

heart for many of us to whom he had rarely made express professions of affection.

Good-by, then, old friend. We shall nevermore meet the upright figure, the blue eye, the hearty laugh, upon these Cambridge streets. But in that wider world of being of which this little Cambridge world of ours forms so infinitesimal a part, we may be sure that all our spirits and their missions here will continue in some way to be represented, and that ancient human loves will never lose their own.

[1] An address delivered at the Memorial Service to Francis Boott in the Harvard Chapel, Sunday, May 8, 1904. Printed in 38 *Harvard Monthly*, 125.

V

THOMAS DAVIDSON: A KNIGHT-ERRANT OF THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE.[1]

I wish to pay my tribute to the memory of a Scottish-American friend of mine who died five years ago, a man of a character extraordinarily and intensely human, in spite of the fact that he was classed by obituary articles in England among the twelve most learned men of his time.

It would do no honor to Thomas Davidson's memory not to be frank about him. He handled people without gloves, himself, and one has no right to retouch his photograph until its features are softened into insipidity. He had defects and excesses which he wore upon his sleeve, so that everyone could see them. They made him many enemies, and if one liked quarrelling he was an easy man to quarrel with. But his heart and mind held treasures of the rarest. He had a genius for friendship. Money, place, fashion, fame, and other vulgar idols of the tribe had no hold on his imagination. He led his own life absolutely, in whatever company he found himself, and the intense individualism which he taught by word and deed, is the lesson of which our generation is perhaps most in need.

All sorts of contrary adjectives come up as I think of him. To begin with, there was something physically rustic which suggested to the end his farm-boy origin. His voice was sweet and its Scottish cadences most musical, and the extraordinary sociability of his nature made friends for him as much among women as among men; he had, moreover, a sort of physical dignity; but neither in dress nor in manner did he ever grow quite "gentlemanly" or *Salonfähig* in the conventional and obliterated sense of the terms. He was too cordial and emphatic for that. His broad brow, his big chest, his bright blue eyes, his volubility in talk and laughter told a tale of vitality far beyond the common; but his fine and nervous hands, and the vivacity of all his reactions suggested a degree of sensibility that one rarely finds conjoined with so robustly animal a frame. The great peculiarity of Davidson did indeed consist in this combination of the acutest sensibilities with massive faculties of thought and action, a combination which, when the thought and actions are important, gives to the world its greatest men.

Davidson's native mood was happy. He took optimistic views of life and of his own share in it. A sort of permanent satisfaction radiated from his face; and this expression of inward glory (which in reality was to a large extent structural and not "expressive" at all) was displeasing to many new acquaintances on whom it made an impression of too much conceit. The impression of conceit was not diminished in their eyes by the freedom with which Davidson contradicted, corrected and reprehended other people. A longer acquaintance invariably diminished the impression. But it must be confessed that T. D. never was exactly humble-minded, and that the solidity of his self-consciousness withstood strains under which that of weaker men would have crumbled. The malady which finally killed him was one of the most exhausting to the nervous tone to which our flesh is subject, and it wore him out before it ended him. He told me of the paroxysms of motiveless nervous dread which used to beset him in the night-watches. Yet these never subdued his stalwartness, nor made him a "sick-soul" in the theological sense of that appellation. "God is afraid of me," was the phrase by which he described his well-being to me one morning when his night had been a good one, and he was feeling so cannibalistic that he thought he might get well.

