

As He Thinketh

He who lives richly yearns for expression. If he possesses talent in the use of language he will speak of his experience, sharing in words the fruit of his thought and the wealth of his ideals. As the soul of a poet is unveiled in his verses, so the character of Thomas H. Macbride was revealed in his masterly addresses. These pages have been selected mainly from his volumes On the Campus. — The Editor

Up to the middle of the last century men were living in all civilized countries very much as men had lived for two or three thousand years. The plantings and sowings and buildings and all domestic arts of the Iowa pioneers were not unlike those which Pliny describes on the hills and valleys of Italy and Spain twenty centuries ago.

Remember, I am not criticising the employments, intellectual or other, of the generation past; not at all: I mean only to say that we have within fifty years, perhaps without knowing it, passed through a new intellectual renaissance, perhaps the most notable in the history of the race, comparable only to the revival at the close of the middle ages. We are confronted by a different view of the world; we see the whole world differently; man's thought about himself and the

universe can never again be the same, and new problems have filled the entire horizon of our philosophy; if not to the exclusion of the old discussions, at least to their profoundest modification.

THE PARK IDEA

No! no palaces, no galleries had they, the men of the prairie, but one universal splendor; the whole state a park; in crystal clearness of sharp winter, in melodious softness of lingering spring, in rushing effulgent wealth of summer; in all the gorgeous pageantry of autumn, every tint in cloud, and stream, and purple field,— values! values! — the prairie had them all!

And people felt it; they knew it well; yet in some delightful, unconscious way, as a sound man knows his health they used their park-world. Instead of parks in towns and cities, for a whole quarter of a century the towns, the cities, the homes of men were lost in one far-stretching unimpeded common.

Not until the great white oaks, twelve of them that for centuries had shaded 'singing springs,' a mile from town,— not until these had disappeared as saw-logs, every one; not until the giant sycamores on the river-brink, whose beauty and shade were to travellers all a joy, during the long, hot days of summer, nor less when their white

stems and changing foliage brought cheer to the cooler weeks of autumn, in silver and brown,— not until the sycamores to the last one, had been dropped to the ice-covered river lost as it seemed forever; — not until our beautiful 'sugar-grove', genuine social institution,— better than easter because our own, more real and more dependable as the harbinger of spring,— not until every tree, reduced to cord-wood had been hawked about the streets as a hard-maple fuel; not until the black-walnut and hackberry from the river bottoms had followed to the furnaces; not until all the valleys were dry, the hillsides gullied and bare; the springs reduced to water-boxes for cattle, or choked at their source; — not until all these things had happened, did the people as a whole suddenly realize the extent of their loss!

THE NATURE OF EDUCATION

I think I could show an intelligent boy in a few hours how to meet all the needs of a Jersey cow — and she is as finicky as the Duchess of Daisydown — but, all that the schools can teach, and all that the government can do, and all that life may bring forth, may one day still be inadequate, insufficient wholly, to meet the crying loneliness of that same boy's throbbing, longing heart!

If that only is practical which makes for toil and for necessities of daily living, if the needs of

the boy and of the Jersey cow lie thus in the same direction; then our problems of education become simplified indeed. Men were once reckoned and called cattle; but it did not work. The French Revolution disposed forever of that idea. But any educational theory which fails to take account of humanity in man, which fails to reach human love and hope and aspiration, which fails to make dominant the best that mankind has thought and wrought, which fails to recognize the light that is brighter than the arc, the light that lit that useful flame, but shall burn long after every carbon point shall blacken in the glow of day — any criticism of any less scope than this is futile, worthless, meriting consideration only as benevolence might seek to save the critic himself.

CULTURE

Culture, to start with, meant the care and development of a plant. This significance still lingers in agriculture, the cultivation of the field — that is, of what grows there —, horticulture, the tillage of the *hort-yard*, or orchard, as we say, and so on.

Cicero looked out upon a civilized world; and, full of genius and wit and all accomplishment as he was, it occurred to him to compare the mental experiences of men with the history of the plant; and so the famous orator flashed all the mystery

and the beauty of those natural, visible processes among the plants into the richness of one fine metaphor, "*Cultura animi philosophia est*" — philosophy is the culture of the soul!

