

ACRES OF DIAMONDS

BY W. C. CROSBY

BEFORE the World War the Rev. Dr. Russell H. Conwell of Philadelphia and his lecture, "Acres of Diamonds," were as standard and staple a part of the American scene as Anheuser-Busch beer, the Odd Fellows, Peruna, or William Jennings Bryan. But the war brought in a new generation, and to its jazzy and godless tastes poor Conwell was flat and insipid, and his Message only gaudy buncombe. When, in March, 1923, a crowd gathered in Philadelphia to see him receive the Edward W. Bok medal as the town's "most valuable citizen," he was already decayed to the estate of a mere legend. The orators of the evening tried heroically to pump the breath of life into him, and make him Somebody. He had, they thundered, delivered "Acres of Diamonds" for a world's record of six thousand times; in fifty years of lecturing he had addressed thirteen millions of people; as a pastor he had built the largest Protestant church in America; and as an educator he had founded Temple University, which enrolled then over ten thousand students. Such record-breaking statistics, of course, are always more or less impressive; Tyrus Raymond Cobb, in twenty-three years of baseball, has not yet played in three thousand games. But the spirit which thumped and roared in Conwell's breast and the Message which used to knock them cold along the Chautauqua circuit were as alien to that 1923 crowd as leg-of-mutton sleeves or red-flannel underwear. The old man sat on the stage with his hands folded contentedly on his paunch, apparently unaware that his day had passed him by, and still firm in the faith

that his gospel of Success contained the ultimate answer to the riddle of existence. But even Bruce Barton, who canonized him as an American saint in 1921 by interviewing him for the celebrated *American Magazine*, had been forced to ignore his fundamental doctrine, and to draw him out on such generalities as Happiness and Immortality in order to make a plausible story. Times had changed indeed.

In the smug days of America's Gilded Age, Russell H. Conwell had been a national figure—the biographer of Presidents, the intimate of celebrities, the inspirer of legions of earnest young men and women, an orator second only to the immortal Bryan himself. In villages and towns throughout the Bible Belt, when the Chautauqua season arrived and the tent auditorium was raised to the hallelujahs of the local clergy, Conwell's was the name that headlined the programme. On the night of his lecture, the crowds of farmers and townsmen would sniff self-righteously by the beer-drinking corner loafers and into the tent, to sit spell-bound while the *maestro* poured forth the Pollyanna economics and saccharine sentiments of his World-Famous Inspirational Lecture. Upon its conclusion they would wave him the Chautauqua salute, press forward to shake his hand, and go home to sand the sugar or water the milk, assured that it was the Lord's will that they should succeed in the world and make piles of money. The smug, thrifty, tightly moral American middle-class, rustic and urban, knew precisely what it wanted to hear. Conwell rose to fame and opulence by serving it its own ideas, buttered with the authority of

a Baptist pontiff and spiced with illustrative stories from the lives of the great. Thus he ground out the breath-taking message of "Acres of Diamonds" across the continent and even in foreign lands. Everybody can be successful and wealthy, for opportunity lies in your own backyard. "Where can I get rich?" The question rose in volume to the platform, and back Conwell thundered oracularly, "Right where you are. At home. Not somewhere else."

Someone has estimated that if he had saved and invested the money he made from "Acres of Diamonds," instead of building Temple University with it, he would have possessed eight million dollars, not counting his ten thousand dollars a year salary, and the proceeds from his thirty-seven books. Besides delivering the lecture orally six thousand times, he printed it in book form, always with his own picture as frontispiece, at least eleven times. It was also translated into at least one foreign language, and published frequently, in abridged form, in magazines and church papers. As Conwell often announced, however, the biggest profits from the lecture were not in the dollars it earned, but in the lives it inspired and uplifted. Testimonials poured in on him. One young man wrote: "During my college days I heard your wonderful lecture at Waco, Texas, and it has been my ideal and inspiration ever since . . . and now I am the grateful pastor of a congregation of five hundred people and just thirty-six years of age." A Pennsylvania paper contributed this one: "It was the lecture of Doctor Conwell on 'Acres of Diamonds,' delivered fifteen years ago in Reynoldsville, that inspired a group of Reynoldsville men, . . . and ultimately resulted in the founding of the Reynoldsville Brick and Tile Company." Such glowing testimonies could be multiplied indefinitely.

