THE THOUGHT OF RALPH ADAMS CRAM: CONSERVATIVE CRITIC OF MODERNISM

Robin McHugh

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THE THOUGHT OF RALPH ADAMS CRAM:
CONSERVATIVE CRITIC OF MODERNISM

By
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B.A., University of Montana, 1974

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
1981

Approved by:

Chairman, Board of Examiners

Dean, Graduate School

Date 6-8-81
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The purpose of this thesis is to describe a major portion of the thought of Ralph Adams Cram. Before World War I Cram concentrated primarily on the development of his architectural practice as well as on the formulation of the philosophical, religious and aesthetic ideas that guided his life and work. The shock of the Great War changed the focus of Cram's thought from these relatively narrow concerns to broad deliberations on the meaning of history, the nature of man, and the proper configurations of the good society. After World War I Cram devoted as much time to social criticism as he did to architecture. This study concentrates almost exclusively on this latter aspect of Cram's career. Also included is a brief discussion of Cram's place in the history of twentieth century conservative thought.

Cram's own writing, contained in books and articles, was the primary research material used. Secondary material on Cram is scarce though several studies completed recently were useful in writing the final chapter. Histories of the American conservative tradition were helpful in relating Cram's thought to that of other conservative critics of his time.

Cram was not an original thinker. Other men shared many of his ideas and often expressed them more clearly. Nevertheless, Cram is an interesting and in some ways perhaps unique figure. At a time when intellectuals were fashionably pessimistic, Cram remained convinced that man could alter the course of history. Other men thought highly of the Middle Ages but few believed, as Cram did, that they were an appropriate model for the modern world. Also, Cram upheld a traditionalist conservative position, emphasizing the importance of religion, self-control, and community at a time when conservatism was popularly identified with individualism and "laissez-faire" economics. Finally, many of Cram's ideas are today championed by people on both the right and the left. This proves, as nothing else could, that he raised pertinent, lasting and perhaps unanswerable questions about the condition of modern man.
Ralph Adams Cram is, I believe, an unjustly neglected figure in the history of twentieth century conservative thought. Though he contained a variety of social criticisms, he has been, until very recently, almost completely ignored by scholars. In four books which deal, at least in part, with conservative thinkers from 1900 to 1940, Cram is discussed only in passing.

In *The Conservative Mind*, Russell Kirk wrote that "it would be interesting to write of Ralph Adams Cram, a great architect and an heir to the Romantics, who spoke for Henry Adams' medievalism." Kirk felt, however, that Irving Babbitt, Paul Elmer More, and George Santayana were "the most significant representatives of the American conservative impulse after 1918," and so relegated Cram to two entries in the bibliography.

Clinton Rossiter surveyed American conservatism from the colonial period forward in *Constitutional America*. Rossiter contended that the dominant strain of conservatism from 1869 to 1945 was what he termed "laissez-faire" conservatism. "As acknowledged that, by emphasizing that particular aspect, he overlooked some exciting examples of conservative political and social thought."

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Ralph Adams Cram is, I believe, an unjustly neglected figure in the history of twentieth century conservative thought. Though he wrote nearly a dozen books containing a variety of social criticism, he has been, until very recently, almost completely ignored by scholars. In four books which deal, at least in part, with conservative thinkers from 1900 to 1940, Cram is discussed only in passing.

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Democracy' of the Middle Ages was the zenith of intellectual reaction in the United States."²

In The Conservative Tradition in America, Allen Guttmann wrote of Paul Elmer More: "Like most prophets, he was unheard. It seems safe to assert that he is, today, unread." He followed that sentence with an asterisk which referred to the following: "The fate of Ralph Adams Cram has been starker still." Guttmann then described Cram's thought in one paragraph.³

Finally Cram was all but ignored in Ronald Lora's excellent study, Conservative Minds in America. A section of this book is titled, "Conservative Critics of Mass Society: 1900-1940." In that section Lora wrote: "Those who contributed much to the Conservative lament over mass society included the New Humanists Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More, the twelve Southern Agrarians, and diverse individuals like Albert J. Nock, Henry L. Mencken, and Ralph Adams Cram."⁴ With the exception of Cram, Lora discussed all these men at length. To have neglected Cram seems perplexing because Lora devoted half a chapter to Russell Kirk, a conspicuous post-War conservative thinker, who, Lora wrote, had a "cast of mind . . . close to that of the medievalist Ralph Adams Cram."⁵ So, though Cram was an important conservative thinker during the first decades of this century, and though his thought has been compelling for some later con-
servatives, he has been unaccountably passed by in the major studies of American conservative thought.

Robert M. Crunden made up for some of this scholarly disregard in a book he edited, The Superfluous Men: Conservative Critics of American Culture, 1900-1945. Crunden included in this work two selections from Cram's writings and he also wrote in his bibliographical essay, "Ralph Adams Cram has been unjustly neglected by scholars of both conservatism and architecture." To emphasize this point he noted that "the best secondary treatment" of Cram is a three-page essay in the Dictionary of American Biography.* Clearly, there is a need for further study of Cram. It is my intention to describe Cram's basic philosophy as well as his social, cultural, and political criticism. Also, I intend to describe Cram's suggestions for a "way out" from the crisis of modernism.

* Crunden also noted that a dissertation on Cram was in progress at the University of Texas in 1977. That dissertation was completed in 1979 and very recently appeared in the abstracts. Material from it is incorporated in Chapter Eight. Crunden was apparently unaware of a good article on Cram, by Robert Muccigrosso, published in 1975.
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CHAPTER ONE: EARLY LIFE, CAREER, AND INTELLECTUAL DIRECTION

Ralph Adams Cram was born in New Hampshire in 1863. During his lifetime he visited many and diverse parts of the world, absorbing numerous artistic, architectural, and historical traditions. But as traveled and learned as Cram became, it is probable that rural New England shaped the contours of his mind as much as any other factor. Though he wrote sparsely about his early years, it is possible to glean from several reminiscences a sense of the New England in Cram's mind.

Cram remembered vividly his maternal grandfather, who, as "the last of the squires" ruled "many acres of rolling land," a representative of a "last phase of feudalism." The Squire, Cram recalled, was a relic of "High Democracy," a political and social condition that, in Cram's opinion, ended upon the ascension of Andrew Jackson to the presidency. Remaining a staunch Federalist, even after the Civil War, the Squire was a passionate admirer of the Adams family, naming his eldest son John Adams, and probably influencing the appellation of his grandson.

The house the Squire lived in was perfect for developing in Cram that sense of history and place that he later wove into his social philosophy. Cram was born in a house "hardly forty years old when [he] saw the light." By con-
trast the Squire's house was almost two centuries old and thus had the "soul that makes old houses living entities." From this "living entity," the "old place" as it was called, Cram's grandfather "ruled and influenced his community without assertion of place and privilege, but rather through personal character and acceptable tradition." Clearly the memories of the "old place" and of his grandfather's role in the community indicate that many years before Cram discovered medievalism as a universal model, he had experienced a remnant of the Middle Ages in nineteenth century New England. Cram greatly regretted the passing of the "old places" and all that they represented. He was realist enough to know, however, that that which he sentimentalized about "was all a lingering episode ... with no single intrusion of the then fast-developing factors of the imminent social and economic revolution that [was bringing] in a new world." Though Cram felt that both of his parents were "brilliant intellectually," his father seems to have had the strongest influence on him. A Unitarian minister who returned to the life of a simple New England farmer in order to care for his aging parents, Cram's father was denied the stimulating career for which he was trained. But this notwithstanding, "books, thought and meditation" were always the predominant factors in his life, producing an atmosphere that his son obviously found agreeable.
Part of that atmosphere was an old shoe shop which Cram's father converted to a study. Cram described it thus:

Books came to cover the walls, arm chairs took the place of high stools, papers of every sort covered the benches, and on one side strange drawings and diagrams appertaining in some way to geological and astronomical problems covered the wall in ever changing sequence as my father pondered on all the unsolvable problems of the cosmos and tried to elucidate them to himself by these curious designs in bright and varied colors.  

When not preoccupied with his own thoughts, Cram's father rather perfunctorily tried to drum some Latin into his son's head. But for the most part young Ralph was left alone to absorb what he chose. Always an omnivorous reader, by the time he was twenty he had read nearly everything in his father's library. But in the process he did not develop any strong predilections toward a possible career. Consequently, his father decided for him, and "architecture was chosen as the destined career of a son too careless of habit and diffuse of mind to choose for himself."  

At seventeen Cram went to Boston to begin an apprenticeship as a draughtsman in an architectural office. For a time, however, architecture was only of secondary interest. First there was a world to discover, intellectual and artistic interests to seize upon, and new friends to cultivate. Cram rapidly became immersed in the young Boston intellectual set of the eighteen eighties. He became
acquainted with musicians, painters, poets, sculptors, "literary venturers of all sorts," as well as architects, and he became a part of a zestful and optimistic youthful ambiance which seemed almost unbelievable to him only a generation later. In several passages of his autobiography Cram described the atmosphere of his young manhood. To quote some of them is to understand the extent of Cram's odyssey from exuberant optimism to a belief that the world was on the precipice.

"There was in the air," he wrote, "something that continued for twenty years, and which has not been experienced since. There was a spirit of high adventure, energized by a buoyant optimism." "To us it was a golden age," he continued, "with the promise of high fulfillment. Everything seemed to open out around us like the bursting of enormous fireworks. We thought we were chosen people in a chosen time." There was, he went on, a "spiritual influence that seemed to be implicit in the air we breathed."

"There was nothing static in life: all was in motion, and the movement was, we believed (holding still to the established tradition of progressive evolution), inevitably forward." Cram and his youthful intellectual cohorts felt that their age was decadent, but, he wrote, unlike the youth of the nineteen twenties, "this did not disturb us in the least or blur our optimism. Instead we rather gloated over the fact. If the world was indeed decadent,
so much louder was the call for crusading."\textsuperscript{16}

In this atmosphere Cram's intellectual life was varied and stimulating. He was interested, at various times, in religion and sociology, Christian socialism and "High Church" Catholicism. He flirted with being both a monarchist and a socialist but found nothing particularly anomalous or contradictory in such predilections. He doubted if any of his circle had ever read Karl Marx. "We were socialists," he wrote, "because we were young enough to have generous impulses."\textsuperscript{17} Writing fifty years later, across an almost unfathomable historical gulf, Cram described the tenor of his youth this way:

Altogether it was a great moment in history, not only for our own small group in Boston, but in actuality. High hopes, definite ambitions, certainty of achievement, and lightness of heart created an atmosphere of which one could breathe deeply. There was no sign, no cloud, even the smallest, on the horizon of destiny . . . .\textsuperscript{18}

During the great depression Cram was to become ever so aware of the clouds which had in fact lurked on the horizon of the eighteen eighties. But in those halcyon days the tragic events of the intervening years were considered "lunatic impossibilities, the maddest of us all would never have conceived of anything of the kind."\textsuperscript{19} The years that followed the golden eighties were to be ones of severe disillusionment for Cram. He personally would prosper and excel, but he would do so in an age which, he came to feel, warranted foreboding rather than optimism.
Though architecture had been chosen for Cram as a career, there were several small deviations from that path. At the age of twenty-two, after five years as a draughtsman in an architectural office, Cram wrote an impassioned letter to a Boston paper protesting a proposed real estate development near the Trinity Church in that city. The letter caught the attention of the paper's editor and Cram accepted a job as art critic. Possessing literary aspirations, he saw fresh possibilities in journalism and, with a small prize he had won in an architectural competition, headed for Europe. The money from the prize disappeared more rapidly than expected and the remuneration from the critical pieces sent back to Boston was not enough to support his travels. Cram was forced to return to Boston where he shortly found himself in a quarrel with his editor; he did not like to write extensively about exhibits he considered unworthy. The galleries, however, were big advertisers in his newspaper. Not able to reconcile this conflict with the editor, Cram rather petulantly quit.  

After one or two years of doing odd jobs, Cram went to Europe for a second time. This was a formative journey for him; he began to develop those values and convictions which were to guide his life, and which led him back to architecture with renewed enthusiasm. This trip was not only another kind of apprenticeship, it was a "revelation." For "it was then," he wrote, "that I came to believe that
beauty was a definite thing, immutable and everlasting in its essence, and the best test and measure of value that man has at his disposal."22

It is understandable that Cram was transformed by this European visit. The beauty of the architecture in Venice, Rome, and Sicily affected him strongly, partly because it contrasted so vividly with the ugliness he perceived in American architecture. He did think that there had been some renewal in American architecture in the eighteen eighties, but he considered the previous fifty years a wasteland. Cram deemed the period from 1830 to 1880 a "half-century of contented vulgarity."23 During that period he proclaimed that "architecture in America fell to a lower level than history had ever recorded."24

It was important to Cram to understand the source of the beauty he found in Europe. He was helped to that understanding by Henry Randall, a friend he met in Rome who introduced him to the Catholic Religion. As Cram explained it: "When I first met him in Rome, I was of the ordinary type of bumptious and self-satisfied youth that, in his mental superiority, scorns all religions other than the ethical culture and respectful deism of the 'liberal' Protestant denominations."25 But this kind of religion could not satisfactorily explain, for Cram, the art in which he was immersed in Europe. He found the explanation in the "life of the Catholic Church." Shortly after returning to Boston he took instruction and was baptized and
confirmed in "the Anglican Communion of the Catholic Church." This conversion was an important point in Cram's life, because his later work, social criticism, and historical understanding were grounded in his Catholic faith.  

Upon returning from his second European trip, Cram began his long and remarkable career as an architect. In the beginning, the firm he founded undertook all types of work, but shortly it began to specialize in church design. This was natural for Cram since, while in Europe, he had developed a passion for Gothic cathedrals in particular and the Gothic style in general. Gothic, for Cram, was not merely an architectural style; it was an entire philosophy. He remained infatuated with Gothic all his life and devoted to a Gothic revival, but he believed that much of what had been done in the name of a Gothic revival did not do justice to true Gothic. Cram desired not merely to copy Gothic design but to revive the spirit which produced it. 

Cram, either alone or through his firm, designed some of the notable architectural works in America. In 1903 his firm won a competition which resulted in a contract for the rebuilding of the United States Military Academy at West Point. "The bold site on the Hudson River was singularly propitious for the exploitation of the firm's Gothic dreams." In 1909 Cram was appointed supervising architect at Princeton University. "During the twenty years he held
that post, he achieved in Gothic style a consistency of construction that is rare in American universities." In 1910 Cram was awarded the architectural design for Rice Institute (later University) in Houston. Here, because of the location, "he forsook Gothic in favor of a style involving Italian and Byzantine elements, with rich colors obtained from rose bricks and a profuse use of marbles and tiles."\(^{29}\) Probably the most impressive and fulfilling work of Cram's career was the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. The Cathedral had been partially completed under a Romanesque design, but since construction had begun "the Gothic impulse had been working steadily in the ecclesiastical consciousness."\(^{30}\) Cram was thus invited to redesign the rest of the Cathedral in a Gothic mode. Major parts of the Cathedral were completed in his lifetime, and it remains the major monument to his architectural genius.\(^{31}\)

Like many notable men, Cram's career was multidimensional. It is true that Gothic architecture was his passion, but other activities interested him as well. For example, Cram and his partners immersed themselves in Japanese architecture in order to present a design for new parliament buildings to be built in that country. Cram traveled to the Far East to present the plan to the Japanese government. Though much impressed, the government fell before any further action could be taken. Cram, how-
ever, was so affected "by the culture, the art, and the philosophy of this ancient and august civilization" that he later wrote a book titled *Japanese Architecture and the Allied Arts.*

In 1914 Cram received a dual appointment: head of the Architecture Department at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Chairman of the Boston City Planning Board. The latter assignment gave Cram the opportunity to influence the development of a great city, but it also depressed him, as he later said, "to realize the radical absurdity—and worse—of the great cities as these have come to be today." Though he tried, through the Board, to "save" Boston, he was not sure that modern cities were worth saving. The experience at M.I.T. was an enjoyable one, but, as with all other experiences in his life, he reflected deeply upon it and began "to entertain certain doubts as to the possibilities of education and its limitations." 

