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Platitudes in the Making Precepts and Advices for Gentlefolk

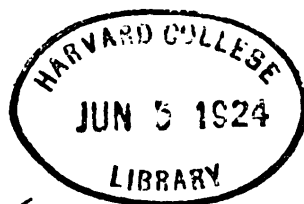
By

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Fine money

**These thoughts were written down
for my own pleasure. They are now
published for the same reason.**

All ideas aspire to the condition of platitude.

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**PRELIMINARY PRECEPTS
FOR THOSE ABOUT TO
LIVE.**

**To
THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY
AND AFTER**

Preliminary Precepts

I.

As soon as an idea is accepted it is time to reject it.

II.

Truth and falsehood in the abstract do not exist.

III.

Truth is one's own conception of things.

IV.

A lie is that which you do not believe.

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V.

Genius is initiative on fire.

VI.

Altruism is another name for Egoism.

VII.

Originality is only variation.

VIII.

Negations without affirmations are worthless.

IX.

Fear of corrupting the mind of the younger generation is the loftiest form of cowardice.

X.

In multitude of counsel there is confusion.

XI.

Definitions put a limit to ideas ; institutions put a limit to life. So long as we recognise these two precepts, both definitions and institutions may be used with advantage.

XII.

No opinion matters finally : except your own.

XIII.

All things are possible : but not probable.

XIV.

Familiarity breeds not contempt, but indifference.

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XV.

**Things done on principle are things
done wrong.**

XVI.

There is nothing old under the sun.

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ADVICES FOR THE SAME

B

To
C. HALDANE MACFALL
WHO DOES NOT
NEED THEM

Advices

I.

Look after the Real: the Ideal can take care of itself.

II.

Be contented, when you have got all you want.

III.

When dealing with humanity remember you have to make the best of a bad job.

IV.

Don't think—do.

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V.

When in doubt, risk it.

VI.

Forgive everybody but yourself.

VII.

Beware of those who agree with you.

VIII.

**Don't try to convert the elderly person :
circumvent him.**

IX.

Be sure your kindness is not cowardice.

X.

Suffer fools gladly : they may be right.

Platitudes in the Making 21

XI.

**Treat the crowd as if you knew best : ✓
its units as if they did.**

XII.

**Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider
her ways and beware !**

THE INNER TEMPLE

To
FREDERICK NIVEN

The Inner Temple

I.

No two men have exactly the same religion : a church, like society, is a compromise.

II.

Theology and religion are not the same thing. When the churches are controlled by the theologians religious people stay away.

III.

The object of life is life.

26 **Platitudes in the Making**

IV.

To a healthy being Death is evil. It is so easy to die.

V.

To be alive : that is the best thing that can happen to any of us.

VI.

✓ The theologian is the apologist of death.

VII.

✓ The desire for immortality is the human tragedy. The desire to be loved for oneself the human comedy.

VIII.

There is no to-morrow for those who are alive : for the dead, no to-day.

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IX.

**A man is a ship : his religion a harbour. ↗
Few men sail the high seas.**

X.

**All dogmas are right : but it is wrong
to need them.**

XI.

**Doubt is the prerogative of the intellect ;
Faith, of the emotions. Nowadays the
emotions have all the Doubt and the in-
tellect all the Faith.**

XII.

Sacrifice is a form of bargaining.

XIII.

Aspiration is discontent.

GODS OF THE TWILIGHT

To
JOHN MAVROGORDATO

Gods of the Twilight

I.

**The gods are the progeny of the poets :
the poets are the children of all.**

II.

**The god of theology: a power that
creates to destroy.**

III.

**Once you become a Christian you admit
that the kingdom of God is within. The
question then is not whether you believe
in God ; but whether you believe in
yourself.**

IV.

Desire to please God is never disinterested.

V.

**God is conservative ; Satan, progressive.
Both are useful to the judicious, though
necessary only to the feeble.**

AMORALITIES

c

To
EDUARDO BOLIO DE RENDON

Amoralities

I.

Goodness and happiness are synonymous terms in a healthy animal.

II.

In the beginning morals were expedients. Later they became institutions. It is only when they are useless that it is necessary to defend them.

III.

Morality is the child of self-consciousness.

IV.

Morals are only the rules of communities. They should be judged by their results.

V

Expedients are the only real substitute for morals.

VI

Beware of your habits. The better they are the more surely will they be your undoing.

VII.

Excess is wrong when it negatives itself.

VIII.

We are more inclined to regret our virtues than our vices ; but only the very honest will admit this.

Platitudes in the Making 37

IX.

Those who preach salvation as a reward for virtue are spiritual hucksters—tradesmen of the soul.

X.

The first of rights is the right to enjoy. ✓

XI.

