

The Lengthening Shadow of A Man

EDMUND H. WUERPEL*

Clayton, Missouri

ED. NOTE—It is common knowledge that the Graduate Department of Orthodontia of the University of Illinois has its roots deep in the Angle tradition. It was appropriate, therefore, that the opening banquet of the first reunion meeting be climaxed by an address from a devoted personal friend of Dr. Angle. The place was the Knickerbocker Hotel, Chicago, the time, Easter Sunday, 1948.

THE COMPLIMENT you pay me in asking that once more I shall speak to you is greatly appreciated and I thank you for this expression of your good will toward me.

Old pumps run dry and need new parts to keep them functioning. This old pump is in such a condition and needs priming to get it started.

What I am about to say to you I am quite sure will contain nothing new, nothing I have not on various occasions already told you in my usual unacademic and informal way. A bad way, perhaps, but mine own.

On Easter Sunday our thoughts naturally tend to dwell on rebirth and I could not have a better example of rebirth than is offered by this reunion. It is by your efforts and by your achievements that the life, the vision and the teachings of one man are being reborn. It is a refutation of Shakespeare's thought when he said "The evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones." You are continuing his life work in keeping alive the ideals for which he stood.

In 1900 a man came to me whom I did not know and of whom I had not heard. He said "I am an orthodontist and have just opened a school. I am trying to find a formula for my students which will guide them and me in the furtherance of our efforts, and you have been recommended to me as perhaps being able to formulate the rule I am searching for." Had he said "I am a crocodile" I would not have been more puzzled than by his announcement that he was an orthodontist. In 1900 the term was not often heard and I was utterly in the dark as to what sort of a school he was opening. But I did not betray my ignorance, I merely said, "What can I do for you?" He took from his pocket a slide of the head of the Venus de Milo and handing it to me he asked, "What do you think of this?" I told him that it was a strong and beautiful head and that I had always loved it. "Well," he said, "If that is so and one could make any woman's head look like that, would it not be a great blessing to the human race?" This suggestion rather staggered me and I said, "I do not understand. Do you mean to ask me if we took this head as a pattern and reduced all peoples' looks to this single pattern, we would be conferring a benefit upon the human race?" "Yes," he said, "that is what I mean. You see, we have to treat faces that have become deformed through badly adjusted teeth. In restoring them to normal relation we have the power to give these faces a

* Director Emeritus, School of Fine Arts, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri.

definite form or aspect and we need a pattern that will guide us. If you are in a position to create a law that will obtain this result my students will have a guide that will avoid mistakes." I used to have a violent temper and sometimes I lost control of it. That is what happened on this occasion. I let go at him. Had I known him then as I grew to know him later, I would never have dared to say the things I then said to him. I tried to show him the utter insanity of trying to make all people look alike, even if this were possible. I told him of types that were common to given races; that though the Venus de Milo type was noble and splendid for the Greeks, it would be criminal to use it as a pattern and change a racial type, and that all the character and beauty contained in that type would be ruined. I completely lost my calmness and called him a fool and perhaps even more than that. He was a curious type himself and I ended by saying "What would you look like if they tried to change you into a Greek type like the Hermes of Praxiteles?" I spoke so fast and so furiously that the poor man did not have a chance to put in a word. He looked at me with increasing uneasiness of expression and when I had finished, or paused, he pulled his handkerchief out of his pocket, mopped his damp brow and uttered but one word—"God!!" I talked with him for an hour or more. I spoke of beauty, of harmony, of balance, of design and of a great many things with which today you are familiar but of which he had not thought. After a long time he said—"You have opened my eyes and my mind to a new world, a world I had not thought of. Would you come to my school and tell my students what you have told me this morning?" I went, of course, and I have been going ever since.

Dr. Angle was primarily a noble craftsman. He used his fingers with all the delicacy and steadiness of a surgeon. He disciplined his thinking as he had disciplined his craftsmanship. As a boy he wanted to work with his hands and his fingers. He had only crude, inadequate tools, some of which he made because he was too poor to buy them. His unspoken maxim was, from the very beginning "Perfection." In all that he did he was never satisfied until his work showed perfect craftsmanship and perfect functioning. In every phase of his invention and his teaching, during his entire career, he insisted upon perfect execution. He was not an academic student but he was much more than that. He was a wise and human philosopher and to the last day of his life he was a student. He educated himself. He was a stubborn man and often clung with exasperating tenacity to ideas which he thought were right. But once he saw the light, once he was persuaded that his idea was faulty, he openly, frankly and honestly admitted his error and craved to be taught. Some of his teaching was undoubtedly wrong. He had to evolve all his theories from his own inward convictions and these convictions were amazingly right in many more instances than they were wrong. He made many enemies because of his condemnation of what he called "unbaked thinking". This he called four-flushing and his contempt of such thinking was unbounded. He respected an honest error but was violent in his condemnation of dishonesty. He sometimes made errors of judgment in the character of the men with whom he worked and nothing grieved him more than a betrayal of his friendship. To become his friend, to be trusted by him was a privilege. To betray this friendship *in any way* was the greatest insult he could conceive. He lost some fine, loyal and beautiful friendships through his abhorrence of what he conceived to be their dishonesty. In some cases he was utterly wrong and I believe that later, when he became aware of the falseness of his condemnation and his

