The Conduct of Life*

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We were considering in our first paper the processes whereby the mind arrives at thought. We concluded that vision, the result of imagination, was worthy of cultivation. Let us proceed further and see what vision is able to do for us; what advantage it may give us over those who are without the sense of vision.

In the first place we must be agreed that we are striving to lift ourselves above the plane ordinarily reached by the average mind. Let us further assume that we have found this condition of mind to have brought its recompense in a finer and deeper understanding of the functions and purposes of life. We must further concede that this plane is attainable. If we are agreed to this then, we may reach the conclusion that fellowship is perhaps one of the most desirable attainments to be striven for. For in fellowship we are open to all manners of contacts and impressions. We are among familiar minds, attuned to our own. Fellowship, in the deepest sense, cannot be attained in a small way. Companionship, yes, but not true fellowship. High ideals are necessary to true fellowship and high ideals are attainable only through high thinking. Companionship does not require more than community of thought. It must follow, therefore, that only those who have attained this higher plane of thinking can achieve true fellowship.

Now in true fellowship there is free, sympathetic and a highly intelligent order of communion and communion means, always, an exchange of ideas. No exchange can be made without a fair return, and this return must be in newer and different approaches to old-time questions. It is a broadening influence, this exchange of ideas with our fellows. It is always possible to teach and influence those of lesser intellectual capacity than ourselves, and under such conditions we give all that in us lies. But in the interchange of ideas with our equals there can be only gain, gain for both sides. It is true that we learn from our fellows, but so, also, do they learn from us. It must not be implied that a teacher cannot learn from scholars. Far from it. One of the compensations that accrue to the school teacher is that fine balance

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of mind and judgement which comes from intimate contact with the budding mind of youth. But this has not the quality of interchange which true fellowship gives and while it develops a strong influence in the broadening of the teacher's mind, it is of necessity confined to the teacher alone and therefore it is limited in its scope. Those who shut themselves out from the companionship of their fellows must invariably sustain a loss. No matter how noble may be our ideas and ideals, through isolation we deprive ourselves of the power of communicating them to others. We and our wisdom might as well be sealed in a glass jar or a vacuum bottle; there is no medium of exchange and an imprisoned impulse becoming embittered, finally dies. A superman may be able, without fellowship, to continue upon the high plane he has been enabled to reach through his own efforts. Such a man was Michael Angelo. He was a rare exception, and even he doubtlessly must, through his complete isolation, have curtailed his usefulness to mankind. Only an extraordinary mind could have survived the imprisonment which he imposed upon himself. We ordinary mortals cannot measure ourselves or our capacities by such a standard. Companionship can never be so profound in its influence as fellowship. But why quibble over the meaning of these terms? We should be all inclusive in our analysis and endeavor to make our statements so clear that there can be no doubt as to our meaning.

Man in his search for fellowship is actuated by the need of sympathy; he cannot logically develop without it. Witholding sympathy is like witholding water from a growing plant. Even a desert plant will die in due time if for an extended period no water reaches it. So also that thing which we call "the soul" of man needs the all-powerful stimulus of sympathy. Sympathy is really intelligent understanding. Only those who have suffered can sympathize with suffering. Only those who have met defeat can sympathize with defeat. The entire gamut of impressions and emotions which make up the sum of human life must have been experienced in order that it may be understood. This understanding constitutes the elements upon which sympathy is built. This likewise becomes a factor entering the development of vision. For if we are to extend our sympathy towards people, we should be able to visualize their condition within ourselves. We should be able to picture the circumstances which have brought about these conditions. We are enabled to visualize them because of similar experiences having entered into our own lives. This is called sympathetic vision. But this is not the only kind of vision which exists. There is the vision of the scientist which has nothing to do with either the joys or sorrows, the successes or the failures of humanity. His vision is rather the definite projection into space

of an idea he has entertained and which idea he proposes to fix in some permanent form. This sort of scientific insight is that which enables a man to carry on, to progress, to improve, to make better and to have constantly before him the vision of a definite goal. There could be no progress without such vision. No man who seeks to rise above a very commonplace and ordinary expression of purpose can afford to ignore the necessity of cultivating vision. It enables him to obtain a wider horizon. He can see with greater clarity. He can correlate matters that, from an uninstructed viewpoint, appear to have no relation. He can put into his thought and into the resultants of his thoughts a deeper meaning, a wider significance.

