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WALKING ESSAYS

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BY

A. H. SIDGWICK

Arthur Sidgwick

LONDON
EDWARD ARNOLD
1912

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DEDICATION

COMITIBUS

O you who walked the ways with me
On hill and plain and hollow :
I ask your pardon, frank and free,
For all the things that follow.
Let me at least make one thing clear ;
In these—I know no name for them—
These dreary talks on futile themes,
Dim visions from a dullard's dreams,
At least you take no blame for them.

You cheered my heart, made short the road,
And kept me philanthropic ;
I only write this little ode
Which desecrates the topic.
You trode with me the mountain ridge
And clove the cloud wreaths over it ;
I take the web of memories
We wove beneath the summer skies
And lo ! the ink-spots cover it.

How vain my effort, how absurd,
Considered as a symbol!
How lame and dull the written word
To you the swift and nimble!
How alien to the walker's mind,
Earth-deep, heaven-high, unfillable,
These petty snarls and jests ill-laid
And all the profitless parade
Of pompous polysyllable!

But yet, I feel, though weak my phrase,
My rhetoric though rotten,
At least our tale of Walks and Days
Should not go unforgotten;
At least some printed word should mark
The walker and his wanderings,
The strides which lay the miles behind
And lap the contemplative mind
In calm, unfathomed ponderings.

And one rebuke I need not fear
From those of our profession,
That Walking Essays should appear
To be one long digression.
Let others take the hard high-road
And earn its gift, callosity:
For us the path that twists at will
Through wood and field, and up the hill
In easy tortuosity.

DEDICATION

Therefore, companions of the boot,
Joint-heirs of wind and weather,
In kindness take this little fruit
Of all our walks together.
For aught it has of wit or truth
I reckon you my creditors ;
Its dulness, errors, want of taste,
Inconsequence, may all be placed
To my account, the editor's.

And haply as you skim the work
In skilled, eclectic hurry,
Some word may find the place where lurk
Your memories of Surrey ;
Or, as you read and doze and droop
Well on the way to slumberland,
Before you some dim shapes will float,
Austere, magnificent, remote,
Their Majesties of Cumberland.

Dream but awhile : and clouds will lift
To show the peaks at muster,
The driving shadows shape and shift
Before the hill-wind's bluster :
Below far down the earth lies spread
With all its care and fretfulness,
But here the crumpled soul unfolds,
And every rock-strewn gully holds
The waters of Forgetfulness.

So dream ; and through your dreams shall roll
The rhythm of limbs free-striding,
Which moulds your being to a whole
And heals the world's dividing ;
So dream, and you shall be a man
Free on the open road again ;
So dream the long night through, and wake
With better heart to rise and take
The burden of your load again.

PREFATORY NOTES

1. I HAVE to thank two friends, who read or listened to large portions of this work, for their sympathy, long-suffering, and good advice, and to acquit them of all further complicity.

2. I must also thank a fellow-walker, who, on Maundy Thursday of 1910, as we climbed the road out of Marlborough into Savernake Forest, suggested to me the magnificent quotation from Cicero which heads the essay on Walking and Music.

3. I have stolen the substance of one epigram from an *obiter dictum* in 'My System for Ladies,' by J. P. Müller; but it was too good to miss.

4. None of the remarks about beer apply to Munich beer.

A. H. S.

August 1912.

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I

WALKING AND CONVERSATION

'The heavenly bodies is philosophy, and the earthly bodies is philosophy. If there's a screw loose in a heavenly body, that's philosophy; and if there's a screw loose in an earthly body, that's philosophy too; or it may be that sometimes there's a little metaphysics in it, but that's not often. Philosophy's the chap for me.'

I

WALKING AND CONVERSATION

About the year 1887 there was still in existence a nursery joke :—

> 'King Charles walked and talked ;
> Half an hour after his head was cut off.'

This, pronounced as a consecutive sentence, gave the infant mind its first experience of paradox. At the time we thought it funny. Later on, in the last decade of Victorianism, when we were struggling with 'post,' 'postquam,' and 'postea,' the joke appeared less funny. But later still, in Edwardian times, a deep moral meaning began (as was customary in those times) to appear underlying the joke. Take the two sentences as they stand above : construe 'walk' and 'talk' in their strict sense : generalise King Charles : convert the 'post hoc' into a

'propter hoc'; and you will have a motto to which all good walkers will add 'ὣς ἀπόλοιτο. . . .'

I do not mean, of course, that any or all forms of walking and talking are incompatible. It is possible, simultaneously, to stroll and to babble, to stroll and to talk, to walk and to babble. Strolling, the mere reflex action of the legs, is compatible with that sustained and coherent activity of the mind which alone deserves the name of talking. Babbling, the corresponding reflex action of the mind, is equally compatible with that supreme activity of the whole being which men call walking. But the attempt so often made to combine real walking with real talking is disastrous. Better the man who babbles and strolls, who trails his feet across country and his tongue across commonplace, than the man who tries to ventilate fundamental things while his body is braced to the conquest of road and hill.

'A Voice' at this point says 'Yes, but we are not all scorchers,' and thereby makes manifest a very common delusion. The

Voice, and the body of opinion which it represents, are convinced that the difference between strolling and walking consists in the merely material point of speed, and that walkers cannot talk because they are bent solely on record-breaking, and have one eye ever on the milestones and one on the stop-watch, and no attention to spare for anything else. This is a gross and palpable error. Record-breaking is, of course, a possible form of walking, and most of us have indulged in it at one time or another; it is interesting, and sometimes even salutary, to abandon all higher thoughts, and go for a record frankly and wholeheartedly. But to the true walker this is only an occasional indulgence. Record-breaking is ultimately a degrading and (literally) a brutalising pursuit. It is the mere pitting of the brute animal powers against the brute inanimate conditions of time and space. If we are to be men and not animals, walking must be something more than a mere swing of the legs, and the country something more than a colourless aliquantum of miles. Record-breaking,

if it becomes a habit, will be as a blight in the fair garden of walking, as a sarrusophone in the pedestrian symphony.

A casual observation of true walkers no doubt lends some colour to the Voice's delusion. Walkers have generally an air of being intent upon the business in hand: they do not (as explained below) talk much: and as a mere matter of fact they generally walk at a good round pace. But their pace is only accidental and subordinate to their main purpose. The full swing of the legs, like all physical activities, is a fine thing in itself, but it is merely physical. The great fact is that such an activity leads more directly than others to that sense of intimacy with air and sun and hills and green things, which is the walker's ideal. This sense of intimacy is not to be won by strolling; a man must do his best with his body before the gates are opened to him.

Another Voice may here interject 'Wordsworth'; but, with all reverence and respect, I doubt if that great man ever was really an intimate of his surroundings in the sense which I mean. With him it

was a mystical communion rather than an intimacy. He loved the country with a kind of austere and detached benevolence; I doubt if he really felt its idiosyncrasies like a friend. In his altitudes of thought there was probably little perceptible difference when he climbed Loughrigg after tea and when he took a whole day over the Langdale Pikes and Serjeant Man (if he ever did). Like the God of Aristotle, he experienced a single and continuous pleasure, instead of the infinitely varied and minutely individualised feelings of the ordinary walker. And the reason, I think, was simply that he was not, in the true sense, a walker. He records expeditions, of course, but these were generally made with his wife and sister, which in the then state of feminine development would give little chance of walking. There is no evidence that he ever laid his body at full stretch to the conquest of a mountain; hence they were to him merely mountains, full of general sublimities, and not individuals, each with its own idiosyncrasy, full of the variety and interest which are the

staple food of friendship. His higher faculties, in short, operated abstractedly; he missed that concrete body of feeling to which even you and I can attain by ministering to the soul through the body. It is a great thing, no doubt, to be catholic, to feel the same immensities on Silver Howe as on the Great Gable; but there is something to be said for the humbler lot of the ordinary walker, who, if he misses the immensities on Silver Howe, yet gains that sudden jump and uplifting of his whole being as he approaches Esk Hause from the south-east, leaving behind the soft outlines and mere prettiness of the south, and on an instant lifts his head into a world of gods and giants.

The attainment of such a feeling requires a certain receptivity and even passivity of mind. You cannot grasp the character of country by a conscious effort of discursive reason; all you can do is to set your body fairly to its task, and to leave the intimate character of your surroundings to penetrate slowly into your higher faculties, aided by the consciousness of physical effort, the

subtle rhythm of your walk, the feel of the earth beneath your feet, and the thousand intangible influences of sense. You must lay aside for the time being that formal and conscious reasoning which (you fondly think) gives you your distinctiveness and individuality in ordinary life; you must win back to deeper and commoner things: you must become mere man upon the face of your mother earth. Only in a state of humility and simplicity, with all views and arguments and chains of reasoning—all, in fact, that divides man from man—laid aside and utterly forsworn, can you enter the great democracy of walkers.

Which things being prefaced, the utter incompatibility of walking and talking needs no further demonstration, but only (what walkers much prefer) dogmatic reiteration. Talking requires a definite activity of the mind: walking demands passivity. Talking tends to make men aware of their differences; walking rests on their identity. Talking may be the same on a fine day or on a wet day, in spring or autumn, on

Snowdon or Leith Hill; walking varies according to each and every one of these conditions. In a word, when you can paste a photograph on to the middle of an Old Master, or set a gramophone going in an orchestra, then, and not till then, can you walk and talk simultaneously.

Those who try to combine the two usually fail to achieve either. Sometimes, of course, a talker may be tamed: if securely buttressed by a large company of walkers, he may be subdued by a judicious mixture of silence, irrelevance, or frivolity; or he may be carried along at such a pace that he is reduced to voicelessness, if not to a proper state of quiescent reverence. But usually a single talker in a walking company will infect the whole; he will provoke them to argument and disputation; he will expose the inmost parts of his soul and gradually allure them to a like indecency. In such a case walking goes by the board; the company either loiters and trails in clenched controversy, or, what is worse sacrilege, strides blindly across country like a herd of animals, recking little of whence they come

or whither they are going, desecrating the face of nature with sophism and inference and authority and regurgitated Blue Book. At the end of such a day, what have they profited? Their gross and perishable physical frames may have been refreshed: their less gross but equally perishable minds may have been exercised: but what of their immortal being? It has been starved between the blind swing of the legs below and the fruitless flickering of the mind above, instead of receiving, through the agency of a quiet mind and a co-ordinated body, the gentle nutriment which is its due.

If, then, we are to walk, the talker should be eliminated before starting. But this does not mean that our walk will be a silent one. There are many forms of utterance besides talking, strictly so called; and nearly all of these are possible and even desirable concomitants of walking. Thus, there is the simple and natural babble of the first few miles, while the body is settling down to work: the intellect, so to say, is blowing off steam preparatory to a period

of quiescence. Then there is monologue of the purely spontaneous kind, which asks for no listener and desires no reply—the mere happy wagging of a tongue and jaw only remotely connected with anything that could be called a meaning. There may even be relatively continuous and intelligible statements or discussions, provided that these arise naturally out of the walk and the surrounding circumstances—for example, discussions on the weather, the way, the place for lunch, the utility of hard-boiled eggs, the peculiar pungency of wedding-cake in the open air. All of these fit in easily with the walking frame of mind.

The question of the rhythmic and musical elements in walking is so important as to require separate discussion; but there is one form of utterance, related to music much as babbling is related to talking, which is so intimately associated with the greater moments of life that I cannot forbear mentioning it here. I mean the After Lunch Song. If lunch is taken properly, that is to say lightly, without strong drink, in the open, the period which follows is the very heart

of the day. The limbs are well attuned to their work: the soul has begun to receive its appropriate message: there are long hours ahead, clean food within, the face of nature without. At such a time a man can, if he will, do his greatest feats of mere space-devouring. But it is better, if time permits, to abate something of the full speed, and to allow the heart-felt sensations of gratitude and content to find their natural utterance in song. It need not be an appropriate song: nay, it need not be a song at all in the ordinary sense: above all, the whole company may sing without regard to one another or to any laws of time and harmony. It is the utterance alone which matters. I remember well a party of three which climbed the northern face of the Bookham Downs on a summer Sunday, with Schubert's Müllerin cycle going in front against two distinct Sullivan operettas behind; and there was in our hearts no more thought of discord than there is between the chiff-chaff and cuckoo when the reiterated fourth of the one blends with the other's major third in a different key.

Superficial observers may think from the preceding passage that the walker as there represented is a morose and unsociable person. Nothing can be further from the truth. Only by construing sociability in the very narrow sense of compliance with current social conventions, can you justify such a position: and even so, I would ask, are walkers the only men who have ever omitted calls or trifled with dance invitations? But if sociability is taken in its true sense as indicating a friendly attitude of mind, I say there is more of it between two walkers treading the eighteenth mile without a word spoken, than between any two diners-out talking twenty-four to the dozen, as if there were a tax on unaccompanied monologue, and a graduated super-tax on silence. When put to the ultimate test of fact this becomes clear. If you have walked with a man you will lend him tobacco, half-a-crown, nay, you will lend him your map; if you have only dined with him, I doubt if you would lend him a silk hat.

But even when judged by the merely physical test of the volume and quality of

words uttered, walkers have no need to fear comparison with any other class of men. It is true that while engaged in their own particular craft their words are few: but does the artist talk much while he is painting, or the motorist while driving? Is the conversation of the golfer while golfing—even with the shorter sentences omitted—such as he could repeat in a drawing-room which he respects? If we are to apply comparative tests we must take the specialists, not when they are specialising, but when they are mixed with one another and with ordinary men and women. In such circumstances I say that the walker shines: he possesses, on the average, all the conversational qualities of ordinary men, and, in addition, has certain special advantages. As these have been slighted and overlooked by other observers, I proceed to set them forth.

The first point is that walkers generalise much better than other men, whether on morals, politics, art, or any other of the worn topics of society. Their generalities may not be so frequent or facile: but when

they occur they will be far more weighty. The ordinary man generalises by the action of a feverish brain working above a sluggish and disparate body; hence his utterance is that of the brain only, of the quarter man. But walking induces a more concrete habit of thinking. When you have let a problem simmer at the back of your head for the whole of a twenty mile walk, you will find at the end that it has worked itself into your system, and your verdict on it is the concrete verdict of your whole being. And such a verdict is invincible, disdaining argument and scouting refutation. What chance have the merely logical beliefs of the ordinary diner-out against the ingrown and seasoned prejudices of the walker? The rest may reason and welcome; 'tis we pedestrians know.

The first great merit, then, of a walker in ordinary society is a power of authoritative and Delphic utterance on subjects which other men approach humbly with reasoning, aggregated evidence, and formal disputation. It may be urged that this has the effect of killing the subject. That is true:

but the real fact is that such subjects ought to be killed once the first opinions are spoken. General topics have really no permanent place in civilised conversation; they are useful only as guides to enable people to adjust themselves easily to each other's mental and spiritual conformation. When this has been effected, generalities can be cast aside; and the particularities of persons and things and times and places, which form the staple food of conversation, can begin. The walker by a single bold utterance of a prejudice deeply felt at once defines the position. *Ex pede Herculem;* the conversation can then proceed comfortably.

The second great point in a walker's conversation is that his 'shop' is less shoppy and more interesting than that of other men. The minutiae of his own craft are homely and human things—boots and coats and knapsacks and hobnails and ordnance maps. The golfer's talk of Dreadnought Drivers and eclectic scores and the fathomless iniquities of caddies has only a limited interest; the motorist is little better with

his accelerators and carburettors and police traps and organised perjury. Few people really care to hear how a matchless car was bought in Long Acre (where the bow drawn was also long), went from Land's End to John o' Groats in ninety-five minutes (or hours), paid for a new county asylum in fines, killed four chickens, a human being, and a chauffeur, and finally exploded and fell into the Devil's Punch-bowl. (I summarise from vague memories the folklore of motorists.) But all turn round with a pleased smile when a friend of mine begins the life history of his famous boots; how they were originally bought as football boots and scored twenty-seven goals in two seasons; how they were then resoled and nailed by a Swiss cobbler and went up Mont Blanc; how they subsequently covered nine hundred miles in the Home Counties; how they lost all their nails and became ordinary boots and went to a garden party; how they split on a critical occasion and were under-girded (like St. Paul's ship) with string, bootlaces, and a Government strap; how, finally, when

they were past their work, they were offered to (and only refused after a struggle by) the Pitt-Rivers anthropological collection in the Oxford Museum ; and how they now repose in a glass case inscribed with the words *Bene Merentibus.*

It is thus clear (if it is not, I decline to argue) that as regards conversation under ordinary conditions, so far from being at a disadvantage, the walker is better qualified than most men to speak with his enemies in the gate—that is with his acquaintances in the drawing-room or dining room. In the structural part of conversation, dogmatism, his touch is firmer and more impressive ; in its constituent material he can on his own subject display a pleasing virtuosity. Over the rest of the ordinary range of conversation I make no extravagant claims for the walker : it is enough to say that he is at no disadvantage as regards persons and events and anecdotes and gossip and generally What Has Happened and What They Are Saying About It. He is, in virtue of his craft, above all things,

sane and concrete, and has therefore little difficulty in observing the ordinary conversational traditions. But he is no blind acceptor of conventional limitations. On the contrary, he ever seeks to extend the limits of the conversational range, adding new topics of interest. And there are in particular a few topics which (like the souls of the young ladies in the song) the blind world despises, and has therefore excluded from the realm of proper conversation. These it is the walker's business to reclaim and invest with a due sense of their real importance.

The first of these is the weather. For some obscure and probably discreditable reason the weather is regarded as a trivial subject. At most it is permitted in less advanced circles as a mere preliminary conversational flourish, comparable to the stray chords with which a pianist settles himself to his work and his audience to listening or slumber. In the more intense intellectual circles the weather is altogether taboo. If you mention it in Hampstead or Chelsea you are set down as a trifler and not asked

again. Now of all those unintelligently transmitted, mystically apprehended, and devotionally guarded traditions which uphold the fabric of current cant, this seems the blindest, the most foolish, the least defensible. There is nothing really so interesting as the weather: nothing so omnipotent in its workings, so far-reaching in its effects, so inscrutable in its variety, so compelling in its fascination. And yet the heathen in his blindness—a fair description of the intellectual in his detachment—is pleased to rule out the weather as a triviality. He plumes himself on the universality of his social and political range, on his familiarity with the forces which lie behind the working of our ordinary life; but what force is so effectual and so omnipresent in every moment of every man's existence as the weather? A political or financial crisis occurs, and some few of us become excited for some twenty-fourth of our day-to-day life; a drought or a frost or an anticyclone occurs and all of us in all our doings are directly or remotely affected by it. Yet we may talk crisis until our brains

reel; we may say nothing of the weather. The intellectual plunges eagerly into the depths of art and literature and the drama, and talks with a glib facility of the clash of cosmic forces; let him open a window and put out his head if he would know what a clash of cosmic forces really is. When kings are philosophers and philosophers are kings, their first act will be to reinstate the weather as a subject of supreme interest and importance; to relegate to a secondary place in the newspapers the present seventeen columns of murders and suicides, the seven columns of politics and the seventy times seven columns of sport, and to print at the head in large and golden letters the really valuable and significant part of the news, namely the weather report. In those days, let us hope, the critic and the politician and the sociologist and the biologist and all other sentimental empiricists will be removed from the popular pulpit: and the most sacred crown of unfading bay will be laid on the head of the meteorologist, the ordained and initiated interpreter of depressions and vortices and anti-cyclones and

Atlantic secondaries, the hierophant of the celestial pageant. And at the head of the great Philippic which shall then be uttered to disestablish the tyranny of the intellectuals, there will stand the words *Quousque, Chelsea, abutere patientia nostra?* How long will you debar us from discussing the weather?

The struggle has already begun, and in the forefront of the fighting line are the walkers. To them even more than other men the weather is a matter of vital and compelling significance. It is not so much that the tangible weather conditions affect them more nearly: no man who plies his craft in the open can be indifferent to sun and wind and wetness and drouth. It is rather that the walker in virtue of his craft is more intimately attuned to the temper of earth and sky; his soul and body are more of a piece, and his nature consequently responds with a subtler sympathy to the influences of weather. When a dry north-easter is stiffening the earth, the walker is a man of dour endurance: he attacks unpalatable tasks—arrears of letter-writing, the

sorting of papers, the ordering of clothes —with readiness, almost with gusto. Then the wind dies down and the sky clears and a frost anti-cyclone sets in: forthwith he becomes a Stoic, thinking high and abstract thoughts, determining lofty resolutions, conceiving pure outlines of things. Then comes the herald of the most magical of all shifts, an Atlantic disturbance; there are hints of soft air from the south-west and smells of coming rain. At once the walker's nature responds: the iron resolutions begin to break down, the pure outlines are blurred; through every sense steals in the charm of detail and colour; he becomes less stoical, more humane, a fitter companion for the spring that is being ushered in without.

The weather, then, is the first of the conversational provinces which walkers have to reclaim from a servile status of alleged triviality. It is their duty, as it is their pleasure, to set up against the so-called Pathetic Fallacy that nature is in sympathy with man, the Joyful Fact that man, if whole, is in sympathy with nature. There are already signs of the coming Restoration:

even now, where two or three kindred souls are assembled, the weather begins to take precedence of other subjects. Recently, on a Saturday night, I happened to remark, in company, that as I walked to the house the wind was swinging round to the north, the sky was clear, the streets were dry, and there was promise of a brilliant Sunday. My host, who wished to discuss the merits of Zoroastrianism as a working creed for urban civilisations, became rather restive, and mentally I saw the blue pencil going through my name in his wife's *rota umbrarum*; but across the room I observed a man fixing an eager eye on me in total disregard of his neighbours. One look was enough. As soon as I had rebuffed the Zoroastrian with a few firmly enunciated prejudices, I moved across to my man and said, 'Do you know the track above Pickett's Hole?' He answered, 'Yes, but it's just been ploughed up and wants marking out again.' So, as Touchstone says, we swore brothers.

The second topic of conversation, which

is especially the property of walkers, is the topic of food and drink. This, like the weather, is generally taboo in polite circles; but through our country as a whole it is a popular and almost universal topic, especially the second half of it. Hence the walker's function in this case is to introduce not so much a new topic as a new treatment. He has to substitute for the levity with which food and drink are usually treated a proper and befitting gravity.

The word 'levity' may seem strange to those who are familiar with a certain type of conversations, not rare among our island race, on the subject of food and drink. It is easy for the moralist to draw a terrible picture of bull-necked financiers dining in clubs or City restaurants—men gorged with high living, to whom the past is a memory of business enlightened by eating and drinking, and the future a dear vision of eating and drinking uninterrupted by business. But the real fault of such men's conversation is its levity. A glutton is only a tenth of a man. When food and drink have begun to occupy the whole area of mental dis-

course, the human being becomes only a digestive and ruminative apparatus informed by a rudimentary consciousness. The conversation issuing from such a system is mere animal grunt with little human element intermixed; hence, for all its avoirdupois, it has from the standpoint of eternity a very real levity, a very real lightness in the spiritual scales.

Conversations on food and drink between normal persons are far pleasanter to listen to, and have much more real gravity. They start, as a rule, with bald statements of likes and dislikes, which, as dogmas incapable of proof or argumentation, are excellent props to the framework of discourse. But as the general topic of Things I Like begins to particularise itself under the heading of Meals I Have Eaten, the conversation takes a wider range. The great meals of the past are necessarily associated in memory with their surroundings—the walk, the bathe, the scenery, the fine day. Viewed in isolation, a meal is not much; viewed in its relation to the day and the day's work, it is an interesting,

important, even essential element. What walker is there who does not treasure in his inmost heart the memory of some chocolate consumed on a mountain top, some stream drunk dry among the eternal hills, some sandwich eaten in a palpitating shadow-land of shifting mist? Such memories are indeed part of his being: and when they issue forth in conversation they come with no glutton's levity, but with the gravity of the whole nature of man.

'All very fine,' says A Voice at this point; 'but are walkers the only men who treat the subject of eating and drinking with gravity? What about those French fellows — gourmets, aren't they called? And, in your beastly antiquity, were there not Epicureans?' My dear Voice, Epicurus was a simple-hearted old man who lived in a garden on cabbages, was notably kind to children, and disestablished existing systems of religion out of pure conscientiousness and in the interests of geniality and good feeling; his most famous Roman disciple talks of eating and drinking and other things of sense in a way which

makes an article in the *Medical Encyclopædia* seem relatively warm and passionate; and his nearest modern equivalent is Bernard Shaw. No doubt subsequent gluttons called themselves Epicureans: but they have thereby no more claim to philosophic gravity than any half-baked philanderer who talks of Platonic Love. As to gourmets, I dare say they exist, and I am still hoping to meet one, in order to discover what in spite of all the talk on the subject seems very doubtful—that is, whether there can be a real art of eating and drinking in the least worthy of the name, whether the sense of taste is capable of an aesthetic experience even remotely comparable to those of sight and sound.

In the interim, I hold that the last word on the subject was uttered by the gentleman in *Punch*:—'Oh, what a 'eavenly dinner we 've 'ad!'—'Enough to make yer wish yer was born 'oller.' The gourmet's art, in short, operates, if at all, only during the actual process of the deglutition of food; it has no concern with what happens afterwards. (I hope it is unnecessary to

apologise for this vulgar but vital distinction.) Food and drink are regarded merely as ticklers of the palate, and not as builders and preservers of the body. Now surely this is once more an error of abstraction. Properly regarded, the sandwich does not cease when it is swallowed; it gives shape and colour to the subsequent pipe: it braces the heart for the afternoon walk; its swan song calls us to tea; last of all, its spirit is linked and welded into the imperishable memories of the day. Can the gourmet say the same of his lobster salad? Is it not, when once its brief domination of the palate is over, at best a fruitless and dissociated memory, at worst a torment and a foe? Once again, the walker by adhering to the concrete view gains sanity and width of vision: the abstract specialist is left with a half-discerned and therefore disordered world.

There is one further cause which tends to set apart the walker's food and his conversation about it, from that of other men; he usually carries it, at least for the mid-day meal or meals, on his person. It is

thus far more intimately associated with him than the food which issues at stated intervals from the mysterious economy of the home. There is no formal process of sanctification so real and so significant: the gilding of the horns of the sacrificial victim, the solemn procession and the prayer, the incense and meal and sacred fire—these are but vain symbols, compared with the sublimation and even transubstantiation which ensues from carrying food in the pocket. Better a simple marmalade sandwich which has climbed a hill with you firmly stuck to your pouch and your ordnance map, than all the flesh-pots of Egypt, if connected with you only by the extrinsic relation of eating.

