

boys who have stayed here are just leavings, without brains or ambition, and having nobody better than themselves to associate with, they get worse and worse.

There are about twice as many girls as boys in Thompsonville, and they look to me like a different race. They are quiet and sweet and seem rather sad. Mr. Harding says there aren't finer girls anywhere, and I believe him. Of course I don't know them; I feel that they wouldn't want to be acquainted with a man of a record like mine. It might spoil their chances—though God knows what their chances are here. . . . There is one I know pretty well. I deliver vegetables at her house, and I spend a good deal more time talking to her than is necessary. She is very nice to me; she thinks I would never have got into trouble if I had had a good woman's influence. Maybe so; I certainly don't feel very set up over my past life when I'm talking to her. She is a favorite with Mr. and Mrs. Harding. They have hinted that if I marry and settle down here, I'd get their farm after they die. When it dawned on me they might be driving at something, I got rather scared. Me married and settled down? With my record, I'm not good enough. And besides, after a while I might come to look on Thompsonville as a kind of life-term.

I'm still for prison reform, but it seems to me now that there is more need for reforming the Thompsonvilles. Somebody like Tom Osborne ought to make his home in each of these little old villages, let in the sun and systematize the work, and let loose a few ideas for the young fellows to try their minds on. You can never make very much out of a penitentiary. At best, the boys who come out will be rather a bad lot. But a place like Thompsonville, where everybody could have all the food and air and sun he needs, could be made into a kind of little Heaven, under its swaying treetops in the bend of the shining river.

J.

"The Horrible Pleasure"

IN winter I get up at night, three or four nights a week, and talk from a platform. My subjects are many, all knowledge is my province, the aim of all my lectures is the same—to give my hearers the illusion that they are rubbing noses with the very newest thought and art.

As one is to five, so is the number of men in my audiences to the number of women. My ideal audience would combine the minimum of education with the maximum of surface sophistication. No one who enjoys my lectures would take seriously an attempt by Mr. W. J. Bryan to prove the

immortality of the soul in forty-five minutes, yet my performances are just as absurd. In an hour and five minutes I have proved that the fourth dimension is will. A few minutes more were needed for my demonstration that we shall have a noble politics in the United States as soon as we substitute for its present unrhythmical plod-plod the true rhythm of the dance. One of my most popular lectures is or was called, "The Evolution of Deity, or a God after Man's Own Heart."

One series of my talks is really an attempt to drop salt on the tail of Utopia. Utopia needs salt. The future I used to paint was frightfully sugary. It was inhabited by choruses of blessed boys who went their joyous ways to industrial conquest hand-in-hand and singing, by lovely slim upright women who never did anything but look the facts of life straight in the eye. The future as I paint it now is filled with the proud clashing of ruthless egos. Everybody rushes about this future shouting *vae victis*, and yet there aren't any *victi*. Everybody comes out on top.

In such an enterprise as mine success is impossible without the right vocabulary. I take pains with my vocabulary. If I should ask an audience how it felt about liberal studies it would think me a back number. It thinks me very modern indeed if I urge its members to define each for herself, in pragmatic terms, her reaction to the problem of cultural education. One of my lectures, delivered a few winters ago, was composed in this way: I set down a few words, vital, pragmatic, in terms of, cultural, Freudian, subconscious, pre-conscious, the will-to-power, and then filled in the spaces between every two words. Of course I know that there is a difference between "your opinion of" and "your reaction to," if you stop to think about it, but if I stopped to think I should offend my audiences. Besides, not everybody can think who stops for that purpose.

Even without thought, however, life may be difficult. I know that mine is laborious enough. Without reading it is almost impossible to acquire that familiarity with the very modernest proper names which gives my followers such confidence in their guide, and quite impossible to talk about the theory or art form or point of view which each name stands for. Even a trained lecturer has to read a great deal, and some of his reading is certain to be wasted. I, who have a nose for what is new, often fail to pick winners. I made such a mistake many years ago about Izoulet. I spent two or three weeks reading "La Cité Moderne," but he never caught on in this country, and my time was thrown away. By failing to read at the right moment a certain essay by William James I almost missed the Bergson train. At this very

hour I have a puzzle of this sort on my hands. Has the war made my audiences so anti-German that they will let me tell them the truth about Sudermann, or do the ladies still believe in his fake wilde Weiber?

