

## A STUDY IN INFANTILE REGRESSION.\*

BY T. SWANN HARDING.

THESE are the futile reflections of an unimportant member of the impotent minority upon a matter of no importance. With them the mighty and the powerful have naught to do. They are intended solely as a stimulant for that anaemic and tiny group called the intellectuals. They are set down with all possible humility as befits a member of a minority in a functioning democracy, but they are based upon the unpopular postulate that the most efficient and unimpeded mental and intellectual efficacy is a matter of paramount importance to true civilization. Let then those whose ears and eyes and minds are closed to ideas—the already dead, John Haynes Holmes called them this morning—beware.

When entering upon a study of two very prevalent types of infantile regression as exemplifying the sterility of modern civilization, it is necessary to set some criterion by which to judge the maturity of the human intellect. The most prominent differential characteristic between men and other animals is generally esteemed to be in the mind. Animals utilize knowledge wherein it possesses immediate utility; they are, in a sense, a mass of instinctive reactions to external stimuli; their state compares well with that of a high-grade human imbecile. As we pass from the imbecile through the moron grades and the sub-normal to the normal we eventually come to a type of mind which, as Soreley has expressed it, has an independent interest in knowing and places a valuation upon knowledge per se.

We address ourselves then to the difference between *savoir* and *connaître*; between *wissen* and *kennen*; between knowledge of and knowledge about. We take as an axiom for this purpose John Grote's remarks in the *Exploratio Philosophica*—"Immediateness is confusion or chaos which reflection begins to crystallize or organ-

ize. . . . Immediate or intuitive knowledge is knowledge with the smallest amount of reflection possible consistent with its being knowledge. . . . Knowledge begins, when reflection begins, and no earlier, for in immediateness it is dormant." These assumptions place us in a minority painfully small, but known facts seem to prohibit us from assuming the more comfortable theory that rightness abides in numbers.

The question has very frequently been asked since the theoretical termination of The War, whether modern civilization is not on the verge of complete disaster. Wise men of the East are echoed by wise men of the West who really contemplate such a contingency as very much more than merely probable. Civilizations have arisen and fallen before—mighty and noble civilizations; and there is really no valid reason for presuming that the one which now encompasses us embodies the germ of immortality any more than those of the past embodied it.

The world of 1914 is absolutely gone, in spite of the sentimental reactionary glances turned toward it by the vast conglomerate of people led by that matchless master of the strategy of retreat, Warren G. Harding. We have witnessed the episode of a real world war to delight the hearts of the militarists, a catastrophic epilepsy which has seized modern civilization and which still clings like an incurable malady. Old ties have been broken; the former ideas of peace, security and civilian ethics have been replaced by an attitude of mind which lacks in great measure the quality of stability and which rebels against the man-fearing spirit.

This world-wide general murder and its mass psychosis have been brought to a nominal close but, pugnacity once unleashed, it has been found most difficult to quell the group of animalistic instincts a regression to primitive mindedness brings in train. The repressive agencies of modern civilization were deliberately cast aside by all nations in order to win the war. Men were cold bloodedly instructed to act in absolute diametrical opposition to the peace time ethic; they were trained to murder in the foulest manner, to steal, to lie, to be atrocious, to use women as a needful sex necessity; to do anything, in short, that might contribute to ultimate brute victory. The revaluation of all values was realized practically, and master morals became the order of the day.

Today these inculcated master morals impel the masses to menace what we are wont to call civilization. They do not desire to stop fighting. Men no longer care so much for the apparently

rather petty conventionalized limitations of civilian life. Such polite amenities seem quite out of place after one has been admonished to make a bayonet thrust and take what is desired—to *win* regardless of humanitarian considerations. Europe does not desire to stop taking while ever there appears to be anything to take; and American bankers, ever avaricious, send over the sinews of war disguised as charitable contributions for the suffering women and children. So easy is it to fool people who will not understand, whose minds do not function to the extent of seeing that when resources no longer permit fighting and starvation is actually at hand, people will go to work and reconstruction follows inevitably.

