

hands. He represents the greatness and range of human desire, the illimitable capacity of the human soul.

In this noble sense all men of mind and heart are adventurers; they stand loyally to their tasks, they are heroic workers; but the song of the sea is always in their ears, with its suggestion of space and danger and freedom; and the great world beyond the hills, with its mighty energies, its passionate aspirations, its magnificent opportunities, is always in their thoughts. A strong man steadies himself by steadfast devotion to the work of the day and to the relations in which he finds himself; but he gives his soul the freedom of the world, and his imagination the range of art and nature and experience; and so he keeps himself fresh in feeling, in spite of the routine of daily tasks, and original and creative in spirit in spite of conventionalities and the dead level of opinion about him. Every man must do his work and keep his freedom also; every man must care for his body, but he must keep his soul alive also. There is, for those who have learned the secret, no real schism in the order of life; a man may live wisely and well, at the same moment, in the little community where his home is and in the great world which lies about all communities. Over the toughest bit of stubborn soil heaven spreads its infinite blue, and over the most solitary worker in the loneliness of the night-watches the stars shine. Infinity is about us on all sides.

The release of the soul is peculiarly the service which nature offers us in this season of fresh and fragrant beauty. The morning whispers its "*au large*" at every window as it lies on a renewed and blossoming world. "Come out of yourself," it seems to say; "drop your books, your hobbies, your anxieties, and become once more a free man; wander in the fields, loiter in the woods, consult the stars." He is wise who accepts this invitation and drops his burden and becomes a child once more in open-eyed wonder and open-hearted delight. For no man is so great as when he forgets himself, nor so useful as when he brings to his tasks and his duties a fresh mind and a joyful heart.



A Great Opportunity

It has been intimated that New York City may perhaps be able to secure the services of Dr. D. C. Gilman, of Johns Hopkins University, as Superintendent of Public Instruction in the city of New York. This constitutes a possible great opportunity for New York.

New York is the commercial metropolis of the United States, and is likely to remain so for many years to come. No city can ever be to the United States what Paris is to France, or London is to Great Britain; but no other city can be so much an object-lesson for good or for evil to America as New York. But while it has been the commercial metropolis, it has not been an intellectual or moral leader. Its press is no model for other cities; its government has been a warning, not an inspiration; its public schools have been far inferior to those of other cities possessing smaller population and less wealth. New York has been a great money-making center—that and little more. During the last decade there have not been wanting signs of a moral and intellectual awakening. It has made a vigorous and, on the whole, successful attempt at municipal reform. It is becoming, if it has not already become, a literary center. No city in the world issues from its presses a periodical literature which rivals in various excellence the monthly magazines edited and published in New York. The enlargement of the New York University and its removal to University Heights, the

still greater enlargement of Columbia College and its natural development into a true university, and the corresponding though less rapid and notable development of the Polytechnic and the Packer Institutes in Brooklyn, give promise of a true educational life in the higher realm worthy of a great city. It will be long before New York has a public library to compare with the libraries of Chicago or the Public Library of Boston, but the Tilden bequest and the recent amalgamation of the Lenox, Astor, and Tilden endowments gives assurance of a provision in the next century generous beyond anything dreamed of in the past. The Pavey School Bill makes possible a reorganized school system, and the election of Daniel C. Gilman as the executive head of that system, provided he were given an untrammelled liberty and a cordial support, would insure a wise reorganization and a capable and efficient personnel. Without such a system thus officered and equipped, neither great universities nor a great public library can adequately serve the civic life of the city.

The public-school system of America has grown up in a series of independent local experiments. There has been thus far a distinct advantage in this fact. To this system has been contributed the best intellectual life of many minds. If it is somewhat heterogeneous, it is not narrow; if it is somewhat crude, it is not so bound by its own traditions as to be incapable of further growth. But the time has fully come for an endeavor, on a large scale and under an able leader, to take up the results of experiments throughout the country, and, in the light of them and making full use of them, to organize a public system of education which shall be to the country in its primary and secondary grade the object-lesson which such universities as Harvard and Yale, Princeton and Cornell, Oberlin and Ann Arbor, have been and are in the collegiate grade. New York City is the city in which to undertake this work. It is the most cosmopolitan city on the continent. Boston is Yankee, Baltimore is Southern, Chicago is Western, New York is of no section. It is the most heterogeneous in its population, the most complex in the variety of its problems. It is at once American and foreign, Eastern, Western, and Southern, Roman Catholic and Protestant, Jewish and Gentile. It embraces the homes of wealth and poverty, culture and ignorance, and all the combinations which they afford, including wealth without culture and culture without wealth. It is the only city on the continent which has no local character of its own, because it is a collection of cities, each with its own distinctive character. This is its intellectual and social disadvantage, but is also its opportunity; this makes it a microcosm within which all educational problems are presented; permits it, by solving them, to proffer a solution valuable as an object-lesson to any American community from ocean to ocean.

And Dr. Gilman is, of all men on the continent, the man to undertake this work. He is not only an eminent educator, he is even more eminent as an organizer of educational life. He has proved his executive genius in the public schools of New Haven, in the University of California, and in Johns Hopkins University. He is a creator of educational institutions. It is not improbable that the question—if there can be a question—of his election will be decided before this editorial reaches the eyes of most of our readers. He ought to be elected unanimously, and by acclamation. That election ought to be urged if necessary, and, if prior urging is not necessary, indorsed, by such a spontaneous public meeting as will leave him in no doubt as to the support which will be given him if he accepts. And he should be given a free field, a large liberty, and a cordial support in the difficult task laid upon

him—difficult under the best conditions—of organizing in the metropolis a metropolitan system of education worthy of the city, and worthy to be a model for all other American cities.