Now the only way to counteract the present craze, the only way to save the republic, as it seems to me, from the destruction which has, in all time, come with wealth, upon every nation, so far, in the world, is, if possible, to maintain in our population a leaven of culture, a sufficient number of men and women who have found for value another meaning than that which may be expressed in money or autos. Of what possible use is a touring car if it takes a man to destruction; or if, through ignorance, the unfortunate owner has no slightest inkling where he is going? It is bad enough to remain at home and be ignorant; but to come suddenly to wealth, to have means to see the splendor of the world, to pass the flowery fields, the flowing hills, the treasured cities, as in a flitting car, and be all unconscious of their meaning or their beauty, to have all the world clamoring for recognition and still to sit in a limousine and be ignorant — this for a sentient soul must approach the lowest level of personal disgust and disappointment.

The rich man, in his proverbial search for health, not to say joy, drinks his cup of postum

and eats the crumbs of sorrow which, for a consideration, thrifty Battle Creek prepares for his abstemious breakfast; and all his wealth avails him not. It is trite: but look at this. Only a few days ago a few score aged men were marching along our city street. Before them went the banner of the republic, and each bore as his badge of honor a copper button worth a penny. But the wealth of Golconda may not buy that button *and the right to wear it!*

Value, value; do we not begin to see that in themselves dollars have no value? Did you ever see the copper button set with diamonds? How should in such a place the Kohinoor lose its lustre, and the copper badge blush in sheer humiliation and disgrace! Only intelligence, accomplishment, has value, and culture scorns the evidence of wealth, save as it may serve the purposes of wisdom. Wealth can never be, as culture always may be, an end unto itself.

THE GIFT OF SCIENCE

The highest gift of science is an added hope, a new impulse to human faith. Science is optimistic in the extreme. The golden age is yet to be. For the older civilizations the age of gold was always in the past; but the pessimism of that thought brought all the old empires to wreck and ruin. Christianity attempted to remedy the mis-

chief by recapturing the golden era as an article of faith absolutely essential to the highest conceptions of God, and the highest possibilities of man; and now in these later days, comes our boldest speculative scientific thought, demonstrating that as a fact, the golden age has always been in the future, that every present is a golden age to that which has gone before; we have caught the equation of the terrestrial order, and every fixed point known proclaims a curve whose sweep is not downward, nor backward, but upward and outward and onward to limitless perfection.

THE HUMMING-BIRD

Have you ever watched a humming-bird amid the blossoms? Did you notice him last summer and spy his ways hanging upon the weigela and the lilac clusters? If you did you must have been startled by the suddenness of his apparition. All at once he hovered there; you watched him for a moment, perhaps moved — and he was gone. Perhaps you saw what he was doing, saw him flit, at least, like some swift beetle, quick from flower to flower. What he did there you did not see; he is too speedy by far for that, and yet he was by no means playing; every simple flower yielded up its sweet, not much of course, but a little, and the sum of it all feeds the tiny hummer. To understand this you must see your specimen

at close quarters, then you find a long slender bill, the two parts applied to form an almost capillary tube in which a hair-like tongue can play; this is the suction apparatus by which the nectar rises to that throbbing throat. But here he is again tonight! How like a flash he does come, to be sure. Did you ever see such swiftness? You cannot see him fly, you only note that he has changed position. What a breast is that, and what whirling wings, just a haze; sure no saint ever wore halo such as that! What little wings! How can they go so fast and not break all to pieces? There he is before that great swinging bluebell, stands right in its flaring portal. Stands? — no, he does not stand, his little feet touch nothing, he is balanced there in perfect equilibrium, marvel of marvels! Gravitation pulls one way, wind blows another, little wings beat another, resisting both, and there he hangs spinning like a tiny planet suspended upon nothing. When saw you equipoise like that? There, he's gone again. He heard perchance the squeaking whistle of his mate, or possibly saw *you*; but think of it; vision, hearing, taste, desire, perception, life, energy exhaustless. Oh, what a miracle is there, that moves from year to year through tireless generations! The gleaming perfection of exquisite beauty, and *alive!*

THOMAS H. MACBRIDE