

THE SUPPORTS OF CIVILIZATION

THE process of civilization consists of the discovery by men of the laws of the universe, and of living in harmony with those laws. The most important of them to men are the laws of their own nature.

This is education, the method whereby man is revealed to himself. It is the instruction of his understanding, the training of his sentiments, the direction of his action. It discloses the physical and the spiritual, the unseen and the seen. It includes every human relationship and shows forth every duty. It is alike the source of the intellectual and moral force of all mankind.

I shall assume that civilization is desirable. I do not think that is questioned in any respectable quarter, though I recall that a wise old Massachusetts magistrate once observed to me that perhaps we should all be better off if our entire efforts were directed to a hoe and a potato. There is honest difference of opinion whether the results of civilization are equitably distributed. That I shall not now discuss. It seems obvious that the present population of the globe could not subsist by that ancient method of the tillage of the soil represented by the hoe-and-potato era. But, even if it could, it is enough to say that existence in such a state is totally inadequate to em-

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ploy all the powers of man, and it cannot be, either, that man ought to be satisfied to be anything but his best, or that being his best can be inconsistent with the highest welfare of society. The question I propose to consider is what it is necessary to do to sustain modern civilization and provide for its advancement and further development.

It is not necessary to suppose that our civilization is perfect. We Amherst men have heard that "there is first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear," and we have further heard that "it doth not yet appear what *man* shall be." It is necessary to be assured that civilization is on a sound foundation, that it is in such a state that it can grow and develop for the general welfare.

Both the answer to this main question and this necessary assurance are found in part in history. Great light is always shed on the question of what ought to be done by finding out what has been done. Progress has lain in the cultivation and maintenance of a state of mind. It has been in general a strong adherence to ideals. The ideal around which the ancient tribes of Israel developed was monotheism. The ideal of Greece was beauty. That of Rome was glory. The strength of the British Empire has been in a sense of obligation. Well might Admiral Nelson appeal to that sense by flying at his masthead as he swung his fleet into battle: "England expects every man to do his duty." To the French it has been a personification of their country. To one of her generals, on trial for surrendering his army, who plead that with many of her cities in the hands of the enemy, with her forces disintegrated, her government in flight, there was no

longer anything for him to fight for, went the reply: "There is always France." The strongest sentiment of America has been for that independence which is the basis of self-government. These are but main features. There clustered about them many other ideals which in all instances lent strength to the character of the people of each nation. It was only when the people fell away from their adherence to their ideals that the disintegration began which ended in the final downfall of the nations of antiquity. It has but lately been demonstrated to the fullest extent that the self-governing peoples of the modern world are strong and vigorous, still true to their traditions, still loyal to their ideals. Such a condition has always indicated a sound foundation in the past, and must be the best index of it in the present.

Our modern life is very complex. Its conduct is dependent on technical skill. Strike out what is known of physics and substantially every mechanical device, all transportation by power-driven motors, all manufacturing, heating, and lighting plants, water-supply, and drainage would fail to operate; strike out chemistry and pestilence would overwhelm the earth in a few days. These are results which affect the entire human race. There is nothing of such broad application as the practical results of learning. There is no force so democratic as the force of an ideal.

But it is not only by technical skill that modern civilization is sustained. It depends to a large degree on accumulated and invested capital, and for its advance will depend more and more on accumulation and investment of capital. Civilization and profits go hand in hand. It

is out of the surplus of our efforts that progress is made. It is only necessary to remember the method of conducting all industry, transportation, banking, mining, and commerce and to observe that they not only need constant renewal but ever-increasing facilities with which to meet enlarged demands, to determine that what we call capital is the chief material minister to the general welfare of all mankind.

Invested capital is the result of brains. All the elements that are assembled in a Corliss engine, a modern printing-press, or an aeroplane have lain in the earth throughout all the ages. For countless generations there has been sufficient human labor to assemble them, yet they did not appear. They came into being only when called by the skill and brains of men. The same is true of the plant whereby is carried on all modern business. It is also by organizations, by management, that labor is so directed as to produce a surplus for present and future investment. Truly capital, surplus, profits, and progress are the result of brains. In fact, that which we call labor is intelligent effort directed toward some desired end. Otherwise such result could well be secured from a machine. In its last analysis, what the workman sells is his intelligence. But it is still true that the management and direction, of which surplus and profits are born, is a rarer skill, a yet more acute intelligence, which we in general designate as brains. It is on the continued existence of this power in man, which is the result of effort and training, that not only the advance but the maintenance of our present standards depends.

