

Let Granny Drive If She Can

My mother at 85 was alert, with good vision and sharp reflexes for her age, but one day she smashed into three parked cars on a supermarket parking lot. We never found out exactly how it happened—she was not sure, either—but the investigators figured Mom hit the accelerator instead of the brake. When the car didn't slow down, she panicked and pushed down harder on the wrong pedal. This may be what happened to the 86-year-old man who plowed through that California farmers' market.

Mom was lucky, even though she spent two weeks in the hospital with two broken ribs. But we reluctantly concluded that it was time to take Mom's car keys. This was the hardest thing I have ever had to do. She pleaded, cajoled and demanded to keep her car. I was "mean" and "unfeeling," and her gentle voice grew strident. Tears trickled down her cheeks. I think she never felt old until that moment, when I took away the independence provided by the car. I felt like the wicked witch of the west, and the other points of the compass as well.

In the days that followed, we suggested that she take taxis to visit friends and to shop, but she wouldn't do it: "That's not my style." A driver was out of the question because she had no set places she had to go. She was not a lady for "Driving Miss Daisy." Fortunately, she lived in the city and quickly slipped into the routine of taking the bus, which she hadn't done since high school. She got to know the bus drivers and waved at them as they drove past her on her frequent strolls through the neighborhood. She began to enjoy her new life. But most old people have no convenient public transportation or shops within walking distance.

Hard as it was on both of us, we made the right decision in Mom's case. But is tragedy like that in Santa Monica a reason to take away the car keys of the elderly? I think not. Unless we learn how to play God, foreseeing accidents, that's the wrong lesson to learn.

Age doesn't necessarily prove anything. Slower reflexes or not, senior citizens are much better drivers than, for example, teenagers. They usually drive more slowly. They get honked at a lot, but their slower speed reduces the risk of death and destruction that accompanies speeding tons of metal. The worst risktakers on the highway are young men between the ages of 18 to 25, but no one suggests taking away their keys or raising the driving age to 26.

The fatality rate in 2001 for motorists between 16 and 20, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, was more than double that for drivers over 70. The AARP estimates that drivers 55 and older compose a quarter of the driving population, but have only 18 percent of the accidents. The older the driver, the fewer miles he puts on his car. As the baby boomers age, the numbers of older drivers will increase. Large majorities of them live in the suburbs or in the countryside without public transportation. Rural and suburban communities must arrange for alternative kinds of transportation for those who are failing in their driving ability; demand can drive public and entrepreneurial innovation.

Preventive remedies for the aging driver abound. Their licenses could be renewed at shorter intervals, with tougher physical tests. At the first signs of diminished alertness, a designated adult in the family should monitor the elderly driver closely for the good of everyone else. They shouldn't drink and

drive, but who should? Doctors who prescribe medications for the elderly must make them aware of their influence on driving. The older citizen who tries to avoid danger is likely to take personal responsibility with considerably more seriousness than a younger person who courts danger through partying and risk. I like the example of Lord Renton, the 94-year-old “Father of the House of Lords” in London, who volunteered the other day to take his first driving test. He first drove a car in England before 1935, the year a driver’s license was first required. He enjoyed a grandfather clause, you might say.

Deciding he owed it to himself and his fellow drivers to submit to a test, he submitted himself to the indignity of taking the test on a small and unfamiliar Ford sedan, not his usual cup of tea. He succeeded brilliantly. We could expect no less from seniors on this side of the Atlantic. So, let’s let Granny drive for as long as she can. Road age is a lot less dangerous than road rage.

1. What two paragraphs state the author’s proposition and summarize her support?
2. What two other patterns of writing (narration, exemplification, comparison and contrast, process analysis, analysis by division) does the author use significantly to advance her argument?
3. List the evidence the author uses.
4. The author personalizes her argument by discussing her mother’s situation. What effect does that approach have on her overall presentation?

Face to Face with Hurricane Camille

John Koshak, Jr., knew that Hurricane Camille would be bad. Radio and television warnings had sounded throughout that Sunday, last August 17, as Camille lashed northwestward across the Gulf of Mexico. It was certain to pummel Gulfport, Miss., where the Koshers lived. Along the coasts of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, nearly 150,000 people fled inland to safer ground. But, like thousands of others in the coastal communities, John was reluctant to abandon his home unless the family -- his wife, Janis, and their seven children, aged 3 to 11 -- was clearly endangered.

Trying to reason out the best course of action, he talked with his father and mother, who had moved into the ten-room house with the Koshaks a month earlier from California. He also consulted Charles Hill, a longtime friend, who had driven from Las Vegas for a visit.

John, 37 -- whose business was right there in his home (he designed and developed educational toys and supplies, and all of Magna Products' correspondence, engineering drawings and art work were there on the first floor) -- was familiar with the power of a hurricane. Four years earlier, Hurricane Betsy had demolished undefined his former home a few miles west of Gulfport (Koshak had moved his family to a motel for the night). But that house had stood only a few feet above sea level. "We're elevated 23 feet," he told his father, "and we're a good 250 yards from the sea. The place has been here since 1915, and no hurricane has ever bothered it. We'll probably be as safe here as anyplace else."

The elder Koshak, a gruff, warmhearted expert machinist of 67, agreed. "We can batten down and ride it out," he said. "If we see signs of danger, we can get out before dark."

The men methodically prepared for the hurricane. Since water mains might be damaged, they filled bathtubs and pails. A power failure was likely, so they checked out batteries for the portable radio and flashlights, and fuel for the lantern. John's father moved a small generator into the downstairs hallway, wired several light bulbs to it and prepared a connection to the refrigerator.

Rain fell steadily that afternoon; gray clouds scudded in from the Gulf on the rising wind. The family had an early supper. A neighbor, whose husband was in Vietnam, asked if she and her two children could sit out the storm with the Koshaks. Another neighbor came by on his way in-land -- would the Koshaks mind taking care of his dog?

It grew dark before seven o'clock. Wind and rain now whipped the house. John sent his oldest son and daughter upstairs to bring down mattresses and pillows for the younger children. He wanted to keep the group together on one floor. "Stay away from the windows," he warned, concerned about glass flying from storm-shattered panes. As the wind mounted to a roar, the house began leaking--the rain seemingly driven right through the walls. With mops, towels, pots and buckets the Koshaks began a struggle against the rapidly spreading water. At 8:30, power failed, and Pop Koshak turned on the generator.

The roar of the hurricane now was overwhelming. The house shook, and the ceiling in the living

room was falling piece by piece. The French doors in an upstairs room blew in with an explosive sound, and the group heard gun-like reports as other upstairs windows disintegrated. Water rose above their ankles.