premises, he was deeply grieved. This uncompromising attitude hurt him more than it injured anyone else. Even today those who do not agree with his teaching, hold this up against him. "Angle thought he was It, that *he* was never wrong and that to oppose him was idiotic." This pronouncement was not fair. It is true that so firm was he in his convictions, so intensely earnest was he in his research and in his logical conclusions that any opposition when not accompanied by evidence of profound study, made him unreasonably contemptuous and the violence of his sweeping condemnation was not easy to take. But he was neither vain nor autocratic. He loved to consult and to exchange opinions with men of sincere and earnest study and well founded wisdom. His fondness for Emerson, Theodore Roosevelt, Mark Twain and Benjamin Franklin bordered upon hero worship and anyone who had no admiration for such men he considered deficient in wisdom and culture. One trait we had in common was our love of Charles Dickens and it bound us all the more closely together. He sometimes came to our summer place on the St. Lawrence River where sky, water, woods and fields joined harmoniously to create varying moods and where, always, he found rest. He compared the human race with nature and found man wanting. In giving voice to his thoughts he had no fear. Indeed at times he seemed to go out of his way to provoke anger and threats. I saw him show physical fear occasionally and I could not quite reconcile it with his philosophy. Once we went fishing together in a long, low and light St. Lawrence River skiff. It rode the water beautifully and was safe when wisely and knowingly handled. The river is wide at our shore and fishing is good near the Canadian shore, nine miles across the water. One of the characteristics of the river is its rapid and unforeseeable changes of moods. We were three miles from our boat house when a strong wind came up and the river was angry and rough within five minutes. The man who was rowing the boat was perfectly competent to manage it and I had not the slightest thought of danger. Not so Dr. Angle. He became afraid, frankly and terribly afraid. I told him to lie down flat in the bottom of the boat and not to move. When we were safely landed, I said to him, "Why were you afraid? the worst thing that could have happened to us would have been death by drowning. Would that have been so terrible?" He did not say anything for a long time and then he said "Fear does strange things to men."

Behind a stern and forbidding countenance lay a very warm heart. This was openly shown in his love and understanding of children. He had no difficulty in obtaining their affectionate confidence. No matter how sternly he might upbraid the parent he never scolded the child. His love for nature and for all that appealed to his sense of aesthetics and of ethics was pronounced and open, and in our walks and drives he showed his innate sense of beauty, form or color; he delighted in contacts that appealed to his innermost feeling. He had not infrequent moments of loud and joyous moods and no matter where he might be or under what circumstances, he gave frank, almost childish expression to his feelings. Aside from his attainments as a scientist and an inventor, he was a man and the shadow of this man will be felt long after the man has been forgotten.

I often wonder what would have been his reaction to modern modes and manners. Would it have been possible for him to have closed his eyes, his mind and his voice to world conditions as they exist today? Perhaps it was a merciful act of Providence to have removed him before the chaotic reactions to world wars had upset his more or less puritanical ideals.

To the very last he worked for the betterment of the human race. He came to his wife, in whom he had under all circumstances an understanding, patient and loyal companion, he came to her one day after having worked many hours on the model for his last device and said to her, "Anna, I think it is done at last. I have put all I know into it and I can do no more. I am tired and shall rest." Not long thereafter, he entered into a rest from which there was no awakening.

As I have already said, you young men who are gathered here tonight must and will carry the torch he lighted. It is your privilege to accept his ideals under the guidance of a rare teacher who has the power, the mind, the patience and the will to instill in you the ideals of a great profession. This is not an easy problem. Conditions of thoughts and acts have never in written history been worse than they are right now. You face, above all things, prejudice, jealousy, hatred and selfishness, which is the result of fear. Fear is a mighty enemy, stronger than most human emotions. If the world could be rid of fear there would be no chaos. All differences could be adjusted, all wrong righted, all misunderstanding cast aside. This should be the world's objective.

