

## **Philistine and genius / by Boris Sidis.**

### **Contributors**

Sidis, Boris, 1867-1923.

### **Publication/Creation**

New York : Moffat, Yard, 1911.

### **Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/dqpj2vzu>

### **License and attribution**

Conditions of use: it is possible this item is protected by copyright and/or related rights. You are free to use this item in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s).



Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722  
E [library@wellcomecollection.org](mailto:library@wellcomecollection.org)  
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

# **PHILISTINE AND GENIUS**

**BY**

**BORIS SIDIS**

1934

lo  
xgi

ND	1934.	ND
	THE CHARLES MYERS LIBRARY	
	Reference Section	
	NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY	
ND		ND

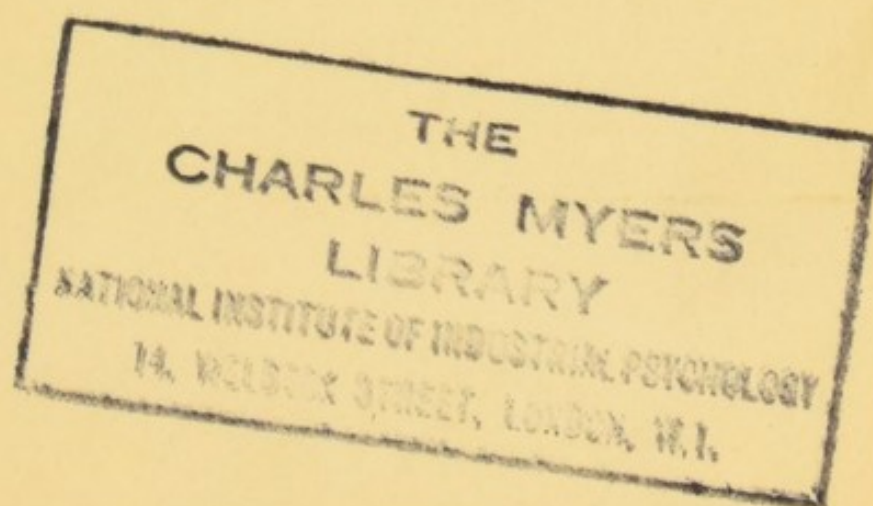


22500563798



Med  
K47729

uc







Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2016

**PHILISTINE AND GENIUS**





# PHILISTINE AND GENIUS

BY

BORIS SIDIS, M.A., Ph. D., M.D.



NEW YORK  
MOFFAT, YARD AND COMPANY  
1911

COPYRIGHT, 1911, BY  
MOFFAT, YARD AND COMPANY  
NEW YORK

---

*All Rights Reserved*

Published, May, 1911  
Second Printing, September, 1911  
Third Printing, November, 1911

PRINTED IN U. S.

WELLCOME INSTITUTE LIBRARY	
Coll.	WelMcmeC
Coll.	
No.	MS

TO  
THE FATHERS AND MOTHERS  
OF  
THE UNITED STATES





## PHILISTINE AND GENIUS

### I

I ADDRESS myself to you, fathers and mothers, and to you, open-minded readers. I take it for granted that your life-work is with you a serious matter and that you put forth all your efforts to do your best in the walk of life which you have chosen. I assume that you want to develop your energies to the highest efficiency and bring out the best there is in you. I assume that you earnestly wish and strive to bring out and develop to the highest efficiency the faculties not only of your children, but also those of your friends and co-workers with whom you associate

in your daily vocation, and that you are deeply interested in the education of your countrymen and their children, who share with you the duties, rights and privileges of citizenship. I also assume that as men and women of liberal education you are not limited to the narrow interests of one particular subject, to the exclusion of all else. I assume that you are especially interested in the development of personality as a whole, the true aim of education. I also assume that you realize that what is requisite is not some more routine, not more desiccated, quasi-scientific methods of educational psychology, not the sawdust of college-pseudagogics and philistine, normal school-training, but more light on the problems of life. What you want is not the training of philistines, but the education of genius.

We need more light, more information



on "the problems of life." Is it not too big a phrase to employ? On a second thought, however, I must say that your problems are the problems of life. For the problems of education are fundamental, they are at the bottom of all vital problems. The ancient Greeks were aware of it and paid special attention to education. In rearing his revolutionary, utopian edifice, Plato insists on education as the foundation of a new social, moral and intellectual life. Plato in his *Republic* makes Socrates tell his interlocutor, Adeimantus: "Then you are aware that in every work the *beginning* is the most important part, especially in dealing with anything young and tender? For that is the time when any impression which one may desire to communicate is most readily stamped and taken."

We may say that all man's struggles,

religious, moral and economical, all the combats and conflicts that fill the history of mankind, can be traced finally to the nature and vigor of the desires, beliefs and strivings which have been cultivated by the social environment in the early life of the individual. The character of a nation is moulded by the nature of its education. The character of society depends on the early training of its constituent units. The fatalism, the submissiveness of the Oriental; the æstheticism, the independence, love of innovations and inquisitiveness of the ancient Greek; the ruggedness, sturdiness, harshness and conservatism of the ancient Roman; the emotionalism, the religious fervor of the ancient Hebrew; the commercialism, restlessness, speculation and scientific spirit of modern times, are all the results of the nature of the early education the individ-



ual gets in his respective social environment. We may say that the education of early life forms the very foundation of the social structure.

Like clay in the hands of the potter, so is man in the hands of his community. Society fashions the beliefs, the desires, the aims, the strivings, the knowledge, the ideals, the character, the minds, the very selves of its constituent units. Who has the control of this vital function of moulding minds? Fathers and mothers, the child is under your control. To your hands, to your care is entrusted the fate of young generations, the fate of the future community, which, consciously or unconsciously, you fashion according to the accepted standards and traditions with which you have been imbued in your own education.

It is related, I think, in Plutarch's



Lives, of Themistocles telling with the ironical frankness characteristic of the Greek temperament that his son possessed the greatest power in Greece: "For the Athenians command the rest of Greece, I command the Athenians, his mother commands me, and he commands his mother." This bit of Greek irony is not without its significance. The mind of the growing generation controls the future of nations. The boy is father to the man, as the proverb has it; he controls the future. But who controls the boy? The home, the mother and father, the guides of the child's early life. For it is in early life that the foundation of our mental edifice is laid. All that is good, valid and solid in man's mental structure depends on the breadth, width, depth, and solidity of that foundation.

## II

THAT the groundwork of man's character is laid in his childhood appears as a trivial platitude. I am almost ashamed to bring it before you. And yet, as I look round me and find how apt we are to forget this simple precept which is so fundamental in our life, I cannot help calling your attention to it. If we consider the matter, we can well understand the reason why its full significance is not realized. We must remember that all science begins with axioms which are apparently truisms. What is more of a truism than the axioms of Geometry and Mechanics—that, the whole is greater than the part, that things which are equal to the same thing are



equal to one another, or that a body remains in the same state unless an external force changes it? And yet the whole of Mathematics and Mechanics is built on those simple axioms.

The elements of science are just such obvious platitudes. What is needed is to use them as efficient tools and by their means draw the consequent effects. The same holds true in the science of education. The axiom or the law of early training is not new, it is well known, but it is unfortunately too often neglected and forgotten, and its significance is almost completely lost.

It is certainly surprising how this law of early training is so disregarded, so totally ignored in the education of the child. Not only do we neglect to lay the necessary solid basis in the early life of the child, a solid basis ready for the future

structure, we do not even take care to clear the ground. In fact, we even make the child's soul a dunghill, full of vermin of superstitions, fears and prejudices,—a hideous heap saturated with the spirit of credulity.

We regard the child's mind as a *tabula rasa*, a vacant lot, and empty on it all our rubbish and refuse. We labor under the delusion that stories and fairy tales, myths and deceptions about life and man are good for the child's mind. Is it a wonder that on such a foundation men can only put up shacks and shanties? We forget the simple fact that what is harmful for the adult is still more harmful to the child. Surely what is poisonous to the grown-up mind cannot be useful food to the young. If credulity in old wives' tales, lack of individuality, sheepish submissiveness, barrack-discipline, unques-



tioned and uncritical belief in authority, meaningless imitation of jingles and gibberish, memorization of mother-goose wisdom, repetition of incomprehensible prayers and articles of creed, unintelligent aping of good manners, silly games, prejudices and superstitions and fears of the supernormal and supernatural, are censured in adults, why should we approve their cultivation in the young?

At home and at school we drill into the child's mind uncritical beliefs in stories and tales, fictions and figments, fables and myths, creeds and dogmas which poison the very sources of the child's mind. At home and at school we give the child over as a prey to all sorts of fatal germs of mental diseases and moral depravity. We leave the child's mind an open field to be sown with dragon's teeth which bring forth a whole crop of pernicious tenden-

cies,—love and admiration of successful evil, and adoration of the rule of brute force. From the dragon's teeth sown in early childhood there rises in later life a whole brood of flint-hearted men who blindly jostle and fight and mercilessly tear one another, to obtain for some greedy Jason, some witch of a Medea their coveted golden fleece.