To sum up, then, or rather to reiterate, food and drink are to the walker a very vital and central part of his being, of the concrete world without and the concrete man within. Hence, they form very nearly the most intimate and essential part of his conversation. It is sometimes thought that a test of friendship is the ease and frequency of conversation upon lofty and abstract

themes. For myself, I set little store by the friendship of two men or women who talk largely of life and death and the beginnings of things: such talk, especially about death, is better kept for one's enemies. But when two men talk freely about food and drink, then you may be sure that a real intimacy has begun; and when a youth and a maiden talk thus, their feet are on the high road to the great adventure. Recently I overheard Mr. Jones say to Miss Robinson, 'Hard-boiled eggs are all very well for a family party, but not much good if you mean real business'; to which she answered, 'I only like them on mountains in the winter.' Finding that my friends—a deplorable and indeed indefensible practice—were offering seven to two against the engagement, I caused some astonishment by taking the odds. I have not yet been paid, but I saw young Jones in Kensington Gardens the other day beating his sister with a hazel switch.

The third of the walker's special subjects of conversation, the subject of Places, ought

perhaps to be classed under the general head of shop. Places are to the walker what the goal is to the athlete or victory to the election agent—the ultimate and determining elements in his activity to which all the rest is subordinated. We cannot desire the process, but only the object—the actual swoop of the ball into the goal, the triumphant and epoch-making return of Mr. X. So—in the pleasant land of ultimates—we cannot desire walking: we can only desire places. But just as the casual outsider is more interested in the goal than in the brilliant forward combination which produced it; just as he is excited about the announcement of the poll and quite calm about the speaking, pamphleteering, canvassing and other stimuli which led to it; so for the walker places lie nearer than walking to the common interests of man, and may therefore perhaps be regarded as a general subject of conversation.

In the widest sense, of course, topography is one of the safest and most familiar subjects of conversation, and 'Do you know (somewhere)?' as a dinner-table opening

is as good or better than the classic 'Do you know (some one)?' The latter might, perhaps, be compared by a chess player to the orthodox King's Knight openings—well-tried and well-worn methods which, as the text-books say, generally lead to a solid and instructive game. If so, the places opening is more of a gambit, less safe but more attractive. The following is a specimen. 1. *P-K* 4. 'Do you know Surrey?' 1. *P-K* 4. 'Yes.' 2. *P-K B* 4. 'Do you know Dorking?' 2. *P* x *P*. (gambit accepted) 'Yes; delightful country, isn't it?' 3. *K Kt-K B* 3. 'Yes; which part do you prefer?' 3. *P-K Kt* 4. 'Oh, I am very fond of Leith Hill.' 4. *B-B* 4. (plunging) 'Do you know many ways up it?' 4. *P-K Kt* 5. 'Four or five.' 5. Castles (the pun is quite accidental). 'The Rookeries, perhaps?' 5. *P* x *Kt*. 'Yes, very well,' and the Muzio gambit, that most sensational of openings, is established. If the other party is a man he should be a good fellow; if not, it is time for you to begin to think seriously.

Such an opening is of course exceptional

(like the Muzio gambit) and requires a kindred spirit; otherwise gambit is not accepted, and the game may become dull. But as a general rule most people have something to say about places: both literally and metaphorically, the subject is common ground to many different interests. Take a simple bit of road, such as that in the Mole valley by Burford Bridge. To the walker it is a quiet interlude between the classical austerity of the Roman Road and the more romantic interest of Denbies and Ranmore Common. To the motorist it is a brief moment in the morning scorch to Lewes and back in time for the inquest at noon. To the cyclist it is the last lap before the second shandy-gaff. To the Box-Hill picnicker it is the way to heaven; to the Meredithian, the road to Mecca. One and all can meet on this ground and speak each other in passing. And the walker, if he is wise, will neglect none of these other interests and points of view: there is no element which is really alien, no interest really irrelevant, to the concrete view of places which is his peculiar

privilege. It is well to think of the cycling and motoring communities as you cross Burford Bridge; it is better to hear the giggles and gallant conversation of the young parties struggling up the grass slope of Box Hill; it is best of all to turn one glance to that ugly house and its little wooden annexe—and then, as you strike up through Denbies, to think of Diana and the woods which witnessed her great wrong and later on ministered to her broken spirit.

But interesting and relevant though such associations may be to the walker, they are only elements in the real meaning which places have for him. This meaning is hard to analyse and impossible to define: in the last resort we are driven back on the metaphor of personal relations. There are places which are, so to speak, given to us from the beginning without our choice, like parents and family, places which are part of us and are not to be criticised or regarded from outside. There are places, on the other hand, like casual acquaintances which we choose for ourselves, which we

see, and even see often, with pleasure, but with which we have little permanent intimacy. And there are places of a third kind, somewhere between the two former, which seem partly chosen by our conscious choice, partly given to us by a pre-ordained kinship, which may be viewed both from within and without, which have for us a special meaning and a special individuality. Whether the metaphor can be driven to a romantic-idealist conclusion, whether there is for everybody one especial place of the third type reserved for one unique intimacy, I would not venture to say. It may be so; it might, on the other hand, prove to be a case of pressing a comparison too far, and invalidating in the interests of dialectic symmetry, if not the great institution of monogamy, at least its idealistic interpretation. When it comes to places, I doubt if some of us have rounded Cape Turk.

Conversations about places are thus really like conversations about persons, and have all the charm and interest of this familiar conversational mode. We are

interested when Jones has met our family acquaintances or friends; we are also interested when he has met our parent places (wherever they are), our acquaintance Helvellyn, or our very dear friend Bowfell. Did Jones merely visit Bowfell casually (via Esk Hause), or did he dine with him and converse until a late hour in the smoking-room (Hell Gill route)? Such talk is both lively and profitable: it brightens up both parties and speedily shows them whether they are destined for friendship or acquaintance. It may be that Jones is a mere trifler, who went up Bowfell as he would have gone up Skiddaw (that mountain of banality) and talked by the way, or tried to set up a record; if so, you may treat him kindly, but it is better to pass on to Wordsworth or politics or immortality or some more trivial subject. But it may prove that he is a real walker, of a reverent and concrete mind, and then you may get out your map and go over it with him, and talk about food and the weather.

It is in this detailed talk that the walker

takes his highest flight. It may be evening, in London, in company: yet the noise of the traffic dies away; the glare of the light and the babble of others drops from you: you are alone with a kindred soul and (if possible) a map spread out between you. Then point by point and detail by detail you recall and redintegrate in memory the larger moments of your life; every path that you have taken, every stone and summit on which you stood, revive and take shape under the plastic stress of your joint memories; the outline of the eternal hills stands before you, hard and high as the call of duty: once more the soft rain enwraps you or the clean wind whips you into ecstasy. For a moment, in the midst of our dividing and abstracting civilisation, you are again a man whole and concrete. This is something better than sympathetic conversation: it is the colloquy of two beings joined by a real bond: it is common talk.

II

WALKER MILES

E tenebris tantis tam clarum extollere lumen
Qui primus potuisti inlustrans commoda vitae,
Te sequor . . . inque tuis nunc
Ficta pedum pono pressis vestigia signis,
Non ita certandi cupidus, quam propter amorem
Quod te imitari aveo.

LUCR. iii. 1.

II

WALKER MILES

When Macaulay's New Zealander has finished his meditations on London Bridge, and comes to sum up the history of this country, he will, if he is a wise man, have something to say on the subject of names. In Book VII. Chapter iv. Section 48 on Individualism, he will point out how we always tried to ascribe events to single individuals, and to stamp them with a great name; how we worshipped our national heroes when they were dead, and ascribed all our glories to them; how we hung their statues with garlands on appointed days, or wore flowers which were somebody else's favourites. But he will add that this tendency did not stop there: that a great many things which were really public and national institutions, having originated in

individual effort, remained to the end marked with the individual name. Bradshaw, Whitaker, Crockford, Hazell, Haydn, Kelly —in another country we should have had long official and descriptive titles, but in England all these great works—the very props of our domestic life—still bear the names of their creators, though these have in some cases passed from us. We cling passionately, with something of an anthropomorphic instinct, to the idea of a single man in each case, of one colossal brain issuing annually or at intervals in these magnificent aggregations of indispensable fact.

In this list there is a name lacking, and it is one which, far more truly than the rest, stands for unaided effort and individual enterprise. I mean Walker Miles, the author of *Field Path Rambles* and other guide-books for walking in the home counties. Less wide in his scope than Whitaker, less exuberant in detail than Bradshaw, he yet stands, in virtue of his subject, on a far higher plane than either. Bradshaw can lay before us, with masterly

lucidity and conciseness and a wealth of symbolic resource, a picture of our country's passenger transport system; Whitaker articulates for us the whole skeleton of its official being. But our country is something more than a complex of railways or a structure of offices and salaries; and the true Englishman, or at least the true Londoner, when he has expended a proper veneration on the other masters of actuality, should at any rate have a thought to spare for Walker Miles.

Walker Miles was not, it may be inferred, his real name. There are colleagues of his, co-heirs of his renown, who deal with other parts of the country: and one of them bears the name of Alf Holliday. Both names were clearly pleasantries, adopted possibly from modesty, possibly from a feeling that their task was too sacred to be associated with the name of an actual man. But it is as Walker Miles that we know him: as Walker Miles he influences our lives, guides our steps, and points us to the inner secrets of our native land. And, among his colleagues, he was clearly the leader and the

pioneer. Alf Holliday and Noah Weston have great moments: Hertfordshire is theirs and the Northern Heights are theirs: theirs are Chipperfield Common and St. Albans and the valley of the Chess. But Walker Miles has Kent and the whole of Surrey; the Oxted hills and the Epsom Downs, and that wonderful triangle whose apices are Guildford and Leatherhead and Leith Hill; all these, to his eternal honour, are marked with his name.

The task which he undertook may be indicated by the words with which he himself begins his immortal work on the Surrey hills. 'It has been remarked, and with much truth, that to any one with a good knowledge of our field paths and bridle roads, England may be said to be one vast open space for the enjoyment and recreation of its people. This knowledge, however, is somewhat difficult of attainment, owing mainly to the frequent absence of any distinctive mark or indication by which a public right-of-way may be known. Even the ordnance maps afford no assistance in this direction.' It was to the

spreading of this 'good knowledge' that he addressed himself. With consummate care and precision, he set himself to select from the vast complex of footpaths the best and most interesting, to weave them into continuous walks bearing a practical relation to the facilities for railway travel and food supply, and then, by instructions which even the most careless could hardly mistake, to lay them open to his followers. We can picture him with his note-book and compass, piecing together the stray and apparently purposeless fragments of path which abound in our country, harking back, altering, revising, adding touches of detail for the guidance of the inexperienced, suppressing all superfluity, sparing no pains in his effort to spread the good knowledge, to reveal the vast open space for enjoyment and recreation, and, in a very real sense, to restore England to the English.

It was a work necessarily incomplete and necessarily open to criticism. An exhaustive treatment of the footpaths of any district, however concise and summary, would run

into quartos: it was the essence of Walker Miles's books that they must be small and portable. The most, therefore, that he could hope to do was to adumbrate certain main routes and to leave others to work out in detail all the countless variations and combinations. And since every man has his own predilections in footpaths as much as in poetry, Walker Miles labours under all the limitations and all the vulnerability of the anthologist. There is no one of us but could pick out here and there points in which the Walker Miles route could (as we think) be improved upon; there are few who do not habitually abandon his guidance at times and take a favourite line of their own. But such variations neither undo his work nor disestablish his primacy among home-county walkers: it was only through following his way that we were able to improve upon it; and we may be sure that he himself would never have wished the good knowledge to be limited within the necessarily narrow confines of his own work, but would rather have welcomed

any subsequent variations which amplified without superseding it.

Perhaps one general criticism of his work may be allowed which rests on something more than a personal predilection. He seems hardly to have realised the fascination of the straight line. Of course he had to cater for all types—the six-miler, the twelve-miler, the eighteen-miler, and the twenty-four-miler—the four great classes of walkers which are separated by more than a numerical distinction; and stations and inns had to be provided at suitable points to meet all these tastes. Even so, the routes seem often unnecessarily tortuous; and although the tortuosities are never objectless, and often lead to exceptionally fascinating pieces of scenery, yet there is lacking that grandeur of conception about the walk as a whole, that sense of a sustained purpose, which attaches to a straight-line walk of twenty miles or more. There is a certain sublimity, such as the Roman road-makers must have felt, in holding a general direction across country regardless of the rise and fall of

the ground: most of all when the direction is southward, and the sun swings slowly round from the left cheek to the nose and on to the right cheek and the right ear. So man goes straight to his goal while the constellations swing round him. Still, if we wish to improve on Walker Miles in this way, the remedy is in our own hands; and more, we shall often find that some of the greatest moments of our line are his. Of the two big lines in the central Surrey district, that from Epsom to Guildford (it is not quite straight) is made up of three Walker Miles fragments (Epsom —Burford Bridge—Ranmore—Guildford); while that from Esher to Leith Hill, perhaps the greatest of all, reaches its climax in Walker Miles's track through the Rookeries and up the Tillingbourne valley, or the even nobler route through Deerleap Wood and Wotton.

The mention of straight lines suggests one of the most difficult of walking questions, namely the functions and limitations of trespassing. There is a definite

type of walker who loves trespassing for its own sake, and exults, as he climbs a fence or turns up a path marked 'Private,' in a vision of the landed aristocracy of England defied and impotent. There is much excuse for this attitude: as we review the history of English commons and rights-of-way, of the organised piracy upon the body politic and the organised perjury which supported it, it is difficult to stifle an impulse to throw at least one little pebble on our own account, if only for old sake's sake, at the forehead of Goliath. But like other unregenerate impulses, this carries its punishment with it. To indulge the love of trespassing involves ultimately making trespassing an end rather than a means, and this—like the twin passion for short-cuts as ends in themselves—is disastrous to walking. It may rest on a mere natural love for law-breaking: it may—and often does—rest on higher and deeply considered motives; but in either case it is an alien element in the commonwealth of walking.

Trespassing on high moral grounds has

the further disadvantage that it leads to meticulous hair-splitting. I know walkers who think it right to trespass on the grounds of a large landowner, but not on those of a small landowner. They consequently draw a line at five acres or so, and have to consider, whenever trespassing is proposed, on which side of the line the field of action lies. Under conditions of urgency — the only conditions which unquestionably justify trespassing — there is little time for such refinements of casuistry, and as a matter of fact moral considerations usually go by the board in any real crisis. I have myself seen one of the most fervent upholders of the five-acre doctrine open the gate of a blameless householder at Caterham, walk down his ten-foot garden path, climb his back-fence, and so issue on to a private golf-links.

There are practical disadvantages, too, in the way of the hardened trespasser. Sooner or later, at the end of his trespassing, waits Nemesis for him—the keeper, flanked by dogs and fortified by a gun, purple-faced in hate of a wrong not his,

ingeminating the awkward question, 'Did you see the notice-boards or did you not?' And there follows the mean and abject retreat to the nearest road, with the vision of the landed aristocracy calm and triumphant.

And there are deeper reasons which make trespassing for its own sake a passion unworthy of a walker. The desire to affront the landed aristocracy is just one of those disconnected and abstract impulses which walking should mould and settle into the structure of larger thought. He who walks over English country in a proper and receptive frame of mind must catch something of its spirit, of the age-long order of possession. It is not only the voice of the keeper and landowner that is lifted against the casual trespasser: it is the voice of a long tradition, a settled convention, the voice, in a sense, of the country itself. The force which settled the forms of wood and field and hedgerow, which fixed the very conditions of our walking, is the same force which (dimly comprehended) pulsates in the breast of the

indignant keeper and hardens the faces of the 'Private' notice-boards against us. In the concrete imagination of the practised walker such a force must have its due place; and, beside it, the vague and abstract love of trespassing is but a shadowy phantom of to-day.

But if we can respect the rights of others, we can also respect our own; and it is here that Walker Miles is at once our prophet and our guide. As ancient as the fields themselves, as securely based upon the ages and sanctified by the use of our fathers, the footpaths and field-tracks stand as the living embodiment of popular rights. Beside the way which the feet of generations have worn to church or inn, the loftiest dwellings and widest parks are mere parvenus. If the trespasser wishes to commit an act of symbolic defiance against the landed aristocracy, he need not climb their fences or jump through their flower-beds: he can tread the right-of-way which existed before they were thought of, which conditioned the laying out of their estates, which often cuts clean through their property

with all the contempt of an oak for a mushroom. Some rights-of-way may have been lost to us, in the manner mentioned above; but many yet remain which the Romans trod, and the Saxons trod, and our later ancestors trod; and all the forces of darkness have not prevailed against them.

The preservation of commons and footpaths has now passed into the hands of a great and beneficent society; Pompeius has set sail on the Mediterranean, and the pirates have been subdued. But there is no surer guard for our rights than a steady and regular patrolling of our possessions; and in this Walker Miles is a safe guide. He is a master of all the tricks by which the public is at present cheated, all the last desperate devices of defeated piracy. The locked gate of the farmyard, the 'Trespassers' board planted by the stile within a foot of the path, the track which appears to lead up to the doors of a private house—all these figure in his stately prelude, and are exemplified again and again in the course of his works. Following in his steps we need fear no keeper: and if ever a bar

or board stand in our way we can disregard it. Beside one of the Oxted paths there lie (or lay) the shattered remains of a notice-board which some usurper had planted in the very centre of the way. I can claim no credit for its destruction, for by the time I came there was in truth very little destroying left to be done; but I like to think of that unknown devotee of Walker Miles, pursuing his placid way, faced suddenly by the intruder, and with one splendid motion laying it low and (as far as could be judged) jumping on it afterwards.

The style of Walker Miles is perhaps an acquired taste. He wrote under peculiar conditions: he had to be at once clear and compendious, that the careless walker might not miss his way nor the weakling stagger under the weight of a large volume. He had thus little use for rhetorical tropes and flourishes; his words had to be cut down to the bare minimum necessary to express his meaning. But, to the initiated, this rigorous conciseness lends his style a peculiar

value: every word has its appointed function: we feel that we could not sacrifice a single line; nay, those who have unintentionally done so by skipping a few lines in the middle of the page have regretted it when the subsequent directions became unintelligible. And the fact—also necessitated by his conditions—that most of the verbs are in the imperative mood exercises a singular charm; we feel that the author is in an intimate relation with us, addressing us personally and not merely discoursing from afar.

As a sample of his style, I take a section of the walk from Leith Hill to Felday.

'Another lane is soon reached. Cross this lane, and take the opposite path uphill towards the entrance-gate of the approach-road to Highashes-farm. Pass through this gateway, and upon reaching the first outhouse, note a wicket gate on the left. Pass through it and follow the track downhill between banks. Upon coming out upon an open path through the wood, still keep straight ahead along the hillside, with a copse overhead on the right, and a grand larch-wood below on the left. In another quarter-

of-a-mile the SEVENTEENTH MILE point will be reached and then for half-a-mile further the path still continues easily up and down the picturesque undulations of the wood.'

Within the compass of six sentences we have traversed perhaps the most wonderful mile in all the author's works. The uninformed may regard the passage as dull, but to those who know their Walker Miles, and above all to those who know the Highashes Farm bridle-path, there is more meaning in these simple words than in all the laboured enthusiasms of a guide-book or a local-colour novelist. In the whole passage there are but two descriptive epithets, and these of the most temperate kind; but both their rarity and their temperance give to the epithets of Walker Miles a special value: he only uses them when there is something which deserves epithet. As the short and businesslike sentences pass before us in ordered succession, we may fairly recall another author who knew how to gain vividness by sacrificing ornament; we catch again something

of the quick, uplifting stringendo of Thucydides.

Works of reference are traditionally the butts for small wit; and it is possible that as Walker Miles becomes more widely known a legend will spring up that his directions are obscure, like the sister legend, fostered by dying or dead humourists, that Bradshaw is unintelligible. The Bradshaw myth has by now got some footing, and it will take a few generations of increasing good sense to kill it; but it may be hoped that all walkers will combine to strangle any embryo Walker Miles legend at birth. If a man knows the four points of the compass, can distinguish between his right hand and his left, and (occasionally) can recognise a holly or an oak, he has all the equipment necessary for understanding Walker Miles. I have followed his directions now for some years, and have only come to grief from my own carelessness, or from actual changes in the country which have made his directions out of date. Now and then the course of a footpath has been altered: for example, the Highashes Farm

track now debouches not into the Felday road, but into the cross-road to Abinger, so that one turns to the left instead of the right. Here and there, too, a stile has been removed or a gate has become a gap. But the great bulk of Walker Miles is still accurate, and none but a fool need go astray.

Under which term I include, with the deepest respect, betrothed couples: in the honourable and Shakesperean sense they are fools, being too much occupied with supramundane things to be able to attend properly to the business in hand. It was my good fortune one Whit-Monday to overtake two such couples on a Walker Miles track, both with the master's work in hand and both somewhat puzzled as to his meaning; but I was able to set both right by precept and example, and I trust that there are now two happy homes where Walker Miles stands in the place of honour in the front-parlour, ousting East Lynne and the other customary household gods. There is also a story about a minister of state, but that has nothing to do with Walker Miles.

Useful, accurate, concise, intelligible—it is no light thing to be able to predicate these qualities without reservation of a man's work: and I doubt if he himself would have desired further praise. There is no trace of trumpet-blowing in his writings: indeed, he leaves the reader in doubt whether he himself realised the full measure of his achievements. 'Though the main roads to Leith Hill,' he says, 'are perhaps some of the most charming in the country, it is, nevertheless, strange how few except thorough-going ramblers know of any other routes. The five following rambles will, therefore, it is to be hoped, find favour with those who like to get off the "beaten track." They are all different, both going and returning, and are of varying lengths, as will be seen by reference to page 65.' In this masterpiece of understatement it is difficult to know whether a smile of Socratic irony is not lurking on the master's lips, waiting the answering smile of the disciple who understands. Where another would have let loose the big trumpet of the 'Exegi monumentum' timbre, he merely

states the fact. 'They are all different, both going and returning.'

He himself has gone to return no more, and only his works remain. But I like to think that somewhere on the Elysian plain, where prophet and hero and poet tread together down the well-worn paths, a single figure quests somewhat aside, writing words of gold upon an ivory tablet as he goes. 'Continuing on past the Happy Groves take the well-marked track to the right, but at the third clump of asphodel, note a grassy track diverging to the left, and follow this until it leads into an open space covered with amaranth and moly.'

III

WALKING AND MUSIC

With a Digression on Dancing

Saltatorem appellat L. Murenam Cato. Maledictum est, si vere obiicitur, vehementis accusatoris ; sin falso, maledici conviciatoris. Quare cum ista sis auctoritate, non debes, M. Cato, arripere maledictum ex trivio . . . neque temere consulem populi Romani saltatorem vocare ; sed conspicere, quibus praeterea vitiis affectum esse necesse sit eum, cui vere istud obiici potest. Nemo enim fere saltat sobrius, nisi forte insanit.

CIC. *Pro Mur.* vi. 13.

The waltzer is characterized by great delicacy and stupidity. The death-rate is higher amongst them than amongst ordinary tame mice. . . . A waltzer cannot escape ; it cannot keep up a run in a direct line for long, and soon lapses into spinning.

A. D. DARBISHIRE,
Breeding and the Mendelian Discovery, pp. 85-6.

III

WALKING AND MUSIC

WITH A DIGRESSION ON DANCING

THE poet Juvenal in a well-known line remarked that the penniless traveller (or walker) will sing within earshot of a robber. In modern times the picture has rather lost its poignancy, since robbers have deserted our highroads and content themselves with organising bazaars; but the significant conjunction of the words 'Cantabit' and 'viator' remains. To sing, hum, burble, whistle or generally adumbrate music is at once the distinction and the pride, the duty and the pleasure, of walkers. Under the influence of a fine day and a pleasant country the voiceless and tone-deaf have been known to emit sounds coming well within the orchestral range (interpreted liberally

and so as to include the instruments of percussion), while the most moderately and modestly musical of men become on a walk encyclopaedic in their range of melody and Protean in their variety of tone-colour. There is surely some natural kinship between walking and music; the musical terms—andante, movement, accompaniment—are full of suggestive metaphor; and the sacred symbol of both arts is the wooden stick which marks the strides of the walker and pulsates to the heart-beats of the orchestra.

The most obvious ground for this kinship is rhythm. The simple beat of the foot on the ground, with the natural swing of the body above it, suggests inevitably the beat of the musical bar. It is difficult to walk for long under the sway of that regular 'one, two, one, two' without fitting a melody to it; it is even more difficult to hear a melody played or sung when walking without dropping instinctively into its rhythm. A London crowd, that most apathetic of masses, begins to march in unison when a barrel-organ strikes up the

'Soldiers of the Queen' or the Intermezzo of Mascagni or some other item from the repertory of mechanical music; and if ever you wish to deride, contemn, trample on and spiritually triumph over a tune (which happens to all of us sometimes), there is nothing more satisfying than to walk past the band or gramophone from whence it issues at a step cutting clean across its rhythm. Had the Sirens lived on land, Odysseus would have needed no wax in his ears; he could have waited till they began their incantation (in A flat, three-four time, sixty bars to the minute, lusingando), and then walked by at a brisk step, matched to a breezy anapaestic song or to the incomparable rhythm of his own hexameters.

The simple foot-beat is undoubtedly a potent link between walkers and music; I doubt, however, if it is the only or the chief ground of their musical susceptibility. There are other activities besides walking which have a regular and emphatic rhythm, and yet are not markedly associated with music. Some of these will be treated in more detail later; here it will suffice to

mention carpet-beating, the treadmill, and bicycling. The cause is no doubt partly physiological; the carpet-beater and the felon operate in awkward positions, while the bicyclist, even if he does not stoop over his handle-bars and so cramp his lungs, has a current of air in his face which parches his throat and impedes the flexibility of his whistle. The same applies even more forcibly to motorists, were it possible to conceive them as in any relation to music or as fit for anything but treasons, stratagems and spoils—the stratagems being conceived, and the spoils exacted, by the police.

