THE STRENUOUS LIFE: THE CULT OF MANLINESS IN THE ERA OF THEODORE ROOSEVELT

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ABSTRACT

THE STRENUOUS LIFE: THE CULT OF MANLINESS

IN THE ERA OF THEODORE ROOSEVELT

By

Gerald F. Roberts

"The strenuous life," a phrase introduced by Theodore Roosevelt, characterized a distinct and identifiable phenomenon in American life in the 1890's and early 1900's. In preaching the strenuous life Roosevelt expressed a set of values in American culture that were associated in the late nineteenth century with the wealthy, college-educated, young men of the Eastern upper middle class. As the emerging leaders in the 1880's and 1890's, members of this youthful elite admired personal daring and adventure, and dedicated themselves to public service. The strenuous life reflected the strong sense of national pride, moral purpose, and Anglo-Saxon superiority which lay behind the rationale for American imperialism. It also reflected their concern for manliness, which was the central theme of the strenuous life.

Against the background of the changing conditions of American life in the late nineteenth century, and in response to those changes, the strenuous life was cultivated as an alternative to the discontent, uncertainty, and frustration fostered by the threat of "overcivilization" inherent in the nation's new urban-industrial society. The quest for the strenuous life produced a cult of manliness which exerted

great influence at the turn of the century. It expressed itself in the boom in sports and outdoor recreation, in the new concern for nature and the American wilderness, in the war with Spain and America's venture into imperialism. Generally, this spirit infused the theme of masculinity into many areas of society.

The strenuous life characterized the America of Theodore Roosevelt at the turn of the century. Both the man and the nation displayed an adolescent nervousness and anxiety, combined with an impulse for action that revealed a desperate need to prove themselves, and that they possessed the heroic virtues. Roosevelt became the undisputed leader of the cult of manliness; the nation discovered itself to be a new world power--the possessor of a far-flung overseas empire.

For advocates of the strenuous cult the Spanish-American War provided the supreme test of manliness and courage. The war glorified the American gentleman-soldier and completed the building of the heroic image of American manhood which epitomized the strenuous ideal. It also inaugurated two decades of seeming strenuous activity in the life of the nation, when Americans adopted the strenuous life as a guiding principle in the conduct of both domestic and foreign affairs.

"The strenuous life" thus is an appropriate label for the era, and it remains a key to the explanation of significant social and intellectual currents of the American 1890's and early 1900's. As many then believed, nations could be manly as well as individuals, so the strenuous life represented

the national struggle for maturity in the era of Theodore Roosevelt. Like so many other currents in American life, however, the ideal of strenuous service and sacrifice was shattered by the time the United States emerged from World War I. The war and the resultant disillusionment brought the era of the Rooseveltian strenuous life to an end.

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The real service is rendered, not by the critic who stands aloof from the contest, but by the man who enters into it and bears his part as a man should, undeterred by the blood and the sweat.

--Theodore Roosevelt,1894

First of all, a man must be what other men call "square"--which implies that he must have a sense of honor. This means so much in the relations of men with men. . . . Fair play and the rigor of the game is a masculine ideal; and men will trust and like and honor those who live up to its strict requirements.

--Rafford Pyke, 1902

Chapter I

The Strenuous Life

Nine months after his charge at San Juan Hill, Theodore Roosevelt appeared as guest speaker of the Hamilton Club in Chicago, declaring:

> . . .I wish to preach, not the doctrine of ignoble ease, but the doctrine of the strenuous life, the life of toil and effort, of labor and strife; to preach that highest form of success which comes, not to the man who desires mere easy peace, but to the man who does not shrink from danger, from hardship, or from bitter toil, and who out of these wins the splendid ultimate triumph.[1]

Roosevelt, and others, had been arguing this theme for years; what came to be particularly distinctive about this speech, however, was Roosevelt's introduction of the phrase, "the strenuous life."[2] The point of view summarized by this phrase functioned as a powerful dynamism in Roosevelt's private life, in his performance as a public figure, and in

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[1]Theodore Roosevelt, The Strenuous Life: Essays and Addresses (New York: The Century Co., 1904), p. 1. The Hamilton Club, before which Roosevelt spoke, was one of several Chicago clubs which sought to enlist "respectable" members of society in the cause of reform in the 1890's. See Ernest L. Bogart and Charles M. Thompson, The Industrial State, 1870-1893, Vol. IV of the Centennial History of Illinois (Springfield: Centennial Commission, 1920), pp. 207-208.

[2]Years later in his autobiography Roosevelt stated that he had always wished that "I had myself used 'The Vigor of Life' as a heading to indicate what I was trying to preach, instead of the heading I actually did use." Roosevelt, An Autobiography (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), pp. 50-51.

his generation's role in history; his phrase, "the strenuous life," became an appropriate label for the age and remains a key to the explanation of significant social and intellectual currents of the American 1890's and early 1900's.[3]

Attacking those who shrank from the strenuous life, Roosevelt observed in his Chicago speech that they either believed in the "cloistered life," or else "are wedded to that base spirit of gain and greed which recognizes in commercialism the be-all and end-all of national life, . . ."[4] At odds with the dominant trend of selfish materialism and the quality of life it was producing in America, Roosevelt sought to restore, through the strenuous life, the older, hardier strain of virtues which, he felt, had been responsible for the nation's greatness. Thus he could say on another occasion: "No amount of commercial prosperity can supply the lack of the heroic virtues."[5] For Roosevelt these could be

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[3]See for example, John Higham, "The Reorientation of American Culture in the 1890's," The Origins of Modern Consciousness, ed. John Weiss (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1965), pp. 25-48; Edwin H. Cady, "'The Strenuous Life' as a Theme in American Cultural History," New Voices in American Studies, ed. R.B. Brown, D.M. Winkleman, and H. Allen (Purdue University Studies, 1966), pp. 59-66; Cady, Stephen Crane (New Haven: College & University Press, 1962), pp. 81-84; Alfred Kazin, On Native Grounds (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., Anchor Edition, 1956, pp. 69-71; Harold U. Faulkner, The Quest For Social Justice, 1898-1914 (New York: Macmillan Co., 1937), p. 281.

[4]Roosevelt, The Strenuous Life, op. cit., p. 8.

[5]Roosevelt, American Ideals and Other Essays Social and Political (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1897), p. 11.

supplied only through such forms of strenuous endeavor as football, boxing, ranching, hunting, or war.

It could be argued, however, that men who were engaged in the fierce and unrestrained economic competition which had characterized the industrial and commercial growth of the nation since the Civil War were themselves simply participating in one form of the strenuous life. Indeed, in his Chicago speech Roosevelt paid tribute to the so-called "captains of industry": "All honor must be paid to the architects of our material prosperity, to the great captains of industry who have built our factories and our railroads, to the strong men who toil for wealth with brain or hand; for great is the debt of the nation to these and their kind."[6]

However, while acknowledging the role of America's industrial giants and all others engaged in the rigours of the economic struggle for survival, Roosevelt pointed to another breed of men, represented by Lincoln and Grant, to whom the nation owed a greater debt. These men, he declared, strenuously participated in endeavors which were of a higher, nobler order than mere money-making: "They showed by their lives that they recognized the law of work, the law of strife; they toiled to win a competence for themselves and those dependent upon them; but they recognized that there were yet

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[6]Roosevelt, The Strenuous Life, op. cit., p. 8.

other and even loftier duties--duties to the nation and duties to the race."[7] For Roosevelt, as for many other men of his background, what the nation needed was the renewal of a commitment of strenuosity to worthy tasks which would make for a better America, rather than an adherence to the values of the Gilded Age which was producing an easy life of selfish materialism.

The Spanish-American War and the nation's resultant venture into imperialism had provided an opportunity for the exercise of the Rooseveltian brand of strenuosity, and, indeed, that strenuosity had contributed to the coming of the war and to the imperialist mood of the period. Roosevelt's Chicago speech was primarily a rousing defense of American imperialism, and his praise of "the strenuous life" was presented within the context of America's new aggressiveness in foreign affairs:

> We cannot avoid the responsibilities that confront us in Hawaii, Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippines. All we can decide is whether we shall meet them in a way that will redound to the national credit, or whether we shall make of our dealings with these new problems a dark and shameful page in our history. . . The timid man, the lazy man, the man who distrusts his country, the over-civilized man, who has lost the great fighting, masterful virtues, the ignorant man, and the man of dull mind, whose soul is incapable of feeling the mighty lift that thrills "stern men with empires in their brains" -- all these, of course, shrink from seeing the nation undertake its new duties. . . . These are the men who fear the strenuous life, who fear the only national life which is really worth leading.[8]

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., pp. 6-8.

Belief in the necessity for a national strenuosity in world affairs dominated the thinking of many who were writing in the 1890's. It appeared in the writings of Alfred T. Mahan, Brooks Adams, John Fiske, Josiah Strong, John Hay, Homer Lea, John W. Burgess, and Henry Cabot Lodge. Roosevelt's speech, therefore, was but representative of a mode of thought characteristic of many men of the upper middle class in late nineteenth century America. The strenuous life reflected the strong sense of national pride, moral purpose, and Anglo-Saxon superiority which lay behind their rationale for American imperialism. It also reflected their concern for manliness, for they attributed to strong, vigorous nations those qualities of manliness deemed essential in men. "If we stand idly by," Roosevelt said, "if we shrink from the hard contests where men must win at hazard of their lives and at the risk of all they hold dear, then the bolder and stronger peoples will pass us by, and will win for themselves the domination of the world. Let us therefore boldly face the life of strife, resolute to do our duty well and manfully; . . ."[9]

The class of men for whom Roosevelt spoke applied the Darwinian notion of a struggle for existence to the various international rivalries of the period. "The life of strife"

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[9] Ibid., pp. 20-21. On the views and assumptions of the imperialist elite, see chapters 1 & 2 of Howard K. Beale, Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1956).

was the Rooseveltian version of "the struggle for existence." Without a national commitment to such a life, Roosevelt felt that "the bolder and stronger peoples" of the world would pass America by, and would "win for themselves the domination of the world." Captain Alfred T. Mahan reflected the prevailing Darwinian view when he wrote in 1897: "All around us is strife; 'the struggle of life,' 'the race of life,' are phrases so familiar that we do not feel their significance till we stop to think about them. Everywhere nation is arrayed against nation; our own no less than others."[10]

Roosevelt had pointed to "the overcivilized man" as the one who shrank from the strenuous life and from the idea of America doing its duty overseas. That people were "over-civilized" was a matter for concern to many Americans in the late nineteenth century. The subject was frequently discussed in the period. Mahan asserted that the outside barrier of Rome had crumbled "when the strong masculine impulse which first created it had degenerated into that worship of comfort, wealth, and general softness, which is the ideal of the peace prophets of to-day."[11] Brooks Adams touched on the theme in his Law of Civilization and Decay, which appeared in 1895.

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[10]Quoted in Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1962), p. 188.

[11]Alfred T. Mahan, "The Possibilities of an Anglo-American Reunion" in The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1903), p. 121.

"Overcivilization" was regarded as a crucial problem in late nineteenth century America because, it was felt, it undermined masculinity and the masculine virtues.[12]

The message preached by Roosevelt in his Chicago speech in 1899 represented his conviction from personal experience. Roosevelt had committed himself at a very early age to the struggles of a strenuous existence. He had been a boxer in his Harvard days, a cowboy and rancher in the Badlands of the West, a wilderness and big-game hunter, and he had undergone the supreme test of manhood by performing heroically in battle in the war with Spain.

In preaching the strenuous life Roosevelt was expressing a set of values in American culture that were associated in the late nineteenth century especially with the well-to-do, college-educated, leisured young men of the Eastern upper middle class. Coming to the fore in the 1880's and 1890's, this youthful elite set the tone for much of America's social and cultural life. When Roosevelt called upon the nation to

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[12]Larzer Ziff, in his study of the American 1890's, has emphasized the theme of "overcivilization" as being a major factor contributing to the new cult of strenuousness. In literature, Ziff observes, the problem of "overcivilization" helped give birth in the 1890's to a new American hero--the cowboy: "As commerce, politics, and art, as even war increasingly became abstract, how necessary was the Western, the constant reminder that there really is such a thing as being overcivilized, and the constant proclamation that Americans were bred to be warriors . . ." The American 1890's (New York: The Viking Press, 1966), pp. 227-228.

act as he had acted, he struck a responsive chord, for in social and cultural matters many Americans tended to follow where the gentlemen of the Eastern upper class led; and in the last decades of the nineteenth century some members of this class assiduously promoted a strenuous mode of life.

II

It was especially the restlessness of the young men of comfortable Eastern family background which produced the impetus for the strenuous life in the late nineteenth century. Many had been born into the security of old, established families in America, and they found themselves ill-at-ease in the newly emerging industrial order of the East.[13] The discontent of the sons of prominent, old-stock American families in the industrial Northeast was reflected in

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[13]G. Edward White has chronicled the early discontent in the lives of the three members of "the Eastern Establishment" who most vigorously promoted the strenuous ideal in relation to the West--Roosevelt, Frederic Remington, and Owen Wister. Central to White's thesis is his analysis of the adolescent experience of these men in the urban-industrial environment of the East, and his conclusion that, as representatives of old-stock families whose prestige stemmed from America's preindustrial age, each approached manhood with a sense of anxiety and uncertainty regarding his ability and desire to fit into the emerging industrial society of late nineteenth century America. Hence they found a new sense of identity in their strenuous lives in the non-urban, nonindustrial West. The Eastern Establishment and the Western Experience: The West of Frederic Remington, Theodore Roosevelt, and Owen Wister (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 52-74.

criticisms of the new industrial age, and of that class which was concerned only with money-making. In The Century Magazine in 1886 Roosevelt expressed his criticism this way:

> In all the large cities of the North the wealthier, or, as they would prefer to style themselves, the "upper" classes, tend distinctly towards the bourgeois type; and an individual in the bourgeois stage of development, while honest, industrious, and virtuous, is also not unapt to be a miracle of timid and short-sighted selfishness. The commercial classes are only too likely to regard everything merely from the stand-point of "Does it pay?"...[14]

The discontent of the young men of Roosevelt's class and background, fostered by the status shifts of the post-Civil War period and by a gradual awakening to the evils of the Gilded Age, stimulated a new activism in the political arena. The entrance of the sons of the leisure class into politics in the 1880's and 1890's prepared the way for the Progressive period of the early twentieth century.[15] Roosevelt emerged as the chief spokesman for those who were initiating a strenuous mode of service in politics. It is significant that one of his most famous statements on the strenuous theme was made within the context of a political lecture. "The

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[14]Theodore Roosevelt, "Machine Politics in New York City," The Century Magazine, XXXIII (November, 1886), p. 76.

[15]See Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform (New York: Random House, Vintage Edition, 1960), pp. 134-148, 164-173. For a detailed discussion of the entry of Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge into politics, see Chapter II, "The Scholars in Politics," in Matthew Josephson, The President Makers (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1940), pp. 29-64.

real service," he said, "is rendered, not by the critic who stands aloof from the contest, but by the man who enters into it and bears his part as a man should, undeterred by the blood and the sweat." He continued his discussion of "The Manly Virtues and Practical Politics" by declaring that it "must not be forgotten by the man desirous of doing good political work" that there is "the need of the rougher, manlier virtues, and above all the virtue of personal courage, physical as well as moral." Certainly for those men who would work for decent politics, he said, they must show "that they possess the essential manly virtues of energy, of resolution, and of indomitable personal courage."[16]

Similarly, in foreign affairs the impact of the sons of the patrician class was being felt. Their outlook reflected what John P. Mallan has called "the warrior critique of the business civilization" of America, which flourished as an aspect of the expansionist argument developed by "the little imperialist elite" of the 1890's. This group of expansionists included Roosevelt, Henry Cabot Lodge, Alfred T. Mahan, and Brooks Adams--men whose background was largely that of the old-stock, cultivated leisure class, and who composed an

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[16]Theodore Roosevelt, "The Manly Virtues and Practical Politics," The Forum, XVII (July, 1894), pp. 552, 555, 557.

aristocratic elite in American society which assumed imperialist leadership. Theirs was an anti-materialist and anti-business view which reflected a militant nationalism, which celebrated the martial spirit, and which pictured the business world as the enemy of the country's new and necessary role overseas.[17] They advocated a new national strenuosity in foreign affairs as one antidote to the dangers posed by "overcivilization." In the struggle for power, nations, they felt, must act boldly and decisively.

The impulse to live the strenuous life was fostered by the lingering concept of service derived from the martial heroism of the Civil War. George M. Fredrickson has argued that the legacy of the Civil War provided the basic motivation for the strenuous life of the late nineteenth century. In this view, the war produced a spirit of strenuous service which carried over into peacetime, and, lacking a further martial stimulus to self-sacrifice, found an outlet in various peacetime manifestations of "the strenuous life": "For many, . . . the late nineteenth century effort to define and promote 'the strenuous life' was inseparably

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[17]John P. Mallan, "The Warrior Critique of the Business Civilization," American Quarterly, VIII (Fall, 1956), pp. 216-230.

bound up with the continuing search for the meaning of the Civil War."[18]

Fredrickson also traces the strenuous life ideal to the pre-Civil War patrician ethic of Francis Parkman, the great historian of America's wilderness epic. New England aristocrats of that earlier period, such as Parkman and Theodore Winthrop, had deplored the growing softness of the American aristocracy, and, in seeking to perserve the masculine fighting qualities, had stressed the ideal of going to the wilderness to test one's manhood. Then, the Civil War experience resulted in "the transformation of the ideal of the 'strenuous life'--which had previously meant a retreat into the wilderness--into a social ideal. Rather than following the path of Francis Parkman and Theodore Winthrop and seeking adventures outside the confines of civilization, it was now deemed more suitable to do one's duty in a strenuous way within society." Finally, Fredrickson declares:

> With Roosevelt, the "strenuous life" ideal had come full circle. Beginning with Parkman's glorification of physical strife as drawing out the masculine fighting qualities, it had been transmuted by young men who were tired of war into the ideal of "useful citizenship" in time of peace; in the eighties and early nineties, it had regained its emphasis on physical courage--to be demonstrated, however,

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[18]George M. Fredrickson, The Inner Civil War: Northern Intellectuals and the Crisis of the Union (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 217.

> in the West or on the playing field rather than on the battlefield. In the age of imperialism, we are back to an essentially military ideal.[19]

Concerned primarily with the strenuous ideal of those who participated in the Civil War, this analysis offers only a partial explanation for the strenuous life of the next generation, which was responsible for enshrining it as a national cult. Nevertheless, the heritage of the Civil War remained a strong influence on the generation that grew up in the postwar era. Roosevelt was born in 1858, Owen Wister in 1860, Frederic Remington in 1861, Caspar Whitney in 1862, and Richard Harding Davis in 1864. To be a child in the Civil War decade meant that one was likely to experience an early consciousness of war and the aftermath of war. Even to be born as late as 1871, as was Stephen Crane, did not mean a childhood devoid of the imprint of the war, as the stories and reminiscences of the conflict, still fresh in the minds of the participants, could evoke something of the martial spirit of the early 1860's.

That the martial spirit of the 1890's certainly struck a responsive chord among the young men of the Eastern upper class was evident in their eagerness to get into the war with Spain. When the conflict broke out in 1898 swarms of young Ivy Leaguers flocked to join the Rough Rider Regiment. The men of Harvard, Yale, Princeton and other American colleges

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[19] Ibid., pp. 33-35, 175, 225.

joined the range-hardened cowboys from the West to ride with Roosevelt into glory. This impulse for the strenuous life, which was discernible in a wide variety of public and private activities of members of the cultivated leisure class--in sports, outdoor recreation, the wilderness life, and in the ideal of a vigorous and useful citizenship--found perhaps its greatest release in the Spanish-American War. For many of these young men, participation in the war provided a swift resolution of the disturbing set of problems which faced them in the late nineteenth century: uncertainty regarding their proper role in society, discontent stemming from the threat of "overcivilization" inherent in the urban-industrial environment of the East, and the frustration--inherited from the previous generation--of attempting to perpetuate in peacetime the martial heroism and spirit of strenuous service derived from the great Civil War experience.

III

The growth of the leisure class, which took up the cause of the strenuous life, was an important phenomenon of the times. At the turn of the century A. Maurice Low commented on this development:

> A few years ago it was distinctly true that there was no leisure class in the United States. To-day one will often hear it said that there cannot exist an aristocracy in America because

> an aristocracy is only possible where there is a large leisure class, and the idle rich are not known in America. But this is only partially true. The leisure class is constantly growing and now consists of rich men, the serious business of whose lives is to devise means to amuse themselves and kill time. They are men who either do nothing or have merely a nominal connexion with great business enterprises which they have inherited, the real management being in the hands of less known but more capable men.[20]

Thorstein Veblen suggested a direct relationship between the leisure class and aspects of the strenuous life of the late nineteenth century in his The Theory of the Leisure Class in 1899. Veblen attacked the non-productive role of the leisure class, which consumed its energies, he said, in "conspicuous consumption" and "pecuniary emulation." He then elaborated upon their wasteful pursuits and pastimes, their vulgar displays of wealth, and their preoccupation with sports. "Addiction to athletic sports," he said, "not only in the way of direct participation, but also in the way of sentiment and moral support, is, in a more or less pronounced degree, a characteristic of the leisure class, . . ."[21]

In a chapter on "Modern Survivals of Prowess" Veblen argued that the leisure class perpetuated through sport

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[20]A. Maurice Low, America at Home (London: George Newnes, Limited, n.d.), pp. 44-45.

[21]Thorstein Veblen, The Theory of the Leisure Class (New York: The New American Library, Mentor Edition, 1953), p. 180.

aspects of the predatory habit of life developed in barbarian cultures. He declared, in typical Veblenese, that "the ground of an addiction to sports is an archaic spiritual constitution--the possession of the predatory emulative propensity in a relatively high potency."[22] To apply Veblen's analysis to the social scene of late nineteenth century America, which included both a growing leisure class and a widespread enthusiasm for sports and outdoor recreation, suggests that the impulse for much of the strenuous life lay in the atavism that reacted against the leisure class scheme of life.

Veblen exaggerated the role of the leisure class in the rise of sports and outdoor recreation in America, as one of Veblen's contemporaries, Charles D. Lanier, indicated when he expressed a contrary view of "The World's Sporting Impulse" in 1896:

> There is an open air movement almost revolutionary in its degree and which cannot by any means be accounted for by any theories of a more numerous leisurely class. People are bicycling, yachting, running, jumping, fishing, hunting, playing baseball, tennis and golf, to an extent which is new in this generation. Nor is any considerable fraction of these people of the class whose wealth makes some such diversion inevitable; they are the workers in stores and offices of the great cities; typewriters, elevator boys, barbers, physicians, layers and clergymen--in short, "the people." If it be true that the times

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[22] Ibid., p. 170.

> are too strenuous, that Americans are a nation of dyspeptics because they work too hard and take too little physical exercise, the signs of 1896 are very promising of better things.[23]

Still it was the growth of leisure which made it possible for "the people" to devote time to sports and outdoor recreation in the fashion of the higher leisure class. The American people as a whole were becoming conscious of the new leisure which accompanied the rise of the city. In an address at Lake Chautauqua in 1880, James A. Garfield declared: "We may divide the whole struggle of the human race into two chapters; first, the fight to get leisure; and then the second fight of civilization--what shall we do with our leisure when we get it."[24] One man's answer appeared in Harper's Weekly in 1895, in a light-hearted note on the "new cult" of leisure. The writer reported overhearing a conversation in which a lawyer disclosed that he had deliberately cut down his work load in order to concentrate on leisure. The lawyer remarked: "I enjoy my leisure. I enjoy life. I read; I converse with congenial people on congenial topics; I walk; I take lots of out-of-doors exercise, and steer clear of nervous prostration; I play tennis and chess; I go wherever there are

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[23]Charles D. Lanier, "The World's Sporting Impulse," The Review of Reviews, XIV (July, 1896), p. 58.

[24]Quoted in Arthur M. Schlesinger, The Rise of the City, 1878-1898 (New York: Macmillan Co., 1933), p. 287.

beautiful things to see--you have no idea how many are available, both in nature and art--and I let them soak in and become assimilated with my being. I live."[25]

This description of an active life of leisure is marked by an air of comfort and satisfaction. Some men of leisure, however, did not permit themselves so relaxed an attitude. They felt compelled to seek a strenuous mode of life within the context of the new leisure. Imbued with the ideal of the strenuous life, they aspired to lives of personal daring and adventure, and to lives of strenuous public service to the nation.

IV

"Overcivilization" was viewed as a threat to national virility. The central theme of the strenuous life--the emphasis on "manliness"--reflected this basic concern. Confused by the complexities of life in a new urban-industrial civilization, faced with the realization that the frontier was rapidly disappearing--or had already in fact disappeared, and beset by the rising power and influence of women, men were increasingly defensive about the masculine image. Perhaps many men turned to various forms of the strenuous life

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[25]Duffield Osborne, "A New Cult," Harper's Weekly, XXXIX (January 12, 1895), p. 46.

as a means of testing their manhood and of maintaining some semblance of physical prowess in a society which threatened to destroy the archetypal male role of hunter and warrior.

The great popularity of Rudyard Kipling indicated the strength of the male attachment to the concept of an autonomous man's world. Austin Lewis, in celebrating Kipling in the Overland Monthly in 1903, declared that Kipling "talks not as an exhorter, but as a man to men, perhaps too much in the language of the smoking-room, but none the less truly and plainly. He addresses us all, men and women, in terms of good comradeship, and he shows us men and women, living and suffering, and above all, in 'a world of men.'"[26] The strenuous cult sought to perpetuate in a new urban-industrial and evidently womanized society those masculine values and skills enshrined in ages past by the archetypal male hunting groups of primitive societies.[27] Such values and skills had experienced a great New World revival in America's frontier experience. Then, with the end of the frontier in the late nineteenth century the pattern of hardy male associations

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[26]Austin Lewis, "Kipling and Women," Overland Monthly, XLII (October, 1903), p. 360.

[27]Man's role as a hunter in primitive societies has been interpreted by anthropologist Lionel Tiger as the source of the male bonding pattern in society, or the marked tendency in men to form groups that exclude women. This pattern, according to Tiger, is responsible for male dominance in politics, war, sport, etc. See Men in Groups (New York: Random House, 1969), passim.

required to conquer a continent crumbled. It seemed, finally, that women were making the final assault on the all-male groupings which controlled and directed society. The last remaining hope for men to salvage the masculine virtues and preserve the ideal of adventurous, male comradeship lay in the strenuous life.

The widespread speculation regarding the state of the national virility in the late nineteenth century reflected a growing tension between the sexes in America. Industrialization, urbanization, and the feminist movement brought about a disruption of the accustomed relationship between men and women. The alteration of relations between the sexes contributed to a heightened consciousness of masculinity and femininity as factors in human society. The question of the relative worth and success of the male and female species in the new urban-industrial order was now explored in earnest, and the broad outline of the debate revealed the disharmony between men and women. "Sometimes, at dinner," wrote Henry Adams in his Education, "one might wait till talk flagged, and then, as mildly as possible, ask one's liveliest neighbor whether she could explain why the American woman was a failure. Without an instant's hesitation, she was sure to answer: 'Because the American man is a failure.' She meant it."[28]

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[28]Henry Adams, The Education of Henry Adams: An Autobiography (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1918), p. 442.

Seeking to avoid failure and dependence upon men, the modern American woman of the late nineteenth century was striking out on her own, vigorously asserting herself in society and extending her influence and power. Robert Grant, one of the more thoughtful contemporary observers of the relations between the sexes, posed the question of her sincerity: "Woman's authority over matters social is far greater than it has ever been. . . .If she is sincere, society will become both more earnest and more attractive; if she is simply seeking liberty at the expense of religion, purity, sentiment, and the fine things of the spirit, it were almost better she were again a credulous, beautiful doll."[29] Many were quick to condemn the "New Woman." H.B. Marriott Watson declared of American women that "their cold-bloodedness is, in effect, a signal of degeneracy, testifying to the desiccation of natural sentiment."[30] Even astute female observers, though critical of man, expressed concern regarding the new breed of woman. Ella Wheeler Wilcox, writing on "The Restlessness of the Modern Woman" in 1901, declared that "man is a weak animal and a self-indulgent one, . . ." Still, she found man to be

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[29]Robert Grant, "Search-Light Letters: Letter to a Modern Woman with Social Ambitions," Scribner's Magazine, XXV (March, 1899), p. 378.

[30]H.B. Marriott Watson, "The Deleterious Effect of Americanisation Upon Woman," The Nineteenth Century and After, LIV (November, 1903), p. 790.

"a less dangerous factor in our present feverish social conditions than I find women to be."[31]

The new assertiveness of women contributed to the masculine confusion generated by the threat of "overcivilization." The impulse to clarify the proper relationship between the sexes in society was apparent in Roosevelt's address to the National Congress of Mothers in 1905:

> No piled-up wealth, no splendor of material growth, no brilliance of artistic development, will permanently avail any people unless its home life is healthy, unless the average man possesses honesty, courage, common sense, and decency, unless he works hard and is willing to fight hard; and unless the average woman is a good wife, a good mother, able and willing to perform the first and greatest duty of womanhood, able and willing to bear, and to bring up as they should be brought up, healthy children, sound in body, mind, and character, and numerous enough so that the race shall increase and not decrease.[32]

Roosevelt's preaching to American women that they should aspire to greater fecundity reflected his alarm over the declining birth rate and his consequent fear of "race suicide." Of all American evils he found the worst to be

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[31]Ella Wheeler Wilcox, "The Restlessness of the Modern Woman," Cosmopolitan, XXXI (July, 1901), p. 317.

[32]Theodore Roosevelt, "The Woman and the Home," American Problems (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), Vol. XVI of The Works of Theodore Roosevelt, ed. Hermann Hagedorn (20 vols., National Edition, New York, 1926), p. 165.

"the diminishing birth rate among the old native American stock." Seeking to save the Anglo-Saxon from the threat of extinction, he led a campaign against birth control while president, and exhorted his fellow Americans to have large families. "Willful sterility," he insisted, "inevitably produces and accentuates every hideous form of vice. . . . It is itself worse, more debasing, more destructive, than ordinary vice. . . .I rank celibate profligacy as not one whit better than polygamy."[33]

Although condemning both men and women for refusing to have children, Roosevelt tended to put the blame primarily on what he characterized as the new breed of shallow-hearted and self-indulgent women in America.[34] The strenuous life, which expressed a masculine counter-reaction to the threat of "overcivilization" and to the radical expansion of feminine influence and power, also implied a new sexual vigor in American men. The fact that the birth rate was declining, therefore, was not very flattering to them--particularly to those men who pursued the strenuous life. Surely it was the new breed of cold, selfish women who were to blame, and not the virile, active men who were leading the nation toward

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[33]Quoted in Thomas F. Gossett, Race: The History of an Idea in America (Dallas: Southern Methodist U. Press, 1963), pp. 305, 306. Also see Henry F. Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt: A Biography (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Harvest Edition, 1956), pp. 332-333, and Faulkner, op. cit., pp. 162-166.

[34]Theodore Roosevelt, "The Women and the Home," American Problems, op. cit., pp. 168-169.

greater muscularity and vigor.

The social and literary record of the 1890's and early 1900's reveals at every hand a widespread and crucial concern for what is "manly" (one of Roosevelt's frequently used words). Hence the importance of sports for American youth: they were essential for building "manliness." This was the message preached by most of the contributors to the juvenile periodicals of the day. The pages of St. Nicholas, Harper's Young People, and The Youth's Companion are filled with stories, articles, and editorials which drive the point home. This was the message of Gilbert M. Patton in his immensely successful "Frank Merriwell" series, uniting manliness and morality in the field of athletics.[35]

Advocates of the strenuous life celebrated the masculine fighting qualities. Part of the legacy of the Civil War and one of the results of the search by many for an "equivalent of war" in the late nineteenth century was that various forms of the strenuous life, particularly those which called for a high degree of physical courage, were viewed in terms of the war metaphor. The football field became a battlefield where the martial virtues could be developed and tested; the disappearing frontier became increasingly popularized as an arena where soldierly courage was still required; hunting

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[35]See Russel B. Nye, "The Juvenile Approach to American Culture, 1870-1930," New Voices in American Studies, op. cit., pp. 75-78.

and the confrontation with wild animals became an exciting new way for Easterners to foster manliness.[36]

The emphasis on manliness in the 1890's led to a near obsession concerning the question of courage. It is no accident that one of the most important and popular novels of the period dealt with the subject.[37] Stephen Crane's Red Badge of Courage was more than one man's investigation of the theme. It was representative of a national preoccupation and search for the explanation of what constituted courage and what could be done to develop it. Lyman Abbott, a minister and editor of The Outlook, declared in a sermon during the Spanish-American War:

> But there is one virtue which we have a right to look for in young men, one virtue which you have a right to demand of yourselves. It is this virtue of courage; the virtue of the soldier on the battle-field. It is the virtue that does and dares, that hopes and expects, that rushes forward into the fight, that is eager for the battle.
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> . . . . . .
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> We have a right to expect of young men the high ideal, the hopeful aspiration transmuted into action by high and strong and strenuous endeavor.[38]

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[36]Fredrickson, op. cit., pp. 222-225.

[37]The Red Badge of Courage ranked 8th on the best seller list in 1896. Alice Payne Hackett, 60 Years of Best Sellers, 1895-1955 (New York: R.R. Bowker Co., 1956), p. 96.

[38]Lyman Abbott, "The Seven Ages of Man," The Outlook, LIX (August 13, 1898), pp. 927-929.

Courage was the necessary virtue of the strenuous life. In "The Essence of Heroism" which appeared in The Youth's Companion, Roosevelt analyzed this virtue. There are two kinds of courage, he said: moral and physical. A boy or a man "must be able to master himself, to master his own passions and overcome his own weaknesses. This is what we usually mean when we speak of moral courage." Roosevelt then defined physical courage as "the quality which enables the man not so much to master himself as to hold his own among outside rivals or enemies. It is the quality which is indispensable if a man is to be a good soldier, a good policeman, a good fireman, a good sailor; in short, if he is to succeed in anything requiring the qualities of bravery and hardihood." The essence of heroism was a blending of the two forms of courage, so that "the man of perfect courage alike on the physical and moral sides must have each of so peculiar a quality that it could not be distinguished from the other."[39]

The concern for what constituted courage contributed to the impulse to display courage. The Spanish-American War provided a splendid opportunity for this, and the war of 1898 became a testing ground for American manhood. Stories, often exaggerated, of the heroic exploits of American fighting men

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[39]Theodore Roosevelt, "The Essence of Heroism," The Youth's Companion, LXXV (April 18, 1901), p. 202.

filled the pages of the nation's newspapers and magazines during the summer and fall of 1898, and of these none captured the imagination of the public more than the adventures of Roosevelt's "Rough Riders." The war seemed to both strengthen and vindicate the heroic image of American manhood.

Although the war afforded the supreme opportunity for the exercise of the strenuous life, not all advocates of strenuous endeavor championed war and the imperialist impulse. William James, for example, who celebrated man's capacity for what he called "the strenuous mood," became a vocal anti-imperialist who launched a bitter attack against Roosevelt's Chicago speech.[40] Eight years before Roosevelt's famous expression of the idea, James had praised "the strenuous mood" of man. "The deepest difference, practically," he said, "in the moral life of man is . . . between the easy-going and the strenuous mood." "The capacity of the strenuous mood," he continued, "lies so deep down among our natural human possibilities that even if there were no metaphysical or traditional grounds for believing in God, man would postulate one simply as a pretext for living hard, and getting out of the game of existence its keenest possibilities of zest."[41]

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[40]Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought, op. cit., pp. 194-195.

[41]William James, The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy (New York: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1927), pp. 211, 213.

The quest for the strenuous life emerged as a distinct and identifiable phenomenon in American life in the late nineteenth century. It reflected a cultural dynamism which was particularly characteristic of upper and middle class American life at the turn of the century. It expressed itself in the boom in sports and outdoor recreation, in the new concern for nature and the American wilderness, in the war with Spain and America's venture into imperialism, and in the infusion generally of the theme of masculinity into many areas of life. The manly image in America to which boys and young men aspired to at the turn of the century was that of the strenuous life.

The masculine image promoted by the strenuous life in the 1890's and early 1900's required a proper boyhood on which to build. The existing image of American boyhood was more than adequate for this. It had deep roots in the American experience, and it, too, had been created to counter the masculine confusion produced by the concern for "overcivilization" and the feminine threat to manliness. To the American mind of the late nineteenth century the world of boyhood was the ideal male world--the only time and place in which true and natural masculine lives could be led, and in which a non-ambiguous allegiance to the masculine virtues was possible. The image of American boyhood was a fitting precursor to the image of dynamic manhood fostered by the strenuous life.