Crime in America reaches unheard of proportions. Things seem to be going to the dogs, and so we have very respectable people fearing a complete reversion to barbarism and the utter annihilation of modern civilization's mighty imposing structure.

This question is important. It is, however, secondary in importance to the question of depopulation. Procreation has been ground into us; we have made it a sacred part of our religious cult; it is strongly entrenched in our code of honor; it is a prominent theoretical tenet in our moral and ethical codes. Impelled as we are by the most imperative instinctive urge known to us, we see fit, in a prudish age, to account for it as a moral or religious or ethical obligation; and so we prate of the necessity for "continuing the race" and anathematize any tendency towards depopulation—all in an age which has found human life the very cheapest of commodities.

What, frankly, is the necessity for continuing the race and is it so overpowering? We may make any assumption that pleases us and bask comfortably in it, but what of the reality? Life is sweet; with all of its imperfections—with all that it contains of ill health, poverty, privation, frustration, disaster and miserable deaths—few desire to leave it. Schopenhauer refrained from suicide however justifiable he proved it. Even poor Barbellion enjoyed life and would have traded his personality for no other. There are those who lugubriously wish to die, but if you offer to kill them will they usually accept your invitation with proper alacrity?

But we have no warrant to assume that posterity will necessarily relish life and we cannot consult posterity upon the problem. I see no reason for assuming a deep moral necessity. For all we know we may be hapless pawns who have arisen by mechanical evolution in order to do some special work in cosmos, to release certain

necessary forces, at the behest of the greater, impersonal and unmoral force which may rule the universe. We feel important, but are we? We are inevitably egocentric, but what does that argue of universal significance?

We are here, then, and we go on bringing our kind into being for better or for worse. We have built up a something which we are pleased to call "modern civilization." Should it perish from the earth is this of cosmic, even of mundane—or even of race importance? Have we so tremendously perfect a civilization as we are all too prone to think? Might not the world wag along quite as well without it and might not even the race benefit by its disappearance? It is essentially a civilization based upon mechanics and immediateness of application and ignoring almost altogether that one spiritually enlightening realm where knowledge by reflection comes into being. Speaking animalistically it is a wonderful thing: but viewed from the heights of a human intellect what can we honestly say?

There are those pious in a modern way who find consolation in an hypothesis of cosmic evolution. There are those who see progress advancing by pendulum strides with a forward movement and a regression forever alternating. Both classes believe in the ultimate achievement of perfect good and both necessarily believe that our present state must be in advance of any previous world state. Do facts faced coldly and without sentimentality warrant such positive affirmations of optimism?

There comes the adumbrant memory of an American Indian who, after being incarcerated by the pale face government in a properly uncultivable reservation, returned to visit the farmer who had "bought" the land where he formerly lived. He was a very nice Indian and, instead of scalping the farmer, he talked pleasantly regarding their respective civilizations. The farmer was not really content to admit that two civilizations were under discussion. He admitted only his own. A wealthy urbanite with a proper comprehension of bridge, golf and ball room dancing, would not have considered the farmer civilized, however. And an intellectual would have found the wealthy urbanite but a thinly veneered barbarian.

However, the Indian said, in substance: "You have fenced in now both the little land that you can use and a great deal that you cannot use. You call it all yours. It is not yours any more than it is mine. The land was placed here like the sky, the air, the water, the plants and the animals—for the use of all: it cannot belong to

you as can a horse and some day there will be an accounting. You have brought with you expensive machinery and you farm in an elaborate and a complex manner. By working yourself and your entire family every day in the year you manage to make a bare living. I and my squaw lived on one-tenth this land. We worked perhaps one month in the spring and one in the fall; we fared bountifully and reared a large family. We were always happy while you are worried and fretful."

