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Booth Tarkington

On "What I Have Learned From Boys"



What I Have Learned From Boys

By Booth Tarkington

A FEW years ago a society of scientists whose specialty is the study of crime and criminals held an international meeting at a European university to exchange ideas upon their subject; and one of the Italian criminologists opened the discussion with a rather startling proposal. "At the outset, gentlemen," he said, "let us admit that man is natively criminal."

Now, since this was as much as to say that all of the distinguished participants in the meeting were themselves natural-born criminals, and that only the training they had received, and their fear of the law, prevented them from obeying their native instincts and committing various crimes, it isn't surprising to learn that a considerable commotion was observed among the listeners. None the less, the speaker carried his point, and, so far as could be judged by the journalists present, the conclusion of the debate showed the sense of the meeting to be that man is natively criminal. Of course this is the same as saying that if we follow the instincts with which we are born, we lead lives of crime.

Here we have expert opinion agreeing with the conviction of original sin; with the ancient lament, "We are all miserable sinners;" and with many a badgered spinster's complaint that there never was a boy who didn't have the Old Harry in him! For if it be true that we are natively criminal, then boyhood must be a period of conflict between the boy and the trained adult. The latter calls himself society, and makes the laws, while the boy (according to the expert's conclusions and the old wives' tales too) is still so new in the world that he cannot help being strongly inspired by the criminal impulses of which he principally consisted when he was born.

In other words, it is natural to him to be an outlaw, and, since what is not natural is artificial, his parents' duty is to train him to lead an artificial and uncongenial life of decorum, instead of the logical one of crime for which nature intended him.

The theory that a boy is congenially a criminal has a multitude of advocates. In fact, almost all parents of active boys do at one time or another at least temporarily adhere to it. Grandparents fre-

quently uphold it with vigor; uncles and aunts (aunts especially) often declare for it spiritedly; whole neighborhoods come out for it sometimes, with unanimous vehemence; and I have known domestic servants, both the alien and the native colored, to spend the vocal part of long summer days in oratory passionately affirmative of it.

In fact, the Italian criminologist said nothing new, but merely repeated in a fresh form of words a thing that people have been saying ever since men began to have families, and yet, if that view be the correct one, we have some traditional conceptions to revise. We shall have to alter our whole sentimental position in regard to youth.

Our fond and romantic fancies about children must be reformed and all the tender idealism of childhood stored in our older literature and art abandoned. A father, bending over the cradle of his first-born, will not murmur, "Precious new little pure soul, fresh from heaven, teach me to be worthy of being your parent," but, "Thanks to a merciful Providence, you are in too helpless a condition to execute your dreadful intentions."

WE SEEM to be living in a time of new sciences, and most of them insist upon disturbing us rather seriously; though some of them appear to be at least partly occupied in saying old things in a new and uncomfortable way. Certain rather numerous adherents of one of these have gone a step or two in advance of our friend, the Italian criminologist. According to this advanced position, the child is not only a natural-born criminal but he is an unwholesome sort of criminal to boot. Moreover, it is a risky thing to restrain his evil tendencies, because if he isn't given free rein he will merely bottle up a tendency inside of him, and it is likely to break out of him later, when he is an adult, and do great harm.

That is to say, the repressed desires of childhood and youth become dangerous later, because those desires have been repressed. Thus, if I may be pardoned what is often called a personal allusion, the most passionate and persistent desire of my own childhood was one that had to be repressed. That same desire was also the keenest and longest-lasting of the desires

of all my friends and contemporaries of both sexes; and all of them were forced to repress it. It was the desire to be the proprietor of a candy store.

THERE can be no question: This is an unwholesome desire or yearning, poignant and widespread and persistent. It is invariably repressed, and consequently becomes buried in the subconsciousness of thousands of children; and therefore the new psychology, if consistent, should trace to it a great amount of adult crime, of nervous disorder, morbid brooding, and insanity.