"In 1870 we went down the Tigris river," "Acres of Diamonds" always began. "We hired a guide at Bagdad. . . . He was well acquainted with the country, but

he was one of those guides who love to entertain their patrons; he was like a barber who tells many stories in order to keep your mind off the scratching and the scraping." One story which the guide related concerned a certain Al Hafed, who lived, contented and wealthy, on a large farm not far from the river Indus. Chancing to hear one time from a visiting priest of the value of diamonds, Al Hafed "went to his bed that night a poor man—not that he had lost anything, but poor because he was discontented and discontented because he thought he was poor. He said: 'I want a mine of diamonds.' " So, selling his farm and collecting money, off he went in search of diamonds. But after he had wandered over the world, and been reduced to poverty and rags, he drowned himself, disappointed and despairing because he had not found diamonds. The man who bought Al Hafed's farm "led his camel out into the garden to drink, and as that camel put its nose down into the clear water of the garden brook Al Hafed's successor noticed a curious flash of light from the sands of the shallow stream. . . . 'And thus,' said the guide to us, 'were discovered the diamond mines of Golconda.' . . . Had Al Hafed remained at home and dug in his own garden, instead of wretchedness, starvation, poverty and death in a strange land, he would have had 'acres of diamonds.' "

There always followed the story about "that man out in California, who in 1847, owned a ranch there. He read that gold had been discovered in Southern California, and he sold his ranch to Colonel Sutter and started off to hunt for gold." Colonel Sutter's little girl was playing with some dried sand from the mill-race, and in that sand "a visitor saw the first shining scales of real gold that were discovered in California; and the man who wanted the gold had sold this ranch and gone away, never to return."

Now under full way, "Acres of Diamonds" wound swiftly from incident to incident, some long, some short, some

from the lecturer's own life, most of them from his reading. In the version printed with his biography, there are twenty-five such stories, each one illustrating the message, "Opportunity is in your own backyard."

II

The tattered tents and thin crowds along the Chautauqua circuit today are pathetic reminders of the flourishing state of that noble institution in the Gilded Age. Charles and Mary Beard have described the outpouring of the pious and hopeful to Lake Chautauqua and to the hundreds of travelling Chautauquas throughout the land as a typically 100% American phenomenon, unprecedented in the world's history. Chautauquaing was quite as lucrative and steady a career as acting in "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Even so eminent a philosopher as William James was once inveigled into it, as the Beards record. "It was after lecturing to comfortable and excellent people at Chautauqua," they say, "that James heaved an immense sigh of relief as he escaped into the freight yards at Buffalo, where the noise, grime, and jar of reality broke the monotony of moderation, purity, and median lines of thought." But to Russell H. Conwell the sweet moderations of the American middle-class represented the final wisdom of life. In the close air of the lecture-tent he found his greatest satisfaction.

The note most often harped on before the old-time Chautauqua audiences was that of Success, and Success was measured neatly by the amount of money one had in bank. It was in that Gilded Age that newspaper reporters got into the habit of asking famous men to what they owed their success, and of reporting the invariable answer: to honesty and hard work. The cynical conclusion of the present age that luck is the chief factor would have seemed sacrilege in those innocent days. Horatio Alger wrote inspirational novels for the uplift of the youth of the land. Orison Swett Marden published "Pushing to the

Front" and promoted magazines to teach the lower middle-class how to get rich. Hundreds of other gifted soothsayers made their living by writing and lecturing, always on Success. But of them all, Russell H. Conwell was easily the most eminent. He was the real high priest in the temple.

