

Bradley admits.¹⁰ Thanks to this "nature," they call themselves to the company of the elect. As naturally, their pugnacious pathos always betokens an activist philosophical yeast. Setting spiritual and practical freedom by the ears, they are keenly concerned to maintain that a man's "morals" have nothing to do with his—or any—metaphysics. The old, illusory whatever-it-may-be is slashed to bits; the seer heads a revolt of the human spirit. And the value of it? The value of it lies precisely in its relentless pursuit of stupidity by creatures of destiny! "Away with this hurrah of the masses, and let us have the considerate vote of single men spoken on their honor and conscience" Emerson said this once, Nietzsche a thousand times.

As I see it, then, we must approach Nietzsche from some such angle rather than from the objectivities of philosophy. But if so, another generation may well have to pass ere the time will be ripe. Meanwhile, every one who desires to learn what manner of man he actually was, to know how his cyclopean notions rolled, must go to Mr. Salter. I detect no sign of a "post-Nietzschean period in philosophical speculation," rather the reverse—witness Thomas Mann's *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*—but Mr. Salter's withers are unwrung. He has given us the most completely equipped monograph on a single thinker within living American memory.

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THE EDUCATION OF HENRY ADAMS.

This book has made an interesting appeal to the American public. It is widely read. It has been numerous reviewed. In fact, one feels that some explanation is in order before the reader is asked to consider anything further. By way of apology and encouragement it is mentioned here that this paper limits its purpose to the philosophy of Henry Adams as expressed in the book and implied in the teaching and method of Adams.

We get a man's philosophy at the end of his career. Hence we proceed backward, beginning with the last chapter in the book. "Nunc Age" is the title. Adams returns to America, the long search for an education ended. As the ship enters New York, Adams standing upon the deck views the city. The appearance of the city violated every canon of art. There was no unity, no

¹⁰ Cf. *Ethical Studies*, p. 181.

form, no beauty. Adams saw chaos and hysteria, a disorderly exhibition of vast, unregulated force. The city seemed the result of an explosion, an upheaval of mad power. Physical expansion beyond the utmost dream on every hand. The center of this power was the Trust, and the Trust illustrated monopoly. Adams looked for the man who had increased with this increase in physical power. He could see no gain in man. "The two thousand years' failure of Christianity roared upward from Broadway, and no Constantine the Great was in sight." Adams saw no gain in ultimate values from the Trust. "They tore society to pieces and trampled it underfoot." Roosevelt was giving battle to the Trust in Washington. Adams journeyed thither. There he found John Hay, his good friend. Roosevelt made no impression upon the Trust. John Hay was one of our great secretaries; but his career was as puzzling to Adams as was the city of New York. Hay represented intelligence, order, high purpose. He had developed an Atlantic policy. Through this policy peace would come to all the nations bordering the Atlantic and remain with them. He was at work upon a similar policy for the Pacific. Against him as crude, raw power stood the Senate. The life of Hay broke against this power and the policy was blocked. Power triumphs over intelligence. Adams saw in the struggle of Hay the same ultimate problem that Plato saw when Athens broke the life of Socrates. Neither man recovered from the experience. Adams closes the chapter with the melancholy reflection that it might be interesting to return one hundred years hence and look again upon the tangle.

In the chapter "Vis Nova" we have the problem that broke Henry Adams. He had lived in Europe and studied its life. He found there the power of the Virgin. This influence had produced an excellent type of man. It also manifested itself in forms of beauty permanent and gracious. Adams yielded to the appeal of the cathedral and the glass in the windows of the cathedrals. It was the Virgin that broke the power of the Empire. Rome knew slavery and the occult as power. But Rome could not digest the power of slavery and in the end was undone by it. Then came the power of the Virgin, deep, subtle, ennobling, expressing itself in the cathedral as visible, permanent beauty. Here man came into relation with ultimate value and his education made progress.

Out of this rich, moving experience Adams crossed the Atlantic to visit the St. Louis Exposition. Here he met a new power, coal.

Coal produced steam and steam produced, not beauty, but force. Adams was unable to find any ultimate value in force that educated. The Exposition was closed on Sunday. The best in a man is associated with Sunday. The exposition had no message for man on Sunday. The cathedrals were never closed. They had wide-open relations to life. Adams was utterly puzzled. He said that his education failed him completely. He saw only chaos in the vast exhibition of force. He preferred the cathedral and returned to Europe.