### III

WE regard with disapproval the bloody combats of some savage tribe; we regard with horror the sacrifice of children and prisoners to some idol of a Phenician Moloch or Mexican Huitzlio-Potchli; we are shocked at the criminal proceedings of the infamous Torquemada with his inquisition glorying in its terrors and tortures in the name of Christ; we are sickened as we read of the religious wars in Europe; we shudder at the horrors of the night of St. Bartholomew; we are appalled by the recent slaughters of the Jews in Russia, by the wholesale massacre of the Christians in Turkey.

All such atrocities, we say, belong to

barbaric ages and are only committed in semi-civilized countries. We flatter ourselves that we are different in this age of enlightenment and civilization. Are we different? Have we changed? Have we a right to fling stones at our older brothers, the savage and the barbarian? We are so used to our life that we do not notice its evils and misery. We can easily see the mote in the eye of our neighbor, but do not notice the beam in our own.

We are still savage at heart. Our civilization is mere gloss, a thin coating of paint and varnish. Our methods of inflicting pain are more refined than those of the Indian, but no less cruel, while the number of the victims sacrificed to our greed and rapacity may even exceed the numbers fallen by the sword of the barbarian or by the torch of the fanatic. The slums in our cities are foul and filthy,



teeming with deadly germs of disease where the mortality of our infants and children in some cases rises to the frightful figure of 204 per thousand!

The sanitary conditions of our cities are filthy and deadly. They carry in their wake all forms of plagues, pests and diseases, among which tuberculosis is so well known to the laity. "Tuberculosis," reads a report of a Tenement House Commission, "is one of the results of our inhumane tenements; it follows in the train of our inhumane sweatshops. It comes where the hours of labor are long and the wages are small; it afflicts the children who are sent to labor when they should yet be in school."

"The Consumers' League," says Mr. John Graham Brooks, "long hesitated to lay stress upon these aspects of filth and disease, because of their alarmist and sen-



sational nature, and of the immediate and grave risk to the consumer of the goods manufactured in the sweatshop and the tenement house. If the sweatshop spread diphtheria and scarlet fever, there is the hue and cry before personal danger. But these diseases are the very slightest elements of the real risk to the general good. It is the spoiled human life, with its deadly legacy of enfeebled mind and body, that reacts directly and indirectly on the 'social whole.' We do not realize that we drift into national degeneracy. We fail to realize that we raise a generation of stunted lives, of physical and nervous wrecks, of mental invalids and moral cripples.

We boast of our wealth unrivalled by other countries and by former ages. We should remember the great poverty of our masses, the filthy conditions of our wealthy

cities, with their loathsome city-slums, in which human beings live, breed and teem like so many worms.

We spend on barracks and prisons more than we do on schools and colleges. What is the level of a civilization in which the cost of crime and war far exceeds that of the education of its future citizens? We spend on our army and navy a quarter of a billion dollars, which is found to be insufficient, while the "total money burden of crime amounts in this country to the enormous sum of 600 million dollars a year!"

The cost of crime alone is so enormous that a representative of the Board of Charities of one of our Eastern states considers "the entire abolition of all the penal codes and the complete liberty of the criminal class." Our civilization can boast of the city-slum, the abode of mis-



ery and crime, the gift of our modern industrial progress, wealth and prosperity.

Professor James and myself were over once on a visit to a charitable institution for mentally defective. With his clear eye for the incongruities and absurdities of life, Professor James remarked to me that idiots and imbeciles were given the comforts, in fact, the luxuries of life, while healthy children, able boys and girls, had to struggle for a livelihood. Children under fourteen work in factories, work at a wage of about twenty-five cents a day, and, according to the labor bureau, the daily wage of the factory children of the South is often as low as fifteen cents and sometimes falls to nine cents. In many of our colleges many a student has to live on the verge of starvation, freeze in a summer overcoat the whole winter and warm his room by burning newspapers in



the grate. We are charitable and help our mediocrities, imbeciles and idiots, while we neglect our talent and genius. We have a blind faith that genius, like murder, will out. We know of successful talent, but we do not know of the great amount of unsuccessful talent and genius that has gone to waste. We favor imbecility and slight genius.

One of the physicians of the institution overheard our conversation and attempted to justify his work by an argument commonly advanced and uncritically accepted—"Our civilization, our Christian civilization values human life." Does our civilization really value human life? The infant mortality of the slums of our large cities and the factory work of our young children do not seem to justify such a claim.

The loss of life on our railways is as



large as one caused by a national war. Thus the number of persons killed on American railways during a period of three years ending June 30, 1900, was about 22,000, while the mortality of British forces, including death from disease, during three years of the South African war amounted to 22,000. In 1901, one out of every 400 railway employees was killed and one out of every 26 was injured. In 1902, 2,969 employees were killed and 50,524 were injured.

Commenting on the statistics of railway accidents, Mr. John Graham Brooks says: "One has to read and re-read these figures before their gruesome significance is in the least clear. If we add the mining, iron and lumbering industries,—portions of which are more dangerous than the railroad,—some conception is possible of the mutilated life due to machinery as it is now run." It may

also be of interest to learn that, according to the calculation made by a representative of one of the insurance companies, more than a million and a half are annually killed and injured in the United States alone.

The waste of human life is in fact greater than in any previous age. "Saul hath slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands." Think of our modern warfare, with its infernal machines of carnage, mowing down more men in a day than the warlike Assyrians and Romans, with their crude bows, arrows and catapults, could destroy in a century. And is not our country, our civilized Christian society, with its high valuation of human life, keeping on increasing its army and navy, and perfecting deadly weapons of slaughter and carnage? What about the justice dealt out by Judge Lynch? From



1882 to 1900 there were about three thousand lynchings! What about our grand imperial policy? What about our dominance over weak and ignorant tribes, treated in no gentle way by the armed fist of their civilized masters, who send to the benighted heathens their missionaries to preach religion and their soldiers to enforce the sale of narcotics and other civilizing goods?

## IV

WE are stock-blind to our own barbarities; we do not realize the enormities of our life and consider our age and country as civilized and enlightened. We censure the faults of other societies, but do not notice our own. Thus Lecky, in describing Roman society, says: "The gladiatorial games form indeed the one feature which to a modern mind is almost inconceivable in its atrocity. That not only men, but women, in an advanced period of civilization,—men and women who not only professed, but very frequently acted upon a high code of morals—should have made the carnage of men their habitual amusement, that all this should have con-



tinued for centuries with scarcely a protest, is one of the most startling facts in moral history. It is, however, perfectly normal, while it opens out fields of ethical inquiry of a very deep, though painful, character."

As in modern times, our college authorities justify the brutalities of football and prize-fights, so in ancient times the great moralists of those ages justified their gladiatorial games. Thus the great orator, the moralizing philosopher, Cicero, in speaking of the gladiatorial games, tells us: "When guilty men are compelled to fight, no better discipline against suffering and death can be presented to the eye." And it is certainly instructive for us to learn that "the very men who looked down with delight, when the sand of the arena reddened with human blood, made the theater ring with applause when



Terence in his famous line proclaimed the brotherhood of men."

One feeble protest is on record, a protest coming from the mother of civilization, from ancient Athens. "When an attempt was made to introduce the games into Athens, the philosopher Demonax appealed successfully to the better feelings of the people by exclaiming: "You must first overthrow the altar of pity!"

The philosopher Demonax had not the compromising spirit of the modern professor. Although the brutal games of our youth and populace need a Demonax, we certainly should not look for one in our colleges and universities. Our college authorities assure us that athletic prestige is indispensable to a good university. In fact, according to some official statements, football teams are supposed to express the superior intellectual activities of our fore-

most colleges. Like Cicero of old, we claim that "our games are good,—they train men, and no better discipline can be presented to the eye."

The fact is, man is bat-blind to the evils of the environment in which he is bred. He takes those evils as a matter of course, and even finds good reasons to justify them as edifying and elevating. In relation to his own surroundings, man is in the primitive condition of the Biblical Adam,—he is not conscious of his own moral nakedness. Six days in the week we witness and uphold the wholesale carnage, national and international, political, economical, in shops, factories, mines, railroads and on the battlefields, while on the seventh we sing hymns to the God of mercy, love and peace.

We pick up the first newspapers or popular magazines that come to our hand,



and we read of wars, slaughters, murders, lynchings, crimes and outrages on life and liberty; we read of strikes, lockouts, of tales of starvation and of frightful infant mortality; we read of diseases and epidemics ravaging the homes of our working population; we read of corporation iniquities, of frauds and corruption of our legislative bodies, of the control of politics by the criminal classes of the great metropolis of our land. We read of all that evil and corruption, but forget them next moment.