Out of his interest in the Middle Ages, Cram was instrumental in founding the Medieval Academy of America. Convinced also that the restoration of Christian unity was "the only solution of human society" he was one of the founders of *Commonweal Magazine*. On a lighter note Cram contended in his autobiography that the tradition of caroling at Christmas was begun in America at his home on Beacon Hill in Boston when he, his wife, and some friends
ventured out to sing the *Adeste Fideles* to their neighbors. Clearly Cram lived up to his conviction that "architecture is far more than the making of designs to fit certain occasions, or the piling of stone upon stone." He tried to embody his conviction that architects should have "the broadest sympathies, the deepest apprehension of life, both in the historic past and in the present . . . ." He tried "to interpret society to itself, to get under the skin of things and to find the essential core of reality."36

World War I was for Cram, as for so many others of his generation, a great divide. He practiced architecture nearly until his death in the early 1940s, but World War I changed the temper of his life. After that terrible August in 1914, Cram underwent a change in intellectual direction; he obsessively strove to understand what had gone wrong. For a man of Cram's ilk, the catastrophe of the War was especially intense since so many of the architectural wonders that were the inspiration of his life were destroyed. He had always written books, but, he explained, "the red interlude of War changed the whole temper that had hitherto controlled my literary activity." He found himself "driven suddenly back to a consideration of those impulses and forces that subsisted beneath the things that were being destroyed, and [beneath] the putative civilization, as of our own time, that made destruction both possible and a matter of no particular concern."37 Cram
became obsessed with the question, as he put it, "How did all this come about and what is the way out?" This question spurred him to reflect and to write on a wide range of topics, all related to the predicament of the world as he saw it and to possible solutions. Thus, Cram became a social critic, "scarcely less distinguished as an author than as an architect."
The errors of the modern world, illuminated by the Great War, were sources of extreme anxiety and displeasure for Ralph Adams Cram. This prompted him to devote a good deal of his life to an understanding of the origins and errors of modernism. He came to believe that the most important thing which other more healthy ages had possessed, but which was missing in modern times, was a vital religious faith. To Cram this meant that the remedy for the modern temper was the restoration of true Christianity. This theme appears again and again in his writings.

He averred, for example, that modern man has adopted a "false philosophy of life which [is] not only untenable in itself but [is] vitiated and made noxious through its severance from vital religion." This "false philosophy and this progressive abandonment of religion" were much more responsible for modern failures than were institutional defects. There were institutional defects, to be sure, but, Cram asserted repeatedly, that "effort at correction and betterment [would] make small progress unless we first regain the right religion and the right philosophy." And, he believed, "right philosophy" would follow "right religion."1

If men "were infused by religion, through and through,
and . . . lived its life, and in its life, philosophy would take care of itself." Religion must enter into the "very marrow of social being." If not, we shall "seek in vain for our way out into the Great Peace of righteousness and consistent living." Reiterating this theme, Cram wrote an essay about public worship in which he said that "personal and corporate action towards political, economic, industrial [and] social reform is good, but . . . [it] can be but palliative and temporary unless there is behind [it] the spiritual regeneration that will change the temper of the people as a whole . . . ." Behind all of Cram's social criticism and suggestions for change there lies this consistent belief: the heart of the modern affliction is spiritual decay, and therefore the only real solution is spiritual rejuvenation. Cram wished to restore the vital Christian spirit of the Middle Ages—which was solidly grounded in Christian philosophy. It is important to explain Cram's understanding of that philosophy.

"From the beginning of conscious life, man has found himself surrounded and besieged by uncalculable phenomena." And from the beginning man has striven to try to understand these phenomena, to place them in some kind of order, to give them meaning. Classical man sought to use the power of his intellect to devise a method for understanding the universe. "People of the East" rejected this method and relied instead on the power of intuition, "the mysterious
operation of the inner sense that manifests itself in the form of emotion." The great accomplishment of Christianity, according to Cram, was that it fused these two methods of understanding. As he put it, "the intellectual method of the West and the intuitive method of the East came together and fused into a new thing, each element limiting, and at the same time fortifying the other, while the opposed obscurities of the past were irradiated by the revealing and creative spirit of Christ."6

This fusion was the heart of the Christian philosophy that Cram revered and was the foundation of the civilization of the Middle Ages. At the waning of the Middle Ages there occurred a disintegration of this "new" and "positive" philosophy; there began to be a breakup of the original philosophical unity into a new mysticism and a new intellectualism. The mysticism "withdrew . . . from the common life" but the new intellectualism came to dominate the mind of western man; the Renaissance was the supreme manifestation of that dominance. The Reformation, represented most insidiously by Calvin, was the result of the infusion of this intellectualism into Christianity. The mechanistic and rationalistic system which emerged most conspicuously with Descarte, and which dominated the world completely by the nineteenth century, was another pernicious result. Cram believed that the modern world must, in order to achieve salvation, return and embrace that
philosophical system which was the underpinning of the Middle Ages. "I believe," he wrote, "that we must and can retrace our steps to that point in time when a right philosophy was abandoned, and begin again." 

Christian philosophy posits, Cram contended, that the world is the union of matter and spirit. Matter and spirit are two distinct and different things and apart from their union there is no life. Their union is achieved through a "Divine Actuality" or through God. Man, Cram held, is a compact of both matter and spirit; matter and spirit cannot be separated in man and man can only come to know spirit "through the medium of matter." Matter thus takes on a sanctity "as the vehicle of spirit." From this, Cram asserted, "follows of necessity the whole sacramental system . . . of Christianity." The sacramental system was the "original, revolutionary and final contribution [of Christianity] to the wisdom that man may have for his own." This "great contribution" of Christianity was held to be true until it was rejected, Cram believed, "either wholly or in part" by the "Protestant organizations that came out of the Reformation." The intensity of Cram's belief in the sacramental system was illustrated when he wrote the following:

When carried out into logical development [the system gave] a meaning to life, a glory to the world, an elucidation of otherwise unsolvable mysteries, and an impulse toward noble living, no other system can afford. It is a real
philosophy of life, a standard of values, a criterion of all possible postulates, and as its loss meant the world's peril, so its recovery may mean its salvation.

The extent to which the sacramental system influenced Cram's intellectual constitution cannot be overstated. As will be discussed in greater detail later, beauty came to have positive value for Cram; beauty was good and ugliness was bad. He developed an entire philosophical formulation out of this idea that was based primarily on his understanding of the sacramental system. It is possible to reduce Cram's criticisms of industrialism, mass democracy, most of modern art and architecture, contemporary political systems and the myriad other things which annoyed him, to the fact that he thought them ugly. And man tolerated ugliness, he thought, because he no longer embraced the vital religion of which sacramentalism was the heart.

Through use of the sacraments man approached spiritual things through material things and "by means of material agencies." Thus, "music, vestements, incense, flowers, poetry, [and] dramatic action were linked with the major arts of architecture, painting and sculpture, and all became not only ministers to the emotional faculties but direct appeals to the intellect through their function as poignant symbols." Believing this as he did, Cram had tremendous reverence for the art of the Middle Ages. Because matter and spirit were fused, a Gothic cathedral was
much more than simply an intricately designed structure and an engineering marvel. Cram explained the power of a Gothic cathedral this way:

What were Reims Cathedral once, and Soissons, before their martyrdom, but the transfiguring of stone and metal and wood; dead matter delved from the ground or hewn out of the forest, through the labour of man exalted into forms of absolute beauty that, because of this loving labour had been transformed into gifts worthy of giving back to God . . . .12

As with other disgruntled intellectuals in the first decades of this century, namely Henry Adams and T. S. Eliot, Cram had almost unbounded reverence and admiration for the Middle Ages. His reading of history, his understanding of Christianity, his study of architecture and his sense of the beautiful all led him to proclaim that the Middle Ages, of all historical epochs, should be a model for human society. Interspersed throughout Cram's social criticism are admiring references to the guild system, the natural hierarchy, and the sense of duty and honor that characterized the medieval period. But, as has been noted before, it was the art and architecture of the Middle Ages which, emanating from a vital religious faith, most infatuated Cram.13

Because of his architectural training, Cram saw a correspondence between the art and architecture of a period and its vital signs. Beautiful art must spring from beautiful impulses which in turn must be created by the
good society. Thus, Cram went from the art of the Middle Ages to the society that produced it. And the society that produced Gothic cathedrals, Cram believed, must have been glorious indeed; so too, the society that could destroy them must be infected with a spiritual sickness and rottenness—the antithesis of everything which gave them life. Beauty occupied a prominent place in Cram's system of values. It is important to discuss his ideas on beauty and what creates it.

Cram was convinced that he was living in an age substantially lacking in beauty. Minds that create ugliness in one area cannot be expected to create beauty in another. Thus, it was no surprise to Cram, in the age of large-scale industry and environmental devastation, to find very little in the way of artistic or architectural beauty. Architectural beauty must emanate from philosophical or spiritual beauty, and as clearly as this interdependence was lacking in the modern world, it was present in the medieval world. Thus, the importance of Gothic art in general and Gothic cathedrals in particular to Cram's thought.

Cram maintained that there have been two "revolutions in history that have metamorphosed man's view and use of beauty." The first resulted in beauty as it was perceived and used during the Christian era. Great beauty had been created in pagan times, "but with Christianity [beauty]
was given a new content and a new function." Artistic creation became sacrificial labor for God so that there was a joy in taking the greatest pains to turn the humblest materials "into vital agencies of spiritual stimulus and spiritual expression." Cram called the historical progression from pagan to Christian art a "great transformation," during which "art received its oversoul and beauty was made one of the ministers of God." The second revolution, which Cram dated around 1500, resulted in a return to the paganism in art that Christianity had previously superseded. The spirit which had infused the art of the Christian period became dormant and reached its nadir during the years 1825 to 1875, a period which, Cram believed, with respect to beauty, was "the most barbarous . . . that history has painfully recorded."

But the artistic spirit of the Christian era did not die. Midway through this "most barbarous" period it began to flicker to life in the form of the Gothic revival, an impulse and movement which was dear to Cram. "Gothic," he said, "is not a passing phase of the building art already completed and dead, it is the voicing of an eternal spirit in man, that may now and then withdraw into silence, but must reappear with power when, after long disuse, the energy emerges again." Gothic was, for Cram, "Christianity applied to life." Therefore, it is easy to understand why the Gothic revival was of such importance to him. It
was not the revival of a mere architectural form, but, possibly, the renascence of a new spirit which could regenerate the modern world.

As has been noted, it was the spirit behind Gothic architecture that impressed Cram, because without that spirit there would have been no Gothic structures. Great art, Cram believed, is not progressive, but rather, like history, moves in cycles; it is intricately related to the civilization that produces it. As Cram put it, "there is a close relationship between . . . art and the civilization [that brings] it into being. There is no great art with an immediately antecedent condition of barbarism; there is no degraded art in close succession from high civilization." Thus, to understand Gothic art "we should also have to merge ourselves in the intricate history" of the medieval period.

Certainly Cram cannot be accused of establishing the curse of modernity in proximate causes. Rather, as noted, he saw the ills of the twentieth century as the result of a loss of vital religious faith, the erosion of which began many centuries ago. In addition to this, he developed a deterministic theory of history which blamed the deplorable condition of modernity on inevitable historical oscillations.

Cram developed his theory of history because he thought the idea of progressive evolution, which enthralled the
minds of many in his day, was so obviously wrong. Though, as he said, he "was born and bred in the briarpath of . . . progressive evolution," and had early in life read all the major works of evolutionists, he came to think that "the ancient doctrine of progressive evolution . . . was . . . next to the religious and philosophical dogmas of Dr. Calvin and the political and social doctrines of M. Rousseau, the most calamitous happening of the last millennium." Cram believed that the "old doctrines" of his youth were showing "thin and thread-bare." He agreed that the evolutionary idea was alluring; to believe that man was "the crown of an immemorial sequence" which began with "primeval slime" and culminated in "the glorious product of the Victorian era" was comforting indeed. If the historical process was one ascending line, it was easy to believe, as many did before the Great War, that man was headed for the millennium. The "discovery, invention and material aggrandizement" of the epoch immediately preceding the Great War, could, if not looked at too closely, give some credence to evolution.

Cram, however, believed that the logic of evolution forced one to conclude that "the Greeks were greater than the Egyptians, the Romans than the Greeks, the Renaissance than Hellenism." Similarly, Protestantism must be better than Catholicism and "democracy must be better than monarchy, feudalism or aristocracy." Cram proclaimed that
this was clearly nonsense. For him the evidence of the Great War was more than enough to relegate the "once popular dogma of progressive evolution . . . to the domain of discredited superstitions." Man, wrote Cram, has not progressed; he has throughout history indulged in a "farrago of cruelty, slaughter and injustice." After the first World War, the cruelest of all to its time, and after "a century and a half of unparalleled scientific and mechanical development" mankind confronted "a situation so irrational and apparently hopeless of solution, that there [was] not a scientist, a politician, an industrialist, a financier, a philosopher or a parson who [had] the faintest idea how we got that way." For Cram, the theory of progressive evolution was a mockery of the facts. His own theory, he believed, was much closer to the truth.

Essentially Cram extrapolated his theory of history from his understanding of Catholic philosophy. From that philosophy he assumed "that life is an enduring process of the redemption of matter through the interpenetration of spirit." Cram sought to explain this with a diagram that was broken down into four strata:
The bottom strata (X) Cram called the "primary unknowable, the region of pure spirit, pure spirit itself, the creative energy of the universe, the unconditioned Absolute, [or,] in terms of Christian theology, Almighty God." The second level (A) is made up of matter, "an area of potential, but in itself inert and indeterminate." The third level (B) is life, "the area in which the transformation and redemption take place." And "the fourth (X') is the ultimate unknowable, that is to say, that which follows on after life and receives the finished product of redemption." As the diagram shows, the plane of matter is constantly being penetrated "by jets of the élan vital from the realm of pure spirit" as if "it were striving to detach from the plane of matter some small portion, which is transformed in its passage through life and achieves entrance into the ultimate unknowable, when the process of redemption is, for this small particle, completed." But all energy does not, of course, pierce into the upper strata, but is bent back by "the gravitational pull of matter" in a parabolic curve. So some portions of matter get through to the upper strata but others do not and are pulled back and reabsorbed into matter, "becoming subject to the operation of future interpenetrating jets of spiritual energy." Cram held that "the upward drive of the élan vital constitutes what may properly be known as evolution, the declining fall the process of devolution or degeneration." "Evolution," Cram
continued, "is only one part of the cosmic process, it is inseparable from degeneration."  

This process, contended Cram, is the same for individuals as for civilizations. As man is born, reaches maturity, and declines, "so in the case of races and nations and the clearly defined epochs into which the history of man divides itself. There is no mechanical system of 'progress,' no cumulative wisdom and power that in the end will inevitably lead to earthly perfection and triumph." Civilizations and human epochs are born, flower, and die; their birth is analogous to that process illustrated by the diagram above. As Cram explained it:

So through a mass of low and static vitality comes the sudden and enormous power that produces at the very beginnings of our own recorded history of man, the almost superhuman intelligence and capacity of the Greeks and the Egyptians. So each of the definite eras of civilization opens with the releasing of great energies, the revealing of great figures of paramount character and force. So, conversely, as the energy declines, men appear less and less potent and in a descending scale. This is the case with the Greek states, with the Roman Republic and the Empire, with Byzantium, with Medievalism, and with our modern era. I do not know of any other theory that claims to explain the perpetual and rhythmical fluctuations of history, as violent in their degree as they are approximately regular in their rhythm.

Cram believed that his cyclical theory applied to men as well as civilizations. By his logic, a primitive man, whom the evolutionists claimed occupied a stage between less developed ape-like creatures and modern man, might
simply be a man at the end of a cycle. He could very well be descended from a great civilization. God has at various times created man in his own image and man can fall and "forfeit . . . his inheritance," ending quite possibly like primitive man. But, Cram emphasized, "it is man that is created in the beginning, of his full stature, . . . not a hairy quadrumanina that by the laws of natural selection and the survival of the fittest, ultimately and through endless ages, and by the most infinitesimal changes, becomes at last Plato and Caesar, Leonardo and Dante, St. Louis and Shakespeare and St. Francis." Not surprisingly, lost civilizations like Atlantis seemed quite plausible to Cram.35

Regarding the civilizations which we know existed, Cram held that they showed history moving in cycles of five hundred years. Like a "periodical" beat, Cram thought these cycles could be charted "as far as history records."

He wrote the following:

500 B.C., Anno Domini; 500 A.D., 1000 A.D., and 1500 A.D. are all, to the point of very clear approximation, nodal points, where the curve of the preceding five centuries, having achieved its crest, curves downward, and in its fall meets the curve of rising energy that is to condition the ensuing era.37

Cram calculated from this evidence that the crest of the modern epoch was the year 1914 and that the next nodal point would come in the year 2000. He charted these cycles as follows:38
Intriguingly, Cram maintained that history conceived and charted in this way tells us something about reform movements:

As the élan vital that has made and characterized any period declines, it throws off reactions, the object of which is if possible to arrest, or at least delay, the fatal glissade. These are, in intent and in fact, reforms; conscious efforts at saving a desperate situation by regenerative methods.\(^{39}\)

Reforms of this kind are bound to fail, Cram thought, since they originate from a degenerating line of force and are therefore "poisoned at the source and no true or vital reforms."\(^{40}\) But the descending line of energy from one epoch crosses the ascending line of the next. Therefore, reforms can just as well issue from a regenerative line of force. Cram held that the problem was to determine the energy source of the various reforms of our times in order to judge their efficacy. He believed that most of the commonly considered progressive reforms of the early decades of this century emanated from the dissipating line of energy. He thought them "really no reforms at all."\(^{41}\) A reform springing from the ascending line of energy could
be identified by its manifest incompatibility with the
tenor of the last four or five centuries, or "if it is by
common consent impractical and 'outside the current of
manifest evolutionary development.'" An example, of
this kind of reform, Cram believed, was the return to
medievalism by a small handful of people. They were
riding on the ascending wave, and the critical choice
before civilization was what wave it would choose to ride.

