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Lecture delivered before the students of the
American high school for girls on 3^d Jan. 1915.

Dear friends!

It is a great pleasure for me, to meet you here
to night and have a talk about some interesting
questions.

For this happy circumstance I am indebted and
thankfull to the kind regards of (the Christian Associ-
ation). I must sincerely confess, that I consider this
institution as one of the most usefull among others,
for the education of the youth, in our country. So,
I praise highly the moral value of it's aims; I am
only sorry to say, that the actual sad circumstances
have not been so much favourable to encourage the
young generation of all communities residing here to
unite their efforts in order to realise much more quickly
and surely the moral ideal of the christian association
by spreading it's good principles. But I hope this desidera-
tum will be realised after a while. I had, sometime ago,
the honor and pleasure of having a talk with some of
it's proeminent members, and I came to an agreement
with them, on the most important and essential principles
which started this ~~movement~~ educational, and moral
movement.

Before beginning, I must congratulate you for the
new year, and express on this good occasion, my best
wishes for you all, and for our beloved Country.

The down-fall of this year, has marked out the hori-
zon a terrible point of interrogation, which stands

out before our alarmed imagination as a fearful sphinx demanding an answer. It seems to say: What it will be the result of all this?... Are you pessimistic or optimistic on account of humanity?....

I should like to have the supernatural intuition of a prophet, or the mysterious science and the extraordinary skill of an astrologer to be able to tell you surely what Future will bring forward, and what will be it's influence on human morality.

Of course I can't have such a claim!...

Well!... That is the only reason why I had yesterday a confidential interview with my own mind, something as a colloquium with my own self. I consulted my intimate sense ~~of~~ on some leading questions; because some of my best friends, have found, my moral idealism altogether wrong, and even ridiculous before the actual events. They explained to me the causes of the (Bankruptcy of idealism).

I could not very much believe in it, and I made up my mind to hold still higher my own principles. But at the same time I found myself really, in the awful situation, in the false position of a banker, just after a great financial crisis, who finds himself obliged to clear up his account in order to know surely how much solid gold will remain in his when he will throw out of it the ~~entire~~ fictive paper-money which has no more value in the market.

I found myself really in such an extraordinary critical situation. Even I thought, it would be convenient to make up, a conventional philosophie a (philosophie de circonstance),

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Kütüphanesi Arşivi
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because I believe it is much better to have such a philosophy, than to have none at all; just as an unhappy banker ruined by his proper speculations, is obliged to have something to do and to live.

So I tried to built up a creed, and secure the quietness of my mind, by rising it above the vicissitudes of the common course of the daily life.

I began to examine first, as much as carefully possible, some abstract notions, I had acquired long ago, like civilisation, humanity, developement and so forth. I was keeping them in my mind, just like a man keeps some funds in his

After having made an analysis of this abstract notions and tried hard to harmonize my feelings with my ideas, I was led, by such an investigation to some ~~fixed~~ positive opinions again, but by a very discursive way.

It seemed to me before all, that one of the most striking features of human destiny is developement; an integral and full developement, following a line of activity and conduct which brings us near and nearer to a goal of perfection, that is, what we call civilisation.

We suppose — and we rightly do so — that when rising to a higher form of civilisation, we shall have a nobler type of life both individual and social. we believe that it will be possible to realise some of the most fascinating aspirations after which we are yearning without any hope for an immediate satisfaction.

I do not know, if you all agree with me, and consider the same question from the same point of view! But this is actually my frank opinion on the matter.

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I don't know if you all agree with me, and consider the same question from the same point of view. But this is actually my frank opinion on the matter.

X Well!... Where this aspirations come from?... It is worth while to think about it. ~~Have~~^{Can} we ~~cast a glance~~^{even} ~~a kind of~~ unconsciously ~~glance~~ on our capacity of evolution?...

