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## THE STUDY OF PHILOSOPHY.

I have been asked by the editor of the OCCIDENT to put on brief record, in this place, a few of the views that, as a teacher of philosophy, I have formed, concerning the place of philosophical studies in a liberal education, and concerning the value of such studies for the individual student.

I have very little interest in what students and teachers often mean by the "disciplinary value" of any sort of study, in so far as, by this disciplinary value, is meant something to be got through the mere pursuit of a given course of intellectual work, apart from a living interest in the topics themselves which are in question. If a man loves mathematics or botany or Greek, for the sake of the truth that he learns when he studies any of these branches, he will get plenty of "discipline" from serious work devoted to the attainment of the truth that he loves. But when a student announces that he elects a given study, say calculus or logic, merely because he has heard that much valuable "mental discipline" will result from the undertaking, although he as yet cares nothing for these topics themselves, then I myself, were I his teacher, would feel sure that my only real hope of helping him would depend upon any success that I could win in trying to make him forget about the desired mental discipline, and love the topic in question purely for its own and the truth's dear sake. Discipline is like pleasure. You can get it chiefly through forgetting it in your absorption in your task, in case the task is worth while, and is capable of absorbing your attention for a considerable time. I fancy that the best athletes are men who really love their chosen athletic sport for its own sake. I should suppose that a man who cared little or nothing for the game that he played, and who had no great delight when his side won the victory, would be an unwelcome member of your athletic teams, and would not be any less unwelcome because he assured you that, despite the entire coldness of his interest regarding both the game and the possibilities of victory in it, he was as a

fact very earnestly resolved to play it for the sake merely of the discipline which it afforded. And I should assume that such a player, after all, would actually never get as much discipline from his physical training as would his *naive* fellow, who plays because he loves this sport, and wants to win, and is consequently willing to give his whole soul to his task.

Accordingly, in speaking of the value of philosophical study in a University course, I may at once say that no student has yet justified his interest in philosophy who gives, as his sole reason for the existence of this interest, his belief that philosophical work involves a great deal of "mental discipline." So does enduring a toothache involve a good deal of possible "moral discipline." Yet most of us can better train our consciences than by mortifying the flesh through the endeavor to cultivate, or to endure, toothaches. And just so, since there are minds, and sometimes decidedly good minds, for which philosophical reflection, persistently pursued, involves a distinct and aching intellectual pain, I cannot advise the possessors of such minds to pursue philosophical work for the sake of mortifying their wits in the interest of discipline.

Philosophy as a serious study is for those who love it. To be sure, in a general and superficial sense, every man has some hint of philosophy about him; and most men, above all the ardent and voluble haters of philosophy, daily assert and maintain philosophical theses without knowing the fact. Yet I speak here, not of that unconscious metaphysic which common sense at every moment thinks and intolerantly loves to preach, even at the time when it announces its contempt for metaphysic; but of the consciously persistent academic pursuit of philosophy, and that pursuit, I say, is properly open only to its genuine lovers. Nor need anybody (with that gentle-eyed seriousness which often so well adorns but so easily misleads sensitive, ambitious, and still imperfectly enlightened youth)—devotedly persist in attending uncomprehended lectures in philosophy, merely because, for-

sooth, one believes that the only way to grow wise is to keep on attending until something chances to leak in through the earnest eye or the patient ear, bringing the long awaited wisdom. No, the rule is in these matters that you must needs be patient, but that, if you are to win, you must be kept constantly, from the first, in a genuine and in a not unloved sort of productive inner activity. And for certain very good minds, as I have just suggested, there lies far more hope of wisdom in very many other sorts of work than in the pursuit of philosophy.

Philosophy, then, as a deliberate undertaking is, I repeat, for those who love it. And now, I next add, it is for those who not only love it, but also, have a right to it. I must very briefly suggest what class of students I mean when I use these terms.

Philosophy is a thoroughgoing effort to think out what human life means. We all live; but naturally we live rather by instinct than by insight. Nor in the practice of living can this ever cease to be the case, so long as we are men on this earth. If by instinct one means, as I here do, merely an untechnical name for whatever guides life in fashions of whose meaning we are not conscious at the very moment when we are guided, then we can say that instinct directs us, rather than clear insight, when we fall in love, when we select our individual lifework, when we enjoy art, when religious sentiment appeals to us, and in general, whenever we feel the business of living to be worth while. No philosopher wins the right to abolish his wholesome instincts; and no philosopher ever learns to translate all his instincts into insight. For him, as for other men, naivete remains, or ought to remain, in its own region, a precious treasure of life.