Chapter II

The Image of American Boyhood

The manly image in America in 1900 derived in part from the nineteenth century image of American boyhood. Essentially the image was that of "the barefoot boy." Ever since Whittier's "Barefoot boy, with cheek of tan!" poem of the 1850's, the American imagination had lent itself to the construction of the image. This nineteenth century American boy was basically a good-hearted, though mischievous, inhabitant of rural, small town America. He was brave, fair in games and fights, respectful and polite toward the ladies, adventuresome, superstitious, and ill-at-ease in Sunday school. His closeness to nature was fundamental to the experience of American boyhood.[1] The image was given a considerable boost by Mark Twain, whose "bad boy" creations of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn seemed to establish, apparently for all time, an identifiable and distinct image of American boyhood--one which seemed to be the only real boyhood of America.

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[1]Henry Steele Commager, The American Mind: An Interpretation of American Thought and Character Since the 1880's (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), pp. 35-36. Also see Chapter XI, "Small-Town Boy," in Page Smith, As a City Upon a Hill: The Town in American History (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), pp. 213-234; "The Fun of Being a Boy" in Robert U. Johnson, Remembered Yesterdays (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1923), pp. 36-48; Henry A. Shute, The Real Diary of a Real Boy (Boston: The Everett Press, 1902); Albert Britt, An America That Was (Barre, Massachusetts: Barre Publishers, 1964); Lewis Atherton, Main Street on the Middle Border (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1954); and Clyde B. Davis (ed.), Eyes of Boyhood (Philadelphia: J.P. Lippincott Co., 1953).

Although Twain's books on American boyhood proved to be the most memorable, they were but part of a long list of what one literary critic has called "the boy-book" genre of nineteenth century American literature.[2] In addition to Twain's works, the list includes: The Story of a Bad Boy by Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Charles Dudley Warner's Being a Boy, Edward Eggleston's The Hoosier Schoolboy, George W. Peck's Peck's Bad Boy and His Pa, William Dean Howells' A Boy's Town, William Allen White's The Court of Boyville, Hamlin Garland's Boy Life on the Prairie, and the Whilomville Stories of Stephen Crane. Varying degrees of realism, romanticism, and nostalgia characterized these works, but most contributed to the building of a distinctly American image of boyhood. Why so many writers were turning to boy life as a subject is a question which is difficult to answer. Perhaps this literary preoccupation with boyhood represented one response of American writers to the industrialized and urbanized world of the Gilded Age. Boyhood, for many, seemed to be identified with the virtues of an older, simpler, America--the writings on boyhood seemed to be an expression of an older innocence.

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[2]Jim Hunter, "Mark Twain and the Boy-Book in 19th-Century America," College English, XXIV (March, 1963), pp. 430-438. Also useful on this topic is Dorothea Morse, "Study of Juvenile Writings of Eight American Authors of the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1952), and Ima Honaker Herron, The Small Town in American Literature (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1939).

The image of American boyhood in the late nineteenth century evoked memories of a carefree existence in the congenial environment of rural, small town America: lounging in the bough of an apple tree on lazy summer afternoons; trudging worn and familiar paths in bare feet with fishing pole in hand; splashing wildly in the good times at "the old swimmin' hole;" swapping marbles, tadpoles, crickets, knives, tin soldiers, pieces of glass and string; plotting bold and daring adventures in the hay loft, such as stealing watermelons or sabotaging the town's Fourth of July celebration; and practicing the acts and stunts one would perform when one ran off to join the circus. These were the delights of American boyhood--they represented a freedom and a joyousness of spirit which were appropriate for the thriving democratic society of the New World. Just as America had always seemed to be, to Americans, the very best place on earth, so, too, did boyhood in America seem to be a very special kind of boyhood.

The celebration of American boyhood in its rural setting reached a sentimental extreme in the poetry of Indiana's James Whitcomb Riley. The turn of the century saw an outpouring of Riley's verse which sang the praises of "the barefoot boy" and the life of the Hoosiers. The immense popularity of Riley undoubtedly stemmed in part from the fact that his verse struck a responsive chord in the memory of most of his fellow countrymen--in the memory of vanishing rural America. The dedication in one of Riley's books is to "all Americans who were ever boys,

to all at least who had the good luck to be country boys, and to go barefoot."[3] The timeliness of his poetry is evident in the fact that the memorization of lines by James Whitcomb Riley became for decades almost a standard exercise of schoolchildren. The poignancy of Riley's verse was such that it even captured forever the heart of fellow Hoosier Theodore Dreiser, whose literary naturalism depicted a far different world from that of Riley's, but who also shared the barefoot memories of Indiana.[4]

Riley was by no means the only poet of the period to sing sentimentally and nostalgically of boyhood on the farm. Young people in the 1890's were often reminded of "how sweet life was and good, in the days of Barefoothood," as James Buckham's poem testified in The Youth's Companion in 1895:

> Oh the soft, cool morning dew,
> Ere the days of sock or shoe!
> Oh the showering as you pass,
> Of the sparkling spears of grass!
> Miles and miles of cobweb lace,
> Morning freshness on your face--
> Who'd forget them, if he could,
> Dear old days of Barefoothood![5]

Boyhood reminiscences frequently lamented the fact that urbanization was destroying the idyllic American boyhood of

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[3]Quoted in Horace Gregory and Marya Zaturenska, A History of American Poetry, 1900-1940 (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1946), p. 63.

[4]Van Wyck Brooks, The Confident Years, 1885-1915 (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1952), pp. 69-72.

[5]James Buckham, "Barefoothood," The Youth's Companion, LXVIII (July 18, 1895), p. 348.

rural, small town America. In "Looking Back at Boyhood," which appeared in The Youth's Companion in 1892, Donald G. Mitchell pitied "those young folks who pass their early years without having any home knowledge of gardens or orchards. City schools and city pavements are all very well; but I think if my childish feet had not known of every-day trampings through garden alleys or on wood walks, and of climbings in haylofts or among apple boughs when fruit began to turn, half of the joys of boyhood, as I look back at them, would be plucked away."[6]

Not only in fiction, poetry, and autobiographical reminiscences, but also in popular historical sketches were the joys of American boyhood evoked. Reflecting an old tradition, one of the interesting features of the news stories on the war heroes of 1898 was the emphasis placed on the subject's boyhood. Information on Admiral Dewey's boyhood, for example, seemed to mark "the hero of Manila Bay" as having enjoyed a true and authentic American boyhood. "By the older people of his native town," observed a writer for Leslie's Weekly, "George Dewey is remembered as a harum-scarum lad. There was nothing too hazardous for him to undertake. He could swim better than most boys of his age, and found pleasure in

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[6]Donald G. Mitchell, "Looking Back at Boyhood," The Youth's Companion, LXV (April 21, 1892), p. 202.

climbing such trees as contained the earliest apples and the choicest cherries. It is observed," the writer continued, "that young Dewey was not over-particular whose orchard he visited, either. At winter sports he was regarded as one of the best in the village."[7]

One of the war's first heroes was Richmond Pearson Hobson, who sank an American boat, the Merrimac, in the entrance of the Santiago harbor in an attempt to block the Spanish fleet. Hobson's name was soon on the lips of everyone at home, and how reassuring it was to know that his had been a typically American boyhood. The editor of the Alabama Beacon, an old playmate of Hobson's, described the scene at the Hobson home:

> The premises are shaded with handsome forest trees, large magnolias, noble chestnut-and hickory-trees, which were the delight of all the neighboring boys when their ripe treasures yielded their abundance in the early days of October. Oaks from whose branches we hung our swings for athletic exercises, a large orchard where we ate our fill of apples, peaches, and scuppernong grapes, and down in the pasture--greatest joy of all--a little brook which by dint of constant clearing out and building of dams we made into a swimming-pool, in which "Rich" Hobson and his young playmates first learned to swim and dive until the water was too muddy

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[7]"The Hero of Manila," Leslie's Weekly, LXXXVI (May 26, 1898), p. 335.

> for us to stay in it longer . . . My home and their home were the joint property of our boyhood. Not a tree in either place did we fail to climb or a rat-nest or rabbit-hole we did not explore.[8]

Perhaps William Allen White expressed the feelings of all of those who shared the common bond of a nineteenth century boyhood when he wrote of his own youthful experience: "The home, the barn, the river, and the school made this Willie White. The school only taught him superficial things--to read, write, and figure, and to take care of himself on the playground. But those other ancient institutions of learning taught him wisdom, the rules of life, and the skills which had survival value in the world of boyhood."[9] "The town of Boyville," White wrote, "is free and independent; governed only by the ancient laws, made by the boys of the elder days . . ."[10]

This sense of an autonomous community of boyhood is evident in many of the boy-books. In A Boy's Town William Dean Howells declared that "everywhere and always the world of boys is outside of the laws that govern grown-up communities, and it has unwritten usages, which are handed down from old to

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[8]H.G. Benners, "About Richmond Pearson Hobson," Leslie's Weekly, LXXXVII (July 28, 1898), p. 75.

[9]William Allen White, The Autobiography of William Allen White (New York: Macmillan Co., 1946), p. 47.

[10]William Allen White, The Court of Boyville (New York: Macmillan Co., 1910), p. xxviii.

young, and perpetuated on the same level of years, and are lived into and lived out of, but are binding, through all personal vicissitudes, upon the great body of boys between six and twelve years old. No boy," Howells added, "can violate them without losing his standing among the other boys, and he cannot enter into their world without coming under them." He concluded, "It is a great pity that fathers and mothers cannot penetrate that world; but they cannot, and it is only by accident that they catch some glimpse of what goes on in it."[11]

The code of boyhood was a stern code. The first great law was that you suffered silently the torment inflicted by another boy, unless you could right the wrong by whipping him. "To tell the teacher or your mother, or to betray your tormentor to any one outside of the boys' world, was to prove yourself a cry-baby, without honor or self-respect, and unfit to go with the other fellows." Every new boy in town faced a fight with the old residents in order to determine his proper place in the tribal hierarchy. "There was no reason for this, except that he was a stranger, and there appeared to be no other means of making his acquaintance." Although the boys' world was a

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[11]William Dean Howells, A Boy's Town (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1890), p. 67.

rough and frequently dangerous world, still there were certain unwritten laws which governed behavior there and reflected something of a sense of fair play.[12]

Not only could adults seldom penetrate the world of boyhood, but also they were unable to be in harmony with nature in the same way that boys were. It was particularly the close contact with nature which made for a truly American boyhood in the nineteenth century. On this point the realistic writing in most of the boy-books usually gave way, sooner or later, to the Romantic concept of childhood's closeness to nature. "Nature teaches those children who will hearken to her words," B.O. Flower asserted in a tribute to Whittier, whom he dubbed the "little barefoot dreamer boy," "and she is never false in word or note or picture."[13] It was this view of nature which Charles Dudley Warner portrayed in writing of the subject of Being a Boy:

> There was the lovely but narrow valley, with its rapid mountain stream; there were the great hills which he climbed only to see other hills stretching away to a broken and tempting horizon; there were the rocky pastures, and the wide sweeps of forest through which the winter tempests howled, upon which

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[12] Ibid., pp. 68-78. For a consideration of the group psychology of boyhood see J. Adams Puffer, The Boy and His Gang (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, Riverside Press, 1912).

[13] B.O. Flower, "A Barefoot Boy Who Was Also a Dreamer," The Arena, XV (May, 1896), p. 966.

> hung the haze of summer heat, over which
> the great shadows of summer clouds traveled;
> there were the clouds themselves, . . .
> and there were days when the sky was ineffably
> blue and distant, . . . Can you say how
> these things fed the imagination of the boy, who
> had few books and no contact with the great
> world? Do you think any city lad could have
> written "Thanatopsis" at eighteen?[14]

Even Howells deviated from his realism in A Boy's Town to proclaim: "Life has a good many innocent joys for the human animal, but surely none so ecstatic as the boy feels when his bare foot first touches the breast of our mother earth in the spring. Something thrills through him then from the heart of her inmost being that makes him feel kin with her, and cousin to all her dumb children of the grass and trees." Howells continued in this Romantic mode: "His blood leaps as wildly as at that kiss of the waters when he plunges into their arms in June; there is something even finer and sweeter in the rapture of the earlier bliss." And finally: "It is all like some glimpse, some foretaste of the heavenly time when the earth and her sons shall be reconciled in a deathless love, and they shall not be thankless, nor she a stepmother any more."[15] One critical analysis of this passage

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[14]Charles Dudley Warner, Being a Boy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, Riverside Press Edition, 1905), pp. 164-165.

[15]Howells, op. cit., pp. 83-84.

emphasizes that it is incongruous within the context of Howells' book, that it is "a startling lapse" on the part of the author, but that of the boy-book writers only Twain manages "to avoid sentimentality or sententiousness on this subject."[16] This fact suggests just how powerful the Romantic view of nature was in the nineteenth century American mind, and how closely linked it was to the image of boyhood.

Realism and not Romanticism was the dominant tone in American writing in the late nineteenth century, however. The boy-books of the period reflected the new direction in literature, and the realistic treatments of boyhood did not weaken the identification of boys with nature, but rather strengthened it. The great artistic achievement in this regard was Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn. With this book the world of American boyhood was inextricably linked to Twain's memorable depiction of nature, and Huck's affinity for it, in a language that was concrete, visual, and rich in descriptive detail. Years later Twain repeated his achievement in that section of his autobiography in which he wrote vividly and movingly of his boyhood days on his uncle's farm in Missouri.

By 1899 Hamlin Garland was writing realistically of boy life on the prairie. One cannot imagine Garland's western youths

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[16]Hunter, op. cit., pp. 435-436.

experiencing the same ecstatic sensations which nature sent reverberating through the bodies and souls of Howells' barefoot boys. Yet the straightforward narrative of Boy Life on the Prairie made it clear that boys could respond with feeling to the natural environment of the prairie, despite the harsh realities of existence there. The book was admittedly not an autobiography and Garland stated that the incidents in it "were the experiences of other boys," but he added that they "might have been mine. They were all typical of the time and place."[17]

The identification of boyhood with nature fitted in appropriately with the impulse for the strenuous life in the 1890's. In the nineties Ernest Thompson Seton was stirring the blood of American boys with his authoritative writings on wildlife. The young readers of The Youth's Companion and St. Nicholas were inspired to share in the excitement of life in the great outdoors. Writing of "A South American Hunt" Herbert H. Smith exclaimed in an issue of St. Nicholas in 1892: "But what a wilderness! Suppose I could select a score of the St. Nicholas boys--the real boys, who love a gun

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[17]Hamlin Garland, Boy Life on the Prairie (New York: Macmillan Co., revised edition, 1906), p. vi.

and fishing rod, and glory in a long tramp--to ramble with them over those great, breezy, sunshiny hills and down through the tangled forest?"[18]

Smith's reference to "the real boys" touched on a theme vital to the image of boyhood in America in the late nineteenth century. Mark Twain had suggested the theme in his two short stories of the 1860's: "Story of the Good Little Boy" and "Story of the Bad Little Boy." Then in the first of the boy-books, The Story of a Bad Boy (1869) by Thomas Bailey Aldrich, the author explained to the reader: "I call my story the story of a bad boy, partly to distinguish myself from those faultless young gentlemen who generally figure in narratives of this kind, and partly because I really was not a cherub. I may truthfully say I was an amiable, impulsive lad, blessed with fine digestive powers, and no hypocrite. I didn't want to be an angel and with the angels stand . . . . In short, I was a real human boy, . . ."[19]

The point which both Twain and Aldrich were making in the 1860's, and which became an integral part of the image of American boyhood in the late nineteenth century, was that

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[18]Herbert H. Smith, "A South American Hunt," St. Nicholas, XIX (February, 1892), p. 261.

[19]Thomas Bailey Aldrich, The Story of a Bad Boy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., Riverside Press Edition, 1911), pp.7-8.

the "bad boy" was the only real boy. He was the appropriate subject for the writers of the boy-books, and not the other familiar figure of juvenile literature of the period--the "model boy." The "model boy," who dominated the Sunday school books which Twain ridiculed, was the neat, scrubbed, well-dressed youth Tom Sawyer loathed. He was, as one critic has written, a wooden stereotype--"the anathema of real boyhood, the botched work of women and schoolmasters." The "bad boy," on the other hand, "was real and alive in the affections of his countrymen between 1870 and the turn of the century. His is the central, easily recognizable image in all the many backward glances, wistful and envious, at boy-life then finding their way into print."[20] Because the "bad boy" was actually a "real" boy, George W. Peck wrote of him in the preface of Peck's Bad Boy:

> The counterpart of this boy is located in every city, village and country hamlet throughout the land. He is wide awake, full of vinegar and is ready to crawl under the canvas of a circus or repeat

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[20]John Hinz, "Huck and Pluck: 'Bad' Boys in American Fiction," South Atlantic Quarterly, LI (January, 1952), pp. 123-124, 121. The value of boy fiction is also explored in Louis D. Rubin, Jr., "Tom Sawyer and the Use of Novels," American Quarterly, IX (Summer, 1957), pp. 209-216. Also useful are Warren Beck, "Huckleberry Finn versus The Cash Boy," Education, XLIX (September, 1928), pp. 1-13; and Asher Brynes, "Boy-Men and Man-Boys," Yale Review, XXXVIII (Winter, 1949), pp. 223-233.

> a hundred verses of the New Testament in Sunday School. He knows where every melon patch in the neighborhood is located, and at what hours the dog is chained up. He will tie an oyster can to a dog's tail to give the dog exercise, or will fight at the drop of the hat to protect the smaller boy or a school girl.[21]

As Peck's preface described him, the "bad boy" of the period seemed to be a mischievous barefoot boy. The boy character created by Peck, however, did not quite fit the image the author himself had suggested. "Peck's Bad Boy," who became a byword of the era, was an insufferable little pest who continually harassed his rather stupid and weak-willed father. His methods were often vulgar and cruel. Because of the severity of his practical jokes, and also because he was a city boy, "Peck's Bad Boy" actually was not typical of the nineteenth century American "bad boy." The authentic "bad boys" were those who shared the more common experiences of American boyhood--Twain's Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, Howells' "my boy," and Aldrich's Tom Bailey.[22]

The "bad boys" of American fiction were particularly sensitive about the feminine influence in their lives. They shuddered at the thought that their mothers might make of them "model boys." A boy "had to be pretty careful," Howells wrote,

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[21]George Peck, Peck's Bad Boy and His Pa (Chicago: Thompson & Thomas, 1900), p. xxiv.

[22]Hinz, op. cit., pp. 122-129.

"how he conformed to any of the usages of grown-up society. A fellow who brushed his hair, and put on shoes, and came into the parlor when there was company, was not well seen among the fellows; he was regarded in some degree as a girl-boy. . . ."[23] Young Jack Dudley in Edward Eggleston's The Hoosier School-Boy shrank from the same term of opprobrium, "girl-boy," when another youth discovered Jack performing a task usually considered as woman's work. "Foolish men and boys," Eggleston commented, "are like savages,--very much ashamed to be found doing a woman's work."[24]

The role of the mother in the boy's world was, however, an almost inescapable fact of life. This was apparently true of an early nineteenth century boyhood as well as of a late nineteenth century one. In his account of boy life before the Civil War Howells stated that "the mother represented the family sovereignty; the father was seldom seen, and he counted for little or nothing among the outside boys. It was the mother who could say whether a boy might go fishing or swimming, and she was held a good mother or not according as she habitually said yes or no. There was no other standard of goodness for mothers in the boy's world, and could be none. . . ."[25] Writing of late nineteenth century

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[23]Howells, op. cit., p. 76.

[24]Edward Eggleston, The Hoosier School-Boy (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), pp. 17-21.

[25]Howells, op. cit., p. 75.

boyhood, William Allen White observed that "only the boy's home, and often only his mother at home, counteracted the influence of the environment of his youth outside his home. Even inside his home his mother sometimes was the boy's one civilizing agent."[26]

The adult world of the nineteenth century sought to foster in the young a sacred respect for parents, especially mothers. In Uncle Henry's Letters to the Farm Boy in 1897 Henry Wallace noted that it was a "world-wide fact that there is a very close and intimate relation between a boy's success in life and the filial affection which he shows to his parents and especially to his mother." Wallace then proceeded to give the farm boy advice on the defense of motherhood:

> Some boy will wish you to join him in something of which you know your mother would not approve. He will sometimes sneer at you and call you "mother's boy," and say you are "tied to your mother's apron strings." I would not advise you to knock that boy down, because the sneer is directed at you and you can afford to let it pass, but if he says anything against your mother you have my permission to give him a sound drubbing. Do not let any boy of your age or size say a word disrespectful of your mother. Let her religious convictions, her ideas of duty and propriety, her faults even, be too sacred to be found fault with by mortal man.[27]

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[26]William Allen White, Boys--Then and Now (New York: Macmillan Co., 1926), pp. 10-11.

[27]Henry Wallace, Uncle Henry's Letters to the Farm Boy (New York: Macmillan Co., 1911), pp. 9-11.

This undoubtedly represented the code for the defense of motherhood of many an American boy. Yet for boys, the problem was that mothers themselves could go too far. This was the case when, at the turn of the century, countless numbers of small boys in America were turned into "Little Lord Fauntleroys" by their mothers. In dress and appearance they seemed to be carbon copies of Frances Hodgson Burnett's famous creation, and indeed they were. The illustrations in Little Lord Fauntleroy, which appeared in 1886, were based on a photograph of the author's son Vivian, who was also the model for the character itself.[28] Fauntleroy, who was such a good little boy, who always called his mother "Dearest," and who devoted so much time and energy to making his mother happy, quickly became the ideal boy image of American motherhood. The result was that many a boy suffered the agony and the torment of having to wear curls for a considerable period of his boyhood, and this frequently fostered youthful rebellion.

The cultivated goodness of "Little Lord Fauntleroy" was in striking contrast to the mischief and chicanery of the era's "bad boys." Also the virtuous boy heroes of the famous

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[28]Max J. Herzberg and others (eds.), The Reader's Encyclopedia of American Literature (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1962), p. 125; Mark Sullivan, Our Times: The United States, 1900-1925, Vol. I: The Turn of the Century (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), p. 278.

Horatio Alger books, which celebrated the great American success theme of "rags to riches," did not fit the "bad boy" image. The Alger heroes were no-nonsense, hard-working poor boys, who, usually through some stroke of luck or great good fortune, achieved wealth and middle class respectability. They were always honest, decent, manly youths, not given to such "bad boy" diversions as tying tin cans to dogs' tails or raiding the local watermelon patch. Still, many Alger heroes were originally barefoot boys--country lads who left the farm or village to make their way in the city. The image of the popular Alger hero was firmly implanted in the American mind in the late nineteenth century.[29] It undoubtedly made the manly image of boyhood, which it joyously celebrated, attractive to countless numbers of adolescent boys. Surely many a boy reader at the turn of the century found it an easy transition to go from an Alger novel to a Frank Merriwell story which glorified the new manly image of the sports hero.

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[29]For an analysis of the Alger novels, see the introduction by William Coyle to Adrift in New York and The World Before Him (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1966).

II

The manly image of American boyhood was an ideal which was promoted with great intensity in the 1890's and early 1900's. "American boys," wrote C.A. Stephens in The Youth's Companion, "very rarely lose entire self-control even when excessively exasperated and very angry. It is asserted that there is no country in the world--unless it may be China--where schoolboys agree so well as in the United States." Stephens argued that European schoolboys fight more than American boys, and that European writers "defend this readiness to fight as a sign of desirable energy in their boys." Stephens marked it as "a symptom of brutality," as well. He concluded that "after a long acquaintance with schoolboys in the United States, I am convinced that, as a rule, they avoid fights not from lack of animal courage but because of less excitable temperaments, and greater power of self-control."[30]

The superiority of American over European boys was also one of the themes of Thomas Davidson's article, "The Ideal Training of an American Boy," which appeared in The Forum in 1894. The author warned of the danger to American boys from overexposure abroad. "There is nothing," he said, "which so

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[30]C.A. Stephens, "A Terrible Temper," The Youth's Companion, LXIV (June 25, 1891), p. 363.

sharply distinguishes American boys from all others as their freshness and purity of life, and these qualities are likely to suffer from contact with European--especially French and German--boys. A Europeanized American is nearly always a moral eunuch."[31]

Theodore Roosevelt, as the nation's chief bearer of the heroic image of American manhood, fittingly outlined the manly standard for American boys in an article for St. Nicholas in 1900, "The American Boy";

> Of course what we have a right to expect of the American boy is that he shall turn out to be a good American man. Now, the chances are strong that he won't be much of a man unless he is a good deal of a boy. He must not be a coward or a weakling, a bully, a shirk, or a prig. He must work hard and play hard. He must be clean-minded and clean-lived, and able to hold his own under all circumstances and against all comers. It is only on these conditions that he will grow into the kind of American man of whom America can be really proud.[32]

"The boy can best become a good man," Roosevelt said, "by being a good boy--not a goody-goody boy, but just a plain good boy. . . . "Good," in the largest sense, should include whatever is fine, straightforward, clean, brave, and manly." Roosevelt insisted that the best boys and the best men that

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[31]Thomas Davidson, "The Ideal Training of an American Boy," The Forum, XVII (July, 1894), p. 577.

[32]Theodore Roosevelt, "What We Can Expect of the American Boy," St. Nicholas, XXVII (May, 1900), p. 571.

he knew were "fearless and stalwart, hated and feared by all that is wicked and depraved, incapable of submitting to wrong-doing, and equally incapable of being aught but tender to the weak and helpless. A healthy-minded boy should feel hearty contempt for the coward, and even more hearty indignation for the boy who bullies girls or small boys, or tortures animals." Roosevelt concluded that "one prime reason for abhorring cowards is because every good boy should have it in him to thrash the objectionable boy as the need arises."[33]

This, then, was the manly image which American boys were exhorted to aspire to at the turn of the century. It was a demanding but an appropriate image because the nineteenth century image of American boyhood suggested that boy life in America was a very special kind of boyhood. Most American boys, it seemed, were real boys and for this reason they could become real men. J.T. Trowbridge expressed this faith in 1889:

> There was never any better stuff in the world for the shaping of men than there is in the American boy of today. . . . With all his failings, which are many and manifest, he has courage, gayety, endurance, readiness of wit and potency of will. Give direction to these

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[33] Ibid., p. 574.

> forces, deepen his conscience and elevate his point of view, and the future of the American boy, the future of America itself, is secure.[34]

Throughout the late nineteenth century sports in America had come to provide an excellent way of facilitating the process of growth and development from boyhood to manhood. The baseball diamond and the football field offered splendid opportunities for "barefoot boys" to make the transition to heroic manhood. By 1900 the strenuous life had become the gospel for American boys. In counselling them, Roosevelt exhorted: "In short, in life, as in a football game, the principle to follow is: Hit the line hard; don't foul and don't shirk, but hit the line hard!"[35]

Behind this principle lay not only the authority of Roosevelt's strenuous life philosophy, but also the tradition stemming from the muscular Christianity of Tom Brown's School Days in England. The values of muscular Christianity, inculcated in English youth in the Victorian period, were also embodied in the strenuous ideal evolving in the United States. In late nineteenth century America boys and young men aspired to be, like their English cousins, "muscular Christians."

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[34]J.T. Trowbridge, "The American Boy," North American Review, CXLVIII (February, 1889), p. 225.

[35]Roosevelt, "What We Can Expect of the American Boy," op. cit., p. 574. Novelist Frank Norris declared that "one good fight will do more for a boy than a year of schooling. . . . it wakes in him that fine, reckless arrogance, that splendid, brutal, bullying, spirit that is the Anglo-Saxon's birthright. . . Quoted in Ernest Marchand, Frank Norris: A Study (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1942), p. 132.

Chapter III

Muscular Christianity

The strenuous life espoused the manliness of "muscular Christianity," a tradition which celebrated the Christian gentleman as vigorous, athletic, and manly. The doctrine of muscular Christianity had developed in England in the early Victorian period and was closely identified with English public school life in the second half of the nineteenth century.[1] In the 1890's and early 1900's it was nurtured by the missionary movement, and by other religious activities which encouraged young men to mold themselves along "muscular Christian" lines. The manliness idealized by muscular Christianity was also nurtured by the developing cult of sports and games in the schools of England and America. To many Americans, the brand of manliness valued by muscular Christianity was viewed as a requisite for life in the strenuous age of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The times, it seemed, demanded a virile, heroic Christianity.

Advocates of Christian muscularity saw it as a needed corrective to the feminine influence in religion. The

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[1]Walter E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), pp. 201-206; John W. Derry, A Short History of 19th Century England: 1793-1868 (New York: New American Library, 1963), pp. 209-210.

Reverend Josiah Strong, one of the foremost spokesman for the manly ideal, expressed this sentiment in his The Times and Young Men:

> There is not enough of effort, of struggle, in the typical church life of today to win young men to the church. A flowery bed of ease does not appeal to a fellow who has any manhood in him. The prevailing type of religion is too utterly comfortable to attract young men who love the heroic. Eliminate heroism from religion and it becomes weak, effeminate. Is there no significance in the fact that two-thirds of the church-membership to-day are females, that for every young man in the church there are two young women? Why is it that the angels of modern art are almost invariably feminine, while those of the Scriptures are masculine? Is it because religion has come to suggest more of beauty than of strength, more of gentleness than of heroism?[2]

Strong then challenged young men to a life of heroic Christian service, because "it is not the typical church-member whom you are called to follow. Your leader is the supreme hero of the ages, and he calls every follower to heroism, . . . If the church is not what it ought to be, which is true enough, then, having become a genuine Christian yourself, enter the church and help to make it more genuinely Christian." The question of one's manhood was most important for a life of such service, as Strong proclaimed: "The practical question for you is whether you are man enough to become a genuine Christian--man enough to give up the meanness of selfishness for the general good." Not only in missionary

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[2]Josiah Strong, The Times and Young Men (New York: The Baker & Taylor Co., 1901), pp. 179-180.

activity abroad, he said, but also at home, "right here, in the midst of ease and luxury and selfishness; here, in the midst of municipal corruption, and industrial hate, and social discontent, there is a call for the 'strenuous life,' a call for the 'living sacrifice' which 'dies daily;' and the living sacrifice may be even more heroic than the dying sacrifice."[3]

Appeals such as this reflected the missionary spirit of the age, which sought to reform American society at home and, at the same time, Christianize and uplift the presumed inferior and backward peoples of the world. Indeed, it was in the field of foreign missions that the ideal of strenuous Christian service was most revered. The missionary movement in the United States was sparked by the revivalism of Dwight L. Moody, the leading evangelist of the day, and by the activities of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions. This organization, which was founded in 1888, took the lead in promoting missionary activity abroad, recruiting missionaries and popularizing the movement in the churches and colleges across the land. The results were apparent in the growing number of people who chose to follow this strenuous way of life. From 1890 to 1917 thousands of American missionaries went out to the far-flung areas of the globe to bring Christianity and Western ways to those peoples who had

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[3]Ibid., pp. 181-183.

remained relatively untouched by them in the past.[4]

The missionary of the period was praised as the finest example of the tradition of muscular Christianity. He represented the ideal of the heroic Christian, whose courage and moral fervor would triumph in the struggle for righteousness in the world. Judson Smith, writing of foreign missionaries in 1896, declared: "For strength and clearness of mind, for balanced judgment, for practical sense, for industry and efficiency, for power in leadership and organization, for success in dealing with men, for magnanimity and courage, for patience and heroic self denial, they are the peers of the best men of their generation."[5] The Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions observed that "the missionary, like the soldier, must take risks. From Paul down missionaries have not hesitated to face them. . .the work must go on. Devoted missionaries have accepted the risk in the past, and they will accept it in the future."[6]

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[4]Paul A. Varg, Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats: The American Protestant Missionary Movement in China, 1890-1952 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1958), pp. 52-67.

[5]Judson Smith, "Foreign Missions in the Light of Fact," North American Review, CLXII (January, 1896), p. 26.

[6]Arthur Judson Brown, "The War and Our Devoted Missionaries," The Missionary Review of the World, XXVII (April, 1904), p. 243.

In likening the missionary to the soldier the author was employing a familar comparison. The missionary movement was often popularized in military terms. Ex-President Benjamin Harrison, for example, depicted the members of the World's Student Christian Federation as a mighty Christian army in his introduction to John R. Mott's Strategic Points in the World's Conquest:

> We see the stalwart youth of our country, or of the world, beating out the armor they are to wear and forging the swords they are to wield. The armor will be tough and strong and the swords bright and keen; and these eager young soldiers will readjust boundaries. . . .Give them leaders chosen from their own ranks, and their own corps badge; and out of this cadet corps will come the great captains who will fight it out on the lines of truth until the world's rebellion against God has been put down and the vanquished are given an unstinted share in the heritage of the victors.[7]

The missionary movement was closely related to the imperialist impulse.[8] Writers often employed the idea of the Christian mission in justifying imperialism and war. One of the leading advocates of expansion was Strong, whose Our Country preached the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon and lent Christian sanction to the imperialist movement. In Strong's view the Anglo-Saxon, as the representative of the two great

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[7]Benjamin Harrison in the Introduction to John R. Mott, Strategic Points in the World's Conquest (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1897), pp. 5-6.

[8]Varg, op. cit., pp. 81-83.

ideas of civil liberty and spiritual Christianity, was possessed of a divine mission to spread those blessings throughout the world. The role of the United States, Strong asserted, was vital to this task, the accomplishment of which would hasten the coming of the kingdom of Christ.[9] Alfred T. Mahan argued the proposition that "war, . . .is justified as an element of human progress, necessitated by a condition of mankind obviously far removed from Christian perfection, and, because of this imperfection, susceptible of remedy." In discussing "War From the Christian Standpoint" before the Church Congress held in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1900, Mahan employed a rather lengthy Biblical argument in support of his view.[10] In the wake of the Spanish-American War such an argument was reassuring to many Americans, as was the assertion in The Century Magazine that "the fighting fury of the old Hebrews--of their champions, kings, prophets, and poets,--has dominated the mind and the habit of Christian civilization."[11]

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[9]Josiah Strong, Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis (New York: The Baker & Taylor Co., rev. ed., 1891), pp. 208-227.

[10]Alfred T. Mahan, Some Neglected Aspects of War (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1907), pp. 97-114.

[11]"Christianity and War," The Century Magazine, LVIII (July, 1899), p. 481.

Both the missionary and the soldier, therefore, were viewed as the key figures in the advance of civilization. An editorial in The Independent in 1900, in seeking to define the proper role of each, placed the missionary in the vanguard of imperialism:

> . . .in the path that he blazes will follow the army. . . .The army will follow, however, not as a scourge, not in conquest. It will follow only as the police power of civilization. That, in the coming centuries, is to be its supreme function, . . .The faith of Christendom is not spread by the sword, but by the missionary. The army of Christendom follows the missionary, it does not go before him.[12]

The missionary ideal was inherent in the strenuous life philosophy of Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt praised the missionary spirit of strenuous endeavor, declaring that "every earnest and zealous believer, every man or woman who is a doer of the work and not a hearer only, is a lifelong missionary in his or her field of labor--. . ." In an address before the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in 1902, Roosevelt lauded those who "are doing strong men's work as they bring the light of civilization into the world's dark places." The occasion provided still another opportunity for a characteristic statement of the strenuous theme: "The criticism of those who live softly, remote from the strife, is of little value; but it would be difficult to overestimate the value

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[12]"The Army Follows the Missionary: Yes!" The Independent, LII (June 28, 1900), p. 1571.

of the missionary work of those who go out to share the hardship, and, while sharing it, not to talk about but to wage war against the myriad forms of brutality."[13]

Imbued with the missionary spirit of the age, the Rooseveltian strenuous life was also significantly influenced by the Tom Brown tradition of schoolboy manliness and athleticism. Although muscular Christianity in England had been associated particularly with Charles Kingsley, the noted clergyman, novelist, and poet, it was Thomas Hughes's novel, Tom Brown's School Days, which most effectively spread this gospel among nineteenth century Englishmen and Americans. The manliness idealized by the muscular Christianity of the fictional Tom Brown became the goal of American boys as well as English ones, and it contributed greatly to Roosevelt's formulation of "the strenuous life."

II

Tom Brown's School Days, which first appeared in 1858, had an enormous influence in America as well as in England.

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[13]"President Roosevelt at the General Assembly," The Outlook, LXXI (May 31, 1902), pp. 338-339.

