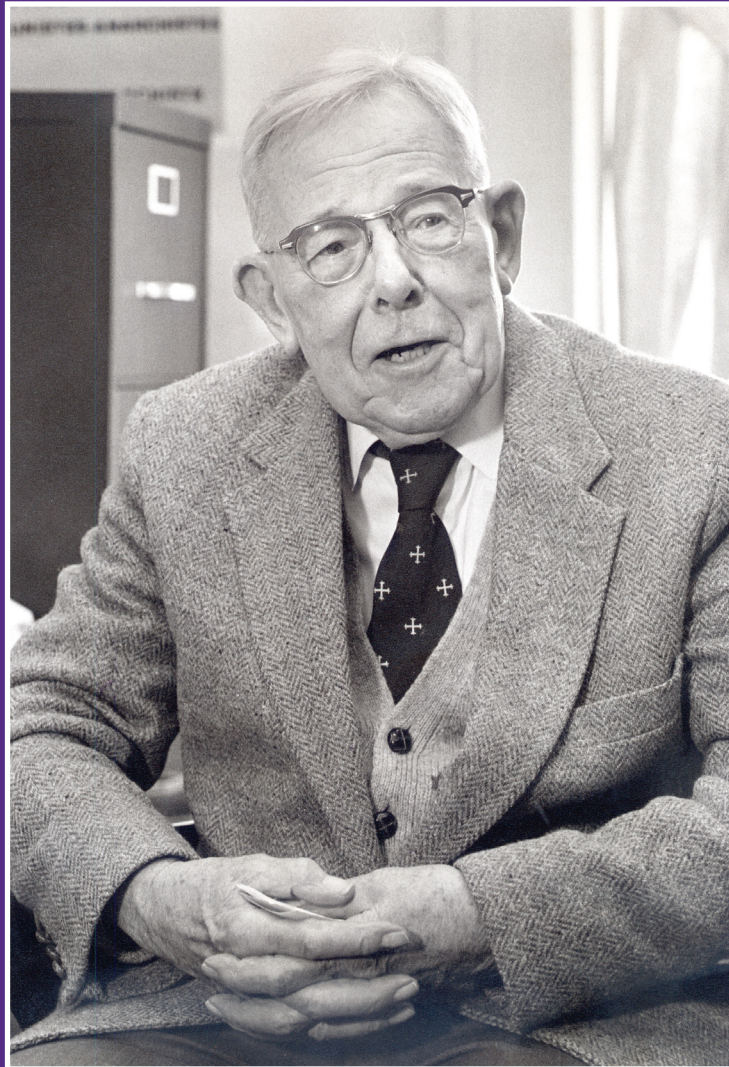


The Papers of F. G. Marcham: IV

Britons and Cornellians

By Frederick G. Marcham



Edited by John Marcham

The Internet-First University Press

Ithaca, New York

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Cover: Professor Marcham in his office in McGraw Hall, March 4, 1987,
in his 63rd year of teaching at Cornell University.

—*Charles Harrington, University Photos.*

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This Volume

Among many essays written by F. G. Marcham were a number about individuals. One grew out of his publication of a book on the Cornelian bird artist Louis Agassiz Fuertes. Several are memorial tributes.

Foreword

Frederick George Marcham, the Goldwin Smith professor of English history, emeritus, was a Mr. Chips for the 69 years he taught at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, between 1923 and his death in 1992.

The university asked me, his son, to assemble material that would reflect on his career as teacher, adviser to students, coach, faculty advocate, author, and mayor of Cayuga Heights for 32 years. I drew upon dozens of composition books, notes, unpublished manuscript pages, photographs, and other mementos he deposited in the Cornell archives or left me to sort, turn over to the archives, and control access to.

F. G. Marcham had already shown some of his nearly 2,000 manuscript pages of memoirs, essays, and other writing to students, colleagues, and other friends. After his death, the least complicated and expensive way to continue to make these available to people in Ithaca and at a distance was to arrange MS pages in logical volumes, xerograph, and offer them at cost or to be read in the archives in the Kroch Library at Cornell.

This year Professor J. Robert Cooke's Project for Creating an Open Access Paradigm for Scholarly Publishing began making available and online DVDs and other materials about and by notable Cornell professors, starting with the Nobel physicist Hans Bethe and President Emeritus Dale Corson.

Selections from the F. G. Marcham papers constitute six of the eleven elements of such a DVD on Professor Marcham, produced by The Internet-First University Press of Ithaca. The other five elements: A video introduction by Prof. Walter LaFeber and myself; The Photographs of Frederick G. Marcham; an audio of a talk on Job by Marcham; a video of his talk with the last meeting of a class in 1991, and an audio of his memorial service.

The pages of the six books contain the latest draft I could find among my father's papers. Little effort was made to change his occasional "English English" spelling, capitalization, or punctuation, except when needed to make a point clearer. Any changes of mine are shown by ellipses or within brackets. His own parenthetical remarks are either within parentheses or dashes.

Not among the six Internet-First University books are the following original xerographic volumes: Cromwell (six essays), Cayuga Heights Memories, and Governance at Cornell (an uncompleted MS); and two volumes, Cornell Notes 1967-1979 and Personal Memoirs, which are to be released later.

The Cornell Notes in particular are very frank descriptions of the struggles among professors, departments, college deans, and central administrators to govern a university. Why so frank? I asked a close colleague of my father's. "He wanted to leave his view of the story." Which fit with a remark that the constitutional historian in him once made, "I'd

rather be secretary than chairman [of a group], to be sure the record is straight.”

F. G. Marcham grew up in the slums of Reading, England, and won scholarships to a public (private secondary) school and after World War I to Oxford University.

“Last Lecture” in *On Teaching* gives a sense of his reverence for the documents that record the centuries-long movement in England toward the franchise and freedoms for the working class. His relations to working class advisees and his dogged activism on behalf of Cornell professors and in civic life attest to a concern for underdogs and with arbitrary authority.

Brief observations in the second Cornell Notes, under “His Role in the University,” express disappointment at being shunned for responsible positions by several presidents and deans. In later years he applied his administrative and persuasive energy to keeping Cayuga Heights a tight little village and chairing the History Department.

My editing draws on nearly six decades as a reporter and editor of newspapers, magazines, and books in Ithaca and elsewhere: the *Cornell Daily Sun*, *Ithaca Journal*, *Cornell Alumni News*, and a dozen previous books of Cornell and community history.

Particular thanks go to Bob Cooke and my grandson Liam Frederick Lowe of Etna for their help, especially with these newfangled computers, and to my wife, journalist Jane Haskins Marcham, for patience through the months this project has occupied.

December 2005

John Marcham

Gilbert and Sullivan

Their World and Their Audience

I wish to talk today as an English historian about some characteristics of the operas [of Sir William] Gilbert and [Sir Arthur] Sullivan. For myself, I look at them as I do at other artifacts and ask prosaic questions about them: What topics do they discuss? What points of view does Gilbert express? What made them acceptable to the audience? What kind of audience was it?

I shall say little about Sullivan's music. My knowledge of music is not enough to justify comment. I recognise that the music has always contributed greatly to the success of the works; indeed if my own experience counts for anything the airs came first. How I learned them, where I heard them, I don't remember; perhaps in a British Army concert tent during the First World War, when amateur tenors sang "Take a pair of sparkling eyes" and followed with "A wand'ring minstrel I." The Sullivan airs I have remembered in detail, half a dozen of them; of Gilbert's words only a first line here and there. A full stage production of Gilbert and Sullivan I did not see until 1951, *The Gondoliers* with Martyn Green. I say with shame that I have not seen one since; I come to the subject of this lecture not only in shame but in humility, prepared to do no more than interpret Gilbert's texts in the manner of a historian and relate them to the time in which they were written.

When the historian looks at Great Britain in the last quarter of the 19th century he sees a wide range of conditions: extremes of wealth and poverty, the stirrings of social change and the restraining hand of Conservatism; an economy that had given Great Britain first place among the powers of the world during the middle 19th century, now challenged by successful rivals in the economies of the United States, Germany and others; the largest empire the world had ever known and an Irish problem that brought death and destruction in Ireland and shook the parliamentary system at Westminster.

For the economic and social historian the landmarks are the periods of depression that appeared from time to time during the 1870's and 1880's, the growing trade union movement, the strikes, notably the London Dock Strike of 1889, and Charles Booth's monumental study, *Life and Labour of the People of London*, displaying house by house, almost room by room, and person by person, the sordid conditions in which part of London lived. If we seek in the literature of the time representative voices of protest against the suffering and the bankrupt ideas that produced it we should look perhaps to George Gissing and George Bernard Shaw.

A public lecture delivered at Cornell University March 14 1975, commemorating the centennial of Trial by Jury. An explanation of how the lecture came to be given follows this article.

For the political historian there is a different picture. The whole century had been one of adaptation to demands for change; the Establishment slowly reforming the parliamentary system, the educational system, local government and the judicial system. The lawyers had been the last to submit to change, in the Judicature Act of 1873. The Parliamentary Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, and 1884 and '85 extended the franchise until it encompassed almost all adult men.

This reforming legislation, particularly reform of the franchise, had had as a major object preservation of existing institutions. The admission to Oxford and Cambridge of persons other than members of the Church of England took place on terms that assured that the Church of England would continue to be dominant in the affairs of the universities. The merger of the Common Law Courts, the Court of Chancery, and some others in the High Court of Judicature in 1873 put an end to centuries of rivalry among the courts, but gave them new life in a different setting. Reform of the franchise gave the workingman the vote, but in circumstances that guaranteed that for a decade or so he would belong to one of the traditional parties. As late as 1882, as *Iolanthe* tells us, Private Willis believed

*That Nature always does contrive
that every boy and every gal
that's born into this world alive
is either a little Liberal
or else a little Conservative.*

For the present, at least, the Establishment was secure on all fronts, except possibly the economic. On this front statistics suggested that Great Britain's industrial and trade advantages, her strength for decades, now were slipping away. We might infer that this development, a foreshadowing of her economic decline in the next half century, darkened the prospects for the upper classes. But they had a buffer against hardship. They held investments in foreign companies and state enterprises, scattered throughout the world, to the amount of \$6 1/2 billion as of the middle 1880's, ample insurance until the First World War against the decline of agriculture, and the textile and metal industries and others at home. So it came about that the writers who used the upper classes and their way of life as background for their commentary on British society, such as Oscar Wilde, Pinero, Archer, and a little later Galsworthy, painted a picture of luxury and ease and of wealth flowing so assuredly that its source need not be considered, unless by Lady Bracknell when she was match-making.

The most common generalization regarding the social and institutional setting for Gilbert and Sullivan's operas affirms the security and the solidarity of upper class society. "If we wish," says Wingfield-Shatford, "to get back into the atmosphere of that time we can hardly do better than treat ourselves to a course of Gilbert and Sullivan operas. It is the music and the dialogues of a society that feels itself to be too secure to be serious or angry or troubled about anything." "They wrote," said Hamilton, "in the safest and most comfortable world mankind has ever known." Another said, "The country was peaceful and intensely prosperous

and the social hierarchy seemed to be a permanent institution in which all had their appointed places.” “Gilbert felt,” he continues, “as any successful man of those days might feel, that things were pretty comfortable as they were.” This is the general view of the commentators; they go further and imply that the mockery of some ancient institutions presented in the operas is proof of the security of the total establishment.

What does Gilbert have to say about these institutions? In *Trial by Jury*, the jury and the judge are throughout committed partisans for the plaintiff; in addition the judge declares his law is “fudge,” phony. He does not blink at the confusion of bigamy and burglary. In *The Pirates of Penzance* the police fall before the pirates, adding to the woes that make the policeman’s lot not a happy one. Sir Joseph Porter rose to greatness by polishing the handle of the big front door, and by being an obedient member of his party:

*I always voted at my party’s call,
And I never thought of thinking for myself at all.*

Major General Stanley’s case was different; though bursting with knowledge of things vegetable, animal and mineral, he admitted his shortcomings as a soldier:

*For my military knowledge, though both plucky and adventury
Has only been brought down to the beginning of the century.*

With the peers matters are much worse. They know nothing and are proud of it. Some part of England’s glory they attribute to the fact that in times of crisis the peers “did nothing in particular, and did it very well.” As for brains and the peerage, Lord Mountararat offers the ultimate judgment: “I don’t want to say a word against brains; I often wish I had some myself.” The M.P.s, the members of the House of Commons, as Private Willis describes them, are no better.

*When in the House M.P.s divide,
If they’ve a brain and cerebellum too,
They’ve got to leave that brain outside
And vote just as their leaders tell ‘em to.
But then the prospect of a lot
Of dull M.P.s in close proximity,
All thinking for themselves, is what
No man can face with equanimity.*

In these instances Gilbert directs his assault not against the institutions but against the fools, and incompetents who man then.