"I have always preached the gospel of worldly success because I have always believed it to be in harmony with the spiritual gospel," he declared in 1916, toward the end of his long life. "Any Christian who has a chance to get rich, and doesn't, is not living up to his full duty," he said to Bruce Barton, when that talented metaphysician was interviewing him for the *American Magazine*. Thus his closing notes were the same he sounded in the first edition of "Acres of Diamonds" in 1888: "To secure wealth is an honorable ambition, and is one great test of a person's usefulness to others. . . . I say, Get rich, get rich! . . . Money being power, it ought to be entirely in the hands of good men and women." The germ of Service lurked in those innocent words!

The stodgy *bourgeoisie* who paid for his lectures and bought his books had, in Conwell's eyes, other commendable virtues beside their love of money. He had hated the aristocracy since his days at New Haven, when the young gentlemen of Yale remained blandly indifferent to the presence in their midst of the Massachusetts boy-orator. He knew little about the working classes, although he admitted, in his broadly tolerant way, that there might be good Christians even among this lowly group. But all the ins and outs of *bourgeois* psychology he knew and praised; the middle-class was the flowering of God's handicraft and the hope of the nation. "After all, the great government of this country is going to be borne triumphantly through all its difficulties by the even balance of the middle-class of people, which is an honor to America and which has maintained so grandly the honor of the American flag."

Every little thing about the middle-class

was perfect and good. "The place where we find the most health is among the middle-class of people. The homes we have in Philadelphia where men are earning from fifteen to fifty dollars a week are the happiest homes in the world. They are the most healthful homes in the world; no class of people live so long, and none enjoy their lives so much, as those who own their own homes, with an income of from fifteen to fifty dollars a week."

A middle-sized family for the middle-classes was his ideal in an age when apartments were called flats and still had backyards. "I read the account of that man in Kentucky . . . 130 years old, with nineteen children. I should say that is two or three too many! But, on the other hand, with none, it is two, three, six, or eight too few. There is a middle ground, and for this we are seeking in our civilization." . . . "No man can enjoy over fifty thousand dollars. . . . Fifty thousand dollars furnishes everything that any healthy man or woman could enjoy, and when a man gets beyond that sum he is going into care; he has passed beyond the place where perfect happiness is found."

Conwell tussled with the problem of how to get the fifty thousand with all his might. His answer was of the sort that shows the third assistant bookkeeper how to rise to be second assistant: thrift, frugality, hard work, honesty, and all the rest of the shop-keeping morality. All about him in the eighties and nineties the ruthless merchant princes and money barons were exploiting the country for huge gains, stuffing their pockets with the profits of extortion, trickery and corruption, but Conwell never saw it so. Instead, he reached into the grab bag of his memory, pulled out Emerson's old "make a better mousetrap" theory, refurbished it with new words and yelled, "If you have anything the people want, they will pay you for it. The more they need it, the more they will pay you for it. Find out then the world's need and earnestly endeavor to supply that need." Pressed by ambitious

clerks and farm-hands for more specific advice, he offered the stale suggestion of spare-time study, and soon he had thousands flocking into Y. M. C. A. training classes and enrolling in correspondence schools. He eventually founded his own night-school for the submerged classes of aristocratic Philadelphia, but this expedient was suggested to him, and did not originate in his own head.

But to criticize him for lack of originality is to chastise an elephant for not flitting like a humming-bird. His massive power, his strength as a preacher and lecturer, did not lie in ideas, but in inspiration. When he had emotionalized his hearers into a fine frenzy of determination, his job was done. If the frenzy sizzled out in nothingness, who could blame him? But if it proved the starting point for a career, he got the credit. The technique of inspiration, as he practiced it, began and ended with the success story. By reciting enough stories of how success had been won by homely methods, he convinced every dolt in his audience that he could step out and miraculously achieve fame and wealth. The method was sound, too; the fact that Conwell was called upon to give his lecture six thousand times proved that the people got a real thrill out of it.

In the maw of his incredibly capacious memory he carried literally thousands of success stories—how great men had overcome difficulties, how poor boys had found riches, how inventors had happened upon profitable devices, how iron-willed young men had fought through to success, how pious and charitable acts had brought their return in buttered bread, how hard work had won promotion. His mind worked in terms of stories, and these stories he wove into glittering tales of wealth and fame which hypnotized his listeners into a glassy-eyed determination to go out and do likewise.