A more potent reason, I think, is the actual bodily condition of a walker, that perfect harmony which comes of a frame well occupied. The carpet-beater operates from the waist upwards, his lower half being as irrelevant as that of a stranded mermaid; the bicyclist forswears his birthright by allying himself to a machine. But the walker is an organism, and therefore a fit vehicle for music. And this inner fitness is matched by the merely material conditions of the walker's physique. His bodily habit is

the right one for singing—for the exercise of the vocal mechanism irrespective of the kind of music produced. A good walker means an instrument in good condition, with a wide compass and a ripe quality of tone. That high A after which you strive at other times with tears and sweat comes without effort; you make trees and the mountain tops that freeze bow their heads with notes which at other times would merely make the accompanist blench; your runs sound like a bird soaring into the empyrean and not like a lame man going upstairs; your trill is at last a trill, clearly distinguishable from a yodel. And when the day is done, what singing is there like that of a walker in his bath?

These two facts, the natural beat of the foot and the bodily exhilaration of walking, account for a good many of the ordinary walking songs, the cheerful melodies of simple rhythm, which recall a flagging company to courage and unison. Chief of these is the famous 'John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in his grave.' Tradition

dictates that this must be sung on the principle of cumulative omission—the first verse in full, the second without the word 'grave,' the third without 'his grave' and so on, the blanks being filled by beats of the foot. Thus in the last verse but one, the first three lines consists only of the word 'John' and seven foot-beats, thrice repeated; while in the last verse of all there are twenty-three beats in complete silence, until the whole company comes in on the words, 'But his soul goes marching on.' It is a point of honour to count these beats and the pause preceding them exactly right, so as to get a unanimous attack with no false starts. For reviving the attention and good feeling of a tired company, there is nothing like John Brown; and, it may be mentioned, it will carry them over 576 paces if 'a-mouldering' is reckoned one word, or 640 if it is reckoned two, as the more orthodox hold.

Walkers may be thought perverse in making a fetish of a song like 'John Brown'—which is in origin, I suppose, a threnody on the death of an eminent man—when

there lies ready to hand such a store of specifically walking tunes. I allude, of course, to that ancient and well-established form of music, the March. There is no age of man which has not had its marches, whether it called them anapaests or war-songs or what not. Further, the feelings which marches express are wide in range and highly impressive in character. Military glory, religious pomp, state ceremonial, weddings and funerals—all these have their appropriate setting in the march rhythm. Or, in other words, when man celebrates his greatest achievements or his highest aspirations, when he makes the big adventure of his life or the greater adventure of his death, the most natural and human expression of feeling is to walk to the strains of music. Marching, in short, is the epic form of walking, and march tunes are the epics of music—the formal embodiments of communal feeling on the great occasions of life.

But communal feeling is not the whole of life, and marching is not the only, nor indeed the best, form of walking. Marching

presupposes a disciplined company and a hard road; it reduces all to the measure of the least, resulting in that cramped and debased form of motion known as the military 'stride'; rhythmically, it over-emphasises the beat of the foot and neglects the other elements in the walking motion. In the same way, marching tunes seem often to win their popularity at the expense of their quality, and to border on dulness, if not triviality. To say that marches express the great moments of life is perhaps inaccurate; strictly they deal not with the feelings of the hero or king or priest or corpse or bridegroom, but with the feelings of the bystanders about these feelings. Now it is a regrettable fact that ordinary men on ceremonial occasions tend to take a slightly superficial view of the proceedings. I doubt if the *Cives Romani* assembled at a triumph thought about the imperial greatness of Rome so much as the fit of the proconsul's cloak, the personal appearance of the chained captives, or the chances of a stampede among the elephants. Similarly at a wedding, the linked destinies of two

young lives, the eternal vows flung out by the unquenchable courage of man across the unsubstantial hazard of futurity, are not, as a rule, the first and only preoccupation of the guests. Hence it comes that the most popular march tunes have often a suggestion of artificiality or even insincerity. The orthodox Wedding March is deliberately artificial; it was written to represent —and does most exquisitely represent— the wedding of six semi-mythical lovers seen through the glamour of the fairy-haunted forest of midsummer: it is somewhat out of place at a decorous union of citizens. Similarly, of the three popular Funeral Marches, one is tinged with decorative pomposity, and one with Little Nell; only one casts over the hearer the very shadow of death.

However this may be, in actual fact the walker on the hills, alone or with a few companions, has little to do with marches. His rhythm is not a bare 'one, two, one, two'; it is a long swing from the hips to which the whole body sways, a complex of stresses in which the foot-beats only mark

the periods. And his feeling is not that of a crowd at a show: it is something deeper, more contemplative, more individual, a function of many variables, of himself, what he is, what he does, of last week, last month, to-day, the face of the country, the influence of sun and wind. And the music which he craves as his counterpart—nay, the music which he actually hums or sings or whistles—is rarely the music of the march.

What it is may be disputed. At one time or another I have heard nearly every kind of tune sounding to the steps of a walker. Wagner and Purcell, Sullivan and Anon, symphony and opera, tone-poem and folk-song — nothing (with one exception) seems to come amiss to a walking company. And from this very large and variegated body of music one most remarkable fact emerges—namely, that nearly every kind of rhythm can, at some time or other, be accommodated to the walking stride. Regarding man as a biped, naturally inclined to 'lead' with one foot rather than the other (generally the left), you would say

that even rhythms with two or four beats to the bar would suit him best; and perhaps (in the lowest sense of 'nature' as the starting point and not the finishing post) the natural rhythm of walking is the 'one, two, one, two.' But man is more than a biped; and if he likes a tune with three or five beats to the bar (or seven or eleven for that matter), he is quite capable of stepping accordingly, and of either 'leading' with each foot alternately, or of overlooking altogether the difference between the natural stresses of his feet. Further, as regards the three-time rhythms, many of them go quick, so that only one foot-beat is needed in each bar; and there is the incomparable six-eight, of which more will be said in the sequel.

At this point the scandalised mathematician inquires, What becomes of the tempo? Is not the effect of walking on music purely Procrustean? A walker (let us say) takes two strides to a second; in order to suit his steps, a tune in even time must go at a particular rate, selected from the following schedule, to wit, (*a*) two bars to a second, with

one foot-beat in each bar; (*b*) one bar to a second, with two beats in each bar; (*c*) one bar to two seconds, with four beats to each bar; for practical purposes we need not go beyond this point. For the three-times, there is an even more sharply divided scale, viz. (*a*) two bars to a second, one beat to each bar; (*b*) one bar to a second and a half, three beats to each bar; (*c*) one bar to three seconds, six beats to each bar. What, asks the mathematician, happens to the tunes whose proper pace falls, let us say, between (*a*) and (*b*): must they either be drawn out languorously to fit (*b*), or feverishly accelerated to fit (*a*)?

The answer to the mathematician's question is that in practice no difficulty arises. In the first place, a walker's rate of stride varies to some extent according as he is going uphill or downhill, on grass, rock, or road. Secondly, a little licence may surely be claimed by a walker in varying the orthodox tempo. After all, even conductors do this sometimes; and if one tune has to go a little quicker than an orchestra takes it, another will have to go a little

slower, which is (I understand) only a slight extension of what the musicians call 'rubato.' Thirdly, and as a minor point, we may set against any possible disadvantages the peculiarly fine effects which the walker obtains in augmentation, when he whistles a tune with one step to a bar and repeats it with two steps to a bar. Finally, it is only in the three-times, between (*a*) and (*b*), that the matter becomes at all serious, (*b*) being one-third of the rate of (*a*). Now, it is a curious fact, that all the good three-time tunes (to speak broadly) fall quite easily under either (*a*) or (*b*). Cheerful songs and jigs and scherzos and most six-eight tunes go naturally with one step to each group of three notes, the swing of the body marking the weak stresses; more solemn themes, funereal folk-songs, the Unfinished Symphony, the last movement of the 'Pathétique,' and the Tristan prelude go naturally with three steps to a group of three notes; the Pilgrims' March takes six, with complicated cross-accents when the 'pulse of life' begins. The intermediate class of three-times, between (*a*) and (*b*), taking about one second

or two strides to a bar, and therefore cutting across the walking rhythm, are generally waltz tunes, which no one in his senses wants to sing on a walk.

If the mathematician still persists, we can silence him by remarking that in any case the tempo is not the most vital point in walking tunes. If all that we desired were a measure to suit our steps, 'John Brown's body' and the 'Dead March' would be enough. The real thing which matters is not the tempo but the character of a tune. Nothing proves the stuff of a tune so surely as to sing it on a walk; music which can stand this test must have some real substance in it. The walker need go through no conscious process of judging, accepting, refusing; let him merely walk, with his mind ranging at large and a tune sounding on his lips or working unuttered in the inward ear, which is the joy of solitude; without his knowing it the assize will be held and judgment pronounced. The shoddy sentimental phrase, which sounded so alluring at 11.30 p.m. yesterday among the potted palms in the conservatory, turns

thin and sour by day on the ruminant palate of the walker. The theme which sounded hard and obscure takes on a new meaning as it pulsates to the rhythm of the stride: obscurity reveals hidden purposes and possibilities of melody; hardness becomes strength; and the whole sinks gradually into the inner parts of the walker's consciousness where music abides beside the springs of thought and action.

Songs and marches are good, no doubt, and 'John Brown's body' is a strong staff in moments of fatigue; but better than these, and nearer to the spirit of walking, are the great themes, the structural tunes which uphold the fabric of symphony or opera. For the mood of a man as he walks is thematic; there are certain main currents of thought in his head, clear and distinct at first, which have to be developed and interwoven and combined and contrasted and turned upside down before they can be restated with all the added volume of meaning they have acquired in the process, or finally summarised and emphasised in the coda (after tea). His thoughts are not

homogeneous, self-contained wholes like those of ordinary life which issue in words and actions; they are shifting and variable, moving continuously, and continuously changing; they dwell in a region apart from the world of action and experience, though related to it and coloured by it. Hence the music to which they naturally adapt themselves is not the definite tune with a beginning, a middle, and an end; it is rather the theme, which has no fixed form, but develops and germinates and changes its colour and shape, and reveals itself only through varied manifestations. So a man may whistle a theme when he starts in the morning, forget all about it as he sinks into the contemplation of walking, and yet find at evening that all the day it has been working in the fabric of his thought; and when next he hears it on an orchestra it will come to him with an added richness of meaning, with a suggestion of the wind in his ears, the shower on his face, and a large contemplation enwrapping him.

It is on the mood which walking induces, rather than on the rhythmical character

itself, that the affinity between walking and music mainly rests. There are other bodily activities besides walking which have a rhythm, some a much more marked and interesting rhythm; and yet these are not usually accompanied by music, and do not seem to feel the need of it. Eminent among these are the two very noble rhythms of a hurdler and of a racing crew. In an actual hurdle race there are possibly difficulties in the way of musical accompaniment: the competitors generally move at different speeds (or it would not be a race); and the tune in any case would have to be a short one, lasting about sixteen seconds. But a rowing crew has necessarily a uniform and well-marked rhythm, and can continue its activity for a considerable time: *prima facie*, it would form a fine subject for a descriptive tone-poem in the modern style, the orchestra including rattles, a pistol, a bell, and a bass tuba (the coach), the roar of the crowd and the swish of the aeroplanes forming 'colour,' with the steady rowing rhythm proceeding underneath. And yet, as far as I know, this tone-

poem has not been written. The nearest approach that has yet been made to the rowing rhythm is the 'cello theme in the Unfinished Symphony; but the rest of the movement is hardly in keeping. The Eton Boating Song, whatever its other merits, is a complete failure as a picture of rowing; it suggests much more forcibly what happens after the race. The fact is, that the rower's mood is not, like the walker's, a musical one: it is too practical, too mechanical, too much bound down by time and space; it lacks the large speculative outlook which calls for music as its natural counterpart.

The same criticism applies even more strongly to another form of bodily motion, namely dancing. *Prima facie*, it would appear that in relation to music, dancing is first of the bodily activities and the rest nowhere. Dancing is, in theory, the pure embodiment of music in motion; walking is an activity primarily directed to other ends, and only accidentally associated with music. However much the walker may appreciate music, however thematic the structure of

his mood, he has to be getting along; whereas the dancer has no such locomotive limitations,[1] but can stop or stand on one leg, or go round in circles, or do anything else which appears suitable to the character of the music which inspires him. Further, the dancer has his band, or at least his piano or harmonium, tangible and within earshot; the walker nearly always has to produce or imagine his music for himself. Any appreciation, therefore, of music which the walker can achieve by suiting his steps to it, would seem but a pale shadow of the dancer's rapture, as he flings himself, unhampered by any other thought, into the intoxicating whirl of the waltz.

But this by no means exhausts the superiorities of dancing, considered as a purely artistic form of motion. Dancing contains or admits of artistic elements of which walking knows little or nothing. One of these is figure; whereas the walker is bound to move along a more or less

[1] I am not including the so-called dancer who shakes hands with his hostess, smiles genially round, and then edges to the door and goes home to bed.

straight line, the dancer can move in circles or squares or ellipses and can thus employ all the resources of decorative art. Second, and more important, is the fact that dancing can be concerted; the individual dancers can move in correlative or supplementary motions forming one rhythmic system. The best rhythmic unity which walkers can hope for is a mere unison of stride and step. But the unity of dancers' movements can be organic—a harmony, a unity of differing elements, a type of the perfect man or the perfect state. A concrete presentation of the ideal, aided by all the resources of bodily grace, music, and decorative art—such, in short, is the essential character of dancing; and beside it walking cuts a very poor figure.

Imagination boggles at the ultimate possibilities of dancing. Far back in the dim and unenlightened past, the dance on the shield of Achilles seems wonderful enough —the wreathed maidens of costly wooing and the youths in well-woven doublets, their hands on each other's wrists, speeding in lines and circles, while a divine minstrel

(who, I regret to observe from the brackets, is textually under suspicion) made music on his lyre. And this is only Homeric dancing, and the centuries that have elapsed since the lamented death of the author have seen one continual process of development in all the elements involved in dancing, most of all in music. Youths and maidens could dance nowadays in figures subtler than the line and circle, to music other than the simple melody of the lyre. We might have—indeed to some extent we have—recital-dances by a single performer. We might have chamber-music dances—four or five trained and expert athletes mingling and intertwining in figures growing more complicated and with motions less classical as the music grows later in date. We might have concerto-dances with a single supreme performer whose motions are accompanied and enforced by others. We might have symphony-dances—a systematised performance in elaborate figures, with a definite motion by a group of dancers to represent each theme, modified in the development section, repeated in the recap-

itulation, returning emphasised and strengthened in the coda. Lastly, we might have an intoxicated riot on no particular plan and call it a dream-phantasy. Before such conceptions the walker can only call attention humbly to the rhythmic elements in his own craft, and pass on with bowed and reverent head.

And then, as Xanthias says after Dionysus' News from the Front, 'I woke up.' We look round the actual world for this realisation of the rhythmic ideal, and what do we find? Thirty couples waltzing, in inadequate space, at a late hour, in a vitiated atmosphere, to the tune of the 'Merry Widow.'[1] Where are the complex and concerted figures? Where are the trained and exquisite movements? Where are the subtleties and varieties of rhythm? The figure is rotatory, roughly elliptical, varied by collisions and pauses for breath. The bulk of the dancers plainly do not know what training is. The rhythm is as

[1] This was written in 1910: now perhaps the 'Chocolate Soldier' or the 'Rosary' should be substituted. But I hate the 'Merry Widow' so much that I gladly let the anachronism stand.

varied as that of a clock and much less subtle than that of a motor-omnibus. The dancers are talking instead of attending to business; the atmosphere reminds one of the Thames Valley on a November afternoon; the thermometer is at 72°; the tune makes one ill. Something very serious seems to have happened to that conclusive *prima facie* argument which we presented so faithfully above.

The hygiene of dancing and the physical conditions of dancers are very interesting subjects, and have, I think, a close connection with dance music; but for the present let us pass them by and take only the essential points. The outstanding fact is the progressive limitation of dancing to one form and one rhythm. Evidence on such a matter is hard to collect, for there is little in the way of printed record; but I can speak with first-hand knowledge of a provincial culture of the late 'nineties, which is probably a fair equivalent of the metropolitan culture of the early 'nineties. In this culture there were several forms of dance, now completely extinct, which,

although of a low grade anthropologically, contained at least the rudiments of higher things. There were concerted dances—with a perceptible figure—the Swedish dance, Sir Roger de Coverley, and, relatively a masterpiece of ingenuity, the Lancers. They were not much as dances; their figures were still at the lowest level of geometrical art and could have been executed with a ruler and compasses; their organisation demanded, without overstraining, the intelligence of a normal child of eight. (The Grand Chain in the Lancers perhaps required a little more and formed a beautiful moral analogue, since its success depended not on the most but on the least capable person present, with the result that it often broke down.) Still, with all their futility, these dances contained the elements of organisation and figure. Where are those elements now?

It was the same with rhythm; our culture was low, but had its possibilities. There was a form of motion, somewhere on the confines of dancing and jumping, called the Galop—a series of wild rotatory

leaps or shuffles, which would have made a cannibal war-dance appear relatively dignified or even sophisticated, but formed no mean test of wind and limb. There was that daring rhythmic variety, the Polka, which even had dotted notes, with a neat anacrustic jump on the quaver following. There was a further reach of human enterprise into triplets, called the Pas de Quatre, with an inspiriting high kick. And there were various barbarisms from America and elsewhere to remind us that there are depths below depths. I have no wish to champion these relics, still less to advocate their restoration; but over their dishonoured grave it is only fair to remark that they were distinct varieties of rhythm, and pointed the way to further developments. That way is now closed.

For what have we now? My evidence for the present century rests mainly on hearsay, but the witnesses are unanimous. The concerted dance is gone; the dance with a figure is gone; nearly all rhythmic varieties are gone, except one. There

are, to be sure, occasional reversions to barbarism, which display some rhythmic variety, but these are ephemeral, relatively rare, and depend more on posture than on rhythm for their interest. If we view the 1902-1912 dance culture as a whole, there is no denying that the single staple form is the waltz—a plain homogeneous three-time rhythm, with no figure and no organisation, taken throughout at a uniform pace which is fixed annually at something approaching a bar to a second by the Congress of Incorporated Dance Musicians.

On its merits as a form of motion opinions are divided. For those who like it, the waltz is the supreme form of bodily motion, enshrining all grace and all rhythm, opening the doors of paradise and lifting the dancer to a rapt ecstasy of sense transcending the bounds of reason, or words to that effect. To those who dislike it, the waltz seems a singularly dull, monotonous and undistinguished form of rhythm, poles asunder from the clean movement of a free man. But whether good or bad, it is alone ; there are no other dancing rhythms

which need be seriously considered. So we reach this curious result, that while rowing, which has no relation to music, has produced at least three very interesting rhythms (the racing-stroke, the paddle, and the picnic-party), and while walking, which has on the physical side only a secondary relation to music, has produced at least four rhythms (the amble, the uphill, the downhill, the full stretch along the flat); dancing, which *is* music in bodily form, has shrunk to one rhythm, and that one very simple, perfectly uniform and strictly limited in tempo.

To inquire how this has happened would carry us beyond even the liberal limits of this discussion. It may be another instance of sheer human perversity, or in other words, the instinct of other people to do what we don't like. The waltz may be a concession to human weakness, figure and organisation and rhythmic variety having been found to overtax the intelligence of the normal dancer. Some would say that the real point is not so much the rhythm as the fact of dancing in

couples—the romantic interest, in short. There is no time to examine this theory: I pause only to note its subtle suggestion of Victorian sentiment and even more of Victorian politics. The round dance thus represents society as an aggregation of mutually exclusive monogamic units, taking their independent way and avoiding each other as much as possible; the art of ball-room steering becomes the analogue of Mill on Liberty. The Homeric dance equally typifies a society organic in all its members; but I digress.

Whatever be the cause, the fact is clear, that for practical purposes dancing is reduced to the waltz. If so, what seemed *prima facie* absurd—to admit walking to a comparison with dancing on artistic grounds—is clearly anything but unreasonable; the balance rather inclines the other way. On the point of rhythm, walking can beat dancing both in subtlety and variety; the other artistic elements, figure and organisation, which might give the superiority to dancing, have been thrown overboard. The unison of walkers is as much and

as little a harmony as the unison of waltzers; the figure of a walk is, like the figure of a waltz, a plain line, with the difference that it is shaped not by four walls, a dais, benches, potted plants, and the possibilities of collision, but by the rise and fall of the ground, the accidents of rock and vegetation, the configuration of our mother earth and her waters. Dancing, by surrendering its other possibilities, falls to the level of walking; by concentrating on one rhythm, it sinks below.

Even so, the waltzer will reply, is not the comparison still, in spite of your sophistries, absurd? Does the walker with all his rhythmic variety achieve any real sympathy with music comparable to the rapture of waltzing? Does not the very concentration of dancing on this form mean that it is the one artistic motion, the one bodily movement which can really express music? The walker may be able to fit music to his steps, but it is a mere extrinsic connection; the waltzer moves *in* music, and his soul is one with that of the waltz composer.

The waltzer has hit the real point. It is of little use to argue in the abstract about the merits of this or that rhythm; we must take rhythm and music together as a whole if we are to form any judgment about them; waltzing ultimately stands or falls by the character of the music it has inspired. What, then, of waltz music considered as a whole? We can at once concede this to the waltzer, that his music is something quite distinct and apart from the rest of music, unique both in rhythm and melody. The rhythm must, for practical reasons, be absolutely uniform—three notes to the bar, sixty odd bars to the minute, a strong accent on the first note of each bar marked either in the melody or the accompaniment, dotted notes being a rare luxury and syncopations and cross-accents even rarer. The character of the music is hard to describe in words, but in practice unmistakable: it is smooth and melodious, appealing strongly and at once to the senses, stimulating or intensifying rather than dilating the imagination; it is built generally on phrases of

equal length, which should, if possible, imply or repeat each other so that they can carry the dancer along and 'run in the head' (like water), even when he is distracted by the heat, the unwonted exercise, and his partner's conversation. In short, a waltz is 'catchy': and to anybody who has ever heard one, further description is superfluous.

Waltz music, then, as a whole, has a definite character of its own. The question follows: is it a good character? To discuss this necessarily involves offending some one; but to carry all parties along together a little further, let us note two points on which all will agree. The first is that in judging waltz music, dancers use a criterion which is not applied to other music. There are certain waltzes of the great masters in which they attempted to use the form for musical purposes; unfortunately, they most of them strayed into syncopations and irregular phrases, and failed to make their tunes sufficiently catchy; consequently they are rarely heard in the ball-room, and the dancer's verdict on them is that they

are very fine music. no doubt, but not good to waltz to. At the other end of the scale are certain waltzes, in fact quite a large number, which no one would attempt to defend seriously on musical grounds; the dancer's verdict is that they are possibly not much as music, but are good to waltz to, and he proceeds to wallow in them. Thus waltz music, besides having a special rhythm and a special character, is judged by a special criterion—*i.e.* whether it is good to waltz to, which practically means, whether it has this special rhythm and this special character, a regular three-time unobscured by rhythmic variations, and a strong sensuous appeal undistracted by any demand on the intellect.

The second point is simply another aspect of the same thing; to wit, the fact that in the normal reasonably good concert —taken, in its widest sense, to include orchestral and choral performances, chamber music, and recitals of all kinds—the waltz rhythm is extremely rare and the pure waltz even rarer. The ordinary concert-goer in a year's experience will have

ranged over practically every other kind of rhythm and (under the guidance of his programme) every other field of emotion; he will have quailed at the relentless tap of destiny, in two-four time; he will have bestridden the narrow world like a Colossus or plumbed the depths of grief or passion, in slow three-time; he will have wondered and frolicked and wondered again, in quick three-time; once or twice at least, he will have had his only relief in a fever of tortured imagination, in five-four time. (Note that every one of these is a walking tune.) But where are the medium three-times? Where are the waltz tunes? How often in his year's experience has he come across the true waltz atmosphere? Perhaps thrice: in Suppé's 'Poet and Peasant' Overture (if he cannot escape in time); in the Hoffmann 'Barcarolle,' which, by the way, is used in the opera to accompany a particularly brutal murder; and in the 'Valse Triste' of Sibelius, where the rhythm is employed with the very definite (and very gruesome) dramatic purpose of representing the imagination of a dying woman

curdled by the stale memories of debauch. The one famous movement that is called a waltz is really much nearer a minuet; it is marked ♩= 138, and can be walked to. Take together as a whole what may be called the ordinary mass of good music, and you cannot resist the conclusion that for some reason the musician will have nothing to do with the waltzer or his atmosphere.

The separation is complete. On the one hand we have music, which issues from life and returns upon life, which appeals to something very deep within us, making every kind of thought and feeling its minister—the music which fitly accompanies us as we walk. On the other hand, apart and alone, judged by its own criteria and bounded by its own conditions, we have the waltz music, related not to life but to a very small, narrow, and detached phase of it, appealing only to the senses, and these in a very abnormal state. Faced with this contrast, we can only say to the waltzer that here our ways part, bid him farewell, and proceed to denounce him.

For the state of the waltzer is something frightful to contemplate. The progressive limitation of dancing to the waltz rhythm is but the outward sign of an inner limitation of feeling, by which the waltzer cuts himself off from the rest of humanity and the rest of his own life, placing between himself and them the barriers of a bad art and a bad hygiene, and so fencing off his little paradise, his illuminated interspace of world and world, where never creeps a cloud, nor moves a wind. At a late hour, in a special costume, under artificial light, in a vitiated atmosphere, stimulated by abnormal food and drink; with every external condition that can unseat the judgment, suspend the continuity of good sense, and cut off the sane feeling of relation to the day that is past and the morrow that is to come—is it any wonder that he needs a special rhythm to move in and a special kind of melody to move to? And so the wheel moves in a vicious circle. The ambitious waltzes of the great masters impose a strain on the intellect; they have little direct sensuous appeal; they are recondite, discontinuous,

frigid, tiring; they have no go; away with them to the outer darkness (to the stars and the fresh air). But from the cafés of Vienna arises a very different voice, sensuous, regular of rhythm, rich with the glamour of late hours, the swish of skirts and the slither of feet; however vulgar, however trivial, it is good to waltz to; bring wreaths of laurel to usher the conqueror in!