Not being thoroughly informed upon the matter myself, I asked a new psychologist how much wickedness and misery due to this suppressed desire had been uncovered by the investigators in his branch of science. He seemed to be surprised; but, after a moment's thought, informed me that the new psychology interprets the yearning to be the proprietor of a candy store as a sex tendency.

This interpretation was unable to gain my confidence, even though he explained it at length, using several impressive and uncouth words repeatedly; and the end of the matter was that I became somewhat confirmed in a suspicion I had, that both he and the distinguished Italian criminologist were mistaken. What confirmed my suspicion was, in the first place, a difficulty in identifying candy as sex, or even gender; and, in the second, my own reflections upon the behavior of the infants, children, and youths I have known.

There can be no question: a baby is self-centered. He is concerned with himself and exhibits no altruism whatever; but a mere lack of altruism is not generally held to be criminal; and a baby is in no position to prove that he possesses capacities of the generous kind.

Moreover, we may admit that the child continues to be self-centered when he has passed out of babyhood. His own desires, and what he believes to be his own needs, are in general more important to him than is anything else in the world; he is not especially concerned to make other people happy, can view the anguish of contemporaries with equanimity or even pleasure; and, although sometimes temporarily and vaguely disturbed by symp-

toms of grief on the part of members of his own family, his emotions are not greatly affected by any troubles except his own.

Now, the criminologist may argue that the child has naturally a poor sense of property rights; for instance, that a child will take another child's toy without compunction, and will often passionately resist efforts to restore the toy to its proper owner. That is true; but, on the other hand, when the child has once learned the law in the matter, he characteristically submits to it and respects it. "You let that sand-pile alone! I made it and it's mine!" one four-year-old shouts to another on the bathing beach; and, although the sand of a beach has the strongest appearance of being common property, the encroacher nearly always departs, albeit somewhat peevishly. Even though he be the stronger and larger of the two, he will ordinarily respect the law, if he is aware of it.

But the self-centeredness of childhood persists, of course, and, having been so powerful in infancy, it could not well be expected to disappear during boyhood or even in those later years of boyhood that we sometimes call youth. However, by this time the boy or youth has learned that self-centeredness isn't esteemed as creditable, and so he may seek to overcome it and substitute altruism—often inadequately.

NOT long ago I knew a boy of thirteen who was very fond of his mother, a widow, and, as her fortieth birthday anniversary approached, he thought a great deal about a present for her. As she was "literary," he decided upon books; but he had no funds of his own, and he felt a delicacy about asking her for money to buy a present for her, since that would put her almost in the position of merely buying a present for herself through an agent. So he went to a book store and asked to be allowed to open a "charging account," but the clerk informed him that this was not necessary, since the boy's mother already maintained such an account with the store.

That simplified everything; and upon the breakfast table, on the morning of her birthday, the mother found a rather heavy box, upon which was a card whereon the son had written, "For My Affectionate Mother, From George." Opening the box, she discovered that it contained those nine well-bound books known as "The Carroll Boys' Own Island and Eight Other Volumes of the Carroll Boys Adventure Series." And with the books was a slip of paper recording the fact that they were charged to her account.

At that, George did a little better than two other boys whom I knew. They were

brothers, aged eleven and nine; and one morning they waylaid their father at the gate as he went forth in the morning. They asked him for ten dollars.

"What!" he exclaimed severely. "Ten dollars!"

"Please give it to us," the older of the brothers pleaded. "It isn't for ourselves, Papa. We wouldn't ask you for ten dollars just to spend on ourselves, Papa. We want it for Mama."

"Do you expect me to believe your mother asked you to ask me—"

"Oh, no, Papa! She doesn't know anything about it. It's for a surprise to her on her birthday to-morrow. We know of

ten dollars' worth of chewing-gum, although she had never shown herself to be an addict.