The success story, as Conwell, Orison Swett Marden, and the other inspirers of the last generation developed it, had as definite a technique as the confessions

story which has succeeded it in popular favor. Indeed, there are surprising similarities between the two forms. Writing for the soldiers in 1918, Conwell employed the perfect technique. "If the soldier of whom I am now to write were not a man of world-wide fame or one on whom a mighty empire has leaned heavily in this great World War, the reader might surmise that this sketch was an imaginative story, a mere fairy-tale. But all the civilized world knows that these two pictures are true to real life." The hero is always a young man just like the reader or hearer, facing the same seeming barriers to success: he is poor, or he has no education, or he is slow and dull in learning, or he comes from a humble family, or he has contracted secret vices, such as smoking or drinking. No one expects him to amount to much. "His friends prophesied failure, and some of the competitors smiled at the imagined future collapse." But, through the exercise of whatever quality the story-teller may then be emphasizing—will power, observation, reading, or spare-time study—he climbs to wealth and spectacular success, usually dramatized in a gorgeous moment at a "great national convention," where the hero stands "amid admiring thousands."

The story of Sam is typical of the pure sentiments and lofty idealism of this standard success story. It begins, "Three colored men stood together on the stage of the Academy of Music in Philadelphia, in 1907, each of whom was an honor to the human race." The crowd and the enthusiasm and the honor receive full description. The first of these colored men is Booker T. Washington, "the friend of President Roosevelt." The second is Paul Laurence Dunbar, "the friend of William Dean Howells, and famous for his dialect poems." The third is Sam. Sam had been born in slavery in Mississippi. When the Civil War broke out he ran away and attached himself as a servant to a Union officer, but "he sent his old, widowed mistress money" to relieve her distress. He tried to learn to

read, but he seemed too dull ever to acquire the art; his teacher "gave him up," allowing him to continue just for kindness. Now follows a digression on how dullness need never be a handicap. But by an almost miraculous "opening of the mind," Sam suddenly began to read, and even "to learn at a glance." In the end he wrote a "poem":

If de debbil do not ketch
Jeff Davis, dat Confederit wretch,
An roas' an' frigazee dat rebel,
What am de use of any debbil?

To develop his literary gifts, Sam continued his schooling in Massachusetts, became a teacher, and was sent to Liberia. Finally, in South Africa, he entered the service of the British. Now, as he stood before the audience in the Academy of Music in Philadelphia, he was "introduced by Dr. Pepper as receiving the largest salary of any Negro in the civil service of the English government."

Such was the standard formula, capable of indefinite expansion or of severe contraction. "The president of one of the largest banks in Chicago secured his place by the chain of results following his improvement in his hand-writing, when as a soldier, he wrote letters home. . . . I am thinking of a young Connecticut farm lad who was given up by his teachers as too weak-minded to learn. Today he is a respected professor of zoölogy in an Ohio college."

The success story is still seen occasionally, in somewhat wilted form, in the *American Magazine*, the *Speciality Salesman* and other such publications, but gone forever is its old lusty bounce and vigor. The real masters of it, such as Conwell and Marden, could put everything into it except sex appeal; this the skinny morality of their Protestant credo prevented. Could they have promised buxom damsels as the reward of success, and pictured the maidens with the gusto of the Rev. John Roach Straton describing a New York night club, they might have created a permanent demand for their wares, and forestalled Bernarr Macfadden's *True Stories*. But the

success story could not survive by appealing to greed alone; with the beginning of the present century Elinor Glyn and Victoria Cross, and later Macfadden, taught the adolescent morons to play peek-a-boo. It was the righteousness of the inspirers that wrecked the success story.

Since he was an ordained Baptist minister, one question was continually popped at Conwell which did not trouble the layman Marden: how to hitch money-grubbing as the end of life with the teachings of Holy Writ. Conwell answered with large gestures and his usual muddy logic: "We ought to get rich if we can by honorable and Christian methods, *and those are the only methods that sweep us quickly toward the goal of riches.*" Again,

Money is power; money has powers; and for a man to say, "I do not want money" is to say, "I do not wish to do any good to my fellow-men." It is absurd thus to talk.