In *The Gondoliers* and *Utopia Limited* his targets are different; they are ideas and attitudes. In *The Gondoliers* one of his concerns is with the notion of political equality. Don Alhambra, having told his tale about the king who wished all persons to be as rich as he, ends

*To this conclusion you'll agree,
When everyone is somebody
Then no man's anybody.*

In *Utopia Limited* the attack is on all fronts. After the opening chorus, the Utopian Vice Chamberlain prepares to welcome back Zara, the King's eldest daughter, who has been to England, "The greatest, the most powerful, the wisest country in the world." "In a few minutes," says another, "Utopia may hope to be completely Anglicized. See what we have to gain—English institutions, English tastes and English fashions." "England," he says, "has made herself what she is because in that favoured land everyone has to think for himself." "How much more brilliant," he adds, "this dialogue would have been if we had been accustomed to exercise our reflective powers. They say that in England the conversation of the meanest is a corruscation of impromptu epigram."

Princess Zara brings in her train six representatives of English culture, Lord Dramaleigh, a Lord Chamberlain; Captain Fitzbattleaxe of the Life Guards, Captain Sir Edward Corcoran of the Royal Navy; Mr. Goldbury, a company promoter; Sir Bailly Barre, Queens Counsel and M.P.; and Mr. Blushington, a county councillor. Each of them is empty, a fool or a crook. As they go about reforming Utopia, Gilbert rains hammerblows on them, but they succeed. Utopia, as one observer says, "is swamped by full prosperity" and the demand is that affairs "be restored to their original complexion." How? By introducing the English party system.

"ZARA. Government by Party! Introduce that great and glorious element—at once the bulwark and foundation of England's greatness—and all will be well! No political measures will endure, because one Party will assuredly undo all that the other Party has done; and while grouse is to be shot, and foxes worried to death, the legislative action of the country will be at a standstill. Then there will be sickness in plenty, endless lawsuits, crowded jails, interminable confusion in the Army and Navy, and, in short, general and unexampled prosperity!"

This was the Gilbert of 1893. He praised one English institution only:

*Go search the world and search the sea,
Then come you home and sing with me,
There's no such gold and no such pearl
As a bright and beautiful English girl.*

In *Utopia Limited* and its predecessors the survey of English institutions was wide. Even the royal court of Victoria was held up to ridicule for its parsimony in *Utopia Limited*. But it is the case that Gilbert spared some parts of the English system. His first draft of *Patience* had two clergymen in place of Burnthorne and Grosvenor, but he shied away from a religious theme. There is, of course, the mild-mannered Dr. Daly in *The Sorcerer*. His faults are minor, certainly when compared to those of Gilbert's Bishop of Rumtifoo, in his *Bab Ballads*. The Bishop taught his charges on this tropical island to dance exotic dances. He declared,

*I'll dress myself in cowries rare
And fasten feathers in my hair,
And dance the cutch chi boo.*

The ballad continues,

*And to conciliate his see
He married Pickadillillee.
And though the dress he made her don
Looked awkwardly a girl upon
It was a great improvement on
The one he found her in.*

There is nothing like that about the Church in the comic operas. Nor does the medical profession come on the scene, as it does in the *Bab Ballads*. In the operas, he spares male professors, but not the ladies, as *Princess Ida* shows us. And the working class, if we may regard them as an institution, are not pilloried. Were they outside the range of Gilbert's concern? Certainly he was keenly aware of questions of class.

A central theme of almost every comic opera deals in some way with the distinctions among the classes. From *Trial by Jury* to *The Gondoliers*, each story hinges to a lesser or greater degree on a mistake, a misunderstanding or a misplacement; by which a person of one class finds or puts himself in another. There are misfits who climb from a lower class to a higher, such as the judge in *Trial by Jury* and Sir Joseph Porter; there are confusions based on baby-swapping; there is Prince Nanki-poo, who became a second trombone; there are the Pirates of Penzance who are finally redeemed:

*They are no members of the common throng.
They are all noblemen who have gone wrong.*

The social misfits betray themselves by attitudes toward class that are clearly out of order. Sir Joseph Porter, who began life as an office boy, speaks condescendingly

towards Josephine, daughter of Captain Corcoran R.N., who was related, he says, to an earl. Porter tells her she “occupies a station in the lower middle class.” Pooh-Bah, another climber, says, “I go out and dine with middle class people on reasonable terms. I dance at cheap suburban parties for a moderate fee.” The tarnished Duke and Duchess of Plaza-Toro have their weaknesses.

*If you'd kindle
The spark of a swindle,
Lure simpletons into your clutches—
Yes into your clutches—
Or hoodwink a debtor
You cannot do better
Than trot out a duke or a duchess.*

We can almost see them presiding over a bingo party.

As for the basic English class structure, Gilbert comments directly on the characteristics of two classes, the aristocracy and the lower middle class. The working class appears from time to time as individuals—Little Buttercup, Dick Deadeye, Bobstay and Becket in *Pinafore*; Private Willis, Old Adam Goodheart, Rose Maybud and Dame Hannah; possibly Jack Point and Elsie Maynard. They are not more than a handful, and by the time we meet them the diction of most of them has undergone improvement—as if at the hands of Professor Higgins. True, the sailors have their lapses. Only once is there the attempt to fix a group of working people in their class by their mode of speech, and that is in *The Sorcerer*. When the villagers awaken from the effects of John Wellington Wells's love philtre, they use a rural dialect: “Where be oi” and “What, be oi a doin'?” But standard speech soon breaks in, and we hear only an occasional echo of dialect; “Eh, but oi do loik you.” Richard Dauntless, also has a lapse in *Ruddigore*. “That's what my heart says. It says Dick (it calls me Dick acos it's entitled to take that liberty), that there young girl would recoil from him if she knowed what he really were. Ought you to stand off and on and let this young gal take this false step and never fire a shot across her bows to bring her to? No, it says, you did not ought. And I wont ought, accordin'.”

Gilbert's chief concern was with the other end of the social scale. In many of the operas there are dukes and earls and baronets; in some a prince or princess; even a king and queen. Little is said about monarchy. True, the pirate king, at ease with his profession, declares,

*Many a king on a first class throne
If he wants to call his crown his own
Must manage, somehow, to get through
More dirty work than ever I do.*

But the pirate gang makes amends, when they surrender at the end of the play.

*We yield at once with humbled mien
Because, with all our faults, we love our queen.*

In the Barataria of *The Gondoliers*, monarchy had suffered two setbacks. An earlier king, we are told, abandoned the creed of his forefathers and became a Wesleyan Methodist “of the most bigoted and persecuting kind.” He and his court were killed in an insurrection. The other misfortune occurred when the two gondoliers shared the kingship and took themselves seriously as servants of the state.

As for aristocrats, they are the butt of ridicule from the start. In *Thespis* we learn that while fate allots nothing “to clever obscurity, the noodles (dummies) are baroned and earled.” The chorus assures us in *Iolanthe* “that high rank will never hurt you, the Peerage is not destitute of virtue.” In *Ruddigore* baronets are condemned wholesale. Ruth says of a baronet of Ruddigore, “All baronets are bad, but he was worse than other baronets.” What ever their deficiencies, the peers in *Iolanthe* plead their cause modestly.

*High rank involves no shame.
We boast an equal claim
With him of humble name
To be respected.*

*Hearts just as pure and fair
May beat in Belgrave Square
As in the lowly air
Of Seven Dials.*

Yet with all their modesty they cannot ignore the fact that they are a race apart, “Blue blood! Blue blood!”

Next to the aristocracy the class most pilloried is the lower middle class. This is done in part indirectly by mentioning the stores they used in London; the Army and Navy, Swan and Edgar, Sewell and Cross, Lewis and Allenby. We are in the world of Macy’s and Gimbels. More directly, Gilbert speaks of

*Ye butchers and bakers and candlestick makers
Who sneer at all things that are tradey,
Whose middle class lives are embarrassed by wives
Who long to parade as “My Lady.”*

In *Patience*, Gilbert presents the everyday young man—"a commonplace type with a stick and a pipe, a threepenny bus young man;" perhaps a law clerk in Chancery Lane or a civil servant at Somerset House, or worse still, serving behind the counter and asking the customer, "What's the next article, madam?"

*A pushing young particle,
What's the next article,
Waterloo House young man.*

What is the total effect of this comment on institutions and classes? Does it show that Gilbert was alert to the political and social problem of his times? If we set aside *Utopia Limited* for later comment, I think the answer is "No."

We can say with some certainty that the poets and poetry ridiculed in *Patience* remind us of Oscar Wilde, William Morris and others. When Gilbert wrote *Princess Ida* he knew that Girton College and women's education afforded subjects for discussion. Further, perhaps, if we could stretch a point, the movement towards votes for all working men led him to say in *The Gondoliers* that

*When everyone is someboddie
Then, no man's anybody.*

But this is thin evidence for the view that he was a commentator on contemporary society. Until he wrote *Utopia Limited*, he was no more than a humorous observer of the English scene. Indeed, it may be said that the nature of his observations and the language in which he expressed them, justify us in calling him a champion of the Establishment.

In making his comment on the social classes, Gilbert himself occupies a position, a vantage point, that leads me to infer that he spoke for its upper middle class. He does not speak to them directly, but uses scores of items that make it clear that, though much of what he said might have entertained a wider audience, only a special group would have gained the full effect of his allusions and humor. Let me offer a few examples.

In *Thespis*, when the mortals changed places with the gods on Mt. Olympus, questions arose about who was married to whom. Daphne, a mortal, has become the goddess Calliope, and is in doubt about Apollo, to whom she is married. She goes to the Mt. Olympus Library and there finds Lempriere's *Classical Dictionary*. She takes it to Thespis, leader of the troupe of mortals, who reads, "Apollo was several times married, among others to Issa, Bolina, Coronis, Chymene, Chione, Cyrene, Acacallus, and Calliope." Daphne, "And. Calliope." Thespis: "Ah, I didn't know he was married to them." Daphne: "Sir, this, is the Family Edition."

In *Princess Ida*, Lady Psyche assigns for the young lady students of the classics some of the more lusty writers, Anacreon, Ovid, Aristophanes, and Juvenal. One adds, "You'll be well advised to read then Bowdlerized."

Major General Stanley ranges far in describing his knowledge of history; further skill in mathematics. In painting he can distinguish Rafaels from Gerard Dows and Zoffanies, an easy task if you know who the last two are. Similarly the Colonel of the Dragoon Guards, in spelling out his prescription for a heavy dragoon, displays an assortment of knowledge that would carry its full meaning only to a small, well-educated, well-informed part of English society. The multitude of verse forms Gilbert uses cover many types of poetic diction from the Greeks to his own day; and the music of Sullivan is famous for the wide range of its parodies. Part of what each of them wrote was intended to be a parody of a mode of expression in verse or music. How enjoy a parody, one might say, unless you know the rhythms of Aristophanes or the structure of a madrigal.

As I look back on Gilbert's work as observer of the English scene I find it possible to make some distinctions in the quality of his humor as it expressed itself in three different forms between the 1860's and the 1890's. He made his mark first as a writer of humorous verse, notably in the collection called the *Bab Ballads*. These are some of the most witty, sharp, and biting verses in the English language. They carry through the logic of a situation without mercy and rarely have a happy ending.

With *H. M. S. Pinafore* in mind, let us consider the case of Joe Golightly, as handled in the *Bab Ballads*. He was a common sailor who adored the daughter of the First Lord of the Admiralty. The daughter was proud. She

*. . . snubbed earls and viscounts nightly
She sneered at baronets out loud
And spurned poor Joe Golightly.*

Joe took this badly and made such a nuisance of himself on board ship playing his banjo and singing that his captain sentenced him to twelve years in the black hole. Joe had a mate, a sailor who resolved to help him.

*Cheer up young Joe,
I'll tell you what I'm arter.
To that First Lord I'll go
And ax him for his darter.*

When he asks the First Lord the answer is "Get out."

*That honest tar repaired to Joe upon the billow
And told him how he'd fared: Joe only answered "willow."
And for that dreadful crime,
Young sailers learn to shun it,*

*Joe's working out his time.
In ten years he'll have done it.*

The bite of this humor is not in the operas. They are for the most part comic operas, bland affairs, full of impending disasters which are miraculously avoided. A happy accident, a twist of fate, some confusion over babies; these and other turns of fortune lead to blissful settlements: lovers are united or reunited.

To this standard fare there are two exceptions. Professor [Robert] Hall of Cornell's Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics has argued that in *The Yeomen of the Guard* Gilbert turned away from his ordinary mocking approach and adopted instead what Professor Hall calls "the bitterest of all satire, that of a man mocking his own work." "The Yeomen," he says, "is Gilbert's satire on Gilbertian tomfoolery."

