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Yours faithfully
Henry A. Harper.



***THE SECRET
OF HEROISM***

***A Memoir of
Henry Albert Harper***

***By
W. L. MACKENZIE KING***

***New York Chicago Toronto
Fleming H. Revell Company
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To My Mother

O strong soul, by what shore
Tarriest thou now? For that force,
Surely, has not been left vain!
Somewhere, surely, afar,
In the sounding labour-house vast
Of being, is practiced that strength,
Zealous, beneficent, firm!

—*Matthew Arnold, "Rugby Chapel."*

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TO THE READER

The erection by the Canadian public of a monument in the capital of the Dominion; its unveiling by the representative of the Crown; its acceptance, on behalf of the government, by the Prime Minister of Canada; a gathering of thousands to do honour to the occasion,—and this, to commemorate the heroism of one not yet eight and twenty years of age,—is a national tribute which may well cause us to pause and silently revere a people who in their hearts cherish so strong a love for the heroic, and build for their children such sacred traditions.

It is now four years since Henry Albert Harper, in an endeavour to save the life of Miss Bessie Blair, a girl of rare and beautiful character, was drowned with her in the Ottawa River. On an afternoon in December, 1901, he had joined, by chance, a party of three, of which Miss Blair was a member. They were skating on the river, a little before twilight, when Miss Blair and a gentleman who accompanied her, came suddenly upon a wide space of open water near the mouth of the Gatineau. Before there was time to avoid it, they had skated into the opening, and were at the mercy of the current. Harper, who was following at a short distance with a friend of Miss Blair, witnessed the accident and went at once to their assistance. Having sent the young lady with whom he was skating to the shore for help, he himself lay prone upon the ice, close to the edge, and extending his walking stick, endeavoured to put it within reach of those in the water. Finding the distance too great, and hearing Miss Blair assuring her companion that she could swim alone, for each to make a single attempt lest they

should go down together, and seeing also that he was striving in vain to save her, Harper regained his feet, pulled off his coat and gauntlets, and prepared to risk his life in an endeavour to effect a rescue. In answer to entreaties not to make the venture, that it meant certain death, he exclaimed, "What else can I do!" and plunged boldly into the icy current in the direction of Miss Blair. They perished together; their bodies were found on the following morning, the one not far from the other. Miss Blair's companion had a miraculous escape, otherwise no one would have known of the brave deed which has given Harper an enviable fame, and of the no less splendid courage of Miss Blair. She, as well as Harper, was prepared to give her life for another.

At a largely attended public meeting, held in the city hall of Ottawa a day or two after the occurrence, and which was presided over by the mayor, resolutions were passed inviting the public to join in the erection of a monument to commemorate Harper's heroism. It was decided that the monument should be of bronze or stone, to be erected in the open air, and to take the form of a figure symbolical of heroism and nobility of character, such as might be suggested by the figure of "Sir Galahad," in the famous painting of that name by the late George Frederick Watts, R. A. The choice of a sculptor was to be determined by a public competition, unrestricted in any way.

The character of Harper's act was sufficient in itself to suggest "Sir Galahad" as a subject suitable for a memorial of this kind, but the choice had, in fact, a more intimate association with Harper himself. Hanging on the wall above the desk in his study, and immediately before him whenever he sat down to work, was a carbon reproduction of Watts' painting. He had placed it there himself, and often, in speaking of it to others, had

remarked, "There is my ideal knight!"

In the design and model submitted to the memorial committee by Mr. Ernest Wise Keyser, the best expression appeared to be given to the ideal which it was hoped might be embodied in the monument to be erected. Mr. Keyser is a young American sculptor, a citizen of Baltimore, Maryland, who had his studio in Paris at the time. Subsequent to the making of the award it was learned that he had been born on the same day of the same year on which Harper was born. He was commissioned to execute the work. A beautiful bronze "Sir Galahad," mounted on a massive granite base, deep carved in which are Sir Galahad's words in the *Holy Grail*,

*"If I lose myself
I save myself,"*

the whole standing within the shadow of the stately pile which crowns Parliament Hill, marks the successful completion of the sculptor's task.

The monument was unveiled by His Excellency Earl Grey, Governor-General of Canada on the afternoon of Saturday, 18th November, 1905. A fitting impressiveness marked the unveiling ceremonies. Notwithstanding that so long a time had elapsed since the deed it commemorated, and that the approach of winter was already evident in the cold air and in the presence of snow upon the ground, three thousand or more of the citizens of Ottawa assembled in the open to do honour to the occasion. Mr. P. D. Ross, the chairman of the memorial committee, presided, and the Right Honourable Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the Prime Minister of Canada, accepted the monument on behalf of the

government. The writer had the honour, on behalf of the memorial committee, of presenting the monument to Sir Wilfrid. The eloquent tributes paid to the memory of Harper by the chairman of the committee, and by the distinguished representatives of the king and of the people at the unveiling, were regarded by those who heard them as a memorial not less splendid than the monument which occasioned the reference. The chairman, Mr. Ross, gave expression, in the following words, to the feelings which had prompted the public in the erection of the monument:

“Harper lost his life. But in that sacrifice he left to the rest of us a great lesson and a great inspiration. Every fellow Canadian of Henry Harper was honoured by his death, and every man of the English-speaking race from which he sprang. It was an assurance that in this country there is present the old manly virtue, the true steel of our forefathers. And, far more than that, it was one argument more that our human nature has in it inspiration and strength from a higher than earthly source.

“Had such a thing gone uncommemorated by us, his fellow citizens, it would have been a disgrace to us. The absence of this memorial, or of some memorial, would have marked our blindness, our meanness. Harper did not need this monument. We did. Such heroic fire as his commemorates itself. But we fellow Canadians of Henry Harper needed to show by practical action that we could see and reverence the nobility of soul which sent him knowingly to his grim death.”

The Right Honourable Sir Wilfrid Laurier, in accepting the monument on behalf of the government, spoke as follows:

“Let me say, sir, in accepting this monument, commemorating, as it does, an heroic death, that the government of Canada looks upon its acceptance as an honour, and will consider it a labour of love to care for it. I enter heartily into the spirit which conceived the idea of this splendid testimonial to a glorious deed. Harper’s act of heroism will ever be an example and a lesson to us all. The stranger to our city will pause as he passes this monument and wonder what deed called forth its erection. He will be told of the noble act of self-sacrifice—of a life given in an effort to save another. The citizens of Ottawa will ever be proud to honour the memory of Harper, and to look, as the government shall look, upon this memorial as a national monument in every sense of the word.”

His Excellency the governor-general, said:

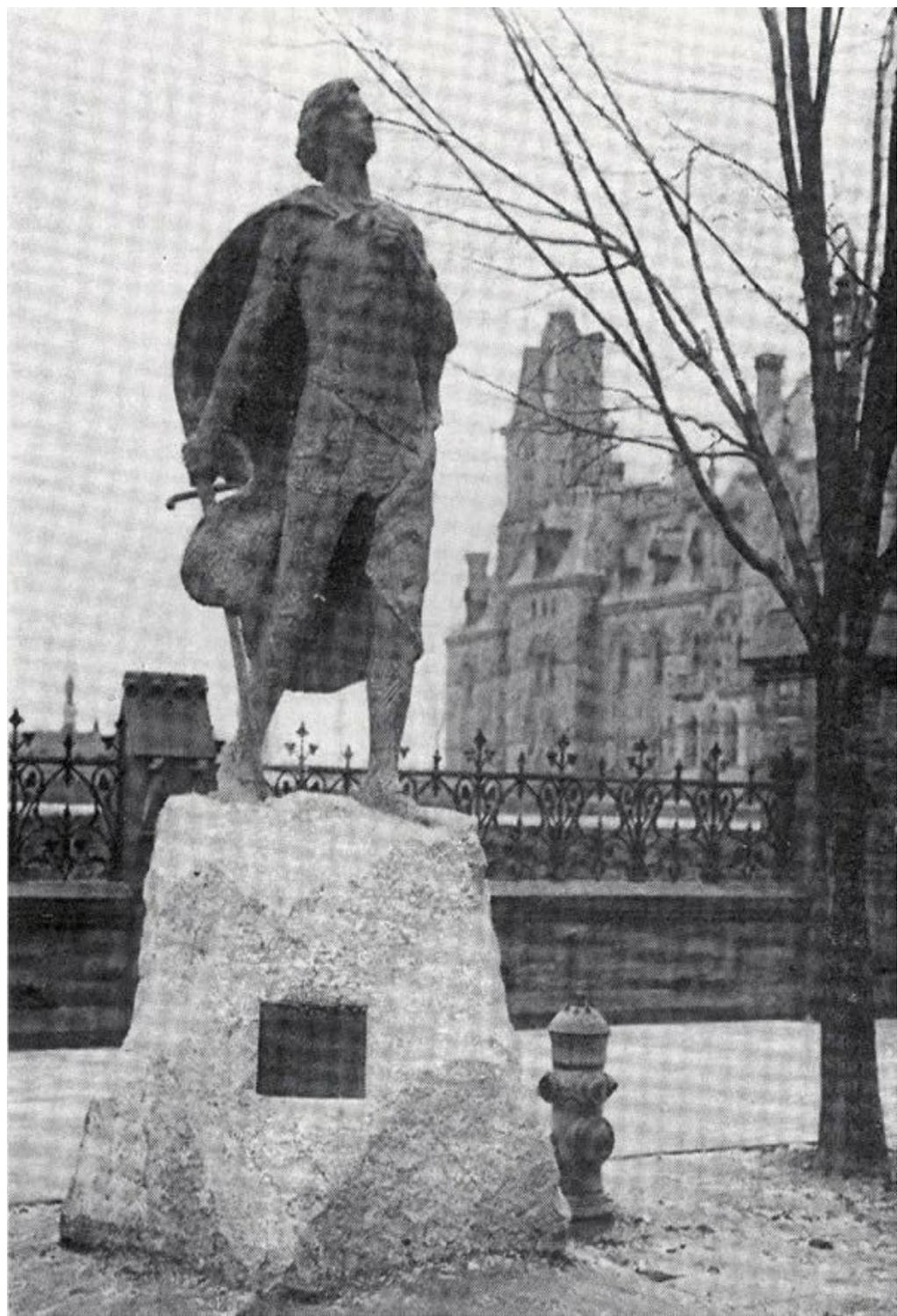
“I would like to extend my congratulations on the notable addition of this monument to the interest, embellishment and idealism of this Federal city. Although I never knew Harper, I have learned enough about him to believe that I shall seldom pass this monument without being reminded of the example which he has bequeathed as a precious legacy. His character and ability were such as would have enabled him, had he lived, to win in the wide and honourable service of the Crown that distinction which is within the reach of

all whose greatest delight is to spend themselves, their fortunes and their lives in the service of their fellow countrymen and their King. He is gone, but who shall say that Canada and the world are not richer by his death? His character and his example live. I congratulate the sculptor on the skill with which this statue of Sir Galahad indicates those qualities of energy, fearlessness and service of which young Harper was the incarnation; and I hope this statue may be only the first of a set of noble companions which, in the course of time, will make this street the *Via Sacra* of the capital.

“A few years ago I stood at the grave side of another young civil servant of the Crown in the Matoppos of Rhodesia, who, as he was carried to his last resting place mortally wounded, said: ‘Well, it is a grand thing to die for the expansion of the Empire’—that Empire which, in his mind, as in that of Harper, was synonymous with the cause of righteousness. Harper and Hervey, had they known each other, would have been bosom friends; they both believed in their idea. If they had lived they both would have done great things. They have both died, and how would they have died better?—for their ideas will not die; no, neither in the Matoppos, nor on the banks of the Ottawa, nor in any other portion of the British empire, so long as we are loyal to their traditions and follow their example.”

The regimental band of the Governor-General’s Footguards, which had volunteered its services, played “The Maple Leaf” as

the King's representative unveiled the monument; at the same moment the sun came out from behind a cloud. The ceremonies were concluded with the national anthem.



THE SIR GALAHAD MONUMENT AT OTTAWA
*erected by the public to commemorate the
Heroism of Henry Albert Harper.*

It was the writer's privilege to have been Harper's oldest and most intimate friend. It has seemed to him that he would be unworthy of a friendship such as existed between them, were he unwilling to share with others some of the beauty of soul which he knew so well, and of which Harper's heroic deed was but an expression. For personal reasons, he has, up to the present, hesitated to disclose aught that has been in his keeping. The generous appreciation by the public of a single act appears to him now to warrant a larger confidence. He has ventured, therefore, to allow those who will, to look in at the windows of the soul, and see, in its sacred chambers, the secret which was an abiding presence in a life whose heroism has already received from the nation a recognition so splendid and impressive.

To those into whose hands this little volume may come, the writer begs they forget not that it is but a collection of fragments gathered, after he had gone, from along the path on which he trod. It is not Harper's life, it is not even a worthy tribute to his character. What it may contain of thoughts and expressions of his own will be acceptable as "broken light upon the depth of the unspoken"; for the rest it will be well, if, as a labour of love, it has done no injustice to the memory of a friend.

W. L. M. K.

Ottawa, January, 1906.

THE SECRET OF HEROISM

The quality of a man's love will determine the nature of his deeds; occasion may present the opportunity, but character alone will record the experience. To a life given over to the pursuit of the beautiful and true, the immortal hour only comes when conduct at last rises to the level of aim, and the ideal finds its fulfilment in the realm of the actual. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Few lives have been more earnest or constant in the pursuit of an ultimate perfection than was Henry Albert Harper's; few have sought more conscientiously than he to live out existence under the guidance of lofty aspirations, and in the light of pure ideals. There was nothing exceptional, save the opportunity, in the chivalrous act which cost him his life. It was a sublime expression of the hidden beauty of his real character and soul. Day by day he had been seeking for years to gain that freedom which is the reward of obedience to the highest laws of life, and little by little he had been fashioning a character unfettered and untrammelled by human weaknesses and prejudices, and strong in the noblest qualities of heart and mind. Galahad cried, "*If I lose myself, I save myself!*" In the same spirit, and with the same insight into truth, Harper sought to keep unbroken the vision of immortality which was his, to be faithful to an ideal of duty, which, by a seeming loss, he has made incarnate for all time.

By what path the heroic was attained in Harper's life may be traced from the pages of a diary, in which at intervals he recorded his thoughts, and from the words he has left in letters

to his friends. Fragmentary as these are, an attempt has been made in the following pages to weave from them the story of his inner life, in the belief that its beauty will bring courage and inspiration to many, and in the knowledge that there is something of inestimable worth in a recorded experience which reveals the endeavour of a human soul to know and attain the highest, and to realize its divine capacities amid the complexities of every-day life.



THE INFLUENCE OF HOME

Harper was born in the village of Cookstown, Ontario, on December 9, 1873, but most of his childhood was spent at Barrie, one of the most picturesque and beautifully situated of Canadian inland towns. The vine-clad lattice alone obstructed the beautiful view from the front veranda of his father's house across the waters of Kempenfeldt Bay, and it was to this home and its associations that he was wont to attribute all that was best in his nature and dearest in his affections. It was there that the great joys and the great sorrows of his short life had centred. It was over this Barrie home that the skies were the brightest to him; and it was there, too, that for a time the clouds had appeared to return after the rain.

There are few pages anywhere which, in simpler or more tender words, disclose a heart's love and sorrow, a life's greatest inspiration and its greatest grief, than those which commence Harper's diary after it had remained closed for nearly three years. They constitute an expression of feeling so personal, a record so sacredly tender, that their publication can be justified only on the ground that they are among the few passages he has left which reveal the influence of his home upon his life, an influence which, as the words themselves show, was the strongest and the sweetest he had known. Just a year before his death, Harper writes:

“For nearly three years this book has travelled around with me unopened—three years in which I seem to have lived a lifetime. They have been filled with satisfaction enough in some ways, and

with pain enough, too. Seven months ago, when the world seemed empty, I was inclined to throw myself upon these pages, but my feelings were too much my own, even for that, for, since I last wrote here, I have gazed into the darkest depths.