In it, Hughes fused the muscular Christianity of Kingsley[14] with the educational ideals of Thomas Arnold, Hughes's old headmaster at Rugby, and added his own zest for sports and games to create a model of school life for boys. Hughes's athleticism far exceeded that of Arnold's, but it harmonized nicely with Arnold's teaching of self-discipline and with his emphasis on building character and training dynamic Christian gentlemen. Arnold led the way in the reform of the public school system in England in the nineteenth century, and Hughes saw to it that the headmaster's ideals were enshrined in the hearts of Englishmen.[15]

Hughes's novel was also a celebration of the English squirearchy. Hughes declared of the class of country squires

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[14]Although Kingsley apparently detested the phrase, "muscular Christianity," he nonetheless preached that brand of Christianity which the slogan described, calling for "a healthful and manful Christianity; one which does not exalt the feminine virtues to the exclusion of the masculine." Regarding education, "the question is not what to teach," he said, "but how to educate; how to train not scholars, but men; bold, energetic, methodic, liberal-minded, magnanimous." Quoted in Margaret Farrand Thorp, Charles Kingsley, 1819-1875 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1937), pp. 172, 101. Also see Una Pope-Hennessy, Canon Charles Kingsley: A Biography (New York: Macmillan Co., 1949), p. 8. For an American note on Kingsley's influence see his obituary in "Charles Kingsley," The Illustrated Christian Weekly, V (March 6, 1875), pp. 113-114.

[15]See Asa Briggs, "Thomas Hughes and the Public Schools" in Victorian People (New York: Harper & Row, Colophon Edition, 1963), pp. 140-167.

represented by the Browns that for centuries "they have been subduing the earth in most English counties, and leaving their mark in American forests and Australian uplands. Wherever the fleets and armies of England have won renown, there stalwart sons of the Brown's have done yeomen's work." They are, he said, "a fighting family." The values of the squirearchy were clearly evident in the aspirations expressed by Tom's father, on the occasion of Tom's departure for Rugby: "I don't care a straw for Greek particles, or the digamma, no more than does his mother. . . . If he'll only turn out a brave, helpful, truth-telling Englishman, and a gentleman, and a Christian, that's all I want, . . ." As for Tom, his ambition at Rugby was to be "A 1 at cricket and football, and all the other games, . . . and to please the Doctor; and I want to carry away just as much Latin and Greek as will take me through Oxford respectably." Then he added thoughtfully: "I want to leave behind me, . . . the name of a fellow who never bullied a little boy, or turned his back on a big one."[16]

At Rugby Tom achieved that manliness which muscular Christianity advocated. The hardy values absorbed through athletics and team play were tempered by Dr. Arnold's moral guidance and inculcation of Christian principles. The goal

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[16]Thomas Hughes, Tom Brown's School Days (Boston: Houghton Mifflin & Co., The Riverside Press, 1896), pp.1, 3, 68-69, 302.

of Christian manhood was achieved through inner struggles as well as physical ones, and a boy was taught to subject his soul to rigorous Christian examination. Thus the boys who emerged from Rugby were blessed with a manly, Christian faith that enabled them to face bravely the struggles and disappointments of life. Central to the Rugby ideal, and to the muscular Christianity movement, was the role of fighting. Hughes expressed it this way:

> After all, what would life be without fighting, I should like to know? From the cradle to the grave, fighting, rightly understood, is the business, the real, highest, honestest business of every son of man. Every one who is worth his salt has his enemies, who must be beaten, be they evil thoughts and habits in himself or spiritual wickedness in high places, or Russians, or Border-ruffians, or Bill, Tom, or Harry, who will not let him live his life in quiet till he has thrashed them.
> . . . I am as sorry as any man to see folk fighting the wrong people and the wrong things, but I'd a deal sooner see them doing that than they should have no fight in them.[17]

The London Spectator declared of Hughes in 1899 that "he, more than any other man, made the modern schoolboy. . . . He convinced schoolboys that it was possible to be manly, and truthful, and pure, and even religious, and yet remain healthy schoolboys still, with muscles in their frames longing for exercise, and ferment in their hearts, and vague

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[17] Ibid., pp. 272-273.

aspirations in their brains, . . ." The boys who fell under the Hughes influence, The Spectator further observed, held the manly virtues to be respectable, and "each in his degree strove to found conduct on them. That was, in substance, the teaching of the whole school of 'muscular Christians' to which Mr. Hughes always belonged, but he, and he alone, made it palatable, or indeed in favourable cases delightful, to average schoolboys, . . ." Furthermore, "there is no recoil in after life from the teaching of Tom Brown. The result has been at least two generations of men much more manly, sincere, and actively good than the generations which went before them, . . ."[18]

III

Writers often cited Tom Brown's School Days as a guide for American boyhood. Roosevelt listed it in 1900 as one of those books "which I hope every boy still reads."[19] It was Roosevelt himself who helped popularize the Rugby schoolboy

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[18]"The Influence of 'Tom Brown'," The Spectator, LXXXIII (July 1, 1899), p. 9. Also see Hamilton Wright Mabie, "Some Famous Schools: Eton College," The Outlook, LIX (August 6, 1898), p. 851. Victorian criticism of the athletic tradition is traced in Bruce E. Haley, "Sports and the Victorian World," Western Humanities Review, XXII (Spring, 1968), pp. 115-125.

[19]Theodore Roosevelt, "What We Can Expect of the American Boy," St. Nicholas, XXVII (May, 1900), p. 573.

tradition of Christian manliness in America. His view of a boy of character might have come from the pages of Tom Brown:

> He must not steal, he must not be intemperate, he must not be vicious in any way; he must not be mean or brutal; he must not bully the weak. In fact, he must refrain from whatever is evil. But besides refraining from evil, he must do good. He must be brave and energetic; he must be resolute and persevering. The Bible always inculcates the need of the positive no less than the negative virtues, although certain people who profess to teach Christianity are apt to dwell wholly on the negative.
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> . . . . . .
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> Alike for the nation and the individual, the one indispensable requisite is character--character that does and dares as well as endures, character that is active in the performance of virtue no less than firm in the refusal to do aught that is vicious or degraded.[20]

Roosevelt's emphasis on the active performance of virtue was basic to his approach to life, and it reflected the teachings of muscular Christianity. This was clearly evident in what Jacob Riis described as Roosevelt's creed, discovered in a speech to the Bible Society, in which Roosevelt stated: "If we read the Bible aright, . . . We read a book which teaches us to go forth and do the work of the Lord in the world as we find it; to try to make things better in the world, even if only a little better, because we have lived in it. That kind of work can

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[20]Theodore Roosevelt, "Character and Success," The Outlook, LXIV (March 31, 1900), pp. 726-727.

be done only by the man who is neither a weakling nor a coward; by the man who in the fullest sense of the word is a true Christian, like Greatheart, Bunyan's hero."[21]

To a great extent Roosevelt the reformer was actually Roosevelt the muscular Christian, setting about to do on earth the work of the Lord in the fashion of the boys of Rugby--vigorous, determined, unflinching, fair. One of the reasons why other professional politicians found him so disturbing was the fact that Roosevelt seemed actually to adhere to this schoolboy ethic. Owen Wister said of him, "the game that he plays is'square.' And this instinct to be 'square,' when it goes with a clean, out-of-door sporting and shoulder-hitting nature, wins all hearts at sight, except of course the hearts of politicians." Wister described Roosevelt as "in one word, the all round gentleman. When you find an all round gentleman who is public spirited and patriotic, you have the very best thing our American soil can produce; and the American people confess this in their approval of Mr. Roosevelt."[22]

It was the image of the dynamic Christian gentleman, built on the tradition of muscular Christianity and Roosevelt's own strenuous life philosophy, which Roosevelt carried

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[21]Quoted in Jacob Riis, "The Story of Theodore Roosevelt's Life," The Cosmopolitan, XXXII (February, 1902), p. 410.

[22]Owen Wister, "Theodore Roosevelt: The Sportsman and Man," Outing, XXXVIII (June, 1901), pp. 244, 247.

into the presidency. This was the image which depicted Roosevelt as a young St. George boldly leading his people forward to slay the dragons of the twentieth century. It was the image etched by Jacob Riis:

> A man with a healthy belief in God and in his fellow-man, who stands in the life of the people for honesty, square dealing and high courage; his mark that of a clean, strong man who fights for the right and wins; at forty-three, with such ideals, upon the top-rung of the ladder of honorable ambition, with a career behind him as scholar, statesman, soldier, that comprises the strenuous work of a dozen lives; the youngest of our Presidents and the young man's President, type and hero of the doers of our day, of those who hold the future in their hands. . . . Theodore Roosevelt, it has been truly said, is great on lines along which each and every one of us can be great if he wills and dares.[23]

Riis declared that this was Roosevelt's great message to the young men of the time. It was a message which appealed to the strenuous and muscular Christian outlook of the late nineteenth century. Charles F. Thwing, the president of Western Reserve University, in sampling the letters of young men regarding "the preaching they want," stated in 1895 that "in a material age, . . . the cry is for sermons to be other than material. 'That which shows the beauty of the religion of Jesus;' 'The plain application of the gospel in regard to right and wrong;' 'The gospel, pure and simple;' 'Vigorous, robust, muscular, practical Christianity;' 'Preaching

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[23]Riis, op. cit., p. 410.

Christ;' 'That which shows the character and manliness of Christ'--these are the phrases which the young men use to voice their demands."[24]

The religious "demands" of young men were met by ministers who sounded the trumpet of muscular Christianity. It was not uncommon for ministers to draw sermons from the teachings of Thomas Hughes, particularly from his The Manliness of Christ. In that book Hughes depicted Christ as "the true model of the courage and manliness of boyhood and youth and early manhood." This image of Christ as a manly man helped to make Christianity palatable to the strenuous-minded youth of the late nineteenth century. Manliness was an integral part of the moral effort against evil, a conflict central to the struggle to achieve the Christian goal of perfection of character. This was the gospel preached by Hughes,[25] and echoed by many others. It was appropriate, for example, for the Reverend David James Burrell of New York to acknowledge the widespread influence of Hughes by preaching an entire sermon on "Tom Brown of Rugby," on the occasion of Hughes's death in 1896.[26]

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[24]Charles F. Thwing, "Young Men, and the Preaching they Want," The Century Magazine, XLIX (February, 1895), p. 639.

[25]Thomas Hughes, The Manliness of Christ (Boston: Houghton Mifflin & Co., n.d.), pp. 52, 5-6.

[26]David James Burrell, "For Christ's Crown" and Other Sermons (New York: American Tract Society, 1896), pp. 244-253.

Sermons of the period frequently dealt with the strenuous themes of courage and heroism. In a sermon at Cornell University in 1900 Congregationalist minister Lyman Abbott declared, "I sometimes think that no crime is greater than the crime of cowardice and no virtue more needed than the virtue of heroism. . . . no man does great service to his age and generation who has not the heroism that dares suffer defeat and dares to die for a principle."[27] Henry Van Dyke's Sermons to Young Men included one on "Courage" in which bravery was extolled as a virtue in friend and foe alike:

> . . . in man bravery is always fine. We salute it in our enemies. A daring foe is respected, and though we must fight against him we can still honour his courage, and almost forget the conflict in our admiration for his noble bearing. . . . The enemy who slinks and plots and conceals. . .is despicable, serpentine, and contemptible. But he who stands up boldly against his antagonist in any conflict, physical, social, or spiritual, and deals fair blows, and uses honest arguments, and faces the issues of warfare, is a man to love even across the chasm of strife. An outspoken infidel is far nobler than a disguised skeptic. A brave, frank, manly foe is infinitely better than a false, weak, timorous friend.[28]

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[27]Lyman Abbott, "A Call to Battle," The Outlook, LXXI (May 24, 1902), p. 272.

[28]Henry Van Dyke, Sermons to Young Men (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898), pp. 54-55.

Sermons such as these, couched in muscular Christian terms, abounded in the era of the strenuous life. The image of Christian manhood fighting the good fight was posed as the highest manly ideal in American society. A professor at West Point, writing that "we want our officers to be a high type of men as well as highly trained soldiers," declared in 1902 that "the world justly recognizes as highest the Christian type of manhood; . . ." Furthermore, he said, "the Christian ideal is more ennobling than a simply religious spirit. The Christian man is nobler than the merely religious man. Christianity is broader than creed. Religion employs only a part of our nature, while Christianity uses the whole. Christianity is the perfection of character of which the religious feeling is an element." He insisted that "the highest and most exalted examples that we have to follow are those which approach most nearly to the Christian type of perfect manhood."[29]

The achieving of "the Christian type of perfect manhood" required a committment to a strenuous existence--both physical and spiritual. After Roosevelt gave currency to the phrase, "the strenuous life," William De Witt Hyde applied it as a title to a poem on the rigors of the Christian struggle to perfect oneself and society. "The Strenuous Life" appeared in The Outlook in 1903:

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[29]S.E. Tillman, "The True Soldier," The Outlook, LXX (April 19, 1902), pp. 963- 964, 968.

O Lord, we most of all give thanks
  That this thy world is incomplete;
That battle calls our marshaled ranks,
  That work awaits our hands and feet;

That Thou has not yet finished man,
  That we are in the making still;
As friends who share the Maker's plan,
  As sons who know the Father's will.

Beyond the present sin and shame,
  Wrong's bitter, cruel, scorching blight,
We see the end at which we aim--
  The blessed kingdom of the Right.

What though its coming long delay!
  With haughty foes it still must cope!
It gives us that for which to pray,
  A field for toil and faith and hope.

Since what we choose is what we are,
  And what we love we yet shall be,
The goal may ever shine afar;
  The will to win it makes us free.[30]

According to The Young Man and Himself by J.S. Kirtley et al., "there is one single task before the young man: to make himself the most perfect specimen of a man, in all the elements that enter essentially into right character, and, while doing it, to help others as powerfully as possible to do the same thing."[31] The age imposed on young men the moral obligation to make themselves into dynamic Christian gentlemen, and one means by which young men were trained to

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[30]William De Witt Hyde, "The Strenuous Life," The Outlook, LXXIV (May 9, 1903), p. 119.

[31]J.S. Kirtley and Others, The Young Man and Himself (Naperville, Illinois: J.L. Nichols & Co., 1902), p. 17.

meet the challenge of Christian manhood was through the activities of the Y.M.C.A. The Young Men's Christian Association, organized in England in 1844 and implanted in America in 1851, was an offspring of evangelical Protestantism and was designed to foster Christian ideals in young men and boys. Eventually developing into a world-wide movement, the Y.M.C.A. experienced phenomenal growth in the late nineteenth century and became a great layman's organization. By the 1890's a network of local associations in the cities and towns of America were conducting diverse programs of education, physical training, and welfare work. In all of North America the Y.M.C.A. in 1895 reported 263,000 members. Three years later the Spanish-American War acted as a great stimulus to the expansion of the movement.[32]

During the war with Spain Anna Northend Benjamin, in praising the work of the Y.M.C.A., posed a basic question for nineteenth century Americans: "The query is made every day in the minds of thousands, Is our army strong, well disciplined, and brave? How does it compare in these respects with the armies of other civilized countries? How many ask, Is it a moral, is it a Christian army?" Writing in The

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[32]C. Howard Hopkins, History of the Y.M.C.A. in North America (New York: Association Press, 1951), pp. 3-8, 409, 411-412, 418, 452-456, 681. Also useful is Sherwood Eddy, A Century With Youth: A History of the Y.M.C.A. from 1844 to 1944 (New York: Association Press, 1944).

Outlook, Benjamin then proceeded to report on the fine Christian work being done in the army camps. In addition to the Army Christian Commission and Y.M.C.A. workers, she singled out for praise General O.O. Howard and the noted revivalists Dwight L. Moody and Ira Sankey, all of whom had participated in religious services held for soldiers in a Tampa camp. "Hundreds," she was pleased to report, "have not been ashamed to acknowledge their Christianity, . . ."[33] Americans could breath a sigh of relief, knowing that their army indeed was, or would be, a moral, Christian army. In addition, at the close of the war, they could praise their army for possessing those virtues valued by muscular Christianity. This was apparent, for example, in the remarks of Albert Shaw in an article on "The Army and Navy Y.M.C.A.," in which he observed that "the very best thing about our soldiers in the recent war has been the fact that they have shown the plucky, high-spirited, independent qualities that characterize our young American manhood."[34]

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[33]Anna Northend Benjamin, "Christian Work in Our Camps," The Outlook, LIX (July 2, 1898), pp. 566, 567. See also "Religious Influences in the Soldiers' Camps," The Literary Digest, XVII (July 2, 1898), pp. 17-18.

[34]Albert Shaw, "The Army and Navy 'Y.M.C.A.'," The American Monthly Review of Reviews, XVIII (November, 1898), p. 537.

It was in the area of physical education that the Y.M.C.A. most nearly expressed the ideals of muscular Christianity. Dedicated to improving the body as well as the mind and spirit, the Association developed a vigorous body-building, health, and athletic program. Under the leadership of the physician Luther Gulick, the Y.M.C.A. promoted a philosophy of physical education based on Gulick's triangular concept, in which body, mind, and spirit should be developed proportionately in order to achieve the essential unity of the whole man. In the 1890's trained instructors began spreading the gospel of "the Triangle" in the many Y.M.C.A. gymnasiums in the country, and the Association significantly influenced the developing codes of sportsmanship and fair play in athletic contests and games. In short, the Y.M.C.A. played a major role in the rise of sports in America in the second half of the nineteenth century. This may be underscored by the fact that it was a Y.M.C.A. instructor, James Naismith, who is credited with having invented the game of basketball in 1891.[35]

One of the places where the Y.M.C.A. found especially fertile soil on which to grow, was the college campus.[36]

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[35]Hopkins, op. cit., pp. 245-270.

[36]Ibid., pp. 271-308, 625-639. Also see Henry T. Fowler, "A Phase of Modern College Life," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, XCII (April, 1896), pp. 688-695.

The American college and university was viewed by many as perhaps the most important institution for training Christian gentlemen. In his Within College Walls, published in 1893, Charles F. Thwing stated the case clearly:

> . . . it is to be said that it were well for the college to emphasize more strongly not simply a Christian profession, but also aggressive Christian manhood and manliness in the person of its professors, with a view to the training of Christian manhood and manliness in the person of its students. . . . The college should be Christian because Christianity is, on naturalistic grounds, the survival of the fittest in religion, and because, on other grounds, it is a divinely given system of truth for the control of conduct. It should be Christian because Christianity represents the finest type of manhood and of character.[37]

Thwing emphasized the role of the college teacher as being vital to the training of Christian manhood. He praised Arnold of Rugby as the ideal teacher and acknowledged Arnold's wide influence, asserting that "none have done a nobler work for humanity in the formation of character." With Arnold as the great example, he declared that "the professor should be a man who lives such a vigorous and earnest moral life that his scholars will be attracted toward it; . . ." Furthermore, he said, "it is the man more than the teacher, which makes the college. . . . For

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[37]Charles F. Thwing, Within College Walls (New York: The Baker & Taylor Co., 1893), pp. 39-40.

to the student the manhood of the professor is more significant than his scholarship."[38]

It was in intercollegiate athletics that the college role of training Christian manhood was unmistakably muscular Christian in emphasis. The values of "Tom Brown of Rugby" were perpetuated on the playing fields of American schools. This was particularly true of football. Thwing explained it this way: "Pluck, enthusiasm, self-restraint are elements of the heart which are trained in foot-ball. Most precious elements they are, too. They are the elements which are constitutionally characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon. . . . football for six weeks in the fall may do much, if properly conducted, in aiding the college in the securing of its supreme and ultimate purposes in training true young manhood."[39] Football contributed greatly to the building of the image of the young, dynamic Christian gentleman, schooled in the Rugby tradition. This was nowhere more apparent than in the speech of an old college alumnus to

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[38]Ibid., pp. 37-38, 46, 50. For a view of the college as a thoroughly Christianizing influence see William De Witt Hyde, The College Man and the College Woman (Boston: Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1906). Hyde stated that "the college, like the Christian home, is so organized that mere non-resistance, mere acceptance of the influences that surround you, tends to make one a gentleman and a Christian." p. 126.

[39]Charles F. Thwing, "Foot-Ball: A Game of Hearts," The Independent, L (November 3, 1898), p. 1261.

a football team: "My sons, you are gentlemen, and should play football as gentlemen, and not as heathen mercenaries, hired to draw blood. Let tactics, brawn,--made hard by days of self-denial,--courage and endurance win; but don't be rowdies. Don't disgrace your ancestors by striking 'below the belt;' not by kicking a man when he is down. You are not Roman gladiators, but Christian under-graduates."[40]

Ministers and teachers were encouraged to take an active interest in sports, and to inculcate in boys and young men the muscular Christian values derived from fair athletic competition. Sports writer Caspar Whitney stated the case for athletics in terms of the old Rugby ideal:

> Let these ministers and teachers make themselves familiar with the principles of honor and manliness which ought to govern all athletic contests, and then instill these principles into the boys and young men. . . . a boy who learns by his athletic life to do everything he can honorably to win, but to submit cheerfully to defeat will carry the same spirit in all his recreation and work in after life. After all, we all know that lying and dishonesty are largely matters of habit. But so are courage, manliness, and high-mindedness.[41]

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[40]"The Football Team," The Youth's Companion, LXVII (February 22, 1894), p. 84.

[41]"The Minister and Athletics: Mr. Caspar Whitney's Views," The Outlook, LV (January, 1897), p. 183.

Whitney's remarks were representative of the strenuous trend in American sports in the late nineteenth century. The roots of that trend lay in the athletic tradition of "Tom Brown of Rugby." Although muscular Christianity, which had fathered Tom Brown and the Rugby ideal, would lose its vitality with the decline of Victorianism, many of its values were enshrined, apparently forever, in the world of organized sport.

Chapter IV

The Strenuous Ideal in Organized Sport

According to a Harper's Weekly article in 1895, "ball matches, football games, tennis tournaments, bicycle races, regattas, have become a part of our national life, and are watched with eagerness and discussed with enthusiasm and understanding by all manner of people, from the day-laborer to the millionaire." Moreover, "this widespread interest in athletic sports has passed beyond the bounds of a mere 'fad,' and has grown into a settled fashion, the permanency of which can no longer be doubted." Evaluating the benefits of athletics, the writer concluded that "there is no better witness to the intrinsic sanity of our race--or, if you choose, of the Zeitgeist that animates our generation--than the widespread and steadily growing interest in amateur sports."[1] By the nineties the era of modern sport had arrived, and organized sports in America reflected something of the temper of the age of the late nineteenth century. Nowhere was the strenuous life more clearly displayed than in the realm of sport.

Sports and outdoor recreation had grown spectacularly since the Civil War in response to urbanization, industrial-

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[1]Henry Smith Williams, "The Educational Value and Health-Giving Value of Athletics," Harper's Weekly, XXXIX (February 16, 1895), p. 165.

ization, and the rise of leisure in America,[2] and most Americans probably shared the enthusiasm of the Harper's Weekly writer for athletics. The general view which prevailed was that sports represented a positive good amidst the complexities and evils which had accompanied the rise of the city and the growth of an industrial society.

This was in striking contrast to earlier American attitudes regarding sport. In the seventeenth century Puritan society had generally frowned upon recreation and play, cautioning and regulating against such activities; it had enshrined the gospel of work as the highest ideal of life in the New World wilderness--necessary for the survival of a pioneer society. The next century witnessed a gradual lessening of restraints, only to be followed in the early years of the nineteenth century by another period of repression of popular amusements. Amid the boundless new opportunities

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[2]On this subject see Frederic L. Paxson, "The Rise of Sport," in The Great Demobilization and other Essays (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1941), pp. 94-117; John Rickards Betts, "The Technological Revolution and the Rise of Sport, 1850-1900," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XL (September, 1953), pp. 231-256; Foster Rhea Dulles, A History of Recreation: America Learns to Play (2nd ed. rev.; New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1965), chapters 8, 9, 11-14; John Allen Krout, Annals of American Sport (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929), passim; Allen Nevins, The Emergence of Modern America, 1865-1878 (New York: Macmillan Co., 1927), chapter 8; Arthur M. Schlesinger, The Rise of the City, 1878-1898 (New York: Macmillan Co., 1933), chapter 9; Harold U. Faulkner, The Quest for Social Justice, 1898-1914 (New York: Macmillan Co., 1937), chapter 12.

of nineteenth century American economic life there was a renewed emphasis on the gospel of work, one that was overwhelmingly endorsed by the religious leaders of the country. Still, despite the fact that the first half of the century was a time of official restraint in terms of recreation and play, the changing conditions of American life were responsible for the beginnings of the rise of spectator sports and other forms of recreation and amusement. Industrialism and urbanization radically altered the outlook of Americans in regard to sport, causing them to place new value on outdoor exercise and activity.[3]

Even in the sports-crazed late nineteenth century, however, there were dissenting voices. Perhaps the most corrosive critic of sport, and the society of which it was a part, was Thorstein Veblen. Veblen viewed sports primarily as predatory activities of "the leisure class." He observed that force and fraud, two elements which characterized barbaric prowess, "are similarly present in modern warfare, in the pecuniary occupations, and in sports and games." "Strategy or cunning," he said, "is an element invariably present in games, as also in warlike pursuits and in the chase. In all of these employments strategy tends to develop into finesse and chicanery. Chicanery, falsehood, browbeating,

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[3]Dulles, op. cit., pp. 3-147.

hold a well-secured place in the method of procedure of any athletic contest and in games generally."[4]

Although Veblen's analysis of sport was out of harmony with the prevailing views of the time, the very fact that he devoted so much space to it in his The Theory of the Leisure Class was indicative of the strong claim sport made on the American imagination in the late nineteenth century. The nation was sports-minded, and most Americans probably agreed with the author of an article entitled "Sport's Place in the Nation's Well-Being" when he declared that "one is certainly well-nigh convinced that either real sport or artificial sport is the only tonic, the only medicine, which keeps men going, once they are civilized." He expressed the prevailing view that sports were necessary for a man to successfully withstand the strain of city life:

> . . . , sport is merely artificial work, artificial adventure, artificial colonizing, artificial war. It is shooting at a mark because there are no enemies to shoot at; it is keeping the muscles hard and the nerves steady, and the head, heart and body under control by a subterfuge, now that the real necessity is gone. And though there are certainly higher and

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[4]Thorstein Veblen, The Theory of the Leisure Class (New York: The New American Library, Mentor Edition, 1953), pp. 180, 181.

> better tests of patience and self-control and courage than are required at football, or golf, or hunting, there is certainly no better preparation to bear those tests than the schooling one gets by playing these same games.[5]

II

Sport fostered the masculine virtues. This was the main point made by advocates of the strenuous life in defense of athletics in late nineteenth century America. The theme of masculinity was apparent at every level of the thought of the period, ranging all the way from popular writing on sports to the essays and speeches of the nation's most sophisticated intellectuals, many of whom expressed concern for national virility. The Youth's Companion reported that "there is, beyond question, a tendency in football to promote manliness of bearing, courage, and 'push'."[6] Gifford Pinchot, writing of the kind of boy suited to be a forester, declared that "especially he should be manly,"[7] and Owen Wister said

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[5]Price Collier, "Sport's Place in the Nation's Well-Being," Outing, XXXII (July, 1898), p. 384. Also see H.W. Foster, "Physical Education vs. Degeneracy," The Independent, LII (August 2, 1900), pp. 1835-1837.

[6]"The Football Question," The Youth's Companion, LXVIII (March 14, 1895), p. 130.

[7]Gifford Pinchot, "Forestry as a Profession," The Youth's Companion, LXXI (October 14, 1897), p. 476.

of a group of cowboys he had met in the West that "they are of the manly, simple, humorous American type which I hold to be the best and bravest we possess and our hope in the future."[8] "All of our teachers and preachers of virtue," Roosevelt asserted, ". . . should try to educate our young men to the understanding that they must be manly as well as moral."[9] William James urged that "we must make new energies and hardihoods continue the manliness to which the military mind so faithfully clings." James sought a means which "would preserve in the midst of a pacific civilization the manly virtues which the military party is so afraid of seeing disappear in peace."[10]

The craze for intercollegiate athletics which swept the nation during the period received much criticism, but the critics were overwhelmed by the defenders and exponents of sport. Typical of the reaction to criticism which insisted that the preoccupation with college athletics was contrary to the real purposes of education was that of Caspar Whitney,

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[8]Fanny Kemble Wister (ed.), Owen Wister Out West: His Journals and Letters (University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 246.

[9]Theodore Roosevelt, "The New York Police Force," The Youth's Companion, LXXI (May 13, 1897), p. 224.

[10]William James, Memories and Studies (New York: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1912), pp. 287, 291.

sports columnist for Harper's Weekly. Whitney justified the popular enthusiasm for sport by celebrating the masculine virtues in Rooseveltian fashion:

> Of course the heroes among the undergraduates are the "men of brawn." Was it ever otherwise since the world began? Games, athletic endeavor of any kind, have always created more instant enthusiasm among spectators than success, in college or out of it, where the mental faculties alone are concerned. Vigor, health, bravery, appeal to us as no mental attainment can.
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> No amount of culture nor of refinement nor of intellectual force can atone for lack of those virile virtues essential to the perpetuation and the well-being of mankind.[11]

That participation in sports effectively prepared a boy for manhood became a truism of the age. "Athletic success is well worth having," The Youth's Companion counselled, "not only because it trains the body, but because its experiences help to make the boy a man."[12] St. Nicholas advised American boys to: "Go in for athletics! Go in for training! The training of today means not only strength of body, but strength of character; it involves purity, temperance, unselfishness, perseverance, and a host of other good qualities every boy should possess."[13] "Baseball," Walter Camp wrote in Century

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[11]Caspar Whitney, "Amateur Sport" column, Harper's Weekly, XLIII (March 4, 1899), p. 227.

[12]"How to Succeed at College," The Youth's Companion, LXV (May 19, 1892), p. 258.

[13]Samuel Scoville, Jr., "Training For Boys," St. Nicholas, XXVI (June, 1899), p. 644.

Magazine, "is for every boy a good, wholesome sport. It brings him out of the close confinement of the school-room. It takes the stoop from his shoulders and puts hard, honest muscle all over his frame. It rests his eyes, strengthens his lungs, and teaches him self-reliance and courage. Every mother ought to rejoice when her boy says he is on his school or college nine."[14] According to Caspar Whitney, sport "is the dominating force in the moulding of the boy's character."[15] In 1890 in Harper's Young People the captain of the Princeton football team wrote of the value of football:

> It makes a boy a true boy, and prepares him to be a man in the best sense of the term. It implants and develops in him courage; it strengthens him in his every joint and muscle, and lays the foundation of an iron constitution that will be of inestimable service to him after he has become a man. It also makes him self-reliant, sturdy, and quick-witted, for the head now plays as important a part on the football field as the body. There is no more gratifying scene to me than a crowd of youngsters playing football. I always feel that the community in which they live will be the stronger and more useful as a direct consequence of it.[16]

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[14]Walter Camp, "Base-Ball for the Spectator," The Century Magazine, XXXVIII (October, 1889), p. 831.

[15]Caspar Whitney, "Amateur Sport" column, Harper's Weekly, XXXVII (November 4, 1893), p. 1067. On another occasion Whitney observed that "the boy who is honest and sportsmanlike in his baseball and football is the one who will be honest in his profession." Harper's Weekly, XXXVII (June 24, 1893), p. 609.

[16]Edgar A. Poe, "Foot-Ball," Harper's Young People, XII (November 25, 1890), p. 62.

The martial spirit pervaded football. "For football is very like a small war," wrote J. Hamblen Sears in Harper's Round Table, "and the training of a team is not so different from the training of an army as are many other things. A brave man who cannot or does not obey orders in a regiment is well known to be not only useless himself, but a serious cause for the loss of discipline and efficiency on the part of all the other men of the regiment. It is precisely the same with football, . . ."[17] Of football at West Point and Annapolis, Caspar Whitney said, "if there is any game fitted to the training of the soldier, it is this one." Whitney declared that "the game is a mimic battle-field, on which the player must reconnoitre, skirmish, advance, attack, and retreat in good order; he must exercise strategy; be prepared to meet emergencies with coolness and judgment under trying circumstances; be trustworthy, observant, vigilant; have courage, pluck, fortitude, daring, and a spirit of self-sacrifice to duty. . ." The football player must "combine sobriety, common-sense, health, strength, activity, and esprit de corps to a marked degree; have a well-balanced manhood, a healthy mind in a sound body. . . ."[18]

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[17]J. Hamblen Sears, "A Few Words About Football," Harper's Round Table, II (November, 1898), pp. 33-34.

[18]Caspar Whitney, "The Athletic Development at West Point and Annapolis," Harper's Weekly, XXXVI (May 21, 1892), p. 496.

As were many other kinds of strenuous endeavor, football was viewed in the evolutionary terms of the "survival of the fittest." The result was to both intensify the popular mania for sport and to stimulate a public outcry against the brutality of certain sports, notably boxing and football. The Youth's Companion in 1894 referred to the qualities necessary for playing football as "the soldier's virtues" and to the game itself as possessing "some of the brutality of war." The author then observed that several members of the Princeton football team "played according to the law of natural selection--only the fittest survive."[19]

Accordingly the football field became the great school for instilling in young men the values of the strenuous life. It served as a training ground for a generation of college youth who would carry the strenuous ideal in sports into the conduct of their adult lives. The experience of football in the 1880's and 1890's undoubtedly contributed to a spirit of strenuous endeavor among many of those men who eagerly sought service in the Spanish-American War. The intensity of the college football movement was a key to the temper of the times. Perhaps the best example of this

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[19]"The Football Team," The Youth's Companion, LXVII (February 22, 1894), p. 84. Writing on "The Making of a Perfect Man," an M.D. declared that "the healthy youth who wishes to be equipped for the struggle of life should be a boxer, a wrestler, a football player, a baseball player, or a crew man." Munsey's Magazine, XXV (April, 1901), p. 101.

intensity of the football spirit was reported by Richard Harding Davis, who covered the Thanksgiving Day game between Princeton and Yale in 1893. The game, which was described at the time as "the greatest contest from first to last ever played on an American field,"[20] saw Princeton defeat Yale 6-0. Davis described the scene in the Princeton dressing room after the game:

> One of the Princeton coaches came into the room out of this mob, and holding up his arm for silence, said, "Boys, I want you to sing the doxology." And standing as they were, naked and covered with mud and blood and perspiration, the eleven men who had won the championship sang the doxology from the beginning to the end as solemnly and as seriously, and, I am sure, as sincerely, as they ever did in their lives, while outside the no less thankful fellow-students yelled and cheered, and beat at the doors and windows, and howled for them to come out and show themselves. This may strike some people as a very sacrilegious performance, and as a most improper one, but the spirit in which it was done has a great deal to do with the question, and any one who has seen a defeated team lying on the benches of their dressing-room sobbing, like hysterical school-girls, can understand how great and how serious is the joy of victory to the men who conquer.[21]

The rage for college football was fostered by the spirit of muscular Christianity which stemmed from Rugby and "Tom Brown's School Days" in England. The football player in late

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[20]Caspar Whitney, "Amateur Sport" column, Harper's Weekly, XXXVII (December 9, 1893), p. 1184.

[21]Richard Harding Davis, "The Thanksgiving-Day Game," Harper's Weekly, XXXVII (December 9, 1893), p. 1171.

nineteenth century America was continually reminded of the moral aspects of athletics. Charles Kendall Adams pointed to the fact that a great change had taken place in college life since the advent of athletics. Writing in The Forum in 1890, Adams declared that "there is vastly less of riotous disorder in our colleges than there was a generation ago." The reason for this, he observed, lay "very largely, if not chiefly, in the moral power of regularly-prescribed gymnastic exercise and athletic sports." What is obvious after a close inspection of the game of football, he said, "is the fact that it calls into active effort the mental and moral, no less than the bodily, faculties of the players."[22] "The true spirit in football," said a writer in Outing, "is absolute integrity and fairness in players and playing, and the dash and determination which can be built on that basis."[23]

Although the exponents of football and other intercollegiate sports emphasized the moral aspects of athletics, there were numerous critics who presented a mass of evidence to the contrary. The brutality of football and the growing professionalism in the sport did not support the contention that the "moral" side of the game was flourishing. "The

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[22]Charles Kendall Adams, "Moral Aspects of College Life," The Forum, VIII (February, 1890), pp. 672, 674.

