

upon to rule on points of order, his luminous mind, stored with accurate knowledge of the decisions of his predecessors, was able instantly to put the matter in its proper light, and to arrive at conclusions which would commend themselves to all as sound and just. It has often been said that a more judicial-minded man never occupied the Speaker's chair.

Mr. Carlisle's name was never associated with angry controversies about the Speaker's powers, as was that of Thomas B. Reed. For the former it would probably have been impossible to count a quorum in order to get a rule authorizing him to count a quorum. He had too great a respect for the doctrine of *stare decisis* to be capable of that. But in a quiet and almost unperceived way Mr. Carlisle did a great deal to exalt the power of the Speakership. No Speaker before him had used the right of "recognition" in just the way he did. That is to say, where other Speakers had often refused to "recognize" a member with a motion that would be troublesome to the dominant party, of which the Speaker was the tacitly acknowledged leader, Mr. Carlisle followed his own individual judgment. For example, during all the time he was Speaker the Blair Education bill was pending in Congress. Three times it passed the Senate, but Speaker Carlisle never recognized a member who sought to lay it before the House.

An even more striking illustration of his conception of the Speaker's duty came in 1885. In that year a bill was pending to repeal the internal-revenue tax on tobacco. A letter was sent to the Speaker by three prominent Democrats, George D. Wise, John S. Henderson, and Samuel J. Randall, informing him that a majority of their party, together with many Republicans—in all a large majority of the House—were in favor of the measure, and appealing to him "most earnestly" to "recognize" some Democrat who would move to suspend the rules and pass the bill. After thinking it over for two days, Speaker Carlisle sent an answer which Miss Follett, in her book on "The Speaker of the House of Representatives," declares to be "a monumental document in the history of the Speakership." It was a brief discussion of the party situation as respects plans to cut down taxes, and wound up by saying: "I consider that

it would not be proper, under the circumstances, for me to agree to a course of action which would present for the consideration of the House a simple proposition for the repeal of the internal revenue tax on tobacco, to the exclusion of all other measures for the reduction of taxation." Thus coolly did the Speaker set his personal judgment against that of his party, and, indeed, of a majority of the House, and make of himself a leader who declined to take orders from his followers.

For more than ten years Mr. Carlisle had dropped entirely out of political life. It is not alone this fact, nor the age at which he died, which made him latterly appear like a survivor of a generation that is gone. He was that, too, in his attitude toward public questions, and the political methods which he adopted. The clamor and the shouting and the advertising which acquired so much greater strength and offensiveness since his retirement were not congenial to his nature, and he could never have felt at home with them. Without bitterness, he called himself old-fashioned, and withdrew from politics to devote his strength to the practice of the law. Never a man of the highest possibilities in our public life, his death yet removes a figure that was both noteworthy in his time and typical of political conditions that passed away before he did.

ENDOWMENT OF BUDDING GENIUS.

In the last number of the *Independent*, Mr. Upton Sinclair gives the results of an inquiry conducted among fifty distinguished American and English writers concerning the desirability and feasibility of establishing a prize fund for the encouragement of commercially unsuccessful young writers. In each of three classes, poetry, fiction, and "prose writing of an inspirational character," there should be one one-thousand-dollar prize and two five-hundred-dollar prizes for a period of three years, the awards to be made by a board of three judges made up of men who "have produced vital work themselves," and have shown themselves able critics of the work of others. To speak of the "results" of Mr. Sinclair's canvass is somewhat misleading, since only sixteen out of the fifty men consulted have gone to the trouble of expressing their opinion. Two of the sixteen replies are re-

tral, six are in favor of the plan, and eight are against it. If we count by weight of authority as well as by mere number, the balance goes heavily against Mr. Sinclair's project. The best-known names among those who have pronounced in favor of the plan are Bliss Carman, Edwin Markham, Stewart Edward White, and Charles Edward Russell. Voting in the negative are John Bigelow, Henry van Dyke, William James, Henry James, Jack London, Eden Phillpotts, H. G. Wells, and William De Morgan.

If we take into account the writers' intensity of belief, the balance sways still more heavily against the plan. Those who condemn it are very emphatic in their sentiments; those who favor it do so with hesitancy and qualification. Nearly everybody has his doubts whether a suitable board of judges can be found. Mr. Wells points out that if the object is to encourage work of a "new and path-breaking nature," that is just what a selecting jury never will be capable of. Such bodies "invariably become timid and narrow and seek refuge in practical, academic, and moral tests that invariably exclude the real men of genius." Again, Mr. Charles Edward Russell and Mr. Stewart Edward White would exclude fiction from the benefits of the scheme. Fiction is well rewarded now, and we have too much fiction as it is. This would leave poetry and "prose of an inspirational character," essays presumably; and in so doing would, we imagine, negative Mr. Sinclair's main intention. For it is undeniable that the "new, path-breaking" work in literature of to-day is done by the fiction writer and his colleague, the dramatist. As for the poet and the essayist, they have nothing more to gain by our endowment than the meagre three years' sustenance it offers. For even if the prize bring with it recognition and success, these, to the poet and the essayist, can almost never mean material success. The two are in a business that, practically speaking, has never paid, and, if they are endowed at all, they should be permanently endowed.