“Though ‘out in the world’ in a measure, since I left home for college, the little home group in Barrie remained the centre of my world. The chief reward of success was the ‘well done’ from the kindest father and most loving mother who ever lived. They have gone. After a week’s illness father died on April 6, 1900. Mother joined him on April 12th. During thirty-six years of married life they had been loyal and true to each other, and to their duty before God and man. For their children they sacrificed personal comfort and social pleasures. Loving sympathy always went out to meet us in joy or in pain. They passed away together into the hereafter with unflinching eye, and with a nobleness and truth of heart which won them the respect of all good men and women who knew them in life.

“I did not reach home until the morning of father’s death, and when I saw that dear beloved face it wore the calmness and pallor of death. That room in which he lay is hallowed. To the last, they say, his carelessness of self was evident. A frank, straightforward man; his life open as a book; his heart kind, with the true love of a Christian. He was not particularly demonstrative, but we all knew the breadth and depth of his affection and his

sympathy. At the end, conscious of it, he gazed before him towards the face of God, as one ready to appear before the judgment seat. A healthy, honest, wholesome man, he was to me father, brother and friend.

“And my mother. How often has her clinging kiss muttered a prayer as I left home, and impressed a welcome as I returned. An heroic character, enriched by the depth of a mother’s love, was hers. When I reached home on that cold, gray day in early spring, she lay there sorely stricken with the dread pneumonia which had taken my father, but patient, tender, unselfish as ever. To my broken attempt at encouragement, she replied: ‘Yes, I must try and live for you children.’ But, as life ebbed and she saw that it was not to be, that noble heart, ever resigned to the will of God, accepted the inevitable. It seemed that to join him who had gone was her dearest wish; without him life, as she lay there suffering, must have seemed cold, empty, cheerless. But even this she seemed prepared to bear, so that she might keep a home open for her children, and endeavour to help them from falling from the path of duty. Then came the day when she was told that hope of recovery was gone. ‘I knew it,’ she said. Calling us around her, in a voice greatly weakened, she uttered her heart’s wish in a simple sentence—‘I want you all to be good, so that you may meet us There.’ I am naturally rather disposed to be cold, I fear, but in that moment the depth of that mother’s love came to

me as never before, and the sublimity of her faith burst upon me. From that day dates a new epoch in my life.

“To the last her thoughts were of us. Faithfully, unobtrusively, but unswervingly, she had throughout life worked and lived that we might know truth, and not stray from what she was wont to call ‘the straight and narrow path.’

“At four o’clock in the morning the end came. How cold the dawn of that morning! Without a struggle her soul went to its God. How delicate the thread which binds us to eternity! But a short time before she was there and knew all that was happening; that she was going; and, that we must fight the battle of life, with the snares and temptations with which we are beset by our human passions and weaknesses. Not a doubt seemed to enter into that mind, which had held steadfastly to the eternal truth throughout a noble, fearless life. She had run her race, she had kept the faith. The sturdy integrity, inherited from her father, and a gentle, loving kindness, which probably came from the mother who died when she was yet a child, combined to make a character which by its sweetness, beauty and nobility, has woven itself into my life. Pray God that I may never be unworthy of her memory.”

And unworthy of so holy a memory Harper never was. While spared to him, the love and affection of his father and mother were his greatest inspiration, and his great reward; taken

from him, the remembrance of their example, and a belief in their continued existence, constituted an abiding presence, helping him ever to nobler conduct and aim.

Yet, how irreparable this loss was, words cannot tell. Harper could never bring himself to speak of it without the deepest emotion. What seemed hardest to him was that his father and mother should have been taken just when he had hoped to be able to make them fully conscious of his gratitude.

In a letter written some months after, he says:

“Great as is my pride in the noble lives of my beloved parents, and confident as I am that they will enjoy their reward unto all eternity, I find it impossible to get away from the sense of the emptiness of the world without them. Their lives were devoted to their children, and their children were devoted to them. A kinder father, and a more loving mother, never lived. To them we looked for congratulation upon any success which fell to our lot and for sympathy if our sky were dark. They never failed us. And at the moment when we were all comfortably settled in our professions, and there was the prospect of a long peaceful life before them, they were taken away. Herein lies the chief bitterness of it all. But we have the lesson of their lives, and fond memories which we can ever cherish.”

Some time later, in acknowledging hospitality shown him during a brief visit in Toronto, he wrote on his return to Ottawa:

“As I lay in my berth last night, looking out at the beautiful, silent, star sprinkled sky, a feeling

settled upon me that the curtain had just fallen upon one of the happiest days of my life. The warmth of your welcome, and the kindly thoughtfulness of your every word and action, were appreciated by me the more, because I have learned what it is, both to have, and to be without, that most happy and most sacred of human associations, a home.”

There is less of intensity of grief, but hardly less of tenderness and delicacy of feeling, in his words of sympathy with a friend, which, containing an expression of his own belief, also reveal the continued influence of his home and its associations on his daily actions, even after these associations had vastly changed. In a letter written only a few months before his death, during a short visit to Barrie, the last which he spent amid the scenes of his youth, he says:

“And furthermore, I know that you understand that when sorrow crosses your path, your sorrow is mine just as is your happiness. I know the wrenching of the heart-strings which comes when one who is close is taken away, and I feel deeply with you. I can only repeat to you the message which you sent to me when all that I held dearest on earth seemed to have passed out of it. There is no death. Life is eternal and makes towards perfection. When those whom we love pass, we are the more linked to that greater, larger, deeper spiritual life which is within us and about us, but which passes our human comprehension. The very air in which I write is filled with a thousand associations which bring me into the closest sympathy with those who have passed through the

Valley of the Shadow. Were you here to-night, I might make myself intelligible in a way which I cannot hope to in a letter. As I have been sitting here looking out over the bay with which I am so familiar, my boyhood and my youth have passed before me, and these, as well as the hopes and aspirations of early manhood, are so closely associated with the devoted lives which guarded and nourished all that was good in me, that I could not recognize myself, were I not convinced of their continued existence and their living interest in all that I cherish that is worthy. This afternoon I stood before the grate where, with you, I spent an hour which stands out as a milestone in my life, and to-night I thank God that we have been enabled to accomplish something of what we then contemplated, and that we have before us opportunity of usefulness beyond what we could have imagined as we stood there upon the threshold of life. The very atmosphere of this dear old place is sacred to me through the associations which float through my mind as I breathe it. My visit here has been like a pause in a quiet and familiar eddy in the stream of life, and I feel that it has done me good. It has strengthened me in my resolutions, and has enabled me to see more clearly.”

It is rarely, if ever, that men, especially young men, stop to estimate the influences which are the most potent in their lives, and it is rarer still, in seeking this estimate, that they become conscious, with any true degree of proportion, of the extent to which home, as compared with other influences, has contributed

to the result. It was not so with Harper. He honoured his father and his mother, and he was wont to attribute to what he inherited by birth, by training, and by example from them, all that made for what was worthiest and best in his life.



COLLEGE AND AFTER

Colleges and universities afford the opportunity for the attainment of a measure of self-knowledge, self-reliance and self-development, which in the home is often apt to come too slowly, and, learned at first hand with the world, is bought frequently at the price of an experience which dwarfs, if it does not altogether destroy, some of the finer fruits of those essential qualities of manhood. It is not what is gained in knowledge of books, but in knowledge of self, of limitations and powers and capacities; in what is acquired of habits of self-discipline and application, of methods of thought and research, that a college or university renders its truest service to its students; as it is by the love of truth and learning which it instils, rather than by the honours and degrees which it confers, that a university puts its stamp upon the graduates it sends out into the world.

It may be that for many men four years of undergraduate life are not sufficient to make a college impress deep, or, to appearances, lasting; but if in any measure it is real, that influence must tell, not only on the years immediately succeeding, but through the whole of life. The first fruits of a college education are more likely to be revealed in the attitude of mind towards the problems of life, as these present themselves when academic halls are vacated, than in any immediate accomplishment. A consciousness of capacity without opportunity may be, and is too often, the first inheritance of many a man, whose intellect has been stimulated and whose zeal has been intensified by association with his fellows in the numerous relationships which undergraduate life affords, but

who finds in the world a less ordered and less congenial arrangement. Probably for most men, the years immediately following the attainment of their academic or professional degrees are the most critical, if not also the most painful, years of their lives.

To this phase of post-graduate experience Harper's life was no exception, though undergraduate days were enjoyed by him to the full. In the summer of 1891, at the age of seventeen, he matriculated at the University of Toronto, from the Barrie Collegiate Institute, and he graduated from the university in June, 1895. He was, during the last three years of his undergraduate course, an honour student in the department of Political Science, and the class lists show that in the work of this department, especially in the subjects of political economy and political philosophy, he held a high place. His contemporaries at the university will always remember him as a man who entered in a whole-hearted way into what may be spoken of as the larger life of the university. He was a prominent member of the Literary and Scientific Society, and of his class society, and was always certain to be found an active participant in those events or movements of general interest with which undergraduate life at a large university abounds. While he was fond of books and might have been termed, at least during the latter half of each year, a conscientious student, it is doubtful if he did not get quite as much as, or more, out of association with his fellows, and from sharing in the spontaneous life of the college, than he did from the lecture room. A characteristic which distinguished him was a readiness to carry on with enthusiasm whatever he undertook, and this, combined with a nature intensely loyal to cause or friend, made him a strong man among men, and one whose support was sought because it could

be counted upon. On the whole his disposition was social rather than individual, and his interests were diversified rather than particular. He was saved from the possible inimical effects of such a nature by an earnestness of purpose which kept him true to his responsibilities, while there can be little doubt that from it, in the broadening of his sympathies and in the understanding of men and their ways, he gained much which was of infinite service to him in after years.

Measured by the standard of growth already hinted at, Harper may be said to have left the university with a consciousness that he was fitted by talent and inclination for work in some branch of the so-called higher professions, that it was in connection with the general, rather than the more exclusive, interests of society that his energies would find their freest play, and that not by theories, but by men, he could hope to be permanently attracted. He had already learned that he was capable of serious and sustained effort, and likely to find in work a satisfaction of his best desires; and he must have known that in his nature were possibilities of the noblest expressions of disinterested action. It was natural, therefore, that having made no definite choice of a future profession at the time of graduation, and having engaged temporarily in agency work which was not to his liking, and towards which from the start he had not entertained any serious intentions, he should have found much that tried his patience severely, and at times caused him to experience periods of the most genuine depression. Fruitless attempts to obtain a start in journalism added for a while to his discouragements, so that the year and a half which followed graduation, though characterized by anything other than neglect or indifference, and, as a matter of fact, made the occasion of an opportunity for increased reading and the preparation of a thesis

which secured him a Master's degree from the university, was nevertheless, so far as he could see at the time, to be remembered as of adversity rather than as of advance. In reality it was a testing time, and it served to prove the man.

In the pages of the journal which Harper commenced shortly after graduation, it is possible to discern the attitude of mind which he had towards the problem of life, as he thus encountered it upon the threshold. Revealing as they do the qualities of inherent worth in him who wrote them, these pages are deserving of more than passing reference. Two characteristics they clearly disclose, a fearless integrity of heart and mind, and a disposition to philosophize, underlying each of which is a constant purpose of self-improvement, and a more than accepted belief in a definite moral order, and the ultimate triumph of right. Unconsciously he summed up the whole in the first paragraph he wrote:

“I am writing this record of my thoughts and actions in order that I may be better able to understand myself; to improve in that wherein I find myself wanting, and that some day I may be able to look back and find a rule of development or perhaps of life, with its assistance. I shall endeavour to be at least honest with myself, and hope that the use of this book may help me occasionally, to sever myself mentally from the associations of the world and retire within myself. My hope is that some day I may be able to become acquainted with my own individuality, and discover what is the first essential and object of my existence.

“I have not as yet settled upon a course in life. Several weapons lie before me which might be of use in the conflict with the world, and with all of which I feel that I might soon familiarize myself. Which will enable me to achieve the greatest success? And by what standard shall I measure that success so as to discover whether it is real and after all worth striving for? Shall it be law, the ministry, a business career, or journalism, or what? At one time I lean in one direction, and again in another. The result is an unsettled frame of mind which cannot be healthy, and which compels me to be constantly before the bar of my own judgment. I find that the old idea of ‘individual aptitude’ means less than I formerly believed. One finds many specialized avocations before one, and it is a question of fashioning one’s self to suit one of them. Whether it be that the chosen profession does not employ all one’s faculties, or requires more than one possesses, a certain amount of dissatisfaction is, I think, bound to result. It is necessary that a man be a philosopher, as well as a lawyer, or a carpenter, as the case may be, if he is to be happy. I flatter myself that I have a fair education (although I regret that I have not drawn from it as much as I might and should have), and some slight knowledge of men and their ways, but my choice is limited to those callings which do not require a considerable initial capital. At the moment my leanings are towards journalism as most likely to give me self-satisfaction, and to aid me in the study of mankind—man.”

And again,

“As to myself, during the past week or two, the spirit of unrest, to which I have referred as characteristic of my mind, has been intensified in proportion as I have withdrawn myself more and more from the insurance business. One thought is ever staring me in the face. It is the question which has been before me for so long. What are you going to do? I shall certainly have to ‘make a break’ before long, since the state of affairs is preying upon my mind and upon my ambition and self-esteem. To-night we have some friends coming in, a minister from the country and his wife. They will probably ask me what am I going to do? I am sick of that question.”

And on the first of January, 1897,

“For over three months I have not made a single entry in this book, and this for the reason that I have had little that is hopeful or pleasant to write about. I have been in constant dread of the effect upon my mind of the forced inactivity to which I am subject, for the uncongenial work at which I have been plodding away has been of little use as an intellectual training. At times, encouraged by the appreciation which I have been able to give to some of the sublime thoughts of master-minds, or by the words of such friends as ——, I have been quite hopeful as to my future usefulness, but on both my thoughts and my humours, I can see the fatal traces of repeated disappointments. Of course the

life that I have been living has not been without its advantages. Some of many too hastily conceived ideas have been swept away, and withal, sympathies have been aroused within me which might never have come to me under other circumstances. Furthermore, the fact that the time when I must enter the struggle for existence on my own behalf has been postponed, has led me to think less and less of the mean dishonest methods which are so generally adopted by some of our so-called successful men and used as a means of reaching their petty successes. The fact that these opinions had been forced upon me, may, it is true, prevent me from ever being what the world considers a successful man, but if the moral stamina is within me I hope they will enable me to realize the high ideal of my existence.

“But now as to the thoughts which the New Year brings with it. Last night as I listened to the tolling of the midnight bell at the Church of England, as it rang out the old year and rang in the new, the future was none too encouraging to me. It was with a feeling of bitterness that I took out a note-book and wrote the words, ‘January 1, 1897, and still on the market.’ But as I sit now and gaze into the future, I think I was a little unfair. I have been filling a position of usefulness to a degree. I do not think I have lost in moral force, while I think I have gained in knowledge and love of my fellow men; while the fact that I have been compelled to drop some ideas which I have held has proven to

me both that my tendency is towards an honest desire for truth, and that I have still much to learn. I look forward to the coming year with hope, although I have still much of the bitter feeling which has been preying upon me all year, causing me many wakeful nights and forcing me to call out at times when the feeling was intensified, that, with Burke, mine was a case of '*Nitor in adversum.*'

“One thing more. Although for years my mind has had a decidedly sceptical tone in matters of religion, I feel that in the past year I have come more into sympathy with the work of our religious bodies. This is no doubt largely due to a sympathy with the ends which they have in view, but probably, also, in great measure to my growing belief in God, although my idea of the Deity is more correctly expressed in the words of Matthew Arnold than in some of the accepted creeds. For all these things I feel grateful, and my greatest hope as I sat in the church during the first moments of the New Year was—my greatest hope as I write these words is, that I may have the inclination and the power to cut off from my life those things which tend to make it less beautiful, less good, and less useful, and that, if living when the bells toll in the New Year of 1898, I may be able to recognize in myself a better, a stronger and a purer man.”