To enter fully into Henry Adams's difficulty one must consider the teaching in the chapter called "The Problem," in the *Degradation of Democratic Dogma*. The problem here is the possibility of history. The historians have stood upon the first law of physics, the conservation of energy. Using Lyell and Darwin as interpreters of this law, he sets forth to report the phenomena of man's life as a steady, progressive realization of perfection. A controlling purpose, wise and good, is in these phenomena holding them to the great end. The historian examines the past, the present and the future. Out of this examination he brings a practical formula for the daily, safe conduct of man.

As Adams sees it, this method is not to be tolerated. It is historical scandal. It ignores completely the second law of thermodynamics. This law states the opposite of the law of evolution. Energy is not conserved; it is lost. Nature is not developing. Nature is dying. This discovery was stated by Sadi Carnot in 1824. It was developed by Thompson, Lord Kelvin, Clausius and Helmholtz. "There is at present in the material world a universal tendency to the dissipation of mechanical energy." "Within a finite period of time past, the earth must have been, and within a finite period of time to come, the earth must again be, unfit for the habitation of man as at present constituted." Adams says, "When this young man of twenty-eight thus tossed the universe into the ash-heap, few took him seriously; but after the first gasp of surprise physicists began to give him qualified support which soon became absolute."

Accepting this second law of physics, life shows metaphysical confusion, ultimate defeat. In this utter antagonism, what is the hope for history? Adams, a professional historian, was unable to find himself. He found it impossible to understand history. Nobody has understood death. The only utterance about it so far is to deny it. In the face of the facts and the second law of physics, Adams

admitted that the earth was dying. The sun is steadily decreasing. At one time its diameter was equal to the orbit of Mercury. Plant life reached its maximum in the carboniferous period. Animal life reached its maximum in the miocene period. At the end of these periods the earth faltered under its load. According to Saporta the shrinkage of the sun manifested itself in the cooling of the earth at the poles. These places ceased to support life. The migration began toward the equator. Adams could find no relief in the suggestion that man was not held in the nature-process. He accepted the teaching of evolution. He saw no possible rescue from the whirlpool. Man is in and of the death-struggle. Man dies. Physically man dies. Intellectually man dies. As man is developed, he does not transcend the law. He dies faster. Already he has lost twelve teeth. His jaw-bone is narrower and hence weaker than it should be. Physically the developed man is without value. The training of his intelligence does not avail. The scholar loses the hair from his head, his teeth, and his eyes. The developed woman tends to become sterile and to lose the capacity to nourish her offspring.

Confronted with this condition, Adams resumes his task of formulating a possible plan for history.

The static treatment of history is without foundation or hope. Evolution and the second law of thermodynamics have done for history a revolution as complete as the work of Copernicus did for the Ptolemaic astronomy. The same kind of work must be done for history that was done for nature by Galileo, Kepler and Newton. But these men did not have to consider the second law. The task of the historian is more difficult. Frankly, Adams feels that the historian is out of a job. His occupation, beyond that of nature's stenographer, is gone. In the chapter "A Dynamic Theory of History" Adams presents the case so far as it is possible to do so. Given two equal forces, moving in opposite directions, is a purpose possible? The old static theory with its basket full of facts is absurd. There are no facts. There are forces, currents, and these in deadly grapple, with death getting the better of the struggle. Can we find the law of the struggle? Can apparent facts find a place or function in the world-whirl? The comet of 1824 rushes into the sun, remains within its circle, then wheels about and retires, unmindful of the laws of attraction and unmelted by the heat of the sun. Adams says all known methods of explanation fail before such a phenomenon.

The development of Roman life proceeded steadily until its high point under Diocletian. The achievement looked to be progress. Value had been achieved. Diocletian resigned. The movement stopped, then fell back, then chaos. Is this evolution? Is it anything intelligible? Gibbon wrote volumes to explain the problem. He left it where he found it. Adams sat on the steps of the deserted temple where Gibbon had sat and pondered over the problem. He could find no relief. Rome, by the sacred doctrine of evolution, should have stood. One page of man's life illustrates development; the next page exhibits the death of this progress. There is no history in the sense of a steady realization of perfection. History as a science is impossible. The educating force in Europe is not a supreme European purpose, but the compass, gunpowder, and the microscope. Man has followed these blindly. They have controlled the lines of action.

