

Adam Landers: *Pearls Before Swine*

Assorted advice for the 1990's.

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INTRODUCTION

Adam Landers was a writer whose wisdom of human nature, and eloquence in expressing it, has seldom been rivaled. Like his famous twentieth century namesake, he offered readers helpful advice in many different matters. In his time, Adam Landers was furthermore renowned for his thoughtful excursions into ancient astronomy, physics, logic and metaphysics, rhetoric and belles lettres, linguistics, and jurisprudence -- as well as occasional detours into economic theory, policy, and practice, among other subjects.* He was, in short, a true renaissance man.

With his rare wit and keen understanding, he had the potential to be one of the most influential opinion-makers of our time. (As we shall see, however, he would have had to adjust his writing for the age of "political correctness"). Today Adam Landers, whose major concern was the human condition, is commonly remembered only for the portion of his contributions to economic theory emphasizing the importance of free trade and markets. Largely unrecognized are his works in so many other subjects -- and those of his writings in economics that might not fit the popular image of him as an advocate of "laissez-faire."

This collection of quotations aims to acquaint the reader with the whole Adam Landers, the student of the human condition in many walks of life. In these days when bits of public advice, including those by Adam's famous namesake, are a dime a dozen, we would like to convince the reader that Adam Landers had great advice to offer -- advice, in our opinion, that has aged well.

In his days, Adam Landers's reflections were memorized by students in long classroom sessions and afterwards transcribed on paper word for word from their memories. The modern reader, who scarcely has time to read the USA Today, has neither the time nor the attention span to discover him in that manner. To preserve his precious insights in the era of supermarket tabloids, daytime talk-shows, and other sound-bites, the editors have put them in the form of easily digestible tidbits to be read on the run. With this booklet, we

* See references.

hope that at last his vital thoughts will be accessible in a wider variety and to a larger audience.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>HUMAN NATURE, ETC.</u>	5
* OF SELF COMMAND, OR THE LACK OF IT	6
* OF SELF-ESTEEM AND VANITY	7
* OF LOVE AND SEX	8
* OF HAPPINESS	9
* OF MONEY, FAME, AND POWER	11
* POTPOURRI	13
<u>COMMUNICATION</u>	14
* OF GRAMMAR AND STYLE	15
* OF LITERATURE	16
* OF TELEVISION	17
* OF CONVERSATION	18
<u>ECONOMICS: THEORY, POLICY & PRACTICE</u>	19
* OF THEORY: DEFINITIONS, ASSUMPTIONS, AND PROPOSITIONS	20
* OF ECONOMIC PROBLEMS	21
* OF MONEY, WEALTH, ETC.	22
* OF THE THEORY OF THE FIRM, ETC.	23
* OF BUREAUCRACY	24
* OF POLITICIANS, CIVIL SERVANTS, AND THE LIKE	25
* OF FISCAL AND MONETARY POLICY	27
* OF OTHER POLICY MATTERS	28
* OF EDUCATION AND EDUCATORS	29
* OF OCCUPATION AND LABOR	33
<u>OTHER</u>	36
* OF BODY, SOUL, AND COLLEGE ATHLETICS	37
* POTPOURRI	38

HUMAN NATURE, ETC.

*** OF SELF COMMAND, OR THE LACK OF IT**

On being prudent I

The prudent man always studies seriously and earnestly to understand whatever he professes to understand, and not merely to persuade other people that he understands it; and though his talents may not always be very brilliant, they are always perfectly genuine. (TMS 213)

On being prudent II

The prudent man ... neither endeavours to impose upon you by the cunning devices of an artful impostor, nor by the arrogant airs of an assuming pedant, nor by the confident assertions of a superficial and imprudent pretender. He is not ostentatious even of the abilities which he really possesses. His conversation is simple and modest, and he is averse to all the quackish arts by which other people so frequently thrust themselves into public notice and reputation. (TMS 213)

On being prudent III

The prudent man is always sincere, and feels horror at the very thought of exposing himself to the disgrace which attends upon the detection of falsehood. But though he never tells any thing but the truth, he does not always think himself bound, when not properly called upon, to tell the whole truth. As he is cautious in his actions, so he is reserved in his speech; and never rashly or unnecessarily obtrudes his opinion concerning either things or persons. (TMS 214)

On being prudent IV

The prudent man is not willing to subject himself to any responsibility which his duty does not impose upon him. He is not a bustler in business where he has no concern; is not a meddler in other people's affairs; is not a professed counsellor or adviser, who obtrudes his advice where nobody is asking it. He confines himself, as much as his duty will permit, to his own affairs, and has no taste for that foolish importance which many people wish to derive from appearing to have some influence in the management of those of other people. (TMS 215)

On self-deceit

Self-deceit is the source of half the disorders of human life. (TMS 158)

Easy come, easy go ...

Light come light go, says the proverb; and the ordinary tone of expence seems every where to be regulated, not so much according to the real ability of spending as to the supposed facility of getting money to spend. (WN 579)

On misguided diets

Exercise and practice have been wanting; and without these no habit can ever be tolerably established. (TMS 152)

On counting to a hundred before you act

Our views are apt to be very partial; but they are apt to be most partial when it is of most importance that they should be otherwise. (TMS 157)

* OF SELF-ESTEEM AND VANITY

On the importance of others' opinions

Of such mighty importance does it appear to be, in the imaginations of men, to stand in that situation which sets them most in the view of general sympathy and attention. (TMS 57)

On vanity I

He is guilty of vanity who desires praise for qualities which are either not praise-worthy in any degree, or not in that degree in which he expects to be praised for them; who sets his character upon the frivolous ornaments of dress and equipage, or upon the equally frivolous accomplishments of ordinary behaviour. He is guilty of vanity who desires praise for what indeed very well deserves it, but what he perfectly knows does not belong to him. The empty coxcomb who gives himself airs of importance which he has no title to, the silly liar who assumes the merit of adventures which never happened, the foolish plagiarist who gives himself out for the author of what he has no pretensions to, are properly accused of this passion. (TMS 309)

On vanity II

He too is said to be guilty of vanity who is not contented with the silent sentiments of esteem and approbation, who seems to be fonder of their noisy expressions and acclamations than of the sentiments themselves, who is never satisfied but when his own praises are ringing in his ears, and who solicits with the most anxious importunity all external marks of respect, is fond of titles, of compliments, of being visited, of being attended, of being taken notice of in public places with the appearance of deference and attention. (TMS 309-10)

On being really wise

To a real wise man the judicious and well-weighted approbation of a single wise man, gives more heartfelt satisfaction than all the noisy applauses of ten thousand ignorant though enthusiastic admirers. (TMS 253)

On thinking big

Great success in the world, great authority over the sentiments and opinions of mankind, have very seldom been acquired without some degree of ... excessive self-admiration. (TMS 250)

On cosmetics

A woman who paints, could derive, one should imagine, but little vanity from the compliments that are paid to her complexion. These, we should expect, ought rather to put her in mind of the sentiments which her real complexion would excite, and mortify her the more by the contrast. (TMS 115)

Why plastic surgery will always be en vogue

We are charmed with the gaiety of youth, and even with the playfulness of childhood: but we soon grow weary of the flat and tasteless gravity which too frequently accompanies old age. (TMS 246)

* OF LOVE AND SEX

On love I

... though a lover may be good company to his mistress, he is so to nobody else. (TMS 31)

On love II

... in the one sex it [love] necessarily leads to the last ruin and infamy; and though in the other, where it is apprehended to be least fatal, it is almost always attended with an incapacity for labour, a neglect of duty, a contempt of fame, and even of common reputation. (TMS 33)