Though it has been left to others to trace through the pages of his diary the rule of development and of life therein disclosed, it will hardly be said that the first hope expressed was denied, and that Harper did not realize, even in the brief day he was

allowed, “the first essential and object of his existence.”



THE DAY'S WORK

For some time before opportunity came to engage in journalism, Harper had quite made up his mind that this was the profession which he could follow with most satisfaction to himself, and greatest good to others, and he sought every means to secure a connection with a newspaper in one of the cities. "It would seem," he writes, after some months of searching, "that newspaper work is like most other things—it is difficult to get a start at. My experience is that it is exceptionally so. I have accepted the disappointment philosophically, and I am trying to make a good use of my time until an opening presents itself, and I am keeping my eyes open for one." At last, in February of 1897, a temporary vacancy on the staff of the London *Advertiser* afforded an opening, and though he had promise of employment for not more than a few weeks, and knew for a certainty that it could not extend beyond a month or two at the most, he gladly seized the opportunity. There was a chance, at least, to test the field and to prove himself. He accordingly left Barrie for London to begin as a reporter on the *Advertiser*, and from that time, for the remainder of his life, there were to be found no moments of "forced inactivity," or "comparative idleness," but the whole was one unbroken stretch of the most tireless putting forth of energy, the most continuous and sustained activity and zeal.

The weeks on the *Advertiser* were followed by a few months on the *London News*. In October, 1897, an opening came on the Toronto *Mail and Empire*, and Harper joined the staff of that journal. In London, his duties had been those of a general

reporter; in Toronto, they were at first the same, though with larger opportunities. His abilities, however, caused him soon to be singled out for the larger and more special assignments, and in this way he was brought into active touch with two important branches of public affairs. As city hall reporter he had to do for a time with municipal politics and administration, and, as reporter of the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, he was brought into similar relationship with provincial affairs. An appointment on the staff of the *Montreal Herald* in February, 1899, gave him the opportunity of still wider experience and further advancement. He was part of the time the city editor of that daily, and part of the time its representative and correspondent at Ottawa. Both positions afforded him opportunity of a closer intimacy with the public affairs of the Dominion, and as, throughout his entire connection with the *Herald*, he was a contributor to its editorial columns, he had commenced to help at least to shape and direct public opinion in matters of national concern.

After the establishment of the Department of Labour by the Dominion government in the summer of 1900, Harper, in November of that year, severed his connection with the *Herald* to accept the position of associate editor of the *Labour Gazette*. The department had just been created as a new department of the government, with the *Gazette* as its official journal. Its policy had still to be shaped; its usefulness to be proved. It was in part the strong bond of friendship existing between Harper and his friend, the deputy minister of the department, in part the opportunity of cooperation in a work undertaken primarily on behalf of the industrial classes of Canada, and which he believed might be made of the greatest service to the country as a whole, that caused him to terminate his then promising career

in outside journalism, and to share with his friend the fortunes of the civil service in a work to which they were both prepared to devote their lives. In addition to being engaged on the *Gazette*, Harper actively cooperated in the management and administration of the affairs of the department, and acted as the deputy minister of the department when the latter was absent on official duties elsewhere. He was acting as deputy minister of labour at the time of his death.

During the entire period he was engaged in journalism, Harper had not, with the exception of a brief vacation of one or two weeks, which he devoted in part to work of another kind, a single break of any appreciable duration in the round of continuous work. The time for vacation, with the exception mentioned, came, in every instance, just as a new affiliation was formed, and new duties, instead of a temporary respite from old ones, were taken on. It is doubtful, indeed, if so continuous a strain could have been so successfully borne, had it not been for the period of reflection which preceded it, the joy which he found in his work, and the purpose which he had at heart.

“I start,” he wrote, on February 20, a few days before his departure from Barrie to London, “under favourable auspices, and I intend to make my time tell for good so far as it is in my power. Perhaps after all it has been best for me, this year of comparative idleness. It has at least enabled me to form certain sober views of life, which might not have come until too late, had I been carried from the first on the crest of fortune’s wave.”

And upon his arrival at London:

“On this, the evening before my first serious

association with my chosen profession, let me register the resolution which I promised in a letter to dear old —— last Sunday. I hope and trust that I may hereafter be able to subdue whatever weakness there is in my character, and there is much. I am starting here under favourable auspices. May I not betray the trust, and may I leave this community better for my influence during my sojourn in it!”

After little more than a month’s experience he wrote again as follows:

“I have had no cause to regret my choice of a profession. I begin to feel the tremendous power wielded by the press in formulating public opinion, and am in a position to build up, by reflection upon what it is, a conception of what a newspaper should be, all of which I trust will enable me, when the time comes, to do my share in furthering the highest interests of the State and mankind in general. I have come to see where the dangers which surround the young newspaper man lie, and am endeavouring to keep myself free from their influence.”

Leaving London in October, ’97, he measured his success and services in a few brief words:

“My time here has not been lost, and, while I have fallen far short of what I might have done, still I think that I leave the city rather better than worse for my visit.”

Measuring development by the opportunity which

anniversaries afford, he had, after a year's experience, reason to feel that progress had been made, while at the same time he was fully conscious of what remained to be done.

“When I look at myself now and what I was on March 1, 1897, when I went to London to serve my apprenticeship at daily newspaper work, I can scarcely recognize the same individual. Carelessness, thoughtlessness and love of pleasure, I see all along the line; but I feel that I have gained more than I have lost, and I have learned that the only road to success is work, and close, careful study. I have done much that I should not have done, I have omitted much, very much, that I ought to have done. I see it and shall try and do better.”

A year later, the same earnest spirit, realizing its limitations, its responsibilities and its opportunities, is revealed in a letter written from the press gallery of the House of Commons at Ottawa. It refers to his newly formed connection with the *Herald*, and is a true and characteristic self-estimate and confession.

“Regarding the change—it is one of great moment to me. Here at the very centre of the life of the Dominion, I see all about me means of acquiring the knowledge and exerting the influence which should make my life a useful one, and that, I assure you again, is my chief aim. I am still a student, of course, and I am made conscious of the fact from the character of the men with whom I am associated, for they are all men of years, experience and force of character. I appreciate the

fact that I am still in tutelage, and the training here I regard simply as preparatory to something else—what that something else may be remains to be seen.

“My own rule, latterly, has been to follow the course which promises to be best in the long run, for, while not neglecting the present, men of our years must remember that life is real, and that we must arm ourselves for the struggle on the hither side of thirty.”

Harper was, at the time, twenty-five years of age.



NATURE

“That in companionship with and close study of Nature, who ‘neither hastens nor rests’ but unquestioningly conforms to the order laid down by the Creator, there lies a potent means of enrichment of character, and an important medium of culture, I am thoroughly convinced.” From these words of Harper’s diary we are enabled to gather with what degree of insight, and to what purpose, he sought the woods and the fields, and the freedom of “God’s out of doors” whenever opportunity permitted. From his early boyhood, few enjoyments brought him the same measure of delight as the afternoon excursions or camping expeditions which took him with other boys, or with his father, across the bay at Barrie, to explore the creeks and unfrequented spots away from the haunts of men. When after graduation his temporary employment led him for a time into the bleak and rugged parts of Northern Ontario, he found an enjoyment and source of instruction in this first hand contact with primitive conditions, which, to his feelings, was the one compensation in the pursuit of an otherwise uncongenial task. If a friend were visiting him at his home in the summer time he was not at rest till they were off together with horse or stick into the country, or out with canoe or boat on the waters of the bay; and if it were winter it was still to be out in the open, either on skates or in a sleigh, or for one of those long tramps through the snow so invigorating and health-giving at that season of the year. When his work permitted a choice being made between the country and the city, he chose the former as a place of residence, though early rising and much journeying were necessitated thereby.

The summer of 1901 was spent in this way at Kingsmere in the province of Quebec, a more beautiful spot than which there is not to be found along the whole range of the Laurentian hills. It is a distance by road of twelve miles from the capital, eight of which can be covered by rail. Harper's real sense of freedom began when, after a day's work in town, that eight miles of travelling was at an end, and the chance came for a four mile walk across fields, through the woods and along the country roads, or for a ride upon his wheel or by stage. Then came the evenings with their glorious sunsets, and the walks and talks in the twilight, and then night with its unbroken panoply of star-lit sky.

It is, perhaps, impossible to convey, save to those who have known the experience, any conception of what a constant association of this kind with Nature really means. It proves, to use Harper's own words, "how beauty, grandeur, sublimity and purity in God's world, find a ready response in the human heart unfettered." Yet it is this perception of God, this communion of soul between the creature and the Creator as He is revealed in Nature, that is the conscious or unconscious secret of all the refreshment and joy which comes from a contact of this kind. Some natures are more susceptible to this kind of revelation than others. Harper's nature was one that could share and did share it to the full.

A few paragraphs from his diary may serve to show how real was the "response" of which he spoke between the world of nature and his own heart, and how sweetly sensitive to even the most delicate of impressions, his soul became when under this favouring influence.

Having climbed one Sunday morning to the top of the

mountain at Kingsmere, to find after a hard week's work that rest which is the truest reward of toil, he gave himself up for a little to recording some of the enjoyments of the place and the hour. He writes:

“Here I am having church all by myself in this majestically beautiful spot. It was a hot climb, for it is a sweltering morning, but I am amply repaid. I had a five minutes' conversation with a red squirrel on the way up the mountain. He was a little nervous at first, but became reassured, climbed down the tree trunk until he was ten feet from me, and looked me in the face steadily as I prattled away to him. The little fellow felt like myself, he could not imagine vicious intentions in such a place. A delightful breeze is making music in the tree-tops, a bird with a clear yet sympathetic note, I can't describe the note, and I don't know the name of the bird, is leading in a medley of wood sounds infinitely refreshing after a hard week's work.

“The thought of the past week has caused me to look up for a moment to take another glance at the capital, which stands out clearly in the bright sunshine, though the lines of the buildings are softened by a blue white summer haze, sufficiently marked to give the effect of distance. If men could only get to a mountain occasionally and look down upon the world in which they live and move and have their being, there would be less diletantism, less worship of forms, institutions, baubles and lath and plaster. The foot-hills, when last I saw them from here, were rich in the full colour of maturity.

To-day they are strong in the deep refreshing green of youth. They are happy. Everything about me is happy, and I thank God for it all.”

Recording the events of a day on a short trip taken in the spring of the year to the city of Quebec and points of interest in that vicinity, he writes:

“This day was easily the best of our trip. In a few minutes we were away from civilization, and started our climb, with the assistance of two locomotives, up the mountains. At every turn some new beauty burst upon us. First, it was a cloud capped range of hills, then a quaint whitewashed village, then a laughing mountain stream, then a tree-encircled, hill-girt lake, then a rushing river, then a quiet wood, then a deep shadowy valley, then a burst of sun on the new-leaved trees, until one felt one’s self getting away forever from the pettiness of the world. Shortly after midday we swung across the bridge at Grand’ Mère, and had a capital view of the falls which have been turned to practical use by the Laurentide Pulp Company, and, about three o’clock, arrived at Shawenegan Falls, our objective point. We lunched at the Cascade Inn, a picturesque summer hotel on a hilltop, and, guided by a staff of engineers, visited the works of the Shawenegan Falls Power Company which I found extremely interesting. All this was as nothing, however, compared with the marvellous scene which burst upon us when we turned a spur of the hill and came out at the foot of the roaring, raging cataract. Down a steep, narrow, boulder-

strewn gorge, rushed the mighty river, struggling, tumbling, roaring, throwing itself into the air, and shooting forward in huge mountains of surging foam or clouds of sunlit spray. I could feel my breast heave in sympathy with the great struggle that was going forward, and my whole being kindle with the beauty and power of it all. Nowhere have I seen anything that can rival that magnificent spectacle. My nature seemed touched to its depths, and I found myself in immediate sympathy with the Indians who saw in these prodigious efforts of Nature, in the presence of which man's littleness is so apparent, the manifestations of the work of the Great Spirit. As we wound our way through the mountains one had a feeling that, once stripped of its forest wealth, this district would be a lonely wilderness so far as practical utility was concerned. As I gazed into the raging torrent, I felt that it was worth a whole province of desolation to have that grand, sublime, soul purging sight. After gazing long and earnestly into the mighty maelstrom, I raised my eyes to the tree clad mountains around, rich in the fresh foliage of spring, and furrowed with deep shadowy glens. I felt that the world was indeed grand, beautiful, that no man could stand where I stood without feeling that he had a soul.

“And as our train wound its way homeward towards a sublimely beautiful sunset, behind the glorious tumbled-together hills, the scene of loveliness was set in my mind and in my heart in

deep rich tints of crimson and gold. That day was one of the happiest in my life. I cannot attempt to describe what I saw in words. All I can do is to record something of the impression. It was soul stirring.”

Later in the year Harper visited the Maritime Provinces with members of the Canadian Press Association on their annual excursion. His account of the trip contains much that is full of interest, and something in the way of recorded observation which might surprise those who had had the same opportunities, or had visited simultaneously these places and participated in the same events. Two brief paragraphs may suffice to further illustrate how he was wont to be influenced by scenes of great natural beauty, and in what regard, relative to other things, he was accustomed to hold them. Speaking of the Montmorency Falls he says:

“At the Montmorency Falls we spent a very happy hour. We decided to scramble up the cliff side, instead of taking the steps. At the top we had a splendid view of the falls which impressed me differently from any I had seen. The volume of the river is not great, but it descends from a giddy height, throwing out a great cloud of white spray, peaceful and beautiful. To me the message it conveyed was of chastity and purity, like a beautiful, faithful woman, who had gone through the world to a white age, unspotted and unstained. The great semicircular basin beneath seemed wrought by Nature to give full effect to the beautiful work of the Creator.”

And referring to the evening of the same day, after returning to Quebec, he says:

“After dinner —— and I gave up a trip to a summer theatre for a stroll on the terrace before the Château Frontenac. It was a night not soon to be forgotten. The moon’s rays, softened by a faint film of the most delicate of clouds, fell quietly about us, and, from the dancing waves far below, came the signal bells of steamers and the distant calls of boatmen. I can recall few nights to rival it. The world seemed more kind, and my own work in it more clear and possible, as we sat there and gazed into the quiet night, which wore an ethereal, fairy-land air about it, pure and inspiring. Most of our fellows were off ‘seeing’ the city, but none of them could have had half the pleasure that was ours. Few things in the world could have been more beautiful than that night out there on the terrace, under the frowning guns of the hard war citadel, and above the moon-bathed waters of the grand old St. Lawrence. I felt my heart throb as I thought that this noble river was the gateway to Canada, the land which gave me birth, and which I am learning to love more and more dearly as years roll by.”

BOOKS

In books, as in nature, Harper found companionship and instruction, and the selection was as carefully made, and the appreciation of the beautiful and true as keen and delicate, in the one case as in the other. It was a distinguishing mark of his reading that he chose, for the most part, only such works as were likely to be productive of intellectual or moral growth; he read little, however, for the sake of mere entertainment, and he was less inclined to seek recreation with a book than in other ways.