Finally,

And yet this religious prejudice is so great that some people think it is a great honor to be one of God's poor. I am looking in the faces of people who think just that way. I heard a man once say in a prayer-meeting that he was thankful that he was one of God's poor, and then I silently wondered what his wife would say to that speech, as she took in washing to support the man while he sat and smoked on the veranda. I don't want to see any more of that kind of God's poor.

Conwell went further. He demanded that the church itself become business-like and "show results." "The world is demanding more and better returns from the church for the time and money given it. Real, practical Christian work is what is asked of the church. The sooner it conforms to this demand, the more quickly it will regain its old influence and be prepared to make effective its fight against evil." So says an editorial quoted approvingly in his official biography. He put his own Baptist Temple on a strictly business basis. Regular dues, like those of a club, were exacted of the members, in addition to the voluntary offerings. "One dollar and twenty cents a year for those under eighteen years of age and three dollars for those over that age" were the rates for

irregular attendants. He got church trustees who were hard bargainers. "When they wanted lumber they knew where to purchase it and how to obtain discounts. When they needed money they knew where the money was and what securities were good on the market." Attendance on choir rehearsals was checked by a device closely resembling a time-clock.

III

All the events in Conwell's life seemed to conspire to make him the spokesman of the lower middle-class he loved so well. He was born of poor parents on a rocky farm in the Berkshire Hills of Western Massachusetts in 1843. No pride of lineage marred his outlook, although his toe-kissing biographer insists on saying the family could be traced "to the days of William the Conqueror."

On a neighboring farm lived the venerable William Cullen Bryant, a circumstance which enabled young Russell to indulge himself early in that adoration of celebrity which was a marked characteristic of his later life. He and his brother dragged the doddering poet to the stream beside which he had written "Thanatopsis," and demanded that he recite from it for their benefit. The old man obliged with the lines of moralizing which close the poem.

Conwell's youth passed like that of many another New England farm boy. He worked hard under the supervision of a dour father, enjoyed the simple pleasures of country life, ran away from home once or twice, and got some schooling at Wilbraham, a Methodist academy. Later he became a student at Yale, working his way through. From his youngest days he had enjoyed the gift of gab. His biographer relates glowingly his prowess as a village debater and orator. When the Civil War broke out he blossomed forth as a recruiting orator, and if the biographer is to be believed, raised whole regiments by the charm of his speeches. His fame as the Boy Orator spread to the edges of the county.

In 1862 he volunteered himself, was elected captain of his company, and served two enlistments in an inactive sector in North Carolina. On the one occasion when the Confederates attacked the position, he happened to be A. W. O. L., for which he was court-martialed and dishonorably discharged. He managed later to have the decision reversed and to get a commission as a lieutenant-colonel. In trying to get the court-martial verdict expunged from the records he carried his plea to President Lincoln personally. Years after, his description of meeting the great, good man was one of his most effective stories, and frequently told. No one in his audiences ever knew, though, why he met the President.

About his gifts as an orator there is not much question. He had a fine natural voice, well modulated and unusually expressive. He could lecture a hundred nights in succession without the slightest trace of hoarseness. Memory, however, and not intellect, was the power behind his larynx. A teacher in the grammar grades had trained him to memorize by the visual method. He could so fix the picture of a printed page in his mind that at any time he could call it before him and read from it as though from the book itself. In his study of law during the idle days of his service in the Civil War he memorized the whole of Blackstone, and he could also repeat pages from Milton and Moore, his favorite poets. He never wrote a lecture or a book: his speaking was mainly impromptu, and all his books and set lectures he dictated to a shorthand writer.