Then the front door started to break away from its frame. John and Charlie put their shoulders against it, but a blast of water hit the house, flinging open the door and shoving them down the hall. The generator was doused, and the lights went out. Charlie licked his lips and shouted to John. "I think we're in real trouble. That water tasted salty." The sea had reached the house, and the water was rising by the minute!

"Everybody out the back door to the cars!" John yelled. "We'll pass the children along between us. Count them! Nine!"

The children went from adult to adult like buckets in a fire brigade. But the cars wouldn't start; the electrical systems had been killed by water. The wind was too Strong and the water too deep to flee on foot. "Back to the house!" John yelled. "Count the children! Count nine!"

As they scrambled back, John ordered, "Every-body on the stairs!" Frightened, breathless and wet, the group settled on the stairs, which were protected by two interior walls. The children put the cat, Spooky, and a box with her four kittens on the landing. She peered nervously at her litter. The neighbor's dog curled up and went to sleep.

The wind sounded like the roar of a train passing a few yards away. The house shuddered and shifted on its foundations. Water inched its way up the steps as first- floor outside walls collapsed. No one spoke. Everyone knew there was no escape; they would live or die in the house.

Charlie Hill had more or less taken responsibility for the neighbor and her two children. The mother was on the verge of panic. She clutched his arm and kept repeating, "I can't swim, I can't swim."

"You won't have to," he told her, with outward calm. "It's bound to end soon."

Grandmother Koshak reached an arm around her husband's shoulder and put her mouth close to his ear. "Pop," she said, "I love you." He turned his head and answered, "I love you" -- and his voice lacked its usual gruffness.

John watched the water lap at the steps, and felt a crushing guilt. He had underestimated the ferocity of Camille. He had assumed that what had never happened could not happen. He held his head between his hands, and silently prayed: "Get us through this mess, will You?"

A moment later, the hurricane, in one mighty swipe, lifted the entire roof off the house and skimmed it 40 feet through the air. The bottom steps of the staircase broke apart. One wall began crumbling on the marooned group.

Dr. Robert H. Simpson, director of the National Hurricane Center in Miami, Fla., graded Hurricane Camille as “the greatest recorded storm ever to hit a populated area in the Western Hemisphere.” in its concentrated breadth of some 70 miles it shot out winds of nearly 200 m.p.h. and raised tides as high as 30 feet. Along the Gulf Coast it devastated everything in its swath: 19,467 homes and 709 small businesses were demolished or severely damaged. it seized a 600,000-gallon Gulfport oil tank and dumped it 3.5 miles away. It tore three large cargo ships from their moorings and beached them. Telephone poles and 20-inch-thick pines cracked like guns as the winds snapped them.

To the west of Gulfport, the town of Pass Christian was virtually wiped out. Several vacationers at the luxurious Richelieu Apartments there held a hurricane party to watch the storm from their spectacular vantage point. Richelieu Apartments were smashed apart as if by a gigantic fist, and 26 people perished.

Seconds after the roof blew off the Koshak house, John yelled, “Up the stairs -- into our bedroom! Count the kids.” The children huddled in the slashing rain within the circle of adults. Grandmother Koshak implored, “Children, let’s sing!” The children were too frightened to respond. She carried on alone for a few bars; then her voice trailed away.

Debris flew as the living-room fireplace and its chimney collapsed. With two walls in their bedroom sanctuary beginning to disintegrate, John ordered, “Into the television room!” This was the room farthest from the direction of the storm.

For an instant, John put his arm around his wife. Janis understood. Shivering from the wind and rain and fear, clutching two children to her, she thought, Dear Lord, give me the strength to endure what I have to. She felt anger against the hurricane. We won’t let it win.

Pop Koshak raged silently, frustrated at not being able to do anything to fight Camille. Without reason, he dragged a cedar chest and a double mattress from a bed-room into the TV room. At that moment, the wind tore out one wall and extinguished the lantern. A second wall moved, wavered, Charlie Hill tried to support it, but it toppled on him, injuring his back. The house, shuddering and rocking, had moved 25 feet from its foundations. The world seemed to be breaking apart.

“Let’s get that mattress up!” John shouted to his father. “Make it a lean-to against the wind. Get the kids under it. We can prop it up with our heads and shoulders!”

The larger children sprawled on the floor, with the smaller ones in a layer on top of them, and the adults bent over all nine. The floor tilted. The box containing the litter of kittens slid off a shelf and vanished in the wind. Spooky flew off the top of a sliding bookcase and also disappeared. The dog cowered with eyes closed. A third wall gave way. Water lapped across the slanting floor. John grabbed a door which was still hinged to one closet wall. “If the floor goes,” he yelled at his father, “let’s get the kids on this.”

In that moment, the wind slightly diminished, and the water stopped rising. Then the water began

receding. The main thrust of Camille had passed. The Koshaks and their friends had survived.

With the dawn, Gulfport people started coming back to their homes. They saw human bodies -- more than 130 men, women and children died along the Mississippi coast- and parts of the beach and highway were strewn with dead dogs, cats, cattle. Strips of clothing festooned the standing trees, and blown down power lines coiled like black spaghetti over the roads.

None of the returnees moved quickly or spoke loudly; they stood shocked, trying to absorb the shattering scenes before their eyes. "What do we do?" they asked. "Where do we go?"

By this time, organizations within the area and, in effect, the entire population of the United States had come to the aid of the devastated coast. Before dawn, the Mississippi National Guard and civil-defense units were moving in to handle traffic, guard property, set up communications centers, help clear the debris and take the homeless by truck and bus to refugee centers. By 10 a.m., the Salvation Army's canteen trucks and Red Cross volunteers and staffers were going wherever possible to distribute hot drinks, food, clothing and bedding.

From hundreds of towns and cities across the country came several million dollars in donations; household and medical supplies streamed in by plane, train, truck and car. The federal government shipped 4,400,000 pounds of food, moved in mobile homes, set up portable classrooms, opened offices to provide low-interest, long-term business loans.

Camille, meanwhile, had raked its way northward across Mississippi, dropping more than 28 inches of rain into West Virginia and southern Virginia, causing rampaging floods, huge mountain slides and 111 additional deaths before breaking up over the Atlantic Ocean.

Like many other Gulfport families, the Koshaks quickly began reorganizing their lives, John divided his family in the homes of two friends. The neighbor with her two children went to a refugee center. Charlie Hill found a room for rent. By Tuesday, Charlie's back had improved, and he pitched in with Seabees in the worst volunteer work of all--searching for bodies. Three days after the storm, he decided not to return to Las Vegas, but to "remain in Gulfport and help rebuild the community."