Our social life is corrupt, our body politic is eaten through with cankers and sores, "the whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises and putrefying sores," and yet we think we are a civilized people, superior to all

countries and to all ages. "The voice of our brother's blood crieth unto us from the ground." How can we be so callous? How can we be so mole-blind and so stone-deaf?

The truth is, we have but a thin varnish of humaneness, glossing over a rude barbarism. With our lips we praise the God of love, but in our hearts we adore the God of force. How much physical force is worshipped we can realize from the crowds that throng the games of baseball, football, prize-fights and boxing exhibitions. They go into tens of thousands. How many would be drawn by a St. Paul, an Epictetus, or a Socrates?

The newspaper, the mirror of our social life, is filled with the names and exploits of our magnates of high finance, our money-mongers and usurers. Our journals teem with deeds and scandals of our refined "smart set" set up as patterns, as



ideals, after which our middle class so longingly craves. Like the Israelites of old we worship golden calves and sacred bulls. Our daughters yearn after the barbaric shimmer and glitter of the bejewelled, bespangled, empty-minded, parasitic females of "the smart set." Our college boys admire the feats of the trained athlete and scorn the work of the "grind." Our very schoolboys crave for the fame of a Jeffries and a Johnson. If in the depths of space there is some solar system inhabited by really rational beings, and if one of such beings should by some miracle happen to visit our planet, he would no doubt turn away in horror.

## V

WE press our children into the triumphant march of our industrial Jugger-naut. Over 1,700,000 children under 15 years of age toil in fields, factories, mines and workshops. The slums and the factory cripple the energies of our young generation. The slaughter of the innocents and the sacrifice of our children to the insatiable Moloch of industry exclude us from the rank of civilized society and place us on the level of barbaric nations.

Our educators are narrow-minded pedants. They are occupied with the dry bones of text-books, the sawdust of pedagogics and the would-be scientific experiments of educational psychology; they



are ignorant of the real vital problems of human interests, a knowledge of which goes to make the truly educated man.

About the middle of the nineteenth century, Buckle made the prediction that no war was any more to occur among civilized nations. Henceforth peace was to reign supreme. "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. . . . Nations shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor shall they learn war any more." This prophecy was rather hasty. We have had since the Civil war, the Franco-Prussian war, the Spanish-American war, the Boer war, the Russo-Japanese war, not counting the ceaseless wars of extermination



carried on by civilized nations among the various semi-civilized nations and primitive tribes. Civilized nations do not as yet beat their swords into ploughshares, but keep on increasing the strength of their "armed peace," and are ready to fight bloody battles in the quest of new lands and the conquest of new markets.

In spite of The Hague conference of peace convoked by the peace-loving Czar, no other age has had such large standing armies provided with such costly and efficient weapons of execution ready for instant use. The red spectre still stalks abroad claiming its victims. We still believe in the baptism of fire and redemption by blood. The dogma of blood-redemption is still at the basis of our faith and, consciously or unconsciously, we brand that sacred creed on the minds of the young generation.



We are not educated to see and understand the wretchedness, the misery of our life,—the evil of the world falls on the blind spot of our eye. In the name of evolution and the survival of the fittest, we justify the grasping arm of the strong, and even glory in the extermination of the weak. The weak, we say, must be weeded out by the processes of natural selection. The strong are the best; it is right that they should survive and flourish like a green bay tree. The fact is that we are still dominated by the law of the jungle, the den and the cave. We are still wild at heart. We still harken to the call of the wild; we are ruled by the fist, the claw and the tooth.

Love, justice, gentleness, peace, reason, sympathy and pity, all humane feelings and promptings are with us sentiments of “unnatural” or supernatural religion

which we profess in our churches, but in which we really have no faith as good for actual life. We mistake brutishness for courage, and by fight and by war we train the beast in man.

All humane feelings are regarded as so many hindrances to progress; they favor, we claim, the survival of the weak. We are, of course, evolutionists, and believe most firmly in progress. We believe that the luxuries and vices of the strong are conducive to prosperity, and that the evils of life by the automatic grinding of that grind-organ known as the process of evolution *somehow* lead to a higher civilization.

When in the beginning of the eighteenth century Bernard de Mandeville proclaimed the apparently paradoxical principle that *Private Vices are Public Benefits*, the academic moralists were shocked



at such profane brutality. Mandeville only proclaimed the leading, the guiding principle of the coming age of industrial prosperity. We now know better. Are we not evolutionists? Have we not learned that progress and evolution and the improvement of the race are brought about by the fierce struggle for existence, by the process of natural selection, by the merciless elimination of the weak and by the triumph of the strong and the fit? What is the use of being sentimental? Like Brennus, the Gaul, we throw our sword on the scales of blinded justice and shout triumphantly "*Væ victis!*"

## VI

WE are confirmed optimists and sow optimism broadcast. We have optimistic clubs and mental scientists and Christian scientists,—all afflicted with incurable ophthalmia to surrounding evil and misery. We are scientific, we are evolutionists, we have faith in the sort of optimism taught by Leibnitz in his famous *Theodicea*. We are the *Candides* of our oracles, the *Panglosses*. You may possibly remember what Voltaire writes of Professor Pangloss. “Pangloss used to teach the science of metaphysico-theologocosmologo-noodleology. He demonstrated to admiration that there is no effect without a cause and that this is the best of



all possible worlds. It has been proved, said Pangloss, that things cannot be otherwise than they are; for everything, the end for which everything is made, is necessarily the best end. Observe how noses are made to carry spectacles, and spectacles we have accordingly. Everything that is, is the best that could possibly be." It is such shallow optimism that now gains currency.

Verily, we are afflicted with mental cataract. "If we should bring clearly to a man's sight," says Schopenhauer, "the terrible sufferings and miseries to which his life is constantly exposed, he would be seized with horror, and if we were to conduct the confirmed optimist through the hospitals, infirmaries, and surgical operating-rooms, through prisons, asylums, torture-chambers and slave-kennels, over battlefields and places of execution; if we were to open to him all

the dark abodes of misery, where it hides itself from the glance of cold curiosity, he would understand at last the nature of this *best of possible worlds*."

Schopenhauer is metaphysical, pessimistic, but he is certainly not blinded by a shallow optimism to the realities of life. Drunk with the spirit of optimism, we do not realize the degradation, the misery and poverty of our life. Meanwhile the human genius, the genius which all of us possess, languishes, famishes, and perishes, while the brute alone emerges in triumph. We are so overcome by the faith in the transcendent, optimistic evolution of the good, that through the misty, heavenly, angelic visions, we do not discern the cloven hoof of the devil.

Professor James in a recent address told the Radcliffe graduates that the aim of a college-education is "*to recognize the good man,*" when you see him. This ad-



vice may be good for Radcliffe young ladies; but, fathers and mothers, *the true education of life is the recognition of evil wherever it is met.*

The Bible begins the story of man in a paradise of ignorance and finishes it with his tasting of the fruits of the forbidden tree of knowledge of good and evil. "And the eyes of them both were opened and they knew that they were naked. And the Lord God said,—Behold, the man is become as one of us to know good and evil, and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live for ever. Therefore, the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden. So he drove out the man." We prefer the sinful, mortal, but godlike man with his knowledge of evil to the brutish philistine in the bliss of Elysium.

## VII

IN the education of the young generation the purpose of the nation is to bring up the child as a good man, as a liberal-minded citizen, devoted soul and body to the interests of social welfare. This purpose in the education of the young citizen is of the utmost importance in every society, but it is a vital need in a democratic society. We do not want narrow-minded patriots devoted to party-factions, nor bigoted sectarians, nor greedy *entrepreneurs* fastening in trusts, like so many barnacles, on the body-politic. We do not want ringleaders and mobs, unscrupulous bosses and easily led voters. What we need is men having at heart the welfare of their fellow-men.



The purpose of the education provided by the nation for its young generation is the rearing of healthy, talented, broad-minded citizens. We need, above all, good citizens, active and intelligent, with a knowledge of life and with a delicate sense of discrimination and detection of evil in all its protean forms; we need strong-minded citizens with grit and courage to resist oppression and root out evil wherever it is found. A strong sense of recognition of evil should be the social sense of every well-educated citizen as a safeguard of social and national life. *The principle of recognition of evil under all its guises is at the basis of the true education of man.*

Is it not strange that this vital principle of education, the recognition of evil,—a fundamental principle with the great thinkers of humanity,—should remain so

sadly neglected by our educators and public instructors? Our educators are owl-wise, our teachers are pedants and all their ambition is the turning out of smooth, well-polished philistines. It is a sad case of the blind leading the blind.

It is certainly unfortunate that the favored type of superintendent of our public education should be such a hopeless philistine, possessed of all the conceit of the mediocre business man. Routine is his ideal. Originality and genius are spurned and suppressed. Our school-superintendent with his well-organized training-shop is proud of the fact that there is no place for genius in our schools.