On love III

... though [love] may be ridiculous, it is not naturally odious; and though its consequences are often fatal and dreadful, its intentions are seldom mischievous. (TMS 33)

On lust

To the person who feels [the appetites of the body], as soon as they are gratified, the object that excited them ceases to be agreeable: even its presence often becomes offensive to him; he looks round to no purpose for the charm which transported him the moment before, and he can now as little enter into his own passion as another person. (TMS 28)

On jealousy

The true cause of the peculiar disgust which we conceive for the appetites of the body when we see them in other men, is that we cannot enter into them. (TMS 28)

On overcoming break-ups

Are you in adversity? Do not mourn in the darkness of solitude, do not regulate your sorrow according to the indulgent sympathy of your intimate friends; return, as soon as possible, to the day-light of the world and of society. Live with strangers, with those who know nothing, or care nothing about your misfortune; do not even shun the company of enemies; but give yourself the pleasure of mortifying their malignant joy, by making them feel how little you are affected by your calamity, and how much you are above it. (TMS 154)

On friendship

The hasty, fond, and foolish intimacies of young people, founded, commonly, upon some slight similarity of character, altogether unconnected with good conduct, upon a taste, perhaps, for the same studies, the same amusements, the same diversions, or upon their agreement in some singular principle or opinion, not commonly adopted; those intimacies which a freak begins, and which a freak puts an end to, how agreeable soever they may appear while they last, can by no means deserve the sacred and venerable name of friendship. (TMS 255)

* OF HAPPINESS

Little does it take ... (on happiness)

In the most glittering and exalted situation that our idle fancy can hold out to us, the pleasures from which we propose to derive our real happiness, are almost always the same with those which, in our actual, though humble station, we have at all times at hand, and in our power. (TMS 150)

On inexpensive remedies for anxiety

Society and conversation are the most powerful remedies for restoring the mind to its tranquillity, if, at any time, it has unfortunately lost it; as well as the best preservatives of that equal and happy temper, which is necessary to self-satisfaction and enjoyment. (TMS 23)

On the importance of a cheerful disposition I

... we can scarce express too much satisfaction in all the little occurrences of common life, in the company with which we spent the evening last night, in the entertainment that was set before us, in what was said and what was done, in all the little incidents of the present conversation, and in all those frivolous nothings which fill up the void of human life. (TMS 41)

On the importance of a cheerful disposition II

The man who is made uneasy by every little disagreeable incident, who is hurt if either the cook or the butler have failed in the least article of their duty, who feels every defect in the highest ceremonial of politeness, whether it be shewn to himself or to any other person, who takes it amiss that his intimate friend did not bid him good-morrow when they met in the forenoon, and that his brother hummed a tune all the time he himself was telling a story; who is put out of humour by the badness of the weather when in the country, by the badness of the roads when upon a journey, and by the want of company, and dulness of all public diversions when in town; such a person, I say, though he should have some reason, will seldom meet with much sympathy. (TMS 42)

On the importance of a cheerful disposition III

Nothing is more graceful than habitual cheerfulness, which is always founded upon a peculiar relish for all the little pleasures which common occurrences afford. (TMS 41-2)

On the effect of friendly service at Dunkin Donuts

The sight of a smiling countenance ... elevates even the pensive into that gay and airy mood, which disposes him to sympathize with, and share the joy which it expresses; and he feels his heart, which with thought and care was before that shrunk and depressed, instantly expanded and elated. (TMS 36)

On keeping up the hope when the going gets rough

Our happiness in this life is ... upon many occasions, dependent upon the humble hope and expectation of a life to come ... (TMS 132)

"Don't worry, be happy"

... extreme sympathy with misfortunes which we know nothing about, seems altogether absurd and unreasonable. Take the whole earth at an average, for one man who suffers pain or misery, you will find twenty in prosperity and joy, or at least in tolerable circumstances. No reason, surely, can be assigned why we should rather weep with the one than rejoice with the twenty. (TMS 140)

Lighten Up

Hatred and anger are the greatest poison to the happiness of a good mind. (TMS 37)

Why even William Jefferson Clinton tried it

... where there is perfect tranquillity there is scarce any thing which is not capable of amusing. (TMS 149)

On becoming a hermit

Are you in earnest resolved never to barter your liberty for the lordly servitude of a court, but to live free, fearless, and independent? There seems to be one way to continue in that virtuous resolution; and perhaps but one. Never enter the place from whence so few have been able to return; never come within the circle of ambition; nor ever bring yourself into comparison with those masters of the earth who have already engrossed the attention of half mankind before you. (*TMS* 57)

* OF MONEY, FAME, AND POWER

On authority of fortune I

The authority of fortune is very great even in an opulent and civilized society. That it is much greater than that, either of age, or of personal qualities, has been the constant complaint of every period of society which admitted of any considerable inequality of fortune. (WN 672)

On authority of fortune II

It is scarce agreeable to good morals, or even to good language, perhaps, to say, that mere wealth and greatness abstracted from merit and virtue, deserve our respect. (TMS 62)

On the importance of having the right parents

The son of a wise and brave man may, indeed, ... be somewhat more respected than a man of equal merit who has the misfortune to be the son of a fool or coward. (WN 673)

On upstarts and old money

Upstart greatness is every where less respected than ancient greatness. ... As a military officer submits without reluctance to the authority of a superior by whom he has always been commanded, but cannot bear that his inferior should be set over his head; so men easily submit to a family to whom they and their ancestors have always submitted; but are fired with indignation when another family, in whom they had never acknowledged any such superiority, assumes a dominion over them. (WN 672)

On lottery winners I

The man who, by some sudden revolution of fortune, is lifted up all at once into a condition of life, greatly above what he had formerly lived in, may be assured that the congratulations of his best friends are not all of them perfectly sincere. An upstart, though of the greatest merit, is generally disagreeable ... (TMS 41)

On lottery winners II

We are glad, we say, on account of our neighbour's good fortune, when in our hearts, perhaps, we are really sorry. (TMS 44)

On becoming a nouveau rich

Are you in prosperity? Do not confine the enjoyment of your good fortune to your own house, to the company of your own friends, perhaps of your flatterers, of those who build upon your fortune the hopes of mending their own; frequent those who are independent of you, who can value you only for your character and conduct, and not for your fortune. ... (TMS 154)

On how to become rich (and famous)

It seldom happens ... that great fortunes are made even in great towns by any one regular, established, and well-known branch of business, but in consequence of a long life of industry, frugality, and attention. (WN 113)

On how to be rich and happy

The prudent, the equitable, the active, resolute, and sober character promises prosperity and satisfaction, both to the person himself and to every one connected with him. The rash, the insolent, the slothful, effeminate, and voluptuous, on the contrary, forebodes ruin to the individual, and misfortune to all who have anything to do with him. (TMS 187)

On lotteries I

That the chance of gain is naturally over-valued, we may learn from the universal success of lotteries. The world neither ever saw, nor ever will see, a perfectly fair lottery; or one in which the whole

gain compensated the whole loss; because the undertaker could make nothing by it. (WN 108)

On lotteries II

In order to have a better chance for some of the great prizes, some people purchase several tickets, and others, small shares in a still greater number. There is not, however, a more certain proposition in mathematics, that the more tickets you adventure upon, the more likely you are to be a loser. Adventure upon all the tickets in the lottery, and you lose for certain; and the greater the number of your tickets the nearer you approach to this certainty. (WN 108)

On watching the rich and famous

The disposition to admire, and almost to worship, the rich and the powerful, and to despise, or, at least, to neglect persons of poor and mean condition, ... is ... the great and most universal cause of the corruption of our moral sentiments. (TMS 61)

On the nature and causes of fame

The external graces, the frivolous accomplishments of that impertinent and foolish thing called a man of fashion, are commonly more admired than the solid and masculine virtues of a warrior, a statesman, a philosopher, or a legislator. (TMS 63)

On Hollywood stars

There are some very agreeable and beautiful talents of which the possession commands a certain sort of admiration; but of which the exercise for the sake of gain is considered, whether from reason or prejudice, as a sort of public prostitution. ... It seems absurd at first sight that we should despise their persons, and yet reward their talents with the most profuse liberality. (WN 107)

On "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous"

If we examine, however, why the spectator distinguishes with such admiration the condition of the rich and the great, we shall find that it is not so much upon account of the superior ease or pleasure which they are supposed to enjoy, as of the numberless artificial and elegant contrivances for promoting this ease or pleasure. (TMS 182)

* POTPOURRI

On innocence

With regard to the future, [the infant] is perfectly secure, and in its thoughtlessness and want of foresight, possesses an antidote against fear and anxiety, the great tormentors of the human breast, from which reason and philosophy will, in vain, attempt to defend it, when it grows up to be a man. (TMS 12)

On ways to make the grade ...

