

CURRENT MAGAZINES

To a Young Man Bent on Entering the Professoriat:—Professor George Boas in the *Atlantic*.

Edinburgh:—Mr. Lewis Spence in *The Nineteenth Century*.

The Perils of Modernism:—Dr. H. E. Fosdick in *Harper's*.

General Primo de Rivera:—Mr. Charles Petrie in the *Empire Review*.

My Ninety-Two Years:—Mr. Chauncey Depew in *Current History*.

IN these days, when professions are over-crowded and the hazards of the world of commerce are somewhat intense, it is becoming more and more difficult to choose a life-work. The calling of the teacher is, indeed, always open. Mr. Bernard Shaw, among numerous other advisers of ingenuous youth, has pointed out that it is the refuge for all who are incapable of success in a more strenuous rôle. "Those who can, do; those who can't, teach":—so runs the Shavian cynicism. And Professor George Boas appears to agree with this. "Only prospective failures go into academic work nowadays," he writes,—whether autobiographically or otherwise, we are not informed.

In an article contributed to *The Atlantic Monthly*, this lecturer on English at Johns Hopkins University offers counsel to a young friend with a like career in view. This gives him a chance to say what he thinks of the academic life. And in a number of ways his opinion of it is low.

Owing to a certain latitude with which the word "Professor" is used on this side of the Atlantic, one has to determine in the first place what this particular critic intends by it. Obviously he expects that his young friend will regard writing in "the magazines" as a very important part of his future business. So he warns the enquirer that there will be a "primordial slime" in which his first literary efforts will have to begin. There will be printed slips from editors, regretting that the manuscripts submitted are not "available." By the way, if there is anywhere a word wrongly used, it must be that word so customary with American editors. For when one comes to think of it, a manuscript offered—with eager desire that it should be taken—is at least "available", though the editor does not choose to avail himself of it.

Knowing his friend's qualities, Professor Boas predicts that his literary work will begin to be popular after a while, because it will be "gay and insouciant and cynical." After some time it

will cease to be welcomed, because it will have passed into the stage of being "thoughtful and perplexed and bitter." Editors will write regretful letters for two or three years after this, and then will come the stage of printed rejection slips back again. Meanwhile, the writer's old classmates will be figuring, to his intense disgust, on those title-pages where his own name used to appear, and he will gradually understand that he is "behind the times"—all because he is thoughtful instead of gay, and perplexed instead of insouciant! His wife will comfort him with the assurance that his work is too good for the magazines, but she will be wrong, for the true reason will be that it is tiresome. It will dwell on fundamental and philosophic points,—as if anyone in the reading world of to-day cared for that! And the sentences will be heavy with qualifying clauses, because the writer does not see things in the old "clean-cut" way. The collegiate air, too, will have vitiated the style. For that is a poisoned air, already breathed hundreds of times. And contact with immature students—or still more immature colleagues—will have done harm to the literary gift.

The person to whom this homily is addressed will likewise fail as a lecturer, because he will be without certain qualifications that are quite necessary. He will not have the needful prejudices, will not know that Teaching is Service, will not agree with some traditional literary valuations. He will be ironic, and the point of his irony will be missed. People will say he is only "destructive" in criticism, and if he wins admiration from the group of youthful people "in revolt", this will finish his condemnation. But Professor Boas adds that he was himself told all this years ago, and that his correspondent will be writing in the same strain, ten or fifteen years hence, to someone else.

Perhaps there is more wisdom in this last remark than in most of what preceded. Professor Boas has written an article which, tried by his own standards, ought to get published. It is gay and insouciant and cynical. And it actually has been published, in the attractive columns of *The Atlantic Monthly*. But while he has said much that is true, he has said nothing else quite so much to the point as his concluding statement that the man bent on the professorial life will not be deterred by the obstacles he has indicated. Why? Because the lure of that life does not lie in its promise of popularity in magazines, or of cutting a notable figure before the wisecracs of the area where one works.