Unfortunate and degraded is the nation that has handed over its childhood and youth to guidance and control by hide-bound mediocrity. Our school-managers are respected by the laity as great educa-



tors and are looked up to by the teachers as able business men. Their merit is routine, discipline and the hiring of cheap teaching-employees.

It is certainly a great misfortune to the nation that a good number of our would-be scientific pedagogues are such mediocrities, with so absurd an exaggeration of their importance that they are well satisfied if the mass of their pupils turn out exact reproductions of the silly pedagogue. What can be expected of a nation that entrusts the fate of its young generation to the care or carelessness of young girls, to the ire of old maids, and to pettifogging officials with their educational red tape, discipline and routine,—petty bureaucrats animated with a hatred towards talent and genius?

The goody-goody schoolma'am, the mandarin-schoolmaster, the philistine-

pedagogue, the pedant-administrator with his business capacities, have proved themselves incompetent to deal with the education of the young. They stifle talent, they stupefy the intellect, they paralyze the will, they suppress genius, they benumb the faculties of our children. The educator, with his pseudo-scientific, pseudo-psychological pseudogogics, can only bring up a set of philistines with firm, set habits,—marionettes,—dolls.

Business is put above learning, administration above education, discipline and order above cultivation of genius and talent. Our schools and colleges are controlled by business men. The school-boards, the boards of trustees of almost every school and college in the country consist mainly of manufacturers, store-keepers, tradesmen, bulls and bears of Wall street and the market-place. What



wonder that they bring with them the ideals and methods of the factory, the store, the bank and the saloon. If the saloon controls politics, the shop controls education.

Business men are no more competent to run schools and colleges than astronomers are fit to run hotels and theaters. Our whole educational system is vicious. A popular scientific journal entered a protest against the vulgarization of our colleges, the department-store trade methods of our universities, but to no avail. The popular hero, the administrative business superintendent still holds sway, and poisons the sources of our social life by debasing the very foundation of our national education.

## VIII

FROM time to time the "educational" methods of our philistine teachers are brought to light. A girl is forced by a schoolma'am of one of our large cities to stay in a corner for hours, because she unintentionally transgressed against the barrack-discipline of the school-regulations. When the parents became afraid of the girl's health and naturally took her out of school, the little girl was dragged before the court by the truant officer. Fortunately "the judge turned to the truant officer and asked him how the girl could be a truant, if she had been suspended. He didn't believe in breaking children's wills."



In another city a pupil of genius was excluded from school because "he did not fall in with the system" laid out by the "very able business-superintendent." A schoolmistress conceives the happy idea of converting two of her refractory pupils into pin-cushions for the edification of her class. An "educational" administrative superintendent of a large, prosperous community told a lady who brought to him her son, an extraordinarily able boy, "I shall not take your boy into my high-school, in spite of his knowledge." When the mother asked him to listen to her, he lost patience and told her with all the force of his school-authority, "Madam, put a rope around his neck, weigh him well down with bricks!"

A principal of a high school in one of the prominent New England towns dismisses a highly talented pupil because, to

quote verbatim from the original school document, "He is not amenable to the discipline of the school, as his school life has been too short to establish him in the habit of obedience." "His intellect," the principal's official letter goes on to say, "remains a marvel to us, but we do not feel, and in this I think I speak for all, that he is in the right place." In other words, in the opinion of those remarkable pedagogues, educators and teachers, the school is not the right place for talent and genius!

A superintendent of schools in lecturing before an audience of "subordinate teachers" told them emphatically that *there was no place for genius in our schools*. Dear old fogies, one can well understand your indignation! Here we have worked out some fine methods, clever rules, beautiful systems and then comes



genius and upsets the whole structure! It is a shame! Genius cannot fit into the pigeon-holes of the office desk. Choke genius, and things will move smoothly in the school and the office.

Not long ago we were informed by one of those successful college-mandarins, lionized by office-clerks, superintendents and tradesmen, that he could measure education by the foot-rule! Our Regents are supposed to raise the level of education by a vicious system of examination and coaching, a system which Professor James, in a private conversation with me, has aptly characterized as "idiotic."

Our schools brand their pupils by a system of marks, while our foremost colleges measure the knowledge and education of their students by the number of "points" passed. The student may pass either in Logic or Blacksmithing. It does not

matter which, provided he makes up a certain number of "points"!

College-committees refuse admission to young students of genius, because "it is against the policy and the principles of the university." College-professors expel promising students from the lecture-room for "the good of the class as a whole," because the students "happen to handle their hats in the middle of a lecture." This, you see, interferes with class discipline. *Fiat justitia, pereat mundus*. Let genius perish, provided the system lives. Why not suppress all genius, as a disturbing element, for "the good of the classes," for the weal of the commonwealth? Education of man and cultivation of genius, indeed! This is not school policy.

We school and drill our children and youth in schoolma'am mannerism, school-



master mind-ankylosis, school-superintendent stiff-joint ceremonialism, factory regulations and office-discipline. We give our pupils and students artisan-inspiration and business-spirituality. Originality is suppressed. Individuality is crushed. Mediocrity is at a premium. That is why our country has such clever business men, such cunning artisans, such resourceful politicians, such adroit leaders of new cults, but no scientists, no artists, no philosophers, no statesmen, no genuine talent and no true genius.

School-teachers have in all ages been mediocre in intellect and incompetent. Leibnitz is regarded as a dullard and Newton is considered as a blockhead. Never, however, in the history of mankind have school teachers fallen to such a low level of mediocrity as in our times and in our country. For it is not the amount of



knowledge that counts in true education, but originality and independence of thought that are of importance in education. But independence and originality of thought are just the very elements that are suppressed by our modern barrack-system of education. No wonder that military men claim that the best "education" is given in military schools.

We are not aware that the incubus of officialdom, and the succubus of bureaucracy have taken possession of our schools. The red tape of officialdom, like a poisonous weed, grows luxuriantly in our schools and chokes the life of our young generation. Instead of growing into a people of great independent thinkers, the nation is in danger of fast becoming a crowd of well-drilled, well-disciplined, commonplace individuals, with strong philistine habits and notions of hopeless mediocrity.



In levelling education to mediocrity, we imagine that we uphold the democratic spirit of our institutions. Our American sensibilities are shocked when the president of one of our leading colleges dares to recommend to his college that it should cease catering to the average student. We think it un-American, rank treason to our democratic spirit when a college president has the courage to proclaim the principle that "To form the mind and character of one man of marked talent, not to say genius, would be worth more to the community which he would serve than the routine training of hundreds of undergraduates."

We are optimistic, we believe in the pernicious superstition that genius needs no help, that talent will take care of itself. Our kitchen clocks and dollar time-pieces need careful handling, but our

chronometers and astronomical clocks can run by themselves.

The truth is, however, that the purpose of the school and the college is not to create an intellectual aristocracy, but to educate, to bring out the individuality, the originality, the latent powers of talent and genius present in what we unfortunately regard as "the average student." Follow Mill's advice. Instead of aiming at athletics, social connections, vocations and generally at the professional art of money-making, "Aim at something noble. Make your system such that a great man may be formed by it, and there will be a manhood in your little men, of which you do not dream."

Awaken in early childhood the critical spirit of man; awaken, early in the child's life, love of knowledge, love of truth, of art and literature for their



own sake, and you arouse man's genius. We have average mediocre students, because we have mediocre teachers, department-store superintendents, clerkly principals and deans with bookkeepers' souls, because our schools and colleges deliberately aim at mediocrity.

Ribot in describing the degenerated Byzantine Greeks tells us that their leaders were mediocrities and their great men commonplace personalities. Is the American nation drifting in the same direction? It was the system of cultivation of independent thought that awakened the Greek mind to its highest achievements in arts, science and philosophy; it was the deadly Byzantine bureaucratic red tape with its cut-and-dried theological discipline that dried up the sources of Greek genius. We are in danger of building up a Byzantine empire with large

institutions and big corporations, but with small minds and dwarfed individualities. Like the Byzantines we begin to value administration above individuality and official, red-tape ceremonialism above originality.

We wish even to turn our schools into practical school-shops. We shall in time become a nation of well-trained clerks and clever artisans. The time is at hand when we shall be justified in writing over the gates of our school-shops "mediocrity made here!"



## IX

I ASSUME that as liberal men and women you have no use for the process of cramming and stuffing of college-geese and mentally indolent, morally obtuse and religiously "cultured" prigs and philistines, but that you realize that your true vocation is to get access to the latent energies of your children, to stimulate their reserve energies and educate, bring to light, man's genius. The science of psychopathology now sets forth a fundamental principle which is not only of the utmost importance in psychotherapeutics, but also in the domain of education; it is the principle of stored up, dormant, reserve-energy,—the principle of potential, subconscious, reserve energy.

It is claimed on good evidence, biological, physiological and psychopathological, that man possesses large stores of unused energy which the ordinary stimuli of life are not only unable to reach, but even tend to inhibit. Unusual combinations of circumstances, however, radical changes of the environment, often unloose the inhibitions brought about by the habitual narrow range of man's interests and surroundings. Such unloosening of inhibitions helps to release fresh supplies of reserve energy. It is not the place here to discuss this fundamental principle; I can only state it in the most general way, and give its general trend in the domain of education.

