

retard the time of his death, can fix that time by recourse to one of the three classic methods of 'shuffling off this mortal coil'—the cord, the hemp or the bodkin. But a man has no say as to the time and circumstances attending his birth."

"Would we wish to be anyone but ourselves?" here interjected my father, waking from his reverie. For when the big practitioner made his last remark concerning fathers my parent slapped his leg, wound the cords of his dressing-gown tightly around his waist, straightened the Turkish fez on his head, leaned back in his chair, and straightway fell to thinking the matter over. Indeed, he had not heard the doctor's opinions on life, marriage and death.

"Would we wish to be anyone but ourselves?" he asked the doctor, and then proceeded without waiting for an answer. "Would we change our individuality, if we could, after we are born? One man has an accomplishment for which I envy him. But he lacks sensibility. Another plays a remarkable game of chess. In all else he remains a fool. A third has brains, but women will not look upon him with favor. I covet a man's riches: I would not be responsible for his debts. I desire his dinner: would keep my own appetite. Envy his genius: would keep my own individuality. It is not that impalpable something, that disputed soul, ego, will—call it what you like—that I would change. I want only possessions, talents, bodily and mental graces. With all my faults, foibles, drawbacks—for there are spots on the sun—what man would I change souls with? Not one!"

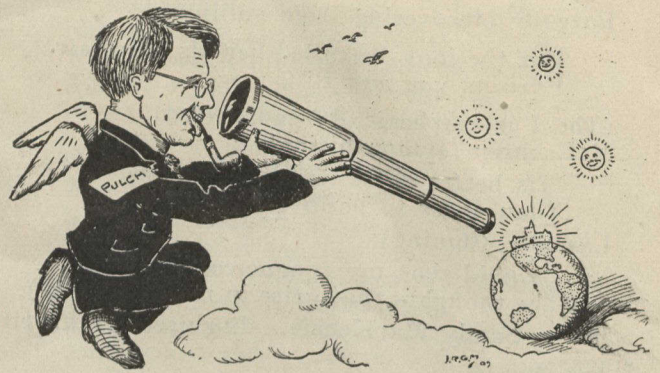
Here my parent slapped his leg again, unwound the cords of his dressing-gown, shoved the fez to the back of his head and continued:

"It seems to me as if I had elected in some way to become myself. I am content with my own character. The good that is in me I can see quicker and clearer than anyone else. My own faults I can condone, for I alone know all the temptations, opportunities, extenuations, provocations. Ego applauds all my witty sayings; reads what I write with un-censorious approval; is not bored with my strictly personal business; nor shocked at my apparent wickedness. To me my opinions, manners, and beliefs appear to be correct, good, and true. It is indeed well that I am myself.

"Yet how different things would be if I had the opportunities of others. In the forefront of battle, in the desperate charge, in the ranks of the forlorn hope, how heroically would I have acted. Had Providence called me to be a great statesman how quickly would I have forgotten self-interest, reformed the laws, given bread to the hungry, work to the workers. As a man of business how honest I would have been. There would have been no sand in my sugar, no adulterants in my beer, no orphans robbed for my charity, nor workmen starved so that I could have been a philanthropist. What a holy divine I would have made!"

And here my father fell back into a brown study as was his custom after such a rhapsody. The doctor put on his hat and went about his business. He knew that he could not get a word of sense from my father for another two hours.

(To be continued.)



Obiter Dicta

Those who read this column will remember that two weeks ago I promised to express my views on that kind of chivalry which certain men gave as a reason we should not stamp in the library. They said that because women were present we should show more respect to them than to act in a boisterous manner.

Candidly, although I have an infinite conceit on some subjects, and will oppose my views to those of any other living man, feeling assured that I am right; on this subject of the relation of the sexes in our undergraduate body and implicitly of their relations in all highly civilized communities, I am not sure that my eye is clear and that I have grasped the essentials of this the greatest and most important of all social problems. Still, I hold a few tentative ideas and give them for what they are worth, and not by any means as authoritative.

In the first place I believe in the absolute equality of the sexes. I hold that any other view leads one into a distorted and disproportioned outlook on life. I see in man the harmonious complement to woman, as I see in woman the harmonious complement to man. Each sex has its own function, its own place and its own responsibility in the evolution of humanity. Each sex should pay tribute to the qualities of the other. There should be no jealousy of function nor imitation of qualities. Each man should express manhood, according to his understanding of the term, and each woman should express womanhood as her intuition reveals to her the truly feminine characteristics.

"Away up in the air," I think I hear someone say, but I think not. Rather I am standing on a solid foundation. And now this matter of paying tribute to the qualities of the opposite sex. Every true man must be attracted and charmed by woman as every true woman must find joy in the qualities and being of man, but this does not imply that there should be discord in the minds of either, or a sinking of the true characteristics of either when they are brought into the relationship we find in our co-educational undergraduate life.

There are many characteristics in humanity which are common to both sexes and with which sex has really nothing to do, and we should not confound these qualities with those of the sexual nature.

I feel that it is because this confounding takes place in a great deal of our ordinary life we come to hold the false and miserable conception of