The farmer of course laughed because the poor Indian did not know enough to appreciate the blessings of civilization. The gentleman who told me this story was a Single Taxer and he was interested in Single Tax aspects of the situation. Perhaps the Single Tax is the ideal absolute remedy for absolute wrong, the grand panacea, the ultimate system of perfection for the remission of all sins. I am almost as dubious of ideal systems as is Theodore Driiser, but I shall not deny the possibilities. The story had, however, another interest for me.

What constitutes the essential point in true civilization? Roughly speaking, man is differentiated from the other animals by the possession of intellect. It is in the peculiar functioning of his brain that he most differs from ordinary animals. It is normal mental functioning including the power of abstract reasoning and an interest in knowledge of its own sake which forms the real nucleus of civilization; it is this alone that is worthy of attainment. Mechanical advance is only justifiable in so far as it assists a still higher development. This peculiar human brain functioning is a quality which bears no direct relation either to culture or to education; it is pre-eminently the faculty of intelligence. It should be assisted by education and mechanical luxuries; it should eventuate in real culture; but it is synonymous with none of these things.

The mind of the Indian mentioned above functioned; the mind of the farmer was in a practical and conventional groove and it did not function. To make the difference still more striking and still more readily grasped—the farmer had a certain appreciation of knowledge in so far as it was of immediate practical application—in so far as it enabled him to satisfy the complexities of an existence which gave rise to more and more problems as its complexity increased. The Indian was in possession of a mind functioning as a mature human brain should; he had a disinterested interest in knowledge for its own sake; he actually saw that knowing possessed an inherent valuation per se, and he was able to take hold of

an odd and unusual problem, meditate about it and achieve definite results. The farmer had certain in-bred or spoon-fed ideas and he understood nothing else; the Indian had constantly new ideas of his own and lived on a more human plane.

This disparity of mental functioning is a world disease; I notice it more or less in nearly all of the foreigners all over the globe with whom I have corresponded to the extent of several hundred. Considering the mechanical perfection we have achieved our minds should be in a better position to function than that of an aboriginal and they should attain conclusions which would put a Socrates or a Plato to shame. We have every convenience and inducement. But we have mistaken the means for the end in view; we eternally make life more and more complex and then, as we solve piecemeal the problems this complexity generates, we imagine we are becoming civilized. We live a life which produces ills that only the most elaborate medical profession can manage even partially to allay, but after the modern diseases are produced and cured what have we accomplished in an absolute sense? Anything?

Our intellects, instead of being facilitated, have found out, it is true, the way to apply practically certain scraps of facts and certain rudimentary scientific laws, but they have almost lost the ability to meet diverse situations and find a way out in the manner constantly exemplified by the high-grade primitive man in the open. We have too much elaborate instruction, for instance, without enough learning. Pure intellect finds a way. I remember the time when the *Poet and Peasant*, and the *William Tell Overture* and the *Second Hungarian Rhapsody* were my idea of really heavy classic music. How was I ever to attain an intellectual appreciation of the best music?—a thing, be it understood, quite different from either a sensual or a technical appreciation. Sensual appreciation does not exist much above the human subnormal and technical appreciation is limited to professionals. I mean the ability to see the fruit of intellect in a piece of music and to find it intellectually suggestive and uplifting.

This appreciation was attained merely by insistently hearing till I understood and meanwhile cleaving to my taste as formed. Wagner, Straus, Ornstein, Strawinsky and Scott came into my ken and I appreciated; my intellect having been unbound from conventional precedents to achieve this. Today I feel the need of some deeper appreciation of art; I feel that I should comprehend some meaning in the most absurd drawing published by *The Dial*, cer-

tainly in the most baffling utterances of Rimbaud; I do not assume that *The Dial* is asinine; I cannot be certain that I am not myself terribly stupid and slow in mental functioning not to grasp such matters. I got beyond the *Unfinished* and *The New World* symphonies and I may get up to *The Dial* in time.

