

the language of the gutter, for that is not the English apt to prevail as a standard. It is true that upon occasion certain expressions and modes of pronunciation have spread from one social class to another, frequently from a higher to a lower, at times from a lower to a higher. The broad *a* sound in such words as *past* and *half*, now considered ultra-refined by many, is a case in point, for in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth it was, as a dictionary of the time puts it, "the sound used by the vulgar but not the polite and learned world." But these occasional cross currents do not justify an acceptance of wholly uncultivated speech as a norm. By virtue of the historical principle upon which the liberal grammarians proceed, they are still committed to the speech of the people who direct the affairs of the community as a standard. However, since the English speaking countries are democratic in character, the limitation of the speech standard to the narrowest top layer of the social order is also precluded.

Another aspect of linguistic liberalism which frequently troubles the layman is fear that the lack of ironclad rules will lead to eventual disintegration. Again history shows such fears to be unfounded. It has been pointed out that rules for the speaking of correct English date chiefly from the beginning of the eighteenth century. They have existed only 200 years of the 1500 since English was first spoken in the British Isles. Accordingly, one is inclined to feel that these rules have had relatively little effect in either hindering or accelerating the main trends of development.

Moreover, we can never be too sure as to just what is meant by disintegration of a language, which innovations are bad and which are good. As one eminent linguist has written, "To the conservative grammarian all change is decay. Although he knows well that an old house often has to be torn down in part or as a whole in order that it may be rebuilt to suit modern conditions, he

never sees the constructive forces at work in the destruction of old grammatical forms. He is fond of mourning over the loss of the subjunctive and the present slovenly use of the indicative. He hasn't the slightest insight into the fine constructive work of the last centuries in rebuilding the subjunctive."

At present the greatest need confronting those entrusted with the teaching of our language in the schools is for new textbooks which describe accurately the language of those now carrying on the affairs of the English-speaking people, grammars which record the forms and syntax of present-day American English. A most significant beginning in this direction has been made by the National Council of Teachers of English which, in November, 1932, sponsored the publication of *Current English Usage*. The volume is in reality a continuation of the survey begun by Professors Leonard and Moffet, which has for its purpose a codification of the usages of present day English.

We can only hope that this forward-looking work will serve as an impetus to others, that the fine scholarship and the scientific zeal which is so clearly reflected here will find their way into the dozens of texts adapted to classroom use which must be written in the next five or six years.

ALBERT H. MARCKWARDT

YOUTH TO SAVE THE DAY

ON a recent trip west of Chicago, on a Burlington train a well dressed gentleman across the aisle, on learning that I was engaged in educational work, asked why high school and college students were so disloyal and "red." I asked how many. "All," he said. Then I asked how he knew it. Well, he knew it. "Magazines say so and nobody denies it."

This talk was given over the NBC network as one in the series on "Our American Schools."

Of course, I left him in an angry mood. He couldn't understand where I had been living to honestly defend the conduct of the youth of today. That and other offhand dishonest criticisms on young people make me feel that it is about time we call the hand of these unwise critics.

Why charge all youth with questionable loyalty because a few have lost their poise, and because now and then one pattern after older people who desire to get into the limelight by expressing radical views? Of course, I disapprove of unbridled license, and I disapprove of any form of disloyalty. But there is so little of it comparatively speaking that it is most unfair to let it count against young people as a class. Most of these over-radical young people have been driven or dragged into that state of mind.

They have been driven into it by unjust criticism. They have been dragged into it by disgruntled politicians who will break if they can't make. They have been dragged into it by older people who have, as a result of the depression, lost confidence in our government and who continually growl about the terrible situation, especially as they talk with young people. Yes, a few students are off color. But oh, so few, as compared with their elders.

When I see all these forces at work, I just wonder that there are not ten times more young people in the over-radical class. The reason is plain, however. Young people are leveler in the present emergency than the shell-shocked gray-haired group. The one thing that actually saves civilization at a time like this is that nature seldom fails to provide youth with a hopeful outlook. Hope ought to last as long as the sense of seeing or hearing. It often does carry over fairly well. But just as some lose their eyesight or their hearing, others may lose the sense of hope. The one with gray hair who does retain the courage of early life is worth much more to the

nation in a crisis, because of his background, than even the young man. Young men know this. That is why the gray growler sometimes turns the minds of the young into wrong channels. Why not say that these older people are red?

As you know, a boy by the name of Leland Monasmith of South Dakota recently won first place in the national health contest. Some may think him disloyal simply because he is inquisitive about the government's part in affairs. He wishes to discover what besides the drought is the cause of the misery in his own state. He gives his mind healthy exercise as well as his body. He had no sooner been declared health champion of the United States than a friend of a cigarette company proposed that he allow the company to use his name. It would be easy to say that he smoked a certain cigarette. Here was a chance to get rich quick. Why should he not do so? Congressmen, Senators and noted women have accepted tempting offers of that kind.

What grown-up would resist the temptation? But this is just another instance to show the real strength of youth. He turned the offer down. He would try to get along in some other way. His ideals, nurtured by the home and cultivated by the school, have not become contaminated with the selfish and careless outside. It is a splendid thing to have physical health, but this lad represents the best in the young people of the day in moral health as well. Yet you can no more stop him from inquiring about causes of conditions than you can buy him off with cigarette funds. That is true of the great body of youth, not only in this pioneer country but throughout the nation. You could no more curb the minds of the students of my own Nebraska University or of the high schools of that state, than you could chain the tongue of United States Senator George W. Norris.