By positing such a deterministic theory, Cram could
easily have bound himself to a fatalistic philosophy; e.g.,
if we are on the downside of our cycle all we can do is
resign ourselves to it. But, Cram opined, modern man is
unique because for the first time he can clearly observe
the rhythms of history and therefore avert them. In
other words Cram believed that man, if he had the will,
could stand athwart history and determine its course.*

* Further discussion of the contradictory nature of
Cram's determinism may be found in Chapter Eight.
CHAPTER THREE:
INHUMAN SCALE, HUMAN EQUALITY, AND INDUSTRIALISM

Based on his understanding of Christian philosophy, history, and the Middle Ages, Cram concerned himself with the development of a "right society." He believed that the two greatest obstacles to such a development were "the enormous scale in which everything of late has been cast, . . . and . . . that element in modern democracy which denies essential differences in human character, capacity and potential." In attacking imperialism of scale and "social democracy" Cram was well aware that he was flying in the face of the zeitgeist. "I am," he wrote, "attacking precisely the two institutions which are today . . . held in most conspicuous honour by the majority of people." In this opinion he was no doubt correct.

Imperialism of scale was a theme which Cram wove throughout nearly all his writings. Whether in industry, politics or education, man, Cram believed, had created gross and demeaning institutions. He had developed quantitative rather than qualitative values and had unwittingly loosed a Frankenstein monster. The huge energies man unleashed in the age of coal and iron came, in a short time, to master him. A community of supermen, Cram averred, might be able to master an inhuman scale, but plain men were asking for catastrophe. Mixing his metaphors, he
described the dangers as follows:

The breaking through into the imperial scale is simply a letting in the jungle; walls and palings and stockades, the delicate fabrics of architecture, the clever institutions of law, the thin red line of the army, all melt, crumble, are overcome by the onrush of primordial things, and where once was the white man's city is now the eternal jungle, and the vines and thrusting roots and rank herbage blot out the very memory of a futile civilization, while the monkey and the jackel and the python come again into their heritage.2

Clearly Cram believed that the inhuman scale, the quantitative standard, was a threat—not only to culture—but to civilization itself. He listed numerous "evils" which resulted from this "gross scale of things": large states which exist at the expense of smaller states, huge cities which exceed a manageable population, "division of labour and specialization which degrade men to the level of machine," "the factory system," "high finance and international finance," "capitalism," "trades-unionism and the International," and "standardized education." These, and others, were manifestations of an unwieldy human scale.3

Cram believed that these things were "poison" for the social fabric because they cut man off from his natural associations of family, neighborhood, guild and church. Man should work with those he knows personally, Cram thought. Imperial scale meant "unnatural associations" making man a "cog in a wheel, a thing, a point of potential,
a lonely and numerical unit, instead of a gregarious human animal rejoicing in his friends and companions, and working, playing and quarrelling with them, as God made him and meant him to be and to do." Cram was a passionate believer in neighborhood and natural communities. He hated the "development of 'class consciousness,'" feeling that it destroyed community values.

Recognizing that in a world of "great empires, populous cities, mills and factories and iron-works in their thousands," reverting to a human scale would be difficult, Cram nevertheless felt that there was no alternative. If institutions continued to grow, they would eventually "burst in anarchy and chaos." But the irony was that "all schemes of reform and regeneration . . . [were] infected with the very imperialism in scale that . . . produced the conditions they would redeem." Socialism, Cram contended, was as materialistic as the capitalism it replaced. Most reform designs, Cram believed, were in response to a "false scale in human society." But these designs--Cram mentioned communism but he was critical of others as well--implied the "quantitative standard" like the systems they sought to replace. They "may triumph for a day" but will eventually succumb, victims of having eschewed the medieval principles Cram espoused.

Cram was unsure how to reduce the too cumbersome scale of human society. But he was certain of the goals he
would try to accomplish:

I can only say that I believe the sane and wholesome society of the future will eliminate great cities and great corporations of every sort. It will reverse the whole system of specialization and the segregation and unification of industries and the division of labour. It will build upward from the primary unit of the family, through the neighborhood, to the small, and closely knit, and self-supporting community, and so to the state and the final unifying force which links together a federation of states.  

In short, Cram wrote, he would try to return in principle to the medieval system. This, he believed, was the solution most in conformity with man's nature.

Just as a return to human scale "does not imply any admixture of communism," so, Cram held, it does not mean a retention "of so-called democracy." Cram believed that democracy, as it came to be practiced, meant a belief in uniformity and a practice of leveling. This was, he thought, wrong and destructive. "Before God all men are equal," he proclaimed, and "also they possess immortal souls of equal value." But here, he was adamant, equality should stop. For in every other respect men are unequal, Cram proclaimed, and the "sane" society would recognize this and distribute its rewards on the basis of merit.

Cram thus believed in aristocracy, which he defined as an order of merit. This was consonant with "real democracy" for it was rewarded on the basis of service. Aristocracy, Cram was quick to admit, had in the past degenerated "into an oligarchy of privilege without responsibility," but this
meant that true aristocracy had to be restored, not demeaned.10

Aristocracy had to be restored because a society was much like an individual. Society, thought Cram, has a higher character and a lower; it is the duty of an aristocracy to maintain the "right standards of comparative value," the "ideals of honour, chivalry, [and] courtesy" and to guard "the social organism as a whole from the danger of surrender to false and debased standards, to plausible demagogues, and to mob psychology."11 The more a society succumbed to democracy, Cram maintained, the less likely it was that high standards would be preserved.

Behind Cram's belief in aristocracy based on merit, not privilege, was, as has been noted, a strong conviction about the inequality of men. Based on this conviction, he became a strong ally of those advocating restricted entry into the United States of certain immigrant groups.12 Cram dwelt on inherent human inequality because it determined the plausibility of much of his social critique.

Reduced to essentials, Cram believed that "character-potential" was predetermined. This being the case there was not much that education or environment could do to improve or retard its development. Some groups or races, he thought, have a greater number of individuals with high character than other races and groups. This accounted for the dynamism of Greeks, Jews, Romans, Normans, Franks,
Anglo-Saxons and Celts, as well as for the torpor of groups like the American Indian, Hottentot and Mexican peons. "Beyond a certain point," Cram postulated, these latter groups "are no more subject to the cultural and character-creating influences of education and environment . . . than are the weeds of my garden."

Cram feared lest "scientific materialism" should prevail in a world of such obvious inequality. For, he wrote, "If the contention of the scientific materialist were correct, and the thing that makes man, and that Christians call the immortal soul, were but the result of physical processes of growth and differentiation, then slavery would be justifiable, and exploitation a reasonable and inevitable process." But since each man has an immortal soul, and that of a "Cantonese river-man" is as worth saving as that of a Bishop, there is a necessity, Cram said, for a "higher humanitarianism." This meant that, since all souls are equal, each should be guarded by state, church and law with equal vigilance. The guarantee of equality extends to the "distribution of justice and the protection of law," but there, Cram felt, it should end. If, he admitted, there was evidence of the heritability of acquired characteristics, then present methods might be tolerated in anticipation of the day "when environment, education and heredity [could] accomplish their perfect work." Cram contended, however, that there was no evidence of this, and, he warned,
hewing to the familiar course would bring civilization "down to a level where it is threatened with disaster." There must, he declared, be a new way of doing things.*

Cram contended that the rise of industrialism, probably more than any other single factor, was the cause of the distortions in scale, deplorable labor conditions, and the loss of community which he abhorred. One of the characteristics of the Middle Ages, he asserted, had been the favorable conditions for laborers. The Christian spirit and the guild system created in that period a true fraternal joy in work and accomplishment. But the freedom and joy in work, the "communal sense of brotherhood," dissipated at the end of the Middle Ages because of the disintegration of vital Christianity and the rise of capitalism. Upon the rise of the industrial age, slavery, in fact if not in name, was reimposed on workers. This only began to be ameliorated with the rise of labor unions and the efforts to abolish wage slavery.18

World War I, Cram asserted, put the emancipated laborers in a position to dictate terms to capital. But though the old industrial slavery was rectified, joy did not return to the workplace. "The fact of industrial slavery," Cram maintained, "has been done away with but the sense of the servile condition that attaches to work

* For further discussion of Cram's views on race, see Chapters Four and Eight.
has been retained." The "old joy and satisfaction" of work must be recovered, for if not:

[No reorganization of industrial relations, neither profit-sharing nor shop committees, neither nationalization nor state socialism, neither the abolition of capital, nor soviets nor syndicalism nor the dictatorship of the proletariat will get us anywhere.]

To discover the reasons for this Cram once again returned to a discussion of an inhuman scale, this time as it related to the industrial age.

A prime violator of human scale, for Cram, was bulk production. This came about as a result of the factory system and ended in a search for new markets to absorb the surplus production. Cram maintained that production was no longer intended to satisfy real needs but rather to increase profits. So, he said, there came into existence a system of advertising, designed to convince people of needs which they heretofore did not know they had. By the opening of the twentieth century, this new productive system was predominant and the changes it wrought went far beyond industry and production. The new system, wrote Cram, "moulded and controlled society in all its forms, destroying ideals as old as history, reversing values, confusing issues and wrecking man's powers of judgement." The new industrial system, in Cram's opinion, did two especially pernicious things: it destroyed the unit of human scale by producing in bulk and for profit, and it
destroyed the nobility and joy of work. Moreover, the new system resulted in social transformations of staggering proportions—moving civilization further and further away from the "right society" of the medieval model. Several of the most significant changes were an "alarming drift toward cities," a "segregation of industries in certain cities and regions," a "minute division of labour and intensive specialization," an "abnormal growth of a true proletariat or non-landholding class," and a "flooding of the country by cheap labour drawn from backward communities and from people of low race-value."\textsuperscript{21} Corresponding to the rise of these factors, Cram thought, had been an increased class consciousness with the risk of conflict, an "artificially stimulated covetousness" for luxuries which tended to erode fundamental values, and the production for profit.

This last, production for profit, and especially the advertising system which fostered it, came in for particularly harsh criticism from Cram. The new industrial age, he proclaimed, turned on its head the "ancient doctrine that the demand must produce the supply." In its place was substituted the notion that the supply must create the demand. Cram believed that this was a major cause of "our industrial ills," and that because advertising was the vehicle which propelled this system, it must be condemned. The following indicates the venom with which Cram criticized advertising:
Advertising is bad in itself as the support of and strength of a bad institution, but its guilt does not stop here. So plausible is it, so essential to the very existence of the contemporary regime, so knit up with all the commonest affairs of life, so powerful in its organization and broad in its operations, it has poisoned, and continues to poison, the minds of men so that the headlong process of losing all sense of comparative values is accelerated, while every instinctive effort at recovery and readjustment is nullified.\textsuperscript{22}

To further make his point, Cram quoted the director of an advertising firm who said that "the future of the world depends on advertising. Advertising is the salvation of civilization . . . ." This prompted Cram to refine his position further. The type of mind now ascendant in the world was, said Cram, "curiously subservient to the written word." And without a true sense of values or effective leadership this mind risked being "easily swayed by every wind of doctrine." Because good and evil were always contending in the world and because "the forces of evil . . . are notoriously ingenious in making the worse appear the better cause," the true implications of advertising, Cram thought, were frightening.\textsuperscript{23} He wrote that, "as the support of our present industrial and economic system, [advertising] is perhaps the strongest and most subtle force of which we must take account."\textsuperscript{24}
CHAPTER FOUR:
EDUCATION, LEADERSHIP, AND RACE

Given Cram's convictions about the nature of man, particularly his beliefs that some groups are inherently less capable than others and that acquired characteristics are not heritable, it is not surprising that he should have joined other critics in condemning the American system of education.¹ Education in America underwent fundamental change during the course of Cram's lifetime. Before the Civil War, and even for several decades thereafter, formal education in the United States was fairly elitist. Some effort was made, depending on the area of the country, to provide universal primary education, but secondary, and especially college, education was reserved for the few who were most promising and could afford it.²

Around the turn of the century progressive reformers, having absorbed reform Darwinism and selected ideas of Jefferson, began to push for universal popular education. Reform Darwinists, rejecting the laissez faire doctrines of the social Darwinists, believed that man could and should promote the evolutionary process. They believed that man could be an active agent of progress and that education could be the savior of democracy. Jefferson had postulated that democracy depended to a large degree on the absorption of adequate information and, thus, democracy
demanded an educated public. Reformers of democracy at the turn of the century demanded a more inclusive system of education. The result was an explosion of universal popular education.  

The people who encouraged this expansion Cram called "protagonists of salvation through education." The system they espoused sought to admit as many students as possible and to make available electives, from which the students could choose those courses best suited to help them prepare for life. About this Cram asked:

I am curious to inquire at this time if education such as this does, as a matter of fact, educate, and how far it may be relied upon as a corrective for present defects in society; or rather, first of all, whether education of this, or of any sort, may be looked on as a sufficient saving force, and whether general education, instead of being extended should not be curtailed, or rather safeguarded and restricted.

Writing after the Great War, Cram asked yet again if a great hope of modernism, in this case popular education, should not be scrapped as failing to fulfill the objectives of its supporters.

Cram was convinced that a modern characteristic corresponding to the rise of popular education was a decline in morality and paucity of leaders. He acknowledged that the blame for this could not all be placed on education, but, as he put it, these conditions gave "some basis for estimating the efficiency of our educational theory and practice." Cram asked three questions of education:
(a) Are we justified in pinning our faith in ultimate social salvation to free, secular, and compulsory education carried to the furthest possible limits; (b) if not, then what precisely is the function of formal education; and (c) this being determined, is our present method adequate, and, if not, how should it be modified?  

To the first question he answered no. Each person, he believed, has limits which cannot "be extended by human agencies." Unless an individual shows capacity and motivation, then government should not make school compulsory. Cram felt that "our educational system should, so far as it is free and compulsory, normally end with the high school grade." Free education past that point should not be offered except to those showing exceptional drive and ability.

To the second question regarding the "function of formal education," Cram answered thus: ["The function of education] is primarily the fostering and development of the character-potential in each individual." Training should be a part of education but the primary function, he believed, should be the development of character. At one point he wrote:

The one thing man exists to accomplish is character; not worldly success and eminence in any line, not the conquest of nature (though some have held otherwise), not even "adaptation to environment" in the argot of last century science, but character; the assimilation and fixing in personality of high and noble qualities of thought and deed, the furtherance, in a word, of the eternal sacramental process of redemption of matter through the operation of spiritual forces."
Two things are clear from this quotation: that, as in nearly everything else, sacramental philosophy was the basis for Cram's idea of character, and also, in rejecting "adaptation to environment" he was objecting to the very basis of progressive education as expounded by John Dewey and others.\textsuperscript{12}

The answer to the last question was obvious; Cram did not believe that the system of education in the United States was adequate. It has, he said, "dealt with and through one thing alone, and that is the intellect," but it has neglected those things, like religion and fine arts, which develop character. Latin, Greek and ancient history were either minimized or eliminated altogether from the curriculum. Cram held that these and other traditional subjects were essential for the development of character.

One modification that Cram recommended was to place a much greater emphasis on religion in education. He wrote, "that there can be no education which works primarily for character building, that is not interpenetrated at every point by definite, concrete religion and the practice of religion."\textsuperscript{13} In order to do this Cram proposed that public funds be disbursed to parochial schools so long as those schools complied "with certain purely educational requirements established and enforced by the state."\textsuperscript{14} Not only would this promote religion as well as education, he felt, but it would provide a variety of cur-
ricula. He thought that there was "no more fatal error in education" than standardization which he believed had become a fad.\textsuperscript{15}

Cram suggested that curricula, up to and including high school, should contain less emphasis on science and more on history and English.\textsuperscript{16} History, he declared, should not be taught as a succession of dates but rather as "life expressed in terms of romance." Exact documentation was an unimportant element of history. One learned more about the real meaning of historical epochs from legends than from "scientific" histories. Wrote Cram:
"The history of man is one great dramatic romance, and so used it may be made perhaps the most stimulating agency in education as character development." But, he continued, "The deadly enemy of good, sound history is scientific historical criticism. The true history is romantic tradition; the stimulating thing, the tale that makes the blood leap, the pictorial incident that raises up in an instant the luminous vision of some great thing that once was."\textsuperscript{17}

Extending this thought, Cram proposed a series of books, written for elementary school and high school readers, which would include "the lives and deeds" of great men. Whether the stories of these men were based on documentation or legend was of no importance to Cram, just as long as they provided examples of "honour and chivalry, of compassion and generosity, of service and self-sacrifice and
courtesy" which students could emulate.\textsuperscript{18} Much of what Cram had in mind by history could be taught "through a judicious use of the opportunities offered instructors in English."\textsuperscript{19} "The object of teaching English," he wrote, "is to get young people to like good things . . . ." Cram disapproved of most of the older methods of teaching English. Analytical, grammarian or philological methods were being taught "as though English . . . was for the production of a community of highly specialized teachers."\textsuperscript{20} But for the average person, Cram held that "example is better than precept" and that "practice makes perfect."\textsuperscript{21} Reading would instill a habit of good grammar in speaking and writing. Therefore, Cram's English program would consist of little more than extensive reading of the great literature of the language.