In short, those who have the older idea of a "Professor" will have some difficulty in identifying the rôle as here sketched. They

do not think of him as a literary showman, but as one with either a passion for higher teaching or a love of research. If he wants, instead of either of these objects, to be known as the "bright" man of the town, or to shine in the popular journals every month, he has chosen the wrong career. But to explain this further would be to waste space. For those who have the academic temperament it would be superfluous, and for those who have not, it would be impossible. The profession of higher learning is a sort of priesthood. And to those outside "the faith" all commendation of it is an idle tale.

A MOST piquant, and at the same time a rather distressing, article is that by Mr. Lewis Spence in *The Nineteenth Century*, entitled "Edinburgh."

It is about the decline and debasement of an historic city. Within the last twenty-five years, we are told, Edinburgh has been modernized, and no good Scotsman—either at home or abroad—will hear of that without a shudder. The shadow of a mock commercialism has been cast over those "stately sites." Gigantic hotels occupy each end of Princes Street, making what was once the people's pride and glory seem the wreck and ruin of its former self:

Blatant shops and picture-house frontages, stuccoed, gilded and bronzed, stand in rococo hideousness over against the graceful spire of its world-renowned Scott Monument and its princely gardens, and tramway uprights for the support of overhead electric cables, burnished with silver paint, occupy the centre of its roadway.

Electric cars run now through the retired eighteenth century vistas of George Street, and the dignity of those old Georgian façades has been defiled. Charlotte Square, planned by a great architect of the past, is now mainly given over to offices. The Burns Monument on Calton Hill has been turned into a toolshed!

Such vandalism, it appears, would have gone still further if there had not been a fierce resistance made by public opinion against yet more ghastly proposals of the modern school. An influential section of the Town Council wanted to remove the railings from Princes Street Gardens, and to construct "an arcade of pink granite and rubble." The National Art Gallery on the Mound was to be removed. Tram lines were to be carried across the Dean Bridge, whose parapet has already been so raised as to obliterate almost altogether the unrivalled view of the Dean Valley, "on the plea

that people of suicidal tendency could not resist the chance of self-immolation it afforded." And who is responsible for all these horrors?

The idea, it seems, was to transform what used to be a great educational centre into "a poor imitation of Pittsburgh." A trade confraternity, of American origin, has taken root among the smaller commercial folk of Edinburgh. It appeals to "all-wool, yard-wide he-men", set upon booming Edinburgh, "as the 'boosters' of 'Main Street' might whip up a one-horse city in the Middle West." These shopkeepers, as a rule in the drygoods or stationery business, have the delusion that there is an immense commercial prospect in such schemes. They will induce big business to settle in Edinburgh. So they carry on advertising propaganda about the availability of sites for factories, about the low rating, about the advantages of the neighboring port of Leith. But what do these vandals know about world commerce and European markets, about business geography and high finance? The place does not lend itself to any such exploitation. What they have effected may be compared to a flinging of Monte Carlo in the face of Florence, or the Palais Royal battening upon the colonnades of St. Peter's!

That sounds horrible indeed. But there is more to follow. Mr. Spence dwells with vindictive satire upon the disappearance from Edinburgh of its men of literary or artistic distinction. The Scottish aristocracy and intelligentsia has withdrawn almost altogether. Edinburgh has been conquered by "the shop", and the names of "soft-goods barons" are spoken with a kind of awe. There is still, indeed, a body of distinguished men in the professions of law and medicine, but they take hardly any interest in municipal affairs, confining themselves to the West End, like Chinese royalty within the walled Inner City of Peking. In that ancient centre of culture, once known not inappropriately as "the Athens of the North", there is to-day, according to this pessimist, not one man of outstanding literary distinction, and orators have to be imported from elsewhere to respond at a banquet to the toast of Scott, Burns, or Stevenson. Edinburgh has now no literary journals, its literary societies are negligible, its painters and sculptors are following a continuous stream to London. The university is almost destitute of scholarship in its loftiest sense, and has begun to bestow academic honours upon leading men in the drapery trade. In the famous "Old Town" can be seen what is in part an historical museum, in part "the worst slum in Europe."