[23]Harmon S. Graves, "Army and Navy Football: The True Spirit of Play," Outing, XXXVII (January, 1901), p. 453.

deaths caused directly by football-playing," one report read, "are as numerous in proportion to the numbers engaged as in a skirmish in real war."[24] Andrew D. White, the former president of Cornell, said that "the sight of a confused mass of educated young men making batter-rams of their bodies, plunging their heads into each other's stomachs, piling upon each other's ribs, or maiming each other for life, --sometimes indeed, . . . killing each other, --in the presence of a great mass of screaming, betting bystanders, many among them utterly disreputable, is to me a brutal monstrosity."[25]

Even Caspar Whitney, one of the foremost advocates of the game, was forced to admit in 1895 that, "when I consider the condition of affairs this moment over the whole country in football alone I am compelled to acknowledge that it is a criticism of the severest kind on the morality of the young men of America, . . ."[26] Charles Eliot Norton did not equivocate in his statement on the subject: "The manners and morals displayed in intercollegiate contests in athletic sports in all parts of the country fall little short of a national disgrace, . . ." They result, he said, "not only

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[24]"Brutal Football," The Youth's Companion, LXXI (December 2, 1897), p. 610.

[25]Andrew D. White, "How to Choose a College," The Youth's Companion, LXIV (August 27, 1891), p. 462.

[26]Caspar Whitney, "Amateur Sport" column, Harper's Weekly, XXXIX (November 23, 1895), p. 1124.

from the character of the contestants, but from that of the community at large from which they are drawn, and which encourages the barbaric instincts of youth by its indifference to fair play, and by the excess of its hysteric applause of victory won by any means, fair or foul. The intercollegiate game has become an evil not only in college life, but in the life of the nation itself, . . ."[27]

Many college presidents maintained that football was worthwhile, but insisted that reforms were necessary for the sport to survive in American colleges.[28] Despite efforts to eliminate the brutality and the abuses of the game in the 1890's, the football controversy continued and the furor reached new heights in the early years of the twentieth century. "It is a fact that modern life demands courage," Ira Hollis wrote in the Atlantic Monthly in 1902, "and that football develops it; nevertheless it is foolish to risk life and limb in a game because it teaches physical courage." The author also took issue with the view that football was particularly valuable in training men for military service.[29] Serious injuries and deaths in the sport

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[27]Charles Eliot Norton, "Some Aspects of Civilization in America," The Forum, XX (February, 1896), pp. 645-646.

[28]"Are Foot-Ball Games Educative or Brutalizing," The Forum, XVI (January, 1894), pp. 647-654.

[29]Ira N. Hollis, "Intercollegiate Athletics," Atlantic Monthly, XC (October, 1902), p. 540.

reached such ominous proportions in 1905 that President Roosevelt threatened to abolish football if the colleges did not institute the necessary reforms in the game.

As a result of Roosevelt's action, which included a White House conference with athletic representatives from Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, reforms were made in the game which established football as a relatively safe sport. Roosevelt was an advocate of the strenuous ideal in football, and he did not object to the roughness of the game, but he was firmly opposed to the brutality and foul play.[30] "The sports especially dear to a vigorous and manly nation," Roosevelt had written several years earlier, "are always those in which there is a certain slight element of risk."[31] Although it may have seemed otherwise at times, Roosevelt always maintained a sensible view of athletics, and he frequently expressed his views on the necessity of keeping the role of sport in proper perspective.[32]

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[30]Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University: A History (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), pp. 374-376. Rudolph's chapter on "The Rise of Football" is an excellent treatment of the development of the game and its relation to its college setting in America. Also see Allison Danzig, The History of American Football (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1956).

[31]Theodore Roosevelt, "Value of an Athletic Training," Harper's Weekly, XXXVII (December 23, 1893), p. 1236.

[32]Ibid; Theodore Roosevelt, "Professionalism in Sports," North American Review, CLI (August, 1890), pp. 187-191.

Although the future of the game was seriously in doubt in 1905, football survived the controversy to become the major college sport in the twentieth century. Even by 1900 it was apparent that football occupied a special place in sports, as Harmon S. Graves indicated when he said in 1901 that "football is unquestionably the representative American college game. It has been wholly developed by college men, and they have naturally furnished its highest exponents."[33] It is not surprising that a game such as football developed when it did--in the strenuous age of the late nineteenth century. Many Americans in the era of Theodore Roosevelt adhered to the view expressed in Outing magazine in 1900: "Football is the expression of the strength of the Anglo-Saxon. It is the dominant spirit of a dominant race, and to this it owes its popularity and its hopes of permanence."[34]

Football contributed greatly to the heroic image of American manhood which was celebrated at the turn of the century under the vogue of the strenuous life. The football player was elevated to the status of national hero in American society. An example of this hero-making process was the poem "The Foot-ball Heroes," which appeared in Leslie's Weekly in 1899:

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[33]Graves, op. cit., p. 453. Also see Walter Camp, "Football up to Date," The Century Magazine, LXXIX (November, 1909), pp. 61-73.

[34]W. Cameron Forbes, "The Football Coache's Relation to the Players," Outing, XXXVII (December, 1900), p. 339.

Princeton, and Yale, and Harvard,
And every brave college team
From the hills of old New England
To the soft Suwanee's stream,
Here's to your brawn and sinew,
To your hearts so stout and true.
Oh, where would our Deweys and Roosevelts be
If they tried to tackle you?
. . . . . .
And they are but shining examples
Of the lads we all love and admire,
Ready with muscles of iron
For the scrimmage of blood and fire;
Ready to tackle the foeman
Alike upon land and on sea,
Columbia, these are thy jewels,
Thy heroes of battles to be![35]

The newspaper sports page, which was just then coming into its own, covered intercollegiate athletics fully and completely, and made the names of outstanding football players known in households throughout the country. Not only did the football players become public idols, but also the great coaches of the game achieved fame. Walter Camp of Yale was the first famous football coach. "There is only one man in New Haven," Richard Harding Davis wrote in the 1890's, "of more importance than Walter Camp, and I have forgotten his name. I think he is the president of the university."[36] Camp took the lead in promoting intercollegiate athletics.

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[35]John Paul Bocock, "The Foot-ball Heroes," Leslie's Weekly, LXXXVIII (January 5, 1899), p. 7.

[36]Richard Harding Davis, "A Day With the Yale Team," Harper's Weekly, XXXVII (November 18, 1893), p. 1110.

The great success of his Yale teams established him as the leading authority on the game of football, and his numerous articles on the subject helped to popularize the sport.

It was at Yale that the mighty Frank Merriwell performed his heroic deeds, both on and off the athletic field. Merriwell, the fictional creation of Gilbert M. Patten, captured the imagination of American youth in the 1890's and early 1900's. Writing as "Burt L. Standish," Patten made the name of Frank Merriwell synonymous with the strenuous ideal in sport. There was no sport at which Frank did not excel, and no big game he could not win for Yale when the chips were down. His heroic feats on the gridiron and on the baseball diamond (as a pitcher he could throw a ball that curved twice) became legend. Morality was also a part of the Merriwell legend. He was the model of the clean-living sportsman, setting the example which would be emulated by countless numbers of American boys for years to come. Frank was manly. He possessed all of those virtues of manliness which Roosevelt and his contemporaries so heartily admired. As the great fictional exemplar of the strenuous life, Frank Merriwell had a tremendous impact upon the generation which read him. Counted among his admirers were such diverse figures as Jack Dempsey, Fredric March, Woodrow Wilson,

Babe Ruth, Al Smith, and Wendell Willkie.[37]

Frank Merriwell demonstrated that clean living was vital to success in sports. He did not smoke, drink, or swear, and he performed heroically in games where others who did could never match him in stamina and ability. Injuries in football did not deter him. In the last seconds of one of the "big games" against Harvard, Frank, despite great pain, recovered a fumble and raced down the field toward the goal line. "Had Frank been at his best," Patten reminds the reader, "he would have crossed the Harvard line without again being touched, . . ." Because of his injuries, however, he was not at his best, and he was tackled on the ten yard line by Hollender of Harvard. Instead of going down though, Frank kept his balance and, with legs churning, plunged forward: "He felt hands clinging to him, and, with all the fierceness he could summon, he strove to break away and go on. His lips were covered with a bloody foam, and there was a frightful glare in his eyes. He strained and strove to get a little farther, and he actually dragged Hollender along the ground till he broke the fellow's hold. Then he reeled across Harvard's line and fell." The game won, Frank had to be carried from the field, placed in

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[37]Robert H. Boyle, Sport--Mirror of American Life (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1963), pp. 241-246; Russel B. Nye, "The Juvenile Approach to American Culture, 1870-1930," New Voices in American Studies, ed. R.B. Brown, D.M. Winkleman, & H. Allen (Purdue University Studies, 1966), pp. 75-76.

bed, and treated by a doctor. After he had recovered sufficiently to talk, his jubilant teammates crowded around his bed, congratulating him and praising his heroism in winning the game. His modesty, however, prevailed as always, and he replied: "No, no! We all did it. Think how the boys fought! It was splendid! And that was the best eleven Harvard ever put on the field. Oh, what a glorious Thanksgiving!"[38]

Winning the big game was Frank's forté. In baseball he made the Yale varsity team as a freshman, and in the game against Harvard his ability as a pitcher was put to the test. Not only did he pitch his team out of serious trouble, but in the last of the ninth inning he hit a long ball into left field, thereby providing an opportunity to win the game on the basis of his speed and skill as a base runner. He rounded third and headed toward home plate in a desperate attempt to beat the throw to the catcher:

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[38]Boyle, op. cit., pp. 264-265.

> "Slide!"
> That word Frank heard above all the commotion. He did slide. Forward he scooted in a cloud of dust. The catcher got the ball and put it onto Frank--an instant too late!
> A sudden silence.
> "Safe home!" rang the voice of the umpire
> Then another roar, louder, wilder, full of unbounded joy! The Yale cheer! The band drowned by all the uproar! The sight of sturdy lads in blue, delirious with delight, hugging a dust-covered youth, lifting him to their shoulders, and bearing him away in triumph. Merriwell had won his own game, and his record was made. It was a glorious finish![39]

Winning in the Frank Merriwell tradition inspired many American boys in sports in the twentieth century. The strenuous concept of giving one's all in games, but within the context of a spirit of fair play was the great legacy of the Merriwell series. One played fiercely in sports, but one played fairly. Above all, one did not give up when the going got rough. On this point the author of the Merriwell stories spoke in Rooseveltian terms: "Do not quit. Above all things else, do not be a quitter. The boys who have a large amount of stick-to-it-iveness invariably develop into men who persist against all obstacles and succeed in the struggle of life. They rise above their companions and surroundings, and are pointed out as successful men." "Quitters," Patten said, "become ordinary men, followers of their more persistent and determined fellows." Furthermore,

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[39]Gilbert M. Patten, Frank Merriwell at Yale (Philadelphia: David McKay, ca., 1903), pp. 380-383.

he observed that quitters "never rise to hold positions of trust and influence. At least, if one ever does rise through chance to hold such a position, it almost invariably happens that sometime his original weakness causes him to fail and fall. He is not a stayer."[40]

The Merriwell series, which began in 1896, was a celebration of American college life as much as it was a testimony to the virtues of the athletic competitor. As such, it was representative of a literary genre which flourished between 1890 and World War I which depicted the glamour of college student life. Out of these years came, in addition to Patten's Frank Merriwell, Owen Johnson's Stover at Yale and George Fitch's Siwash stories. The period produced an image of college life which lingered far into the twentieth century. It evoked memories of carefree student days amidst the congenial atmosphere of ivy-covered walls and familiar campus walkways, of soft autumn afternoons and glee club concerts, of the singing of the Whiffenpoof song with a glass of beer at Mory's, of dying "for dear old Rutgers," of reading Kipling and Stevenson, of fraternity functions, spring dances, and pep rallies.[41] It was this image of college life

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[40]Quoted in Nye, op. cit., p. 77.

[41]Ernest Earnest, Academic Procession: An Informal History of the American College, 1636-1953 (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1953), pp. 230-235. Also see John O. Lyons, The College Novel in America (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1962).

which evoked the sentimental nostalgias of alma mater. As M.A. de Wolfe Howe, Jr., remarked, a college man's memories would probably be, more often than not, those "not of lectures and the wisdom of the ages, but of the spring and autumn evenings on the campus, the winter nights of informal supper and song in jolly rooms, the old good-fellowship of bygone days."[42]

It was as a part of this image of college life that the competitive spirit of intercollegiate athletics was popularized, and the manly image which this spirit promoted was tempered by an allegiance to the turn of the century values of the strenuous life. The strenuous ideal in organized sport received its most enthusiastic following in intercollegiate athletics. "So long as college athletics build up the physique of our youth," Walter Camp wrote in 1893, "so long as they teach self-control, temperance, and courage, so long as money considerations and dishonesty do not enter into them, they will form a valuable feature of college life."[43] Advocates of sport stressed the idea that the manly image fostered by athletics provided a general uplifting of the moral tone of student life. J.H. Sears said in The Youth's Companion that "the athletic men, standing as they do before

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[42]M.A. de Wolfe Howe, Jr., "Curious College Customs," The Youth's Companion, LXVI (May 25, 1893), p.266.

[43]Walter Camp, "College Athletics," The Century Magazine, XLVI (June, 1893), p. 210.

their college mates, are in a measure examples to the body of the students. Their regularity, their temperance, their zeal and good standing in studies serve to increase the morality and the temperance of the entire university."[44]

Crucial to the manly image in sport at the turn of the century were the developing concepts of sportsmanship. Writers on the subject attempted to define the code of the "sportsman" and sought to make it conform to the gentlemanly ideal in American society. Harper's Round Table declared that "a true 'sportsman' is always a gentleman by instinct, if not by birth and education, and he engages in sport for sport's sake only."[45] Commenting on the football situation, Walter Camp observed that "rules will not make a gentlemanly game. But men may."[46] Caspar Whitney, the foremost sports writer of the period, attempted to define "the sporting spirit" in this fashion: "Be it understood that, shorn of the outward and visible signs of sport, the sportsman is simply a fair-minded, manly-acting, outspoken, courteous gentleman--and I mean gentleman in the sense that implies natural instinct, not clothes and general outward appearance.

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[44]J.H. Sears, "Athletic Training at Harvard," The Youth's Companion, LXVI (June 15, 1893), p. 306.

[45]"Interscholastic Sport" column, Harper's Round Table, XVII (November 5, 1895), p. 17.

[46]Walter Camp, "Football. Review of Season of 1894," Outing, XXVII (October, 1895), p.88.

Many a good sportsman I have known in cowhide boots and with a somewhat limited vocabulary." Whitney pointed to "four attributes essential to sportsmanship--first, sport for sport's sake; second, fair play; third, playing the game out; fourth, courtesy to a worthy adversary."[47]

In an article entitled "The Sporting Spirit. Ancient and Modern," which appeared in Outing in 1900, George Hibbard stressed the strenuous ideal in his analysis of the sporting spirit: "Play the game out! There it is--play it out. Do not give up because things go awry, but try to set them right, for that is not only the more dignified course, but the true way of the sporting spirit. The man who 'sulks' is false to others and false to himself, and the sporting spirit forbids all falsity and weakness." Hibbard also emphasized the necessity for a fair fight in a sporting contest. "The chances must be equal," he said, "and then, and then only, all may be done for victory. This great principle runs through the requirements of all the range of sport." Hibbard also linked the strenuous theme in sports to the national strenuosity displayed in the Spanish-American

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[47]Caspar Whitney, "The Way of the Sportsman" column, Outing, XXXVI (June, 1900), p. 315. John Corbin also commented on the topic in "The Modern Chivalry," The Atlantic Monthly, LXXXIX (May, 1902), pp. 601-611. He declared that "the bare struggle for existence exacts strength and masterhood, but to live in the fair name of a sportsman it is necessary to rise to spiritual heights." Of athletic sports, he said: ". . . like the chivalry of old, they afford the most generally available school for the humanities of living." p. 604.

War: "It now may be admitted this was a 'sporting' war. And in the answers to the questions that have been left--the questions of imperialism and expansion--the sporting spirit in these days is having a great deal to say, for there is a great deal of the spirit of sport in the spirit of Jingoism."[48]

III

Sport was useful in explaining the temper of the times, it seemed. The most popular sport in America was baseball, and Mark Twain said that it was "the very symbol, the outward and visible expression of the drive and push and rush and struggle of the raging, tearing, booming nineteenth century." Baseball, as the great "national game," offered

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[48]George Hibbard, "The Sporting Spirit. Ancient and Modern," Outing, XXXVI (September, 1900), pp. 599-601. The results of years of sporting activity in America were summed up by Price Collier in 1901. He observed that "we have gone a long way toward the goal of manliness in our sports and pastimes. . . . Not only may those who are professionally interested and those who are participants in playing games feel encouraged, but every man who loves his country wisely will welcome any proof that men are more manly than they were. . . . It is something gained that thousands of our boys are being taught to play with all their might, to play fair, and to win if they can. A lad who has had ten years of such training can scarcely fail to retain something of that same spirit when he comes to take part in the real contests of life." "The Ethics of Ancient and Modern Athletics," The Forum, XXXII (November, 1901), p. 318.

countless numbers of Americans opportunities for expressing the values of the strenuous life. As one historian of the game has observed, baseball provided "all the vicarious, atavistic satisfactions of combat, even though it be in the form of a sham battle between two groups of paid performers."[49] By 1900 professional baseball was firmly established as an aspect of the American scene. This was the era of Casey at the Bat, Slide, Kelley, Slide!, and Spalding's Official Base Ball Guide. The heroes of the period included Cy Young, John McGraw, and Honus Wagner.

Baseball captured the interest of Americans of all ages. Helen M. North, in writing of the sport for young people, observed in 1890 that "from the small boy of the neighborhood 'nine' to the mature man who eagerly watches the game in which the infirmities of age alone prevent him from participating, the masculine American is thoroughly interested in the game of base-ball." "The feminine American, too," she added, "begins to grow interested."[50] "Baseball," the historian Frederic L. Paxson wrote, "succeeded as an organized spectator sport, but it did also what neither racing nor boxing could do; it turned the city lot into a playground and the small boy into an enthusiastic player."[51]

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[49]Harold Seymour, Baseball: The Early Years (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 347.

[50]Helen M. North, "About Base-Balls and Base-Ball," The Youth's Companion, LXIII (March 20, 1890), p. 154.

[51]Paxson, op. cit., p. 103.

The active role taken by American youth in the game of baseball represented the ideal kind of sporting activity of which Theodore Roosevelt approved. Participation, Roosevelt emphasized, was the important thing in sports. Commenting on baseball as a spectator game, he said that "the only good resulting from seeing a battle between two paid professional nines is the emulation excited in the minds of the younger portion of the onlookers to try their own hands at the bat."[52] Roosevelt was critical of professionalism in sports. "Our object," he said, "is to get as many of our people as possible to take part in manly, healthy, vigorous pastimes, which will benefit the whole nation; it is not to produce a limited class of athletes who shall make it the business of their lives to do battle with one another for the popular amusement." Roosevelt was concerned that the American people adopt the proper approach to sports. He pointed out to his countrymen that "the existence of a caste of gladiators in the midst of a population which does not itself participate in any manly sports is usually, as it was at Rome, a symptom of national decadence."[53]

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[52]Roosevelt, "Value of an Athletic Training," op. cit., p. 1236.

[53]Roosevelt, Professionalism in Sports," op. cit., pp. 190-191.

Roosevelt encouraged especially those sports which developed "such qualities as courage, resolution, and endurance," and these he believed, largely fell outside the realm of organized athletics. "The best of all sports for this purpose," he said, "are those which follow the Macedonian rather than the Greek model: big-game hunting, mountaineering, the chase with horse and hound, and wilderness life with all its keen, hardy pleasures. The hunter and mountaineer lead healthier lives--in time of need they would make better soldiers--than the trained athlete."[54]

For some, the values of the strenuous life were realized primarily within the realm of organized sport. For others, such as Roosevelt, the strenuous ideal was achieved through contact with the wilderness. The outdoor movement which swept the nation at the turn of the century invited the exercise of the strenuous life. It was in "the great outdoors" that many Americans sought to cultivate the values embodied in Roosevelt's philosophy.

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[54] Ibid., p. 188.

Chapter V

The Vigorous Life of the Great Outdoors

"This rise of outdoor sports," wrote Caspar Whitney in 1900, "is not a craze that will presently subside and leave us cooped up indoors again with our flannels and our grog and doctor's prescriptions. . . . We have gone outdoors to engage in this stimulating, muscle building play because our Anglo-Saxon instincts draw us toward it and we are outdoors to stay."[1] The outdoor movement which gripped America at the turn of the century was of such intensity that it indeed seemed that Americans who could afford to do so were "outdoors to stay." Everywhere people of the urban middle and upper class were leaving the confines of the office, factory, and home, for recreation and activity in "the great outdoors."[2] "We love the open air

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[1]Caspar Whitney, "Outdoor Sports--What They Are Doing For Us," The Independent, LII (June 7, 1900), p. 1362. In a similar vein Dallas L. Sharp declared that "this so-called nature movement is peculiarly American. No such general, widespread turning to the out-of-doors is seen anywhere else; no other such body of nature literature as ours, no other people so close to nature in sympathy and understanding, because there is no other people of the same degree of culture that is living so close to the real, wild out-of-doors." See "Our Uplift Through Outdoor Life," The World's Work, VIII (July, 1904), p. 5044.

[2]For a comprehensive study of the outdoor movement see Peter J. Schmitt, Back to Nature: The Arcadian Myth in Urban America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969). Examples of the many contemporary articles on various aspects of the subject are: Francis W. Halsey, "The Rise of the Nature Writers," The American Monthly Review of Reviews, XXVI (November, 1902), pp. 567-571; Henry Litchfield West, "American Out-Door Literature," The Forum, XXIX (July, 1900), pp. 632-640; "Out of Doors," The Century Magazine, LVIII (June, 1899), p. 321; Ed. W. Sandys, "Camps and Camping," Outing, XXX (July, 1897), pp. 373-379; and Frederick McCormick, "Outgoing Ways," Outing, XXXVI (August, 1900), pp. 525-528.

for itself, and are contented with it," declared a writer in the Atlantic Monthly. "This sweet, fresh renewal that comes from contact with nature is felt even by people who have little imagination or sensibility, who abhor solitude, and certainly would not choose the country as an abiding-place. In summer the whole population flocks to the mountains and salt water, and they are not quite the same there as at home."[3] Urban Americans were flocking to "the great outdoors" for reasons of recreation, health, and spiritual renewal, and also because many, especially the exponents of the strenuous cult, found in the outdoor movement the antidote for "overcivilization."

It is not surprising that "overcivilization" aroused widespread concern in middle and upper class America in the late nineteenth century. An intellectual current of the period was one that has been termed "the cataclysmic vision," forecasting social catastrophe and the doom of civilization. This view represented one intellectual response to the rapid transformation of American society which occurred after the Civil War. The impact of the changes wrought by industrialism, urbanization, immigration, and labor organization unsettled American life. The strains and tensions imposed by this rapid transformation of society and the accompanying social evils

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[3]Gamaliel Bradford, Jr., "The American Out of Doors," Atlantic Monthly, LXXI (April, 1893), pp. 455-456.

gave rise to political and social protest movements by the end of the century, and they also gave rise to the pessimism of cataclysmic thought.[4]

Intellectual America in the 1890's became preoccupied with works such as Max Nordau's Degeneration and Brooks Adams's Law of Civilization and Decay. Nordau declared that many European literary figures and artists were degenerate, and suggested that the social order was rapidly losing its vitality. Degeneration was translated into English in 1895 and the American press was deluged with reviews and discussions of the book.[5] In the same year The Law of Civilization and Decay appeared, formulating a theory of history that in some respects anticipated Oswald Spengler's The Decline of the West. Adams traced the rise and fall of civilizations on the basis of the scientific principle of the law of force and energy. Human societies, according to Adams, experienced various phases of

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[4]Frederic C. Jaher, Doubters and Dissenters: Cataclysmic Thought in America, 1885-1918 (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), pp. 3-32, 158-187.

[5]John Higham, "The Reorientation of American Culture in the 1890's," The Origins of Modern Consciousness, ed. John Weiss (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1965), p. 38. For a contemporary examination of the question, see Charles L. Dana, "Are We Degenerating?" The Forum, XVIX (June, 1895), pp. 458-465. To a great extent "degeneration" and "overcivilization" were reactions to the decadence movement of the nineties. On this topic, and for discussions of leading figures of the movement such as Oscar Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley, see Oscar Cargill, Intellectual America (New York: Macmillan Co., 1941) and Henry F. May, The End of American Innocence (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959).

centralization through the expenditure and accumulation of energy, but "a race must, sooner or later, reach the limit of its martial energy, when it must enter on the phase of economic competition." It was this economic phase, Adams said, which posed the danger of decay: "In this last stage of consolidation, the economic, and perhaps, the scientific intellect is propagated, while the imagination fades, and the emotional, the martial, and the artistic types of manhood decay. . . ."[6]

This was obviously intended as a message for late nineteenth century American civilization, and Adams's book was widely discussed in intellectual circles.[7] Perhaps more typical of the widespread concern regarding the threat of "over-civilization," however, was an article by Henry Childs Merwin, entitled "On Being Civilized Too Much," in the June, 1897, issue of the Atlantic Monthly:

> There are in all of us certain natural impulses, or instincts, which furnish in large measure the springs of human conduct; and these impulses, or instincts, as they may be called with some exaggeration, are apt to be dulled and weakened by civilization. . . . Pursue the process a little further, and soon you will have a creature who is what we call over-sophisticated and effete, . . .

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[6]Brooks Adams, The Law of Civilization and Decay (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1943; Preface, 2nd ed.), pp. 60, 61.

[7]See, for example, Theodore Roosevelt's review of Adams's book in The Forum, XXII (January, 1897), pp. 575-589. Roosevelt, like Adams, was concerned for the future of civilization, but he rejected Adams's pessimism.

> In fact, however, every step in civilization is made at the expense of some savage strength or virtue.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The sensible people, the well-educated, respectable people of the day are almost sure to be on the wrong side of every great moral question when it first arises.
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> . . . . . .
>
> Leave the close air of the office, the library, or the club and go out into the streets and the highway. Consult the teamster, the farmer, the wood-chopper, the shepherd, or the drover. . . . From his loins, and not from those of the dilettante, will spring the man of the future.[8]

The call to break out of the stuffy confines of the city and return to nature became the standard prescription of those who would treat the maladies of the "overcivilized" man. Closely related to this phenomenon was the American view of wilderness, which was then in a state of transition. Traditionally the wilderness had been viewed as an alien area to be conquered and civilized. Now, near the end of the nineteenth century, perceiving the end of the frontier and the increasing, often vague, discontent with civilization, Americans came to appreciate the wilderness as a place to be preserved and enjoyed. There developed a remarkable preoccupation in the 1890's and early 1900's with that which was primitive and savage. Out of this transition of American thought and feeling at the turn of the century came a variety of developments related to the strenuous life: the Boy Scout

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[8]Henry Childs Merwin, "On Being Civilized Too Much," Atlantic Monthly, LXXIX (June, 1897), pp. 838, 839, 842, 846.

movement, the conservation movement, the new emphasis on "outdoor life" in American magazines, the rise of the "nature writers" such as John Burroughs and John Muir, as well as a turning to the cult of the primitive.[9]

John Muir wrote of this new attitude toward nature:

> The tendency nowadays to wander in wildernesses is delightful to see. Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, overcivilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a necessity; and that mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life. Awakening from the stupefying effects of the vice of over-industry and the deadly apathy of luxury, they are trying as best they can to mix and enrich their own little ongoings with those of Nature, and to get rid of rust and disease.[10]

The "back to nature" movement was vigorously promoted in the nation's leading periodicals. Americans were exhorted to turn away from civilization and seek spiritual renewal in the great outdoors. "Nature is a middle ground between God and man; it is the playground of the soul," declared The Outlook. "There is no better approach to truth than going into

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[9]Roderick Nash, Wilderness and the American Mind (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 141-160. Also see Nash's "The American Cult of the Primitive," American Quarterly, XVIII (Fall, 1966), pp. 517-537.

[10]John Muir, "The Wild Parks and Forest Reservations of the West," Atlantic Monthly, LXXXI (January, 1898), pp. 15-16. On Muir as a conservationist and founder of the Sierra Club, see Holway R. Jones, John Muir and the Sierra Club: The Battle for Yosemite (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1965). The view of conservation as scientific management is presented in Samuel P. Hays, Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890-1920 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959).

the fields with the open mind and the quick imagination; no better way of throwing off the cares of life and renewing that spirit of freshness which is the most precious possession of men who deal with problems and questions of all sorts."[11] George S. Evans, writing in Overland Monthly, struck a similar note: "You think of the civilization you have left behind. Seen through the eyes of the wilderness, how stupid and inane it all seems. The mad eagerness of money-seeking men, the sham pleasures of conventional society, the insistence upon the importance of being in earnest over trifles, pall on you when you think of them." Evans also celebrated the strenuous experience of wilderness life: "Whenever the light of civilization falls upon you with a blighting power, and work and pleasure become stale and flat, go to the wilderness. The wilderness will take hold on you. It will give you good red blood; it will turn you from a weakling into a man."[12]

The wilderness, many believed, could also help turn boys into men. Shortly after the turn of the century Ernest Thompson Seton and Daniel Carter Beard promoted the idea of teaching outdoor skills to city boys. Seton's Woodcraft Indians and Beard's Sons of Daniel Boone and Boy Pioneers paved the way

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[11]"Back to Nature," The Outlook, LXXIV (June 6, 1903), pp. 305, 306.

[12]George S. Evans, "The Wilderness," Overland Monthly, XLIII (January, 1904), pp. 32, 33.

for the organization of the Boy Scouts of America in 1910. The movement spread rapidly, based on the premise that "the boys in our modern life, and especially in our cities and villages, do not have the chance, as did the boys of the past . . . to become strong, self-reliant, resourceful and helpful, and to get acquainted with nature and outdoor life, without special guidance and training."[13] The Boy Scout movement was a product of urban America, and it suggested that boys must be made immune to the dangers of "overcivilization." In the first Scout Handbook Seton pointed to the "degeneracy" which had accompanied industrialization and urbanization. American boys, he said, could counteract this trend through the contact with outdoor life which Scouting provided.[14] Many of the values of the strenuous life were institutionalized in the Boy Scouts of America, and generation after generation of American boys aspired to develop those values as a means of achieving manliness.

Seton's reference to "degeneracy" in the Boy Scout Handbook reflected another aspect of the concern regarding "overcivilization." This involved the effects of industrialization and urbanization on health. Articles such as "Nervousness: The National Disease of America"[15] constantly reminded the

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[13]Quoted from a scouting pamphlet in Schmitt, op. cit., p. 109.

[14]Quoted in Nash, op. cit., pp. 147-148.

[15]Edward Wakefield, "Nervousness: The National Disease of America," McClure's Magazine, II (February, 1894), pp. 302-307.

public of the state of the national health. In 1895 the Health Commissioner of New York declared that "in no nation at any time have the demands on the nervous forces been as great as in these United States." He pointed to signs of increased nervous disorders in children (partly as a result of being around nervous parents), and urged that exercise be made an integral part of school life.[16] The spokesmen for the strenuous life were ever ready to boast of the healthful aspects of outdoor sport, as did Alexander Hunter when he proclaimed in Harper's Weekly: "It is an established fact that a sportsman is a rare patient of the doctor. His tonic is the open air, his 'nerve restorative' drawn from the spicy odors of the wood and field, and his general 'tone' and temperament seem to be in accordance with the sunny, patient forces of nature."[17]

From Forest and Stream came this advice to American men: "Hie thee to the fields and the woods and the streams, O man! that thou mayest get a little tan on thy cheeks and sufficient muscle in thine arm to hug thy wife with seemly and becoming vigor. Of what use is a pale jellyfish of a creature to any woman on the top of the earth?" The author declared that most men had a one-sided view of the world: "--it is of bricks and mortar, smoke and grime, money-chasing; recreation taken among

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[16]Cyrus Edson, "Nervous Exhaustion in Children," The Youth's Companion, LXVIII (February 7, 1895), p. 67.

[17]Alexander Hunter, "The Increase of Sportsmen," Harper's Weekly, XXXVII (February 18, 1893), p. 167.

the rustling of silks and satins, perhaps, or tinsel, amid fetid odors from gas and all other abominations." He then offered the outdoor life as an attractive alternative, cataloguing the delights of nature in America. "Go study these," he exclaimed. "Drink inspiration from the breast of nature, and breathe in health at every pore from the wholesome, balsam-laden breezes."[18]

Health and recreation were major factors behind the development of playgrounds and public parks in late nineteenth century America. In 1891 Brander Matthews observed that "half a century ago there was scarcely a town in these United States which had anything that could fairly be called a public park. . . . Today there are not only parks attached to almost every city in the union; there are also state parks and national parks."[19] Observers in the 1890's pointed to a revolution in urban life as a result of the parks and playgrounds movement and the new emphasis on sports. Julian Ralph wrote of the effect of outdoor life and exercise on New Yorkers, emphasizing particularly the boys of well-to-do families:

> At first it was the boys who exhibited the good effects of the social revolution. Time was, and not very long ago, when the sturdy boys of the metropolis were found in the greatest numbers in the public schools and the

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[18]A.A. Lesueur, "How to Camp Out," Forest and Stream, XXXVIII (May 12, 1892), p. 444.

[19]Brander Matthews, "Concerning Out-Door Books," The Cosmopolitan, XI (June, 1891), p. 253.

> districts inhabited by persons in middling circumstances. The boys in the well-to-do families were apt to be spare, narrow-chested, and of such appearance that the more rugged city children called them by contemptuous nicknames, all implying that they were girlish. Such puny lads are not now anything like being numerous enough to represent a class. The once derided "mother's apron-strings" have been woven into tennis nets, and the hands of the "girl-boys" now grip baseball and cricket bats. Three months of country life with "city improvements," and nine months of 'cycling, boxing, sprinting, and gymnastics, have given them muscle and lungs, until the juvenile crowd in town accept it as an axiom that a well-dressed lad is worth avoiding when persecution or mischief is intended.[20]

Ralph's emphasis on the physical transformation of upper and middle class youth reflected the fact that it was the leisure class which led the way in sports and recreation. "Within the last score of years," observed a minister in 1900, "we have passed into a new social order. A leisure class has arisen which has time to play. The old prejudice against pleasure as being intrinsically evil has broken down nearly everywhere. The Puritan Sabbath has been definitely renounced."[21] Following the example of the leisure class the great mass of the American people also turned increasingly to the new forms

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[20]Julian Ralph, "The Spread of Out-Door Life," Harper's Weekly, XXXVI (August 27, 1892), p. 830. Also useful on this topic are: Jacob Riis, "Small Parks and Public-School Play-Grounds," Harper's Weekly, XLI (September 11, 1897), p. 903; "Public Parks and Playgrounds: A Symposium," The Arena, X (July, 1894), pp. 274-288; and Frank Chapman, "A City Playground," St. Nicholas, XVIII (June, 1891), pp. 609-616.

[21]Rev. S.D. McConnell, "The Moral Side of Golf," The Outlook, LXV (June 2, 1900), p. 300.

of outdoor recreation, as Caspar Whitney indicated: "We may turn up our noses generally at those who in this country profess to lead the fashions, but in the matter of showing the way to healthy, vigorous outdoor play they have set a fine example and one that has taken a firm hold among the people. We owe them hunting, yachting, polo, tennis, golf and a lot more."[22]

The new zest for outdoor life was reflected in the rise of the country club in America. The country club, Gustav Kobbé said, "exists because the American who does business in a city, or lives there, has been seized with an uncontrollable and most commendable desire to be outdoors; and it promises to be a safety-valve of an overworked Nation." Writing three years after the Spanish-American War, the author declared that "if Waterloo was won on the Rugby gridiron, it is not impossible that Santiago was captured at the American country club. For the growth of outdoor amusement and the consequent increasing physical snap and vigor of American men and women has been one of the striking

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[22]Caspar Whitney, "Outdoor Sports--What They Are Doing For Us," op. cit., p. 1362.

phenomena of the past decade."[23]

In the 1890's Americans of both sexes were engaging in sports and outdoor activities, and of these various outdoor attractions none was more popular than cycling. The bicycle craze of the nineties was a most remarkable phenomenon. "When the social and economic history of the nineteenth century comes to be written," stated a writer in The Forum, "the historian cannot ignore the invention and development of the bicycle."[24] From The Century Magazine came the view that "the bicycle has, in fact, become a necessary part of modern life, and could not be abandoned without turning the social progress of the world backward." The democratizing influence of the bicycle seemed obvious: "The bicycle is indeed the great leveler. It puts the poor man on a level with the rich, enabling him to 'sing the song of the open road' as freely as the millionaire, . . ."[25]

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[23]Gustav Kobbé, "The Country Club and Its Influence Upon American Social Life," The Outlook, LXVIII (June 1, 1901), pp. 256, 255. Frank S. Arnett declared that the country club "has come into existence only since we have learned to play." In his view, "the country club has practically changed the entire social life of America. . . . It has been chiefly responsible for the development of gentlemanly sport." "American Country Clubs," Munsey's Magazine, XXVII (July, 1902), pp. 481, 482. Also see Caspar Whitney, "The Evolution of the Country Club," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, XC (December, 1894), pp. 16-32; and Whitney's "The Golfer's Conquest of America," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, XCV (October, 1897), pp. 695-713.