Imagine yourselves without vision even of the most ordinary kind. What would you do, let us say, should the question of your leisure come up; how would you occupy it? Would you not be hard-pressed to know what next to do?

Should you attempt to tabulate the thoughts of those men who seem to have nothing better to do than to hang around street corners, you would undoubtedly find that they were living only for the moment, thinking only of the moment. Visionless! Would you choose to join their ranks? Would you want to be classified with them?

Vision can likewise become unruly. We must not so much indulge vision that we become impractical. Vision can be compared to the piano accompaniment of a song. If the accompaniment becomes so strong that the song is lost, then perhaps it were wiser not to be accompanied. This should indicate that what we need is a fine sense of balance. There must be dominance of mind over matter or vice-versa; no sentiment which shall overpower common sense. For sentiment which has been allowed to grow out of bonds, becomes vapid and weak and develops into mere sentimentality.

The sense of balance is not so easy to grasp or to define. Balance means, primarily, a fine sense of adjustments. We must learn to evaluate all our reactions; we must weigh them in order to get at their relative importance. Some things appear to be of major importance, but, after a deliberate weighing, we find that they are, after all, merely trifles which we can set aside and forget. Thus we achieve balance. If vision overbalances our thoughts then we become unreliable; we cannot be depended upon; we are very apt to see things only from a visionary point-of-view.

So even that very desirable quality, vision, can become a danger. In fact we must be constantly alert that we may not give way to our varying reaction. Controlled vision is an asset; uncontrolled, it becomes a menace to our usefulness. Our asylums are peopled with such minds.

Culture, which engenders within us a calm contemplation, is the helm with which we can most truthworthly steer the course of our lives. It witholds our rash impulses. We are considerate of all things. We see beyond as well as behind us. We are enabled to make use of experiences for which our ancestors may have paid dearly. With culture we learn self control. If nothing else, the lack of culture lowers us in our own esteem and to lose self-esteem is, indeed, to have lost the chart which may guide us to a safe harbor.

With the aid of culture we are enabled to think wisely and to choose wisely. We can set one course of thought against another and we can, with the deliberation of cultivated intelligence, select the wisest course to pursue. We do not blindly commit ourselves to an act which we may later regret. I say blindly because, with culture, we are enabled to weigh our decisions; our thoughts, so to speak, become three dimensional instead of merely two. It is true that we are all prone to error. No man is infallible in his judgment. No one can be said to be always right. But this error in judgment is not arrived at blindly, if one is cultured; it is not the result of prejudices, nor is it irrevocable.

You, in your fine profession, have great need to consider the conduct of your lives. For you are not the only ones concerned in what you do. There are more people coming under your influence than the average professional man has to deal with, unless we except the school teacher. These little folks come to you in a more intimate relationship than they do to most teachers. How will your conduct towards them influence the lives of these children? Children's minds are extremely sensitive. They are rarely without opinions of their own. Often the apparent lack of intelligence in a child can be attributed to other causes; to habits; to upbringing; to complexes and inhibitions; and oh, so often, to shyness! Certainly the average child is worth cultivating. If they are bad mannered, it is not their fault. Often parents, in weak self-defense say, "I don't know what is the matter with my child; it is naturally bad. I don't know what to do with it". The "matter" is generally with the parents and the only truth at which they have arrived lies in their ignorance of what to do for the child. The child's mind is usually a mirror of impressions received from grown-ups. How can it well

be otherwise? If the child receives false, crude or brutal impressions, it will reflect them. Must the child be made to suffer for this?

You will be in a position to counteract these false impressions. That is to say, you will be able to do this if you have so conducted your own life that you have within yourself the power to counteract vicious influences. If you have nothing fine within you how can you hope to give forth fineness? If you yourself are lacking in delicacy of perception how can you detect this lack and counteract it in your little patients? You come into contact with these little beings at an age when they *are* impressionable,—that is the age when you can treat them most successfully. But have you considered that their minds may be as badly in need of adjustment as their dentures? Have you paused to consider that? Are you preparing yourselves to meet this problem?