Thus the lamentation proceeds. Mr. Spence recalls with chagrin how Nature had done such marvels for Edinburgh, and how

the vision of its planners in the eighteenth century had developed such natural resources into structural effects that were the wonder of the world. But the spirit of those great men is gone! The Edinburgh electorate is now probably one of the most supine in Great Britain. No competent person will accept civic office, and it is "Baillie-Nichol-Jarvieism" that rules.

What is the remedy? This observer has had his heart gladdened a little by the fact that Professor Patrick Geddes has been making a valiant effort to waken attention to the state of the super-slums. And we are told that Mr. F. C. Mears, who had to do with the recent re-planning of Jerusalem, has been thinking about the condition of Edinburgh. But the scheme most in the critic's mind is to get a Scottish parliament back to its old historic place. This, he thinks, would introduce new social vitality and concern for the higher things. Perhaps his faith in the parliamentarians is no better grounded than the faith of other people in leaders of retail trade. But such is his proposal. Edinburgh, he holds, can never become a commercial centre like Glasgow or Manchester, but it may become something on a truly grander scale and of a grander type—if it can shake off the incubus of these "improvers."

I express no personal opinion about the matter, though on a visit to Edinburgh two years ago I did see a good deal to suggest that Mr. Spence is not just talking at random. One resident, of the same type of mind as the writer of this *Nineteenth Century* article, deplored to me the invasion of the city by "soft-drinks" and the parlours devoted to such refreshment. I expressed a mild liking for that American beverage. "I tell you," he said, "there is no need for it in Edinburgh." Now, what can he have meant? I wonder.

SUCH a title as "The Dangers of Modernism" does not stir much interest if the article it introduces is by a writer of the school of the late W. J. Bryan. For we have all heard from writers of that sort at very considerable length. But when the signature is "H. E. Fosdick", the case is altered, and one begins to attend. In the March issue of *Harper's* this conspicuous Modernist has faults to find with his own group, and in a very short space he says much that seems very opportune indeed.

What he finds wrong is "the notorious spiritual aridity of some of our liberalism." The Modernists are too often nothing more than crusaders against superstition. They excel in ridicule, but

in little else. Setting out to show that the religious and the scientific views of the world are not incompatible, they limit themselves to arguing for science, and seem to assume that—if one is but intellectually awakened—the religious attitude to life may be left to construct itself. But in Dr. Fosdick's view, a genuine faith can no more grow out of mere intellectual discipline than it can grow out of mere dogmatically imposed creeds. And if he had to choose between the two, he would prefer the Fundamentalist who is superstitious and earnest to the Modernist who is enlightened and cynical.

It was time for someone to write in this strain. That movement of deep disgust, not so much with Modernism as with Modernists, which is driving many to take refuge in churches they know to be very unprogressive indeed, has a source far deeper than these "advanced thinkers" suspect. It lies by no means in a stupid attachment to the past as such, nor in blindness to the truth of a great deal that these religious revolutionaries have to say. Many a worshipper in Fundamentalist churches is at least as clearly aware of the indefensible element in old forms as is the shrill-tongued innovator who, by turns, appeals to him and mocks him. With a grotesque self-consciousness, some young apostle of "the modern mind" announces, as if it were an original discovery of his own, what has long been familiar to not a few who hear such pulpit boasting with mingled amusement and anger. What one misses is, in part, that note of seamliness with which ancient religious usages should always be treated, and in part that historical sympathy which demands that new structures of thought shall be reared on the foundation of what is there already. Neither in religion nor in government are we prepared for a declaration of "The Year One."