As a nation and as individuals we fear that our great privileges will be taken away from us. Comfort and plenty, freedom and justice, equality and fellowship. It is because we value these that we fear to lose them and this fear weakens us, generates threats that do not really exist. Fear makes us weak and unreasonable, selfish and antagonistic. As a nation we have become narrow where we should have been broad. We lose the respect and confidence of other nations because we have lost respect and confidence in ourselves. The nations dependent upon us, both for spiritual guidance and material help, look askance upon the mismanagement of our foreign affairs and are frightened and easily weaned away from our ideals by ruthless propaganda. Through fear we are most liable to lose the place which we had attained. As it is with the nation so it is with the individual. We fear that those who have been our friendly neighbors are turning against us for selfish reason. Trust and respect are being lost—all through groundless fear, a fear that respects no sane reasoning, a fear that creates enmity, greed and treachery. How is this condition, national as well as individual to be held in check? What power can we bring to bear upon the issue in order to change its course? What is fundamentally wrong; what has fear and selfishness done to destroy our integrity? Is there any way out of this difficulty?

If we could establish a common respect for one another, if in other words we looked upon each other with confidence, without prejudice, could we not make a good beginning? Is this possible? It is possible only if we give friendly consideration to the ideals and the beliefs of all men. It is almost an axiom that where there is distrust there can be no friendship and where there is no friendship there can be no peace. Why can we not speak the other fellow's language, try to understand his way of looking at things. We may change our viewpoint or they may alter theirs. It will be a sane way to establish the road to understanding. And when in traveling side by side with our fellows, no matter who they may be, all pilgrims bound for a common destination, we reach a sign post pointing out the way, we can all read it and from its message join in common, peaceful fellowship.

I recall that when I first went to Paris as a student I had to find a

place to live and to work, a place which was within my restricted means. I was advised to rent a studio, of which there were many and at all prices; to furnish it with second hand furniture of which also there was everywhere an abundance. I entered a shop which appealed to me and was soon the owner of a steel folding bed a small table and chair, a stand with two drawers, a bowl and a pitcher and last but not least, a mirror. With my new possessions around me I wondered how I was to get them to the studio I had rented. The storekeeper said, "That is easy. I have hand carts to rent and you can load your things onto the cart and push them home. No sooner said than done. I knew how to push a load and I proceeded without trouble, but the cobblestones of the Paris side streets were rough and the jolting shifted my load and halted my progress. I determined to make use of the smooth pavement which ran under pleasant shade alongside the street. I had not enjoyed this easier progress long before a voice behind me called "Arretez." I turned and faced a gendarme who drew a notebook from his pocket and with no further ado began his questioning. My name, my age, my occupation, my nationality, my objective and even the name of my parents and grandparents. In bewilderment I asked him what it all meant. He said "Do you not know that pushcarts are not permitted on the sidewalks?" I told him I had just come to Paris and was not aware that it was "defendu" to push a cart on the sidewalk. "If you have been in Paris only a few days and do not know the laws how does it happen that you speak French so well?" I told him. I told him that I had learned to speak French at home and that my grandmother was a Frenchwoman. This interested him and when I told him she was born in Rouen he instantly closed his notebook, declaring that he too had come from Rouen. We spoke a common language, we understood one another and he was all gentleness and smiles, helped me once more onto the street and bade me a courteous "Bon Voyage." There was no arrest, no complication, no anger, no conflict of any kind. All because by virtue of a common language we understood one another and were friendly, calm and reasonable. That is what I mean by speaking a common tongue,—by understanding, by respecting the situations that may arise, by trusting in our mutual humanity. In our own country, with our own fellow citizens that course should encounter no difficulties. It can be done for individual intercourse. By employing the same principles it can be done in our intercourse with foreign nations. The key to this method is, world fellowship, a respect and understanding of the other side. Is this impossible? What do we in reality know of the rest of the world, and what do they know of us? To read all the articles that have been written on the Russian situation, the Palestine drama and the Chinese war leaves us in a more bewildered state of mind than had we not read anything. Even those whom we believe should from personal experience know just what is going on often disagree diametrically, one remedy is opposed to another. Is it surprising that we, the common people, knowing only what is told us should become increasingly bewildered? Surely no one wants war. If I could ask each one of you, separately, to give me your reaction to the various situations as you have conceived them, I might obtain a surprising number of differing opinions. It could not be otherwise for each of us react differently to the same theme. But if I should ask the very simple question "Do you favor war?" I am convinced that the answer would be a unanimous and positive "No!" This is true not only among this small group but it is true among the vast majority of the people throughout the civilized world. What a strange anomaly war presents. A condition which

no sane person favors but which is forced upon us through the fear that some nation will attain wealth, power, supremacy over another. Can any reasoning justify such devastation? Can anything be more insane, foolish, unreasonable?