In this connection I remember attacking the French language in a manner quite savage. I ignored all the set rules and trusted unaided intellect to find a way when a reading knowledge of this language became necessary. I gathered together a French book and a French dictionary and, after reading the book, progressed rapidly until I could within a few weeks read anything in the language. If I had not been so assiduously educated, and had I not had so much rot to unlearn, I fairly believe that today I should be more than sub-normal in intelligence. Civilization that is true teaches the attainment of normal intelligence in a reasonable time.

What then can constitute the immense superiority of our civilization over that of an aboriginal who has attained a certain definite racial maturity and whose mind functions normally? We bring him a physician after we have taught him conditions of living which make the physician necessary. The surgeon can cut him wide open, handle his organs with nonchalant familiarity, sew him up and then not be sure just what was wrong with him and whether he will benefit from the operation. Or he can operate upon a native woman and tell her that she will never menstruate thereafter and that her stomach is fearfully delicate. Thereafter she menstruates more regularly than ever and can digest a portion of a crowbar if necessity arises. At very best, and with the utmost familiarity with an individual's anatomy, a physician will do well to ameliorate part of the physical ills, a majority of which arise from the complexities of this very modern civilization.

However, it is alleged that the native has unpardonable quacks called witch-doctors. It may be replied that the intelligent aboriginal always looks askance at these pests just as he views his native priests with amused tolerance, having meditated far beyond the narrow confines of the mass faith. Moreover, I do not know that we can point the finger of scorn very consistently so long as we complacently tolerate Christian Scientist practitioners, spiritualistic mediums and others of ill-fame who prostitute perfectly good psychology and psychiatry to cheap uses.

As noted, the aboriginal usually has his religion, quite closely adhered to and quite properly feared by the more ignorant—just as

among us civilized. We, however, inflict our religion upon him, telling him meanwhile that he is altogether at variance with the truth. Yet his faith is quite satisfactory to him and is certainly no more illogical and no greater strain upon credulity than our own. H. Fielding Hall illuminated this subject both directly and indirectly in his *Soul of a People*, written before he discovered his perfect world system in a later work, and thus ceased really to think and began to pack life into doctrinal compartments.

The story of native exploitation by unscrupulous whites has been the same the world over, and the desire to "spread civilization"—horrible words!—has been uniformly followed by disastrous consequences to the poor primitive. He is compelled to work beneath foreign tax masters who egg him on to attain a complexity of life which eventually kills him. He is made to cease thinking and being happy in order that he may get his nose to the grindstone and live less fully at the cost of infinitely more toil. Hawaii offers the best example of this process in miniature; here we have the complete destruction within a century of a perfectly satisfactory native civilization by the ferocious inroads of our vaunted civilization.

However, I do not mean to be a second Thoreau. I do not advocate that we revert to the simple life, don skins, enter a wigwam and bid goodbye to the amenities of civilization as we know it. We have been born into this condition and we can, if we wish, find a way to make it conduce toward a very high mental development; we can make it a means to an end rather than continually piling up more means. We must first of all realize that this civilization of ours is not the best simply because it exploits certain elaborate mechanical contrivances; and secondly we must be aware that there is no such thing as true civilization unless it assists minds to function properly.

It is not necessary to live at Walden to be civilized. It is not necessary to eschew books and symphony orchestras and great cities and art galleries. But it is absolutely a fact that a man may be more civilized without being able to read a word, more civilized in the truest and best sense, than some learned university dry-as-dust, some wealthy manufacturer of luxuries or some stupid business patron of an orchestra. It is quite probable indeed that slaves like Epictetus; men altogether ignorant of modern science like Socrates; flabby idealists like Gautama the Buddha and unlettered peasants like Jesus Christ, were all of them more civilized than



thousands of people who bask in all the multifarious conveniences of present-day life.