Along with a proper teaching of history and English, Cram felt that education should stress the value of beauty and art. It has already been noted that Cram thought beauty should be one of man's most exalted values. Also, it has been noted that he believed the nineteenth century to be one of the blackest periods, with respect to beauty, in history. He thought this in part because art had been separated from life and become the domain of the artist who often used it as a "form of purely personal expression."\textsuperscript{22} The artist became a being apart from the rest of mankind. Like the separation of religion from life, Cram
held this to be a disaster. Therefore, he said, "it is . . . a problem of which formal education must take cognizance." Ugliness is a corrupter of youth Cram asserted.

Youth is beaten upon at many points by things that not only look ugly, but are, and as in compassion we are bound to offer some new agency to fill a lack, so in self-defense we must take thought as to how the evil influence of contemporaneousness is to be nullified and its results corrected. The "new agency" Cram offered was the improvement of the physical beauty of educational institutions. "The ordinary type of school-house," he wrote, "is, in its barren ugliness, a very real outrage on decency." School buildings and surroundings at all levels, Cram believed, should be made more beautiful. This would do more than any study of art theory or art appreciation.

Cram was no educational reactionary along the lines of Albert Jay Nock, wishing to return to an ironclad curriculum of nothing but Latin, Greek and formal logic. On the other hand he was no fan of the extent to which the elective system had gone, calling it "one of those curious phenomena, both humorous and tragic, that grew out of the evolutionary philosophy and the empirical democracy of the nineteenth century." But he did not want to eliminate electives entirely. His ideal curriculum was a blend of electives and compulsory courses.

Actually Cram tended to deemphasize curricula in favor
of the educational experience. He wrote:

It is the living in a school or a college that counts more than a curriculum; the association with others, students and teachers, the communal life, the common adventures and scrapes, the common sports, yes, and as it will be sometime, the common worship.28

Cram wanted the educational experience to duplicate his idea of community. And he doubted that the student could experience community in a "university with five or ten thousand students all jostling together in one inchoate mass." College education, he thought, should be carried on in groups of "not more than 150 students."29 In this way the "character that denotes the Christian gentlemen" might properly be instilled.30

Cram did not believe that the failure of civilization could be blamed entirely on education.31 But he did think that those who expected education to deliver the world from its problems were deluding themselves. The educational system was based, he opined, on the same standards which characterized the rest of the modern world. In effect, Cram thought that the educational system which evolved around the turn of the century in the United States was part of the problem, not part of the solution. Wrote Cram: "The most intensive educational period ever known had issue in the most preposterous war in history, initiated by the most highly and generally educated of all peoples."32 For Cram this was all the evidence needed to
rebute the "protagonists of salvation through education."

Cram believed that another characteristic of the early twentieth century was the scarcity of leaders. Never, he lamented, has there been such an obvious demand for leaders and such a woeful lack of supply. The generations just preceding had produced leaders of great stature. Men such as Metternich, Disraeli, Bismarck, Gladstone and Lincoln were, whether one liked them or not, dominant leaders. Cram was loath to compare this august group with the leaders he observed during the opening decades of this century. For not only were there fewer leaders, but they were of inferior quality. Cram thought that to compare leaders of the years 1900 to 1920 with leaders of the previous generation, say a comparison between Bryan and Cleveland, was enough to support this argument.

The leadership shortage was not merely regrettable, it was alarming. "The soul of sane man demands leadership," Cram opined, and "without strong leadership democracy is a menace; without strong leadership culture and even civilization will pass away." When the leader of the "old type," the natural leader of "vision and will and personal quality" does not emerge, then the mob creates a leader in its own image. In this category Cram placed such men as Ramsey MacDonald, Lenin and LaFollette. They, and others like them, were, he wrote:

... the synthetic product of a mechanical process
of self-expression on the part of groups of men without leaders, but who must have them and so make shift to precipitate them in material form out of the undifferentiated mass of their common inclinations, passions and prejudices.\textsuperscript{36}

Surveying the leadership of the world from 1900 to 1920, Cram found it a sorry lot. In America at the outbreak of World War I there were, he said, "three potential leaders": President Wilson, Theodore Roosevelt, and William Jennings Bryan.\textsuperscript{37} Shortly after the war began, Bryan "retired into an oblivion only broken in the beginning by sheer force of ingratiating oratory." Roosevelt failed to renew the public's confidence which was, Cram believed, more the public's fault than Roosevelt's. Wilson was, thought Cram, a real leader "of the old and almost forgotten type." He delivered "some of the finest verbal pronouncements of high principle the Republic has thus far heard."\textsuperscript{38} But Wilson, Cram feared, was the exception which proved the rule. He was conspicuous because of a dearth of great leaders around him.

Cram blamed the lack of leaders on the democracy of the modern world. Ideal democracy, he said, which described the politics of the Middle Ages, had an aristocratic component which ensured a supply of leaders. But there was no longer an aristocratic component to democracy, the result being a failure of democratic government to create "leaders of an intellectual or moral capacity above
that of the general mass of voters." Men who have leadership ability, Cram contended, seek the field of big business for there at least they find outlet for their talent if not their moral sense. Cram summed up the predicament this way:

The world no longer wants or knows how to use statesmen, philosophers, artists, religious prophets and shepherds, but rather "captains of industry," directors of "high finance," "efficiency experts," shrewd manipulators of popular opinion through journalism, or of popular votes through primaries, political connections, and the legislative chambers of representative government. Here also the demand creates the supply.

In the context of our failed public leadership, Cram again raised the problem of education. The result of secular, vocational, popular education was, he believed, a diminution of character. The new education was designed to produce men "for the sort of life that was universal during the elapsed years of the present century": lives in business, applied science and finance. But preparation for these fields did not, Cram repeated again and again, provide the kind of character development needed for true national leadership.

So two important factors in the decline of leadership were "democracy in government" and "democracy in education." They were instrumental, he lamented, in establishing a "reign of mediocrity." But he postulated yet a third element as a cause of the leadership decline. This ele-
ment he described as "the democratization of society by the breaking down of the just and normal barriers of race."\textsuperscript{42}

Cram maintained that it was a "dogma" of modern democracy that there should be no discrimination based on differences in "race, blood or status." Therefore, there should be no restrictions on immigration based on race nor on "absolute freedom of union in marital relations and the legal procreation of children."\textsuperscript{43} The justification for this, according to Cram, was a "superstition" of the nineteenth century which held that "human progress was both automatic and constant, through the acquisition of new qualities by education, the force of environment, and 'natural selection.'"\textsuperscript{44} Cram conceded that if this "superstition" were "demonstrably true," the arguments against the upholding of race values in marriage and in favor of free immigration would be substantially vindicated:

If character is determined by education and environment, and is transmitted in substance generation after generation, the question is manifestly only one of enough education, of the right kind, and distributed with sufficient generality. Mongol and Slovak, Malay and Hottentot stand on the same plane with Latin and Saxon and Celt, for it is merely a question of education, environment and continued breeding; good is cumulative, automatically transmitted, and time is the answer to all.\textsuperscript{45}

Cram thought, however, that this "superstition" was demonstrably untrue. The "universal state education" sys-
tem, based on this belief, not surprisingly, he believed, failed to produce "appreciable results." "Native character," Cram insisted, had remained "untouched." Moreover, he said, the evidence is against the notion that what a father acquires the son inherits. Cram unburdened himself of the belief that "it is commonplace ... that the American-born son of the foreign-born immigrant of a decadent race" does not show, "in general," an advance over his progenitor. Rather, "however great his educational acquirement," there is "a retrogression and a return to type."46

With the breakdown of the nineteenth century "superstitions," and "the doctrine of the omnipotence of education and environment fall[en] to the ground," Cram believed that the way was clear to see the free movement of peoples and the "unrestrained mating amongst men and women of alien racial qualities" as a nearly unparalleled tragedy.47 Cram declared that, "the democratic principle of the free movement, intercourse and mating of peoples of every known blood, race and status can only appear the blackest and most imbecile crime in the human calendar." The result can only be a "universal mongrelism and the consequent end of culture and civilization."48

These convictions might have led Cram to a belief in eugenics but for his religious faith. As noted, he believed that, "The appeal of the eugenist ... is dangerous
when carried too far—as it generally is—for it leaves out of account the element of the soul." Also, Cram was convinced that the efforts to produce "higher types" would ultimately fail because the products would "inevitably" retrogress "back to the normal type." But though his religious beliefs and intellectual convictions prevented Cram from adopting eugenics as a solution to the "mongrelization of the race," neither did they offer a plausible solution to the problem. For example, he did believe that though education and environment cannot produce character in a person with no innate capacity, spiritual energy can. Spiritual energy, a kind of divine gift, is the explanation for the appearance of people of character within a depraved or mongrel race. There is no "scientific" explanation for such people, Cram believes; rather, they are a result of divine will. This divine will, this spiritual energy is "the only sure instrument of victory over the gravitational pull of a predetermined natural handicap." But, Cram lamented, spiritual energy was not sufficient to lift an entire race out of its stupor. There comes a time, he feared, when the "degenerative forces" become so great that even "the energy of the spiritual factor is negative" and the individual or race slides into oblivion. Cram thus delivered a counsel of despair. "Democracy of method," he wrote, had "betrayed society, involving it in a profound mediocrity which now confronts that fate which always fol-
lows identical progress in other categories of the organic world, reversion to type and ultimate sterility."

The best solution to this "blackest and most imbecile crime," Cram believed, was a revision of our attitude toward immigration. "Whole classes, and even races" must be excluded, he thought. Just as important, "we must control and in some cases prohibit, the mating of various racial stocks." Toward this objective Cram wanted to end "the practice of changing, by law, one race-name for another." This was insidious, he argued, because it made it difficult to guard "against the adulteration that has gone so far towards substituting the mongrel for the pure racial type." Although Cram didn't provide much justification for this last recommendation, presumably he was upset by the transformation of immigrant names from, as he put it, "Treibitsch into 'Lincoln.'" This served to camouflage true racial identity while the "mongrelization" proceeded undetected. If racial differences were as glaring as Cram believed, it is hard to see how they could be hidden by a name change.
CHAPTER FIVE:
THE FALL FROM "HIGH DEMOCRACY"

It was Cram's thesis that there once existed a "High Democracy" which, as a result of forces inherent in modernism, had degenerated into a "Low Democracy." "High Democracy," thought Cram, existed for a "few centuries during the Middle Ages," but unfortunately moderns came to disparage that high estate by referring to it as "Monarchical Feudalism." "High Democratic" theory was held by America's founding fathers, Cram opined, but, fearing "any intellectual commerce with democracy," they denominated their effort an Aristocratic Republic. Their fears were shortly realized when:

[w]ithin a generation decomposition of the body of their wisdom set in, to continue by process of mathematical progression until life had departed and a new and, so to speak, fungoid growth, had insensibly taken its place.

Ideal democracy or "High Democracy," of either the Middle Ages or of the Founders, had been reduced by the Jacksonian period to a "fungoid growth."

Modern democracy, Cram wrote, had little relationship "to that ideal estate" which inspired the people of the Middle Ages and the American founding fathers. The modern variety of democracy, Cram avowed, is based on three disastrous doctrines, mentioned in previous chapters: (1) progressive evolution which assumed inevitable advance,
(2) "free, secular, universal and compulsory education" as the guarantee of such an advance, and (3) the theory "that all men are created free and equal." Associated with these doctrines was the conviction that the franchise is an "inalienable right, inherent in man as man," and the dogma that "the majority was practically sure to be more nearly right on all possible subjects than any minority"; the majority decision, right or wrong, must "implicitly be accepted and obeyed."³

Such was the state to which "High Democracy" had been reduced. Or, using Cram's words, "This was the bastard form of an originally sane and fine idea." Writing in the 1930s, Cram saw several of the European countries as so devastated by modern democracy that they had to abolish it "as a public nuisance." The United States had not come to such a pass because it had "a great and preservative Fundamental Law" which though "vitiated by ill-considered amendments" still resisted the worst facets of democracy.⁴ But Cram believed strongly that changes must be made in the American system to avert further disintegration and collapse. He wrote: "The really vital and insistent question today is just such drastic alteration, in what it is to consist and how it is to be accomplished."⁵

Acknowledging a debt to many critics, Cram paid special tribute to Hillaire Belloc, G. K. Chesterton, Oswald Spengler, and José Ortega y Gasset for accurately
diagnosing the condition of modern democracy. However, he believed that most of the works of these men "might not unjustly be called defeatist." They saw only two alternatives, communism or dictatorship, both of which they despised. One of the refreshing characteristics of Cram was that he tried not to give in to defeatism. With hope he declared:

With the great model of our original Constitution before us, and with the mental ingenuity of our inventors and discoverers turned to more really creative concerns than have been their possession during the past fifty years, we surely ought, by taking thought, to find a third alternative to Communism and Dictatorship.

The "democracy" for which the Great War was fought was, Cram held, not much more than a hundred years old. And, based as it was on the doctrines mentioned above, it was not democracy but really "no more than a pseudo-democracy, a sort of changeling foisted on a naive and credulous public." Since recent history offered no model for democracy, Cram asked the questions: "Has there been a true democracy?" and "If so, what are its distinguishing marks?"

As an introduction, Cram listed those things that democracy was not. "It is not universal suffrage, the parliamentary system of government, direct legislation or . . . the initiative and referendum." The form of government did not, for Cram, make a democracy. He believed that "there have been and are 'democracies' that
are tyrannical, oppressive and destructive of legitimate human liberty"; and "there have been and are 'monarchies' that stand for and enforce the basic principles of the higher democracy." Democracy does not mean the "abolition of status" nor "the elimination of grades or rank in the social organism." The right type of aristocracy and monarchy is "not inconsistent with [the democratic] ethos." However, Cram admitted that the aristocracies "built on material power and the monarchies that followed the end of the Middle Ages" were not consistent "with high democratic principle." Because a polity adhered to the mechanics of democracy, did not mean for Cram that it practiced "High Democracy."

Having established what democracy is not, Cram gave a terse description of what it is. "Democracy is," he wrote, "that form of social organization which endeavors to assure to man Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness." For those who would think this axiomatic, Cram explained that "all democratic or pseudo-democratic communities have either completely lost, or are by way of doing so, power on the part of the individual so to live his life as to make possible the achievements of these ends." This sorry state, Cram contended, was held in common by Italy, Germany, Mexico, the Soviet Union, and the United States. The "social, economic, and political estate" reached by these countries (most would no doubt have been astonished at the
company the United States was keeping in this regard) was "the antithesis of a true democratic polity and state." Where, Cram asked, did "some of these antitheses exist" in the United States?

The first condition mentioned as being antithetical to democracy was that most Americans no longer had an independent means of livelihood. A century ago, Cram wrote in the 1930s, "the American people . . . were free, independent, self-supporting, self-respecting citizens, owning their own land, practicing their own craft or trade; in a word [they were] free men." But that condition had changed by the 1930s. At that time Cram protested that "seventy percent of the populace [were] proletarians." "They had no means of support except the sale of their mental or manual services." They were in short, Cram believed, "unfree men." For a democracy to have a "firm foundation," he continued, at least sixty percent of the people must live on their own land.* The restoration of land ownership to a large percentage of people, in order

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* Cram was a believer in the subsistence homesteads proposed by the Roosevelt administration. This was a way to return people to the land--essential for the preservation of democracy--but it would also solve the unemployment problem, Cram believed, which was caused, he said, by technological improvements that reduced the number of workers necessary to produce a given amount of goods.
to return to a "truly democratic State" was, Cram thought, the only alternative to "the corporative, Totalitarian State, or to that state socialism which is the negation of all democracy."  

Another antithesis of real democracy, Cram believed, was the development of political parties. Partisan divisions, he said, were "no essential part of sound democratic doctrine." They were instead devices "to implement a democratic doctrine that was rotting as it ripened."  

Cram considered it a disaster that political parties so quickly developed in the American system. He was not convinced apparently by Madison's view of contending factions, which held that contending groups were essential to a republic, because they acted as a natural preventative to the acquisition of excessive power by any one group, individual or region.  