Near the end of the first week, a friend offered the Koshaks his apartment, and the family was reunited. The children appeared to suffer no psychological damage from their experience; they were still awed by the incomprehensible power of the hurricane, but enjoyed describing what they had seen and heard on that frightful night, Janis had just one delayed reaction. A few nights after the hurricane, she awoke suddenly at 2 a.m. She quietly got up and went outside. Looking up at the sky and, without knowing she was going to do it, she began to cry softly.

Meanwhile, John, Pop and Charlie were picking through the wreckage of the home. It could have been depressing, but it wasn't: each salvaged item represented a little victory over the wrath of the storm. The dog and cat suddenly appeared at the scene, alive and hungry.

But the blues did occasionally afflict all the adults. Once, in a low mood, John said to his parents, "I wanted you here so that we would all be together, so you could enjoy the children, and look what happened."

His father, who had made up his mind to start a welding shop when living was normal again, said, "Let's not cry about what's gone. We'll just start all over."

"You're great," John said. "And this town has a lot of great people in it. It's going to be better here than it ever was before."

Later, Grandmother Koshak reflected: "We lost practically all our possessions, but the family came through it. When I think of that, I realize we lost nothing important."

The Beast of Burden

by W. Somerset Maugham

1 At first when you see the coolie on the road, bearing his load, it is as a pleasing object that he strikes the eye. In his blue rags, a blue of all colors from indigo to turquoise and then to the paleness of a milky sky, he fits the landscape. He seems exactly right as he trudges along the narrow causeway between the rice fields or climbs a green hill. His clothing consists of no more than a short coat and a pair of trousers; and if he had a suit which was at the beginning all of a piece, he never thinks when it comes to patching to choose a bit of stuff of the same color. He takes anything that comes handy. From sun and rain he protects his head with a straw hat shaped like an extinguisher with a preposterously wide, flat brim.

2 You see a string of coolies come along, one after the other, each with a pole on his shoulders from the ends of which hang two great bales, and they make an agreeable pattern. It is amusing to watch their hurrying reflections in the padi water. You watch their faces as they pass you. They are good-natured faces and frank, you would have said, if it had not been drilled into you that the oriental is inscrutable; and when you see them lying down with their loads under a banyan tree by a wayside shrine, smoking and chatting gaily, if you have tried to lift the bales they carry for thirty miles or more a day, it seems natural to feel admiration for their endurance and their spirit. But you will be thought somewhat absurd if you mention your admiration to the old residents of China. You will be told with a tolerant shrug of the shoulders that the coolies are animals and for two thousand years from father to son have carried burdens, so it is no wonder if they do it cheerfully. And indeed you can see for yourself that they begin early, for you will encounter little children with a yoke on their shoulders staggering under the weight of vegetable baskets.

3 The day wears on and it grows warmer. The coolies take off their coats and walk stripped to the waist. Then sometimes in a man resting for an instant, his load on the ground but the pole still on his shoulders so that he has to rest slightly crouched, you see the poor tired heart beating against the ribs: you see it as plainly as in some cases of heart disease in the out-patients' room of a hospital. It is strangely distressing to watch. Then also you see the coolies' backs. The pressure of the pole for long years, day after day, has made hard red scars, and sometimes even there are open sores, great sores without bandages or dressing that rub against the wood; but the strangest thing of all is that sometimes, as though nature sought to adapt man for these cruel uses to which he is put, an odd malformation seems to have arisen so that there is a sort of hump, like a camel's, against which the pole rests. But beating heart or angry sore, bitter rain or burning sun notwithstanding, they go on eternally, from dawn till dusk, year in year out, from childhood to the extreme of age. You see old men without an ounce of fat on their bodies, their skin loose on their bones, wizened, their little faces wrinkled and apelike, with hair thin and grey; and they totter under their burdens to the edge of the grave in which at last they shall have rest. And still the coolies go, not exactly running, but not walking either, sidling quickly, with their eyes on the ground to choose the spot to place their feet, and on their faces a strained, anxious expression. You can make no longer a pattern of them as they wend their way. Their effort oppresses you. You are filled with a useless compassion.

4 In China it is man that is the beast of burden.

5 “To be harassed by the wear and tear of life, and to pass rapidly through it without the possibility of arresting one's course, —is not this pitiful indeed? To labor without ceasing, and then, without living to enjoy the fruit, worn out, to depart, suddenly, one knows not whither, —is not that a just cause for grief?”

6 So wrote the Chinese mystic¹.

Questions:

1. Why does the author describe the coolie on the road as “a pleasing object”?
2. What is a beast of burden? Name some beasts of burden.

¹ 指庄子。上面引号内的文字对应庄子《齐物论》中的“与物相刃相靡，其行尽如驰，而莫之能止，不亦悲乎！终身役役而不见其成功，荼然疲役而不知其所归，可不哀邪？”

Marrakech

by George Orwell

Note: In this essay, Orwell successfully depicts the poverty of the inhabitants of Marrakech by describing the various aspects of their life. His vivid description gives readers a clear picture of the poverty of the people. He shows six almost unrelated scenes, except for the fact that they demonstrate the invisibility of the people in Morocco, which are: the corpse scene, the gazelle-Arabian scene, the Jew-cigarette scene, the landscape scene, the donkey-woman scene, and the bird-soldier scene. Orwell denounces the evils of colonialism or imperialism. He mercilessly exposes the poverty, misery and degradation of the native people in the colonies. These people are not considered nor are they treated as human beings. The cruel treatment the donkey receives evokes a greater feeling of sympathy in the breasts of the white masters than the miserable fate of the brown human beings. The central thought gives coherence to the whole essay for the separate examples all illustrate the poverty and misery of the colonial people.

1 As the corpse went past the flies left the restaurant table in a cloud and rushed after it, but they came back a few minutes later.

2 The little crowd of mourners – all men and boys, no women – threaded their way across the market-place between the piles of pomegranates and the taxis and the camels, wailing a short chant over and over again. What really appeals to the flies is that the corpses here are never put into coffins, they are merely wrapped in a piece of rag and carried on a rough wooden bier on the shoulders of four friends. When the friends get to the burying-ground they hack an oblong hole a foot or two deep, dump the body in it and fling over it a little of the dried-up, lumpy earth, which is like broken brick. No gravestone, no name, no identifying mark of any kind. The burying-ground is merely a huge waste of hummocky earth, like a derelict building-lot. After a month or two no one can even be certain where his own relatives are buried.

