

STANLEY HALL: A MEMORY

BY A. E. HAMILTON

AFTER re-reading once more, slowly, carefully, delightedly, the five hundred and ninety-five pages of that amazing romance of intellectual wanderlust which the late G. Stanley Hall called "The Life and Confessions of a Psychologist," I somehow feel that I know less about my guide, philosopher and friend than I knew before. The Stanley Hall that the world was aware of, to be sure, is in it—the strange Yankee who came back from Wundt's lecture-room to found the science of experimental psychology in America—the father of Clark University, now, alas, no more, and for years the main source of its vigorous life—the chief agent, after Eliot and Gilman, in the revolutionizing of the higher education among us. This Hall is in the book, and between its red covers he has unfolded an awe-inspiring panorama of the universe, sketched the evolution of mind from moneron to man, psychoanalyzed the idea of God, surveyed every educational problem of the modern world, and painted, incidentally, some charming pictures of boy-life in New England seventy years ago. But where is his smoky workshop? Where are his cigars? Where is his famous spirometer? Where is his delight in breaking pedantic and idiotic laws—in jay-walking on crowded streets, in swimming where swimming was forbidden, in forever playing Peck's Bad Boy? The university president is there, and the author of "Adolescence," but not the Stanley Hall that I knew and worked with. Now he is dead, and I shall try to recall him. . . .

It was down in the beautiful old city of

Mexico that I discovered "Adolescence"—in a second-hand book shop. I took the two weighty volumes home, and they precipitated such a bewildering revolution within me that I became possessed instantly by the idea that I must leave my job to study at the feet of a man who, I concluded, must be the very wisest person who ever lived. In his "Life and Confessions," Dr. Hall says that "with, I think, three exceptions, we have never received into the institution [Clark University] any who had not graduated from a reputable college." A timely shipwreck off the coast of Virginia was largely responsible for my becoming one of those fortunate exceptions. My job in Mexico was that of selling stock for a building and loan association, and it gave me much time for reading while my heels cooled in the ante-rooms of offices. I decided to finish Herbert Spencer's "Synthetic Philosophy," re-read "Adolescence," and then take a college course somewhere in America as a preliminary to asking admission to Clark under Hall. But Madero moved southward, Porfirio Diaz evaporated, and my exit from Mexico was endangered before I had completed my self-imposed discipline. So I packed my books, ran the revolutionary gauntlet to Vera Cruz, and embarked for New York on the ill-fated steamship *Merida*, which adventurous divers are still trying to find for its cargo of gold and silver ingots.

The "Synthetic Philosophy," together with "Adolescence" and a boxful of lesser but still precious books, went down with the ship at about midnight, and as I watched the mastlight dip and sway and

then disappear, I had almost the feeling of losing a friend, a home, or a beloved dog. Landed in Norfolk with nothing in the world to my name but the bedraggled clothes on my back and a few soaking bills in my pocket, I started immediately for Philadelphia, where I heard there was a college which might take me in. No such luck. Very courteously and even kindly, but with all firmness and finality, I was assured that a high-school diploma or its equivalent was essential for my admission. Columbia, the College of the City of New York, New York University and Boston University were equally kind and sympathetic and equally adamant. I decided to move on to Worcester. There President Sanford, of Clark College, while doubting my technical preparation for college, unaccountably, astoundingly suggested that I go and have a chat with President Hall himself!

I had dreamed of meeting Hall with a rolled and ribboned bachelor's degree in my hand, and the story of long years of persistent effort in college on my tongue. It was then, and then only, I had decided, that I should ask to be allowed to sit in his lecture-room. Now I must come to him empty handed, and with only a tale of failure on my lips—to ask merely for advice as to what to do with myself. It was with a dismal medley of fear, chagrin, disappointment and awe in my heart that I crossed Woodland street and walked up the narrow concrete path across the lawn to the big brown door of number 156. But I believe a faint wisp of hope played flittingly within me, too—an uncertain, bashful little hope that something impossible might happen. It did.

An old Negro let me in, and trotted up stairs to tell Dr. Hall I had come. The Negro had asked me to sit down, but I walked about nervously in the hall. I even picked up a soft felt hat from the rack and tried it on. It covered my ears and eyes with enough spare room to allow my finger to run around inside the rim easily. I was sure it was President Hall's. Just the sort

of head such a man would carry on his shoulders! My sense of forlorn littleness shrank even smaller as I put the hat back on its peg and wondered how differently God made men and skulls.

