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Remarks at a dinner in honor of William James, held on January 18 1910. Contains some autobiographical remarks on his first contacts with James.

A WORD OF GREETING TO WILLIAM JAMES.<sup>1</sup>

MY word of greeting to our host ought to be delivered *ex tempore*. If I cannot meet the requirement of the occasion in this respect, one sufficient reason for my failure is the difficulty of separating out, in my mind, and in my speech, the things that it is possible to say from amidst the great mass of the things which flock to my mind at such a time. My relations to our host have lasted so long, — have been so manifold, — that I can select only with difficulty. What he has meant to me has been of such intimate importance in my own personal life that it is especially hard to judge what part of my own account of him will appeal to others with any of the deeper meaning that this account inevitably has for me.

Yet there is one matter to which I may at once refer, — a matter that has been indeed momentous for my own private fortunes, but that is also known and interesting to all of us alike. Nothing is more characteristic of Professor James's work as a teacher and as a thinker than is his chivalrous fondness for fair play in the warfare and in the cooperation of ideas and of ideals. We all of us profess to love truth. But one of James's especial offices in the service of truth has been the love and protection and encouragement of the truth-seekers. He has done much more than this for the cause of truth; but this at least he has always done. He has lately warned us much against thinking of truth as a mere abstraction. And indeed it has always been his especial gift to see truth incarnate, — embodied in the truth-seekers, and to show his own love of truth by listening with appreciation, and by helping the cause of fair play, whenever he found somebody earnestly toiling or suffering or hoping in the pursuit of any genuine ideal of truth. How many eager seekers, neglected by the world, — men who fought on the side of unpopular causes, have come to him for sympathy, and have found it, — not in the form of any easy acceptance of their own opinions, — but in the form of a sympathy that has

<sup>1</sup> A dinner was held at the house of Prof. James on Jan. 18, to celebrate the completion of his portrait, and the presentation of it to the University. The portrait was subscribed, on the occasion of Prof. James's retirement, by the members of the Division and the Visiting Committee on Philosophy as a symbol of the affection and esteem of his colleagues. The following were present at the dinner:

Specially invited guests: Pres. Lowell, Pres. Eliot, Mr. H. L. Higginson. Members of the Visiting Committee: Messrs. R. C. Robbins, G. B. Dorr, R. C. Cabot, R. H. Dana, W. R. Warren, J. Lee, and the Rev. G. A. Gordon. Members of the Division of Philosophy: Professors James, Palmer, Münsterberg, Royce, Peabody, Santayana, Holt, Yerkes, Woods, Perry, and Dr. Fuller. Informal remarks were made by Prof. Palmer, who represented the subscribers, by Pres. Eliot and Prof. Royce, who spoke as Prof. James's associates throughout his career, by Pres. Lowell, who represented the University and received the portrait in its behalf, and by Prof. James. The portrait was painted by Miss Ellen Emmett, of New York, and is to hang in the Faculty Room, University Hall.

sustained them in the freedom of their faith and in the sincerity of their life, because he told them that if the spirit of earnest endeavor was in them, and if some real light had come to their souls, it was better to offer what they had, and to fight for their own best, than to accept tamely the restraints of this or of that transient form of present-day orthodoxy. Other men talk of liberty of thought; but few men have done more to secure liberty of thought for men who were in need of fair play and of a reasonable hearing than James has done.

Now I suppose that it is altogether, or almost altogether because of James's chivalry of soul that I myself first obtained that opportunity in life which results in my being here with you at all. In speaking of my personal relation to him, I therefore have to dwell upon a matter that in this respect does indeed tend to characterize him. My real acquaintance with our host began one summer day in 1877 when I first visited him in the house on Quincy St., and was permitted to pour out my soul to somebody who really seemed to believe that a young man might rightfully devote his life to philosophy if he chose. I was then a student at the Johns Hopkins University. The opportunities for a lifework in philosophy in this country were few. Most of my friends and advisers had long been telling me to let the subject alone. Perhaps, so far as I was concerned, their advice was sound; but in any case I was so far incapable of accepting that advice. Yet if somebody had not been ready to tell me that I had a right to work for truth in my own way; I should ere long have been quite discouraged. I do not know what I then could have done. James found me at once — made out what my essential interests were at our first interview, accepted me, with all my imperfections, as one of those many souls who ought to be able to find themselves in their own way, gave a patient and willing ear to just my variety of philosophical experience, and used his influence from that time on, not to win me as a follower, but to give me my chance. It was upon his responsibility that I was later led to get my first opportunities here at Harvard. Whatever I am is in that sense due to him.

There are a great many people living who could give almost this very account of their own careers. My own case is but one of a multitude. No other philosopher in our country compares with James, I think, in his effectiveness as a man who has helped active and restless minds not only to win their own spiritual freedom, but to express their ideals in their own way.