Those who are careless of happiness are happy.

XII.

Your readiest desire is your path to joy—even if it destroy you.

XIII.

People who want to be amused have lost the art of living. ✓

XIV.

**Life is great when it is tragic; but
tragedy is born of joy, not sorrow.**

XV.

**Once you are conscious of real joy,
Death, for you, is dead. Those only who
have known joy have lived. Joy is the
nihilism of consciousness.**

INHUMANITIES

To
ALL WHO ARE WEARY AND
HEAVY LADEN

Inhumanities

I.

**It is easy to be human ; but humanism
is a dismal failure : look at man.**

II,

**Why did Nature create man ? Was it
to show that she is big enough to make
mistakes ; or was it pure ignorance ?**

III.

**Man is Nature's first protest against
herself ; he is a creature suffering from
inverted ego.**

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IV.

Man is a dog's ideal of what God should be.

V.

Man is the only animal that can be a fool. In this there is hope. Folly may be the loophole of retreat.

VI.

There are two kinds of men; those who are the subjects and those who are the lords of their environment. But real power transcends environment.

VII.

Mankind reveals itself in civilization. What a revelation!

VIII.

The future will look upon man as we look upon the ichthyosaurus—as an extinct monster.

IX.

As soon as a nation becomes civilized it dies ; yet man has but one idea—to becomes civilized. Thus he assists nature to correct her errors.

X.

Domestic animals are inferior animals. Domesticity is the last refuge of the inferior man.

XI.

There is no such thing as the average man, except in the mass. The mob is everyman.

XII.

The typical man of any nation is the exception.

XIII.

Idiosyncrasy is the individual's contribution to life. Vulgarity is the idiosyncrasy of the crowd.

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XIV.

He who can lead will lead. Followers are not necessary.

XV.

Nowadays an eminent man who obeys the crowd is called leader. But there have been few real leaders even in history. Most so-called leaders have been tuft-hunters.

XVI.

In democracies, those who lead, follow ; those who follow, lead.

XVII.

The individual saves humanity ; but humanity never forgives him. Humanity has no faith in herself, and by that fact shows she is her own best judge.

XVIII.

Nationality is to nations what individuality is to persons.

XIX.

Responsibility proves the man : and so does irresponsibility.

THE OUTER TEMPLE

To
A. ST. JOHN ADCOCK

The Outer Temple

I.

Civilized man has decided that he is a social being ; but he has not learnt how to be social. Now it is too late.

II.

A social system that cannot be changed cannot be maintained.

III.

A State should be a field for the free play of individuals.

IV.

Democracy does not necessarily ignore the few ; it recognises the many.

D

V.

The wise legislator will always leave a loophole through which humanity may pass into something higher.

VI.

The supremacy of the lawyer in politics is a menace to freedom.

VII.

Every custom was once an eccentricity ; every idea was once an absurdity.

VIII.

How can you tell the inferior politician ? He always says "You cannot alter human nature."

IX.

Slavery in the last resort is psychological. The slave can always free himself if his desire for freedom is strong enough.

AT THE FRONT

To
FREDERICK RICHARDSON

At the Front

I

**Modern commerce is the confidence
trick—glorified.**

II.

Commercial profit is legalised loot.

III.

**Riches are made by accident or stupidity,
rarely by intelligence. This does
not mean that poverty is a virtue.**

IV.

**Only the rich preach content to the
poor.**

V.

The poor can abolish poverty when they have had enough of it.

VI.

The rich are not so happy as the poor, because they have not learnt the folly of owning things.

VII.

Shoddy and adulteration are products of poverty. Luxury is a kind of shoddy.

VIII.

In a community in which there is involuntary starvation every well-fed person is a thief.

IX.

To give people food is just as wrong as to take it from them. Food should not be in any one's gift: it is the first right of man.

X.

The State recognises the right to work for a living by making begging for bread illegal ; but it reduces this to an absurdity by making begging for work possible.

XI.

The only hope for present society lies in the fear of the poor ; there will be no hope for the poor until they realise this.

XII.

There are only two classes in society : those who get more than they earn, and those who earn more than they get.

XIII.

The poor are the only consistent altruists. They sell all that they have and give to the rich.

XIV.

The man who is content to work all his time for a wage that just keeps him deserves what he gets.

XV.

Nobody is competent in all things. Obedience is the prerogative of the incompetent.

XVI.

It is only natural you should obey your superiors; but they are not always above.

XVII.

He who spends well, saves.

XVIII.

Success is the reward demanded by the inferior.

XIX.

Success is fortuitous—and useless.

XX.

Charity corrupts both receiver and giver. The philanthropist is a symptom of disease.

XXI.