Equipped with this magnificent memory and his booming, resonant voice, Conwell went forth at the end of the war to open his oyster, firmly believing that diligence and hard work would bring him success. A tough and recalcitrant oyster it proved to be in those first years; none of the openers worked. His admittance to the bar, his marriage, and his bold removal to the frontier city of Minneapolis in 1865 should, according to all the precepts of the success

teachers, have been the opening wedges to a high, wide and handsome career. But though he worked like a dog, glad-handed the local population, and slaved zealously in the pious activities of the Sunday-school and the Y. M. C. A., all that came of the two years in the West was a charity appointment as immigration agent in Germany for the State of Minnesota, obtained on the plea of broken health.

Convinced, now, that his pot of gold lay at the near end of the rainbow, Conwell, after two years in Germany, formed connections in Boston with that estimable paper, the *Traveller*, and went on special assignments for it and one or two others. In the course of two years or so he did a series of articles called "Revisiting the Battlefields," and another called "Letters From an Around-the-World Tourist." He faithfully saw and reported what he had set out to see, and came home with his fly-paper memory stuck full of impressions of the great people he had interviewed. Of a type are all his reports. After one glimpse, "Victor Hugo impressed him as a stern, reserved man, who hated Napoleon the Third, and looked upon his ascension to the throne as a great crime."

Back in Boston, Conwell worked harder than ever. A mere list of his activities shows a bewildering versatility, but also points to a corresponding lack of success in any one of them. He wrote editorials for the *Traveller*; corresponded for outside papers; went abroad several times to interview celebrities; continued his lecturing; opened two law offices, one in Somerville, where he lived, the other in Tremont Temple in Boston; managed a campaign for General Nathaniel P. Banks and otherwise fiddled with politics; speculated in Somerville real-estate; founded and edited the *Somerville Journal*; began the Young Men's Congress, a debating club which flourished until 1913; organized the Tremont Temple Bible-Class, which he also taught; coöperated in bringing two children into the world; established a free legal clinic for the poor, and jeopardized

his professional standing by announcing that he would accept no client of whose righteousness and innocence he was not convinced.

The man seemed to be rattling himself to pieces, like a stalled flivver, when two events gratuitously directed him into the path which led to his eventual success: his first wife died, and he married a wealthy Newton Centre church-worker. Thus relieved of drudgery, he became a preacher in his thirty-seventh year, serving his apprenticeship at Lexington, Mass. This ministry gave him the background which he had lacked as a lawyer-lecturer-politician; it transformed his incessant buzzing and frittering into purposeful activity. He continued to buzz and fritter and spread his shot, but now he began to have significance and meaning. His memory and his booming, persuasive voice became of prime value to him. His unctuous solicitude for other people's welfare hung more easily upon him as a preacher than as a lawyer. But of the gifts which counted most toward his success behind the sacred desk, his newspaper training ranked highest. Conwell knew what was news in the elegant eighties and gay nineties, and he saw to it that his church and his preaching made it. The conservative clergy of the day scorned him as a sensationalist and upstart, but the people flocked to him, and eventually many other Protestant sorcerers copied his methods. Conwell's contribution to the progress of Christianity in the United States was the "home-like" church: he transferred the hearty informality of the middle-class fireside into the worship of the Almighty. The Protestants of the Gilded Age, accustomed to worshipping God on hard benches and in high, starched collars and frock coats, accepted the new idea of being jolly and informal about the business with the glad relief of a flapper checking her corset.

After eighteen months in Lexington, Conwell was called to a struggling mission church in Philadelphia in 1883, and here he demonstrated the advertising value of his

home-like church idea. The board made Conwell a sporting proposition in regard to salary. The church had paid a salary of eight hundred dollars: every time he doubled the membership they would double his salary. To the man who had worked his way through school peddling Ridpath's "Life of John Brown" from door to door in New England, the offer was good as a gold mine. His commissions mounted so rapidly that when he reached ten thousand all hands piped a halt, and ten thousand dollars remained his salary for the rest of his days.