But soon I was chatting amicably, freely, comfortably with one of the cheeriest, most sympathetic and at-homey gentlemen I had ever met or will ever meet again. All my fears and discouragements vanished like a puff of cigar smoke in a breeze. My diffidence was changed swiftly, electrically, into a feeling of downright, simple, unaffected human fellowship. An age seemed to pass in a few rapid minutes, and I left the house conscious only of a hearty handshake and a rosy haze of bewilderment and wonder at the possibility of miracles in the life of man today.

II

The rest of that afternoon and all that night I walked the streets of Worcester, gazing abstractedly at store windows; dropping into arm-chair lunch-rooms for a few minutes' rest over a cup of coffee; wondering in the early morning hours if some suspicious cop would run me in. Dawnlight frightened me with the thought that I must write out my self-made credentials of reading and study to present at Dr. Hall's office at ten o'clock. I hurried to my hotel, asked the clerk for lots of paper and one envelope, then sat me down to write a list of every book I had ever read, and some brief notes about my life. These were to be my diploma and credentials!

I was admitted to the University! On trial, to be sure, but none the less admitted with every privilege and every responsibility. For the University itself I cared but little at first. I had been admitted to President Hall, to a personality, to an ideal, a demi-god. The institution, the students, the professors were mere necessary adjuncts, cloudy fringes on the penumbra of one supreme individual. I accepted them, however, with all due

deference, assumed the right academic demeanor, filled out cards and blanks, and began to follow the prescribed routine assiduously.

At the close of my second visit to Dr. Hall at his home, he picked up that great hat of his, seized a cane and asked me to come out for a walk.

"Let's stop at the library a minute," he said as we crossed the campus, "I want to introduce you to Freud. You don't know Freud, do you?"

I did not know Freud; I had never heard of him. He sounded German, and I hoped that I should be introduced to him in translation, and not in the original. Fortunately the first volume we found on the shelf was an English version of the studies in hysteria. This was good enough, said Dr. Hall, to give me an introductory insight into psychoanalysis.

Psychoanalysis! Wonderful word! It buzzed in my head like a strange and colorful beetle as we ran down the steps, two at a time, and out into the street. What was it? How did it work? Who invented the term? Was it practical or theoretical? These questions, and a flock of others struggled to get out into words, but I was still partly under the semi-paralyzing fear that one feels in the presence of the chieftain, the general, the king. However, I did not need to reveal my ignorance in order to obtain the enlightenment I was so eager for. Dr. Hall talked. He talked simply, humanly, effervescently, and by the time we had returned to his house I believe I knew more about the history of psychoanalysis, its possibilities, applications, shortcomings and importance to psychology, than I could have discovered by weeks of reading or note-taking in lecture rooms. That first walk of ours revealed to me the fascinating possibilities of intellectual parasitism!

Next day a patronizing student told me not to bother the professors. He said they were hard pressed for time, did not like to be disturbed except by appointment, and were willing to talk only on the most

important of academic subjects. It was well, this student said, to make notes beforehand of questions one wanted to ask, and to take them up, one by one, at an appointed conference, saving time and professorial patience. I listened agreeably enough, and thanked him, but I had already taken a walk with Doctor Hall,—and almost the first thing I did under that admonition was to walk up to Professor Chamberlain as he started for home and ask him if I might come along for a way. I learned, on that walk, all that it was essential for a student to know about the measurement of the cephalic index in man, its origin in anthropometry, its usefulness and its technique. I had asked no idiotic questions, I had simply tapped an interest with no premeditation, and the rest was a matter of walking rapidly along the sidewalk and listening to a man's spontaneous eloquence.

So it was with the other professors. President Hall had gathered about him men in his own image and likeness, at least as to fundamentally human and friendly characteristics, whatever their intellectual differences might be. I got more intellectual growth, more viewpoints on life, and even more actual cut and dried lumber of knowledge from my walks and informal chats with him and his colleagues than I did from all the lecture work, seminars and reading that I put myself through while at the University. I believe this was also true of all the others who had the courage or the impudence to step in where orthodoxly academic students feared to tread.