These are but instances that show the trend: the impulse to do something generous and appreciative is present; but self is present too, and is likely to prevail. The boys who bought the chewing-gum for their mother hesitated for a time over a hand-mirror shown them by the salesman; but it could not quite bring them to the purchasing point; they could not warm to it as they did to the prospect of a house illimitably supplied with gum. Cologne or some other "perfumery" might possibly have had a chance with them, before their idea of the gum became fixed; for a scent bottle is a gift of which the benefits may be shared between recipient and donor; and, although statistics are not available, a bottle of "perfumery" is probably the most characteristic gift of a child to an adult, especially if both be of the same household.

ALL this, however, is far from saying that children never do generous things, even noble things. They sometimes do—and without prompting; they may even keep their generosity or nobility hidden and seek to gain no credit for it. And sometimes, too, they do terrible things; but both the terrible and the noble things done by children are exceptional, and not commonplace; otherwise we should take little note of them.

What observation and reflection seemed to suggest, when I found myself in disagreement with the new psychologist and the Italian criminologist, was that, in the main and in general, where and when children know the law they show little inclination to resist it or circumvent it. In other words, they are self-centered but law-abiding, which does not seem to indicate criminal tendencies. And in being self-centered but law-abiding they do not appear to differ widely from the rest of the mass of humankind.

Probably it is the "active boy," aged typically from eight to fourteen or fifteen, who most often incites the old wives to pessimistic theorizing, who offers substantial testimony in favor of the doctrine of original sin, and inspires certain weighty criminologists to conceive mankind as natively criminal. But in spite of these sinister aspects, from eight to fourteen is a period of life piquantly interesting to the congenial observer; for in studying it he may perceive unconcealed in the boy not only what is later to be found coated over in the man but something also of the history of all mankind.

To say that something of the history of all mankind is to be found in the typical

This Article Tells You Why "Boys Will Be Boys!"

IN "Penrod," in "Seventeen," and in many other books and short stories Booth Tarkington has proved that he knows what goes on inside of the average boy's mind better than any other living writer of fiction.

In the article starting on the preceding page, Mr. Tarkington departs from the field of fiction to reveal for the first time what he has learned from his lifelong observation of the American boy in action. It is a serious study, lightened with whimsy and humor and fantasy, and the author's message is driven home by one of the most entertaining true stories of a boy ever written. No one but Mr. Tarkington could have done this particular chapter in the hectic life of Harvey Thomas Pringle.

Packed between the smiles of the article you will find a real revelation of what modern science knows about the workings of a boy's mind—how and why he passes through the various stages of his young life. An understanding of this theory will help us all to deal with boys more wisely and more sympathetically.

THE EDITOR.

something we want to get her and surprise her with."

"What is it?"

Both boys looked serious. "Papa, it's something we *know* she'll like; but we thought of it ourselves and we want to not tell anybody about it at all until we give it to her. Papa, Mama's always been a good mother to us, and we *do* want to make her a nice present. Won't you *please* give us ten dollars so's we can do it?"

Amused, but a little touched, too, the father gave them what they asked for, and the next day they came to their mother, kissed her fondly, for her birthday, and presented her with a package consisting of

boy, aged eight to fourteen, is to set forth one of those shadowy generalities that may, upon analysis, mean nothing whatever. Details and illustration are needed, and for these I fall back upon Harvey Thomas Pringle, a neighbor of mine aged eleven, verging upon twelve.

Harvey Thomas Pringle is one of those "active boys." At least, that is how his mother speaks of him, with an apologetic inflection of the voice, and hurriedly, as if she hopes to be allowed to pass on to another subject immediately; but the neighborhood has a great many definitions of Harvey, most of them Biblical. Not long ago he gave his family, and some other people, what poor Mrs. Pringle called (in the evening, when the doctor had gone) "a Day indeed!"