Have we, something as a mysterious intuition ^(throwing a light) on our future perfectibility? A power of foreshadowing today what ~~forcibly~~, and unconsciously we shall be able, or forcibly we shall be obliged to accomplish tomorrow?...

If not, how then, we are anticipating — in such a sentimental way — the future probabilities, which are certainly beyond

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Kütüphanesi Arşivi
No 273.500.1

the walls of our actual life?...

That is a question!.. And, I believe, a very serious one, because it is intimately connected with our belief in a better life in the future; not in this world only, but in a more perfect one also!...

This question ^{demands} ~~has~~ an answer.

I can only give a single and a simple one:

Our spirit, is the most certain reality; we can't deny it; it exists! the soul life is ^{evidently} proved, and manifested by it's own aspirations. So I say: We have such aspirations, just as a tree has a tendency to grow up seeking the light of the sun. Our soul is constantly yearning after an ideal, just as a flower is seeking light. Our intelligence, is giving ^{perhaps} a form to this ideal, after the ~~degree of~~ ^{its own} conception we

that is - I suppose - why, ^{my} we can ^{actually get of it.} by and by realise our aspirations as much

as their conditions can fall within the reach of our control and power. We can not conceive the impossible; and if our conceptions are sound, they are more or less realisable.

Humanity goes on step by step on

that line, realising by and by its legitimate conceptions; and this line of progress, in the past, is the history of human civilisation; in the future it is the orbit of its possible evolution.

But let us examine furthermore what we understand by this well known word of (civilisation), which comprehends and implies, in its widest sense all the most important conditions of human perfectibility. the meaning of the word is not very clear indeed! I am sure, anybody is not responsible for it. But every man ought to be responsible for its misinterpretation; because his approbation or disapprobation of human conduct in general, depends strictly on the meaning he draws out of this word.

Yet It is not very easy to ~~define it~~ ^{give a correct}

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Kütüphanesi Arşivi
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and satisfactory definition for it.

After my opinions expressed just ~~how~~ ^{now} ~~about~~, civilisation means, the natural growth, and the spontaneous tendency of the human mind towards an indefinite perfection, which an integral progress can realise it's principal steps. This accomplishment is only possible by a mutual respect of all legitimate and sound aspirations, creeds, rights and interests of human beings; in order to live in a better understanding, in a greater happiness, and satisfy plainly ~~a~~ not our material needs only, but also our spiritual aspirations.

That is precisely, what I can understand by civilisation. If really my interpretation is not wrong, then it is true that every counter-tendency, every force or factor capable of avoiding, or even attenuating the human progress towards this ideal goal, must be considered as a ^{cause of} retrogradation, as a calamity, as a sin.

(9) (8) ^{or at least a hegelian} Many people, would suppose, I am a platonician, ~~thinker~~, and would say:
^{neither} ~~not~~ We are before all living bodies, and independent spirits, nor ghosts; we have some material needs which come first. We must beforehand, satisfy them, more or less, in some way, for the conservation of our own self. If we neglect them altogether we die!... As there is always an essential antagonism between such capital and vital interests, competition is a fatal necessity, and (struggle for life), is the rule and principle; ~~of it~~ because our own world is quite limited, and there is no room for all!))

This opinion sums up - as you all know - the teachings of Malthus and Darwin and contains their fundamental principles.

These well known principles are quite true; but quite insufficient too. We are certainly living bodies, and not aerolites. We are living bodies but not just as a palm tree, or even as a crocodile. Surely we have some important material needs which ought to be satisfied first, unless we die. But we

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Kütüphane Arşivi
No 276.80001

are men, not because we are growing up, or eating and digesting; we are men because we have some aspirations, and we are as much as superior, as our aspirations are high and noble; if even our digestion is not satisfactory. *too much*

So in the consideration of our own dignity and destiny we must not confine our attention to the narrow limits of the common conditions of animal life; and above all to make illegitimate and wrong generalizations.