Adams spent seventy years in the effort to adjust himself, and failed. Education was supposed to prepare him. It did nothing. "If school helped, it was only by re-action." "The passionate hatred of school methods was almost a method in itself." "For success in life as imposed upon him he needed, as afterward appeared, the facile use of only four tools, mathematics, French, German and Spanish. These four tools were necessary to his success in life, but he never controlled any one of them." "Books remained as in the eighteenth century, the source of life." The condition was not improved by four years at Harvard. "Beyond two or three Greek plays, the student got nothing from the ancient languages." "He could not afterward remember to have heard the name of Karl Marx mentioned, or the title of *Kapital*. He was equally ignorant of Auguste Comte. Yet these were the two writers of his time who most influenced its thought." "The entire work of the four years at Harvard could have been easily put into the work of any four months in after-life." "Socially or intellectually the college was for him negative and in some ways mischievous. The most tolerant man in the world could not see good in the lower habits of the students, but the vices were less harmful than the virtues." Having failed to become equipped at Harvard, Adams goes to Germany and enters the University of Berlin. The results were less than at Harvard.

Having failed to secure education at the hands of the university, Adams sought it of the politicians, diplomats, and in travel. He

was in Washington when President Grant announced his cabinet. He went to Washington eager to learn and expecting to support Grant. He says, "To the end of his life, he wondered at the suddenness of the revolution which actually, within five minutes, changed his intended future into an absurdity so laughable as to make him ashamed of it." With diplomacy the case was little better. Gladstone admitted that his view of policy in 1860 was terribly wrong. The war of 1870 was not expected and nobody predicted the outcome. Diplomats appeared to have nothing to teach. They were concerned with "theaters, restaurants, monde, demi-monde, drives, splendor, grandezza." Adams says he learned the little he knew by accident, generally the concept breaking when he was idle or trying for something else. Therefore Adams loved travel. I suppose he would admit that travel gave him social education. It certainly made him a highly cultured man.

The thin confidence left to Adams in current methods of education was destroyed by the career of Clarence King. King was the young man perfectly equipped for a successful life. He had all that American education could give. Yet his end was miserable; his life a palpable failure. John Hay was a great secretary of state. Yet he had to fight the Senate constantly and saw most of his work killed by the Senate.

Perhaps the above statement will serve to set forth that Henry Adams saw a deep problem and was unable to satisfy his intellect. Physically, socially, religiously, intellectually he faced chaos. He never had a sense of world-mastery. He never caught the vision of supreme purpose in ultimate triumph everywhere. Chaos, night, the end is the story.

As said in the beginning, the book has had a wide response from the public. Does this mean that the book interprets the deeper consciousness of American life? Is America to repeat the experience of Europe and give to the world a "Dark Age," a confessed sense of utter failure? Is this the significance of the wild, mad abandon of ultimate principle characterizing so much of life to-day? I do not suppose that the winter season is to be stopped in its approach by criticism or argument; but it is of advantage to see its coming and to prepare for its ice and storm. Adams points clearly to a winter season in civilization, if nothing more. It is in order to attempt to understand the grounds of his prophecy and the method of it.

Adams had a view of knowledge, a method of study, and a philosophy underlying this view and determining his method. Let us consider these in order.

Psychologists are not agreed as to exactly what happens when you know. You look at a bench. You get knowledge. Is there any wood in your knowledge? If there is no wood in your head, and you have knowledge of the wood, which is not wood at all, we are in difficulties at once. Like other men, Adams holds one theory of knowledge and uses a different theory in criticism. Education is learning, getting knowledge. What is it one gets? Adams says, "The young man himself, the subject of education, is a certain form of energy; the object to be gained is economy of force; the training is partly the clearing away of obstacles, partly the direct application of effort. Once acquired, the tools and models may be thrown away." That is, the aim in education is to grow a strong, full man who can put forth effort efficiently.