At the university his reading was, for the most part, of the books prescribed by the college curriculum, with supplementary reading along the lines it suggested, and some slight addition of current fiction and standard works in poetry and prose. For a time, after entering upon journalism, he gave himself up so entirely to its demands that he may be said to have dropped books altogether, and to have substituted for their reading a careful perusal of the daily press, and an occasional survey of current magazines and other periodicals. The habit thus formed remained constantly with him, and made him a careful observer of events, and well informed on the main issues and questions of the day. Though he had the mind of a student and a scholar, his habits, as has already been hinted, were not of the kind which students are popularly supposed to have. His temperament was versatile, his nature active, he was impatient of too detailed or continuous research, and was more interested in living men and current affairs than in documentary records of any kind. Yet he was by no means blind to the fact, which unfortunately many

public men are, that to be of real service to any cause, a man's intellectual as well as his physical powers must be stimulated and strengthened by sustenance of the proper sort, and that, except through inborn genius of the rarest kind, a man cannot be saved from intellectual sterility, unless, to more than a limited degree, he familiarizes himself with the best thought of the strongest minds.

The books with which Harper sought to become most familiar were the works of writers whose intellectual preeminence was undoubted, and whose main concern, though they viewed it from many and frequently different standpoints, was the problem of existence, the meaning and the duties of life. Of this class, Carlyle, Matthew Arnold, Emerson, Tennyson, and, among present day writers, Hamilton Wright Mabie, were the ones to whose works his spare hours were chiefly devoted during his last years. It would be difficult to know from which of these authors he gained the most; that he was strongly influenced by all is beyond question, though this influence was one rather of clearer definition and understanding of his own beliefs and convictions, than of conversion to other and different views. Of what, as a teacher, literature contributed, something may be gleaned from the pages containing his views on present day problems and matters of religion. In the present chapter it is of the companionable enjoyment derived from this source, consciously sought and cultivated as a means to the enrichment of life, that it is desired to give a sympathetic appreciation.

The winter of 1900-01 was made exceptionally profitable through the opportunities of reading which many of its evenings and Sundays afforded. Harper and his friend had lodgings in common, and his diary is full of mention of the evenings they spent together in company with books, from which each in turn

read aloud to the other, and which were laid aside only that a deeper searching of the heart might follow, accompanied by pledges of mutual loyalty and resolve, long after the embers had burned out upon the hearth, and all things were in the sacred keeping of the night. Did not the personal references which these accounts contain preclude their publication, opportunity might be given of looking in upon the best that this world has to offer, the soul communion of friend with friend. One or two passages relating to evenings not dissimilar, though spent with less intimate friends, will suggest, to those who read them, with what profit an evening might have been shared with him by those who knew and appreciated his genuine self aright, and what measure of inspiration in turn was accorded to him by the conversation and views of others, and by the writings of master minds.

Of the chance happening in of a friend, he writes:

“I had finished reading Matthew Arnold’s criticism of Gray when L—— came in and spent the evening with me. I read Gray’s *Elegy*, *The Bard* and some other extracts, in order to make good Matthew Arnold’s judgment. Then we talked of men of genius and their lives, and L—— spoke of their unhappiness and want of appreciation. I took the ground that this unhappiness was often more apparent than real; that the greatest happiness in sensation was that of the soul satisfaction which must come with the beautiful expression of a great truth; that no great work came by chance, but rather that the thought was first real and vital to the artist; that however much, humanly, he might feel the want of appreciation and physical satisfaction, his pleasure must be ecstatic at finding an expression

for his best self, his inner life.

““*These demand not that the things
without them
Yield them love, amusement, sympathy.*”

“Just as theirs is the great happiness, so theirs is the great sorrow, for sorrow to be expressed in such form must first be appreciated, felt.

“From this we drifted to Kipling and imperialism, my contribution being that Kipling was a great imperialist, that of those who were urging forward the British empire, he was one of the most enlightened, one of the most clear seeing; that his anxiety for the empire’s future was as much cosmopolitan as British, having faith in the Anglo-Saxon ideal. In support of this latter contention I cited the *White Man’s Burden*, which I think was primarily designed for the American people.

“Then to the woes of Ireland and her future. I expressed disgust with the methods of such men as ——, who are trying to fan the flame of hatred to England, a flame justly enough started by the long years of oppression, but which must be smothered if Ireland is to progress, for I can see only one way for her healthy development,—as part of the British empire, the great civilizing and evangelizing power of the world.

“I read some of Moore’s poems to illustrate my views of the beauty and richness of the Irish nature,

and its possibilities when fairly treated. We closed our evening by reading a passage from *Great Books as Life Teachers*, in the chapter on *Ruskin's Seven Lamps of Architecture*, to show that true liberty consists in obedience to law—true law. ‘Nature loves paradoxes, and this is her chiefest paradox—he who stoops to wear the yoke of law becomes the child of liberty, while he who will be free from God’s law, wears a ball and chain through all his years. Philosophy reaches its highest fruition in Christ’s principle, “Love is the fulfillment of the law.”’””

Of an evening spent with friends, he says:

“To-night we spent a pleasant evening, enjoying music and reading. Mrs. J——, whose whole life seems to be poetry and music combined, rendered several brilliant selections on the piano, conveying to me a conception of beautiful thoughts playing about the crests of moonlit waves, after which R—— and I read several of Matthew Arnold’s poems. I have grown to like Matthew Arnold more and more. His philosophy, the pursuit of perfection, of sweetness and light, and the sweeping away of viciousness, has always influenced me strongly since I first read *Culture and Anarchy* some years ago. But I find in him more and more the noble high minded man as I proceed. I read *The Buried Life* and *Rugby Chapel* among other things. The latter has always been a favourite of mine, pointing, as it does, a noble useful view of human duty, as in the lines—

*“But thou would'st not alone
Be saved, my father! alone
Conquer and come to thy goal,
Leaving the rest in the wild.”*

“*The Buried Life* seems to me one of the most beautiful, hopeful and inspiring poems I have ever read—the thought that man’s life and development goes on, and that his real life is realized despite the spoiling of himself which he does continuously in the meaningless follies of his daily round.

*“Fate . . .
Bade through the deep recesses of
our breast
The unregarded river of our life
Pursue with indiscernible flow its
way;*

*And that we should not see
The buried stream, and seem to be
Eddying at large in blind uncertainty,
Though driving on with it eternally.”*

“And then how—

*“. . . often, in the world’s most crowded streets,
But often, in the din of strife,
There rises an unspeakable desire*

After the knowledge of our buried life.'

“The room where we sat before a grate fire seemed filled with the thought of the noble man who penned the poem, and the evening was a most enjoyable one.”

Harper's was a nature quick to respond to the beautiful and true wherever found, whether in prose or verse, in music or painting, or in the actions of daily life. He was, moreover, intensely sympathetic, and what he read or saw always impressed, and sometimes affected, him deeply. He would often rise from the reading of a beautiful poem, or the story of some heroic human effort, with eyes filled and voice completely overcome, and then, as a means of gaining relief, and at the same time of giving expression to his feelings, would pen in a single sentence or two the thought that was most in his mind at the time.

Such little entries as the following are a characteristic feature of his diary, and reveal his sympathetic appreciation of what he read, and of the subject treated:

“To-night I read the sad story of Keats' life.
How sad it is to see so promising a man pass so
soon! How admirably he declared a great truth
when he said,

““*Beauty is truth, truth beauty,*”—
that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to
know.””

“To-night I read over again Lanier’s *A Ballad of Trees and the Master*, which, I think, most beautiful. The poem appealed to me strongly as illustrating the subduing calm of the woods. Before going to bed I read Ward’s biography of Lanier, a story of the heroic struggle of a soul steeped in music and high purpose.”

“In the afternoon I read Matthew Arnold’s Essay on Shelley, whose life was a strange mixture of genius and weakness. But for his poetry his weakness would have made him detestable. But for his weakness his poetical genius might have made him one of the most beautiful of all our authors. As he is, he is one of those strange paradoxes who give rise to speculation as to the necessary qualities of genius. Much can be forgiven in one who has created the ode, *To a Skylark* and *The Sensitive Plant*.”

“Matthew Arnold seems to me above all a critic, clear, impartial, appreciative, kindly, bravely severe, when this is necessary to do justice. In what he says in these Essays on Criticism, one feels how sad it is that noble work

is marred by a something wanting; half results because of the want of something,—‘many are called, few chosen.’”

“Next, of the features of the fortnight, was the completion of *The Idylls of the King*, from which I have drawn much healthy inspiration. We read *Pelleas and Ettarre*, *The Last Tournament*, *Guinevere* and *The Passing of Arthur*. At the close I was struck by the wonderful way in which the truth of the words,—

“*It is the little rift within the lute,
That by and by will make the music
mute,
And ever widening slowly silence
all,*’—

was unfolded. Even that beautifully conceived court, with its noble King, its high ideals and its battle-trying knights, went to utter ruin through the example of one sin. Another thing which struck me was that Tennyson, like others, shows that the deadliest enemy is the Judas. The most cherished knight and beloved Queen poisoned the court by betraying friend and husband. But Tennyson holds out the beautiful hope of the thief upon the cross. Lancelot was allowed to die a holy man; and

Guinevere, by true repentance and goodly works, was able to purge her soul so as to be prepared for the reunion hereafter. The gentle teaching of the poem is that we must be swayed by high resolves and noble motives.

“*We needs must love the highest when
we see it,
Not Lancelot, nor another.*”

“My admiration for the poem increased towards the close. The delicate portrayal of character, and of utter pain and remorse in *Guinevere*, and the beautiful imagery of *The Passing of Arthur* are sublime—

“*From the great deep to the great
deep he goes.*”



“To-day R—— and I read several chapters of *Past and Present*. Grand, bluff, sturdy old Carlyle is becoming a reality to me. In his chapters leading up to the selection of Samson as Abbot of St. Edmundsbury, he throws much light upon a really important view of public policy, how necessary it is to select the best as Governor, and how that best is to be recognized and selected. Carlyle I find to

be healthy, wholesome and full of moral fibre.”

“Even to the outcry against the fleeting nature of our impressions of beauty, and, for a time, satisfying, comes an answer in the story of Shelley’s *Sensitive Plant*. The author concludes the beautiful yet sad story by saying:

*“I dare not guess; but in this life
Of error, ignorance, and strife,
Where nothing is, but all things seem,
And we the shadows of the dream,*

*“It is a modest creed, and yet
Pleasant if one considers it,
To own that death itself must be,
Like all the rest, a mockery.*

*“That garden sweet, that lady fair,
And all sweet shapes and odours there,
In truth have never past away:
'Tis we, 'tis ours, are changed; not
they.*

*“For love, and beauty, and delight,
There is no death nor change: their
might
Exceeds our organs, which endure
No light, being themselves obscure.’*

“If this be so, can we not increase and make more lasting our knowledge of these things by mastering ourselves and giving scope to the spiritual side of us?”



THE LOVE OF OTHERS

In love for others human nature manifests its highest expression. It is the quality of soul by which, in his relations with his fellows, a man's capacity for service is determined; it is the fount at which all the finer springs of action are fed. Generosity, mercy, pity, friendship, devotion, sacrifice, flow from this one source, which conscious effort may help to replenish, but which conscious or unconscious borrowing can never exhaust.

In his love for others lay the absorbing passion of Harper's life. It was a love which begot him the strongest and most enduring of friendships, and it was a love which carried his influence, and the sweet purpose of his life, away out beyond the circles of those with whom he was in daily association to where the tide of affection is wont to ebb, or, apparently, wastes itself in the reefs and shallows which abound. Man, woman, or child, he felt their kinship to the race; their lives were related to his life; misfortune only heightened his sympathy, and failure his compassion. Day after day gave new expression to the wealth of generous purpose in that great human heart of his. It dictated the fields into which he directed his activities; it inspired his impulses, and was the sustaining power in his work.

Nor was this, with Harper, a blind love, an unreasoned passion. On the contrary, whatever its origin, it derived its strength from a carefully thought out philosophy of life, a philosophy based on a belief in a divine order and purpose in the universe, and in the sanctity of individual lives. He had faith in both God and man, and he held that the will of the one could

only be fulfilled as it was realized in the life of the other. This belief explains his efforts on behalf of individuals, it interprets the views he held on such questions as those of social and political reform.

He loved men because of the belief he had in their natures. "After all," he writes, "it is not the external appearance of a man, nor what he says or does, that ought to excite our admiration or distrust, but that inner personality, the individuality, the soul, which is 'the all and in all,' and of which appearances are but imperfect representations and expressions." He was not a man given to professions, or to the public performance of good deeds; in fact, the being seen of men caused him to hesitate in the doing of much which a less sensitive nature would have allowed. He did not shrink, however, from manifesting a personal interest in lives which seemed to demand it of him, or from revealing his purpose to those whom he knew could appreciate it aright.

One incident, among two or three which he has recorded, but one of a great many known only to those with whom the occasion was shared, is sufficient to illustrate how practical expression was given to this belief. It occurred within a short time after he had left the university, and before he had entered upon his journalistic career.

"I was returning home one night after a social evening, when I saw a young man in the hands of a policeman. He was what some people would have called a 'bad boy,' kept rather doubtful company, and was under arrest for having raised a disturbance during a drunken row. Well, I managed to get the boy, who was about eighteen years of

age, out of the cells on bail, and, in company with a fellow who had been ‘painting the town’ with him, I undertook to take him home. I contrived, after some time, to get rid of his ‘pal,’ and, as soon as the boy was sober enough, I undertook to find out whether he had a conscience.

“After walking about the streets with him for a couple of hours in the beautiful moonlight, by the aid of a power which was certainly not my own, I discovered that he had; and the boy opened up his heart to me. I showed him the uselessness and folly of the life into which he was rapidly drifting, and, in a voice convulsed with sobs, he told me that what I said was true. My own eyes moistened as he confessed what a fool he was. He concluded by promising me in a voice and with a pressure of the hand which meant truth, that he would never touch a drop of liquor again. From the frank manner in which he meets my eyes when I now see him occasionally, I believe that he has thoroughly reformed. That night, as I went home, I knew that one prayer had not been in vain.”

For society as a whole, as for its individual members, his aim was a constant betterment.

“There are so few men who couple the capacity for appreciating the troubles of struggling humanity with an earnest desire to remove them, that I can see in such a life a tremendous power for good, and, after all, is not that the highest ideal a man can hold before him?”

In this sentence, penned in reference to another, he wrote of himself more truly than he knew. His journals are full of passages which disclose his “capacity to appreciate,” and his “earnest desire to remove,” the obstacles which thwart the upward and onward progress of men engaged in the competitive rivalries of the world, and in the struggle for daily bread. Whether it was pursuing an uncongenial task in the wilds of Muskoka, or immersed in the cares and unrest of journalism, or busied in research for material from which to construct an article for the *Labour Gazette*, a human interest in the life and the lot of the mass of men was ever before him, and a purpose to understand and improve that lot his aim.

“During the course of my stay here,” he writes of Muskoka, in the winter of 1895, “I have had some chance to notice the type of inhabitants of this inhospitable district. First and foremost come the lumbermen, not the miners who live in the town, but the stout fellows in smock and jersey, with their pants shoved into stockings, which are in turn encased in stout rubbers. Overcoats are scarce, they don’t seem to be needed. Altogether, though these fellows lead a hard life, and are often coarse and dissipated, they have opinions of their own, and must be reckoned with by the rulers of the country.

“Next comes the Muskoka farmer living in his shanty, for that is pretty much the rule, although there is, of course, an occasional farmhouse of more pretentious appearance, and drawing a bare livelihood by his constant toil with antiquated implements; most of the hay (the chief product,

since it requires little care,) being cut by the scythe on patches of land cleared by years of toil, and in most cases thickly strewn with rocks, the only satisfaction that they have in their poverty being that they are independent.

“It is difficult to conceive of culture and refinement under such circumstances. It may be well, however, to have one part of our population comparatively free from the two dangerous influences of our time, riches and luxury on the one hand, and, on the other, embittered and ignorant combinations actuated by selfish interests and swayed too largely by demagogues.