This turnabout we might expect on occasion from the irascible Gilbert. Especially if we accept the novelist Mrs. Tweedie's report of a conversation with Gilbert. According to her report he said, "I have been scribbling twaddle for thirty-five years to suit the public taste. Look at the theatre; it contains an audience of some 1,500 persons. Now if you serve up tripe and onions for the gallery it offends the stalls. If you dish up sweetbreads and truffles it offends the pit. Therefore a plain leg of mutton and foiled potatoes is the most stable fare for all. Light frippery and amusing nonsense is what I have endeavored to write. But I can tell you, after thirty-five years of that sort of thing, I am sick of it, and I should not mind if I never wrote another word." Perhaps it was in this mood that he wrote *Utopia Limited*.

The humor of *Utopia Limited* is sweeping and sustained sarcasm from beginning to end. He holds up to ridicule not only the whole complex of English institutions but England's supposed role in world affairs, her civilizing, cultivating influence. He wrote in 1892. Is it possible that by 1892 he was aware that the security, the stability, the prosperity of the earlier decades was beginning to wear thin? Was he aware of the folly of imperialism? Was he anticipating Kipling who six years later, in "The White Man's Burden," poured scorn on the imperial interests and attitudes he had previously endorsed?

In any case the London public showed no enthusiasm for *Utopia Limited*; after its initial run no professional group revived it until this present year. I suspect that the medicine was too strong.

The long parade of Gilbert and Sullivan operas had almost come to an end. For more than thirty years Gilbert had been in the front rank of English humorous writers—the companion of Lewis Carroll and Calverley, and in the tradition of Edward Lear. In my judgment Gilbert's collaboration with Sullivan was a great event in his career as a humorist, for the comic opera mode which they adopted and perhaps perfected called for themes that could be handled gently and genially. The bite of the *Bab Ballads* would not do. It is true that all the operas before *The Mikado* incorporated topics which Gilbert had used in the *Bab Ballads* or elsewhere. But as I have shown in the case of Joe Golightly, the story in the opera takes another course. Ralph Rackstraw is on his way to marrying the Captain's daughter in *Pinafore* before his true identity is known. The short-tempered, sharp, aggressive Gilbert

changed himself into a warm, avuncular person who could turn any situation into a happy ending.

And he did more than that. His geniality shone upon scores of scenes and situations, and characters. The lovers' meetings, the patter-songs, and the choruses maintain a level of good humor that is irresistible. But where would Gilbert's geniality be without the music of Sullivan? My opinion is that collaboration with Sullivan not only called forth from Gilbert a new form of humor but that it contributed greatly to the acceptance of the operas; that is, to the enjoyment of Gilbert's words and comic situations. How large would the audience have been, would it be today, if Gilbert's words were spoken only, or published in print? How many read the *Bab Ballads*?

As I have said earlier, my opinion is that Gilbert and Sullivan wrote for two audiences, one well-informed, the other the English public at large. For the general public the music was probably the chief ingredient. The overtures created an atmosphere of warmth, an air of expectation; they set the tempo. Sullivan's airs were melodious, and simple; easily remembered. Gilbert's words were important in a different way. They had their rhymes and rhythms, their sparks of wit and logic; they had those marvellous constructions, the patter-songs, which an audience never tired of hearing. What stayed in the listener's mind was Gilbert's occasional trick of phrasing—"What never? Well, hardly ever"—and the audacious, perhaps atrocious, rhymes. There were the ridiculous contradictions, as when Ralph Rackstraw, simple sailor, begins a speech to Josephine, "I am poor in the essence of happiness, lady" and ends, "I am but a living ganglion of irreconcilable antagonisms." She responds, "His simple eloquence goes to my heart."

All this is glorious nonsense, for Gilbert was a master of words in the service of humor. Yet in his day, I think, his words floated to the listener on the music of Sullivan and the general listener kept in his memory more of Sullivan than of Gilbert. Perhaps it is so today. We enjoy the marriage of words and music; we enjoy the total effect they produce. Yet the dominant partner, or the partner whose image stays longest with us, is the music.

It is a commonplace of commentary upon art that a work of art is not to be understood, but enjoyed. Yeats said, "If it can be explained, it isn't poetry." I have not tried to explain Gilbert and Sullivan, but to show in what ways their works, and especially Gilbert's, have value for the historian. In a sense, what I have done is an act of sacrilege, for I have talked as if the operas were no more than the words and the music, I affirm my belief that the words and music of the operas have limited power to stir us. Actors and actresses, musicians and conductors, designers and directors and producers give the breath of life. Of these airy mysteries I have nothing to say.

To conclude I return to the mundane and record an achievement of Gilbert's that otherwise might be forgotten. He wrote a short piece of political satire mocking Gladstone and other leading politicians of his day. The censor banned it. Gilbert then made a fairyland parody of the piece, with Mr. Gladstone in disguise but recognizable. Mr. Gladstone saw it and rocked with laughter. Gilbert wrote a *Bab Ballad* called "Etiquette." The poet Swinburne wrote to Rossetti, "It took me about an hour to read it to my family, owing to the incessant explosions and collapses

of reader and audience in tears and laughter.” Who but Gilbert could shake with laughter the earnest prime minister and the poet of passion?

How This Speech Came About

I had a visit from David Wyatt, our departmental Gilbert and Sullivan enthusiast, who asked me to give a lecture on G. & S. as part of the 1975 celebration of the centenary of the first Gilbert and Sullivan performance in England of *Trial by Jury*. I knew hardly anything about the men themselves and little more about their work. I had seen the *Gondoliers* in London in 1951 and *The Mikado* on T.V. once or twice.

My classes had read *Iolanthe* for the past four or five years. All in all it seemed that someone ought to give the lecture, so as to add something to the total Cornell celebration, which was built around the Cornell Savoyards performance of *Trial by Jury* and *H.M.S Pinafore*. I thought of the job as something I ought to do because I had spent much time in my teaching trying to show how the historian uses plays and other literary materials as evidence of cultural interests and standards.

The lecture was to be given in March 1975. Therefore I spent such spare time as I had in the winter and spring 1974-5 in reading all I could of the plays and of the *Bab Ballads*. The whole project was an interesting one, chiefly because I started from scratch, almost, and soon found myself in a fairly complex topic. No one before had written about the work of these men in terms of the different audiences one and the same text appealed to. I rearranged the lecture a number of times and delivered the final version by reading from a text. The total centenary celebrations attracted much interest and from this momentum created came a good audience for my lecture. A late spring blizzard, which began two hours before the lecture, made the Ithaca hills impassable and the afternoon a time of uncertainty—shall I be able to get home? Nevertheless the lecture had a good reception.

From “Cornell Notes, 1967-79,” unpublished as of 2005.

Wilfred Owen

Wilfred Owen was born at Plas Wilmot, Oswestry on March 18, 1893. In 1910 his family moved to Shrewsbury. When he was 13 or 14, he showed clearly the fascination that poetry had for him. In September of 1911, he took the University of London matriculation exam and in October he learned that he had matriculated, although without honors. He arranged to take botany classes at University College, Reading, for six hours a week. By this time he had become a writer of verses, and was particularly intrigued by the work of Keats. In May of 1913, he took the Reading University scholarship [exam]. In July he learned that he failed to win the Reading scholarship. Owen then goes to France, where he is an English instructor and tutor until October 21, 1915, when he joins up in the Artists' Rifles.

This is a collection of letters and poems of Wilfred Owen. The letters chronicle Owen's life during the war. The accompanying poems do not all correspond to the dates when the letters were written. However, I believe that the poems complement the mood and spirit of the letters.

The letters included in this paper all appear in a memoir by Edmund Blunden which is part of *The Poems of Wilfred Owen*, edited with a memoir and notes by Edmund Blunden, A New Directions Book, Norfolk, Connecticut, 1961. The poems and fragments are included in Jon Stallworthy's wonderful work *Wilfred Owen. The complete poems and fragments*, edited by Jon Stallworthy, W.W. Norton and Company, New York, 1954.

Wilfred Owen, speculating on his future, May 1914:

I certainly believe I could make a better musician than many who profess to be, and are accepted as such. Mark, I do not for a moment call myself a musician, nor do I suspect I ever shall be, but there! I love Music, with such strength that I have had to conceal the passion, for fear it be thought weakness.... Failing Music, is it Pictures that I hanker to do? I am not abashed to admit it, following Legend, have covered, with spirited fresco, the shed, or carved the staircase knob into a serene Apollo!... Let me now seriously and shamelessly work out a Poem."

Undated

Before the war:

FROM MY DIARY, JULY 1914

Leaves

Murmuring by myriads in the shimmering trees.

Lives

Wakening with wonder in the Pyrenees.

Birds

Cheerily chirping in the early day.

Bards

Singing of summer, scything through the hay.

Bees

Shaking the heavy dews from bloom and frond.

Boys

Bursting the surface of the ebony pond.

Flashes

Of swimmers carving through the sparkling cold.

Fleashes

Gleaming with wetness to the morning gold.

A mead

Bordered about with warbling waterbrooks.

A maid

Laughing the love-laugh with me; proud of looks.

The heat

Throbbing between the upland and the peak.

Her heart

Quivering with passion to my pressed cheek.

Braiding

Of floating flames across the mountain brow.

Brooding

Of stillness; and a sighing of the bough.

Stirs

Of leaflets in the gloom; soft petal-showers;

Stars

Expanding with the starr'd nocturnal flowers.

Reading of the War as an abstract subject, late 1914:

THE SEED

*War broke: and now the Winter of the world
With perishing great darkness closes in.
The foul tornado, centred at Berlin
Is over all the width of Europe whirled,
Rending the sails of progress. Rent or furled
Are all Art's ensigns. Verse wails. Now begin
Famines of thought and feeling. Love's wine's thin.
The gram of human Autumn rots, down-hurled.*

*For after Spring had bloomed in early Greece,
And Summer blazed her glory out with Rome,
A slow grand age, and rich with all increase.
But now, for us, wild Winter, and the need
Of sowings for new Spring, and blood for seed.*

In 1915, after joining the Artists' Rifles, but before seeing action, Owen apparently sees war as a burden. But there is an air of romanticism i[n] this poem written in 1915.

BALLAD OF PURCHASE MONEYS

*The Sun is sweet on rose and wheat
And on the eyes of children;
Quiet the street for old men's feet
And gardens for the children.*

*The soil is safe, for widow and waif,
And for the soul of England,
Because their bodies men vouchsafe
To save the soul of England.*

*Fair days are yet left for the old.
And children's cheeks are ruddy,
Because the good lads' limbs lie cold
And their brave cheeks are bloody.*

Gazetted to the Manchester Regiment, Owen joined the 2nd Battalion in January 1917 on the Somme battlefield, where the last sharp fighting was in progress, in the hardest of winters, before the Germans withdrew to their new trench system. Wilfred writes home:

I have just received Orders to take the train at Etaples, to join the 2nd Manchester This is a Regular Regiment, so I have come off mighty well.... It is a huge satisfaction to be going among well-trained troops and genuine "real-old" officers.... This morning I was hit! We were bombing, and a fragment from somewhere hit my thumb knuckle. I coaxed out one drop of blood. Alas! no more!! There is a fine heroic feeling about being in France, and I am in perfect spirits. A tinge of excitement is about me, but excitement is always necessary to my happiness.

INSPECTION

"You! What d'you mean by this?" I rapped.

"You dare come on parade like this?"

"Please, sir, it's—" "Old yer mouth," the sergeant snapped.

"I takes 'is name, sir?" "Please, and then dismiss."

Some days "confined to camp" he got,

For being "dirty on parade."

He told me, afterwards, the damned spot

Was blood, his own. "Well, blood is dirt," I said.

"Blood's dirt," he laughed, looking away.

Far off to where his wound had bled

and almost merged for ever into clay.

"The world is washing out its stains," he said.

"It doesn't like our cheeks so red:

Young blood's its great objection.

But when we're duly white-washed, being dead,

The race will bear Field Marshal God's inspection."

His mood was to change soon. Sunday January 7, 1917:

It is afternoon. We had an Inspection to make from 9 to 12 this morning. I have wandered into a village cafe where they gave me writing paper. We made a

redoubtable march yesterday from the last Camp to this. The awful state of the roads, and the enormous weight carried, was too much for scores of men. Officers also carried full packs, but I had a horse part of the way. It was beginning to freeze through the rain when we arrived at our tents. We were at the mercy of the cold, and, being in health, I never suffered so terribly as yesterday afternoon. I am really quite well, but have sensations kindred to being seriously ill. As I was making my damp bed, I heard the guns for the first time. It was a sound not without a certain sublimity. They woke me again at 4 o'clock. We are two in a tent. I am with [a] Lewis Gun Officer. We begged stretchers from the doctor to sleep on. Our servant brings _____ of water and the intense damp cold.... This morning I have been reading Trench Standing Orders to my platoon. Needless to say I show a cheerier face to them than I wear in writing this letter; but I must not disguise from you the fact that we are at one of the worst parts of the Line... I can't tell you any more Facts. I have no Fancies and no Feelings. Positively they went numb with my feet. Love is not quenched, except the unenduring flickerings thereof.