With great aptness does Dr. Fosdick admonish such free lances, who are doing so much harm to a cause otherwise admirable. He has a word to say for the much abused "denominationalism":

There is a great deal more in these old denominations than the trifling peculiarities which ostensibly distinguish them. Around them and their traditions, their ways of worship, their habits of thought, has gathered much of the finest spiritual quality and moral devotion that we have to rely upon. These churches have become more than the items of their creeds and policies that can be reckoned up and counted; they have become to multitudes of people symbols of spiritual life, shrines of household memories and personal loyalty. . . . Let Modernists take note! It is one thing to recognize that a waterbucket is outmoded; it is another to appreciate that it still may carry living water.

No one that has read the newspaper report of certain Modernist preachers, who obviously think they are electrifying the world, can fail to see how they need a rebuke of this sort.

And there is a further point of strength in Fundamentalism, to which Dr. Fosdick might have referred. Our Modernists, having professed an intense zeal for truth, have a curious habit of lapsing into what looks like a mere counsel of policy. Again and again they tell us about what must be done "in order to keep the Church's hold upon intelligent youth." But intelligent youth may resent being thus manoeuvred by cunning, as much as it resents being bombarded by authority. The Fundamentalists at all events proclaim what they believe to be true, without taking cautious bearings as to the effect of stating it upon the mind of the future generation. But the Modernists, consciously or unconsciously, often appear in the rôle of trimmers, and their artifices are too transparent. If the "orthodox" preacher relies upon old tradition, they depend upon playing to the gallery. The gospel which is rejected as stale when offered in the language of ancient piety is by no means certain to have a stronger appeal when lit up by some vulgar metaphor from a football scrum.

THERE is a story of a kind-hearted child who was shown a picture of the persecutors of Daniel being torn to pieces in the den by lions. She began to cry, "for the poor little lion in the corner that is getting none." Mr. Charles Petrie finds fault with the prevailing discrimination among dictators. All the world hears of Mussolini in Italy, and a good many people know about Mustapha Kemal in Turkey. But there are others, mute inglorious despots, unhonoured and unsung. Who hears of the greatness of Horthy in Hungary, of Pangalos in Greece? Mr. Petrie is resolved to rescue at least one from this unmerited oblivion. He will sing of General Primo de Rivera. Fair play among dictators!

The Spanish super-man is well supplied with a baptismal name. It occupies, when written out in full, a whole line of the *Empire Review*. He is Miguel Primo de Rivera y Orbaneja, Marqués de Estella. "Why," as *Pickwick* hath it, "with a name like that, he might be anybody." And in truth he is somebody, according to this eulogist. He was born at Cadiz, on January 8th, 1870. His family is noble, with a long record of "service" to Spain, and its fortunes have ever been bound up with those of the House of Bourbon. The dictator is himself a most devoted adherent of

the Bourbon line. Like every other Primo de Rivera, he entered the army, and he saw service in various lands—in Morocco, in the Philippines, and in Cuba. In 1915 he was appointed Governor of Cadiz, and in 1919 he became Capitán-General of Madrid. Both these posts were abandoned rather abruptly, because—says Mr. Petrie—“his outspokenness was distasteful to the politicians, whose intrigues he knew were fatal to the progress of the country.” An item in the “progress” he demanded was that the Spanish government should open negotiations with Great Britain to get back Gibraltar. Perhaps the government found such an enterprise too difficult to tackle, and General Primo de Rivera himself has not got very far with its accomplishment since he had a chance to show how such things should be done. But in 1922 his star rose, and he achieved “his bloodless coup d’état in 1923.

There is no ostentation about him, it seems. Like every other despot whom history records, he professes an extreme reluctance to face that duty which he has had to accept because it was being faced by no one else. Even now, when he goes to the theatre, he slips into an ordinary seat, as a rule quite unrecognized. And he is a devoted friend of the Church.