There are men whose attitude is always that of seeking for truth, and men who on the contrary always believe that they have the root of it already in them. Davidson was of the latter class. Like his countrymen, Carlyle and Ruskin, he felt himself to be in the possession of something, whether articulate or as yet articulated by himself, that authorized him (and authorized him with uncommon openness and frequency) to condemn the errors of others. I think that to the last he never fully extricated this philosophy. It was a tendency, a faith in a direction, which gave him an active persuasion that other directions were false, but of which the central insight never got fully formulated, but remained in a state which Frederic Myers would have called subliminal. He varied to a certain extent his watchwords and his heroes. When I first knew him all was Aristotle. Later all was Rosmini. Later still Rosmini seemed forgotten. He knew so many writers that he grew fond of very various ones and had a strange tolerance for systematizers and dogmatizers whom, as the consistent individualist that he was, he should have disliked. Hegel, it is true, he detested; but he always spoke with reverence of Kant. Of Mill and Spencer he had a low opinion; and when I lent him Paulsen's Introduction to Philosophy (then just out), as an example of a kind of eclectic thought that seemed to be growing, and with which I largely sympathized, he returned it with richer expressions of disdain than often fell even from his lips: "It's the shabbiest, seediest pretence at a philosophy I ever dreamed of as possible. It's like a man dressed in a black coat so threadbare as to be all shiny. The most poverty-stricken, out-at-elbows thing I ever read. A perfect monument of seediness and shabbiness," etc.

The truth is that Davidson, brought up on the older classical traditions, never outgrew those habits of judging the world by purely aesthetic criteria which men fed on the sciences of nature are so willing to abandon. Even if a philosophy were true, he could easily fail to relish it unless it showed a certain formal nobility and dogmatic pretension to finality. But I must not describe him so much from my own professional point of view--it is as a vessel of life at large that one ought to keep him in remembrance.

He came to Boston from St. Louis, where he had been teaching, about the year 1873. He was ruddy and radiant, and I soon saw much of him, though at first it was without the thoroughness of sympathy which we afterwards acquired and which made us overflow, on meeting after long absences, into such laughing greetings as: "Ha! you old thief! Ha! you old blackguard!"--pure "contrast-effects" of affection and familiarity passing beyond their bounds. At that time I saw most of him at a little philosophical club which used to meet every fortnight at his rooms in Temple Street in Boston. Of the other members, J. Elliot Cabot and C. C. Everett, are now dead--I will not name the survivors. We never worked out harmonious conclusions. Davidson used to crack the whip of Aristotle over us; and I remember that, whatever topic was formally appointed for the day, we invariably wound up with a quarrel about Space and Space-perception. The Club had existed before Davidson's advent. The previous year we had gone over a good part of Hegel's larger Logic, under the self-constituted leadership of two young business men from Illinois, who had become enthusiastic Hegelians and, knowing almost no German, had actually possessed themselves of a manuscript translation of the entire three volumes of Logic, made by an extraordinary Pomeranian immigrant, named Brockmeyer. These disciples were leaving business for the law and studying at the Harvard law-school; but they saw the whole universe through Hegelian spectacles, and a more admirable *homo unius libri* than one of them, with his three big folios of Hegelian manuscript, I have never had the good fortune to know.

I forget how Davidson was earning his subsistence at this time. He did some lecturing and private teaching, but I do not think they were great in amount. In the springs and summers he frequented the coast, and indulged in long swimming bouts and salt-water immersions, which seemed to agree with him greatly. His sociability was boundless, and his time seemed to belong to anyone who asked for it.

I soon conceived that such a man would be invaluable in Harvard University--a kind of Socrates, a devotee of truth and lover of youth, ready to sit up to any hour, and drink beer and talk with anyone, lavish of learning and counsel, a contagious example of how lightly and humanly a burden of erudition might be borne upon a pair of shoulders. In faculty-business he might not run well in harness, but as an inspiration and ferment of character, as an example of the ranges of combination of scholarship with manhood that are possible, his influence on the students would be priceless.

I do not know whether this scheme of mine could under any circumstances have been carried out. In point of fact it was nipped in the bud by T. D. himself. A natural chair for him would have been Greek philosophy. Unfortunately, just at the decisive hour, he offended our Greek department by a savage onslaught on its methods, which, without taking anyone's counsel, he sent to the *Atlantic Monthly*, whose editor printed it. This, with his other unconventionalisms, made advocating his cause more difficult, and the university authorities, never, I believe, seriously thought of an appointment for him.