What we call "modern civilization" implies numberless mechanical appliances; it implies indeed the greatest mechanical advances that the world has ever known—but in doing so it necessarily implies the application of knowledge directly to practical uses, and a contempt for knowledge which presumes to a validity of its own; nor does it imply an ability to build anything worth while on the magnificent foundation we have laid. The fact that we have electric lights, automatically regulated heat, street cars and locomotives, automobiles and canned vegetables does not argue that we are highly civilized, however much our egocentric predicament may urge us so to argue. Plato was quite civilized without either a typewriter or a printed book. It is possible to be civilized today and yet to be unable to read. It is doubtless much better to know how to read, but this is not essential to what may truly be called civilization.

There is a certain complacently vulgar American city—and if a city is going to be vulgar it may as well be complacent about it—which today sits on its haunches, declares that its material ambitions have in some measure been accomplished and thinks that it is now about time to go in for a little culture. It reminds me of the way rural natives formerly "got religion," the idea being that it is in good taste to have a certain bowing acquaintance with such things just as a matter of "right-thinking." This city therefore bought up a loose Russian pianist of very considerable talent and purchased itself a symphony orchestra to cluster around him. He went sincerely to work and actually produced wonderful results, achieving on artistic perfection which does him worlds of credit.

Then the people of the city came to hear the orchestra because it was "their" orchestra, just out of a species of ridiculous local pride. And they sat stupified through the symphonies and the tone poems and the arias and the suites and applauded vociferously at the end of the selection—or in between time whenever it sagged toward silence—partly to be doing the right thing, partly to encourage the musicians, but largely because they were frankly glad that that much of the program was over. When truly superior orchestras led by Stokowski and Strausky and Damrosch and Toscanini came to that city these people stayed at home or in the movies; for they went to "their" orchestra, not from mental functioning through an intellectual urge, but because music ought to be patronized

because it was, as a matter of purely practical business, a good thing for the city to get the reputation of having a fine orchestra; and also did not the papers continually repeat that the conductor got thirty thousand dollars a year?—it must be good! Likewise this city gave Ornstein and Rachmaninoff the compliment of empty houses while such popular ballad sobbers as Gluck and McCormack warbled to houses packed to suffocation.

Nevertheless—and this is where we attain our objective, infantile regression—it is to the rich, but empty headed, business men who find it profitable to support such ventures as symphony orchestras or community funds, that we must appeal for any effective assistance against the inroads of the animalism which is the real pernicious menace of true civilization. As twentieth century matters have been arranged the business man has the power; we have abjectly sold ourselves out to him, we seem to like to feel impotent in his fatherly hands; hence we must somehow manage to appeal to him in order to inject any spirituality and intellectuality into civilization.

The cultural impetus toward a deeper and truer civilization, we have a right to expect from the college and the university men. It is a hard but a true saying that it cannot come from them. The few functioning civilized minds in America today—and America must save civilization because no other nation can at present do so—are not university minds. The college and university atmosphere is truly stultifying to intellect; it is so largely devoted to practical applications and to the perpetuation of certain almost instinctive conventions.

To be absolutely truthful and candid it must indeed be admitted as a fundamental postulate that any study of the minds of business and university men is nothing short of a *study in infantile regression*. There are exceptions of course, but the primitive infantility of these two classes of minds is seldom appreciated at its full value.

There lives in a certain industrial city a business man who has the peculiar idea that life should be at least two dimensional—that it should have breadth as well as length. He has, therefore, permitted himself to investigate certain cultural matters which have no practical significance in his business and which may be dismissed as “*merely*” broadening. That man is a man set apart from his fellows and the other business men actually regard him as a mysterious creature altogether different from them.

This man has, for instance, attained the incredible erudition

which enables him to read understandingly *The Atlantic Monthly* and *The Freeman*. He has at times placed before his friends a column of editorial comment from the latter journal. These captains of industry have positively atrophied mentally to the extent that, in spite of their painful and sincere efforts, they have not the slightest idea what it is all about! They actually want to understand; their efforts to do so are nothing less than pitiable, but they altogether lack the ability.