January 16:

I can see no excuse for deceiving you about these last 4 days. I have suffered seventh hell, I have not been at the front. I have been in front of it. I held an advanced post, that is, a "dug-out" in the middle of No Man's Land. We had a march of 3 miles over shelled road, then nearly 3 along a flooded trench. After that we came to where the trenches had been blown flat out and had to go over the top. It was of course dark, too dark, and the ground was not mud, not sloppy mud, but an octopus of sucking clay, 3, 4, and 5 feet deep, relieved only by craters full of water. Men have been known to drown in them. Many stuck in the mud and only got on by leaving their waders, equipment, and in some cases their clothes. High explosives were dropping all around, and machine-guns spluttered every few minutes. But it was so dark that even the German flares did not reveal us. Three-quarters dead, I mean each of us 3/4 dead, we reached the dug-out and relieved the wretches therein. I then had to go forth and find another dug-out for a still more advanced post where I left 18 bombers. I was responsible for other posts on the left, but there was a junior officer in charge. My dug-out held 25 men tight packed. Water filled it to a depth of 1 or 2 feet, leaving say 4 feet of air. One entrance had been blown in and blocked. So far, the other remained. The Germans knew we were staying there and decided we shouldn't. Those fifty hours were the agony of my happy life. Every ten minutes on Sunday afternoon seemed an hour. I nearly broke down and let myself drown in the water that was now slowly rising over my knees. Towards 6 o'clock, when, I suppose, you would be going to church, the shelling grew less intense and less accurate; so that I was mercifully helped to do my duty and crawl, wade, climb, and flounder over No Man's Land to visit my other post. It took me half an hour to move about 150 yards. I was chiefly annoyed by our own machine-guns from behind. The seeng-seeng-seeng of the bullets reminded me of Mary's canary. On the whole I can support the canary better. In the platoon on my left the sentries over the dug-out were blown to nothing. One of these poor fellows was my first servant whom I rejected. If I had kept him he would have lived, for servants don't do sentry duty. I kept my own sentries half-way down the stairs during the more terrific bombardment. In spite of this one lad was blown down and, I am afraid,

blinded. This was my own casualty. The officer of the left platoon has come out completely prostrated and is in the hospital. I am now as well, I suppose, as ever. I allow myself to tell you all these things because I am never going back to this awful post, it is the worst the Manchesters have ever held; and we are going back for a rest. I hear that the officer who relieved me left his 3 Lewis Guns behind when he came out. (He had only 24 hours in.) He will be court-martialled.

EXPOSURE

*Our brains ache, in the merciless iced east winds that knive us...
Wearied we keep awake because the night is silent...
Low, drooping flares confuse our memory of the salient...
Worried by silence, sentries whisper, curious, nervous,
But nothing happens.*

*Watching, we hear the mad gusts tugging on the wire,
Like twitching agonies of men among its brambles.
Northward, incessantly, the flickering gunnery rumbles,
Far off, like a dull rumour of some other war.
What are we doing here?*

*The poignant misery of dawn begins to grow...
We only know war lasts, rain soaks, and clouds sag stormy.
Dawn massing in the east her melancholy army
Attacks once more in ranks on shivering ranks of grey,
But nothing happens.*

*Sudden successive flights of bullets streak the silence.
Less deathly than the air that shudders black with snow,
With sidelong flowing flakes that flock, pause, and renew;
We watch them wandering up and down the wind's nonchalance,
But nothing happens.*

*Pale flakes with fingering stealth come feeling for our faces-
We cringe in holes, back on forgotten dreams, and stare, snow-dazed,
Deep into grassier ditches. So we drowse, sun-dozed,
Littered with blossoms trickling where the blackbird fusses,-
Is it that we are dying.*

*Slowly our ghosts drag home: glimpsing the sunk fires, glazed
With crusted dark-red jewels; crickets jingle there;
For hours the innocent mice rejoice: the house is theirs;
Shutters and doors, all closed: on us the doors are closed,-
We turn back to our dying.*

*Since we believe not otherwise can kind fires burn;
Nor ever suns smile true on child, or field, or fruit.
For God's invincible spring our love is made afraid;
Therefore, not loath, we lie out here; therefore were born.
For love of God seems dying.*

*Tonight, this frost will fasten on this mud and us,
Shrivelling many hands, puckering foreheads crisp.
The burying-party, picks and shovels in shaking grasp.
Pause over half-known faces. All their eyes are ice.
But nothing happens.*

February 4:

I suppose I can endure cold and fatigue and the face-to-face death as well as another; but extra for me there is the universal pervasion of Ugliness. Hideous landscapes, vile noises, foul language, and nothing but foul, even from one's own mouth (for all are devil-ridden)—everything unnatural, broken, blasted; the distortion of the dead, whose unburial bodies sit outside the dug-outs all day, all night, the most execrable sights on earth. In poetry we call them the most glorious. But to sit with them all day, all night—and a week later to come back and find them still sitting there in motionless groups, THAT is what saps the “soldierly spirit.”

April 25:

Never before has the Battalion encountered such intense shelling as rained upon us as we advanced in the open . . . The reward we got for all this was to remain in the Line 12 days. For twelve days I did not wash my face, nor take off my boots, nor sleep a deep sleep. For twelve days we lay in holes, where at any moment a shell might put us out. I think the worst incident was one wet night when we lay up against a railway embankment. A big shell lit on the top of the bank, just 2 yards from my head. Before I awoke, I was blown in the air right away from the bank! I passed most of the following days in a railway cutting, in a hole just big enough to lie in, and covered with corrugated iron. My brother officer of B Coy., 2nd Lt. G., lay opposite in a similar hole. But he was covered with earth, and no relief will ever relieve him, nor will his Rest be a 9-days-Rest.”

FUTILITY

*Move him into the sun-
Gently its touch awoke him once,
At home, whispering of fields half-sown.
Always it woke him, even in France,
Until this morning and this snow.
If anything might rouse him now
The kind old sun will know.*

*Think how it wakes the seeds-
Woke once the clays of a cold star
Are limbs, so dear achieved, are sides
Full-nerved, still warm, too hard to stir?
Was it for this the clay grew tall?-
O what made fatuous sunbeams toil
To break earth's sleep at all?*

In June, Owen found himself with a high temperature, and believed he had trench fever. About June 17, he was at the Welsh Hospital, Netley. One of his letters from the hospital sums up the creed which had taken bold form in his mind:

Already I have comprehended a light which never will filter into the dogma of any national church: namely, that one of Christ's essential commands was: Passivity at any price! Suffer dishonour and disgrace, but never resort to arms. Be bullied, be outraged, be killed; but do not kill. It may be a chimerical and an ignominious principle, but there it is. It can only be ignored: and I think pulpit professionals are ignoring it very skillfully and successfully indeed.... And am I not myself a conscientious objector with a very seared conscience?... Christ is literally in "no man's land." There men often hear His voice: Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for a friend. Is it spoken in English only and French? I do not believe so. Thus you see how pure Christianity will not fit in with pure patriotism.

From Netley, he was sent to what he described on June 26 as "a decayed hydro"—the Craiglockhart War Hospital, a short way out of Edinburgh. On August 8 he wrote from the hospital.

I am a sick man in hospital, by night: a poet, for quarter of an hour after breakfast. . . The other day I read a biography of Tennyson, which says he was unhappy, even in the midst of his fame, wealth, and domestic serenity. Divine discontent! I can quite believe he never knew happiness for one moment such as I have—for one or two moments. But as for misery, was he ever frozen alive, with dead men for comforters? Did he hear the moaning at the Bar, not at twilight and the evening bell only, but at dawn, noon, and night, eating and sleeping, walking

and working, always the close moaning of the Bar, the thunder, the hissing, and the whining of the Bar?...

Fragment from HAPPINESS

But the old happiness is unreturning:

Boys have no grief as grievous as youth's yearning;

Boys have no sadness sadder than our hope.

Owen stayed at Craiglockhart until mid-October. After Craiglockhart, he was given three weeks' leave pending return to his unit. Owen then went to Scarborough, and at first, by way of light duty, was appointed major-domo of the hotel where the seventy officers of the 5th (Reserve) Battalion, Manchester Regiment, assembled. In June of 1918, he was graded fit for general service. On August 31, he reported his embarkation to Mr. Sassoon:

... Everything is clear now; and I'm in hasty retreat towards the Front. Battle is easier here; and therefore you will stay and endure old men and women to the End, and wage the bitterer war end more hopeless.

Another message followed shortly:

The sun is warm, and sky clear, the waves are dancing fast and bright. But these are not Lines written in Dejection. Serenity Shelley never dreamed of crowns me. Will it last when I shall have gone into Caverns and Abysms such as he reserved for his worst daemons? ... And now I am among the herds again, a Herdsman; and a Shepherd of sheep that do not know my voice.

To Sassoon, September 22:

You said it would be a good thing for my poetry if I went back. That is my consolation for feeling a fool. This is what shells scream at me every time: "Haven't you got the wits to keep out of this?"

October 10, responding to Sassoon's letter:

Your letter reached me at the exact moment it was most needed—when we had come far enough out of the line to feel the misery of billets; and I had been seized with writer's cramp after making out my casualty reports. (I'm O.C. D Coy.) The Battalion had a sheer time last week. I can find no better epithet; because I cannot say I suffered anything, having let my brain grow dull. That is to say, my nerves are in perfect order.

It is a strange truth: that your Counter-Attack frightened me much more than the real one: though the boy by my side, shot through the head, lay on top of me, soaking my shoulder, for half an hour.

Catalogue? Photograph? Can you photograph the crimson-hot iron as it cools from the smelting? That is what Jones's blood looked like, and felt like. My senses are charred.

INSENSIBILITY (verses 1—3)

1

*Happy are men who yet before they are killed
Can let their veins run cold.
Whom no compassion fleers
Or makes their feet
Sore on the alleys cobbled with their brothers.
The front line withers.
But they are troops who fade, not flowers,
For poets' tearful fooling:
Men, gaps for filling:
Losses, who might have fought
Longer; but no one bothers.*

2

*And some cease feeling
Even themselves or for themselves.
Dullness best solves
The tease and doubt of shelling,
And Chance's strange arithmetic
Comes simpler than the reckoning of their shilling.
They keep no check on armies' decimation.*

3

*Happy are these who lose imagination:
They have enough to carry with ammunition.
Their spirit drags no pack.
Their old wounds, save with cold, can not more ache.
Having seen all things red,
Their eyes are rid
Of the hurt of the colour of blood for ever.
And terror's first constriction over,
Their hearts remain small-drawn.*

*Their senses in some scorching cautery of battle
Now long since ironed,
Can laugh among the dying, unconcerned.*

On October 29, Owen went into the line for the last time. On October 31, writing to his mother, Owen repeated the words:

My nerves are in perfect order... I came out in order to help these boys—directly by leading them as well as an officer can, indirectly by watching their sufferings that I may speak of them as well as a pleader can. I have done the first.

He had, and continued to do so until the end, which came one week before the Armistice was signed. On November 4, 1918, Owen was helping his men who were trying to bridge the Sambre Canal. Owen was helping to carry some duckboards or planks, and was at the water's edge when he was hit and killed. On November 11, peace came, men returned home, and news of Wilfred Owen's death reached Shrewsbury.

STRANGE MEETING

*It seemed that out of battle I escaped
Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped
Through granites which titanic wars had groined.*

*Yet also there encumbered sleepers groaned,
Too fast in thought or death to be bestirred.
Then, as I probed them, one sprang up, and stared
With piteous recognition in fixed eyes,
Lifting distressful hands, as if to bless.
And by his smile, I knew that sullen hall,-
By his dead smile I knew we stood in Hell.*

*With a thousand pains that vision's face was grained;
Yet no blood reached there from the upper ground,
And no guns thumped, or down the flues made moan.
"Strange friend," I said, "here is no cause to mourn."*

*"None," said that other, "save the undone years,
The hopelessness. Whatever hope is yours,
Was my life also; I went hunting wild
After the wildest beauty in the world,*

*Which lies not calm in eyes, or braided hair,
But mocks the steady running of the hour,
And if it grieves, grieves richlier than here.
For by my glee might many men have laughed;
And of my weeping something had been left,
Which must die now. I mean the truth untold,
The pity of war, the pity war distilled.
Now men will go content with what we spoiled,
Or, discontent, boil bloody, and be spilled.
They will be swift with swiftness of the tigress.
None will break ranks, though nations trek from progress.
Courage was mine, and I had mystery,
Wisdom was mine, and I had mastery:
To miss the march of this retreating world
Into vain citadels that are not walled.
Then, when much blood had clogged their chariot-wheels,
I would go up and wash them from sweet wells,
Even with truths that lie too deep for taint.
I would have poured my spirit without stint
But not through wounds; not on the cess of war.
Foreheads of men have bled where no wounds were.*

*“I am the enemy you killed, my friend,
I knew you in this dark: for so you frowned
Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed.
I parried; but my hands were loath and cold.
Let us sleep now....”*

Charles S. Hollocks

Charles S. Hollocks and I met for the first time when we enlisted as recruits in the British Army, on March 7, 1917. We joined the Queen's Westminster Rifles of the London Regiment, Battalion 16. For him it was the first enlistment; for me a second, as five months earlier I had tried to enlist in another London Regiment, the Artists' Rifles, and had then been rejected because my heart was out of order and kept me from military service. Now in March 1917, joining with a friend of mine named Carpenter, from Reading where I lived, the two of us went to the headquarters of the Royal Berkshire Regiment and we were both accepted, I without any heart examination.