Flitting

Isaac Watts to the contrary notwithstanding, the busy bee is a dangerous exemplar for the Christian to follow. Flitting from flower to flower is not the exercise most conducive to growth. If the flitter were as eager to get the sweets from the flowers among which he flits, and as patient to digest them into honey, the bee might possibly serve as a suggestion, if not as a model. But, unfortunately, this the flitters are not wont to do. They are more curious than industrious, and more eager to get than assiduous to utilize.

There are not a few in our day who flit from church to church; who go wherever they can hear the last new preacher or the last new soprano; who crowd the aisles of one church on one Sunday, of another church on the next Sunday, and are possibly on their bicycles or reading the last sensational Sunday newspaper at home on the third Sunday. If they are not given the best seats in the sanctuary, they grumble at the inhospitality of the churches; if a contribution-box is passed, they drop a penny in, and wonder that the churches are always begging; and they go away from the church flattering themselves that they have rendered a distinguished service to the church and its preacher by honoring the one with their presence and the other with their attention. Such Christians grow as little as a plant that should be transplanted into a new pot every week. The soul is not like the aerial moss which thrives on the moisture in the air, and grows as it travels on the wings of the wind. It must be rooted if it is to be built up.

Of a similar fashion are men and women who flit from creed to creed. The Athenians survive in America, and they spend their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing. That a conviction is old and tried, that it has passed through the fire of controversy unscathed, that it has come out assayed and proved, is to dub it uninteresting; and it is not truth but interest that the flitters seek after. Whatever is traditional they count as false; whatever is new—or they imagine to be new—has an irresistible attraction for them. Such men are like Pilate, of whom Bacon says, “He asked, What is truth? and went out without waiting for an answer.”

In the olden time men were educated in creeds and believed them, not because they were true, but because they were traditional. The danger in our time is exactly the reverse: the danger of being educated in questioning and so to believe nothing which is traditional. The world wants not doubts and indecisions in business or politics; as little are they wanted in religion. The mind should have two compartments: an open one to receive the truth, a closed one to retain it. It is quite as important to hold fast that which is good as it is to prove all things. Men should question, not for the intellectual fascination of questioning, but for the solid satisfaction of securing a definite answer. The skepticism which leads only to an interrogation-mark leads nowhere. A positive conviction should be the object of all inquiry. It is far better to be a whole-hearted Roman Catholic than a half-hearted Protestant, or to be a Unitarian with intelligent convictions than a Trinitarian and not know what Trinitarianism is. It is better to believe in anything which has spiritual truth in it, than it is to question everything. Put a tree in poor soil

and it will grow a little. Transplant a tree every morning from one good soil to another good soil, and it will not grow at all. We are to build our faith as men build a house. Settle one foundation truth; when that is settled, refuse to question it; build the next faith on that; thus lay a course of convictions, each on its predecessor, and lay them in cement. Refuse to let others' questionings or your own unsettle them.

For instance:

The Gospel of Mark tells the story of a wonderful life, paints the portrait of a wonderful character. The life is a noble one, worthy of imitation; the character is a noble one, inspiring to every noble soul who reads it. This is what manhood ought to be, may be. This is an indisputable fact; a granite foundation.

This life and character presents an object for reverence and love. History furnishes no higher object. It is a revelation of an ideal, a disclosure in history of what humanity worships whenever and wherever it is perceived. This is a second indisputable fact; another granite foundation. And these are facts whether the story is fact or fiction, history or myth. In either case the life and character is an ideal humanity and a manifestation of divinity. These facts settled, on these further building is possible. To build on these is to begin a building on Christ. And any building is better than perpetual locomotion from tent to tent, put up to-day and taken down to-morrow.



From the Center

“Men give me credit for genius,” said Alexander Hamilton. “All the genius I have lies just in this: when I have a subject in hand, I study it profoundly, day and night. It is part of me; I explore it in all its bearings; my mind becomes pervaded with it. Then the effort which I make people are pleased to call the fruit of genius; it is the fruit of labor and thought.” These words disclose one of the secrets of the impression which a mind dealing with a subject with which it has filled itself always makes. Hamilton was a man of genius in spite of his disavowal; but genius cannot supply the place of information nor render unnecessary the thorough work which must precede mastery of any subject. A trained eye can always detect in print the difference between a treatment of a subject based on a thorough and profound study, and a treatment based on a rapid consultation of the encyclopædias. Many men have the power of picking up information rapidly, but the difficulty with this method is that the information so collected does not, to use Hamilton's phrase, “pervade the mind.” It is only when a subject is mastered by exploration in every direction and by long meditation that the mind becomes imbued with its peculiar quality, is able to divine what it does not see at a glance, and in the end presents it from a fresh and individual point of view. The intellectual difference between men is much more important along the line of quality than along the line of mere information. There are a great many fairly well informed people who have practically nothing to say on any important subject; they know a good deal, but they have not mastered the subject, nor have they really entered into it. On the other hand, there are those whose information is comparatively limited, and yet who make positive contributions to a subject whenever they discuss it. There are those who touch everything on the rim, and there are those who see everything from the center. The first are always superficial, no matter how large their information; the second are always fundamental, no matter how limited their definite knowledge.