“My sojourn here, though not pleasant and not profitable from a business point of view, has opened an extensive field of thought. Of my companions the most interesting was the lumberman whose wife was sick, and who as a result was leaving the woods. I was quite interested by his ideas of human life, although they were not given in a scientific way. He was evidently a man of energy; one who took life seriously and who had his share of troubles. It was pathetic to hear the way he spoke of how his wife’s family usually died at about twenty-four years of age, how his wife was now at that age and was sick. In fact, there are worse places than the lumber woods for the study of man.”

In the spring of 1898 he was rejoiced at having the opportunity of conducting a more or less extended inquiry into

the conditions of working men in the several trades.

“The *Mail*,” he writes, “intends, during the coming summer, to publish a series of articles concerning the conditions, social, moral and economic, governing each of the various trades, the facts to be gathered by personal observation and enquiry from journeymen, apprentices, employers and employees. The work is to be a feature of each day’s paper, and, *mirabile dictu*, the entire charge of the matter, design and detail, has been handed over to me. I need not say that I am pleased. I have at once an opportunity of examining into the industrial and sociological conditions of the city and province, and possibly of doing good to my fellow men as the result of these observations. Incidentally, also, I have an opportunity of strengthening myself in my own profession, although that is a thing that one can do in journalism no matter what line of work one is pursuing. Roughly described, the aim of the series of sketches is to indicate to the parent what qualifications are required for, and what returns are to be expected from, the several vocations, in order that he may the better decide what to do with his boy or girl. I appreciate the responsibility which the work places upon me, and pray that I may be able to meet it.”

The articles which were written by Harper, then twenty-four years of age, and which appeared under the caption “What to do with your boy or girl,” were continued in the *Mail* from day to day for several months, and attracted very considerable

attention at the time. They disclose a remarkable ability to get at facts, and the strongest sympathy with the end in view, and constitute a not unimportant contribution to the scanty literature which has thus far appeared, having to do with industrial and labour conditions in the Dominion.

The human interest which made even the dry language of statutes to glow with animation for him, is abundantly apparent from the following passages in reference to some of his work in the department of labour:

“I spent most of the day in the Library of Parliament, reading up the provincial acts concerning mining. The thing which impressed me, as I read, was the uninviting nature of the task of the miner, cut off from the light of day, hewing away in the bowels of the earth, exposed to the danger of cave-ins, explosions, and a living entombment, as the result of carelessness on the part of his employers, or his associates, or the will of nature. How can such men, if they are crowded down almost to the margin of subsistence, develop a roseate view of life! Ever facing almost terrorizing conditions, they must become brave, sturdy, self-reliant and earnest enough, but how can they fail to be out of sympathy with the shams, hypocrisies and dilettantisms of modern society!”

And again:

“At the office, I have been much interested in working upon the article on the Fisheries of Canada, inasmuch as it has shown to me a sturdy class of men toiling under conditions of hardship

and danger for what is comparatively a small return. Doubtless the isolation of the fishing villages, the system of part proprietorship, and the passion for a sea-faring life, account for the relative immobility of the population.

“I am becoming more and more convinced daily of the fact that this country is going through a transition stage which must influence it to the bottom. The use of machinery, the weakening of the artisan by removing the rewards of skill, the work and wages of girls, the prevalence of piece work and its results, the effects of pauper and convict labour, and a thousand other problems are brought daily before my notice in terms of flesh and blood.

“It is important to know and understand all sorts and conditions of men if society as a whole is to be led towards what is better. Certainly the ‘better class of people’ need leading as well as the others, for with them the opportunity offered by leisure is too often wasted in dilettantism and folly.”

To “society,” in the highly specialized meaning of that word, a reference may not be out of place. In its ambitions, its mandates, Harper saw but little which made for the development of true manhood or womanhood, while he saw much which aimed directly at the destruction of both. There was never any one who enjoyed more the pleasure of good company, whose temperament, frank, hearty and mirthful, and whose manner, courteous and sincere, made him a more welcome guest wherever he went. It was no affectation, therefore, which

caused Harper to feel as he did; it was his belief in the true purpose of life. What to some, and to himself, was a pastime, he saw, to others, was becoming an end; instead of developing, it was robbing, natures of their finer sensibilities. Many of its conventions were wholly artificial, some of its relationships altogether false. The following short sentences are sufficient to reveal this view:

“Social engagements may, I think, be a healthy relaxation, if kept in their place, and if one does not forget to keep hold of one’s self, and remembers the force of example. With many people here in Ottawa, I fear the social round is becoming an end in itself, and therefore a danger to themselves and others.

“I am coming to the conclusion that if a man is to wield any influence worth while in this world, he has to cut this folly out of his life. The past fortnight has shown me how impossible it is for a man to do what the social world expects of him, and do justice to himself.”

Commenting on a wedding notice which appeared in a local paper, he writes:

“So spoke the society editor this morning. The important thing, really, was the happy union for life of two loving hearts. Apparently what the public is supposed to be interested in, is the gown of white something or other. It may be salutary, as a means of developing an æsthetic taste generally, to have space in our public prints for such trifles. For my own part, I often think the world would be better

and saner if the society editor had never been born.”

And of the “better part,” in a personal letter to a friend:

“If you will pardon me for making the remark, I was very pleased to see the lively interest your sisters take in the great work of improving the condition of the masses. It is one which is bound to widen their sympathies, and remove any possibility of their becoming enthralled by the chains of hollow conventionality, which, more than anything else, prevents the development of true womanhood, under the conditions of our modern society.”

How, according to his view, true womanhood might be developed, may be gathered from a letter written by Harper to one of his sisters a short time before his death. It is one of many home letters which might be quoted, but it may be taken by itself as characteristic. In speaking of his love for others, its reproduction here may not be out of place:

“Ottawa, Oct. 4th, 1901.

“MY DEAR L—:

“I am not writing to give you news, for there is little to give. I have been having a quiet happy little evening all by myself, and I thought I could not do better than let you into the secret of my happiness. I think I have told you before that I am an admirer of the high-mindedness of Matthew Arnold, ‘the apostle of sweetness and light.’ Latterly, I have been taking a great deal of true pleasure from his

poems, and one of the best of them, *The Buried Life*, I have just finished reading, not for the first time, for they stand many readings; and I am sure you would find it hopeful and inspiring. I wish you would read Matthew Arnold's works, particularly some of the poems, such as *Rugby Chapel*, *Dover Beach*, *Self Dependence* and *The Buried Life*; the last, most of all. There is a good deal of the stoical Greek about Matthew Arnold, but his is a beautiful, noble, pure mind whose example makes the pursuit of perfection meaningful, and beautiful to contemplate. There is much in his philosophy with which you doubtless will not agree, but there is a richness, beauty and purity, which you will find most inspiring.

“And this brings me still to another question. Why should not you and E—— turn this winter to profit by spending a part of every day reading aloud to each other, choosing, preferably, such works as *The Idylls of the King*, Matthew Arnold's poems, or other writings of the great masters in literature which take one away from the sordidness of life, and tend to develop the best that is in one. This, with an adulteration of fiction, would make the winter very profitable as well as very enjoyable to you both. When E—— can find time, he could read with you, and direct your reading course. My dear L——, I am becoming more and more convinced every day that the most important duty we have is the moulding of our character; for it is in the strength and richness of our character

that we obtain the title to self-respect, and are able to influence others. It is by bringing ourselves into closer contact with the highest thought that we are going to be enabled to obtain high-mindedness and purity ourselves. There is a world of truth in the statement, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,' and these things of which I speak are some of the ways of attaining that purity of heart which makes life richer, deeper and happier.

“Longfellow, in his prose romance, *Hyperion*, has something of what I have in mind, when he says:

““It is the part of an indiscreet and troublesome ambition to care too much about fame, about what the world says of us; to be always looking into the faces of others for approval; to be always anxious for the effect of what we do and say; to be always shouting to hear the echo of our own voices. If you look about you, you will see men who are wearing life away in feverish anxiety of fame, and the last we shall ever hear of them will be the funeral bell which tolls them to their early graves! Unhappy men and unsuccessful! because their purpose is, not to accomplish well their task, but to clutch the “fantasy and trick of fame”; and they go to their graves with purposes unaccomplished, and wishes unfulfilled. Better for them, and for the world in their example, had they known how to wait! Believe me, the talent of success is nothing more than doing what you can do well; and doing well whatever you do,—without a thought of fame. If it

comes at all, it will come because it is deserved, not because it is sought after. And, moreover, there will be no misgivings, no disappointment, no hasty, feverish, exhausting excitement.’

“This is rather a heavy quotation for a letter, but I wished you to catch the thought, you will find it in the chapter in *Hyperion* on *Literary Fame*. You will see the truth of it, if you allow your mind to dwell upon it for a moment. Longfellow has no thought of discouraging ambition. Far from it. He simply wants to emphasize the folly of hoping for fame which is undeserved, and, as he points out, the way to deserve it is by doing well what is to be done. But as you are not fame hunting, it is not the fame part of it that I wish to dwell upon here, so much as the parallel thought, that it is the inner life, the inner strength which comes from resolute effort and familiarity with the best thought, which tells, and which makes for true happiness.

“I have often told you that your worst danger is your tendency to worry, a tendency which is based, I know, upon the depth of the interest which you take in those who are dear to you. What you must do is to prevent that tendency from casting a shadow over your life. I have a picture of you—a copy which W—— enlarged from the little sunbeam of you, with a big white hat, you remember,—in a gold frame over my desk. It is much admired, and I am proud to introduce it as my sister. As I look at it, I can see my dear little sister, bright, happy and devoted, and now I don’t want to

think of her with any unnecessary cares. Now do be good, and you and E—— try and make the winter profitable to both of you. Take walks, get exercise in the open air, be cheerful, read, and generally try and make life happier by the means which you have at hand. I am neither scolding nor lecturing, and I have said nothing which you do not already know, but somehow to-night, you have been running in my mind, and I wanted to tell you what I thought and wished, so that, in due course of time, you will look back to the winter of 1901 as one of the happiest chapters in your life. I am sorry that, when we were in Barrie, the shadow of memories and the pressure of many things must have made me seem selfish and not kind enough to my sisters, but I need not tell you, L——, that your happiness is dear to me.

“And now I must close. So good-night, my dear little sister.

“With much love,

“Ever your affectionate brother,
“BERT.”

Just how characteristic this letter is of the interest taken by Harper in the welfare and happiness of those to whom he was united by the closest of ties, will be apparent from another letter, written many months previous, to a brother in New York, after returning from a short visit to that city. It reveals the same earnest endeavour of a life to impart its own secret to the lives of others, and to establish a standard of happiness which could

bring no deceptions. Its practical common sense will make it no less commendable as an evidence of the truest affection.

He writes:

“*Ottawa, Dec. 30, 1900.*

“MY DEAR WILL:

“Since returning to Ottawa there has been little happening that would be of interest to you. I have been busy enough, and have managed to control a tendency, fostered by the invitations of a number of kind people here, and my own disposition, to be drawn into the social whirl. It is weak, and life is earnest, so I have decided to do with as little of it as possible. No man who desires to make progress in this world, can hope to do so if he squanders his evenings. There are two ways in which a man may equip himself so that he may be in the van of progress:—first, by strengthening his own mind through a study of what is and has been in the minds of great men of thought,—this, one can do from books;—secondly, by pursuing positive original work along the special line to which he has devoted himself. These things I am attempting to do. The difficulty lies in selection. What we have to do is to get away from the semblances, and get at the realities of life.

“Of Carlyle’s *Hero Worship*, I have already spoken to you. It is healthy and sturdy. I am now reading Carlyle’s *Past and Present*, and do not know anything in literature more wholesome or

worth reading. Do not neglect to read it. Men of the stamp of Carlyle, Emerson and Matthew Arnold go to the root of questions, and their books will do you one hundred times as much good as all the novels which are going the rounds. Every man owes it to himself to supply his mind with the best material available, and, although Carlyle may seem a little heavy in parts, where one may not have become familiar with the subject matter he refers to, you will find the influence of his sturdy personality upon your own views of life.

“With regard to the second point,—work along one’s own special line,—I am plodding along at work in the field of economics, and hope to be able to get out a book in the more or less near future. You know best what will be profitable for you. What I would suggest is, that you lose no opportunity of familiarizing yourself with the best writings on architecture; that you devote time and thought to studying architectural models of buildings as they are, and otherwise; and, that you take every opportunity to attend lectures or discussions where architectural subjects are being considered. In this way you will find your interest in your work, and in life generally, as well as your usefulness to your employers, increasing at a surprising rate. I know how hard it is for a man living in a great, interesting place like New York, to do deliberate, consecutive work, and to keep control of himself and his time, but he must do this, if he is going to get along. Life is real and earnest,

and a man who is going to hold up his end in dull times, and in the autumn of life, must take every opportunity to equip himself, and to save his dollars. A man need not be mean, he can go to things worth going to, he can dress decently, and hold up his end generally; but there are lots of things upon which money is often spent, which are absolute folly. Money is hard to make, and a man cannot justify himself in throwing it away.

“I hope you will pardon all this which may appear like a lecture. It is not, I can assure you, dear old Will. It is simply a few conclusions which I have come to, and which I believe to be absolutely true. If they are, why should we not follow them? I want us both to live fruitful and useful lives, and it is by such conscious, deliberate work as I have referred to, that we both can do it. Let us cut asunder what of empty, unprofitable conviviality, and the like, may have grown into our lives, and let us live so that when we are old men,—if we are spared,—we may look back upon our lives without regret, and feel that we have been worthy of the best that is in us, and of the trust which our dear parents placed in us.

“My visit to New York was thoroughly profitable; it has given me much food for thought, and has enabled me to see some things more clearly than ever before. I cannot tell you of all the impressions New York brought, and has left upon me. I have never quite managed to shake off the attitude of mind of a student, and I find myself

constantly weaving my experiences in New York into my philosophy of life. The two events which seem to stand out most clearly are the visit to the *Art Museum*, and the concert at the *Metropolitan*. That was a glorious day, for it showed how men in the rush and flurry of business life have at hand the means of soul purifying and refreshment in art and music, two great agencies which bring men's minds back from semblances to truth. Will you ever forget the music we heard? The singing of Rossini's *Stabat Mater* was to me like wandering through a sea of dreams, beautiful yet sad. Greatest of all, I thought, was Nordica's *Inflammatus*, a soul-stirring song, splendidly set off by the orchestra and chorus, and which stirred the vast audience to its depths. It was the great victory of the evening. How strong must be the satisfaction of the possession of so magnificent a voice, both in the capacity to interpret such beautiful music, and in the ability to thrill and purge the human soul. For is it not the case that great music ever does this? I know little of the *technique* of music, but for years I have felt its influence upon me for good.

“Every hour of my visit was profitable, and I need not say that it would have been a blind, stupid ramble without your assistance. I know what it meant in sacrifice of time and hard-earned money to you. I would have liked to have controlled your generosity. However, I know the spirit which moved you, and I am deeply grateful to you.

“And now, my dear brother Will, I trust that this

New Year which ushers in a new century, will bring to you true happiness, and the accomplishment of your most worthy ambitions.

“Your affectionate brother,

“BERT.”

It is not surprising to find in a remote corner of the diary of a man whose feelings were so genuine, and sympathies so sincere, such mention as the following, of an evening spent with “The Woodcutters,” a society he had helped to organize the year after he left the university, and the purposes of which will be sufficiently clear from the reference:

“We went to old Thomas Mahoney’s where we worked hard from about 8:30 to 11:00 P. M., sawing and splitting wood. The family consisted of Mrs. Mahoney, an old woman of about sixty or sixty-five, and her daughter. The daughter, who is half-witted, goes out washing and scrubbing, while the old lady has to saw and split all the wood necessary to keep their hovel warm, it being situated in an exposed place on the edge of the common. The interior does not betoken wealth, but the old woman and her daughter seem to be not unhappy, this probably because of their having come from the Emerald Isle. I shall try and follow up the acquaintance with a view to discovering to what causes their poverty is due. This institution is a good one, for besides the hard work, it affords undoubtedly a good way of helping the deserving poor, and gives one a splendid chance for

economic study.”

