Doers and Thinkers

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The popular mind, though fond of broad distinctions, is a vague and universal mirror wherein one sees all aspects. Without having regard to the subtler shades of difference it masses most of its impressions in large formulas; consequently its generalizations though wide are often loose, and unhappily the conclusions drawn from them are usually as clearly defined, as if they were absolute and precise.

Thus the consent of the world has divided mankind into two classes, the "Doer" and the "Thinker": and ordinarily the division may be accepted. We know it means only to demarcate the man in whom thought predominates from the one in whom thought is subjected to the mere animal or instinctive tendencies. But the distinction of which

all as the propriety, having passed into a formula, it is received as an absolute truth; and from it is deduced the current opinion that the thinker is unfit for action, and ordinarily inferior in the great race for leadership and promotion in the every day walks of life. Certainly, we know the question is only one of degree, and that every one has capacity for both thought and action. The sluggish stonebreaker working in the quarry, without one spark of creative genius within him has yet a thinking faculty, while the meditative recluse - the enlightened student may be a dreamer - a visionary - and little fitted to hold the reins of government. But even then supposing the two extremes of the scale, the man of thought will

be found with all his "imperfections thick upon him" infinitely superior to the uninstructed, little thinking stone breaker. Men and women accustomed to habits of study and speculation, to passing laborious day in theories of an abstract nature, are generally absorbed in their own thoughts and reflections, and give little heed to the smaller details of life. And it is because the thinker is usually a dreamer, and of unbusiness-like habits that we hear the conclusions against theory so constantly expressed. Shall the use of a thing be tested by its abuse? Because there are theories wild and chimerical, shall we extinguish the brightest lamp that lights the thinkers but?

True it is that poets, philosophers and historians have not been generally

men of business. But can we not forgive them? Is not the man of business the man of habits? He does today what he did yesterday. He thinks this week what he thought last. His mind moving in a narrow circle and his associations being restricted generally to the affairs of his own occupation, he acquires a certain readiness in the small sphere in which he lives. But take this man of habit from his counting house to the political field, to the camp, or the study, and you will find the tact and proficiency which distinguished him in his narrow orbit is gone, and he is a child. Habits of business are essentially habits; things done upon rule and precedent. While the mind of the real thinker is not chained down to any association of ideas; it moves

as rigorously in one direction as another
If new things are required he invents
new things. If the conditions are
modified, he modifies his plans.
Yet he is called a "mere theorist", and
probably by one who is himself the slave
of theories. It has been well said that
no man is so much the servant
of metaphor as he who has two or
three metaphors which he uses on
all occasions. In the same way
no man is so abject a slave to
theories as he whose, "large discourse
of reason" has not looked beforand
after". Doubtless there are some, as
"sicklied o'er with the pale cast of
thought" in whom the thinking faculty
is so active that its very activity con-
fuses and perplexes them. Men like
Hamlet, who by reasoning too much
upon the means, want the resolution

to effect their ends. He cannot bring himself to execute his fathers commands, because he refines too much upon the best method of doing it. Thought crowds upon him until his brain is bewildered and in the end he leaves vengeance to chance. Such cases however are exceptional and as we do all act upon our thoughts, it is evident that our leaders must be thinkers. The Mahomets, the Alexanders, the Caesars were preeminent as thinkers, because they thought so clearly they acted so efficiently; for action in its real sense is not movement, not mere turbulence. It is the incarnation of thought into deeds, the passing into action of strong volitions. With Ruskin we say when accidentally, or mechanically events take place without a purpose

we have indeed effects or results and agents or causes, but neither deed nor doers"! In order to a true deed it is necessary that the effect of it should be foreseen. And here comes into play again the logical, thinking mind. What the man of genius has he enables others to see, unlike him who journeyed all day beside the Leman Lake and asked his companion at eventide where it was. It is of great importance we should understand that our real rulers are men of thought. Despotisms, feudal and military governments can be carried on with some efficiency by men castes and classes - on hereditary traditions. But this can never be the case with Democracy. If the people are to legislate for themselves they will choose such legislators as appear to them

to be wisest; and they should understand the real influence of the thinking man upon society. They should direct themselves of the absurd prejudice respecting the impracticability of poets, historians and moralists. When I say poets, I do not mean mere versifiers, when I say historians I do not mean compilers! When I say moralists I do not mean declaimers of commonplaces and maxims. I mean men to see whatever the eye of leadership should see, and a mind to grasp and hold it. It is the condition of all strong convictions that they should realize themselves; only your half beliefs, your notions adopted at second hand are timorous. The echo grows fainter with each succeeding reverberation and, opinions, the same is true of each time they are held

Surely our fittest leaders politically or scientifically are those in whom body is subservient to mind, who unite to great capacity for thought a "keen eye to see" and an energetic will to realize convictions. To mind is impartial, as the phenoma of nature is as open to the seeker in a hovel as a palace, so, on the broad road to the temple of knowledge there is room for every traveller. The mechanic converts into magical rods the humblest tools of his humble trade. The Port Ploughman pours forth his golden song at the plough share and the morning lone, and the lights in the temple windows beckon and dance a welcome to every thinker who glances toward her.