A puppy fawns upon its dam, and a spaniel endeavours by a thousand attractions to engage the attention of its master who is at dinner, when it wants to be fed by him. Man sometimes uses the same arts with his brethren, and when he has no other means of engaging them to act according to his inclinations, endeavours by every servile and fawning attention to obtain their good will. (WN 14)

On sucking up and looking down

There is in human nature a servility which inclines us to adore our superiors, and an inhumanity which disposes us to contempt and trample underfoot our inferiors. (LRBL 120)

On corruptors of moral sentiments

Of all the corrupters (sic) of moral sentiments, ... faction and fanaticism have always been by far the greatest. (TMS 156)

On the causes of urban riots

Those who have had the misfortune to be brought up amidst violence, licentiousness, falsehood, and injustice lose, though not all sense of the impropriety of such conduct, yet all sense of its dreadful enormity ... they are very apt to regard it as, what is called, the way of the world, something which either may, or must be practised, to hinder us from being the dupes or our own integrity. (TMS 200-1)

On an American's perspective of third-world starvation

If he was to lose his little finger to-morrow, he would not sleep to-night; but, provided he never saw them, he will snore with the most profound security over the ruin of a hundred millions of his brethren, and the destruction of that immense multitude seems plainly an object less interesting to him, than this paltry misfortune of his own. (TMS 137)

On civilization and the importance of philosophy if it rains cats and dogs and you have no house over your head ...

Mankind, in the first ages of society, before the establishment of law, order, and security, have little curiosity to find out those hidden chains of events which bind together the seemingly disjointed appearances of nature. A savage, whose subsistence is precarious, whose life is every day exposed to the rudest dangers, has no inclination to amuse himself with searching out what, when discovered, seems to serve no other purpose than to render the theatre of nature a more connected spectacle to his imagination. Many of these smaller incoherences, which in the course of things perplex the philosophers, entirely escape his attention. (EPS 48)

COMMUNICATION:
GRAMMAR & STYLE
LITERATURE
TELEVISION
AND CONVERSATION

*** OF GRAMMAR AND STYLE**

On stile ...

What are generally called ornaments or flowers in language, as allegoricall, metaphoricall and such like expressions are very apt to make one's stile dark and perplex'd. (LRBL 8)

On Mrs. Jones's eighth grade advice on good writing

Studying much to vary the expression leads one also frequently into a dungeon of metaphorical obscurity. (LRBL 14)

Concerning your high-school grammar class

The most animated and eloquent works whether ancient or modern, if turned into the grammaticall order would appear to be wrote by a dull fellow or an idiot. (LRBL 4)

* OF LITERATURE

Concerning your high-school literature class

Literary translations have been from the beginning of the world and to its end will be unsufferably languid and tedious. (*LRBL* 4)

On Doctor Seuss

After the praise of refining the taste of a nation, the highest eulogy, perhaps, which can be bestowed upon any author, is to say, that he corrupted it. (*TMS* 197-8)

On poetry

A well-contrived building may endure many centuries: a beautiful air may be delivered down by a sort of tradition, through many successive generations: a well-written poem may last as long as the world. (*TMS* 195)

*** OF TELEVISION**

On T.V. Evangelists I

One who was to Storm and Thunder before 5 or 6 persons would be taken for a fool or a madman; Tho the same behaviour before a Great assembly of the people would appear very proper and suitable to the occasion. (*LRBL* 30)

On T.V. Evangelists II

The frequent, and often wonderful, success of the most ignorant quacks and imposters, both civil and religious, sufficiently demonstrate how easily the multitude are imposed upon by the most extravagant and groundless pretensions. (*TMS* 249)

* OF CONVERSATION

On polite conversation

A certain reserve is necessary when we talk of our own friends, our own studies, our own professions ... it is for want of this reserve, that the one half of mankind make bad company to the other. A philosopher is company to a philosopher only; the member of a club, to his own little knot of companions. (TMS 33-4)

On Elvis returning in a UFO

Men of the most ordinary constancy, indeed, easily learn to despise those foolish tales which are so frequently circulated in society, and which from their own absurdity and falsehood, never fail to die away in the course of a few weeks, or of a few days. (TMS 119)

On 'Do-Gooders'

... those whining and melancholy moralists, who are perpetually reproaching us with our happiness, while so many of our brethren are in misery ... those who affect this character have commonly nothing but a certain affected and sentimental sadness, which without reaching the heart, serves only to render the countenance and conversation impertinently dismal and disagreeable. (TMS 139-40)

ECONOMICS:
THEORY, POLICY & PRACTICE

* OF THEORY: DEFINITIONS, ASSUMPTIONS, AND PROPOSITIONS

Money makes the world go 'round

It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk of our own necessities but of their advantages. (WN 14)

On flipping hamburgers at McDonald's

In the progress of the division of labour, the employment of the far greater part of those who live by labour, that is, of the great body of the people, comes to be confined to a few very simple operations, frequently to one or two. But the understandings of the greater part of men are necessarily formed by their ordinary employments. The man whose whole life is spent in performing a few simple operations, of which the effects too are, perhaps, always the same, or very nearly the same, has no occasion to exert his understanding, or to exercise his invention in finding out expedients, for removing difficulties which never occur. He naturally loses, therefore, the habit of such exertion, and generally becomes as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to become. (WN 734)

On rational expectations

When an object of any kind, which has been for some time expected and foreseen, presents itself, whatever be the emotion which it is by nature fitted to excite, the mind must have been prepared for it, and must even in some measure have conceived it before-hand; because the idea of the object having been so long present to it, must have excited some degree of the same emotion which the object itself would excite: the change, therefore, which its presence produces comes thus to be less considerable, and the emotion or passion which it excites glides gradually and easily into the heart, without violence, pain, or difficulty. But the contrary of all this happens when the object is unexpected; ... (EPS 34)

On the changing nature of consumer preferences

The vegetable food of the inhabitants [of the West Indies a.k.a. the USA] ... consisted in Indian corn, yams, potatoes, bananas, &c. plants which were then altogether unknown in Europe, and which have never since been very much esteemed in it, or supposed to yield a sustenance equal to what is drawn from the common sorts of grain and pulse, which have been cultivated in this part of the world time out of mind. (WN 527)

On non-satiation

The desire of food is limited in every man by the narrow capacity of the human stomach; but the desire of the conveniencies and ornaments of building, dress, equipage, and household furniture, seems to have no limit or certain boundary. (WN 164)

* OF ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

On welfare

Man has almost constant occasion for the help of his brethren, and it is vain for him to expect it from their benevolence only. He will be more likely to prevail if he can interest their self-love in his favour, and shew them that it is for their own advantage to do for him what he requires of them. ... Nobody but a beggar chuses to depend chiefly upon the benevolence of his fellow-citizens. (WN 14)