But the confusion and inefficiency of public business called for sharp measures, and Primo de Rivera was the man for the occasion. Politicians were hopelessly corrupt, the Communists were running riot, Abd-el-Krim had made the Spanish hold on Morocco “most precarious”, and national prestige was at a low ebb. Over all these disorders he has waved a magician’s wand. First of all, he dissolved the Spanish parliament, and since September 13th, 1923 that body has not met. Why? Because it was “an institution which had outlived its usefulness.” He has not abolished, but only suspended it. The Cortes will meet again when General Primo de Rivera permits it, not before. And it seems that no one regrets its disappearance, except the *caciques* that used to divert through its help so much of the public money into their own pockets. Railways had fallen into a shocking state, the roads were beyond description, every branch of the civil service was paralysed to an extent which recalled the days of “Charles the Bewitched.” Ministries had been rising and falling, for no apparent purpose except to redistribute the sweets of office. Assassination was following assassination. Spain needed a “strong man”, and was fortunate enough to get him at the right moment.

The dictator brought down a heavy hand upon the Barcelona Communists. From that centre, there had been in progress an agitation which stopped at nothing. In June, 1923, the Cardinal

Archbishop of Zaragoza was murdered. Communist emissaries used to appear at a factory, to order the men out on strike for no reason which they deigned to assign, and the order was commonly obeyed by workmen in terror. Criminals, even murderers, were almost invariably acquitted by a jury. In short, there was the same sort of condition in Spain which in Italy preceded the rise of Fascismo. But the Spanish Fascist has changed it all. There are probably fewer strikes in his country now than in any other in Europe. Criminal justice is quickly and decisively administered. A short time ago, for example, the murderers of a priest who committed their crime on a Thursday were executed the following Saturday morning. And Primo de Rivera has notably held the scales even in the industrial disputes with which he has dealt.

He has transformed the situation, too, in Morocco. He has proved a loyal supporter of the League of Nations, and has cultivated the most cordial relationship with the republics of Latin America. Next year he is to accompany the king on his tour of the New World. According to this writer, his success has been due not only to his own high qualities, but to the constant support of King Alphonso, towards whom he stands in much the same relation as Cavour occupied towards Victor Emmanuel. The Military Directory last year was exchanged for a Civil Directory, but we learn that the change was more in name than in anything else:

From the Pyrenees to the Straits of Gibraltar, and from Cadiz to Barcelona, there is a new spirit abroad in Spain. . . . Trade is expanding, means of communication are being improved, corruption is no longer tolerated, and the law is being enforced as never before. Whatever the future may hold in store for Spain, it is unthinkable that she should ever sink back into the darkness from which she emerged two years ago, and for this she has to thank two men—King Alphonso XIII, and Miguel Primo de Rivera y Orbaneja, Marqués de Estella.

It chanced that in *The Morning Post* of a few weeks ago there was an article by the Spanish dictator himself, in which he tells the story of his régime. He tells it in terms very similar to those of Mr. Petrie, and adds a few points of greater emphasis. Naturally, he dwells more on the success of his vindication of Spanish arms in Morocco. But he tells us, too, how the Military Directory established 1,500 new schools in Spain, how it suppressed gambling, and how it has promoted social morals. He thinks its greatest claim to future respect may yet be found in its voluntary relinquishment of office, and its substitution of civil rule. But we have heard from his eulogist that this was a nominal rather than a real alteration.

With a few changes of place-names, Mr. Petrie's article might stand as an account of the Mussolini reform in Italy. It recalls, too, what Carlyle wrote about the dictatorship of Francia in Paraguay. But it is only fair to add that the Primo de Rivera coup d'état was bloodless, and that so far there is no evidence of the ruthlessness and cruelty which have so darkened the Mussolini régime. It may well be true that politics in Spain were hopeless. We all know how elections were managed, how ballot boxes used to be stuffed, how the so-called parliamentary government was a burlesque. Desperate diseases need desperate remedies, and only an idolator of the democratic principle will deny that there are times which call for the strong hand of a dictator.