Nor is the following entry less surprising, written, as it was, in part justification of himself, lest he should have erred in having aided financially, and in other ways, a deaf-mute boy who came to him for assistance, but into whose circumstances he had not, at the time, had opportunity of making a personal inquiry. A file of correspondence with the Charity Organizations officer, and the superintendent of *The Institute for the Deaf and Dumb*, reveals the care with which he subsequently satisfied his conscience in this particular case of one who belonged to “the dependent and neglected poor.”

“Whatever may be held regarding the unwisdom of a paternal system with regard to society generally,—and while my own best judgment inclines me to be individualistic,—I have a strong sympathy with those who are robbed of the use of their senses, to whom so much of the beauty of God’s world is as a sealed book. I felt this strongly as I dictated the letters which he could not hear. The bright intelligence on his face as he learned my intention, and indicated his approval of some of my suggestions, was beautiful to see. I trust that he will not prove a disappointment, and that I shall not be deceived.”

Harper had the faith which led him at times to cast his bread upon the waters. Had he been asked why he did so, he would have replied, because he loved to. If questioned further, he would, with Tennyson, have said:

“That nothing walks with aimless feet;

That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete.”

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL IDEALS

Few men of his years have thought as deeply as Harper did, or had clearer perceptions, concerning conditions and forces which make for happiness and progress in social life, and the development of national greatness. Had he been spared he would have been an earnest and practical reformer; silent as his voice is now, the words he once uttered are not without their value to our day and generation. He was a true patriot in sentiment and aspiration.

Harper loved his country and its people, and in all that he undertook, which was of a public nature, he was animated by an enthusiasm for the common good. Of the self-imposed tasks he had undertaken in addition to his regular duties at the department of labour, and in each of which he had made some progress, were treatises on "Labour Legislation in Canada," and the "Outlines of an Industrial History of the Dominion." Among his contributions to publications other than the *Labour Gazette*, was a short essay on *Colleges and Citizenship* in a Christmas number of the *Acta Victoriana* of Victoria College, one or two articles in *The Commonwealth* on *Canada's Attitude Towards Labour*, and an uncompleted monograph, intended for publication, on *The Study of Political Economy in the High Schools*. He was president of the Ottawa Social Science Club, secretary-treasurer of the Ottawa section of the University of Toronto Alumni Association, and an active member of the Ottawa Literary and Scientific Society. He was at the same time promoting the organization of a University Club, a plan of which he had carefully prepared, and the object of which was to bring

the university men of the city into closer touch with each other, and make their influence more widely felt in the civic and social life of the community.

The background of all Harper's thinking on social and political problems was coloured by his belief in a moral order; in the forefront was ever the individual proclaiming this order, and seeking to realize it in his own life. Institutions of whatever kind, whether national or religious, were to him of human creation. Their usefulness was in proportion to the degree to which they helped to give expression to the unseen purpose in the universe. Nature and man, alone, were divine. It followed logically from this that man's work among his fellows in the world was to discover the moral order, reveal and maintain it, so far as within him the power lay. Harmony with this order meant happiness, want of harmony, whether by the individual or the state, unhappiness. In this view, the individual is vastly superior to any institution he and his fellows may construct, superior as an end, and as a means to an end. If a set of conditions exist which are counter to the moral order, or obstruct its fulfillment in the lives of men, these conditions should be changed, the individual should not be sacrificed to them. On the other hand, change may be, and ought to be accomplished more by men than by institutions, and can only be accomplished in the degree to which beliefs become active, potent factors in individual lives.

It is true that human knowledge is limited, and that the purpose of God is infinite, and so there may rightly be among men differences of opinion as to what, under any circumstances, are the ends to be sought, and the best means to attain those ends; and humility may well characterize all expressions of belief relative thereto; but, to the extent of knowledge gained,

the ground underfoot is firm, and humility will not excuse the want of assertion, where right reason is set at naught by wrongful conduct. Moreover, there is much on which men can be agreed, broken arcs visible to all, though the perfect round is seen by none. There are right and wrong, truth and falsehood, honesty and dishonesty, love and hate, purity and vice, honour and dishonour, and the difference between them is as apparent and real as the difference 'twixt day and night, albeit, now and again, a twilight of uncertainty may render doubtful the confines of separation. Harper's exclusive insistence was only upon what in this way was acceptable to all; and knowing that it was acceptable, he was sure the appeal would find a response in those to whom it was addressed. Whatever men might be in seeking privately their own selfish ends, their belief in a moral order was apparent once action became collective; the public had a conscience to which it was generally true, though men at times might seem to betray their better selves; and public opinion might be expected to guard for society as a whole a right for which individuals sometimes lost respect. How great, therefore, was the responsibility upon those who had the capacity, or opportunity, to see that public opinion was rightly formed and directed, and that, in social and political affairs, truth and right should be made to prevail!

This insistence upon the recognition of responsibility in those favoured by educational training or opportunity, is well brought out in a paragraph or two in the short essay on *Colleges and Citizenship*. Referring to a quotation from Sir Alfred Milner's life of Arnold Toynbee, in which "the estrangement of the men of thought from the leaders of the people" is referred to as having constituted, in Toynbee's mind, the great danger of the democratic upheaval of the time, Harper writes:

“People in Canada to-day are doubtless not so anxious about democratic upheaval. Fortunately the aggravated conditions of an old world metropolis have not yet been developed. The task is easier; the duty none the less imperative. It is more possible to secure the confidence of men who are not embittered by the pangs of slumdom. But because conditions here are not as distressing as they have been and are elsewhere, it is surely no less desirable, with a view to promoting industrial peace and healthy national development, that the men who have opportunity and capacity for the serious study of social and economic problems, should not allow themselves to become fenced off by a wall of indifference of their own creation from those to whom the mass of the people look for direction, inspiration and suggestion. It is reasonable to expect that he who claims to be engaged in the pursuit of truth should not give countenance to what makes for social disorder and national decay.

“Men are as much open to reason, as liable to accept truth, when they have been convinced of it, as when Arnold Toynbee studied, lectured and wrote. They are as prone to prefer what is genuine to what is pretense and dissimulation. Surely a peculiar obligation to see that men think rightly and act sanely, devolves upon those whose vantage ground should enable them to distinguish what is genuine. Sir Alfred Milner, having in mind the earnest friend of his undergraduate days, said six

years ago to the members of Toynbee Hall: 'I do not go so far as to say that what Oxford thinks to-day England will do to-morrow, but certainly any new movement of thought at the universities in these days rapidly finds its echo in the press and in public opinion.' Indeed, is there not fair ground for the belief that much of the virtue which has marked the conduct of Great Britain's High Commissioner at Cape Town, throughout the South African crisis is due to association with the high-minded student, who, in the congenial atmosphere of Oxford, did not forget that he was a citizen?"

It was his belief in the importance of men recognizing their duties as citizens, and being able to discharge these duties with intelligence and for the common good, which led Harper to prepare a scheme for the teaching of Political Economy in the high schools. The merits of this plan he had summarized as follows:

“Such a study would tend to remedy the great evil of democratic institutions, the susceptibility of the masses to the influence of demagogues, and their liability to misconstrue the relations of cause and effect because of ignorance. It would tend to promote mental development, especially in the direction of individual thought. It would tend to raise the standard of such studies in the universities, and this in time would react upon the high schools in the way of more competent teachers, and, in the end, create great possibilities for the prosecution of research in this all important branch of knowledge in our country. It would tend

to remedy social evils by giving the philanthropist and the public generally, something like an accurate idea of the true state of society. It would react beneficially upon the government, which, with a more critical observation, would be more careful in its actions.”

He modestly concludes,

“I simply put forward a proposal which, I think, if carried out, would tend to modify the evils fostered by ignorance. I have to a great extent taken it as an axiom that whatever tends to disseminate knowledge, to advance truth, and to develop the intellect, cannot be wrong, and should be accepted by all liberal minded men; and this, I think, would be the result of the study of Political Economy in our high schools.”

From the notes he had made, and from what is contained in the body of the article, it would appear that he had in mind a course on *Civic Ethics*, quite as much as on the *Elements of Economics*, and that he would have liked, if possible, to have had a beginning made in the public schools.

Scattered throughout his diary are such observations as the following:

“I am becoming more and more convinced that the true rulers of the nation are outside of our parliaments and our law courts, and that the safety of society lies in informing those who form public opinion.”

“I feel more and more the necessity of emphasizing the importance of the scientific study of economic and political problems in a country in which every man has the franchise, and is supposed to be in a position to express an intelligent opinion upon public questions, and particularly at a time when labour and kindred problems are prominent in the public mind.”

“A man who truly loves his country should be disposed to do his utmost to see it rightly governed.”

“The poor downtrodden have more to hope for from men who, having a specialized training in the operation of social forces, apply themselves to the proper remedy, than from all the windy, ultra-radical demagogues.”

“It is the alienation—partly, no doubt, due to indolence—of the men of thought from those from whom the mass of the people habitually receive their inspiration, which accounts for much of the crass ignorance and purposeless passion of the people and their demagogues.”

“For myself, I have long deplored the foolish worship of this or that set of political machinery by apparently well intentioned men. In Matthew Arnold’s *Culture and Anarchy*, there is a solution for much of our distressing bluster and blunder. With confidence in the possibilities of man and a resolute endeavour to strive towards perfection, to allow our best consciousness to play about our stock notions and our painful conditions of society, we should be able to see the real value of things, and ultimately to approach more nearly to right and truth. If our well-intentioned, but perhaps ‘over-Hebraized’ ultra-socialists and ultra-individualists would have perfection more prominently in mind than the pet panacea they have ever before them, and would allow their best consciousness to play about their notions of society and its evils, there would be less of viciousness and ignorance in their propaganda.”

“The fallacy of political panaceas! And the vital importance of improving the individual morally, and encouraging him to elevate his ideals! What a splendid thing it would be if every labour agitator, every demagogue, every member of parliament, every professor, teacher and minister, and, in fact, every one who exerts an influence upon the public mind, could realize and act upon the truth which came to Alton Locke after his life of bitter trial: ‘My only ground was now the bare realities of life and duty. The problem of society—self-sacrifice, the one solution.’”

“We are too apt to regard social phenomena as if they are entities in themselves, instead of incidents in the development of society, a fact which a man who is amidst the strife of existing social and economic conditions should not lose sight of.”

“I am continually impressed with the wisdom of keeping a mind open to suggestion and impressions from the men one meets in the ordinary course of life, in fine, the importance of keeping an open mind. If one can accomplish this, even the din of ‘the world’s most crowded streets’ becomes interesting and instructive, even beautiful, because of the opportunities of seeing truth and discovering the remedy for evils.”

“Justice and truth must prevail over tyranny and ignorance.”

The true mind is revealed in its unconscious moments, and it is, therefore, from passages like these, casually expressed, and

constantly recurring in much that he wrote, which was of a private nature, that his real views and beliefs are to be gathered. One or two other passages in a similar vein will disclose these views more fully.

During Christmas week of 1900 he visited New York for the first time. Of the many impressions made upon his mind, the contrasts of wealth and poverty, and all that they implied, were to him more real than aught else.

“What was particularly irritating to me,” he writes in his journal, after returning from this trip, “was the constant evidence of the power of money rule in that throbbing metropolis. The story is written, even on the store signs on Broadway, that this, the greatest commercial city in America, is practically owned by monied persons, whose tastes and ambitions strike one as being essentially low, mean and vulgar. I felt strongly a growing pride in British institutions and British character compared with what I saw about me. The ground taken by Mr. Mulock, on behalf of labour, came strongly before me. I felt that selfishness must be reckoned with in the solution of social problems. What is to be hoped is that strong men may be brought to see that right legislation is good politics, that they may thus be persuaded to lend their aid to those who hope to avoid the growth in Canada of a corrupt system by which the power is in the hands of the octopus who owns the money bags, and who fattens on the blood of the people whom he crowds under him. There is luxury and magnificence on Fifth Avenue, but I envied not the proud possessors of those costly

mansions. I want naught but what my own ability and effort will bring me. I believe in making one's surroundings as beautiful as may be, but I feel that there is much waste and vulgar display in the way in which wealthy New York arrays herself. Her luxury is ponderous and heavy and dull, when one remembers that much of it rests on the necks of the hundreds of thousands of toilers who gasp for breath in the narrow streets, from whom are withheld God's free gifts, the sunlight and the pure air."

Elsewhere, he writes after a walk through the city streets:

"On the way home I turned over in my mind the question as to how wealthy men come to be so much appreciated in spite of the fact that it is only the lovable in man which is truly loved—by right-minded men at all events, and I am satisfied that, consciously or unconsciously, men come to compromise with their own sense of justice in their estimate of men, until a habit of thought and regard is fixed. What goes forward is something like this: we do not love the man with the big house, but we would love to be the man with the big house. And since the man with the big house often has it in his power to get a bigger house than we have, we come to appreciate him. Many men do this until it comes to be usual to appreciate the man with the big house, and he comes to be a large figure in the eyes of the world, however little we may love him and his methods. This is particularly the case in a young nation like the United States which has, as

yet, scarcely come to realize the really valuable things, an appreciation of which comes from genuine culture.

“Again, whilst there is no great sin *per se* in being rich, I can see the truth in the old scriptural saying, ‘It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.’ When it is so hard for an earnest student to keep his mind rivetted upon the eternal realities of life, through which character building and true happiness come, how much harder must it be for the man whose circumstances make the existing order, if not sufficient, yet comfortable, who has his vanity flattered by the things which he has been pursuing, and who has a vast web of houses and other possessions to shut him off from even an occasional view of the realities. These facts, of course, only hold in their general application and tendencies. There have been, doubtless, splendid rich men. When these reach that state when, of their own free will, and of deliberate choice, they are prepared to go, sell all that they have, and give to the poor, then they have reached an attitude of mind and heart which enables them to distinguish between semblances and realities, to deliberately select the latter, and so realize the greatest happiness, the Kingdom of Heaven.”

His fine spirit is no less clearly revealed in the views which he held of the duties of the department of labour, and of the ideals he believed should govern and direct its work. The

following extracts from letters to the one with whom he was associated, may serve to show with what purpose and to what end he had given himself to the work. The letters were written during the summer of 1901, while he was in charge of the department:

“As I lay in a hammock last night at Kingsmere, and gazed into the deep blue moonlit vault of heaven, and ran over in my mind the progress already made by the department, and taxed my imagination to see its future, the one formidable obstacle which I saw ever before us was the difficulty of keeping firm to one’s convictions in the face of growing clamours for things which one cannot approve, yet which are uttered by people whom one cannot ignore. Nevertheless, I am convinced that all will be well in the end. We will have the good will of the decent, fair-minded people, and that is all one should be much concerned about, after one has satisfied one’s own sense of right and justice. I feel a deep sense of the gravity of our position, and I am determined that you shall command my best effort in your endeavours to make the work of the department effective, and to defeat unworthy attacks. I do not think that I am lacking either in faith in human nature or in the ultimate triumph of right, but I am coming to realize more, day by day, that it is a great man’s work which we are called upon to perform. I have every confidence in our ability to weather the storms which we will undoubtedly be called upon to meet, and you can be assured that you will find

me ready to do my share. It behooves us both to steadfastly keep before us those things which are true, and, if we do, Nature, as Carlyle says, will be on our side.

“The work on the *Labour Gazette* allows opportunity for a careful and searching analysis of the industrial and social life of the Dominion. Already I can see the practical usefulness of the work. In addition to the obvious recognition of the claims of labour involved in the creation of the department, we have it in our power to publish information which should lead to a better understanding all round, as well as to further such movements as arbitration and conciliation which tend to promote industrial peace.