This Day was Saturday, and Harvey began it early in the morning. He was in high spirits (though for no discernible reason), and when he came down-stairs he found that not even the elderly colored cook was up, so he decided to rouse her. This he did, and also roused his own and surrounding households by making the Pringles' grand-voiced collie bark steadily for some twenty minutes under the cook's window. The nurse in attendance upon an invalid across the street complained by telephone, and Mr. Pringle came forth imperiously in a bathrobe.

After uttering a few words, bitter upon his own behalf as well as upon the invalid's, he returned up-stairs; and Harvey brought Nero, the collie, into the kitchen. The night had been rainy; Nero had harried a strange dog up and down an unpaved back alley in the dawn; the kitchen floor was clean until he came upon it. He walked about, interested in the Young Master, who decided to get his own breakfast, since the cook was so tardy. She was not enough so, however; for the amateur breakfast was but half prepared when she descended. Her kitchen, on the contrary, it appeared, from her lamentations, was quite finished; and she proved surprisingly enough that she knew something of ancient history; she showed herself fully aware that Nero was an atrocious name.

The collie was banished under the compulsion of a furious oratory, the accompanying illustrative gestures being done with a mop, and Harvey, hearing his mother descending the back stairs inquiringly, retired to the front part of the house.

HE WAS pleased with the episode, which had relieved the ennui of waiting for breakfast; but another interval now began to hang heavily upon him. He took a bit of chalk from his pocket and exercised a new talent. After school, the day before, one of his friends had drawn a fascinating picture consisting of only seven curved lines. It was called "The Cat Walking up an Alley," and was readily recognizable as a cat going away from the observer, though the alley was left to the imagination.

Harvey had found that he could draw the cat as well as his friend could, and he drew it now, upon the living-room floor; but the floor was waxed and did not take the chalk well. The new artist looked about for a better surface, a black surface preferably, and, glancing through a door-

way, noticed that his father's overcoat, of rather smooth black cloth, had fallen to the floor of the adjacent coat-room. He spread the coat out on the floor, and made a splendid picture of the cat walking up the alley.

HAVING admired it with a little pleasant vanity, he was about to draw another when he heard his father coming down to breakfast, and realized that he was in a compromising position. Mr. Pringle did not like to have his overcoat on the floor, and would probably be unjust enough to charge Harvey with putting it there. Harvey quickly restored the coat to the hanger from which it had fallen, put the chalk in his pocket, and walked away from the coat-room.

After breakfast he romped



with Nero in the yard for a few minutes; and then an Airedale, a stranger in that neighborhood, came round the corner, perceived the boy and the collie, and paused upon the sidewalk considering matters, his facial expression gravely pugnacious. Harvey saw the Airedale, and without an instant's deliberation looked for a missile.

He found several ready to hand, for the night's storm had shaken down some hard little apples that had remained attached to the upper branches of an old apple tree this late into the autumn. Harvey ran out upon the sidewalk, throwing apples with all his might at the Airedale. "Sick 'im, Nero!" he shouted, and Nero rushed ferociously upon the stranger.

The latter was broad-shouldered and of



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Booth Tarkington, famous novelist and playwright, was born in Indianapolis fifty-five years ago, and he still lives in that city. He took up writing as a career in his early twenties, and he has produced more than a score of widely read novels, dozens of short stories, and several popular plays. "The Gentleman from Indiana," "Monsieur Beaucaire," "The Conquest of Canaan," "Penrod," "Seventeen," "Gentle Julia," "The Magnificent Ambersons," and "Alice Adams" are among his most popular books.

a truculent spirit; but he had a conscience and knew himself to be outside his rights. This was not his own neighborhood; it belonged to the collie, who was doing the proper thing in attacking trespassers, and had both morals and tradition behind him. Therefore, the Airedale, though irritated by the other's language and the apples, returned to the corner; but here he found himself occupying a proper field of duty, for his master, a boy of Harvey's age, was now in the act of turning that corner. The Airedale halted, and in a sinister manner declared himself to be a dangerous person, and within the law. Nero arrived ravening, and battle was instantly simultaneous. Both dogs had loud voices; so had Harvey and the Airedale's master; a demoniac uproar shattered the peace of the neighborhood; and from several up-stairs windows pacifist housewives screamed at the combatants and their abettors. But a negro who abandoned a lawnmower for a garden hose proved more effective: the powerful stream of water near the nozzle was unendurable. The dogs separated; the Airedale retreated round the corner, and Nero, shaking his head continuously, returned to his own yard.