But to what a paradox are we come! Dancing, the highest of the bodily arts, which should be in the closest alliance with the companion art of music, appears its deadliest foe. The dancer, who should co-operate with and inspire the musician, is merely a burden to him; instead of pointing the way to further developments, he restrains him relentlessly from all rhythmic variety, from all reaches of feeling and character which do not fall within the narrow limits of being good to waltz to. With the shackles of a cast-iron rhythm he cramps his spirit: with the miasma of the waltz atmosphere he pollutes his soul. Is it any wonder that, with this prospect before him, the reputable musician turns his back on the

ball-room and shakes the French chalk from off his feet? And when he is gone the charlatan sees his opportunity; and the end of it all is the dance music of to-day, expressing nothing beyond the mere dance atmosphere, indicating no feelings above the level of instincts, pointing the way to no developments, but an isolated system, cut off from all contact with the normal thoughts and feelings of humanity, exotic, expressionless, unfruitful, as only a hothouse hybrid can be.

O Freunde, nicht diese Töne! Fellow-walkers, have nothing whatever to do with dance music! You who ply your craft by day, in the open, in easy clothes, whose thoughts roam at large over yesterday, to-day, to-morrow, and repose upon the sane continuity of experience, what part have you in the glamour of the waltz? You who stride from a hundred to a hundred and twenty steps to the minute, with a long swing from the hips, what have you to do with the waltz rhythm? Between you and it there is a gulf fixed. On the further side lights shine, and patent leather slithers over

the polished floor, and the band has just had supper and is muting its strings for a particularly impassioned appeal; you cannot answer to that call, you cannot move in that rhythm, without forswearing your birthright as a walker. But on this side of the gulf are hills and fields and sun and wind, and as we go we shall whistle a stave to the rhythm of our stride. And if you would know what this rhythm is, look up the work from which I have copied the words that begin this paragraph, and turn back to the second movement. Or better still, turn further back in the bound volume, and find the Allegro of the seventh symphony. There is the song of walking, the sacred music of our craft. The rhythm ( ) is the exact measure of the stride, buoyant and elastic, with the uneven note marking the hoist of the outside leg from the hip. The tune swoops at us suddenly like a gusty breeze, plunges into the deep pianissimo, vanishes, and returns to a tremolo on the strings which suggests that it has been going on somewhere else all the time; it shifts and changes like the face of earth with the

shadows racing across it. If music can ever be bound to time or place, surely we may assign this Allegro to a day in April when we surmount some height like Wetherlam or Maiden Moor, issuing in a long ridge, and swing forward over grass and rock with the wind in our ears and the earth spread out below.

(O Richard Wagner, you who called this movement the Apotheosis of the Dance, what did you mean by it? In that august Valhalla where you justly repose, no doubt by now you have met the author and apologised; but can you do nothing to reassure us on this side of the gulf? Can you not send some authoritative message, or at least work a concurrent automatism, to say that you are sorry?)

Is there any hope for dancing? Is the vicious circle to go on for ever? Is the gulf too deep to be spanned? Let us trust not: it would be tragic if dancing, the union of motion and music, were for ever to be represented only by that misshapen monstrosity, the waltz. Certain

practical reforms are necessary before any development can begin; dancing must be performed by day, in fresh air, in reasonable costume, to good music. A minimum level of physical competency must be demanded, backed by proper training; as a provisional test, I would suggest excluding any one who would be refused on sight by the secretary of a fourth-class lacrosse club. New rhythms must be introduced and developed, and concerted dances organised, the dancer working throughout in close co-operation with the musician. When these changes have been made, the way is clear, and dancers can begin to take their craft seriously.

Until then nothing can be done; here at least, in the ball-room, where nature sickens, nothing. As Dr. Middleton said, 'it is the time for wise men to retire within themselves, with the steady determination of the seed in the earth to grow. Repose upon nature, sleep in firm faith, and abide the seasons.' For the change must come; if civilisation is based, a sit surely is, on reason, the waltz can not be anything more

than a temporary aberration. If omnipotent at present, it must ultimately be doomed: if we do not see the change, our grandchildren will. Against that day, when the waltz shall figure with our other fooleries before the inexorable Vehmgericht of posterity, let this at least be put on record, that in our own times, in the height of its popularity, when the false doctrine was expounded with all the art of Viennese composers and backed by all the weight of social authority, not every one acquiesced. Some at least shook their feet clear of it, and were content to tread the roads and hills to simple measures in the unadorned light of day, and to hand on, in however rudimentary a state, a tradition of free movement and clean rhythm to the wiser generation ensuing.

IV

WALKING, SPORT AND ATHLETICS

Our bodies are gardens; to the which our wills are gardeners, so that if we will plant nettles or sow lettuce, set hyssop or weed up thyme, supply it with one gender of herbs or distract it with many; either to have it sterile with idleness or manured with industry; why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills.

Othello, i. 3.

IV

WALKING, SPORT AND ATHLETICS

NOTHING arouses keener feelings than the idea of sport. No one knows exactly what it means; every one feels very intensely that it is something truly intimate and national, unintelligible except to those who have been rightly bred, a touchstone of proper disposition, indefinable but unmistakable. To be called a 'sportsman' is the most gratifying compliment which an Englishman can receive; actions otherwise indefensible and risks otherwise unthinkable are undertaken gaily if once established as 'sporting'; and any pursuit which can be brought under the title of 'sport' is thereby relieved of all further need for justification and becomes irradiated with the ethical light which the idea bestows. And the most awful moment of the walker's life is

when he suddenly faces himself with the question—Is walking a sport?

His horror deepens as he realises that most men, himself included, would instinctively answer, No. Walking is allowed a place in the Badminton series, but this is partly out of kindness and partly because it connects easily with rock-climbing and the more dangerous kinds of mountaineering, which are generally admitted to be sport. Besides, dancing is included in the Badminton series. If we collect the commonly accepted views, cricket is a sport, and hockey is a sport, and billiards is a sport, and grouse-shooting is a sport, and fox-hunting is a sport, and bull-fighting is a sport, only not proper, and cock-fighting was a sport in the good old days, and dog-fighting is still a sport north of the Trent, and boxing is a sport if homochromatic; but the one thing which never, nowhere, and under no conditions is, was, or could be a sport, is walking.

An exception might be made for walking of the racing type—the kind of thing which begins on Westminster Bridge at 6 a.m., continues through Crawley (3 h. 56 min.

23 s.) shepherded by cyclists carrying raisins, brandy, and plasmon, and ends about two in the afternoon at the Brighton Aquarium. But no ordinary walker will be inclined to press the exception. The walking race is indeed a wonderful thing, a standing testimony to the exuberance of human invention. Naturally, if a man wants to go fast, he runs; if he wants to go at a steady pace for a long distance, he walks. Only in the higher stages of civilisation, when his mind gets really to work, does he invent a mode of progression which combines all the possible disadvantages, being more exhausting than a walk, slower than a run, physically uncomfortable and aesthetically only to be described in the idiom of Aristophanes. No one who has seen the gait of a walking racer can ever forget it; it is a sport in more senses than one. Therefore, as our business is with walking in the ordinary sense, as we are physiologists rather than pathologists, we cannot press the exception. Consequently we are left with the blank and brutal fact, supported by general opinion, that walking is not a sport.

If we go on to ask why this is so, the question is naturally resented, since every decent man understands what is sport and what is not without being told or wanting to argue about it. Sportsmanship, like sense of humour, is one of the ultimate things; if you possess it, you do not need to define it; if you lack it, no process of reasoning can ever bring you anywhere near it. None the less, if we are not allowed to be sportsmen, we may at least be allowed to examine the limits of our own deficiency. After all, an eminent Frenchman has just written a book entirely about the sense of humour. Taking heart of grace from this we venture to proceed with the question.

The first and most obvious reason why walking is not a sport is that it does not arouse or gratify the sporting instinct. This may seem like arguing in a circle, but in fact it brings us to a clear definition. For there is no doubt what the sporting instinct is. It is the instinct which delights in a struggle on equal terms, which aims at a victory by sheer merit under conditions

carefully adjusted so as to eliminate as far as possible all determinants except merit. The essential point in the sporting instinct is the paradox that you wish to win but at the same time wish your adversary to have every possible chance of winning; you desire victory, but you desire it after the closest possible struggle conducted with the greatest possible amount of difficulty. Your ideal is to win, figuratively speaking, by a hundred and one goals to a hundred, your last goal being obtained just before the call of time and leaving you in a state of complete exhaustion, relieved only by the fervid hope that your adversary may be able to put up an equally good or better struggle against you next week.

To dwell upon the great ethical beauty of this instinct—its chivalry, consideration for others, generous waiving of all advantages except that of merit, and so forth—is hardly a task for a layman. But we may be allowed to point out, with pardonable pride, that in England the sporting instinct extends far beyond sports, even in the catholic interpretation of the Badminton

series. It—or something like it—may be found in nearly every department of life—in law, in religion, in politics, both domestic and foreign, in thought and philosophy. One reason for the popularity of the Darwinian theories, as generally understood, was that they represented the secular process as a glorified Cup Tie competition, with the mammoth and the ichthyosaurus disappearing in the qualifying rounds, and man emerging triumphantly from the final—in contrast with the unsportsmanlike theories of creation, in which man got his post by a job. In law and politics the sporting instinct is so fundamental that perhaps we ought really to call it the legal and political instinct, and regard sport, in the Badminton sense, as one of its secondary manifestations. In law, we do not concentrate the wisdom of bench, bar, and the detective service to decide whether something did or did not happen; we organise a fair struggle, and employ time, money, and all the resources of trained forensic skill to prove to an impartial jury in the first place that it did, and in the

second place that it did not, happen. In politics, we do not unite all our wisest and most experienced men to determine the best policy; we propound to the electorate (with expenditure of time, money, and resources as before) at least two conflicting policies, which cannot both be the best. In religion, the brightest jewel in the British crown is a fair field and no favour for any creed not involving human sacrifice or Suttee. Captious critics may point out that there can only be one truth in law, politics, or religion, and that it seems a waste of energy to bolster up any number of alternative truths; and they suggest that in each department a panel of wise and experienced men (including themselves) should be authorised to decide for the community. To which the vulgar answer is that the same panel might as well decide the County Championship and the University Boat Race.

It is painful, then, to admit that this primary British instinct has no part in walking. We may, if we please, fondly imagine that walking involves a fair struggle

with time and space, with rocks and hills, but this is a mere playing with words. The true sporting relation can only exist between man and man, never between man and things; your adversary must be something which you treat as an end, never something which you treat as a means. In walking, you do not wait until weather and ground are at their worst in order to give them a chance of defeating you; you take the most favourable opportunities, you steal advantages, you employ all the cunning of the organism to overcome the inorganic. A walker needs many qualities for the pursuit of his craft—endurance, equability, resource, a good conscience, both moral and physical; but the one thing which, as walker, he never needs is the sporting instinct.

But if this be so, he is not alone. If we have defined the sporting instinct rightly, there are numbers of other people masquerading as sportsmen who have no proper claim to the title. Chief among these are all hunters and shooters of any kind whatsoever. There can be no true sporting

relation between a man and a beast, except possibly in the cases of Achilles and the tortoise and the boxing kangaroo. The hunter or shooter wants to kill his prey, and the prey merely wants to escape from or—in the case of big game—to eat his adversary; neither party at the end of a contest wishes his antagonist well or hopes that he will return to renew the struggle. Indeed, there is much more sportsmanship in war than in hunting; for the victorious nation, while glad to have won, always feels a chivalrous regret that in so doing they have, accidentally, killed a number of their gallant foes. The hunter is far from such a feeling; the furthest he will go is to bar out certain obvious ways of killing, such as shooting foxes or netting salmon; but this is not entirely out of consideration for the feelings of the fox or salmon.

The conception of sport, even in its narrowest sense of a fair struggle, cannot be applied to the hunting activities except by a series of violent strains. In the case of fox-hunting, the only struggle is between the speed and sagacity of the hounds and

the natural cunning of the fox, and the sole connection which hunters have with this very unsportsmanlike struggle is that they are able to sit on horses, which go as fast as the hounds, which are *ex hypothesi* having a fair struggle with the fox, who, under the fortieth article of the orthodox rural faith, really enjoys it. Otter-hunting and beagling are perhaps one degree less remote from sportsmanship, since the combatants rely on their own legs without the interposition of a horse. But when we come to grouse-shooting the strain becomes almost unbearable, since in this case we are asked to believe that the grouse is blithely dodging the shots with a keen appreciation of the sporting interest involved. The plain fact is that all these activities arise simply from the hunting instinct — the natural impulse to kill or capture something which tries to escape. It is a fundamental and, no doubt, a valuable instinct; but it has nothing to do with the sporting instinct, and does not in itself entitle a man to be called a sportsman.

I need hardly add that in making these

remarks I do not in the least wish to disparage the morality of hunting and shooting. I only wish to point out that whatever moral character they have must be derived from other, and no doubt nobler, attributes than sportsmanship. What these attributes are, this is no place to inquire; but arguments on the subject are full of interest. It is pointed out, for example, that without hunting and shooting, the well-to-do would cease to reside in the country, with disastrous economic and social results; that foxes have to be destroyed anyhow, for the sake of the poultry, and that this being so, any fox worthy of the name much prefers an exhilarating run across country with the chance of getting away to the certainty of being shot; that without fox-hunting there would be nothing for fox-hounds to do; and so forth. This only shows us what we lose by the present loose use of the term 'sport' to cover both hunting and football. People who object to hunting are thereby prejudiced against football; while fox-hunters are saved from the necessity of justifying themselves, and so of working out in

detail the fascinating speculations in rural economy, teleology, and the psychology of foxes indicated above.

We are left, then, with the conclusion that on a strict construction of the term 'sport,' walking, hunting, and shooting are outside the pale of sportsmanship. The natural resentment of walkers, hunters, and shooters is by no means assuaged when they consider who are inside the pale—not only cricketers and golfers and footballers and lacrosse-players, but billiard-players and chess-players and draught-players, and even lawyers and politicians, all of whom love a fair struggle with a human opponent. The outcasts may well ask how it is that a term which covers all these activities, and covers them equally, as 'sport' appears to do, can really have a complimentary meaning. Is it much of a compliment to be compared to a draught-player? Need a man gnash his teeth if he is denied kinship with a ludo champion? Must there not be something else in the conception of sport beside the pure sporting idea? For an answer we have

only to turn to the so-called sporting columns of the press. The place of honour is still given to horse-racing, but this is more for economic than for purely sporting reasons. The backbone of the sporting columns, the things which people really admire, the main themes on which the reporters exercise their amazing virtuosity, are the great staple forms of athletics, cricket, football, rowing, lawn-tennis, golf, running and the rest.

These are so much the commonplaces of existence that few people realise what a stupendous growth they represent. Games of various kinds have always flourished in this country, but the growth of athletics since 1870 or so is something too huge, both in bulk and variety, to be ascribed to any normal development. Since that time cricket must have increased at least tenfold; football has developed into three colossal and quite distinct branches, not to mention Colonial and American variations and the historic cults of English schools; golf has grown from the recreation of a few Scots to the business of ten thousand Britons;

lawn-tennis, purged of its garden-party birthstain, has become a game of the first rank; hockey has lived down the derision of its youth and commands its thousands of devotees; cross-country running holds its head high; lacrosse has become a bond of Empire; *quid plura?* I have not even mentioned women's athletics. If Lord Macaulay were to return to earth to-morrow, he would be surprised at many things—at our style of drawing-room furniture, at the respect paid to Plato, at the universal prevalence of pipe-smoking, not to speak of Marconigrams and promenade concerts; but his biggest shock would come if he stood at a London terminus at two o'clock on a Saturday afternoon and watched the youth of the nation—and its middle-age, too—speeding forth in their thousands on athletic pursuits, to toil and labour and sweat, and even to spend money, for an idea.

This enormous growth in the staple forms of sport cannot be attributed only to the sporting instinct. There must be some other element in them which commands general

support and admiration, whether or no a strictly sporting struggle is involved. Now, what is the common character of these activities? Three points are clear at once: they all take place in the open air; they all involve some physical expertness; they all involve, what is quite a different thing, hard physical exercise. Or, to put it negatively, they can none of them be undertaken in a house, by an incompetent, without bodily labour. These three things, far more than the pure sporting instinct, are the fundamental characters of the athletic movement; it is these which really evoke popular admiration. And because most of the sporting activities and some of the hunting activities share in these characters, all sporting activities and all hunting activities are lumped together in the popular mind as 'sport,' and this term, thus endowed with favourable associations of fresh air, physical expertness and exercise, is then applied alike to billiards, grouse-shooting, and betting on horse-races.

Even so, the claims of walking to a place among the staple forms of athletics seem

dubious. Every one would agree that it takes place in the open air, not many that it is hard exercise, fewer still that it involves physical expertness. It may be admitted at once that there are certain physical states to which the walker can never attain. He never knows what it is to concentrate all his energies, like the runner or rower or footballer, within five minutes or twenty minutes or seventy minutes, reaching at the end that complete and satisfying state of exhaustion, that sense of having come to the end of the tether, which uplifts the soul like death or exile or any other finality. His fatigue is a slower and less inspiring sensation, a thing of muscle rather than wind. Nor, again, has he ever the feeling of having done something really clever and unusual with his body, like the three-quarter when he swerves or the rower when he gets his hands away. The walker's motions are things, apparently, which any one can do.

None the less, walking at its best comes very near the greater athletics. A full day's walk at a good pace is not a thing to be despised; the worst that can be said is that

it does not need that superfine concert pitch of physical competency, that little extra cleanness of wind and limb above the normal, to which rowers and runners attain for about ten days in each year. Granted this, still walking is no activity for the grossly untrained or incapable. There are moments in it which test the body as keenly as any football or hockey; there is the peculiar and special demon of inertia always waiting for you at the eighth mile, and again about the eighteenth, ready to seize on the slightest weakness, a demon only to be exorcised by a genuine effort. If you can conquer him, you may at least claim a leaf from the athlete's crown. Even in the matter of physical expertness, where walkers contrast most strongly with other athletes, they are not altogether beneath consideration. A proper stride is not a mere gift of the gods; it can be cultivated, increased in ease and length, made a more useful servant. There is no little difference at the end of the day between the walker who can move his feet lithely and delicately, making a rhythmic bar of each stride, and

the walker who hoists them up anyhow and lets them fall with a bang, like instruments of percussion. The adjustment of gait to slopes and to varying kinds of ground is also a matter of some expertness. And, above all, there is the very subtle art, when you are coming down a steepening hill, of knowing the moment at which to abandon care, swing out and run.

Running on a walk is a subject strictly outside the ambit of this work, but I cannot pass it by unpraised. It is quite unlike ordinary running; it generally takes place down a violent slope and could not possibly be managed in spiked shoes and bare legs. It is of many kinds, all of them good. Running down a hard grass hill is good, on the flat of the foot, with short strides, each step sending a jerk from the extreme toe to the topmost hair; then, as the slope flattens near the bottom, you swing out, stride enormously and fly. (Thus do, descending from Scarf Gap to Buttermere, and turn to the left at the foot beyond the stream, to the pool with the grassy promontory which washes you clean of mortal ills.) Scree-

running is good, when you have clambered gingerly down the crags, and find them issuing below in fine slopes of shale; here forget your toes, trust only to your heels, and look out for rocks. But best of all is the grassy head of a valley, soft with moss and hidden bog; here you must rush at full stride, watching your leader (if there is one) for bog-holes; if not, trusting in Providence. If your foot fall on good ground, it is well; if there be a sudden yielding beneath it, leap but the more wildly off the other, and it will rise from the bog with a sound like a giant's kiss, and a tingle of cold water within your boot. Thus come wise men from Esk Hause to Borrodale by Grain Gill, forsaking the path of the foolish by Styhead Pass; and at the bottom there is a pool for them only less worthy than that of Buttermere, and thereafter they move down Borrodale in the dusk among silent sheep-folds, ennobled and perfected men, the long memories of the day rounded with the rapture of their run.

This, however, is by the way: the fact that some walkers run on a walk does not

make walking a form of athletics any more than the fact that some company promoters write poetry in the evenings makes stock-broking a branch of poetry. Of the legitimate claims of walking in itself and by itself to be considered a form of athletics, the athletes will probably remain unconvinced. They will continue to regard it as a thing any one can do, and to rate walkers on a level with grouse-shooters and beaglers, and only a little higher than rabbit-shooters. Let it be so; if a little exclusiveness is needed to maintain the aristocracy of physique, no walker will grudge it. But when this has been fully granted, and the primacy of athletics proper firmly established, let the athletes remember that they themselves make use of walking. I do not mean only that they walk down the street when they cannot afford a cab; I mean that often in the utmost rigour of their training they use walking as one of the most effective means to that training. This is notably the case with boxers, who of all athletes need to be the most carefully and scientifically trained. There must surely

then be something in walking akin to, if not identical with, the highest capacities of the body; when a man is reaching his physical maximum, he does not grouse-shoot or beagle or dance or play billiards, but he does walk.

The reason of this can be understood, and the tone of this discussion raised, by the help of a moral analogue. Consider some athlete of action—a statesman, a general, a bishop, or a merchant-prince; when he is preparing for some supreme feat—a bill, a battle, a wholesale conversion, or a corner in nitrates—he does not keep his energies entirely on the lofty plane which such feats demand; he busies himself, if wise, with a number of minor affairs requiring only his ordinary capacity and not the special effort of the feat. In other words, he exercises his normal powers to the full, and so prepares himself for an abnormal strain. It is the same with the athlete; when he is getting ready for the abnormal strain of a race or a cup-tie, he needs to keep his normal physical powers in good condition; hence, as the most

normal and central of all bodily activities, he walks. I do not in the least mean by this that he needs special muscles for his main feat and resorts to walking because this uses other muscles; this would be untrue, would spoil the analogue, and, worst of all, would be quite out of date. The physiology which divided a man's bodily activities by muscles, is like the old psychology which divided his mental activities by 'faculties'; nobody now believes such things, except possibly some physiologists or psychologists. The man, whether mentally or physically, is a whole: he has a normal mental self and a normal bodily self, and the two are closely allied. In either case, he must keep the normal self in full swing by means of its most congenial activities when he is preparing for an abnormal effort.

Consider the analogue further, and a second profound truth emerges. Not only will the normal activities of the statesman, general, bishop, or merchant-prince conduce to great feats, but also the high condition they are in will react on the performance

of their normal activities. The week before the great feat takes place, the statesman will deal with questions and estimates in a particularly masterly way; the general's regulation of camp routine will be a marvel; the bishop's diocese will be a Utopia; and the merchant-prince will forecast the fluctuations of stock with deadly accuracy. Each of them will feel that he is taking ordinary affairs (note this metaphor) in his stride, and with a peculiar sensation of completeness, confidence, and well-being he will march to meet the event of the week following. And whenever, in the course of years, he resumes and maintains this high condition of training, there will be the same superb feeling of mastery, the consciousness of a fine faculty fully exercised, the recollection of the great moments of the feat.

Need I point the parallel? Every foot-pound which the athlete adds to his physical capacity is felt in his walking. There is nothing you can do in your physical life which will not affect you for better or for worse as you walk. Walking is the book

of the recording angel of the body, who never forgets or forgives. If you have sat up late, or eaten and drunk unwisely, or breathed foul air, or listened to or participated in waltzes, or done all these things simultaneously, which is quite easy—you will know it at the eighth mile next day. But if you have trained your body, and given it its due of food and drink and sun and air, then you will walk with a peculiar exaltation; you will swing your legs to the full rhythm of your physical being; you will feel yourself one with all the greatest moments of your bodily past—that last sprint up the straight, when your legs felt like somebody else's; those forty-five frenzied seconds in the wash of the boat in front, until your nose grated on her stern; that wild gallop down the left wing with the half-back in pursuit and that sweeping centre which the inside right did (or did not) put through.

Once this is understood, further argument about the relative merits of walking and athletics becomes futile and absurd. The two are simply different but related

modes of expressing one idea, the idea, that is, of realising the body's capacity as a thing good in itself. This common interest outweighs any differences of expression. Walkers and athletes are working to the same end, and are closely allied. Indeed, it is no matter for argument; for the idea, like other ideas, can never be completely proved. We only know, instinctively, that athletics are good, that in training and exercising ourselves to the full we feel a natural satisfaction, and that walking at its best shares in this feeling. The idea works itself out in the usual way of idealism; in the beginning it calls to us dogmatically to exercise our bodies, and only as we continue in the process do we begin to realise its meaning; we can never completely justify it in argument, since it is an idea, and therefore demands faith as well as reason. But this at least can be said, that any other explanation breaks down. If we try to explain athletics and walking by reference to any standard outside themselves—to anything other than the pure bodily idea—utter confusion ensues.

There is one particularly insidious line of argument which starts from the conception of Health, and exhibits walking and athletics and most other things as part of a general Health Movement. It looks extremely attractive — the single cause exhibiting itself in a numerous and varied selection of phenomena, sanitation laws, food reform, fresh air, physical training, the simple life, hygiene, health-conscience, *mens sana in corpore sano* and the rest. On this view, we walk and undertake athletics for the same reason which makes us open our windows and keep regular hours and observe moderation in food and drink—namely, to preserve health. It is all very impressive and scientific, until we begin to apply it in detail, and consider various forms of athletics from the health standpoint. Disturbing questions then arise. Is it not the fact that running is apt to strain the heart? Does not rowing need to be supplemented by something a little more jerky to keep the liver in order? Does not football lead to an abnormal and ill-

distributed development of the frame, so that the professional footballer is neither hygienically nor artistically a model? Is not walking, as a mild and equable form of exercise, really healthier than any other form of athletics, operating more beneficially upon the heart, liver, lungs, digestion, motor-centres, blood-corpuscles, opsonin index, and the rest of the catalogue of modern psychology? Finally, is not the best exercise, from the health standpoint, a carefully graduated system of physical culture, nicely adapted by an expert to each individual's needs, and performed in correct clothing in a sterilised atmosphere of 57° Fahrenheit?