The geographical division-line of opinion is not the least interesting characteristic of the *Independent's* symposium. Of the six men in favor of the endowment plan, five are Americans. Of the eight men opposed to it, only four are Americans. Probably the fact that

the originator of the project is also an American writer may have had something to do with the result. Yet the odd fact persists that in this land of unrivalled opportunity, of periodicals circulating by the million and paying ten cents the word, the need of an artificial fostering of literature should be so acutely felt; whereas in England, with its appreciably lower standard of living, England where authors do not inhabit rural palaces or own a "string" of motor-cars, the author feels no such need of help from the outside. Mr. Phillpotts, in negating the entire project, wonders why it should have ever originated on our side of the Atlantic:

An original man has a better chance to be heard in your country than in mine, because your magazine literature is alive and alert and fairly ready to welcome a new thing. It is not entirely under the thumb of religion, or in terror of public opinion, or hat off to the young person's parents. Here, these forces rule, because they represent the money, and an artist who lives by writing can only boil the necessary pot with discomfort. No; your budding genius is in better case than ours; you are going on all right, save for a stupid petticoat prudery in sexual matters; while for us, what we want is certainly not prizes for unrecognized merit in our writers, but an effort toward more merit in the readers. We and they alike wallow in the mean sties that our journals provide. We cannot get ourselves to them, because magazine proprietors will not suffer us to do so. We must appear before them in the moth-eaten garments that they know.

There is a good measure of truth in what Mr. Phillpotts says concerning the avidity of our magazines for what is new. Under that definition some very good literature row and then gets into our magazines.

And yet in Mr. Phillpotts's statement is contained a strong argument in favor of the endowment scheme. A prize fund in itself would be such a novel institution that it could not but appeal to the magazine editor and the publisher. It may be that a board of jurors would function very imperfectly and that an annual distribution of a bare six thousand dollars would be but a drop in the unfilled literary bucket. The gain would be in the fact that such an institution did exist and did operate in some manner or other. It might not discover many great American poets and essayists—although Mr. Sinclair hopes for a Chatterton or a Keats—but it would make the patronage of poets and essayists of sufficient advertising value to work a change of heart in the magazine

editor. Just as a single year of the New Theatre has unmistakably set the commercial managers to thinking of stock companies, répertoires, and revivals, a substantial laurel for poetry and inspired prose might tend to make those branches of literature respectable. Tremendously successful they will never be in a monetary sense, but to the hard-up young writer we imagine that every little would count.

A DUTY OF PARENTS.

The fortune which was left a few weeks back to a beloved son of eight, on condition that he should follow a minute programme of education and conduct, caused many at the time to speculate on its size, and to wonder whether the game was really worth the candle. Those with a bias for the dramatic naturally suspected a hoax, and mentally tucked away a chuckle against the coming climax. Doubtless they will feel cheated at the premature revelation, made a day or two ago, that they were virtually right, that the fortune amounts to almost nothing. But many others will sigh with relief to think that the boy, now that there's "nothing in it," is probably to be spared the huge ordeal which his father prescribed, and will dismiss the case from their minds as being merely eccentric and, therefore, uninteresting.

There is a theatric exaggeration in the case, no doubt, yet underlying it is a problem so important and so typical of any age that it prompts serious thought. The problem is: To what extent may a parent be to his children the divinity that shapes their ends? It is the old, old question. Petrarch's father was determined that his son should become a lawyer, and coming upon him reading poetry tried to destroy his precious library. Boccaccio believed himself so thoroughly to be a poet that he has the fact recounted on his tombstone, but was forced to study law, and ended a first-rate story-teller. Incidentally, it may be remarked that compulsory law has committed a greater number to the Hall of Fame than all the other professions put together. And, in general, parental authority, thus exerted, has turned out to be quite as much of a spur as a curb. Milton, we suspect, would scarcely have done so well if he had not been flying in the face of his father's wishes.

Now, we are not in reality poking fun

at the insight of parents. On the contrary, our brief is really on the side of more planning by parents. For the lack of it, the situation in America has become serious. Of the two classes, the wealthy and the poor, wealthy sons with every opportunity go to college unburdened by even the precepts of Polonius, and are expected to emerge cultured gentlemen of genuine ability. It is the rare exception, among this class, to meet a student, as one might do frequently abroad, whose family traditions or wishes are leading him in the direction of medicine or scholarship or politics. As a result, these "rich parasites," through no real fault of their own, drift about from course to course listlessly, often contemptuously—having neither curb to chafe under nor spur to urge them on. There is no plan of life imposed upon them from without or from within to give their thoughts coherence; and the vaudeville theatre is their chief thought-producer. Yet we wonder how it is that so few of these fellows have any real mental fabric, or are able to talk in a sustained way on any subject whatsoever for more than fifteen minutes running! The actual condition is seen clearly by the contrast of an Englishman of wealth, attending one of our large Eastern universities, who announced on one occasion that his father, the governor, had brought home a new book of essays and that they were having some great discussions over it. For one reason or another, and we believe it is due partly to this sort of supervision, the well-to-do graduate of Oxford or Cambridge has more ideas and is a better talker than the corresponding type in this country.

But what shall we say of our students of only moderate or even slender means? Here the situation is brighter, though through no fault of the parents. Indeed, it is our boast that men of this class are qualified to carve for themselves; that even in college they are learning to pick and choose what is best for them out of the great mass of conflicting facts and tendencies which we call life. This they are attempting to do beyond question, and the spectacle is not uncommon of a freshman believing that he knows just what he is going to be and just what courses will best serve his purpose. Yet few freshmen, in the existing conditions, are capable of assuming such responsibilities.