

serve the state as its organ of recollection, its seat of vital memory. It should give the countrymen who know the probabilities of failure and success, who can separate the tendencies which are permanent from the tendencies which are of the moment merely, who can distinguish promises from threats, knowing the life men have lived, the hopes they have tested, and the principles they have proved.

This college gave the country at least a handful of such men, in its infancy, and its President for leader. The blood of John Knox ran in Witherspoon's veins. The great drift and movement of English liberty, from Magna Charta down, was in all his teachings; his pupils knew as well as Burke did that to argue the Americans out of their liberties would be to falsify their pedigree. "In order to prove that the Americans have no right to their liberties," Burke cried, "we are every day endeavoring to subvert the maxims which preserve the whole spirit of our own"; the very antiquarians of the law stood ready with their proof that the colonies could not be taxed by Parliament. This revolution, at any rate, was a keeping of faith with the past. To stand for it was to be like Hampden; a champion of law, though he withstood the king. It was to emulate the example of the very men who had founded the Government, then for a little while grown so tyrannous and forgetful of its great traditions. This was the compulsion of life, not of passion, and college halls were a better school of revolution than colonial assemblies, provided, of course, they were guided by such a spirit as Witherspoon's.

Nothing is easier than to falsify the past; lifeless instruction will do it. If you rob it of vitality, stiffen it with pedantry, sophisticate it with argument, chill it with unsympathetic

comment, you render it as dead as any academic exercise. The safest way in all ordinary seasons is to let it speak for itself; resort to its records, listen to its poets and to its masters in the humbler art of prose. Your real and proper object, after all, is not to expound, but to realize it, consort with it, and make your spirit kin with it, so that you may never shake the sense of obligation off. In short, I believe that the catholic study of the world's literature as a record of spirit is the right preparation for leadership in the world's affairs, if you undertake it like a man and not like a pedant.

Age is marked in the case of every people just as it is marked in the case of every work of art, into which enters the example of the masters, the taste of long generations of men, the thought that has matured, the achievement that has come with assurance. The child's crude drawing shares the primitive youth of the first hieroglyphics; but a little reading, a few lessons from some modern master, a little time in the old world's galleries set the lad forward a thousand years and more, make his drawing as old as art itself.

The art of thinking is as old, and it is the university's function to impart it in all its length; the stiff and difficult stuffs of fact and experience, of prejudice and affection, in which the hard art is to work its will and the long and tedious combinations of cause and effect out of which it is to build up its results. How else will you avoid a ceaseless round of error? The world's memory must be kept alive, or we shall never see an end of its old mistakes. We are in danger to lose our identity and become infantile in every generation. That is the real menace under which we cower everywhere in this age of change. The old world trembles to see its proletariat in the saddle; we