The atrophic muscles in the ear of a horse will function. Those in the ear of a human being only in rare instances and then imperfectly. A business man can normally no more comprehend anything beyond the sub-moron level of the average newspaper editorial than he can wiggle his ears. To the world of ideas, to the world of human as distinguished from animal mind he is dead. He can be led in any direction and stampeded by anybody who lies plausibly or who makes sufficient noise, for national processes in any true sense are beyond him; he is delightfully uncivilized.

Yes, surely enough—he has put together a great business; he has made his millions; by a combination of circumstances more or less fortuitous he has organized a great corporation. But his mind does not function as the mind of a human being should and could. "Because they seeing, see not, and hearing, hear not; neither do they understand." Certain mechanical stimuli occur to his organism and he reacts in immediate practical applications; he obeys the impulse even as does the squirrel when burying a nut.

He reacts to golf or to yachting or to other animalistic sensational amusements. He will rally to a perfectly unintellectual and convictionless politician like Harding. He will make a member in good standing of almost any sort of church and will acquiesce in the most monstrous theological imbecilities because he has no power to reason. He even does the world's work, not to clothe and feed and assist human beings, but to make combinations of trade and capital and to acquire power. Of abstract thought, the only mental process which differentiates genus homo from the rest of the animals, he knows nothing. Such is the superman we have generated, he to whom we have sold out, at whose mercy we live and whom we uphold as the finished product of modern civilization.

Is the graduate much better? In December, 1920, there appeared an article of mine in *THE OPEN COURT*. A copy containing it fell into the hands of a college graduate I knew and he could never "get into it." An article of no philosophical pretensions at

all was too "deep" and too "high-brow" for him and he actually lacked the intellectual ability to read it understandingly? In *The Christian Century* of October 7, 1920, there appeared a still lighter article of mine of which the import was almost too obvious. This was read by another product of another American university and, upon finishing it, his comment was: "I don't understand it at all—what is it about?" Then it was that I found this educated young person was even incapable of comprehending when the matter was explained to him in the greatest simplification of detail. I could no more get him to understand the import of that simple article than I could explain the structural formula of manno-keto-heptose to a ten-months-old babe. There was no point of contact. However, he did know that the theology of the Presbyterian church was a perfect affair and that the Bolsheviki and Radicals all were incapable of anything but evil; he knew how to solve the European tangle and a very great deal about what Christ meant, but——

It was a third university which produced the young doctor of philosophy who asked me *what* Hume was! He apparently thought it either a game or the name of a kidney tonic. Two other universities brought into being those stupendous minds possessed by two other graduates who strove to read *The Hibbert Journal*, *The Philosophical Review*, *The Nation* and *The Freeman* as they came to my desk. They had certain vague notions that the latter journals were Bolshevik, but in general they lacked the slightest rudimentary knowledge of what the periodicals intended to convey and they gave up in gentlemanly despair.

Nor can I neglect to specify the young graduate of Wisconsin who brought me H. M. Wenley's *Modern Thought and the Crisis in Belief*. It appeared that his roommate was a graduate of Michigan, and he told the gentleman from Wisconsin that his senior class had been told to read Wenley's book, but that not a single member of the class ever found out what Wenley was driving at! Knowing me to be a "nut" my Wisconsin friend brought me the book in order that it might perhaps find a reader sufficiently depraved to appreciate it. Needless to say, it was so clearly written than an intelligent girl of less than high school education read it with perfect understanding, because her mind, untrammelled by too much formal education functioned naturally. Unfortunately, modern American college and university educations too often contribute to intellectual atrophy rather than to mental resilience. What if these young men had been exposed to Kant or to Hegel or to Mill's *Logic*

or to Aristotle or to a good modern volume on metaphysics or even to Sorley's *Moral Values and the Idea of God!* Not that I maintain that it is necessary to a man's soul salvation to read obscure philosophic treatises; God forbid! But it simply is a fact that if a man's mind functions properly he can read and follow an abstract discussion. That so many read but understand not is the explanation for the popularity of *The Hibbert Journal* and *The Christian Century* among people who would find these periodicals insiduously heterodox if they understood what they were reading. In the same manner a candid Methodist can preach Unitarianism from his pulpit and a popular lecturer can advocate socialism before "refined" people with perfect impunity, resting upon their collective and individual ignorance.