In criticism Adams uses another theory. Truth is objective. The process of education is to connect the student with this perfect truth. Thus connected, the student will be equipped to master the forces in his life. This is the mechanical view. Truth is as the water at the bottom of the well; man is one hundred feet away; education is the device of the bucket, chain and windlass. When the chain breaks, there is thirst unquenched. The mechanical theory enables one to pass swift, final, infallible judgments. Adams's book abounds in these ultimate judgments. The chain broke. There is nothing to discuss. Nothing escapes the keen analysis of Adams. Adams sought all the education within reach; but when the grapple came, he was without the infallible formula. The fault was in the education. The chain broke. Clarence King was the best educated young man in America. The panic of 1893 ruined his fortune; germs ruined his health; he died in a lonely lodging-house, his education failing to meet every test. Education had no value for Clarence King. Hay and Lodge succeeded, but not through education. Each one married into a wealthy family. Theoretically education should cover the past, the present, the future; actually it is of no value at any point. This conclusion is final for Adams.

This conclusion ignores the view of education stated by Adams. Not a perfect formula, but an efficient man is the aim of education. This view does not require that a man transcend himself. It is enough that he be "a certain form of energy, efficiently putting

forth effort." An educated man need not be always successful; it is enough that he find his place and fill it. Force is negative as well as positive. The nitrogen is good nitrogen when it loses its form and lives as big, green corn. No education, no knowledge can go in advance of concrete, vital things. To be qualified to order a perfect dinner and enjoy it fully is not an adequate training for cooking a similar meal. When Adams says the four years at Harvard were wasted, it is in order to ask for the explanation of Adams. He became an international figure. He wrote a remarkable book. Upon what meat did this young Cæsar feed? If we accept the theory of education stated by Adams, then the fact of Adams as he matured annuls his criticism.

The method of Adams is intellectualistic. That is, he permits no elemental function to feeling. He strives to be pure intelligence. He admits willing, but only as force; and unrationalized force is chaos. Strict intellectualism can never lead beyond itself. Limited to an intellectual analysis the Sophists of Greece could find nothing of value. So of David Hume. The intellectual process is a process of assimilation. It may be compared to the process of digestion. When the dinner is digested, it has ceased to be, as dinner. It has become muscle, nerve, blood, power to do. So it is with knowing. To know is to understand, to master, to assimilate. When a problem is solved it ceases to be a problem; it is now power of the intelligence solving it. Mastery, strength, insight come to the intelligence solving it. The truth in the problem has been assimilated. This knowledge that is understanding is centered not in the object, nor the subject, but in concepts. The concept is individual, and yet more than individual. The individual gets it. It is his, and yet he can share it with others and lose nothing by giving it. How the concept breaks into the consciousness is not yet described. James says, "By a process too well known to need description." If Professor James knew, he stood alone in the world. We get concepts by study, by loafing, by dreaming, by toil and by the aid of teachers. The ancients called it a process of vision that occurred on mountain tops. The Greeks called it *eureka*. The act is individual always. When it comes, the result is a state of identity between the student and his knowledge. It ceases to exist over against him. It is his discovery, his theory, his truth. He is now an authority, a master. Adams says his concepts came by accident. He found his first musical satisfaction in this way. I think this is

the experience of all students. I know a student who worked ten years to get a concept of law. It burst upon him one morning when he was trying to do something else. The process of understanding is as vital to the spiritual life as eating bread is to the physical life. One cannot recall the assimilated elements in either process. The act is an analysis in which the object disappears. What remains is an experience, a growth. This process of growth has vitamins that so far defy analysis. They escape the scientist in his analysis of the simpler forms of life; they are far beyond us in the higher forms of life. Therefore, when Adams says he got nothing from his four years at Harvard, he is like the boy who complained of hunger six hours after he had feasted at a marvelous banquet. His keen hunger is largely the result of the perfect banquet. If the boy had filled himself with fried meat and grease, he would never have cared for another banquet. Adams spent his life searching for more. He gave free rein to his intellect. It was keen, strong, penetrating. Its work abounds in charm and sparkle. Nothing escaped it. Like the scientist dissecting a cat, it did a thorough job. Only fragments remained. Love rears the objects that the intellect dissects. Adams permitted no place for the emotions. Therefore he found life empty.

The philosophy of Adams is interesting. He had reached a state of detachment from any creed. His intellectual processes were uncommonly free. He accepted the facts and bowed to the currents as he uncovered them. But Adams did not free himself of the inertia or habit that goes with mental inheritance. Nor could he escape the guna of Greek philosophy. Adams fancied himself so free as to be capable of pure intellectual processes, utterly beyond the control of partiality. He went cordially as far as the first law of physics and the doctrine of evolution made clear. But he was unwilling to go further than was clear. He could see no evolution in the fall of the Roman Empire, and said so frankly. Nobody ever showed the evolution here. With equal sincerity he went with the second law of thermodynamics, the law of decadence. These laws contradicted each other. Adams did his utmost to find a line of advance beyond this stalemate. To the end he stood helpless. The problem appeared to grow. He saw that nature had ceased to do large things. The large animals were extinct. The big mountains are finished incidents. No more wide oceans need be hoped for. Nature is cooling and the sun is decreasing. Nature's only constructive interest appears to be in microbes, the microscopic.