I believe that in this case, as in one or two others like it, which I might mention, Harvard University lost a great opportunity. Organization and method mean much, but contagious human characters mean more in a university, where a few undisciplinables like T. D. may be infinitely more precious than a faculty-full of orderly routinists. As to what Davidson might have become under the conventionalizing influences of an official position, it would be idle to speculate.

As things fell out, he became more and more unconventional and even developed a sort of antipathy to all regular academic life. It subdued individuality, he thought, and made for Philistinism. He earnestly dissuaded his young friend Bakewell from accepting a professorship; and I well remember one dark night in the Adirondacks, after a good dinner at a neighbor's, the eloquence with which, as we trudged down-hill to his own quarters with a lantern, he denounced me for the musty and mouldy and generally ignoble academicism of my character. Never before or since, I fancy, has the air of the Adirondack wilderness vibrated more repugnantly to a vocable than it did that night to the word "academicism."

Yet Davidson himself was always essentially a teacher. He must give forth, inspire, and have the young about him. After leaving Boston for Europe and Africa, founding the Fellowship of the New Life in London and New York (the present Fabian Society in England is its offshoot), he hit upon the plan which pleased him best of all when, in 1882 or thereabouts, he bought a couple of hundred acres on East Hill, which closes the beautiful Keene Valley in the Adirondacks, on the north, and founded there, at the foot of Hurricane Mountain, his place "Glenmore" and its "Summer School of the Culture Sciences." Although the primeval forest has departed from its immediate vicinity, the region is still sylvan, the air is sweet and strong and almost alpine in quality, and the mountain panorama spread before one is superlative. Davidson showed a business faculty which I should hardly have expected from him, in organizing his settlement. He built a number of cottages pretty in design and of the simplest construction, and disposed them well for effect. He turned a couple of farm buildings which were on the grounds into a lecturing place and a refectory; and there, arriving in early April and not leaving till late in November, he spent the happiest part of all his later years, surrounded during the summer months by colleagues, friends, and listeners to lectures, and in the spring and fall by a few independent women who were his faithful friends, and who had found East Hill a congenial residence.

Twice I went up with T. D. to open the place in April. I remember leaving his fireside one night with three ladies who were also early comers, and finding the thermometer at 8 degrees Fahrenheit and a tremendous gale blowing the snow about us. Davidson loved these blustering vicissitudes of climate. In the early years the brook was never too cold for him to bathe in, and he spent days in rambling over the hills and up the glens and through the forest.

His own cottage was full of books whose use was free to all who visited the settlement. It stood high on a hill in a grove of silver-birches and looked upon the Western Mountains; and it always seemed to me an ideal dwelling for such a bachelor-scholar. Here in May and June he became almost one with the resurgent vegetation. Here, in October, he was a witness of the jewelled pageant of the dying foliage, and saw the hillsides reeking, as it were, and aflame with ruby and gold and emerald and topaz. One September day in 1900, at the "Kurhaus" at Nauheim, I took up a copy of the Paris *New York Herald*, and read in capitals: "Death of Professor Thomas Davidson." I had well known how ill he was, yet such was his vitality that the shock was wholly unexpected. I did not realize till that moment how much that free companionship with him every spring and autumn, surrounded by that beautiful nature, had signified to me, or how big a piece would

be subtracted from my life by its cessation.

Davidson's capacity for imparting information seemed endless. There were few subjects, especially "humanistic" subjects, in which at some time or other he had not taken an interest; and as everything that had ever touched him was instantaneously in reach of his omnipotent memory, he easily became a living dictionary of reference. As such all his friends were wont to use him. He was, for example, never at a loss to supply a quotation. He loved poetry passionately, and the sympathetic voice with which he would recall page after page of it--English, French, German, or Italian--is a thing always to be remembered. But notwithstanding the instructive part he played in every conceivable conversation, he was never prolix, and he never "lectured."