Carpenter and I went to London and were duly enlisted and put with other recruits on a train that took us to a London suburb called Croydon. Two or three hundred of the Q.W.R. were there, undergoing training for active service in France and many of them were, like ourselves, boys of 18 who were debarred from front line service until we were 19. A few of us lived in an empty house, a dozen or so, and Charles Hollocks was one of our group, known to me in a casual way. When, much later, he and I spoke of our stay in Croydon, he mentioned an event in which he had said another recruit in our house had stolen his socks. I remembered that. The sergeant in charge said Charles and the other fellow should fight the matter out. And Charles said later, "He gave me quite a beating."

In May 1917 the Q.W.R. went from Croydon to Richmond Park, a few miles away, where we pitched tents and slept ten or so to a tent. Other regiments of the London Regiment were there alongside us; together we made a camp of about 2 or 3,000 persons. In my tent was Charles. At first we were friendly in a casual way, as we were with our other tentmates.

For myself the military parades and marches and active duty soon came to an end. After many marches of ten or fifteen miles a day in full kit, my heart began to lose a stroke or two, or to have excessive pulse rate, so the doctor who saw me said at once I should cease my military activities and prepare to be discharged. The examination took place in mid-July. The company commander ordered me to be the company store keeper. And so, still sleeping in my original tent, I took charge of the company store, with blankets and other soldiers gear; no rifles, no bayonets, no ammunition, but belts, and puttees and socks and such.

Charles told my son and me two years ago of one of his first recollections of me. I was in his store tent, a tent held upright by a central pole. Some object I held which I wished to put in place, by hammering it to the tent pole, and I stood there, on an upturned bucket, with the object and a nail and a hammer. As Charles came

Written March 1988.

in I aimed at the nail and hit my thumb. Charles said, "Fred turned to me, 'Excuse me; booger.'"

This was Charles's word for the English obscenity "bugger." Charles said to John and me, "Here was a man I might like, a man who says 'excuse me' before he says 'booger.'"

Charles was at this time and on until he went to France about Christmas time 1917, the company bread man. He had a tent; something like my store tent and there, day by day, bread for the company came. He distributed it to the cook and his men, but above all, as I see him now, he stood there most of the day, cutting the loaves into slices. I see him there at the large open part of the tent, behind a table, knifing his way through the bread supply.

He as bread man and I as store keeper, were given by some military pattern which I did not know, permanent evening passes that allowed us to leave camp about 6 p.m. and come back at 11 p.m. How we got them I don't know; it was far beyond the dreams of the ordinary infantryman who had to hear the "Last Post, Lights Out" when he went to sleep at 9:30. But for Charles and, in a sense, to me, there was more to it than that, for on some evenings Charles's girl, Lou, stood waiting outside the camp gate for us. The two of them had been companions for a long time, and now, indeed, welcomed me to join them in our evenings and nightly excursions to London. We walked a mile or so to a bus and journeys then to a famous club in London called *Ciro's*, a principal high life club which had been turned over completely to the services.

We went in, occupied a table, and had food and drink served; it was simple and substantial. I can still see the aristocratic ladies, with their jewel bedecked fingers, serving us tea and scones. For me a part of the experience was the concert offered continuously from the stage; a concert where persons eminent in the national stage and concert hall presented singing and piano playing and string quartets. To *Ciro's* Charles and Lou and I went many times, three or four times a week, and the events with their friendship is all I can remember of my life as a store-keeper.

At a point, somewhere about the end of September 1917, the army moved me away and a little later they moved me as a clerk to the British war office where I served throughout the rest of the war to about January 1st, 1919. The army then sent me to a military hospital southeast of London, a place called Lewisham, where my heart was to be studied. I was in trouble then, my heart out of order, and the doctors put me to bed; but after a few weeks I was up and about and in the course, for a year, allowed to go out and travel by street car in London proper, some seven miles away. By this time, while I was in hospital, Charles was in hospital, having been wounded in the right side of his face by a hand grenade. He had lost the sight of one eye. We had written to one another after he came back to hospital in London, and Charles later told my son and me that while he was in hospital I used to bring to him from time to time a bottle of Bordeaux. He was firm in saying this, but the whole thing has faded from my memory.

But certainly we wrote to one another during the years 1919 and 1920, and indeed during my three years at Oxford 1920-1923. When I told him that I had become captain of the St. Edmund Hall hockey (field hockey) team and was allowed to wear on my sports blazer a St. Edmund's Hall crest, Lou said she would make the

crest for me out of solid silver wire. It was the only thing of its kind I saw at Oxford and came from Lou whose profession was making the gold and silver decorations for the medieval finery of the Royal Family and the Lords and Ladies.

Charles and Lou gave my wife and me a wedding present in 1925, a copy of a painting by Veneziano, which hangs today above my fireplace. My wife and I were now living at Ithaca, N.Y. and my correspondence with Charles moved along year by year until the beginning of the 2nd World War. I was in England in 1927, 1929, and 1933, and I saw him briefly. The war caused us to lose one another; we were both caught up in a new variety of business. When I returned to London in 1951, one of my first acts was to get the telephone directory and look up Charles and there to my surprise he was. And so I called and Lou's sister answered and said she knew me and that Charles would come to my hotel the next day at 12 noon, a Sunday and bring me to lunch.

In all the correspondence and conversation of Charles and me we never asked direct questions about certain parts of our lives. For the time to 1951, I never asked him where he worked and certainly not what salary he earned. In some respects (though not for salary) it was different for me, because I told him from time to time what work I was doing at Cornell and what in way of advancement or studying lay ahead of me. I reported the children born, and the illnesses that caused trouble in my family, say once every three years or so, when my family had moved through a crisis. But for the rest, and especially on his side all was quiet. There were no children.

On the Sunday morning when I waited for him I had no idea how he would appear to me, how dressed, in what kind of car. A small, battered car drove up and in it was Charles, dressed in an oldish looking suit with here and there a mark that showed he still smoked a pipe. How should I move along the conversation? When we met in the army we talked about our jobs before enlistment and he told me he was office boy in a large insurance company which dealt with great Britain's internal and coastal shipping as Lloyd's did with ocean going shipping. Now, on this Sunday morning, 1951, I asked, "What job do you do now?" He said, "Same company as before." "What kind of work do you do?" "I'm the president."

So the battered car and the worn suit were marks of the year 1951, when Great Britain still suffered from shortages of food and clothing and the rest; though in all these things the conservative Charles was content to accept and, indeed, enjoy the restraints. As we were about to eat lunch he took me to the bathroom to wash my hands. There I saw a bath whose inner surface had been worn to the point where pieces of rust appeared. I said to him, "Why not get a new bath?" He answered, "This bath holds water, doesn't it."

But the whole affair was a joyful one. He spoke of his service as a fire bomb watcher during the war and of the bomb which had crashed into a shelter nearby and killed many people. It was, on that Sunday in 1951, a bright day and we went out and walked in a park, before he took me back to my hotel. And so for me, back to the United States and the new resumption of our writing. For a time, until he gave up stamp collecting, I sent him four copies and more of the U.S.A. stamps, as they appeared and in due course he wrote to me with new British stamps, all

carefully set out and postmarked in Taunton, to prove that they were purchased and stamped on the first day of their use; the First Day Cover.

After my wife died in 1977 I planned my summers to take me to England for two or three weeks and so I went from 1978 to 1986, with two one-year breaks. As I told Charles of this he arranged, from his home on Porelock, Somerset, to travel to the home of Flo and Len Lockett, Len his nephew, who lived at Cuffley in Hertfordshire, fifteen miles or so from Russell Square in London, where I stayed. My visits to him and Flo often were great events in my visits to England and I managed to get in two trips in each visit. During my later visits my son, John accompanied me, because I wished him to see someone who had been my best friends and, from his point of view, to see an Englishman, indeed a cockney, who came near to exemplifying the life, vigor, language and humor of that London quality

Charles became an active member of the high side of London's merchant and service aristocracy. He did not say so, but an aside here and there in a story, made it clear he had authority. In Great Britain persons from the lower classes, with accents that show their class origin, rise to power, and, in doing so, acquire the accents of the leading classes; in effect the accents of the British Broadcasting Company. Charles kept his cockney accent, not because he wished to be different, but because that was the way English was spoken; more specifically, that was the way he spoke it.

As Charles and I and Flo and Len sat at Cuffley talking for three or four hours about our work and interests, about the United States and Great Britain and gradually, from Charles, came more and more about his military service. This came particularly when he and I were alone. He had been, as I would have been except for my heart, in the front line. He had lived through all the unbelievable things that front line service meant. He never spoke to me of pain or suffering.

He joined up with other young men, when they got to France. They called themselves, he said, the Four Musketeers. They would stay by one another in front line duty. When they were prepared for their first raid into enemy lines one of the boys said to Charles, "If you see me frightened or afraid to go on, shoot me." They had no disasters. On another occasion the man, Charles said, did work of great bravery and was shot by the enemy and killed. Charles told me only a sentence about his own wound. "Do you remember the regimental sergeant major in the Q.W.R.?" he said in 1984. "I saw him a day or two ago. The last time I saw him he was down, his stomach and such had fallen out. I pushed it back in and used my mess plate to hold it there and bandaged it until they brought the stretcher." These things came from him in simple, flat statements.

Together he and I talked over and sometimes sang some of the songs that we used to sing as we marched. "Its a Long Way to Tipperary" was the best known one, but as I recalled others, about the Q.W.R. band, and recited the words "And Major Jones came up and took me by the hand and said he's never heard the likes of Charles Pemell's band." Charles corrected a word or two and went on to finish the song.

One story he told with glee, sums up him and his attitude to authority and to the War. After his stay in hospital he was transferred to the Paymaster's Corps, where they kept certain records, recorded promotions and deaths and kept company accounts. There he saw himself, a soldier who had been, as we said to the Front,

working with men who had soldier's uniforms but were, as he saw them, second class civilians, men who had got these jobs to get out of service. From time to time he said these things and in particular to a sergeant who himself took pride in telling Charles what he thought about him, Charles, wound and all, who had nothing to justify his criticism of the Paymasters Corps.

One day Charles saw on a notice board his own name among those who had been awarded a military medal for his own bravery in France and with this news was word that he, Charles, and some others were to go to Buckingham Palace to receive their award from the King. A great moment for Charles; a great disaster for the sergeant.

The sergeant came to Charles and made some slighting remarks about bravery, but brought a store keeper to measure Charles for a new uniform. "You can't go to Buckingham Palace in the old clothes they gave you in France," said the sergeant. In due course the new uniform arrived and they brought it to Charles, the tunic, the trousers, the puttees for the legs, the belt, the shoes. "There it all is," said the sergeant. But they had forgotten one thing. "Where's me 'at," said Charles. Charles said he stuffed uniform and hat and all into a bag and went to Buckingham Palace in the old one's he had received in France. He never said what the medal was he got or why he got it. Part of our friendship lay in the fact that neither he or I asked things about one another. We listened. And going to Buckingham Palace in his old uniform and playing a trick on the sergeant; an old Cockney joke.

Our friendship lasted for seventy-one years and become, towards the end, a knowledge that each of us gave greater worth to it. Through it the past came to life as we grew older and brought to us joy, such as young people see in the pleasures of thinking and talking about the future. With Charles and me what we wrote and said kept to a settled pattern: statements about our selves and our families, a mention once in a while of our small intentions, perhaps about the vegetable garden. We spoke of the things that pleased us in our own conduct with other people, the weather, a memory or two, and in correspondence and in the conversation at Flo and Len's home, the politics of Great Britain and United States.

This friendship was, of a certain kind, mature, steady, continuing, and devoid at all points of emotion. When my wife died and his a little later the true effect came simply, directly, perhaps a sentence or two. At all times he and I had deep personal concern for one another but this was assumed, never spoken. Our letters flowed on month by month, and whenever we met it was as though we last met two or three weeks ago.

He achieved fame in his work, though what it was precisely I never knew. He deserved fame for the knowledge and strength and sense of tradition that were part of his personal worth.