III

A large mill-pond near Worcester was posted here and there along its shore with signs declaring that no swimming was allowed. We passed by these warnings often, our pockets bulging with swimming trunks and our lips perhaps smacking a bit in anticipation of forbidden fruit.

"Can you read the language on this sign-board?" asked Dr. Hall one day. "It

seems dimly familiar to me, as though I might have known it in my boyhood days. I wonder what those words mean? Perhaps my ancestors, in ages long ago, used that tongue. It seems to call up vague, rudimentary memories from down inside me somewhere. Let us take a swim!"

Thus, so often, his philosophy of psychogenesis, which I believe will crown him as the Darwin of psychology, mixed itself with his bubbling humor and sparkled forth in boyish fun. In our surreptitious swims off the beach of a little island in the forbidden pond, he would catch "atavistic echoes of our pelagic days"; he would declare himself to be positively littorotropic, like some of Jacques Loeb's snails, when he grew tired of swimming and lay basking in the sunshine on the pebbly sand. His most abstruse lectures, and the least comprehensible polysyllables of his printed works would suddenly become luminously clear and almost comically simple through some chance spontaneity thrown off in the sheer gusto of living a few natural minutes in the open air. In that inspiringly optimistic book, "Senescence," he declares: "Old age is called second childhood. That is all wrong, for there is nothing rejuvenative about it. Childhood is the most active, healthful, buoyant, and intuitive stage of life; age, the least so." Perhaps true enough for most men, but he, at least, carried the child with him through all his long and useful years.

"Let's catty" he would say when we were to cross a street. Then we jay-walked, as triangularly as possible, taking the shortest distance between two points and as forgetful of traffic mores as we had been of *verboden* signs. "There, that's a new experience!" he would laugh when we walked a railroad track, or ducked under some culvert or bridge on our rambles. He was ever seeking new trails, down side-streets and sometimes over fences and across back lots. One day, on Newton Hill, his favorite climb, he suddenly sat down upon a boulder and took off his

shoes and stockings. "Let's feel the green grass and the real earth under our feet! I've been lecturing about getting back to nature today. Let's go back as far as we can. The police might object if we went any farther than feet and ankles, but they'll hardly arrest us for that much. I'll bet Anetus never wore shoes!" At the White City, a diminutive Coney Island, near Worcester, we were boys again. We rode the grotesque little horses, threw rings over canes, punched slot-machine bags, stamped out aluminum name-plates, pounded pegs with hammers, ate popcorn and peanuts, and sometimes won horrible cigars.

In his "Confessions," Dr. Hall has shown us how much of his delightful New England boyhood he carried with him into the midst of his presidential perplexities and responsibilities and his other herculean labors, but he has not mentioned that little sled of his which, after dark and most folks' bedtime, he would haul out of the red brick barn behind his house. Then he would go sledding down Worcester hills. He has confessed to taking secret lessons in dancing in his last late years, but he has left no account of those horrific rag-time records for his Victrola to which he would clog and jig in the solitude of his workshop.

The famous spirometer stood for a long time on the book-piled table of his study and almost every visitor was commanded to blow his hardest and record his score. President Eliot, of Harvard, blew the arrow up to the line of 210 one day, and Dr. Hall, whose record was then somewhere between 170 and 200, began to breathe more deeply on his walks, hoping to reach, at least, his colleague's achievement. We tried the spirometer almost daily, watching for possible developments of vital capacity. We blew before our walks and after, just as we weighed before starting and upon our return, to see how many ounces of our bodies we must give in return for the fun of a walk. The lung machine was a toy, a jolly toy.

Dr. Hall, indeed, did more than study childhood; he kept living some of its happiest and best moments, so that we sophisticated students sometimes felt old and fossilized in his buoyant presence.

But, his work, of course, was his favorite play. People said that he overdid, that he attempted too much, that he never relaxed, that he burned his candle, not only at both ends, but in the middle beside. Yet it was glorious to watch him at his work—glorious and yet a bit dispiriting, for I used to compare my own sputtering efforts with his great swinging strides, and felt ever so small and sluggish. It was my privilege to work with him, for a time, in his den. I wrote out his dictation on a typewriter. The only salvation for me was the fact that he wrote his own notes so hurriedly that he had to stop now and then to decipher a word, and I had time to catch up. Every evening he fairly plunged from supper into his beloved work. Always he ate hurriedly, and many a time after an evening meal he asked me what it was we had had to eat! His bottle of tonic, left him by a friendly physician, remained almost always untouched. "There," he would exclaim, "what will the doctor think of me? I've forgotten that medicine again, but I can't take time for it now." And he would pick up a scribbled sheet and set me to hammering the keys for an hour at a stretch. "Thank the Lord there's mail," he would exclaim, and away we went.