Not so their masters. The Airedale's owner, likewise a stranger on this ground, had already (Continued on page 146)

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exchanged hard words with Harvey, and the dog fight was no sooner over than the boy fight began. It also was noisy; and again the window pacifists screamed indignation. Again, too, the negro gardener employed the garden hose successfully.

Sodden, and with his nose slightly enlarged upon one side, Harvey retired to his own quarters, and, desiring to avoid his mother, went up-stairs to the attic, and thence through a scuttle to a more interesting place, the roof of the house. Here he partly dried himself in the sun, and then, observing that he had the attention of several children in the yard next door, he began to perform hazardous feats of climbing. Twice he risked his life and once probably would have lost it, except for the fact that as he slid downward to the abyss his toe caught by chance in a copper rain-gutter. He murmured "Whee!" and then waved his hand with boastful grace, to show his admirers below that the thing had been done precisely as intended—but an adult spectator had warned his mother, whose voice was now heard from the scuttle. Harvey returned to earth, after an enforced change of costume.

COMRADES now joined him and they decided to build something. One reported that materials were available, as a new house was being constructed not more than a block away; it was merely needful to avoid attracting the attention of the carpenters. Successful forays were made, and within an hour, in Mr. Pringle's garage, there was a pile of planks, tile, tin, shingles, tarred paper and miscellaneous building stuffs which the contractor estimated, a little later, for Mrs. Pringle's information, at a money value of two hundred and thirty-one dollars.

For the final foray was a disaster; the carpenters saw and pursued with such seriousness that the refugees scattered to their own homes. This is nearly always the symptom that a boy is in difficulties upon what he recognizes as the adult plane, and it was a pallid Harvey who sat on a box in the cellar, listening to his mother's conversation with the contractor in the front hall, just above him. When the horrible sum, two hundred and thirty-one dollars, was announced—repeatedly announced and emphasized in the contractor's booming voice—Harvey saw himself in the death-house; and he was incredulous when the man accepted

as plausible Mrs. Pringle's sincerely indignant defense of her son.

Harvey was an active boy, she said, but he would never have been a participant in a larceny. The very fact that the lumber was piled in the Pringles' garage—with the doors open—proved that the other boys, and not Harvey, had put it there, because even a boy of eleven would certainly know better than thus to incriminate himself.

The contractor departed to help his men remove his property from the garage, and after a few moments Harvey came quietly up-stairs from the cellar. He was by no means uncomfortable; he had just heard the words "stole" and "theft" and "robbery" used freely in personal application to himself and his most intimate friends; but this did not trouble him, because it was a purely adult application. Harvey and his friends looked upon a house occupied by the owners as private property; but they felt that a house under construction belongs to no one in particular. Colored people "and everybody" (Harvey would have said) carry away things from such houses. Carpenters and policemen have to be avoided, but the carrying-away is ethical, semi-universal, and has nothing to do with stealing.

His mother saw him coming up demurely from the cellar, and he mentioned to her that he had been "playing down there a pretty good while;" then went forth to collect his friends again. The episode had passed, and by lunch time it was almost of the long ago.

A LITTLE way down the street lived a piquant maiden named Ethel, ten-and-two-thirds-years-old by her own insistently exact definition. After lunch Harvey sauntered over to her yard and found her playing happily with two other little girls.