Cram lamented that partisan division meant "permanent warfare for office between the factions, a generally regular oscillation between two powers ... which meant a complete lack of continuity in policy, domestic and foreign, and an unwholesome state of feverishness and uncertainty in society." But, he said, America was in rather good shape compared to the parliamentary systems of Europe (except Britain). There the "six to twelve personal and feudal followings," which is how Cram denoted the political parties, "finds its parallel only in Alice in Wonderland." He wrote that it all would be
highly amusing but for the fact that it had such tragic consequences: "This three ring circus of Continental parliamentary government was in itself enough to explain, if not to justify, the advent of Mussolini [and] Hitler."\(^{19}\)

Cram maintained that three things were essential to sound democracy (or "High Democracy"): "abolition of privilege; equality of opportunity; and utilization of ability." Needless to say he did not believe that "the application of these principles in the Modern Age" had been epidemic.\(^{20}\) He believed that privilege in the modern world was mostly "bought by money, attained through "control of natural resources or the means of production, or [through] any monopoly that is gained by force of any kind." He saw privilege as emanating, not for merit, but from an aristocracy "dominated by . . . money lenders, tycoons of big business, cinema stars, and publishers of amoral (and immoral) newspapers." Clearly this was not the aristocracy of the "High Democracy" of the Middle Ages, let alone of the American Founding Fathers. Cram's idea of equality of opportunity was that the "potential inherent in every man must be given opportunity to develop to the full." Modern education was condemned by Cram as hindering rather than facilitating that opportunity. Continuing education beyond a rudimentary stage was, he believed, "worse than useless" for most people; tempting the unfit was "unfair, even cruel, to them and to those
who could do better." Modern graduates were "spoiled for
doing the sort of thing they were by nature fitted to do."
They often "crowd[ed] out those of real ability . . . or
. . . join[ed] the cohorts of the white-collar unemployed." This, thought Cram, was the "bankrupting of the
idea of equality of opportunity." Closely associated with
this, he thought, was the problem of "utilization of
ability." "Democracy should mean," Cram averred, "that
every man would find and hold that place where his inher­
ent and developed capacity can find its clearest field and
where all that he is can best be used for the good of
society, the community and the larger synthesis of the race
itself." 21 But unfortunately, because of the "transvalu­
ation of values," employment under modern democratic
government goes by favor. The spoils system, he insisted,
was as prevalent in his own day as in the time of Andrew
Jackson. Favor worked not only in government but was rife
throughout society. Ability had to be compromised or
prostituted in most areas of life.

Today professors and teachers fight for their
scholastic lives against bigotry and political
tyrranny in high places; potential statesmen must
become party politicians or must hire themselves
out to money or big business to get a hearing;
Hollywood seduces the actor, the writer, the
artist into selling his soul if he would gain
recognition, fame and competence: the Hearstified
press reduces to the lower depths, the literary
and moral standards of men who would follow the
high profession of letters; the radio and broad­
casting lay their heavy deleterious hands on all
forms of the creative instinct. 21
Clearly he believed that life under a modern democracy was not promising for the development of ability. Cram looked out at democracy from the vantage point of the great depression and he found it wanting. It did not ensure life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Instead it meant that fewer and fewer people owned their own land and means of subsistence; political power was fought over by political parties, a system which among other things, disrupted the tranquility hoped for in a "High Democracy;" privilege was granted on the basis of power; the attempt to promote equality of opportunity was grounded on a false idea of equality and ended by denying opportunity to many; partly as a result of this, people could not develop their ability to the benefit of themselves and the community. What had happened, Cram wanted to know, to a fine idea? What had happened, Cram stated bluntly, was that "Jeffersonian democracy had been superseded by Jacksonian democracy." The idea that these two were the same he found humorous and a "gauge . . . of the mental calibre of the general run of human beings." Of course, the ascension of Jackson marked simply a "local transformation" and was illustrative only of a process which happened over and over again in history. Cram wrote that, "the ethos of what I call "High Democracy" manifested itself from time to time throughout all history," as did the ethos of "false" democracy.
"High Democracy" or Jeffersonian democracy was most conspicuous during the Catholic Middle Ages. The political theory of the Middle Ages, the underpinning of "high Democracy" according to Cram, held that "all men are free and equal before God and the Law." Equally important was "spiritual liberty, the freedom of the spirit of man before man-made law." "The chief object of the State was the ensuring of justice for the individual and between man and man." Political authority assumed a moral as well as a legal obligation. There was no power to "rule wrongly."^24

It was the prerogative of the sovereign power to declare the law, after consultation with the wisest and best men of the state, but no law so promulgated could be held as valid unless it was freely accepted by the people themselves. The civil relation was the result of a definite contract between two free agents; lord and vasal, king and people, seigneur and serf; if one party violated this contract, the other was absolved from allegiance.^25

Of course, Cram said, this was "perfectly good democratic doctrine, if you are speaking of the old democracy," "High Democracy" or Jeffersonian democracy. However, if you are speaking of the "new democracy, its application is less intimate and exact."^26

These principles of "High Democracy" began "with the Renaissance and the Reformation . . . to fade from men's consciences." Again, to quote Cram, as the Middle Ages waned:

Religious sanctions were increasingly ignored, the rapid growth of commerce and banking, the influx
of the fabulous gold of the Indies, the development of arbitrary political power, the self-satisfied contempt for what were held to be the "barbarous dark ages," soon extinguished the flame of the old Christian ideals. The Protestant Revolution, with its shattering of the Church and its emphasis on individual authority, private judgement and rugged individualism, broke down the unity of society. The peasantry became enslaved, independent craftsmen were forced into the position of wage earners, and society found itself again sharply divided into two classes: the omnipotent rich, and the oppressed and degraded poor.27

Such was the regression of "High Democracy" from the Middle Ages to the eve of the age of revolution. The decline of "High Democracy" from the Middle Ages to the modern period was hastened, Cram asserted, by the Reformation, the Renaissance and the Age of Revolution. The Reformation and the Renaissance, because they were imbued with those values mentioned above, facilitated the decline from "High Democracy" and made inevitable the Age of Revolution.

Cram deplored the tendency to revolution but he also had sympathy with it. After all, he wrote, "the unrighteous and unwholesome conditions" created by the breakdown of "High Democracy" could not last. "Power, wealth and autocracy dig their own graves," and by the middle of the eighteenth century, the power of the autocracy having weakened, "the long oppressed commons burst through the crumbling shell of wealth, dominion and privilege."28 Cram thought that the "proletarian revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries" were justified. He summarized the
problem thus:

An actual process of enslavement had been in process ever since the liquidation of the medieval system in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The small, independent farmers, then as ever in an wholesome civil polity, had been largely dispossessed, becoming unfree agricultural labourers, or, more often, paupers; the craft-guilds had become unionized with the same result, i.e., the members, once free and autonomous, were now simply wage earners; the merchant guilds were transformed into corporations, and over all was the dominating power of the new banking system and high finance, fast becoming international.

Politically, the "limited and responsible monarchies" of the Middle Ages "had been superseded by Renaissance tyrannies and absolutism." Compared with the degraded state of the worker described above, the worker in the Middle Ages was, Cram thought, relatively well-off. "He could have his own sense of dignity and self-respect and he was not exploited as is the town-dwelling, wage-earning proletarian of today." Beaten down from his previously high estate, the worker carried within him the seeds of revolution.

The new slavery of the post-Middle Ages, Cram believed, changed the character of the mass of men. They became, as a result of the new conditions, "penurious, crafty, selfish, jealous, envious, covetous and instinct with a dull rage against the privileged few who kept them in subjection." Again, Cram found this understandable. They could not have been otherwise for a "sense of justice is implicit
in man and for them there was no justice." When the early failures to exact justice were unsuccessful, they became "embittered . . . still more and when at last, three centuries later, they began to get the whip-hand they acted according to what they had been made." This sullen mass of men, Cram explained, split into two groups when finally they got the "whip-hand": "the proletarian mob and the new class of industrial, commercial and financial bosses." These bosses seized the power "from the fast degenerating aristocracy," and they reimposed servitude on the "proletarian mob" just as the world was about to undergo "the greatest social revolution in human history." This was, of course, the Industrial Revolution, made possible by the use of coal and iron. And made possible also by, as Cram described it, a "portentous combination of the unveiling of a vast and dynamic energy and the releasing of exactly the type of man to exploit it." The "emergent mass of humanity" just discussed, freed "from the prison house of its long suppression" and complete with the new type of character created therefrom was poised to seize the power of coal and iron and shape a new world. Part of the mass turned into "exploiter, profiteer and ultimate boss," the others were "easily . . . regimented and again bound in slavery, no longer fixed in serfage to the land but in equal serfage to the machine." The new type of
man demanded by the age of coal and iron was:

... a type ambitious, daring and courageous, but self-seeking, ruthless and cold-blooded; shrewd, crafty and unscrupulous, covetous of wealth and greedy for power; unconscious of any religious sanctions except those of Calvinistic determinism, predestination and salvation by faith; constrained by no moral conditions save those of the jungle.34

Cram believed that the men who launched and controlled the industrial age were of low descent; they were "base-born upstarts whose greed for wealth and power had been inculcated through the ill-gotten spoils of suppressed monasteries and field enclosures."35 They were men made low by the disintegration of the Middle Ages and the waning of the inherent justice which that period represented. Having lost that sense of justice, there was nothing to prevent the kind of labor conditions prevalent in the Industrial Age. Those conditions were a point of particular indignation for Cram. Of those conditions, he wrote:

It is doubtful if the life of Moorish galley slaves was more miserable. Certainly nothing is recorded in the annals of Greece, Rome or the Middle Ages that is comparable. Miners and mill hands slaved under living and labor conditions that have left a black blot on the history of England and the industrial revolution. Working hours ran from fourteen a day upward. Women in the mines, crawling on all fours, dragged carts of coal by a chain that passes from a leather yoke between their legs. Children of five or six years were regularly forced up narrow chimney flues to dig out the soot, sometimes getting stuck and dying in the operation. Boys ten or twelve years old were hanged for stealing a loaf of bread to keep from starving. The unforgivable sin was the sin against property.36
These conditions awakened the consciences of some, enabling the "parliamentary action that went far towards ameliorating the condition of the labouring classes." This was to the good, Cram acknowledged, but "simultaneously two other movements came into being; unionization of labour and the extension of the electoral franchise." The result was the increasing control of government by the proletarian class. The sequence varied from country to country, but basically Cram saw the nineteenth century as the period when the proletarian class took control of democracy. Though this may have been historically and morally justified, it still meant that the development of democracy in the modern world was "diametrically opposite" the "High Democracy" of Cram's ideal. Cram believed that the dictatorship of the proletariat was a reality in western democracies.

As mentioned above Cram was basically in sympathy with modern revolutionary impulses. He cited the often horrible labor conditions to which he attributed the disintegration of the ethos of the Middle Ages, the consequent development of low character by the mass of men, and the rise of the age of coal and iron. Revolutions, he wrote, "were probably the only way in which [such] bad conditions could be remedied." But, he continued, the revolutionists should have stopped once such laudable ends as the overthrow of a "decadent reigning house," the chastisement of a worn out
aristocracy, and the restoration of land to a dispossessed peasantry had been accomplished. When the revolutionaries "exceeded their mandate," and "fabricated a democratic device which had no reasonable relation to reality," they ended by guaranteeing "the return of the old ills against which they had contended."\textsuperscript{40} Cram asserted that the revolutions from the French to the Spanish of his own day, were proletarian revolutions subject to the reversals mentioned above. The American Revolution was an exception, "an upper class movement, initiated and directed by landed and commercial interests," and therefore did not conform to the pattern of proletarian revolutions.\textsuperscript{41}

The failure of democratic revolutions was consistent and predictable, Cram believed. "Since the French Revolution," he wrote, "and with perhaps two exceptions, no democratic republic that has succeeded a democratic monarchy, has added any valuable quality to the life of those peoples on whom it has been imposed."\textsuperscript{42} The reason for this, Cram held, is that men are unequal, and any attempt to promote equality beyond an equality before God and the law, has undesirable results. As Cram proclaimed, "the radical slogan, now current, is based on fundamental reality. 'From each according to his ability. To each according to his needs.'" Cram believed that a government based on majority rule would become "a reflection of the neolithic mind." The standard of modern democracy Cram
The idea of mass standards, emanating from mass man is central to Cram's convictions about the failure of democracy. Bluntly put, Cram thought modern democracy was not good because it was based on mass support, mass opinions and mass standards. And just as water cannot rise above its source, just so democracy cannot rise above its source: mass values. This was the heart of Cram's criticism and it was persuasive if one agreed with him about the inherent potentialities of the mass of men. In perhaps his most famous essay, Cram asked the question: Why don't we behave like human beings? His answer: most men are not human beings; they are rather neolithic beings, not having reached, nor having the ability to reach the state of human beings. In every age, out of this neolithic mass, there emerge human beings. They are created as if by divine spark. They emerge and determine the course of an age. They are the leaders who push civilization and culture to great heights. But though they emerge from the neolithic mass, they are not of it. Thus, mass man contains the raw material from which human beings emerge. From this we can understand clearly Cram's loathing for politicians and his craving for leaders. He decried politicians because they were merely mass men risen to lead other mass men. This being the case, he believed,
electoral politics were bound to fail because they yielded politicians, not leaders.

The basic dynamic of the modern age was, Cram believed, the rise to world domination of the neolithic or mass man. At first this was facilitated through violence and revolution, but later in the nineteenth century it was "pushed forward, implanted and established through the facile and irresistible power of the new democracy." The most deplorable result of this new world was a transformation of values from a qualitative to a quantitative standard. The "tabloid type of man controls all things," Cram lamented. Believing that his age was "fundamentally unique," he endeavored once more to discover its nature.45

Cram wrote that in the modern world there were "two millstones . . . grinding ponderously, steadily, and with increasing momentum." One stone was made up of "organized financial, industrial and commercial power."46 Explaining his metaphor Cram continued:

The energy that drives these grinding stones is organized greed, individual and corporate; the lubricant is organized power, financial, social, political; the brake that might act as control is an organized social sense that is now inoperative, its place being taken by an unorganized personal and social lethargy superinduced by that "rugged individualism" that has lost the sense of communal ideals, methods and basic values. The upper stone represents some thousands of individuals controlling, directly or indirectly, eighty percent of the wealth of the nation; the lower a few million controlling nothing but an implicit power to throw the machinery out of gear, split the upper stone
into fragments, and disrupt society by the threat, and ultimately by the use of force: physical, economic or political.47

Between these two stones there was, Cram contended, a "forgotten class." They made up a majority of citizens, but they were ignored by the government, "victims of exploitation" by either the upper or the lower class. Included in the "forgotten class" were "farmers, small shopkeepers, tradesmen, craftsmen and artizans [sic]; members of most of the professional classes: teachers, followers of pure science, artists, literary men, clergy, small renters, college students, clerks, and finally the great mass of skilled and unskilled manual labourers."48 The "forgotten class" was, "strictly speaking," the middle class. But Cram liked the former denomination better because he thought it more descriptive of a class which "represented the real Americanism" but which had been derided and forgotten. The challenge for America, Cram believed, was to create a cohesiveness and a unity of the "forgotten class," for within that class was the "inherent energy, character and ability that can redeem society and State and start them going again on decent lines."

The power of regeneration was within the middle class.49 Because it was from within the middle class that society was to be redeemed, Cram considered it a "very important task" to make the middle class "into a name of honour and of power rather than of disparagement."50
admitted that this would be difficult because he felt that "'Main Street,' as a portrait, was not altogether inaccurate." He wrote that, "its vision was exceedingly circumscribed, its scheme of life earth-bound and pedestrian, its morals conspicuous but stodgy, its religion very largely compact of the bean-supper, a degenerate Protestant superstition, and ballyhoo." But Cram also saw a very positive side of "Main Street." He described it thus:

It had the real virtues of self-reliance, sturdy independence, social kindliness and a true sense of communal and national patriotism. Above all, without quite knowing why, it was suspicious of the growing trend towards money-capitalism, big business, and technocracy.\footnote{51}

It was precisely these last, positive qualities of the middle class which Cram saw as a sort of launching pad of redemption. But he feared that degeneration was setting in among the middle class as a result of "radio and pulp-magazines, newspapers and public-school education, back-slapping societies consecrated to 'service' and a deliquescent Protestantism." As other evidence of this degeneration, Cram cited the second Ku Klux Klan, the Scopes trial, Huey Long, and the Hauptmann trial. This degradation of the middle class he found "depressing and even alarming."\footnote{52} The middle class was suffering, he wrote, "a sort of fatty degeneration of intelligence and character."\footnote{53}

But there was hope for the middle class. The modern
age had brought down the old aristocracy of merit, the elite of achievement, to economic parity with the middle class. This being the case, it was imperative, Cram implored, that these two classes meld in a "sense of solidarity." "The fast-slipping middle class," Cram wrote, must be "arrested in its declension through association with the 'elite,'" and in turn this 'elite' must be saved from the temptation of hedonism by the values of the middle class. The two classes must, in short, save each other from their worst instincts. As Cram explained it:

The old "middle class" must be won away from its present following of all the vulgarity and the crude, depressed mentality that is a by product of "modern civilization" while the "saving remnant" must come to realize that their kinship is not to be found with the money and the power-aristocracy.54

Through this new middle class, renewed by an association with an older elite, Cram hoped to regenerate society.
CHAPTER SIX:

THE AMERICAN SYSTEM, KINGSHIP, ARISTOCRACY, AND LIBERTY

After he concluded that democracy in its present form was a dismal failure, indeed a menace, Cram asked the question: "If democracy has failed, what has a better chance of success?" The alternative systems then in "experimental" stage in Europe, Communism and Fascism, he dismissed as having "little promise" and being "antagonistic to the 'American Idea,' and singularly repugnant to the American mind." The United States, Cram believed, did not need a revolutionary new system of government. Rather, it needed to adhere rigorously to the fundamental precepts of the Constitution; precepts which since the Jacksonian period had been either superseded or forgotten.