Lord Salisbury once described Spain as a "dying nation", and in the darkest hour of the South African War there came a vindictive telegram from Madrid to Downing Street: "On receipt of the news from South Africa, the dying nations salute you." But it was indeed a moribund country, and the machinery of the best form of government suits only a nation prepared to operate it with judgment and fairness. Spain does not seem to have been such a nation in the last twenty-five years. So what Mr. Petrie has said may not be far from the truth. One wonders, indeed, in view of some recent events, whether her loyalty to the League of Nations is quite beyond reproach under present guidance. And one is not encouraged by hearing that the dictator is so devoted an adherent of the House of Bourbon. Still, despite a general and growing suspicion of these apologies for despotism, Mr. Petrie has set forth a persuasive case, and it would be unjust to dismiss it merely because it is so like the case for hideous autocracy elsewhere. Primo de Rivera deserves to have his régime judged on its own merits, apart from the malodorous association with Turkish or Italian parallels.

THERE is always a great charm in books of reminiscences, by those who are qualified to write them. And who is better qualified, by length of years, by tenacity of recollection, or by the vital strength of his extreme old age, than Mr. Chauncey Depew? He is in his ninety-third year. Unlike what we are taught by the psychologists to expect, in this case remembrances of youth are reported to be no clearer in the mind of this memoirist than those of a comparatively recent time. And Mr. Depew can personally recall many stirring events as well as most notable public persons.

He is one of those who owe their reminiscences to the people who come after.

His article in *Current History* tells how, in days of long ago which he thinks happier than the present days, men did not look forward to the colossal wealth that may be obtained now. The ambitious man of seventy-five years ago thought of fortune in terms of \$100,000. If he had a yearly income of \$3,000, he could have all he needed, including a carriage and pair, with two or three servants. Those folk were not fed with the luxury of outside news as fast as people are now, and perhaps that was all the better. Newspapers used to publish tidings from Europe about three days after it had come by steamer to New York. Buildings in that city were thought immense if they reached five or six storeys in height. And, most curious of all, the fees paid to lawyers were as extraordinary in one way as they are extraordinary now in another. Mr. Depew's first remuneration amounted to \$1.75, "earned by several days of work in preparing a legal opinion." His first savings of \$100 went into the bank, and it still remains there, amounting now to \$900. He has another account of \$87.50, that is half a century old, but draws no interest. So apparently he was not a speculator.

He knew Abraham Lincoln rather well. Their first meeting was at the White House in 1864, when Mr. Depew was one of a long succession of callers. By the time he arrived, the President had a crowd pressing round him, and the young visitor was going to withdraw. But Lincoln called him back. "Just a moment, young man," he said; "what did you want?" "Nothing," was the reply. "Well," said the President, "no one ever came here before who didn't want something. I wish you would remain, for I should like to talk to you."

That was the beginning of an acquaintance in which Mr. Depew discovered, among other things, that Lincoln loved a humorous story. He was himself an inveterate *raconteur*. So this article goes on, with odds and ends of entertaining gossip. This veteran of ninety-two dislikes some of the new features of his time, for example, Modernism. But he is not just a dismal lamenter of good old days that are past. "It is evident," he says, "that we cannot go back to former conditions, and we should not wish to return even if it were possible." He looks forward to an assuaging of the industrial strife, and to the return of the world to composure. For himself, he has found that the secret of long life and happiness is to refuse with resoluteness every temptation to worry. His father and grandfather worried so that they shortened

their days. Mr. Depew, at his great age, is "confident of living to complete a century of life." And when inclined to rest, as his friends advise him, he defeats the tendency by "rising and stirring." His only concession to fatigue is to take a ten-minute nap in the afternoon. The rest he leaves to Providence.

A good rule, if you can follow it. And people can follow it more than they think they can.

H. L. S.