"Conwell evenings" became a Philadelphia institution, and other preachers flocked from miles around to observe how the members of his congregation spoke to every stranger at the services. One preacher visitor from Albany records: "A well-dressed lady near me said, 'Good evening' most cheerfully, as a polite usher showed me into a pew. They say that all the members do that. It made me feel welcome. She also gave me a hymn-book. I saw others thus kindly greeted. How it did help me to praise the Lord! At home with the people of God! That is just how I felt." Others felt the same way; the church was so crowded that tickets of admission had to be issued. In 1893 the huge new Baptist Temple was dedicated, seating forty-two hundred in the main auditorium, with carpets on the floor, no hard benches, and with an office "equipped with desks, filing-cabinets, telephones, speaking-tubes, and everything necessary to conduct the business of the church in a business-like way." Conwell had at last found a job in which he could satisfy every heart's desire.

His lack of success in Minneapolis and Boston had not been due to want of hard work, but rather to the way he scattered his shot. He always worked hard. Everyone who ever met or heard him testifies to his enormous driving energy. Throughout life he continued the habit, learned on the farm, of rising at four or five in the morning, and of considering sixteen hours a fair working day. Commuting between Somer-

ville and Boston on the train, he learned to read five foreign languages. Always there was a book in his pocket, and never was a spare minute allowed to go to waste. When he was forced to work swiftly he could make a newspaper reporter rushing copy two minutes before the deadline look like a sluggard. The speed with which he wrote some of his thirty-seven books set records hardly surpassed even in these heroic days.

Many of these books were campaign biographies written at the behest of the Republican National Committee. They "were penned quickly and had a large sale. In this way Doctor Conwell wrote biographies of General U. S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, James A. Garfield, and James G. Blaine." His most successful biography financially was the life of Charles H. Spurgeon. When the great pulpit-thumper checked out, a publishing house wired Conwell an offer; he was on a lecture tour, but by dictating to a secretary during the day on the train, without notes or clippings, he finished the book in twelve days, and saw it reach the gratifying sale of 125,000 copies in four months. He dictated his life of Blaine in three weeks. When news of Bayard Taylor's death in Germany was received in America, he set to work at once and had his "Life of Bayard Taylor" completed before the body arrived. Five thousand copies sold before the funeral. Conwell wound up his biographizing by embalming in print his life-long friend, "Philadelphia's great merchant, John Wanamaker," in 1924.

IV

To the earnest, enquiring youths, aflame with ambition after hearing "Acres of Diamonds," who asked for practical hints on how to be successful and rich, Conwell, in his later days, answered, "Study." Education was the open sesame to better jobs and bigger salaries. At first, his advice was simple and direct—carry a book in your pocket and study during your spare mo-

ments. "Out of the forty-five hundred millionaires in the United States, more than thirty-nine hundred of them were poor boys. . . . The study of their biographies reveals the almost universal fact that they carried a book in their pockets to study in spare moments." In 1884 a young printer came to Conwell. He had the laudable desire of becoming a preacher, but he knew no Greek or Latin; would Conwell help him study in the evenings? Conwell promised the young man three evenings each week. The first night appointed the youth brought six friends with him, since seven could be taught as easily as one. The second night forty showed up. By the end of the first year more than two hundred and fifty students were studying at night, under Conwell and other volunteer teachers. Thus was born Temple University, which has, this present year, over twelve thousand students in day, afternoon and evening classes: "an institution for strong men and women who can labor with both mind and body."

This faith in the efficacy of education was curiously coupled with a hatred of existing educational institutions. They were "aristocratic," and Conwell had hated the aristocracy since the days of his snubbing at Yale. The greatest peril to democracy, he boomed in his old age, was "an institutional aristocracy which shuts the doors of the professions to all who have not loitered in some aristocratic school for a certain number of hours and paid a high tuition fee." The insidious agents of aristocracy were shutting the door of opportunity in the face of the poor by requiring one and two years of collegiate work for entrance to medical schools. The American Medical Association was raising standards so high that the graduates of Conwell's Temple University medical night-school could not get licenses to practice, and so he shouted, "If these obstacles are arbitrarily increased, we will eventually have in this country two classes—a peasant class and an aristocratic class."

Conwell went to his reward in 1925.