On the other hand, it is an honorable task to try not only to live, not only to be guided by motives whose very real value one directly feels, but *also* to comprehend the meaning of life. To do this is not to seek to substitute insight for instinct, but rather to try, first, to set the life of the reason, as a light to make manifest the beauty of instinct, over against the still

fresh and uncorrupted life of the healthy instincts themselves, precisely in so far as these natural guides prove to be in harmony with reason. And secondly, to seek this comprehension of life, is to aim to purify our instincts wherever reason shows them to be mutually contradictory, or to be otherwise misleading. To illustrate: common sense reverences ideals of duty, but does not know, in abstract terms, what duty means, or why it is authoritative. One philosophizes when one deliberately asks, What authority has the moral law? What reason can we give wherefore we ought to reverence our duty? Now, in general, one who philosophizes does not cease, if he is a worthy man, to feel his old relatively instinctive, *i. e.*, unconsciously rational, respect for the moral law, even while he is coolly, and, it may be, very sceptically inquiring whether any clearly conscious, any explicitly reasonable ground can be given for his moral sentiments themselves. Nor does one who philosophizes about right and wrong, and about the rational grounds for their distinction, hope ever to be able to substitute dry reason for his socially trained instincts in all of the cases where, in daily life, a complex practical issue, involving right and wrong arises. On the contrary, the moral philosopher, if put into a difficult moral situation, by the chances of real life, will indeed use his reason as well as he can, and will take advantage of whatever training his clearer insight has received in the course of his philosophical studies; yet he too, somewhat like his unphilosophical fellow, will generally be, in such a situation, very much guided by his individual temperament, by his past social training, by his present mood—in brief by the sum total of what, in our present untechnical use of the term, we here mean by his instincts. For these more or less trained instincts he will never, I insist, be able wholly to substitute the guidance of his reason, as expressed in his philosophical system of morals.

But, despite this fact, the rightly guided philosophical moralist will have gained, from his abstract studies, a sort of light whose value to him will be far greater than one can

express by merely calling attention to the inadequacy of his moral system to substitute itself wholly for his more or less well trained moral instincts. For the moral philosopher, even if he cannot and in general must not, change his relatively instinctive moral sentiments, or substitute mere reason for them, will have learned, in a measure, from his philosophy, why his instincts, viewed as a whole, are what they are, and why, within limits, he ought to trust them. He will still, in general, follow the natural guidance of his temperament; but he will no longer do so as blindly, as slavishly, as helplessly, as the unphilosophical man does. He will rather freely surrender himself to his natural guides, because he will have learned, by the light of his reason, to respect their sacredness. He will not merely act thus or thus, but he will in a measure, see that being what he is, he does well to act within the limits of his healthy instincts. His reflection will not interfere with his life, so much as to enable him to see, as it were, from without the rationally observable complexity and beauty of what his life is. On the other hand, to be sure, he will have rationally learned to distinguish between what is petty, accidental, or corrupting in his natural life of practical instinct, and what is deep, humane, significant. He will not be a mere casuist, a mere doubter, or a mere computer of moral probabilities; but he will, in the course of his studies, have tended to free his impulses from some of their inconsistencies, and to let his deeper nature (which his conscious reason can indeed never alter) go all the more unhindered to its destined life tasks, just because he has learned to see that it is his deeper nature, while others of his natural tendencies are relatively capricious, superficial, and insignificant. Thus he will have learned not to live with less elemental fondness for the individual business of living, but to "let himself go" with a more enlightened coolness, fearlessness, and contemplative freedom.

If this illustrates something of the work of philosophy, it also illustrates the inevitable dangers of philosophical study. Such freedom is not to be won in a moment; nor does it

come to anybody except through a process—and a slow one—of leisurely independent, and critical reflection, involving a fearless and skeptical scrutiny of whatever instinct most ardently believes. Yet how shall one criticize instinct without paralyzing its vitality? How shall one doubt in theory, without hesitating in practice? How shall one wait long for insight, without poisoning the earnestness of one's practical activity? How shall one live in the indispensable faith of daily life, and nevertheless scrutinize life's mysteries with a keen eye to detect the inconsistencies of common sense?