[24]Henry J. Garrigues, "Woman and the Bicycle," The Forum, XX (January, 1896), P. 578.

[25]"The Reign of the Bicycle," The Century Magazine, XLIX (December, 1894), p. 306.

Everywhere people were taking to the bicycle. Under the auspices of the League of American Wheelmen, founded in 1880, riding clubs were organized throughout the land. From city streets to country lanes cycling enthusiasts were ever active, finding "in the bicycle a new pleasure in life, a means for seeing more of the world, a source of better health through open-air exercise, a bond of comradeship, a method of rapid locomotion either for business or pleasure, and many other enjoyments and advantages which they will not relinquish." It was estimated that a quarter of a million bicycles were sold in the United States in 1894 and that there were a million bicycle riders in the land.[26] In 1897 the League of American Wheelmen had a membership of 150,000.[27]

Not only did the bicycle improve physical health, but it was also credited with having a comparable moral effect. Sylvester Baxter wrote in The Arena that "the clean, outdoor life, amid the tonic influences of fresh air, sunshine, and the pleasant sights of nature, remove thousands of young men from the danger of debasing associations. Temperance is also promoted; no wheelman can safely use intoxicants, for a cool, clear head and steady nerves are absolutely essential." Sylvester also pointed to the beneficent effect of the bicycle upon women:

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[26] Ibid.

[27] A.H. Godfrey, "Cycling Clubs and Their Spheres of Action," Outing, XXX (July, 1897), p. 341.

"The bicycle has given, as nothing else has, the means for a healthful exercise combined with delightful recreation, so much needed by the sex. It has gone far towards emancipating them from slavish conventionality in both dress and conduct. It has taught them the advantage of sensible and healthful attire, . . . It has given them an independence in action approaching that possessed by their brothers."[28]

Isaac B. Potter declared that "after a close study of the question for five years, I am ready to express my belief that the use of the bicycle will do more to improve the physical condition of American women, and therefore of the American people, than any other agency yet devised." Potter noted that women, as well as men, shared the outdoor impulse: "The average woman loves to be out of doors; she enjoys the change of scene, the gentle exercise, the delightful companionship of congenial friends, and the exhilarating benefits of contact with the pure air and bright sunlight, which the knowledge of cycling brings within her reach. To the woman, as to the man, these features, possessed by no other form of sport, comprise the foundation on which the popularity of the bicycle will rest."[29]

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[28]Sylvester Baxter, "Economic and Social Influences of the Bicycle," The Arena, VI (October, 1892), p. 583.

[29]Isaac B. Potter, "The Bicycle Outlook," The Century Magazine, LII (September, 1896), p. 786.

Perhaps the most passionate plea for cycling came from Elizabeth Robins Pennell, who, in an article for St. Nicholas, encouraged young people to take to the bicycle to escape from the city. By jumping on one's bicycle after school, she said, "off you can go, slowly and carefully at first, where street-cars and wagons block the way; but before very long you will have ridden past the rows of houses, past the shops, past the factories; and paved streets will have become country roads; and you will breathe pure, sweet air; and on all sides you will see, instead of bricks and mortar, the fresh green of trees and pastures; and you will carry yourself along at a speed that will be a pleasure in itself."[30]

This expression of the exuberance of breaking out of the stuffy confines of the city and cycling into the countryside epitomized the outdoor impulse that seized Americans at the turn of the century. Furthermore, the outdoors beckoned to American intellectuals as it did to the great mass of urban Americans. Historian John Higham has observed that William James and Frederick Jackson Turner "were never so happy as when they were camping in the wilderness, . . ."[31] Even Henry Adams was moved by the wilderness experience. Having accompanied explorer and mountain-climber Clarence King on an expedition

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[30]Elizabeth Robins Pennell, "Cycling," St. Nicholas, XVII (July, 1890), p. 733.

[31]Higham, op. cit., p. 43.

into the Wyoming territory in the early 1870's, Adams wrote: "To stand on the top of a lofty mountain with a haughty smile at civilization and a proud consciousness of my own savage freedoms was a gratifying experience . . . I never felt so lively and so much in the humor for enjoyment."[32]

II

Glorification of the great outdoors became the specialty of a new series of magazines founded in the period. The age saw the rise of the various periodicals devoted to field sports and outdoor life, magazines which have continued to delight American sportsmen in the twentieth century. The list included, in addition to Forest and Stream, Sports Afield, Outdoor Life, Field and Stream and Outing. Outing was perhaps the most influential outdoor magazine at the turn of the century.[33] In 1900 its new editor, Caspar Whitney, outlined the magazine's editorial policy: "Outing will seek, first of all, to nourish the out-of-door spirit which has spread so happily throughout the present generation of Americans. It will strive to bring its readers closer to nature, . . . It hopes to bring into

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[32]Quoted in Hans Huth, Nature and the American: Three Centuries of Changing Attitudes (Berkely: University of California Press, 1957), p. 152.

[33]John Rickards Betts, "Sporting Journalism in Nineteenth-Century America," American Quarterly, V (Spring, 1953), p. 48.

the work-a-day lives of its readers the smell of the forests, the song of the sea, and the spell of the wilderness." Whitney declared that Outing would stand for conservation and sportsmanship, and then he added: "We believe in the strenuous life."[34]

Whitney with many of his contemporaries found the pursuit of the strenuous life to be realized best through grappling with nature, rather than through the discipline of organized sport. Whitney's celebration of "the sporting spirit" was couched in outdoor terms: "It is the sporting spirit which prompts adventure, makes one's blood tingle with expectancy on facing dangerous big game, and that sends men up and over desperately defended trenches. It is the moral uplifting which comes from fair play even to the beasts of the forests and the birds of the air. It is the exhilaration of a contest of wits--yours against your quarry's. It is the thrill of honorable contest. It is living."[35]

This view of "the sporting spirit" reflected a passion for field sports--the kind of outdoor activity which Roosevelt always relished. Such enthusiasm was shared by many Americans. Emerson Hough said that "the field sports of America have done

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[34]Caspar Whitney, "What Outing Stands For," Outing, XXXVI (April, 1900), pp. 91-92.

[35]Caspar Whitney, "The Sporting Spirit," Outing, XXXVI (June, 1900), p. 315.

much to make the American character what it is, . . ."[36] Alexander Hunter echoed Roosevelt's sentiments when he said: "Above all athletics are hunting and fishing. . . . A tramp through the heather all day with gun and dog, or a scramble down the rocky cliff of a granite-walled mountain stream with rod and reel, is more beneficial than the frenzied rush of a football game or the arduous pull of a boat-race."[37]

The strenuous theme was an integral part of the popularization of field sports in the 1880's and 1890's. This was nowhere more apparent than in the glorification of hunting, institutionalized by wealthy Eastern hunters through the organization of the Boone and Crockett Club in 1887. Hunting, a necessary activity of pioneer life, now acquired a new rationale. Roosevelt, the founder of the Boone and Crockett Club, defined the role of the hunt in this fashion in his The Wilderness Hunter:

> In hunting, the finding and killing of the game is after all but a part of the whole. The free, self-reliant, adventurous life, with its rugged and stalwart democracy; the wild surroundings, the grand beauty of the scenery, the chance to study the ways and habits of the woodland creatures--all these unite to give to the career of the wilderness hunter its peculiar charm. The chase is among the best of all national pastimes; it cultivates that vigorous manliness for the lack of which in a nation, as in an individual

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[36]Emerson Hough, "If the Prince Came West Again," Harper's Weekly, XLIII (April 15, 1899), p. 370.

[37]Alexander Hunter, op. cit., p. 167.

> the possession of no other qualities can possibly atone.[38]

The Boone and Crockett Club played a leading role in the outdoor movement. The members encouraged big game hunting, worked diligently for conservation, and promoted the study of wildlife. The Books of the Boone and Crockett Club, edited by Roosevlt and George Bird Grinnell, were outstanding collections of writings on life in the great outdoors. The manly image which the club promoted was that fostered by the strenuous life. Roosevelt and Grinnell wrote, that "hunting big game in the wilderness is, above all things, a sport for a vigorous and masterful people. The rifle-bearing hunter, whether he goes on foot or on horseback, whether he voyages in a canoe or travels with a dog-sled, must be sound of body and firm of mind, and must possess energy, resolution, manliness, self-reliance, and capacity for hardy self-help."[39] The strenuous lives led by the Boone and Crockett men exemplified the highest ideals of sportsmanship, as Roosevelt indicated in an "Amateur Sport" column in Harper's Weekly: "The club is emphatically an association of men who believe that the hardier and manlier the sport is the more attractive it is, and who do not think that there is any place in

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[38]Theodore Roosevelt, The Wilderness Hunter (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1893), p. xiii.

[39]Theodore Roosevelt and George Bird Grinnell (eds.) American Big-Game Hunting (New York: Forest and Stream Publishing Co., 1893), p. 14.

the ranks of true sportsmen either for the game-butcher, on the one hand, or, on the other, for the man who wishes to do all his shooting in preserves, and to shirk rough hard work."[40]

The question of what constituted a "true sportsman" loomed large in the articulation of the new rationale for hunting. Caspar Whitney often addressed himself to this topic in his column for Harper's Weekly and as editor of Outing. In an attack on "crusting," or the killing of animals trapped in the snow, Whitney declared that "the same qualities that make the 'cruster' are found also in the man who plays foul on the football field, who abuses his horse or dog, or who as manager or captain of a college team permits the playing of an ineligible man." He observed that in his outdoor trips around the country he could not "call to mind a sportsman of my acquaintance who had not as a boy and man 'played fair' first and last. I can remember, on the other hand," he said, "men who as boys had not played fair, and as men fell far short of being sportsmen. If ever I wanted to know a man thoroughly I should go afield with him. . . ."[41] The Youth's Companion declared that hunting "may have its useful and legitimate end. But to kill for the mere sake of killing, or as a test of marksmanship, or for reputation, is a crime against nature.

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[40]Theodore Roosevelt, "The Boone and Crockett Club," Harper's Weekly, XXXVII (March 18, 1893), p. 267.

[41]Caspar Whitney, "An Ignoble 'Sport'," Harper's Weekly, XXXVII (December 16, 1893), p. 1211.

Happily it is going out of fashion. The true sportsman always condemns it, for he is usually a true gentleman."[42]

It was the human motivation for hunting that most concerned Frederic Remington, writing about a bear hunt in the Rocky Mountains. "One never heard of a bear," he said, "which travelled all the way from New Mexico to Chicago to kill a man, and yet a man will go three thousand miles to kill a bear--not for love, or fear, or hate, or meat; for what, then?" For Remington, a noted exemplar of the strenuous life, "the spirit of the thing is not hunting but the chase of the bear, taking one's mind back to the buffalo, or the nobles of the Middle Ages, who made their 'image of war' with bigger game than red foxes."[43]

As an aspect of the strenuous life, hunting, particularly the hunting of big game, provided an excellent way for the martial virtues to be developed and tested in peacetime, while the human encounter with the primitive environment was

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[42]"Sportsmen's Shows," The Youth's Companion, LXXIV (March 29, 1900), p. 158.

[43]Frederic Remington, "Bear-Chasing in the Rocky Mountains," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, XCI (July, 1895), pp. 251, 247. For other examples of writings on hunting in the period see Julian Ralph, "Plain Truths About Hunting," St. Nicholas, XVIII (August, 1891), pp. 755-759; Theodore Roosevelt, "Buffalo Hunting," St. Nicholas, XVII (December, 1889), pp. 136-143; E.O. Stanard, Jr., "Hunting Big Game," Harper's Weekly, XLIII (April 15, 1899), pp. 367-369; Walter McClintock, "Goat-Hunting in the Rockies," Harper's Weekly, XLIII (April 15, 1899), pp. 385-386; "Caspar Whitney's Trip to the Barren Lands," Harper's Weekly, XXXIX (April 20, 1895), p. 382; and George Bird Grinnell, "The Present Distribution of Big Game in America," Outing, XXXVII (December, 1900), pp. 251-259.

congenial to the prevailing Darwinian mood. Thus, Caspar Whitney wrote of the rigours of his first hunt for musk-ox: ". . . I speedily realized that it was to be a survival of the fittest on this expedition, and if I got a musk-ox it would be of my own getting."[44] In The Forest Stewart Edward White wrote of the human struggle against nature: "The man in the woods matches himself against the forces of nature. In the towns he is warmed and fed and clothed so spontaneously and easily that after a time he perforce begins to doubt himself, to wonder whether his powers are not atrophied from disuse. And so, with his naked soul, he fronts the wilderness. It is a test, a measuring of strength, a proving of his essential pluck and resourcefulness and manhood, an assurance of man's highest potency, the ability to endure and to take care of himself."[45]

Man against nature was a major theme of American literature at the turn of the century. The young literary naturalists--Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, and Jack London--drew heavily from the strenuous impulse of the outdoor movement, with London reigning supreme over the cult of the primitive in the early years of the twentieth century. London's

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[44]Caspar Whitney, George Bird Grinnell, and Owen Wister, Musk-Ox, Bison, Sheep and Goat (New York: Macmillan Co., 1904), p. 21.

[45]Stewart Edward White, The Forest (New York: The Outlook Co., 1903), p. 5.

celebration of the "superman" image in his outdoor adventure stories was thoroughly Darwinian in tone, and represented the extreme in strenuosity. Variations on the outdoor theme were played by such writers as Stewart Edward White, James Oliver Curwood, and Zane Grey, who followed in London's footsteps to become masters of the red-blooded adventure and wilderness novels which were so popular in the early decades of the new century.[46]

This literary genre flourished against the back-drop of the real-life adventure of the age--the pitting of man against the elemental forces of nature. Everywhere around the world men were frantically pursuing the strenuous life in the struggle with nature, as if civilization threatened to deprive them of the experience forever. Joshua Slocum sailed alone around the world in the 1890's, testing man's ability to dare and endure. Men were facing the rigours of life in "the wild north" as they sought riches and adventure in the Klondike. Big game hunting in Africa was opening up to hunters and adventurers. Mountain climbers were intent on conquering the world's highest peaks and polar exploration was being conducted with

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[46]For discussion of this fiction see chapter 12, "The Wilderness Novel," in Schmitt, op. cit., pp. 125-140.

vigor.[47] Part of the appeal of imperialism was the attraction of new and strange parts of the world where nature had to be reckoned with through strenuous living. War correspondents found that the strenuous life involved struggles with nature as well as confrontation with the enemy. In America the steady advance of civilization was encroaching upon the last of the great wilderness areas; to many, the West seemed to be the last great natural arena for the pursuit of the strenuous life.

III

Theodore Roosevelt was the most famous outdoor enthusiast of the period, and he did much to popularize the "back to nature" movement. Embodied in his appeal for an active outdoor movement was his plea for a "life of strenuous endeavor." The vigorous life of the great outdoors was one answer to the crucial problem of "overcivilization"--the prospect of a deteriorating manliness posed by the effects of a life of ease fostered by a commercial culture. Roosevelt reiterated this

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[47]Robert E. Peary declared in 1899: "I am after the Pole because it is the Pole; because it has a value as a test of intelligence, persistence, endurance, determined will, and, perhaps, courage, qualities characteristic of the highest type of manhood; . . ." See "Moving on the North Pole.--Outlines of My Arctic Campaign," McClure's Magazine, XII (March, 1899), p. 418. Hugh Robert Mill viewed polar research as "a survival, or rather an evolution, of knight-errantry, and our Childe Rolands challenge the 'Dark Tower of the North' as dauntlessly as ever their forbears wound slug-horn at gate of enchanted castle." "The Race to the North Pole: The Expeditions of Nansen and Jackson," McClure's Magazine, I (July, 1893), p. 147.

concern throughout his career. In an article for The Forum in 1894, in which he encouraged active participation in politics, he warned that "a peaceful and commerical civilization is always in danger of suffering the loss of the virile fighting qualities without which no nation, however cultured, however refined, however thrifty and prosperous, can ever amount to anything."[48] His address to the Naval War College in 1897 struck a similar note: ". . . a rich nation which is slothful, timid, or unwieldy is an easy prey for any people which still retains those most valuable of all qualities, the soldierly virtues."[49]

Although the great outdoors beckoned to Roosevelt and others as a strenuous test of manliness, most Americans who participated in the "back to nature" movement sought relaxation rather than strenuosity; and as for the advocates of the strenuous life, including Roosevelt, they did not reject the city for a permanent life in the wilderness.[50] Moreover, Roosevelt's preaching of "the strenuous life," and his exploits as a hunter often obscured the fact that at heart he

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[48]Theodore Roosevelt, "The Manly Virtues and Practical Politics," The Forum, XVII (July, 1894), p. 555.

[49]Theodore Roosevelt, American Ideals and Other Essays Social and Political (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1897), p. 248

[50]Schmitt, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

was a naturalist with a deep knowledge of wildlife and natural history. Nature writer John Burroughs said that Roosevelt's "training as a big-game hunter stood him in good stead, but back of that were his naturalist's instincts, and his genuine love of all forms of wild life." Burroughs accompanied Roosevelt on a trip to Yellowstone Park in 1903, and he said of him: "The President wanted all the freedom and solitude possible while in the Park, . . . He craved once more to be alone with nature; he was evidently hungry for the wild and the aboriginal,--a hunger that seems to come upon him regularly at least once a year, and drives him forth on his hunting trips for big game in the West."[51]

It was to the West that Roosevelt had repaired nearly twenty years earlier to test his own manliness. In the grim and lonely environment of the Dakota Badlands he had personally met the arduous test of the strenous life, and had emerged from the experience a more disciplined and confident man. Other young men of his background also found the strenuosity of Western life appealing. The hardy life of the West particularly attracted Americans in the late nineteenth century. There the exercise of the strenuous life was marked by a sense of urgency, because it was becoming obvious in the 1890's that the old West was rapidly disappearing.

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[51]John Burroughs, Camping & Tramping With Roosevelt (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1907), pp. 40, 29.

Chapter VI

The Hardy Life of the West

The closing of the frontier in America formed an important part of the historical context of the strenuous life. Americans in the 1890's faced a future no other American generation had faced--a future devoid of a beckoning frontier. The census report of 1890 declared that a traceable frontier line no longer existed within the continental limits of the United States. In the light of this knowledge, Americans developed rather mournful attitudes. They also came to celebrate the hardy life of the West as a dominant American value. To those, such as Theodore Roosevelt, who felt in the late nineteenth century that there was real danger in "overcivilization," the hardy life of the West possessed a poignant appeal--it offered a last chance to participate in the great masculine adventure of conquering the continent.

"The West was suddenly a subject in 1891," wrote Thomas Beer in The Mauve Decade, pointing to the numerous stories and sketches of western life which appeared in the magazines of the day.[1] The West remained "a subject" from then on, as the American quest began for the discovery of those eternal truths which were presumably hidden in the frontier heritage of the country. The historical elegy to the frontier was delivered in 1893 by Frederick Jackson Turner before the

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[1]Thomas Beer, The Mauve Decade (New York: Random House, Vintage Edition, 1961), p. 40.

Chicago meeting of the American Historical Association. Turner's argument that the frontier experience was primarily responsible for shaping the American character was accompanied by the somber announcement that "the frontier has gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history."[2]

To many in the 1890's it was obvious that with the settling of the last frontier something of profound significance was happening to America. Frank Norris observed in 1902 that "the Frontier has become so much an integral part of our conception of things that it will be long before we shall all understand that it is gone." He added that "the Frontier has become conscious of itself, acts the part for the Eastern visitor; and this self-consciousness is a sign, surer than all the others, of the decadence of a type, the passing of an epoch."[3] Perhaps most Americans simply shared the disturbed feelings of Emerson Hough when he remarked: "It is unpleasant to be asked to believe that there is no longer any West."[4]

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[2]Frederick Jackson Turner, The Frontier in American History (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1920), p. 38.

[3]Frank Norris, "The Frontier Gone at Last," The World's Work, III (February, 1902), pp. 1728, 1729.

[4]Emerson Hough, "If the Prince Came West Again," Harper's Weekly, XLIII (April 15, 1899), p. 370.

The role of the West in American life, therefore, acquired a new and special meaning for the generation of Americans which came of age at the turn of the century. This was especially true for those young men of the Eastern upper and middle class who went west to experience the rigours of frontier life--notably Roosevelt, Frederic Remington, and Owen Wister. In The Eastern Establishment and the Western Experience, G. Edward White traces the response of these men to life in the West and analyzes their roles as Eastern spokesmen for the West in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. White concludes that the celebration of western life by Roosevelt, Remington, and Wister was in large part responsible for transforming the image of the West from that of a wild, uncivilized place to that of a region which was, in the finest sense, "American," thereby reconciling the counter images of East and West through the establishment of a nationalistic consensus of values.[5]

Despite the apparent success of the image-makers in reconciling East and West, the new emphasis on the West inevitably made both easterners and westerners aware of differences between the two sections. William R. Lighton

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[5]G. Edward White, The Eastern Establishment and the Western Experience: The West of Frederic Remington, Theodore Roosevelt, and Owen Wister (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 184-202. Also see chapter 3, "Discoverers of the Wild West," and chapter 5, "Americans Move Outdoors," in Earl Pomeroy, In Search of the Golden West: The Tourist in Western America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957).

commented in Outlook in 1903 that "the Easterner is now quite willing to admit the word 'West' to his vocabulary without close scrutiny of its credentials. Along with the word he adopts a shadowy notion that Western men, manners, and morals are somehow radically distinct from those of other communities--that Western affairs must always wear a unique complexion."[6] Spokesmen for the West found the quality of western life superior to that of the East. Reflecting Turner's environmentalism, the Reverend James B. Funsten, Bishop of Boise, found "a distinct type of American manhood and womanhood" developing west of the Rockies:

> The probability is that the American who lives in this region will not suffer from the enervating influences that come from overcrowded districts. He will have plenty of room in which to get his full development. . . . He will not have the depressing influence of extreme poverty; he will drink in the love of freedom that comes with the glorious skies and the mighty mountains, the wideness of the plains and the pureness of the air. The opportunity for successful and remunerative labor will make him strong, resolute, and hopeful. His sons and daughters will be no unworthy exponents of the best physical type of American.[7]

Funsten's remarks appeared in The Outlook during the first year of Roosevelt's presidency, and the author used

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[6]William R. Lighton, "Where Is the West?" The Outlook, LXXIV (July 18, 1903), p. 702.

[7]James B. Funsten, "The Making of an American on the West Side of the Rockies," The Outlook, LXXI (June 14, 1902), p. 453.

the example of the early western experience of the new president to fortify his argument. "Who can estimate the influence of the environments of the far West in the molding for his high position of President Roosevelt, . . .? The Rough Riders who followed him up San Juan Hill were but the embodiment of forces that carried him to his high position. Others will, in the future, be elevated to positions of importance by just such forces."[8]

II

The western environment had indeed played an important role in the making of Theodore Roosevelt, or at least Roosevelt believed that it had. He felt that the hardy life he had led in the Badlands in the early 1880's prepared him for the strenuous career which led him eventually to the White House. According to John Burroughs, Roosevelt had remarked in 1903 "that his ranch life had been the making of him. It had built him up and hardened him physically," and it had also made him aware of "the wealth of manly character" possessed by westerners. "Had he not gone West, he said, he never would have raised the Rough Riders regiment; and had he not raised that regiment and gone to the Cuban War, he would not have been made

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[8] Ibid.

governor of New York; and had not this happened, the politicians would not unwittingly have made his rise to the Presidency so inevitable."[9]

For Roosevelt the western experience provided a test of manhood for which he had long prepared. His early life had been a constant struggle against poor health and he had worked diligently to build up his frail body. Much of the psychological impetus for Roosevelt's strenuous existence had been instilled by his father, who had challenged his twelve year old son to make his body. Roosevelt said of his father that he "was the best man I ever knew" and that he was "the only man of whom I was ever really afraid." To a great extent his father was the one man he sought to emulate throughout his life. "I never knew," Roosevelt wrote in his Autobiography, "any one who got greater joy out of living than did my father, or any one who more wholeheartedly performed every duty; and no one whom I have ever met approached his combination of enjoyment of life and performance of duty."[10] This was the model of living which the younger Roosevelt applied to his own life and career. Crushed by his father's death in 1878, he wrote:

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[9]John Burroughs, Camping & Tramping With Roosevelt (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Riverside Edition, 1907), pp. 14-15.

[10]Theodore Roosevelt, An Autobiography (New York: Macmillan Co., 1913), pp. 8, 10, 12.

"I owe everything I have or am to Father. He did everything for me, and I nothing for him." "I realize more and more each day," he said, "that I am as much inferior to Father morally and mentally as physically."[11]

Roosevelt had responded to his father's challenge by plunging into a rigorous physical fitness program. A regimen of daily exercise gradually improved his health and toughened his body. The boredom of the gymnasium work-outs was lightened by long hikes, riding, and hunting. The young Roosevelt made exercise a pleasant business, throwing himself into the various activities with an energy and enthusiasm which marked everything he did. His nearsightedness and lack of skill as an athlete were compensated for by his "pluck," as his boxing opponents at Harvard soon discovered. At Harvard he boxed as a lightweight, reveling in the fierce battles in the ring in which he pitted himself against tough and determined fighters.[12]

The Roosevelt who went west in 1884 was ready for the hardy life of the frontier. He welcomed the test of strenuous living in the Dakota Badlands, but in a sense his sojourn

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[11]Quoted in Carleton Putnam, Theodore Roosevelt: The Formative Years (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), pp. 150, 151.

[12]Ibid., pp. 71-80, 142-146; Henry F. Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt: A Biography (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Harvest Edition, 1956), pp. 11-13, 24-25.

in the West represented an escape. He went west at a time when his political future was in doubt, and at a moment when he was suffering from the almost simultaneous deaths of his mother and his first wife, Alice Lee.

That the West was the place for Roosevelt after these personal crises was evident soon after his arrival in the Badlands. To his sister, Anna, he wrote: "The country is growing on me, more and more; it has a curious, fantastic beauty of its own, . . ." In a letter to Henry Cabot Lodge in August of 1884 he said: "I heartily enjoy this life, with its perfect freedom, for I am very fond of hunting, and there are few sensations I prefer to that of galloping over these rolling, limitless prairies, rifle in hand, or winding my way among the barren, fantastic and grimly picturesque deserts of the so-called Bad Lands, . . ."[13] This exuberant response to western life was just as strong years later when Roosevelt wrote in his autobiography of his days in the West: "We knew toil and hardship and hunger and thirst; and we saw men die violent deaths as they worked among the horses and cattle, or fought in evil feuds with one another; but we felt the beat of the hardy life in our veins, and ours was the glory of work and the joy of living."[14]

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[13]Elting E. Morison, (ed.), The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt, 8 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), 1, pp. 74, 80.

[14]Roosevelt, An Autobiography, op. cit., pp. 103-104.

Initially cutting a rather ridiculous figure as a "tenderfoot" or "dude," Roosevelt doggedly set out to prove himself a westerner. Plunging into the work of the range with his characteristic grit and determination, he constantly amazed those around him, including seasoned ranch hands who at first ridiculed or scorned him as a foolish young Easterner. Roosevelt was eager to demonstrate that he could endure the hardships of a frontier existence, and he quickly adapted to ranch life, mastering many of the skills necessary for living in the wilderness. Gradually he earned the respect of the inhabitants of the Badlands.[15]

His stay in the Dakotas was marked by some adventures which were of the "Wild West" variety. On one occasion Roosevelt had an altercation with a bully in a hotel bar, knocked to the floor and disarmed him.[16] On another occasion, he and two of his men pursued and captured three thieves, and then Roosevelt marched alone with the prisoners over rugged terrain, through two days of bad weather, to deliver them to the authorities in Dickinson, North Dakota. It was

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[15]See Edward and Frederick Schapsmeier, "Theodore Roosevelt's Cowboy Years," Journal of the West, V (July, 1966), pp. 398-408; Pringle, op. cit., pp. 64-74; For detailed accounts of Roosevelt's life in the West, see Putnam, op. cit., and Hermann Hagedorn, Roosevelt in the Bad Lands (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1921). Also useful is William T. Dantz, "Theodore Roosevelt--Cowboy and Ranchman," Harper's Weekly, XLVIII (August 6, 1904), pp. 1212-1215, 1221.

[16]Roosevelt, An Autobiography, op. cit., pp. 135-136.

an arduous journey, with Roosevelt walking forty miles without sleep. When Roosevelt arrived in Dickinson, Dr. Victor Hugo Stickney treated the "bedraggled" man, whose appearance he later described in a reminiscence: "He wore glasses, for one thing, which in itself was immoral out in that country, and his fringed buckskin jacket and chaps were covered with sticky gumbo mud. He was all teeth and eyes. His clothes were in rags. He was scratched, bruised and hungry, but gritty and determined as a bull dog."[17]

Exploits such as these, as well as his performance as a cowboy and wilderness hunter, insured Roosevelt of a respectable reputation as a westerner, and they satisfied his inner need to test his physical courage. Also, his sojourn in the West finally settled the issue regarding his health which had plagued him since childhood. As his friend William Sewall wrote, "He went to Dakota a frail young man suffering from asthma and stomach trouble. When he got back into the world again he was as husky as almost any man I have ever seen who wasn't dependent on his arms for livelihood."[18] Roosevelt returned to the East, after the blizzard of 1886-87 had wiped out his ranching investment, to face an uncertain future. He returned, however, instilled with a new confidence and sure of his manhood.

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[17]Quoted in Putnam, op. cit., p. 568.

[18]Quoted in Schapsmeier. op. cit., p. 403.

It was Roosevelt's western experience that transformed his zest for outdoor life into a cult of strenuosity and manliness. As his writings indicate, he found the Badlands environment harsh and forbidding and life there isolated and lonely. Roosevelt viewed existence in that grim environment as a struggle for survival, and he attributed to westerners those masculine qualities necessary for survival. His image of the West was a thoroughly masculine one, and it became a major frame of reference for his life and thought.[19]

Thus began Roosevelt's celebration of the West and of those hardy souls who endured and conquered in the struggle of the wilderness. In an article for Harper's Weekly in 1886 on "Who Should Go West," he declared that "in reality a wild, new country calls for the existence of all the robuster and more virile virtues on the part of those who would try to live therein. The far West is the place of all others where the weak will most surely and quickly be pushed to the wall." He pointed to the fact that many young men from the East had recently turned to ranching, and that many of them were physically unprepared for the rigors of western life. "To be able to follow the business at all," he said, "the man must be made of fairly stern stuff.

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[19]White, op. cit., pp. 79-93. Also see John A. Barsness, "Theodore Roosevelt as Cowboy: The Virginian as Jacksonian Man," American Quarterly, XXI (Fall, 1969), pp. 608-619.

He must be stout and hardy; he must be quick to learn, and have a fair share of dogged resolution; and he must rapidly accustom himself to habits of complete self-reliance." He declared that "a ranch is not the place for any man who is either feeble, or irresolute, or unaccustomed to out-door life."[20]

There was, however, Roosevelt said, a certain breed of young Easterner who could meet the strenuous test of western life: "active, energetic young men" who possessed "stout hearts and sound bodies." Roosevelt observed that "in almost every Eastern family there will be one or two members who are square pegs in round holes; they have a genuine taste for adventure and rough work, and a genuine willingness to endure hardship, coupled with an intense loathing for the decorous hopelessness of the office or the counting-room." He added that "for such men, of bold, free spirit, yet with balance and self-control, the West is the place of all others, . . ."[21]

The hardy life of the West was the subject of several books by Roosevelt: Ranch Life and the Hunting-Trail, The Wilderness Hunter, Hunting Trips of a Ranchman, and his multi-volume history, The Winning of the West. In these

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[20]Theodore Roosevelt, "Who Should Go West," Harper's Weekly, XXX (January 2, 1886), p. 7.

[21]Ibid.

he depicted the West as an arena for strenuous and heroic endeavor and developed the corresponding masculine image of the westerner. "Ranching," he wrote in Ranch Life and The Hunting-Trail, "is an occupation like those of vigorous, primitive pastoral peoples, having little in common with the humdrum, workaday business world of the nineteenth century, . . ."[22] Reflecting the growing American awareness of the passing of the frontier, Roosevelt's writings were tinged with sadness over the prospect of a vanishing way of life which to him represented the ideal manly existence. "For we ourselves, and the life that we lead," he wrote wistfully as a Dakota cattleman, "will shortly pass away from the plains as completely as the red and white hunters who have vanished from before our herds. The free, open-air life of the ranchman, the pleasantest and healthiest life in America, is from its very nature ephemeral. The broad and boundless prairies have already been bounded and will soon be made narrow."[23]

Roosevelt's The Winning of the West (1889-96) anticipated Turner on the role of the frontier in American history, and it articulated his strenuous life philosophy within the historical context of the passing of the frontier West and

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[22]Theodore Roosevelt, Ranch Life and the Hunting-Trail (New York: The Century Co., 1902), p. 6.

[23]Theodore Roosevelt, Hunting Trips of a Ranchman (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1902), p. 19.

the burgeoning martial spirit of the 1890's. Both of these developments in the broad outline of American history converged in Roosevelt's life and career, and both were factors in the formulation of the cult of manliness which he espoused. On the level of personal experience this was nowhere more apparent than when Roosevelt went to war in 1898 as a "Rough Rider" of the cattleman's West.

III

Roosevelt was also among those responsible for building the heroic image of the cowboy. "They are smaller and less muscular," he said, "than the wielders of ax and pick; but they are as hardy and self-reliant as any men who ever breathed--with bronzed, set faces, and keen eyes that look all the world straight in the face without flinching as they flash out from under the broad-brimmed hats." In a passage, which first appeared in print in 1888, Roosevelt etched the image of the cowboy which Owen Wister and others would complete in the 1890's and early 1900's:

> To appreciate properly his fine, manly qualities, the wild rough-rider of the plains should be seen in his own home. There he passes his days, there he does his life-work, there, when he meets death, he faces it as he has faced many other evils, with quiet, uncomplaining fortitude. Brave, hospitable, hardy, and adventurous, he is the grim pioneer of our race; he prepares the way for the civilization from before whose face he must himself disappear.

> Hard and dangerous though his existence is, it has yet a wild attraction that strongly draws to it his bold, free spirit. He lives in the lonely lands where mighty rivers twist in long reaches between the barren bluffs; where the prairies stretch out into billowy plains of waving grass, girt only by the blue horizon,--plains across whose endless breadth he can steer his course for days and weeks and see neither man to speak to nor hill to break the level; where the glory and the burning splendor of the sunsets kindle the blue vault of heaven and the level brown earth till they merge together in an ocean of flaming fire.[24]

The rise of the cowboy as the dominant western hero in American culture was evident in the late eighties. John Baumann was remarkably perceptive in his analysis of the phenomemon in 1887: "The cowboy has at the present day become a personage; nay, more, he is rapidly becoming a mythical one. Distance is doing for him what lapse of time did for the heroes of antiquity. His admirers are investing him with all manner of romantic qualities; they descant upon his manifold virtues and his pardonable weaknesses as if he were a demi-god, and I have no doubt that before long there will be ample material for any philosophic inquirer who may wish to enlighten the world as to the cause and meaning of the cowboy myth."[25] Baumann himself had contributed to the development of the masculine image of the

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[24]Roosevelt, Ranch Life and the Hunting-Trail, op. cit. pp. 9, 100.