You have heard the psychologizing educator advise the formation of good, fixed, stable habits in early life. Now I want to warn you against the dangers of such



unrestricted advice. Fixed adaptations, stable habits, tend to raise the thresholds of mental life, tend to inhibit the liberation, the output of reserve-energy. *Avoid routine.* Do not let your pupils fall into the ruts of habits and customs. Do not let even the *best* of habits harden beyond the point of further possible modification.

Where there is a tendency towards formation of over-abundant mental cartilage, set your pupils to work under widely different circumstances. Confront them with a changed set of conditions. Keep them on the move. Surprise them by some apparently paradoxical relations and strange phenomena. Do not let them settle down to one definite set of actions or reactions. Remember that rigidity, like sclerosis, induration of tissue, means decay of originality, destruc-

tion of man's genius. With solidified and unvariable habits not only does the reserve energy become entirely inaccessible, but the very individuality is extinguished.

Do not make of our children a nation of philistines. Why say, you make man in your own image? Do not make your schools machine-shops, turning out on one uniform pattern so much mediocrity per year. *Cultivate variability.* The tendency towards variability is the most precious part of a good education. Beware of the philistine with his set, stable habits.

The important principle in education is not so much *formation* of habits as the power of their *re-formation*. The power of breaking up habits is by far the more essential factor of a good education. It is in this power of breaking down habits that we can find the key for the unlocking of the otherwise inaccessible stores of



subconscious reserve energy. *The cultivation of the power of habit-disintegration is what constitutes the proper education of man's genius.\**

\*A well known editor of one of the academic Journals on Educational Psychology writes to me as follows:

"Your remarks on the avoidance of routine would be like a red rag to a bull for a number of educators who are emphasizing the importance of habit formation in education at present."

## X

THE power of breaking down or dissolving habits depends on the amount and strength of the *aqua fortis* of the intellect. The logical and critical activities of the individual should be cultivated with special care. The critical self, as we may put it, should have control over the automatic and the subconscious. For the subconscious has been shown to form the fertile soil for the breeding of the most dangerous germs of mental disease, epidemics, plagues and pestilences in their worst forms. We should try to develop the individual's critical abilities in early childhood, not permitting the suggestible subconsciousness to predominate, and to



become overrun with noxious weeds and pests.

We should be very careful with the child's critical self, as it is weak and has little resistance. We should, therefore, avoid all dominating authority and categorical imperative commands. Autocratic authority cultivates in the child the predisposition to abnormal suggestibility, to hypnotic states, and leads towards the dominance of the subconscious with its train of pernicious tendencies and deleterious results.

There is a period in the child's life between the ages of five and ten when he is very inquisitive, asking all kinds of questions. *It is the age of discussion in the child.* This inquisitiveness and discussion should by all means be encouraged and fostered. We should aid the development of the spirit of inquisi-

tiveness and curiosity in the child. For this is the acquisition of control over the stored-up, latent energies of man's genius.

We should not arrest the child's questioning spirit, as we are often apt to do, but should strongly encourage the apparently meddlesome and troublesome searching and prying and scrutinizing of *whatever interests the child*. Everything should be open to the child's searching interest; nothing should be suppressed and tabooed as too sacred for examination. The spirit of inquiry, the genius of man, is more sacred than any abstract belief, dogma and creed.

A rabbi came to ask my advice about the education of his little boy. My advice was: "Teach him not to be a Jew." The man of God departed and never came again. The rabbi did not care for education, but for faith. He did not wish



his boy to become a man, but to be a Jew.

The most central, the most crucial part of the education of man's genius is *the knowledge, the recognition of evil* in all its protean forms and innumerable disguises, intellectual, æsthetic and moral, such as fallacies, sophisms, ugliness, deformity, prejudice, superstition, vice and depravity. Do not be afraid to discuss these matters with the child. For the knowledge, the recognition of evil does not only possess the virtue of immunization of the child's mind against all evil, but furnishes the main power for habit-disintegration with consequent release and control of potential reserve energy, of manifestations of human genius. When a man becomes contented and ceases to notice the evils of life, as is done by some modern religious sects, he loses his hold on the powers of man's genius, he loses touch

with the throbbing pulse of humanity, he loses hold on reality and falls into sub-human groups.

The purpose of education, of a *liberal* education, is not to live in a fool's paradise, or to go through the world in a post-hypnotic state of negative hallucinations. The true aim of a liberal education is, as the Scriptures put it, to have the *eyes opened*,—to be free from all delusions, illusions, from the *fata morgana* of life. We prize a liberal education, because it *liberates* us from subjection to superstitious fears, delivers us from the narrow bonds of prejudice, from the exalted or depressing delusions of moral paresis, intellectual dementia-praecox, and religious paranoia. A liberal education liberates us from the enslavement to the degrading influence of *all* idol-worship.

In the education of man do not play on



his subconscious sense by deluding him by means of hypnotic and post-hypnotic suggestions of positive and negative hallucinations, with misty and mystic, beatific visions. Open his *eyes* to undisguised reality. Teach him, show him how to strip the real from its unessential wrappings and adornments and see things in their nakedness. *Open the eyes of your children so that they shall see, understand and face courageously the evils of life.* Then will you do your duty as parents, then will you give your children the proper education.

## XI

I HAVE spoken of the fundamental law of early education. The question is "*how early?*" There are, of course, children who are backward in their development. This backwardness may either be congenital or may be due to some overlooked pathological condition that may be easily remedied by proper treatment. In the large majority of children, however, the beginning of education *is between the second and third year*. It is at that time that the child begins to form his interests. It is at that critical period that we have to seize the opportunity to guide the child's formative energies in the right channels. To delay is a mistake and a



wrong to the child. We can at that early period awaken a love of knowledge which will persist through life. The child will as eagerly play in the game of knowledge as he now spends the most of his energies in meaningless games and objectless silly sports.

We claim we are afraid to force the child's mind. We claim we are afraid *to strain his brain prematurely*. This is an error. In *directing* the course of the use of the child's energies we do not force the child. If *you* do not *direct* the energies in the right course, the child will *waste* them in the *wrong* direction. The same amount of mental energy used in those silly games, which we think are specially adapted for the childish mind, can be directed, with lasting benefit, to the development of his *interests in intellectual*

*activity and love of knowledge.* The child will learn to play at the game of knowledge-acquisition with the same ease, grace and interest as he is showing now in his nursery-games and physical exercises.



## XII

ARISTOTLE laid it down as a self-evident proposition that all Hellenes *love knowledge*. This was true of the national genius of the ancient Greeks. The love of wisdom is the pride of the ancient Greek in contradistinction to the barbarian, who does not prize knowledge. We still belong to the barbarians. Our children, our pupils, our students have no love of knowledge.

The ancient Greeks knew the value of a good education and understood its fundamental elements. They laid great stress on early education and they knew how to develop man's mental energies, without fear of injury to the brain and

physical constitution. The Greeks were not afraid of thought, that it might injure the brain. They were strong men, great thinkers.

The love of knowledge, the love of truth for its own sake, is entirely neglected in our modern schemes of education. Instead of training men we train mechanics, artisans and shopkeepers. We turn our national schools, high schools and universities into trade-schools and machine-shops. The school, whether lower or higher, has now one purpose in view, and that is the training of the pupil in the art of money-making. Is it a wonder that the result is a low form of mediocrity, a dwarfed and crippled specimen of humanity?

Open the reports of our school superintendents and you find that the illustrations setting forth the prominent work performed by the school represent carpentry,



shoemaking, blacksmithing, bookkeeping, typewriting, dressmaking, millinery and cookery. One wonders whether it is the report of a factory inspector, the "scientific" advertisement of some instrument-maker or machine-shop, a booklet of some popular hotel, or an extensive circular of some large department-store. Is this what our modern education consists in? Is the aim of the nation to form at its expense vast reserve armies of skilled mechanics, great numbers of well-trained cooks and well-behaved clerks? Is the purpose of the nation to form cheap skilled labor for the manufacturer, or is the aim of society to form intelligent, educated citizens?

The high-school and college courses advised by the professors and elected by the student are with reference to the vocation in life, to business and to trade. Our

schools, our high schools, our colleges and our universities are all animated with the same sordid aim of giving electives for early specialization in the art of money-getting. We may say with Mill that our schools and colleges give no true education, no true culture. We drift to the status of Egypt and India with their castes of early trained mechanics, professionals and shopkeepers. Truly educated men we shall have none. We shall become a nation of narrow-minded philistines, well contented with their mediocrity. The savage compresses the skull of the infant, while we flatten the brain and cramp the mind of our young generation.