3 When you walk through a town like this – two hundred thousand inhabitants, of whom at least twenty thousand own literally nothing except the rags they stand up in – when you see how the people live, and still more how easily they die, it is always difficult to believe that you are walking among human beings. All colonial empires are in reality founded upon that fact. The people have brown faces – besides, there are so many of them! Are they really the same flesh as yourself? Do they even have names? Or are they merely a kind of undifferentiated brown stuff, about as individual as bees or coral insects? They rise out of the earth, they sweat and starve for a few years, and then they sink back into the nameless mounds of the graveyard and nobody notices that they are gone. And even the graves themselves soon fade back into the soil. Sometimes, out for a walk, as you break your way through the prickly pear, you notice that it is rather bumpy underfoot, and only a certain regularity in the bumps tells you that you are walking over skeletons.

4 I was feeding one of the gazelles in the public gardens.

5 Gazelles are almost the only animals that look good to eat when they are still alive, in fact, one can hardly look at their hindquarters without thinking of mint sauce. The gazelle I was feeding

seemed to know that this thought was in my mind, for though it took the piece of bread I was holding out it obviously did not like me. It nibbled rapidly at the bread, then lowered its head and tried to butt me, then took another nibble and then butted again. Probably its idea was that if it could drive me away the bread would somehow remain hanging in mid-air.

6 An Arab navvy working on the path nearby lowered his heavy hoe and sidled slowly towards us. He looked from the gazelle to the bread and from the bread to the gazelle, with a sort of quiet amazement, as though he had never seen anything quite like this before. Finally he said shyly in French:

7 'I could eat some of that bread.'

8 I tore off a piece and he stowed it gratefully in some secret place under his rags. This man is an employee of the Municipality.

9 When you go through the Jewish quarters you gather some idea of what the medieval ghettos were probably like. Under their Moorish rulers the Jews were only allowed to own land in certain restricted areas, and after centuries of this kind of treatment they have ceased to bother about overcrowding. Many of the streets are a good deal less than six feet wide, the houses are completely windowless, and sore-eyed children cluster everywhere in unbelievable numbers, like clouds of flies. Down the centre of the street there is generally running a little river of urine.

10 In the bazaar huge families of Jews, all dressed in the long black robe and little black skull-cap, are working in dark fly-infested booths that look like caves. A carpenter sits cross-legged at a prehistoric lathe, turning chair-legs at lightning speed. He works the lathe with a bow in his right hand and guides the chisel with his left foot, and thanks to a lifetime of sitting in this position his left leg is warped out of shape. At his side his grandson, aged six, is already starting on the simpler parts of the job.

11 I was just passing the coppersmiths' booths when somebody noticed that I was lighting a cigarette. Instantly, from the dark holes all round, there was a frenzied rush of Jews, many of them old grandfathers with flowing grey beards, all clamouring for a cigarette. Even a blind man somewhere at the back of one of the booths heard a rumour of cigarettes and came crawling out, groping in the air with his hand. In about a minute I had used up the whole packet. None of these people, I suppose, works less than twelve hours a day, and every one of them looks on a cigarette as a more or less impossible luxury.

12 As the Jews live in self-contained communities they follow the same trades as the Arabs, except for agriculture. Fruit-sellers, potters, silversmiths, blacksmiths, butchers, leather-workers, tailors, water-carriers, beggars, porters – whichever way you look you see nothing but Jews. As a matter of fact there are thirteen thousand of them, all living in the space of a few acres. A good job Hitler isn't here. Perhaps he is on his way, however. You hear the usual dark rumours about the Jews, not only from the Arabs but from the poorer Europeans.

13 'Yes, mon vieux, they took my job away from me and gave it to a Jew. The Jews! They're the real rulers of this country, you know. They've got all the money. They control the banks, finance – everything.'

14 'But,' I said, 'isn't it a fact that the average Jew is a labourer working for about a penny an hour?'

15 'Ah, that's only for show! They're all moneylenders really. They're cunning, the Jews.'

16 In just the same way, a couple of hundred years ago, poor old women used to be burned for witchcraft when they could not even work enough magic to get themselves a square meal.

17 All people who work with their hands are partly invisible, and the more important the work they do, the less visible they are. Still, a white skin is always fairly conspicuous. In northern Europe, when you see a labourer ploughing a field, you probably give him a second glance. In a hot country, anywhere south of Gibraltar or east of Suez, the chances are that you don't even see him. I have noticed this again and again. In a tropical landscape one's eye takes in everything except the human-beings. It takes in the dried-up soil, the prickly pear, the palm-tree and the distant mountain, but it always misses the peasant hoeing at his patch. He is the same colour as the earth, and a great deal less interesting to look at.

18 It is only because of this that the starved countries of Asia and Africa are accepted as tourist resorts. No one would think of running cheap trips to the Distressed Areas. But where the human-beings have brown skins their poverty is simply not noticed. What does Morocco mean to a Frenchman? An orange-grove or a job in Government service. Or to an Englishman? Camels, castles, palm-trees, Foreign Legionnaires, brass trays and bandits. One could probably live here for years without noticing that for nine-tenths of the people the reality of life is an endless, back-breaking struggle to wring a little food out of an eroded soil.

19 Most of Morocco is so desolate that no wild animal bigger than a hare can live on it. Huge areas which were once covered with forest have turned into a treeless waste where the soil is exactly like broken-up brick. Nevertheless a good deal of it is cultivated, with frightful labour. Everything is done by hand. Long lines of women, bent double like inverted capital Ls, work their way slowly across the fields, tearing up the prickly weeds with their hands, and the peasant gathering lucerne for fodder pulls it up stalk by stalk instead of reaping it, thus saving an inch or two on each stalk. The plough is a wretched wooden thing, so frail that one can easily carry it on one's shoulder, and fitted underneath with a rough iron spike which stirs the soil to a depth of about four inches. This is as much as the strength of the animals is equal to. It is usual to plough with a cow and a donkey yoked together. Two donkeys would not be quite strong enough, but on the other hand two cows would cost a little more to feed. The peasants possess no harrows, they merely plough the soil several times over in different directions, finally leaving it in rough furrows, after which the whole field has to be shaped with hoes into small oblong patches, to conserve water. Except for a day or two after the rare rainstorms there is never enough water. Along the edges of the fields channels are hacked out to a depth of thirty or forty feet to get at the tiny trickles which run through the subsoil.