[25]John Baumann, "On a Western Ranche," The Fortnightly Review, XLVII (April, 1887), p. 516.

cowboy. A year earlier he had written in Lippincott's Magazine that "a cow-boy's life, with its hardships, isolation, and dangers, develops all the sterner manly qualities in a high degree. To a lithe and sinewy figure he joins courage, stoic indifference to suffering, and a dogged industry when work has to be done. For these qualities it would be difficult to find his equal."[26]

By 1898 a writer in Harper's Round Table observed that "every boy whose imagination is in healthy working order desires at some period of this Golden Age to be a cowboy." That the cowboy had been elevated to the status of hero was reflected in the author's story of one Logan Mulhall, a young and daring Oklahoma cowboy who had met an early death and who was to be honored by a statue to be erected in his memory--a lasting tribute to his heroic exploits. The physical descriptions of young Mulhall fitted perfectly the masculine image of the cowboy as hero: "By the time he was fourteen years old he was a magnificent specimen physically, being nearly six feet in height, and with broad shoulders to match. His face, tanned by wind

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[26]John Baumann, "Experiences of a Cow-Boy," Lippincott's Magazine, XXXVIII (September, 1886), p. 313. On the passing of the cowboy, see Julian Ralph, "A Talk With a Cowboy," Harper's Weekly, XXXVI (April 16, 1892), pp. 375-376; and Arthur Chapman, "The Cowboy of Today," The World's Work, VIII (September, 1904), pp. 5272-5278.

and sun, was of a deep copper-color, and with a blanket over his shoulders he would have been taken for an Indian. His hair was long and black, and his eyes were blue and piercing."[27]

The neo-romantic depiction of the cowboy in the 1890's drew upon the martial spirit of the period together with the prevailing Darwinian concept. Owen Wister in an article for Harper's New Monthly Magazine, "The Evolution of the Cow-Puncher," likened the cowboy to the Knight of the Round Table, seeing him as the lineal descendent of the old Saxon warrior type: ". . . in personal daring and in skill as to the horse, the knight and the cowboy are nothing but the same Saxon of different environments, . . ." Wister wrote that, "No soldier of fortune ever adventured with bolder carelessness, no fiercer blood ever stained a border." To underscore his racist premise he pointed to the ordeal of frontier life and the likelihood of survival by the non-Saxon peoples: "But to survive in the clean cattle country requires spirit of adventure, courage, and self-sufficiency; you will not find many Poles or Huns or Russian Jews in that district, . . ." The Anglo-Saxon, on the other hand, "is still forever homesick for out-of-doors."[28]

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[27]John N. Hilliard, "A Boy Who Managed a Ranch," Harper's Round Table, I (January, 1898), pp. 114, 116.

[28]Owen Wister, "The Evolution of the Cow-Puncher," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, XCI (September, 1895), pp. 604, 606, 614.

The views of Wister were echoed by other writers. One author declared that the point of view of the cowboy "is that of the man on horseback. He represents the aristocracy of the plains, . . ."[29] In writing of the settlement of the West, Emerson Hough stressed the evolutionary struggle, glorifying "the aristocracy of survival." "People may pass away," he said, "monarchies may fall, but above them there will stand the only aristocracy fit to survive; not a false democracy which nominates all men as equal, but the aristocracy of survival. . . .never shall there utterly perish the strong blood which got its survival by fitness, and its education by continuous conflict with mighty things."[30] Such notions were still being expressed at the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. In 1909 a writer in Collier's Weekly said that cowboys were made "from the best and strongest of the men whose restless spirit had led them to the range. Those who were too weak or vicious or small were winnowed out, . . ." He noted that "their life was hard. It developed high qualities of courage, quick minds, and iron bodies."[31] In the Overland Monthly Matthew

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[29]William T. Larned, "The Passing of the Cow-Puncher," Lippincott's Magazine, LXVI (August, 1895), p. 268.

[30]Emerson Hough, "Settlement of the West," The Century Magazine, LXIII (January, 1902), p. 367.

[31]Frederick R. Bechdolt, "The Field Agent of Settlement--The Cowboy's Contribution to American Civilization," Collier's Weekly, XLIII (September 18, 1909), p. 19.

J. Herron declared that the evolution of the American cowman "was a case where the Anglo-Saxon and the Aztec met and mingled."[32]

IV

The environmental explanation for the cowboy's manliness and superior character implied, or sometimes directly expressed criticism of civilization. The cowboy was viewed as a child of nature, possessing an innocence and virtue which civilized man was incapable of sustaining. Frederic Remington was emphatic about this: "In my association with these men of the frontier I have come to greatly respect their moral fibre and their character. Modern civilization, in the process of educating men beyond their capacity, often succeeds in vulgarizing them, but these natural men possess minds which, though lacking all embellishment, are chaste and simple, and utterly devoid of a certain flippancy which passes for smartness in situations where life is not so real. . . . They are not complicated, these children of nature, and they never think one thing and say another."[33]

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[32]Matthew J. Herron, "The Passing of the Cowman," Overland Monthly, LV (February, 1910), p. 195.

[33]Frederic Remington, "A Rodeo at Los Ojos," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, LXXXVIII (March, 1894), pp. 523-524.

Roosevelt said that on the frontier and in the wilderness "life is reduced to its elemental conditions. The passions and emotions of these grim hunters of the mountains and these wild rough-riders of the plains are simpler and stronger than those of people dwelling in more complicated states of society."[34] Roosevelt, concerned as he was about "over-civilization," found a great source of national strength in the frontier experience. "As our civilization grows older and more complex," he said, ". . . we need a greater and not a less development of the fundamental frontier virtues."[35]

"Overcivilization" was anathema to the spokesmen for the hardy life of the West. Emerson Hough, one of the important publicizers of the cowboy and the West, found little in civilization to recommend it, celebrating, instead, the hardy ways of America's pioneer past. "It was exceeding sweet to be a savage," he said. "It is pleasant to dwell upon the independent character of Western life, and to go back to the glories of that land and day . . .These days, vivid, adventurous, heroic, will have no counterpart upon the earth again."[36] In his The Story of the Cowboy in 1897, Hough

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[34]Theodore Roosevelt, "In Cowboy-Land," The Century Magazine, XLVI (June, 1893), p. 276.

[35]Theodore Roosevelt, "The Pioneer Spirit and American Problems," The Outlook, XCVI (September 3, 1910), p. 56.

[36]Emerson Hough, "The Settlement of the West," The Century Magazine, LXIII (November, 1901), p. 91.

dennounced civilized society. "In the cities," he began, "men are much alike, and, for the most part, built upon rather a poor pattern of a man. The polish of generations wears out fibre and cuts down grain, so that eventually we have a finished product with little left of it except the finish. In modern life the test of survival is much a question of the money a man is able to make." According to Hough, the prospect for America was a gloomy one. He declared that "in this country, as in the history of all other countries, there must go on the slow story told by the ages, of more and more wealth, more and more artificiality, more and more degeneration." Only in the stories of the "strong times" of the past, Hough believed, could "good human nature, dragged by the hand of the spirit of complex civilization," find inspiration, for "mankind has always loved the strong, because it is only the strong which is fit to be loved."[37] For Hough this meant that Americans should turn constantly to the heroic tales of the nation's frontier past.

The disease of "overcivilization" was described in Horace Porter's analysis of "The Philosophy of Courage," which compared the life of the city boy with that of the frontier youth:

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[37]Emerson Hough, The Story of the Cowboy (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1936), pp. 237-238.

> Take two youngsters born with equal degrees of courage; let one remain in a quiet city, playing the milksop in a modern Capua, leading an unambitious, namby-pamby life, surrounded by all the safeguards of civilization, while the other goes out on the frontier, runs his chances in encounters with wild animals, finds that to make his way he must take his life in his hand, and assert his rights, if necessary, with deadly weapons, and knows he will be drummed out of the community if he is once caught showing the white feather. In the one particular trait of personal courage the frontiersman will undoubtedly become the superior of the lad who has remained at home.[38]

Perhaps it was the threat of "overcivilization" that caused many young Easterners, such as Roosevelt, Remington, and Wister, to wander the West in the late nineteenth century in search of the masculine roles denied them in the urban-industrial society of the East. G. Edward White suggests that the anxieties surrounding the Eastern adolescence of Roosevelt, Remington, and Wister, were intimately connected with "the imaginative response" of each man to the West. Each of these men, White observes, "had experienced prior to his departure (for the West) a sense of frustration, disappointment, or personal tragedy, and sought in the West a moratorium, a momentary stay against confusion, or a chance to begin life from a new perspective." White finds their exuberant response to the West closely tied to the adolescent anxieties regarding "each man's relations with his parents

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[38]Horace Porter, "The Philosophy of Courage," The Century Magazine, XXXVI (June, 1888), p. 253.

and each man's search for an attractive occupational role." The adolescence of Roosevelt, Remington, and Wister, was set against the changing economic and social background of post-Civil War America, and as the youthful representatives of the old wealth and prestige of the nonindustrial age, they found themselves bewildered by the choice of occupational roles open to them in the newly emerging industrial order.[39] The cry of "overcivilization" in the period, therefore, perhaps also reflected this sense of frustration felt by young members of the Eastern Establishment over their prospective roles in the civilized society of the East.

Certainly young men did go West in great numbers in the late nineteenth century to experience frontier life. In 1881 Louis C. Bradford observed that "there is a peculiar fascination in this wild life of the cow-boys which tempts many young men of culture and refinement, reared in the enjoyment of every luxury in the East, but of adventurous dispositions, to come and live with these rude spirits on the frontier."[40] A year later George R. Buckman referred to "the exodus of

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[39]White, op. cit., pp. 52-74.

[40]Louis C. Bradford, "Among the Cow-Boys," Lippincott's Magazine, XXVII (June, 1881), p. 568. See also Lewis Atherton, The Cattle Kings (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961), pp. 13-15; George L. Burton, "With the Colorado Cow-Punchers on a Round-Up," Outing, XXXVI (May, 1900), pp. 152-156; Thomas Holmes, "A Cowboy's Life," Chautauquan, XIX (September, 1894), pp. 730-732; and Joseph Nimmo, Jr., "The American Cowboy," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, LXXIII (November, 1886), pp. 880-884.

young collegians and professional men from the overcrowded East," observing that many of them took up ranching in the West. "It may safely be said," Buckman remarked, "that nine-tenths of those engaged in the stock-business in the Far West are gentlemen. Here is a fascinating, health-restoring, and profitable occupation for the great army of broken-down students and professional men, and in crowds are they turning their backs upon the jostling world to secure new life and vigor upon these upland plains."[41]

Not only did the West offer outdoor excitement through ranching, but the fact that it was a hunter's paradise in the nineteenth century lured many Eastern sportsmen into the vast wilderness areas of the West. The hunting of big game afforded splendid opportunities for the exercise of the strenuous life, and game was plentiful in the American West. Many of the adventures recounted in the various books of the Boone and Crockett Club were based on Western hunting expeditions. Most of those who went on such trips probably agreed with the sentiments expressed by W.S. Rainsford, who, in encouraging young men to go West for recreation, said that "there is no land where nature recreates a man as

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[41]George R. Buckman, "Ranches and Rancheros of the Far West," Lippincott's Magazine, XXIX (May, 1882), p. 435. In a study of Eastern investment in the cattle industry, one historian asserts that many young Easterners in the West were misfits sent there by their families for redemption. See Gene M. Gressley, Bankers and Cattlemen (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), pp. 68-69.

she does there. You literally renew your youth. The climate is invigorating beyond words. For nervously exhausted men, for weary brains, there is simply nothing to touch it."[42] Roosevelt celebrated the Western hunter in a series of books and articles, and hunting was the activity he enjoyed most during his stay in the West.[43]

Richard Harding Davis, on a tour of the West, was struck by the fact that he often encountered on his trip friends and acquaintances he had known in the East. Davis, speculating on the whereabouts of all those men who had suddenly disappeared from his acquaintanceship in the East, found an answer on his tour: "I know now what becomes of them; they all go West."[44] Even Davis felt compelled to make the journey West, although he did not respond to the environment in the exuberant way of Roosevelt, Remington, and Wister. The strenuous life of Stephen Crane also included a trip to the West, where

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[42]Archibald Rogers, W.S. Rainsford and others, The Out of Door Library: Hunting (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896), pp. 52-53.

[43]"The hunter is the arch-type of freedom," Roosevelt said. He declared that "certainly there can be no healthier or more exciting pastime than that of following game with horse and hound over the great Western plains." Hunting in the mountains of the American West offered the test of endurance Roosevelt urgently sought. "All mountain game yields noble sport," he said, "because of the nerve, daring, and physical hardihood implied in its successful pursuit." Ranch Life and the Hunting-Trail, op. cit., pp. 83, 145, 186.

[44]Richard Harding Davis, The West From a Car-Window (New York: Harper & Bros., 1892), pp. 226-230.

adventure and danger, so vital to Crane's artistic vision, was still an everyday occurrence. Crane's sojourn in the West furnished material for two of his finest short stories--"The Blue Hotel" and "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky."

Strenuous lives also were led in the West by those roving artists and illustrators of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who were intent on capturing visually the last stirring days of American frontier life. The magazines of the period devoted considerable space to their illustrations which memorably depicted the Old West, and their paintings increasingly drew critical attention. The genre was dominated by Remington, but there were also other Easterners whose work was of equal merit--Charles Schreyvogel, H.W. Hansen, William Leigh, Henry F. Farney, and Rufus Zogbaum. Westerner Charles Russell also entered the field. All of these men in their paintings, illustrations, and sometimes bronze works, celebrated the strenuosity of Western life.[45]

While the artists and illustrators of the West were depicting life on the vanishing American frontier, writers were emerging who perfected, in their fiction, the heroic image of the cowboy. The 1890's and early 1900's witnessed

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[45]For a thorough discussion of this topic, and of earlier artists working in the West, see Robert Taft, Artists and Illustrators of the Old West, 1850-1900 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953).

the rise of the cowboy in literature with the appearance of the work of Owen Wister, Alfred Henry Lewis, Eugene Manlove Rhodes, Andy Adams, Emerson Hough, and a few years later--Zane Grey.[46] The most important of these, from the standpoint of the cowboy as folk hero, was Wister. In 1885 Wister had gone to Wyoming on the advice of his doctor, and, as he said, "this accidental sight of the cattle-country settled my career."[47] His first Western story appeared in 1892. The cowboy hero was the subject of the novel Lin McLean, published in 1898, and The Jimmyjohn Boss in 1900. Then in 1902 The Virginian, Wister's classic, appeared. "The Virginian" immediately became the prototype of the Western hero in America, the subject of innumerable novels, short stories, and screenplays.

In 1895, in a review of Wister's stories, Roosevelt celebrated the new author as an American Kipling, and in the process severely criticized those émigré novelists whose works were devoid of muscularity: "What pale, anaemic figures they are, these creations of the émigré novelists, when put

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[46]For a historical account of these writers, see chapters 9 & 10 of Joe B. Frantz and Julian E. Choate, Jr., The American Cowboy: The Myth and the Reality (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955). An excellent critical analysis of Western fiction is James K. Folsom, The American Western Novel (New Haven: College and University Press, 1966).

[47]Owen Wister, Roosevelt: The Story of a Friendship, 1880-1919 (New York: Macmillan Co., 1930), p. 28.

side by side with the men, the grim stalwart men, who stride through Mr. Wister's pages." The review, which appeared in Harper's Weekly, provided a classic statement of the strenuous philosophy by Roosevelt:

> It is this note of manliness which is dominant through the writings of Mr. Wister. Beauty, refinement, grace, are excellent qualities in a man, as in a nation, but they come second, and very far second, to the great virile virtues, the virtues of courage, energy, and daring; the virtues which beseem a masterful race--a race fit to fell forests, to build roads, to found commonwealths, to conquer continents, to overthrow armed enemies. . . . we welcome eagerly a man who deals with the elemental and basic qualities, a man who is free from any touch of valetudinarianism, and who has nothing morbid in his make-up. . . . He does not shrink from the blood and sweat of the conflict, nor does he grow unhealthy and think that in the conflict there is nothing else. . . . His tales are clean and fresh and strong, and healthy with an out-of-doors healthiness; they quicken our pulses and our hearts beat quickly for having read them.[48]

These remarks reflected the dominant concern for manliness which characterized the strenuous life. Preoccupation with the question of the state of the national virility was fostered by the concurrent passing of the frontier and rise of urban-industrial America. The question was made even more compelling by the sharp extension of feminine influence and power in American society in the

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[48]Theodore Roosevelt, "A Teller of Tales of Strong Men," Harper's Weekly, XXXIX (December 21, 1895), p. 1216.

late nineteenth century. Even in the male domain of the West, women were usurping masculine ways. In the dime novel literature of the day the "Wild Woman of the West" took her place alongside the western heroes Buffalo Bill and Buck Taylor.[49] The celebration of Hurricane Nell and Calamity Jane signified that even in the Wild West the feminine threat to manliness was a fact of life.

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[49]See Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth (New York: Random House, Vintage Edition, 1957), pp. 126-135, and William Wasserstrom, Heiress of All the Ages: Sex and Sentiment in the Genteel Tradition (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1959), pp. 39-51.

Chapter VII

The Feminine Threat to Manliness

The strenuous cult, self-consciously a defense of masculinity, conflicted with the women's rights movement and the new assertiveness of women, epitomized by the "New Woman" and the "Gibson Girl" of the 1890's,[1] and a national discussion of the differences between the sexes and their proper respective roles in society. Robert Grant, writing in Scribner's in 1895, observed the exasperation of American men over the woman question: "A great many men, who are sane and reasonable in other matters, allow themselves, on the slightest provocation, to be worked up into a fever over

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[1]On this general topic see Eleanor Flexner, Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1959); Aileen S. Kraditor, The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965); William Wasserstrom, Heiress of All the Ages: Sex and Sentiment in the Genteel Tradition (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1959); Fairfax Downey, Portrait of an Era as Drawn by Charles Dana Gibson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936); "The Titaness," Chapter I in Thomas Beer, The Mauve Decade (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1926); Mark Sullivan, Our Times: The United States, 1900-1925, 6 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926-1935), I; and chapters 1 and 2 in Lloyd Morris, Postscript to Yesterday: America: The Last Fifty Years (New York: Random House, 1947). Also see the chapters on women in America in Arthur M. Schlesinger, The Rise of the City, 1878-1898 (New York: Macmillan Co., 1933) and Harold U. Faulkner, The Quest For Social Justice, 1898-1914 (New York: Macmillan Co., 1931).

the aspirations of woman. They decline to listen to argument, grow red in the face, and saw the air with their hands, if they do not pound on the table, to express their views on the subject--"[2] The growing feminization of American culture produced a counter reaction in the form of a new and spirited advocacy of masculinity, which contributed to the development of the idea of the strenuous life.

The women's rights movement was bringing about a revolutionary change in the position of women in late nineteenth century America. Everywhere women were on the march. Through the activities of their various clubs and organizations they sought to remove the legal and social restrictions under which they lived. They also sought to reform some areas of the men's world and increasingly encroached upon it. Aside from the question of "rights" it was this latter

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[2]Robert Grant, "The Art of Living: The Case of Woman," Scribner's Magazine, XVIII (October, 1895), p. 465. For a variety of contemporary views on various aspects of the woman question, see the chapter "The American Girl" in A. Maurice Low, America at Home (London: George Newnes, Limited, n.d.); chapter 4, "An Appreciation of the American Woman," in James F. Muirhead, The Land of Contrasts (Boston, New York, & London: Lamson, Wolfe & Co., 1898); Francis Parkman, "The Woman Question," North American Review, CXXIX (October, 1879), pp. 303-321, and CXXX (January, 1880), pp. 16-30; Kate G. Wells, "Transitional American Women," Atlantic Monthly, XLVI (December, 1880), pp. 817-823; Ella W. Winston, "Foibles of the New Woman," The Forum, XXI (April, 1896), pp. 186-192; Richard Harding Davis, "The Origin of a Type of American Girl," Monthly Illustrator, III-IV (January, 1895), pp. 3-8; Caroline Ticknor, "The Steel-Engraving Lady and the Gibson Girl," Atlantic Monthly, LXXXVIII (July, 1901), pp. 105-108; and William M. Salter, "What is the Real Emancipation of Women?" Atlantic Monthly, LXXXIX (January, 1902), pp. 28-35.

development which particularly aroused male alarm. It seemed that women were becoming more masculine.

"Woman," Goldwin Smith wrote in 1890, "has made her way to the smoking room and has mounted the bicycle. She began to adopt male attire, and nothing but her own taste stopped her. After all, Nature has made two sexes. Nobody thinks it a compliment to a man to be called effeminate; why should we think that to become masculine is the highest ideal of woman?"[3] A professor at Rutgers Female College complained that young women "practice boyish manners and boyish mischief. They imitate the college yell and wear the college gown." Reporting on this development in The Independent one writer declared that "the invasion of man's domain by women is not a matter of social evolution and progress, but a temporary anomaly against which a strong reaction has already set in."[4]

Aside from the activities and achievements of the organized feminist movement, the influence of women was asserting itself in more subtle, but no less powerful ways. The Sunday-school morality of women set the tone of church life

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[3]Goldwin Smith, "Woman's Place in the State," The Forum, VIII (January, 1890), p. 524.

[4]Henry T. Finck, "Are Womanly Women Doomed," The Independent, LIII (January 31, 1901), pp. 267, 268.

in America. Women teachers, in addition to filling the instructional ranks in primary education, were securing many positions in the high schools.[5] The significance of this development was underscored by a writer in the Atlantic Monthly in 1912, in which the author traced "The Feminizing of Culture" which had been occurring for a generation: "As to the feminizing influence of woman teachers on manners and morals and general attitude toward life, there can be no real doubt. Boys and girls cannot spend eight or twelve impressionable years of childhood and youth under the constant daily influence of women without having the lady-like attitude toward life strongly emphasized. . . . in this present assimilation, one cannot help regretting the steady disappearance of the katabolic qualities of the human male."[6]

In the urban environment boys were seldom outside the sphere of feminine influence and rule. The social history of the American family in the nineteenth century recorded a decline in the authority and influence of the patriarch. Thus, domestically, "under the new order, the home comes to be run for the women and children rather than for the man, . . ."[7]

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[5]Ray Ginger, Age of Excess (New York: Macmillan Co., 1965), pp. 324-328; Harry Thurston Peck, Twenty Years of the Republic, 1885-1905 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1919), pp. 744-749.

[6]Earl Barnes, "The Feminizing of Culture," Atlantic Monthly, CIX (June, 1912), p. 775.

[7]Arthur W. Calhoun, A Social History of the American Family, 3 vols. (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1919), III, p. 158. See the chapter, "The Passing of Patriarchism and Familism."

The pressure of a man's work in an urban-industrial society tended to keep him away from home during most of the day, and many comfortable middle class men increasingly turned to the club rather than to the home as a haven for relaxation. "The best proof of man's dissatisfaction with the home," wrote Charlotte Perkins Gilman in 1903, "is found in his universal absence from it. It is not only that his work takes him out (and he sees to it that it does!) but the man who does not 'have to work' also goes out, for pleasure."[8]

Clarence Day, in his humorous recollections in Life With Father, admitted that he saw more of his father after he grew up than he had in his childhood.[9] Perhaps Day's portrait of his father as a blustery domestic autocrat, whose bark was decidedly worse than his bite, was characteristic of many respectable middle class homes in the late nineteenth century in which the woman of the house usually got her way. Although the husband-father continued to be idealized as the master of the family, it seemed that his influence in the home, and on children, was much less than it had been in earlier years of American life.

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[8]Charlotte Perkins Gilman, The Home: Its Work and its Influence (New York: McClure, Phillips & Co., 1903), p. 283. Also see in Calhoun the chapter entitled "The Precarious Home," ibid.

[9]Clarence Day, Life With Father (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1936), p. 221.

The decline of the father in American society and the rise of the "emancipated woman" were developments which were reflected in the literature of the period. It has been observed, for example, that in many novels of the day the women were strong, while the men were ineffectual.[10] A study of the heroines of Henry Adams bears this out,[11] as do studies of other authors in the period. The novel which perhaps most explicitly revealed this was Robert Grant's Unleavened Bread, which appeared in 1900. A year earlier Grant had written that "there are some women to-day who would . . . enter the lists of life on the footing of a second-class man, proud of their swagger, and with the instincts of the wife and mother sternly repressed. . . . The danger lies in the failure to recognize the species in the bustling, chirping, metallic, superficial class of women which in some numbers, and with the wiry whirr of grasshoppers, infests the cities and towns of the republic to-day-- . . ."[12] In Unleavened Bread Grant depicted this type of woman in his portrait of the selfish and social-climbing Selma, who divorced one husband, outlived a second, and married a third, a lawyer, who rose in politics to become a United States Senator.

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[10]Ginger, op cit., p. 325.

[11]See Edward N. Saveth, "The Heroines of Henry Adams," American Quarterly, VIII (Fall, 1956), pp. 231-242.

[12]Robert Grant, "Search-Light Letters: Letter to a Modern Woman with Social Ambitions," Scribner's Magazine, XXV (March, 1899), p. 377.

For Selma in Unleavened Bread, "to be an American meant to be more keenly alive to the responsibility of life than any other citizen of civilization, and to be an American woman meant to be something finer, cleverer, stronger, and purer than any other daughter of Eve." In the novel it was Flossy Williams, another social-climbing female, but an honest one, who, in an angry exchange, exposed to Selma the full measure of her selfishness, deceit, and haughty sense of superiority:

> You're one of those American women--I've always been curious to meet in all her glory--who believe that they are born in the complete panoply of flawless womanhood; that they are by birthright consummate house-wives, leaders of the world's thought and ethics, and peerless society queens. All this by instinct, by heritage, and without education. . . . You don't understand, . . . that a true lady--a genuine society queen--represents modesty and sweetness and self-control, and gentle thoughts and feelings; that she is evolved by gradual processes from generation to generation, not ready made . . . . But there's hope for me because I'm conscious of my shortcomings and am trying to correct them; whereas you are satisfied, and fail to see the difference between yourself and the well-bred women whom you envy and sneer at.[13]

Unleavened Bread was widely read in America; it ranked third on the best seller list in 1900,[14] and it provoked

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[13]Robert Grant, Unleavened Bread (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900), pp. 3-4, 243.

[14]Alice Payne Hackett, 70 Years of Best-Sellers, 1895-1965 (New York: R.R. Bowker Co., 1967), p. 96.

widespread discussion. Upon reading Grant's novel Brooks Adams wrote the author: "The fact is, that our social system is calculated to breed, and does breed, intense selfishness in all classes of women, from the top to the bottom of the scale. Selma is growing to form the dominant type of our female population."[15] Theodore Roosevelt, in an address before the National Congress of Mothers in 1905, urged the women to read Grant's novel and to "ponder seriously the character of Selma, and think of the fate that would surely overcome any nation which developed its average and typical woman along such lines. Unfortunately, it would be untrue to say that this type exists only in American novels. That it also exists in American life is made unpleasantly evident by the statistics as to the dwindling families in some localities. It is made evident in equally sinister fashion by the census statistics as to divorce, which are fairly appalling, . . ." Roosevelt then proceeded to denounce divorce as "a bane to any nation, a curse to society, a menace to the home, an incitement to married unhappiness, and to immorality, an evil thing for men, and a still more hideous evil for women."[16]

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[15]Quoted in Arthur F. Beringause, Brooks Adams: A Biography (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), pp. 360-361.

[16]Theodore Roosevelt, "The Woman and the Home," in American Problems, Vol. XVI of The Works of Theodore Roosevelt (20 vols., National Edition, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), p. 169. On the topic of divorce see William L. O' Neill, Divorce in the Progressive Era (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967) and James H. Barnett, Divorce and the American Divorce Novel, 1858-1937 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1939).

In Henry James's The Bostonians, the Southern hero Basil Ransom discovered at first hand the fervor of the feminist movement. The masculine dilemma of late nineteenth century America was summarized in an impassioned speech by Ransom:

> The whole generation is womanised; the masculine tone is passing out of the world; it's a feminine, a nervous, hysterical, chattering, canting age, an age of hollow phrases and false delicacy and exaggerated solicitudes and coddled sensibilities, which, if we don't soon look out, will usher in the reign of mediocrity, of the feeblest and flattest and the most pretentious that has ever been. The masculine character, the ability to dare and endure, to know and yet not fear reality, to look the world in the face and take it for what it is--a very queer and partly very base mixture--that is what I want to preserve, or rather, as I may say, to recover, . . ."[17]

By the turn of the century many American men were bewildered by the radical extension of the feminine influence in society. Many were thoroughly exasperated by the "chattering and canting," as an editorial in The Independent indicated in 1901. On the subject of "Why Men Don't Like Her," referring to the "New Woman," it declared that men, above all, "are distinctly and thoroughly disgusted with her everlasting habit of arguing, in season and out of season, about herself, her 'rights,' her opportunities,

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[17]Henry James, The Bostonians (New York: Dial Press, 1945), p. 283.

her profession, her 'cause,' her 'reform,' her hobby, or her ism, until the helpless male creature that has to choose between listening to her or being absolutely rude is well nigh dead with fatigue."[18] The woman question was much on the minds of Americans of both sexes in 1900, when Flora McDonald Thompson posed the basic question in the North American Review: "Considering the new form of superiority of the American woman at the end of the century--a superiority which is greater than all the domestic virtues, a superiority that boasts of feminine independence, a superiority that immortalizes woman and demoralizes man; considering this modern superiority of the American woman, one looks curiously to the future and asks, What of its effect upon our national character and standing?"[19]

II

Besieged by suffragettes, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, "New Women" and "Gibson Girls," many American men found themselves in the rather uncomfortable and irritating position of having to develop a defense of manhood.

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[18]"Why Men Don't Like Her," The Independent, LIII (April 11, 1901), p. 854.

[19]Flora McDonald Thompson, "Retrogression of the American Woman," North American Review, CLXXI (November, 1900), p. 753.

"We hear so much about the rights of women," Harry Thurston Peck wrote in 1899, "that just for the sake of variety it ought not to be displeasing to hear a little something said about the rights of man. When one comes down to the plain fact of human life on its serious side, it is man who is the finest and the noblest and the most godlike figure in the world . . . ." After cataloguing the achievements of man down through the ages, Peck declared that a woman's place is that which is marked out for her by man.[20]

The masculine vs. feminine theme became evident in various areas of discourse. The achievements of women in literature and the arts entered the discussion. Charles Dudley Warner had posed the question in 1890: "Man is a noble creation, and he has fine and sturdy qualities which command the admiration of the other sex; but how will it be when that sex, by reason of superior acquirements, is able to look down on him intellectually?"[21] In the light of this question, how reassuring it was for men to read ten years later that "art has masculine emotions, representing the katabolic, militant spirit of man." In arguing this, in support of his thesis that men are more creative than women, E.A. Randall declared that "women have lacked the masculine

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[20]Harry Thurston Peck, "The Woman of To-Day and of To-Morrow," The Cosmopolitan, XXVII (June, 1899), p. 154.

[21]Charles Dudley Warner, "The Subjection of Man," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, LXXX (May, 1890), p. 973.

emotions necessary for the production of great paintings."[22]

Although women did not always disagree with such assertions, they, too, sought to clarify the distinction between masculine and feminine attributes. A female professor of philosophy at Randolph-Macon Woman's College complained in 1901 of the inadequacy of the definition of womanly. The Century Dictionary, she said, "is in no way embarassed in its definition of manly. It is at no loss for distinct virtues to mention as characteristic of a manly man. He is 'humane,' 'charitable,' 'hospitable,' 'independent in spirit or bearing,' 'strong,' 'brave,' 'large-minded,' etc. There are some characteristics which the manly man must not have, prominent among them being 'womanish.' When the definition of the adjective womanly is reached, the paucity of definite characteristics is distressing."[23]

In literature there was a masculine reaction against the decadence of Oscar Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley. Rudyard

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[22]E.A. Randall, "The Artistic Impulse in Man and Woman," The Arena, XXIV (October, 1900), pp. 415, 420. On a related topic by a woman, see Edith Brower, "Is the Musical Idea Masculine," Atlantic Monthly, LXXIII (March, 1894), pp. 332-339.

[23]C.S. Parrish, "The Womanly Woman," The Independent, LIII (April 4, 1901), p. 775.

Kipling was celebrated on both sides of the Atlantic as the foremost exponent of the masculine mode in literature. Kipling was hailed in the Overland Monthly as a rare example of an author "who has gained fame and made money not only without the aid of women, but actually in spite of them." He was admired because "his is a strenuous and exceedingly virile conception of things, the conception of the young man whose heart is too full of the joy of conflict to feel the necessity for the tenderness and sympathy which are implied in the very term."[24]

Kipling's popularity in America was a reflection of the new masculine assertiveness of the period. Where Kipling led, Americans followed. In "The Healthful Tone for American Literature" in The Forum in 1895, Richard Burton observed that "a mere glance at world-literature proves beyond peradventure that the moving and permanent forces are those which are healthful, vital, positive, optimistic." Burton attacked decadence and the "art-for-art's sake" approach of the aesthetes and called for a new muscularity in American literature. "Our land," he said, "entering into its young heyday of national maturity, must develop a literature to express and reflect its ideals, or we shall display to the astonished world the spectacle

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[24]Lewis Austin, "Kipling and Women," Overland Monthly, XLII (October, 1903), pp. 357, 358.

of a vigorous people, hardly out of adolescence, whose voice is not the big, manly instrument suiting its years, but the thin piping treble of senility. Common sense and patriotism alike forbid such an absurdity."[25]

American literature, it was asserted, had always been largely dominated by the feminine influence, and the Kentucky author James Lane Allen declared in 1897 for a reassertion of "the Masculine Principle" in American writing. In an article in the Atlantic Monthly he protested against the dominance of "the Feminine Principle," touching on the theme of "over-civilization" in the process: "You American novelists and short-story writers, as the result of following the leadership of this principle, have succeeded in producing a literature of what kind? Of effeminacy, of decadence. For in the main it is a literature of the over-civilized, the ultra-refined, the hyper-fastidious; of the fragile, the trivial, the rarefied, the bloodless. . . ."[26]

Frank Norris declared early in his career as a novelist: "Let us have men who are masculine, men who have other things to think of besides fooling away their time in ball-rooms. After all, think of a man who smells of perfume

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[25]Richard Burton, "The Healthful Tone for American Literature," The Forum, XIX (April, 1895), pp. 252-253.

[26]James Lane Allen, "Two Principles in Recent American Fiction," Atlantic Monthly, LXXX (October, 1897), p. 438.

and sachet--one's gorge rises at it! I would rather a man smell of horse sweat, the nasty salt rime, the bitter, pungent lather that gathers when the girths gall and the check strap chafes." However, not only did Norris call for red-blooded men in American fiction, but also for red-blooded women: "Give us stories now, give us men, strong, brutal men, with red-hot blood in 'em, with unleashed passions rampant in 'em, blood and bones and viscera in 'em, and women, too, that move and have their being. . . . It's the Life that we want, the vigorous, real thing, not the curious weaving of words and the polish of literary finish. . . . We don't want literature, we want life."[27]

In a series of novels--Moran of the Lady Letty, Blix, and A Man's Woman--Norris developed what literary historian Donald Pizer has called "a masculine-feminine ethic, in which men achieve a correct masculinity with the aid of women who themselves move from masculinity to femininity."[28] In one of these novels, A Man's Woman, Norris pitted Ward Bennett, a brutish Arctic explorer, against Lloyd Searight, a determined and strong-willed nurse whose creed was "to do things." In Lloyd's view "she was stronger than other

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[27]Quoted in Donald Pizer, The Novels of Frank Norris (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966), p. 89.

[28]Ibid., pp. 110-111.

women; she was carrying out a splendid work." Yet despite her masculine power, in her introspective moments she could cry: "I am no better, no stronger than the others. What does it all amount to when I know that, after all, I am just a woman-- . . ." She thought of Ward "at his very best--how he had always seemed to her the type of the perfect man, masterful, aggressive, accomplishing great projects with an energy and determination almost superhuman, . . . she had been proud of his giant's strength, the vast span of his shoulders, the bull-like depth of his chest, the sense of enormous physical power suggested by his every movement."[29] A Man's Woman explores the clash of masculine and feminine wills, out of which Lloyd discovers that it is the natural role of woman to submit to the man, while Ward learns that masculinity consists of much more than mere brute strength. As Pizer writes, the novel "is devoted to the process by which a strong-willed woman learns to win love by surrendering and a strong-willed man learns to temper strength with understanding."[30]

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[29]Frank Norris, A Man's Woman (New York: Doubleday & McClure Co., 1900), pp. 57, 58, 172-173.

[30]Pizer, op. cit., p. 107.