On the stigma of unemployment

As it is ridiculous not to dress, so is it, in some measure, not to be employed, like other people. As a man of a civil profession seems awkward in a camp or a garrison, and is even in some danger of being despised there, so does an idle man among men of business. (WN 97)

On fertility I

Poverty, though it no doubt discourages, does not always prevent marriage. It seems even to be favourable to generation. A half-starved Highland woman frequently bears more than twenty children, while a pampered fine lady is often incapable of bearing any, and is generally exhausted by two or three. (WN 79)

On fertility II

Luxury in the fair sex, while it inflames perhaps the passion for enjoyment, seems always to weaken, and frequently to destroy altogether, the powers of generation. (WN 79)

On poverty and infant mortality

Poverty, though it does not prevent the generation, is extremely unfavourable to the rearing of children. The tender plant is produced, but in so cold a soil, and so severe a climate, soon withers and dies. (WN 79)

*** OF MONEY, WEALTH, ETC.**

On the notion that money is wealth

... this ambiguity of expression has rendered this popular notion so familiar to us, that even they, who are convinced of its absurdity, are very apt to forget their own principles, and in the course of their reasonings to take it for granted as a certain and undeniable truth. (*WN* 418)

On living within one's means

The man who lives within his income, is naturally contented with his situation, which by continual, though small accumulations, is growing better and better every day. (*TMS* 215)

On the rich getting richer ...

Money, says the proverb, makes money. When you have got a little, it is often easy to get more. The great difficulty is to get that little. (*WN* 93)

On wealth I

Wealth and greatness are mere trinkets of frivolous utility, no more adapted for procuring ease of body or tranquility of mind than the tweezer-cases of the lover of toys. (*TMS* 181)

On wealth II

Power and riches ... are immense fabrics, which it requires the labour of a life to raise, which threatens every moment to overwhelm the person that dwells in them, and which while they stand, though they may save him from some smaller inconveniencies, can protect him from none of the severer inclemencies of the season. They keep off the summer shower, not the winter storm, but leave him always as much, and sometimes more exposed than before, to anxiety, to fear, and to sorrow; to diseases, to danger, and to death. (*TMS* 182-3)

* OF THE THEORY OF THE FIRM, ETC.

On the likely winners in labor disputes

It is not ... difficult to foresee which of the two parties must, upon all ordinary occasions, have the advantage in the dispute, and force the other into a compliance with their terms. ... In all such disputes the masters can hold out much longer. A landlord, a farmer, a master manufacturer, or merchant, though they did not employ a single workman, could generally live a year or two upon the stocks which they have already acquired. Many workmen could not subsist a week, few could subsist a month, and scarce any a year without employment. In the long-run the workman may be as necessary to his master as his master is to him; but the necessity is not so immediate. (WN 66)

On the corrupting influence of monopoly profits

(dedicated to William H. Gates III and Andrew Grove)

The high rate of profit seems every where to destroy that parsimony which in other circumstances is natural to the character of the merchant. When profits are high, that sober virtue seems to be superfluous, and expensive luxury better to suit the affluence of his situation. (WN 578)

On "price-gougers"

Our merchants and master-manufacturers complain much of the bad effects of high wages in raising the price, and thereby lessening the sale of their goods both at home and abroad. They say nothing concerning the bad effects of high profits. They are silent with regard to the pernicious effects of their own gains. They complain only of those of other people. (WN 98)

On power lunches

People of the same trade seldom meet together, even for merriment and diversion, but the conversation ends in a conspiracy against the publick, or in some contrivance to raise prices. (WN 145)

On incentive compatibility I

The directors ... being the managers rather of other people's money than of their own, it cannot well be expected, that they should be watch over it with the same anxious vigilance with which the partners in a private copartnery frequently watch over their own. (WN 700)

On incentive compatibility II

Nothing can be more absurd ... than to imagine that men in general should work less when they work for themselves, than when they work for other people. A poor independent workman will generally be more industrious than even a journeyman who works by the piece. The one enjoys the whole produce of his own industry; the other shares it with his master. The one, in his separate independent state, is less liable to the temptations of bad company, which in large manufactories so frequently ruin the morals of the other. The superiority of the independent workman over those servants who are hired by the month or by the year, and whose wages and maintenance are the same whether they do much or do little, is likely to be still greater. (WN 84)

On incentive compatibility III

In every profession, the exertion of the greater part of those who exercise it, is always in proportion to the necessity they are under of making that exertion. (WN 717)

*** OF BUREAUCRACY**

On the Clinton impeachment hearings

Absurdity of conduct may deprive an assembly of its influence, as well as a private person. An imprudent conduct will take away all sense of authority. (*LJ* 434)

On factional interest (politicians, professors, etc.)

Every independent state is divided into many different orders and societies, each of which has its own particular powers, privileges, and immunities. Every individual is naturally more attached to his own particular order or society ... [and] is ambitious to extend its privileges and immunities. (*TMS* 230)

* OF POLITICIANS, CIVIL SERVANTS, AND THE LIKE

On senators, congressmen, and other politicians

The statesman, who should attempt to direct private people in what manner they ought to employ their capitals, would not only load himself with a most unnecessary attention, but assume an authority which could safely be trusted, not only to no single person, but to no council or senate whatever, and which would nowhere be so dangerous as in the hands of a man who had folly and presumption enough to fancy himself fit to exercise it. (WN 423)

On civil servants I

In all governments ... the highest offices are generally possessed, and the whole detail of the administration conducted, by men who were educated in the middle and inferior ranks of life. (TMS 56)

On civil servants II

Of all the discarded statesmen who for their own ease have studied to get the better of ambition, and to despise those honours which they could no longer arrive at, how few have been able to succeed? The greater part have spent their time in the most listless and insipid indolence, chagrined at the thoughts of their own insignificance, incapable of being interested in the occupations of private life, without enjoyment, except when they talked of their former greatness, and without satisfaction, except when they were employed in some vain project to recover it. (TMS 57)

On sleazy politicians

... the ambitious man flatters himself that, in the splendid situation to which he advances, he will have so many means of commanding the respect and admiration of mankind, and will be enabled to act with such superior propriety and grace, that the lustre of his future conduct will entirely cover, or efface, the foulness of the steps by which he arrived at that elevation. (TMS 64)

An argument for term limits

That indolence, which is the natural effect of the ease and security of their situation, renders them too often, not only ignorant, but incapable of that application of mind which is necessary in order to foresee and understand the consequences of any public regulation. (WN 249)

On partisan politics I

In a nation distracted by faction, there are, no doubt, always a few, though commonly but a very few, who preserve their judgment untainted by the general contagion ... All such people are held in contempt and derision, frequently in detestation, by the furious zealots of both parties. (TMS 155)

On partisan politics II

A true party-man hates and despises candour; and, in reality, there is no vice which could so effectually disqualify him for the trade of a party-man as that single virtue. (TMS 155)

On the social engineer

He seems to imagine that he can arrange the different members of a great society with as much ease as the hand arranges the different pieces of a chess-board. He does not consider that the pieces upon the chess-board have no other principle of motion besides that which the hand impresses upon them; but that, in the great chess-board of human society, every single piece has a principle of motion of its own, altogether different from that which the legislature might chuse to impress upon it. (TMS 234)

On the rewards of being a public servant

Men desire to have some share in the management of public affairs chiefly on account of the importance which it gives them. ... In the attacks which those leading men are continually making upon the importance of one another, and in the defence of their own, consists the whole play of domestic faction and ambition. The leading men of America, like those of all other countries, desire to preserve their own importance. (WN 586)

On incentives of public servants I

Public services are never better performed than when their reward comes only in consequence of their being performed, and is proportioned to the diligence employed in performing them. (WN 678)

On incentives of public servants II

The proud minister of an ostentatious court may frequently take pleasure in executing a work of splendour and magnificence, such as a great highway, which is frequently seen by the principal nobility, whose applauses not only flatter his vanity, but even contribute to support his interest at court. But to execute a great number of little works, in which nothing that can be done can make any great appearance, or excite the smallest degree of admiration in any traveller, and which, in short, have nothing to recommend them but their extreme utility, is a business which appears in every respect too mean and paltry to merit the attention of so great a magistrate. Under such an administration, therefore, such works are almost always entirely neglected. (WN 687)

Power blinds ...