If we but had the wisdom to see eye to eye *in any situation*, if we but had the integrity, the patience, the forbearance to put ourselves into the other man's place could there result any other attitude save that of tolerance, understanding and willingness to make reasonable and ethical adjustments, put aside conflict and adopt arbitration? We are all more or less alike in our spiritual reactions and if we listened to the promptings of our inner conscience we would meet each other without fear of misunderstanding. We all, at one time or another, make mistakes. That is a very common human failing; it is not criminal or lack of judgment or intelligence that makes us err. Why should we be ashamed of such a common fault. Acknowledgment thereof, endeavor to correct the error, to profit by the superior wisdom of wiser men, to be glad to be set aright, that could not result in insensate jealousies, deceptions and final violence. Why can we not meet our fellowmen on equal footing? Is it false pride? Pride plus fear equals stupidity, it makes us incapable of reasoning. Why is it that "from the mouths of children ye shall learn?" They have no fear, they intuitively say what they feel and often that is closer to the truth and closer to wisdom than is adult but prejudiced, so called, reasoning.

You who have to deal with children, who have to win their respect, confidence and affection, who must guide their untrained, naive impressions, you have a far greater responsibility than that of merely restoring occlusion. You have become great and good technicians; you know well your own craft,—are you *more* than that? Do you do anything to stimulate your minds, to learn to think; to think not only logically but ethically? Do you live so closely to the scientific side of your profession that you forget or do not stimulate the aesthetic? You are not correcting malocclusion merely to restore balance, proportioned harmony to face. A face may, quite normally, be lacking in all these essentials and yet it may be beautiful. There is a spiritual beauty and there is a physical beauty, one quite apart from the other. It is your power to make or to mar the physical beauty. What can you do for the spiritual beauty which may lie there, very close to the surface? You cannot possibly touch this until you yourself are akin to it. Make it yours. You can if you will. There are in store for you vast opportunities for the deeper enjoyments of life, the enjoyments you must recognize, desire and cultivate that you may impart them to others. Give these children a start and give it to them wholeheartedly, joyously and do not ever forget that "The gift, without the giver, is bare." Do not be small and prejudiced in your effort to attain culture. Do not say "I don't like it" before you know what *it* really is. We measure success by what a man has attained, in most cases. He is wealthy, prominent and a leader. But real success is the giving of self. I once sat near Fritz Kreisler as he played before a vast audience. His power to move his listeners attained its greatest strength when, in a frenzy of creative expression, forgetful of all save his music, he gave himself. It was so with Rachmaninoff. His instrument became a part of him. *He was* the instrument and what came forth as his impassioned fingers touched the keys was divine melody. It moved us all to silent rapture.

I must confess that I had puzzled and thought about and read and re-read the poems of Gertrude Stein. I had reached the point where I said to

myself, "I don't like them." I had the grace to add, "I do not understand them." She happened to come to our city to read her poems. More out of curiosity than for any desire to gain wisdom and enjoyment, we went to hear her recital. She was, physically, not an inspiring figure. We were more than intrigued and wondered what our reaction would be. I feared that I might even so far forget my manners as to laugh. I was all alive to have her tell me what she meant. She began to recite in a low, mellow voice which varied almost with every line she read. The effect was instantly soothing, musical and harmonious. There was nothing told, there was nothing to tell! It was like the wind in the tree tops, like the soft ripple of a brook running over moss grown pebbles. It was sound, nothing but sound, a joyous new music which held the audience bound. With all her witchery of word and soul she captured her audience. She had nothing to *tell*. We listened—and were moved!

They were artists, all, and their greatness, their success lay in the giving of themselves. Your success will be all the greater if you can do more for the child, the parents and yourselves, in culture, understanding, tolerance and fellowship.

It is not only the peace of the world we must seek to establish but peace among ourselves. How can we expect to give to all who are in need of peace what we do not ourselves possess. We can only expect to achieve abroad that which we have achieved at home. It is not merely something that the government must do, it is something all of us, individually, must do. We lack a good deal in courtesy, one toward another. We do not seem to think it worth while to speak with respect to those who appear to be below us in rank. "Daily with souls that cringe, and plot, we Sinai climb, and know it not."

If we bear these precepts in mind, if we will adopt an attitude of reciprocal giving, our relations with our fellows will lead us to better relations with the stranger at the gate.

If Dr. Angle could be here tonight, if he could speak to you, he would tell you that he is proud of you, proud and comforted that you are following, wisely but not blindly, in his footsteps. He would end by telling you that which an unknown French baron had carved over the portal of his castle "Plus est en moi".—There is more in me.

So live that when your summons come you may join that long caravan with a smile on your lips and contentment in your hearts—unafraid.

7717 Walinca Terrace