I salute him and bid him farewell, today, March 24, 1988.

Louis Agassiz Fuertes

In the world of art the painting of birds has flourished from ancient Egypt until the present day and in that world some seventy years ago, American ornithologists regarded Louis Agassiz Fuertes as the leading artist. In America today those who know birds and enjoy the painting of them still look to Fuertes as the master.

Fuertes was born February 7, 1874, in Ithaca, New York, the sixth child of Professor Estevan Antonio Fuertes and his wife Mary Perry. The professor taught civil engineering at Cornell University and gathered around himself and his wife a lively family much given to playing instruments and choral singing. Louis himself sang and played the flute and violin. He had a precise ear for natural sounds and in time he recognized and exactly repeated hundreds of bird songs.

Starting at the age of 10 he kept written records of the birds he saw, their movement, their migration, their food and nesting. The records were complete but they lacked a picture of each bird and so, at the age of 14, he taught himself to paint birds. He had already studied Audubon's *Birds of America* in its elephant folio in the Ithaca Public Library and with Audubon to guide him and with his own skill in painting his work won the support of ornithologists at Cornell University who arranged a public exhibition of it. Fuertes was 20 years of age.

He was by now a student in Cornell's College of Architecture where in 1895 a fellow student asked Fuertes to come with him to Philadelphia and show his paintings to his uncle, Elliott Coues, the leading person in the American Ornithologists Union. When the union met in Philadelphia in 1895 Coues arranged an exhibition of the paintings and spoke of the artist's work to the members who gave them high praise. In 1897 Coues made a formal judgment to ornithologists, "I say, with a full sense of the weight of my words, that there is no one who can draw and paint birds as well as Mr. Fuertes and I do not forget Audubon himself when I add that America has not produced an ornithologist artist of equal possibilities."

Coues asked Fuertes to illustrate a book called *Citizen Bird* which Mabel O. Wright wrote with him; other writers of bird books followed suit. By the time Fuertes had his degree from Cornell in 1897 he had illustrated three books, one of which *Citizen Bird* had 111 illustrations.

In 1896 Fuertes met a painter, Abbott Thayer, whose training had been in France but who had in his middle years become a prominent figure in American artistic life. Thayer heard Fuertes discuss the coloration of birds and then, having seen Fuertes' pictures he said, "yours are the true thing . . . half my life and passion is birds and pictures of them." Fuertes accepted Thayer's offer of artistic instruction and he lived in long stretches of time with the Thayer family near Dublin, New

Hampshire, from 1897 to 1900. Before 1897 Fuertes had studied and improved on the work of Audubon. Now, with the guidance and encouragement of Thayer, he used a vigorous, brilliant style of his own which brought together the attitude and movement and eyes of the bird into what he called "the personal look of the bird," a living forceful presentation which no earlier painter of birds had created.

By 1900 he was a professional artist and student of birds, the first American to make a living in this way. Fuertes brought together in the collections in his studio hundreds of paintings and drawings he had made, referring to them as a scholar might refer to his notes. A pencil sketch, a more complete drawing, his study of a foot, perhaps a watercolor; he had a dozen of these for any bird he had worked on in the field and these, with the bird skins he had prepared or borrowed, were the library to which he turned as he made the finished plates for such works of his as the illustrations for *The Birds of New York State* and *The Natural History of Ducks*. They remain today the best of their kind.

My memories of Fuertes in the 1920's show him as a person prominent in the life of Ithaca, N.Y. and known for his paintings to many in the United States. Dr. Livingston Farrand, president of Colorado University, on being invited to become president of Cornell, said he knew of Ithaca as the home of Cornell University and of Louis Fuertes. By the 1920's Fuertes had worked for twenty years in a studio where, with door ajar, Ithaca friends and school children came to visit him. For the Cornell alumni who returned to Ithaca, Fuertes was a reminder of the last thirty years, of songs he had sung at student gatherings and at alumni reunions. Ithacans knew him for his comic lectures, as on the art of snoring; to Boy Scouts he was a leader who took them on bird-walks. As he passed the time of day with his visitors to the studio Fuertes worked at his easel.

Life in Ithaca was interspersed with journeys to parts of America, to Europe, and to Africa, in particular to Alaska, to South America and to Ethiopia. His usual companion was Frank Chapman, editor of the ornithological magazine *Bird Lore*, and the two of them covered 50,000 miles through forest and plain. They went as representatives of leading museums in the United States for whom they studied birds, shot them and skinned them. Fuertes ended each day by painting some of the birds he collected. In Ethiopia for example, in 1926 and 1927, day by day he spent a morning and afternoon in the field and then walked back to camp and began to skin and pack his birds, and after a wash and supper, he painted four or five of them each evening. Half an hour was enough for a single portrait.

Watercolor drawings of this kind which he made from 1898 on throughout his life, and the pencil sketches he made in the field as a preliminary to the portraits, are for me and many admirers of the artistic skill of Fuertes the height of his mastery.

His first step in painting birds was to take into his mind and senses the bird before him. Vernon Bailey, chief field naturalist of the United States Biological Survey, went with Fuertes to Texas in 1901 to study mammals and birds. He said of Fuertes "one morning at sunrise, in our base camp in a gulch of the Chisox Mountains, a Mearns quail came and sat on a rock and preened and strutted and spread its hooded crest within four or five feet of his nose. When it had gone he

burst out of his sleeping bag and fairly danced with joy as he ran for pencil and paper and worked for an hour on sketches of the quaint bird.”

When Fuertes spoke of his work as an artist he began by talking of himself as a boy and, using the third person, he called himself “a boy.” “It was not the natural ability to draw which established the boy in the painting of birds but rather the opposite,” he said, “his desire to learn accurately developed him in his crude and unlearned handling of his medium.” From childhood he had learned by himself the bodies and feathers of birds. “I have been longer a student of the comparative anatomy, appearance, and general personal looks of the birds themselves and have spent a larger proportion of my time since boyhood on the direct study of birds and have seen more widely varied types in life than almost anyone I know.”

“The one fundamental, basic, prerequisite of all art, particularly naturalistic art, must be good, sound, deep and appreciative knowledge,” he said. Next in importance was the awareness of color. The beginning student, declared Fuertes, must know, “the actual, local color of objects and elements and the color reflected from lighted parts on to shaded parts.” These things the student was not to “behold” or “observe,” like objects that pass before his eyes in a moment of impression, a flash, but to “see” to the full extent of his “visual capacity,” the structure, the color, the relation of part to part drawn together by him into a single artistic unity. From the depths of what he had seen he must “work without stint to put them together on paper or canvas.” Advice of this kind he gave to Keith Williams in 1922 (see Marcham, editor of *Louis Agassiz Fuertes & the singular beauty of birds*, page 26) as he did with more elaborate comments to the young persons who wrote to him and came to see him asking for help in the painting of birds.

Fuertes worked without stint to that day on August 22, 1927 when he died as his car was struck by a passing train. He had in his studio three thousand of his drawings and sketches and these make it possible to reconstruct his life as an artist from day to day. He began his morning with half a dozen preliminary sketches for his first work and from them he made, perhaps, a formal watercolor for a book. His drawings and paintings were part of fifty publications whose range included William Beebe’s *Monograph of the Pheasants*, T. Gilbert Pearson’s *Hérons of the United States*, a part of *The Birds of Massachusetts and Other New England States*, scores of bird magazines, and seven publications for the National Geographic Society.

Year by year individual collectors commissioned him to paint large bird pictures and these are today to be found throughout the United States in museums and private homes. Fuertes had in mind pictures of this kind when in 1925 he said to Roger Tory Peterson about his paintings of a great horned owl in a trap he had just finished, “This is the way I really like to paint. I’m going to do more of it from now on.”

In his paintings and drawings large and small he presented the bird in all its vividness. The bird itself is alive and in action in Narina’s trogon, the chestnut-eared aricari, and the great blue heron. His rendering of the curly-crested shrike, the secretary bird, and breast and underwing of the magpie jay show his grace in using watercolor for the texture of the bird’s feathers. He had the hands of an angel.

To this great gift he had another, the ability to write with such skill that among the novelists and prose writers in the United States in the early 1900's he stood with the best for his lively description in words of the scene immediately before him and the emotion it created in him. The clarity of his words and thoughts are like the clarity of what his brush brought to life. Hundreds of his letters still exist at Cornell University and among these are the letters to his wife, written sometimes in a jungle tent, the candle flickering.

He wrote an eight page letter to his wife one night on February 22, 1913 from Monte Redondo in Colombia. A sentence or two says all about his literary style.

“Along the trails bare little farms, built so steep they look like maps of farms on the wall. They harbor and faintly nourish a scattered people the poorest in every conceivable sense, I think, in the world. They know of nothing truly. They can hardly think at all and stand in a blurry daze while you pass them, and probably for hours after. I have never been so touched by what man, God's creature, will do and do without to live bare life as here in these sad, huge, resourceless desolations of the eastern Andes.”

The things seen, the scattered people, his own emotional shock, and the total setting in the “desolations of the eastern Andes,” these are the cry of a living person called to speak, to write with the same force that caused him to paint.

When he died in 1927 in his 54th year he had already given to the study of birds in the United States new standards of knowledge and appreciation. He had illustrated scores of cards with bird pictures and these went out to advertise purchases in every home. Children collected them. The books he illustrated were on hand in libraries. Leading museums displayed his works and persons of wealth cherished his portraits of birds in their homes.

What he drew and painted put before the public the knowledge of the bird as a natural creature, its form, its color, its movements, and, by the grace of Fuertes as an artist, called up in the viewer a sense of the beauty Fuertes had experienced in painting it. Out of this work he was a leader with Frank Chapman and others in the vast expansion of popular study and enjoyment of birds that occurred from the early 1900's to present.

Fuertes was above all things an ornithologist from his earliest days to his death. Hundreds of different kinds of birds he knew as an anatomist, their colors he knew, their habits and the rest. His study in North America and his visits to other continents kept him in action as a scientist.

He was a lively man, fond of company. He was a gentleman. One day I asked a woman who as a child had known him what was her memory of him. She said that on an afternoon she rode in the Ithaca Street Car and that she was worried because she had to attend a birthday party in a few hours and had no present to give. Fuertes who knew her well was riding in the car, caught her face, and came to ask why she worried. She told him. “Get off this car at my house,” he said, “and I'll paint a bird picture for you.”

Charles Henry Hull

Charles Henry Hull was born in Ithaca, September 19, 1864. He graduated from Cornell University in 1886, was appointed assistant librarian in 1889, and the year following went to Germany, where he studied economics and history for two years, receiving the degree of doctor of philosophy from the University of Halle in 1892. Returning to Cornell as instructor in Political and Social Institutions, he was appointed assistant professor of Political Economy in 1893, professor of American History in 1901, and Goldwin Smith professor of American History in 1911. He retired from active service in 1931, in excellent health and in the prime of his intellectual powers, only to be prostrated by an obscure and painful disease which he endured with great fortitude until his death, July 15, 1936.

Residing virtually all his life in the place of his birth, Professor Hull's activities were identified, in a singularly happy and useful way, with the City of Ithaca and Cornell University, both of which he served untiringly and to their great advantage. His knowledge of men and things, his sound judgment, and his integrity in thought and conduct made it inevitable that honors and responsibilities should be incessantly thrust upon him. He served as secretary of the University Faculty, as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and as Faculty representative on the Board of Trustees. His knowledge and love of books, and his competence in the purchase and care of them, was of incalculable assistance to those in charge of the library.

He was one of the founders and the first president of the Co-operative Society. He served as president of the Town and Gown Club, and was one of those who did most to make it an agreeable and a useful meeting place for faculty members and townsmen. He served as vice president of the Ithaca Community Chest, as president of the Hospital Association, as a member of the Ithaca Board of Education, as a director of the Chamber of Commerce and of the Cornell Library Association. It would be difficult to name a man who, so unobtrusively and with so little self-seeking, was so incessantly and so competently occupied with the practical affairs of the community and the university which he loved.

Although immersed in practical affairs, Professor Hull always regarded teaching as the first of his obligations. Countless men and women throughout the country will remember him as a teacher and a friend. They will remember that he was exacting in his requirements, unerring in detecting and caustic in exposing slipshod or dishonest effort. They will remember still better the acute intelligence, the vivid personality of the man, the genuine interest he took in their work, the time he freely gave in helping them to do it well. Best of all, they will remember that he was their friend as well as their teacher, that he always met them as individuals, without aloofness or condescension, and that no one was ever more

Written January 1937.

warmly sympathetic, or more ready with substantial aid, when they came to him for advice in any personal trouble.

