stupidity, it would not have come within hailing distance of equalling the infinite stupidities of the war. My suggestion has only one point, and that is to exhibit these stupidities by pointing out what might have been done with the money wasted.

Now we return to our initial query. In all Western nations, politicians are ruled by business men. Some group selects senators, congressmen, members of parliament, presidents, prime ministers, and all the other men at the helm of state. How did it happen that the great bankers, the international promoters, the export companies, the manufacturers, the organizations such as Chambers of Commerce and Rotary, and all the other rich and powerful people who dominate politics normally allow their government underlings to launch two continents upon a sea of troubles whose wreck-bound shoals still froth and thunder all around those of us who still cling to the old derelict?

The answer is a matter of record. Turn back to newspapers, magazines and books appearing between 1914 and 1917. There you find virtually every American of consequence airing his views; and scarcely any of them in the ranks of business and finance showed the feeblest insight into world economics and war finance.

When the World War broke out in 1914, several eminent economists were interviewed by the New York newspapers on the probable duration of hostilities. Charity prevents me from mentioning the names of several distinguished experts who asserted, with great positiveness, that the fighting would be over within three or four months. Explicit arguments were adduced. They explained that the modern war cost millions of dollars a day, and might even cost a million

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an hour, if all the countries became involved in it. But, they added, this would soon use up all the money on earth; and soon thereafter all the credit too. Judged merely as a straightforward business proposition, the war could not continue because the sinews of war—money—would fail. As late as the spring of 1915 I heard this argument repeated among the learned.

What was wrong with the economists? Just one thing. They did all their thinking on a false presupposition. They assumed that human affairs are rigorously conducted within the money-and-profit system. Even those who strenuously opposed war called it a monstrous expression of "economic imperialism." And by using that phrase they indicated their belief that States were motivated by economic interests pure and simple; that nationalistic expansion is simply a form of super-business, hence run on the basic principles of money and profit.

But the ghastly joke is that not a single nation either entered the war on a business basis or conducted warfare that way later. How much happier the whole world would have been, if only all the nations had done so! They would then have estimated costs in advance. They would have looked into probable net profits. They would have taken duly into account depreciation, overhead, insurance, and all the other aspects of controlling costs to the end of ultimate gain. They would have investigated the various sources of eventual profit, too. And—what then? Not even the silliest of the belligerents would have taken up arms. For all would have found war to be exceedingly bad business.

Unfortunately, nobody regarded war as a business. To some it was a holy duty, to others a lark, to still others a neat way of being cured of a neurosis. A few manufacturers saw chances for personal fortunes and encouraged the fools in their folly. But that was a private affair.

American business men are the world's most wishful thinkers. And many represent a significant type of stupid egocentricity. A few commentators have pointed this out. Alexander Noyes* shows how the American business man successfully immunizes himself against perceiving facts and learning opinions and ideas which do not coin-

* *New York Times*, January 5, 1931.

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cide with his wishes. His ego cannot endure the conflict set up by unpleasant truths. Noyes wrote:

"As the president of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company lately remarked, 'No responsible financier will make unpleasant predictions publicly because he knows that it will earn for him the dislike of the business world.' It is therefore always taken for granted in advance that our men of affairs, when they affix their names to New Year's Day prophecies, will seek for a hopeful side and so exclude any disagreeable offsets "

The magazine *Nation's Business*, pleads guilty to a like stupidity, and gallantly publishes Alvin T. Simonds' article "Business Is Afraid of the Truth." * For some months before the Decline and Fall of the Stock Exchange, Mr. Simonds sent an article to *Nation's Business* suggesting a business decline. He confined his mild gloom to a single clause: "If a turndown in business should take place in 1929, as now seems probable,"—and went on to other matters. The article was rejected, as the editors admit, because it was "pessimistic "

Financial houses hesitate to forecast declines in business. They lose good clients and often win enemies by honestly interpreting facts. Yet the danger of misinformation due not to ignorance but to wishful thinking was pointed out by Franklyn Hobbs: †

"The commonest article of commerce is misinformation on fundamental things. The distribution and broadcasting of such misinformation caused a mild business recession in 1930 to develop into a serious and painful business depression. If every man in America had possessed the knowledge which was possessed by some thousands of real students of business conditions, this depression need not have been any more serious than the mild business recessions of 1924 and 1927."

We cannot agree with Hobbs' conclusions about the severity of the 1929 depression. It is unquestionably true, however, that the blind egotism of American business and its universal unwillingness to see unpleasant realities has done great harm to business itself and has enormously confused the significant issues.

The hapless prophets of 1929 have lived to eat their words. For

* *Nation's Business* April, 1931.

† *Steel*, January 22, 1931 Quoted by Simonds.

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too many months they were bearers of glad tidings. Poor Hoover goes down to history, famous for his pronouncement two days before the first crash on the Stock Exchange. He declared then that "the fundamental business of the country—that is, the production and distribution of commodities—is on a sound and prosperous basis." * Charles Schwab went him one better. In an address before the American Iron and Steel Institute, he foresaw good business, and added that "If the equilibrium between production and consumption is maintained, there is no reason, in my opinion, why our present prosperity should not continue indefinitely." Four days later United States Prosperity became United States History.

On March 8, 1930, Hoover again blundered in the same old way. He issued his now classic statement:

"All the evidences indicate that the worst effects of the crash upon employment will have been passed within the next sixty days, with the amelioration of seasonal unemployment, the gaining strength of other forces, and the continued cooperation of the many agencies actively cooperating with the government to restore business and to relieve distress."

Soon we shall pull the curtain of charity.

Not only does American business reek with bland and naïve optimism. But it is a veritable temple for the wide-eyed believers in magic, who, from salesman to banker, gather to watch rabbits pulled from hats and to look for and discuss the means of wonder-working through sundry supernatural agencies.

Look, for example, at Reverend Dr. James E. Walker and the officials of the National Broadcasting Company, who made a gallant attempt to persuade the good Lord to send rain to this parched land. He was requested by the aforesaid officials to include a prayer for the cessation of the drought in his devotional period of fifteen morning minutes. Dr. Walker announced that this was the first time in his knowledge that a radio concern had taken such a step.

Our little prelude would fail in its high purpose, were it to ignore U. S. Secretary of Labor, William N. Doak, and his Magic Potato. We learn the following from the United Press, under date line of May 15, 1931:

* See "Prophets Not Without Honor." *Edward Angly. Forum, May, 1931.*

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All that he is, Secretary of Labor William N. Doak owes to a magic potato. He remarked this today in commenting on his reelection as editor of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen's Magazine.

A magic potato, he said, "brings all kinds of good luck," stops rheumatism, and is "even good for neurasthenia," especially if it happens to be an Irish potato, grown flat and shiny from use, such as Doak always carries.

If the Hon. Doak is still living when we undertake our main study of mankind, we shall send a committee to study him. He deserves much attention, especially by reason of his high post and great power in American labor circles. Are our railways managed by the Magic Potato? If so, is there any connection between this fact and the present plight of most roads? As a member of Mr. Hoover's Cabinet, does the Hon. Doak use the Magic Potato in shaping the destinies of our nation? If so, has this anything to do with the present grievous state of the world?

Eras of high prosperity bring into prominence all manner of astrologers, clairvoyants, palmists, witch doctors, and common quacks. Why? I think the chief cause of this is so simple that it has eluded solemn historians and anthropologists.

The onset of a boom means easy money. That means that thousands of people who lack the wit and stamina to attain wealth in harsher times now prosper. They have always been superstitious adlepatates, but now, for the first time, they have the price to indulge their foolishness; and, of course, the crooks who peddle astrology, numerology, and the other frauds get their trade.

Then too, there are fresh motives for consulting the stars and the palms. The low brows, seeing everybody else raking in money, yearn to do likewise; they have enough to pay the seance fees, so in they storm in quest of stock market tips and general business advice. Nobody knows how many millions of moron dollars have been poured into the hands of that vast underworld of psychic racketeers during the easy-money years of the present century; but we may be sure that such estimates as have been made by various organizations cannot be far wrong. They range from \$50,000,000 to \$200,000,000 a year. Evidence gathered by the New York City police in 1931, during eleven months of quiet delving, shows that four fake astrologers in that city have been cleaning up about half a million dollars

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a year by selling horoscopes to suckers. Various radio companies which foolishly allowed these crooks access to the air discovered equally staggering facts about their incomes—as well as about the people whose lives they ruined by their false prognostications.

Before we close this brief note on magic, let us look at one of its more subtle evidences.

The stupid man cannot distinguish between feeling and ability. Let him pick up Charlemagne's broadsword in a museum and swish it through the air, and he will perhaps become excited over the memories this act arouses. He feels himself a world-conquering warrior. Feeling thus, he imperceptibly slips over into the attitude of being another Charlemagne. Here is one of the inextinguishable roots of magic. It comes over into our modern world in many subtle forms, some of which have been briefly but penetratingly described by Thomas F. Read.*

Machines are said to brutalize those who operate them. Read almost any high-brow magazine or book on the subject. Yet never was sillier nonsense. Says Mr. Read: "I have often wondered why the Chamber of Commerce of some manufacturing town does not offer a prize of, say, \$100,000 for the production of an authentic specimen of a workman who has been degraded and brutalized by the performance of repetitive work." I, for one, never met a man who had been brutalized by any machine. But I have known several who had been brutalized by their employers, by walking delegates, by employment agencies, and by boards of directors. And for each such I can cite a score who have brutalized themselves through sheer stupidity. Every machine reduces to some series of fixed, more or less automatic operations a task which previously had to be attended to at every moment, analyzed, and followed through with thought and dexterity. It reduces by manyfold the physical and mental strain upon the worker. By a queer indirection, then, it sometimes creates the illusion of brutalizing the latter in that it gives him time to "be himself"; and, when he can be that, the brute and dullard in him emerge and roll a bestial eye at the innocent bystander.

We close our exhibit of American economic stupidity with the case of a certain Charles M. Schwab, chairman of the board of directors of the Bethlehem Steel Company, for his serious advice to

* *Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1931, p. 223, etc. "Our Medieval Minds."

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married women, given in May, 1931, when the world-wide depression was reaching bottom.

"Spend all you can; never mind what your husband says; that is the best way to spread prosperity."

We assume that Schwab is not a scoundrel but a simple-minded business man who sincerely believes what he says. We also assume (and believe it thoroughly) that he is a kind-hearted chap without the slightest malice. Yet the devil himself could not put into the mouth of mortal man a sentence which, if obeyed, would send the world to hell faster than Schwab's extraordinary remark.

In the main, American business men display much more ignorance than stupidity. And this shall be my thesis regarding all major blunders in this vast labyrinth of money and profit. Frail as man's wit is, stupid as his conduct tends to be, its gravest handicap is dealing with the affairs of industry, trade, and credit centers in the intricacy, obscurity and vastness of the facts which must be mastered before sound judgment can be attained.

Logically, we should now go on to point out the different kinds of stupidity arising from a worthy human—and typically American—ambition to get Something for Nothing. For nowhere else has the aim been so hotly pursued with such devastating results. This dominant motive would, if all moved smoothly, lead to man's greater enjoyment of life. He saves that he may live more abundantly. He foregoes today's pleasure for a hopefully richer one on some bright morrow. But, when left to his own devices, he seldom improves his lot by investing, speculating, or gambling with his funds. And when bleak ignorance combines with human stupidity in transactions involving money, the outcome is wonderful to behold. As a sharpster wit once remarked, "The human being is the only animal that can be skinned more than once."

Had we arrived, then, at the fiftieth volume of our Chronicle of Human Stupidity, we should now present you with a free ticket to Section 99 of the Fools' Parade. Since a certain unhappy day in

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October, 1929, however, many volumes have described the procession. We shall, then, spare you our 50,000 words, which fade in full gloom in our files. They tell you of the drum majors—and the leaders of the battalions. They describe the painful antics of investors, speculators, gamblers, bankers. For the minute details, we refer you, then, to the *New York Times*, ad lib. from the date of the Great American Fall.

Yet before we leave this unhappy scene of folly, linger with me a moment in Florida. The year is 1924. For two years thereafter, the Florida boom was the epitome of every characteristic phase of American credulity. This spectacular and fantastic phenomenon throws a searchlight on our national stupidity which has never been equalled in any other period of American history. For two crazy years, Florida was the Garden of Eden of the Gullible. Then came the disaster of the hurricane—and it was all over. But it was a great show while it lasted!

In 1925, the United States was lolling in a warm bath of perfumed prosperity. Hundreds of Americans had made colossal fortunes in war industries. The speculative craze was at its height. And partly through luck, partly through intelligent planning, enterprising real estate operators recognized the amazing possibilities of Florida's tropical climate and marvelous soil. All over the country, from hamlet to metropolis, the glad word spread that here was the last new rich frontier.

It was my good fortune to visit the State twice during the epidemic. (No, thoughtful reader, I was not buying lots, nor selling lots, nor even writing advertisements about lots; I was just enjoying one of the maddest spectacles of modern times.) From Tampa to Miami there gathered a slowly rising hurricane of humanity something like the Children's Crusade and again rather like the procession behind the Pied Piper of Hamelin. All the infants were there, and so were the rats. Each sunrise added something to the rising tide of madness. The waters ran thick with all the stupidities of the race.

It is impossible even to outline the two years of insanity in a brief prolegomenon like ours. Here are a few high lights. It was estimated that during the height of the boom 600,000 people lived in tents. Outside the cities, almost no provision was made for water, and campers brought their drinking water from the nearest wells or unprotected springs without the slightest interest in ordinary sanitary

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precautions. Hotel elevator boys sold lots between floors. S. N. Tatum, who is said to have made a fortune in Florida, said that "A man came to Miami . . . and opened an office with twelve stenographers. He advertised all over the country and people sent him money through the mail. He was cleaning up and owned no land at all when he was caught. We captured a couple of crooks who used to work with forged deeds. They asked their victims to meet them at a piece of property and offered it to them below the market price on the excuse that the woman's mother was ill and they had to return home. . . ." An insurance company's slogan ran: "50% profit sure, 500% probable."

Almost the whole state was offered for sale, in some 20,000,000 lots plotted and staked out for sale. Were a house built on each lot and occupied by a family of three, Florida's population would therefore have equalled half that of the entire United States! This slight difficulty did not, however, occur to the lunatic enthusiasts. Ocean front property was sold for \$1000 to \$2000 a foot. And in Miami a front foot in the business section brought \$25,000. A room without bath cost \$10 often enough. One man paid \$32 a week for a corner of a sleeping porch. Another forked over \$35 a week for the privilege of sleeping on the cement floor of a garage. From 1500 to 1800 cars an hour passed on the Dixie Highway. A six-room bungalow on a 50-foot lot in an ordinary Miami city street sold for \$37,000.

Builders and engineers went mad with the rest. Incompetents earned a fat living despite the most ludicrous of mistakes. An engineer, for example, put in a sewer system for a small community. When the job was completed, the unhappy citizens discovered that the sewage, instead of running out of town to a near-by watercourse, ran straight back into the city streets! The demand for carpenters was so great that anyone with horse power could get a job. But the one carpenter I met did not care for a job. Here's why.

He used to be the town drunkard, in a sleepy village some distance from Miami. If ever he could pick up a half dollar, it went for rum. His wife took in washing and prayed God for deliverance. Then came the boom. Strangers appeared, bought up worthless sand tracts covered with palmetto, laid out streets, brought in brass bands, and started an auction of lots. Our friend, the carpenter, appeared in the midst of the proceedings and, being thoroughly inebriated, began to bid up on the lots. No money was passed until the day's end;

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as he bought, the auctioneer's clerk simply handed him a slip to sign.

Around noon the carpenter wearied of the game. He reeled homeward and fell asleep on the parlor floor, where his wife found him later, his pockets stuffed with purchase memoranda. As she was trying to decipher the strange slips of paper, in rushed real estate speculators offering her mad prices for the lots her husband had supposedly bought. Being a nimble wit, she sold all the slips on the spot and was able to retire for the rest of her days.

But those who bought the slips were walking northward, begging hand-outs, only a year later. *Sic semper stuperdis.*

"And how about the Big Fellows?" you are asking me. "What a clean up they must have made!"

Well, you'd better inquire of your banker as to that. But, if the last news reports I happened to see were authentic, some of the largest operators are not to be envied. There was the brilliant George Merrick, a poet in the business of creating a new Mediterranean; Merrick, who bought entire villages in old Spain, just to get the tiles off the house roofs; Merrick, who created the amazing Coral Gables, which went totally bankrupt and continued so for longer than my memory runneth. Then there was Carl Fisher, creator of Miami Beach, who had the shrewd foresight to slip out before the boom ended; with his millions—which, in my opinion, were deservedly earned—he came up to Long Island and tried to repeat his achievement away out at Montauk Point—and is still wondering why people will not flock thither. Dave Davis, the only man on earth who ever built his private archipelago? Glenn Curtiss and his million-dollar race track? Mizner and his lovely Boca Raton? Well, I don't know. But, on sight unseen, I'd rather keep what I've got than swap with any of them just now. At least, that would be safer.

Anyhow, those who didn't lose their all in Florida hastened to do so in 1929 in Wall Street. *Selah.*

And now for those other branches of American stupidity which serve to poison the home, the child, the citizen, and the state.

Who works this havoc?

In the home it is the parent. In the school, it is the teacher. In the community it is the lawyer and the politician. And in the nation—as in all nations—it is the military. Of the stupidities of these you already know much. But still more remains to be said.

Here it is.

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PARENT

The stupidities of parents are so many and so terrible that the wonder is that even one per cent. of our children grow to adulthood with even moderate sanity. Were the worst blunderers parents of little opportunity, bad education and early training, or low intelligence, we might more easily explain their mistakes in raising children. Yet superior men and women often perpetrate the most addepleted stupidities toward their young.

All but the most progressive parents believe that, because they have "experienced" motherhood and fatherhood, they are therefore blessed with a sort of God-given competence in understanding children. Furthermore, most parental love is the blindest of all. Their own little dears are to them not only special, but especially superior to all other little dears. And woe betide him who would infringe on the prior rights of parents.

All the stupidities to which mortals fall victim pile up in cumulative confusion as we raise our children. They are the more disastrous because of the arbitrary authority which we exercise over the young. For nearly two decades the child is helpless to escape the blunders of his forebears. His formative days must be spent in homes where egotists, introverts, mental defectives, neurotics, and other humanesques rule the roost.

Furthermore, children today must be trained by and live with adults who are demoralized and bewildered by the very conditions for which they are attempting to prepare their offspring. The young grow up in a world where there isn't enough work to go around; where their chances for making a comfortable living were never more uncertain; where leisure is a menace and vocational adjustment an ominous problem. The task of parents, like the world's work, is confused by so many complex and terrifying issues and obstacles that their best efforts may, through no fault of their own, turn out to be mistakes.

'Twas not ever thus. Yet, world without end, baby prides and joys have grown to dull and stupid manhood, to live out the years, blood-brothers to one-eyed Cyclops. For how many such and in what ways are parental blunders responsible? We shall discuss this problem further in Volumes 55 and 56 of our History of Human

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Stupidity. For the present, let us inspect a few conspicuous errors of fathers and mothers.

The stupidities of parental ego lead to one crime worse than murder. This is the crime of moulding children in the parents' image—or into the image of what he wishes he might have been. There are only two things wrong with this practice. First of all, the child does not possess his parents' personality. His inner nature differs considerably. Secondly, he will grow up in a world that will differ much from that of his parents' childhood. Otherwise, everything is all right.

In its most terrible form, we see this domineering egotism in John Ruskin's awful mother. Critics and laymen usually fail to see beyond Ruskin's marvelous genius the tragedy of a warped personality. Yet, almost wholly because of bad early training Ruskin grew up a social imbecile. His innocence about the ways of people led him into ludicrous absurdities. Had he been permitted to develop a normal, well-rounded personality, he might have achieved his deepest desire—to be the world's greatest geologist. From his own writings and the reports of his friends, we have every evidence of his enormous scientific interest and latent ability. Yet through babyhood and childhood, his horrible mother succeeded in thwarting his genius, as the many rich and authentic records reveal, leaving not the slightest doubt that the man's career was ruined in its larger development by the frightful stupidity of his mother.

She was a harsh Puritan addicted to petty moralizing and plagued with the passion to dominate her household. Grim, strenuous, prudish, and fond of sewing, darning, and washing dishes, this creature lived to the rare old age of nearly ninety without relaxing her management of her famous son. She did everything but wipe his nose. In his first decade she whipped him for every trifling deviation from her commands. Whenever she wished to be alone, she shut the child up in an upstairs room and commanded him to remain absolutely quiet, on penalty of a thrashing. She never allowed him to have toys; so his main delight was the contemplating of the patterns in the nursery carpet and his wall paper. She barred him from other children, on the ground that they were dirty and vulgar. She barred him from all sports and strenuous exercise on the ground that he might hurt himself. She drove him to church with fanatical regularity until he came to hate the very sight of a pew and a parson.

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Thus he grew up, imprisoned, lonely, inert—not by choice but as one jailed from birth.

But perhaps the vilest habit the old hag inflicted upon her offspring was the evening cross-examination. She forced him to tell her everything he had done during the day, no matter how picayune the deed. In short, the confessional in Puritan guise. In one respect her motive was pardonable; the boy showed sickly tendencies at times and had to be watched. But she did not realize that exercise and freedom would probably have firmed his fibre.

The crowning insult, however, came when he went to Oxford at eighteen. Papa and Mamma went along too! They took lodgings close to the college, and Mamma forced Johnnie to report to her every evening and go through his confessional. She also packed him off to bed, sharp nine thirty. The result was that he missed all those contacts and experiences normal to college years. Worse yet, the students sneered at him. He was dubbed a milksop, a home boy, and a dishrag. No wonder the downtrodden youth confessed to Dante Gabriel Rossetti: "It is a great, in the long run the greatest misfortune of my life that, on the whole, my relatives, cousins, and so forth, are persons with whom I can have no sympathy and that circumstances have always somehow or another kept me out of the way of people of whom I could have made friends. So that I have no friendships and no loves."

So he grew up ignorant of men and their ways, no less ignorant of the world, and most ignorant of the variety of emotions, attitudes, and experiences which blend in the making of widely different personalities. He could not understand how people felt, thought and acted at variance with his own predilections. He went at the task of reforming economics and the social order with such innocence that he lost a large fortune in the endeavor. He rationalized his own point of view in an absurdly individualistic philosophy. The marvel of it all is that he was able to penetrate his own crippled nature and coolly describe its flaws.

"My judgment," he wrote late in life, "of right and wrong, and powers of independent action were left entirely undeveloped; because the bridle and blinkers were never taken off me. . . . I had nothing to endure. Danger or pain of any kind I knew not; my strength was never exercised, my patience never tried, and my courage never fortified."

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His sole channel of rich experience was the eye. The ear and tongue give us most human contacts and lead to social insight; the eye looks to physical events, especially to those which delight us as spectacles. Ruskin's dream was to become the world's greatest geologist. And why not? Stones and mountains are as far as possible from people; only the eye is invoked to reveal them. It may be linked to a personality whose social stupidity is infinite without harm to the geological quest.

It is quite certain, too, that Ruskin's matchless sensitivity toward clouds, mountains, hills, and brooks, no less than his feeling for the English phrase, at which he was unchallenged master, must have been aided by his total stupidity in human relations. It is a general law of psychic equilibrium that a trait, when relieved of all the counteractions from another trait, in that measure runs free and strong. Nozzled down to the eye, Ruskin achieved much in the narrowly visual world. Had he been raised by a decent mother, we might have lost through stillbirth that personality which Morley described as "one of the three giants of prose style who strode across the literature of the nineteenth century." But we might have gained one of the greatest scientific geniuses who ever lived. We shall never know.

Of all tragic mistakes made by parents whose egotism is subtly disguised and therefore socially acceptable, we see one of its worst forms in those loving souls who sacrifice and scrimp away their lives that their children may have at last their own lost opportunities. Parental sacrifice has long been considered noble and lofty, extolled by ministers and praised on Mother's Day. It is in its dangerous form a distorted and emotionalized development and integration of admirable traits, and often most conspicuous among parents who have had so few opportunities themselves that their ambition for their children is out of all proportion to their offsprings' abilities.

The same sentimentalism develops somewhat differently but quite as harmfully in the parent who looks back with excessive feeling on the joys of his own childhood and says, "We're young only once. Let the precious little dears enjoy their childhood to the utmost while they may! For when they grow up, life will be hard!" Or again, it may lead parents to let their intense love of the children blind them to all their faults and benumb healthy parental resistance to children's immature demands. I know such a mother, who today pays

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a terrible price for her folly. For last week her son killed another boy. And largely because he had been trained to believe that whatever he wanted was right—hence whoever opposed him did wrong.

Over-anxiety and too much attention lead to such obvious stupidities as the coddling and worshipping of pleasant but ordinary little mortals. This prolongs infantilism. Parents baby and manage, direct and restrict, and continue to use the same methods in dealing with their offspring as they grow older which were moderately successful in earlier years. Unable to readjust to changing and therefore uncomfortable conditions, these parents vainly try to dam a flowing current. Like bad engineers, they play havoc with forces which they are incompetent to control.