“With the added responsibility there has come to me an increasing sense of the usefulness of the work which we are doing. I believe we can do much towards determining the direction of social progress. With a knowledge of fact, an absence of sectarian prejudice, some understanding of the progress of human institutions, and of the motives which influence men, we should, if we can keep control of ourselves, and maintain high ideals as inspiration for the development of the best that is in us, be able to render a lasting service to this country.”

In this connection his views as to the relation of the State and Labour, and of labour problems generally, may not be without interest.

“I think,” he writes, “we should discourage anything that tends to prevent Canadian workers from being good citizens, and enough means and leisure to avoid the brutalizing tendency of suppressed bitterness and poverty, is necessary to that end. I am inclined to believe that healthy, rational development will be best furthered by restraining those influences which tend to lower the level of citizenship, and the material well-being of the mass of the workers in a country in which, as in Canada, the workers are an important element in the governing of the nation. Society must insist upon rules of fairness governing our industrial system, and upon frowning down the ‘mean man.’ Let each individual have to himself the reward of his energy, and of his legitimate effort, but let him work in accordance with rules of fair play, and frown down, and banish, if need be, the ‘mean man.’”

“There are those who have held that man has but one right, the right to live, if he can. Modern British democracy does not stop there. That same sense of self-respect which prevents us considering as tolerable a society which allows men and women, who are unable to provide for themselves, to lie down on the street and die, forces us to insist that there shall be some rules for the regulation of industrial life, more particularly where the parties in an industrial contest are of unequal strength. Most modern societies are prepared to admit that industry should be so conducted that men who are

willing to work shall be allowed to work under as wholesome conditions as are reasonably possible, and that they shall be allowed such a return for their labour and so much leisure, as is necessary to health. For, to put it on no higher ground, no society, however hard hearted, can afford for long, when the remedy lies in its own hands, to countenance conditions which create in the hearts of reasonable men, that bitterness which tends to provoke social upheavals and revolutions.

“Where the governing power is dependent upon the governed, no abstract theory of individual liberty or what not, will long prevent the State from taking cognizance of apparent and remediable injustice. Doctrinaire political philosophers, painters of Utopias, peddlars of political panaceas, still have their own little *nostrums* for society, but the law has been built up, as has seemed right or expedient to the law makers of the time, as a series of arbitrary rules based upon experience, and defining the terms upon which people may best live in each other’s society.

“The attitude taken by those who have fashioned British policy in industrial matters, recognizing the principle that upon individual ability and individual energy rests national progress, allows to the individual the enjoyment of the fruits of his industry. But it insists that in the getting of it he must be governed by rules of fair play. The rule which underlies the various labour laws seems to be ‘leave well enough alone, but get

after the mean man.' A parent has a right to chastise his child, but that does not mean that he has a right to beat his child whenever he feels inclined, or allow him to be so worked as to start him in life a crippled, deformed, little creature. The Factories Acts, perhaps the best known department of labour legislation, both in England and in Canada, have been created to correct abuses, which would not have arisen but for the practices of hard-hearted employers. In order to thwart the mean man, who will consider neither the comfort nor the well-being of his employees, certain rules have been laid down, declaring how establishments, where abuses are likely to arise, shall be conducted.

“The generally accepted rule nowadays is, that good done is sufficient justification of an act, in the absence of evidence that equal or greater evil will follow. Take as an illustration the inspection of apples and pears, which does not fall within the scope of what is normally considered labour legislation. It was found that, left to themselves, some men who sold apples were so short-sighted as to fill the centre of the apple barrels with inferior fruit, straw, old boots, clothes, and other material which cost less than the hand-picked fruit of the Canadian orchards, and which could not be seen when covered up with rosy, sweet smelling Northern Spies. But the appetite of the British consumer does not extend to the contents of the refuse cart, and Canadian fruit growers as a whole suffered. Because some men are prepared to carry

their meanness to the extent of counterfeiting, and of impairing the reputation of their countrymen, the Canadian parliament felt called upon, in the interest of common decency and the good of the apple trade, to require an inspection, which, while it will defeat the mean man, will involve the regulation of every honest Canadian shipper who is content to take his chances on the principle, ‘*caveat emptor.*’

“Here, then, is an illustration which may be applied. Let every man stand upon his own feet, says the parliament at Westminster. Let every man choose and pursue his own aim in life, and have for himself the reward of his efforts. But where an abuse develops to such an extent that it becomes a menace to public safety, or an invasion of the rights of others, we are prepared to so legislate as to defeat the offender, whilst restricting individual enterprise to the least possible extent.”

And of the application of the same principle of fair play to industrial disputes, he writes:

“Partly because society feels that it cannot afford to see the machinery of production tied up and inactive, partly because of the effect upon consumers of increased inconvenience and increased prices as the result of that suspension, but largely, I think, because society demands that the men who work shall have fair treatment, because the great heart of society, stripped of its shams, its semblances, its dilettantisms, its

hypocrisies and its follies, demands that justice and fair play shall rule between man and man, that they who are willing to work with, their hands shall have a fair return for their work, and shall be allowed to work under fair conditions, it has come to pass that, in British countries, there is an answer to the demand of labour for some kind of arbitrament other than the strong hand, when the parties to an industrial dispute fail to agree. In New Zealand the answer has come in compulsory arbitration, which, at bottom, means, practically, the fixing of wages by the State. In Great Britain and Canada individualism will not go so far. Public opinion, for the time being at least, is satisfied with the creation of machinery for the operation of voluntary conciliation. We hope that public opinion will, in most cases and in the long run, strike a true note. Under modern conditions, as Carlyle says, ‘Democracy virtually extant will insist upon becoming palpably extant.’

“Inasmuch as many industrial disputes have their origin in misunderstandings, and in sentimental alienations from the arbitrary disposition of one party or the other, the Acts in Great Britain and Canada, providing as they do for the appointment of an unbiased mediator to bring the parties together, are calculated to sweep away all unessential entanglements, and make the way clear for a settlement by means of amicable compromise without taking away from either of the parties the privilege, to which each claims a right,

of using its strength to further its own legitimate individual ends. The existence of the machinery makes it difficult for either party in a serious dispute to refuse to employ it; the prestige of the government behind the conciliator enables him to deal freely with each party, and to throw the full light of day upon the real condition of affairs. This done, the full strength of the system of voluntary conciliation comes into play. Public opinion will force a settlement which approximates to justice and fairness. The mean party, whether it be the employer or the labour organization, must inevitably give way to the extent of its meanness, and at the same time, the right of the individual to realize for himself the fullest fruits of his legitimate effort, at once the stimulus of the capitalist, and *raison d'être* of the trade union, is preserved. The system, it is true, acknowledges, at once, the imperfection of trade union machinery, and the selfishness, even to the extent of meanness, of employers; it goes further than the grasping and heartless employer would allow; it falls short of what many unionists, especially among the socialists in the organizations, would demand; but it adequately represents the general attitude of the British public in matters of labour legislation generally, preserves the reward of individual effort to the individual who makes the effort, but makes it impossible for the mean man to profit by his meanness. Meanwhile, with the option, in case of disputes, of the arbitrament of public opinion, an employer is apt to give greater consideration to a

proposal for the creation of a permanent conciliation board, representative of himself and his employees, to determine questions which may arise within his establishment.

“Such a bringing together of the two classes in the producing scheme for the consideration of their mutual interests, as well as their mutual differences, is calculated to promote a harmony which should make for the great aim of all, the promotion of industrial peace. Granted the existence of a fair rate of wages and fair conditions of work, the existence of conditions, which can, with little difficulty, merge into a modified form of industrial association or partnership, and there is the vindication of the truth, that there is no necessary warfare between the parties to production.”

Lastly, of Democracy; its problems were to him mainly industrial; a well informed public opinion was the one hope, a recognition of the duties of citizenship, the one necessity of the times. In obedience to a moral order lay the secret of happiness, for the heart of a people like the heart of man, was governed by truth.

“If we are to have faith in democracy, we must believe that the people, when informed, will choose what is right in preference to what is base. If we can judge of the disposition of the press and the expressed opinions of prominent men who give thought to the matter, Canada has deliberately set her face towards the promotion of industrial peace,

the stamping out of the mean man. Canadians seem disposed to declare with Carlyle, that ‘cash payment is not the sole nexus of man with man. Deep, far deeper than supply and demand are laws, obligations as sacred as man’s life itself. He that will not learn them, perpetual mutiny, contention, hatred, isolation, execration, will wait on his footsteps, till all men discern that the thing which he attains, however golden it look or be, is not success, but the want of success.’”

“Working men are not asking for favours. In their federations less and less is heard of technical differences, and more of a desire to secure the good will of the general public by means of a cool, deliberate presentation of views upon public questions primarily affecting them. It is impossible not to accept the general views of Mr. Henry Compton, that as working men acquire their full rights, their leaders will turn to the noble task of impressing upon them the duties of citizenship. Outside of parliaments and law courts, the destiny of the nation’s workers and employers is being shaped by the consciousness of right in the minds of the mass of the people.”

“I have confidence that public opinion will, in most cases and in the long run, strike a true note. I have faith in the saying, ‘the people may make mistakes, but the people never lie.’ Show the people what it all means, and the people will do what is right. They are learning the insufficiency of political catch words. They know that no political pill, call it by ever so attractive a word, is a cure for all ills.”



“Whatever course we may pursue we must not forget that it is but a means to an end. Machinery is good, so long as we remember that it is machinery. No system will, even for a short time, avoid industrial evils unless the people have respect for what is right and true and just. The present system has its omissions and its weaknesses, but it keeps in mind some of the principles of public policy, which experience has shown to be sturdy, sane and wholesome. I think it is a stride in the right direction. If men will but be true to themselves, a new era is dawning upon us; an era, which, if it will not be free of pain, hardship and suffering for many, will, while preserving a premium as a reward for the energetic, a punishment for the mean, leave the final judgment in industrial questions with public opinion, which, when informed, is ready to choose what is right in preference to what is base. The ultimate solution of

industrial problems, now as never before, lies with the people at large, and all will be well if citizens will but discharge the duties of their citizenship.”



THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

“I trust I may do my duty before God and man and realize the best that is in me.” These words are among the last in Harper’s diary. Five years before, referring to repeated disappointments and reverses he had written: “I hope they will enable me to realize the high ideal of my existence.” The same lofty purpose was expressed in the opening paragraph of his diary, already quoted. It reads:

“I am writing this record of my thoughts and actions in order that I may be better able to understand myself; to improve in that wherein I find myself wanting, and that some day I may be able to look back and find a rule of development or perhaps of life, with its assistance. I shall endeavour to be at least honest with myself, and hope that the use of this book may help me occasionally, to sever myself mentally from the associations of the world and retire within myself. My hope is that some day I may be able to become acquainted with my own individuality, and discover what is the first essential and object of my existence.”

If love for others was the ruling passion, the realization of a high ideal was the constant purpose of Harper’s life. He deliberately, at an early age, looked in upon his life; regarded it as a trust given him by the Creator to mould and fashion at his will; saw that it had capacities which he believed to be infinite and divine; and sought, by reflection and action, to unfold its meaning and to work out its end. “There is a dreamy undercurrent in my whole make-up, which I have never been able to understand, but which sometimes seems to me to be

more real than my waking life.” Already the infinite mystery had become a great reality to him. His search was not in vain. Before its close,

*“He saw life clearly,
And he saw it whole.”*

Man found himself in a world surrounded by mortals like himself; two theories were possible, either all was chance, or there was design. If chance, there could be no ultimate meaning of things, no relation between the parts, either between the universe and man, or man and his fellows; truth and right there might be, by arrangement, but they could not be absolute; duty might exist, but under what law? No, the world, man,—these clearly were to be accounted for in some more rational way. The only alternative was design. The finite mind, seeking to interpret the Infinite, had invented a language, whereby, through the medium of words, it sought to give expression to its thoughts. A creator and an infinite purpose were essential to design; the creator, the finite mind conceived of as God, the infinite purpose, His will. To know God and to do His will became then the chief end of man.

From a consciousness of the mystery of his own being and of the universe about him, the earliest perception of the infinite nature of each and of their relation, came to Harper in the discovery of what he was wont to call “the rule of law.” In Nature he found it first. In Nature there was no chance, all was cause and effect; there was constant change, but no final destruction. “Immortal growth was the prophecy which Nature made for man.” What the eye of the senses discovered in the

physical world, the eye of the soul discerned to be true of the inner life. Character was not the child of Destiny, the shadow of Circumstance, it was the one immortal creation of which man was capable. "What a man sows, that shall he also reap." In character was the harvest of all that a man ever thought, or willed, or did.

And herein lay the greatness of life. An order in the universe, a capacity in man to discover and interpret; Truth, the order; the path, Right; Reason, lighted by the lamp of Conscience, might lead man to the abode of God.

Without some satisfying of reason, Harper maintained there could be no true inspiration of soul; for a belief to be vital, it was necessary that its significance should be grasped, and its meaning comprehended. It was secondary, therefore, *what* a man believed, so long as he had a reason for the faith that was in him, and was prepared to follow where an honest search might lead. In the end, the meaning of life would be clear. It was not against criticism or the critical spirit that he was prone to object, but against such divorced from an honest and sincere purpose. Honest criticism he believed was essential to clearer vision, and, reverently pursued, strengthened belief.

It was the intellectual honesty of Matthew Arnold which attracted Harper so strongly, and gave the writings of that author so great an influence over his life. What he has written, in reference to his reading of *Literature and Dogma*, is not without interest as showing the effect which this book had upon him, and as disclosing his own views in the matter of criticism and belief.

"To-day," he writes, "I spent a good morning taking a look into *Literature and Dogma*, which,

so far as I have read, is in entire accord with Matthew Arnold's clear, critical method of examination. I was anxious to get at his main thesis, and read several chapters, as well as the conclusion, and think that as a result my own views regarding Christianity have been rather strengthened. A quibble always annoys me, but Matthew Arnold's criticism is of a different sort. For my own part, I am convinced that the critical spirit is not indicative of meanness, but rather of balance and honesty of mind, and is calculated to create, not blind prejudice, but wholesome conviction. This is particularly the case where the critic has, as in the case of Matthew Arnold, imaginative power properly controlled, and a deep appreciation of love and beauty."

And some days later:

"To-night I read several chapters of Matthew Arnold's *Literature and Dogma*, which, with what I have already read of the work, cleared my mind as to the main purpose of the author, the placing of our conception of the value of the Bible and of Christianity on a more stable and permanent basis. I feel confident that this will be the effect upon my own mind, for I thoroughly hold that a belief to be vital must be real to him who professes it. Indeed, the profession to others of what one believes, however important, is almost inevitably vague, or, at least, liable to be misunderstood. What is really important is for us to believe what we ourselves find believable and true before the bar of our

inmost conscience. I find myself reaching out with eagerness to the thought, which seems an old one to me, that God is intimately associated with conscience; that conduct is important, but that rules of conduct institutionalized are apt to be external and wanting in vital force; and that it was the emphasizing of the importance of the personal, inward condition, which was the real strength and lasting service of the new dispensation.

“I find my views clearing as time goes on. Latterly two thoughts have been, perhaps, more prominent than any others: the importance of constant choice in the matter of selection and rejection, and a respect for the conception of the many sidedness of truth, which conception brings with it a toleration for the views of others, particularly in the matter of religion. For given that religion is an inward personal matter, and that men are constituted so differently, their conceptions of the truth, itself single and indissoluble, if you will, must vary widely. Under such conditions the necessity of keeping in view the highest standard of life, as illustrated by Christ, becomes of the very greatest importance.”

In the character of Christ, Harper found the answer to the question, what is the purpose of life? That life appealed to him from every side. It was the manliest of lives. Conscious of its greatness, it could forbear to use its creative powers for selfish ends. It could be governed by a principle, where a multitude could not attract. Bigotry, passion and prejudice only added force to its invectives; ridicule and calumny, dignity to its

assertion of right. In the presence of the strong, it could champion the cause of the weak; the rich it could make to tremble at their neglect of the claims of the poor. In the midst of opposition, it could stand alone; surrounded by temptation, it could remain pure.