As a scholar, Professor Hull achieved high distinction. He was one of those who can acquire wide and exact knowledge, and who possess as a native endowment that critical insight, that constructive imagination, and that sympathetic understanding which, applied to knowledge, lead to wisdom. His edition of *The Economic Writings of Sir William Petty*, published when he was 34 years of age, was at once pronounced by competent critics, in Europe and America, to be in its kind a masterpiece without blemish. The dominant characteristic of his mind was an insatiable intellectual curiosity—the desire to know what is true in order to understand what is possible and desirable to be done. “I am inclined to think,” he once said, “that there are no uninteresting subjects, there are only uninterested people.” By virtue of a happy union of erudite learning and an analytical intelligence of the first order, he could find any subject interesting by disclosing its essential nature and its significant relations. Whether in the study occupied with books, or among men occupied with affairs, he was ever engaged in research in the original and best sense of that term—engaged in searching more profoundly into the truth of alleged facts, into the validity of accepted conclusions.

We admired Professor Hull for his competence, we honored him for what he did; but we loved and revered him for what he was. We loved him for his sincerity, for his unfailing courtesy and kindness, for his indefeasible integrity. We loved him for the serenity with which he met good and evil fortune, for the subtle humor that disarmed contentiousness, for the ironic understatement that deflated high claims, for the instinctive generosity that promoted good will. We shall remember him as he went about among us, never idle, yet never hurried, and ever ready to lend himself to our necessities. Those of us whose work brought us into close association with him can never forget how free we always were to consult him on any subject, simple or recondite, that might concern us. We shall not forget the genuine modesty with which he would first of all assure us that he knew very little about the matter; nor forget that he would then, in his calm and leisurely manner, in sentences elaborate and unconfined, sinuously intricate and infinitely qualified, set before us a reticulated pattern of relevant facts and of the circumstances that occasioned them, from which there would emerge the conclusions that seemed to him tentatively tenable. Nor shall we forget that he would then sincerely apologize for not being able to be of any real assistance to us. Least of all shall we forget how all but impossible it was to come away from such conferences without having our knowledge increased from his store, our insight quickened by his criticism, our judgment fortified and our wisdom deepened by the easy play of his profound and flexible intelligence.

Those who speak of Charles Henry Hull have no need to recall the precaution *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*. In his life as in his death, as a scholar and as a colleague, as a man and as a citizen, above all as a friend, there is nothing but good that can be said or will be remembered of him. He was a man whose character and conduct challenged pessimism and engendered courage by exhibiting, consistently and in rare perfection, those qualities of intelligence and good will that are essential to a life that is at once wisely ordered and memorable.

Remembering Carl Becker

When my fellow graduate students first mentioned Becker's name to me, and I mentioned it with awe that no other professor's name called forth, I was puzzled. Not so much that the name was new to me; I had heard the names of no other Cornell history professors, except that of Wallace Notestein and then only because he had come to Oxford to interview me.

In my first few weeks at Cornell I had come to accept the parochialism of my Oxford education in history; but it was disturbing to be made aware that here in the Cornell history department was a historian perhaps more highly respected than any other in the United States. And I had never heard his name, though I knew the names of the leading historians in France, Germany, Holland, and Russia.

My fellow graduate students, to a man and woman, registered for graduate work with Becker, either in a major or a minor field; I did not. This was partly because I wished to explore other fields of knowledge besides history, partly because I was not, in these first weeks when the decisions were made, as earnest as they were.

As Becker's students they saw a side of him I did not; Becker in seminar—gentle, relaxed, asking questions that went to the roots of ideas, offering tentatively for criticism, as though he were himself a graduate student, his latest manuscript essay or a chapter from a book.

Years later, when I sat beside him as a fellow examiner of graduate students, the same qualities held. He posed the fundamental questions, he assumed that the student would take thirty seconds or so to find the beginning of an answer and he waited, rolling a cigarette between his fingers and thumb. If no answer came he began to offer a suggestion or two. Somehow or other he bailed the student out; though in doing so he made a just appraisal of the student's intellectual attainments. He was, of all the persons I have known, the only one who saw you, virtues and faults, saw into your mind and knew its limits, yet liked you, indeed, admired you. (See his introduction to George Gordon Andrews's *Napoleon in Review*.)

I was not one of Becker's students but by accident I became, almost at once, in a minor way one of his colleagues. In the summer 1924 I returned to England for a vacation, [Professors] Notestein, [Charles] Hull, Becker, and [Frederick C] Prescott [English] were holidaying in the English Cotswolds; they invited me to spend a few days with them. One morning at breakfast Becker produced a cablegram from Julian Bretz, Cornell's other American historian, saying there was suddenly a vacancy in the department. The ancient history professor had withdrawn: would Marcham take on the job?

From the September 1974 Cornell Alumni News.

Notestein bridled at the suggestion; it would be unprofessional for an English historian to teach ancient history. I said simply that I had never taken a course or read a book on ancient history. Becker said, "Well, Marcham. if you don't do it, they'll get some grey bearded old chap who'll bore the students. Do it yourself, it's part of the game." I said I would: I did not know that Becker had begun his teaching career in almost identical circumstances.

To some degree, perhaps, Becker's simple friendliness towards me came from a concern to see how I managed my new responsibilities. We did not see him often. He taught his classes and seminars only in the afternoon and came to the campus after lunch. He suffered long periods of illness. Once or twice in the '20's and '30's it seemed not possible that he would survive. My recollection of him therefore has nothing of the solidity and continuity of my memory of Hull, the other leading figure in the department. I see him only in a few brief scenes.

In the fall of 1924, after I had begun my adventure in ancient history, he dropped by to ask how things were going and whether I was receiving the salary I mentioned in the return cablegram that carried my acceptance of the job. I said all was well; the salary was \$400 or \$500 less than the one agreed upon.

Becker: "Had you built any plans on the expectation of the higher salary?"

M: "Yes, but only tentative."

Becker: "Could it be that you hoped to save enough to get married next summer?"

M: "Well, yes. We have talked about it."

Becker: "I'll see what can be done."

Henceforth I received the agreed-on salary.

On a spring morning the Cornell historians, with those of Rochester, Syracuse, and other Central New York colleges, were holding their annual informal convention at Cazenovia. I sat alone with Becker at a small breakfast table. He was reading the morning paper. He began to speak of a new movie in which Charlie Chaplin performed. The animation with which he spoke of Chaplin surprised me. Was he interested in such things? When he stopped talking about Chaplin's grace and agility, I thought, "I understand: Becker is a man in almost constant ill health, his physical skills no more than the ability to play a so-so game of pool in Willard Straight Hall. No wonder he is dazzled by the almost infinite physical accomplishments of Chaplin."

A little later he said, from behind the paper, "I wonder how Lou Gehrig feels today?" How would one explain the fact that he knew the name of a baseball player? Perhaps it was accident. His eye had caught the name, he had read the story and learned that Gehrig now knew he had an incurable disease and must quit baseball at once. I was listening to the compassionate Becker. But not so.

Becker I learned later from his correspondence was a World Series fan and tried to arrange his affairs so that he could attend a game or two. More than that, he gloried in the crowds, the hum, the stirring of a great city. He loved New York and London. When for the only time in his life he contemplated visiting Paris, which to him as an authority on the French Revolution should have been Mecca,

he glowed at the prospects of entertainment, but avowed that he would not stick his neck into “that dusty old Bibliotheque.”

Becker was a loyal colleague and a concerned member of the history department. His bonds with Hull were particularly strong. The robust, rotund, bearded, steady Hull was in appearance almost the opposite of the frail, sickness-ridden Becker. But in things intellectual and more they spoke the same language. They had the same concern for integrity, for utter honesty, as men and as scholars.

For the persons with whom they came in contact their concern was deep, though Becker dealt with a relatively small group—his graduate students and his colleague-friends. It was as though he had taken them into his family.

He was sensitive to the general welfare of mankind and was appalled by the suffering caused by war, poverty, and disease. When he spoke of the good life and described the service and sacrifice that might lead to it he also took account of the circumstances in which men must put their basic physical needs before their ideals.

But for all his interest in his fellow man he was not a frequenter of social parties, even academic social parties; I doubt if he spoke more than the necessary words to his barber. With Hull it was otherwise, as was appropriate for a man who once said to me that there were no uninteresting things, only uninterested people.

Becker showed concern for the people in his circle by the direct, simple, low-key way in which he spoke. His remarks, often questions, were sober and to the point. On the other hand he took great pleasure in the lively, witty conversation of his graduate students, particularly women. Much of his conversation on personal matters asked what you thought about this or that, how your affairs stood. You were his equal and though he did not thrust himself upon you, you knew that he stood ready to help you.

Both Hull and Becker were scholarly men though in quite different ways. Hull was the master of the particular, a fountain of knowledge. Give him a paper bag and he would describe the different sizes and uses that might occur here and there, the different materials. But that would be merely the prelude to the explanation of the economic, social, and ultimately historical significance of the paper bag. You would learn how and why it replaced the burlap bag; how its triumph signalled the end of the frontier era. He might apologize for talking so much, and add, as he did once to me, “I don’t think I could have done so much with the trouser button.”

Hull’s mind formed connections joining one fact to another in the manner of a telephone system so that from any given point he could move in any direction. For conversation and lecturing this was no handicap. In his later years it kept him from writing books and essays. No one knew a tenth as much about Ezra Cornell as he, yet he could not finish a short essay on Cornell for the *Dictionary of American Biography*. The editors turned the job over to Allan Nevins who probably put an assistant to work gathering information and then wrote the essay himself in a couple of hours.

Becker was a man who dealt with ideas and drew his inspiration from the leading philosophers, political theorists, and economists of the West. As George Sabine explains, in his introduction to Becker’s *Freedom and Responsibility in the American Way of Life*, Becker had a mind of great subtlety and balance.

His genius lay in sorting out some of the leading intellectual issues that concerned his contemporaries—the educated public, as well as professional historians, philosophers, and social scientists—and arranging them into reasonably clear patterns. In the manner of a judge he weighed conflicting arguments on freedom of speech or private economic enterprise or constitutional government and he brought the reader face to face with the basic questions that called for decision. The reader had a sense of seeing the issues in new perspective, clearly, free of prejudice, the pros and cons fairly balanced, the whole subject put in place in a framework of history, of philosophy, of morals.

Becker wrote with difficulty. I myself have sat by his desk while he moved from the twelfth to the thirteenth writing of an essay. But when he had come to the final draft, each thought, each word was where he wished it to be and the whole essay had coherence and completeness. The style was open and graceful, rich in the range of its allusions to the profound and the homely, and informed by a gentle humor. To his public Becker was what Mencken was to the world of literary and social criticism. Since his day no academic has held a similar position of eminence in the United States.

In his later years Becker's principal interest was to uphold the values of democracy and to show what was needed to assure its survival. Freedom and responsibility became his watchwords. His last public lectures, given in 1944, traced the development of democracy in the United States. The published version of them is in the book on freedom and responsibility already referred to.

Throughout Becker's later works his mind moved around the concepts of integrity, intelligence, goodwill. These, he said, were the qualities the good man should have, qualities which, when brought to bear upon society by all, would assure the good life, the survival of democracy, of Cornell University as Becker had known it.

How were Becker's opinions received at Cornell; what effect did they have? Praise of democracy and the endorsement of qualities such as integrity and intelligence went well in the early 1940s, for the United States was involved in a war which, if not intended to make the world safe for democracy, did seek to destroy fascism, the foe of democracy.

What Becker had to say about the American tradition of freedom and responsibility made it possible for men to believe, as Churchill led Britons to believe, that their cause was not only just but hallowed by the ideals and sacrifices of their forefathers. The war made Becker's interpretation of American history not wartime propaganda but teaching acceptable to a nation at war, a sophisticated study all the more acceptable because, as Sabine said, "for the democracy of his time Becker posed the greater problem—perhaps the final problem of emancipated intelligence—an idealism without illusion and a realism without cynicism."

Curtis P. Nettels

Curtis Nettels came to the Cornell History Department when he was a mature man and a scholar known throughout the nation. Our history community saw him at once as a person of deep commitment, a man to whom the study of history was more than a profession; perhaps a view of life, rather a way of life, a driving force that kept his mind in action in matters present as well as past, great and small.

In the center of his thinking was the Age of the American Revolution, the setting for events which he regarded as unique in the history of the Western World: unique for the quality of those who carried through the Revolution; unique for the effects of the revolution—the new nation it created, the noble principles which that nation enshrined and through its example offered to the world.

He had a powerful mind which studied and studied again the evidence which he thought supported his judgments. More than that he had an intellectual passion that caused him to commit himself entirely to the judgments he had made. He accepted no qualifications, no compromises. The zeal that he brought to the support of his judgments he turned with equal force in defense against those who disagreed with him. Not since the days of an earlier colleague, George Lincoln Burr of sixty years ago, has the History Department had a man of such well-reasoned, independent, and intense convictions.