They did not offer him a cordial welcome; on the contrary; and so, feeling a little shy and embarrassed, he ostentatiously kicked Ethel's hat into a goldfish pool that ornamented the lawn, near where she had carelessly left her hat. All three little girls, instantly shrill with hatred, told him what they thought of him, and ordered him off the premises. Then, as he felt that it would be undignified to depart while they were so noisily imperious, they impulsively attempted to push him out of the yard. This was a mistake, since Harvey's self-respect

positively could not allow such a thing to be done; and the end of it was that Ethel followed her hat into the goldfish pool.

One of the guests shrieked "Murder!" and "Help!" in an appalling consecutive repetition, while the other ran into the house to ask Ethel's mother to telephone Mrs. Pringle to come and punish Harvey; and this telephoning was done, but Harvey had departed by an alley gate before his mother arrived.

His attire was permanently damaged; his cheeks and swollen nose were scratched, and he felt rather depressed; for Ethel was the shining pearl of his fairy dreams—he cared for none other, and feared that he was not making much headway with her. All of her recent behavior, and particularly what she had said as she climbed out of the goldfish pool, emphasized this gloomy impression, and as he went down the alley he became somewhat morose. He was in no state of mind to be taunted—yet viperish taunts he had to bear, for three of his comrades of the morning sat upon a back fence and giped at him: "Yay! Harvey Pringle! Fightin' with girls! Fightin' with your *own* girl! Fightin' with your sweetie!"

NERO had not brought away all the mud of that alley with him in the early morning; there was plenty left. Harvey assailed his tormentors with hard-packed balls made of the caked mud; the jeerers descended, and in like manner assailed Harvey; and presently he received one of these serious missiles directly upon his right eye.

This put him straightway out of the combat, and he had to be led to a hydrant, where cold water failed to reduce a swelling that surpassed anything similar in the experience of those present. Consequently, it was thought that Harvey should go home, tell his mother that he had stumbled, and receive medical attention. He acted upon this advice, but outside the living-room door he paused, hearing his mother engaged in a wailing narrative to one of his aunts.

"I don't know *what* to do about him!" he heard Mrs. Pringle lamenting. "Poor little Ethel already had a cold, and her mother says she had to put her to bed, she was in such a chill; besides her dress and hat being utterly ruined. And the cook insists that Harvey was *not* in the cellar, but the very ringleader when they brought all that stuff and put it in our garage! Two hundred and thirty-one dollars, the man said it was worth! Of course a thing like that is more than merely 'serious'; it's simply outrageous. I don't know what his father *will* do to him! He insisted over the telephone that I shouldn't question Harvey about that drawing on the back of his overcoat, but leave it to *him* when he comes home this evening. He says he never noticed it at all until he got down town and couldn't *imagine* why everybody made so much commotion wherever he went. He's very upset over it and he says if it was Harvey that did it—and he's almost positive it was—well *this* time he says he's going to—"

Harvey waited for no details; he could imagine them for himself. He decided that his eye would do better without the doctor, and went hurriedly away on tip-

toe. He returned to his comrades, and, finding them engaged in throwing mud balls at a colored man on a trash wagon, joined in the pastime, though his aim was defective since he now had the use of only one eye.

Mud-ball warfare on passing strangers in trucks and wagons was continued intermittently until late in the afternoon, when it was discovered that the carpenters had gone away, and that consequently the house under course of construction had become available for every possible use.

It was thought best, however, not to remove anything, but to convert the place into a besieged fortalice, one party attacking, the other defending. Weapons were easily constructed, so much material being to hand; and battle was joined.

It went on spiritedly—sometimes with a great deal too much vigor—until, in the gathering twilight, a thrust from a wooden sword caused Harvey to step backward upon nothing and fall into the cellar of the unfinished house. As he had been upon the second floor when his descent began, and as it was getting dark, anyhow, the boys decided to stop playing and go home.