Yet he gave himself generously, inexhaustibly, to students, visitors and friends, whenever they chanced to call. Perhaps this was his relaxation, and yet for every minute thus given he seemed to feel that he must work harder and longer on his own job to make up for it. Of his mornings he was particularly jealous. "Best fellow in the world, that, but it does hurt a lot to have him take such a grab out of my morning work-time!" I do not believe, however, that anyone was ever turned away from his door, and his welcome to

everyone was like Spring sunshine, or an open flower.

IV

Nor did his relation with students end with their sojourn at the University. He says in his autobiography that he was not a great writer of letters, but if my own sheaf is a sample his letter-writing must have been actually prodigious. His pupils and friends were scattered far and wide in the world. If each one of them was stirred to feeling and moved to action as I was by even some of his briefest of notes, then his influence was colossal indeed. He wrote freely, spontaneously, just as he would talk if we were out for a tramp, or sitting on the sand after a swim. In reply to a note about my days at Clark he wrote:

Your recollections show that you not only have a wonderful memory, because a few of these things I cannot possibly recall, but, I must believe, a very vivid and sprightly imagination. . . . I don't know what the dickens it was that so delightfully led me to draw aside a reserve which is always an obsession (though it ought not to be) with professors, and a perfect curse to college presidents. . . . I had no idea, however, that I was being subjected to such observation, and when you see me hereafter (which I hope will be often) you will probably find me very reserved, self-conscious, etc., realizing that I am being noted . . . I have always preached euphoria, but you incarnate it.

One of these recollections, which Hall declared he had no memory of, was of a day when he visited me in my attic-room in May street and lunched off a newspaper table-cloth on my writing desk. I fed him an orange, some shredded-wheat with butter, a few figs, some raisins and a glass of milk. These he said he enjoyed immensely, but I would not be surprised if he visited his own ice-box as soon as he got home. The thing he had forgotten, however, was his dance. My landlady had prohibited my inviting undergraduates to my room. Only graduate students were to be allowed. Undergraduates were too noisy and too destructive of furniture and curtains. On the day I speak of President Hall, after his vegetarian lunch, proceeded to demonstrate to me a phase of his motor

mindfulness. He said that, in order to learn the names of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, he had evolved a little dance to the rhythm of the words. He not only said this; he danced it out on my floor. His dancing shook the ceiling of the room below, rattled the chandelier, and brought my landlady scurrying up the stairs with the fire of accusation in her eye. Why had I broken my promise regarding college boys? When I introduced her to the president of the University, she was naturally much abashed and profoundly apologetic; but I feel quite sure that she still believes I had hidden a collegian in my closet before she opened my door.

In his autobiography Dr. Hall said: "I do believe that I have encouraged many, especially young writers and investigators, and possibly sometimes shown undue appreciation of really rather crude productions, especially if I thought they gave promise of better things." His appreciation, in truth, was sometimes a trifle exaggerated, and altogether too complimentary, but it remained none the less encouraging. It was exceedingly cheering to receive such cordial good words as the following from so tonic and energizing a source:

But don't you know you should not write this way to a stogy old grind as I have to be? For it fills me with a kind of wild Spring fever, makes me infinitely discontented with my own life and everything about me, and makes me feel that I, too, ought to get off in the woods and rusticate for a season. . . . This note gives me a new sense of inferiority, a sort of looking up to you.

Such chords in his letters show, in their undoubted frankness, and spontaneity, something of the exquisite modesty and self effacement of the man. He seemed to take a warm delight in the possibility that some of his own pupils might some day see farther than he did himself because he had helped them to stand on his shoulders.