Curtis Nettels thought it his duty as an historian to hold together in his mind the past and the present of American public life. As the crises of present day America took shape, he studied them and often found in them parallels with events of the past. His letters to the press pointed out these parallels, and went on to offer comments on contemporary affairs and to suggest appropriate policies. A true historian, to him the past was a daily point of reference for the affairs of today; and behind the turns of politics and foreign policy lay the crowning glory of the American Revolution.

His ties with me were on the surface not simple. For him, to whom the American Revolution and the throwing off of the English yoke were sacred matters, there was the inconvenient fact that I had been born in England, I came from the camp of the enemy. This might have been the cause for his unfriendliness if not hostility. But it was not so.

In all his dealings with me over thirty years and more, he was not only gracious and friendly, but affectionate. His feelings ran in deep channels. His loyalties were intense. In the formulation and presentation of ideas, his mind was vigorous and firm once he had given shape to his judgments. In the informalities of personal refutations with his colleagues, his manner was warm. To us he was at once a doughty and formidable warrior in the world of historical ideas; and a colleague who, though somewhat withdrawn in his manner, valued his association with us.

We shall remember him for both of these qualities.

Written in 1981.

William Wayne Krantz, A Tribute

William Wayne Krantz, the son and only child of Mr. and Mrs. R[udolf] Krantz of South Lansing, New York, and a fourth-year Engineering student at Cornell University, died on August 6, 1960, after a short illness.

His parents, particularly his father, I have known for many years: we have been close friends. Our first acquaintance came when I went to the Krantz garage for repairs to my car. Soon, my wife and I, when driving through South Lansing, made a practice of stopping at the garage to say a few words to Mr. Krantz—Rudy, as we called him. My sons turned to him for advice and help concerning their cars, as did some of my faculty friends. We had found an expert mechanic, one whose work and word could be relied on. The more we turned to him, the more we were satisfied; the more we were satisfied, the more anxious I was to do something in return. Rudy turned my offers aside; he was glad enough, he said, to know and have the confidence of me and my family and my friends. Later, when his son was ready, perhaps I would advise him and help him about going to college.

Bill I had first learned about when his father told me that he had undergone a serious operation at Rochester. His life was in peril for a while. We stopped in South Lansing more often and offered our sympathy: we rejoiced with the parents when he recovered. Within a year or so the question of college came up for discussion in detail, and I began to consider seriously what I could do to help.

By this time I had met Bill and knew him to be a lively, gentle, and earnest boy. When he and I spoke of college I kept in mind two things: his experience in his father's garage—he knew how to work with tools—and his education at the local high school—a small, rural school, few of whose graduates went to college. Bill, it is true, had done well at school; indeed, had been prominent in all activities—academic, social, and athletic. Nevertheless, I judged him to be best suited for a small, technical college where he might use his skills and learn more about farm machinery. I planned to advise him accordingly.

He surprised me by saying at once that he wished to enter Cornell. I changed my plans and said that perhaps I could help him to enter the College of Agriculture: I mentioned the possibility that he might prepare himself for work in the college's Department of Agricultural Engineering. He said that he wanted nothing less than admission to the School of Electrical Engineering. This staggered me. I knew that his College Entrance Board scores were not high and that he would be competing with students whose general preparation was much better than his; besides, the curriculum of the school is a rigorous one. Would it be fair to put him to such a test; to risk not only his own disappointment but that of his parents, if he could not meet the standards. These views I put to him: he was firm. And so with my blessing he applied to the School of Electrical Engineering. He had his interview

Delivered in 1960.

with the admissions officer. His application was refused. I spoke to him again about the College of Agriculture.

Again he said, no. He wished to become an electrical engineer, no more, no less. These conversations had taught me a good deal about him, particularly about his attitude to the future and his strength of character. Perhaps, I began to say to myself, I should try my powers of persuasion on the admissions officer. Maybe this young man, like his father, would give more than a hundred cents on the dollar. When he said that he would work to the limit and meet Cornell standards, he meant it, he would do it. I pointed out to him that he would have to rearrange his whole life and build it around study, and that he would have to commit himself to five years of unremitting work: above all that however hard he worked he would have disappointments. Yes, he said, he had thought about all these things; but he was ready for them and he was confident. I went to see the admissions officer. In the spring of 1956 they told him he had been admitted. He began his undergraduate work at Cornell in the fall of 1956.

He had indeed reorganized the pattern of his life, and his parents had done all that they could to help him. Not only did he have a quiet and adequate room to work in but the promise of every consideration of his wishes. He had prepared for himself a rigorous schedule, and as the first weeks and months went by I knew that everything he could do to master his work he would do. But would that be enough? About this I wondered all the more as he grappled with his studies in English. He could not write; he could not adjust his mind to the requirements of the elementary course in English.

Here I believed I could help a little and so for some part of the first term we worked together. He improved slowly, but improve he did. And so with other courses; the struggle was often difficult, but he always acted swiftly and never hesitated to engage a tutor. Bit by bit he put together an adequate record—at first it was no more than that—and passed his first year's work. The second, the third, the fourth year, each came a little more easily, though not without occasional disappointments. By the end of his fourth year his steadiness and his improved performance had won him five college scholarships.

The steadiness was what impressed me, the willingness to do each day's work as it came along, however late he might have to stay up to finish it. He was never behind, never out of step. Yet he was not a mere machine. He had his times if not of despair, at least of unhappiness, when something he wished to master seemed to be beyond him. On these occasions, a word or two of encouragement was enough. He smiled shyly, happily again, said Thank you, and picked up his books.

As I followed his career at Cornell I believed more and more that here was a young man of unusual promise. He had begun as a boy, a simple country boy. He had chosen to study in a difficult field. He had kept to his work day by day, year by year; almost always the same quiet, efficient, pleasant student. What a man this country boy would make! How many students have I known who had natural qualities of mind many times greater than his and yet how few of them did work worthy of their gifts? How many hundreds of students have I known who with a quarter of his power to persevere could have had successful careers at Cornell, and yet have failed? To me he came to be almost unique, the ideal student; ideal

not so much for his willingness to work as for his loyalty to his own concept of what he wished to do.

During his fourth year in college the serious abdominal condition which caused his first operation began to reappear. Through the winter and the spring, his health, though never so poor as to disable him completely, interfered with his capacity for work. Yet he worked on without a break, and the quality of his work improved. The School of Electrical Engineering added to his original scholarship at the beginning of the second term. His performance at the end of the second term won him even more scholarship aid. The road to successful, even distinguished accomplishment in his fifth and final year seemed open. During the summer, however, his health declined. Under a second prolonged operation he weakened and, after a few days of suffering, he died.

So passed away one for whom I had the highest hopes, not only as a student but as a man. His career as a student had made me happy because it confirmed one of my strongest beliefs; that character, drive, and steadiness count for much—almost everything—in the maturing of an undergraduate. His career seemed to say, bring a young man of determination and native wit to a great university, let the one work, the other stimulate and guide, and see what is made—the intelligent, resolute, gentle, informed man, the man who can go his own way and gradually pick up responsibilities without stumbling or stooping.

This was the man I had seen in the making, whose memory I shall always cherish, whose example I shall have in mind whenever I sit down to advise a student. In his death I find only this small comfort, that I may write and speak of him with more freedom than he would have wished me to use if he had lived, and that by this means others may draw strength from his accomplishments. For there is strength in the story of his four years at Cornell, his own strength and the force of a great university.

And yet I had known only part of him, though the part I had known seemed more than enough to make a solid, stable man. I did not know of his religious beliefs. No word of our many conversations had ever, directly or indirectly suggested to me that he had strong beliefs. Indeed I had been so unobservant that I did not know whether his family was Catholic or Protestant.

I conclude this short memorial to Bill Krantz with the following letters, which he wrote some days before his operation, when he knew or guessed that perhaps he would not survive it. That he wrote them is remarkable enough. What he wrote is testimony both to the direct and practical qualities of his mind and to the depth of his faith:

To the greatest folk in the world:

Dear Mother & Dad:

This is just a note to let you know a few of the wishes I wish that I could have completed and to tell you that I really love you both, even though I did not show it. Even now I can't find the words to describe my love for you two, so I say I honestly, really, loved you.

With my insurance policy if you can afford it please give the new church building fund about \$1,000.00. I always wanted to buy you both a new car, so please when the 1961 models come out buy a 1960 (new Chev.). With the remainder of the insurance money place it in the Ithaca Savings & Loan 6 percent bonds.

I'll be waiting for you both next to those pearly gates. So please go to Church every Sunday morning & evening. Dad I don't believe that it is necessary for you to work on Sunday.

Please both live a clean life.

Until Eternity

Your loving son, Bill

P.S. Tell Nana I will be waiting for her. Instead of flowers have people donate their money for the new church.

Dear Pastor Cole:

I probably don't have to tell you that I'm really the lucky one and those that I leave behind are the ones that are the unfortunate.

The only thing that I feel so bad about is that all through my life God has blessed me so many times and I haven't given anything in return. Not only did He give His only Son in my behalf, but He has brought me through twenty-three years. In which I'm very lucky to have lived through the first.

I have asked that instead of flowers that my friends donate money for the new church. Please keep up the good work for this.

Until Eternity In Christ,

Bill

Susan René Rogers

To me, Susan Rogers was the embodiment of many virtues, kindly virtues; and though she was lively and active, even adventurous, she was to me a gentle, kindly young woman. She and I became friends when she joined one of my classes as a freshman. Our sense of the worth of the one to the other, of me to her and of her to me, grew as with three or four other students we sat around a table, read aloud to one another, and talked about what we had been reading.

These talks often moved far away from our books. We talked of our hopes and our ideals and of the hindrances that seemed to come between what we hoped for and what we could attain. And as the weeks and months went by each of us came to know the others as whole persons, as more than students and teacher. We were in a sense equals. If not in age and experience then in our concern to help one another, first in studying, reading and writing and next in presenting to one another something of our inner thoughts and beliefs.

Study and writing did not come easily to Susan, especially writing, and so she and I had our long meetings when we rearranged patterns of thought, changed words here and there, and moved sentences around until the final writing said what she wished to say clearly and gracefully.

To master what she was learning was a struggle at first, but she was patient and persistent. And at a point, perhaps after a year or two, she grew out of her role as a struggling student, and became a person who had confidence, who was gaining command. In due course, confidence itself led to another state of mind, to satisfaction, to exhilaration, to a sense of joy flowing from her mastery of the subjects she was studying.

She was growing. Her mind was growing and she now had the gift of drawing not only knowledge but strength from the books she read, as she drew strength from her love of nature and of music. She had come to the threshold of maturity. And once she was there her life changed. She had herself known the joy of learning and had seen how learning opened to her a new world. She wished to help others follow in her path. She became a teacher.

As a teacher she faced the problems of the Connecticut high school where she taught. She faced the problem of teaching, of holding attention, of stimulating in others a love for history and literature. Books had become a special pleasure to her and she made a large personal collection of them. As she read them and thought about them, she began to see a thousand ways in which what she was still learning could enrich her teaching, say, in American studies. In this way she brought to her academic program all the enthusiasm of a young teacher. No wonder she spoke to me of the brilliant things her classes were doing and of the excitement she felt in teaching them.

Delivered March 7, 1981

As a teacher she also made individual students aware of her concern for them. She remembered her own struggles as a student, and, as though to pay a debt to her teachers, she let her students know their worth to her as individuals and according to their needs she gave them special attention.

But there was another side to her work in high school. She saw the high school as a social institution, a community of teachers, administrators and students, living within the larger community of Pomperaug, the Connecticut city where she lived and worked. She was concerned about the lives of her students, in so far as they were rooted in the social conditions of the larger community. By her own knowledge of her students and the experiences of her friends, teachers and counselors, she knew how the social life of some of her students was lived under the shadow of broken homes, of violent parents, of drink, and drugs. The “deprived kids,” she called them.

She worried deeply about them; and as she thought of this, and talked with her friends into the night about it, one word of hers constantly appeared, kindness. She herself showed that kindness by organizing and leading students in sports, but even more by giving, to the individual boy and girl, a sense of the warm, reciprocal relationship that should bind teacher to student.

All in all as a teacher and as a member of the community, Susan worked hard and was almost always in good spirits. No one could doubt that she had found a place in the world. She was a teacher yet still learning, a person of high enthusiasm and of deep concern for those whose lives she touched.

We are all immortal. Through our children, our friends, and our associates we pass on something of ourselves. How true it is of teachers. They live on through their students and through the generations of those who are influenced by their students. Of few young teachers could this be said more truly than of Susan. Already her students and colleagues have, in their own memorial service, shown themselves to be the beneficiaries of her teaching and her kindness.

In her life, short though it was, Susan had fulfilled herself, she had triumphed, she had with success brought herself from youth to maturity. She had become a warm, gentle woman whose hand and heart reached out to others.

She has left us. We who remain, who mourn her going, what can we do but meditate in sorrow and turn back to our memories of her for consolation and strength.

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