All this over-attention, however, is the worse because of the ignorance back of it. In spite of the extraordinary progress of modern parental education, a committee of the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection has found that "Half the parents of young children do not read any books on child care and three-fourths do not read more than two books within a year" They are like Mildred James, who today is ruining her small boy and girl with the poisonous combination of over-attention and magnificent ignorance. "A mother always understands her own children better than anyone else ever can," says she, "so I see no point in reading about other people's children." Consequently, the five-year-old is a chronic whiner and weeper, badly nourished, horribly spoiled, and always tired and irritable. The younger never sleeps through a night, having learned that a wail an hour brings prompt and pleasant attention, a lullaby, a story, or a toothsome dainty which upsets his stomach but serves as a temporary balm.

Other doctors have more to say. Dr. Joseph Brenneman, for example, announces that "it is a matter of common knowledge among practicing pediatricians that of 50% or more of all children beyond the age of infancy, who are brought in for consultation, the sole or major complaint is that they will not eat." And Dr. Lippman, of St. Louis, says that "With all our weighing and measuring and all our rules as to when, where, what and how much to feed children, we have succeeded in doing just one thing; we have taken their appetites away."

Modern parents who do read are threatened with a labyrinth of

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scientific theories and dogmas in which they must pick their way almost arbitrarily.

We have no record of what happened to Cotton Mather's daughter Katy, thanks to the dolorous atmosphere of cogitation and prayerful theory in which she grew up. But when Katy was four, Cotton reports that he "took my little daughter Katy . . . into my study and there told my child that I am to dy shortly and she must, when I am dead, remember everything I now said unto her I sett before her the sinfull condition of her nature and charged her to pray in secret places every day. That God for the sake of Jesus Christ would give her a new heart. . . I gave her to understand that when I am taken from her she must look to meet with more humbling afflictions than she does now she has a tender father to provide for her." (But it was thirty years before Cotton departed this earth and ceased providing)

Modern parents, deep not in religion but in child psychology, fall into equally ludicrous habits. Everybody knows at least one mother who is terrified lest her life's joy develop an "inferiority complex," or be loved into an "Oedipus complex," thus making life an elephantine burden of child training and bad psychology, carried bravely with the best of intentions.

But, lest we forget that these pages are but an infinitesimal report of a few parental stupidities for our Short Introduction, let us turn now to the other extreme before we end this brief prelude Here we see the parade of parents who forever mess their children's unhappy lives through nothing else but simple neglect.

These are the children who are treated by the hundreds in juvenile psychiatric clinics A well-known New York children's doctor recently told me that thirty per cent of the children between two and six years of age brought into the better children's clinics in New York had psychic disturbances resulting from contacts with their worthless mothers. They were quickly cured, he said, by being taken away from their parents. Interested in this maladjustment between mothers and children, he investigated further Checking on every child clinic in Manhattan, he found that no children between eighteen months and three years who had been taken away from their mothers and placed under the care of competent nurses ever developed any nervous symptoms. Among the children who were nervously upset and demoralized, there was a positive correlation between the amount

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of time the mother spent with the child and the seriousness of the disturbance. After long study of the whole problem, this doctor has come to the conclusion that scientifically correct supervision of very young children is better by far than the usual type of maternal care.

Such competent help, from nurses, governesses, and the like, is all too difficult to secure. And the combination of parental neglect and stupid supervision of hired employees leads to criminal negligence, especially in families who can best afford competent help.

Rich parents are often too much absorbed in society and Wall Street to give thought to their children. They hire nurses whom they believe to be competent, though a later check-up reveals tragedy. Here, for instance, is a nurse who has "a little trick" which will let her escape from her small charge prompt and sharp on the dot of 6:30 p. m. Not paregoric, sometimes used by impatient nurses to opiate their little darlings. A device simpler by far—the nurse simply turns on the gas burner in the children's room, they soon get drowsy and fall asleep.

A fashionable child specialist in New York says that he has treated many little children for partial asphyxiation. He adds, "That's an old trick among nurses. The parents want to be fooled. They want to think all is well, even when they know all is not well. They convince themselves that, because their children have all that money can buy, they are therefore the most fortunate of youngsters."

The devilish combination of stupid parents and stupid nurses has ruined the life of many a helpless child. A dull-witted nurse dropped her charge, and, fearing dismissal, kept silent. The child grew up a hunchback. Another let a child swallow a button hook. Afraid to call the mother or a doctor, she tried to pull it out herself, thereby removing a part of the child's throat. Another was afraid to report that the baby had swallowed a safety pin. The child died.

Fashionable private schools have case after case of these abandoned children. Here is a child in a New York girls' school, at which she was a day pupil. Her teacher gave the child a report card to take home for her mother to sign. Three days passed. The teacher asked about the card, and why it hadn't been returned. "Well, you see," said the small miss naively, "I've tried and tried to find Mother for three days now. But I don't know where she is. And nobody else does, either. As soon as I see her, I'll bring the card back." At the

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end of the fifth day, the report was returned, duly signed, and the child beamed because at last she had seen her mother.

Little Mary Everard sometimes goes to the theatre with her favorite private school teacher. At the end of a recent play, she begged the teacher to come home with her. "I'm always so scared to be home at night. There's never anyone there but the servants," she explained. At one o'clock the house was still deserted. At two, Mary's teacher decided to go. Mary told her the next morning that her young sister, fifteen, came in at three that morning, and that her mother and father got in around four. "I was too scared to go to bed before they came; and I guess I was pretty glad to see them. But they often stay out late like that."

Jennifer, now fourteen, is a pupil at the same school. The other day, in talking with one of her teachers, she commented casually, "Well, I got in early last night." "Early—what time?" "Oh—two o'clock. I met Mother coming in, and she asked me what I was doing in so early." "Do you call two o'clock *early*? What time do you usually get in?" "Oh, around three or four—never before." This, mind you, at the tender age of fourteen!

Helen is the child of well-to-do parents who dumped her in an expensive boarding school in September, telling the head-mistress that they wanted to leave her there for the whole year. The child had no place to go at vacation times, and from September to the following May heard not a single word from anyone related to her. Finally it came time for the school to close. The head-mistress cabled Helen's mother to come to collect her offspring. With great reluctance, the lady came, and assured the school powers that she was greatly put out because they would not be considerate enough to keep Helen for at least another month.

Unfortunately, parental neglect is not confined to the well-to-do. Army reports bring much evidence to the contrary. The British National Service Board,* for example, in charge of the physical examinations of the British army, found that the low standards of health and physique among those examined was due, not chiefly to poverty or to working conditions, as might be expected, but rather to bad training and general neglect of physical defects.

* Report upon the Physical Examination of Men of Military Age by National Service Medical Boards from November 1, 1917, to October 31, 1918. Vol. 1. London, 1920.

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There is no greater tragedy in America today than that pitiful army of boy hoboes and tramps, juvenile unskilled laborers, who drift aimlessly from town to town because there is no place for them at home. Recent studies reveal the fact that most of these boys, living from hand to mouth at day labor, or as harvest hands, or ordinary human driftwood, are the sons of farmers who often enough have driven their youngest from home at the point of a gun. I shall never forget the weary straggling parade of these boys without hope whom I saw in the dark winter of 1930 as I drove from New York to the Pacific Coast. Chilled to the bone, starving and gaunt, they trudged from town to town in a futile search for work. Doomed to defeat from earliest youth, they struggle darkly confused in a world which holds for them no place. Usually the unwanted youngest in families already too large, born in poverty and raised in want, these sons of the stupid join the dull horde of Cyclops.

Especially in America, where life is most closely built around money and profit, it is of vital importance that children be progressively emancipated from childish attitudes toward money. Yet in an economic system where this emancipation is more important in adult life than any other single factor, children grow up in the bleakest and most helpless ignorance of the use and value of money. Small wonder that America is a nation of sucker investors and speculators when its whole educational system completely ignores the need for early intelligent training in personal finance. Americans are the world's greatest fools when it comes to doling out money to children. Were I to report cases of folly which I have seen, this book would be filled from cover to cover with nothing else. There are five varieties, four of which are common and one rather rare.

The first is the social exhibitionist, the parent raised with an exaggerated social sense. If a father, he feels uneasy, or even downright criminal, if he does not imitate his business and neighborhood associates even to the things he allows his children to buy. His mania is "keeping up with the Joneses." He has a feeble personality and fears the herd as a yellow dog fears his master. Does Jones, who is much richer than he, give his son Ike an eight-cylinder car for his birthday? Then little Mickey must have at least a four-cylinder runabout too, so that he will feel that he is moving in Ike's social circles.

Almost as numerous, but not quite so obnoxious is the doting parent whose motto is always, "Willie is right." "Willie won't hurt anybody

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if he has a car." "Willie's smart; he can spend money as well as I can." And so on, *ad nauseam*.

Next comes the artful dodger, the parent who, being either stupid or else weak-willed, evades responsibility by giving in to all his children's requests for money. As few adults ever have strong wills or very high intelligence, the army of artful dodging parents must be huge.

Fourth comes the egotist who, when importuned for money, says, "Mother knows best! I'll buy you a new dress myself. I'll pick out a nice sled; I know sleds better than you do! Tell me every week what you think you ought to have, and I'll decide." Parents of this type breed little rebels who may grow up in costly ignorance of the simplest matters of money and business. I know a mature woman whose life is today largely messed up simply because her mother, while spending money lavishly on her, almost never allowed the child to spend herself. A sense of inferiority is developed in some children by such treatment. In others the result is rage and rebellion and trickery.

Rarest of all among our well-to-do classes is the old-fashioned tightwad, the parent who begrudges every cent given to children, no matter for what purpose. Among the poor this occurs through necessity and cannot be open to reproach in broad terms. The evils of the practice are too palpable to require comment. It breeds thieves and thugs. In Utopia a parent of this stamp will have his entire property taken away and put in trust, on the ground of mental incompetence.

The stupidities of American parents are, in the last analysis, the more hopeless because their culture is barren of a social or economic philosophy. For this, no one is to blame simply because a so-called civilization rushes like a torrent pell-mell into chaos. What are wise and what unwise aims and purposes in training children? The answer is confused. In what kind of world will those now young find themselves a generation hence? No one knows. Pity the parent who must bear and raise children for a life steadily more bewildering, complex, confounded, chaotic.

What hope of a larger progress can shine through all this murk? Are parents, through their overshadowing stupidity, turning civilization into catastrophe? The question is not hysterical. It has a sober tone and intent. It leads us to close this doleful chapter with a glance

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at the influence which the parent-child relation exerts upon all social cycles.

As man rebuilds his world, he must remodel himself, to fit it. This is the irony of progress. In theory—or, if you prefer, in vague anticipation of the event—it would appear wholly possible to make the environment conform to human wishes and tastes without changing any of the latter. And, in a special sense, this appears correct. But man pays a price for his bargain with nature; and the price includes innumerable amendments to all previous ways of life. He must give up certain favorite foods, perhaps; he must regulate his sleep anew; he must alter the heating system in his house. Somewhere, threaded through this web of reform, there runs a strand of faith, belief, moral attitude, and esthetic judgment. This, too, suffers change—and there's the rub!

Every established belief and practice eventually must be put through this cracking process; some elements will be salvaged and placed in a totally new setting, while other elements will be tossed into the trash bin. The dogmas of medical orthodoxy must be thus handled no less vigorously than the superstitions of Romanism and Christian Science. Democracy and chiropractic alike must be ground between upper and nether mill stone. Nothing is sacred.

Now, this is the bulkiest obstacle to happy progress. Do you not see why and how? To change the course of a river or the design of a molecule is exciting. To make smoother highways and warmer homes enlarges man's ego no less than his comforts and opportunities. But when it comes to changing the stream bed of his own personality in harmony with all new discoveries and controls of his environment, he bristles; he turns his back, he fights desperately to preserve the old, old equilibrium of spirit. Nowhere is this egocentric balance more conspicuous than in eminent scientists who, after notable achievements in their narrow specialty of physics or astronomy, calmly go papal and utter authoritative dogmas in matters theological. Like Eddington, they construe their findings as supporting the religious views which they, as babes, learned from ignorant nurses, rectors, and mamas. What causes such extraordinary stupidities of logic? Nothing more than the relative power of dominance; what controls man's action in childhood, particularly in so far as it is pleasant, has the advantage over all later controls. But can you persuade the pious physicist of this? Of course not! For he is already dominated by an

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infantilism. We must never hope to convert such people. The odds against it are millions to one. The ego is fixed in its basic balance of thought and action during the first twenty years or fewer.

Here we have the root explanation of the fact, often noted by students of social change, that fully thirty years must elapse between the launching of a major reform in social affairs and its widespread success. You cannot force an old ego into a new mould. Leaders all have strong egos. Hence at any given time they lead the larger public against the reform. The older groups in this public follow naturally enough, for their life balance too is threatened by the proposed change. So the seeds of progress sprout and are nourished only in the young people; and not in all of them, but only in those who are not tied to their mamas' apron strings. The child who worships his parents is usually a foe of progress; so too is the child who fears either parent. The hope of the world lies on the knees of the free child. Perhaps our Utopia will be reported to him during the next few years; perhaps he will be amused or a little enlightened; half a generation hence the idea may sprout somewhere, in greatly improved form. And one purpose of this Short Introduction will then have been realized.

TEACHER

The facile critic of education in America must guard himself against what often turns out to be his own blind bigotry. He is all too inclined to fix blame and responsibility on teachers alone. Yet there is another side to the picture—and a disheartening one. Throughout the country even our best teachers are infinitely handicapped by the traditions and dogmas of group regulation, on the one hand, and by our cultural panic, on the other.

Three trends stand forth here: the first is excessive socialization; the second, the battle of the inferior intellectual classes for what they regard as the schooling of the superior man but what is really antiquated and useless "culture"; the third, the genuine bewilderment caused by too rapid social and economic changes, this frame of mind leading to extremes of experimentalism in which the school authorities "try everything once" and so overload the curriculum to the breaking point of both teacher and pupil. Other important trends

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there are, I grant; but the stupidities we are now studying seem to emerge mainly from these three.

The physical environment causes some of the insensitivities, but most of the latter are the effect of a curious blend of natural and artificial selection in the most confusing, unstable social settings man has ever blundered into. So intricate are the combinations of force, inertia, and design throughout our culture, that the critic of schools and teachers who tries to be objective has pretty rough going. He will protect his reputation, in the end, by conceding that stupid teachers are more to be pitied than censured.

In teaching, as elsewhere, the job determines the worker. Success comes only when, by nature and by training, the worker fits the work. In America, especially in our high schools, teachers are maladjusted. For getting their jobs is determined by one set of abilities. But holding them depends on quite another. In other fields, training approximately fits the job requirements. The prospective lawyer spends two years at a law school and is prepared after a fashion to enter the bar. But the teacher's training is almost sheer misrepresentation. It is somewhat as if a boy who wished to prepare himself to become an airplane pilot were required to memorize French irregular verbs.

Teachers are trained by the standards and requirements of an antiquated system of formal education, derived from the medieval emphasis on and love of culture. They learn the minute details of subject matter and method which prepare them to teach English—or Ancient History—or Algebra—or Botany. Their chance of employment depends on the degrees they hold, on the cultural training in which they have been successful, and on their mastery of special subjects. Some of them, of course, dabble at the theory of educational method and the like. But this has only the slightest bearing on school teaching.

The standards by which teachers above the primary grades are selected favor those who are more or less intellectual. Graduation from high school and normal school are usually the minimal requirements. Oftener, the college graduate with still further special cultural training has a greater opportunity of getting the better jobs. And increase of salary—if not keeping a position once obtained—is increasingly dependent on graduate work at a university.

At the end of such training, then, what work is the teacher called on to do? Well, he must meet the demands made by parents upon the

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Board of Education, and hence upon school superintendents and principals. And what do parents want? For boys—training for jobs. For girls, social training above all, and job training if necessary. We need hardly consider the small group of parents who wish college preparation for their children. Yet such preparation must still be highly formalistic, and therefore constantly conflicting with the interests and demands of girls and boys who have no intention of going beyond high school.

American taxpayers, on the whole, want their boys to be trained so that they can step directly from school into paying jobs. In most families, this is a necessity. They want their daughters to marry well, first of all. Boys and girls must make favorable social contacts. Girls must meet the best youths within reach. Boys must know the town's up-and-coming business men. They, too, must hobnob with the youths of the more prosperous class. Not one parent in a thousand has the faintest interest in such remote attainments as culture or learning or science. The burden of making a living prevents that, if nothing else did.

The smallest group of taxpayers, more prosperous than the rest, still worships college just as the larger middle class worships high school as the opening into fairer fields of friendships and business. As high school diplomas admit to college, the sons and daughters of parents who are not rich enough to support them in the expensive private preparatory schools troop off to high school.

So the high school has become the civic center for the rising generation of job hunters, husband hunters, and society strivers. Every taxpayer expects his children to enjoy the practical benefits of the institution for which he has shared a large part of the bill. He feels that he has a right to insist that his Johnnie be drilled as an electrician, so that he can go to work for the Power Company later; and that his Arabella improve her social charms and table chatter, her dress and her contacts that she may make some worthy man a worthy wife.

The high school—the taxpayer's property—must become more and more a combination of workshop, dance hall, beauty parlor and matrimonial agency. The teachers, however, trained in another tradition, still believe that the high school is an educational institution, where knowledge of subjects to them important but alien to American life must be drilled relentlessly into benighted and unwilling

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learners. They think that the rising generation ought to master what its medieval ancestors learned—in the way of foreign languages, history, literature, English composition, and the like. As far as they are able, they fight for this cultural and mistaken ideal. They create a treadmill of intellect which has no place in the American scene.

There is, of course, not the slightest reason why an institution whose purpose is to aid youths to get jobs and maids to move in the best social circles should maintain the outmoded cultural standards of schools which were concerned with the improvement of the citizen, his mind and his morals. You might as well demand that an aquarium set up the same rules of admission as those of the Union League Club, New York. But being unable or unwilling to observe the shift of motive and aim, we persist in teaching the old subjects, giving examinations, and grading students after the manner of an educational institution.

Simple boys and girls by the millions are forced into the treadmill, and there spend years in improving their minds. They must learn the names and dates and places of things and persons most of which are as inconsequential as they are multitudinous. They must learn algebra, which they never use. They must read, analyze, and criticize scores of so-called classics which interest them not in the slightest. They must write essays, be examined and quizzed, and hand in reports by the dozen for teacher to grade.

Against all this elaborate formalism, the students are in constant rebellion. Uninterested in subjects which relate not at all to their lives, the learners resist and rebel at the training forced on them. Teachers, therefore, are in constant battle, year in and year out, to cram down the throats of their obstreperous patients information which they are incapable of learning, in the first place, and to which they are hostile in the second.

Pupils are put through their paces by a series of teachers who treat them like mere minds, not like persons. They are judged entirely by grades, by attention in classroom, by speed in memorizing. Their joys, their sorrows, their secret aspirations, their difficulties with father or mother, their sinister fondness for fishing on rainy days, and all other complications of real life they must check at the outer door as they enter school. And the result has been told many a time by students of mental hygiene. The learners develop a hatred toward school and all knowledge.

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Even strong, healthy teachers are soon exhausted by this endless war. It is the more insidious and demoralizing because shrouded in the poison gas of well-mannered belligerence. There is no open warfare. Battles are conducted on both sides by strategy and sallies, by subtle campaigns without free fighting.

The most effective of all student weapons is simple passive resistance. Bernard Brodie, a Philadelphia school principal, recently called upon all of his teachers to tell him why pupils failed. Fifty-eight failed because of lack of effort and inattention; fifty-four because of absence, some of which, at least, was surely sheer student rebellion; twenty displayed "poor conduct," and three were "lazy." Of the total 251 students, certainly 81, and possibly more, failed because of their indifference or out-and-out hostility to classroom work.

The effect of all this on the students we shall soon take up. But it is not a tenth as wearing and exhausting as it is on the teachers. Fatigued and worn out by constant bickering and haranguing, forced drill and wearing mental discipline, the teachers' burden from this alone is enough to make them prey to all kinds of stupidities.

Dr. Esther Loring Richards* has made a study of retarded children who have been forced to repeat work and gave evidence of being mentally retarded. She found, however, that what teachers often termed "stupidity" was in many cases the result of a profound personality maladjustment brought on by a variety of factors. For example, a child who had made a bad beginning in school was so shy and embarrassed at his failure that his teacher called him stupid, when he was instead the victim of profound timidity. Another, suffering from both a language handicap and lack of home understanding, refused to recite when called on, as a rule. On the rare occasions when he did answer questions, he refused to have them explained if he did not understand, failed, and was described by his teacher as "hard-headed and stupid." A third, coming to a city from a country school, was not only poorly prepared for work but badly adjusted at home. Embarrassed and humiliated at her double failure, the child was assumed to have a "limited intellect," to be sulky and obstinate.

Dr. Richards studied a group of eighteen so-called retarded chil-

* In the *Survey*, September, 1930.

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dren. Of these, all but one responded to remedial treatment and were able to join their regular classes.

In describing these misunderstood children, Dr. Richards writes:

"Naturally the mental attitude of a child who has been passed from one teacher to another for a year or two without promotion is a very interesting study. Some of these children were calloused to ridicule, teasing, and loud rebukes, both at school and at home. Ambition and the spirit of rivalry had gone. They were bored time servers in the class room, often organizing mild revolutions when the teacher's attention was diverted for a moment. Others covered up a sense of shame at not being promoted by various reactions attributed to their being 'high-strung and nervous.' They were exceedingly 'touchy' over the slightest criticism or teasing, bursting into tears or explosions of cursing at the most trivial provocation. Still others seemed to have sunk into an uncommunicative state, never volunteering a remark and rarely answering a question, but quietly amusing themselves in a way to escape contact with the environment as much as possible. The general characteristics of the group and the personal traits of its individual members were so interwoven that in many instances it was impossible to say how much of the child's behavior was due to temperamental idiosyncrasies and how much was a defense mechanism developed to meet the school existence."

Add to the exhaustion from such chaos the fatigue which derives from the sheer clerical labor of handling the thousands of grades, quizzes, reports, and elaborate records required by antique and formalistic education, and you have a rough picture of the awful obstacles against which teachers must battle day after day.

Enmeshed in the labor of heavy administrative work, necessary discipline, adapting instruction to fit the superior and the dull child at once, correcting and grading papers, attending teachers' meetings, and all the rest of the endless routine required of most teachers, it is little wonder that many develop insensitivities as safeguards against complete breakdown. Unfair critics often misjudge these teachers as incompetents. True, the effects on children of worn-out instructors are quite as serious, yet the cause of poor teaching is often not so much inability as complete exhaustion.

In an article in the *Survey*, Dr. Bernard Glueck has commented on this situation:

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"The fatigue engendered from having to manage too large classes, the ennui which is inescapable when one is so largely deprived of the opportunity to exercise one's initiative, the irritations that are bound to come from constant lack of appreciation of one's best efforts in connection with an administrative machinery which has become so largely impersonal in nature, the anxieties over security of tenure, all these are effects which only the exceptional teacher is able to escape. The average man or woman obliged to work under these circumstances comes to reflect in his own personality and attitude the characteristics of the dissatisfied and balked individual, characteristics which in the specially sensitive person are sufficient to poison the atmosphere of any classroom. It is particularly under these conditions that the teacher is apt to resort, consciously or otherwise, to a kind of exploitation of his or her authoritative position which plays havoc with the personalities of the children."

Even this is not all. American taxpayers still demand that teachers be upright and moral. Often they refuse to permit them to marry.

Earl W. Anderson * has pointed out a few of the ludicrous and imbecile restrictions which the American public imposes on teachers. These prohibitions, remember, are directed at adults competent to direct our children in their entire educational training, yet unable, we rightfully assume, to regulate their own conduct with equal intelligence.

Here are the chief stipulations which we make for our teachers. Read them—in all their glory:

1. Prohibitions against such recreations as card playing and dancing.
2. Positive requirements of character, including church attendance and financial integrity.
3. Proscription of marriage or other occupations which might interfere with school work.
4. Attempts to protect the integrity of the teaching profession. (In this class fall laws that no teacher may serve as agent for a school-supply house, and laws regarding the employment of relatives of board members.)
5. Attempts to secure increased community services from the teacher by requiring that she live in the district, remain in it over week-ends, or teach a Sunday-school class.

* "Hamstringing Our Teachers." *Atlantic Monthly*, March, 1930.

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6. Demands of loyalty to the nation—growing out of the feeling engendered by the late war.
7. Rules against giving or receiving gifts. (A protection which in most cases is welcome to the teacher.)

Teachers must be compliant and docile, yielding to supervision and regulation often stupid and irrelevant. The employees of stupid American taxpayers, they must accept silly codes and ludicrous rules of personal conduct, as well as the breaking burdens of their jobs.