You must be fine for them; you must be generous for them; you must be patient for them; you must have reason to spare for them and you must guide them. That, it seems to me, is your duty just as much as correcting malocclusion. It is a part of the game, if you wish to put it that way. Are you not exercising your profession for the betterment of the human race? It is a sacred obligation which you have assumed and you must use every effort to carry on. Surely there can be no doubt in your mind as to your primary motive. If you are in a profession, you have allied yourselves to high motives. There can be no doubt of that, there is no other choice. A deserted house soon goes to rack and ruin. It almost seems as though human care and especially contact with the human element is needed to preserve a building or monument from destruction. Without these human contacts the house deteriorates and after a certain lapse of time it becomes a ruin. So it is with the lives of men. We are all dependent upon each other and rely upon one another for stimulus. Have we not already found that in order to preserve our status in the social sphere we must have something to give, if we expect to receive? There must be a certain interchange in our relations, otherwise the house of our lives becomes vacant, deteriorates and we may as well move out. Even the things we have had are taken away from us, courage, vision, wisdom, all leave us, if we do not have interchange of thought with our fellows.

We have already considered the wisdom of cultivating the creative arts as a method of testing our capacities for reasoning. Emotions are the common factor used in communicating with our fellows. By sympathetic un-

derstanding we create a link which it is difficult to establish except through understanding. To create emotions within us means that in some way and in some form our sense of understanding has been reached. If, therefore, we have emotions in common, we grow into closer relationship, into better understanding and in addition to that we widen our horizon. For who can say when the seed for a new understanding shall have been sown? Education should prepare the mind to receive all the seeds. It is the plowing of the soil of the mind and unless education can do this it spends itself in vain. If I scatter my seed upon untilled soil it will either be destroyed or it will be pilfered by others. Education should be an introduction to harvesting. To stuff the ground with good seed will not produce a harvest; or at best, it will produce but an inadequate, an incomplete one. The soil must be prepared and we can be said to be educated only when we have been prepared to receive and to germinate the seed of knowledge. Thus, if we have been educated to receive this knowledge, we can have a community of thought. This stimulus can only be brought through the medium of education.

Education need not confine itself to the walls of the school or college. Some of the best minds we know have been educated outside of schools. It requires a tremendous tenacity of mind and rigid will-power to educate oneself—but, decidedly, it can be done. Many of us have not had the opportunity to become educated in the school sense of the word, but given the impulse or desire all of us can, by using our will, educate ourselves. Our lives and our capacity for usefulness are most woefully limited without an education. It behooves us to obtain it even at a great sacrifice. Do not forget that I am assuming that we have the desire to rise above a very mediocre environment. If this premise does not obtain then my thesis is in vain. If this desire is lacking then, again I repeat, you have no moral right to ally yourselves with the ranks of the professional.

You will see, if you have not known it long ago, that your choice of a profession has entailed in the very beginning a serious consideration of a program in life. This program must vary according to the preparations you may have received prior to your choice of a profession.

We have already considered background and we know that background and a sense of values will be a great asset in our struggle towards achievement. Intelligence and intellect we have also discussed and our intelligence can always be cultivated. That is precisely what education should do for us.

It is a wise thing to plan our lives. Planning does not mean a rigid, hard-and-fast line of pursuit. But it does mean that we are committed to a general scheme and procedure. When an architect is called upon to plan a house he first sets himself the task of discovering, in as great detail as possible, for what purpose the house is to be built. What conditions shall govern the uses of this house? The matter of light and heat and ventilation; the walls, the floors, the ceilings and the fixtures must be made to answer these requirements. They must be considered from all angles. Only thus can the architect adequately plan his house. He must prepare. So all people must plan their house, the house of their lives. They must consider with honesty, without prejudice, the needs and the importance of all the accessories the house of their lives requires. Thus we may order our lives. Thus, only, can we expect to supply the shortcomings that either the lack or neglect of opportunity have created within us. By a painstaking recapitulation of our assets we may know in what direction we must labor to strengthen or augment them. Is it general reading we need? Then we should find out what kind of reading will best answer our purpose. We must do nothing haphazardly. The person who realizes that he is in need of general reading must so adjust his plan for reading that it may develop in certain directions, in the direction of his more important development. He must ask himself what is his objective and then analyze the needs of his individual case. Is it history, is it language, is it general science? What is it that the profession he has chosen requires of him; with what must he become more conversant? Having discovered this need, he must proceed to strengthen his position, to make sure that he knows, and that others know that he knows, the literature in his own field. If he is honest that should not be difficult. I mean honest with himself. One can always get advice if he knows what he desires to be advised about. Essentially the thing we want to know about is people. We have to do with people in the professional world. We want to understand them. We want to be able to reach them. We must know how to make contacts with them. Contacts are most easily made through community of interests. You are all aware of that. In respect to his hobbies and his interests, a man is like a boy. Just get him started on his hobby and you can easily sway him. A child is really more difficult to capture than a man. He is more shy. You know that he has inhibitions and so often he is afraid. All these, and others, you will have to break down before you can get at the child.

