

Conservation and Technical Education

quality of the sap of life and of the conditions under which it was grown.

In the quality of life we folks are not crabs. There are crabs of humanity still on the face of the earth; but we are not of the crabs. A thousand years of cultivation, a thousand years of struggle for liberty and intelligence and opportunity and justice pure and undefiled, for the children and the grown children—that has made the difference in the sap of life. More is expected of fellows of our kind of sap, a heap more. It is expressed by the French “Noblesse oblige.” We have got to live up to the inheritance of this quality of life.

We have been enriched by streams of learning, not by the rubbish of the old fellows who did not know much or do much worth while but recorded some foolish things they tried, and bad things they did—and perhaps because they were all revered as classics we keep the bad with the good. I take worthy learning to be whatever the race has found useful; and that is the stream of learning that enriches and uplifts. That is the sort of learning which is worth conserving: just whatever out of the experience of the race has been proven true and good and beautiful; that is learning. It is not talking Greek or translating from English into Latin; it is the wealth of the good things saved out of the experiences of the race. Whatever the past has made clear as being true and good, let us have the use of that now. Streams from Edinburgh and Glasgow, Cambridge and Oxford, Paris and other continental places, flow through our common schools and make for the quality of thinking, for the concepts of life and duty, that determine even now the arrangement of the brain cells.