One of the greatest sins of our time was such an intellectual aberration. We considered as a universal truth, a biological principle which is only true within the realm of animal Kingdom. We generalized it.

Such a biological principle can not ~~not~~ explain the genesis of sympathy and love in the human heart; though sympathy, is the most important, and living factor of a social life. But it can't explain even the solidarity born from an evolutive integration of social organism, and the equilibrium of interests which is the natural outcome of it. It does not explain in a rational manner, how the competition

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between the ~~aggressive~~ individuals becomes solidarity, and establishes equilibrium which is the foundation stone of social life. Certainly there are hypothesis on that subject, but they are not very much convincing. It is still difficult to find the proper link which binds together the egotistic hypothesis, and the utilitarian hypothesis.

This later one, ~~which~~ is undoubtedly higher than the other, because it is much more ^{mor}~~moral~~, and because ~~it may~~ - as a principle of conduct - it may oblige us to unite our individual efforts, to reach an end, if we suppose it profitable for all. But does not go farther. It may be reduced, to the well known formula condensed in this three words: (intérêt bien entendu)!...

this formula, can explain only the economic side, and the physiological nature of our social life, but not our affectional life, our moral activity, our sympathy which plays the greater role in the genesis of true civilisation. We appreciate always the degree of civilisation, by the standard of sympathetic feelings

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Kütüphanesi Arşivi
No LT3.544.1

manifested either by individuals or by societies. We know that whenever and wherever civilisation existed, sympathetic feelings existed. For instance: (We find traces — says the late professor Gorn-pertz, speaking of an old confessional (book of the dead), an egyptian book — We find traces of a refinement of moral feeling in an uncommon and partly in a surprising degree. The following quotations will illustrate this point:

I have not oppressed the widow.

I have not withdrawn the milk from the mouth of the suckling.

I have not made the poor more poorer.

I have not made the journeyman work beyond his contracted time.

I was not negligent; I was not idle.

I have not traduced the slave to his employer.

I have not made any man's tears to flow.

Moreover the ethical teaching which shines between the lines of this confessional, enjoined acts of positive benevolence, as much as the avoidance of wrong-doing. Like these for instance:

I have spread the canopy of joy everywhere.

I have fed the hungry; given drink to the

thirsty; clothed the naked; I have provided a boat for the retarded voyager.) and so forth.

We ^{all} admire, - I am sure - these confession of far-reaching moral significance.

Well!... Don't you see in these noble sentiments and deeds, the fundamental principles (both theoretical and practical) of this humane philosophy called by Adam Smith, (Philosophy of sympathy)?

Don't you acknowledge - at the same time - that even thousands and thousands years ago, sympathy was considered as the essential principle of moral civilisation?... Have we another standard now?... Can we appreciate the real moral value of human acts by the standard of utilitarianism only?...

This sympathy or love - Call it whatever you like! - is a moral factor indispensable to stand up for a civilisation worthy of the name; because sympathy is the (primum mobile) of every moral act; it exerts an extraordinary influence over the human soul by rendering it capable of sacrifice.

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TDV İSAM
Kütüphanesi Arşivi
No 27680001

Now, can we explain really in a plausible manner the genesis and evolution, the birth and the growth of this important moral factor by the principle of (Struggle for life) only?...

I tried hard, but I could n't!... I could n't & simply because this principle in its most comprehensive explanation can't go beyond egotistic facts of self-conservation. Even utilitarianisme can't go beyond solidarity and equilibrium. Equilibrium is life; but sympathy is far more than that: it is love! Even as a thought or sentiment. Every true religion is founded on this principle, which constitutes it's main power. In my opinion, there is no religion without love; there is no love without sympathy. If you see a man who has a great amount of sympathy for human beings, and is at the same time, an atheist, believe me, he is only an unconscious believer; he is easily convertible!...