It was the manliest of lives. Chivalrous in its defense of woman, tender in its love for little children, loyal in its allegiance to friends. Uncompromising it was in its demands for truth, unsparing in its rebuke of evil, relentless, almost violent, in its denunciations of hypocrisy. Yet nowhere was such sympathy to be found; nowhere, greater compassion; nowhere, forgiveness more sincere.

It was the manliest of lives, but it was also the simplest and the best. In vain one searched for an account of material possessions; in vain one looked for an assertion of worldly place or power; but it was recorded that its cradle was a manger, its crown, a wreath of thorns. The mountains, the woods, the sea, the flowers, the stars, were so sought by, and so ministered to that life, as to be almost a part of it. Simple fisher-folk of Galilee, devoted but humble women in the town of Bethany, shared its companionship, the sorrowful and outcast, its love.

And withal, it had a mission, higher, greater than the world had ever known. Clearly it saw into the mystery of the universe, deeply it divined the meaning of the human soul. In words, as simple, as beautiful, as the flower, or the name which suggested the thought, it related the universe to man, and man to God. "Consider the lilies how they grow!"—all that Nature had to teach was there, selection and rejection, cause and effect, the unfailing operation of law, life and death. "Our Father,"—

obedience, love, trust, forgiveness, the brotherhood of man, man's sonship under God.

Was it a matter of wonder then, that such a nature as Harper's should be captivated by such a life? Having founded his belief on reason, in the following after the perfect life of Christ, reason was soon outrun by that which brought conviction of itself. Having learned something of the secret and the method of that life, Harper came soon to believe the words:

*“Ego sum via, veritas, vita,
Sine via non itur, sine veritate non
Cognoscitur, sine vita non vivitur.”*

They came to be the controlling power in his life.

Harper sought the realization of his belief in conduct. His impurity, his weakness, he contrasted with the strength and beauty of the life of Christ, and daily sought with an earnest devotion to yield the allegiance due to the higher ideal. Without many professions, he strove silently for the attainment of a character which would make him, among men, not unworthy of the ideal which he cherished in his heart.

The following passages may help to make good the truth of these words:

“Idealism is not folly. It prevents folly. It is the main hope of a delirious world. It is the means of informing common sense. An ideal truly cherished is never lost, save to give place to a higher ideal. An ideal is not smashed by experience of frailty; but is rather thrown into greater relief. Ideals are

dissipated only by the clearer view which comes with a widening horizon. Disappointment in persons will not make an idealist a cynic, unless he has no heart.

“Unfortunately, all men are apt to reach out for the immediate thing which looms large before them. Some are worse than others. And it is only by trying to see things in perspective, by the application of common sense enlightened by idealism, that we can hope to be among the wiser. A constant regard for perfection, the constant cherishing of an intelligent idealism, will, I think, help a man ‘in the midst of the crowd to keep with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude,’—Emerson’s measure of a great man.”

“On the place of churches in national and social life, I take the ground that the important thing for a man is his religion, what he actually believes regarding his relation to the universe, rather than his church affiliation. The first is individual and real, the latter more or less artificial and a matter of expediency, a means of assisting him in making easier the spread of the views which he holds; in fine, an institution, with an object doubtless, but none the less an institution, machinery.”

“This has been a good day, in that life and human duty have been very real to me in it. In the afternoon H——, L—— and I walked out Bank Street to the canal, and, on the way back, I turned the conversation to the question of man’s duty to himself and to others, taking the position that a man owed it to himself to make the most of himself, and that, if he ever earnestly started in on the task, he would find himself moved to see that his influence upon others was in the same direction, namely, towards perfection; that if men were once taught to see the working of the rule of law in this sense, they must inevitably recast their entire views of life to their own advantage and that of society; and that if the church, instead of saying do this, because this and that authority says it is right to do it, would appeal to a man’s appreciation of what manhood means in this sense, there would be more Christlikeness among so-called professors of Christianity.”



“This, my birthday, has commenced most happily. As I lay last night on the couch in our comfortable little room, allowing my thoughts to run on into the future, and resolving to make this new year of my life one marked by real and substantial progress, —— came to me about midnight with a birthday present, which, it seems to me, could not be more in keeping with my present

state of mind and resolutions. The present consisted of two splendid engravings of Hoffman's *Christ, the Child*, and *Christ, and the Rich Young Man*. More and more, as time goes on, I am coming to realize that the virtues upon which the hopes of the world are based are to be found in that rich beautiful life of the Master. Humility, self-sacrifice and love, all that appeals to the noblest instincts of our nature, are to be found in the character of that perfect Man, who was 'despised and afflicted, yet opened not His mouth.'

"Trammelled by a liberal share of human weakness, an unfortunate combination of high ambition and a tendency to frivolity, I can only hope to come to realize gradually all that that life represents. When one considers the wide-spread influence which even a comparatively obscure personality yields in this world, the awful responsibility which is attached to every act of volition, to every word and deed, is forced upon one. These and other weaknesses I must control, and my character I must seek to strengthen in order that my life shall not be useless, in order that I may realize dear mother's last wish, that we may meet 'There.' I must try, with the help of God, to more and more conform thought and act to the model of the perfect life of Christ, a life that if men and States would imitate, there would be an end to viciousness and of man's inhumanity to man. To be brought face to face, daily, with Hoffman's beautiful representation should make strong

resolutions stronger and more possible of realization.

“It is a beautiful day, the first really cold day of the winter. Rarely do I remember a clearer air, a brighter sun. To me, it is as if God smiles His approval on my resolutions. Pray God, I may be able to live them out in practice.”

“I wrote to F—— to-night, and my heart went out strangely to him as I wrote. The thought which I wished most to convey to him, was the importance of combining nobility of mind with true humility in the sense in which Christ used the words; the truth in the simple but meaningful words of the beatitude, ‘Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God’; and the necessity, with a view to the healthy upbuilding of a strong character, to ‘Be just and fear not.’ The more I am brought into contact with the views of the world, the more I see the wealth of meaning in some of the scriptural sayings. If, as I trust, this expansion in the meaning of things goes on, life should be filled with more and more real happiness, especially if I am able to so master myself as to regulate my life in accord with the truth revealed to me.”

“To-night I feel that what the world wants is more of forbearance, less of viciousness, more of sweetness and light, more of the spirit of Jesus Christ.”



A LAST WORD

The love, the truth and the beauty of Harper's nature have nowhere found better expression than in his last letters to his closest friend. His heart is revealed there, as, only in such a relationship, it is possible for hearts to reveal themselves. In the sanctuary of Friendship, everything is holy; there abideth the love that "thinketh no evil," the confidence that is never betrayed; at its threshold, semblances disappear; having entered beneath its portals, there is no longer anything to conceal.

The one to whom they were written was in British Columbia when these letters were received by him. He had been sent by the government to reconcile, if possible, the conflicting claims of labour and capital, which at the time had assumed the proportions of a strike in one of the mining towns of that province. In his absence, the department of labour had come in for some criticism at the instance of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. Harper was anxious lest this should be a matter of concern to his friend, and hastened to reassure him. The letters are a true expression of himself. They reveal his standards, his belief in truth, his appreciation of beauty, his conception of duty, his trust in an overruling Providence, his deep concern for humanity, and his love for his friend. All these, in him, were as inseparable from each other as each was inseparable from his life.

He writes:

"Ottawa, Nov. 10, 1901.

“MY DEAR REX:

“I have been flying westward with you all week, weighing in my mind the chances of the success of your mission. It may be weak, this proneness to speculate upon the outcome of an issue in the future, but where one’s feelings are so nearly concerned, one cannot but do it. Each time my thoughts have turned to the subject of your mission to the coast, my conclusion has been the same—you must succeed. To-day—the first breathing spell which I have had since you left—as I walked home in the bright sunlight and the brisk air, the conclusion has become conviction. I do not attempt to disguise the difficulties which confront you. Indeed, perhaps, I rather magnify them. Two camps of organized self-interest confront each other. Misunderstanding, bitterness and passion have much sway in each. But your strength lies in the fact that what you seek is fairness, truth and justice, as well as the promotion of industrial peace and the country’s welfare. ‘Speak to his heart,’ says Emerson, ‘and the man becomes suddenly virtuous.’ My dear Rex, I assure you it is not the prejudice of a friendship, which makes me miss you more than I care to confess, that tells me that it is not the strong arm of a commission, nor yet the power of public opinion, that is your strongest weapon in this important crisis; but the commanding influence of a high-minded manhood moved by noble impulses, and unalloyed by selfish motive. Success must crown your efforts.

“This week has been an instructive one in many ways. You have doubtless noticed the conclusion of the Canadian Manufacturers’ Association with regard to the *Labour Gazette* and the department’s work generally. The decision, though not unexpected, is an evidence of how much must be done, before men, whose business principles are but a reflection of their personal interests as they conceive them, can be brought to see that right reason will not be satisfied by any industrial scheme which leaves out of account consideration for the well-being of the great mass of the people. Mr. ———, in a conversation which I had with him on Friday, assured me that we ought not to worry over the verdict of the Manufacturers’ Association. ‘For,’ as he put it, ‘a department which stands for the recognition of the rights of working men cannot expect to be popular with selfish employers.’ Speaking of the comparison made between the Canadian and United States Departments, I urged upon him the importance of the publication of a monthly Gazette as a means of making effective a policy which depends for its sanction upon public opinion. He agreed with me, and added, ‘They talk of a quarterly publication, doubtless they would be better satisfied still if there were no publication at all.’

“Mr. ———’s opinion was not necessary to reassure me in the matter of the Manufacturers’ Association’s criticism. The judgment which is really important is that of one’s own conscience.

Mine tells me that, however imperfect our work may have been, however much there may be room for improvement, what we have done has not been inconsiderable, especially when the difficulties under which we have laboured are considered. I am confident that the broad lines of policy which we have followed are right, and that our work, as our knowledge of existing conditions increases, will be of more and more value to the working men of Canada and to the country generally.

“I miss you very much in the office, but still more out of it. Indeed when you are away I realize how much we are together. However, Rex, I need not assure you that I am constantly with you in thought. Your life has grown into mine to such an extent that your hopes and aspirations are mine as well. Take care of yourself, my dear Rex, and whatever may be the outcome of your mission, I know that you will have done your duty. When you are in the mountains think of one whose soul is also profoundly stirred by the message which great, glorious, beautiful Nature has for man.

“With much love,

“Ever yours affectionately,

“BERT.”

“Ottawa, Nov. 13, 1901.

“MY DEAR REX:

“You must not take my official notes daily as a measure of my interest in your affairs here, your progress yonder, or your thoughtfulness in writing me such refreshing letters as those which you have written *en route*. And let me thank you for these letters, Rex. They take me with you as you go through that wildly grand country, the very thought of which makes the heart of a true Canadian bound with pride. The dating of your last, ‘in the country of the foot-hills,’ makes me think how eagerly you must be looking forward, as you wrote, to the prospect of the mountains. Perhaps you were fortunate enough to see them in the stern glory of a winter sunset. These things, like great pictures and noble thoughts, leave a permanent impress upon one’s life, and I rejoice that the path of duty has led you through so much that is beautiful and sublime.

“But hold, I am probably several chapters behind your present thought and work, for by now you will be wrapped up in the affairs of a mining town, interested in its mushroom growth, its throbbing, ill-digested life, and in the main object of your mission, the strike.

“Perhaps it is this very mission of yours which has set my mind so strongly of late upon the question of man’s duty. This afternoon, Harry, Laschinger and I took a long walk in the frosty air,—for winter has gripped Ottawa hard, ice covers the ground, ponds are frozen and the sky is stern

and gray, and I found myself driven to turn conversation along this line. Is it because the church has so far drifted from truth that it succeeds so little in making the life of Christ a reality among men? I thoroughly hold that once convince a man of a truth, and that truth, even despite him, will become an active potent factor in his life. How are men to be convinced? The church says do this, because authority says it is right so to do. But men do not do it. Why? Because men do not come to vital conclusions upon the strength of authority, especially when they have their own opinions regarding the channels through which the authority filters. Is it not time that a different line should be followed? Tell men to do right because it is right to do right; because it is consonant with the law of their natures; because only by so doing will they realize themselves. And here we come to the great beauty, justice and potency of the appeal to the rule of law. Show a man that it is only by putting forth his best efforts towards what his best consciousness tells him to be right that he will make any progress satisfactory to his own nature, or in harmony with the eternal realities, and the shackles of petty ambitions fall from him. He becomes stronger and stronger. And in proportion as his own true strength increases, so will the appreciation of nature's laws and the character of Christ develop manly humility and a sense of duty to the world without him, a sense that his life is part of the lives of many others, as many as come within the almost unlimited sphere of his influence,

and that he owes it to himself, as much as he owes it to them, that that influence shall also tend in the direction of perfection, the sweeping away of bitterness, passion, prejudice and viciousness in whatever form. Once bring home to a man the sense of personal duty in terms of inflexible and yet infinitely just law—law which, properly followed, makes for progress, if disobeyed, for confusion,—and you have put him on his feet with his face to his true goal in life. Herein, it seems to me, lies a reconciliation of the two injunctions: ‘Bear ye one another’s burdens,’ and ‘bear your own burden.’ Do the latter, and you will find yourself doing the former, which is a good thing to do.

“All of this is simple, Rex, even rudimentary, but to-night it has a strong hold upon me, and, as I have not you here to talk to, I am laying it before your sympathetic eye, that is if you have patience for it. Out there where the country is just finding itself, where standards are few and hastily put together, men are apt to emphasize the importance of the *immediate* thing. Here in the East men try to get away from the truth by demanding ‘of all the thousand nothings of the hour, their stupefying power.’ Both sides of the continent have perplexities and heartaches for the well-wisher of mankind. But, however distressing may be the rash radicalism of British Columbia, I doubt if its position is not relatively better than that of the indifferent East. For where there is manly force and rude contact with nature—in Carlyle’s sense—

there is apt to be more of a result where an appeal is made, as it must be in both cases, to the manliness of men, the true-heartedness of true hearts. The main difference, it seems to me, lies in this, that British Columbia requires the curb, and the East the spur. Both need light. And the man who would give it to them must have their confidence, so much have men come to associate the truth and its exponent. Confidence requires trust and faith; and these, to be lasting, must be based upon strength and honesty in the individual who would be the guide. Hence it behooves every man who would be of lasting service to his country to see that he, too, is clean.

“But I see I am going far afield again. I miss you, Rex, very much. The meaning of an individual is sometimes emphasized when the individual is absent from the associations which are eloquent of his individuality. The Canadian Manufacturers’ Association to the contrary notwithstanding, your work is neither superficial nor ephemeral. It is of the very essence of a force which is calculated to prove a strong lever in regulating the labour movement, and indeed other movements as well, in Canada. It is my happiness to be associated with you in that work. I think I comprehend its nature and its importance, immediate and even prospective, and I trust I may prove true to its demands and purpose.

“But I must get down to my night’s work, Rex. The house is singularly quiet, without any

movement in the adjoining room, but that does not excuse the sacrifice of opportunity.

“With best wishes and much love,

“Affectionately yours,

“BERT.”

And nothing, not even the loss of life itself, did excuse, with Harper, “the sacrifice of opportunity.”

“In the common round
Of life’s slow action, stumbling on the brink
Of sudden opportunity, he chose
The only noble, godlike, splendid way,
And made his exit, as earth’s great have gone,
By that vast doorway looking out on death.”

Harper was drowned on the sixth of December. Three days later, on the twenty-eighth anniversary of the day of his birth, they buried him on the crest of a hill overlooking the village in which he was born. Thus does Destiny, linking the cradle with the grave, leave us to wonder over the mysteries which she delights to weave.

[The end of *The Secret of Heroism* by William Lyon Mackenzie King]