From Davidson I learned what immunities a perfect memory bestows upon one. I never could discover when he amassed his learning for he never seemed "occupied." The secret of it was that any odd time would do, for he never had to acquire a thing twice over. He avoided stated hours of work on principle. Reprehending (mildly) a certain chapter of my own on "Habit," he said that it was a fixed rule with him to form no regular habits. When he found himself in danger of settling into even a good one, he made a point of interrupting it. Habits and methods make a prisoner of a man, destroy his readiness, keep him from answering the call of the fresh moment. Individualist à outrance, Davidson felt that every hour was an unique entity, to whose claims one should lie open. Thus he was never abstracted or preoccupied, but always seemed, when with you, as if you were the one person whom it was then right to attend to.

It was this individualistic religion that made T. D., democrat as he nevertheless was, so hostile to all socialisms and administrative panaceas. Life must be flexible. You ask for a free man, and these Utopias give you an "interchangeable part," with a fixed number, in a rule-bound organism. The real thing to aim at is liberation of the inner interests. Give man possession of a *soul*, and he will work out his own happiness under any set of conditions. Accordingly, when, in the penultimate year of his life, he proposed his night-school to a meeting of young East-Side workingmen in New York, he told them that he had no sympathy whatever with the griefs of "labor," that outward circumstances meant nothing in his eyes; that through their individual wills and intellects they could share, just as they were, in the highest spiritual life of humanity, and that he was there to help them severally to that privilege.

The enthusiasm with which they responded speaks volumes, both for his genius as a teacher and for the sanity of his position. A small posthumous book of articles by Davidson and of letters written from Glenmore to his class, just published, with an introduction by his disciple Professor Bakewell,[2] gives a full account of the experiment, and ought to stand as a model and inspirer to similar attempts the world over. Davidson's idea of the universe was that of a republic of immortal spirits, the chief business of whom in their several grades of existence, should be to know and love and help one another. "Creeds are nothing, life is everything. . . . You can do far more by presenting to the world the example of noble social relations than by enumerating any set of principles. Know all you can, love all you can, do all you can--that is the whole duty of man. . . . Be friends, in the truest sense, each to the other. There is nothing in all the world like friendship, when it is deep and real. . . . The divine . . . is a republic of self-existent spirits, each seeking the realization of its ideas through love, through intimacy with all the rest, and finding its heaven in such intimacy."

We all say and think that we believe this sort of thing; but Davidson believed it really and actively, and that made all the difference. When the young wage-earners whom he addressed found that here was a man of measureless learning ready to give his soul to them as if he had nothing else to do with it, life's ideal possibilities widened to their view. When he was taken from them, they founded in New York the Thomas Davidson Society, for study and neighborhood work, which will probably become perpetual, and of which his epistles from Glenmore will be the rule, and keep the standards set by him from degenerating--unless, indeed, the Society should some day grow too rich, of which there is no danger at present, and from which may Heaven long preserve it. In one of his letters to the Class, Davidson sums up the results of his own experience of life in twenty maxims, as follows:

1. Rely upon your own energies, and do not wait for, or depend on other people.
2. Cling with all your might to your own highest ideals, and do not be led astray by such vulgar aims as wealth, position, popularity. Be yourself.
3. Your worth consists in what you are, and not in what you have. What you are will show in what you do.
4. Never fret, repine, or envy. Do not make yourself unhappy by comparing your circumstances with those of more fortunate people; but make the most of the opportunities you have. Employ profitably every moment.
5. Associate with the noblest people you can find; read the best books; live with the mighty. But learn to be happy alone.
6. Do not believe that all greatness and heroism are in the past. Learn to discover princes, prophets, heroes, and saints among the people about you. Be assured they are there.
7. Be on earth what good people hope to be in heaven.
8. Cultivate ideal friendships, and gather into an intimate circle all your acquaintances who are hungering for truth and right. Remember that heaven itself can be nothing but the intimacy of pure and noble souls.
9. Do not shrink from any useful or kindly act, however hard or repellent it may be. The worth of acts is measured by the spirit in which they are performed.
10. If the world despise you because you do not follow its ways, pay no heed to it. But be sure your way is right.
11. If a thousand plans fail, be not disheartened. As long as your purposes are right, you have not failed.
12. Examine yourself every night, and see whether you have progressed in knowledge, sympathy, and helpfulness during the day. Count every day a loss in which no progress has been made.
13. Seek enjoyment in energy, not in dalliance. Our worth is measured solely by what we do.
14. Let not your goodness be professional; let it be the simple, natural outcome of your character. Therefore cultivate character.
15. If you do wrong, say so, and make what atonement you can. That is true nobleness. Have no moral debts.
16. When in doubt how to act, ask yourself, What does nobility command? Be on good terms with yourself.
17. Look for no reward for goodness but goodness itself. Remember heaven and hell are utterly immoral institutions, if they are meant as reward and punishment.
18. Give whatever countenance and help you can to every movement and institution that is working for good. Be not sectarian.
19. Wear no placards, within or without. Be human fully.
20. Never be satisfied until you have understood the meaning of the world, and the purpose of our own life, and have reduced your world to a rational cosmos.