The character of Ward Bennett in A Man's Woman was representative of the cult of the strong man which developed in American fiction at the turn of the century.[31] "The world wants men," exclaimed Lloyd in that novel, "great, strong, harsh, brutal men--men with purposes, who let nothing, nothing, nothing stand in their way." When Lloyd's safety is threatened by a runaway horse, Bennett kills the horse with a single, powerful blow from a hammer. Lloyd's reaction to this "fearful thing done there in the road" is a significant commentary on the strong man theme:

> . . . the savagery of the whole affair stuck in Lloyd's imagination. There was a primitiveness, a certain hideous simplicity in the way Bennett had met the situation that filled her with wonder and even a little terror and mistrust of him. The vast, brutal directness of the deed was out of place and incongrous at this end-of-the-century time. It ignored two thousand years of civilization. It was a harsh, clanging, brazen note, powerful, uncomplicated, which came jangling in, discordant and inharmonious with the tune of the age. It savoured of the days when

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[31]For a literary analysis of this theme in the light of Norris' works, see chapter 3, "The Cult of the Strong Man," in Ernest Marchand, Frank Norris: A Study (Standford, California: Standford University Press, 1942), pp. 97-129. On the general topic of naturalism in literature, see Lars Ahnebrink, The Beginnings of Naturalism in American Fiction (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1961).

> men fought the brutes with their hands or with their clubs. But also it was an indication of a force and a power of mind that stopped at nothing to attain its ends, . . . disdainful of hesitation, holding delicacy and finessing in measureless contempt, . . .[32]

Led by Norris and Jack London, this school of Darwinistic fiction emphasized the primitivistic, atavistic side of man.

The image of the strong man in literature seemed to be appropriate for the age of Darwin and imperialism, and it was undoubtedly reassuring to many to see the masculine image bolstered in fiction. The age also witnessed new celebrations of manhood in the nation's leading periodicals and magazines. Women, as well as men, joined in this celebration of the masculine theme. "Are we not weary," wrote Ellen Burns Sherman in The Critic in 1896, "oh so weary! of hearing about the new woman? Yes, we are; and where--all this time--is the new man?" It was high time, she said, "that some one should give the new man his due and gratefully recognize in him the fulfillment of prophecy--for he not only sees visions and helps to bring them to pass, but he is himself a second prophecy of a still higher type of manhood."[33] Still, women claimed a large share of the credit in the making of men. "Idleness and luxury," observed Sara Grand in 1894, "are making men flabby, and

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[32]Norris, op. cit., pp. 82, 102, 105-106.

[33]Ellen Burns Sherman, "The New Man," The Critic, XXVIII (May 23, 1896), pp. 364, 365.

the man at the head of affairs is beginning to ask seriously if a great war might not help them to pull themselves together." She concluded, however, that "women need not be disheartened. Now is the time," she said, "to cultivate a cheerful frame of mind, and remember that if there is little hope for the present generation, they can spank proper principles into the next in the nursery."[34]

"The present generation" did find hope. By 1900 a war had helped men, or so it seemed, "to pull themselves together," and America's imperialist venture had afforded Theodore Roosevelt the opportunity of injecting the idea of the strenuous life into the national values. The national impulse for the strenuous life, evident for over a decade in American life, had been motivated, in part, by the feminine threat to manliness in the late nineteenth century. Roosevelt had written in The Century in the 1880's that "it is . . . unfortunately true . . . that the general tendency among people of culture and high education has been to neglect and even look down upon the rougher and manlier virtues, so that an advanced state of intellectual development is too often associated with a certain effeminacy of character."[35]

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[34]Sara Grand, "The Man of the Moment," North American Review, CLVIII (May, 1894), pp. 626, 627.

[35]Theodore Roosevelt, "Machine Politics in New York City," The Century Magazine, XXXIII (November, 1886), p. 76.

The strenuous life was offered as a masculine antidote to combat effeminacy. Frank Norris spoke for the new strenuous generation when he declared that "the United States in this year of grace of nineteen hundred and two does not want and does not need Scholars, but Men--Men made in the mould of the Leonard Woods and the Theodore Roose-velts, . . ."[36] The view that effeminacy represented an unhealthy tendency in American life was evident in much of the widespread criticism of the novels of Henry James. Writing of James in 1902 Rafford Pyke declared that "his themes grew more and more unwholesome; so that now his writings exhibit all the stigmata of degeneracy, . . ."[37]

On the subject of "What Men Like in Men," Pyke declared that "every man who is a man would readily agree that he dislikes a 'Sissy', . . ." He then generously attributed a host of ideals and virtues to men and emphasized their necessity in relations among men:

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[36]Frank Norris, The Responsibilities of the Novelist and Other Literary Essays (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1903), p. 265. From one of Norris' stories came the remark, "that the same qualities that make a good football man would make a good soldier; and a good soldier, sir, is a man good enough to be any girl's husband." Quoted in Marchand, op. cit., p. 132.

[37]Rafford Pyke, "What Men Like in Men," The Cosmopolitan, XXXIII (August, 1902), p. 403.

> First of all, a man must be what other men call "square"--which implies that he must have a sense of honor. This means so much in the relations of men with men. From women they do not expect it, at least in the fullest sense, --a man's sense; but it is the very corner-stone of friendship among men. . . . Fair play and the rigor of the game is a masculine ideal; and men will trust and like and honor those who live up to its strict requirements. The foundation of it all is justice--the most masculine of virtues, and the only one in which no woman ever had a share. Some women have been generous, and many have been brave and wise and self-denying, but there has never lived a woman who was absolutely just. Justice, even-handed, clear-eyed, supreme over prejudice and passion--this is God's gift to man alone, and man alone can feel how splendid and sublime a thing it is.[38]

The masculine virtues fostered by the strenuous life attracted women, as well as men. Lavinia Hart observed in Cosmopolitan that "strength is that attribute of man which most keenly appeals to woman. The untrained, untutored woman loves him for brute strength. The woman of culture and refinement loves him for strength of intellect and

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[38]Ibid., pp. 403, 405. Edward A. Ross declared in his Sin and Society: "Men rather than women are the natural foes of wrong. Men burn at the spectacle of injustice, women at the sight of suffering. 'White,' 'decent,' 'fair play,' 'square deal,' voice masculine conscience. Men feel instinctively that the pith of society is orderly struggle, competition tempered by rules of forbearance. The impulse of simple-minded men to put down 'foul play' and 'dirty work' is a precious safeguard of social order. But the impulses of simple-minded women are not so trustworthy." Sin and Society (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1907), p. 94.

character, and that tenderness which in man is the acme of mental and moral and physical strength and poise." It was apparent that her ideal was conceived in terms of the image of heroic manhood which the strenuous life promoted. Writing of "the man who would win a woman," she declared that he must be "a man of the heroic temperament, a man who dares; a man who has character sufficient to have convictions, and courage sufficient to embody and emblazon them in his life; a man who is master of others, because he first is master of himself. Only such a man wholly wins the woman he wants; and only such a one can make her wholly happy."[39]

Because of the feminine threat to manliness a new concern was evidenced for the American boy. Boys had to be saved from effeminacy. Because they would someday face the test of manhood themselves, it was felt that boys should be subjected to a strong masculine influence in their lives--that they should be nurtured on the values of the strenuous life. The necessity for this was emphasized by Harry Thurston Peck, who stressed the importance of the role of the father in inculcating the masculine virtues:

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[39]Lavinia Hart, "The Way to Win a Woman," The Cosmopolitan, XXXV (August, 1903), pp. 400, 403.

> For the life of a man differs from the life of a woman in this respect, that at some time or other, sooner or later, the time must come when he shall stand alone relying on his own strength, to conquer if he is sound and brave, to fall if he be weak and cowardly. . . . He must meet the test and fight the fight alone. And in that hour of trial, the truest safeguard is not so much inherent principle; it is not religious precept; it is most of all the long-exerted, silent, irresistible influence of those early years when his father, not merely as father, but as a comrade and a friend, led him to feel in his very soul, that truth and honor and decency are fairer and finer for their own sake than falsehood and dishonor and uncleanness.[40]

The celebration of the manly relationship between father and son typified the masculine self-consciousness of the period. A male anxiety to prove oneself--"to meet the test and fight the fight alone"--was generated by the feminine threat to manliness. This was especially apparent in the appeal of jingoism in the 1890's. With women encroaching upon most spheres of the male domain, the martial spirit loomed as the last citadel of manliness. To many men in the decade of the nineties, war provided the one remaining haven from the massive feminine assault upon male dominance in society.

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[40]Harry Thurston Peck, "What a Father Can Do For His Son," The Cosmopolitan, XXXIII (October, 1902), p. 707.

Chapter VIII

The Martial Spirit

A militaristic strain pervaded the doctrine of the strenuous life throughout the nineties. It was the heyday of flag-waving, boys' brigades, patriotic societies, national debates on preparedness, rumors of wars, and finally "the splendid little war" itself. America, plagued by domestic discontent, found a certain relief in the martial spirit. For an American in the 1890's it was reassuring to know that despite the depression, the labor disorders, the influx of immigrants, and the Populist uprising, the American people could rally round the flag and show the world that national muscularity was not lacking. The martial spirit of the period provided for the ultimate expression of the values of the strenuous life. Existing impulses for strenuous endeavor were tempered by the war spirit of the nineties to produce a full-fledged cult of manliness.

The Civil War remained a powerful factor contributing to the strenuous impulse. The impact of the war on those who had participated in it was deep and enduring, as countless letters, diaries, and speeches of the period testify. Charles Francis Adams, Jr. always insisted that the war made a man of him. Of his army career he maintained that "educationally and every other way, it was the most fortunate event in my life . . . Think of my life without that

experience!"[1] Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. spoke for a whole generation when he said that it had been set apart by the war: "Through our great good fortune, in our youth our hearts were touched with fire. It was given to us to learn at the outset that life is a profound and passionate thing. . . . we have seen with our own eyes, beyond and above the gold fields, the snowy heights of honor, . . ."[2] Ambrose Bierce emerged from the blood bath to spend the rest of his life pursuing in fiction an apparent obsession with death, which stemmed in part, it seems, from his grim experiences in the war.[3]

For many participants, both military and civilian, the spirit of strenuous service demanded by the Civil War became an elusive ideal in the long period of peace which followed.[4] To a great extent, through this preoccupation with the haunting question of the role of the martial spirit in peacetime, the Civil War generation provided much of the intellectual

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[1]Quoted in Edward C. Kirkland, Charles Francis Adams, Jr.: The Patrician at Bay (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 23, 31.

[2]Quoted in Catherine Drinker Bowen, Yankee From Olympus: Justice Holmes and His Family (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1945), p. 197.

[3]Edmund Wilson, Patriotic Gore: Studies in the Literature of the American Civil War (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 617-634.

[4]George M. Fredrickson, The Inner Civil War: Northern Intellectuals and the Crisis of the Union (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), pp. 217-238.

stimulus for the strenuous life of the generation which followed. The pronouncements of an Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., who had been "touched with fire" in his youth were taken to heart and expressed in both thought and deed by the young men who came of age in the 1880's and 1890's. It was the experience of the generation of Civil War veterans which provided the example for exemplars of the strenuous life near the end of the century, such as Theodore Roosevelt, Richard Harding Davis, Stephen Crane, Owen Wister, Frederic Remington, and others.

Holmes was perhaps the foremost spokesman for the strenuous theme prior to Roosevelt. Having personally experienced the agonies and horrors of war, his hatred for it was deep. Nevertheless, he sought to maintain in peacetime the heroic ideal of martial heroism.[5] Holmes's distinguished career was marked by a number of public pronouncements concerning the impact of the war on his generation. In these he sought to give meaning to the experience, as the famous Memorial Day Addresses of 1884 and 1895 eloquently testify. In 1895 Holmes's Boston speech drew praise from Roosevelt. "War, when you are at it," Holmes declared, "is horrible and dull. It is only when time has passed that you see that its message was divine. . . . In this smug, over-safe corner of the world we need it, that we may realize that our comfortable

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[5] Ibid., pp. 218-222.

routine is no eternal necessity of things, but merely a little space of calm in the midst of the tempestuous untamed streaming of the world, and in order that we may be ready for danger."[6]

This was the voice of the older, Civil War generation speaking, and the message was one which many of the young men of America accepted. Roosevelt's own articulation of "the strenuous life" undoubtly drew from the war theme of the earlier generation. Holmes even anticipated Roosevelt in an address to the New York State Bar Association, a few months prior to Roosevelt's "The Strenuous Life" speech in Chicago. He told his audience: "The place for a man who is complete in all his powers is in the fight. The professor, the man of letters, gives up one-half of life that his protected talent may grow and flower in peace. But to make up your mind at your peril upon a living question, for purposes of action, calls upon your whole nature."[7]

A unique view of the role of the martial spirit by a member of the war generation came in William James's essay of 1910, "The Moral Equivalent of War." It seems that James, who had remained out of the war, sought throughout much of his career a moral equivalent of the Civil War.[8] In this essay James,

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[6]Quoted in Bowen, op. cit., p. 337.

[7]Ibid., p. 295.

[8]Fredrickson, op. cit., pp. 229-238.

although declaring himself a pacifist, celebrated "only the higher aspects of militaristic sentiment." He declared that "the martial virtues, although originally gained by the race through war, are absolute and permanent human goods." In his view the martial spirit must be maintained in peacetime in order to preserve peace. "Martial virtues must be the enduring cement; intrepidity, contempt of softness, surrender of private interest, obedience to command, must still remain the rock upon which states are built . . ."[9]

The solution which James offered to the problem of finding "a moral equivalent of war" anticipated the Civilian Conservation Corps of New Deal days and the Peace Corps and Vista of the New Frontier and Great Society era. James argued that, "instead of military conscription a conscription of the whole youthful population to form for a certain number of years a part of the army enlisted against Nature." "To coal and iron mines," James declared, "to freight trains, to fishing fleets in December, to dishwashing, clothes-washing, and window-washing, to road-building and tunnel-making, to foundries and stoke-holes, and to the frames of skyscrapers, would our gilded youths be drafted off, according to their choice, . . ." "They would tread the earth more proudly," he added, and "they would

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[9]William James, Memories and Studies (New York: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1912), pp. 275, 287-288.

be better fathers and teachers of the following generation."[10]

James indicated that his search for "a moral equivalent of war" was motivated by the experience of the Civil War. He referred to the heritage of the war at the beginning of his essay, suggesting its powerful claim on the memory of most Americans: "Those ancestors, those efforts, those memories and legends, are the most ideal part of what we now own together, a sacred spiritual possession worth more than all the blood poured out."[11]

As a small boy during the conflict, Theodore Roosevelt grew up with a consciousness of the war, a feeling for the experience which rivalled that of many members of the earlier generation who had participated in it. In an address at a veteran's reunion in Vermont in 1901, Roosevelt spoke of the war as a great national experience which aroused a "community of interest," derived from a "community of devotion to a lofty ideal:"

> The great Civil War rendered precisely this service. It drew into the field a very large proportion of the adult male population, and it lasted so long that its lessons were thoroughly driven home. In our other wars the same lessons, or nearly the same lessons, have been taught, but upon so much smaller a scale that the effect is in no shape or way comparable. . . In our modern life there are only a few occupations where risk has to be feared, and

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[10] Ibid., pp. 290-291.

[11] Ibid., pp. 267-268.

> there are many occupations where no exhausting labor has to be faced; and so there are plenty of us who can be benefited by a little actual experience with the rough side of things. It was a good thing, a very good thing, to have a great mass of our people learn what it was to face death and endure toil together, and all on an exact level.[12]

The link between the memory of the Civil War and the rising martial spirit in late nineteenth century America consisted of more than mere rhetoric. One manifestation of the nationalistic impulse was a patriotic fervor North and South, oriented towards a reconciliation of the two sections, and reflected in the rise of patriotic societies such as the Grand Army of the Republic, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Society of Colonial Wars, the Colonial Dames, the Sons of the Revolution, and the Society of the War of 1812. Veterans of the Blue and the Gray began appearing together in meetings and began sharing the same speakers' platforms in the 1880's, to dramatize the reconciliation of the sections. Americans from both the North and the South also enthusiastically supported the host of centennial celebrations held in the last quarter of the century. These jubilees tended to foster national unity by focusing on the nation's historic past prior to the Civil War.[13] In 1890 E. Benjamin Andrews, the president

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[12]Theodore Roosevelt, The Strenuous Life: Essays and Addresses (New York: The Century Co., 1904), pp. 268-269.

[13]Arthur M. Schlesinger, The Rise of the City, 1878-1898 (New York: Macmillan Co., 1933), pp. 409-412; Merle Curti, The Roots of American Loyalty (New York: Columbia University Press, 1946), pp. 187-193.

of Brown University, observed that it was strange to find "a feeling that it is still uncertain whether these States will permanently continue a single nation. Yet many at this moment share that feeling. . . . The sectional spirit which killed Rome is powerfully at work among us. Hardly ever, even before our war, was it more manifest than now." Andrews then proceeded to define the role of the public schools in inculcating patroitism. "Peace needs its love of country," he said, as well as war."[14]

The martial spirit thrived on the legacy of the Civil War, and, in the 1890's, it flourished as an aspect of the new imperialist impulse. In that decade American jingoism was the prevailing note in the conduct of foreign affairs. In 1891 the United States threatened to go to war against Chile over the "Baltimore" affair, and in 1895 threatened England with war over the Venezuelan boundary dispute. In that year an insurrection in Cuba also touched off a chain of events which led to the war with Spain in 1898.

The Darwinian argument used to justify imperialism was also used in celebrating the martial spirit. Alfred T. Mahan, the influential advocate of navalism, declared in 1897 that "conflict is the condition of all life, material and spiritual; and it is to the soldier's experience that the spiritual

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[14]E. Benjamin Andrews, "Patriotism and the Public Schools," The Arena, III (December, 1890), pp. 74, 75.

life goes for its most vivid metaphors and its loftiest inspirations. Whatever else the twentieth century may bring us, it will not, from anything now current in the thought of the nineteenth, receive a nobler ideal."[15] In 1899 Harriet Bradbury in writing on "War as a Necessity of Evolution" declared that, "The noblest qualities of the Anglo-Saxon race were developed in the stress of conflict, the heroism of self-sacrifice, devotion to an ideal of honor dearer than life, and in the pursuit of which, pain and danger become mere words."[16]

"Overcivilization" and peace were threats to manliness and factors which contributed to the decline of the martial virtues. "We are told," Carl Schurz said after the "Maine" disaster, "that a nation needs a war from time to time to prevent it from becoming effeminate, to shake it up from demoralizing materialism, and to elevate the popular heart by awakening heroic emotions and the spirit of patriotic self-sacrifice."[17] Schurz, and other critics of the war spirit, found this point of view very disturbing. It was a notion preached by Roosevelt and others throughout the 1890's. The president of the Naval War college had declared in 1896 that

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[15]Alfred T. Mahan, "A Twentieth-Century Outlook," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, XCV (September, 1897), p. 533.

[16]Harriet B. Bradbury, "War as a Necessity of Evolution," The Arena, XXI (January, 1899), p. 94.

[17]Carl Schurz, "About War," Harper's Weekly, XLII (March 5, 1898), p. 219.

"the corrupt ease, the luxurious immorality of life, toward which a total absence of war always leads nations, has in it something more degrading for the human race than simple savagery."[18] At the close of the war with Spain Maurice Thompson wrote in The Independent that "the greatest danger that a long period of profound peace offers to a nation is that of effeminate tendencies in young men. This is especially true in a country where the advancement of civilized methods of living has reached the point now touched by it in the United States."[19]

The subject of war and the nature of war was much under discussion in American periodicals. A survey of the contents of leading magazines of the day reveals such article titles as "War and Civilization," "Christianity and War," "War as a Factor in Civilization," "The Natural History of Warfare," "Philosophy and Morals of War," "War As a Moral Medicine," "War as a Necessity of Evolution," and "The Benefits of War." In these and other articles war was celebrated and condemned. One of the most extreme statements in praise of the martial spirit and war was that of Rear-Admiral S.B. Luce in the North American Review. "The truth is," wrote Luce, "that war is an ordinance of God." In his view war did have a positive role in the history of mankind: "War is the malady of nations;

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[18]H.C. Taylor, "Study of War," North American Review CLXII (February, 1896), p. 183.

[19]Maurice Thompson, "Vigorous Men, A Vigorous Nation," The Independent, L (September 1, 1898), pp. 610-611.

the disease is terrible while it lasts, but purifying in its results. It tries a nation and chastens it, as sickness or adversity tries and chastens the individual. There is a wisdom that comes only of suffering, whether to the family or to the aggregation of families--the nation. Man is perfected through suffering." Luce summed up his argument by declaring that "in the economy of nature, or the providence of God, war is sent, not necessarily for the punishment of national sins, nor yet for national aggrandizement; but, rather, for the forming of national character, the shaping of a people's destiny, and the spreading of civilization."[20]

Christianity was brought to the defense of war. Undoubtedly many Americans, ill-at-ease over the war with Spain and the subsequent American acquistion of the Philippines, were reassured to read the words of the Dean of Canterbury in the North American Review "that war, in any just and holy cause, is not only defensible, but is a positive duty." The Reverend F.W. Farrar declared that, "There has scarcely been any war in which some of the finest elements of virtue have not been educed. What splendor of self-sacrifice, what unflinching battle-brunt of heroism, what sense of the absolute supremacy of duty, does war call forth, even in the humblest and most ignorant soldiers." The Reverend Farrar concluded that "a

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[20]S.B. Luce, "The Benefits of War," North American Review, CLIII (December, 1891), pp. 683, 672.

war waged in the cause of truth and right, though it may be a very terrible necessity, yet in human history still continues to be at times a necessary duty, even for the most Christian nation, and is in no way at conflict with the obligations by which every true Christian is eternally bound."[21]

The debate over the martial spirit raged back and forth during the years of imperialism. In 1897 an editorial in Harper's Weekly discussed "the apprehension so frequently expressed of the revival of the martial spirit in the American people." The author insisted that there could be no revival of the "warlike spirit," because there had never been a distinct manifestation of such in the American past; instead "the commercial spirit" had always been dominant in America, and "the warlike spirit in our era is aroused with great difficulty, and when aroused is with still greater difficulty maintained." The writer attempted to place the "warlike spirit" in proper perspective:

> The warlike spirit proper--the love of fighting for its own sake or for a merely predatory object--exists only among uncivilized races; and even among these it is something far above the brutal thing it seems, so that out of it spring a rare nobility of sentiment and simple amenities and courtesies--the beginnings of that broad human sympathy which, though developed at first under the disguise of aversion, becomes finally the ground of social solidarity. Apart from this latent quality--this human interest which is lodged in all human strifes, and which distinguishes the

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[21]F.W. Farrar, "Imperialism and Christianity," North American Review, CLXXI (September, 1900), pp. 291, 292, 295.

> warlike man from the predatory beast--the warlike spirit, pure and simple, would have no worth or meaning.[22]

There were certainly many who disagreed with the writer in Harper's Weekly, and the events of the next few years seemed to refute the contention that the "warlike spirit" could not and would not flourish in America. In less than a year after the Harper's Weekly editorial appeared the United States plunged into war with Spain. This was followed by three years of bloody guerrilla war in the Philippines, and seven years of the martial adventure of Roosevelt's "Big Stick" diplomacy. Goldwin Smith, pointing to the rise of such brutal sports as football and prizefighting and to the imperialist binge, observed in 1900 that "the present ideal is the 'strenuous life;' that is, the life of combativeness and aggression."[23] Many Americans were disillusioned with the belligerent course the nation was taking. W.P. Trent wrote in the Sewanee Review: "We know perfectly well that very few of our soldiers are heroes, and that war, save in the upper grades of the two services, is a brutal trade. Yet we keep up our illusions by the tall talk about patriotism and the 'strenuous life;' . . ."[24] In the light of the events

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[22]H.M.A., "Warlike Spirit," Harper's Weekly, XLI (August 28, 1897), p. 858.

[23]Goldwin Smith, "War As a Moral Medicine," Atlantic Monthly, LXXXVI (December, 1900), p. 735.

[24]W.P. Trent, "War and Civilization," Sewanee Review, VIII (October, 1900), p. 388.

at the turn of the century, the view of Max Nordeau seemed to be far more persuasive than that of the Harper's Weekly view that the "warlike spirit proper . . . exists only among uncivilized races." Nordeau argued that,

> The emotion which sustains the warlike tendencies of cultured men is stronger than religion, which preaches love to one's neighbor, stronger than philosophy, which teaches the irrationality of brute force; stronger than morals and right, which civilized man pretends to recognize as the leading powers of his life. This feeling is rughless egotism, which lusts merely for self-gratification, and remains untouched by the concept that the neighbor also has rights which deserve respect. All the culture of to-day is calculated to strengthen this egotism, not to weaken it.[25]

II

The new patriotism especially affected American youth. In addition to the widespread activities of the various patriotic societies and the nationalist emphasis provided by the centennial celebrations, there was a concerted effort made to teach patriotism in the public schools. The period was marked by a mania for flag-flying and the idea of allegiance to the flag became a cult. In 1897 the American Flag Association was organized to promote reverence for the "stars and stripes." From the pulpit clergymen sounded the call of the

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[25]Max Nordeau, "Philosophy and Morals of War," North American Review, CLXIX (December, 1899), p. 797.

new patriotism, and churches, along with the schools, formed boys' military drill brigades.[26] That patriotism had become a national pastime was reflected in an observation by General O.O. Howard in 1897: "At the mention of the names of our heroes, patriotic fervor thrills every assembly, regardless of political affinities; the "star-spangled banner," seen or sung, brings tearful joy to the eyes of the aged, love and confidence to manhood, fresh enthusiasm to childhood and youth."[27]

The martial spirit of the 1890's fostered the strenuous cult of manliness, and this was perhaps most apparent in the new emphasis placed on military training for boys. The manly image of American boyhood which existed in the late nineteenth century was given a martial air in the 1890's. "The military instinct is innate in the American boy," declared Harper's Weekly. On the subject of "Military Instruction for Boys," the writer insisted that "the early lesson of the soldier would then become an integral part of the boy's life, and he would not be likely to outgrow it."[28] Declared Harper's Round Table:

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[26]Wallace Evan Davies, Patriotism on Parade: The Story of Veteran's and Hereditary Organizations in America, 1783-1900 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), pp. 218-222, 339-342. Also see chapter I of James C. Malin, Confounded Rot About Napoleon (Lawrence, Kansas: James C. Malin, 1961).

[27]Oliver O. Howard, "A Plea for the Army," The Forum, XXIII (August, 1897), p. 641.

[28]Barnet Phillips, "Military Instruction for Boys," Harper's Weekly, XXXVIII (July 21, 1894), p. 690.

"In every boy's heart--I am sure in every American boy's heart--there lies a love for martial things. The sound of a fife and drum, the sight of a soldier's uniform, stir him and set his blood a-tingling."[29] St. Nicholas reported that Sir Walter Besant's deepest impression of his visit to the United States was the devotion of American youth to their flag; "that nowhere except among British soldiers had he seen such affection and respect for a national emblem; and that a nation which as a whole felt as we seemed to feel about our Colors from the time we left our mother's knees, was one that could withstand the world in arms."[30]

In 1893 the G.A.R. launched a nation-wide movement to promote military instruction in the public schools. The idea received an endorsement from ex-president Benjamin Harrison, who discussed the value of military training for boys in an "open letter" to the public: "A military drill develops the whole man, head, chest, arms, and legs, proportionately; and so promotes symmetry, and corrects the excesses of other forms of exercise. It teaches quickness of eye and ear, hand and foot; qualifies men to step and act in unison; teaches subordination; and, best of all, qualifies a man to serve his country. The flag now generally floats above the school-house

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[29]Richard Barry, "The Boy Soldier in Camp," Harper's Round Table, XVII (November 5, 1895), p. 12.

[30]Charles Sydney Clark, "Honors to the Flag in Camp and Armory," St. Nicholas, XXIV (July, 1897), p. 762.

and what more appropriate than that the boys should be instructed in the defense of it."[31] In 1896 Whidden Graham stated in Munsey's Magazine that the military movement in the schools "promises to become a really important factor in American life." In addition to the physical benefits, he said, "the boys are taught to be brave, honorable, and manly; that they must be obedient, courteous, and respectful, that they must protect the weak, be helpful to their comrades, and above all else be truthful and patriotic."[32]

The G.A.R. conducted a tireless campaign and achieved considerable success, particularly in the East and Midwest. Schools in the large cities were most inclined to adopt the idea of military training for boys, and New York led the way. Large numbers of American boys were learning military discipline and skills in the mid-nineties, and the G.A.R. pressed Congress to pass a bill which would authorize a national program of military instruction for the nation's schools.[33] "This measure," the Dial editorialized in 1896, is a natural

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[31]Benjamin Harrison, "Military Instruction in Schools and Colleges: An Open Letter by Ex-President Harrison," The Century Magazine, XLVII (January, 1894), p. 469.

[32]Whidden Graham, "Our Schoolboy Soldiers," Munsey's Magazine, XV (July, 1896), pp. 459, 462-465. See also Henry Drummond, "Manliness in Boys--By a New Process," McClure's Magazine, II (December, 1893), pp. 68-77, and "Military Training in Schools," Harper's Weekly, XXXIX (February 9, 1895), p. 127.

[33]Davies, op. cit., p. 342.

consequence of the tall talk about war that has been heard so frequently of late in the Capital at Washington, and made so much of by sensational newspapers almost everywhere." The Dial attacked what seemed to be a marked militaristic trend in American life.[34]

The movement to institute military training in the schools provoked a heated controversy. Many observers denounced it as a dangerous step toward the development of a militarist society. B.O. Flower, editor of The Arena, declared that "the introduction of military training into the common schools of America marked the triumph of the military spirit of despotic Europe over the long-cherished traditions of the republic." Flower accused those behind the movement of "fostering the savage in the young."[35] Benjamin Trueblood expressed a fear that such activities might lead eventually to the creation of a large standing army. "Why," he asked, "at this late period in our history, should we begin a course of action growing out of groundless fear and suspicion, and thus put ourselves on a plane with those nations whose military drill in the schools would "unfortunately keep alive that excessive admiration of the

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[34]"Playing with Fire," Dial, XX (May 16, 1896), pp. 293-295. See also A.B. Ronne, "The Spirit of Militarism," Popular Science Monthly, XLVII (June, 1895), pp. 234-239.

[35]B.O. Flower, "Fostering the Savage in the Young," The Arena, X (August, 1894), pp. 422-432.

soldier ideal which has been anything but a blessing to mankind. We ought to educate for peace and the future, and not the past and war."[36]

Many were distressed at the role the churches began to play in the military movement for youth. "Comparatively few people," B.O. Flower observed in 1894, "are aware of the military activity within the city churches of America to-day." This, it seemed, was carrying "muscular Christianity" too far. Flower expressed concern for the impact of such activity on the formative years of youth, and pointed to the psychological danger involved:

> . . . , the child who is drilled in the manual of arms has constantly before him the hour when he may draw the trigger which means death to a fellow-man; he comes to love the sound of the drum beat, and learns to long for a chance to shoulder the murderous gun. He turns to the lives of Alexander, Caesar, and Napoleon; dreams of fame through slaughter, of power through devastation and destruction, fill his mind, and by coming to believe it is legitimate to kill his fellow-men when ordered to by a superior officer, the highest and finest elements in his mind are numbed.[37]

The sentiments of Flower were echoed by W.D. Le Sueur in an article entitled "War and Civilization," which appeared

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[36]Benjamin F. Trueblood, "Military Drill in the Schools," The Century Magazine, XLVIII (June, 1894), pp. 318-319.

[37]Flower, op. cit., pp. 426, 430.

in Popular Science Monthly in 1896. Le Sueur also warned of a possible cause and effect relationship inherent in the rising martial spirit in America. Referring to the patriotic and military activities of American youth, he said:

> Whether all this is for the best may well be doubted. It is difficult to put a gun into a boy's hand and drill him without creating in his mind a desire to kill somebody. Do we or do we not wish to cultivate this spirit in the rising generation? There is no doubt that the ease or difficulty with which a country is led into war depends very largely upon the dispositions of its population. If their thoughts run on war; if they have been accustomed by a semi-military training in the schools to make little of the horrors of war, and perhaps less of its crimes; if they have taken in the idea which continually haunts the military mind that might makes right, there can be no doubt that, in a given contingency, when a spirit of moderation and justice would smooth over an international difficulty, the voice of such a people will be given for war.[38]

Two years later the United States went to war against Spain in conformity with Le Sueur's analysis of the martial spirit. Roosevelt might have been writing of the American soldier, as well as the American sailor, when he said after the war that "every one alike, from the highest to the lowest, was eager for the war, and was, in heart, mind,

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[38]W.D. Le Sueur, "War and Civilization," Popular Science Monthly, XLVIII (April, 1896), p. 769.

and body, of the very type which makes the best kind of fighting man."[39] Perhaps the boy cadet of 1894 did become the spirited American fighting man of 1898.

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[39]Theodore Roosevelt, "Military Preparedness and Unpreparedness," The Century Magazine, LIX (November, 1899), p. 150.

Chapter IX

War:1898

The men who marched to war in 1898 had been imbued with the rationale of the strenuous ideal, and to the men of the middle and upper class the Spanish-American War provided a splendid opportunity to achieve it. The values of the strenuous life had been inculcated in them through participation in sports and vigorous outdoor activities, through the preachings of muscular Christian sermons, and through the reading of Theodore Roosevelt and Richard Harding Davis and Rudyard Kipling. Just as they were called upon by patriotism and idealism to free Cuba from Spain in 1898, they were also called upon to put the strenuous ideal to its severest test. For advocates of the strenuous cult the war provided the supreme test of manliness and courage.

War fascinated them. Roosevelt's brand of strenuosity celebrated war as the highest form of strenuous activity: "No triumph of peace," he said, "is quite so great as the supreme triumphs of war. The courage of the soldier, the courage of the statesman who has to meet the storms which can only be quelled by soldierly virtues--this stands higher than any qualities called out merely in times of peace." He added that "no national life is worth having if the nation is not willing to stake everything on the supreme arbitrament of war, and to pour out its blood, its treasure, and tears like water rather than submit to the loss of

honor and renown."[1] Frederic Remington, who accompanied the Fifth Corps on its expedition to Cuba, referred to the hardships of the Santiago campaign as satisfying "a life of longing to see men do the greatest thing which men are called on to do." "He who has not seen war," he said, "only half comprehends the possibilities of his race."[2]

Although the stories of heroism in the Spanish-American War were often exaggerated, there is no question but that the American troops achieved a splendid record in the field. Many were veterans of the Indian wars, while others made up in courage and fortitude what they lacked in experience. Their performance under fire made the subsequent celebration of American manhood possible. After the decisive battles at Santiago Harper's Weekly declared that "the patriotism of America is such that, when the direful occasion comes, the citizen becomes an energetic, courageous, and intelligent soldier, the like of whose associated qualities cannot be found in European armies." Certainly "this eager courage to carry the flag into the heart of an enemy's country, to plant it above his sinking ships and his crumbling

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[1]Quoted in Matthew Josephson, The President Makers: The Culture of Politics and Leadership in an Age of Enlightenment, 1896-1919 (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1940), p. 75.

[2]Frederic Remington, "With the Fifth Corps," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, XCVII (November, 1898), p. 962.

forts, this rush after the colors to the very death, this recklessness of life, this wonderful enthusiasm and joy in battle, are the phenomena of a deep and abiding patriotism, . . ."[3] "The country is now content to enjoy to the full this splendid exhibition of American manhood."[4]

The victories of the American army and navy in 1898 seemed to resolve the much-mooted question of American courage. In the Atlantic Monthly in 1893 S.R. Elliott had stated the issue: "The question is often asked, Are people less brave now, in these advanced times, than formerly, or is civilization on the whole inimical to the warlike spirit, and inclined to view with distrust any victories except those of peace?"[5] The war provided a reassuring answer, as Julian Hawthorne observed: "It proved once again that there were among us noble, generous, and high-minded men, young and old, not only ready to give all they had and were for their country, but who, under the stimulus put upon them, expanded to a greatness which had not been apprehended in them, and towered to a stature that surprised

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[3]"American Patriotism in War," Harper's Weekly, XLII (July 9, 1898), p. 659.

[4]Harper's Weekly, XLII (July 16, 1898), p. 683.

[5]S.R. Elliott, "The Courage of a Soldier," Atlantic Monthly, LXXI (February, 1893), p. 237.

us, who thought we knew them. But we had not known them. We never know what is best in us till the need comes that draws it forth."[6]

It was the courage and fortitude of the American soldier which particularly impressed war correspondent John Fox, Jr., who reported on the Santiago action: "There is nothing that daunts the American soldier--defective organization, deficient equipment, hen-coop life on board of transport, heat and fever of tropics, insufficient transportation, lack of food, lack of protection by artillery fire--nothing that daunts the American soldier. . . .And what a pleasure it is to have it again proved that there is no better plain soldier than the American gentleman and volunteer!"[7]

This celebration of the American gentleman soldier of the war with Spain represented a triumph for the cult of manliness in America. The war completed the building of the heroic image of American manhood, which the strenuous ideal fostered. The American soldier now emerged as a superior type, as H.C. Corbin declared after the war: "Compared with the immense standing armies of Continental Europe, our

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[6]Julian Hawthorne, "A Side-Issue of Expansion," The Forum, XXVII (June, 1899), p. 443. Also see "Courage in Modern Warfare," Scientific American, LXXIX (July 9, 1898), p. 18.