With the stilling of the booming voice, his name was forgotten, even by his beloved middle-class, almost as quickly as that of last year's murderer. The Baptist Temple goes its uneventful way, but it is heard of no more. Only Temple University strives to keep his memory green, and even here one wonders how long the administration will print Conwell's picture as the frontispiece of every bulletin and catalogue, and how long the line "Founded by Russell H. Conwell" will be run under the name of the school. Already his dream for the building of Temple University has been scrapped for a skyscraper Temple of Learning, an idea obviously borrowed from the University of Pittsburgh's plan for a thirty-odd-story Cathedral of Learning. The tuition fee has been raised to \$215; the entrance requirements have been made more rigid. The authorities even boast in public that children of rich parents now come to them for instruction. Conwell's simple educational aim, that every boy in

America should learn a trade and work his way through school, has been ditched for the ideal of winning football games.

Nobody knows what magic produced last year's winning team, but the school was not slow in taking advantage of it. The students were pepped up with such posters as this:

FOOTBALL: NOV. 19

Bucknell vs. Temple

Franklin Field

Game Called 2 o'clock

This is Temple's greatest opportunity to impress upon the world that she rightly belongs in the very front rank of the Great American Universities

Most people judge a University by the kind of football team it has. This year Temple has a GREAT team. It has shown its mettle and has scored many fine victories. Let us show the world that Temple also has a real body of Alumni and Students back of this Fine Team.

THIS IS TEMPLE'S REAL OPPORTUNITY

For this did Russell H. Conwell deliver "Acres of Diamonds" six thousand times!

CLINICAL NOTES

BY GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

The White Dove.—It takes a pretty imagination to share the optimism of those who believe that the various leagues, alliances, conferences and mystic backslappings currently being indulged in as a step to end wars will succeed in their lofty purpose. Wars may no more be got rid of by such means than smallpox or lumbago may be got rid of by calling meetings. All the cool, calm, hard common-sense and wisdom in the world cannot change human nature and its impulses, and leagues of nations, with the best of intentions, cannot alter what has been unalterable since the second primordial man, for a reason that may have been good or bad, cracked the first man over the head with a club. Man's impulse to fight has its birth not in the cerebrum but down in the dark cellars of his emotional being, and nothing is going to get it into an elevator.

The notion that war may be averted by limiting armament is ridiculous. We need only refer to history to appreciate that wars are and have often been started by nations with armament inferior to that of the enemy. In any speakeasy, it is generally the little fellow who starts the scrap. In the whole log of Jack's restaurant and out of thousands of bellicose customers who had to be handled by the bouncer, the records showed that not more than half a dozen of the ejectees weighed over 150 pounds. The theory, further, that the invention of such dismayingly malefic and sinister devices as the death-ray and the like will go a long way toward discouraging war is equally hollow. The invention of the big-bore cannon and of poison gas, just as dismaying in their day, didn't discourage war any more than the invention

of the guillotine, the scaffold and the electric chair have discouraged murder, or than the invention of safety matches put an end to arson.

It is a platitude that wars are started by inflaming the emotions of a people. Inflammation of the emotions is one of the most pleasurable phenomena that a people experiences, whether it be induced by romantic love, booze, an appeal to the fighting impulse or what not. If war is to be ended, therefore, a means must be hit upon to inflame a people's emotions in a relatively analogous, if oblique, direction but with a relatively analogous thrill and satisfaction. This, obviously, can't be done by calling together representatives in a hall in Switzerland some 3,500 miles away or by getting a few civilians to shake hands in a London hotel or a Hague basilica. The business, if it is to be negotiated at all, must be negotiated spectacularly, romantically, in a way that will appeal to the people's imagination as strongly as the marching of brightly figged-out soldiers, the flying of brilliant banners, the rattle of inspiring drums and the melodramatic sound of cannon. The day that sees moves toward peace marked with the same thrilling spectacularity and romance that mark moves toward war will see the day of war's end—but not before.

It is this all-important point that the delegated fixers presently overlook and so waste their time and accomplish nothing. They can hold meetings in the remote Alps until Kingdom come and no more succeed in averting war than they can succeed, by the same process, in averting joyrides and *crim. con.* They are trying to