This argument is dangerous in many ways. It goes near the truth and just manages to miss it completely. It holds out a bait to walkers to desert the cause of athletics that their own craft may be exalted. It encourages people who dislike athletics, but can walk in a fashion, to distinguish between walking and sport and say that all sport is unhealthy as well as demoralising. It sets a gulf between athletics and physical

training, so that the man who pursues both is in an equivocal position. It encourages doctors to talk about health, which they misunderstand, being preoccupied with illness. Finally, it lets in philosophers, who begin to say that a healthy activity must be spontaneous, that all health movements, including athletics, are fads, and that the only sound rule is to do what you like and eat what you like and drink what you like —particularly this last. So in the end walkers, athletes, doctors, hygienists, physical trainers and philosophers are set by the ears and the intellectual Riot Act is read.

The whole trouble arises from treating 'health' as something that can be analysed and defined. Really, it is one of the ultimate terms, like happiness or virtue or poetry. Doctors can, of course, define health in a limited and negative way as the absence of specific disease; and so far it may be possible to analyse the body into a catalogue of organs, to enter against each item the effects of the different kinds of exercise, and then to add up the entries and

pronounce a result. Granted that this is a genuine scientific process, and not gross empiricism got up so as to impress the statistically susceptible, it still does not carry us very far. Health in the true sense is a single and positive thing: it is the active well-being of the body. To prove a man healthy, it is not enough to go through the items in his catalogue and give each a satisfactory mark; it is not enough even to group his items and show that A. B. C. prove that he can breathe properly, and D. E. F. that he can digest food, and X. Y. Z. that he can sleep. Health is not, any more than morality, the capacity to do things: it is the actual doing of them. It is good for a man to jump and run and walk and breathe and eat and sleep—not medically good in the sense that vaseline is good for chapped hands, but fundamentally and categorically and inexplicably good: it is what the body was made for, the realisation of its idea. Whether these activities are also good in the medical sense, whether, that is, they keep A. B. C. and the other items in good condition, is of

quite secondary importance. As a matter of fact, if we disregard medical evidence for and against, it is pretty clear that they are good in this sense: the things which the body naturally finds good also tend to preserve and strengthen it. This, after all, is only what we should expect, assuming the body not to have been invented as a bad joke. But the medical consequences are secondary: the primary thing is the activity itself.

Once admit the primacy of health in this wide sense, which is the same as the primacy of the bodily idea, and the rest of the tangle is easily cleared up. We regulate food, drink and sleep, not because this is medically good for our organs, still less because discipline is good in itself, but simply because this enables the body to do its best. We open our windows, not in order to make our atmosphere approximate in chemical composition most nearly to what doctors think the best, but because the body naturally craves for fresh air as its environment. We promote sanitation and public health, not in order to

reduce the number of bacilli per cubic inch, but because smells and dirt and darkness are nasty things, instinctively condemned by a clean body. And, finally, we walk because it is good, and run and jump and perform athletics because they are good, and not because they enable us to work harder or earn more, or win the next battle of Waterloo.

But the surest test of the validity of this view is the extreme case of physical training, the absurdum to which the health argument is reduced. The philosophers would say that we must either take the health position, in which case physical training is clearly the best form of exercise; or, when this is laughed out of court, we must abandon it altogether, and admit that the only good activities must be the spontaneous ones. But on the idealist view no such absolute opposition is necessary: there is a place for physical training in the kingdom of bodily ends. Let it be admitted at once that the proper athletic activities are best, and that if we had these to the full, any system of physical training would

be superfluous and unthinkable. But the hypothesis is a large one: it assumes perfect physical conditions for every one, full leisure and opportunities for every kind of exercise. Such conditions are not often realised at present: we live largely in towns, within doors, seated, clothed, avoiding sunlight, shirking rain and wind. This being so, is it unthinkable that we should try in our scant leisure to remedy the defect as best we can, to concentrate into a few moments something of the bodily experience which we lack? The point has been often obscured by the particularism of certain systems of physical training. To move a dumb-bell up and down in order to expand and harden the biceps muscle is—or rather was—an absurdity deserving every hard name which philosophers can invent; it was as silly as smiling on purpose in order to cultivate a habit of cheerfulness. Indian clubs were a little better, since they brought the whole of the upper part of the body into play; there was occasionally in the motion something reminiscent of a golf swing or a tennis drive or the whirl of a

stick in a walker's hand. The modern systems still sometimes talk about muscles, but this is only their fun: what they are really concerned with is the body as a whole, and they twist it and stretch it and strain it and rub it with the primary object of giving it the most varied and exciting experience possible within a limited time. At the end of your daily quotum you can, of course, if you wish, go through a list of your muscles and note how each has been exercised; but to say that this is the aim of physical training is simply to mistake the trees for the wood. What has really happened is that you have experienced, in a concentrated form and on a small scale, the feeling of a well-exercised body: you have swung, as when you rowed; you have bent the leg, as when you climbed; you have twisted, as in the most crucial moment of the scrum. And the feel of your skin when the daily exercises are over may perhaps recall to you those times when you ran down a mountain, bathed in a stream, and lay prone in the sun thereafter.

Let there be peace, therefore, and co-

operation, between all who are interested in and use the body, athletes, walkers, hygienists, physical trainers: their interests are so largely the same, and the apathy they have to face is so overwhelming, that they cannot afford to quarrel. Let each pursue his own calling whole-heartedly, and he will find later or sooner that he needs the others to fight against the common foe. If any philosophers give trouble, refer them to the primacy of the bodily idea and see how they like that; if any doctors give trouble, refer them to the other doctors who have said the opposite thing. For the rest, let there be peace; and as time goes on, windows will begin to open and sunlight and water and exercise will begin to become popular; and at last people will realise that the body is not a joke or a plaything, a catalogue of organs or an arena of moral combats, but a trust for which each man is responsible, to make or mar.

Poor, ill-used, neglected, misunderstood body! Our ancestors soddened you with port: our grandfathers overlooked you while they muddled with the soul and mind

which are bound up with you: ascetics starved you and hedonists cultivated you in patches: doctors analysed you till there was nothing left but a catalogue of inanimate fragments: economic forces penned you in dens and prisons: fashion clothed you in impossible garments, and kept you up at hours and in atmospheres which outraged your most sacred instincts. And now I make you sit here writing—writing! For heaven's sake, come out for a walk.

V

WALKING AS A SOCIAL FORM

Sociati incedunto.
WILLIAM OF WYKEHAM.

On the subject of walking and driving there is but little to be said, for the simple reason that the time thus passed in the open air is usually passed by persons in the company of members of their own families. The usual fashionable hour for walking, both in the metropolis and at watering-places or seaside towns, is from twelve to two o'clock.

Manners and Tone of Good Society,
by a Member of the Aristocracy.
Chapter xiv. (4th edition; n.d.)

V

WALKING AS A SOCIAL FORM

In an earlier essay an attempt was made to rebut the charge sometimes levelled against walkers of being unsociable. This was easy to do; for the charge can only be sustained by making mere conversation, mere verbal output per hour, the measure of sociability. Apart from this fallacy, no one can seriously hold that walkers are not sociable beings, capable of intimacy, responsive to good fellowship, adjustable to the conformation of each other's personality, sensitive to the fundamental unities and unaffected by the superficial diversities of men. Both the process of walking and its environment tend to sociability. The process is a good activity, shared by two or more concrete beings who are doing their best and are at their best; it lays a foundation of mutual respect more quickly

and more surely than any specialised activity of the half or quarter man. The environment of a walk is exactly right; it is familiar enough to create a sense of ease, and yet strange enough to throw the walkers back on themselves with the instinct of human solidarity—that instinct which unites a rowing crew on a long journey and makes English visitors civil to each other in Swiss pensions. The scenery changes fast enough to be interesting, and not too fast to give a feeling of continuity and permanency. Finally, sun and wind and rain and lunch, and the consultation of maps and divination of the way, all combine to surround the walkers with an atmosphere of sociability.

Those who call walkers unsociable will probably reply that this is not quite what they mean. Friendliness and good fellowship are all very well, but they do not necessarily imply a strict execution of social duties. The real charge against walkers is not that they are unfriendly to each other, but that they fail in their duties to other people. They go walks, especially on

Sunday, when they ought to be paying calls; they smoke in chairs when they ought to be in evening dress; they are in bed—and sometimes even out of bed again—when they ought to be dancing. In short, they do not take their fair share in maintaining the existing social forms; hence they are rightly called unsociable.

Before a jury this general accusation could be rolled back in confusion: there are plenty of walkers who are punctilious in social observances, and plenty of social recalcitrants who are not walkers. But in that heart of hearts which lies beyond the reach of juries, we cannot escape an uneasy feeling that there is something in the accusation. Most walkers at some time or another must have been conscious of the tug of conflicting duties, must have felt that there was a choice between going a walk and paying a call, between going out at night and being in good condition next day, and that while fulfilling a need of their natures in walking they were neglecting something else which either was or was thought to be a duty.

To illustrate this point, perhaps I may tell a perfectly true story. I use fictitious names, for the sake of politeness, but documents can be produced, if necessary, to prove the facts. I had arranged with my friend X. to take a walk on 26th March. (Document 1—postcard from X. to me accepting, postmark 22nd March). Subsequently Mrs. Y. asked him to tea on 26th March (Document 2—Mrs. Y.'s letter, dated 23rd March, with 'Refd.' docketed on the corner in the handwriting of X.). X. refused on the ground of a previous engagement (letter not preserved) and came for a walk with me, and we found a new way up Leith Hill, combining the Walker Miles route by Pickett's Hole to Ranmore Common (read backwards), with the diversion from the way down Leith Hill through Deerleap Wood (also read backwards), which makes a pleasing variation from the normal ways by Logmore Lane or the Rookeries. (Document 3—certified copies of my notes on pages 51 and 96 of Walker Miles—dated 26th March). Continuing westward over Holmbury Hill and then

down to the road under Pitch Hill, we found Z. sitting in a motor-car and pretending to enjoy the scenery, while 'Enry investigated whatever had gone wrong underneath. We exchanged a few courtesies (documents not preserved) and went our ways. 'Enry subsequently won his fight and took Z. back to town in time for the Y.'s tea-party, where he told Mrs. Y. all about us several times over, being a sensitive man. Mrs. Y., thus learning what X.'s previous engagement was, became incensed, rebuked him (Document 4—date 26th March), cut him out of her visiting list, disparaged his character, knocked him off the Rota (see below), induced her friends to suspend his acquaintance (Document 5—comparative return of X.'s invitations for the three months preceding and succeeding 26th March), and finally drove him into solitude and the contemplative life, with the result that he wrote a book about philosophy without using the term 'values' (Document 6—'Adumbrations of Twilight.' By X. Price 7s. 6d.).

The point of this story is in Documents

2 and 4. X. held that the walk constituted a previous engagement warranting a refusal of the tea-party; Mrs. Y. held that it did not (to put it mildly). In other words, X. held that the walk involved social obligations comparable with those involved by the tea-party; Mrs. Y. held that the tea-party was a social duty and the walk merely a pleasure, and that duty ought to have overridden pleasure. The tea-party was a recognised social form, and the walk was not. This is the essential point, and to appreciate it, we must abstract from all the particular and personal considerations in the case—the question (not disputed) whether Mrs. Y. is nicer than I, the fact that X. wished to try the Deerleap Wood route, the especially fine day in the rear of a cyclone and so forth.

X. himself, in 'Adumbrations of Twilight,' appears to have been thinking over this question. In one of the more cheerful and impulsive passages of that work he says (p. 247 of the popular edition): 'It may, perhaps, be doubted whether within the area of political and moral good which

we can hardly deny to be co-extensive with the life of a normal civilised being, there do not lie areas dominated by a principle, or set of principles, whose relation to the ultimate good, while we must necessarily postulate it as existent, is yet not, or not completely, demonstrable, and often appears indeed to be a relation only of conflict or incompatibility. He would be a confident thinker who would posit the actual or even the realisable compatibility of aesthetic and moral ends : but short of the aesthetic, in the actual life of men wherein the moral autonomy is most generally asserted, it seems at least tenable that there may well be realms of apparent if not ultimately irreconcilable heteronomy. Especially it has seemed to me in the social forms and customs of civilised men and women, that there may well lurk a homiletic principle, if I may so call it, distinct from and even in apparent conflict with moral and political principle, whose conformability to ultimate purpose is as yet undemonstrated, whose phenomenology is as yet indeterminate, whose operation is as distinct from the

operation of moral principle as that of the comedic form, which is its aesthetic counterpart, from the epic or tragic. Such speculations, of course, can at best be tentative and provisional: but at least the point must not be altogether overlooked.' This is X.'s only published reply to Document 4, and very temperate and gentlemanly in tone it is.

What he means I take to be this: when we say that burglary is bad, or murder, or sitting up late, we know what we mean and can prove our words; the bad things do not fit in with other things or each other, and if developed on a large scale will cause trouble; and if any one says they are good, we either neglect him or hit him on the head. Similarly, when we say that a picture or symphony is bad, we know what we mean: it does not fit in with our general ideas (in the strictest sense of either word), and if any one says it is good, we decline to argue with him and send him to the theatre. Further, the badness of the picture, although not the same as the badness of burglary, is yet

something like it. But if any one says that it is bad to go a walk instead of attending a tea-party, we are not quite certain what he means. On the burglary line of thought, if every one went for walks and no one went to tea-parties, it would cause no trouble; indeed, it would make for peace and harmony. On the picture line of thought, a walk is far more like a work of art than a tea-party. Therefore, if it is bad, it is a new kind of badness quite unlike the other kinds, and it seems a pity to use the same word for it.

As against Mrs. Y., X. has overloaded his case by talking about pictures. Document 4 clearly shows that she accused him on moral grounds, and was not thinking about aesthetics, which she probably associates only with Bunthorne. Had he confined himself to the moral question, his case would have been strong. On the one side is a walk, a thing good in itself, and also tending to promote friendly feelings. On the other side we have recognised social forms—tea-parties, calls, dinners, dances—which claim to override walking. What is

their moral authority? If the object of social forms is to promote sociability, why are these forms recognised and not walking? Do they promote more sociability or better sociability than walking? If not, what do social duties mean, and what is their sanction?

None of these questions are easy to answer, because the subject has never been investigated. All the ordinary moral apparatus of life, law and custom and *esprit de corps*, and the other forms in which morality embodies itself, have been carefully tabulated and weighed and set forth, so that we know where we are in dealing with them. But no one has ever seriously studied social forms. We know why and how far we should obey the law and conform to common moral customs: we do not know why or how far we should pay calls or go to garden-parties. If every one stopped obeying the law, trouble would ensue; if every one stopped going to garden-parties, it is hard to see how the world would suffer permanent harm. We are not even certain what the authoritative social

forms really are: no one has ever made a list of them. We do not even know their history: while everything else, from philosophy to eating and drinking, has its carefully tabulated series of facts from the earliest times to the present day, we have to collect the history of social forms, in so far as it is possible, from novels, oral tradition, and the bound volumes of *Punch*. So, when we are faced with the simple question, Why is not walking a recognised social form? it is very difficult to see the answer.

One reply, which is not so idiotic as it sounds, would be that walking is not a social duty because it is pleasant. The kind of friendliness it promotes involves no effort; if people like a thing, it cannot really be a duty. What is really needed to carry society along, is the effort involved in making the acquaintance of new people; this is necessary and is slightly unpleasant, and therefore has all the marks of a duty. But this assumes two things: first, that we only walk with people we know already; second, that when we go out in the evening,

we only talk to people we do not know already. Neither of these assumptions is true: there are plenty of social entertainments every bit as effortless socially as a walk of two familiar friends; on the other hand, there are walks with a complete or partial stranger involving much more effort and a much greater hazard than any party.

Confront A. and B., previously unknown to each other, at a party. What happens? With no common experience behind them, and no common activity between them, except sitting on chairs, they have no talk, to bring their personalities into relation with each other by means of words, both being regarded as failures if the talk stops for an instant. Their surroundings are not sufficiently remote to compel any feeling of intimacy; their food, drink, and dress are not such as to encourage any coherency or continuity of thought; worst of all, their bodies are inactive, and their minds feverishly stimulated. The result is that they try to talk about books and plays, or even pictures and music, and either become insincere or expose their most sacred

aesthetic principles to a total stranger: they oscillate between banality and intensity, and are usually driven back, for lack of anything better to say, on sheer verbal brilliancy. In the end A. cannot tell whether B.'s conversation is natural, due to nerves, or a deliberate attempt at intellectual tyranny; while to B., A. is like a nightmare or a hallucination, a discontinuity in ordinary experience. When they meet again, if they ever do, they are at sea: A. cannot be certain whether B. is an intimate friend to whom he once confided his belief that *King Lear* is a good play, or an enemy on whom he once inflicted an epigram.

But send A. and B. for a walk, and the whole situation is changed. They at once have a common interest and a common activity, and every influence combines to make them simply themselves. They need not talk all the time, and what talk there is will spring naturally from their circumstances, and will not be very brilliant. They will learn the value of pauses, of silence, of ejaculations, even of grunts. The bodies will be fully occupied, and will

shake and settle down the contents of their brains into good solid dogmatisms and prejudices purely spontaneous and characteristic of themselves, the stones of which intimacy can be built. Three miles will tell them what twenty parties cannot, whether they are destined to be friends or no. And therefore, while the social possibilities (in the strictest sense) are greater, the risks are greater too: a bigger task may be achieved, or a more complete failure. Is not a walk then, on both sides, a far greater social duty than a party?

When we come to consider social forms seriously, it almost looks as if their conditions were framed so as to discourage intimacy. To begin with, most of them take place at night. Now, the night has many merits: it is the time when men begin slowly to settle down to the period of rest and low vitality; it is a kindly but limited time—excellent for smoking in a chair, or reading an old novel, or thinking in a not very acute way of yesterday, and to-day, and to-morrow; but it is bad for anything continuous, anything energetic,

anything needing the whole man. The sun by going down indicates that he does not expect very much of humanity till he reappears. Everything that people do when he is gone is limited in one way or another. They get into houses, forsaking the outside air; they kindle artificial lights, which are a very poor substitute; they sit or dance, instead of walking about. Atmospheres, on the whole, are more vitiated by night than by day; drinking, on the whole, occurs more after sunset than before. If people were content to limit their activities to suit the limitations of nature, it would not matter. But when they try to be active in these conditions, they necessarily become morbid: the lights and the atmosphere and (in some cases) the drink stimulate a feverish and unnatural excitement, which some call the romantic feeling of the evening, in the strongest contrast to the solid and concrete activities of the day. This kind of excitement can never really promote intimacy. It may make people for the moment less grumpy and more accessible than usual, but it is necessarily a transient and unstable

feeling: dealing with a man in this state you feel that he is not really representing himself, and is not therefore authorised to give or receive friendship. To be certain of him, you must meet him by day.

It may be held, of course, that night and the conditions which go with it are a necessity, since by day people have no leisure for social forms. But I think it is clear that night is chosen for its own sake, and that the peculiar hygienic conditions of nocturnal gatherings have an appeal of their own. The people who support social forms do not all work, and there would be a large clientèle obtainable for entertainments by day, if they really preferred this. It is clear that they do not—that the night conditions, abnormal and detached from ordinary experience, are felt to be the right conditions for dances and dinner-parties and conversaziones and the rest. Social duty and formality seem to become progressively more rigorous as the sun goes down. Lunch is an informal and casual thing, with no special obligations and code of duty; with tea-parties and calls formality increases; finally, as night draws

on, we reach the most authoritative and formal entertainments of all.

There is a second and quite different point about social forms in general, which I approach with some reluctance, but which must be treated if we are to measure the social validity of walking. In contrasting the acquaintance of A. and B. at a party and on a walk, we imagine them the same persons in either case. In actual fact, A. and B. on a walk would probably be of the same sex: A. and B. at a party would pretty certainly not be of the same sex. The principle of sex dualism runs through all the social forms: the more authoritative they become (dances and dinner-parties), the more inflexibly and mathematically is it exercised. This is Mrs. Y.'s real point against X.: it was not that he took a walk, nor (I flatter myself) that he walked with me, but that he walked with a male.

If any one wishes to take this point and fulminate anti-feministically against all dances and dinner-parties as being mere marriage-markets, he can easily do so by reading up the worst parts of *Vanity Fair*.

Such a charge would neither be true nor relevant to our purpose; many people, at any rate, go to dances and dinner-parties in a much more broadly human spirit than this view implies, to cultivate far more general and varied relations with other men and women than the very special and particular relation which may exist between A. and B. if they are young, of different sex, and unmarried or widow. But as against the forms themselves, the actual rules by which dances and dinner-parties are regulated, the point is a good one: they seem to be designed primarily with a view to promoting this special relation, and to leave the more general human interests in an inferior place. They are dominated so entirely by the A. and B. principle, that all other possibilities are cheerfully sacrificed to it. We saw elsewhere what a disastrous effect this principle has had in limiting the development of dancing; but the same holds true of dinner-parties. Conversation, which I take to be the art of dinner-parties, may be a somewhat limited and unsatisfactory means of expression, but it ought to

have its chance; and this can never be so long as it is cut up, by the law of A. and B., into water-tight compartments of dialogue, rearranged once only at the moment when every one swings round sixty degrees for the second period of water-tight isolation on the other side. Compare the conversation after lunch on a walk—but I need not labour the point.

The whole question is assuming a very instant and practical interest just now, because, as applied to dances, the A. and B. principle is in danger of breaking down. Whether this is due to a protest against the principle itself, or against the artistic or hygienic conditions of dancing, I do not know, but the fact remains—attested by those most keen in support of the principle—that it is increasingly difficult to get enough A.'s to balance the B.'s. Worse than this, the quality of the A.'s, when got, is not satisfactory: finding that the demand for their labour exceeds the supply, they tend to put a higher price on their services, to say that they won't dance unless they get a dinner first, and to assume

airs of complacent virtue. Faced by this shortage, the employers resort to the highways and hedges; in their desperate need of A.'s, they cast overboard all strictly social considerations (*i.e.* considerations of friendship) and will take any presentable A., even if a total stranger, regarding him not as a person but as a mere means for balancing the supply of B.'s. In the last resort they are driven to the operation known as pooling the reserves of casual labour. Hence comes that most interesting of all social phenomena, whose existence is tacitly admitted but publicly denied, the Rota of Unobjectionables. To illustrate this, I may perhaps be allowed to repeat the story of William Featherstone Goodenough and his agent.

William Featherstone Goodenough was a young man of pleasant address and engaging exterior, who liked dancing and received many invitations to dances. In the course of time the claims of his future and the commercial development of the Empire called him to Burma, and he departed leaving an agent with authority to deal with his

correspondence. The agent was a youth of humble and reverent mind, who expected that the correspondence would mainly consist of tradesmen's circulars, charitable appeals (*i.e.* appeals to William to be charitable), expressions of regret and tenders of consolation to the exile, and perhaps an impassioned threnody or two over the departed. The circulars and appeals arrived, and were tactfully dealt with; but the rest of the correspondence consisted almost entirely of invitations to dances. At first the agent, slightly surprised that William's acquaintance were unfamiliar with his movements, used to answer respectfully in the third person that W. F. G. was absent from the country for some years, and would therefore be unable to accept ——'s kind invitation for the 7th proximo; and he naturally thought that the news would spread, and that the flow of coroneted cards would cease. But as time went on the flow still continued, and more than four years after William's departure, the agent's letter-box was still crowded with invitations of the most pressing and intimate kind. At

last, in utter perplexity, the agent consulted a cynical friend, well versed in the ways of the world and the organisation of dances. The friend said, 'Oh, it's quite clear: William Featherstone has got on to the list and his name is passed round.' With a feeling that the foundations of his moral world were tottering, the agent inquired his meaning, and learnt with horror and dismay of the existence of a List or Rota of Unobjectionables, compiled by social organisers and used in common amongst them to fill up vacancies in prospective entertainments. He walked home in a nightmare: those splendid and stately cards, he reflected, which had warmed his heart with the vision of a large circle of friends burning for the pleasure of William's company, were now but the symbols of a system as heartless as electoral registration, as coldly impersonal as assessment under Schedule D. Nay, was not the parallel too favourable? In copying William's name from a list, the election agent at least called upon him to exercise the highest functions of a man and a citizen; the assessor of income-tax at least

expected truth in reply (the penalty for a false return being £20, and treble the duty chargeable); and both alike would take early and careful note of his removal. But the social organiser, more ruthless in purpose and less efficient in method, wished merely to exploit William as a dancing unit, disregarding his personality, his history, everything except his dancing capacity. The agent ranged the cards in order on the table in the silence of his chamber; before him floated memories of his youth and upbringing; and in his dreams a ghostly voice seemed to echo from the lofty turret of Königsberg: 'Use humanity, in thine own person and that of others, always as an end, never merely as a means.'

Now, it may be said that the A. and B. principle is so important in the public interest that everything else, including Kant's law, must be sacrificed to it. To put it quite baldly, people must get married; and the safest way of promoting this is to organise society by pairs, to proclaim attendance at social forms so organised as a moral duty, and back this up with the

whole weight of custom and constituted authority. But if this be the object of social forms, what a way to set to work! Your aim being to promote intimacy between A. and B., you select the worst time of day and the worst surroundings; you present them to each other under conditions exactly calculated to make them abnormal, unnatural, unlike their ordinary selves; every art is exercised to give them a sense that this is a special occasion, cut off from normal life, a discontinuity in the sane and convincing series of yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow. In this state you invite them to consider a relation which above all others involves their ordinary selves, which is a function of their normal thinking and acting, and tastes and habits, and has very little to do with their dinner-table conversation, a relation which they will have to construe to the end in terms of yesterday, to-day, to-morrow. Is there no better way?

There is one; and the mere fact that I have had to lead up to it gradually and unobtrusively, instead of blazoning its name

on the title-page, shows what a deplorable state the science of social forms is in. There is one social form which no one has ever considered seriously, and is indeed regarded, if at all, as rather a joke. Yet it counts its devotees by tens of thousands, where dinners and dances count their hundreds; it strikes right down into the heart of the people, where white ties and cards and the normal apparatus of social duties never penetrate. It is based on the A. and B. principle, but it maintains this without a Rota and without violating Kant's law. It gives A. and B. the very best chances of a proper intimacy. It is not only a social form, but also a status of a very important and interesting kind. Above all, it is a branch of walking; you have merely to add one word—Walking Out.

