

course and compel him to work for his living. Surely our statesmanship ought to be equal to the task of devising a scheme which, while substantially just to all, will stamp out the nuisance and redeem for useful citizenship everyone who has not, by too long use, become hopelessly degraded and depraved. The latter are fit only for compulsory labour under the eye of a taskmaster, and such should be provided for them.

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The Philosophy of the Cut.

I WAS walking on a late summer day along King Street, enjoying the level convenience of the pavement, the shade of the south side of the street for the morning was a little over ardent—and the sight of the men and women there, when I saw, coming toward me, a man for whom I have a great admiration. He is in most respects my superior, while the points in which I excel him are so few that the balance of respect and veneration is in his favour. I should, therefore, never think of not giving him precedence. I had been at his house the day before and he had received me with polite consideration. I was accordingly prepared, when I saw him approaching me, to give and receive some sign of recognition. I could tell, even at that distance, that he saw me.

He cut me dead.

I felt at first somewhat hurt. One does not like to have the genial current of one's soul frozen in that particular way. The usual effect of being cut is a slight tendency to anger and I think I felt a little angry. Then I began to examine the image of him which still lingered on my retina, and as I went over its points I saw that the face showed absorbing reflection. Keeping my mental eye on that image, and knowing from my prolonged observation of it that he had actually seen me, I formulated the train of the thoughts on the subject which had probably run through his mind side by side with the ideas that were more seriously occupying him, as thus: "Here is . . ." (swirl of the thought on the subject previously in his mind); "horrid bore having to speak to him" (new idea on before mentioned subject); final resolve, "I will not speak to him."

This consoled me—I turned and looked after him with respect and sympathy.

While I had been thus momentarily going along with introverted vision, Boreham had met and passed me. I knew this when I began to sort up the impressions my outside eye had received. I had unconsciously cut Boreham while I was engaged in thinking why the other man had cut me. I was glad I had cut Boreham anyhow, though unintentionally, and determined to cut him intentionally on the first opportunity. I wish Boreham every happiness in a distant sphere. I don't know whether I shall succeed in cutting him again so well as I did just now. He is effusive, and very often on King Street. I am troubled with a sort of fatality of meeting him there. I have tried walking on King Street only at odd and singular hours, but all to no purpose. Boreham meets me at two o'clock in the morning just as easily and as airily as at high noon. There is his smiling face, his outstretched hand, and his kind of here-we-are-again expression. If I take a trip to the Island he is sure to be on the boat. I once went up to the top of a church tower to look over the town with some friends from the country. Boreham was there before me, and assailed me with his hail-fellow-well-met greeting just as I put my foot on the top step of the winding stairway. So now that I had cut him successfully for the first time in my life, I felt rather jubilant and happy, and began to look about for moral reasons for being so.

I came to the conclusion that everybody has the right to cut. That the people that we cannot cut are our real friends—all the others being merely incidental acquaintances.

Nobody can cut his blood relations, and he will not, as a rule, cut his wife's kinsfolk. There is also a small circle of friends who cannot be cut.

Outside of this there is a wide forest in which cutting may be legitimately and usefully done.

If we come to think of it one main purpose of our bodies is simply to isolate our souls. I hope I shall always have a

body of some sort for that reason. I do not wish to be a wave in a sea of soul. I think Boreham does. He seems to wish to turn himself inside out on you. The body is the house of the soul, and it is a boon that we are able sometimes to pull down the blinds and shut the doors. It would be a pretty thing if we were always obliged to leave everything open for tramps like Boreham to come in. I think that idea of isolation as a duty is a fine one. Why should we weakly consent to be continually mixing ourselves with society? After we have been baked by circumstances into separate loaves of humanity why should we wish to return to the state of dough and be kneaded with others into an indiscriminate mass? Boreham is dough and he always seems to pine for kneading. Of course there are various sorts of dough. There is the fashionable batch and the reading batch and the artistic batch. But surely we are intended to be something better than dough. This is, of course, all metaphor and may be misleading.

The true philosophy of the cut lies in its applicability to the growth of our nature. It is our duty to be conservative and eclectic. Not only have we the right but it is our duty to guard ourselves from the lowering influences of the foolish and inane. We waste more time and vitality in the vapouring recognitions of social life than we can afford. They minister to no healthy growth and they help no solid advance. The occasional use of the cut is healthy, especially if applied to the right people. Besides universal effusiveness and gush implies conceit on the part of him who indulges in it. I have seen people who wear a perpetual smile on their commonplace countenances and who address everybody as "my friend." They imagine they can bestow something on humanity and that the world's population is the better for their everlasting grin of welcome. They are usually like an hotel with a big sign, and nothing in the cellar or larder. It is impossible to regenerate the earth by talking pleasantly to it. Such persons should always be remorselessly cut and snubbed, even if they poke tracts into your hands and ask you about the state of your soul. The real attitude of such people is that of conceit and fancied superiority. They have come to think that they have a mission to put the world straight. They never entertain the notion that they need putting straight themselves. Neither have they learnt that nearly the only way to make the world better is by living as good a life as one can and keeping one's mouth shut. Of course the cut is a weapon that must be judiciously used. It may be doubted whether women make all the use they can of this means of repressing the effusive dandy. The effusive dandy needs a great deal of snubbing, not only for his own health but for that of society. If his supreme self-satisfaction can occasionally be ruffled it is good for him, and, speaking broadly, the oftener his conceit is taken down a peg the better. No one can do this more easily than a woman of tact, if the tact be combined with even moderate beauty. The dandy may bluster and fume when a pretty woman cuts him, but inwardly his weak soul wilts and he feels "so vewy unpleasant, doncher know." In him, too, the judicious cut brings forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness. There are other opportunities for legitimate cutting which will occur to the well regulated mind. The cut is useful, and morally reasonable when it helps us to build up our own personality and is used as a defence against the incursions of people who can be of no use to us and to whom we ourselves can be of no use. In conclusion it may be said that only the irredeemable snob cuts humble friends when he happens to meet them under inconvenient circumstances. There is Foppleton, for instance, who, while he chiefly worships himself and the fashions, is glad enough to avail himself of the friendship of Sturder who was the companion of his boyhood, and who has twice the brains and gumption of Foppleton as the latter knows. But Sturder is not considered stylish, so if Foppleton, in the company of some haw-haw friends of his own calibre, meets him on King Street, he religiously cuts him. But Sturder does not care, for he has long made up his mind that nothing that Foppleton does matters very much.

B. MCCREA.

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Mr. Walter Besant is reported as saying that hundreds of people are making over £1,000 a year by literature of various kinds; that at least thirty in England alone are making over £2,000, at least six or seven over £3,000 and at least one or two this year not less than £4,000.