Cram considered the Constitution, in its "original integrity," an "astonishing mechanism." But he also thought that, "so transformed, one might say distorted, has the great document become through amendment, judicial decision and accepted custom, [that the] fathers would not know their own child." Cram believed the founders would have been dismayed to think that the amendment process would be used to undercut what they considered to be "the just basis of civil government." But he contended that that "is exactly what has happened." The Thirteenth Amendment,
Cram averred, was the only amendment subsequent to the Bill of Rights, which "has [not] done violence in varying degrees . . . to the plain intent of the Constitution." Nearly all of the amendments enacted after the Thirteenth, Cram wrote, ["were] the off-spring of political or partizan expediency or of an inflamed and uninformed mob psychology." They were the product of a belief that the cure for democracy was more democracy, and they could not have been more out of step with a document which contained "an aristocratic-republican form of organic law with no salient democratic features." Still more strongly, Cram proclaimed that the Constitution, in its original form, was "anti-democratic, and markedly aristocratic-monarchical." Considering several of the amendments separately, Cram attempted to show that they did not conform with the intent of the framers.

The Thirteenth Amendment, Cram said, did not do violence to the intent of the founders. "Chattel slavery" was on its way out, he thought, as a result of a changing world (though he believed that there was a new type of slavery in the industrial world which was not much better) and the writers of the Constitution would "have been only too glad to have incorporated this clause in their draft." The Fourteenth Amendment was, however, a different story. The proposing of the electoral franchise as a natural right by Republicans, searching for a way to ensconce their
party in power, must have, Cram wrote, kept "the graves of the founders of the Republic and the Framers of the Constitution . . . disturbed for a considerable time . . . ". The Sixteenth Amendment, Cram contended, made possible the massive shift of power to the central government that had occurred since its passage. This, he said, "is in radical opposition to the belief and interests of the Framers."^10

The Seventeenth Amendment, allowing for the direct election of senators, especially disturbed Cram. He quoted James Bryce, who spoke of the Senate before the amendment: "The Senate has succeeded in making itself eminent and respected. It has drawn the best talent of the nation, so far as that talent flows to politics, into its body, has established an intellectual supremacy, has furnished a vantage ground from which men of ability may speak with authority to their fellow citizens."^11 Since the Seventeenth Amendment, Cram was sure that this exalted opinion of the Senate no longer held true. The democratization of the upper body meant that "the standard of character and intelligence" of the representatives "has steadily degenerated."^12 "Had the Convention envisaged," Cram declared, "the coming of a time when a free electorate would choose the late Huey Long as Governor of one of the States, and then send him to Washington as Senator, it is highly probable it would have given up its task in
despair, thinking the game hardly worth the candle."

Further deploiring this amendment, Cram continued:

The XVIIth Amendment not only violates the most cherished convictions of the Framers of the Constitution while it negatives the whole idea of a bicameral legislative system, it has also been, in its effects, the most calamitous of all those [amendments] inflicted on the fundamental law since the completion of the original Constitution by the Bill of Rights.

Because of the pernicious amendments mentioned above, Cram believed that the United States was "labouring under what is to all intents and purposes, an entirely new Fundamental law bearing only the remotest relationship to that of 1787." Therefore, he felt that changes in the Constitution should be directed toward restoring it to its original meaning.

Nothing disturbed Cram quite so much about the changes in the American system since its founding as the introduction of universal suffrage. He stated the import of this issue bluntly: "When universal suffrage came in, democracy went out as a practicable proposition." And if we are serious about alternatives to the present system, Cram declared:

... if we are to retain any sort of free, representative government that guarantees liberty and justice with decency and effectiveness in operation, universal suffrage will have to be abandoned in favour of some restricted, selective scheme such as was in force and held to be a desideratum by the statesmen of 1787.

This would not be easy, Cram admitted, but the first
step should be to rid the body politic of "the Reconstruction dogma that [the electoral franchise] is a natural right appertaining to all men (and women) by virtue of their humanity." Two things might be done toward this end: (1) the vote could be withdrawn from anyone "convicted of any crime or misdemeanor involving 'moral turpitude,'" and (2) the ownership of property should be a "prerequisite to the exercise of the electoral franchise." For such behavior as "adulteration of foods, libel, cruelty to man or beast, swindling of any sort, fraud [or] malicious mischief," the vote could be denied permanently or for a period. Cram felt that "so to penalize anti-social action might prove to be the most effective protection of society." Property, in Cram's view, required special definition with regard to the franchise. It did not mean "money, goods, securities, [or] shares in industrial or commercial ventures," because there is no "reality" in these things. "Real" property is "ownership in fee simple of land, tools of trade, or an individually owned business or individually practiced profession, sufficient to guarantee decent living conditions for an household." A wage or salary is not property. A recipient of either, Cram avowed, is a proletarian and "a proletarian is not a free man and only free men can safely participate in government." Cram allowed that this last definition was a delicate one but he stuck to his belief
that anyone, an "editor of a big city newspaper, a college professor or a Protestant parson . . . a bank clerk, a brick mason or a mill hand," if he was susceptible to "being fired and joining the ranks of the unemployed or going on the dole, then this man so placed is not a free man." 19

But the simple disenfranchisement of all such men would mean that only about thirty-five percent of the people could qualify to vote. Another solution must be found, Cram believed, and thus he suggested "functional representation." Under this system, "the party system would be abolished and with it, presumably, the politicians." Citizens of particular interest groups would form associations from which a representative would be sent to the legislature. Thus, the "educators, mine-workers, bankers," etc., would "come together in their own local or state units and choose each its own representative to municipal, State and national governments." 20 Cram saw this as having the primary virtue of reducing the influence of the politician and substituting a representative of each interest group. He wrote:

Farmers, merchants, mechanics, financiers, miners, professional men, clergy, clerks, millhands, teachers, all would have a spokesman to guard their own interests and express their views in all matters of government. It would form a true cross section of the American people instead of the political interests of party managers." 21

Cram's ideas on the national legislative body have
already been touched on. He believed the lower house could be left unchanged but he was adamant that the Seventeenth Amendment should be repealed. The popular election of senators, he maintained, "vitiated the whole bicameral principle," and made the upper house no different from the lower. Cram also believed that the executive should play a greater part in legislation. He recommended that at the beginning of each congressional term, the President present a package of legislation which the Congress must dispose of as a body before considering private bills. In this way Cram hoped to circumvent the committee system and to hasten deliberation on the most important issues facing the country.  

The imperatives of governing in the modern world required, Cram contended, increased powers for the President. The powers accrued by the Presidents in wartime were "destined to increase" and this was only natural—a movement to "social and political maturity."  

Cram described the imperative this way:

Unless we recognize conditions as they have come to be, accept an aggrandized, directing, coordinating Executive as a political necessity, and give the Chief of State this new status through Constitutional modifications, we may find ourselves in the same box with Italy, Germany, the U.S.S.R. and the many other dictatorships in Europe, Asia and South America.

Along with increased powers, Cram suggested the Presidency be changed in several other ways. The President should be
elected for life "subject of course to impeachment for cause and to retirement on account of age or disability." And the President should not be chosen by popular election. Cram held that "the people as a whole are quite incapable of judging who should be the head of State." Further, the President should not be, at one and the same time, the representative of all the people and also the head of a political party. "These two things," Cram opined, "cancel out," and result in "a government of the people, by the politicians, for the party."

Cram's solution for the ills of the Presidency was to resurrect the idea of kingship. "There is no subject on the calendar more completely misunderstood than this of kingship," he wrote. This was because of the "high estate and low character of the Renaissance monarchies." But "monarchy does not mean absolutism, irresponsibility, or the right to rule wrongly; it does not even mean the right to reign by hereditary descent." Cram thought hereditary descent as on the whole not a bad way of selecting kings, but he acknowledged that this was "quite foreign to American ideology." Some elective system would have to be devised. Cram thought one possibility would be to select the king by a caucus of the members of Congress plus the state governors, but he said that any number of systems would be acceptable. The important point would be that the President (king) would hold office for life (subject to qualifications)
and would not have any connection to a political party. The most important factor was that "one visible individual" would be the "incarnation . . . of the tradition of a people, their ideals and aspirations." "This centralizing of a national idea in one personality," Cram continued, "is a basic factor in any well-ordered polity."

But there was more to kingship, Cram instructed, than the "prerogatives of sovereignty." The American President should have all the other trappings of a king as well. "With the fact [of kingship,] the title and the estate, must go the forms, ceremonies, ritual and vesture that show in visible form the quality of this kingship that is so much more than a faculty of government." To resent these symbols of kingship Cram thought "snobbish and vulgar." The accoutrements and ceremonial of kingship were as vital to a nation as "the sacerdotal vestments of the priests at the alter, the robes of the judges on the bench, the gowns of scholastics or the secular dress clothes of formal occasions." The title for a national leader was also very important to Cram. "President" could not continue to be used because it contained the bad association of "old and poisonous partizan shackles." A title must be found "commensurate with [the President's] dignity and power." "King" or "emporor" were not good either because they had unpopular connotations. Cram suggested "His Highness the Regent of the Republic of the United States"
as a good and dignified title.\(^{33}\)

Cram was perfectly serious about the resurrection of monarchies in modern democratic states. His many reasons have been largely described. He summarized them as follows:

And so, after this interlude of well-meant but futile democracy of the modern sort, we should do well to return to the old kingship. Not that of the Renaissance autocracies, which was the debasement of sovereignty, but to the elder sort under which a real democracy was not only possible but well assured. There may be liberty under a right monarchy: there has come a sort of slavery under the democracies of the modern form where a political oligarchy and a money-oligarchy, now in alliance, now in conflict, have brought about grave disorder, social chaos and the negation of the free commonwealth founded on assumptions that are baseless biologically, philosophically, historically, and from the standpoint of plain common sense.\(^{34}\)

Along with the changing of the United States to a Constitutional monarchy, Cram had several further suggestions. First, he said the Supreme Court should not be able to veto legislation, clearly desired by the people, on a simple five to four vote. This, he believed, has meant oft-times that the Constitution is what one man says it is and Cram thought this to be "Alice in Wonderland or Gilbert and Sullivan farcicality."\(^{35}\) At least an "extraordinary majority" of the Court should be required to void acts of Congress and perhaps even unanimity. Cram placed himself squarely on the liberal side of the Court controversy of the thirties. In 1935 the Court aroused the
wrath of Roosevelt by declaring the NRA unconstitutional. This prompted many to question whether the Court should have that power. Cram wrote:

Is it not possible that the Supreme Court, in its insistence on the "narrow interpretation" of the Constitution, to the exclusion of broader considerations of public policy and the "general welfare" is joining itself to the idols of archaeology? Perhaps a little daring in the way of Marshall's "liberal interpretation" might better serve public ends.

Second, Cram believed that government in the United States had gone beyond the "human scale." There were great increases in the size of the bureaucracy and in administrative centralization and this should, he declared, be reversed. Matters handled at the national level might better be handled by the states and matters handled by the states might well be returned to individual citizens.

Cram was well aware that his suggested remedies for the ills of modern democracy were counter to the prevailing winds of the twentieth century. And he knew that there was no chance of such changes being made in his lifetime. Nevertheless, he was convinced that a Constitutional-monarchical form of government, wedded to a natural aristocracy, was the method by which man could arrive at "High Democracy."

It cannot be overstated that, for Cram, a natural aristocracy was a crucial ingredient in a vital social order. This has been mentioned before in other contexts
but since it is such a constant theme throughout Cram's writings, it should be stressed again. Cram believed that there was certain evidence that aristocracy was gaining a measure of popular support. As evidence, he quoted with approval from a book published in the 1930s entitled Anarchy or Hierarchy by Senor de Madariaga. Cram considered the following passage from that work the "definitive portrait of the true aristocrat."  

I mean by aristocrat the man who, in matters of collective life, sees by himself: who realizes what is going on in all its depth, and is able to detect the seeds of the future in the recesses of the present; who can conceive the image of what collective reality ought to become in a desirable future, actually wishes such a future to materialize, and devotes himself to the task of bringing it about, and of shaping his world to fit the image of his vision, animated by the highest of all passions--intellectual love.

No one appoints, elects or chooses the aristocrat. He knows himself to be one because he hears himself called to his high and arduous endeavor by an internal voice--his vocation. The aristocrat obeys his vocation without any possible excuse or evasion. He is his own slave. The aristocrat asks nothing for himself--but all that is necessary for his work. The only privilege of the aristocrat is to have more duties than the rest of the citizens--duties which he cannot evade, for he is his own police, judge and executioner.

The aristocrat fights on two fronts: that of outward reality, which he endeavors to model and shape so as to fit his own inner vision, and which revolts and bites his hands; and the front of inward reality, where he meets the weak and frail man within, the man of the people who in his own soul resists him because he wants to do as he pleases, and the bourgeois who in his own soul settles down and seeks to enjoy in selfishness every available comfort and privilege. The life of the aristocrat knows no rest,
taut as a sonorous string, the work pulls at him, he pulls at the work . . . .

He should not expect popularity. He may obtain it. He may not. There is no certain relation between good service and popularity. He should therefore put aside all fear of incurring unpopularity, or even the anger of the people . . . . He serves, and that is all he is required to do. Both in and out of his work, he gives himself up to it without stint: but he is not troubled in his soul by the possibility of failure. Over the furrow which will cover his bones the same sun will ripen other harvests.  

As a method of recapturing this kind of aristocrat, Cram recommended the establishment in the United States of an order of knighthood. The President (or king) would be the only one empowered to bestow the orders. This would restore the proper recognition of merit to those truly deserving, eliminating the vast array of honorifics bestowed on people of dubious merit. Cram had other schemes for the recognition of merit, but they all aimed at the same purpose: to disabuse the entire social fabric of America of the nineteenth century idea that "one man was as good as another;" and to establish a hierarchical system toward which the nature of man was disposed.

Cram was concerned lest some see in his proposed alterations of modern democracy a threat to liberty. He contended that liberty was not in jeopardy under his system and endeavored to define and analyze the nature of liberty in order to prove his point. First, he wrote, "liberty cannot exist without corresponding and definite limitations
to its action." Limitations, Cram believed, were really of great benefit to man. They were "implanted in him by Divine Providence" and provided the "form within which he works." As he often did, Cram resorted to metaphor to make his point. He explained that man would be an amoeba, a "barthybious ooze" or "impalpable gas diffused in interstellar space" without limitations. "Chess," Cram continued, "is perhaps the best game in the world, but it would be less than nothing without the rigid limitations of its unbreakable laws."

But though man is constrained by his own nature and by physical laws, he is also "granted free will, freedom of choice, freedom of the spirit." Cram considered free will to be a "redeeming and liberating gift." This is why the doctrines of Calvin were so hateful to him. Cram, forgetting that he too flirted with determinism, asserted that Calvin "was really the progenitor of all the destructive forms of modern thought: determinism, behaviorism, Freudismus." Freedom, for Cram, was more threatened by the "heresies" of Calvin than by the "laws of a Hitler or a Mussolini or of a democratic parliament." These latter were but external threats to liberty which pass whereas "Calvinism . . . assail[ed] the very citadel of spiritual freedom and integrity."