To many people the phrase suggests clerks and shop-girls in the Strand, or nurses and soldiers in Knightsbridge—people who walk out perforce, because they have nowhere else to go. But let the sociologist lay not the flattering unction to his soul that this is the whole of Walking

Out. If he ever went himself to Hampstead Heath, or Wimbledon Common, or Box Hill, or Leith Hill, he would speedily realise that Walking Out is a thing taken of choice and not of necessity. There he would see, in hundreds and thousands, his fellow-citizens, who, with ample opportunities for sitting down together indoors at night, prefer to walk together in the open by day. There he would see a social form so widely supported, and so firmly established, that by comparison balls and dinner-parties are the merest irrelevancies. There he would see men conforming to a social law, not reluctantly and under the stimulus of cards, not as the last reserve of casual labour flung into the market by the operation of the Rota, but as free citizens, voluntarily approving and enforcing the law they obey. There he would find, in short, an institution, compact of the clarified wisdom of the past and the glad acceptance of the present, deep-based on instinct, world-wide in its scope, sane, practical, and utterly unnoticed by any sociologist up to date.

In whatever way we regard it, Walking Out is surely a portent. It is one of the notable creations of the English people, unaided by their governing classes or their intellectuals; it is the creation of the classes not assessable for income-tax, or at any rate of those eligible for abatement. While the Assessables recognise no status between ordinary friendship and full engagement, the non-Assessables with the sound instinct of sanity have interposed between the two a provisional status, allowing of intimacy but committing neither party; and the name of the status is Walking Out. While the Assessables still rely on the abnormal stimuli of late hours, lights, and music to promote intimacies, the non-Assessables send their young persons forth to walk upon their feet in the open, and there to thrash out in the cool air the question whether or no. While the romantic memories of the Assessables reach their highest in the thought of some fifth extra after supper, the non-Assessables can remember some stroll beside the Thames, or some climb up the sandy track from Broadmoor among the

beeches and the firs to the magical turn where the ground drops suddenly into thirty miles of Weald with the South Downs beyond.

Therefore, when the whirligig of time brings in his revenges, when the violation of hygienic and moral law leads to its just retribution in the collapse of the present social forms, there is a way of escape open for the Assessables. If they still want to give parties on the A. and B. principle, they have merely to organise and regulate the Walking Out system. Instead of a dance, let Mrs. Y. give a walk, naming time and place, and inviting equal numbers of A.'s and B.'s. (X. and I will be delighted to come.) If she wants it to be a real success she had better let them sort themselves; but if she likes to stick to the old system, there might be programmes dividing up the route into appropriate sections. (Question: 'May I have the pleasure of the Roman Road?' Answer: 'I am afraid that I am engaged; but I am free for Deerleap Wood.') There would not be much function for chaperons; but if it is desired to keep up

this institution (now, I understand, something of an archaism), a chaperon might be stationed at the end of each section, to act as a kind of clearing-house, make sure that the couples were properly sorted for the next section, keep a supply of bootlaces and stimulants in case of need, and finally return by motor-car and report to the hostess at what time the last couple started on the ensuing section. The hostess, acting on this information, could (if the company had not advanced to the point of carrying their own food) have lunch ready at an appropriate point in the middle of the walk; but her main function would be to provide accommodation at the end of the walk for changing, ablution, and a large meal. And if, as we may hope, music is still to play a part in social life, a band might be stationed near the end of the last section to play the walkers home to the tune of the Seventh Symphony. I venture to say that this form of entertainment, besides being far cheaper than existing forms, would produce results in the way of intimacy-statistics beyond the wildest dreams of present-day organisers,

and everything which Lord Tennyson so beautifully prophesied in that speech at the end of the *Princess* would be accomplished. It is noteworthy how at the climax the poet turns instinctively to the right metaphor: we will *walk* this world, yoked in all exercise of noble end, and so thro' those dark gates across the wild, where good romanticists go when they die.

But I hope that when this consummation is achieved, it will be remembered that there are other social relations besides that of A. and B., and that of all of them social forms should take account. The mistake made at present of isolating the A. and B. relation and sacrificing everything else to it must not be repeated. Walking Out, be it never forgotten, is only a branch of walking; and besides Mrs. Y.'s party of couples I hope there will be other parties of a miscellaneous character, who will not walk out in the strict sense, but will simply walk, to confirm existing intimacies and determine new ones. It is the walk itself, the conditions under which it is carried on and the state of mind it produces, which is

the real and ultimate social form : Walking Out is only a special if important variety. Therefore the social obligations of the future must cover parties of all kinds and intimacies between all types—men and women, young, middle-aged, and old. There is no human relation which walking cannot promote: with whomsoever you would be friends, you must first do the things in which walking so conspicuously assists—that is, you must clear the brain of feathers and fireworks, settle the mind well back on itself, and link the present firmly on to the past. For some, maybe, the aged and infirm, the walking days are over ; and to these you can only talk. But you will find, if you are fortunate, that you are not debarred from their friendship. It is not only that they may speak to you of the walks of their youth, enlarging the distances and diminishing the times, for the abasement of the present generation, while you sit admiring the kindly law of nature by which memory passes so easily into imagination. Even if they have not been walkers, there is still a kinship between

you; for the sixtieth year is like the eighteenth mile—the point at which you settle into your stride for the last stage, and the essence of the preceding miles begins to distil itself in your brain, emerging clear and translucent from the turbid mass of experience. Remember the metaphor which Socrates used to Cephalus. 'I love,' he said, 'talking to the very old; for, it seems to me, we ought to ask them, as men far advanced on a track which we too may have to walk, what it is like, rough and difficult or easy and smooth.'

VI

WALKING IN LITERATURE

Some readers of these imperfect remarks may possibly wish to pursue such investigations farther.

SIR G. GROVE, Preface to *Beethoven and His Nine Symphonies.*

VI

WALKING IN LITERATURE

WALKING is one of the many things whose history is not to be found in the historians. Even since they constituted themselves a distinct class of writers and began to see themselves in the part—that is, ever since Herodotus—history has been mainly a catalogue of abstractions, interesting and even thrilling, but (to the walker) mostly irrelevant. It is no doubt a good thing to have the wars and political convulsions and trade movements and Gunpowder Plots and Acts of Parliament and executions of the various periods accurately recorded; it is probably a good thing to have the pots and hair-ornaments and tombs of our distant ancestors excavated and labelled. But the moment we begin to ask about the ordinary man of each period, what he was doing and what he was

thinking and whether he liked walking, we are answered only in abstract terms. The archaeologist can only say that he used pots of the Protomycenean period; the historian can only say that about seven thousand of him were killed in battles, and that most of him began about this time to grasp the first principles of commerce, and that all of him was subject to several conflicting economic tendencies not yet completely disentangled. The man himself is still hidden from our gaze.

Literature is our only help. Once a man sits down not to record facts and analyse tendencies in what he conceives to be a scientific historical spirit, but to write about the things which really interest him, to imagine and moralise and sentimentalise, we begin to learn some history. It is not only that he shows us something of the normal man's habits and ways of life: even better, he shows us his thoughts, his prejudices, his unconscious presuppositions, what he takes for granted and cannot imagine not to be so. History is probably the worst record of the ordinary man, and

memoirs the second worst; letters are more trustworthy, because letter-writers do not always confine themselves to facts and frequently become excited; poetry, rhetoric, drama, philosophy, and fiction are best of all, since in these men are really saying what they think. If we want to know what Athens was really like in her decline, we turn not to the scientific and accurate record of Thucydides, but to contemporary comedy, acted to the partly drunk by the completely drunk. If we want to know our great-grandfathers, we turn not to Lecky but to Miss Austen.

Walking, being above all things human and intimate, is naturally neglected by the historians: it cannot be shown to have caused any political convulsions, or to have had any economic effects; it is therefore ruled out. If we want to know whether men walked in the past, and how much they walked, and, above all, in what spirit and with what object they walked, we must turn to literature. If there is any history of walking, it will be there. What follows is a brief and wholly inadequate attempt to

review literature from this standpoint—to see what part walking plays in the largely unconscious record of facts and wholly unconscious record of ideas which we find in literature.

It is well at once to prepare for a disappointment. It is fairly clear that in all ages men have walked, more or less: indeed, this could be proved *a priori* from the anatomical structure of the leg. But it is equally clear that up to very recent times they have done so without the least knowledge of the value and purpose of walking. They have walked in a utilitarian spirit, to get somewhere; they have walked in a medical spirit, to improve their digestions; they have very rarely walked for the sake of walking, to realise themselves in a fine activity. No doubt the men of old were ignorant and unenlightened, and too much must not be expected of them; no doubt the habit of riding on horses (introduced quite early and still existing) diverted men's attention from the possibilities of walking. But when all allowances are made, the unprejudiced walker, review-

ing all the centuries B.C. and at least eighteen of the centuries since, must pronounce them one long disappointment.

The first disappointment comes in classical literature: among all the figures of the Graeco-Roman civilisation we look in vain for a walker. The Homeric heroes occasionally took a walk by the sea, but only from bad temper (ὃν θυμὸν κατέδων) or to interview their divine mothers. Aeneas is a little more promising: the lines—

> Cui fidus Achates
> It comes et paribus curis vestigia figit—

raise considerable hopes of a proper walk, but the poet proceeds to dash these hopes by the damning admission in the next line—

> Multa inter sese vario sermone serebant.

In all classical literature it is hard to find a single instance of a walk undertaken for its own sake, without some base ulterior motive. Worse than this, a great philosopher goes out of his way to insult walking. In illustrating his doctrine of final cause, Aristotle remarks that the final cause of

walking is health. For a moment the reader is struck dumb with the thought that once again Aristotle has overleapt the centuries and found out something never again discovered until after 1870. But it is clear that he misunderstands health: he is speaking from a grossly medical standpoint. For he interposes between the two a middle term, consisting of digestion viewed in its most revolting and mechanical aspect: and the reader sinks back with a sigh of regret.

But in justice to Aristotle it must be remembered that he himself went far to wipe out this insult by one of those curious, half-conscious, inspired reaches of divination which make the Greeks so unlike other philosophers. In his analysis of the psychology of action he constructs what is known as the Practical Syllogism—a train of feeling leading to action comparable to the train of thought in the syllogism leading to a conclusion. There is the major premise —things that wake a certain kind of feeling in me are to be sought or avoided; there is the minor premise—this is a thing waking

the kind of feeling. A lesser man would have been drawn on by the charms of his own analogy to add a conclusion—this is to be sought or avoided, but Aristotle will allow no theoretical conclusion to the practical syllogism. 'In this case,' he says in words which make our hearts leap, 'the conclusion from the two premises is the act, as when one thinks—Every man ought to walk, I am a man, and at once—he walks.'[1] The major premise with its fine grasp of the meaning and purpose of human life, the minor premise with its simple but splendid assertion of humanity, lead straight to the conclusion—a walk.

The Middle Ages, as far as can be judged, were densely unenlightened on the subject of walking. I have no wish to decry the Canterbury pilgrims, but they were obviously not walkers: they talked too much, and were too much immersed in the bare particulars of actuality. Indeed, the pilgrims as a whole took a low view of walking; not only did they regard it in itself as a penance, but they utilised this

[1] *De Mot. An.* 7.

penance for a grossly material object—namely, the writing off of some of the heavy list of entries on the wrong side of their moral pass-book, which prejudiced their solvency in the future life. Further, they had no eye for country; the Pilgrims' Way from Winchester to Canterbury, after leaving St. Martha's Church, with the magnificent line of the chalk to the north and the no less magnificent hills to the south, takes the relatively tame valley-way between,[1] presumably because there were more facilities for drink in the valley, and the purgation of the pilgrims' miserable souls could be shortened by an hour or so. Judged by all the evidence, the pilgrims were men of low motives and obscurated vision, and quite unworthy of a place in the company of walkers.

The Elizabethans seem little better. There is no trace in Shakespeare of a proper regard for the meaning and purpose of walking. In *As You Like It* both

[1] Arguments are now proceeding about this, and it may prove that they *did* go along the Guildford-Ranmore Common track; in which case I withdraw the above.

parties of travellers arrive at the Forest of Arden in a state of extreme fatigue, without any apparent appreciation of the charming walk they have had through the county of Warwick. In the same way Lysander and Hermia, though they met in a wood only a league without the town —and that a wood with which they were both familiar — promptly lose their way and 'faint with wandering in the wood'— a fearful confession of incompetence and weakness. Only Demetrius and Helena, spurred on by the pangs of unrequited love, are able to achieve five miles or so without fainting. Walking is regarded by Portia as one of the most distressing symptoms of Brutus's condition: she notes with amazement how he suddenly rose and walked about, and how he walks unbraced and sucks up the humours of the dank morning. (Portia's views on hygiene show the true old spirit.) Polonius in the same way advises Hamlet in the interests of his health to walk out of the air—that is, into the nice comfortable palace where the King had caroused overnight and an embassy

had been received that morning; and the chilling reply 'Into my grave?' is the first hint we get of modern views on ventilation. If only Hamlet had acted up to his views—if only he had taken one good walk in the air to shake together all those errant spirits that warred in his capacious brain—the philosopher, the gallant, the good fellow, the calf-lover of Ophelia, the true lover of his father—and weld them into a concrete whole! What a man he would have been, and what a play we should have missed!

The eighteenth century, being both the Age of Reason and the Age of Port, was clearly no time for proper walking. None the less, the century is important as producing the literary form in which walking first became self-conscious, namely, the novel. The emergence of walking was a long business: for many years the writers of fiction were preoccupied with duels and elopements and moral crises and sudden deaths—all the things which conspicuously do not happen to walkers. But as the romantic revival drew on, men became

more whole and concrete; and at last we begin to find in novels that walking is coming to its own. If we review the fiction of the last hundred and twenty years, among much irrelevancy and many abstractions, we can discover a few real walkers; and the fact that they occur in novels makes them immensely more significant. If a person is recorded in history as walking, it only means that one person walked: if in a novel, it means that walking has a real place in the ideas of the age.

The first true walker is unquestionably Elizabeth Bennet. Relatively to her age, she was even a good walker. Her three-mile tramp across the fields to Netherfield was evidently thought something quite sensational. Her time is not given; she left home after breakfast, and reached Netherfield before the family had finished breakfasting: allowing for the probable difference between Mr. Bennet's habits and Mr. Hurst's, we may estimate it at an hour; and three miles an hour is no break-neck pace in the twentieth century. But

for the first mile to Meryton she was with Kitty and Lydia, who were obviously bad walkers, so that on the whole her pace was not to be despised. Further, it may be noted that she was the only person in the whole book who ever walked these three miles. Mrs. Bennet and Kitty and Lydia drove; Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy invariably rode; Jane had to ride (owing to the careful dispositions of Mrs. Bennet), and, as might be expected, caught a cold in the rain.

But Elizabeth was something more than a good walker: she was clearly responsive to the spiritual influences of walking and the open air. Her relations with Darcy are a striking illustration of this. She meets him first at a dance, and naturally forms her Prejudice at once: she continues her acquaintance at several evening-parties and at Netherfield, the most important conversation taking place in a room in which Bingley had just spent half an hour in piling up the fire to prevent Jane taking cold: (it would, of course, have been unthinkable to open a window). She is then bam-

boozled by Wickham in the drawing-room of Uncle Philips, who is himself described as 'stuffy'; and then, after another dance, the first stage of the acquaintance ends. At Hunsford things improve: there is no more dancing, and Fitzwilliam and Darcy *walk* the half-mile from Rosings to the Parsonage. But all the important interviews, culminating in the first proposal and general back-talk, take place either at Rosings or in that room at the Parsonage which Charlotte specially selected, because it did not look out on the road and would therefore not attract Mr. Collins. Then, after this climax, the change at once begins. The first thing next morning Elizabeth takes a walk: she meets Darcy, foot to foot at last, and in the open: she reads his letter, walking, and continues her walk for two hours: the first blow at the Prejudice is struck. They meet again, in the grounds of Pemberley: they walk together (Mrs. Gardiner requiring her husband's support); almost at once the past is wiped out, and truth begins to emerge. Then comes the last phase at Longbourn. Elizabeth

engages and slaughters Lady de Bourgh, on her feet, in the prettyish kind of a little wilderness. Darcy arrives, and after a few fruitless skirmishes in parlours and at evening-parties, they take the road together one fine morning, and when once Kitty has gone to pay her call at the Lucases', there is but one way. The further walk to Oakham Mount (which is too far for Kitty this time) settles the business, and Mrs. Bennet is free to exercise the virtuosity of her imagination on the theme of ten thousand a year.

The relation of Dickens to walking is somewhat peculiar. There is plenty of good walking in his works, just as there is plenty of eating and drinking and romantic eloquence, and other natural processes; but it is nearly all of an unconscious or even mechanical kind. Most of the big walking is undertaken from reasons of economy—the walk of Nicholas and Smike from Dotheboys Hall to London, and on to Hindhead or wherever it was that Mr. Crummles dawned upon the scene; the

walk of Nelly Trent and her grandfather through the industrial districts of England, and on to the village which contained the blameless schoolmaster; the walk of Traddles to Devonshire and back to see Sophy; or David Copperfield's walk to Dover, when the long-legged young man had stolen his money. None of these would have taken the walk for its own sake, except possibly Traddles, who says generally that he had 'the most delightful time.' They seem to have been blind to the beauties of walking, and to have borne it only as a disagreeable necessity. They have not even the purely sensuous appreciation of the beauty of a walk which is found in Mr. Pickwick and his friends, when they walk to the Leather Bottel at Cobham to see if Mr. Tupman is still alive. It is not unfitting that the greatest pronouncement on the Dover road should have been made, not by David Copperfield, who plodded every inch of it, but by that dread Sibyl, Mr. F.'s aunt.

There is only one place in which Dickens rises to a conscious appreciation of the fact

of walking itself—in the description of Martin and Tom Pinch walking into Salisbury to dine with John Westlock. Even here the main theme is that walking keeps a man warm on a cold day, and gives him an appetite for dinner—a view which is very little above the grovelling opinions of Aristotle in the Posterior Analytics. The fact that Martin and Tom walked when they might have driven, and actually found it pleasanter, is flaunted in the reader's face as a novel and startling paradox. Any idea that walking can do something more than keep us warm or make us hungry seems as far from the mind of Dickens the writer as the fact, to which the modern world is awaking, that driving is, with the exception of waltzing and croquet, one of the most despicable of human activities.

But Dickens the writer was not quite the same as Dickens the man. The writer may have taken a low view of walking; the man was first and last a walker. He was a walker of a peculiar kind; in this as in everything else he was a Londoner. But

among London walkers he was one of the greatest. Streets and lamps and human beings, the dim glare and muffled din of London by night, were to him what seas and mountains have been to other poets; they were the food, perhaps the stimulants, of his imagination. And his intimacy with them was not merely the feeling of one who had lived among them. It was that of one who had walked among them, at full stretch, with every muscle taut and every nerve astrain, the feverish reality without answering to the feverish fancy within. It was no doubt by an instinct rather than by conscious purpose that he sought his inspiration in the sights and sounds of the city; his pathetic cry from among the glories of Italy that he cannot be happy without streets, shows only the simple and uncomprehended craving of a child. For the same reason, there is not much patent trace in his works of the compelling influence which London had upon him. Only here and there—in the lonely walks of Neville Landless 'to cross the bridges and tire himself out,' in the stern chase of David

Copperfield and Mr. Peggotty after Martha, or the deadly pursuit of Eugene Wrayburn by Bradley Headstone—do we catch hints of that tremendous vision as revealed to the night-walker, which suffuses every stone of Dickens's London with the glow of excitement and romance.

There is one walker in Dickens who deserves mention for a special reason. This is Canon Crisparkle, one of the three or four clergymen of the Established Church who figure among the thousand or so characters of Dickens; the blameless athlete who bathes before breakfast on a frosty morning, spars at the looking-glass, and is obviously destined to be rewarded by the hand of Helena. Dickens, conscious perhaps that he had hitherto slighted the Church, and anxious to make amends, intended to be as kind as possible to the Canon; but he builded better than he knew. In those days when Kingsley was yet living, and muscular Christianity only beginning to dawn upon the popular consciousness, Dickens, with the wild divination of genius, adds one little touch to the Canon's por-

trait which stamps him indelibly as the forerunner of all that hearty and back-slapping orthodoxy which devastated the 'eighties and 'nineties, and turned to gall the milk of reverence in many a young breast. 'I have not lived in a walking country, you know,' says Neville Landless. 'True,' says Mr. Crisparkle, 'get into a little training and we will have a few score miles together. I should leave you nowhere now.' And thus the author, carried beyond himself by his own creative genius, marks his hero unmistakably as a braggart and a liar.

When we reach Meredith we are in daylight at last, and walking is comprehended as no mere mechanical process, but a great activity of the whole being of man. Passage after passage, phrase after incomparable phrase, call to the walker with the sound of trumpets. 'He jumped to his feet . . . and attacked the dream-giving earth with tremendous long strides, that his blood might be lively at the throne of understanding.' 'He was a man of quick pace, the sovereign remedy for the dispers-

ing of the mental fen-mist. He had tried it, and knew that nonsense is to be walked off.' 'The taking of rain and sun alike befits men of our climate, and he who would have the secret of a strengthening intoxication must court the clouds of the south-west with a lover's blood.' 'Carry your fever to the Alps, you of minds diseased: not to sit down in sight of them ruminating, for bodily ease and comfort will trick the soul and set you measuring our lean humanity against yonder sublime and infinite; but mount, rack the limbs, wrestle it out among the peaks; taste danger, sweat, earn rest; learn to discover ungrudgingly that haggard fatigue is the fair vision you have run to earth, and that rest is your uttermost reward.'

It would be a pleasing task to recall in detail all the walkers of Meredith: Richard Feverel in the storm in the forest; Evan Harrington on the road to his father's funeral; Carinthia and Chillon in the mountains; Gower Woodseer; Arthur Rhodes on the night walk to Epsom and Denbies; Harry Richmond and Temple, made free of romance by the first touch of their

feet on German soil, marching inevitably to find the fairy princess. But I must pass them by in order to linger awhile on the greatest of them all, the living embodiment of the best that is in walking, Vernon Whitford.

At the outset the author wins our sympathy for Vernon by a single bold stroke: he comes before us first in 'the electrical atmosphere of the dancing room' crossing himself, and crossing his bewildered lady (Lætitia), and 'extorting shouts of cordial laughter from his cousin Willoughby.' It was only a square dance, so that Vernon is free from the suspicion of having contaminated himself, even from a sense of duty, with waltzing. The rest of his story is mainly composed of walks. He meets Clara and Crossjay on his way back from a long walk on the evening of Clara's arrival, when she is wrestling with the repugnance which she thought was ended, but was really only beginning; they walk together, and at once he takes his place somewhere in the back of her head, so that in her reflections she 'puts another name for Oxford.' They

walk again after she has found him sleeping under the double-blossom wild cherry-tree ; they talk of the Alps—clearly the beginning of the end. Then follow two of the only three important interviews between them which take place under cover. First Clara, instructed by Willoughby to sound Vernon on the project of marrying Lætitia, 'casts aside the silly mission' and gives him the truth ; immediately he goes off for a walk, returning late at night. Then comes the interview in the inn parlour, but this is only after both have had a wild scurry across country in the rain of the south-west. (See Note A below.) All through the crisis of the book Vernon is scouring the country in pursuit of Crossjay, and returns in time to deliver (in the open air) the decisive blow at Willoughby. Then follows the fateful walk with Clara, when he talks of Switzerland, Tyrol, the *Iliad*, Antigone, Political Economy—anything, we may add, to save poor Clara's face. Last comes the short interview at night, which might have reached the climax, had not both by an instinct reserved it for a more

fitting place 'between the Swiss and Tyrol Alps over the Lake of Constance.' It is not only they of minds diseased who carry their fever to the Alps.

Vernon makes such a claim upon our sympathy that we are driven to decide in his favour what would be with a lesser man a very doubtful point. When he meets Clara on the occasion of their first walk, he tells her that he has just walked nine-and-a-half hours to get rid of the temper caused by Crossjay. Now breakfast at Patterne on a normal morning (see Note A below) ended at a quarter to ten, and it must have taken some little time for Crossjay to rouse Vernon's temper to the walking off point. After he meets Clara they walk for some little time before returning to the hall for dinner, for which presumably they dressed. Dinner at that epoch at the very most cannot have been later than half-past seven, or possibly eight. It is thus very difficult to see where Vernon's nine-and-a-half hours come in. But Vernon was no Canon Crisparkle, and it is hard to think that he lied to Clara at such a time and

on such a matter: we therefore shut our eyes and asseverate blindly that he walked exactly nine-and-a-half hours.

Further, he walked at a pace of something over four-and-a-half miles an hour. If any one wishes to contest this statement, he will have to read Note A below.

After Meredith come professed essayists on the subject of walking—notably Stevenson and Leslie Stephen. I do not propose to treat them at any length, partly because it would be presumptuous and partly because I carefully postponed reading them until seven-eighths of this work were completed. On looking through their essays I am abased, but not disheartened: they say most of what can be said on the subject much better than any one else can say it, but what of that? There is never any harm in repeating a thing, especially when it is important. Stevenson says the essential things about walking once and incomparably; and just for that reason people are apt to overlook them. For example, he says that the traveller 'becomes more

and more incorporated with the material landscape, and the open-air drunkenness grows upon him with great strides'; the ordinary Stevensonian exclaims, 'How charming!' and promptly forgets all about it. But when later writers make seven or eight incompetent attempts at the same idea, the reader begins to think there is really something there, and to explore the meaning for himself. It is like passing seven or eight inaccurate sign-posts all pointing to the same place; it is hard to resist turning up by one of them, and when the road leads you nowhere you become all the more anxious to find the place, and all the more impressed when you reach it; whereas, if you are planted there suddenly and miraculously, you say, 'How charming!' and pass on. The right course is to read these essays first, then go several walks, and then read Stevenson. Therefore no more of him.