Class distinctions are necessary ; but not those of to-day.

XXII.

The Middle Class—Mob+Money.

XXIII

Motto of the average man : Martyrdom should never begin at home.

XXIV,

The two most admirable qualities of the working-man are his love of play and his hatred of intellect. Such qualities give him a touch of paganism that makes him kin with the gods.

STATEWORTHINESS

To
THE FABIAN SOCIETY

Stateworthiness

I.

Socialism aspires to make the world a place fit for supreme beings. Modern civilization provides no place for them.

II.

The individual saves the State. Socialism invites the State to return the compliment.

III.

Socialism recognises that there are limits to human trustworthiness, and, as a consequence, seeks to abolish private property. This is an admission that no men are fit to own things.

IV.

Laisser faire made too great a demand on human nature: for that reason it failed. Socialism will succeed because it does not expect too much of men.

V.

Socialism is the only thing that will save us from collectivism—except, of course, commercialism.

THE RED CAP

To
M. D. EDER

The Red Cap

I.

Revolution is the flower of evolution.

II.

**Revolutions begin in the spirit : with
man they generally end there.**

III.

**Force is sometimes on the side of
revolt ; but it is always on the side of
institutions.**

E

66 Platitudes in the Making

IV.

Insurrections are revolutions at exploding point ; they are caused by incompetent statesmanship.

V.

Insurrection may force the pace of reform, but personal example makes reform more certain.

VI.

We are all revolutionists when we are young—when we are young we are wise.

VII.

The great revolution of the future will be Nature's revolt against man.

FOR THOSE IN LOVE

To
LA FEMME AUX YEUX VERTS
OF MATISSE

For Those in Love

I.

Love is the most subtle form of self-interest.

II.

Love flatters, so does Art. Love and Art are the creative faculties.

III.

Modern love enslaves; but that is not an objection if you like it.

IV.

Love has become a soporific. People take to it as they take to drink.

V.

When we love we are most like animals. When we love we are at our best.

VI.

Women cannot be impersonal; that is why they are irresistible—and detestable.

VII.

Woman is not undeveloped man; but man is.

VIII.

Marriage among the middle classes is a bargain. Among the free it would be a compromise.

IX.

The marriage system created a new sport—adultery.

Platitudes in the Making 71

X.

Love is protective only when it is free.

XI.

The procreative side of life is Nature's device, not man's. Man has to be seduced into reproducing his kind by pleasure. But in the sterilisation of marriage he takes his revenge.

XII.

Modesty in Nature is protective; in civilization it is seductive.

XIII.

The most hopeful sign of the present age is the decline of the birth rate.

SLIPPING THE CABLES

To
WILFRED WHITTEN
(malgré lui)

Slipping the Cables

I.

Reason is the dotage of instinct. ✓

II.

**Ideas are not the product of thought ;
they are flashes of light from the un-
known. Deliberation is barren.**

III.

**Thought and imagination together are
the masters of destiny : apart they must
ever remain its slaves.**

IV.

**Man cannot rest till he knows every-
thing ; but not through the intellect.**

V.

Intelligence is ability to vary your habits.

VI.

He who reasons is lost.

VII.

Only stupid people are wholly sane.

VIII.

All merely brainy people are duffers.

IX.

Cleverness and genius are not the same thing.

LAYING THE DUST

To
LOVAT FRASER

Laying the Dust

I.

The academic person is an intellectual sycophant.

II.

The academic attitude is always obsolete.

III.

Academies sometimes honour genius, but cannot cultivate or protect it.

VI.

The sum total of critical opinion is *nil*. Critics cancel each other.

V.

Pedants are the peddlers of intellect.

BETWEEN OURSELVES

F

To
DAN RIDER

Between Ourselves

I.

A man's spiritual kin are his nearest relations.

II.

Friendship is mutual curiosity.

III.

Friendship is the only respectable form of human intimacy.

HERE'S JOY !

A Vous

Here's Joy !

I.

**It is lésé Dionysos to drink wine for
the purpose of quenching thirst.**

II.

To drink to forget is to abuse drink.

PRELUDE TO ART

To
JOSEPH SIMPSON

Prelude to Art

I.

Art expresses the phases of life we are unable to live. It is the sign of a limited consciousness.

II.

Great art anticipates life.

III.

In degenerate ages the arts are pastimes.

IV.

In a beautiful city an art gallery would be superfluous. In an ugly one it is a narcotic.

V.

A renaissance is an epidemic of theft.

VI.

**In a society worthy the name all men
would be artists—without knowing it.**

VII.

**One should not despise enthusiasm
for the commonplace in art if one loves
the people—because, in it the people see
themselves reflected.**

Enough is too much : but too little is not enough.

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