For though management and persuasion are always the easiest and the safest instruments of government, as force and violence are the worst and the most dangerous, yet such, it seems is the natural insolence of man, that he almost always disdains to use the good instrument, except when he cannot or dare not use the bad one. (WN 751)

* OF FISCAL AND MONETARY POLICY

On Gramm-Rudman and budget deficits

What is prudence in the conduct of every private family, can scarce be folly in that of a great kingdom. (WN 424)

On taxation I

An injudicious tax offers a great temptation to smuggling. ... The law, contrary to all the ordinary principles of justice, first creates the temptation, and then punishes those who yield to it. (WN 779)

On taxation II

The declension of industry, the decrease of employment for the poor, the diminution of the annual produce of the land and labour of the country, have generally been the effects of such taxes. ... Absurd and destructive as such taxes are, however, they take place in many countries. (WN 817)

On taxation III

The middling and superior ranks of people, if they understood their own interest, ought always to oppose all taxes upon the necessaries of life, as well as all direct taxes upon the wages of labour. The final payment of both the one and the other falls altogether upon themselves, and always with a considerable over-charge. They fall heaviest upon the landlords, who always pay in a double capacity; in that of landlords, by the reduction of their rent; and in that of rich consumers, by the increase of their expence. (WN 824)

On inflation

Such operations ... have always proved favourable to the debtor, and ruinous to the creditor, and have sometimes produced a greater and more universal revolution in the fortunes of private persons, than could have been occasioned by a very great public calamity. (WN 28)

On Japan, and protectionism

The love of our own nation often disposes us to view, with the most malignant jealousy and envy, the prosperity and aggrandisement of any other neighbouring nation. (TMS 228)

* OF OTHER POLICY MATTERS

On the reasons for civil government

Civil government, so far as it is instituted for the security of property, is in reality instituted for the defence of the rich against the poor, or of those who have some property against those who have not. (WN 674)

On policy making in the 1980's

The rich, in particular, are necessarily interested to support that order of things, which can alone secure them in the possession of their own advantages. (WN 674)

On Dan Quayle versus Murphy Brown

In every civilized society, in every society where the distinction of ranks has once been completely established, there have been always two different schemes or systems or morality current at the same time; of which the one may be called the strict or austere; the other the liberal, or, if you will, the loose system. The former is generally admired and revered by the common people; the latter is commonly more esteemed and adopted by what are called people of fashion. The degree of disapprobation with which we ought to mark the vices of levity, the vices which are apt to arise from great prosperity, and from the excess of gaiety and good humour, seems to constitute the principal distinction between those two opposite schemes or systems. In the liberal or loose system, luxury, wanton and even disorderly mirth, the pursuit of pleasure to some degree of intemperance, the breach of chastity, at least in one of the two sexes, &c. provided they are not accompanied with gross indecency, and do not lead to falshood or injustice, are generally treated with a good deal of indulgence, and are easily either excused or pardoned altogether. In the austere system, on the contrary, those excesses are regarded with the utmost abhorrence and detestation. (WN 746)

On Pat Buchanan and Jerry Brown (make that Pat Buchanan and Ralph Nader)

They were propagated with all that enthusiastic zeal which commonly animates the spirit of party, when it attacks established authority. (WN 757)

On the night whispers of Bush's and Clinton's campaign managers

Though your judgments in matters of speculation, though your sentiments in matters of taste, are quite opposite to mine, I can easily overlook this opposition; and if I have any degree of temper, I may still find some entertainment in your conversation, even upon those very subjects. (TMS 21)

* OF EDUCATION AND EDUCATORS

On science

Science is the great antidote to the poison of enthusiasm and superstition. (WN 748)

On the perils of philosophy and speculation

Gross sophistry has scarce ever had any influence upon the opinions of mankind, except in matters of philosophy and speculation; and in these it has frequently had the greatest. (WN 725)

On the dialectical method

If the rod be bent too much one way, says the proverb, in order to make it straight you must bend it as much the other. (WN 628)

Why not to send children to boarding schools

Do you wish to educate your children to be dutiful to their parents, to be kind and affectionate to their brothers and sisters? put them under the necessity of being dutiful children, of being kind and affectionate brothers and sisters: educate them in your own house. From their parent's house they may, with propriety and advantage, go out every day to attend public schools: but let their dwelling be always at home. (TMS 222)

On studying too much

Too severe an application to study sometimes brings on lunacy and frenzy ... (EPS 34)

Advice to the parents of college students

Though your son, under five-and-twenty years of age, should be but a coxcomb; do not, upon that account, despair of his becoming, before he is forty, a very wise and worthy man, and a real proficient in all those talents and virtues to which, at present, he may only be an ostentatious and empty pretender. (TMS 259)

On the fate of college graduates in the 90's

In a country where the funds destined for the maintenance of labour were sensibly decaying ... the demand for servants and labourers would, in all the different classes of employments, be less than it had been the year before. Many who had been bred in the superior classes, not being able to find employment in their own business, would be glad to seek it in the lowest. The lowest class being not only overstocked with its own workmen, but with the overflowings of all the other classes, the competition for employment would be so great in it, as to reduce the wages of labour to the most miserable and scanty subsistence of the labourer. Many would not be able to find employment even upon these hard terms, but would either starve, or be driven to seek a subsistence either by begging, or by the perpetration perhaps of the greatest enormities. (WN 73)

On academics I

The unprosperous race of men commonly called men of letters ... have generally, therefore, been educated at the public expence, and their numbers are every-where so great as commonly to reduce the price of their labour to a very paultry recompence. (WN 132)

On academics II

The usual reward of the eminent teacher bears no proportion to that of the lawyer or physician; because the trade of the one is crowded with indigent people who have been brought up to it at the public expence; whereas those of the other two are incumbered with very few who have not been educated at their own. (WN 132)

On academics III

Men of letters, though, after their death, they are frequently more talked of than the greatest princes or statesmen of their times, are generally, during their life, so obscure and insignificant ... (TMS 285)

On tenure

It is the interest of every man to live as much at his ease as he can; and if emoluments are to be precisely the same, whether he does, or does not perform some very laborious duty, it is certainly his interest, at least as interest is vulgarly understood, either to neglect it altogether, or, if he is subject to some authority which will not suffer him to do this, to perform it in as careless and slovenly a manner as that authority will permit. (WN 718)

On faculty collusion

If the authority to which he is subject resides in the body corporate, the college, or the university, which he himself is a member, and in which the greater part of the other members are, like himself, persons who either are, or ought to be teachers; they are likely to make a common cause, to be all very indulgent to one another, and every man to consent that his neighbor may neglect his duty, provided he himself is allowed to neglect his own. (WN 718)

When teachers are slackers too ...