One of the "placards" Davidson tried hardest to keep his Society from wearing was that of "Socialism." Yet no one felt more deeply than he the evils of rapacious individual competition. Spontaneously and flexibly organized social settlements or communities, with individual leaders as their centres, seem to have been his ideal, each with its own religious or ethical elements of discipline. The present isolation of the family is too inhuman. The ideal type of future life, he thought, will be something like the monastery, with the family instead of the individual, for its unit.

Leveller upwards of men as Davidson was, upon the intellectual and moral level, he seemed wholly without that sort of religion which makes so many of our contemporary anarchists think that they ought to dip, at least, into some manual occupation, in order to share the common burden of humanity I never saw T. D. work with his hands in any way. He accepted material services of all kinds without apology, as if he were a patrician, evidently feeling that if he played his own more intellectual part rightly, society could make no further claim upon him.

This confidence that the life of the spirit is the absolutely highest, made Davidson serene about his outward fortunes. Pecuniary worry would not tally with his program. He had a very small provision against a rainy day, but he did little to increase it. He used to write as many articles and give as many "lectures," "talks," or "readings" every winter as would suffice to pay the year's expenses, and thereafter he refused additional invitations, and repaired to Glenmore as early in the spring as possible. I could but admire the temper he showed when the principal building there was one night burned to ashes. There was no insurance on it, and it would cost a couple of thousand dollars to replace it. Excitable as Davidson was about small contrarities, he watched this fire without a syllable of impatience. *Plaie d'argent n'est pas mortelle*, he seemed to say, and if he felt sharp regrets, he disdained to express them.

No more did care about his literary reputation trouble him. In the ordinary greedy sense, he seemed quite free from ambition. During his last years he had prepared a large amount of material for that history of the interaction of Greek, Christian, Hebrew, and Arabic thought upon one another before the revival of learning, which was to be his *magnum opus*. It was a territory to which, in its totality, few living minds had access, and in which a certain proprietary feeling was natural. Knowing how short his life might be, I once asked him whether he felt no concern lest the work already done by him should be frustrate, from the lack of its necessary complement, in case he were suddenly cut off. His answer surprised me by its indifference. He would work as long as he lived, he said, but not allow himself to worry, and look serenely at whatever might be the outcome. This seemed to me uncommonly high-minded. I think that Davidson's conviction of immortality had much to do with such a superiority to accidents. On the surface, and towards small things, he was irritable enough, but the undertone of his character was remarkable for equanimity. He showed it in his final illness, of which the misery was really atrocious. There were no general complaints or lamentations about the personal situation or the arrest to his career. It was the human lot and he must even bear it; so he kept his mind upon objective matters.