At least some of these factors lead to serious personal maladjustments. It is by no means clear to what extent these are responsible for our troubles in education

Such studies as have been made are not comprehensive enough to warrant general conclusions. A recent inquiry into the serious maladjustments of more than 700 teachers, made under the direction of Dr. Charles Benson, of New York University, is suggestive.*

There was one predominating factor in these cases. It was found that the teachers had singularly few interests, and these primarily passive. They were chiefly interested in reading, study, and religion, and almost not at all in sports, dancing, music, travel and the theatre. Whether these narrow interests are the outcome of personality traits by nature one-sided, or whether the teaching profession, with its exhausting demands, left the teachers too worn out to pursue normal and healthy lives in what little leisure time they had is a puzzle. Probably both conditions existed in these cases. The pity of it is that, while we teach teachers to teach, we leave them little opportunity to live.

Now what has all this done to the schools? The facts cannot be printed. Indignant taxpayers would deny at white heat the revelations which any thoughtful teacher could reel off by the hundred. Furious parents would clamor for the resignation of a superintendent of schools brave enough to tell of their shoddy and unfair standards. So the truth, to teachers and authorities ordinary commonplaces, seldom leaks out.

Here is a large high school directed by a pleasant, weak, and exceedingly dull principal. He in turn is regulated by the politician superintendent of schools whose house, lot and auto depend on his

* See *Mental Hygiene*, April, 1931.

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holding his job. Therefore he must please his employers—taxpayers and parents of spoiled, badly trained children. The standards of this high school are as low as they can be. A passing grade is 70, but the mark is flexible. For it is a fixed rule that the percentage of failures shall be limited, regardless of merit. Thus dullards and dolts get over the line.

The trouble roots in the mongrel nature of the high school course. Originally conceived as a preparation for college, it has steadily lost something of that character. Three incongruous strains now mingle in it; a hang-over of the older academic-intellectual species, a fresh infusion of the strictly-business ideal, and a mighty inrush of the social interest. Nobody objects to any of these three strains in a thoroughbred. But when they are crossed promiscuously, a sorry offspring emerges which is neither a good yellow dog nor a clean-cut jellyfish.

Out of the present typical high school three distinct institutions ought to be sifted. One should be a preparatory school to which only those would be admitted who intend to enter college. The standards here must be whatsoever the college set. A second offshoot should be a series of vocational high schools which do nothing save train youth for the everyday tasks of life and all that underlies success in such. Finally there should be a community cultural center whose first aim is to knit and foster the social life of all who dwell within its sphere of influence. To it should be turned over all the dance halls, stadia, auditoriums, basket ball courts, running tracks, motion picture films, tea rooms, and petting party alcoves now possessed by the mongrel high school. In the classrooms all the social virtues, customs, and techniques ought to be taught—and well taught, not for the young alone but for all members of the social group up to grandmothers. Here the parents would be educated in the art of raising children; here children would be taught how to tolerate their parents. Lasses would even be initiated into certain dark secrets of sex, while dancing classes would trip the light fantastic from dawn till dusk. Cooking, making beds, nursing babes, first aid, choral singing, tree planting, the care of furnaces, the art of polite conversation and—of course—all of etiquette together with the fifty-seven varieties of bridge, backgammon, cross-word puzzles and whatever other games are demanded by vogue would properly be taught.

Each task would be performed much more thoroughly and with

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clearer insight on the learner's part, if thus sincerely and drastically isolated. A vocational school can and should insist upon shop standards in its classrooms. The teacher of stenography would have the right and the power to pass only such students as attain an office worker's skill. The instructor in linotype operating need fear no hostility if he holds back every dull learner who cannot pound the keys in the best composing room manner. As for the collegiate preparatory school, it would have little difficulty in maintaining its required standards; for the abler students would no longer be tempted to shirk and cheat as the poor jellyfish have to do when forced to pursue studies grievously unsuited to their needs and abilities.

Briefly, our high schools need intellectual honesty, first of all, and then the moral courage to give the young what they need in the most effective manner. Today the waste and mental humbuggery of the high school system sicken the serious observer, who can scarcely be blamed for damning the public at large and all its politicians.

LAWYER

The Cornerstone of Chaos is the lawyer. When, some time after the year 2,000, detached and well informed historians depict the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in America, they will show, as nobody today can show, how the center, the heart, the brains, and the spirit of the unparalleled criminality of those dark ages were members of the American Bar. Whoever tells that story ought to dedicate his book to Jesus, who was the first to tell the truth about lawyers (thereby becoming himself despised and rejected of men).

For at least another generation—and maybe much longer—it will be unsafe to tell more than half the truth about the degenerate profession. For its power is immense and ever ready for evil. It literally rules America. He was a clever observer who first remarked that the American form of government is, in reality, a Soviet of Lawyers. Check over the memberships in all the national, state and city legislative bodies, if you want full proof; the overwhelming majority is, and always has been, a rabble of shysters, young advocates in search of practice, criminals hired by corrupt interests, and—here and there, with vast empty spaces between them—a thin sprinkling of honest attorneys who have nothing better to do.

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All these fellows have been drilled in the most pernicious and stupidest formalism ever devised. Rome at its vilest had nothing to equal the training and point of view of an American lawyer. And nobody is quicker to admit this than an intelligent and honorable attorney. He will also tell you (but not for publication!) that, because so much time must be devoted to learning the highly organized nonsense called Law that most lawyers never manage to learn anything else.

Bolton Hall relates a conversation with Albert Stickney, a former attorney in New York City and later judge who, in his day, probably tried more cases than any other man in the United States. Commenting on a certain case, Hall remarked that one lawyer in a hundred knows his business. Stickney pondered judicially, then answered, in full solemnity: "That's a gross overestimate." Judge Seabury, many years later, supported this opinion. He said to Hall: "The ignorance of lawyers who come before me (he was then in the City Court) is pitiable." To which Judge Gaynor added the terrible indictment: "In most of the cases I try, both the plaintiff and the defendant would do better without any lawyer at all."

This ignorance, I shall maintain, is largely due to excessive formalistic training; but it also derives in some degree from a diffuse stupidity which seems often associated with an interest in logic-chopping, hair-splitting, and verbose befuddlement. The law, in America, naturally attracts people deficient in a sense of realities and apathetic toward human interests—above all, toward justice, which it is the aim of the law to defeat in many cases. It is a special form of bureaucratic activity, which routinizes all affairs. When honest, it causes appalling injustice by slowing down trials and running up legal costs, if by no worse procedure. When dishonest, it causes most of the crime which now plagues us.

Twenty years ago a man could hardly have declared openly that lawyers are the chief cause of crime in our country; but today even distinguished professors like John Barker Waite, of the University of Michigan Law School, proclaim the obvious truth and cause no stir whatsoever. (For everybody knows it.) Who makes the laws? Lawyers. Who organizes the courts? Lawyers. Who fixes all procedure? Lawyers. Who tampers with juries? Lawyers. Waite insists that the trouble today is less with our laws, as such, than with lawyers

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and subordinates whom they appoint or retain for the

advantage the rich man has in court, even when he indulges in no corruption whatsoever. They have pointed out that, especially in the English system and our own degenerate variety of that, a trial remains a form of combat Plaintiff is pitted against defendant; and that means that one attorney is pitted against another. Who gets the better shyster? He who has the fattest purse, of course. And who is the better shyster? He who knows every trick of winning the case for his client—is not that an axiom of law?

But what have lawyers done to remedy this deplorable situation? Just about as much as they have done by way of moving the equator up to the North Pole. They love to deplore it—in after dinner speeches. Haven't you heard them do that? But often, in assembly, their moral stupor prevents even mild protest, as in the case of Sacco and Vanzetti.

The month is August, 1927. The entire world is still in uproar over that execution. While radicals roar against the wicked capitalists, sober people outside of the legal profession agree that the lawyers, judges and legal system responsible for the seven-year delay in this case are a disgrace to civilization. Meanwhile the American Bar Association holds its annual convention in Chicago, a city notorious for criminality among its lawyers and its perverted machinery of justice. And one of the first things this eminent gathering of jurists does by way of furthering social justice in America is to pass, in committee, a firm, high-minded resolution deprecating the vogue of "stunt flying" by aviators and imploring the Federal Government or somebody to stop all the non-stop flights to far places!

Ruat justitia, fiat coelum!

Can we blame clever lawyers for making monkeys of judges, as Lincoln, Choate, and all of the high lineage have done? Hardly. You might as well spank a little boy for laughing at a mandrill in the Zoo. You surely recall some of Lincoln's famous tilts. Here is a fairly typical encounter with a moral moron, as gleefully reported by the distinguished Joseph H. Choate. He was defending an American diplomat in a creditors' suit against the statesman. The outcome looked dubious. Choate pondered a moment, then showed the presiding judge the diplomat's commission, with its seal "which looked

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as big as a large platter." The judge was impressed. The case was saved. Duly appealed, the point of law made by Choate in the lower court was "laughed . . . out of court." Meanwhile the defendant diplomat was safe from legal clutches—for he fled to South America.

HAIR-splitting sometimes insults ordinary common sense. Some years ago, the case of *Calf vs. Sun Insurance Office* was heard in the King's Bench. It came out in the trial that the accused thief walked into a shop without the use of force and hid in the cellar thereof. Later he reached the office, but he had to break down a door or two to do it. The shop owner's insurance policy protected him against forcible entry of his premises. He sued for redress upon being robbed. But without success, for the court solemnly decided that here, indeed, was no forcible entry "within the meaning of the policy." So the luckless party of the first part footed his own bill. Whether or not he cancelled his policy, deponent sayeth not.

Technical knowledge makes many superior criminals and also aids them to avoid detection. Best of all is knowledge of the law itself. Next to this comes knowledge of the field in which the criminal operates. Some of the intelligent criminals I have talked with assure me that many of their colleagues have become lawyers for a purpose. And as I have pondered this, it seems to throw light on the present state of the legal profession. One disgruntled attorney insisted that twenty-five out of every hundred members of the bar were entitled to be behind the bars. This estimate I regard as peevish prejudice. But does any well informed journalist or social worker or honorable jurist doubt for a moment that shysters and unadulterated criminals are as common as quacks and malpractitioners are in the so-called medical profession? I have never met one who cherished such a doubt.

The five most brilliant criminal minds I personally know are all lawyers—three of them in New York. Not one of them ever has been or ever will be indicted. There is not a shred of evidence that can be brought against one of them. They have been involved in civil suits without end and have generally emerged victors. Most of these suits, as their opponents knew full well, concealed diabolically ingenious criminal acts.

Do not imagine that I am letting you in on any deep secret. A heart-to-heart talk with almost any decent lawyer will bring out more than can even be hinted at here. It is so easy to beat the law in

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America that even the feeble-minded do not hesitate to try it, thus giving rise to the science of criminology and to city room reporting.

Shady lawyers connive to figure out fake alibis for gangsters too stupid to do their own thinking. Alibi witnesses are brazenly selected from among the gunmen's intimates. Sometimes they are caught. Usually the lawyers are too clever to be detected in suborning perjury—and frequent bribes make their cases all the safer. Gangsters and federal officials escape the law thanks to these and kindred malodorous legal methods.

Thus with the effective deadlock following the trial of Attorney General Daugherty, accused of alleged "conspiracy." For weeks and months the trial dragged along, through conniving and subterfuge to protect the leader of the "Ohio gang." The legal technicalities were so bewildering to the twelve jurors who were, after all, no super-men that their puzzled questions to the judge revealed their lost confusion. During the trial, Daugherty was not allowed to take the witness stand to refute damaging charges against him, for, said his lawyers, cross-examination might reveal certain Washington nastinesses which then and now lie embalmed in hypocritical sanctity. That the jury could not agree surprised most citizens more than did the white-washing acquittal of the Ohio gang leaders.

Does some reader still cling to his faith in the law and lawyers? Then let him ponder this case: the law and its parasites found Edward L. Doheny, the multimillionaire petroleum peddler, innocent of having given a bribe to Albert B. Fall; but this same law and its same parasites found Albert B. Fall guilty of having taken a bribe from Edward L. Doheny—and sent said Fall to jail for a year.

Yet for the foul condition of American justice, the responsibility in the long run is the citizen's. The stupid American is to blame for this chaos, and in the long run as usual he pays through the nose.

POLITICS

This chapter is respectfully dedicated to Su Tung-p'o, one of my most distinguished predecessors in our present field of research. Su Tung-p'o was born in 1036 and died in 1101, between which dates he managed to have a son, on whose birth the happy father indited the following lines:

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Families, when a child is born,
Want it to be intelligent.
I, through intelligence,
Having wrecked my whole life,
Only hope the baby will prove
Ignorant and stupid.
Then he will crown a tranquil life
By becoming a Cabinet Minister.*

Political stupidity embraces much more than the stupidity of politicians. It appears in one form among our submerged masses, in another among our little business folk, in a third guise among our intellectuals and professional men, in a fourth among our industrial and financial leaders, and in a fifth among the politicians themselves. No little confusion has arisen through the common failure to distinguish these types and levels of insensitivity to the affairs of government. When we pass beyond the cramping confines of this sketchy prelude into the wide folios of the History of Human Stupidity, we shall consider at length each of the five species. Now be content to glimpse only a few gross features.

First the common man. If you have duly mastered the main points in our earlier discussions of Range and Level and Integration, you will instantly perceive to what a great extent the measureless political stupidities of the clerk, the small farmer, and the factory hand are determined by the size of the city or nation wherein they dwell and by the economic and social complexity of current events and by the velocity of the latter. Bluntly, quite apart from all special schooling and racial or individual abilities, the ordinary mortal in Denmark is much less stupid toward Danish affairs than is the German about German affairs. The German, in turn, is less stupid about home matters than the Russian; and the Russian is much less stupid about Russian conditions than the American ever is regarding American matters. In the last contrast, notice particularly that Russian affairs are relatively easy for a native to perceive and understand, first because they are very simple, as compared to American, and secondly because they move much more slowly than our own. The strain of speed is blinding and deafening in the United States. Before any common man has time to learn fully about a given problem, every-

* "On the Birth of His Son." Translated by Arthur Waley.

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thing has changed so that the problem no longer exists in its earlier form. Most of his efforts have proved futile. No wonder he gives up politics and turns to crossword puzzles!

Politics, like charity and measles, begin at home. But it radiates to the frontiers of the human race. A sound insight into city affairs has to be founded upon information seemingly remote. Your local voter may, in theory, have to know much about the larger laws of economics when called upon to decide a proposed bond issue for new sewers. He ought to be well posted on new trends in Europe before passing on new laws governing workingmen's tenements. Today, in the United States, no town can launch a program of highway construction intelligently without learning much about State and Federal projects. Thus throughout the list of civic tasks.

Most cities are vastly better managed than the best was half a century ago. The men in office are better educated and better trained than any of their malodorous predecessors. We have, in Cincinnati, the highest quality of municipal administration in the whole world; and not a few smaller cities are improving so fast that they will soon be in the Ohio paragon's class. How, then, does it happen that everybody holds his nose when city officials are mentioned? And why do decent men bar mayors and aldermen from their social circles in so many communities? The fair answer is intricate—we cannot render it here. But we can touch on its high points.

Relative to their human problems, certain classes of cities wallow in stupidity. Worst of all are the dirty conglomerates of riff-raff which we, with silly pride, call our great metropolitan centers: New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, and the others. Half a hundred races, a thousand varieties of adventurers, grafters, gamblers, pimps, procurers, rum runners, bootleggers, refugees, fugitives from justice, dope addicts, dope peddlers, egomaniacs, exhibitionists, and plain but honest morons—what could any ordinary man do with such a sour rabble, in the way of keeping the streets clean, the police honest, the tax rate low, apartments quiet, and slums safe? Only a benevolent despot could manage such a stew, and he would have to begin by hanging several thousand citizens at the street corners.

Nearly as evil as the big vortices of scum are many mining and mill towns; but their difficulties are of wholly different stamp. A few rich families own everything and regard the workers as temporary tools of the trade, to be used hard while fresh, shiny and sharp,

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then to be scrapped. Only exceedingly stupid workers would endure such conditions as they must put up with in Pennsylvania mill towns or in West Virginia coal mining villages. The problem of management, to be sure, is hard; but not nearly so hard as getting control. Whereas the rank and file of citizens in the big cities are far from stupid, in these lesser centers they are dull indeed; so they will never solve their own miseries.

The typical small town that is not ruled by one mill or one mine or one railroad, but lives on a dozen industries, all small, and has a good farming district around it is, I venture to say, the best of all places on earth wherein to grow up and live. It is seldom governed stupidly, for its main problems are not beyond the mental and physical powers of its people. There you find well adjusted men and women. The sooner Americans abandon their big cities, their factory towns, and their mining slums, the better for all concerned.

But to learn even the rudiments of the able management of a moderately small town takes time, even when one has the ready wit. Intelligent citizens would have to drop golf, tennis, motoring, and bridge, in order to conquer every major subject. To keep up with events, from month to month, they would have to set aside many an hour for careful reading of semi-technical journals, as well as the run of common world news. In brief, they would have to surrender perhaps half of their own personal interests. This they never have done and probably never will do. As for the stupid populace, which is the perennial majority, it could not learn one-tenth of good government, even if it wished to. Its wisest move would ever be to delegate the task of city management to experts. And how about national affairs? How about international? I fear these queries answer themselves.

The bitter truth is that, in so far as the masses of mankind are concerned (and it is of them alone that we now speak), there is not the remotest prospect that they will ever find time, energy, and intellectual sensitivity required for the larger politics. And the strongest hope of betterment, so far as net results are concerned, seems to lie in the direction of a weakening of central governments everywhere, but especially in the bloated blunderworks of such monstrosities as Russia, the British Empire, and the United States. China would gain by a break-up into seven or eight geographical units; India probably would be a happier place if it disintegrated into a

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dozen small nations. Where disunion, for any reason, is not possible or feasible, it would seem that a simple withdrawal of central powers and a transfer of the latter to states, cities, or counties would help things much. Of all this, more later.

We pass by the small business man and his political stupidity, for in America he is essentially the same sort of creature as the carpenter and the bricklayer. Indeed, thousands of hand workers have, in this land of opportunity, supposedly promoted themselves to the high eminence of corner grocers, undertakers, and garage owners. Here they find many more worries over rent, credits, supplies, and window dressing than ever harassed them when they belonged to the union. So they find still less time and energy for public affairs. Probably they represent, next to the morons and the hill billies, the bottom of intelligent citizenry.

So we come to the intellectuals and the professional groups, which merit far more attention than we can now allot. In America these highly gifted people—numbering possibly a scant million adults—add to their natural stupidities the extra dulness that derives from a profound aversion to mixing in with professional politicians. It has long been our genteel tradition that no person of refinement and culture would soil his hands with the filthy linen of every-day governing and partisanship. He is quite willing to learn all about government and its theories, as well as its dismal history, from books. He will attend lectures on the subject in college and join in debates before select audiences. He may even write letters to the newspapers in moments of peppery rage over some scandal. But as for joining Tammany or the Republican outfit, ugh! Yes, ugh! And even phew! You might as well ask him to invite pimps into his home, to meet the family.

The causes of this hauteur concern us, for their emotionality ties in tightly with political stupidity. So far as I can discover, most critics have missed one factor in it all; they do not see that, as our intellectual and professional classes have arisen, they have been a mere by-product of the dominant industrial and business groups who rule the politicians of both parties. Study the trend of the past fifty years, and you cannot fail to see that Big Money has always bought up Big Brains. That was shrewd and had in it not the slightest malevolence. I doubt whether a single corporation president prior to 1900 ever thought of engaging men simply because of their intel-

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lectual powers and influence. He hired such simply because they could deliver the goods. So what happened?

The old-style lawyer who showed brains was retained by big corporations, which demanded the best. The old-style engineer who thought more clearly and faster than his rivals signed up with hundred-million-dollar concerns. The skilful surgeon got the families of the wealthy as his patients. So did the ablest dentist. Not a single profession escaped this natural tendency; even clergymen of exceptional oratory and presence (of body as well as of mind) have long been picked by the millionaire vestrymen of fashionable city churches, while the imitators of poor little Jesus have been packed off to Tibet and Bolivia for the winning of the heathen. Today virtually all the Best Minds in the professions work for Big Money. Thus even with our scientists, few of whom continue research along lines dictated purely by their personal interests. The laboratories of the corporations have swallowed them whole. Even Mr. Hoover, a few years ago, joined in a sincere lament over the passing of the "pure scientist" and tried to raise a fund to finance him back to life.

As our ablest people have joyously become the poor relatives of plutocracy, they naturally share the attitude of the latter toward politicians. The industrialist, of course, despises the cheap skates whom he hires to lobby for him. He would not admit to his social circle the congressman, though he would sometimes greet a senator and even allow him to join one of his clubs. I shall never forget the look of social nausea which swept over the face of a Wall Street multimillionaire who had signed up as a dollar-a-year patrioteer in 1917, in order to keep on the inside of affairs, and who found himself consigned to a desk next to that of a former representative who had often done his bidding at Albany. That look summed up all that I am now trying to put into words. Its contempt, in dilute form, runs through the intellectual-professional classes.

Nothing short of revolution will change deeply this attitude toward politics. Our "Best People" cultivate political stupidity as a fine art; and every fresh revelation of the nastiness of politicians strengthens the old contempt. This, in turn, leaves the governing racket open and free to the racketeers, as usual; and these, in turn, remain open to the commands of the plutocrats from the Narcotics Ring down to the Aluminum Gang. So we come, in our blithe skimming, to the fourth group of politically stupid people, the 30,000 or

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more dominant personalities in American industry, trade and finance.

Their insensitivity to matters touching the common weal is, in the broad, notorious but seldom analyzed with much clarity; we feel it will tax our resources when we approach it at short range. A few general propositions are easy enough. All would agree, I suppose, that the pursuit of great wealth leads to an inevitable narrowing of outlook and a hardening of the temper, if not of the arteries. Nine out of ten very rich men, apart from the few who have inherited their fortunes, are tense, suspicious, able to see nothing but the main chance, and willing to do many things for money which would revolt most of us who are not willing to devote the best of life to dollar chasing. The history of almost every great fortune is full of filth, especially in its beginnings. But for the libel laws, what a book might be written about the 1,000 largest!

These fellows with big fortunes know little or nothing about world affairs, about economics, or about the best way of managing cities and counties. All they know is how to make 50% or more on their money; as they think about little else, why expect them to know anything else? Their ignorance flows from their constitutional insensitivity toward all other human values. Few of them have even the normal schooling, while many are mere half-literates. Those who possess high school diplomas, as does E. L. Doheny, are rare. Those who have achieved any thorough technical training in anything, as have the du Ponts, can be counted on the fingers of an eel. When and if we ever find time to take a census of the cultural types among American plutocrats, we shall, in all probability, find fewer than one out of every hundred who could sum up, after long preparation, the current problems facing the U. S. Congress and the President with more than 10% accuracy. (I say this after having interviewed three plutocrats.)

Now a word about the hapless politicians themselves. In certain respects I would defend them against their highbrow critics. True, among their parties and cliques and lobbies, we find plenty of undilute scoundrels, procurers of prosperity and pimps of progress. Nevertheless the majority of workers and lawmakers are above the reproach of corruption; and, in spite of much evidence to the contrary, their intelligence, *relative to that of the voters who elect them or even relative to that of the plutocrats who control them*, is not very low. How explain their conduct then?

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Simply enough! Their jobs have been too big for them. Too much to be seen, heard, debated, thought through! Too many crucial decisions to be made at top speed! The human equipment has been selected, for the past half-million years, primarily with an eye to the survival and success of the individual and the family. Not more than 15,000 years have elapsed since small societies were first made possible by the discovery of primitive agriculture. For the 450,000 years or more of humanity prior to the first act of planting seed in prepared soil and waiting for the harvest, all men drifted about the earth's surface in the wake of wandering herds and ripening fruits, feeding on these as they went. They were homeless, stateless, and—in our modern sense—lawless. The rigors of high ritual which shackle the village people even yet all over the world had not yet developed; for there were no permanent institutions, no sinecures, no leisure, no philosophies, no theologies. Even the languages of those nomads were fickle and in flux, each generation building its own vocabulary to a degree now utterly impossible except among the nomad survivors in isolated regions. Is it strange, then, that our sensitivities, inner as well as outer, fail to encompass the intricacies of a world which is, at a conservative estimate, fully 1,000,000 times more complex than the world with which the early Egyptians dealt—and probably 1,000,000,000 times more complex than the nomad's?

These are not poetical figures; they are mathematical. If you doubt them, take a ream of wrapping paper, a box of pencils, and five volumes of the *Congressional Record*; and itemize the facts brought up for consideration in the management of the United States. Mail your findings to my great-great-grandchildren; and they will check them against my estimate.

Any individual who handled his own money affairs as stupidly as our Government and the hosts of Wall Street have been handling the affairs of half a billion people during the past few years would be promptly adjudged incompetent by any court. But it would be a stupid fallacy to infer from this that all the individuals in the Treasury Department, the White House and Wall Street are nincompoops. They have—much as we may regret it—an almost perfect defense, which few of them are intelligent enough to use. They may retort to all critics that their tasks have exceeded human capacities.