As a lecturer he was much less his truly human self, save on those rare occasions when he spoke without manuscript, and from the heart. Lecturing, he read clearly and not too fast; but he poured forth such

tremendous avalanches of facts, figures, citations, technicalities and bewildering neologisms that only an identical twin brother could possibly have kept pace with his speed and distance of travel. Those of us were fortunate who carried away even a few assimilable fragments from the whole, and did not succumb to the temptation to try to get down everything in our notes. Personally, I made very few notes, and these only of things which I at least partly understood. I would then carry them to my room and elaborate them into long letters to my fiancée, who, poor soul, had to take them as they came in cold type, without background of time or space! No wonder she returned all my letters later on with the assurance that I might have within me the makings of a professor, but hardly the elements of a good husband!

The boiling down and sugaring off (a favorite phrase of his) of lecture material into big, red-bound books was Dr. Hall's major job in life. Had he not been so much the artist, as well as the scientist and philosopher, those vast companies, regiments, corps and divisions of facts and figures would be hardly more than reservoirs from which to draw knowledge, as from an almanac or an encyclopedia. But I think no one who has read it will deny that his "Life and Confessions" is a great work of art, rough hewn, perhaps, like "Leaves of Grass," but none the less the product of a true artist's soul.

The daring courage of the man in attempting an artistic synthesis of the multitudinous and apparently utterly kaleidoscopic material gathered in by his omnivorous hunger for truth remains a marvel to me, and a wonder. But the greater miracle, to me, is the fact that his epochal books reflect not only the struggle of a great intellect with the world of fact; but that they also paint a strikingly beautiful picture of a successful experiment in the art of living a strenuously happy life!

AMERICANA

ALASKA

DREADFUL news brought out of the snow wastes by the Right Rev. Peter T. Rowe, Bishop of Alaska:

The church has won its fight, and Alaska today is as good as any other section of the country.

ARIZONA

SWEET, lovely and well-deserved words from the eminent Tucson *Citizen*:

There is nothing so responsive as an Elk's heart. In the social sense, he is the courtier, the gallant knight of modern times. There is more Christianity in the day-by-day practices of Elklodm than there is in many a monumental cathedral. There has been nothing spiritually finer since the day of the Christian crusaders than the Elks' financing the relief work of the Salvation Army during the World War.

ARKANSAS

PROGRESS of reform in Little Rock, as reported by the estimable *Arkansas Democrat*:

Warden Evans announced that all electrocutions conducted under his regime would be held strictly according to the law as regards witnesses. "People get the idea," he said, "that electrocutions are social gatherings, but none of this kind will be held while I am warden. *An execution is a serious matter* and should be considered as such."

COLORADO

AN advertisement in the Red Cliff *Holy Cross Trail*:

DR. W. F. O'GORMAN
Chiropractor

Of Leadville, Colorado.

Will have branch office in the Commercial Hotel on Wednesday and Sunday beginning March 23rd. If sick you need adjustments. Chiropractic has proven it's value in practically all acute and chronic ailments.

CONSULTATION FREE!

P. S. I will bring a selection of ladies and children's hats to display for Mrs. O'Gorman, milliner of Leadville. Prices ranging from \$2.50 to \$7.50.

CONNECTICUT

OBITER dictum of Maltbie, J., of the Superior Court of Hartford:

The man who buys liquor is an enemy of society . . . and a traitor to his country.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

PICTURE of democratic government in the one hundred and thirty-eighth year of the Republic, from a speech in the Senate by the Hon. James Thomas Heflin, of Alabama:

The Federal departments here are honeycombed with crooks and gorged with grafters.

FLORIDA

PROGRESS of Christian work on the Florida West Coast, as reported in a press dispatch from Tampa:

Eva Winchester, eighteen years old, arrested here for stamping to death her father, aged sixty-five, told Sheriff Spencer that she had killed him as a religious sacrifice. He and she had visited a religious gathering at St. Petersburg. He was a paralytic, and had been so much benefited by attendance that she and her mother had decided to sacrifice him as a thank offering to God.

ILLINOIS

EXEGETICAL discovery credited to Mrs. S. J. Bole, wife of the professor of biology at Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill., by the *Chicago Herald and Examiner*:

I disapprove of our co-eds bobbing their hair because it is against the teachings of the Bible.

IOWA

FROM a public harangue by one of the *ordentliche Professoren* at the Iowa State College:

Des Moines has the largest per capita ice cream consumption in America.

The second largest gold-fish farm in the world is located within seventy miles of Des Moines.

The best pair of overalls made on the American continent come from Iowa.

There is no group of two and a half million people in the world who worship God as Iowans do.