[7]John Fox, Jr., "In Front of Santiago," Harper's Weekly, XLII (July 23, 1898), p. 724.

army is insignificant in point of numbers; but man for man, in the possession of qualities that go to make the soldier, --physique, intelligence, and courage,--it can safely claim the highest place."[8] Maurice Thompson wrote in The Independent that "probably no army and navy since the best days of the Roman Empire ever equaled ours man for man in the best results of athletic training. In looking at our soldiers and sailors I was filled with admiration of their lithe and muscular forms and their show of virile health and intelligence."[9]

Thompson credited the rise of athletics in late nineteenth century America with being responsible for "the brawn, the spirit, the self-confidence, and the quickness" of the nation's soldiers and sailors. "We have seen," he said, "that the aristocratic polo-player makes as good a soldier under the tropic summer's sun as the cowboy and the trained regular, so far as the main essentials of soldierly qualifications go. Play has given him self-reliance, courage and endurance." He added that "athleticism, as a mood of

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[8]H.C. Corbin, "The Army of the United States," The Forum, XXVI (January, 1899), p. 513. See also "The Yankee as a Warrior" in The Literary Digest, XVII (August 13, 1898), which proclaimed Americans as "the most intelligent, the bravest, the fiercest soldiery in the world's history . . ." p. 184.

[9]Maurice Thompson, "Vigorous Men, A Vigorous Nation," The Independent, L (September 1, 1898), p. 610.

our civilization, has resulted in a great good where we least expected it. It has given us the 'man behind the gun,' at whom the whole world is still gazing with admiring wonder."[10]

That the heroic image of American manhood was bolstered by the Spanish-American War is evident in the thought of Brooks Adams. Adams, who had developed a pessimistic view of late nineteenth century civilization, was aroused by the martial spirit of the 1890's and through it adopted a buoyant and enthusiastic outlook toward America's future. For Adams the war was an important event. Its meaning for American manhood lay in the fact that, as with other wars, it had produced an uncommon breed of men. Adams expressed his view a few years after the war with Spain: "War may be terrible, but it is also beneficent, for it has given us the noblest type of manhood that, I believe, the race has ever known. It has given us the American soldier."[11]

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[10] Ibid.; An Englishman with the American expedition in Cuba, writing of the men in the U.S. Army, declared that "in physique, everyone knows that they touch the highest standard in the world." John Black Atkins, The War in Cuba (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1899), p. 26.

[11] Quoted in Frederic C. Jaher, Doubters and Dissenters: Cataclysmic Thought in America, 1885-1918 (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), p. 175.

II

Novelist and correspondent John Fox, Jr., aboard a transport bound for Cuba in June of 1898, reported on the spirits of the men who were soon to face the enemy: "And these soldiers! cooped up as they are like chickens, short of rations, aboard here for two weeks, restless and sick with inactivity--nobody hears a word of grumbling or sees a sour face. Big fellows, strong fellows, they are--intelligent, quiet, orderly, obedient, good-natured, patient--patient beyond words. Here and now, in advance, I take off my hat with profound respect and perfect confidence to 'plug' and 'doughboy'--Uncle Sam's own boys of horse and of foot."[12] This salute to the American troops prior to their engaging the enemy typified the reporting of the war, which followed closely the activities of the men who campaigned against the Spanish.

The bravery of the American regulars and volunteers in the various engagements was matched by that of the numerous correspondents who covered the war.[13] This was the great

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[12]John Fox, Jr., "With the Troops For Santiago," Harper's Weekly, XLII (July 16, 1898), p. 699.

[13]On the role of the correspondents in the war, see Charles H. Brown, The Correspondent's War: Journalists in the Spanish-American War (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967). Also see chapter 15, "Reporting the Spanish-American War," in F. Lauriston Bullard, Famous War Correspondents (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1914), pp. 409-424.

age of the war correspondent. During the decade 1895-1905 correspondents of leading newspapers dashed around the world to cover the Sino-Japanese War, the Greco-Turkish War, the Cuban insurrection and the Spanish-American War, the Boer War, the Boxer rebellion, and the Russo-Japanese War. Nowhere was the strenuous life better exemplified than in the hardships and adventures of the American war correspondent. This breed of reporter-adventurer was led by Richard Harding Davis, and included the young literary naturalists: Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, and Jack London. Richard Harding Davis said of the prevailing image of the war correspondent as hero: "The correspondent is the modern knight-errant. That has been said before, but it is not the less true for that. He wanders around the face of the globe with a mission, fighting windmills occasionally, sometimes dragons; and his loyalty to his paper is as praiseworthy as was the knight's loyalty to his lady, although he does not look for praise, because it is unselfish, and calls for great sacrifices and personal risk, and because it cannot be paid for in money."[14]

This image became firmly imprinted on the mind of the public during the Spanish-American War. In a sense the war correspondents emerged, along with Roosevelt, as the high priests of the strenuous cult. Their dispatches celebrated

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[14]Richard Harding Davis, "A Newspaperman's Man," Harper's Weekly, XXXVI (September 3, 1892), p. 856.

both themselves and the American soldier, and they often seemed to set the example for heroism in war. The report by Fox on the fight of the Rough Riders at Las Guasimas seemed to say more about the role of the correspondents in the action than the Rough Riders (with the exception of course of Roosevelt):

> There were no laggards in that little struggle. Marshall, the correspondent, kept with the advancing line, taking notes as he advanced, and when shot through the spine kept on writing his "story" between periods of unconsciousness and spasms of pain. Caspar Whitney stood near a Hotchkiss gun and took the fire as cooly as any regular under General Young. Colonel Roosevelt picked up a rifle and led his men on a charge across a space where he thought they needed encouragement; and Richard Harding Davis gave the good service of an officer in the beginning, and afterwards took the gun of a wounded man and fought with the rest.[15]

Perhaps more than any other correspondent, it was Stephen Crane who truly seemed to meet the test of war. Crane, who had already captured the imagination of the public with his The Red Badge of Courage, earned a reputation for coolness and daring under fire. Richard Harding Davis wrote that "Crane was the coolest man, whether army officer or civilian, that I saw under fire at any time during the war. He was most annoyingly cool, with the assurance of a fatalist." On one occasion only did Davis succeed in coaxing Crane to

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[15]John Fox, Jr., "With the Rough Riders at Las Guasimas," Harper's Weekly, XLII (July 30, 1898), p. 751.

take cover from the enemy fire, that he had attracted while striding back and forth along a line of entrenchments. "Although the heat--it was the 1st of July in the tropics--was terrific, Crane wore a long rubber rain-coat and was smoking a pipe. He appeared as cool as though he were looking down from a box at a theatre."[16] Langdon Smith described a similar incident: "Crane was standing under a tree calmly rolling a cigarette; some leaves dropped from the trees, cut away by the bullets; two or three men dropped within a few feet. Crane is as thin as a lath. If he had been two or three inches wider or thicker through, he would undoubtedly have been shot. But he calmly finished rolling his cigarette and smoked it without moving away from the spot where the bullets had suddenly become so thick."[17]

Not only did Crane foster his own personal image as a daring war correspondent, but his dispatches from Cuba contained some of the best reporting to come out of the war. Davis stated in 1899 that "the best correspondent is probably the man who by his energy and resource sees more of the war, both afloat and ashore, than do his rivals, and who is able to make the public see what he saw. If that is a good defi-

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[16]Richard Harding Davis, "Our War Correspondents in Cuba and Puerto Rico," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, XCVIII (May, 1899), pp. 941, 942; Davis, Notes of a War Correspondent (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), p. 126.

[17]"Some Men Who Have Reported This War," The Cosmopolitan, XXV (September, 1898), p. 557.

nition, Stephen Crane would seem to have distinctly won the first place among correspondents in the late disturbance."[18] Crane provided perhaps the most memorable report of the famous battle of San Juan Hill. "It will never be forgotten," he said, "as long as America has a military history." He pointed out that the theorists would say that "a line of intrenched hills held by men armed with a weapon like the Mauser is not to be taken by a front attack of infantry unless the trenches have first been heavily shaken by artillery fire. . . .But it was done, and we owe the success to the splendid gallantry of the American private soldier." This finest moment for the American troops in the war was thus described by Crane:

> One saw a thin line of black figures moving across a field. They disappeared in the forest. The enemy was keeping up a terrific fire. Then suddenly somebody yelled, "By God, there go our boys up the hill!"
>
> There is many a good American who would give an arm to get the thrill of patriotic insanity that coursed through us when we heard that yell.
>
> Yes, they were going up the hill, up the hill. It was the best moment of anybody's life.
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> . . . . . .

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[18]Davis, "Our War Correspondents in Cuba and Puerto Rico," op. cit., p. 941.

> The army was dusty, dishevelled, its hair matted to its forehead with sweat, its shirts glued to its back with the same, and indescribably dirty, thirsty, hungry, and aweary from it bundles and its marches and its fights. It sat down on the conquered crest and felt satisfied.
> "Well, hell! here we are.[19]

Other correspondents were equally inspired by the American charge at San Juan Hill. War artist Charles Sheldon wrote: "It was a beautiful sight to see the men following their flags, the stars and stripes and the yellow regimental flag of one of the cavalry regiments (note that all the cavalry regiments were dismounted) streaming up the hill dotted with dead and wounded, the entrenchments simply hailing Mauser bullets into them. It was the sort of thing that struck me as heroic in the men, but foolhardy in the officers that commanded it."[20]

In addition to the dispatches of the war correspondents, American periodicals also carried battle sketches and letters written by the men who participated in the San Juan action. "I wish you could have seen us go up that hill at San Juan," wrote a corporal in the 2nd U.S. Infantry. "Say, but we went

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[19]"Stephen Crane's Vivid Story of the Battle of San Juan," reprinted in R.W. Stallman and E.R. Hagemann (eds.), The War Dispatches of Stephen Crane (New York: New York University Press, 1964), pp. 173, 176, 179-180. Also on Crane see Edwin H. Cady, "Stephen Crane and the Strenuous Life," Journal of English Literary History, XXVIII (December, 1961), pp. 376-382; and Cady, Stephen Crane (New Haven: College and University Press, 1962).

[20]Charles M. Sheldon, "Just Before Santiago's Surrender," Leslie's Weekly, LXXXVII (August 4, 1898), p. 94.

up that hill like a lot of devils turned loose. You lose all feeling; you fear nothing; all you think about is getting a shot at the Spaniards."[21] From the published letter of an infantry private came this report of the battle: "The Sixth made a name that day that will go down in history. To take the hill we are now on we had to cross a meadow a mile long, strung with barbed-wire fences. Our company lost over thirty-five per cent. of our men. They fell to the right and left of me, but I didn't seem to mind it. The shot and shell seemed like music, but I want no more of it."[22]

A generation of Americans, nurtured on the strenuous concepts of the martial spirit, were facing the actual test of war, and the fascination with the sound of bullets and the reactions of men in battle were topics of major interest in the reporting of the war. John Fox, Jr., wrote that the bullets "were not as disturbing as I thought they would be, so much like buzzing insects were they; and at the trenches the sound of the Mauser bullet was not unmusical. Really it was not much unlike the last few bars of a meadow-lark's song when you hear it at sunset and at a dis-

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[21]"Close Shave of a Corporal," Leslie's Weekly, LXXXVII (October 13, 1898), p. 294.

[22]"How It Feels in Battle," Leslie's Weekly, LXXXVII (September 8, 1898), p. 194.

tance."[23] George Edward Graham, with the American fleet at Santiago, said that "the balls whistle about you with a nasty whine, as if they deplored not being able to hit you, . . . You experience at first a strange feeling of enjoyment not unmixed with terror. Then you grow animated and discover a peculiar sort of charm in the danger and in the game of life or death. You find yourself hoping the shells will strike closer to you."[24] Wrote John G. Winter, Jr., of an advance with the Rough Riders, "I was considerably excited and had the same sensation that I have in hunting rabbits and birds, . . ."[25] A private who participated in the San Juan action declared in a letter: "This island is an Eden, but now certainly a blood-stained one. But one

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[23]John Fox, Jr., "Santiago and Caney," Harper's Weekly, XLII (August 6, 1898), p. 770. In a story on a New York National Guard camp, Vaughn Kester wrote in June of 1898: "A new generation had arisen since the Civil War. The battles, if they came, were to be fought by the sons of those who had fought before. . . . All were eager for the actual scenes and experiences of war, and the grim reality of battles; but it was rather an eagerness to prove their worth, a desire to pass the test, to escape from the last doubt, to become indeed tried soldiers confident that they could do their part, than any personal love of strife or conflict." See "Transformation of Citizen Into Soldier," The Cosmopolitan, XXV (June, 1898), pp. 150-151.

[24]George Edward Graham, "The Brave Yankee Tar!" Leslie's Weekly, LXXXVII (July 21, 1898), p. 54.

[25]John G. Winter, Jr., "The Fight of the Rough Riders," The Outlook, LX (September 3, 1898), p. 20.

soon gets used to war and the song of the shell and bullet, and I think I might form a taste for it. . . ."[26]

Above all, the dispatches and letters from Cuba contributed to the building of the image of the Rough Riders, Roosevelt's volunteer cavalry unit. "Never was there a more representative body of men on American soil;" Fox wrote, "never was there a body of such varied elements; and yet it was so easily welded into an effective fighting-machine that a foreigner would not know that they were not as near brothers in blood, character, occupation, mutual faith, and long companionship as any volunteer regiment that ever took the field."[27] This image-making process had begun before the Rough Riders ever saw action. Indeed, from the moment of birth the First Volunteer United States Cavalry was marked for glory--the American press having popularized the regiment as a fighting unit composed of the finest specimens of American patriotic manhood: Western cowboys and Eastern athletes and clubmen.[28] Throughout the war, and after, the

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[26]"War History in Private Letters," The Outlook, LIX (August 20, 1898), p. 969.

[27]John Fox, Jr., "With the Rough Riders at Las Guasimas," op. cit., p. 750.

[28]The most perceptive study of this topic is the chapter, "The Rough Riders: Regiment of True Americans," in G. Edward White, The Eastern Establishment and the Western Experience: The West of Frederic Remington, Theodore Roosevelt, and Owen Wister (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 149-170.

heroic image of the men of this regiment continued to be promoted. One correspondent declared at the close of the war: "The most sought-after of all the troops are the rough riders. All the others fought equally as well and were as gallantly led, but there has been something in the daring of these men that has captured the American heart."[29]

Roosevelt's Rough Rider experiences afforded him yet another opportunity to celebrate the hardy life and the masculine image fostered by it. In The Rough Riders, which appeared in 1899, T.R. wrote: "They were a splendid set of men, these southwesterners--tall and sinewy, with resolute, weather-beaten faces, and eyes that looked a man straight in the face without flinching." He proclaimed that "in all the world there could be no better material for soldiers than that afforded by these grim hunters of the mountains, these wild rough riders of the plains." Of the Eastern volunteers he observed that "we drew recruits from Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and many another college; from clubs like the Somerset, of Boston, and Knickerbocker, of New York; and from among the men who belonged neither to club nor to college, but in whose veins the blood stirred with the same impulse which once sent the Vikings over sea." The Easterners proved to be good soldiers, he said, because "they

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[29]Harry P. Mawson, "War-worn Veterans at Camp Wikoff," Leslie's Weekly, LXXXVII (September 1, 1898), p. 167.

were men who had thoroughly counted on the cost before entering, and who went into the regiment because they believed that this offered their best chance for seeing hard and dangerous service." To Roosevelt the Rough Riders epitomized the strenuous ideal: "All--easterners and westerners, northerners and southerners, officers and men, cowboys and college graduates, wherever they came from and whatever their social position--possessed in common the traits of hardihood and a thirst for adventure. They were to a man born adventurers, in the old sense of the word."[30]

The same had been said of Roosevelt. "You are an adventurer," Brooks Adams told Roosevelt in 1896, "and you have but one thing to sell--your sword."[31] Roosevelt followed this advice in 1898, receiving much publicity in

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[30]Theodore Roosevelt, The Rough Riders (New York: The New American Library, Signet Edition, 1961), pp. 19, 16, 17, 21.

[31]Quoted in Arthur F. Beringause, Brooks Adams: A Biography (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), p. 131.

the process and emerging from the war a hero.[32] He was the chief beneficiary of the heroic image of American manhood celebrated as a result of the war with Spain. Writing of the Rough Riders waiting to be mustered out at the end of the war correspondent Harry Mawson declared: "And how they love 'Teddy.' as they call him. All of them worship him. They declare he was never less than twenty-five feet in front of the others, and how he escaped a Mauser bullet seems a miracle. Evidently Colonel Roosevelt is a man of destiny."[33]

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[32]Correspondent Edward Marshall found Roosevelt dramatically transformed into a hero in the first battle in Cuba--the action at Las Guasimas: "Colonel Roosevelt, . . . jumped up and down, literally, I mean, with emotions evidently divided between joy and a tendency to run. The barbed-wire fence on the right of the bridle path was intact at first, but some of our men cut the strands with their wire clippers. . . . Perhaps a dozen of Roosevelt's men had passed into the thicket before he did. Then he stepped across the wire himself, and, from that instant, became the most magnificent soldier I have ever seen. It was as if that barbed-wire strand had formed a dividing line in his life, and that when he stepped across it he left behind him in the bridle path all those unadmirable and conspicuous traits which have so often caused him to be justly criticised in civic life, and found on the other side of it, in that Cuban thicket, the coolness, the calm judgment, the towering heroism, which made him, perhaps, the most admired and best beloved of all Americans in Cuba." Edward Marshall, The Story of the Rough Riders (New York: G.W. Dillingham Co., 1899), p. 104.

[33]Mawson, op. cit., p. 167. One of the most vivid portraits of Roosevelt in action was provided by Howard Chandler Christy: "At the head of the regiment was Colonel Roosevelt, and as full of enthusiasm as ever. He shouted, 'Oh, didn't we have a bully fight back there on the hill!' He wore a dark-blue shirt, with improvised shoulder-straps, and a blue handkerchief around his neck. The shoulder-straps were made of yellow cloth, and the silver leaves looked more like spoons than leaves. He had U.S.V. in yellow cloth sewed on his collar." Christy, "Waiting for a Fight," Leslie's Weekly, LXXXVII (September 8, 1898), p. 194.

Writing of Roosevelt in The Independent in 1900 the Secretary of the Navy proclaimed that "everybody knows him. Every college boy swears by him. Every cowboy ties to him. Every soldier and sailor counts him a friend."[34] A. Maurice Low wrote in The Forum in 1901 that "Roosevelt, the man on horseback, the beau ideal of the cavalry commander, a dashing, superb figure, one that would have delighted the heart of Carlyle, was real and vivid enough to catch the emotional crowd."[35] By that time also John Brisben Walker could write: "Probably no finer illustration of American manhood has ever occupied the office of the presidency than Theodore Roosevelt."[36] "The strenuous life" of Roosevelt had elevated him to the status of hero, and had helped carry him to the White House itself.

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[34]John D. Long, "Theodore Roosevelt," The Independent, LII (September 6, 1900), p. 2138.

[35]A. Maurice Low, "Theodore Roosevelt," The Forum, XXXII (November, 1901), p. 260.

[36]John Brisben Walker, "A Working Man in the Presidency," The Cosmopolitan, XXXII (November, 1901), p. 25.

III

According to Roosevelt "the war with Spain was the most absolutely righteous foreign war in which any nation has engaged during the nineteenth century, . . ."[37] It was also the most glorious experience of Roosevelt's life. He had met the supreme test of the strenuous life and had emerged victorious. Roosevelt would always cherish the memories of the Rough Riders and their charge up Kettle Hill in the San Juan action, and would frequently recall his own dashing role in that engagement. "San Juan was the great day of my life," he said in 1918. On that day he had faced the enemy bullets and killed a spaniard with his own hand.[38] Never again would he experience the same intensity of life. Jacob Riis, visiting Roosevelt at Camp Wikoff at the close of the war, observed him in a revealing moment. Roosevelt, one evening after taps, looking down the long line of tents, said wistfully, "O, well! . . . so all things pass away. But they were beautiful days."[39]

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[37]Theodore Roosevelt, "Fellow-Feeling as a Political Factor," The Century Magazine, LIX (January, 1900), p. 466.

[38]Dixon Wecter, The Hero in America (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963), p. 378.

[39]Jacob A. Riis, "Roosevelt and His Men," The Outlook, LX (October 1, 1898), p. 293.

Roosevelt could also speak with greater authority about courage after having met the test of war. In Century Magazine in January, 1900, he wrote, "With most men courage is largely an acquired habit, and on the first occasions when it is called for it necessitates the exercise of will-power and self-control; but by exercise it gradually becomes almost automatic."[40] In the wake of the Spanish-American War courage became an even more precious virtue to be valued by Americans. Particularly fond of editorializing on the subject was The Outlook: "He who distrusts, holds back, and fears misses the great opportunity and loses the noble achievement; he who trusts and dares plucks the flower of victory out of the very jaws of death. In such a world as this courage is the only safety; the coward is lost."[41] On another occasion the magazine extolled health and courage, and the men who possessed them: "When the brave are in command, it is easy to die, if death is the only alternative. Men do not need a better order of life; they need health, and the courage which comes from health. . . . Here and there over the field a man of health makes his fight, and

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[40]Roosevelt, "Fellow-Feeling as a Political Factor," op. cit., p. 471.

[41]"Courage the Only Safety," The Outlook, LX (September 17, 1898), pp. 164-165.

straightway men take heart, gather about him, charge with him, and die heroically by his side. Such men point the way and reveal the real conditions of life; they are the truth-tellers."[42]

The strenuous life characterized both Roosevelt and America at the turn of the century. Both displayed an adolescent nervousness and anxiety, combined with an impulse for action that revealed a desperate need to prove themselves--Roosevelt as a man, and America as a nation. The war of 1898 provided a testing ground for the personal strenuousness of Roosevelt and the national strenuosity of America. Roosevelt emerged from the war as the undisputed leader of the cult of manliness, as the nation discovered itself to be a new world power--the possessor of a far-flung overseas empire.

Against the background of the changing conditions of American life in the late nineteenth century, and in response to those changes, the strenuous life was cultivated as an alternative to the discontent, uncertainty, and frustration fostered by the threat of "overcivilization" inherent in the nation's new urban-industrial society. The result was a clearly discernible trend of strenuous thought and activity in American culture--a state of mind and an impulse for action which seized Americans in the 1890's and culminated in a war that propelled them into the twentieth century.

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[42]"Health and Courage," The Outlook, LXI (February 25, 1899), p. 446.

Chapter X

Epilogue: The Strenuous Years, 1898-1918

> I preach to you, then, my countrymen, that our country calls not for the life of ease but for the life of strenuous endeavor. The twentieth century looms before us . . . Above all, let us shrink from no strife, moral or physical, within or without the nation, provided we are certain that the strife is justified, for it is only through strife, through hard and dangerous endeavor, that we shall ultimately win the goal of true national greatness.
>
> --Theodore Roosevelt, 1899

> America's present need is not heroism, but healing, not nostrums but normalcy, not revolution but restoration, not agitation but adjustment, not surgery but serenity, not the dramatic but the dispassionate, not experiment but equipoise, not submergence in internationality but sustainment in triumphant nationality.
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> --Warren G. Harding, 1920

The Spanish-American War inaugurated two decades of strenuous activity in the life of the nation, when Americans made the strenuous life a guiding principle in the conduct of both domestic and foreign affairs. Three years after the war with Spain Theodore Roosevelt became President of the United States, and the Progressive movement, already underway at the local level, suddenly burst forth on the national scene. The Progressives energetically sought to reform American society and correct the abuses of the new industrialism. Strenuous lives were led in the crusade for a better America at home. Similarly, in foreign affairs a new strenuosity characterized the nation's conduct, as the United States

attempted to adjust to her new role as an imperial and world power. From the "Big Stick" diplomacy of Roosevelt to the great crusade of 1917-18, in which American fighting men sought to "make the world safe for democracy," the ideal of the strenuous life expressed itself in the nation's vigorous involvement in foreign affairs. Woodrow Wilson, as well as Roosevelt, evoked the strenuous ideal in national leadership.

Socially and culturally the strenuous life set the tone of the age. It was an era of muscular Christian emphasis in American religion, as "the social gospel" preached the salvation of society as a whole as well as that of the individual. The strenuous crusade of American Christianity to improve social conditions at home was matched by the vigorous missionary activity abroad. In the realm of sport the strenuous values reigned supreme in the period, as both amateur and professional sports gained increasing importance in the national life. The excelling of American athletes in the new Olympic games highlighted the zest for the strenuous ideal. The outdoor movement intensified, with Jack London's The Call of the Wild expressing the romantic primitivism of the era. The celebration of the hardy life of the West continued and was infused into the popular consciousness through the new film westerns, as well as the rising flood of fiction depicting the cowboy as hero. The feminine threat to manliness became more explicit in the

growing militancy of the women's rights movement. By the end of the period both the suffragettes and the members of the Women's Christian Temperance Union saw their chief goals realized. For those men who cherished the martial spirit, the adventure of American imperialism and later the war in Europe offered opportunities for that appeal.[1]

But even as the strenuous life persisted in America between 1898 and 1918, it was stripped of much of its glamour and romantic appeal. Just as the excitement over the Spanish-American War was subsiding, the United States embarked upon a bloody, three-year guerrilla war in the Philippines in which American troops battled the Filipino Insurrectionists led by Emilio Aguinaldo. Whereas the battle deaths in the Spanish-American War had been less than 400, the American casualties in the Filipino War were nearly 4,300, and it eventually took an army roughly four times as large as that which had defeated the Spanish in Cuba to pacify the Philippines. This war, which was marked by atrocity stories on both sides, weighed heavily on the

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[1]See Harold U. Faulkner, The Quest for Social Justice, 1898-1914 (New York: Macmillan Co., 1937), passim. Also valuable on the period are the six volumes of Mark Sullivan, Our Times, 1900-1925 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926-1935). An excellent literary history of the first decade of the new century is Grant C. Knight, The Strenuous Age in American Literature (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1954), and for a survey of prose literature for the entire period see Alfred Kazin, On Native Grounds (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1956).

American conscience and divided public opinion. The realities of imperialism had a sobering effect upon the American people. If the strenuous life meant the glories of San Juan, it also entailed the subduing of the freedom-minded Filipinos in the name of civilization.

In the midst of these events Joseph Dana Miller directed an attack against militarism and the strenuous life in The Arena. He questioned the premise that war developed those virtues celebrated by Roosevelt and others:

> Advocates of "the strenuous life" defend the continuance of war as necessary for the development of the virtue of physical courage, or at all events justify war as furnishing opportunities for heroism. . . . But one may doubt if the battlefield affords the highest examples of physical courage. The anesthetics of battle smoke and battle music induce a sort of somnambulistic state in which prodigies of valor may be performed. . . . Most of the heroism exhibited on the battlefield is of the passive sort, disguised somewhat by the activity of maneuver, the noise of cannon, and the onslaught of cavalry. There is but a small individual initiative to the great fighting mass.[2]

"We need," Miller said, "a popular revision of the word 'courage,' . . ." He took a dim view of the heroics in the war with Spain, and criticized the American military and its glorification by the public. "To be true to conscience," he declared, "is the supremest manly virtue. Such virtue is

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[2]Joseph Dana Miller, "Militarism or Manhood," The Arena, XXIV (October, 1900), p. 384. Also see Ernest Howard Crosby, "The Military Idea of Manliness," The Independent, LIII (April 18, 1901), pp. 873-875.

impossible to a soldier. It is this that makes militarism so dangerous to a republic. For the qualities that make a good soldier are the antitheses of those that make a good citizen." Miller reserved his choicest words for Roosevelt, then governor of New York:

> Glorification of the military spirit has become common enough of late, owing to nearly a half century of immunity from its horrors. "The strenuous life" has received more than its meed of praise from the splendid savage who two years ago became governor of the great State of New York. In spite of certain admirable qualities, the Rough Rider governor is conspicuously lacking in those higher qualities which single out the man from among men. Impetuous as a Seyd of the desert, he seems to many the highest ideal of manly heroism.[3]

Miller took issue with the popular image of Roosevelt, charging that, early in his career, "his manhood failed him at the critical moment, . . ." He referred to Roosevelt's endorsement, after some hesitation, of James G. Blaine, the Republican candidate for the presidency in 1884. On that occasion Roosevelt had demonstrated that he was a regular party man. Finally, Miller was highly critical of Roosevelt's boasting of having killed a man in the San Juan action: "This Roosevelt does in his account of the battle of San Juan, with all the indifference of a nature that loves carnage for its own sake."[4]

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[3] Ibid., pp. 385, 386-388, 390, 391.

[4] Ibid., p. 391.

As for Roosevelt, such criticisms never caused him to abandon the strenuous life. Although the responsibilities of the presidency had a sobering effect upon him and he eventually earned a reputation as a peacemaker in foreign affairs, he would always cling to the strenuous ideal, particularly in his private life. Immediately upon stepping down from the presidency he journeyed to Africa to hunt big-game, viewing the trip as his "last chance for something in the nature of a great adventure."[5] A few years later he would almost lose his life on an expedition in the Brazilian jungle. When the United States entered World War I he tried, without success, to be assigned his own division to lead to France. Roosevelt's friendly contemporaries, in analyzing the strenuous impulse in his own life, were themselves sometimes disturbed by it. John Burroughs wrote in his journal that "Roosevelt would be a really great man if he could be shorn of that lock of hair in which that strong dash of the bully resides."[6] And Robert Underwood Johnson concluded in his Remembered Yesterdays: "it seems to me that one of the

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[5]Quoted in George E. Mowry, The Era of Theodore Roosevelt, 1900-1912 (New York: Harper & Row, Torchbook Edition, 1962), p. 224.

[6]Quoted in Clara Barrus (ed.), The Heart of Burrough's Journals (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1928), p. 298.

most fascinating, as well as the most dangerous, things in the character of Roosevelt was that he retained in many ways the point of view of a young man."[7]

In 1918, writing of his son, Quentin, who had been killed in an air battle over the German lines, Roosevelt paid tribute to all those whose lives are molded by the strenuous ideal:

> Only those are fit to live who do not fear to die; and none are fit to die who have shrunk from the joy of life. Both life and death are parts of the same Great Adventure. Never yet was worthy adventure worthily carried through by the man who put his personal safety first. Pride is the portion only of those who know bitter sorrow or the foreboding of bitter sorrow. But all of us who give service, and stand ready for sacrifice, are the torch-bearers.[8]

Six months later Roosevelt was dead. His passing symbolized the end of "the strenuous life" as an American byword, just as his life had symbolized its thrust in American history in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By that time also the First World War was over, and it was the war which ended the strenuous era of Roosevelt and Wilson.

Like so many other currents in American life, the ideal of strenuous service and sacrifice, preached by Roosevelt's generation, was shattered in the trenches of Europe and by

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[7]Robert Underwood Johnson, Remembered Yesterdays (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1923), p. 387.

[8]Quoted in Henry F. Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt: A Biography (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Harvest Edition, 1956), p. 421.

the treaty fight at home. The war and the resulting disillusionment cast a pall upon the strenuous life. The manliness celebrated by the strenuous life gave way to the code of the Hemingway hero, one who found himself "always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain,"[9] and who embraced natural action as a way of life for its healthy exercise of the senses and its pursuit within the context of the unspoken ritual. In a sense, the Hemingway hero was an advocate of the strenuous life who had encountered the violence, pain, and death of the twentieth century. The exuberant aggressiveness of the strenuous life was replaced in the 1920's with a defensive attitude which manifested courage and stoicism in order to meet the traumas and dangers of the modern world.

The dynamics of the prewar strenuous life had been rooted in the moral impulse which characterized Progressivism and Rooseveltian-Wilsonian internationalism, and the values of the postwar period were antithetical to that kind of strenuosity. The business and machine civilization of the 1920's did not nurture the strenuous values shared by the previous generation. Also, the intellectual assumptions of the strenuous cultists were repudiated by many in the postwar period. In Civilization in the United States (1922), a famous collection of essays on American culture by thirty

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[9]Ernest Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), p. 177.

intellectuals, editor Harold Stearns discovered three main themes running through the book: "First, That in almost every branch of American life there is a sharp dichotomy between preaching and practice; . . . Second, That whatever else American civilization is, it is not Anglo-Saxon, . . . Third, That the most moving and pathetic fact in the social life of America to-day is emotional and aesthetic starvation, . . ." Stearns concluded that "we have no heritages or traditions to which to cling except those that have already withered in our hands and turned to dust."[10] Many regarded the strenuous life as one of those heritages or traditions which had led the nation into cultural bankruptcy.

"The strenuous life" provides a fitting epithet for the years 1898-1918. It serves as a valuable key in explaining the temper of the times. Perhaps it can be said that "the strenuous life" was an expression of national adolescence in the life of the nation. Since, as many then believed, nations could be manly as well as individuals, it epitomized the national struggle for maturity in the era of Theodore Roosevelt. Perhaps, too, "the strenuous life" can be viewed as a bravado expression of "American innocence" which could not survive the onslaught of the twentieth century, even though it had launched the United States on

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[10]Harold E. Stearns (ed.), Civilization in the United States (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1922), Preface, pp. vi-vii.

the path of power at the beginning of the century. At any rate, with the close of the First World War and the dawning of the twenties a new era was being ushered in, and the strenuous years of the Rooseveltian era were over.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

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The principal source material for this study was unearthed from the popular periodicals of the American 1890's and early 1900's. The leading periodicals consulted were Atlantic Monthly, Harper's New Monthly Magazine, Harper's Weekly, The Century, The Forum, Leslie's Weekly, Scribner's, The Arena, The Independent, Outing, Cosmopolitan, The Literary Digest, The Outlook, North American Review, McClure's, The World's Work, Review of Reviews, Munsey's, The Overland Monthly, The Youth's Companion, St. Nicholas, Harper's Young People, Harper's Round Table, The Nineteenth Century, Forest and Stream, Lippincott's, Collier's Weekly, Chautauquan, The Critic, Sewanee Review, Dial, and Popular Science Monthly. Extensive research in these magazines yielded a rich vein of material on the strenuous life and related topics.

There are a number of important secondary works which have contributed to the formulation of the author's ideas, and to the attempt to place the Rooseveltian strenuous life in historical perspective. George M. Fredrickson, The Inner Civil War: Northern Intellectuals and the Crisis of the Union (1965) interprets the strenuous life as an extension into peacetime of the Civil War ideal of service and sacrifice. G. Edward White's The Eastern Establishment and the Western Experience: The West of Frederic Remington, Theodore Roosevelt,

and Owen Wister (1968) is especially valuable for its insights into the psychological makeup of the Eastern upper middle class in the late nineteenth century and their zest for the strenuous life in the West. Of major importance also is Roderick Nash, Wilderness and the American Mind (1967), which traces the changing attitudes of Americans toward the wilderness environment at the turn of the century. Nash's chapter, "The Wilderness Cult," relates especially to the strenuous theme. In a similar vein, and more comprehensive for the period under consideration, is Peter J. Schmitt, Back to Nature: The Arcadian Myth in Urban America (1969). The theme of "overcivilization" is the topic of a chapter in Larzer Ziff's literary history, The American 1890's: Life and Times of a Lost Generation (1966). Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought (rev. edn., 1955) presents the Darwinian rationale for the strenuous life. An excellent analysis of the imperialist thought of the Roosevelt-Lodge-Hay circle is provided by Howard K. Beale in Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power (1956). Beale also skillfully relates Roosevelt's concept of the strenuous life to his leadership and conduct in foreign affairs. Roosevelt's philosophy may be best approached through the essays in American Ideals (1897) and The Strenuous Life (1900).

An overall survey of American life and culture in the period is provided by two outstanding general histories:

Arthur Schlesinger, The Rise of the City, 1878-1898 (1933) and Harold U. Faulkner, The Quest for Social Justice, 1898-1914 (1931). Mark Sullivan, Our Times: The United States, 1900-1925 (6 vols., 1926-1935) is especially valuable as a social record of early twentieth century America. The strenuous theme in literature after the turn of the century is analyzed in Alfred Kazin, On Native Grounds (1942) and Grant C. Knight, The Strenuous Age in American Literature (1954).

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