Of the university type I have seen hundreds. My way of living, or of making a living, has brought me into contact with four or five hundred of them from universities the country over. It is only in two or three instances that I have found evidence of independent thinking, unconventional mental functioning and real openmindedness. These men have generally been narrow minded, bigoted, opinionated, quarrelsome children without the redeeming feature of extreme youth to condone them. Indeed a healthy child, before it has been taught the prejudices and the hostilities and the hatreds of adults, is infinitely superior to them mentally.

Among other things it is typical of the normally functioning human mind that, in its utter disregard for the more remunerative aspects of applications commonly adjudged practical, it ignores such slight considerations as pecuniary reward and doggedly, but sincerely, goes its foolish way. I confess that I have long had such a beastly mind and, though it is of low potential, I feel that I confess rather to a liability than to an asset in having a pure love of knowledge while living in a crassly materialistic age. I too have been looked upon as a creature apart by my colleagues because I desired to broaden my interest in life.

During my college course I became addicted to the habit of writing numerous "letters to the editor" of *The Baltimore American* from sheer pressure of intellectual exuberance which demanded an outlet. In one of these articles I sought to demonstrate that Buddhists had as much right to inundate our shores with Buddhist missionaries as we had to inundate theirs with Christian missionaries; but I asked whether we would accept their propagandists as politely as we compel them (with a battleship, if necessary) to

accept ours. Several of my senior classmates saw this trifle tossed off and they passed it around. Ultimately they each and every one discarded it—politically, of course—but none the less decisively, saying that such “deep” matters they really could not get into! They could understand an article on baseball. They could give complex and devious figures for building a structure capable of making humans more comfortable. But their idea was not to make human beings comfortable or to assist them to function mentally; they wanted to make money and marry some girl just as quickly as possible, and that was all.

Indeed I remember just two teachers, one in high school and one in college, who made the slightest effort to get out of the rut and who suggested to me a single really important broadening field of investigation. Education does not teach a man what John Haynes Holmes also said this morning that education should—to hear to the very end the views of a man with whom we disagree absolutely. It does not produce such men today. A college professor who would do this—in fact a college professor who evinces an interest in any intellectual activity beyond his own narrow specialty—is looked down upon as “Oh, he’s all right, but then, well—you know what I mean.”

There is a thing called pure research in science and it is supposed to be the province of pure intellect; it was the field of Faraday and Ampere and Darwin and other great minds; but it is harnessed to business today and leaves little room for pure mental functioning.

There came to me recently from a university man an admonition as to my logic. I discovered that the correct university philosopher feels that our precise method of attaining a conclusion is of more importance than the conclusion attained. This is another aspect of the hopelessly conventionalized mind as it becomes systematically anything. It is the perpetual utilization of means for ends; it is precisely the same mind which made the winning of the war more important than the results of the war and which eventuated in a war won mechanically and barren spiritually. Our minds worked just as far as modern civilization encourages them to work, but they fell down miserably as soon as abstract reasoning became necessary. Modern education and modern civilization look upon such ideals as impractical moonshine; hence a war for a world which gave as its fruits hostility, frustration, debts, influenza and starvation.

It is needless to develop this thesis further in detail. Instances of both business and university infants spring to mind by the dozen. It is the general rule—whatever be the fortunate exceptions—that the mind of the average American business man and of the average American college or university graduate shows infantile regression. There is in each case a certain narrowly restricted area of interest in knowledge which will cash out. But there is little or none of the independent interest in knowing which characterizes the maturity of the human mind, and which alone can produce real civilization.

There exists in modern times a certain small minority of people who can properly be called the intellectuals, and who can properly be said to have the interests of true civilization at heart. They cherish the ideals of highmindedness, of true spirituality and of rational civilization which must be divorced from the view that mechanical perfection is synonymous with the greatest human attainment. They are practically insulated from the business man and the university man who must be moved before anything ameliorative of present conditions can be accomplished.