Some interesting but perverse treatment of walking is to be found in Ibsen. His characters walk a good deal, but it never

seems to have a proper effect on them; they return from their walks without one string of their nervous temperament loosened, or one facet of their personality rounded. Johannes Rosmer is out for a walk on Kroll's first visit, and Rebecca remarks that he has stayed out longer than usual. He returns, not dirty, not hungry, not mentally equable and idea-proof, but just the same as when he started out; he begins talking at once, and in ten minutes is arguing about politics, and in twenty is inaugurating a life-long breach with his brother-in-law; finally, at the end of the act, he goes to bed without any supper. He cannot really have been much of a walker. In the third act Rebecca particularly impresses upon him twice that he is to take 'a good long walk' to give her time for her interview with Kroll. The good long walk lasts exactly eight pages in the English translation, and he comes back fresh enough to take a lively part in the overwhelming scene which finally brings his house toppling about his ears. Surely Rebecca herself, the incomparable heroine for whose sake we

throw over all moral judgments and tear up all commandments, the serene wielder of a concrete purpose, vanquished only by herself, the most attractive murderess who ever drove a rival by lies into a mill-dam —surely she was a better walker than Rosmer.

Hilda Wangel, too—what the plague had she to do with a walking-tour? If she had really walked from her home to the Solness' house, would there have been much left of her abstract purpose? Would she have come in with her eyes sparkling to demand the redemption of the ten-year pledge? Surely twenty miles of Norwegian country, if properly walked, would have warned her to leave Solness alone, and continue her walk somewhere else. It is the same with Gregers Werle: if he had really gone for a walk with Hialmar, he could not have kept the cutting-edge of his ideal sharp enough to sever all Hialmar's roots: they would have begun to talk about the weather, and would have had a large tea and returned smoking pipes with their ideals filed for future reference.

Elsewhere in modern literature there are signs, though only a few, that walking is coming to its own. The most cheering example is Mr. Belloc, who not only records walks, but writes in the true walking mood, with plenty of irrelevancy, plenty of dogmatism, and thorough conviction on the matter of eating and drinking. Mr. Wells also sends his young people out for walks occasionally, with the best results. But the best description of walking, or rather Walking Out, in modern literature outside Meredith is in Browning's 'Last Ride Together.' It is true that he wrote it about riding, but I am sure that this was really a mistake. Any one who has ever started on a walk after a hard week's work can only admit one interpretation to the lines:

> My soul
> Smoothed itself out, a long-cramped scroll,
> Freshening and fluttering in the wind.

It may have been simply a printer's error: by adding two letters we can set the matter right:

> What if we still stride on, we two,
> With life for ever old yet new,
> Changed not in kind but in degree
> The instant made eternity—
> And heaven just prove that I and she
> Stride, stride together, forever stride.

This at least was what the young gentleman was saying to the young lady that afternoon, when I overtook them just short of Newland's Corner. It is a grassy track, and it was well that I stepped on a stick.

NOTE A

On the Rates of Walking of Various Persons in the Egoist, Chapters 25 *sqq.*

IT will be remembered that Clara and Crossjay walked to the station after breakfast, followed first by Vernon and later by De Craye. A close scrutiny of the details given produces some very interesting information.

The first point is the time of the train. Willoughby says that 'eleven is the hour,' but as he adds airily that there is 'a card in the smoking-room,' we cannot trust this evidence alone. But Vernon, we are told, timed himself to reach the station at ten minutes to eleven,

and this before he met Dr. Corney, who drove him part of the way. On getting to the station he tells Clara that she has 'full fifteen minutes, besides fair chances of delay.' It seems fairly clear then that the train was due at just about eleven, that Vernon reached the station at 10.44 or so, and Clara some time earlier.

If the train was due at eleven, the distance to the station can be approximately fixed. When Clara starts the drive back, she passes her own train 'eighteen minutes late by her watch.'[1] She arrives at the Hall just as twelve is striking. The drive consequently took just over forty-two minutes. The roads were wet, and Flitch's horse probably decrepit: the distance by road may therefore be fixed at about four miles. By taking the footpath, according to Crossjay, 'you save a mile.' Crossjay may be trusted on a point like this, and we may thus estimate the field way at three miles.

Now the field way passed through the West Lodge Park Gate. This was clearly not far from the Hall. Clara left the breakfast-room at 9.45. She then had to get her hat and meet Crossjay behind the pheasantry, and, on the lodge-keeper's wife's statement to De Craye, they were through

[1] I do not feel sure whether 'by her watch' is intentionally emphasised. It will be remembered that at breakfast her watch was four minutes slow: but presumably she set it. In any case, the difference hardly affects the argument.

the gate before ten. We infer that the distance was at most half a mile, leaving two and a half miles to the station. Clara and Crossjay cannot have been through the gate much before ten, and after meeting the tramp and sending Crossjay back, she was still at the station before Vernon—*i.e.* before 10.44. The inference is that in wet clothes and over bad ground—even Vernon found the footpath slippery—she went nearly four miles an hour. In dry clothes and on a good ground, she had to fall into a special kind of trot to keep up with Vernon, reminding him of the Piedmontese Bersaglieri, and that at the end of a nine-and-a-half-hour day. It is clear, therefore, that Vernon's pace cannot have been much below five miles an hour.

His own timing on the morning of the flight is not very exactly given. The lodge-keeper's wife told De Craye that he was through the gate half an hour after Clara. If this is accurate, the time would be about 10.25. He then, after meeting Crossjay, timed himself to be at the station at 10.50—twenty-five minutes for two and a half miles. But he clearly intended to run: and although this shows his running pace to be creditable, we cannot safely infer from it to his walking pace.

One further interesting point emerges, namely, that De Craye's watch, after setting everybody right at breakfast, went hopelessly wrong in the

course of the morning. It was ten minutes past eleven by his watch when he left the Park gate: yet he was at the station in time to meet Clara, and, after some discussion, to drive back with her (11.17 or at most 11.21—see above). It is not stated where he picked up Flitch's cab, but even Flitch can hardly have driven in from five to ten minutes a distance which, with a short piece added, took him forty-two minutes on the return journey. A frivolous observer might suggest that the author was not very careful in his timing: but, apart from the hideous blasphemy, this would invalidate most of the previous argument. We therefore shut our eyes once more, and affirm that De Craye's watch went wrong.

VII

WALKING EQUIPMENT

ἀδύνατον γὰρ ἢ οὐ ῥᾴδιον τὰ καλὰ πράττειν ἀχορήγητον ὄντα.

AR. *Eth. Nic.* I. 9.

VII

WALKING EQUIPMENT

EVERY one is well aware—if not, it is abundantly clear from the rest of this volume—that controversy of any kind is naturally repugnant to the amiable nature of a walker. It is therefore with some trepidation that he approaches the highly controversial subject of equipment. Writers on walking, and Alpine climbers—neither of them necessarily the same thing as walkers—usually dismiss the subject in a brief and breezy chapter on nailed boots and the back-lining of waistcoats, with a few brilliant paragraphs on goggles and brandy, unaware that they are dancing among the ashes of several by no means extinct volcanoes. Indeed, the subject bristles with controversial points. The structure and fortification of boots; the requisite number of pairs of socks; the

rival claims of long trousers and short trousers, with the subvariants of short trousers buckling at the knees, short trousers with box-cloth continuations, and short trousers with homogeneous continuations; the configuration of coats; the shape of hats (if any); the functions of waistcoats; the necessity of ties; the moral value of walking-sticks; all these subjects of controversy meet us before we reach the really fundamental questions of food and drink and knapsacks and their contents. But peace was never won by shutting the eyes and pretending that differences do not exist; and so, with whatever reluctance, we enter the lists.

The nature of the controversy may be illustrated by the discussion at present raging around boots. Heavy nailed boots used to be taken as, in every sense, the foundation of walking equipment—as the axiom which could not be gainsaid. But in this age men will gainsay anything; and a formidable school of shoe-walkers has arisen, who deny the axiom of boots, and are ready to construct a new system on

their denial. These Lobatschewskis of footwear do not all go to the lengths of one walker whom I knew, whose habit was to patrol grouse-moors in sandshoes; but in his case there was a special need, since the moors were strictly preserved, and his walking mainly consisted of short and exciting handicaps with the walker on the five-yards mark and a keeper at scratch. But the shoemen are ready to proclaim in the face of the orthodox that their equipment is airier and more comfortable than boots; and this is a controversy which, when once raised, must go forward to its issue.

The bootmen in the first exasperation of outraged orthodoxy will probably say that shoes are effeminate, while boots are the mark of a man; at which the shoemen ask, why it should be effeminate to have a soft and slight covering between the feet and reality and manly to have several layers of bull's hide clamped with armour-plating; and thus, by a neat allegorical turn, they open the whole feminist question. Somewhat sobered, the bootmen then say that boots support the ankles; to which

the shoemen reply that their ankles do not need supporting. This innuendo finally makes the bootmen think, and they issue from their meditations with the unanswerable remark that shoes let stones in and boots do not. The shoemen, if they are wise, admit this, merely adding, that if shoes let stones in they can easily be taken off and shaken; and that if boots keep stones out, they also keep air out. The bootmen then take the aggressive: if air is wanted, why walk at all? Why not stand on your head with your feet out of window? To which the shoemen say, Don't be silly; and the bootmen say, You have no sense of humour; and the relations of years are dissolved.

There is no need to follow this controversy further, either along its main lines or into its side-tracks, on the questions of nails, laces, and unguents. The issues involved are mainly utilitarian. There is little doubt that boots are better for rough ground and bog, and shoes for roads and level tracks; nails are necessary for rocks and steep grass-slopes, but are a burden on the

hard highway. Again, shoes probably leave the feet freer, while boots add mechanically an extra inch or two to the stride. The question may be pursued through all its ramifications; and no doubt those who like quantitative thinking could ultimately produce some sort of determination of the footgear most likely to be suitable to the average man in the average country. Where comfort and utility only are concerned, the vulgar processes of comparing, adding and subtracting are quite sufficient to lead to a conclusion.

But quantitative reasoning, though invaluable in politics, is very poor fun. Life would have little flavour without occasional qualitative excursions into the *a priori*. The very bitterness of feeling aroused by discussions on walking equipment shows, I think, that something more is involved in them than the calculable considerations of comfort and utility. After all, it is mainly a man's own affair whether his feet are comfortable and whether he slips on a grass slope: and were these the only issues, we should have no more concern with his boots

than with his breakfast or banking-account. And the same holds true for most of the doubtful points of walking equipment. The relative comfort and healthiness of hats, caps, and nothing can beeasily determined by counting heads and adding up (and cancelling out) medical opinions; the practical aspect of walking-sticks could probably be exhibited by a diagram of the body, a few mechanical equations, and a fatigue-curve or two. But what walker worthy of the name would accept such conclusions if they disagreed with his own views, or would even welcome them if they disagreed with other people's views? Who would suffer himself to be quantitatively coerced into altering the shape of his hat, or giving up walking-sticks, or adopting or forswearing a tie?

Ties furnish perhaps the clearest instance of the break-down of utilitarianism. They serve no material purpose of any kind. The days are long gone by when the tie added perceptibly to the warmth of the body: even the ties of 1892, which seem ridiculous to-day, cannot have saved a single valetudinarian of that age (as he thought) from

a cold in the chest, or (as we now learn) have weakened his capacity to resist chill. No man's health or bodily comfort would now be affected in the slightest degree by the presence or absence of a tie. Nor, if utilitarians take the rash step of admitting beauty into the system of pleasures, can very much be said for ties. It is true that they sometimes add a desirable touch of colour; but if beauty were our aim in ties, should we stop for a moment within the present limitations of either colour or shape? A large flounced piece of drapery with an elaborate colour scheme, twisted in decorative lines across our chest to a bow on the hips or the small of the back, would be the very least we should put up with. Can any one with a little knot of monochrome peering bashfully from a minute triangular opening in a waste of drab monotony talk seriously about beauty in ties?

The truth is that dress is a paradox. Any one attempting to apply to it the principles of health, comfort, beauty, or even economy, would become an atheist or a suicide in a fortnight. Modern dress is

unhealthy, uncomfortable, ugly, and dear. In spite of the passionate denunciations of stiff shirts and collars by the whole medical profession, we and they continue to wear them. Our necks are chafed, our motions are cramped, our skin is slowly vitiated—but we do not rebel. The fabrics which we choose for our clothing tend on the whole to be the ugliest, the most expensive, and the least durable: yet no one dreams of following the elementary laws of utilitarian economics. Thus in the enlightened twentieth century, with all the wealth of the industrial revolution within our grasp, with doctors ready to prescribe the healthiest clothes and artists to design them most beautifully—when, in a word, at a quarter of the present cost and trouble which it takes to make us eyesores we could become dreams of comfort and colour-harmony—then we, the heirs of all the ages, with open eyes and unclouded vision, refuse.

It is due to fashion, no doubt: but what after all is fashion, and why should we obey it? It is only a human creation: it is no law dictated to the world from outside; it

is merely something which some men chose and other men, of their free will, agreed to obey. When a person asks, 'Why do we follow fashion?' the only answer is, 'Do you?' If he says 'No,' he is probably a liar: but we can still ask, 'Do you not find in yourself some instinct urging you to follow fashion?' Even the most hardened liar will probably say 'Yes.' The answer then is, 'Multiply that instinct by five million, and then think again.' There is something hidden in each of us which tends to make us follow fashion, which welcomes, that is to say, a law of uniformity in dress quite regardless of its practical and aesthetic consequences, which craves, indeed, for uniformity first and at any cost, and lets the consequences be what they may.

This craving for uniformity is, I think, the fundamental fact that lies behind the paradox of dress. Changes come in dress as in other things: but they come much more slowly and irrationally, and in no perceptible relation to the ordinary desires and impulses of mankind. When they make for comfort or beauty, like the partial

supersession of stiff shirts by soft shirts, we accept them gratefully: but there is no evidence that such changes ever coincided with any definite movement in favour of increased comfort or beauty: they came to us, as it were, from outside, unaccountably. We make no conscious efforts towards a change in dress; rather, we shrink from them, lest the growth of a revolutionary movement should shake our treasured uniformity, and leave us some fine morning with the awful prospect of not being quite certain of looking exactly like our neighbours.

This attitude will no doubt be called cowardly and unenterprising, but it is so universal that its morality seems hardly worth arguing. In case, however, any stern moralists wish to denounce this mean compliance with fashion in the name of liberty, I would commend two points to their notice. First, the followers of fashion can claim that they are literally fulfilling Kant's law; they are acting upon a principle which they can and do will to be law universal. When I put on my tie in the

morning, my first and greatest desire is that every other man should do the same. It is not from any malign wish that others should suffer what I suffer : it is rather from a desire that, apart from any considerations of suffering or happiness, humanity, myself included, may be one upon this matter. The champions of liberty probably reply that they also satisfy the Kantian condition on a higher plane : they are ready to act on a universal principle that all men shall be free to dress in the most convenient and beautiful way. To which we answer, on a still higher plane, are you quite sure that this would be real freedom ? In our happy youth we were taught to distinguish between the real freedom which only exists in relation to a positive law of which it is conscious, and the mere negative freedom from restraint, which is empty of content and apt to degenerate into caprice. Is it not at least a possibility that our craving for uniformity is no mere cowardice, but rests upon a deep-seated human instinct, warning us that liberty in dress would prove a merely negative liberty, and in fear of this throwing us

back to the other extreme, so that we welcome a positive law, however irrational?

Another possibility has sometimes occurred to me, namely, that uniformity in dress is in the nature of a political allegory. Modern costume is a great equaliser; in outward appearance there is no longer any distinction between the aristocracy and the middle ranks of life. Every one has noticed the unducal appearance of eminent men, emphasised as it so often is nowadays by the curious fall which has taken place in the social status of whiskers. Every one, again, is familiar with the difficulty felt in clubs and at evening parties in distinguishing fellow-guests from waiters. The allegory may be interpreted in two ways: it may be taken as a satirical demonstration of the results of equality, or as indicating a generous instinct that one man's natural advantages shall not cause him to outshine too brightly his less happy neighbours. But at least it seems possible that the dress paradox veils beneath its apparent perversity some lofty meaning: so that when

the libertarians start piling up sublimities against us, we can reply with a few of our own.

In the rarefied atmosphere of these moral altitudes, a good many of the quarrels over walking equipment lose their importance: they are seen to be particular illustrations of a far wider question. Ties and hats and waistcoats and trousers—it is no use to argue about any of them as if they were ordinary human creations made in response to a felt desire and adapted to some practical purpose; they are all costume, symbols of something more inscrutable than practical purposes, and not to be judged by ordinary standards. Those who wear waistcoats or hats may, of course, attempt to defend them on practical grounds: they may even say, with some truth, that waistcoats have convenient pockets, and hats keep the sun off. But this is really an afterthought: it is the old human tendency to rationalise impulses after the event. The points cannot be argued singly and on practical grounds, until the paradox of dress has been faced and overcome.

The preceding argument will, I hope, bring consolation and moral support to that large class of walkers who conform to the conventional requirements of dress while walking, but feel an uneasy sense that they ought not to be doing so. They need have no uneasiness; their position is perfectly sound. Unless and until dress becomes solely and directly adapted to practical purposes, with no ulterior or symbolic meaning, it is superfluous to feel uneasy about compliance with ordinary rules. Even inconsistency (in the low practical sense) is perfectly defensible. If those, for instance, who leave their heads bare when alone in the country, but put on their caps to pass through a village, are accused by the libertarians of inconsistency, they can justly claim that all mankind are inconsistent in this matter: unless the libertarians are prepared to act up to their principles, and walk through Dorking on a Sunday morning in sweaters and short breeches (which is probably the most comfortable walking costume) they have no right to talk about inconsistency.

More than this, it can be shown, I think, that walkers above all men, if they belong to the working classes, and consequently have to do most of their walking on Sundays, ought to be very tender in their dealings with convention in all its forms. For they above all owe a debt to convention—to the agreement and common action of men in general. In the first place, convention has set aside for them one whole, free day in the week, so securely buttressed by immemorial tradition, that the wildest efforts of revolutionaries make but little impression upon it. Next, the same convention, for the very reason which forms its ultimate support, keeps the greater part of mankind at home during this day, so that the country is singularly empty and free. The Sunday walker gains, in fact, from convention a weekly bank holiday, attended by none of the inconveniences which make ordinary bank holidays rather bad for walking; the democracy sets him free, while leaving his aristocratic susceptibilities unruffled, and in its great kindliness and tolerance offers no hindrance to him in utilising the holy day in

a way which is probably still repugnant to the greater number of Englishmen. He is thus a privileged law-breaker, with all the advantages of the law unimpaired ; and it beseems him to be grateful to those who both make the law and allow him to break it.

This being so, if walkers are allowed to their own great benefit to break one convention, they ought to be all the more respectful to the remainder: they should be careful not to shock conventional susceptibilities further than is necessary. When a Sunday walker meets a church parade (which invariably happens in Westcott to those who take the 10.5 to Leatherhead and go for Leith Hill viâ Polesden Lacey and Ranmore Common) he should not swagger by with a conscious air of superior disreputability; rather, his attitude should be one of humble gratitude, and his costume as modest and conventional as he can make it. For (ultimately) it was church parade that both enabled him to take the 10.5, and has prevented Ranmore Common from being a roaring welter of cocoanut shies.

Let him therefore abase his eyes and reflect, as he turns up Logmore Lane, that privilege involves obligations.

Apart from the question of Sunday walking, the cult of disreputability for its own sake seems hardly worthy of a walker. It undoubtedly exists, very largely in conversation, less largely in fact; and it is curious that the more refined relatives of disreputable walkers often find a peculiar pleasure in dwelling on the enormities of dear ——'s walking appearance. But it is hard to see in what studied disreputability is better than studied foppery; while unstudied disreputability is only separated by a very narrow line from slovenliness, and by a slightly broader line from dirt. Probably the cult rests on some kind of a vague sentimental yearning after originality, coupled with the universal passion for an imagined aristocratic detachment from the ideals of the bourgeoisie. But neither feeling is worthy of a walker, and neither ought to survive a few days' proper walking.

If practical purposes are to be introduced,

this is better done in another matter coming within the scope of equipment in the full sense—I mean food and drink. But luckily here the whole inquiry has been thrown in confusion by a wicked joke played by the doctors on the public. As far as a layman can understand the matter, it appears that no one really can demonstrate scientifically the effects of different kinds of food and drink, for the simple reason that a living and digesting body cannot be examined like a dead one; all theories on the subject are therefore purely empirical. But the medical profession, with an instinct for fun not suppressed by a long training and an arduous life, have made an unholy conspiracy with the organic chemists; and the result is a catalogue of proteids, phosphates, nitrogenous substances, etc., with equivalent percentages in powers of bone-forming, flesh-building, and heating, which is dangled cunningly before the eyes of the unsuspecting public. The public rises at once; we like our food, and love dogmatising about it; here is a chance to gain the unshakable support of formulae and diagrams and

graphic curves. So we plunge into the troubled sea of proteids ; and the end of it, as might be expected, is that there is no form of food which cannot be scientifically advocated, from nettles to human flesh.

How futile is the analytic science of food may be shown by its powerlessness in the face of other dogmatisms. Take, for example, that great traditional food-code associated with the training of oarsmen—a dogmatism so reverently guarded and so profoundly lunatic that a walker must treat it with respect. As late as the fifties it was devoutly believed that rowing men ought to drink very little at meals, but ought to have two glasses of port at three in the afternoon. There is still—or was until recently—a firm conviction that beef was better than mutton for training, while bacon and the flesh of swine generally were altogether taboo. It is not known whether the original prophet who dictated this system was in earnest or no ; he may have been a simple soul, genuinely anxious that others should share the benefits of the truth which had been revealed to him ; he may, on the other hand,

have been a cunning student of men, who knew the power of dogmatism and realised that only thus could he persuade men to eat meals of such a stupefying size that they would be mentally incapable of resenting the monotony of rowing. But, however this may be, the remarkable point is that in a matter where food was really important, and a system of well-known and tried futility was in force, the proteid-experts said never a word; there was never even a voice raised to suggest eating the spare man on the day of the race.

On the question of drink, of course, the dogmatisms are even fiercer; in no other sphere is there such universal intolerance. The abstainers want every one else to abstain, and denounce them if they do not; the heavy drinkers want every one else to drink heavily and despise them if they do not; most bigoted and intolerant of all, the temperate drinkers want every one else to drink temperately and denounce and despise both the other parties. The whole subject is limp with sentimentality—the sentimentality which identifies drink with the devil,

and the sentimentality which identifies drink with humanity, Christianity, and all the popular virtues. Every mug of beer and every cup of tea is now become symbolic; every drink is viewed *sub specie aeternitatis*, and it is difficult for the ordinary man as he drinks not to feel that his act is the illustration of some great and universal principle, and to enrol it, so to say, under the banner of one of the conflicting dogmatisms.

With most of these lunacies and sentimentalities, as such, the walker is not concerned. But he has above all men a very direct and practical interest in food and drink, as the fuel of his walking system, and he is bound to search the dogmatisms for any truth which may be latent in them. But when the practical eye is turned upon them, what nonsense they become! Put three men on the hills with a beef-sandwich, an egg-sandwich, and a jam-sandwich: can your proteid analysts tell you which of them will be going strongest at four o'clock? Give one man a whiskey-flask, and one a mountain stream: can you say which will walk the further or sleep the sounder?

Above all, if you have come to the conclusion by experiment that certain foods and drinks are best for you, by what right can you try to thrust them down the throats of other men? The fact is that the human body is a very wonderful machine, sharing something of the individuality of the soul: and within certain limits there is no saying what exact form of nourishment will suit it best. A few general truths we can fix, such as that unripe apples and cyanide of potassium are unhealthy, and that more than two lobsters are not a good preparation for violent exercise; but the rest of the matter is one glorious uncertainty, and the only law which we can find is the great and universal empirical principle: 'One man's meat is another man's poison,' or, 'It takes all sorts to make a world.'

If then any one wishes to dogmatise about food and drink, let him do so frankly on the ground that he likes certain things, and expects other people to like them too. Let us have no more of proteids and food-values: above all, let us have no more of the moral aspects of food and drink. It is

a man's business to find out what will suit him best, what will keep his body at its maximum capacity for its various duties. This he can only discover experimentally, and in the process he must not be limited in the range of his experiments by any analytic tables or moral taboos: he must try proteids, sulphides, and oxalates impartially: he must try meat-eating as well as fruitarianism (avoiding crime): he must try beer as well as water, and, even more important, he must try water as well as beer. When he has found his right diet, then let him begin to dogmatise if he will; but let it be the dogmatism of a good citizen, who has found a truth and wants others to share it, not the dogmatism of a tyrant seeking to bind others by his own measure.

The worst foe to freedom is not science or morality but sentiment. There is a sentimental picture, dear to many imaginations, of a walker sitting down (generally in his boots) after a 'few score' of miles (to quote Canon Crisparkle) devouring large slices of meat washed down by tankards of

beer, the whole subsequently enhaloed in tobacco. So popular is this fancy among the more sentimental part of the population, that when a walker refuses meat (as some do), or (beer as some do), or tobacco (as a very few do), it is thought something almost wrong, something out of the picture, an error of taste; and many walkers, either from cowardice or from courtesy to the weaknesses of others, have done violence to their own canons of diet in order to fit into the popular picture. On what exactly this sentiment rests it is difficult to see: it and the sister sentiment of disreputability seem to be merely aberrant fancies of imaginative people for their unlikes—of the clean for the slovenly, the abstemious for the greedy. In order to satisfy the imagination of the naturally clean and temperate sentimentalist, the naturally clean and temperate walker has to dress badly and overeat.

Most potent and most vicious of all is the sentiment for beer. No article of diet shines brighter in the imagination of those who do not take it: probably none is worse, on the whole, for walkers. Some walkers, of

course, in the fulfilment of the great experimental law, take beer and thrive upon it, but for a large number it is a faithless friend or an open foe. Yet, so strong is the sentiment in its favour, that we rarely hear a word spoken against beer on other than purely moral grounds; those who cannot take it are apt to be almost apologetic, as though for a defect in themselves. In the interests of the beer sentiment every other kind of feeling is shamelessly exploited: aesthetically, we are asked to admire its beautiful colour: historically, we are reminded of its long tradition as the national drink of merry England: democratically, we are bidden to drink beer as a symbol of our unity with the heart of the people.