But, as I said at the outset, the paramount thing in Davidson in my eyes was his capacity for friendship. His friends were innumerable--boys and girls and old boys and old girls, Papists and Protestants, Jews and Gentiles, married and single; and he cared deeply for each one of them, admiring them often too extravagantly. What term can name those recurrent waves of delighted laughter that expressed his greeting, beginning from the moment he saw you and accompanying his words continuously, as if his pleasure in you were interminable? His hand too, stretched out when yards away, so that a country neighbor said it reached farther than any hand he ever met with. The odd thing was that friendship in Davidson seemed so little to interfere with criticism. Persons with whom intercourse was one long contradiction on his part, and who appeared to annoy him to extermination, he none the less loved tenderly, and enjoyed living with them. "He's the most utterly selfish, illiberal and narrow-hearted human being I ever knew," I heard him once say of someone, "and yet he's the dearest, nicest fellow living." His enthusiastic belief in any young person who gave a promise of genius was touching. Naturally a man who is willing, as he was, to be a prophet, always finds some women who are willing to be disciples. I never heard of any sentimental weakness in Davidson in this

relation, save possibly in one case. They harmed themselves at the fire of his soul, and he told them truths without accommodation. "You 're farther off from God than any woman I ever heard of." "Nay, if you believe in a protective tariff, you 're in hell already, though you may not know it." "You had a fine hysterical time last night, didn't you, when Miss B was brought up from the ravine with her dislocated shoulder." To Miss B he said: "I don't pity you. It served you right for being so ignorant as to go there at that hour." Seldom, strange to say, did the recipients of these deliverances seem to resent them.

What with Davidson's warmth of heart and sociability, I used to wonder at his never marrying. Two years before his death he told me the reason--an unhappy youthful love-affair in Scotland. Twice in later life, he said, temptation had come to him, and he had had to make his decision. When he had come to the point, he had felt each time that the tie with the dead girl was prohibitive. "When two persons have known each other as we did," he said, "neither can ever fully belong to a stranger. So it would n't do." "It would n't do, it would n't do!" he repeated, as we lay on the hillside, in a tone so musically tender that it chimes in my ear now as I write down his confession. It can surely be no breach of confidence to publish it--it is too creditable to the profundity of Davidson's affections. As I knew him, he was one of the purest of human beings.

If one asks, now, what the *value* of Thomas Davidson was, what was the general significance of his life, apart from his particular books and articles, I have to say that it lay in the example he set to us all of how, even in the midst of this intensely worldly social system of ours, in which each human interest is organized so collectively and so commercially, a single man may still be a knight-errant of the intellectual life, and preserve full freedom in the midst of sociability. Extreme as was his need of friends, and faithful as he was to them, he yet lived mainly in reliance on his private inspiration. Asking no man's permission, bowing the knee to no tribal idol, renouncing the conventional channels of recognition, he showed us how a life devoted to purely intellectual ends could be beautifully wholesome outwardly, and overflow with inner contentment. Fortunately this type of man is recurrent, and from generation to generation, literary history preserves examples. But it is infrequent enough for few of us to have known more than one example--I count myself happy in knowing two and a half! The memory of Davidson will always strengthen my faith in personal freedom and its spontaneities, and make me less unqualifiedly respectful than ever of "Civilization," with its herding and branding, licensing and degree-giving, authorizing and appointing, and in general regulating and administering by system the lives human beings. Surely the individual, the person in the singular number, is the more fundamental phenomenon, and the social institution, of whatever grade, is but secondary and ministerial. Many as are the interests which social systems satisfy, always unsatisfied interests remain over, and among them are interests to which system, as such, does violence whenever it lays its hand upon us. The best Commonwealth will always be the one that most cherishes the men who represent the residual interests, the one that leaves the largest scope to their peculiarities.

[1] First published in *McClure's Magazine* for May, 1905.

[2] "The Education of the Wage-Earners." Boston, Ginn & Company, 1904.

VI

HERBERT SPENCER'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY[1]

"God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform." If the greatest of all his wonders be the human individual, the richness with which the specimens thereof are diversified, the limitless variety of outline, from gothic to classic or flowing arabesque, the contradictory nature of the filling, composed of little and great, of comic, heroic, and pathetic elements blended inextricably, in personalities all of whom can *go*, and *go* successfully, must surely be reckoned the supreme miracle of creative ingenuity. Rarely has Nature performed an odder or more Dickens-like feat than when she deliberately designed, or accidentally stumbled into, the personality of Herbert Spencer. Greatness and smallness surely never lived so closely in one skin together.