Cram believed that freedom was something determined from within each individual. "Liberty is an interior
thing," he wrote, "and may be achieved under slavery, tyranny or 'triumphant democracy.'" But, he continued, "freedom of the spirit demands and deserves a corresponding freedom of action." Consciousness of this "divine right" has "periodically . . . lifted society out of its recurrent periods of depression or constructive barbarism," but conversely, when society disregards "the necessary limitations of the scope of liberty," it has been "thrown . . . back again into decline and disintegration." Clearly these two impulses, the desire for freedom, and the failure to recognize limitations, correspond to Cram's understanding of revolution. As he put it:

There is no social, political, or religious revolution in history, from the Athenian and Roman Republics to the Reformation and the modern industrialism, where virtue has not gone out of it in the end just because, to use the current phrase, "the sky was the limit," and all sense of restraint, of protecting boundaries, of rational limitation has been thrown aside.47

There is no sense, Cram explained, arguing over whether liberty is a good thing. "As well put in a plea for the virtue of sunlight or the sanctity of the beautiful thing."48 Continuing, he wrote: "If we have not freedom of thought and liberty of action, we are no longer men. As has already been said, however, liberty without limitation is anarchy; it is diffusive action without its necessary containing framework."49 Liberty, Cram declared, is the "mainspring" of life while restraint is the "governor."
How shall these two opposing forces, Cram asked, "be employed in the workings of the State?" Individuals, Cram wrote, have "original jurisdiction over all acts of the State." The State meanwhile "possesses sovereign right to protect itself and insure continuity in its operations." These two forces or powers, Cram believed, are invariably in conflict: "Under conditions as they exist on this planet the individual is always fighting to preserve and increase his primitive freedom of action, the State to set bounds to this and to establish its confining framework ever more rigidly and narrowly." The problem always is, Cram, thought, "how far this limitation of liberty should be permitted to go." It is at this point that Cram's understanding of liberty and his opinion of modern democracy began to conflict. Analyzing some of the freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution, Cram maintained that restrictions on certain of them would benefit society. For example, he held that much of the newspaper press was "rotting . . . the public mind so that it is increasingly incapable of estimating the quality of what it takes in through eye and ear, or of resisting its appeal." Cram believed that "in all matters of values, the State must serve the individual." It would seem, therefore, that in the case of the press, the State would be right in applying some restrictions in order to keep the public mind from "rotting." This would
mean a limitation of liberty. Similarly Cram held that
"there are phases of religious activity in America which
are just as deleterious and depressive of human character
as are the 'comic strips' in the newspapers to which
they so frequently bear a close resemblance." This reli-
gious activity Cram called "broadly injurious to society."
Again, it would seem that this would be cause for a limi-
tation of liberty by the State in order to save society
"broad injury." But in the case of religion and the
press, as well as other protected activities, Cram's
conviction was that "the dangers of suppression are
greater than the dangers of license."

The State, he
said, is the enemy and "can safely do little or nothing"
about restricting liberty.

This was a curious conclusion for Cram to reach, but,
it turns out, it corresponds nicely with his ideas about
democracy. For, he said, the power to restrict liberty
"cannot be entrusted to the State as this is now constit-
tuted and administered under democratic auspices." In
other words, the proper responsibilities of the State
should not be carried out if those administering the
responsibilities are unworthy. And as Cram believed that
modern governments were in the hands of mass man--
descended as he was from the breakdown of the "High
Democracy" of the Middle Ages and the inhumanities of the
rise of the age of coal and iron--he believed that State
responsibilities could not safely be carried out.  

The predicament of the modern world, from Cram's perspective, now becomes clear. Human society, for Cram, contained within it, whether harmoniously or not, a tension between the forces of license and the forces of restraint. As previously mentioned, the State seeks to restrict and the individual seeks to liberate. In the best society— as in the best individual— these forces are in harmony, not conflict. In the modern world, thought Cram, there is a great deal of licentiousness which needs to be restrained. But it may not be restrained by the State because the State, comprised as it is of mass man, cannot be trusted with this responsibility. Thus, though the forces of license and restriction are not in balance, they cannot safely be righted. The only way the balance can be restored, Cram consistently declared, is through the spiritual regeneration of the individual. Cram concluded as follows:

And as the whole question of the right working of the mechanism of human society comes in the end to that of the kind of men who manage it, so does this resolve itself into that of the individual himself. For, in a new sense, "man is the measure of all things." What he is himself determines what his civil polity will be, and his civilization, and his culture . . . . This is the only basis for social and political regeneration; the freedom and the integrity of the individual man . . . . The great things man has achieved have issued from one individual or from a small minority. A stream cannot rise above its source, and the source of the river of human life is the individual man.  

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CHAPTER SEVEN:
THE "WAY OUT"

The essence of Cram's thought is contained in the dichotomy he posits between medievalism and modernism. The medieval world is the model for Cram's social criticism while the modern world is the antithesis of all that that model represents. In all of Cram's writings the contrast between the two periods is expressed most vividly in the prologue to his book Walled Towns.

In that prologue Cram describes two towns, using vivid, descriptive, even poetic language. The picture he paints of the medieval town is rich, heavenly, sublime. There are "green fields and vari-coloured gardens and shadowy orchards"; there are "closed gardens of rich burgesses, full of arbours, flowers, pleached alleys of roses, espaliers of pear and nectarine"; there are "high-gabled houses, each story jutting beyond the lower, carved from pavement to ridge like an Indian jewel casket, and all bedecked with flaming colour and burnished gold-leaf"; there are "scholars in tippet and gown, youths in slashed doublets and gay hose, grey friars and black and brown, with a tonsured monk or two, and perhaps a purple prelate, attended, and made way for with deep reverence."¹ There is color everywhere and "no din of noise, no pall of smoke," only "fresh air blowing within the city and
without." Outside the city all is bucolic with "blue-clad peasants," wandering and tending their flocks. Cram's only concession to imperfection is his allowance that the streets were not overly clean, but, he asserts, they were "cleaner by far than they were to be thereafter and for many long centuries to come."²

To compare this elysian scene with Cram's depiction of a modern industrial city is, with very little exaggeration, to travel from heaven to hell. A man glares "ill-naturally around with restless, aggressive eyes"; there are "cheaply grained doors" and "rough rafted roofs over the tracks"; things are "black and grimy with years of smoke," which is "belching" and "gathering like an ill-conditioned thunder-cloud over the mob of scurrying, pushing men and women, a mob that swelled and scattered constantly in fretful confusion";³ there are businessmen, fat and pink faced, and there are "ragged and grimy children," and there is air "thick with fine white dust."⁴ This, for Cram, is the city of the modern age: black, stinking, foul, destructive of the human beings within. How, Cram wondered, can man extricate himself from this world?

Man must not fall victim, Cram implored, to "the dilemma of the Two Alternatives." Democracies have lived, he wrote, by holding up only two alternatives from which a choice must be made. But Cram was convinced that "in all human affairs there are never only two alternatives."
There is a third alternative which does not attract popular leadership but which "is always the right one." In the context of his time, the two bad alternatives were "Reactionism or Bolshevism." "We are told," Cram wrote, "that the old world of before-the-war must be restored in its integrity or we must fall a victim to the insane anarchy of a proletariat in revolt." But for Cram, one choice was as bad as the others. He no more desired to return to the period of "profligate excess" than he did to go forward to a Bolshevism which he termed a "tyranny of the degraded." Cram searched for the third alternative, which, though he thought it unlikely the world would follow, he considered at least "theoretically possible." A third alternative or a "way out" could be found, Cram believed, "through group action in which the units are few in numbers." It could not be found through any of the elixers of modernism or through broad "democratic social processes." Rather, he wrote, "the process will be one of withdrawal, of segregation, at first even of isolation." From this "centripetal" action will come "centrifugal" action; constructive, redemptive influences will go forth and "leaven . . . the whole lump." Cram believed that there was evidence in his day of an "astonishing recrudescence of the monastic spirit." It would be as a result of this spirit that there would be a voluntary withdrawal of some groups or individuals for
the purpose of nurturing and revitalizing that energy needed to restore civilization. Cram believed that periods of monastic activity corresponded with the five hundred year historical cycles. Those periods of greatest monastic energy synchronized with the most robust periods in the historical cycle. Thus, the new interest in monasticism which Cram perceived, was, he thought, a harbinger of resurgent civilization.  

Cram explained that historically the monastic spirit manifested itself in various ways. At the beginning of the Christian era "the impulse was personal, the individual was the unit, and the result was the anchorites and hermits. . . ." Later, "the groups became the unit, a sort of artificial family either of men or of women." The state was another monastic model when "all the houses of one order were united under a centralizing and coordinating force." Still another model was the army "with the Society of Jesus as its perfect exponent." From these four models Cram believed that the fifth was "due." He wondered at its form.  

Cram suggested that the fifth monastic model would be based on the unit of the human family. The older modes would still exist, he said, because "the monks, canons-regular and friars, of the old tradition and the old line, will be as necessary as ever." But in addition to the groups "living in a community life apart, and vowed to
poverty, celibacy and obedience," there will be natural families who will live a communal life within "Walled Towns they will create for themselves."\textsuperscript{10}

The idea of "Walled Town" was central to Cram's reform thinking. These towns would be created "in the midst of the world but not of it," by various groups committed to "the preservation of individuality, of private property [and] of family integrity."\textsuperscript{11} Cram maintained that "Walled Towns" were necessary to carry out living experiments "since manifestly it is no longer possible in society as a whole."\textsuperscript{12}

To create "Walled Towns" Cram thought a "certain community of interest must be presupposed."\textsuperscript{13} This would include a "unity in religion, in philosophy and in a revolt against the industrial-democratic-imperialist scheme of society which has dominated Europe and America since the beginning of the nineteenth century." Cram was adamant about the necessity for religious unity. He thought that the nucleus of the towns might form around the various religious denominations—one town Roman Catholic, one town Episcopalian, etc.,—but that the "essential point [was] the fundamental necessity for a vital and common religion among those who go forward to the building of the new social units."\textsuperscript{14} There must also be a unity of philosophy, by which Cram meant sacramental philosophy. Others would not do, he wrote: "False philosophies such
as materialism, evolutionism, Christian Science and pragmatism are not working substitutes for a real philosophy such as that of Hugh of St. Victor, Duns Scotus or St. Thomas Aquinas."

Cram was concerned that the "Walled Towns" contain a positive vision or as he put it a "positive quality of construction." He wrote:

It is not sufficient to hate the tawdry and iniquitous fabrications of the camp-followers of democracy; the gross industrial-financial system of "big business" and competition, with the capital versus labour antithesis it has bred. It is not enough to curse imperialism and materialism and the quantitative standard. There must be some vision of the plausible substitute, and while this must determine itself slowly, through many failures, and will in the end appear as a by-product of the spiritual regeneration that must follow once the real religion and right philosophy are achieved, there must be a starting somewhere.16

Justice and charity, Cram declared, as well as the "Cardinal Virtues" should be the basis and starting points of a renewed society. But, he continued, these have been "involved...in support of every reform, whether it was of God or the devil." Therefore, he recommended certain "less abstract propositions" which might serve as the goals of the new communities.17

The first of these propositions was that "Power is Divine in its origin," and it therefore follows that "no man or group of men, neither king nor boss nor parliament nor soviet, has any authority to exercise power after a
wrong fashion or to govern ill." Second, competition must be abolished. Third, all men should be equal before God and the Law "but not otherwise." Privilege should have corresponding obligations and "the common good demands that those who can do a thing well should do it, those who cannot should be debarred." Fourth, production should be for "use, not profit" and the loaning of money at interest should be questioned both "from the standpoint of morals and of expediency." Fifth, enough land should be provided to "support each family at necessity." Cram had his own special and paradoxical view of private property. Land, he thought, should belong to the community but tenure would be perpetual so long as taxes were paid. Finally, the community should have the power to determine its membership but should not expell except by "process of law." Refining these positions further, Cram held that in the "Walled Towns" there would be no antithesis between capital and labor. There would be a restored guild system and advertising, or any other method of "creating markets" would be prohibited. Large machines would be owned communally as would any mills or canneries or bakeries and any surplus products would be transported communally to outside markets. Cram was also in favor of the establishment of sumptuary laws, "certain things being excluded as vicious in themselves, others as poisoning in their influence." He believed such laws a danger to liberty, but he
saw the proliferation of "useless luxuries" as so destructive to values and to the economy that some sort of regulation would be necessary. He hoped that for the most part "moral force" could regulate the community.  

Apart from these specific propositions, the general purpose of the "Walled Town" was to provide a refuge from the "tyranny of the material product." As pointed out before, Cram had a reverence for the New England of his youth, the "old patriarchal life of the New England countryside before the juggernaut that crushed wholesome society and sane living had begun its fatal course." His memory of New England "before the juggernaut" and his long study of medieval civilization convinced Cram "that man cannot be free or sane or reasonably happy until he forcibly tears himself (or forcibly is torn) from the deadly evil of modernism." The following explains, in part, the deviation of Cram's boyhood New England from the "evil" modernism of his later years.

Here was no telephone, no automobile, no elaborate collection of complicated and costly machines, no flood of cheap newspapers, magazines or other "literature," no weekly expedition to the "movies," no ready-made clothes that must be constantly replaced or that annually went out of fashion, no pianola or graphophone, no "art-furniture," no candy and cheap drinks and fruit out-of-season. Neither was there any labour problem, or strikes, or poverty or high cost-of-living.  

Cram believed that this simple, hard, austere life gave "self-respect, liberty, freedom from the tyranny and op-
pression of outside forces," and, most importantly, it developed character. He recognized that this New England life "lacked some of the qualities that existed in the Middle Ages" but it was so far superior to the common life of his day that he still felt it was worth trying to restore.

The restoration of the spirit of old New England, of the Middle Ages, was the purpose of "Walled Towns." Cram felt that in the modern world the "good [was] so intricately mixed with the bad" that a new spiritual enlightenment was needed to reorder our distorted "standard of comparative values." To nurture a new spirit groups should isolate themselves from a degraded modernity, and regenerate the spiritual energy needed to redeem the world. As Cram summed it up:

The impulse and incentive towards Walled Towns, whenever it comes, will be primarily social, the revolt of man against the imperial scale, against a life of false values impregnably intrenched behind custom, superstition and self-interest, against the quantitative standard, the tyranny of bulk, the gross oppression of majorities. It will echo a demand for beauty in life and of life, for the reasonable and wholesome unit of human scale, for high values in ideal and in action, for simplicity and distinction and a realization of true aristocracy.

In short, a "Walled Town" and the impulse to create one was the "third alternative."
Ralph Adams Cram was not alone in his disparagement of the modern world. Though some of his recommendations (e.g., the establishment of a monarchy in America) were supported by only an eccentric few, other of his predilections were shared by a substantial number of prominent intellectuals both at home and abroad. Cram belonged to what Ronald Lora has termed the philosophical tradition in American conservative thought. As noted above, in the Introduction, Clinton Rossiter contended that the dominant strain of conservatism between the Civil War and World War Two was economic or "laissez-faire" conservatism. But the Gilded Age produced, along with the Rockefellers and the Carnegies, a number of men who kept the philosophical tradition of conservatism alive. Barrett Wendell, Charles Eliot Norton, James Russell Lowell, and E. L. Godkin all in their different ways contributed to the conservative critique of post-Civil War America. Henry Adams' despair at the direction taken by American society was well-known at the time and has been studied in greater detail than that of any other conservative figure of the period. Except for that of Adams, the philosophical conservatism of Gilded Age figures has remained largely unstudied. Perhaps that is because "laissez-faire" conservatism so
dominated that period that it is hard to discern any other voice, or perhaps, as Robert Crundell suggests, scholars have not "neglected the lesser figures of that period any more than their obscurity warrants." Whatever the case, the turn of the century brought an increase of philosophical conservative thought, nurtured by a group of men who have since received significant scholarly attention.

From 1900 to 1940 Ralph Adams Cram shared the conservative podium with such luminaries as George Santayana and H. L. Mencken. Less well-known, but conspicuous nonetheless, were Albert J. Nock, Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More. Also, surprising though it is to some, Walter Lippman and T. S. Eliot made significant contributions to the conservative thought of the period. In the 1920s the Southern Agrarians burst on the scene with the publication of the controversial book, *I'll Take My Stand*. In addition to the conservative intellectual activity in America, there were a number of Europeans whose critique of western society was similar to Cram's. Of these, Oswald Spengler, G. K. Chesterton, Jose Ortega y Gasset and Hilaire Belloc were perhaps the most important. Given this company, it is not surprising that Cram has, until very recently, remained obscure.

Cram did not claim to be a profoundly original thinker, but he was a tireless champion of the ideas that persuaded
him. For example, several prominent intellectuals shared Cram's admiration for the Middle Ages. But few approached the subject with as much intensity. Cram was enormously impressed with Henry Adams' *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*. Adams published the book privately, feeling that the subject would not interest enough people to warrant a larger printing. Cram took it upon himself personally to change Adams' mind. Commenting that "revelation" did not adequately describe the influence the book had on him, he arranged for a general publication under the auspices of the American Institute of Architects. Cram wrote the introduction to this edition and was, as ever, ebullient about his chosen past.\(^6\)

Cram's dedication to the Middle Ages, as indicated by his role in the general publication of *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*, surprised and somewhat amused Adams. Adams was as enamored of the period as was Cram, but he was the eternal pessimist and did not dream that the Middle Ages could be in any way reconstructed.\(^7\) Similarly, T. S. Eliot had tremendous admiration for the Catholic Middle Ages, but he believed that the past was forever lost and that the conditions that created the Middle Ages were unique, not capable of reproduction.\(^8\) Cram, however, was not satisfied merely to admire the past. Thus, his many ventures to resuscitate medievalism, including his involvement with the Medieval Academy of America, with *Commonweal*
Magazine, and his lifetime devotion to Gothic Architecture, as if resurrecting Gothic design would also resurrect the spirit.