The teacher, instead of explaining to his pupils himself the science in which he proposes to instruct them, may read some book upon it; and if this book is written in a foreign and dead language, by interpreting it to them into their own; or, what would give him still less trouble, by making them interpret it to him, and by now and then making an occasional remark upon it, he may flatter himself that he is giving a lecture. ... The discipline of the college, at the same time, may enable him to force all his pupils to the most regular attendance upon this sham-lecture, and to maintain the most decent and respectful behaviour during the whole time of the performance. (WN 720)

On teaching nonsense

If the teacher happens to be a man of sense, it must be an unpleasant thing to him to be conscious, while he is lecturing his students, that he is either speaking or reading nonsense, or what is very little better than nonsense. It must too be unpleasant to him to observe that the greater part of his students desert his lectures; or perhaps attend upon them with plain enough marks of neglect, contempt, and derision. (WN 720)

On college administrations

The discipline of colleges and universities is in general contrived, not for the benefit of the students, but for the interest, or more properly speaking, for the ease of the masters. Its object is, in all cases, to maintain the authority of the master, and whether he neglects or performs his duty, to oblige the students in all cases to behave to him as if he performed it with the greatest diligence and ability. It seems to presume perfect wisdom and virtue in the one order, and the greatest weakness and folly in the other. (WN 720)

On American universities, "the last bastion of socialism" (W. F. Buckley)

... several of these learned societies have chosen to remain, for a long time, the sanctuaries in which exploded systems and obsolete prejudices found shelter and protection, after they had been hunted out of every other corner of the world. (WN 727)

On attendance sheets

Where the masters, however, really perform their duty, there are no examples, I believe, that the greater part of the students ever neglect theirs. No discipline is ever requisite to force attendance upon lectures which are really worth attending, as is well known wherever any such lectures are given. (WN 720)

On innovative, yet ancient ways to increase parents' interest in their children's education

By a law of Solon, indeed, the children were acquitted from maintaining those parents in their old age, who had neglected to instruct them in some profitable trade or business. (WN 730)

On working class kids, minimum wage, education, and upward mobility

[The common people] have little time to spare for education. Their parents can scarce afford to maintain them even in infancy. As soon as they are able to work, they must apply to some trade by which they can earn their subsistence. That trade too is generally so simple and uniform as to give little exercise to the understanding; while, at the same time, their labour is both so constant and so severe, that it leaves them little leisure and less inclination to apply to, or even think of any thing else. (WN 737)

On differences between men I

The difference of natural talents in different men is, in reality, much less than we are aware of; and the very different genius which appears to distinguish men of different professions, when grown up to maturity, is not upon many occasions so much the cause as the effect of the division of labour. The difference between the most dissimilar characters, between a philosopher and a common street porter, for example, seems to arise not so much from nature, as from habit, custom, and education. (WN 15)

On the differences between men II

When [the philosopher and the street porter] came into the world, and for the first six or eight years of their existence, they were, perhaps, very much alike, and neither their parents nor playfellows could perceive any remarkable difference. About that age, or soon after, they come to be employed in very different occupations. The difference of talents comes then to be taken notice of, and widens by degrees, till at last the vanity of the philosopher is willing to acknowledge scarce any resemblance. (WN 16-16)

On the returns to human capital

Education in the ingenious arts and in the liberal professions, is still more tedious and expensive. The pecuniary recompence, therefore, of painters and sculptors, of lawyers and physicians, ought to be much more liberal: and it is so accordingly. (WN 102)

On the external benefits of education

(T)he state is to derive no inconsiderable advantage from the inferior ranks' instruction. The more they are instructed, the less liable they are to the delusions of enthusiasm and superstition, which, among ignorant nations, frequently occasion the most dreadful disorders. An instructed and intelligent people besides, are always more decent and orderly than an ignorant and stupid one. ... They are more disposed to examine, and more capable of seeing through, the interested complaints of faction and sedition, and they are, upon that account, less apt to be misled into any wanton or unnecessary opposition to the measures of government. (WN 740)

On research and teaching

To impose upon any man the necessity of teaching, year after year, any particular branch of science, seems, in reality, to be the most effectual method of rendering him completely master of it himself. By being obliged to go every year over the same ground, if he is good for any thing, he necessarily becomes, in a few years, well acquainted with every part of it: and if upon any particular point he should form too hasty an opinion one year, when he comes in the course of his lectures to re-consider the same subject the year thereafter, he is very likely to correct it. (WN 764)

On self-fulfilling prophecy

Those unfortunate persons whom nature has formed a good deal below the common level, seem sometimes to rate themselves still more below it than they really are. This humility appears sometimes to sink them into idiotism. (TMS 260)

On underestimating intelligence

Whoever has taken the trouble to examine idiots with attention, will find that, in many of them, the

faculties of the understanding are by no means weaker than in several other people, who though acknowledged to be dull and stupid, are not, by any body, accounted idiots. (*TMS* 260)

* OF OCCUPATION AND LABOR

On the driving forces of excellence

Rivalship and emulation render excellency, even in mean professions, an object of ambition, and frequently occasion the very greatest exertions. (WN 717)

On wage differentials I

The wages of labour vary with the easiness and cheapness, or the difficulty and expence of learning the business. (WN 101)

On wage differentials II

In a perfectly fair lottery, those who draw the prizes ought to gain all that is lost by those who draw the blanks. In a profession where twenty fail for one that succeeds, that one ought to gain all that should have been gained by the unsuccessful twenty. The counsellor at law who, perhaps, at near forty years of age, begins to make something by his profession, ought to receive the retribution, not of his own so tedious and expensive education, but of that of more than twenty others who are never likely to make any thing by it. How extravagant soever the fees of counsellors at law may sometimes appear, their real retribution is never equal to this. Compute in any particular place, what is likely to be annually gained, and what is likely to be annually spent, by all the different workmen in any common trade, such as that of shoemakers or weavers, and you will find that the former sum will generally exceed the latter. But make the same computation with regard to all the counsellors and students of law, in all the different inns of court, and you will find that their annual gains bear but a very small proportion to their annual expence, even though you rate the former as high, and the latter as low, as can well be done. The lottery of the law, therefore, is very far from being a perfectly fair lottery; and that, as well as many other liberal and honourable professions, is, in point of pecuniary gain, evidently under-recompenced. (WN 106)

On wage differentials III

We trust our health to the physician; our fortune and sometimes our life and reputation to the lawyer and attorney. Such confidence could not safely be reposed in people of a very mean or low condition. Their reward must be such, therefore, as may give them that rank in the society which so important a trust requires. The long time and the great expence which must be laid out in their education, when combined with this circumstance, necessarily enhance still further the price of their labour. (WN 105)

On paperboys and lemonade stands

In the inferior employments, the sweets of labour consist altogether in the recompense of labour. They who are soonest in a condition to enjoy the sweets of it, are likely soonest to conceive a relish for it, and to acquire the early habit of industry. (WN 122)

On aspiring entrepreneurs and NBA superstars

Such in reality is the absurd confidence which almost all men have in their own fortune, that wherever there is the least probability of success, too great a share of it is apt to go to them of its own accord. (WN 529-30)

On joining the circus

The contempt of risk [is] in no period of life more active than at the age at which young people chuse their professions. (WN 109)

On joining a different kind of circus

Without regarding the danger, however, young volunteers never enlist so readily as at the beginning of a new war; and though they have scarce any chance of preferment, they figure to themselves, in their youthful fancies, a thousand occasions of acquiring honour and distinction which never occur. These romantic hopes make the whole price of their blood. (WN 109)