In the international situation, of course, we see this at its worst. Why is it that, in the years since the Armistice, so little headway

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has been made toward disarmament and world peace? Why is it that, in 1930, with its universal depression and spreading poverty, nations spent about \$5,000,000,000 preparing for the next war, whose date is already being freely predicted by many keen observers? The fundamental explanation is that nobody has yet been able to work out the simple mathematics of proportionate disarmament on a basis which makes due allowance for all the factors in the human equation. Some have tried the arithmetical method and failed; thus the lamented Washington Conference with its once famous, now discarded 5-5-3 ratio for capital ships. Others, notably the French, try the pragmatic standard, measuring the elements of war in terms of their functions rather than their number or magnitude; but the number of variables which come to light when one tries to calculate such utilities quickly outruns the ability of the computers. All of which suggests (though it doesn't prove) that the problem may be formally insoluble.

Technical difficulties like this one accumulate on the desk of every party leader and chief executive. They reduce political leadership to an absurdity. Look at the White House during the past fifty years.

If we judge trees by their fruits and mortals by their deeds, we must pillory most American presidents for their invincible stupidity. Since Andrew Johnson, most cruelly misunderstood of executives, passed from the scene, there seems to have been only one president who has not displayed at least one seriously broad and dark streak of at least one major stupidity; and that man is Grover Cleveland. Far be it from me to argue that Cleveland was endowed with all the important sensitivities; that would have made him a Super-Man. I merely declare that he does not appear to have displayed a stupidity of major importance, *relative to his duties as head of the nation*. In common with Andrew Johnson, Cleveland manifested a certain lack of tact, which at times stood forth as monumental nerve. This trait worked to each man's disadvantage; but I cannot see that it prevented either one from handling his job well, as it did in the tragic career of Wilson, whose other immense insensitivities aggravated it by synthesis.

But what are the major stupidities in a chief executive? They are any deep, persistent, and incurable insensitivity to any one of the following fields of fact and principle:

1. The American temper, opinion, outlook, and aspiration.
2. World affairs, including politics, diplomacy, business, and geo-

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graphic conditions influencing the weal and woe of nations;
and

3. The facts and principles of economics, including the phenomena of
 - a—manufacturing,
 - b—distributing, and
 - c—financing.

A man must have some insight into his own countrymen in order to retain their respect and friendship, on which his administration largely depends. He must be responsive to world affairs, that he may manage our own foreign relations well. And he must grasp thoroughly the larger economic events, if only to avoid national disaster in industry, trade and banking.

Now, the only point I am interested in making just has to do with the relativity of stupid behavior. This may be summed up in a word *as the modern world grows more and more complex, all men grow relatively more and more stupid toward it; for their sensitivities do not enlarge, broaden, and deepen apace with affairs. Likewise, as these affairs move ever faster and faster, the sensory responses of men lag further and further behind the day and hour. So too do their associative responses (which are a higher order of sensitivity).*

American presidents lag further behind than most business men and professionals because of the political medium through which they are selected and in which they must operate. It is no accident, still less a defect peculiar to democracies, that rulers are becoming less and less competent. Science and the techniques doom all *political* management to decay. In 1975 the United States will either have dispensed with the presidency as a genuine executive post, or it will have reduced the White House to a mere shed on the back of our lot.

The trend is intensified by the dwindling sensitivities of the major political parties toward public opinion and the state of affairs. The individuals in these parties suffer under the same handicap of relative lag which curses all of us; but over and above this, changes in the mechanisms of propaganda obscure the social and political situation as never before. Here are, let us say, ten good men in search of a decent, progressive political platform; how can they establish what the country needs? By inquiry? Perhaps. But how are they to detect fact from fiction, truth from wish? United States Senators confide in them. Economists send them treatises and volumes of statistics.

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Committees call on them. But how sift the incontrovertible from the specious? How decide whether the conference is not a press agent's frame-up? The task of peering through the murk adds a heavy burden to the overloaded statesman.

America has lost the most precious asset of her earlier days, the integrity of the individual, first as a man and then as a citizen. This was the English in her makeup. It was largely destroyed by the Civil War, though sturdy strands and shreds survived that colossal imbecility. We might, for the sake of sharpening our point, indulge in a poetic exaggeration and say that, if the British Government were exterminated tomorrow, life would go on exactly as before all over England; but if our own Federal Government, with all its Romanesque trimmings and accessories, were mysteriously destroyed over night, the entire country would lapse into a turmoil of anarchy, looting, racketeering, and slaughters in the open streets.

In the face of this fantasy, will you think me clean crazy if I add that, just because Americans have lost all political sense, they lean heavily on government? Government is not politics. Government is an institution which manages the affairs of state. But politics is an art which only persons may acquire, and they by dint of much practice well firmed upon social trends and a certain insight into human nature. The English possess this art to a degree far greater than any other people past or present; and in this specific sense they are the most highly civilized. By the same token and gauged with the same yardstick, we Americans are mere barbarians—ranking somewhere between the Afghans and the Poles.

What has caused this degeneration? Nothing more, in my opinion, than the inescapable decay of mutual understanding among people of a hundred racial stocks, from fifty nations, and drawn from all levels of intelligence, from all types of emotionality, and from all varieties of practicality. At one time, stern Puritans poured into North America from one land, while pirates were slipping in from other places. At another time came stolid Teutonic peasants and fiery revolutionists. On the same ship, somewhat later, there arrived cunning pawnbrokers and small-time bankers, first class, while down in the steerage a herd of morons rounded up by labor agencies was making ready to trudge ashore and be fumigated. Each large American city is a babel of tongues and a bedlam of customs. So, you see, every-

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body misunderstands everybody else, or else makes no effort to understand.

At best, it is hard to understand and get along with people. Homogeneous countries which are small enough to permit the growth of a web of friendships throughout their whole area manage best here: Denmark, Sweden, and Holland surpass England and France in this respect by as much as England and France surpass such sprawling polyglot jumbles as America and Russia. From the hour our subnormal statesmen flung open the doors to all comers, we were doomed; and not alone because of the particular character of the immigrant but, still more profoundly, because we brought in too many different sorts at once. We should have ruined the country politically even if we had selected only the best from fifty racial and national stocks. By admitting a few of the best and many of the worst, we ruined a ruin. It is still an open question whether the havoc can ever be undone; for, once human affairs get set in one direction, they cut their channels deep, like a river. Things do not work themselves out for the good, as imbecile optimists say; they work out their own natures, whatever these happen to be, under conditions at hand, whatever they may be.

Every thinking man will agree with the oft-repeated view that the indifference and apathy of our industrial and business classes toward politics imperil the nation. But how many who believe this realize that the defect is rooted in a widespread, tenacious social stupidity prevalent throughout virtually all classes? Blame not the manufacturer and the merchant a whit more than our college presidents, our school teachers, our scientists, our engineers, and all other real or pretended "upper classes." All have been dulled by our mongrelism. All have been stupefied by the pandemonium of innumerable cults, rituals, tongues, platforms, philosophies, and moralities all being thundered, squeaked, shrilled, and intoned at once. It were as easy to write a sonata in a boiler factory as to work into the clear regarding social and political matters in a typical American city.

This incompetence is aggravated by two circumstances: man's constitutional stupidity in his relations to others and, secondly, the unique preponderance of low-grades (both in number and in social influence) in our society and politics. We must inspect both of these corrupters. But before we do so, let us be fair and admit that space and time limit man grievously in all his human relations. They make

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him stupid. To appreciate this, you must take a useful view of man's environment in which you see it as a sphere filled with concentric fields of force ever moving outward until lost in some dim infinity no longer human. The core of this sunlike mass of energy is the ego, its main mass of dense, hot life is the immediate moment-to-moment field of home, children, friends, neighborhood, and town. Beyond this lie the four dimensions of space and time: one's mass and one's future, together with the remoter zones of county, state, region, nation, continent, hemisphere and world.

Now, man's normal political stupidity may be simply detected and measured in terms of its range within this field. So far as we can sum up the observations of many students in many places, it seems clear that fully seven men and women out of every ten lack the sensitivity, the energy, the interest and the time to cope with anything beyond their private cravings of hunger, thirst, sex, play, sleep and exercise in so far as these spread over their immediate neighborhood—say, within a radius of a mile or two from their homes. In part this is a constitutional limitation, in part also the result of a steady stream of local stimuli whose power comes only from their nearness. For the law of the inverse square of the distance holds in human nature (in some modified form, to be sure): the closer the source of arousal, the more it arouses us. A mosquito buzzing around your ear in the hot darkness of your bedroom bestirs you far more than any printed news of ten million Chinese engulfed in another flood, somewhere west of Hankow. The sly glance of a passing damsel excites youth more deeply than any messengers crying war.

Intellectuals are prone to overlook this elemental predominance of the Here and Now. So they are unfair in their judgments of common folk.

The Best Minds of twentieth-century America devote themselves to matters far more important than Italian scenery, old cathedrals, theology, and poetry. They study sewage and its disposal, the control of syphilis, methods of making factory workers more comfortable, methods of raising potatoes more cheaply, the sterilizing of imbeciles and psychopaths, and all such low necessities. For they know potatoes outrank Plato in practical consequences, while birth control overshadows the Immaculate Conception.

As for common people, their instincts as well as their natural limitations of sensitivity bind them to the Here and Now; and no amount

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of scolding or preachment can change them. Whatever fills a man's life fills it—and, beyond that, nothing can be added. The more vigorous neighborhoods are, the more completely they use all the energies of their members. And the whole trend of modern life is to enrich and empower the neighborhood; hence it is reasonable to expect a new and finer provincialism to arise in which men are born, live, love, breed, and die almost entirely within the hour's auto journey from their front yards. As space is conquered, the wider political stupidity must increase apace. Its pattern will differ greatly from the old villager's. But it may prove quite as harmful to the larger interests of humanity.

So I come to the defense of the common man. In a metaphysical sense, the ideologists of France may contend that his interest in Main Street and his indifference toward Europe prove his social-political stupidity. True. By the same token, of course, we prove the identical moron level of Gandhi, Lloyd George, Laval, Bruening, Stalin, Einstein, Croce, Dewey, Santayana, and all other leaders in thought and action. For none of these responds delicately and effectively to the affairs of the world at large. Never lived a hypersensitive genius who did that. And when one arises, mankind will not recognize him as one of its own flesh and blood. So, I think, it is fruitless to criticize people for this cosmic stupidity; as well belittle their stature because they cannot reach out and touch the moon. Our research becomes profitable only in so far as it keeps within the bounds of humanity as it is. So we refuse to take seriously the strictures of stupid intellectuals.

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Throughout modern millennia we find, in every year and in every land and among every people four continual forms of war. First, there is the private war, sometimes called the feud, waged between individuals in the first instance and later between families or neighborhoods, often over some fancied insult or sheer personal dislike. Secondly, there is the trade war, which assumes a host of forms, often unrecognized, such as the brawls and riots and sabotage carried on by workers against their bosses; the underground battles between bosses themselves as they strive to gain the upper hand and the fat

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profits by eliminating their competitors; and, especially during the past millennium, the large-scale warfare of big business camouflaged under the mask of a nation, its flag, and its patriotism. Thirdly, there is the so-called spiritual war carried on by sects, cults, sacerdotalisms, and ecclesiastics, leading to persecutions, witch burnings, inquisitions, torture in mass, confiscations, assassinations, poisonings, and ostracisms, all for the sake of establishing one's own system of ritual. Finally, there is the genuine war of the militarists, superficially like the larger trade wars but at core quite different because the ruling spirit of this fourth variety is always an imperial paranoiac, a pervert genius afflicted with elephantitis (inflammation of the cortex inducing pathological cravings for power and bigness) such as Jenghis Khan, Julius Cæsar, Alexander the Great and Napoleon. Later we shall study all of these war forms and warriors more minutely; so here let me say merely that *the stupidity of people in the mass in allowing themselves to be shot to pieces and impoverished by war leaders has caused material and spiritual losses which exceed by a hundredfold or more the petty benefits flowing from the four kinds of warfare. Then, too, the stupidity of the war leaders (including their higher subordinates) has been so colossal that they have driven themselves and all their foolish adherents to death or to material ruinaton. Not all the discoveries and inventions of mankind since the close of the Pleistocene age have benefited the race as extensively or as intensively as the war morons and war maniacs have harmed the race.*

And this, mark you, is only one of a score of human stupidities!

The \$500,000,000,000 to \$600,000,000,000 of goods, property, and lives destroyed by the World War greatly exceed in all probability the cash value of all the important inventions which man has yet turned to his account by the power of clear thinking and planning. And this makes no allowance for the immeasurable losses to the white race caused by the murdering of tens of millions of superior men and women and the general degradation of the surviving stock.

Here are a few items in that deadly bill.

Between 1914 and 1918, 65,000,000 men in the prime of life were put into armies. In those same years, the cost of war in cash, lives, property loss, and so on amounted to thirty-three times all the gold money in the world at that time. At the beginning of the war, Germany was about a billion dollars in debt. In 1918 she owed fifty-five

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billions. Today she is bankrupt. Great Britain owed less than three billions in 1914. She came out owing forty billions, while France, six billions in debt before the slaughter, owed some forty-six billion dollars four years later. In eighteen months, the United States increased her debt from one to twenty-four billions.

By 1923 interest charges had accumulated so that the countries of Europe had internal war debts of about \$154,000,000,000 and external war debts of \$28,261,000,000. The United States was then carrying its own war debt of nearly \$20,000,000,000. The people of all warring countries combined, therefore, were in debt to the extent of \$202,261,000,000 as a result of a war which was, in no sense, an economic enterprise. Nobody, from the Kaiser down to the stupidest peasant of Russia, bought an economic good with this money; and, so far as I can ascertain, nobody imagined that he was buying one. From start to finish, the war was a political enterprise which ignored and even repudiated economic interests. And all the economists who, at the outbreak of the war, supposed that its course could be charted in terms of an economic enterprise ruined their reputations by making comically bad guesses about its duration and possible costs. They thought of it as a part of the money and profit economy. But it was no more than that are the ravings of the inmates of an asylum. It was the expression of primitive herd customs, nothing else. It was a gang war just as truly as those being waged on the streets of Chicago are—only bigger and better. Everybody lost Nobody won.

Had the leaders of the various nations been ruled by genuine economic motives, there would have been no war, of course. For war is bad business always, except when it is a clash between lower and higher cultures for the possession of undeveloped territories, as in Africa today.

Study the direct, as well as the indirect causes of the war. You find, in the main, that it was brought on by insane cravings for vengeance, such as Delcassé's; by paranoid ambitions, such as the Kaiser's; by regional politics, which usually cut athwart the genuine business interests of the very regions which the politicians pretend to represent and support; and by the sheer blunders of doddering old bureaucrats, mad priests, and half-wit princes.

Study the records well, and you will also find that no man in power in 1914 either asserted or believed that he helped bring on the war for the sake of profits. Far from it! Everybody ferociously denied

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any such sordid motive! Everybody was moved by lofty motives, especially patriotism. And yet, if the aim of all parties concerned had been to make money; and if everybody had frankly admitted it, there would have been no war; and the world today would be immeasurably richer as well as happier. The worst thing about that cataclysm, indeed, was that it was not entered into according to the rules and regulations of the money-and-profit system. The ablest business men in Germany, as well as in the United States, opposed it as infinitely infantile. And events confirmed their judgment.

We cannot here undertake an analysis of all the other complex causes of war. Yet certainly it will endure until mankind overcomes one of its most deep-seated insensitivities.

Military experts are not only narrow in outlook and training, but they are, like the rest of us, all too human. Captain Liddell-Hart is keenly aware of their shortcomings:

“ . . . For the profoundest truth of war is that the issue of battles is usually decided in the minds of the opposing commanders, not in the bodies of their men. The best history would be a register of their thoughts and emotions, with a mere background of events to throw them into relief. But the delusion to the contrary has been fostered by the typical military history, filled with details of the fighting and assessing the cause of a victory by statistical computations of the number engaged.” *

The limitations of the scientific knowledge and interests of military experts is one of the most profound and ominous causes of war blunders and disasters. Yet these are enhanced in times of conflict by an ignorant and propagandized public which is led to have supreme faith in generals, majors, admirals whose lives have been spent in the study and practice of war. Little does the layman realize the intellectual deficiencies and the narrow outlook of most military experts, and their profound need, especially during war time, of information and advice from other experts—industrialists, technicians, financiers, statesmen and diplomats, scientists, and a horde of others.

That form of stupidity which arises from sheer lack of rational imagination is largely responsible for continuing warfare among the peoples of the world. This was clearly perceived by early Chinese

* "The Real War" B. H. Liddell-Hart. London. P. 99.

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thinkers, above all, Mencius.* One day he saw King Seuen shudder as a trembling ox was being dragged by the priests up to the bloody sacrificial altar. The fear of the poor animal moved his majesty to stay the proceedings. He commanded that the ox be set free and a sheep substituted for it.

"You did that," remarked Mencius, "because you saw the ox but had not seen the sheep."

Then he went on to remark that a high-grade man cannot eat the animal whose dying cries he has heard. And, on later occasions, he expanded his entire philosophy of war perhaps more lucidly than any later pacifist, demonstrating that all good soldiers who fight of their own volition are criminals and should be so treated in a civilized community. But this does not concern us here. I ask you only to remark his keen insight into the sources of militarist stupidity.

What appears to be simple stupidity in a militarist probably would dissolve into a number of ingredients some of which are not at all inferior sensitivities. But it is very hard to complete an analysis. Take a simple case like the following:

In February, 1901, I spent some weeks in the home of a General who later became a member of the General Staff and as such was killed, along with his sons, at the battle of Ypres. We discussed Germany's military position, powers, and plans with the intimacy of a family circle. The General took great pains to explain to me that, in any international situation that might lead to a war, the United States would figure only as a zero. For it was and always would be helpless, stupid, and thoroughly at the mercy of the Germans.

"The German Army," said this eminent militarist in full seriousness, "could land in New York on a Monday and arrive *en masse* in Chicago on the following Saturday. And that is making full allowances for such resistance as your raw, untrained population might put up in the way of destroying bridges and locomotives."

In various phrasings he recurred to this assertion day after day, as we egged him on to argue the matter. And at the time some of us were sure he was the world's greatest ass. But was it pure stupidity? I am not so sure. Of course, there was a high percentage of the trait in his thinking; but there was something else too. What was it?

Surely, however, it was undiluted stupidity which thrived in

* See especially "Mencius," Book I, Part 1, chapter 7.

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British militarists like a hardy perennial throughout the American Revolution. Of geniuses in blundering there were many, but one of the most stalwart was General William Howe. Thanks to his consistent stupidity, the tiny band of American colonists forced the British to abandon Boston for Nova Scotia, which, though a policy approved by the ministry, seemed to some "like an abandonment of all attempt to crush the rebellion." * The episode has been variously interpreted. Let the facts speak for themselves

In October, 1775, General Howe took command of all British military operations from the Canadian border to the Gulf of Mexico. The colonial army was hopelessly weak. This Howe must have known, through traitors, spies, deserters and the like. There were but 10,000 colonists, hopelessly ragged and short of ammunition. Howe was established in Boston, which he refused to leave despite the fact that the British Ministry suggested his departure for Long Island, still loyal to the King, where he could obtain supplies with ease and prepare to take New York on the arrival of reinforcements.

But Howe would have none of the plan. He lacked transports for his army, he said. And he stayed on in Boston "cooped up," as his officers said plaintively, "by a set of dirty ragamuffins." His harsher critics did not penetrate to any sensitive spot beneath the Howe hide, even though George Washington later wrote, "Search the volumes of history through and I much question whether a case similar to ours is to be found—namely, to maintain a post against the flower of the British troops for six months together . . . and then to have one army disbanded and another to be raised within the same distance of a reinforced enemy."

Yet those six months passed pleasantly for General Howe. During the winter of 1775 he enjoyed himself thoroughly. He had many a charming card game—cards were his favorite pastime—with Mrs. Loring, an attractive loyalist who accompanied Howe's army through the three years of campaigning. The arrangement was as pleasing to Howe as it was profitable to Mrs. Loring's husband, who finally made a fortune through his wife's influence, as commissary of prisoners. So Howe dallied through the winter, was still pleasantly established in Boston in March, and, had he followed his own inclinations, would no doubt have stayed until June. True, in February,

* For an excellent account of the many British stupidities in the American Revolution, see "The Struggle for American Independence," by Sidney George Fisher.

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he knew that the colonists intended to seize nearby Dorchester. But this disturbed the thick-skinned general not at all. He made no effort to occupy the town himself.

Meanwhile Washington and his little army hovered about Boston, hoping against hope that the British would come out and attack. The colonists crept closer, still awaiting the enemy, when, of a sudden, Howe announced that he would evacuate Boston without firing another shot! He could see no advantage in staying on, he said. Besides, he didn't think he would be permanently successful, were he to attack, and the patriots might continue to annoy him. Anyway, he was short of provisions and supplies.

So Howe "made a very peculiar sort of informal agreement with Washington, that if the Americans would not fire on the British, the British would evacuate the town without doing it any injury."

On March 17, Howe and his army sailed away to Nova Scotia, after those months of being "cooped up like inoffensive poultry." He had to leave ammunition and supplies behind, but he generously neglected to destroy these, leaving for the happy colonists ample quantities of powder, lead, cannon and muskets and a ship or two. He didn't arrange to protect the supply ships due to arrive in Boston from England, and he had hardly set sail when "a patriot privateersman captured a large powder-ship which was just arriving."

How, indeed, could the grateful colonists ever pay their debt to British stupidity? They couldn't. They never did.

In war, as everywhere else, there is strength in numbers. And it is an elementary rule in military affairs not to weaken an army by spreading out detachments beyond the point where they can be controlled. Yet, under Cornwallis, British detachments were spread throughout South Carolina and Virginia, each so weak, including his own, that it could neither attack nor defend itself. Washington announced with great satisfaction that "By spreading themselves out as they are now doing, they will render themselves vulnerable everywhere." As, of course, they did, until they were so weak that one hardy attack could ruin the whole British position.

Cornwallis' blunders reached their climax at Yorktown. Throughout the war, he showed complete incapacity to carry through any plan whatever. Yet at Yorktown he showed bewildering stupidity. The town was on a river which could easily be closed by the enemy. Directly opposite, on the north bank of the York River, was Gloucester-

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ter Point. Here the distance from shore to shore was only about a mile. Cornwallis wrote to General Clinton:

"Upon viewing York I was clearly of the opinion that it far exceeds our Power consistent with your plans to make a safe defensive Fort there and at Gloucester, both of which would be necessary for the protection of shipping."

Yet, after the mistakes which he made, he defended himself by completely reversing his position, and wrote:

"The only harbor in the Chesapeake that I knew of then or indeed that I have heard of since, in which line of battle ships can be received and protected against a superior naval force; and as the harbor was the indispensable object, I thought it unnecessary to enter a description of the disadvantage of the ground against a land attack, since there remained no other choice"

As Cornwallis stayed on and on at Yorktown, enemy troops came down to block his means of supplies, his reinforcements and every possibility of rescue. A land army approached. General Clinton wrote to Cornwallis suggesting that the patriot supplies in Philadelphia be destroyed, so that the British could "overset their schemes and break up their public credit," pointing out that "the favorable consequences resulting from such success are too obvious to need explanation." Cornwallis did nothing. Clinton was helpless—and disgusted. Washington and Rochambeau made plans—and were delighted.

The York River was so wide that, had Cornwallis made a move, the British Army could have escaped from Yorktown, and marched to South Carolina. There were no enemy ships to prevent it. Yet on the second day of the siege, Cornwallis made his final and fatal mistake. "The exterior works, on which he had had his men employed for nearly a month, were abandoned by him without firing a shot; and yet his letters had led Clinton to believe that he was capable of withstanding a siege." And in a week's time the British defeat was complete.

Yet when he returned to England, Cornwallis was rewarded for his stupidity by high office and honors!

That characteristic British insensitivity to time endured through generations. And, with other complex but not more important fac-

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tors, it caused what was probably the greatest military disaster of modern times.

The Dardanelles story has been told many times from many different points of view. Winston Churchill describes the fatal campaign from its very conception—for it was known as his “baby”—to its tragic end in those illuminating volumes, “The World Crisis.” Sir Ian Hamilton has given it to us in the “Gallipoli Diary.” For our purposes, however, we cannot improve on William Seaver Woods’ description * of the greatest single disaster in the history of the last five hundred years, whose greatest single cause was time stupor. From many volumes of conflicting evidence, Woods has sifted the facts revealing the awful blunders and stupidities which from its very beginning fated the plan which might have ended the war.

From the first, the great enterprise was chiefly backed by Winston Churchill, who, in defending the plan, said later,† “I am concerned to make clear to the House and the navy that this enterprise was profoundly and elaborately considered, and that there was a great volume of expert opinion behind it: that it was framed entirely by experts and technical minds.” As, indeed, it was.

The plan to force the Dardanelles, had it been successful, would have won the war for the Allies. By opening up the straits, Allies on the West and the East could exchange food and ammunition. Besides, Constantinople would fall into their hands. And Greece, Bulgaria, and Rumania, seeing which way the wind was blowing, would probably join the Allies. With reinforcements, Russia and Italy would put an end to Austria, and Germany would be unable to hold out alone.