Well, when I reached just this point in my reasoning peregrinations, I stopped for a little while, and looked, once more again, at the horizon of the civilised world. I remembered (the book of the dead); I was ashamed; but I understood quite well what really the divine Plato meant

(13) by (μὲν οὖν καὶ οὐκ οὐκ) the greatest harmony.
(14) I understood quite well, that modern civilisation, uncomparably superior to the antiquity by its wonderfull industrial developpement, could not realise this greatest harmony! I acknowledged, that nations are living bodies much better organized than before, but be-
having still now, just like those fearfull megatheriums, of the carbonic ages, to destroy each other.

Then pessimism filled my heart, like a fog darkening the light of hope, within myself. I heard at the same time, the ~~inner~~ voice of my reason, saying to me, in very sarcastic tone:

(Oh you!... poor stupide philosopher!... Do you still believe in books?... ~~What~~ What is the use of making quotations from this very old and obsolete Confessional (book of the dead)?... Don't you see the holy gospels beneeth your feet, before your eyes?... Don't you know that modern civilisation has written the decalogues of Moses, in golden letters on the tablets of his moral code?... Do open, please, any educational book you like, and you will see theses moral principles in the first pages of all them. Yet, there is a a fearfull and shamefull uncongruity between

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Kütüphanesi Arşivi
No: 270.80001

the creeds and deeds of modern civilised nations; because the creeds represent the ideal felicity, and the deeds are the result of the actual, real, and vital necessity. So, by quoting some good instances, from an old egyptian book, you are the victim of a very ordinary and common delusion; the ~~delusion~~ intellectual delusion produced by the historic perspective of facts. Dont you remember, the reigning and the rule of Pharaoh?.. Dont you know that this majestic pyramides were build up by innumerable serfs, and that ~~more~~ more than two hundred thousands of them died miserably, under terrible conditions of hard work, and under a killing sun?...

Dont believe in words, in books, in the history. This terrible abyss between creeds and deeds, will always exist; because the fundamental interest of life, ~~it~~ does not consist in philosophical speculations, and ~~poetic~~ romantic sentimentality. (To be or not to be; that is the question!) In a critical moment set aside, your book, and chose at once between the ~~two~~ two. there is no way for a third possibility!))

After this teachings of my reason, my soul was really in a very painfull situation;

I thought It was empoisoned!.. Moreover, this teachings threw a light upon my conscience, and I understood quite clearly what Leo - Tolstoi meant by (la grande hypocrisie).

I was cured from my disease of pessimism but, I lost my faith also, I became skeptic. But, still, I could n't help it, I was reasoning: (An Ideal, - I said - What is it good for?... if really every thing will be at last destroyed by our proper hands, or vanished by the time, there is a fatality; there is a force against which our will is miserable, powerless. Philosophy is useless, even dangerous, because it feeds our soul by impossible lies, and systematic wrong ideas. Let us set aside all philosophy. Let us set aside also all activity and struggling. the greatest truth is death. We can not escape it by any means. We can not command the unknowable power, whiche makes and destroys everything, at the same time. Will not the glorious ~~sun~~ and majestic sun the source of life and energy, die after a while? What it will become of our civilisation, and our humanity then?... So the best and truest philosophy is (μνημόσυλον) memento mori. the best thing to do is contemplation. And here, I heard the voice of John Chrysostom.

(18) (18) Vanitas, vanitatem omnia vanitas.

But again the imperative voice of my reason said to me:

‘Lo! you are in a wrong way,’ take care of you; you will at once loose yourself in the unbounded desert of nihilisme; which waist and paralyse altogether your vital energies; and kill your soul, with its fascinating mirage-like philosophy. Dont approach to your thirsty lipps this terrible cup of mysticism; you will never more awaken. Read if you are too much tired, some beautifull quatrains of Omar Khayyam; but dont try to find in them any practical principle for life guidance. Do your duty regularly; go on your right way until death comes to stop your activity. And if you have still a sparkle of belief to throw light on your conscience, you will certainly find in yourself the ever twinkling star of hope which will guide your paths all along the right way of salvation. the way of life and activity.