For an understanding of children you must know something of child psychology. There is a vast deal of literature on child psychology, some of

it good, a great deal that is bad and a large amount that is nonsense. Many psychologists are so involved in their own thoughts that they fail to make these thoughts clear to others. Some, who write on child psychology, have never dealt with children and cannot, in all reason, know what they are writing about. Others have an entirely wrong idea of child thought and they are dangerous to the study and understanding of childhood. After all, is not psychology the study of common sense, or is it not a common-sense study of the mind? Why should it be so amazingly complex, in its analysis, that only an expert can find his way through this labyrinth of metaphysical reasoning? At best it is a difficult task to find ones way logically through the mazes of reasoning. Why make the task almost impossible through the uses of terms and precepts which only the most skilled can fathom? So in your reading along this line, you should seek advice and if you have no advice which is available to you, use *your* common sense. Do not merely read for the sake of reading,—read with understanding. There can be no profit in aimless study. It is perfectly possible to read along more than one line at a time, in fact it is more broadening to do so. It need not even have a common end. But our reading should be related.

Do not think that because you have chosen definitely to follow one road in life, that you may not occasionally stray from the given track. How can you tell what the country is like through which you are passing, unless you take some of the cross-roads and by-paths which look enticing and which, though they may seem to lead you out of your way, do not, at any rate, lead you backwards. How many of us have experienced the delights of a detour. We enter upon it with reluctance mostly, (we want to make time) but before we return to the main road we usually have occasion to thank the good fortune which forced us to go over this unbeaten track.

So it is with reading. We should make many detours on our journey towards knowledge. It will increase our understanding and give us a greater range of thought. Because we are lawyers is no reason why we should not know things outside of the law. If we read along correlated lines we cannot help but fortify our sympathetic understanding.

Reading is one of the greatest blessings a professional man can have. In every field of work, familiarity with biography, travel, history, physiography and science is of great importance. Not only the biographies of men in our individual fields of work, but in correlated fields. Travels are not only broadening in their effect, but they are stimulating and refreshing. History, we should all know even if only in a general way. A mere state-

ment of bald facts and useless dates does not comprise history. True history is a binding together of the most important contemporary events in an endeavor to find causes and to prognosticate effects. History should be the story of human endeavor and not a record of accomplishment. It should be a cross-section, not of one segment of humanity, but of the entire world. That sort of history is an education in itself and should be carefully chosen.

Often the perusal of good historical novels may be an interesting method of acquiring knowledge. But one must be sure that their background is authentic, otherwise he may become hopelessly bewildered. Biography is a great stimulus to further effort. A good biography shows the methods great men have employed to obtain results. It does not matter what these results have been; it is courage, determination, vision and faith that usually carry great minds to their ultimate destiny. That is what makes them great.

So, reading should become a habit. We should train ourselves to read at odd moments. There are so many opportunities for doing this. Once it becomes a habit we can accomplish a great deal by this thrifty use of what otherwise would be wasted time. It does not follow that this reading habit should interfere with our recreations. As we have already discovered, we need recreation and we must not allow other interests to cut into time legimately set aside for recreation. You will ask "Is not reading a recreation?" Yes, some reading is. But if you will allow yourself to get into the habit of reading merely as a recreation then you may depend upon it you are not profiting thereby. To be amused is not instructive, at least, not usually so.