The intellectuals are insulated because these others can neither think nor, with the best will in the world, can they follow the processes of thought in another. They write and print certain books and periodicals of restricted circulation, and they manage somehow to keep the ideal of civilization alive, just as such intellectuals have had to do throughout the ages. But what possible point of contact with the powerful, uncultivated majority can they ever hope to make and what possible leverage shall ever be theirs?

The business man and the university man are both relatively infantile. They are likewise cowardly. They do not make good martyrs or human sacrifices. They are gregarious, easily led, readily hoodwinked and complacently pliable even regarding things they do not understand—provided they are first of all very thoroughly scared. Finally their accentuation of conventional and traditional moral, theological and patriotic values renders them easily scared by anything which tends to upset things as they at present are.

To prove these facts we need consider only religion or the past war. In both instances we have seen that the entrepreneurs or capitalists—the business man, and the products of modern college and university education, have always readily fallen into line and cheered for the “right” things. They have first had to have it impressed upon them that it would be a great deal better for them to agree to certain things which they but imperfectly understand.

What they are to believe is really no concern of theirs; they do not need even to try and comprehend. They are not accustomed to think; they are accustomed to react to stimuli. Therefore they must first be told that things will go bad for them unless the enemy is licked; unless the loans are subscribed in full; unless the Red Cross is assisted in its efforts to kill Bolsheviki by neglect; unless the tribal god is propitiated; unless the accepted religion is patted on the back; unless the customary theological dogmas in their respective social strata are swallowed hole; unless the world is made safe for something by their country or unless anything that you desire to have them agree to. Having scared them it is only necessary to retail your ideas and see them believed and insisted upon as true, just as fast as you wish and however imbecile and illogical you may care to make them.

The leavening of the loaf of true civilization must be the intellectuals who have normally functioning minds, and the ideals of culture, refinement, intellect and development for which they stand. Business men and the educated classes need to be scared in order to adopt a different set of ideas. Present conditions with the ghost of so-called "Bolshevism" in the wings are beginning to scare them. As European anarchy becomes more and more pronounced and as they see the good old times slipping away from them, they are doomed to become more and more frightened.

Now just at this point, when the dormant minds are afraid of something, it would be possible for the intellectual to jump into the breach, to slash this monster of materialism, to redeem the land from the single-track animalistic minds which have too long ruled it and to rejuvenate a healthful interest in ideas. We can actually lose more than half of the tawdry, shoddy, wasteful debilitating impedimenta which we call modern civilization; we can do without any number of things which we vaguely imagine to be indispensable. It is not the jeopardy of losing these things which menaces civilization; it is rather the suffocation of a disinterested interest in ideas beneath a welter of excrement non-essentials.

The final question of course is, and remains—do we really desire to be truly civilized, or do we merely want to make life more automatic, more complex, more mechanical and hence more brainless? Or, in deference to Henry Adams' *Degradation of the Democratic Dogma*, a more pertinent question may be—has not civilization already attained and passed its zenith; is not the inevitable



regression of man now in process; and may not protest against the operation of an immutable law be worse than futile?

\*It seems best just to append here a quotation from W. R. Sorley's *Moral Values and the Idea of God* in the chapter on *Values*, which I found after writing the above and which admirably summarizes it—

“It is maintained by an active school of thinkers that truth is simply a concise expression for working efficiency, that it is capable of analysis into certain other values, and that all so-called intellectual values have their real value in relation to some other function than intellectual apprehension . . . The view appeals for support to the practical interests which determine the beginning of knowledge. But it overlooks the independent interest in knowing which characterizes the maturity of the human mind. Truth has been found to possess a value which is not capable of being resolved into other and practical interests, and which must therefore be regarded as independent. It is the object and attainments of intelligence alone and can in this way be distinguished from happiness or goodness or beauty.”