But there is need not only of patriotic ideals and a

trained intelligence in our economic life, there is need of a deep understanding of man and his relationship to the physical universe and to his fellow man. There has always been evil in the world. John Fiske has demonstrated very clearly that of necessity evil and good are coexistent possibilities. What virtue would there be in choosing the good unless thereby the evil was rejected? There are evil forces at work now. They are apparently organized and seek the disintegration of society. They can always be recognized by a direct appeal to selfishness and nothing else. They deny that the present relationship of men to each other, which exists by reason of organized society, has any sound basis for its existence. They point out to men with untrained minds that it takes effort to maintain themselves and support government, and claim that they ought to exist without effort on the accumulation of others, and they deny that men have any obligations toward each other.

The answer to this lies in a knowledge of past human experience and a realization of what man is. These claims are very old. They have had trial times without number, and always with disastrous results. Men are not so constituted that selfishness satisfies them, and the only result of attempting to evade their obligations to others has been to destroy themselves. Man has been so created, his environment is such, his nature is such, that he cannot succeed in that way.

Surely the wonderful experience of man shows he is a being that can only be satisfied with higher things than these. After contemplating his advance from the beginnings of evolution up to the scientist and the philos-

opher, of him well might the ancient prophet Isaiah have inquired: "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out Heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?"

"Who hath directed the spirit of *man* or being his counsellor hath taught him?"

"With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?"

They little understand what men have done, or what they are, who expect they can long be content with the husks of existence. Surely men will not long follow false prophets or long serve their betrayers.

What are the sources, then, of that state of mind which supports civilization? There are but two sources, education and religion. From them are derived the teachings of science necessary to give the requisite technical skill and moral ideals sufficient to support and advance civilization. But when we ask what education, the answer must be the higher education; for in the first place primary schools have been a development of higher education and would not long survive without it, and in the second place we have seen that modern society cannot exist save by the ministrations of the highest scientific skill. We could not survive, then, with only primary education. But what about religion? In so far as that is dependent upon the teachings of the clergy, we come at once to the inquiry, who teach the clergy? and we learn that the higher education was anciently instituted solely

for their instruction. Not only the higher sciences, but philosophy, morals, and religion all centre in our colleges and universities. It is not too much to say that in them is the foundation of all civilization, and that their influence is all-embracing.

That is not saying that everybody ought to have a university education. It is saying that in these days everybody must and does come under the influence of a university education. Neither Washington nor Lincoln had the advantage of a college education, but had it not been for colleges neither Washington nor Lincoln would ever have been heard of.

Is not the conclusion of all this perfectly plain? We hold by the modern standards of society. We believe in maintaining modern civilization for the protection and support of free governments, and the development of our economic welfare. We claim they are sound and minister in the best way to human welfare. The great test of an institution is its ability to perpetuate itself. It seems fairly plain that whether or not these institutions can survive with the aid of higher education, without it they have not the slightest chance. We justify the greater and greater accumulations of capital because we believe that therefrom flows the support of all science, art, learning, and the charities which minister to the humanities of life, all carrying their beneficent effects to the people as a whole. Unless this is measurably true our system of civilization ought to stand condemned. It is to be condemned, anyway, unless it possesses the ability to perpetuate itself. This can only be true by supporting higher education to such a degree that its good influence may

more than match the rising tide of the influence of evil. Those who want a continuation of stability and confidence must seek it by supporting the efforts of our colleges and universities. It is not too much to say that all that we mean when we say America is dependent on the adequacy of this support.

This appeal has not failed. From earliest times Americans have lavished the most solicitous care on advanced education. As our settlements have swept westward they have set up the most efficient State universities. There is no contemporary effort of greater promise or more propitious than the increasing endowment that has been sought and secured by our institutions of higher learning. It shows a recognition of the need both by those intrusted with their management and by those who have the means to respond.

There is satisfaction too in the greatly increased college attendance. With these manifestations all about, what wonder that while the rest of the world is in a turmoil America is serene. This glory we owe in no small part to the all-embracing influence of our colleges and universities. They have wrought mightily in the making of America. While they can command adequate support America cannot fail. They stand like mighty fortresses within whose protection the truth is secure. Against them no enemy shall prevail.