Divide your time in such a way that you have definite time for definite occupation. In this way you can carry on a logical sequence of thought and develop it to a definite end. We must, in other words, plan our lives as a general plans his battles—we must organize our lives. Organization means that we are sure that all things will co-ordinate. If, for any reason, we are called upon to retreat, we must have forseen this contingency and must have prepared for it. We must study the defenses of the enemy and detect the weakness of their lines of defense. If we are to advance we must be sure of our topography, quite certain that we can find a foothold in the direction which we contemplate going. That is organization. It would seem that this business of ordering the conduct of our lives is not such an easy matter. Perhaps it is not, but nothing worth while is easy of attainment. Of that there is ample proof and if you with to make your lives worth

while you must be prepared to pay the price. Remember, always, you have made your choice quite freely and no one is to blame but yourselves.

We try to make contacts with all phases of life in order that we may understand the problem of life. Through books we are enabled to gather a good deal of life's experiences but books, in themselves, will not suffice. We must actually know people. The more intimate these contacts are the broader becomes our understanding and the better our analytical coordination.

The drama presents another method of approach that is excellent but in approaching life by that road be careful to see that the road is well paved. There is in the drama, just as there is in reading, a choice. Usually a dramatist who has survived the wear and tear of several generations of critics may be considered to have become permanently established in reputation. Shakespeare is not held up to us just because of whim or fashion.

Modern methods in the drama are decidedly at variance with those of the Elizabethan age. Perforce they have to be. We live in an age so vastly different that we cannot even think in terms of the Elizabethans. Yet, the humanistic principles, laid down in Shakespearian plays, are fundamental and however much we may have changed in our manner of life, the passions and the emotions, the expressions of life have remained the same. So it seems to be a conceded advantage to study Shakespeare regardless of the fact that his themes are no longer of our time. In the same way Ibsen and Moliere, Racine and Shaw, offer us splendid opportunity for the study of mankind. Some one has said "The proper study of Mankind is Man." Therefore these great dramatists have something to say to you, something fundamental, something very vital and if we would know something of man's reaction to varying circumstances we should acquaint ourselves with the works of the great dramatists of all nationalities. Furthermore, we should see great plays performed by well known actors. Here lies a danger. Our stage today is crowded with utterly worthless plays. There is no doubt that many of the much discussed problem-plays are intrinsically good. The fact that they are problem-plays does not mean that they are pernicious. If the plays have been written merely to lay bare the humilitating weakness of mankind, if they have been created to cater to a decadent taste, then we may justly condemn them. The legitimate stage has been, in this respect, almost driven to an indecent depiction of certain strata of society by the movie-picture. So much have people be-

come accustomed to the exciting events portrayed on the movie stage that they look for it on the legitimate stage and are not satisfied unless they are given that which a perverted taste has led them to expect. But there are good plays and good actors, even on the screen, and a care in their selection should enable you to guide yourself safely through the indecencies of many a stage performance.

This means of education, like that obtained through books, should be used with greatest care. There are a number of magazines which publish unbiased transcripts and estimates of current plays and there should be no vital reason for error in this direction.

There should be room in the ordering of our lives for all good influences and music is perhaps the most easily attainable and the most universal in its appeal. We have already considered some of its aspects in a previous paper. Perhaps the greatest or strongest reason for this universal attraction lies in the sympathetic understanding, created by music, through its freedom from objectivity. It is an appeal to our imagination. We are left quite free to put any interpretation we please upon the sounds which we hear. They either stimulate or soothe us; they make us eager or they calm our turbulent moods. If the music is, to some degree, melodious, it is not difficult to immerse ourselves into it. Like all creative expressions, the sense of music can be cultivated. No doubt a trained student of music can derive more from an opera, a symphony, a concert or a suite than one who has not been trained. But you can learn to like and to understand, in your own way, the better kinds of music. Here too you should remember that the older kind of music, classical music, may not interpret—nay cannot—the trend of our times; yet, fundamentally, it is good and we cannot deny its appeal however foreign it may be to the day in which we live. Perhaps, for the time being, the American Jazz is nearer to an expression of our age than the music of Bach, Beethoven, Schumann and Brahms. It may have more of the chaos, the despair, the movement of a mechanistic age, but since this is, in great measure, a transitory reaction, this music, or its expression, must likewise be of a transitory nature. Until it shall have acquired those human elements which are fundamental it cannot last. That this music contains, at least, the elements of an earnest desire to interpret human life, there can be no question; but it is concerning itself too much with a phase of life which cannot last, which is not fundamental, and until those fundamentals which are permanent, are added, it cannot become a lasting expression in music. The music of the modern-

