

XI.

THE MAN'S OWN SHARE

In this manner it is that the initial proposition of New Republicanism works itself out. It shapes into the rough outline of an ideal new state, a New Republic, a great confederation of English-speaking republican communities, each with its non-hereditary aristocracy, scattered about the world, speaking a common language, possessing a common literature and a common scientific and, in its higher stages at least, a common educational organization, and it indicates in crude, broad suggestions the way towards that state from the present condition of things. It insists as a cardinal necessity, not indeed as an end but as an indispensable instrument by which this world state must be made and sustained, upon a great, a contemporary, and a universally accessible literature, a literature not simply of thought and science but of power, which shall embody and make real and living the sustaining dreams of the coming time, and which shall draw together and bring into intelligent correlation all those men and women who are working now discontentedly and wastefully towards a better order of life. For, indeed, a great number of men and women are already working for this New Republic, working with the most varied powers and temperaments and formulæ, to raise the standard of housing and the standard of living, to enlarge our knowledge of the means by which better births may be attained, to know more, to educate better, to

train better, to write good books for teachers, to organize our schools, to make our laws simpler and more honest, to clarify our political life, to test and reorganize all our social rules and conventions, to adjust property to new conditions, to improve our language, to increase intercourse of all sorts, to give our ideals the justice of a noble presentation; at a thousand points the New Republic already starts into being. And while we scattered pioneers and experimenters piece together our scattered efforts into a coherent scheme, while we become more and more clearly conscious of our common purpose, year by year the old order and those who have anchylosed to the old order, die and pass away, and the unhampered children of the new time grow up about us.

In a few years this that I call New Republicanism here, under I know not what final name, will have become a great world movement conscious of itself and consistent within itself, and we who are making now the crude discovery of its possibility will be working towards its realization in our thousand different ways and positions. And coming to our help, to reinforce us, to supersede us, to take the growing task out of our hands will come youth, will come our sons and daughters and those for whom we have written our books, for whom we have taught in our schools, for whom we have founded and ordered libraries, toiled in laboratories, and in waste places and strange lands; for whom we have made saner and cleaner homes and saner and cleaner social and political arrangements, foregoing a hundred comfortable acquiescences that these things might be done. Youth will come to take over the work from us and

go on with it in a bolder and ampler manner than we in these limited days dare to attempt.

Assuredly youth will come to us, if this is indeed to be the dawn of a new time. Without the high resolve of youth, without the constant accession of youth, without recuperative power, no sustained forward movement is possible in the world. It is to youth, therefore, that this book is finally addressed, to the adolescents, to the students, to those who are yet in the schools and who will presently come to read it, to those who being still plastic can understand the infinite plasticity of the world. It is those who are yet unmade who must become the makers. After thirty there are few conversions and fewer fine beginnings; men and women go on in the path they have marked out for themselves. Their imaginations have become firm and rigid even if they have not withered, and there is no turning them from the conviction of their brief experience that almost all that is, is inexorably so. Accomplished things obsess us more and more. What man or woman over thirty in Great Britain dares to hope for a republic before it is time to die? Yet the thing might be. Or for the reunion of the English-speaking peoples? Or for the deliverance of all of our blood and speech from those fouler things than chattel slavery, child and adolescent labour? Or for an infantile death-rate under ninety in the thousand and all that would mean in the common life? These and a hundred such things are coming now, but only the young know how near they may be brought to us. As for us others, we plant a tree never believing we shall eat the fruit, we build a house never hoping to live therein. The desert, we

believe in our hearts, is our home and our destined grave, and whatever we see of the Promised Land we must see through the eyes of the young.

With each year of their lives they come more distinctly into conscious participation with our efforts. Those soft little creatures that we have figured grotesquely as dropping from an inexorable spout into our world, those weak and wailing lumps of pink flesh more helpless than any animal, for whom we have planned better care, a better chance of life, better conditions of all sorts, those laval souls who are at first helpless clay in our hands, presently insensibly have become helpers beside us in the struggle. In a little while they are beautiful children, they are boys and girls and youths and maidens, full of the zest of new life, full of an abundant, joyful receptivity. In a little while they are walking with us, seeking to know whither we go, and whither we lead them, and why. Our account of the men-makers is not complete until we add to birth and school and world, the increasing element of deliberate co-operation in the man or woman we are seeking to make. In a little while they are young men and women, and then men and women, save for a fresher vigour, like ourselves. For us it comes at last to fellowship and resignation. For them it comes at last to responsibility, to freedom, and to introspection and the searching of hearts. We must if we would be men-makers, as the first and immediate part of the business, correct and finish ourselves. The good New Republican must needs ask and ask repeatedly: What have I done and what am I doing with myself while I tamper with the lives of others? His self-examination will be no monstrous egotism of perfectibility,

indeed, no virtuosity of virtue, no exquisite retreat and slinking "out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat." But he will seek perpetually to gauge his quality, he will watch to see himself the master of his habits and of his powers; he will take his brain, blood, body, and lineage as a trust to be administered for the world. To know all one can of one's self in relation to the world about one, to think out all one can, to take nothing for granted except by reason of one's unavoidable limitations, to be swift, indeed, but not hasty, to be strong but not violent, to be as watchful of one's self as it is given one to be, is the manifest duty of all who would subserve the New Republic. For the New Republican, as for his forerunner the Puritan, conscience and discipline must saturate life. He must be ruled by duties and a certain ritual in life. Every day and every week he must set aside time to read and to think, to commune with others and himself, he must be as jealous of his health and strength as the Levites of old. Can we in this generation make but a few thousands of such men and women, men and women who are not afraid to live, men and women with a common faith and a common understanding, then, indeed, our work will be done. They will in their own time take this world as a sculptor takes his marble and shape it better than all our dreams.

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