What is wanted is a little sentiment on the other side. It may be thought difficult to raise much sentiment on the subject of water, but at least on the grounds taken by the beer-devotees water need fear no comparison. Aesthetically, perhaps, water does not look as beautiful as beer in a glass; but sight is only one of the senses, and

water never causes anything like the aura of a beer-mug the morning after. Historically, beer can simply make no show; it needs an emotional interpretation of history to carry back the tradition of beer even a thousand years; whereas water dates back to the dimmest beginning of things, and in its tradition the praise of Pindar is but as yesterday. Democratically, beer is even more utterly out of it: the constituency of beer consists mainly of men, and does not contain all of them. But the constituency of water is world-wide and heaven-high: it includes women; it includes children; it includes animals: nay, in a sense, it includes earth itself. When I drink beer I may be symbolically sympathising with seven men out of ten in the street; but when I drink water I am symbolically at one with the whole order of creation from the beginning.

Nay, drinker of beer, an thou'lt mouth, I 'll rant as well as thou. What is your drink after all? It is a compound of vegetable substances, whose main function is to ferment—*i.e.* in plain English, to go bad. These substances are sentimentally

supposed to be malt and hops: in reality, they include a long and ghastly category of chemical drugs and substitutes known only to the Inland Revenue Department and the troubled consciences of brewers. These substances are mixed by some malodorous processes, with a Government Official standing by in hope of detecting a certain percentage of the fraud involved; and the outcome is put in barrels of not over-clean wood, and stowed in dirty and stuffy cellars until the time arrives for it to be passed through a metal beer-engine into tankards and glasses, which may or may not have been cleaned, and so down the throats of the long-suffering public, who have the consolation of reflecting that the cost price of their liquor is less than half what they pay, and that the rest is passing through the tortuosities of dubious finance into the pockets of the casual investor, that incubus upon the body politic.

But water is not compounded by any human hand: there is no list of authorised substitutes to be used in its composition. It is given to us complete; and our only

care is, when our civilisation has contaminated it, to restore it to the form in which it was given to us. What other drink is there that can be taken *in situ*? What cask or beaker so fine as a rocky pool or a grass-tangled spring? What cup so satisfying as the scooping hand? Even when it comes through the medium of waterworks and pipes and jugs, it is still an element; it is taking us in its ordained cycle of mist, and rain, and river, and sea; it is making us one stage in the secular process. Let us drink water, then, if we are to reverence the framework of the creation: let us drink water, if we are to honour our remoter ancestors: let us drink water, if we wish to symbolise the solidarity of the living world.

The difference between proper emotion and sentimentality is like the difference between healthy fresh air and a deadly draught: one is what I like, and the other is what I don't like. But I think an appeal may be made on something wider than personal grounds for a little less sentimen-

tality in food and drink, and a little more proper emotion in costume and the rest of the walker's equipment. Food and drink are important things, and must be taken seriously: they have a direct practical purpose, and their consideration must not be influenced by emotion. Every man ought to feel himself free to experiment in the most cold and scientific spirit, undistracted by conflicting sentimentalities, in order to find the diet most suitable to him; and not till this is done should any emotion attach to articles of food or drink. But dress and equipment, as we have seen, involve something more than material considerations; they symbolise something far beyond practical ends and purposes; and it is only fitting that a walker, contemplating the panoply of his craft, should be uplifted above the regions of prose.

When the epic of walking comes to be written, there are at least two moments in which equipment will be charged with the full force of the poetic current. One is at the very beginning of a walk, when everything is fresh and clean, when shirts are

cool and unrumpled, and boots are new-greased, and the walking-stick lies cold and hard in the hand, and the knapsack sits on the shoulders like a bird new-poised and still unfamiliar with its perch. At such a moment who can think of practical and material purposes? Reason may whisper that the grease will make our boots pliable, that the stick will prove useful, that the knapsack contains many indispensable things for the ending of the day. But at the moment we have no such thoughts of the practical value of equipment: we feel only that we are equipped, that we are armed for the combat with time and space and wind and weather and mental depression and abstract thinking; and so we fling out our chests and stamp our feet on Mother Earth, and away to the rhythm of the dotted tribrach. 'And Telemachus girt on his sharp sword and grasped his spear and stood by his seat at his father's side armed with gleaming bronze.'

The other moment comes later, when we are some days upon our way. Boots have grown limp: clothes have settled into

natural skin-like rumples : the stick is warm and smooth to our touch : the map slips easily in and out of the pocket, lucubrated by dog's-ears : every article in the knapsack has found its natural place, and the whole has settled on to our shoulders as its home. The equipment is no longer an external armour of which we are conscious : it is part of ourselves that has come through the combat with us, and is indissolubly linked with its memories. At the start this coat was a glorious thing to face the world in : now it is merely an outer skin. At the start this stick was mine : now it is myself.

When it is all over the coat will go back to the cupboard and the curved suspensor, and the shirts and stockings will go to the wash, to resume conventional form and texture, and take their place in the humdrum world. But the stick will stand in the corner unchanged, with mellowed memories of the miles we went together, with every dent upon it recalling the austerities of the high hills, and every tear in its bark reminding me of the rocks of the Gable and Bowfell. And in the darkest hours of urban

depression I will sometimes take out that dog's-eared map and dream awhile of more spacious days ; and perhaps a dried blade of grass will fall out of it to remind me that once I was a free man on the hills, and sang the Seventh Symphony to the sheep on Wetherlam.

VIII

WALKING ALONE

With a Digression on London Walking

'Lass, O Welt, O lass mich sein.'

VIII

WALKING ALONE

WITH A DIGRESSION ON LONDON WALKING

WALKING alone is, of course, on a much lower moral plane than walking in company. It falls under the general ban on individual as opposed to communal pursuits. The solitary walker, like the golfer or sculler, is a selfish and limited being, unlike the rower, footballer, or cricketer, who is a member of a community. The point cannot be seriously argued. Prevaricators may call attention artlessly to certain features of communal pursuits—to cricket scores and lists of averages and interviews with eminent athletes; they may even review our country as a whole, and expatiate on the widely diffused spirit of toleration, mutual good-will, and readiness to co-operate which our national sports have produced. But their gibes are unavailing:

it is plainly better to do things in company than alone: and the solitary walker, if he is honest, will at once resign all claim to the halo of patriotism, disinterested devotion, esprit de corps and good citizenship which encircles the brow of the footballer.

I will not even pray in aid the great names of Stevenson and Hazlitt. Their defence of solitary walking rested largely on the mistaken idea that if you walk in company you are bound to talk; they did not realise that even silence can be corporate, nay, that there is a concrete and positive taciturnity of two far more satisfying than the negative voicelessness of one. They did not know how grunts can reveal the man and ejaculations create and foster friendship. The silent contemplation of walking is aided, not hindered, by the presence of another silent contemplator at your side.

Walking alone, then, is a thing only to be justified by special circumstances; it is an abnormal function of life, a subject for pathology rather than physiology. But as life is not yet quite perfect and normal in all departments, there is a place for

pathology : as the proper circumstances of walking are not always attainable, there is a place for walking alone. Without elaborating a scheme of casuistry, we can imagine certain conditions under which walking alone is defensible if not laudable ; and it is only fair to the solitary walker, pursuing his lonely way under the ban of moral disapproval, to indicate some of these.

I have mentioned above four classes of walkers—six milers, twelve milers, eighteen milers, and twenty-four milers. The figures are not to be taken too literally ; but I think walkers, as a whole, fall more or less definitely into four groups, whose average daily maxima are at, or near, these figures. The differences extend to other points—to pace, to length of stride, even, I think, to opinions and disposition, although here the classification becomes less definite. Class A, the twenty-four milers, average about 4½ miles an hour on a good road, and stride 40 inches or over : they tend to be mug-wumps, mistrusters of rhetoric, lovers of the classic in art and music and literature, of the distilled and clarified products of human

imagination or insight. Class B, the eighteen milers, average 4 miles an hour, and stride 36 inches: they are generally those who might have been in Class A but for a lack of real comprehensive capacity and for a love of talking and disputation: they tend to spasmodic intensities within a limited area instead of the wide and equable appreciation of Class A: they read Meredith, but talk about his philosophy, and have no proper grasp of Dickens. Class C, average $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour and call it 'about 4,' and stride 30 inches: they often have Class A capacities, but are physically disabled: they insist on large meals and a good deal of drink, and talk much of 'scorching.' Class D, average $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour, and stride 25 inches: they have no illusions about either, and are mainly occupied in catching a train home at the earliest opportunity.

Now it is obvious that if a Class B walker is set down to walk with one from Class D, one of two things must happen: either the D man must rise above his normal maxima, or the B man must sink below them. The

usual supposition is that B must give way, on the ground that it is dangerous and distressing for D to exceed his limits. It is not generally recognised in such cases what a sacrifice is imposed on B. He has got to drop his pace from 4 miles to $2\frac{1}{2}$; he has got to shorten his stride from 36 to 25 inches; he will probably not be allowed to talk politics; D has never read Meredith's poetry, and by the time B is feeling a little warm, D will be beginning to think about the trains home. Now suppose that B has had a hard week's work, is mentally confused, is contemplating marriage or an investment, is just changing his politics or metaphysics, or is in some other condition when his mind wants cleaning up and straightening out: would he not be to some extent justified in refusing to modify his distance, pace, and stride, and in offering D the alternatives of either complying with the B conditions or going to the D— that is, consorting with other members of his own class?

Those who hold that B would not be justified miss, I think, the distinction between walking and strolling; they consider that

B will get some sort of motion through pleasant country, and that this ought to be enough for him, whatever his condition. The instance taken is purposely extreme; normally, it is admitted, a stroll in company is better than a walk alone. But there are times when B must have a proper walk, at whatever cost; when his primary need is for 18 miles at 4 miles an hour; nay, there are times when he is simply not fit for company, and must go walking alone, and recapture something of himself before he can properly consort with his fellows.

This condition of B's which justifies solitary walking is called by many names in medical works or in the impassioned autobiographies of advertisement—neurasthenia, brain-fag, nervous collapse, or even Weltschmerz. But there is a better and more expressive name, covering a larger range of symptoms, which popular idiom created for us, and a poet then marked for ever as our own. I mean the Hump. The use of this phrase illustrates once more the truth that once we are conscious of a thing we have subdued it. When a man says he

has neurasthenia, he understands nothing except a vague sense of discomfort somewhere unlocalised in himself: but when he says he has the Hump, the very word brings a clear vision of something unnatural and extraneous, of a definite deformity which he can attack and cure. The disease is isolated and identified, and is no longer a vague oppression; it is something which is not his real self, but is temporarily connected with him, and may, by an effort, be shaken off. Civilisation has pressed too heavily on one part of him, on his porter's shoulder-knot; and the forces of his being, which should be employed in varying ways on different tasks, have concentrated themselves unnaturally to resist the pressure: his shoulder has become hypertrophied: in short, he has the Hump. Let him take a walk, let his being resume its natural course: let the forces settle instinctively back into their natural channels: let him realise the world around and about him, calling and answering to each of his separate faculties and not to one only; and lo! the pressure is lightened, the Hump is reduced,

and he resumes his natural shape, and is fit for the company of his fellows.

> And then you will find that the sun and the wind,
> And the Djinn of the garden too,
> Have lifted that Hump, that horrible Hump,
> The Hump that was black and blue.

The poet, it is true, wrote of the Hump that comes from having too little to do: but his words apply equally to that which comes of too much.

But it is not only abnormal mental conditions, such as the Hump, which justify solitary walking: there are abnormal physical conditions which at times render it necessary. Chief among these are the peculiar conditions of streets, pavements, and aggregated humanity which make up towns. Walking in company in a town is really a mockery. Not only are you hampered by other people, so that your attention is kept perpetually on them and off your companions: but your line is for ever being broken and reuniting, so that there is no chance of developing a communal swing and stride. Worse than that, the atmosphere of a town induces that danger-

ous combination of physical oppression and mental activity which leads to brilliant conversation: you shout epigrams across the roar of the traffic, and coruscate with wit as you dodge among perambulators. Town-walking in company, in fact, tends to become like an evening party, and the only possible thing in a town is to walk alone.

This being so, it may be asked whether town-walking is worth doing at all. Many people would say that it is not, and as regards the great majority of towns I should agree with them; the only thing to be done with such towns is to walk away from them as quickly as possible, and to achieve this it is pardonable to undergo the degradation of bicycling or even being driven in a vehicle. But there is one exception, and that is London. London walking is a quite distinct and peculiar thing, utterly unlike any other town-walking. It is a unique branch of walking in general and solitary walking in particular: for all the circumstances which make town-walking solitary apply ten-thousandfold in London. But if you accept this condition, and walk London alone, you

will find a very curious thing, namely that in this biggest and most monstrous of all towns you approach most nearly to pure rusticity. The strictly physical conditions, dirt, noise, smell, constriction of outlook, multiplicity of people, are as bad or worse in London than other towns; but in certain other points, by no means unimportant to a walker, the end of the series is like the beginning, the infinite is like the infinitesimal. What was possible on the South Downs, difficult in Cheltenham, and unthinkable in Liverpool, becomes possible again in London.

It all springs from one simple fact: there are so many people in London that they do not notice each other. If the Londoner paid the slightest attention to his neighbour he would go mad in a fortnight. It is physically impossible for him to notice every one he sees; consequently, he gets into the habit of simply overlooking them, and as their *esse* is *percipi*, they become, for practical purposes, not there. A Londoner walking along a crowded street is really alone in the wilderness: the men are simply as trees walking. The difference between

walking along Oxford Street and along the Embankment is only the difference between walking through a copse where there are many trees or on a field track where there are few.

From this two important consequences follow; first, that in London you can wear what you please. No one will notice or criticise, and even if they did there are always a hundred people worse dressed than you, with dirtier boots, with more *négligé* hats, with baggier trousers. You may, of course, meet some one you know; but here again the abnormal size of London comes to your aid. If it is 5 to 1 on meeting a friend in Cheltenham, it is 50 to 1 against in London. Second, and even more important, is the fact that in London you can sing in the streets. The roar of the traffic will drown all but the strongest passages in the highest register: and even if this lulls for a moment nobody will notice. You can even conduct with your stick if the beat of your foot is not enough. Difficult orchestral passages with variations of colour can be safely attempted in London streets: even the difference between a trumpet and

a horn (which involves making faces if it is done properly) can be represented without any one heeding you.

Traversing thus the London streets, singing and in comfortable clothes, unheeding and unheeded by other people, the solitary walker can come near to, if he cannot attain, the proper mood of walking. It is true that a crowd may disturb his repose at times, and dodging the people and the traffic may break the rhythm of his stride: but the sixth sense which Londoners develop enables him to avoid most obstructions without thinking, and it is surprising, as a matter of fact, how rarely one's stride is broken in a London street. The rhythm of street walking can never be quite the same as the rhythm of country walking: there is always something hard and metallic in the contact of foot and paved surface. None the less, there is a rhythm, and it can do something towards pacifying the body, enlarging the mind, and beating the disordered discourse of intellect into the smooth series of contemplation. Here again the mere size of London comes to the solitary

walker's aid. It is large enough to give him the feeling of direction, to feed his innate craving for big lines. True, in London as in other towns you have frequently to make a sharp turn, giving a violent wrench to your internal organ of orientation. But if your main line be a sufficiently big one, as it can be in London, it is possible to regard these turns as temporary irregularities, and merge them in a larger whole. For example, as you go from Charing Cross to Chelsea, you start with a piece of the Strand, turn a little to cut across the lower end of Trafalgar Square and out into the Mall, and then swing round to the left, to the right, again to the right and again to the left, before you resume the big line of the King's Road.[1] But if you

[1] I feel bound to call attention here, if only in the interests of historical record, to an outrage which took place at some time between October 1911 and March 1912. The road which runs down the middle of Eaton Square is the King's Road, the same which continues west from Sloane Square. An attempt was made to disguise this fact by calling it Clevedon Place in one part: but the fact is undoubted, and used to be made quite clear by a tin plate on the palings at the eastern end of Eaton Square; as this was beyond the part masquerading under an alias, the evidence was conclusive. The tin plate has now been removed,

envisage the whole in a sufficiently large spirit, the little irregularity of Trafalgar Square and the four turns necessitated by the intrusion of Buckingham Palace need not trouble you; they are mere modern excrescences on a line which must have existed before Buckingham Palace was built or Trafalgar fought, the line by which the citizens of London went to Chelsea to eat buns.

By walking in this way along big lines it is possible to gain some real idea of London, the relations of its parts, and the characteristic of each. The bus or cab-rider cannot really understand London: by allowing himself to be carried he loses all grip of actuality. The underground traveller is even more benighted: to him London is an unintelligible congeries of districts linked probably by some inferior novelist who found his ideals of Eaton Square incompatible with anything remotely related to Chelsea Town Hall and the World's End. This tyrannical attempt to relegate the domain of the King's Road to the part west of Sloane Square must not be allowed to stand. In the name of all London walkers I call for the restoration of the tin plate. After all, the novelist is straining at a gnat: if he will turn to the London Directory he will find that the correct postal address of his hero and heroine is Eaton Square, Pimlico, S.W.

by memories of the under world. He conceives Hampstead Heath as something near Hampstead station—an awful perversion. But the walker realises Hampstead Heath in its relation to London; he has approached it through the drab monochrome vistas of Camden Town (with the sudden leap into modernity, red brick, and green blinds at the lower end of the heath) or along the pompous and innocently self-satisfied High Street, or up the interminable sameness of Fitz John's Avenue. He knows Parliament Hill as the end of an hour's hard walk, from which he looks back over the way that he has come: he knows the cattle-trough as the first landmark in Alf Holliday's famous walk out of London to St. Albans, which drops him over the Spaniard's Road into a new world, with a high ridge between him and London, twists him deftly through Temple Fortune, takes him into Hendon the back way by the recreation ground, and speeds him from the foot of the hill across the thirteen fields traversed by the river Silk, where a man can stretch his legs and forget all urban things awhile until con-

fronted by the imposing structure of the Hendon Union workhouse.

But the greatest and most inspiring thing in London is the river. On the purely physical side, it ventilates the town as nothing else can do; on the most stifling days, when stone and brick have been so heated overnight that they have killed the freshness of dawn and brought the new day to birth already old, when the feet are as lead and every breath is an oppression, when the most congenial music is a symphony of Tschaikowsky—there is still some freshness beside the river. On the aesthetic side, who shall fitly sing the praises of the river, with the morning sun catching it as one drops on to the embankment from the north, the silver mornings when the air is clear, the gold mornings with a slight fog, and the copper mornings with a thicker fog? Or the November view up river at sunset from one of the Chelsea bridges? But the best gift of the river to London is simply itself, the long curving line on which the whole town is based, which links Fulham to Westminster and Battersea to the Docks,

which shapes as nothing else can shape the walker's conception of London. Give me the man that knows his bridges and has walked the whole range of all the embankments, from Blackfriars to the uttermost parts of Chelsea beneath the shadow of the four chimneys; he alone is the true Londoner.

It is clear then that at least in London there is something to be said for solitary walking; the London walker can come near to the mood of true walking. If he is debarred from real country he can yet gain something of the country conditions; though a townsman, he approaches in many ways to rusticity. A curious confirmation of this view may be found in the Local Government system of this country. While every other town has its Borough Council, London has a County Council; on the South Downs you are in a county, in Liverpool you are in a borough, but in London you are in a county again. In the eye of the Local Government Board, we Londoners are mere chawbacons; we are tending sheep, and sowing corn, and abiding the verdict of the seasons; we dwell beneath our own vine-trees, and wait for

a chance traveller to come by and tell us whether Ladysmith is relieved. There is much humanity in Acts of Parliament.

But however much we may make of London walking, let it never be considered as anything but a *pis aller*. The first principle of all walkers who live in London is to get away, if possible. If you must remain in London, walk there by all means, and trump up whatever defence of it looks most plausible. But as soon as it becomes possible to get away, do not dream for an instant of remaining; beside a real country walk, the biggest London line, the finest view from the Embankment, the most transcendental conception of Hampstead are as dust in the balance. Have done with all such flummery; take your stick and your Walker Miles and go. And, unless you have the hump, do not go alone. Walking *from* London (as opposed to walking *in* London) is one of the finest forms of communal walking; as an education in citizenship it need fear no comparison, whether with cricket, football, or any other organised game.

Consider for a moment the qualities needed by one who has undertaken the organisation of a party of walkers—if a mixed party, so much the better. To perform his functions successfully he must be a combination of Cook's agent, weather-prophet, geographical specialist, Bradshaw expert, commissariat officer, guide, nurse, hostess, and chaperon. First he must arrange the day and time, and train, so as to suit everybody, which involves a hail of postcards, telephone conversations, and personal interviews. Then he must provide a fine day—by far his easiest task. Then he must arrange the route, his choice being limited only by the fact that each member of the party has his own views about pace, distance, time for lunch, and character of country, agreeing only that there must be no undue hurrying or waiting for the train home at the end of the walk. Then his functions as guide begin: he must necessarily lead the party, while keeping an eye behind to see that no one is straggling; he must never show even a momentary hesitation as to the route; he must receive with

gratitude and attention the suggestions of his companions, who don't care about the map, but are sure they came that way with their uncle some years ago, and are quite certain the guide is wrong; he must watch the time all through, making painful mental calculations of rates and distances; he must be sure, if the route passes any ancient churches, public-houses, or registry offices, that no members of the party whose tastes incline thereto linger too long with irretrievable results; and unless and until the party have reached a proper taciturnity, he must originate and stimulate interesting conversation. If the walk continues into the late afternoon—as it will if the leader has an ounce of sporting instinct—he must find a suitable place for tea at exactly the right time, and finally march his party down to their train with not more than five minutes to wait.

Many walkers when guiding a party prefer to stick to familiar routes, and so lessen some of the difficulties; but, if this plan is safer, it misses some of the most exciting moments of walking in company. There is nothing in life quite like guiding a company

against time across unknown or dimly remembered country. With a map it is stimulating enough ; but it is perhaps even more fun with Walker Miles. For the leader feels that not only himself but also Walker Miles is on his trial ; he has to justify to the company not only his own intelligence, but also that of his master. And he knows that tracks may have been changed or landmarks moved, and that a passage is just coming in the text which requires careful attention to make certain of the master's meaning, He turns the critical corner at the dividing of the ways, and has to decide instantly and without hesitation on the right route. He chooses one, and looks ahead to the next point in the text which marks a decisive point—a fork in the road, or a stile in the hedge. Time passes and the track continues, every yard more fatal if the last turn was wrong. And then in a sudden glory the track forks or the stile appears ; the master is justified ; and with something of the feeling of Wellington when Blucher appeared, or Euclid when the forty-seventh proposition worked out, he brushes the doubt

and anxiety of the past from his mind, and hurls himself joyously on the next problem.

It would be untruthful and ungrateful to close an account of walking in company on a note of criticism or discontent. Really, the difficulties can easily be exaggerated: the disasters are mostly might-have-beens, which as a matter of fact were not. Only at certain points, and those mostly in the earlier stages, is it really anxious work. As the day wears on doubts and difficulties diminish: the party instinctively settles down to unanimity and good fellowship: the amateur geographer becomes less dogmatic, the conversationalist less brilliant: differences wear off, and the company is linked together by the influences of motion and their surroundings. When they started they were discrepant units of humanity, with every element that could divide and distract them hypertrophied by civilisation: now they have won their way back to the simpler and commoner things that unite. They have eaten in common the sacramental sandwich: they have trodden

together twenty miles of their mother earth: and the gorse of Ranmore Common, or the autumn beechwoods of Buckinghamshire shall burn in their memory as a token of good fellowship.

Wherefore, O companions, that I may close as I began, let me with my last words put it on record that I bear no malice. There may have been little difficulties at times: when one of you was guiding, I may have offered irritating suggestions and comments: when I was guiding, I may have been inaccurate, heedless, impatient of criticism. But I do not think that these difficulties play much part in our joint stock of memories. What we remember is not the quarrels by the way, but the way itself —that steep run down Muckish and homeward tramp to the strain of John Brown, that April evening on the Longmynd, that wonderful chequered day of sun and cloud on the Gable, that hot afternoon pull over Watendlath, that moment on Moel Hebog when Snowdon burst into view (and the wall into which we crashed at the bottom),

the ridge from the White Horse down to Lambourn, where we talked biology, those Whitsun walks along the back of the world, called the South Downs, those damp lunches on Bookham Common, that clear winter day in Buckinghamshire, and at all seasons and under every sky Leith Hill. Times and places and persons—they are linked together by an imperishable bond: and my last memories are not of bickerings and failures, but of toleration, good-will, and sympathy which lightened the way and sent the miles spinning backward beneath the tread of our feet.

But why use the past tense only? We are not yet old or decrepit, the earth is still firm under us, the wind yet blows, and there is a sun (we are told) still shining in the sky. In part for amusement, but in part as a tribute to our common memories of walking, I have twined these inadequate words. But there is a better thing we can do; let us put on our boots and take our sticks and go forth upon the road once more. There are several new tracks which I am anxious to show you.

EPILOGUE

And after all (the readers cry)
What is your great conclusion?
That walks are good, and hills are high,
Et cetera, in profusion.
We bore the burden of your prose
Through all its painful stages,
Are platitudes as trite as those
To be our only wages?

Yes, reader; there is nothing new,
Nothing the least exciting.
One truth, one only I pursue
In all this waste of writing—
Old as the hills on which we stood,
Trite as our path descending,
That walks are good, that walks are good—
I ask no better ending.

You seek for novel theories
The world without to wisen,
To open other people's eyes
And broaden their horizon;

And so you set but little store
By works (like this) which lead to
What some one else has said before
And every one agreed to.

Yet, you must own, the world proceeds
Mainly by commonplaces,
With platitude to serve its needs,
Banality its basis.
It takes its customary roll
Around the same old axis,
And whispers to the fretting soul
'Οὐ γνῶσις ἀλλὰ πρᾶξις.'

Your theories so vast and vain,
What are they all but vapour
Which the cold workings of the brain
Precipitate on paper?
Your learning (if indeed you learn)
Is but a puny fraction
Of that sure knowledge that men earn
Who set their limbs in action.

If you would know that walks are good
Put intellect behind you;
Go, mount the hill and thrid the wood,
Let sun and shade enwind you.
The flimsy phantoms of your brains
Are blown away in tatters;
One platitude alone remains—
The only one which matters.

EPILOGUE

Once you have grasped these simple facts
There needs no further talking
(A futile process, which reacts
Injuriously on walking),
So you can take your stick and start,
A sadder man, but wiser;
And I can wish you, as we part,
Farewell and Gute Reise.

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