### XIII

THE great thinker, John Stuart Mill, insists that "the great business of every rational being is the strengthening and enlarging of his own intellect and character. The empirical knowledge which the world demands, which is the stock in trade of money-getting, we would leave the world to provide for itself." We must make our system of education such "that a great man may be formed by it, and there will be a manhood in your little men of which you do not dream. We must have a system of education capable of forming great minds." Education must aim at the bringing out of the genius in man. Do we achieve such aim by the

formation of philistine-specialists and young petty-minded artisans?

"The very cornerstone of an education," Mill tells us, "intended to form great minds, must be the recognition of the principle, that the object is to call forth the greatest possible quantity of intellectual *power*, and to inspire the intensest *love of truth*; and this without a particle of regard to the results to which the exercise of that power may lead." With us the only love of truth is the one that leads to the shop, the bank and the counting-house.

The home controls the school and the college. As long as the home is dominated by commercial ideals, the school will turn out mediocre tradesmen.

This, however, is one of the characteristic types of the American home: the mother thinks of dresses, fashions and par-



ties. The daughter twangs and thrums on the piano, makes violent attempts at singing that sound as "the crackling of thorns under a pot," is passionately fond of shopping, dressing and visiting. Both, mother and daughter, love society, show and gossip. The father works in some business or at some trade and loves sports and games. Not a spark of refinement and culture, not a redeeming ray of love of knowledge and of art, lighting up the commonplace and frivolous life of the family. What wonder that the children of ten and eleven can hardly read and write, are little brutes and waste away their precious life of childhood in the close, dusty, overheated rooms of the early grades of some elementary school? Commercial mediocrity is raised at home and cultivated in the school.

"As a means of educating the many,

the universities are absolutely null," exclaims Mill. The attainments of any kind required for taking all the degrees conferred by these bodies are, at Cambridge, utterly contemptible." Our American schools, with their ideals of money-earning capacities, our colleges glorying in their athletics, football teams and courses for professional and business specializations would have been regarded by Mill as below contempt.

What indeed is the worth of an education that does not create even as much as an ordinary respect for learning and love of truth, and that prizes knowledge in terms of hard cash? What is the educational worth of a college or of a university which suppresses its most gifted students by putting them under the ban of disorderly behavior, because of not conforming to commonplace mannerisms? What is



the educational value of a university which is but a modern edition of a gladiatorial school with a smattering of the humanities? What is the educational value of an institution of learning that expels its best students because they "attract more attention than their professors"? What is the intellectual level of a college that expels from its courses the ablest of its students for some slight infringement, and that an involuntary one, under the pretext that it is done for the sake of class-discipline, "for the general good of the class"? What travesty on education is a system that suppresses genius in the interest of mediocrity? What is the cultural, the humanistic value of an education that puts a prize on mediocrity?

## XIV

DISCIPLINE, fixed habits approved by the pedagogue are specially enforced in our schools. To this may be added some "culture" in the art of money-getting in the case of the boys, while in the case of girls the æsthetic training of millinery and dressmaking may be included. The colleges, in addition to class-discipline looked after by the professors and college-authorities, are essentially an organization of hasty-pudding clubs, football associations and athletic corporations. What is the use of a college if not for its games? Many regard the college as useful for the formation of business acquaintances in later life. Others again consider



the college a good place for learning fine manners. In other words, the college and the school are for athletics, good manners, business companionship, mechanical arts and money-getting. They are for anything but education.

We have become so used to college athletics that it appears strange and possibly absurd to demand of a college the cultivation of man's genius. Who expects to find an intellectual atmosphere among the great body of our college undergraduates? Who expects of our schools and colleges true culture and the cultivation of a taste for literature, art and science? A dean, an unusually able man, of one of the prominent Eastern colleges tells me that he and his friends are very pessimistic about his students and especially about the great body of undergraduate students. Literature, art, science have no interest

for the student; games and athletics fill his mental horizon.

In the training of our children, in the education of our young, we think that discipline, obedience to paternal and maternal commands, whether rational or absurd, are of the utmost importance. We do not realize that in such a scheme of training we fail to cultivate the child's critical faculties, but only succeed in suppressing the child's individuality. We only break his will-power and originality. We also prepare the ground for future nervous and mental maladies characterized by their fears, indecisions, hesitations, diffidence, irritability, lack of individuality and absence of self-control.

We laugh at the Chinese, because they bandage the feet of their girls, we ridicule those who cripple their chest and mutilate their figure by the tight lacing of their cor-



sets, but we fail to realize the baneful effects of submitting the young minds to the grindstone of our educational discipline. I have known good fathers and mothers who have unfortunately been so imbued with the necessity of disciplining the child that they have crushed the child's spirit in the narrow bonds of routine and custom. How can we expect to get great men and women when from infancy we train our children to conform to the philistine ways of Mrs. Grundy?

In our schools and colleges, habits, discipline and behavior are specially emphasized by our teachers, instructors and professors. Our deans and professors think more of red tape, of "points," of discipline than of study; they think more of authoritative suggestion than of critical instruction. The pedagogue fashions the pupil after his own image. The pro-

fessor, with his disciplinarian tactics, forces the student into the imbecile mummy-like mannerism of Egyptian pedantry and into the barrack-regulations of class-etiquette. Well may professors of our "war-schools" claim that the best education is given in military academies. They are right, if discipline is education. But why not the reformatory, the asylum and the prison?

We trust our unfortunate youth to the Procrustean bed of the mentally obtuse, hide-bound pedagogue. We desiccate, sterilize, petrify and embalm our youth in keeping with the rules of our Egyptian code and in accordance with the Confucian regulations of our school-clerks and college mandarins. Our children learn by rote and are guided by routine.



## XV

BEING in a barbaric stage, we are afraid of thought. We are under the erroneous belief that thinking, study, causes nervousness and mental disorders. In my practice as physician in nervous and mental diseases, I can say without hesitation that I have not met a single case of nervous or mental trouble caused by too much thinking or overstudy. This is at present the opinion of the best psychopathologists. What produces nervousness is worry, emotional excitement and lack of interest in the work. But that is precisely what we do with our children. We do not take care to develop a love of knowledge in their early life for fear of brain injury, and then when it is late to

acquire the interest, we force them to study, and we cram them and feed them and stuff them like geese. What you often get is fatty degeneration of the mental liver.

If, however, you do not neglect the child between the second and third year, and see to it that the brain should not be starved, should have its proper function, like the rest of the bodily organs, by developing an interest in intellectual activity and love of knowledge, no forcing of the child to study is afterwards requisite. The child will go on by himself,—he will derive intense enjoyment from his intellectual activity, as he does from his games and physical exercise. The child will be stronger, healthier, sturdier than the present average child, with its purely animal activities and total neglect of brain-function. His physical and mental development will go apace. He will not be



a barbarian with animal proclivities and a strong distaste for knowledge and mental enjoyment, but he will be a strong, healthy, *thinking man*.

Besides, many a mental trouble will be prevented in adult-life. The child will acquire knowledge with the same ease as he learns to ride the bicycle or play ball. By the tenth year, without almost any effort, the child will acquire the knowledge which at present the best college-graduate obtains with infinite labor and pain. That this can be accomplished I can say with authority; I know it as a fact from my own experience with child-life.

From an economical standpoint alone, think of the saving it would ensure for society. Consider the fact that our children spend nearly eight years in the common school, studying spelling and arithmetic, and do not know them when they graduate! Think of the eight years of



waste of school buildings and salaries for the teaching force. However, our real object is not economy, but the development of a strong, healthy, great race of genius.

As fathers and mothers it may interest you to learn of one of those boys who were brought up in the love and enjoyment of knowledge for its own sake. At the age of twelve, when other children of his age are hardly able to read and spell, and drag a miserable mental existence at the apron strings of some antiquated school-dame, the boy is intensely enjoying courses in the highest branches of mathematics and astronomy at one of our foremost universities. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are known to him by heart, and he is deeply interested in the advanced work of Classical Philology. He is able to read Herodotus, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Lucian and other Greek



writers with the same zest and ease as our schoolboy reads his Robinson Crusoe or the productions of Cooper and Henty. The boy has a fair understanding of Comparative Philology and Mythology. He is well versed in Logic, Ancient History, American History and has a general insight into our politics and into the groundwork of our Constitution. At the same time he is of an extremely happy disposition, brimming over with humor and fun. His physical condition is splendid, his cheeks glow with health. Many a girl would envy his complexion. Being above five feet four he towers above the average boy of his age. His physical constitution, weight, form and hardihood of organs, far surpasses that of the ordinary schoolboy. He looks like a boy of sixteen. He is healthy, strong and sturdy.