On January 13, therefore, the War Council decided for a naval expedition to “take the Gallipoli peninsula with Constantinople as its objective.” With French help, a naval force composed mostly of obsolete vessels was assembled. Eight battleships made a preliminary bombardment on the Dardanelles and won the entrance. But the main forts had still to be taken.

The straits were loaded with mines, most of them carefully planted by the Russians to sink Turkish ships. Turkish mine sweepers, however, being of an economical nature, simply picked them up each

* See the chapter on “The Dardanelles Disaster,” in his book, “Colossal Blunders of the War.”

† *New York Times*, November 16, 1915.

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morning after their planting, and took them farther down the straits to use against the Allied forces. Thus the Turks escaped the danger of running out of mines.

Now the War Council had planned a joint land and sea attack. Furthermore, the vital point in the entire campaign was to have the landing on the difficult and strange shore at the straits a complete surprise to the enemy. Yet troops were endlessly delayed—and not enough of them were sent to make a substantial advance. The whole plan from the first was muddled and fumbled, and the Allies at once ruined every chance for a surprise attack.

On February 16, the British Cabinet decided to send the 29th Division to the straits. Four days later it changed its mind. For days and weeks the British statesmen and military experts dillydallied and see-sawed back and forth—back and forth. Finally, on March 10, the 29th Division was ordered to go. But it took another week for them to get ready. A total delay, in the end, of more than a month, while the British made up their minds.

Meanwhile, on March 1 Venizelos offered to send three Greek divisions to join the British and French. But Czar Nicholas, the little weak man, he who yielded to his neurotic wife and an unscrupulous adventurer, spoke up in meeting with unaccustomed firmness. Russia, always jealous of Greece, "could not consent to Greece participating in operations in the Dardanelles, as it would be sure to lead to complications." The stupid decision was fatal.

On March 18, eighteen Allied battleships advanced up the straits. Their mine sweepers picked up two or three mines, reported all clear, and the fleet went on. But the mine sweepers were wrong. They hadn't looked far enough. At two o'clock in the afternoon, the French ship *Bouvet* hit a mine, went down and disappeared with her crew in a brief two minutes. Two hours later a British ship hit another mine. A third—a fourth battleship went down. The French ship *Gaulois*, fired on and injured, was beached.

Despite these disasters, everyone expected the British fleet to push through to Constantinople. Yet the Allies delayed another attack, wiring the British Cabinet that army and navy officers thought it advisable to wait until military forces were sent to support the navy.

Historians and experts are divided in opinion as to whether the fleet could have made another attack alone. Had the 29th Division

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been sent on schedule, history would tell another story. Or, after all, would it?

For when the luckless Division embarked in twenty-two transports, of course it couldn't unload and get into action at once. For guns were in one ship, ammunition in another, everything loaded in the most helter-skelter fashion so that all the supplies had to be again resorted and rearranged before anything further could be done. So all twenty-two transports went to attend to this little necessity at Alexandria, in Egypt, the nearest port, while all the little Turkish scouts and fishermen scurried with the news that the Great Twenty-ninth was on its way to Constantinople. This was early in April—several weeks after the British War Cabinet had finally made up its mind about a plan of action.

The twenty-two transports duly unloaded at Alexandria, and there the good news spread to Turkey and Germany and Austria. They were glad, of course, to get a full list of the Allied supplies. That helped. Meanwhile, they were all getting busy, brushing up troops and getting together guns to be ready for the Twenty-ninth when at last it arrived.

German General Liman von Sanders, in charge of the Turkish defense, said that thanks to the information which kept seeping in and to the four weeks' delay of the British, he had just enough time to prepare to meet the enemy. Indeed, the Turks doubled their forces between March and April, collected ample ammunition, and were ready for the Allies to the last mess kit when finally they did land at Gallipoli on April 25.

That landing is so terrible in its tragedy that no one will ever know the worst about the slaughter. The British War Office expected 5,000 casualties. Thirteen thousand were killed. Courageous and gallant, the Allies fought steadily from April through July. By August first nearly 50,000 were killed. Reënforcements arrived in July—but too late. The brave troops were helplessly outnumbered—they had wrong shells—wrong guns—no fuse keys—no organization—obsolete artillery—and they fought throughout against the most hopeless odds. Mismanagement and delay killed men off by the thousands. British troops mistook their own men for Turks, and mowed them down with a high explosive shell. Allied troops rested, loafed and bathed on the shore beneath the very eyes of the waiting Turks.

Every opportunity was lost. Every possible mistake was made.

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And instead of winning the war, 100,000 men were uselessly sacrificed, and the best that will ever be said about the Dardanelles Campaign is that it was, at last, brilliantly abandoned.

No military stupidity was ever so tragic as this. Hundreds of lesser disasters have had even their comic aspects. Look, now, at that blue-ribbon blunder, the mistake of the Russian Baltic fleet.

During the Russo-Japanese War, Russia's panicky sailors attacked and fired on British fishing vessels in the North Sea and nearly involved the whole of Europe in the fracas. The ludicrous mistake was but one of the hundreds made by the Russians which turned the 1904 struggle into Russia's own *opéra bouffe*. The Baltic blunder, however, is an extraordinary illustration of the military stupidity brought on by nothing more than a combination of nervous hysteria and low intelligence. Blinded by dull wits and sharp panic, on the night of October 21, 1904, the Russians opened fire on the British trawlers, sank one of them, killed two fishermen, and wounded others.

At his feeble best, the Russian seaman is something of a dull wit, however long trained in affairs of the seas. But the hearty mariners who made up the Baltic Fleet were even worse dolts. For Russia's trained sailors were defending the flag somewhere off the coast of China in that famous October.

As the Baltic Fleet steamed up the North Sea, its sailors were in a state of panic akin to hysteria. For they had heard too many terrifying stories of the bold and cunning and wicked Japanese, whose mooted treachery shadowed the thoughts of the dullard seamen. Against the villains the Russians had taken every precaution—and every frightened sailor momentarily expected an attack by the torpedo boats of the Japs.

Admiral Rojestvensky, in charge of the fleet, directed it for reasons as yet unknown, from the usual channel in the North Sea. Just off Dogger Bank, the fishing grounds of the North Sea, was a great fleet of British vessels, innocently fishing away to take back a fine catch to Hull. On the night of Friday, October 21, the Russian fleet drew near. Though it was drizzling and dank, and difficult to see at great distance, the fishermen, as they later reported, were so close to the Russian ships that they held out fine fish to the passing warriors.

The British trawlers were in regular fishing waters. They bore not the slightest resemblance to warships of any kind. They burned fishermen's signals, internationally known and recognized as such.

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Yet without the slightest warning, the panicky Russians fired shell after shell, killing and wounding as they steamed their blundering way through the British fleet. The first of the warships passed. Officers and men examined the fishing boats with searchlights. And, of a sudden, the whole Russian fleet joined in a bombardment for half an hour on the innocent fishermen. The trawler *Crane* went down. The *Gull* was badly crippled. A skipper and deckhand were killed. And the Russian fleet steamed on its way, never stopping to find out about the damage, continuing to the Strait of Dover. And not until forty-eight hours later did Admiral Rojestvensky make his report to the Russian Admiralty.

The report, even so, was full of the grossest errors. The Russians, it declared, were attacked early in that morning by two torpedo boats, assumed to be Japanese, which appeared amidst the trawlers. A mysterious cannon had been fired. Signals were ignored. And in the confusion the officers insisted that six shots hit a Russian warship, wounding the crew and ripping off the hand of a priest. (It was later proved beyond reasonable doubt that the Russians, in their fright, fired on their own ships as they supposed they were unloading on the villainous Japanese.)

There is more—but we have enough to emphasize our point. The resulting confusion, indignation and righteous fury of the British rose to warlike fever. Luckily Russia escaped another war with England. And continued to blunder through to the Treaty of Portsmouth, which followed her humiliating defeat.

Bewilderment like that of the frightened Russians was unquestionably in part the result of poor military training. Disasters like that of the Baltic Fleet, and, more recently, those of the World War have led militarists to assert without argument or compromise the urgency of universal compulsory training of young men in time of peace. This, they claim, is "the most important lesson of the war."

"An untrained army invites loss and disaster." Thus spoke General John J. Pershing. And those are true words indeed. I subscribe to them heartily. But I also subscribe still more heartily to the still larger truth that a well trained army invites still vaster losses and disasters. The records of history support this contention.

Where, in 1914, was the world's most highly trained army to be found? In Germany, as everybody knows. No fighting machine on earth could vie with the Prussian. It had everything that the oldest

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and most intensively drilled military science could bring to it. That includes immense self-confidence; for, as Foch always insisted, the will to win must always be active and, to be active, must be supported by the conviction that one has the necessary knowledge and equipment to win. The Germans were so convinced; and they did, of a truth, possess guns, men, garrisons, ammunition, maps, techniques, and everything else. Their men were trained to the last degree, as General Pershing would admit.

And see what loss and disaster this training brought!

What country had the most poorly trained army in 1914? The United States, of course. The fact is, it had no army in the European sense. It hadn't even a General Staff to organize and coordinate military activities, thereby overwhelming the civil powers. Not until nine months after we entered the war did we start our first school for training staff officers, over at Langres, in France. And this is the main reason why—as the Europeans so bitterly complain—our precious United States emerged from the war stronger and richer than everybody else. Nobody won the war. Everybody lost. But we lost least. And all because we had no highly trained army.

This can be rigorously demonstrated. We lost fewer men in the whole war than either French or British lost in single engagements. Why? Because, after we foolishly got into the war, the Allied leaders wisely refused to permit our greenhorn troops to go into action until thoroughly drilled and equipped. They understood that raw recruits can do more damage at the front than all the enemy artillery. This kept our millions of men well back of the danger zone, while they were working havoc on the Germans by pure psychological action. It was not the fighting of our army in France that won the war for the Allies. It was their mere presence. Ask any war leader. This is a commonplace.

But this is a minor argument. Here is the main one. If the United States had been equipped with a trained army, it would have been drawn into the war very early. Trust the General Staff and the profiteers to have done that! But what would Germany have done? First of all, she would have begun her unrestricted submarine warfare in February, 1915, when Vice-Admiral von Pohl, Chief of the German Naval Staff, first formally urged it upon the Kaiser. The one and only argument which prevented it then was a protest from Washington. This is a matter of record, not speculation.

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The Chancellor and the Kaiser agreed to von Pohl's project on February 4th. They instructed the Navy to begin it on the 18th of the same month. But the American government entered its protest on the 12th, and that changed the Kaiser's attitude. He amended the order so that neutral ships were to be spared. And then came the *Lusitania* affair the next May.

With the Americans in the war, would the Germans have waited even until February, 1915, to start unrestricted submarine warfare? Rather not! Now, what was the only weakness in the program, viewed from the purely military point of view? What, in a word, prevented its full success? Only one fact! The temporizing of the Kaiser and his Chancellor, their progressive restraints upon the Navy as a result of the outcry in the United States. Here again the data are beyond all controversy. By the end of September, 1915, von Tirpitz was ousted from his control because he raged against the mollycoddles at Berlin and called for drastic vigor in sinking everything afloat. And it was the relenting that saved the British—nothing else. Had the submarines kept up their frightfulness, unhindered by regards for the American neutrals, there would never have been a fleet to transport either the main army or the indispensable supplies. Long before the Allies could have gained the upper hand over the submarines, they would have been starved into submission. Even with the long, stupid interruption of submarine warfare, the Allies were on the brink of total defeat many months before the American troops began to pour into France.

What proof further? Simply this. As early as 1916 the German navy yards were so magnificently tuned up that they informed von Capelle, the successor of von Tirpitz, that they could turn out five times as many submarines as they were, simply by holding up all other types of naval construction. Now, von Capelle had been put in because he was a temporizer and not a thorough-going Post-Glacial like old von Tirpitz. He was carrying out the wavering ideas of the wobbly Kaiser; in short, playing the American's game on the side while waging a war. So he turned the proposal down hard, saying that "nobody would know what to do with so many U boats after the war." Fancy that!

With America in the war early, having a trained army, von Tirpitz would have been in charge of the U boats; and does any historian in his senses doubt that he would have ordered all of the

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monsters he could get? That would easily have given him 600 by the end of 1917; for Germany then had 120, as it was. The Allies, with America in late, barely beat the 120 U boats. What could they have done against such a fleet earlier? Let our naval experts answer!

I might adduce a dozen more arguments all showing the same paradoxical conclusion: it was America's unpreparedness that saved the Allies! This still leaves wide open the larger philosophical issue as to whether, in the long run, saving the Allies may not have been the supreme stupidity of the war. Unfortunately, this lies beyond matter-of-fact debate.

When we reach our main history, why not give a volume to analyzing correlations between sums spent on armies and the eventual losses of the countries making the investments? Here is a noble research. Who wants to help with it?

ΤΕΧΝΗ
TECHNE

TELOS

THIS sketch of ours seems to be getting long. So we shall drop at once the rest of our notes for the Short Introduction to Human Stupidity and wind up the prelude with a sentence or two on trends and outlooks. No modern volume could be sent to press without something on trends and outlooks, unless its author deliberately aims to be as out-of-date as Little Lord Fauntleroy. Even stupid people nowadays aspire to be forward-looking. Some of them even read several pages into H. G. Wells. So here we are, on the threshold of Tomorrow, ready to open up the fortune-telling business again.

Perhaps we can peer into our crystal most keenly if we first dispose of that hated German rival of ours, that soothsayer of doom, Oswald Spengler. He and I cannot tell fortunes up the same street, for we belong to different trade unions. Yet, beneath this antagonism, we have a deep fellow-feeling founded upon a common conviction that the development of cultures must be seriously studied, their graphs of change plotted, and their equations discovered. The course of a nation is more important than the course of a ship over the waters.

He who would chart the ways of nations and races must strain every nerve to acquire information and understanding far beyond human abilities. He must go the limit in the fundamentals of geography, psychology and mathematics; and then he must force his way far into the Impossible by integrating these three. Man, man's environment, and all the broadest and narrowest relations between item and item in both must be accurately analyzed and cast into some mathematical-logical form. Until that has been accomplished, prophets must remain without honor.

From Isaiah to Spengler, the undertone of all forecasting has been minor, if not dissonant. Worse yet, the prophets have been most accurate in their gloom and least reliable in their rosy visions. The Jews were crushed and taken away in captivity pretty much according to the advance tips of Isaiah; but they never were restored to glory under a messiah, as so many prophets said they would. Polly-

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anna is a dub at crystal gazing. She cannot vie with sour old Jeremiah. So here we have another reason for taking Spengler seriously. The odds favor him, if we calculate them out of history; for his view of Tomorrow is dark and troublous.

He regards cultures as organisms, nations as creatures, civilizations as animals that are spawned, wax lusty, play about, evolve their pre-determined structures and functions, flourish for an allotted time, then grow old, stiff, dull, and blear-eyed, and finally die. To one familiar with German literature, this sounds like a newspaper version of old Blüntschli's tomes on the State as an Organism. The Teutons have ever been prone to such esoteric metaphysical poetizing in which they snatch up sweet morsels of fact and put them through the mill of wishful thinking. Hegel invented a queer logic which he attributed to the cosmos. And Spengler belongs in this wing of the Nordic sanitarium.

Abuse him though we may, however, we must admit that he deals with a question of supreme importance. Pity is that so few solid thinkers pay attention to it! How does it happen that every great institution erected by man has passed away? Surely it is remarkable that not one has endured long, if we take as our measure the whole span of man's earthly career. Surely, too, certain causes of decay must be at work. Whoever discerns these has the beginning of a chance to control them. If statesmanship is ever to be taught as a science, the first years of training must be devoted to this inquiry.

In planning such a school for statesmen, Spengler and I would quarrel at the outset. He would insist that the elements of society are such things as aristocrats, merchants, and peasants. He would reduce these elements to blood, that is to say, to heredity. He would discover progress whenever and wherever those racial strains which he regards as the purest and best dominate all others; and he would see only decay in the triumph of commerce, socialism, and other plebeianisms. This is one kind of biological approach, you see. Much can be said in its defence, provided it sticks to all the facts of animal origins and behavior. But there comes our first dispute.

Spengler seems to be dealing with realities when, in fact, he handles only lax generalizations. Race is, for him, the supreme fact. To me it is, in a precise sense, an entity like the Milky Way. It is a thing only because we, the observers, are so tiny and so far away from it. Where it appears to us as an even glow in the heavens, it

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is a thin scatter of star dust in a void of utterly inconceivable immensity. A race, in its own reality (if any), is—just like the Milky Way; it is a few chromosomes, too small to be seen by any eye, and scattered thinly over millions of miles throughout a million years. Relative to the times and spaces which we apprehend, all the chromosomes which Spengler would identify as the basis of a pure race are invisible and incomprehensible. To deduce the graph of human events from race, then, is to revel in fantasy; it is as absurd as astrology.

How, then, can society and its tendencies be observed? How analyzed? Either in terms of observables or not at all! Here we stand on analytical realism; and with it we stand or fall. It is the foundation of science, as opposed to the sands of theology and metaphysics. From this vantage point what do we behold? Human beings in action—the drama of life in the raw, first of all Creatures moving about in space and time, their existence ever depending on the minutest detail of each instant and each spot. Creatures dying because a membrane encounters a drifting cloud of bacteria, because some other creature has misunderstood a command, because rain came a day too late to save a wheat crop. Events neutralize one another. Events accumulate. Events produce sudden disintegrations of earth, water, air, nerve tissue. And, by the same token, events can be managed so that all of these processes may enable men to get what they want when they want it.

This realism ends up in regions remote from Spengler. The relativities of space and time involve still profounder relativities of psyche and behavior. (Spengler observes this generalization clearly, but he fails to apply it to his own technique of fact finding.) The factors in such relativities are the usual: position, magnitude, order, mass, charge, velocity, acceleration, and so on. Probe into these, and you discover—if at all—the course of human events, first in the small, then in the large. You find that things go wrong, in the first instance, as a result of some adverse relation of size to speed. Sometimes this relation lies wholly within the individual, sometimes it lies between him, as a personality, and persons or things around him.

Many events occur faster than men can perceive them. They are either missed altogether or else noticed only in a few "high spots" which fail to disclose their nature. Thus always in the chemisms of common life. Even with high-power microscopes and laboratory

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technique, many such processes still lie beyond our experience. In other events, such as the onrush of the World War, men cannot grasp the drift because too many things happen in too many widely separated places. There is no way of selecting and collating them fast enough to act wisely toward them. The stupidities of statesmen during the years before 1914 were, in no small measure, inevitable by-products of the velocity at which conspirators schemed, munitions makers built up lobbying staffs, tariffs were juggled, and agreements were created and scrapped. Imagine a chessboard in four dimensions, on which the players moved, every second, some one of ten thousand pieces. That would be much simpler than the chessboard of Europe in that era.

Again, events move much too slowly for man to perceive them or to sense their import. Here we come upon the most embracing causal group. The movements of ice down from the poles, the ensuing changes of rainfall and temperature over half of the inhabitable world, the drift of nomads, the cross-breeding of tribes, the decline of soil fertility, the colossal ravages of erosion, the millennial meandering of great rivers, the accumulations of filth and disease germs around old centers of thick population, and even the inframental alterations in policies of states arising from tens of thousands of local compromises, new rulings of bureau chiefs, court decisions, and the like; it is things like these which, escaping man's attention, discolor, distort, and metamorphose his environment.

Finally, we behold the movement of events which, while rapid enough for people to notice, are too slow for adequate response. I have in mind now the inability of the common man to adjust himself to great social and political changes he may observe, and mainly because he is physically and economically powerless to change his job, his place of employment, and sundry other affairs conformably. Thousands of people now find themselves in this predicament; the "technological unemployment" of our day arises partly from a young engineer's necessity of hanging on to his post, in order to keep alive, even though he sees clearly that the firm he serves must pass ere long because of new inventions in the field; it arises from a lawyer's necessity of carrying on with his clients in the face of a declining practice in a community that is losing its people and wealth because of a great industry shifting to some other center.

The complexity of events thwarts people even more profoundly

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than their velocity. Here we come upon the central cause of the relatively swift collapse of great states when they have attained a certain critical texture of organization and scope. Many observers have called our notice to some phase of this: and it is hard to understand how speculative thinkers like Spengler have persistently underestimated it. In a sprawling, clumsy, lax system like the Roman Empire, the marvel is that any semblance of central control endured as long as we know it did. Likewise in old China and Russia and the British Empire of the Victorian era. Each in its turn has fallen to pieces largely because its rulers and subjects were psychically and physically unable to perceive, first, all relevant conditions and events and, secondly, to grasp the relations among these.

An egomaniac builds up by conquest or fraud an immense state. He creates an army of bureaucrats to carry on what his army of thugs have brought into existence. A hundred million people may be drawn under the yoke. The great lord may sincerely strive to please them, as far as is possible under his egomania. But how many events can his bureaucrats observe? How accurate their conclusions about the needs of the hundred million? How rapidly can affairs of state be consummated in line with any policy whatsoever? Parallel to the "cultural lag" which Ogburn has emphasized we find a political lag whose practical significance exceeds that of the former; for it breeds dissension, cliques, conspiracies and wars. It is the inevitable lag between current necessities of the people and government response to these. The huger the state, the worse the lag.

Does this mean, as Spengler maintains, that every great culture must pass? Not at all. It merely suggests that over-extended systems must disappear; that small states are better than large; and that the only way to make large nations good and permanent is to speed up intercommunications and sundry techniques of intelligence and control to the point where even mediocre bureaucrats will be able to keep in touch with social conditions and to deal with them promptly. It leads me to suspect that Rome fell because Cæsar had neither telephone nor radio; that the Russia of the Czars went to its well deserved doom largely because the Romanoffs spent too much on diamond necklaces and too little on locomotives. This hardly seems radical, still less is it startling. Yet how many deep philosophers overlook the obvious and the trite!

Spengler sees the World War as the climax of decay. I see it as a

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fine housecleaning, in which much dust is swept up and many rats trapped. The only trouble with it is that it was never finished. Well begun—it was left half done—to the sorrow of all forward looking peoples. Every old culture should have been carried down to its long overdue doom. States had physically outgrown their own abilities. There were too many people in Europe relative to jobs and incomes and elbow room. Ancient habits had too firm a grip on the politicians and the tax receipts. Between Germany and France, between England and Russia, between Austria and Bulgaria there was precious little to choose. I speak, you will not forget, of the states and their bureaucracies, not of the peoples as individuals.

Here, then, is my general position as against Spengler. Mankind has ever come to grief simply because men, as personalities, have been held more or less to the level of Cyclops by innumerable influences in the flux of their surroundings. These influences change the senses, the perceptions, the judgments, the attitudes, and the abstract theorizing of people. Whether the change aids or hinders the latter depends mainly upon men's ability to control winds, rain, insects, bacteria, vermin, food, water, in their space-time relations to people. This ability, in turn, depends upon men's sensitivities toward the events themselves; then upon their power to analyze the events; and finally upon their creative energies in devising instruments of control. Stupid people will never deliver themselves from stupidity and all its penalties. May they not engulf all other people, then? Can intelligent men escape the stupid along with other plagues? If they can, will their salvation endure? Will they not lapse into the old ways? Will they not be crushed by some rising tide of malice, greed, ignorance, or superstition? If such an end is inevitable, then the prophets of gloom are correct. Otherwise, we Brethren of Sweetness and Light win out.

At this point, Spengler's admirers raise an embarrassing question. If, they say, you Brethren are so sure that all cultures and civilizations are not organisms which are born, flourish and die like beasts, pray show us just how they may attain life everlasting. Give us your formulas and incantations! A fair retort, I must admit. But, to meet it logically, we must pass far beyond this Short Introduction to Human Stupidity. Three or four more volumes will be filled with the constructive reply. The best we can do now is to assemble a few jottings which point to the latter.

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JĪVANMUKTI

If there is to be any salvation, it must come during man's life on earth. But how may it come? Buddha believed that it would be gained only through the dying out (Nirvāna) of the three cardinal sins, sensuality, malice and stupidity.* But how bring this to pass? Buddha had his answer, and a brilliant one which has deeply impressed the world. It cannot be fairly summed up in a phrase; yet we may say, without too great distortion, that his technique set forth in the Eightfold Path turns mainly upon self-discipline. Man must conquer himself to gain *Jīvanmukti*, or salvation in this life.

Today we know, to our sorrow, that few men can remodel their natures thus. Above all, the stupid cannot; for they cannot perceive their own dulness any more than the blind man can see that he is blind. If, then, they are to be saved, the deliverance must come from without. Will it be education, or compulsion, or a chemical? Look first at education. Consider what the most carefully planned training in the home and at school might accomplish.

American experience in this field indicates all too clearly the hopelessness of the proposed Utopian task. Buddha's first two cardinal sins can be, to a considerable degree, softened through schooling: sensuality may be, if not in all then surely in many young people, brought under the halter by instruction in personal hygiene and social standards; and malice may be prevented by the cultivation of intelligent attitudes in all save a few groups, which will be mentioned in a moment. But stupidity, alas, is sturder against such approaches and assaults. The more diffuse and general its form, the worse it is, as you already know. For that means that the individual youth is insensitive to many kinds of appeals and encouragements.