ists is a thing apart. It has no relation to Jazz, which belongs essentially to the United States. It is an intense desire to awaken within us the same feelings, desires, expressions which life offers us. It uses means which heretofore have been considered unmusical. Those who have been reared in the traditions of the past find it exceedingly difficult to reconcile the turbulent and unfamiliar sound-effects with the ordered harmonies of the nineteenth century. We must forget the traditions of the past if we desire to understand this musical expression. Formerly, any cross section of a period or movement in music was supposed to result in perfect harmony; no matter where a phrase was arrested, according to tradition, it would stop in a harmonious whole. This is not the case today. They do not strive for harmony of that kind. If a discord will better express the feeling of the composer, then he uses a discord. The modern composer thinks only of expression and he will not be tied down by what he considers to be obsolete musical laws or theories.

Now to acquire an understanding of this, is in itself an education. It does not follow that you shall like this music or even tolerate it, but you should understand what the composer is trying to do, what mood he is trying to awaken in you. Often you seriously question whether the composer himself knew what he was trying to do. Those composers who are really and earnestly searching for a new method of expression are, without a doubt, honest investigators. They do not create haphazardly. Their music is founded upon well considered principles, only these principles are new and we must, in so far as we are able, follow them with intelligence if not with admiration. Only thus can we hope to understand and perhaps even learn to like a man like Stravinski.

Thus music is another phase of that plan we might adopt in the ordering of our lives. Let us concede that there are people in whom the musical instinct is lacking, though in many people the desire for music simply has not been awakened. Most human beings respond in some measure to musical sounds. Once aroused, musical appreciation will prove to be a strong influence towards refinement and the appreciation of better things in life. And, surely, that is a very strong factor in the ordering of our lives. A disordered life reults in disorder. It becomes chaotical. Music will anchor some of those tumultuous and embittering thoughts which at times assail everybody. It makes us forget the petty annoyances of daily life; it gives us, after such a pause, an opportunity of dispassionately weighing these disturbing elements in an effort to affirm their importance. Many

of them we are able to laugh away under the soothing inspiration of good music. It makes us stronger and better fitted to carry on when we are enabled to throw aside reactions which have no vital meaning.

Our lives are ordered like a ship at sea. We set our sails according to the winds that blow with or against us. Now and then a squall will arise. The wise mariner knows how to estimate the strength of his masts and his sails. If there is danger he takes in sail even though it reduces his speed. He is ordering the voyage and has constantly in mind the safe arrival of his vessel in a sheltered port. Often he must tack in order to progress at all—even turn about to avoid danger. But always a sound mariner will know his ship and will, with fine sense of proportion, know just what comprises a hazard and what not. If a hazard must be taken, experience will have taught him wherein his greatest danger lies and he will favor that weak spot as much as within his power lies. We call him a sound navigator. We trust ourselves to his care and cast our worries upon his shoulders. So the ship, which we call our lives, must be handled. We, too, encounter squalls. We, too, when discretion becomes the better part of valor, side step, often even reverse the method of our procedure. We become the captains of our own destiny and have the safety of our lives in our own charge. Therefore it behooves us to know the currents and the winds and we must scan the skies and know the portends which make themselves manifest in all directions and under all guises. We must recognize whither we are drifting and, if need be, we must throw out anchors, hold fast that we may consider with calmness and deliberation what further course our lives shall take.

Reading, music, art and fine enjoyments are, so to speak, the anchors which we may cast overboard to stay, momentarily our progress or our drifting. They give us moments of comparative ease, breathing spells during which we can recover our poise, enabling us to continue our voyage with that serenity of mind which comes from conviction.

What are convictions? Are convictions always correct and are they always to be relied upon? These are questions which we must seriously ask ourselves. Convictions are the results of careful pondering, carefully placing one argument against the other, weighing, without prejudice, the pros and cons. This should result in convictions. But, like convictions meted out to prisoners at the bar, these are sometimes false. With all the care we may be able to exercise, we often arrive at faulty, if not