Here lies the practical problem of the student of philosophy—a problem which Des Cartes faces in a memorable passage of his *Discourse on Method*—a problem which led to the fatal conflict between Socrates and the Athenians—a problem which has beset, in all reflective ages, the footsteps of the lovers of free inquiry. I have here to say of that problem only this: that the students who can safely solve it, in their own cases, through a course of years of reflective research, form a noble, but a distinctly limited class of thoughtful persons, to whose company it is one of the highest honors to belong, but to whose privileges by no means everybody may venture to lay claim. The academic teacher of philosophy has the right to invite all who wish to make the trial, to see whether they are heirs to such high privileges. But he must also warn those who are not called, that a year or two of trial may prove to them that they have no right to go further in this sort of inquiry. In case they thus have no right, it is the duty of their teacher so to present to them their elementary philosophy that the pursuit of it will henceforth remain to them a valuable element of their general culture. And it is quite possible to do this. On the other hand, if one is to continue to pursue philosophy, not as an elementary (and, as such, a possibly inspiring) branch of his general culture, but as a serious and sustained academic pursuit, then this must prove itself a safe pursuit, for the individual in question, by virtue of the fact that he can link a cool intellectual skep-

ticism with an ardent practical enthusiasm, a wise *naivete* with a love of carefully attained rational insight, or, in a word, by virtue of the fact that he can learn to see clearly, without unlearning the business of living devotedly.

Can you suspend your intellectual judgment without paralyzing your practical earnestness? If you find that you can do so, then philosophy is yours. But if to think about philosophy, after you have tried the subject for a year or two, in elementary courses, causes your "native line of resolution" to be persistently "sicklied o'er with the pale cast

of thought," then gather together what fragments of culture your elementary courses have given you, and leave the realm of free inquiry to those to whom it belongs. Few academic sights are more melancholy than the sight of the useless youth, who desires to get from philosophy an appetite for life which he thus far lacks, and who attends for years the courts of truth, failing to recognize that this much-courted monarch gives genuine insight only to those who are first the devoted servants of their chosen life-ideal. Let all such men study anything rather than philosophy.

JOSIAH ROYCE.

## ATHLETICS.

### TRACK ATHLETICS.

On Saturday the New York Athletic Club will meet the London Athletic Club in track games that have assumed an international character. From the present outlook it is quite safe to predict that the defeat of the Valkyrie III will be followed by another defeat; but this time the American heart should be filled with pride because our rivals on the track are acting with true sportsmanlike spirit, which cannot be said of English yachtsmen.

The work of Crum is somewhat disappointing to his many admirers throughout the United States. The N. Y. A. C. did every thing in their power to induce the Iowan to join; and after holding out several months he has at last consented to wear the winged acorn in the international games. Many thought that now since Crum was entered the championship for the 100 and 220 yds. dashes would remain on this side of the water. If it does it is probable that Wefers, a young athlete from Lowell, Mass., will be the cause of it, as he defeated Crum in both the 100 and 220 last Saturday at the Annual United States Championships.

At present the outlook for 1896 in track athletics at Stanford is discouraging. Copeland, the mainstay of last year's team, to-

gether with Watson and Orcutt, have graduated. Knowles, the college champion for the 220, and who also did creditable work in the 440, will not return this year as he is studying architecture in San Francisco. It will be seen that these men left places that will be hard to fill, but with the following as a nucleus, a good team should be organized: Sprinters—Bernard, Woodward and Carter; distance men—Brown and Fry; hurdle—Culver and Reynolds; walk—Timm and Farmer; field events—Toombs, Culver, Dole, Calhoun, Hazard, Johnson, Reynolds.

The *Sequoia*, in discussing the athletic outlook says: "We have lost heavily by graduation, but there are good men left; and we have a feeling that Stanford students will not allow Stanford athletics to suffer. It is well, in starting out, to reflect for a moment on the losses we have sustained. This is the first step; the next is to go to work to repair these losses, and we believe that the Stanford student body has energy and ability enough to do it."

We also desire to express our faith in Stanford to place a stronger team in the field next year than ever before; and we will further state that many more annual contests will not occur before the outcome in track games will be as problematical as it is in the other annual contests.