The philistine-pseudagogues, the self-contented school-autocrats are so imbued



with the fear of intellectual activity and with the superstitious dread of early mental education, they are so obsessed with the morbid phobia of human reflective powers, they are so deluded by the belief that study causes disease that they eagerly adhere to the delusion, to quote from a school-superintendent's letter, about the boy being "in a sanitarium, old and worn-out." No doubt, the cramming, the routine, the rote, the mental and moral tyranny of the principal and school-superintendent do tend to nervous degeneracy and mental break-down. Poor old college owls, academic barn-yard-fowls and worn-out sickly school-bats, you are panic-stricken by the power of sunlight, you are in agonizing, in mortal terror of critical, reflective thought, you dread and suppress the genius of the young.

We do not appreciate the genius har-



bored in the average child, and we let it lie fallow. We are mentally poor, not because we lack riches, but because we do not know how to use the wealth of mines, the hidden treasures, the now inaccessible mental powers which we possess.

In speaking of our mental capacities, Francis Galton, I think, says that we are in relation to the ancient Greeks what the Bushmen and Hottentots are in relation to us. Galton and many other learned men regard the modern European races as inferior to the Hellenic race. They are wrong, and I know from experience that they are wrong. It rests in our hands either to remain inferior barbarians or to rival and even surpass in brilliancy the genius of the ancient Hellenes. We can develop into a great race by the proper education of man's genius.

## XVI

ONE other important point claims our attention in the process of education of man's genius. We must immunize our children against mental microbes, as we vaccinate our babies against small-pox. *The cultivation of critical judgment and the knowledge of evil are two powerful constituents that form the antitoxin for the neutralization of the virulent toxins produced by mental microbes.* At the same time we should not neglect proper conditions of mental hygiene. We should not people the child's mind with ghost-stories, with absurd beliefs in the supernatural, and with articles of creed charged with brimstone and pitch from the bowels of hell. *We must guard the child against*



*all evil fears, superstitions, prejudices and credulity.*

We should counteract the baneful influences of the pathogenic, pestiferous, mental microbes which now infest our social air, since the child, not having yet formed the antitoxin of critical judgment and knowledge of evil, has not the power of resisting mental infection, and is thus very susceptible to mental contagion on account of his extreme suggestibility. The cultivation of credulity, the absence of critical judgment and of recognition of evil, with consequent increase of suggestibility, make man an easy prey to all kinds of social delusions, mental epidemics, religious crazes, financial manias, and political plagues, which have been the baleful pest of aggregate humanity in all ages.

The immunization of children, the de-

velopment of resistance to mental germs whether moral, immoral or religious, can only be effected by the medical man with a psychological and psychopathological training. Just as science, philosophy and art have gradually passed out of the control of the priest, so now we find that the control of mental and moral life is gradually passing away from under the influence of the church into the hands of the medical psychopathologist.

The physical life of the nation is now gradually being regulated by medical science with a consequent decrease of disease and mortality. Gradually and slowly the school begins to feel the need of medical advice, both as to the health of the pupils and their more efficient training. Gradually the medical man assumes the responsibility of guiding the teacher and telling him why the pupils are defective in their



studies and why the pedantic methods of academic pedagogy are arid and sterile. In some cases the doctor actually undertakes the training of the young. Thus the Italian doctor, Maria Montessori, from the education of defective children has finally undertaken, with immense, almost phenomenal, success, the training and education of normal children.

As we look forward into the future we begin to see that the school is coming under the control of the medical man. The medical man free from superstitions and prejudices, possessed of the science of mind and body, is to assume in the future the supervision of the education of the nation.

The schoolmaster and the schoolma'am with their narrow-minded, pedantic pseudogogics are gradually losing prestige and passing away, while the medical man

alone is able to cope with the serious threatening danger of national mental degeneration. Just as the medical profession now saves the nation from physical degeneration and works for the physical regeneration of the body-politic, so will the medical profession of the future assume the duty of saving the nation from mental and moral decline, from degeneration into a people of fear-possessed, mind-racked psychopathics and neurotics, with broken wills and crushed individualities on the one hand, accompanied, on the other hand, by the still worse affliction and incurable malady of a self-contented mediocrity and a hopeless, Chinese philistinism.

There are in the United States about two hundred thousand insane, while the victims of psychopathic, mental maladies may be counted by the millions. Insan-



ity can be greatly alleviated, but much, if not all, of that psychopathic mental misery known as functional mental disease is entirely preventable. It is the result of our pitiful, wretched, brain-starving, mind-crippling methods of education.

## XVII

IN my work of mental and nervous diseases I become more and more convinced of the preponderant influence of early childhood in the causation of psychopathic mental maladies. *Most, in fact all, of those functional mental diseases originate in early childhood.* A couple of concrete cases will perhaps best illustrate my point:

The patient is a young man of 26. He suffers from intense melancholic depression, often amounting to agony. He is possessed by the fear of having committed the unpardonable sin. He thinks that he is damned to suffer tortures in hell for all eternity. I cannot go here into the details of the case, but an examination of



the patient by the hypnoidal state clearly traced his present condition to the influence of an old woman, a Sunday school teacher, who infected him with those virulent germs in his very early childhood, about the age of five. Let me read to you a paragraph from the patient's own account: "It is difficult to place the beginning of my abnormal fear. It certainly originated from doctrines of hell which I heard in early childhood, particularly from a rather ignorant elderly woman, who taught Sunday school. My early religious thought was chiefly concerned with the direful eternity of torture that might be awaiting me, if I was not good enough to be saved."

Another patient of mine, a clergyman's wife, was extremely nervous, depressed, and suffered from insomnia, from nightmares, from panophobia, general fear,

dread of the unknown, from claustrophobia, fear of remaining alone, fear of darkness and numerous other fears and insistent ideas, into the details of which I cannot go here. By means of the hypnoïdal state the symptoms were traced to impressions of early childhood; when at the age of five, the patient was suddenly confronted by a maniacal woman. The child was greatly frightened, and since that time she became possessed by the fear of insanity. When the patient gave birth to her child, she was afraid the child would become insane; many a time she even had a feeling that the child *was* insane. Thus the fear of insanity is traced to an experience of early childhood, an experience which, having become subconscious, is manifesting itself persistently in the patient's consciousness.

The patient's parents were very reli-



gious, and the child was brought up not only in the fear of God, but also in the fear of hell and the devil. Being sensitive and imaginative, the devils of the gospel were to her stern realities. She had a firm belief in "diabolical possessions" and "unclean spirits"; the legend of Jesus exorcising in the country of the Gadarenes unclean spirits, whose name is Legion, was to her a tangible reality. She was brought up on brimstone and pitch, with everlasting fires of the "bottomless pit" for sinners and unbelievers. In the hypnoidal state she clearly remembered the preacher, who used every Sunday to give her the horrors by his picturesque descriptions of the tortures of the "bottomless pit." She was in anguish over the unsolved question: "Do little sinner-girls go to hell?" This fear of hell

made the little girl feel depressed and miserable and poisoned many a cheerful moment of her life.

What a lasting effect and what a melancholy gloom this fear of ghosts and of unclean spirits of the bottomless pit produced on this young life may be judged from the following facts: When the patient was about eleven years old, a young girl, a friend of hers, having noticed the patient's fear of ghosts, played on her one of those silly, practical jokes, the effect of which on sensitive natures is often disastrous and lasting. The girl disguised herself as a ghost, in a white sheet, and appeared to the patient, who was just on the point of falling asleep. The child shrieked in terror and fainted. Since that time the patient suffered from nightmares and was mortally afraid to sleep.



alone; she passed many a night in a state of excitement, frenzied with the fear of apparitions and ghosts.

When about the age of seventeen, she apparently freed herself from the belief in ghosts and unclean powers. But the fear acquired in her childhood did not lapse; it persisted subconsciously and manifested itself in the form of uncontrollable fears. She was afraid to remain alone in a room, especially in the evening. Thus, once when she had to go upstairs alone to pack her trunks, a gauzy garment called forth the experience of her ghost-fright; she had the illusion of seeing a ghost, and fell fainting to the floor. Unless specially treated, fears acquired in childhood last through life.

“Every ugly thing,” says Mosso, the great Italian physiologist, “told to the child, every shock, every fright given him,

will remain like minute splinters in the flesh, to torture him all his life long.

“An old soldier whom I asked what his greatest fears had been, answered me thus: ‘I have only had one, but it pursues me still. I am nearly seventy years old, I have looked death in the face I do not know how many times; I have never lost heart in any danger, but when I pass a little old church in the shades of the forest, or a deserted chapel in the mountains, I always remember a neglected oratory in my native village, and I shiver and look around, as though seeking the corpse of a murdered man which I once saw carried into it when a child, and with which an old servant wanted to shut me up to make me good.’ ” Here, too, experiences of early childhood have persisted subconsciously throughout lifetime.