20 Every afternoon a file of very old women passes down the road outside my house, each carrying a load of firewood. All of them are mummified with age and the sun, and all of them are tiny. It seems to be generally the case in primitive communities that the women, when they get beyond a certain age, shrink to the size of children. One day a poor old creature who could not have been more than four feet tall crept past me under a vast load of wood. I stopped her and put a five-sou piece (a little more than a farthing) into her hand. She answered with a shrill wail, almost a scream, which was partly gratitude but mainly surprise. I suppose that from her point of view, by taking any notice of her, I seemed almost to be violating a law of nature. She accepted her status as an old woman, that is to say as a beast of burden. When a family is travelling it is quite usual to see a father and a grown-up son riding ahead on donkeys, and an old woman following on foot, carrying the baggage.

21 But what is strange about these people is their invisibility. For several weeks, always at about the same time of day, the file of old women had hobbled past the house with their firewood, and though they had registered themselves on my eyeballs I cannot truly say that I had seen them. Firewood was passing – that was how I saw it. It was only that one day I happened to be walking behind them, and the curious up-and-down motion of a load of wood drew my attention to the human being underneath it. Then for the first time I noticed the poor old earth-coloured bodies, bodies reduced to bones and leathery skin, bent double under the crushing weight. Yet I suppose I had not been five minutes on Moroccan soil before I noticed the overloading of the donkeys and was infuriated by it. There is no question that the donkeys are damnably treated. The Moroccan donkey is hardly bigger than a St. Bernard dog, it carries a load which in the British army would be considered too much for a fifteen-hands mule, and very often its pack-saddle is not taken off its back for weeks together. But what is peculiarly pitiful is that it is the most willing creature on earth, it follows its master like a dog and does not need either bridle or halter. After a dozen years of devoted work it suddenly drops dead, whereupon its master tips it into the ditch and the village dogs have torn its guts out before it is cold.

22 This kind of thing makes one's blood boil, whereas – on the whole – the plight of the human beings does not. I am not commenting, merely pointing to a fact. People with brown skins are next door to invisible. Anyone can be sorry for the donkey with its galled back, but it is generally owing to some kind of accident if one even notices the old woman under her load of sticks.

23 As the storks flew northward the Negroes were marching southward – a long, dusty column, infantry, screw-gun batteries and then more infantry, four or five thousand men in all, winding up the road with a clumping of boots and a clatter of iron wheels.

24 They were Senegalese, the blackest Negroes in Africa, so black that sometimes it is difficult to see whereabouts on their necks the hair begins. Their splendid bodies were hidden in reach-me-down khaki uniforms, their feet squashed into boots that looked like blocks of wood, and every tin hat seemed to be a couple of sizes too small. It was very hot and the men had marched a long way. They slumped under the weight of their packs and the curiously sensitive black faces were glistening with sweat.

25 As they went past a tall, very young Negro turned and caught my eye. But the look he gave me was not in the least the kind of look you might expect. Not hostile, not contemptuous, not sullen, not even inquisitive. It was the shy, wide-eyed Negro look, which actually is a look of profound respect. I saw how it was. This wretched boy, who is a French citizen and has therefore been dragged from the forest to scrub floors and catch syphilis in garrison towns, actually has feelings of reverence before a white skin. He has been taught that the white race are his masters, and he still believes it.

26 But there is one thought which every white man (and in this connection it doesn't matter twopence if he calls himself a Socialist) thinks when he sees a black army marching past. 'How much longer can we go on kidding these people? How long before they turn their guns in the other direction?'

27 It was curious, really. Every white man there has this thought stowed somewhere or other in his mind. I had it, so had the other onlookers, so had the officers on their sweating chargers and the white N.C.O.s marching in the ranks. It was a kind of secret which we all knew and were too clever to tell; only the Negroes didn't know it. And really it was almost like watching a flock of cattle to see the long column, a mile or two miles of armed men, flowing peacefully up the road, while the great white birds drifted over them in the opposite direction, glittering like scraps of paper.

Nongfu Spring is a hit with tipplers and investors alike

1 “We are not manufacturers of water. We are porters of nature.” So goes a famous quip by Zhong Shanshan, the 66-year-old founder and boss of Nongfu Spring, China’s most popular brand of bottled water. On September 8th the Hangzhou-based bottler listed on Hong Kong’s bourse to spectacular fanfare. Demand for shares from retail investors outstripped supply by 1,148 times. The share price shot up by 60% over the first three days of trading. Its market capitalization reached \$53bn. Mr. Zhong, who still owns 84% of Nongfu Spring, is now China’s third-richest person, narrowly trailing two tech moguls: Jack Ma of Alibaba and (unrelated) Pony Ma of Tencent.

2 Rising disposable incomes and public anxiety about the safety of tap water have fueled demand among Chinese for the bottled variety. Consumption per person of bottled water rose from 41 liters in 2014 to 59 liters in 2019, according to data from Mintel, a market-research firm. Americans, by comparison, guzzled an average of 141 liters last year. That suggests Chinese bottlers still have plenty of room for growth, not least because tap water in America is (typically) potable.

3 Nongfu Spring is the runaway industry leader. It accounted for 29% of the volume sold in China in 2019. Foreign brands such as FIJI Water, Evian (owned by Danone) and Aquafina (part of PepsiCo) are easily spotted in many Chinese supermarkets. But none has a market share greater than 6.5%, reckons Mintel.

4 One reason for Nongfu’s success is its effort to cater to all market segments. Stingy folk can buy a mass-market 380ml-plastic bottle for as little as 1.5 yuan (\$0.22). The well-heeled may opt for the glass-bottled version, which comes with “award-winning” designs and retails for 30-45 yuan. In between you can get a lithium-rich liquid which is claimed to benefit the nervous system. Total revenues across Nongfu’s waters increased by 42% between 2017 and 2019, to 14.3bn yuan. Gross margins held steady at an impressive 60%.

5 Nongfu sceptics point out that the bottled-water industry, in China and elsewhere, has few technical barriers to entry. The main raw material is polyethylene terephthalate (PET), a plastic that is cheap and easy to process. No special knowledge is required. Evergrande, a Chinese property developer, boasts its own line of bottled water called Evergrande Spring. The water itself tends to be an afterthought.

6 Not in Nongfu’s case. As its aggressive marketers never tire of stressing, it possesses water-extraction permits for ten of China’s most famous unspoiled bodies of water—from Thousand Island Lake in the eastern province of Zhejiang to Mount Tianshan in the remote western region of Xinjiang. The permits, granted by local governments for up to 30 years, are a moat against competitors. Loris Li, an independent analyst of China’s beverage industry, observes that “the quality of the original water source” can be a strong point of brand differentiation.