A little later Harvey's parents, seeking him for interrogation first, though with other purposes in mind for later, found him in his own room, rubbing his shoulder and applying a wet towel to his eye.

After looking at him, they postponed discipline and sent for the doctor, who discovered that Harvey had a broken collar bone. He said he thought the eye could be saved.

Undeniably, this lively day of Harvey's caused his parents to feel mortification as well as something not far removed from anguish; it stirred the neighborhood to much ado; and all in all, it might have been called a scandal, for certainly a number of people were scandalized. No commiseration was expressed for Harvey's physical sufferings, though optimists hoped these might be a lesson to him. Harvey's great-aunt condensed the general thought when she said that there was just one explanation of his behavior that really explained it. Simply, Harvey was "a born criminal."

Now, there we have our criminologist again, and it must be recorded that the neighborhood agreed with him and with Harvey Pringle's great-aunt. But I began to ponder upon Harvey and upon Harvey's celebrated day; and it seemed to me that I got another light upon it.

TO THE best of our knowledge there were formerly times when grown men characteristically behaved much as Harvey had behaved that day. Prehistoric men felt and obeyed the impulse to draw crude pictures of animals; they drew them anywhere, upon the walls of caves, upon the bark of trees, upon the skins they (or perhaps their relatives) wore as garments.

When a prehistoric man saw a strange animal he hurled missiles at it—it might prove edible. The instantaneous impulse that led Harvey to throw apples at the Airedale was very ancient; so was his readiness to fight the human stranger, the Airedale's owner. Strangers nearly always meant peril to the earliest men, and the readiness with which Harvey fell upon the

strange boy was even older than that desire to build something, which got Harvey and his friends into trouble with the carpenters.

His wooing of Ethel was ancient, too—what is sometimes called a rough wooing, but a wooing it was, although so rough and ancient in form. So was his clambering and risking his life upon the roof ancient, like the climbing of early men upon the sides of cliffs—the desire to climb is one of the true antique desires in a boy.

Raids with companions upon passing caravans appear later in the development of the race, and the attack upon towers and fortified places, together with their defense, still later. In fact, Harvey and his comrades had run all the long way up from the primordial to the medieval—even further still and into the sixteenth century—during that one lively day. And so, pondering upon this suggestive day, I thought, "Why 'criminal'? Why should we say that Harvey Pringle is a 'born criminal'? Why should we say that civilized man is 'natively criminal'? Why not merely 'historic,' since in his youth he reproduces and lives again the history of the race?"

For I remembered some courses in biology I had followed in college, and I recalled how emphatically one old professor, in particular, impressed upon us what he thought the most suggestive marvel that man has discovered in his study of organic life—the human embryo, during the period of incubation, passes through all the stages of evolution from the lowest to the highest, from the primal cell up to that complicated organism, man. The embryo reproduces evolution; it is the history of our evolving upward from the amœba to what we are.

NOW this history of evolution, depicted and related during the incubation of the human embryo, seems to culminate with the birth of the embryo as a full-fledged baby; or, in other words, when a new man comes into the world. But, thinking over what Harvey Pringle's day had suggested, I began to see that, just as in his embryo man reproduces the history of his development upward from the mire into man, so does he in his childhood and his boyhood and his youth reproduce the onward history of the race, from the most ancient man to the most modern.

That is to say, a boy is not a criminal; he is the history of mankind; and, in that light, with what profound interest, with what solemn respect may we not view him! And thus, in that same light, when we look at a new baby, we may display a better intelligence of what we mean when we say, as we sometimes do, "How wise he looks!"

At one time or another most of us have been rather oddly puzzled, even a little disturbed, by the strange look of a very ancient and withheld wisdom that some babies have. "How queerly *old* he looks!" we say. "If he could only tell us all he knows!" And it may be that then we hint at something more than we ourselves know. For when we gaze down, wondering, at that old, old look in the eyes of a new-born baby, we are looking at the first man that ever walked—the oldest man in the world!