utterly false, convictions. How can we avoid this? A careful judge, either upon charging a jury or when he renders judgement in person, has recourse to a vast fund of tabulated information. Parallel cases come under observation many times. By striking an average, a very dependable judgement can be formed, perhaps as dependable as is humanly possible. This must serve to guide where all other methods fail. We are convinced that, taking all things into consideration, there is only one method of procedure, one conclusion we may arrive at. We need strong convictions in the conduct of our lives but we should never be obstinate. Obstinacy is a kind of narrow-mindedness and narrow-mindedness becomes a conviction that our particular way is the only way. It not infrequently happens that some one else has, upon more thorough investigation, found an argument which will throw an entirely different light upon a debatable question. In the light of this new discovery this investigator may, under the same seriousness of purpose which has actuated us, arrive at an entirely different conclusion. If this conclusion is presented to us and if, without bias or prejudice, we can see its greater purpose, its finer and more righteous application of principles to the case in hand, then we would be foolish and obstinate not to cast aside the conviction at which we had in all honesty arrived, and adopt the wiser and better one.

In the conduct of our life so many elements enter into the study of it that to consider one of these element almost invariably opens up the wisdom of considering others. Thus the futility of arriving at hard and fast judgements or convictions presents another aspect which we should bear in mind. There is an old saying "Circumstances alter the case". That would suggest the flexibility of our convictions. Does not a good part of our reasoning or the quality of our reasoning depend upon our environment and our up-bringing?

We have already considered our inheritance, those things which we bring into the world with us. Let us now consider what environment may do for us, or rather what it may prevent our doing.

Environment is that state which conditions and their reactions create in and around us. It is quite conceivable that under different circumstances we may think differently. If your digestive organs are out of condition, that is to say, not acting in a normal manner,—you are quite likely to think unnormally if not abnormally. That in a sense is environmental. It is environmental in so far as your inner man is concerned. It is true that we are not dealing here with a material or concrete element

like a misplaced brick, or a half open door which in the dark we may run against. But the effect of indigestion upon our rational behavior is quite as liable to cause changes in the sequence of our thoughts as the more subjective elements we have mentioned. In creates in us, for one thing, inhibitions which are prejudicial to clear thinking. Fear of pain, for instance. We should, just as definitely as we are able to do so, avoid these conditions. In other words our physical conditions in preparation for the reception of mental impressions should be as normal as the condition of our rooms for the reception of guests. We should not let bricks lie around in unaccustomed places nor should doors be left open at such an angle that in the dark we run into them. Such carelessness is very apt to be followed by unexpected and oftentimes disastrous results. In its physical aspect, our environment has a tremendous influence upon us,—subconsciously. An enterprising and well-meaning experiment in environmental influences has recently been undertaken by a very prominent and well known surgeon. In the operating room of his clinic he has caused the walls and ceilings to be decorated with fantastic, colorful allegories and fairy tales. He believes that these decorations will attract the attention of his patients and that they will have the effect of producing greater calmness and peace of mind; that through this means their thoughts will be taken away from their own worries and trials and that during the period of operation under local anesthesia the patient will be in a better mental condition than if he had had nothing but blank white walls to look upon. In theory one cannot help but agree with him but in the very execution of these decorations another element presents itself which we hope to develop later. For the present let it suffice that men are beginning to think along the lines of environment. If such a thought is logical why not carry it beyond the confines of the operating room, to the home, to the office and to the city at large.

In all larger cities art commissions have been appointed from time to time to take care of that very problem. Alas, in many cases, their hands are tied because they may only recommend and have no power to act. Suppose the power of the physician was limited to recommendation only. What would, in nine cases out of ten, happen to the patient? A commission of this kind is or should be appointed from among people who have proven their ability to serve. Then, having appointed such an intelligent body, it should be allowed to function. What possible incentive, inspiration or desire can commissioners have if their power to act is taken away from them. They hardly need training for that.

