

Artists have carved and painted it, and have given it many different interpretations. Poets have sung of it, and have treated it either with rejoicing or with lamentation. Philosophers have analyzed and discussed it, and have passed judgment upon it either with amused tolerance or with contemptuous disdain. Perhaps the difference between the treatment of this conflict by the poet and by the philosopher is accounted for by the fact that the poet is ever young while the philosopher is always old.

Surely a revolt or a conflict that has been going on so long and that has guided artists, inspired poets, and perplexed philosophers, must have some meaning which does not lie wholly upon the surface. What is it?

The answer may perhaps be found if we reflect for a moment upon the great adventure that we call life. Each new human being comes to the threshold of that adventure with the same open-eyed wonder as did his ancestors of long ago. He looks about him to see what is happening, and quickly finds that men and women of various ages and differing occupations, a few of whom he knows but of most of whom he knows nothing, are, like Vergil's "Rari nantes in gurgite vasto," meeting with varying measure of success in their struggling attempts to keep themselves moving forward or even afloat on the boundless sea of human experience. Every youth as he waxes in physical strength, longs for the day to come when he too may plunge into the sea of experience and acquit himself, if may be, better than any of his fellows. At least he feels certain that he can acquit himself better than any of those who have made the attempt before. Those who have tried and failed, or those who have tried and only measurably succeeded, or those who have tried and won large applause for their accomplishment but have yet left many problems unsolved and many longings unsatisfied, are looked upon by Youth, not unnaturally, as having failed in greater or less degree through not having