Why a Dawn of Technological Optimism is Breaking

1 For much of the past decade the pace of innovation underwhelmed many people—especially those miserable economists. Productivity growth was lacklustre and the most popular new inventions, the smartphone and social media, did not seem to help much. Their malign side-effects, such as the creation of powerful monopolies and the pollution of the public square, became painfully apparent. Promising technologies stalled, including self-driving cars, making Silicon Valley’s evangelists look naive. Security hawks warned that China was racing past the West and some gloomy folk warned that the world was finally running out of useful ideas.

2 Today a dawn of technological optimism is breaking. The speed at which covid-19 vaccines have been produced has made scientists household names. Prominent breakthroughs, a tech investment boom and the adoption of digital technologies during the pandemic are combining to raise hopes of a new era of progress: optimists giddily predict a “roaring Twenties”. Just as the pessimism of the 2010s was overdone—the decade saw many advances, such as in cancer treatment—so predictions of technological Utopia are overblown. But there is a realistic possibility of a new era of innovation that could lift living standards, especially if governments help new technologies to flourish.

3 In the history of capitalism rapid technological advance has been the norm. The 18th century brought the Industrial Revolution and mechanised factories; the 19th century railways and electricity; the 20th century cars, planes, modern medicine and domestic liberation thanks to washing machines. In the 1970s, though, progress—measured by overall productivity growth—slowed. The economic impact was masked for a while by women piling into the workforce, and a burst of efficiency gains followed the adoption of personal computers in the 1990s. After 2000, though, growth flagged again.

4 There are three reasons to think this “great stagnation” might be ending. First is the flurry of recent discoveries with transformative potential. The success of the “messenger RNA” technique behind the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines, and of bespoke antibody treatments, shows how science continues to empower medicine. Humans are increasingly able to bend biology to their will, whether that is to treat disease, edit genes or to grow meat in a lab. Artificial intelligence is at last displaying impressive progress in a range of contexts. A program created by DeepMind, part of Alphabet, has shown a remarkable ability to predict the shapes of proteins; last summer OpenAI unveiled GPT-3, the best natural-language algorithm to date; and since October driverless taxis have ferried the public around Phoenix, Arizona. Spectacular falls in the price of renewable energy are giving governments confidence that their green investments will pay off.

5 The second reason for optimism is booming investment in technology. In the second and third quarters of 2020 America’s non-residential private sector spent more on computers, software and research and development (R&D) than on buildings and industrial gear for the first time in over a decade. Governments are keen to give more cash to scientists. Having shrunk for years, public R&D spending across 24 OECD countries began to grow again in real terms in 2017. Investors’ enthusiasm for technology now extends to medical diagnostics, logistics, biotechnology and semiconductors. Such is the market’s optimism about electric vehicles that Tesla’s CEO, Elon Musk,

who also runs a rocket firm, is the world's richest man.

6 The third source of cheer is the rapid adoption of new technologies. It is not just that workers have taken to videoconferencing and consumers to e-commerce—significant as those advances are, for example to easing the constraints on jobseeking posed by housing shortages. The pandemic has also accelerated the adoptions of digital payments, telemedicine and industrial automation. It has been a reminder that adversity often forces societies to advance.

7 Alas, innovation will not allow economies to shrug off the structural drags on growth. As societies get richer they spend a greater share of their income on labour-intensive services, such as restaurant meals, in which productivity growth is meagre because automation is hard. The ageing of populations will continue to suck workers into low-productivity at-home care. Decarbonising economies will not boost long-term growth unless green energy realises its potential to become cheaper than fossil fuels.

8 Yet it is reasonable to hope that a fresh wave of innovation might soon reverse the fall in economic dynamism which is responsible for perhaps a fifth of the 21st century's growth slowdown. Over time that would compound into a big rise in living standards. Perhaps still more is achievable because many service industries, including health care and education, would benefit greatly from more innovation. Eventually, synthetic biology, artificial intelligence and robotics could up-end how almost everything is done.

9 Although the private sector will ultimately determine which innovations succeed or fail, governments also have an important role to play. They should shoulder the risks in more “moonshot” projects. The state can usefully offer more and better subsidies for R&D, such as prizes for solving clearly defined problems. The state also has a big influence over how fast innovations diffuse through the economy. Governments need to make sure that regulation and lobbying do not slow down disruption, in part by providing an adequate safety-net for those whose livelihoods are upended by it. Innovation is concentrated among too few firms. Ensuring that the whole economy harnesses new technologies will require robust antitrust enforcement and looser intellectual-property regimes. If governments rise to the challenge, then faster growth and higher living standards will be within their reach, allowing them to defy the pessimists. The 2020s began with a cry of pain but, with the right policies, the decade could yet roar.

Cyberschool

1 Welcome to the classroom of the future! Complete with electronic links to the world, it'll revolutionize education. Students will interact with information infrastructures and knowledge processors to learn group work and telework, whatever that means. You'll be enriched, empowered, and enabled by the digital classroom; immersed in an optimal learning environment. Yee-ha!

2 Worried that things rarely turn out as promised? Well, let me present a pessimal view of the schoolroom of the future.

3 Suppose you're a harried school board member. Voters complain about high taxes. Teachers' unions strike for higher wages and smaller classes. Parents worry about plummeting scores on standardized tests. Newspapers criticize backward teaching methods, outdated textbooks, and security problems. Unruly students cut classes and rarely pay attention. Instructors teach topics which aren't in the curriculum or, worse, inject their own opinions into subject matter.

4 Sound like a tough call? Now—it's easy to solve all these problems, placate the taxpayers, and get re-elected. High technology!

5 First, the school district buys a computer for every student. Sure, this'll set back the budget—maybe a few hundred dollars per student. Quantity discounts and corporate support should keep the price down, and classroom savings will more than offset the cost of the equipment.

6 Next buy a pile of CD-ROMs for the students, each preprogrammed with fun edutainment programs. The educational games will exactly cover the curriculum . . . for every paragraph in the syllabus, the game will have an interactive aspect. As students climb to more advanced levels, the game naturally becomes more challenging and rewarding. But always fun.

7 Every student will work at her own pace. The youngest will watch happy cartoon characters and exciting animations. The kid that likes horses will listen to messages from a chatty pony; the child that dreams of fire engines will hear from Fred the Firefighter. High schoolers get multimedia images of film stars and rock and roll celebrities. With access to interactive video sessions, chat rooms, and e-mail, students can collaborate with each other. It's the ultimate in individualized, child-centered instruction.

8 Naturally, the edu-games will be programmed so that students become adept at standardized tests. No reason to teach anything that's not on the ACT, PSAT, or SAT exams. And the students will have fun because all this information will be built into games like *Myst*, *Dungeon*, or *Doom*. They'll master the games, and automatically learn the material.