On farmers and auto-mechanics

The common ploughman, though generally regarded as the pattern of stupidity and ignorance, is seldom defective in ... judgment and discretion. He is less accustomed, indeed, to social intercourse than the mechanic who lives in a town. His voice and language are more uncouth and more difficult to be understood by those who are not used to them. His understanding, however, being accustomed to consider a greater variety of objects, is generally much superior to that of the other, whose whole attention from morning till night is commonly occupied in performing one or two very simple operations. How much the lower ranks of people in the country are really superior to those of the town, is well known to every man whom either business or curiosity has led to converse much with both. (WN 127)

On hunting and fishing, as time goes by

Hunting and fishing, the most important employments of mankind in the rude state of society, become in its advanced state their most agreeable amusements, and they pursue for pleasure what they once followed from necessity. In the advanced state of society, therefore, they are all very poor people who follow as a trade, what other people pursue as a pastime. (WN 101)

On couch-potatoes

Great labour, either of mind or body, continued for several days together, is in most men naturally followed by a great desire of relaxation, which, if not restrained by force or by some strong necessity, is almost irresistible. It is the call of nature, which requires to be relieved by some indulgence, sometimes of ease only, but sometimes too of dissipation and diversion. If it is not complied with, the consequences are often dangerous, and sometimes fatal. (WN 82)

On prodigies

To excel in any profession, in which but few arrive at mediocrity, is the most decisive mark of what is called genius or superior talents. (WN 107)

On lawyers I: the odds of making it

Put your son apprentice to a shoemaker, there is little doubt of his learning to make a pair of shoes: But send him to study the law, it is at least twenty to one if ever he makes such proficiency as will enable him to live by the business. (WN 106)

On lawyers II: how to make it

In order to increase their payment, the attorneys and clerks have contrived to multiply words beyond all necessity, to the corruption of the law language of, I believe, every court of justice. (WN 680)

On lawyers III: justice ain't free

Justice ... never was in reality administered gratis in any country. Lawyers and attorneys, at least, must always be paid by the parties, and if they were not, they would perform their duty still worse than they actually perform it. (WN 677)

On role models

If his employer is attentive and parsimonious, the workman is very likely to be so too; but if the master is dissolute and disorderly, the servant who shapes his work according to the pattern which his master prescribes to him, will shape his life too according to the example which he sets him. (WN 578)

On job training

A man commonly saunters a little in turning his hand from one sort of employment to another. When he first begins the new work he is seldom very keen and hearty; his mind, as they say, does not go to it, and for some time he rather trifles than applies to good purpose. (WN 8)

Don't try to take on more jobs than you can handle

The man who employs either his labour or his stock in a greater variety of ways than his situation renders necessary, may hurt himself, and he generally does. (WN 497)

OTHER:
BODY, SOUL, AND COLLEGE ATHLETICS
POTPOURRI

* OF BODY, SOUL, AND COLLEGE ATHLETICS

On body, soul, and college athletics

The qualifications of the body, unless supported by those of the mind, can give little authority in any period of society. ... The qualifications of the mind can alone give very great authority. (WN 671)

On diversity

What different ideas are formed in different nations concerning the beauty of the human shape and countenance? A fair complexion is a shocking deformity upon the coast of Guinea. Thick lips and a flat nose are a beauty. In some nations long ears that hang down upon the shoulders are the objects of universal admiration. In China if a lady's foot is so large as to be fit to walk upon, she is regarded as a monster of ugliness. Some of the savage nations in North-America tie four boards round the heads of their children, and thus squeeze them, while the bones are tender and gristly, into a form that is almost perfectly square. Europeans are astonished at the absurd barbarity of this practice, to which some missionaries have imputed the singular stupidity of those nations among whom it prevails. But when they condemn those savages, they do not reflect that the ladies in Europe had, till within these very few years, been endeavouring, for near a century past, to squeeze the beautiful roundness of their natural shape into a square form of the same kind. And that, notwithstanding the many distortions and diseases which this practice was known to occasion, custom had rendered it agreeable among some of the most civilized nations which, perhaps, the world ever beheld. (TMS 199)

On the nutritional merits of potatoes (or is it potatoes?)

The chairmen, porters, and coal-heavers in London, and those unfortunate women who live by prostitution, the strongest men and the most beautiful women perhaps in the British dominions ... are generally fed with this root. (WN 161)

Advice to children trying to skip school

The gout or the tooth-ach, (sic) though exquisitely painful, excite very little sympathy; more dangerous diseases, though accompanied with very little pain, excite the highest. (TMS 30)

On making the most of battlefield mutilation

The man who has lost his leg by a cannon shot, and who, the moment after, speaks and acts with his usual coolness and tranquility, ... naturally feels a much higher degree of self-approbation. (TMS 147)

On fair play

In the race for wealth, honours, and preferments, he may run as hard as he can, and strain every nerve and every muscle, in order to outstrip all his competitors. But if he should jostle, or throw down any of them, the indulgence of the spectators is entirely at an end. It is a violation of fair play ... (TMS 83)

* POTPOURRI

On national character I

A Frenchman in telling a story that was not of the least consequence to him or any one else will use 1000 gestures and contortions of his face ... (LRBL 29)

On national character II

An Italian ... expresses more emotion on being condemned in a fine of twenty shillings, than an Englishman on receiving the sentence of death. (TMS 207)

On national character III (the Falklands conflict)

There is many an honest Englishman, who, in his private station, would be more seriously disturbed by the loss of a guinea, than by the national loss of Minorca, who yet, had it been in his power to defend that fortress, would have sacrificed his life a thousand times rather than, through his fault, have let it fall into the hands of the enemy. (TMS 192)

On national character IV

In general, the style of manners which takes place in any nation, may commonly upon the whole be said to be that which is most suitable to its situation. Hardiness is the character most suitable to the circumstances of a savage; sensibility to those of one who lives in a very civilized society. (TMS 209)

On Mother Nature's supremacy

The natural course of things cannot be entirely controlled by the impotent endeavours of man: the current is too rapid and too strong for him to stop it; and though the rules which direct it appear to have been established for the wisest and best purposes, they sometimes produce effects which shock all his natural sentiments. (TMS 168)

On war

In the most unjust war, ... it is commonly the sovereign or the rulers only who are guilty. The subjects are almost always perfectly innocent. Whenever it suits the conveniency of a public enemy, however, the goods of the peaceable citizens are seized both at land and at sea; their lands are laid waste, their houses are burnt, and they themselves, if they presume to make any resistance, are murdered or led into captivity; and all this in the most perfect conformity to what are called the laws of nations. (TMS 155)

On non-violence I

A person becomes contemptible who tamely sits still, and submits to insults, without attempting either to repel or to revenge them. (TMS 35)

On non-violence II

A very devout Quaker, who upon being struck upon one cheek, instead of turning up the other, should so far forget his literal interpretation of our Saviour's precept, as to bestow some good discipline upon the brute that insulted him, would not be disagreeable to us. We should laugh and be diverted with his spirit, and rather like him the better for it. (TMS 178)

On interior decoration

Trophies of the instruments of music or of agriculture, imitated in painting or in stucco, make a common and agreeable ornament of our halls and dining-rooms. A trophy of the same kind, composed of the instruments of surgery, of dissecting and amputation-knives, of saws for cutting the bones, of trepanning instruments, etc. would be absurd and shocking. (TMS 36)

On sobriety

Beer and ale, ... and wine, even in the wine countries, I call luxuries. A man of any rank may, without any reproach, abstain totally from tasting such liquors. Nature does not render them necessary for the support of life; and custom nowhere renders it indecent to live without them. (WN 822)

On space exploration

To what purpose should we trouble ourselves about the world in the moon? (TMS 140)

On N.I.M.B.Y. effects

... the immediate effects of a prison, the confinement of the wretches shut up in it, are disagreeable ... (TMS 35)

On Halloween pranks

... if a person should throw a large stone over a wall into a public street without giving warning to those who might be passing by, and without regarding where it was likely to fall, he would undoubtedly deserve some chastisement. (TMS 102)