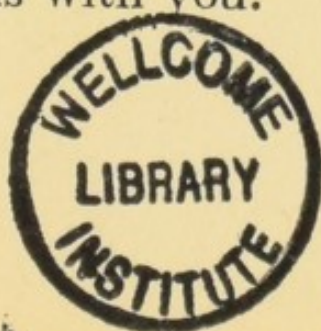


## XVIII

I APPEAL to you, fathers and mothers, and to you, liberal-minded readers, asking you to turn your attention to the education of your children, to the training of the young generation of future citizens. I do not appeal to our official educators, to our scientific, psychological pseudagogues, to the clerks of our teaching shops,—for they are beyond all hope. From that quarter I expect nothing but attacks and abuse. We cannot possibly expect of the philistine-educator and mandarin-pseudagogue the adoption of different views of education. We should not keep new wine in old goat-skins. The present school-system squanders the resources of the country and wastes the energies, the lives of our children. Like Cato our cry

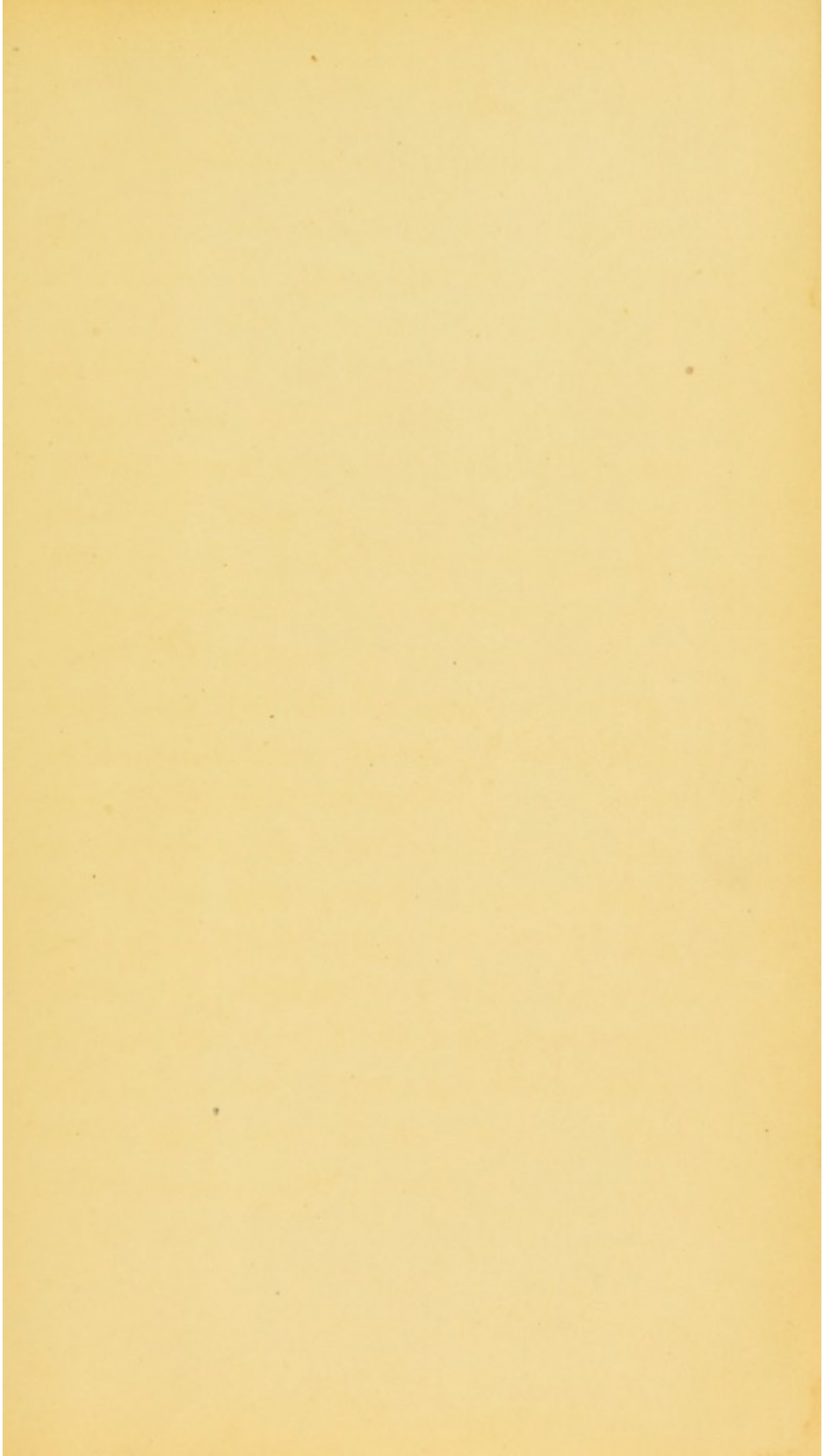
should be *Carthago delenda est*,—the school-system should be abolished and with it should go the present psychologizing educator, the schoolmaster and the schoolma'am.

Fathers and mothers, you keep in your hands the fate of the young generation. You are conscious of the great responsibility, of the vast, important task laid upon you by the education of your children. For, according to the character of the training and education given to the young, they may be made a sickly host of nervous wrecks and miserable wretches; or they may be formed into a narrow-minded, bigoted, mediocre crowd of self-contented "cultured" philistines, bat-blind to evil; or they may be made a *great race of genius* with powers of rational control of their latent, potential, reserve energy. The choice remains with you.

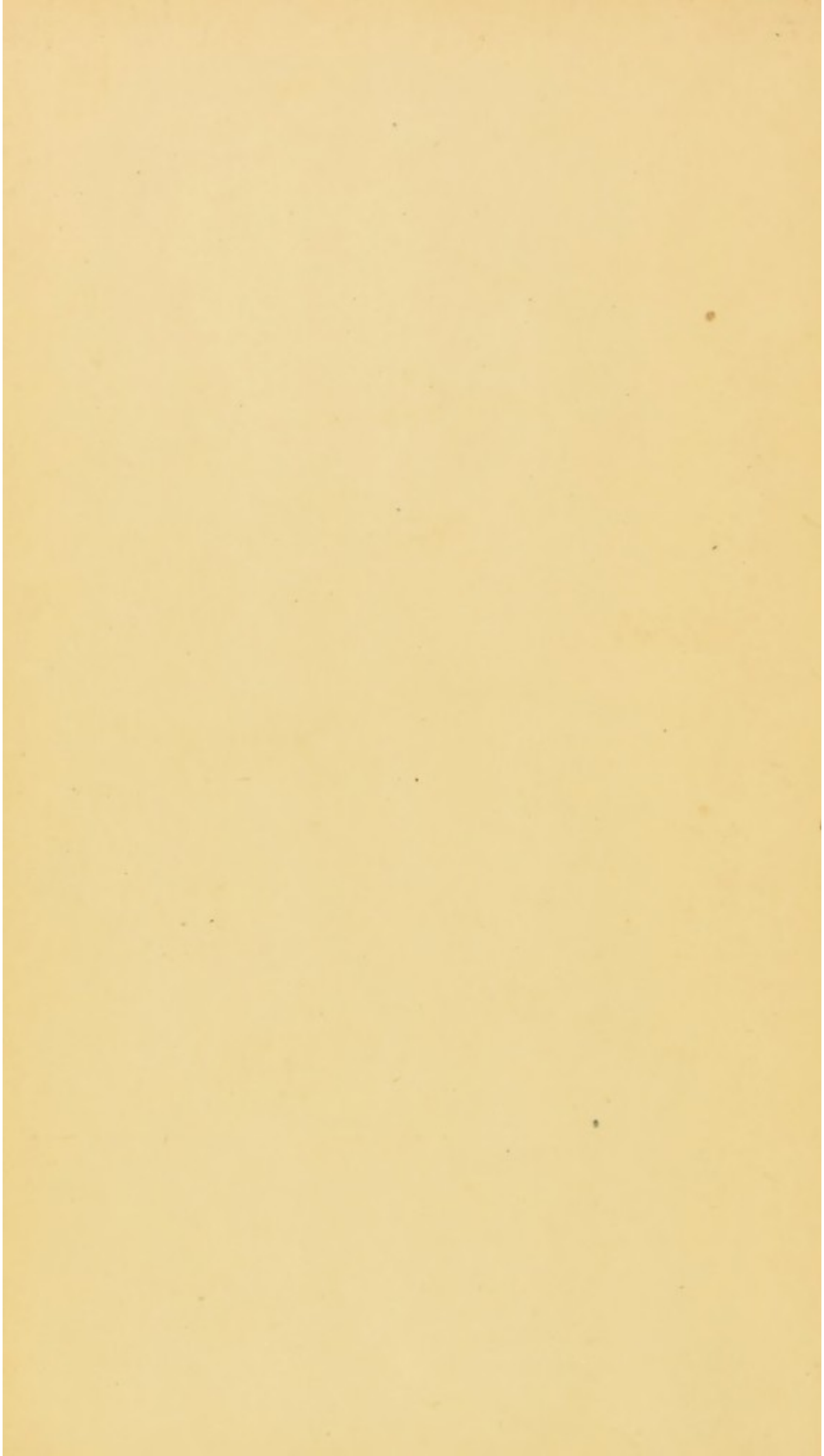












H153