9 Meanwhile, the computers will keep score, like pinball machines. They'll send e-mail to parents and administrators . . . scores that will become part of each kid's permanent record. No more subjectivity in grading: The principal will know instantly how each child's doing. And if a student gets confused or falls behind, automated help will be just a mouse click away.

10 We'll update crowded classrooms, too. Replace desks with individual cubicles, comfortable chairs, and multimedia monitors. With no outside interruptions, kids' attention will be directed into the approved creative learning experiences, built into the software. Well compartmentalized, students will hardly ever see each other . . . neatly ending classroom discipline problems.

11 Naturally, teachers are an unnecessary appendix at this cyberschool. No need for them when there's a fun, multimedia system at each student's fingertips. Should students have a question, they can turn to the latest on-line encyclopedia, enter an electronic chat room, or send e-mail to a professional educator. Those laid-off teachers can be retrained as data entry clerks.

12 As librarians and teachers become irrelevant, they'll be replaced by a cadre of instructional specialists, consultants, and professional hall monitors. Any discipline problems could be handled by trained security guards, who'd monitor the cubicles via remote video links.

13 Effect? With no more wasted time on student-teacher interactions or off-topic discussions, education will become more efficient. Since the computers' content would be directed at maximizing test performance, standardized test scores will zoom.

14 Eliminating teachers and luxuries such as art lessons and field trips will save enough to recoup the cost of those fancy computers. With little effort, this electronic education could even become a profit center. Merely sell advertising space in the edutainment programs. Corporate sponsors, eager to market their messages to impressionable minds, would pay school systems to plug their products within the coursework.

15 Concerned that such a system might be dehumanizing? Not to worry. Interactive chat sessions will encourage a sense of community and enhance kids' social skills. Should a student have questions, the Internet will put her in instant touch with a trained support mentor. When necessary, real-time instructors will appear on the distance learning displays, available to interact via two-way video.

16 The Cyberschool will showcase technology and train students for the upcoming electronic workplace. As local employment prospects change, the school board will issue updates to the curriculum over its interactive website. And the school board will monitor what each student learns—without idiosyncratic teachers to raise unpopular topics or challenge accepted beliefs.

17 Advanced students can sign up for on-line extracurricular activities—perhaps joining the Virtual Compassion Corps. There, students will be paired up across racial, gender, and class lines. Our children would offer foreigners advice and even arrange interviews with prospective employers. In this way, students will perform community service and mentor others, while displaying their cultural awareness over the network. All without ever having to shake hands with a real person, travel to a distant country, or (gasp!) face the real problems of another culture. Simple, safe, and sterile.

18 Should parents worry about Johnny's progress, they need only log in over the Internet to see their

son's latest test scores. In addition, they'll receive e-mailed reports summarizing their child's work. And at any time, they can click on an icon to see live images of their young scholar, automatically uploaded by a school video camera.

19 Yep, just sign up for the future: the parent-pleasin', tax-savin', teacher-firin', interactive-educatin', child-centerin' Cyberschool. No stuffy classrooms. No more teacher strikes. No outdated textbooks. No expensive clarinet lessons. No boring homework. No learning. Coming soon to a school district near you.

Questions for reading:

1. What is the thesis of the passage? Locate the sentence(s) in which the author states his main idea. If he doesn't state the thesis explicitly, express it in your own words.
2. What process does the author describe in the essay? What are the basic steps of this process? What is the author's underlying attitude toward these measures?
3. What specific group of people does the author imagine as being especially in favor of the "cyberschool"? According to the author, how do these individuals justify using computers to teach children?
4. What role does the author indicate teachers will play in the "cyberschool"? What attitude does he convey about this role? Explain.

Self-cultivation in English

(excerpt)

1 English studies have four aims: the mastery of our language as a science, as a history, as a joy, and as a tool. I am concerned with but one, the mastery of it as a tool. Philology and grammar present it as a science: the one attempting to follow its words, the other its sentence, through all the intricacies of their growth, and so to manifest laws which lie hidden in these airy products no less than in the moving stars or the myriad flowers of spring. Fascinating and important as all this is, I do not recommend it here. For I want to call attention only to that sort of English study which can be carried on without any large apparatus of books. For a reason similar though less cogent, I do not urge historical study. Probably the current of English literature is more attractive through its continuity than that of any other nation. Notable works in verse and prose have appeared in long succession, and without gaps intervening, in a way that would be hard to parallel in any other language known to man. A bounteous endowment is for every English speaker, and one which should stimulate us to trace the marvelous and close-linked progress from the times of the Saxons to those of Tennyson and Kipling. Literature, too, has this advantage over every other species of art study, that everybody can examine the original masterpieces and not depend on reproductions, as in the cases of painting, sculpture, and architecture; or on intermediate interpretation, as in the case of music. To-day most of these masterpieces can be studied as a history only at the cost of solid time and continuous attention, much more time than the majority of those I am addressing can afford. By most of us our mighty literature cannot be taken in its continuous current, the latter stretches proving interesting through relation with the earlier. It must be taken fragmentarily, if at all, the attention delaying on those parts only which offer the greatest beauty or promise the best exhilaration. In other words, English may be possible as a joy where it is not possible as a history. In the endless wealth which our poetry, story, essay, and drama afford, every disposition may find its appropriate nutriment, correction, or solace. He is unwise, however busy, who does not have his loved authors, veritable friends with whom he takes refuge in the intervals of work, and by whose intimacy he enlarges, refines, sweetens, and emboldens his own limited existence. Yet the fact that English as joy must largely be conditioned by individual taste prevents me from offering general rules for its pursuit. The road which leads one man straight to enjoyment leads another to tedium. In all literary enjoyment there is something incalculable, something wayward, eluding the precision of rule and rendering inexact the precepts of him who would point out the path to it. While I believe that many suggestions may be made, useful to the young enjoyer, and promotive of his wise vagrancy, I shall not undertake here the complicated task of offering them. Let enjoyment go, let science go, still English remains, English as a tool. Every hour our language is an engine for communicating with others, every instant for fashioning the thoughts of our minds. I want to call attention to the means of mastering this curious and essential tool, and to land everyone who hears me to become discontented with his employment of it.