Worst of all, the peculiarly simple emotional poise of an all-around stupid person stands in the way of the educator as a granite wall. The very notion of breaking through it is repugnant to the school psychologist, for he understands that this poise is a sign of mental health; to destroy it may bring on evils even worse than serene stupidity. As he sees the matter, the dull stability is the only kind attainable in such a personality. Let us consider briefly this annoying but hardly disputable fact.

* "Dīgha," I, 74.

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It is almost self-evident that stupid people may attain their own brand of happiness more easily than hypersensitive people. For there are fewer inner and outer forces to be brought from conflict to a state of pleasant equilibrium in the career of a dullard. I have exhibited several specimens of such stupid happiness in an earlier study,* so I shall merely sum up the whole matter here.

Happiness is the emotional tone accompanying the self-realization of a personality. It is by no means a mere sum of pleasures; against such a view philosophers and moralists have rightly protested since the dawn of reflective thought. Nor can happiness be reduced to simple self-realization; though this notion has much plausibility. To make the most of one's abilities and to get what one wants are surely two important ingredients of a happy life; but we find unmistakable cases of men who, in the finest sense of the phrase, make the most of themselves, yet never become happy. Some remain apathetic, like smoothly functioning machines which, though they turn out their products faultlessly, never know it and never enjoy it. Conversely, we find other people who make no effort to accomplish more than fill their stomachs and rest their weary bones, yet are endowed with certain modest gifts; and these same people may be as cheerful as crickets in a rug. We have all met such; sometimes on the highway, as they amble along bound nowhither, whistling their heads off; sometimes at a dock's end, of a balmy afternoon, fishing where no bait is ever nibbled; sometimes running elevators, passing out papers at news stands, or sitting on guard in unfinished buildings.

These simple souls have attained as much of salvation as possible on this earth. Lacking many high ambitions, they cannot be disturbed by any failure to rise in the world. Being robust of body, they are not moved to nervous strenuities by indigestion—as many money-seekers are—nor by endocrine ailments—as many egomaniacs and dynamaniacs are. Being incapable of sustained reflection over issues involving the simplest mathematical and logical operations, they cannot grasp more than a chemical trace of the universe at their doors. Nor can they understand anything about themselves. So, in the face of such well balanced personalities, the teacher throws up his hands. Their stupidity is invincible, not merely because it is stupidity but rather because it has harmonized its own limitations.

* See "The Psychology of Happiness," especially pp 42 to 61.

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The best the school can do is to fix early habits of health and hygiene and to drill the simple in simple jobs. All this makes for happiness and for social stability; but at the price of an ever swelling horde of dullards and slightly subnormals in our society. More and more tasks must be found for them, as they cannot be left in idleness. Manufacturers and their engineers will therefore reorganize industry and trade so that jobs are simplified downward to the dullard level. And then an alarming social-economic crisis appears.

The man of few sensitivities and cravings finds happiness most easily. Having found it, he inevitably strives to persist in that state. So he becomes the arch-enemy of all progress—unless we define our Utopia as a state whose citizens, as a mass, are happy. Such a view, however, runs counter to that of nearly all superior minds. Thus we see, developing in every society, a profound antagonism between the dull and the clever, between the sluggish and the alert, between the vegetable and the intellectual. This opposition is at its worst in those lands which have managed to supply the common people with all they wish in the way of food, drink, shelter, clothing, rest, and animal exercise (including a simple love life). Gaining such, the herd rests content. It sincerely feels itself to be the most blessed of mankind—and is it not right, from its own point of view? Why change, then? Let well enough alone, please!

We cannot reproach simple people for craving such a simple environment and a correspondingly simple way of life. As well reproach Brun for his love of honey, or the sky for its blue. They are what they are. In their ranks we find millions ranging from morons up to slightly more than average mortals (But most people close to the average are by no means so simple.) In a democracy they are a force that usually overwhelms sensitive, responsive, forward-looking, dissatisfied dreamers. They are the elemental conservatives, who sigh only to conserve the primordial values of human nature and society.

What can the statesman do in the presence of a majority like this? Plainly he faces a profound dilemma. Justice, as men usually conceive it, demands that he aid these dullards to live as they like. Progress demands that he strive, on the one hand, to better the race and, on the other hand, to improve the environment so that better people will thrive in it. But these can be harmonized with the wishes of the herd only by some polite fiction or cunning compromise. The latter cannot work out through education; that we have just seen.

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Well then, how about religion and business? Can he ally himself somehow with Christian leaders, all of whom are, in our land at least, wealthy industrialists, bankers, brokers, and merchants?

As we ponder this question, we must keep clearly before us the possible ways and means. We must find more than men to apply methods; we must find methods first and then men who believe in them and understand them. Thus we are carried back to our previous question: can the world be delivered from its stupid by the methods of the schools, or by the methods of dictator and compulsions, or by some scientific methods using chemicals or other inventions? Turn now to the possibilities of compulsion. And do not forget that these must all be founded upon the active support of the classes which maintain our leading political parties; for only through the latter could sumptuary laws be passed and enforced.

The eugenists offer one scheme here. Find all mental incompetents, say they, and then prevent them from breeding. Thus, in the course of a few generations, the intellectual level of the race will rise. The curse of Cyclops will pass. Many learned men of late have championed this audacious cause. But it still leaves me cold. For I am much too stupid to be able to see how anybody can frame laws which, to public satisfaction, eliminate the profoundly stupid by sterilization. Because of the dusk in which I grope, I incline, for the present at least, to agree heartily with Father John A. Ryan (and, I think, also with Raymond Pearl) in rejecting such sincere proposals as that of Dr. H. H. Laughlin who asks us to adopt a "model eugenical sterilization law." Laughlin is forced to define those citizens who, under that law, would be bundled off to clinics and painlessly deprived of descendants. He bravely describes a "socially inadequate person" as one who "fails chronically in comparison with normal persons to maintain himself or herself as a useful member of the organized social life of the State." Does this help much?

I fear not. Were such an interpretation written into a law, I should heartily lead a rebel band of nuns and monks in promiscuous assassination of all accessible eugenists and Congressmen. To select as a standard the present normal member of a social group strikes me as itself evidence of imbecility. I should incline to reject normality in the social sense altogether; for the entire social life of our age seems to me, as one confessedly stupid spectator, sickening in its innumerable deviations from good sense, the rules of health, and the

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broader principles of human happiness. Eugenists who fall into the lock-step of current social stereotypes ought to be sterilized.

Nothing in this objection, however, prompts me to accept the underlying principles of Father Ryan's argument, which he sketches in this admirable paragraph: *

"Once men reject the truth that the human person is intrinsically sacred, that even his body should be treated with reverence, they can easily persuade themselves that any person may be used in any fashion for the benefit of society. The difference between the social inconveniences arising from the existence of too many imbeciles and that resulting from the presence of too many Negroes, Mexicans, or other non-Nordics, is a difference only of degree—possibly in favor of the imbeciles. If sterilization is no degradation of personality, no violation of natural rights, why should it not be applied to all the inferior classes that bring more inconvenience than convenience to the politically dominant élite?"

In a thoroughly enlightened society, sterilization will be considered no more "a degradation of personality" than the removal of tonsils. In fact, for many people tonsilectomy changes the personality far more than sterilization by the new techniques. Many of us would argue that losing descendants is not half so bad as losing one's eyesight. Nobody is "intrinsically sacred"; that ancient doctrine is a queer mixture of egomania and theology from which all truth, as well as all common sense, has been distilled and thrown away. Nothing is sacred.

There is only one genuine issue: what will the consequences be? Can a statesman today, working in and through the preposterous mechanisms of social control which Americans see fit to employ, rid the land of its stupid hordes by some novel compulsion whose after-effects are, on the whole, less injurious to society at large than the continued presence of the stupid? As for the ways and means, the answer is too easy: Democrats, Republicans, Prohibitionists, and Communists alike would set their faces firmly against an enlarged sterilization law; for each group would see some of its own vital interests menaced, unless it alone could frame the rules for selecting those to be sterilized. Furthermore, all business men and financiers,

* From his pamphlet, "Human Sterilization." Published by the National Catholic Welfare Conference, Washington, D. C., 10 pp.

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regardless of party and creed, would fight to the bitter end any move which promised to reduce greatly the total number of people on earth. Their resistance must be particularly noted.

The stand taken by Calvin Coolidge and Arthur Brisbane represents fairly the majority opinion among money-getters and their agents. Coolidge went on record, years ago, as believing that "there cannot be too many of the right sort of people on earth"; and his ensuing comments made it clear that he regarded as the wrong sort only those with yellow skins, those who would not work hard, those who would not save money, and those who despised and fought the traditions of America. Brisbane is even rasher and stupider. He has said in several editorials that what this country most needs is three or four hundred million people; they would guarantee permanent prosperity. He has even argued that Texas alone could and should contain fifty or sixty million inhabitants. Here speaks the real estate speculator, as you see. His voice is also the voice of the newspaper circulation manager, the advertising agency, the factory man, and the supersalesman. They want people, people, and then more people. That means consumers, consumers and then more consumers—at least, so they fancy, in their ignorance of population laws.

Now, the ancient tenets of Christianity harmonize perfectly with this wish. As Father Ryan correctly states it, in the passage just quoted, each human being is intrinsically sacred, and his body must be treated with reverence. Most of our social workers share in this view, at least up to a certain point. So do many intellectualist reformers. It was a doctrine of Herbert Croly's and amply defended for years in the columns of *The New Republic*. It is the basis of almost all Protestant creeds no less than of Romanist. And for the excellent reason that it underlies the typically religious attitude of the Western people, which is egocentric out and out. It has been carried over intact into most forms of non-religious humanitarianism, too. It underlies, in a peculiarly obscure fashion, the large programs of public improvements and education all over the world, most of which involve the assumption that the only thing wrong with man is his environment and his training, hence that all men are worth saving by giving them the best teachers, the best homes, and the best health possible.

Citizens of wealth and influence will persist in this conviction, not out of stupidity but for the reason that there is much truth in it, the

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truth probably outweighing the errors. There is solid evidence in support of the belief that much more is wrong with man's surroundings and schooling than with his essential nature. If so, then why not proceed on the basis of leaving the individual alone and as free as possible until the world he lives in has been put in order? Then, and then only, shall we see unerringly what remains to be done with personalities. Why take a chance when such a sure thing lies open?

I fear no radical eugenist can answer this. He is shooting in the dark. For, as was suggested a moment ago, he can define the undesirable types only in terms of current social standards, as Laughlin does. But how can he assure himself or us that these standards of 1932 will be acceptable in 1990, or in 2100 or in 3000 A.D.? May not changes in the environment and in the economic system play topsy-turvy with prevailing notions about normality? My own conviction is that, within fifty years, in a few spots on earth, many people who "fail chronically in comparison with normal persons to maintain themselves as useful members of the organized social life of the State" will be looked upon as superior, while those who conform will be found inferior.

Who is the "normal" business man of our century? Whoever works hard, practises thrift, is clever in buying cheaply and selling dearly, avoids reckless price cutting, and strives to render such service to his customers as will please and hold them. But how is reckless price cutting defined? There is the rub. Why should not a man who runs, let us say, the largest grocery store in his town, be satisfied with a comfortable income just large enough to support him and his family? Suppose he took that stand and reduced retail prices accordingly. Instantly he would be denounced by all other merchants as an anti-social price cutter. In some communities, his foes could even start legal actions against him, so I am told. On the "normal" basis of cost accounting and profit taking, which would be defended to the death by bankers and most traditional economists, he would be losing money. Surely that is "abnormal"! He would not be getting 6% interest on his capital and taking out a 10% or 15% profit on operations, over and above a salary to himself and his son of \$75 a week each. And so on.

It is easy to prove that all businesses could be wrecked if a few powerful concerns in each line changed ever so slightly their pre-

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suppositions about the right of capital to earn interest at a given rate, and their presuppositions about a business having the "right" to immortalize itself by setting aside fixed amounts for depreciation, increased business, and the like. Why should any businesses be immortal, any more than the men who run them? Why not run a business on the assumption that it will live only as long as its founder? That might be an interesting intermediate economic system between the stupidities of communism and the stupidities of crass capitalism. I am not arguing in favor of such a scheme; I merely remark that it is one of a score of important variations of our money-and-profit system which a better educated, less stupid generation may prefer to our own.

Take another system, still thoroughly capitalistic; one which permits no wealth to be inherited. That may, for all I can prove, be silly—or it may be the wisest of all. Whatever it turns out to be, it is today highly "abnormal." Its adoption would throw all our present methods into confusion. For it is a basic thought of the money-and-profit economy that a business must grow or else go into the discard. To grow, it must make more goods and sell more goods. For every expansion of industry and trade, then, people must consume more; and there must be more consumers. So the present "normal" order is one in which volume of goods made and volume used increase steadily, while the living standard goes on rising; at the same time, the world population must increase apace.

Now it is my contention that this particular *set* of requirements must fail, in spite of the fact that it is looked upon as the "normal" ideal by the "normal" business man and the "normal" religious leader. Between a growing world population and a rising living standard there is a deep, ineradicable incompatibility. And we might as well indicate it here, because it bears heavily upon the whole problem of world stupidity and its removal. Let me exhibit this briefly by commenting on the Pope's recent encyclical, "After Forty Years," wherein he tries to defend his own *Jivanmukti*, or salvation of man on earth.

In this significant document the Pope assumes with the "normal" business man that the capitalist system must and shall be preserved. He accepts the "normal" doctrine that money has its rights no less than man, and that private property is sacred no less than the human

soul. In fact he uses almost these precise words. Founded on this economic dualism, he then sums up the position of Rome thus:

"It is absolutely necessary to reconstruct the whole economic system by bringing it back to the requirements of social justice so as to insure a more equitable distribution of the united process of capital and labor. . . .

"It is essential that the proletariat be enabled gradually to obtain some of the advantages enjoyed by proprietors. In the present order this can be accomplished only by a fair and just wage. Wages must therefore be such as really to satisfy the legitimate requirements of an honest working man, not only for his person but for his family. . . ."

It can be shown, with full evidence, that this whole view, in spite of certain noble traits, is shot through with the three major stupidities. It betrays a profound insensitivity toward geography, another toward human nature, and a third toward mathematical-logical relations in matters of food supply, birth rate, population increments, wages, income, migration velocities, and resulting social disturbances. Later we may write a small volume on this topic, which is most interesting. Here let me boil down part of its argument.

This stupid old world now contains nearly 2,000,000,000 human beings. Thanks to those billions who go the Pope's way in matters of birth uncontrol, each morning reveals about 50,000 extra mortals on earth. For every 100,000 who perish between dawn and dawn, 150,000 are born. The net daily increase equals the total population of Kenosha, Wisconsin, or of Pueblo, Colorado, or of Pittsfield, Massachusetts. In the course of each year, this amounts to *two countries having as many inhabitants as Belgium*. Or put it thus: every two years, human spawning adds to the world a new France!

In the face of this rising tide of sexuality, the Pope moves to reconstruct the entire economic system so as to increase the wages of the proletariat all over the world. Against what will he have to contend, in carrying out this program? Wages must, as the Pope well says, "satisfy the legitimate requirements of an honest working man, not only for his person but for his family." An admirable ideal, we all say. How bring it to pass?

There is only one way. The costs of producing and distributing the Good Things of Life must be lowered, not for a few people but

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for all. How lower them? Ah! That is purely a technical problem, differing with each commodity and with each region of distribution. We lower the cost of wheat in one way, the cost of coal in another, the cost of medicine in still another. Here the Pope admits he has no right to intervene, and no ability to advise. This is the realm of science and the techniques.

But we must illustrate some of the techniques because they figure heavily in the further developments of the game. Look, for instance, at the technique of feeding 50,000 newcomers every day. Here is a task which our alleged statesmen and social reformers never face.

Suppose that the proletariat is to be raised to the present average American standard of living, at least in matters of food. (Ignore automobiles, radios and lipsticks for the nonce.) Our American eats in the course of a year about 1,900 lbs. of food, dry weight. To raise this nourishment, some farmer must set aside and care for about three acres. (This makes due allowance for the grass of the cow of the dairyman.) What is more, the farmer must till those three acres more skilfully than our American farmer manages to do; for at present the latter uses nearly four acres to get food enough for one eater.

With 50,000 extra adults maturing daily, the farmers of the world must till and pasture about 150,000 extra acres every day, to keep abreast of the hungry horde. That's a tract larger than Chicago and a shade smaller than New York City. In the course of one year, then, they must enlarge their fields by 54,750,000 acres of good soil. That's a mere 85,500 square miles of farmland, ladies and gentlemen! Or a patch of plowland and hay meadow considerably larger than the entire State of Minnesota. It is much more than all the good farmland in the Golden State of California! It is roughly equal to all the tillable land on our entire Pacific Coast.

Do you begin to see why it is that nearly 1,500,000,000 people in the world are living either in semi-starvation or else so close to it that they do not know which hour may bring famine? Since 1920 more than 330,000,000 people have been added to the world's bread line. A horde about $2\frac{1}{2}$ times the present total population of these United States! A horde greater than all India's! All this since Harding was elected President! A horde consuming, on the American basis of eating, the entire yield of 990,000,000 fertile acres somewhere on earth—or an empire of some 1,545,000 square miles, which is almost precisely the size of China! (That is, the eighteen prov-

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inces of the Republic, but not including the great deserts of Mongolia and Tibet.) An empire half again as large as British India. An empire six times the size of all Japan. And all within the lifetime of a twelve-year-old boy now going to school and hearing his elders talk about the mysteries of the worldwide depression!

While these 330,000,000 extra food-eaters have been coming, the world has busily invented machines, worked out new systems of factory and office toil, eliminated waste, accelerated trains and boats and planes, improved credit methods, and generally so reduced the labor of producing the Good Things of Life that a worker today can make two, four, or even ten times as much as a worker of fifty years ago.

The vast benefits of this higher productivity have hidden from the city man's view the colossal disorders in the world's population at large, which remains almost wholly within the ancient social-economic order. Of the 2,000,000,000 people on earth just now, not more than 200,000,000 are enjoying a standard of living equal to that of an American garage mechanic. Of these perhaps 80,000,000 are in our own land and the remaining 120,000,000 are principally in Western Europe. So, you see, there are some 1,800,000,000 people who live as coolies, as peasants, as moujiks, as simple savages—happily mayhap, but still primitive. They are the Flesh.

Now, during the past few years, the World has been rapidly industrializing the ways of all Flesh, on the farms. Mighty tractors invade Sumatra and create horizonwide forests of rubber trees. Cuba becomes one stupendous sugar plantation, dotted with gigantic machines. And every time a new food-manufacturing machine gets under way somewhere on earth, it drives a hundred or more ancient peasants into the cities.

Thither they drift, looking for work. And what do they find? What can they find? The workers there already employed are producing more than anybody can buy. And the 1,800,000,000 peasants, coolies, moujiks and savages out in the open fields cannot buy even the cheapest goods of city mills and country canneries; for they have no money. They belong to an ancient Way of Life, in which money was a trifle. They live against the soil, under the sun, in the breath of the sweet south wind.

As the countryfolk pour into the cities of China and India and Java and Bolivia and Rhodesia and Queensland, they bid against

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the city workers for jobs; so, under the capitalist system of competition, wages tend to fall. But the Pope plans to retain this capitalist system and at the same time to raise wages so that everybody can buy whatever he needs for a decent standard of living. Convert this into statistics and see what it means.

In our land the farmers average between \$600 and \$900 a year, true income per family; this makes fair allowances for what they get from their small farms in the form of food and shelter. In Europe peasants average between \$40 and \$125 a year. In Russia, of course, they get even less than \$40 now. As for Asia, the average falls between \$20 and \$40 a year. In the light of these figures, consider next that, according to the best experts on budgets and living costs, a decent living for a family of five in the working classes of America cannot be maintained on less than \$1,800 a year.

So that, if we accept the American worker's current standards as high enough to satisfy the Pope, then the wages of the world's workers will have to be raised by a total whose order of magnitude is \$450,000,000,000 a year. This is more than five times the entire personal income of us Americans in 1931.

Return for a moment to the matter of cutting costs of the necessities and comforts of life. Food and clothes use from 54% to 66% of the workers' incomes. A poor family must spend between 40% and 50% of all its income for victuals. (The average for families in all classes of wealth is 38.2% of the income.) Clothing uses 14% to 16% of the income. Very well! If the Pope will raise wages, in buying power, he must cut the *relative* cost of food and clothing by 80%. But how? Here comes the great entanglement in his game.

There are only two ways of reducing food costs on a grand scale. One is to force farm wages and farm food prices down to the coolie levels; the other is to industrialize farming as a few Americans are doing (and as the Soviet is undertaking on a scale which makes all American operations look like child's play). The first way defeats the Pope's purpose. He wishes to deliver the world's workers from coolie poverty. So he must reject it; and we are glad he does so. That leaves him with the second procedure.

Rome is irrevocably committed to mechanized farming on a world-wide scale. The Pope must do what Stalin is doing, and with similar logic; for here there can be no feeble compromises with the Past. The bellies of 2,000,000,000 people cannot be filled at a price they

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can pay unless every device which ingenious man can find to grow and market foods cheaply is used to the limit all over the world. Likewise with the growing and manufacture and sale of cotton for clothes; likewise with leather for shoes, with straw for hats, with lumber for houses, with bricks for house walls.

Now, the costliest item is almost always labor. As the Pope will not pay the toiler less but more, it follows that, as the wages rise, the toiler must produce much more per hour, day and year, to force down the costs to the ultimate consumer. Ancient agriculture must be abolished. A Kansas farmer who uses fair machinery and methods on 400-acre grain fields must spend about \$1.22 to grow one bushel of wheat. Were a Japanese farmer to use his prehistoric methods and yet be paid on an American wage scale, probably a bushel of Japanese grain would cost close to \$6.00, if not more. In Kansas and Texas our leading farmers use the largest machine units available and, by driving tractors twenty-four hours a day, in best factory fashion, have already cut the cost of raising a bushel of wheat well below 50c. Within ten years the Russian government, working a million acres in a block, with farm machines ten times larger than any now known, will cut the cost of the bushel to 35c. In no other way can the Pope raise the living standards of the proletariat. He must trail Stalin, as Stalin trails America.

As farms are organized like factories, the output of one man grows by leaps and bounds. In Asia a coolie may work one or two acres of rice. In Texas a boy with machines easily handles 500 acres; and the day is near at hand when he will take care of 2,000 unaided. (That is, 10 assorted workers will handle 20,000 acres in a block.) Thus the Texas boy must displace 250 or more coolies. So too with all basic crops which constitute about 80% of man's diet; wheat, corn, rye, barley, oats, and alfalfa and hay for cattle feed.

The displaced coolies must live. But how? If they work in towns, they must produce goods which others must and can buy. This they cannot do even for the 200,000,000 prosperous industrial and town folk of the world. For the latter already turn out much more than they themselves can buy. On a four-hour work day in a five-day week, they could, with equipment already devised, produce all the comforts of life for themselves. (This has been verified by industrial engineers.) So the farm folk who flock townward must produce for other farm folk—that is, either for themselves or for their friends

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back in the hills. But, alas, they lack property, income, and hence economic status. They are the Pariahs of Prosperity.

Now, would any private capitalist invest billions in factories and amass raw materials to be sold to paupers on terms they could meet? Ask Messrs. Rockefeller, Ford, and Mellon. Buyers would spend a lifetime paying for such goods on instalments; and the goods would be used up years before half the payments had been made. Well, then! The goods can be produced either by charity or by government mandate. Charity is out of the question simply because it violates the rules of the game. It isn't business at all; least of all is it capitalistic business. As for government mandate, that can work; proof is Russia. There we see the State flatly commanding the industrialization of farms and forcing through its program in the spirit of a military campaign. Any other country might do likewise; and, I suspect, several will follow the lead of Stalin ere another decade has passed.

But the Pope cannot accept this variation of the Science Gambit. It runs counter to his technique—and anyhow, it is too late. He opened with another game and stratagem; and it is a rule in his game that he cannot recall a move once made. He must go on opposing all forms of Socialism and Communism. He must go on defending the Capital-Labor form of Society, with its individualism, its competitions, and all that these involve.

So he has lost the present game but does not know it yet. He has contradicted himself in banning birth control while demanding higher living standards. He cannot improve the lot of the proletariat in a competitive system so long as he encourages the breeding of a new city of 50,000 every day of the year and century. Only the miracle of the loaves and fishes repeated every morning could cope with that monstrous sexuality.

* * *

Here, then, is our conclusion and our return to the topic with which we began this discussion. An economic system controlled by "normal" business men and "normal" religions of today cannot and will not save the superior people of the world from the plague of stupidity by means of laws and government policies such as sterilization, birth control, or whatever else tends to block the further breeding of inferior types. For both members of the dominant economic caste cling to the notion of sanctity. Each thinks its own center of

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interest is "sacred," hence *tabu* and inviolable. The business man insists that property is sacred—and calls it by that savage adjective. Capital has an inalienable right to live, to grow, and to prosper, no less than man. The religious man, at the same time, thinks each living person is sacred. No matter how simple nor how vicious, the individual has inalienable rights, among which are "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Now, the capitalist supports the church everywhere, as always in the past; for the church is the chief defender of the existing order. So we have a deadlock on our hands, if we look to the "normal" society of today.