Over against the nature-process was the struggle of civilization. Everywhere man is consciously struggling to stay the process of nature. He responds to the large. In Church, in State, in thought man's dreams are imperial. Only the world-program fires his ambition. No piddler is a hero anywhere in history.

That is, nature is moving in one direction; civilization is moving in the opposite direction.

The Greek philosophy had no means of handling a paradox. "Of two contradictories, one is false." Adams was bound by the limits of Greek philosophy. Adams, using this principle of contradiction, sought the one that must triumph. He could see only the triumph of nature, ultimate death to all.

There is no doubt that the principle of contradiction has a wide field. In the formal, static world it is adequate. If the figure is a five, it cannot be six. If the lion lives, the lamb must die. But the vital world cannot be interpreted adequately with the Greek canon. In the static world nothing is anything else; in the dynamic world everything is something else. A football game is impossible without opposites. The game requires two teams that oppose each other. In a perfect game, neither team would score; and the end would find both teams facing each other in the middle of the field. Each team has failed in its purpose to score and win. This is chaos as Adams sees it; it is perfect football as the expert sees it. The supreme thing here is not the purpose to score; but to play the game. The laws of the game, the grounds, the crowds present, the spirit of sportsmanship are involved. This situation makes a growing appeal to modern life. American life does not respond tremendously to a statue, but to a struggle. The American public crowds the stadiums, but not the sanctuaries. It seeks the living. And life is a struggle.

The analytical process using the canon of contradiction cannot interpret a struggle. It can see nothing but chaos unless one of the parties to the struggle is overcome. The defeated party must be destroyed; this establishes the victorious party. Now life does not destroy; it assimilates and cooperates. To understand this struggle one must have the dialectic process. Adams came up to the dialectic process; but he appeared unable to see its usefulness. A humorous caricature was all he could do. Had he yielded himself to the dialectic, as he did to the second law of thermodynamics, it would have led him into clearness and peace. The dialectic process was used

by Jesus first. In his time there was a deadlock. Only a Jew, or a Greek or a Roman citizen had value, according as Jerusalem, Athens or Rome delivered the judgment.

There was social, political and philosophical chaos. Jesus using the dialectic process, saw God and man as one, and mankind as a brotherhood. This was a most horrible doctrine. The either-or type of mind put him to death. But the dialectic process had been uncovered and released to the world. Later Hegel undertook to make the process a working formula.

The dialectic process takes everything at its face value. The Absolute, the limited, the world, the individual, law, struggle, peace, violence, are frankly accepted. "I in thee, and thou in me; that we all may be one." The dialectic process destroys nothing. Minus does not destroy minus; it gives plus. The end of the stick is as necessary as the wood. A stick is wood and no-wood, the utter absence of wood. The citizen is not the State, he is free; yet the State exists in the citizen. In life each thing lives in its other. Water does not destroy oxygen; it illustrates oxygen. So of all things. There is the moment of negation, the opposition even to flat contradiction; and there is the moment of assertion, the positive moment. Life is the synthesis of the two. A strong character is never one grown in a nursery; but always one that triumphs over supreme temptations. It is the acid test, the Gethsemane that makes the man. The dialectic process recognizes this and finds equal value in the moment of negation and the moment of assertion. Both are necessary. Life is not the triumph of one over the other, but the struggle between the two; the issue is not chaos and death, but a higher synthesis. That is, the struggle is continued upon a higher level. Not death, but the utmost of life is the outcome of the dialectic process. "Not a sparrow falls to the ground" idly.

The full analysis of the dialectic process belongs to logic rather than to an article upon Henry Adams. I know of no work more needed than a good statement of the dialectic process. Until this comes we will remain unable to satisfy ourselves as to reality, life, truth, God. A working formula for the dialectic process will point the line of advance to social life as well as to human thinking. That such a working formula was not available is a loss to American history as well as to the peace of mind of Henry Adams.

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