Sometimes critical people have expressed this by saying that James has always been too fond of cranks, and that the cranks have loved him. Well, I am one of James's cranks. He was good to me, and I love him. The result of my own early contact with James was to make me for years

very much his disciple. I am still in large part under his spell. If I contend with him sometimes, I suppose that it is he also who through his own free spirit has in great measure taught me this liberty. I know that for years I used to tremble at the thought that James might perhaps some day find reason to put me in my place by some one of those wonderful, lightning-like epigrams wherewith he was and is always able to characterize those opponents whose worldly position is such as to make them no longer in danger of not getting a fair hearing, and whose self-assurance has relieved him of the duty to secure for them a sympathetic attention. What, I used to say, would be *my* feeling if James were to wither me with such a word as he can use about Thomas Hill Green, or perhaps about some other so-called Hegelian? — The time has passed, the lightning in question has often descended, — never indeed on me as his friend, but often on my opinions, and has long since blasted, I hope, some at least of what is most combustible about my poor teachings. Yet I am so glad of the friendly words that still sustain me, that these occasional *segnende Blitze*, when incidentally they are sown over the earth where my opinions chance to be growing, only make me love better the cause that James loves, and that he has so nobly served, the cause of fertilizing the human soil where our truth has to grow, — this cause, and the friend who through all these years has borne with me so kindly, and has in so many ways been my creator and my support. He is my teacher. I am his pupil, and I bring him a pupil's homage tonight.

Next to fearing James's lightning, I have long used for years to live in a love which I think he never fully understood, — the love of just watching and listening for whatever James has had to say by way of comment upon current events and upon new problems. For years, I say, I have never known precisely what to think of any new matter until I have carried it to James, and have waited to hear his first absolutely spontaneous comment upon it. I find that he usually forgets these first comments. They escape him without reflection. They leave no trace in his mind of being remarkable or worthy of being remembered. Yet they often possess a quality that he will much object to hearing me mention, — the quality of being absolutely true, — not true in the merely "pragmatic" sense. They are like his lightning, — only they do not by any means always consume. They reveal. It is hard to say how many of these comments have sunk into my soul, or how often I find myself reporting them to my classes, with a greater or less temptation to repeat them as if they were my own.

For a pronounced opponent of philosophical absolutism, such as our host is, it is indeed remarkable how many absolute truths he has been heard to utter, and how many he has also written down in his books. The wind bloweth where it listeth; and so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

As for his books themselves, — this is no place to characterize them; but how intimately this abundant life of our dear James has already entered into the life not only of our country, but of the world! At International Philosophical Congresses, men who cannot possibly pronounce his name aright, inquire much and eagerly for “Weeleyam Jams.” They wait for him as for the rain.

And just as he has always loved and nourished truth-seekers, so now and henceforth his spirit lives and will live in the strivings of thousands of them in many lands. His very form of speech awakens, stimulates, inspires, lightens up his readers, invades their memories, is repeated in their catchwords. Myriads of these readers already say, with his friend Schiller, — “The Will to Believe is Will James,” and when in mind I turn from this his more direct and intense personal influence to the weightier matters which he has so manifoldly illumined, — when I recall — merely as one or two instances among many — that splendid closing chapter of the great *Psychology*, when I dwell upon that masterpiece of dialectic, the essay on The “Dilemma of Determinism,” when I dwell upon some of his very latest published chapters, I see that whatever turns out to be in the end the truth, — there is no doubt that he will be credited, in the Judgment Day, with a genuinely large share both in the discovery and in the portrayal of the truth. He has not always liked to hear talk about eternal truth. But I am sure that in the words in which the eternal truth is embodied, his voice is to be heard as a very genuine and individual and significant voice, which we could not do without.

May his portrait worthily remind many of his presence when the human voice can no longer be heard on earth. But long may that voice still be heard here and amongst us.

*Josiah Royce.*

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### THE NEW LAMPOON BUILDING.

THE quarters of the *Lampoon* in the old house at 8 Holyoke St., while quaint and interesting, were temporary and inadequate. The paper had shown, since 1901, an earning capacity sufficient to pay all its expenses and to lay by annually a good sum towards its surplus while being possessed of a sufficient working capital; consequently, in the spring of 1909, the Editors, with the approval of the Graduate Trustees, voted to purchase the triangular piece of land bounded by Plympton, Mt. Auburn, and Bow Streets, opposite Randolph Hall, and to build thereon a new house designed to meet the business and social needs of the Society. On April 6, 1909, the lot was conveyed to Messrs. John T. Wheelwright, '76, R. L. Scaife, '97, and A. H. Weed, '03, as trustees. Edmund M. Wheel-