Can the world escape this deadlock and all the disasters which must come in its train? Only through some power above church and state, and that power is science. Only through some method which is neither commerce nor piety, and that method is super-production of those goods which men cherish above shoes and jewels and houses, namely, the great intangibles of happiness, health, leisure, play, exercise, harmless thrills, security, self-respect and the joy of friendships. Factories do not manufacture these, nor do peddlers set a price upon them in carload lots. Bankers cannot discount them, nor can pawnbrokers and shysters take them away.

In part, men must have material possessions in order to get and enjoy these intangibles. But they need few such, and here they come into conflict with the "normal" American business man and his standards of prosperity. Again, a point is quickly reached at which sheer volume of material possessions makes their use intolerable and then impossible. You can own so many suits of clothes that the toil of dressing and undressing wears you out; then your only garb is a shroud, and your only reward an obituary notice in the local newspaper. Again, a point is reached in the production of material goods at which the dilemma between coolie and machine becomes complete and insoluble, as was shown a moment ago.

The full appreciation of this hopeless situation came to Lenin, but he saw it through the blurred spectacles of Marxian metaphysics. This was a world tragedy, for the feeble and at times almost stupid notions of Marx threw this extraordinary genius clear off the track at a time when the peoples of Europe needed more than anything else some scientifically accurate escape from capitalistic religion and religious capitalism. Russia was in the grip of the most vicious coalition. At the same time her masses were—and still are—the stupidest

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of all Europe, in spite of certain hypersensitivities among the upper classes. Lenin saw lucidly that the nation could not be saved by any acts of the Romanoffs, who were mere exploiters, nor by any pieties of the Greek ecclesiarchy. How cut through it? Only with an enlightened despotism, of course. Only with thorough revolution.

Western people are already talking dictatorships. All over America you hear men sighing for a Mussolini. Englishmen expect their own Lenin almost any hour. The Germans have a half-Lenin and are torn over the wisdom of enlarging him to full length. In Bruening they have by all odds the closest approach to the only kind of despot who might, in the long run, work things out well; for, so it appears, Bruening has a clear, cool intellect that is not poisoned by the usual insanities of kings and paranoiacs and strutters. And, in the logic of events, it would be natural for Germany to be the first to find salvation through science by way of enlightened despotism. By the same token, we expect Russia to be the last to succeed in that direction. For her despots are doctrinaires, while her masses are dull as dinosaurs. Which way America?

Would that I might finish off this Short Introduction with a brilliant prophecy! Alas, I cannot. I am much too stupid in matters political. Above all, I am baffled by the placidity of our own proletariat, which seems to be hardly above the Russian. Is this seeming itself reality? That is what I do not know and cannot ascertain. Are Americans like the drowsy inhabitants of a Southern village full of hookworm, malaria, rum and Methodism? Will they let things drift along stupidly until something goes crashing down—and will they explode, killing, screaming, and burning whatever lies in their path? Our lynching habits and our general hysteria suggest such a course. And yet . . .

A sinister softness seems spreading here. The bitterness of the past two years of depression, poverty, idleness, and disillusionment has not aroused any sizable group to brisk action, be it good or bad. You hear much grumbling, a few curses, a twittering prayer for help, and little more. A million ruined farmers, so far as anybody can see, have done nothing whatever to straighten themselves out; still less have they turned to the Reds—or to anybody else, for that matter. Dumb and driven cattle, all! So too our white-collar clerks. They go to the talkies, they puff their cigarettes, they trade stories, and they ogle the girls in the same old way, just as if the world were

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not writhing in the throes of a new economic-social revolution. Aside from these pitiful humanesques, we see a handful of intelligent skeptics struggling with the larger issues, while nearly all clergymen preach a return to God and the business leaders preach a return to normalcy.

And what of the world at large? Never having seen the world at large, I am shy about prophesying. But those glimpses which I have enjoyed lead me to guess that nothing short of some unanticipated right-about-face, or else an international bankruptcy, or even a stupendous epidemic wiping out half a billion mortals in a whiff is going to deliver the world at large from stupidity. For I take this to mean two things: first of all, the relative number of stupid people is to be greatly reduced; and then too, the survivors are to be, relative to their world, less stupid than we. How "normal" business, with its doctrine of money and profit, and "normal" religion, with its doctrine of the sacred individual and his right to free spawning and good wages, can or will bring either event to pass, is beyond my comprehension.

DELIVERANCE

"The author calls himself an incurable optimist. Good Lord! What, then, is optimism?"

Several hundred thousand readers have been muttering these words, and I must now answer their biting query.

Even after years of investigation among the stupid, I remain an incurable optimist, partly as a matter of temperament. For a cheerful, forward-looking attitude is less an affair of the intellect than of the basal metabolism, the glands, and one's history of health and poise. Nevertheless there is also an intellectual optimism. It consists of conclusions fairly drawn from observations impartially made.

The brilliant, pertinacious, and analytical reader who has marched with us thus far has already spied the larger promontories of hope along this rugged, bleak coast of fact. He notices, above all, that the mass of the world's stupidities is a survival from bygone eras which crushed the sensitive and favored the tough and the dull. Clever men have transformed the environment so that it now favors the keen as well as the heavy of wit, the delicate no less than the hardy. Even

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the stupid enjoy this new environment so thoroughly that they will never surrender it of their own free volition. Therefore, as it becomes more firmly established, it will, to be sure, fail to exterminate the stupid for many generations; but, on the other hand, unlike the old environment, it will not slay nor expel the sensitive. So, you see, an enormous advance has been made.

Now let us see the mechanics and psychics of this, the vastest of all social changes. We may glimpse it in brief through the amazing decline of population. For today, as never before, the multiplication of children depends less on the old natural factors of disease, nutrition, religion, and economic conditions than on education and the resolve to maintain a higher living standard. Broadly described, the stupid people are still breeding like rabbits while the keener, better informed classes are whittling down their progeny to the vanishing point.

Already the true natural increase of American population has dropped close to zero. This proves, to my way of thinking, that we adapt to the new era more intelligently and more promptly than other people. For, as Louis I. Dublin and other statisticians and sociologists who have given this subject much thought believe, the declining birth rate is almost wholly deliberate. The records of the New York Birth Control Clinic are regarded as typical. out of 10,000 women who visited it for advice, about 9,300 had previously been using some contraceptives. Even Catholic women do this, in flat (and highly sensible) violation of the orders of their stupid priests.

This new enlightenment works in two directions: it reduces the eventual population, while increasing the relative number of older people. The health and comfort of small families are favored over the large; and so, together with preventive medicine and public hygiene and scientific housing, Dublin and Lotka have recently published analyses indicating that, if the present condition continues unchanged for four more generations, no fewer than 40 out of every 100 Americans will be 50 years old or older. And the effect of this? Let the prophets take the floor!

“Young people will not be in the saddle as they are now, and the atmosphere will in consequence be much more sober and conservative. Ambitious schemes which only the concentrated energy

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of youth can carry through and which have played so large a part in our national development will most likely be discouraged. Instead of expansion in our demand for goods and services, there will be contraction; instead of increased markets, there will be dwindling ones. Land values due to the lighter pressure of population will probably go down, and there will be greater competition for jobs. A very disturbing picture indeed could be painted of the distorted social and economic conditions which may result from the changed internal organization of our future society. . . .”*

Dublin feels that as soon as Americans realize the menace of birth control, “a real effort will be made to alter the situation.” In a word, he looks upon the whole trend as deadly, at least in its present form. While agreeing in essence with his statistical forecasts, I cannot tune in on his fears. In fact, I can paint a picture of a society ruled by the middle-aged which is considerably rosier than any régime of youth ever recorded. And it is not a fantasy!

The real foundation of Dublin’s gloom is clearly stated in his study. Says he: “In the last analysis, numbers will count.” So, he feels, countries like Russia will swamp the stunted minorities of lands like France, Holland, and America; for the lusty young will override the enfeebled middle-aged.

“This will be more and more true in the coming generation, when different political, social and economic ideals will strive for supremacy. The near future will probably see no semblance of master and subject peoples. The rapid spread of industrialism and of popular education throughout the world will make for political equality, except as numbers upset the balance. The individual man will more and more come into his own. Under such conditions, if the people of Russia, of India, and of China continue to people the earth, will they not, in all probability, be the dominating influence in it also?”

Here Dublin fails to appreciate the Web of Life, in all its intricacy. Above all, he has overlooked the changing relation between the stupid and the intelligent, between the ambitionless and the upward striving. And, as an integral part of this oversight, he has missed by a wide spread the stupendous, wholly unforeseen influence of universal education and individual opportunity as a check upon

* From an article on “Birth Control.” Louis I. Dublin. *Feruss*, Nov. 1931, p. 275

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political equality. Our Short Introduction will have been written in vain, if we do not establish the high probability of a better world order wherein the very factors which Dublin considers evil prove almost Utopian.

The inner trend of the Super-Machine Age, now about to begin, will be away from political equality; away from the vicious domination of mere numbers, away from the rule of youth; away from the miserable money-and-profit struggles of egocentric, power-mad, fame-lusting young Napoleons of immense energy and pinhead intelligence. It will—as Dublin foresees—work toward an immense equilibrium of human forces, the world over; and with this must go a decline of industry and business, relative to health, wealth and happiness. How will this new balance be struck? Let us conjecture a little, in the light of population statistics and the known facts about culture, machines, social technique, and geography.

Let us assume, as Dublin does, that the present natural birth rate will result in America's reaching, within a few years, her peak of population; say, as Dublin does, that it will be about 148,000,000 in 1970. (In my own previously published studies of related topics, I have assumed 1975 to be the crisis of American culture; and this, I am pleased to observe, harmonizes surprisingly with Dublin's forecast of the population curve.) * But let us also take into our reckoning other profound tendencies already well recognized, such as:

1—The spread of Super-power all over the white man's world;
2—The rise of Super-farms, particularly for the growing of basic foodstuffs such as grains, grasses, and root crops, which make up more than three-fourths of human diet;

3—The rapid decline in the *relative* number of inferior mental types of workers, as a result of improved organization, techniques, and machines in nearly all industries;

4—The almost equally swift drop in the *relative* number of high-grade scientific and professional workers required;

5—The steady emphasis on service rather than on manufactured commodities, with the result that more and more average and sub-average workers will shift from the factory to various personal service;

* See "The Twilight of the American Mind." Chapter 19; "The Crisis of 1975"

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6—The rapid differentiation of mental classes and cultural classes arising from individualized education and ease of shifting habitat and jobs; the superior citizens early finding their superiority, while the inferior reach the limit of their attainments and find their vocational levels accordingly;

7—The slow but sure decay of antique conceptions of democracy and personal liberty, resulting in a new scientific appraisal of individuals and rights purely in terms of objective consequences;

8—The decay of world empires and great states, most of which will probably become confederations of super-cities which will be largely self-sufficient, having within their municipal boundaries farm lands, forest lands, watersheds, and other necessities of community life; the countryside far from such cities reverting to forest or to grassland or else becoming a chain of super-farms operated like immense factories;

9—The expansion of the new air conditioning technique to the point at which the manufacture of climate becomes a public utility, such as electricity, gas and water today; and entire cities arise in regions now unwholesome for white people, all roofed or otherwise insulated against the evils of the district in the form of damp, gales, dust, cold, and insects;

10—The tremendous increase of leisure among all classes; with the utilizing of this leisure on a gigantic scale by the highly intelligent men and women between 35 and 70 years of age, to the outcome that these upper age groups will progress far beyond all others in their scientific knowledge and their techniques, thus becoming a dominant class;

11—The slow but sure transfer of social and political activities to young people and to middle-aged women, under the guidance of technical specialists; the affairs of the group thus absorbing a considerable fraction of the quality labor released from industry and business;

12—The complete subordination of industry and trade to public welfare, probably in many different forms throughout the world; communism, socialism, the New England town meeting, and many other variations being used, according to racial and cultural interests and aptitudes;

13—The early disappearance of large armies and navies, not as a result of public enlightenment but purely through the domination

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of the world by a small group of scientists and cultural leaders who force the governments into disarmament through the threat of annihilation by poison gas, germs, long distance explosives and perhaps destructive agents as yet wholly undreamed of. Such a group of 500 or 1,000 individuals will some day be able to end war on short notice.

A score of other tendencies, more or less active and visible, will figure in the great changes that lie ahead. But man's mind reels before the task of calculating their interactions; and, as yet, no machine has been built to handle the integral equations of social change. As far as the thinker can span the moving panorama, however, he must be a long-range optimist; for he must behold the steady elimination of the stupid through many fresh forces in nature and in society, all of which give more power to the keen, the alert, the foresighted, and the upright, enabling them to be rid of the superstitions, the dirt, the disease, the fanaticisms and the economic lunacies which hitherto have grown out of dull wit. But, before the world can shelter more millions of the superior, it must exterminate the billions of stupid. An era of diminishing population lies ahead. This will purge the race of Cyclops, force the slant-browed business man back into his proper place, and—it may be, after long centuries—make feasible a fresh advance of peopleage finer than anything the past has known.

As, during the next five or six generations, disease, noxious insects, narcotics, alcohol, bad food and lack of food are steadily vanquished, the relative number of stupid people will fall fast. At a long-range guess, I would say that the year 2000 will probably see an end of those varieties of mass stupidity in the United States and in the smaller nations of Western and Northern Europe. Could we measure the phenomenon in simple quantitative units, it might turn out that there would be fully a 75% decline in the dulness and sluggishness of mind caused by these many plagues which smite stomach, blood and nerves from without.

Were no other improvement in human affairs to ensue, this alone would warrant rosy optimism for the future. For, in my judgment, these pathological stupidities, together with those brought on by undernourishment and malnutrition, outweigh all others, even the terrible stupidities of egomaniacs. So, score one big point for Pollyanna!

Now for the next white ray of hope! I maintain that education

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cannot convert the stupid to a better sensitivity; and that seems gloomy, does it not? But there is another side to this prediction. Schools and improved home training can prodigiously enlarge the vision, the judgment, and the policy of intelligent young people, with special reference to the handling of the stupid in business, in social relations, and in politics. Thus far we have attained a new wisdom only toward the dregs of dulness; the feeble-minded and the sub-average wit are now being brought under surveillance; the lowest of them first, because there is least dispute over their character and their threat to civilization. As the decades melt away, however, the intelligent public, which will—as we have shown—increase relatively both in numbers and in power, will increasingly scrutinize children in school and adults seeking important positions; and experts will gather data of behavior, by methods much more refined and reliable than any yet discovered, to the end of appraising capacities. Little by little, the sheep will thus be separated from the goats. Personality, rather than mere intellect or animal cunning or family influence, will determine one's position and potency in the upper levels of business, finance, and government. A man will come closer than ever before to winning or losing on the basis of his own merits. In order to do this, he will surrender those fictitious "inalienable rights" which make him "sacred" and "inviolable" to the pre-civilized cults. If he wishes to preserve this holiness, he must abstain from ambitions to manage men and large affairs.

Now observe closely how this trend must work out. In the course of the next few hundred years a wholly new standard of "normality" will slowly take form. Schools will use it as the basis of curricula and of promotion. Industry will adopt it in the selecting of men for executive and technical posts. More and more, the genuinely able will win out, while the incompetent lose out. And among the latter the worst of the stupid will be found. So, you see, the stupid will sink lower in the economic scale, hence also in the social and political. I expect this will take place so slowly that only the keenest trained observers will perceive its development within any ordinary years of the next century or two. Afterward it may accelerate, thanks to the bulking of public opinion behind it. Certainly well before the year 2000 it will be utterly impossible for a son of Cyclops like Warren Harding to enter the White House, or one like Kitchener to control anything from a war down to a county fair. The millions

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who pay taxes, who endure the miseries of war, who suffer through economic depressions, will, as they grow more intelligent and better informed, insist upon the same right and necessity to inspect the inner workings of a man who wishes to sell himself to them as manager as they now exercise in analyzing the water they drink, the steel they build into trains and automobiles, and the drugs that go into a doctor's prescription. To enter public affairs, one will then cease to have any privacy. The sacred ego will find no job at the top; he may, however, run the elevator and sweep out the office, if he wishes to keep his tabu. Thus shall a civilized minority push back the sodden horde.

But my optimism is not yet exhausted. It moves on to other pleasant scenes. For the past half-million or more years the sensitive and mentally superior have been dependent upon the stupid. This is no poetry; it is bitter truth. Fancy, please, a freak child born in an Aurignacian cave, the little brother of four thick-skinned, hairy huskies who, by the age of twelve, sally forth with their mighty father and slay the lumbering bison. The freak child is too frail for this adventure. He has the high-strung nerves of a modern, together with an intelligence ten thousand years ahead of his time. He shudders at the sight of blood. The wail of wolves outside the cave terrifies him and ruins his sleep. He cannot eat raw flesh unless he first starves himself. The chill of winter drives him into a shivering huddle beside the fire in the cavern. His fundamental health is excellent, as moderns would measure it, but he is hypersensitive to everything, as his contemporaries see him. Plainly, he will die young unless his tougher brothers and parents hunt and drudge for him. In Sparta, thousands of years later, he would die as a babe exposed to the elements by his stern mother. And in many prehistoric communities, his kind certainly died off like flies, through dull neglect.

Now, in much this same manner, right down to our own day, most hypersensitives have depended abjectly upon the calloused. This parasitism has suggested and supported a social-economic bargain. In exchange for food, shelter and physical protection against beast and foe, the clever has given the stupid whatever benefit might accrue from his cunning, his memory, and his nimble thoughts. In other words, the priest and the witch doctor and the minstrel—the great trio of intellect on primitive levels—have requested the common folk to fetch them food, to give them raiment, and to stand

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guard over them in troublous times. For these simple services the herd has been nursed through pestilences and guided in their hunts, their wars and their migrations.

It is thus even today. Does not the public support high schools and colleges, as well as technical institutions? Do not clever maids and youths attend these? Do they not get scholarships from some public purse, if they prove able? Do they not receive their education for as little as one-tenth of its true cost? That done, do they not render service to the multitudes who thus indirectly have given them the coarsities of life, the bread and butter, the roof over one's head, the shoes on one's feet?

Corporations, business men's clubs, women's societies, churches, and all sorts of organizations are supporting these superior minds more and more. In America it has become a religion—and well may it, for it is the first law of human nature that the clever think for the dull, while the dull drudge for the clever. But now appears a strange shift in affairs. So far as my own readings and listenings can testify, nobody has perceived it except myself—and I hope I am not misled. Here is the startling discovery—the New Freedom of the Best Minds!

For the first known time in the career of mankind, superior intelligences can wholly dispense with the aid of the dull and the otherwise inferior. Hence Utopia is already possible. And it will be realized as soon as a sufficiently large number of superior intelligences understand thoroughly this extraordinary situation.

Here is precisely what I mean by this seemingly wild statement. There are, in the world today, at the most conservative estimate, at least 20,000,000 men, women and children among the English speaking peoples alone whose intelligence surpasses that of the other 170,000,000. These 20,000,000 constitute a distinct cultural upper class. They are approximately the top decile of the entire English speaking population. Nearly all of them are concentrated in England, the United States and Canada. A few hundred thousands are scattered over the world, largely in Australia, South Africa, and the minor parts of the British Empire. They have no unity, no group consciousness now; they exist purely as a statistical entity.

They include within their ranks thousands of brilliant minds who can invent, manufacture, and use every tool, every instrument, and every executive method needed for the making and distributing of

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all the necessities and comforts of life. They can make chemical fertilizers, till the soil, apply the subtlest techniques of intensive and extensive cultivation, prepare building materials, erect houses, stores, and factories, make textiles, shoes, and whatever else they crave. Furthermore, they can do all this with only a small fraction of the physical exertion to which their mental inferiors would be put. One small boy can plow, plant and harvest 500 acres of grain, using the finest devices. Automatic machinery reduces heavy labor to a vanishing point.

Now, good readers all! Launch off into the blue and sail a soap bubble for a moment! Imagine a Super-Realtor with a Best Mind (if that isn't a contradiction) hitting on the notion of a Super-Development as large, let us assume, as Washington and Oregon combined. He assembles the tract—and it might as well be that marvelous Puget Sound region, whose climate and soil are so perfectly suited to the highest intellectual and physical development of man. It would be easy to find lovely homes for 20,000,000 of the finest of our English speaking peoples there. And it would be still easier for this magnificent population to live the life of Riley, having all the luxuries desired by intelligent people at the price of three or four hours a day of labor, most of which would be little more than pushing buttons, pulling levers, checking up on sample runs, and the like. This citizenry of Utopia would be plagued with no slums, no morons, no criminal defectives, no insane, no crazy artists, no egomaniacs, no huge factory towns, no tenements. It would be the beginning of the first genuine civilization on earth.

I spin this fairy tale for one purpose; it would convince you that the Best Minds can be their own hewers of wood and drawers of water, can defend themselves, can safeguard their property, can keep well and happy in every respect without the services of a single servant or valet or chambermaid or butler or street sweeper or ditch digger or farm hand whose mentality is inferior to that of a bright high school graduate. Such a Utopia around Puget Sound would be the precise opposite of California, which, through a series of misfortunes, blunders, and geographical eccentricities, has become a land with a small, exceedingly comfortable bourgeoisie all of whose hard work is performed by a horde of coolies, Irish, Mexicans, Japanese, Chinese, Armenians and what not; while, between master and serf, we find interposed a vast, half-idle, half-poor middle class

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of retired farm hands, religious cranks, freak artists, tramps, petty grafters, and the rest of the usual riff-raff that pours into lovely lands over which no intelligent control has ever been exercised.

As with the English speaking peoples, so with the Germans, so with the Russians, and—on a much smaller scale—so with the Scandinavians. Each linguistic group embraces superior people in numbers sufficient to create, by their mere confluence, small states and societies *larger than ancient Athens, at its cultural prime*, yet infinitely finer than ancient Athens in that there would be no slaves except the machines and the chemicals and the current through the electric cables; no submerged class, no tyranny, no demagogues, no scum. There would be a mighty market for goods, especially for production goods, created the instant such a segregation of the superior began. Nor would the industrialists and financiers of the present great countries have the slightest cause to dread competition from such communities in the world export trade; for intelligent people would have no interest in the sort of fighting for distant markets which has besmirched the Western hordes for the past four or five generations. Anyhow, they would be negligible factors in a world of giants like the six great slum-factory nations.

Let us get back to earth with a dull thud. No Super-Realtor is going to take over Washington and Oregon in your day or mine. But, with every passing year, the superior people of the world are likely to become more clearly aware of their new freedom. I have already witnessed the first faint signs of it in sundry movements to launch small communities. Here and there a real estate development has actually restricted the sale of houses to professional men and their immediate families—an unmistakable sign of intellectual class consciousness, is it not? A few small suburban towns have tried to draw up zoning laws reflecting the same phenomenon. Fifty years hence, it may well be that a hundred small towns in Europe and America will admit nobody save citizens of provable superiority, intellectual, physical, and moral.

They may move in skilfully regimented units of between 1,000 and 10,000 families, carefully balanced as to skills, tastes, physiques, nationalities, languages, and other factors. In all unimportant externals, these bands will remind the observer of the migration of the early Puritans into New England, or of the later Mormons into Utah, or of the wild Doukhobors into Manitoba. But in all deeper

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respects they will differ utterly from such wanderers. Among them not a dull soul, not a stupid bigot, not a crank, nor any ignoramus save the babes in arms. They will not fight their way, they will buy it—and take receipts well witnessed and attested, you may be sure. They will never dream of empire, but only of small, self-sufficient communities in which everybody can know everybody else. And the absolute limit of size, both as to area and peopleage, will be just that, the potential range of effective acquaintanceship. Beyond that range, civilization dies out.

A century hence, countries like Sweden and Denmark may have stamped out the stupid masses by birth control, by taxation, and even by indirect deportation through refusing employment to workers below a certain level. Five hundred years hence, what? I leave that to your own fantasy and logic. But I think that a great change is on the way. And, as we draw near to the end of our wanderings in the country of Cyclops, I will regale you with another vision.

As the world becomes a single community, through radio, television, international trade, transpolar air travel, the control of sub-arctic and sub-equatorial climate in cities, super-farming, international public hygiene, world newspapers, and the steady decay of nineteenth-century nationalism (which will begin to wane rapidly about 1975), a wholly novel redistribution of population will slowly set in. Instead of following the old, old channels of national boundaries or of seasonal labor or of territorial exploitation along frontiers, it will go in whatever direction various social classes prefer, heedless of ancient rules. For example, the rejuvenated English country gentlemen may spill over into Kenya. (I am told that this is being strongly urged today under the aegis of none less than the Prince of Wales.) The marvelous plateau of Colombia may fill up with the cream of the Latin intellectuals. The most desirable coastal stretches of British Columbia may well become one of the world's centers of intellectual life, along with the Puget Sound. In short, just as every great city tends to break up into neighborhoods, each with its own type and class of citizen, so in time will the earth. Travel will transcend time and space. And then the high-grade can, without resorting to eugenic attacks upon the undesirables, escape the latter.