My own observation shows that young people in every state average up better than

their elders in the present crisis, as in the depression of the seventies did I see the depressions of the seventies did I see the young people come forward and save the day. Let me ask how the younger of today compare with the older in courage and hope? How, in sincerity of purpose? What does your older group see ahead? What do these young people see ahead? Which are more ready to take hold and to do?

I am often amazed at the courage exhibited by young men in the present crisis. Last week a taxi driver who was taking me to the NEA headquarters told me of his failure to find a position after having completed his education for the doctor's degree. He had worked his way through college. Finding nothing else to do, he is now driving a taxi. His wife is in a hospital. He cares for his four-year-old daughter at night and leaves her in a nursery during the day. He tries to see his wife once a day. Some days he makes a few dollars and others he clears less than one dollar. He speaks five languages fluently. He reads both Latin and Greek. He shows himself in conversation to be refined and scholarly.

I expressed sympathy. "Yes," he said, "it is tough, but I feel sure that if I can pull through the winter and care for my wife and little girl I will get something next spring. I am no worse off than a lot of others. I am not whining. As I see it, all we need is to keep a stiff upper lip for a while. I have a taxi job. Some don't even have that. I think we will soon be all right." He stopped a moment at the entrance to the building to finish his story, but seeing a chance to pick up a passenger on the other side of the street he tooted his horn and hurried on saying, "Good luck to you. Yes, we will be all right before long."

Don't charge the whole student body with being "red" just because a few young men in a college fail to distinguish between academic freedom and unbridled license. Show confidence in the larger group of students

and save the others through them. Let the young men fight their own crooked-necked associates. They know how to do it.

The young are entitled to the rights that the rest of us were entitled to when we were young—the chance for getting an education and the chance to earn a living. We owe them these advantages just as our parents owed them to us. In order to meet these obligations, we may have to make even greater sacrifices than our parents made for us. Always before this it was possible to pick up something to do, almost any day. Such opportunities can only come again by making fundamental adjustments. Young people have keener minds than the worn-out group. They are quicker to see the right adjustments to be made and quicker to make them. But there are a few things which we can see and do. We can see the need of sharing our jobs with them by means of shorter hours. We may need even before seventy to turn our own positions over to them.

Why is it that the proposal for a thirty-hour week is in general favor with fair-minded citizens? Because such a spread of employment would help to equalize the opportunity of young people with that of their elders. Why does the President's plan of pensioning the aged meet with such general favor? Because if the allowance is high enough and if the retiring age is low enough such a law would not only care for the aged but it would take a heavy financial burden off the shoulders of the young and it would enlarge the opportunity for younger people to secure positions. Can you think of anything else in the whole world that means more to the future of young people than a chance to earn a living?

I have shown that young people are not bad as a whole, that they average up better than their elders, and that they are more patient than we would be under similar circumstances. I have called attention to some of their rights, and to the sacrifices we

ought to make in their behalf. I mean this to be in defense of honest thinking on the part of high school and college students. I mean it to be a plea for a square deal for our young men and women. In my judgment the wise course would be for the older group to unite under the leadership of the younger. We have ourselves lost out, perhaps because of conditions as well as age. Why not admit it? Let youth have the right of way.

My advice, young men and women, is that you awake to the necessity of moving forward at once, that you overlook unjust criticism, that you disregard the radical advice to tear down and destroy, that you give yourselves over to constructive thinking and to thoughtful building. Stay in school or study at home while out of work, work out a plan of self-improvement as Benjamin Franklin did when he was young and when times were hard, show an interest in parks and playgrounds and adult education and engage in whatever work you can get at present. Be active in thinking out courses of action for our people. Such a line of action coupled with courage and hope will save the day.

Now to you, Mr. Growler, if you are still listening in: Do you not wish to admit that it is again up to youth to save the nation? Then why stand all crumpled up in the way?

J. W. CRABTREE

BEARD'S OPINION OF HEARST

In the course of the past fifty years I have talked with Presidents of the United States, Senators, Justices of the Supreme Court, Members of the House of Representatives, Governors, Mayors, bankers, editors, college presidents (including Charles W. Eliot), leading men of science, Nobel prize winners in science and letters, and I have never found one single person who for talents and character commands the re-

spect of the American people, who has not agreed with me that William Randolph Hearst has pandered to depraved tastes and has been an enemy of everything that is noblest and best in the American tradition. Alfred Smith—a true friend of public education—added to his many deserved laurels when before a cheering multitude in New York City he defied Mr. Hearst. The answer of the people of New York was final and conclusive. There is not a cesspool of vice and crime which Hearst has not raked and exploited for money-making purposes. No persons with intellectual honesty or moral integrity will touch him with a ten-foot pole for any purpose or to gain any end. Unless those who represent American scholarship, science, and the right of a free people to discuss public questions freely, stand together against his insidious influence, he will assassinate them individually by every method known to his yellow press. Only cowards can be intimidated by Hearst.

—CHARLES A. BEARD.

Certain forms of government are better calculated than others to protect individuals in the free exercise of their natural rights, and are at the same time themselves better guarded against degeneracy, yet experience has shown that even under the best forms, those entrusted with power have, in time, and by slow operations, perverted it into tyranny The spirit of resistance to government is so valuable on certain occasions that I wish it to be always kept alive. It will often be exercised when wrong, but better so than not to be exercised at all.—THOMAS JEFFERSON.

If there be a country where knowledge cannot be diffused without perils of mob law and statute law; where speech is not free; where the postoffice is violated . . . that country is, in all these respects, not civil but barbarous.—RALPH WALDO EMERSON.