If we surround ourselves or permit others to surround us with unmoral things how can we expect to escape from the conditions which they inspire. It is like a contagious disease from which we shrink. We are all convinced that an ordered, well planned and beautiful city is a better place in which to live and work than one that is not so ordered. Out of order grows greater order. Order of law, order of thought, order of action. The experiment has been tried too often for anyone to deny its efficiency. "Clean up the slums" is the first cry of the reformer. While many reformers really have more need of being reformed than of reforming, the plea that the sore spot be removed is a logical one. There can be no sanity where there are unsanitary conditions. Yes,—let them heal the sore-spots, then, perhaps, the body will respond to treatment and a good, solid, intelligent, ambitious soul may emerge. Environment has ever had a great deal to do with the advancement of civilization and as the body politic grew careless of this environment contemporary civilization began to decline. Perhaps it was wars which destroyed the environments that had animated and stimulated a people in their progress towards a finer civilization. Would it be wise to allow this destruction to stand? Was Louvaine allowed to remain a shambles? Did they repair it only out of sentiment? Do we clean up a city after a cyclone only because we want to remove an unsightly mess? No, we do it because to leave it would endanger the morals of our people. It would encourage a letting down of law and order and this would enable a lower order of beings to assert themselves to the detriment of the city's progress. Look at it as we may, aesthetically or practically, environment forms a strong element in the building up of a city and in the advancement of its citizens. We might conduct our affairs in boxes if they were dry and warm and well ventilated. It would be a great deal cheaper to do so. Why, then, shall we encourage the building of Municipal Courts, hospitals, Theatres, Railroad Stations and what not on a resplendent scale of magnificence. Think of the condition our cities would be in if all of our public buildings were either destroyed or replaced by ordinary houses. No matter what our condition in life may be, we all have a distinct civic pride. We like to tell people that we have the finest park-system in the country, the most modern municipal bath and the most up-to-date Zoo ever constructed. Pitiful is the person who has not some spark of civic pride; and though in our inner consciousness we *know* that what we boast of is not, cannot be true, it creates within us a certain feeling of superiority which benefits us in every way. It makes us try to live up to the advantages we boast of and that is distinctly worth while. In

a later discussion we shall attempt to carry the effect of environment into our private affairs. You will clearly see that impressions are made by means of environment. If, therefore, it behooves the nation and the city to take heed of environment does it not follow that the individual, too, should consider it? It is not merely a question of how it affects us as groups, as men and women who, in the pursuit of our daily vocations, must have constant contacts with one another, but we must consider the effect that environment has upon those with whom we are even more remotely associated.

In the ordering of our lives we have no other choice than to consider others as well as ourselves. Selfishness is a blind and often cruel manner of attaining an objective. If we disregard all other considerations, thinking only of ourselves and our desires, we may gain an advantage for a short time, even for a longer period; but in the end anything gained at the expense of someone else is bound to react against us. Any advantage taken that will be detrimental to the interests of others is selfishness. If you are still of the mind that as professional people your slogan should be "I serve", then selfishness can have no place in the ordering of your lives. Your slogan is not "I take", but, "I give".

I do not mean that you shall never take. That would be a most foolish position to assume. Take, yes, certainly what is your due, but never at the expense of some one else. Selfishness is, fundamentally, dishonesty. You would not care to be accused of stealing, would you? Yet, in many instances, if not in all, that is just about what selfishness amounts to. You deliberately allow others to do those things which you yourself were expected to do. "It will be done" you say. "Somebody will do it." Well, if it was incumbent upon you to perform a task and you knew that if you failed someone else would have to do it for you are you not stealing that person's time? Think of the multitude of directions in which this reasoning may apply. In your dealings with people, professionally or otherwise, that is a consideration which must never escape you. Unselfishness implies thoughtfulness of the rights, the comforts, the feelings and your relation to others. We cannot be blind to these things. We can safely say that nine-tenths of the misery and sorrow and misunderstanding which disrupts family life is caused by selfishness. That does not constitute an ordered life.

You will long since have discovered that this advice eminates from the mind of an idealist. That is nothing to be ashamed of. We are quite well aware of the futility of expecting idealism to prevail. Idealism

is not practical, but it is necessary for personal comfort, for inspiration and for the future good we can render. If you would have ease and comfort of mind, then cultivate idealism. All these admonitions are the direct outcome of idealism and while we preach it with every conviction that it is right, we must not for a moment begrudge its cost. It implies self-sacrifice, self-denial, and a constant regard for the rights of others.

Any one who is too much concerned with the cost of the ordering of his house, is likely to have an ill-ordered house. Where it is a question of principle, there can be no hesitation in affirming that at any cost we must accomplish what we have set out to do.

Let us recall the theme of *Thanatopsis* and so live that when our summons comes we shall have no fear but will enter into deserved rest in the conviction that we shall have left behind us a well ordered life. For nothing finer can a man achieve than to have left behind him, not greatness, not wealth, not honors, but the simple record of a life well ordered and devoted to fine ideals.

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