These are my three strongest reasons for optimism. A few minor arguments might be added to them, but I shall content myself with

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only one; and that has to do with the passing of the egomaniac peril. Thus far those stupid creatures who live only to exploit themselves, be it in the manner of an Oriental despot or in that of a sawdust trail evangelist or in that of a politician, have succeeded in dominating whole eras and races. They have been the *spirochetæ pallidæ* of cultures and governments, a poison of perverted lust in the body politic. But, as time passes, they are doomed to a steadily diminishing influence; for this is a corollary to several of our main propositions. The world grows daily more complex and more densely populated. The individual, no matter how able, becomes relatively less and less potent. Already the web of life exceeds the ability of the greatest genius, be it to understand or to control human events. By the same token, the dull wit sinks into deeper abysses of relative ignorance and impotence until at length his malignity contracts to a pin point. What can a moron do today in any large country by way of disturbing the peace? Little more than throwing bricks through windows or smashing into a wayfarer with his automobile. Well, the higher orders of the stupid are suffering much the same retraction: to be sure, they are still a thousandfold more dangerous than the out-and-out moron, but we see them steadily losing out. And those who fall by the wayside earliest are the stupid egocentri who crave power or fame. An egocentric who would go far today must be blessed with a vigorous personality in which some brains have been mixed.

Let the stupid increase like flies, then. They cannot swamp nor rout the intelligent classes. They remain a menace only so long as we ourselves commit the stupidity of regarding their persons as sacred, as granting them inalienable rights, of allowing them just as many votes as anybody else, and of protecting them as we protect those who are worth while.

Hitherto the stupid have always been able to overwhelm the intelligent by virtue of political power. Thus in ancient Greece. Thus in old Rome. Thus all over Europe from Cæsar to Mussolini. How to outwit the herd? How to transcend politics? Thinkers of the old régime sincerely believe we advance best by enlarging the herd and creating world politics in place of the present petty nationalisms. In its noblest form this solution is expressed by the World Court and the League of Nations. To criticize it fairly is a year-long enterprise into which I dare not venture just now. But I must go on record

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once more (for at least the hundredth time, I think) as believing that, while internationalism in a political form may serve a useful purpose in rallying the superior classes of the world, it cannot delive the race from the evils of war and economic rivalries. Had we hundred pages in which to explain this belief, it could be shown that, at bottom, the fatal flaw in the League of Nations and all other international political schemes thus far proposed is similar to that in the politics of New York City. It is psychologically impossible to unify the interests and practices of a hundred races, having hundred distinct, conflicting customs, and speaking four and forty languages. It is economically impossible to unify them as long as some are very rich while others are paupers, some are cultured while others are ignorant, some insist on their own superiority while others fight to be treated as social equals, and some secretly crave the possessions of others. Finally, it is—at the date of this present writing—physically impossible to establish an information service adequate to the needs of a world manager. We are unable to set up such a service even for the United States, though no doubt the Congress might allot funds for research looking to that end, were the members of that group not ineffably stupid; conceivably, after twenty years of scientific study and experiment, we might develop a mechanism for pooling and organizing news to serve the government somewhat as the Weather Bureau now serves farmers and sailors.

All these handicaps appear in the recent troubles which the League of Nations has experienced with Japan, in Manchuria. They must reappear in every clash of nations. To overcome them, it is not enough to bring more nations into the League, or to enlarge the powers of the League. One of the surest ways to wreck the League is to give it genuine power; for that would be equivalent to destroying nationalism and perhaps opening the way to a revision of the economic system of the world. No! We must seek salvation in other directions. I incline to look to Supermachines.

SUPERMACHINE

The Industrial Revolution marked man's greatest recent success in overcoming the weakness of his muscles. Dissatisfied with his ability in lifting and moving things about, he stole the energies of waterfalls

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and coal. First he turned these to account as a better brawn; later he accelerated their discharges and attained speeds undreamed of. Soon the enormous profits and conveniences of this new mastery drew thousands of investigators into laboratories; today their triumph is complete. It is strictly true that they can develop and utilize a hundredfold more power than the human race yet knows how to use. As one eminent engineer told me, some years ago, he would undertake to sign a contract for building an ocean liner which would cross the Atlantic in forty-eight hours, if somebody would pay, first, the high cost of its engines and, secondly, if people would travel on the contraption. The only limit to the further use of power is the profit in it.

Our world is awry today largely because of this glut of available energies which step up the frailty of man's body. For half a million or more years society and all its customs have been founded upon natural assumptions regarding human powers. All these assumptions no longer hold; hence trade and even popular morals are being dissolved. The world moves toward a novel realignment. We cannot understand what it is likely to be unless we contemplate the psychological phases of it. To do this we must go back to elementals in human nature.

Man is an elaboration of the sensory-motor reflex—but what an elaboration! Millions of such arcs overlap in his central nervous system, where they weave into action patterns of inconceivable complexity. Yet there are only three things which this thing called mind can do with its environment. First of all, it detects, notices, and isolates forces and situations there; this is sensitivity in all its aspects. Secondly, it compares, combines, disintegrates, reverses, magnifies, and reduces the items of experience as received through the senses; and this is the thinking process, which includes all that we call association, analysis, reflection, and inference. Lastly, mind acts—and normally it acts toward something in its surroundings which it endeavors to change, if not in essence then in its relation to the individual. This is the final phase of human behavior. Within the three phases all personality is embraced.

Now, as I have said, man's mightiest victory has been the magnification of his muscle power through the use of physical and chemical energies tapped in his surroundings. What remains to be done? Two things, each even more marvelous than power tapping. First of all,

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men in the immediate future must magnify their sensitivities. Secondly, they must magnify their thinking. Are these wild dreams? Not at all! We have begun both campaigns already and have made marvelous progress along each line of march. But, oddly enough, we have not yet gone quite far enough to realize fully our destination. Let me describe it succinctly.

Throughout this Short Introduction we have observed, over and over again, weak eyes, weak ears, weak tongues, weak noses, weak skin sense organs, weak kinesthetic equipment. Imperfect contacts, all, with the outer world! And how have we sought to improve them? Well, long ago, ingenious spirits devised spectacles to clarify vision; others made first ear trumpets and then electrical sound amplifiers for dulled ears; still others built telescopes that brought the invisible remote within eye range, while others invented microscopes that did the same with the minimal realities. As I set down these words, in October, 1931, a group of scientists were photographed in the dark up in the Rochester laboratories; a new camera and a new film which picked up only infra-red rays were used. It is now possible to photograph stars three magnitudes smaller than any hitherto within range. And anybody may be snapped in total darkness quite unawares. Thus genius heightens our sensitivities through mechanics and chemistry.

Why is it that millions of people, the world over, testify that Thomas Edison served mankind more successfully than any other dozen men who ever lived, be they inventors or statesmen or religious leaders or artists? To me the answer seems plain: first and most dazzlingly of mortals, this supreme genius enlarged the time-space field of man's sensitivities. Prometheus brought fire; but Edison brought light and sound. The ear, the eye and the memory of the common man took in more experiences with less effort and less loss of time than ever before since the ice first came down out of the north. Even Cyclops could see to come and go after sundown, thanks to the incandescent lamp; the brute could also watch his own past and live in places he had never visited, thanks to the motion picture; and he could immortalize his own rude voice on the phonograph.

True, Edison did not directly attack the problem of sensitizing the organs of perception; but he completed the prior task of converting outer objects and events into a new flux which was more easily per-

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ceived and retained. The coming age will only finish what Edison began. It will, little by little, equip the eye with the paraphernalia of infinite penetration; and the ear with microphones that encompass the music of the spheres no less than the lilt of electrons. It will find new mechanisms and new chemisms for trapping and preserving the course of events; and will devise immense history machines which will store up the past a thousandfold more thoroughly than our best talking picture and may even work out a time projector which will extrapolate this flux into the far tomorrows and disclose its major probabilities with mathematical precision. The stupid will snort at such prospects, while the squib writers will play lightly around them; but the sober truth is that mankind will some day have mechanical prophets. For the forecasting of the Isaiahs is already childish beside the latest calculating machines.

The next age will be the age of Super-Power. After that must come the age of Super-Sense. In it what will men achieve? I will tell you only a few things—maybe the least important of all. There will be devices which we may, for lack of a better name, call super-spectacles; they will enable the user to see at will any of the rays now invisible. Perhaps men will carry about in their pockets half a dozen such instruments, each tiny, and look at radio waves or at X-rays or at the cosmic rays as we now look at the middle ranges of sunlight. Darkness will be no more; and all outdoor illumination will become antiquated. For people going about after dark will simply wear infra-red spectacles and see as clearly as do owls and bats. Auto and airplane windshields may even be made of some now mysterious substance that enables men to drive seventy-five miles an hour in pitchy night without either road lights or headlights.

There will be Super-Ears; simple little devices, also built in sets of selective ranges, one for vibrations below 32 per second, and several for various ranges above 40,000. Others will be mere improvements on our present amplifiers; they will step up exceedingly faint sounds, such as the rush of a butterfly's wing and the drift of pollen through summer air. Men will then hear everything from the whirr of meteors out in space down to the tinkle of molecules within an emulsion. Thereby will come to an end ten thousand varieties of stupidity.

Perhaps the most startling triumphs in the age of Super-Sense will occur in the field of the chemical senses, notably taste and smell.

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Tongue and nose are the stupidest of man's servants, in spite of their high sensitivities in one respect. They detect exceedingly faint stimuli, it is true; but there seems to be neither law nor order in their responses. The most laborious studies of psychologists for fifty years have not yet succeeded even to the point of reducing common smells to their elements and classes. Flavors have been partly analyzed, but much remains to be done before inventive scientists can manipulate the factors in mechanisms of enlargement.

A hay fever sufferer will, in the age of Super-Sense, have a pocket sniffer which will enable him to detect in the summer breeze the presence of one one-trillionth of a grain of timothy, golden rod, or ragweed pollen in the passing breeze. That will warn him when to move north. Long before such instruments appear on the market, there will probably be pollenometers of a crude sort which the hay feverish can hang outside their windows, like thermometers, and register gross quantities of the poisonous pollens.

There will be super-sniffers, too, which will enable man to detect any and all of the odors which dogs and reptiles sense unaided. There may also be chemical recorders which take a person's natural body odor just as the police now take his fingerprints. The new recorder may register this odor in a manner which identifies the person absolutely. Criminals may thus be classified in a newer and subtler Bertillon system.

There already exists an instrument which detects and records incredibly small traces of bacteria and chemical poisons in water; they are in use in a few city water reservoirs in Germany. No doubt these will be, during the next few generations, so refined and specialized that people may attach them to their home water pipes and, by some chemisms which are transformed into signals perceptible through nose, tongue, eye or ear, become immediately aware of any impurity. Likewise with the air in cities. A smoke detector, a gas detector, a dust detector, and similar devices will be used to bestir the dull senses of common folk. As a matter of fact, most of these latter could be built today, were people sufficiently educated to buy and use them.

It is possible also that chemometers will be perfected for thousands of sensitivities about which we know nothing. A food chemometer which enables us to experience in some simple animal fashion the ingredients of food and drink would be of priceless value, as one easily

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guesses; but may there not be whole species of chemometers whose very function we cannot even conjecture? I suspect as much; think, if you will, of such wild possibilities as a set of physiological chemometers which would register the state of our digestion at all points along the tract, or the condition of our blood, or the vigor of our lungs! I promise you citizens of tomorrow that the age of Super-Sense will make our present Super-Power seem quite childish. The realms it will open up will bring knowledge to the common man that was infinitely beyond the powers of the world's greatest minds only yesterday.

In the mechanization of memory we come to the final stage of man's war against stupidity. Here starts the age of Super-Mind. It has already begun and may advance much faster than Super-Sense, at least for a period, inasmuch as we already have grasped certain principles of invention that are capable of vast and wide application. The earliest aid to memory was the picture and all its variants, such as the statue and the pictograph. Then came written language, which handed down from father to son an ever swelling tradition, most of which, alas, was either useless or harmful. Yet the nucleus of service made the invention well worth while. Thousands of years passed ere another stride forward was taken; then arrived the mechanical-chemical picture, which we call the photograph.

So far as I can ascertain through talks with people, nobody yet realizes the enormity of that advance. Centuries must pass before its import appears. It enlarges memory, of course; but we think of its use here chiefly as a souvenir of pleasant moments and friendships. That is a herd whimsey, which clever money-getters know well how to exploit. Scientists penetrate further and appreciate the camera as a preserver of the entire course of cosmic events, a memorizer of events immeasurably beyond the power of the keenest brain to retain. None sees, though, that, after a few thousand years, students will have, in the form of the billions of photographs of people and places, of earthquakes and eruptions, of riots and parades, of wars and rescue parties, and of all the other occurrences and circumstances caught by intelligent reporters, a set of graphs in which many trends will appear. New light will be thrown on all sorts of hard problems by the mere space-time spread of those pictures. What we have today, in many a field of science, is hardly more than a single word in a long conversation; let a million days of photography accumulate, and

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those then alive will perceive something now beyond all guessing.

If you have trouble understanding this, please read Shapley's report on progress and programs of the Harvard expedition into the galaxies. Hundreds of thousands of photographs of suns, constellations, nebulae and galaxies have been taken; and more hundreds of thousands will be taken. Many years have been covered, and many more will be. Every point of light appearing on the plates will be recorded by name or number; and the paths or positions over long time stretches brought to man's notice. Thus eventually the memories of millions of moments and places will be focussed in indestructible form. Man will at length acquire a revolutionary insight into cosmic process. His dull brain is clever enough to make chemicals and instruments to multiply his retentiveness a billionfold.

The higher the function, the stupider is the ordinary man. His nose is keener than his eye; his eye is keener than his memory; and his memory is keener than his logic. We have seen in an earlier chapter that few people can carry more than four or five factors of a problem in mind through a prolonged chain of reasoning; and nobody can handle, even with the aid of pencil and paper, a mathematical problem involving more than three non-cumulative variables. To deal with ninety-nine out of every hundred real life problems, however, we must handle dozens of variables. How do that?

Only by the inventing of Super-Mind in the form of hundreds of devices which handle, on a huge scale, all the special activities of association, analysis, inference, and synthesis which the mind performs on a puny scale. The ancient tally stick and abacus were the earliest devices for handling numbers beyond man's direct grasp. They do things the average mind still cannot do unaided by mechanics. Thousands of years went to waste before the higher types of adding machines were conceived. Not until the nineteenth century did anyone have the audacity to imagine that a machine might do logical thinking; then it was that the great English logician, W. Stanley Jevons, actually built a little machine whose keys, being pressed, recorded the inferences that might be drawn from the propositions recorded by the keys. True, it had no practicality; it was merely a try-out. Had Jevons not been cut off in his prime by drowning, he might have given the illogical world a genuine logometer. Since his day, amazing progress toward that supreme machine has been made by men who combine the gifts of the mathematician with those of the mechanical inventor. It is worth a thousand-mile trip to see the continuous inte-

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graph work. This extraordinary device fills a large room and solves problems in higher mathematics which are forever beyond the powers of any single man, no matter how clever. It out-Einsteins Einstein. Furthermore, it finishes within the span of a few days problems on which a score of the best trained mathematicians, aided by a staff of clerks with calculating machines, would have to spend months.

The time will come—and perhaps within the lives of our grandchildren—when a few problems of economics will be handled by machines like the continuous integrator. Stupid business men and ignorant bankers will snort at this suggestion, of course; and vacuous paragraphers will pull many a gag in their clownish columns. But, fortunately, human progress cannot be greatly retarded by the addle-pates. Mechanized thinking has begun. Within a century it will be as commonplace as today the automobile. No well educated man will, in those happy eras just over the hill of time, be so foolish as to try to think out with bare brain how he will invest his savings, or which part of his factory he will enlarge, or for what purposes his town will vote funds. True, the sweet young girl may still select her mate by womanly intuition; but her alimony in the following year will be calculated by some clicking meter. Logically described, such a task is merely an extension of mechanical factorization and integration; for there must be some designable set of factors, some set of relations which these factors bear to one another, and certain principles of equivalence whereby, let us say, such a complex matter as standard of living can be integrated with fluctuations of income. Already Derrick M. Lehmer, of the University of California, has perfected a machine for handling the factorization of numbers larger than 2,000,000—a task beyond human ability. From the factorization of number to that of complex, non-quantitative systems is a very long leap, to be sure; but only time and energy are needed to traverse it. It is my serious belief that, were a city budget turned over to a group of economists and mathematicians, with full power to mechanize it, they could, in this very year of grace, work out new machines to calculate fully half of the items with high objective accuracy. But a farmer's budget and his planting program are still far beyond such manipulating, mainly because of the unpredictable factors, such as next season's weather, world-wide plantings, and political machinations like food tariffs. Slowly as Greenland's glaciers slip seaward, however, such matters will become stabilized and rationalized; so, perhaps around 2500 A.D., machines will be handling all our main

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economic problems. The occupant of the White House will then be the official presser of buttons and puller of metric levers—thank God!

Here then is my prediction. What we now call the Industrial Revolution is merely the first stage and phase of man's escape from his own animal incompetence. It is his advance to Super-Power. It is now at its peak, if not its climax. The world awaits something new, which will rid it of the evils incident to a glut of power and of material production. What do we most need? Keener sensitivities, above all; greater capacity to experience things in broad sweep and in minute structure; hence quicker responsiveness to every change in human events. Thus and only thus can we overcome the till now invincible stupidity of our species. Only thus can the horrors and the dirt and the degradations of unfeeling, unseeing, unhearing animal man be vanquished. For this we cannot wait on evolution. It is too dull, too slow, too blundering. And we cannot be sure that it heads in a direction we would like to go. So we choose our own path by the devising of machines which enhance whatever sensitivities appeal to us as deserving and profitable. Thus we widen our horizons, first of all; then too, we feel things formerly unfelt and so respond to them. Gradually we learn that the real world is something totally different from that which our naked sense organs reveal to us. We find that all philosophies and all moral codes and all political practices founded upon naïve empiricism must be thrown into the discard, for they are mansions founded on the mists of illusion. So we enter a new era, Super-Sense; and our days are guided with fresh batteries of meters, indicators, and controls all dealing with sensory stuff and all magnifying the environment in space and in time.

Later will come the mechanisms which think out the implications of these new data. The heyday of such will bring the third and final era, which alone will deserve the name of a civilization. Human stupidity will then be reduced to its ultimate minimum. Error will crop up only in the handling of the machines and their designing. And man will at length emerge from the jungle.

So, most patient reader who has trailed me to my lair, you see that I do not accept the stupidities of Spengler: I take no stock whatever in the metaphysical moonings which has led this man of stupendous learning and feeble thinking to the conclusion that all human institutions and cultures have a natural term of years in which to

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arise, thrive, mature, decay, and pass. Though every culture thus far has done this very thing, it is no argument against man's eventual escape from his own stupidities. Each least enlargement of man's power, of sensitivity, and of reasoning alters the scene profoundly. History has never yet repeated itself, though items in its muddy stream do reappear. Finally, it seems to me that no culture that has yet arisen deserved to endure: all have been poisoned with countless sillinesses, infantilisms, introversions, lyric cries, herd madness, and miscellaneous stupidities. I do not see in the world around me a single civilization whose passing would move me to tears; but I do see several human types which, from my limited viewpoint, appear capable of learning much more than they have, if given half a chance. Above all, I so rate the English and the German upper intellectual classes, with the Americans a very poor third—yet still a third. Any of these—but, best of all, these three together—could push on into the next era of Super-Sense. They might refute Spengler.

Again, I refuse to fall victim to the threadbare stupidities of Rousseau, lately revived in brisk form by Stuart Chase, particularly in his preposterous eulogy of the Mexican Indians. I see nothing to be gained by a return to the Simple Life. Granting that some individuals ought to go that way, because of their own natures, I am unable to accept it as a general policy for mankind. The Simple Life is right enough for the lame, the halt and the blind. It may also be recommended to the thin-skinned and the sub-average mind. It is beautifully adapted to the dull, slow wit of the Stone Age folk who comprise most of Mexico's population; and these will cling to it with sure animal wisdom. But anybody who has even glimpsed the possibilities of the world of Super-Sense and Super-Mind would no more lapse into that sweet savagery than into the heroin habit. Those who fancy it mankind's alternative to the Machine Age betray their utter ignorance concerning the actual evolution of the machine. The Machine Age has scarcely begun. Nor have we cashed in on more than a minute fraction of its values.

Finally, I refuse to succumb to the glittering stupidities of moral and political reformers. Changes in the design of government, changes in personnel, changes in tariffs or taxes, and changes in foreign policy have their uses, of course; but they are only a little more important to civilization and human progress than changes in the prices of tin whistles and washboards on the bargain counters of

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a five-and-ten-cent store. I say this in earnest, not in jest. My reason is simple: the economic and social influences of even fourth-class inventions and scientific discoveries reduce the calculations of so-called statesmen, politicians, war lords and aldermen to a nullity. Twenty-five years of scheming by the French and German militarists were set at naught by sundry improvements worked out in laboratories by men who had neither interest in nor thought of war. Not once but twenty times or oftener the whole course of the World War was changed by the appearance of one of those novelties. Chlorine gas, mustard gas, the tank, the helium-borne dirigible, the infra-red camera, the depth bomb, the radio sounding instrument, and the art of camouflage counted for more in the final decisions than did all the plans of the hundred mightiest strategists who used to foregather around the council tables at Potsdam and Berlin, or at Paris and Verdun. As in war, so in peace. The victories of statesmanship are ludicrous beside those of the engineer, the research worker, and the technician. The entire social structure of Japan is undermined by a relatively simple chemical formula for the transforming of cellulose into fibre: silk yields to rayon, and all the planning of a century of politicians and business leaders is wrecked. Four or five inventions and discoveries dealing with fertilizers and farm machines have, in the past decade, combined to ruin 500,000,000 farmers and their families throughout the world, in spite of everything legislators and editors and social workers and agricultural bureaus have been able to do by way of relief or remedy. The best laid plans of five thousand keen railway executives and their political aides have been shattered by improvements in concrete construction and in motor trucks. England perishes today, as an empire, because of half a hundred scientists who have given to England's rivals freedom from her coal and from her factory goods. Thus ever. Thus everywhere.

Not Man will be saved from his own stupidities only by science; not by religion, nor by moral drill, nor—least of all—by laws. If America wants a Five Year Plan that will put her ahead five centuries, let her close the White House and kick every banker and broker and manufacturer out of every pontifical conference; let her cease drafting new laws for two or three years, while a few thousand genuine scientists who are not Yes-Men for corporations ascertain which unexploited inventions and discoveries might be quickly turned to account, without too greatly disturbing affairs. There are

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hundreds of such, many of them pigeonholed in patent files or else lying unused for lack of financial backing. Let our political pundits finance the free experimenting with new ideas, no matter how remote and abstract they may appear to laymen; the only proviso being that a committee of scientists and engineers uninfluenced by slick profiteers passes judgment on the ideas as worthy of inquiry.

But how stupid of me to waste time and paper suggesting such a thing in a country like ours!

Why has no Utopia been founded during the past decade? The answer is too easy. First of all, people's minds have been directed toward their sea of troubles; they have had scant time and energy to plan better things while their stocks and bonds have melted away in value, while their meagre earnings have been swallowed up in taxes for armies and navies, and while their jobs have vanished over night. Truly creative politics must be conducted at leisure, under happy conditions. But the new age has thus far been poisoned with fear and horror and cruel disillusionment. Mankind is still stunned by the infinite incompetence of its leaders and heroes no less than by the vanity of its own faiths and habits.

But, say you, the time must soon come when these hard times will be gone and well forgotten. Thus will people rush off to Utopias? Hardly! Psychic inertia and lack of leaders will prevent such an upward surge. Men and women past forty will not budge; they will be, as ever, caught firmly in the Web of Life. The ego jells in its own mould or else it spoils and runs off in a thin stream of neurasthenia or worse. The whole environment binds the middle-aged and the elderly: they own houses, interests in stores and factories; their friends and their relatives hold them fast with the silken chains of love; their energies are not what they used to be in youth, so they shudder at the strain of radical changes. Nor should we blame them for this fixity.

Thus we return to an old, old faith. The hope of Tomorrow is in the intelligent young. They alone are the children of Odysseus, always wanderers, always restless. They come, as once we did of old, to the lands of the Cyclops. Soon they will peer into those dark, noisome caves swarming with humanesques of half-vision. Unless youth beware, these treacherous clods will trap them; and, like Odysseus, the captives will hear Polyphemus sneer at them as fools, boasting himself to be mightier than the gods. They will listen to his

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egotistical self-praise as he declares that the gods love him because they made so many of his breed.

The young adventurers of Tomorrow will be rash enough to enter the dark homes of these humanesques and treat them as if they were full-statured men. And, as ever before, Cyclops will consume them to the last bone unless youth strikes the monster blind. For between the children of light and the humanesques there can never be peace. One or the other must survive. One or the other must perish.

Which shall it be?

END

We are now ready to begin the history of human stupidity.

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