You are looking at the attitude of the civilised world engaged in a terrible war of extermination, and you are becoming much more skeptic and faithless than you were ^{before}, on account of human morality and civilisation; but do not be neither alarmed, nor hopeless for that. Be sure, that humanity is, just now destroying by guns, what she had build up ^(obstinately but wrongly) since so many centuries. Human society, is still now ^a paganist, she believes in the (God of Might), and worships it. She had build up a ^{gigantic} ~~enormous~~ temple for this (Moloch), and she is destroying it now. Look at the history of her life and growth, and you will see that she had ^{always} spend such a great energie and power to correct her wrongdoings.

This is not, as you suppose perhaps, ~~an~~ ^{an} extraordinary event, but an ordinary fact in the biography of humanity. When evil, becomes an institution, and ^{grows so much as to be} ~~a~~ ^{an allmighty} factor in social and political life, ~~and~~ it can not stand up, it destroys itself; because evil, is not normal. That is what they call the (immanent Justice).

Do not be alarmed!.. Be sure that Humanity is beginning a (new era). Remember the words of (Goethe) before ^{the} terrible (bloodshed of the (French Revolution)); and think eagerly that such a difficult change ^{for progress} requires a great sacrifice of blood, money and time.

If you believe in this very principle that: (evil is not a normal factor in Nature), you can not be any thing else ^{but} ~~then~~ an optimist. Go on your right way; do your duty! Fight, if fighting is the rule of life, but fight against evil,

and barbarism; be sure that your destiny, is to progress,
and to realise the legitimate and ^{humane} ~~morale~~ aspirations of
your soul, who is yearning after moral, and mental
perfection.

The use of this range of colors is
symbol of the range of human emotions
delivered the 3 Jan. 1915

Y.M.C.A.

delivered in 1915 during the war,
on the self destructibility of the evil.

Lecture about Y.M.C.A.

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TDV İSAM
Kütüphanesi Arşivi
No 2768443

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure for me, to meet you here today, and have a talk with you. For this happy circumstance I am indebted ~~and~~ thankful to the kind regards of (the Christian students association). I must sincerely confess, that I consider this institution as one of the most useful among others for the education of the youth in our country. So I praise highly the moral value of its aims. ^{I am only sorry to say that the actual}
^{circumstances} But Before all, I must congratulate you for the new year, and express, on this good occasion my best wishes for you all, and for our beloved country.

The down-fall of this year, has marked out the horizon a terrible point of interrogation, which stands ~~at~~

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TDV ISAM
Kütüphanesi Arşivi
No 276.844.3

~~forth~~ before our alarmed imagination as a fearful Sphinx demanding an answer: ^{it seems to say:} What it will be the result ^{of all this?}. Are you pessimistic or optimistic ~~I~~ on account of humanity?

I should like to have the supernatural intuition of a prophet, or the mysterious ^{science} ~~skill~~ and the extraordinary ^{skill} ~~science~~ of an astrologer, to be able to tell what future will bring forward, and what will be ^{its influence on human morality.}

Of course I can't have such a claim.

That is the only reason why I had, yesterday a confidential interview with my own mind; something as a colloquium with my own self, ~~and listen to the speech of my intimate sens, for a moment.~~ ^{I consulted my intimate sens on some leading questions.}

Because some of my friends, have found

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TDV İSAM
Kütüphanesi Arşivi
No 278844.3

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TDV ISAM
Kütüphaneleri Arşivi
No 278544.3

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It seemed to me, before all, that one of the most striking features of human destiny is developpement; An integral and full developpement following a line of activity and conduct which brings us near and nearer to a goal of perfection; that is what we call civilisation.

We suppose - and we rightly ^{do so -} ~~suppose~~ that when rising to a higher form of civilisation, we shall have a nobler type of life both individual and social.