On being patient

Three different accounts have been given of the death of Zeno the Stoic. One is, that after enjoying, for ninety-eight years, the most perfect state of health, he happened, in going out of his school, to fall; and though he suffered no other damage than that of breaking or dislocating one of his fingers, he struck the ground with his hand, and, in the words of the Niobe of Euripides, said, I come, why doest thou call me? and immediately went home and hanged himself. At that great age, one should think, he might have had a little more patience. (TMS 285)

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EXPANDED TABLE OF CONTENTS

On being prudent I	-- 6	
On being prudent II	-- 6	
On being prudent III	-- 6	
On being prudent IV	-- 6	
On self-deceit	-- 6	
Easy come, easy go...	-- 6	
On misguided diets	-- 6	
On counting to a hundred before you act	-- 6	
On the importance of others' opinions	-- 7	
On vanity I	-- 7	
On vanity II	-- 7	
On being really wise	-- 7	
On thinking big	-- 7	
On cosmetics	-- 7	
Why plastic surgery will always be en vogue	-- 7	
On love I	-- 8	
On love II	-- 8	
On love III -- 8	On lust	-- 8
On jealousy	-- 8	
On overcoming break-ups	-- 8	
On friendship	-- 8	
Little does it take ... (on happiness)	-- 9	
On inexpensive remedies for anxiety	-- 9	
On the importance of a cheerful disposition I	-- 9	
On the importance of a cheerful disposition II	-- 9	
On the importance of a cheerful disposition III	-- 9	
On the effect of friendly service at Dunkin Donuts	-- 9	
On keeping up the hope when the going gets rough	-- 9	
"Don't worry, be happy"	-- 9	
Lighten Up	-- 10	
Why even William Jefferson Clinton tried it	-- 10	
On becoming a hermit	-- 10	
On authority of fortune I	-- 11	
On authority of fortune II	-- 11	
On the importance of having the right parents	-- 11	
On upstarts and old money	-- 11	
On lottery winners I	-- 11	
On lottery winners II	-- 11	
On becoming a nouveau rich	-- 11	
On how to become rich (and famous)	-- 11	
On how to be rich and happy	-- 11	
On lotteries I	-- 12	
On lotteries II	-- 12	
On watching the rich and famous	-- 12	
On the nature and causes of fame	-- 12	
On Hollywood stars	-- 12	
On "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous"	-- 12	
On innocence	-- 13	
On ways to make the grade ...	-- 13	
On sucking up and looking down	-- 13	
On corruptors of moral sentiments	-- 13	
On the causes of urban riots	-- 13	
On an American's perspective of third-world starvation	-- 13	
On civilization and the importance of philosophy if it rains cats and dogs and you have no house over your head	-- 13	
On stile	-- 15	
On Mrs. Jones's eighth grade advice on good writing	-- 15	
Concerning your high-school grammar class	-- 15	
Concerning your high-school literature class	-- 16	
On Doctor Seuss	-- 16	
On poetry	-- 16	
On T.V. Evangelists I	-- 17	
On T.V. Evangelists II	-- 17	
On polite conversation	-- 18	
On Elvis returning in a UFO	-- 18	

On 'Do-Gooders'	-- 18	
Money makes the world go 'round	-- 20	
On flipping hamburgers at McDonald's	-- 20	
On rational expectations	-- 20	
On the changing nature of consumer preferences	-- 20	
On non-satiation	-- 20	
On welfare	-- 20	
On the stigma of unemployment	-- 21	
On fertility I	-- 21	
On fertility II	-- 21	
On poverty and infant mortality	-- 21	
On the notion that money is wealth	-- 22	
On living within one's means	-- 22	
On the rich getting richer	-- 22	
On wealth I	-- 22	
On wealth II	-- 22	
On the likely winners in labor disputes	-- 23	
On the corrupting influence of monopoly profits (dedicated to William H. Gates III and Andrew Grove)	-- 23	
On "price-gougers"	-- 23	
On power lunches	-- 23	
On incentive compatibility I	-- 23	
On incentive compatibility II	-- 23	
On incentive compatibility III	-- 23	
On the Clinton impeachment hearings	-- 31	
On factional interest (politicians, professors, etc.)	-- 24	
On senators, congressmen, and other politicians	-- 25	
On civil servants I	-- 25	
On civil servants II	-- 25	
On sleazy politicians	-- 25	
An argument for term limits	-- 25	
On partisan politics I	-- 25	
On partisan politics II	-- 25	
On the social engineer	-- 25	
On the rewards of being a public servant	-- 26	
On incentives of public servants I	-- 26	
On incentives of public servants II	-- 26	
Power blinds	-- 26	
On Gramm-Rudman and budget deficits	-- 27	
On taxation I	-- 27	
On taxation II	-- 27	
On taxation III	-- 27	
On inflation	-- 27	
On Japan, and protectionism	-- 27	
On the reasons for civil government	-- 28	
On policy making in the 1980's	-- 28	
On Dan Quayle versus Murphy Brown	-- 28	
On Pat Buchanan and Jerry Brown (make that Pat Buchanan and Ralph Nader)	-- 28	
On the night whispers of Bush's and Clinton's campaign managers	-- 28	
On science	-- 29	
On the perils of philosophy and speculation	-- 29	
On the dialectical method	-- 29	
Why not to send children to boarding schools	-- 29	
On studying too much	-- 29	
Advice to the parents of college students	-- 29	
On the fate of college graduates in the 90's	-- 29	
On academics I	-- 29	
On academics II	-- 29	
On academics III	-- 30	
On tenure	-- 30	
On faculty collusion	-- 30	
When teachers are slackers too	-- 30	
On teaching nonsense	-- 30	
On college administrations	-- 30	
On American universities, "the last bastion of socialism" (W. F. Buckley)	-- 30	
On attendance sheets	-- 30	
On innovative, yet ancient ways to increase parents' interest in their children's education	-- 31	

On working class kids, minimum wage, education, and upward mobility	-- 31
On differences between men I	-- 31
On the differences between men II	-- 31
On the returns to human capital	-- 31
On the external benefits of education	-- 31
On research and teaching	-- 31
On self-fulfilling prophecy	-- 32
On underestimating intelligence	-- 32
On the driving forces of excellence	-- 33
On wage differentials I	-- 33
On wage differentials II	-- 33
On wage differentials III	-- 33
On paperboys and lemonade stands	-- 33
On aspiring entrepreneurs and NBA superstars	-- 33
On joining the circus	-- 33
On joining a different kind of circus	-- 33
On farmers and auto-mechanics	-- 34
On hunting and fishing, as time goes by	-- 34
On couch-potatoes	-- 34
On prodigies	-- 34
On lawyers I: the odds of making it	-- 34
On lawyers II: how to make it	-- 34
On lawyers III: justice ain't free	-- 34
On role models	-- 34
On job training	-- 35
Don't try to take on more jobs than you can handle	-- 35
On body, soul, and college athletics	-- 37
On diversity	-- 37
On the nutritional merits of potatoes (or is it potatos?)	-- 37
Advice to children trying to skip school	-- 37
On making the most of battlefield mutilation	-- 37
On fair play	-- 37
On national character I	-- 38
On national character II	-- 38
On national character III (the Falklands conflict)	-- 38
On national character IV	-- 38
On Mother Nature's supremacy	-- 38
On war	-- 38
On non-violence I	-- 38
On non-violence II	-- 38
On interior decoration	-- 38
On sobriety	-- 39
On space exploration	-- 39
On N.I.M.B.Y. effects	-- 39
On Halloween pranks	-- 39
On being patient	-- 39