As for my vacations, which I pass deep in the country, you might suppose that they too were degraded by labor, for at what other period can I get up that love of nature which renders my lectures so sunny? Nothing of the sort. My knowledge of nature enables me to recognize maples, elms, oaks and something that I call to myself the evergreen. The robin I know as children know him, by his red breast, and the crow by his flapping flight and his caw. To me the country is a place where I hear locusts by day and crickets at nightfall, and where the report of an explosion means not that there is one more busted tire in the world but, unless the farmer's boy has lost his cunning, that there is one less woodchuck. The country is a place underneath a sky so large that there is room for all the broken clouds of September. To exercise, to sweat, and to be alone—it is for these pleasures that I go away from cities. It is in libraries that I learn to love nature best.

My profession has its drawbacks. When in the act of lecturing, when I look at eager and approving faces, row upon row, when the little storm of applause gathers and breaks, I cannot always keep

my attitude of detachment. Remembering all the hours my half-knowledge has cost me, and the pains I have taken with my lecture, I lose my hold upon reality, and something very like self-respect steals back into my heart. In vain do I say over and over my favorite line of Clough's, "Oh, the horrible pleasure of pleasing inferior people." The pleasure of pleasing is keen within me, and in my nostrils the smell of praise is sweet. With something almost indistinguishable from sincerity I fall to composing my new lecture.

It is not, nevertheless, when I am at the center of praise that I respect myself most.

My nearest neighbor in the country, his house being about half a mile from mine, is a first-hand man. His mind is thorough. He has an instinct for finding the essential difficulty and tackling it. His specialty is electrical engineering, and his rank in his profession is high. About once a week throughout the summer we dine together and play chess. I have beaten him, and a record in my notebook proves this, about three games out of five on the average. These victories are the true preservers of my self-respect. What a mind I must have had once if even now, after all these years of lecturing, it is such a presentable ruin.

There is one other thing I am proud of. Never, from the first line of my first lecture until the last line of my latest, have I ever used "urge" as a noun.

CORRESPONDENCE

As Another Anti Sees Hughes

SIR: In "Tainted Ballots" you say it is a strange confession for an anti-suffragist to admit that the government of a country may be of supreme importance to its women. Anti-suffragists are not opposed to women voting, because of any lack of interest in the government, nor do they deny that the fate of women is bound up with the government in precisely the same way as the fate of men. Anti-suffragists believe that the welfare of women is thoroughly conserved by men, who are not, as some suffragists would have it—inimical to women, but who are by every tie of nature as interested in women's welfare as are the women themselves, and always ready to consider special legislation whenever women's peculiar needs require it. This is proved by the laws of Massachusetts and New York, which without the ballots of women have served as models not yet attained by the suffrage states.

There is no "curious twist of mind" in having opinions and yet thinking that all women if given the vote would not materially advance or better conditions. A woman may be a logical anti-suffragist and yet feel that government has a tremendous effect on women. But she does not look to the women themselves as the means of righting wrongs; she feels, on the whole, safer in the hands of men. If she is conservative and a believer in the rights of property, she is logical enough to believe that more help will come to her from a male electorate, *even if she her-*

self has no vote, than to gain one at the expense of swamp-ing the polls with an electorate which has far less interest in property, and represents many less tax-payers. Moreover, it is from no lack of interest in the government that the anti-suffragist prefers the present arrangement, whereby the freedom from party strife makes the non-partisan voice of women the strongest kind of a moral spur, whereby women's activities may be directed to the cause of building up the home, directing education, supporting philanthropies, and encouraging the arts. These women as voters will be opposed by those who are not the speakers, writers, or doers, just as good men and fine men are now opposed by men who would not fight them openly, but who seek the silent, sinister opposition of the ballot-box.

At this moment the woman who devotes herself to a good cause is helped by the votes of good men plus her own vocal and written activities. She is a great help and inspiration to the men who are fighting for the cause. But we cannot have only such women vote. As a voter she will have to meet the opposition of her own sex. It all comes down in the end to the question: Are the majority of women really better citizens, morally stronger, more courageous, wiser, and of sounder judgment than the majority of men? The anti-suffragist waves aside all eighteenth century doctrines of the right to vote. It is with her purely and solely a matter of expediency for the state to decide.