2 The importance of literary power needs no long argument. Everybody acknowledges it, and sees that without it all other human faculties are maimed. Shakespeare says that "Time insults o'er dull and speechless tribes." It and all who live in it insult over the speechless person. So mutually dependent are we that on our swift and full communication with one another is staked the success of almost every scheme we form. He who cannot is left to the poverty of individual resource; for

men do what we desire only when persuaded. The persuasive and explanatory tongue is, therefore, one of the chief levers of life. Its leverage is felt within us as well as without, for expression and thought are integrally bound together. We do not first possess completed thoughts, and then express them. The very formation of the outward product extends, sharpens, enriches the mind which produces, so that he who gives forth little after a time is likely enough to discover that he has little to give forth. By expression, too, we may carry benefits and our names to a far generation. This durable character of fragile language puts a wide difference of worth between it and some of the other great objects of desire, —health, wealth, and beauty, for example. These are notoriously liable to accident. We tremble while we have them. But literary power, once ours, is more likely than any other possession to be ours always. It perpetuates and enlarges itself by the very fact of its existence, and perishes only with the decay of the man himself. For this reason, because more than health, wealth, and beauty, literary style may be called the man. Good judges have found in it the final test of culture, and have said that he and he alone, is a well-educated person who uses his language with power and beauty. The supreme and ultimate product of civilization, it has been well said, is two or three persons talking together in a room. Between ourselves and our language there accordingly springs up an association peculiarly close. We are sensitive to criticism of our speech as of our manners. The young man looks up with awe to him who has written a book, as already half divine; and the graceful speaker is a universal object of envy.

3 But the very fact that literary endowment is immediately recognized and eagerly envied has induced a strange illusion in regard to it. It is supposed to be something mysterious, innate in him who possesses it, and quite out of the reach of him who has it not. The very contrary is the fact. No human employment is more free and calculable than the winning of language. Undoubtedly there are natural aptitudes for it, as there are for farming, seamanship, or being a good husband. But nowhere is straight work more effective. Persistence, care, discriminating observation, ingenuity, refusal to lose heart, —tend toward it here with special security. Whoever goes to his grave with bad English in his mouth has no one to blame but himself for the disagreeable taste; for if faulty speech can be inherited, it can be exterminated too. I hope to point out some of the methods of substituting good English for bad. And since my space is brief, and I wish to be remembered, I throw what I have to say into the forms of four simple precepts, which, if pertinaciously obeyed, will, I believe, give anybody effective mastery of English as a tool.

...

4 Secondly, “Welcome every opportunity for writing.” Important as I have shown speech to be, there is much that it cannot do. Seldom can it teach structure. Its space is too small. Talking moves in sentences, and rarely demands a paragraph. I make my little remark, —a dozen or two words, — then wait for my friend to hand me back as many more. This gentle exchange continues by the hour; but either of us would feel himself unmannerly if he should grasp an entire five minutes and make it uninterruptedly his. That would not be speaking, but rather speech-making. The brief groupings of words which make up our talk furnish capital practice in precision, boldness, and variety; but they do not contain room enough for exercising our constructive faculties. Considerable length is necessary if we are to learn how to set forth B in right relation to A on the one hand, and to C on the other, and while keeping each a distinct part, we are to be able through their smooth progression to

weld all the parts together into a compacted whole. Such wholeness is what we mean by literary form. Lacking it, any piece of writing is a failure; because, in truth, it is not a piece, but pieces. For ease of reading, or for the attainment of an intended effect, unity is essential—the multitude of statements, anecdotes, quotations, arguings, gay sportings, and appeal, all “bending one way their precious influence.” All this dominant unity of the entire piece obliges unity also in the subordinate parts. Not enough has been done when we have huddled together a lot of wandering sentences, and penned them in a paragraph, or even when we have linked them together by the frail ties of “and, and.” A sentence must be compelled to say a single thing; a paragraph, a single thing; an essay, a single thing. Each part is to be a preliminary whole, and the total a finished whole. But the ability to construct one thing out of many does not come by nature. It implies fecundity, restraint, an eye for effects, the forecast of finish while we are still working in the rough, obedience to the demands of development, and a deaf ear to whatever calls us into the bypaths of caprice; in short, it implies that the good writer is to be an artist.

5 Now something of this large requirement which composition makes, the young writer instinctively feels, and he is terrified. He knows how ill-fitted he is to direct “toil coöperant to an end”; and when he sits down to the desk and sees the white sheet of paper before him, he shivers. Let him know that the shiver is a suitable part of the performance. I well remember the pleasure with which, as a young man, I heard my venerable and practiced professor of rhetoric say that he supposed there was no work known to man more difficult than writing. Up to that time I had supposed its severities peculiar to myself. It cheered me, and gave me courage to try again, to learn that I had all mankind for my fellow-sufferers. Where this is not understood, writing is avoided. From such avoidance I would save the young writer by my precept to seek every opportunity to write. For most of us this is a new way of confronting composition—treating it as an opportunity, a chance, and not as a burden of compulsion. It saves from slavishness and takes away the drudgery of writing, to view each piece of it as a precious and necessary step in the pathway to power. To those engaged in bread-winning employments these opportunities will be few, for only practice breeds ease; but on that very account let no one of them pass with merely a second-best performance. If a letter is to be written to a friend, a report to an employer, a communication to a newspaper, see that it has a beginning, a middle, and an end. The majority of writings are without these pleasing adornments. Only the great pieces possess them. Bear this in mind, and win the way to artistic composition by noticing what should be said first, what second, and what third.

6 I cannot leave this subject, however, without congratulating the present generation on its advantages over mine. Children are brought up to-day, in happy contrast with my compeers, to feel that the pencil is no instrument of torture, hardly indeed to distinguish it from the tongue. About the time they leave their mother's arms they take their pen in hand. On paper they are encouraged to describe their interesting birds, friends, and adventures. Their written lessons are almost as frequent as their oral, and they learn to write compositions while not yet quite understanding what they are about. Some of these fortunate ones will, I hope, find the language I have sadly used about the difficulty of writing extravagant. And let me say, too, that since frequency has more to do with ease of writing than anything else, I count the newspaper men lucky because they are writing all the time, and I do not think so meanly of their product as the present popular disparagement would seem to require. It is hasty work undoubtedly, and bears the marks of haste. But in my judgment, at no period

of the English language has there been so high an average of sensible, vivacious and informing sentences written as appears in our daily press. With both good and evil results, the distinction between book literature and speech literature is breaking down. Everybody is writing, apparently, in verse and prose; and if the higher graces of style do not often appear, neither on the other hand do the ruder awkwardnesses and obscurities. A certain straightforward English is becoming established. A whole nation is learning the use of its mother tongue. Under such circumstances it is doubly necessary that anyone who is conscious of feebleness in his command of English should promptly and earnestly begin the cultivation of it.