It is easy, when reading Cram, to get the impression that he believed the Middle Ages were perfect. Indeed, Cram's writings contain few passages indicating anything negative about that period. Robert Muccigrosso has written that Cram's "interpretation of the Middle Ages (and other ages, for that matter) was filled with gross errors and distortions, occasionally to the point of patent absurdity." Perhaps part of what Muccigross has in mind was Cram's contention that the Middle Ages were a time of "High Democracy." The only way to make a plausible case for this was to provide, as Cram did, a definition of democracy corresponding to the political reality of the Middle Ages. The Middle Ages were composed, Cram maintained, of naturally deferential societies. They were aristocracies by consent of the governed. Since this fit nicely with Cram's understanding of ideal democracy, the Middle Ages must have been democratic.

In a sense, as Muccigrosso points out, it is irrelevant to emphasize Cram's distortions of the Middle Ages. Cram had disdain for scientific history and, in any event, at no time did he call for a literal restructuring of medievalism. Rather, Cram was a utopian who used his idyllic vision of the Middle Ages (described in Chapter
VII) as a paradigm. By understanding those aspects of
the Middle Ages which make the good society possible, Cram
believed man could build for the future.  

If there was one aspect of Cram's personality which
set him apart from other conservatives, it was his con­
genital optimism. Since Cram has not been studied in any
of the books on conservatism, his optimism is not generally
recognized. Ronald Lora lumps Cram together with Nock,
Mencken, the New Humanists and the Southern Agrarians and
concludes that in them "the themes of cynicism and pessi­
mism ran very deep indeed."  

This may have been true of the others but not of Cram. Certainly much of Cram's
writing was gloomy, setting off the ideal of the Middle
Ages against the decadence and spiritual squalor of the
modern world. But always, somewhere, there was a hopeful­
ness in Cram. The best evidence of this was his inability
to be consistently deterministic. If Cram truly believed
in his theory of history, that it pointed to the next
nodal point at the year 2000, then he would not have
written imploringly about man's ability to halt the "fatal
glissade."

Cram was greatly impressed with Oswald Spengler's
Decline of the West which postulated the inevitable decline
of western culture. Indeed, Cram had been for years
describing and bemoaning the characteristics of modern
society which Spengler called "civilization" or the last
stage of culture. Cram was struck by Spengler's prediction that in the last stage the masses of people would follow great Caesars, who would lead them into a period of darkness. But whereas Spengler approached this with resignation, Cram placed it in a positive light. First, he believed that great leaders might be able to stem the slide of history and avoid the darkness, and second, the process should be looked on with favor because as one age falls so another must rise. Incapable of a gloomy determinism on the order of Spengler or Henry Adams, Cram believed that the fate of the world need be determined only so long as man ignored his prescriptions for creating the good society.12

Throughout all the vicissitudes of conservative thought there is one consistent theme: the inequality of men and the desirability of hierarchy and aristocracy. Corresponding to this was a skepticism of democracy and a disdain for mass culture and mass society. Cram, too, shared these beliefs, arguing that the best societies demanded a natural elite embodying the noblest qualities of justice and service. But Cram was more charitable toward the masses than other conservatives. Mencken found the common man amusing and Nock found him repulsive. Babbitt and More found little in the average man to respect.13 Cram, on the other hand, while sharing the same contempt for the present state of the mass of men,
went one step further and argued that the decline of the Middle Ages and the attendant rise of materialist philosophies, capitalism and industrialism had debased the common man to such a degree that his low nature was entirely understandable.\(^\text{14}\)

As with his theory of history, Cram's thoughts on mass man were contradictory. As noted, one of Cram's most famous essays was "Why We Do Not Behave Like Human Beings." There, Cram argued, to the delight of Nock who was by that time convinced of the imperfectability of mankind, that most men were neolithic beings, incapable by nature of acting like human beings. Occasionally, as if by divine spark, one of these neolithic beings would rise to the level of a human being but man was not capable of understanding the process by which this occurred.\(^\text{15}\) This analysis, written in the 1930s, mired Cram in a deterministic swamp completely at odds with his analysis of history since the Middle Ages. For if man was determined by nature, it made no sense to maintain, as Cram did, that man's present estate was the result of a loss of spiritual vitality combined with economic oppression. Cram never reconciled these positions, as indeed he could not. It is a contradiction to say that on the one hand man's low character is the result of his inherent nature and then to say on the other hand that his low character is the result of social conditions.
Probably Cram wrote "Why We Do Not Behave Like Human Beings" in a moment of gloom and despair, for it is quite out of character with his other writings. One does not find, for instance, a reference to neolithic beings in Cram's descriptions of those glorious societies which produced medieval cathedrals. Also, Cram's "Walled Towns" were for the purpose of redeeming all society, not for isolating the elite from the neolithic masses. Here, as in other areas, Cram's basic optimism separated him from his conservative brethren. The character of mass man did not invoke in Cram despair, but rather a plea to recapture the spiritual vitality of another age.

The evolving system of universal education in the United States was a point of contention for all conservatives during the first decades of this century and Cram was no exception. The mass of men, said the conservative critics, are simply uneducable, and it is folly to expect otherwise. The educational system designed by Jefferson and championed by Albert J. Nock would probably have been supported by most conservatives. This system offered the rudiments to all but after that quickly farmed people out into those areas which best suited their talents, letting only a tiny, select few continue on to higher education. Nock thought that college should consist of little more than Latin, Greek, Mathematics, formal logic and a small dose of the history of the English language. Cram was not
as concerned about the curriculum as he was about the community and atmosphere of the educational experience. He hoped that life in college would be a miniature of the life he prescribed for the larger world. Beauty should surround the educational experience in the hope that graduates would not tolerate the ugliness without. College life should instill a sense of community, in Cram's view something foreign to the dominant spirit of the age. Cram believed that spirit rather than scholarship was the end of education.¹⁶

Of all conservative thought between 1900 and 1940, Cram's bore the closest resemblance to that of the Southern Agrarians. Ronald Lora wrote of the thought of that period that "Mencken, Nock, and the Humanists were critical from an individualist perspective; Ralph Adams Cram and the Agrarians from a corporate perspective."¹⁷ Probably the intellectual affinity of Cram and the Agrarians has much to do with the similarities of their chosen pasts. Many of the medieval values which Cram admired: chivalry, honor, aristocracy, were consciously emulated in the ante-bellum South, a culture which the Agrarians felt "had supported a genuine humanism."¹⁸

But more important than the similarity of the pasts of their imagination, was the conformity of their views on the ills of the present. Cram, raised in the Northeast and familiar with England and much of Western Europe knew
from young manhood the changes which industrialism brought to societies which had been predominantly rural and agricultural. The evil changes in both the social structure and the individual spirit which industrialism had brought in the wake of the Middle Ages Cram decried from his earliest writing. The South, however, had remained predominantly rural and agricultural, even throughout the great industrial changes of the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era. Slowly this unique character of the South changed until the Southern Agrarians saw in their own backyard manifestations of northern industrialism: chambers of commerce, industrial plans, unionization, labor strife, class conflict. Not surprisingly, the Southern Agrarians posed much the same intellectual opposition to these changes as Cram had in the larger context of the western world. 19

Cram also shared with the Southern Agrarians a desire to promote subsistence farming. In several articles and lectures, and in his book Walled Towns, Cram indicated that the best social order was composed of yeoman farmers, independently making a subsistence living off the land for themselves and their families. As noted earlier, Cram thought it was a government's responsibility to promote such a scheme and was hopeful that the Roosevelt Administration would do so. The Agrarians also proposed several land redistribution plans. In one plan the government was
to buy up land and distribute it to the landless in the form of eighty acres, a log house, two mules, two milk cows and 300 dollars. Both Cram and the Agrarians admired the English "Distributists" led by G. K. Chesterton and Hillaire Belloc. Cram especially admired Belloc, a traditionalist who felt the Catholic Church should lead a movement back to agrarian life.

Cram's views on race and immigration were typical of many intellectuals of his day. Oscar Handlin has identified the thought characteristic of Cram as racialist, signifying the belief that social reform could be carried out by identifying and separating the guilty race. The most extreme advocate of this kind of thought was Madison Grant who hated the idea of a melting pot and in his book, The Passing of the Great Race, gave support to the extreme forces of nativism practiced by the Ku Klux Klan. Though Cram made clear his convictions about the mongrelization of the race, his writings taken as a whole indicate that he was not obsessed with the subject. He acknowledged that he favored immigration restrictions as well as prohibitions against racial intermarriage, but, uncharacteristically, he did not elaborate at length. Cram rejected the allure of eugenics as a solution to race problems. Probably Cram's religious faith tempered somewhat his enthusiasm for racial solutions.

It was a good thing that Cram did not live to see the
post World War II age. Nearly everything which he despised proceeded with a vengeance, just as it had after the First World War. The European countries quickly rebuilt themselves based on the industrial financial model which Cram had spent a lifetime opposing. Furthermore, that development model was exported to other parts of the world so that, for example, Japan, a country Cram had once greatly admired, adopted enthusiastically those values which he deplored. Those parts of the world not inundated by "reactionary" western values of materialism and secularism, came to be dominated by "Bolshevism," so that the two alternatives which Cram had hoped the world could avoid at the close of the First World War, contended at the end of the Second. The world was oblivious as ever of Cram's "third alternative," the medieval model he had spent a lifetime promoting.

As with most other conservative intellectuals, Cram was forced to face the fact, toward the end of his life, that he was a superfluous man. During the 1930s Albert Nock developed an attitude of almost bitter detachment, H. L. Mencken wrote to a rapidly dwindling audience, and the Southern Agrarians began to question the relevance of their own ideas. Cram could not have helped but notice that modern architecture increasingly replaced Gothic, that nary a "walled town" existed, and that there was not the slightest indication of an emerging consensus on the
establishment of a monarchy in America. In addition, the dominant impulse seemed to be toward "Low Democracy," the masses enjoyed greater and greater access to education, nobody advocated the repeal of the Seventeenth Amendment, and leadership was as lackluster as ever. It would have been easy to understand if Cram had despaired of his life's energy.

Cram, however, was not capable of despair. In the final chapter of his autobiography, written toward the end of his life, he reasserted his lifelong convictions and remained secure in the belief that a new age must come.

I have, for my own part, small hope that we can escape the nadir of our social progression; but at the same time, I nourish an equally strong hope, amounting to a religious conviction, that, this fall accomplished, man will immediately go on to the lifting of another social curve the crest of which may well be higher than the last.25

The fact that his reform proposals had been rejected, forced Cram to conclude that there was "small hope" that man could alter the course of history. But that only meant that the course of history would alter man, leaving him inevitably, after the next nodal point, on an ascending wave of energy.

Though Cram may justifiably be considered a superfluous man, his basic ideas have remained vibrant for many conservatives. George H. Nash, in his book _The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America since 1945_, identifies three conservative types since the Second World
War: libertarians, anti-communists, and traditionalists. Of these, the traditionalists avow principles which Cram would have heartily endorsed. Russell Kirk's six "canons" of conservative thought could be derived directly from Cram's writings.

(1) Belief that a divine intent rules society as well as conscience. Political problems, at bottom, are religious and moral problems.

(2) Affection for the proliferating variety and mystery of traditional life, as distinguished from the narrowing uniformity and equalitarianism and utilitarian aims of most radical systems.

(3) Conviction that civilized society requires orders and classes. Society longs for leadership.

(4) Persuasion that property and freedom are inseparably connected, and that economic levelling is not economic progress.

(5) Faith in prescription and distrust of "sophisters and calculators." Man must put a control upon his will and his appetite. Tradition and sound prejudice provide checks upon man's anarchic impulse.

(6) Recognition that change and reform are not identical.

The post-war period also brought a renewed interest in Christian orthodoxy along with a renewal of religious activity generally. Had Cram lived to see this, it is plausible to imagine him reaching for his pen and once again waxing enthusiastic over the possibilities of reviving the medieval spirit.
Ronald Lora has offered as his thesis "that the philosophical beliefs of genuine historical conservatism are in serious conflict with the general value system and purposes of American society." This may be, but it is also true that a conservative thinker like Cram raised questions about the modern world which are still legitimate and have never been satisfactorily answered. It has already been noted that Cram's ideas hold a strong allure for the traditionalist right. What is striking, however, is the affinity of many of his ideas for the contemporary left. Cram's concern with scale, his protestations against the environmental evils, both physical and spiritual, of industrial capitalism, his recommendations to return to small communities where virtually all needs would be satisfied locally, and his belief that community values must predominate over individual values are all elements associated with current trends on the left. Cram's beliefs were contrary to the predominant spirit of his day. But it is likely that, though Cram may remain an obscure figure, many of his ideas will continue to have vitality, at least as long as they are not refuted by the passage of time.
FOOTNOTES

Preface:


5. Ibid., p. 179.


Chapter One:


3. Ibid., p. 81. See also Cram, My Life in Architecture (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1936), p. 29.


5. Ibid., pp. 82-83.

6. Ibid., p. 85.

7. Ibid., p. 91.
8. Ibid., p. 106.


10. Ibid., pp. 107-108.


12. Cram, My Life in Architecture, p. 3.

13. Ibid., pp. 5-6.


15. Ibid., p. 13.

16. Ibid., p. 18.

17. Ibid., p. 20.

18. Ibid., p. 21.

19. Ibid., p. 21.

20. Ibid., pp. 11-12.


22. Ibid., p. 52.

23. Ibid., p. 28.

24. Ibid., pp. 29-30.

25. Ibid., p. 57.

26. Ibid., p. 57-60.

27. Ibid., pp. 67-82 passim.

28. Ibid., pp. 30-39 passim.


Chapter Two:

2. Ibid., p. 32.
3. Ibid., p. 195.
6. Ibid., p. 34.
7. Ibid., pp. 34-36.
8. Ibid., p. 41.
9. Ibid., pp. 45-47.
15. Cram, Convictions and Controversies, pp. 1-18
passim.

16. Ibid., p. 2.

17. Ibid., p. 3.

18. Ibid., p. 6.


20. Ralph Adams Cram, Thomas Hastings, and Claude
    Bragdon, Six Lectures on Architecture (1917; reprint ed.,


22. Cram, Convictions and Controversies, p. 137.

23. Ibid., p. 138.


25. Cram, Convictions and Controversies, p. 139.

26. Ibid., p. 139.


29. Ibid., p. 148.


32. Ibid., pp. 252-254.

33. Ibid., p. 254.

34. Ibid., p. 256.

35. Ibid., p. 258.

36. Cram, Convictions and Controversies, pp. 45-63
    passim.

37. Ibid., Great Peace, p. 37.
Chapter Three:

2. Ibid., p. 58.
3. Ibid., p. 59.
4. Ibid., p. 60.
5. Ibid., p. 61.
6. Ibid., p. 61.
7. Ibid., p. 62.
8. Ibid., p. 63.
9. Ibid., p. 65.
10. Ibid., p. 66.
11. Ibid., p. 67.
15. Ibid., p. 71.
16. Ibid., p. 74.
17. Ibid., pp. 84-85.
18. Ibid., pp. 86-87.
19. Ibid., p. 88.
20. Ibid., p. 91.
21. Ibid., p. 92.
22. Ibid., p. 94.
23. Ibid., p. 95.
24. Ibid., p. 96.

Chapter Four:


2. Cremin, Transformation of School, pp. 3-22 passim.


5. Ibid., p. 157.
7. Ibid., p. 160.
8. Ibid., p. 161.
9. Ibid., p. 163.
10. Ibid., p. 163.
11. Ibid., p. 164.
15. Ibid., p. 171.
16. Ibid., p. 172.
18. Ibid., pp. 175-176.
19. Ibid., p. 176.
20. Ibid., p. 177.
21. Ibid., p. 178.
22. Ibid., p. 181.
23. Ibid., p. 182.
24. Ibid., p. 182.
25. Ibid., p. 183.
28. Ibid., p. 186.
29. Ibid., p. 186.
30. Ibid., p. 187.
31. Ibid., p. 187.
34. Ibid., p. 6.
35. Ibid., p. 7.
36. Ibid., pp. 7-8.
37. Ibid., p. 17.
Chapter Five:


2. Ibid., p. 20.

3. Ibid., p. 21.

4. Ibid., p. 22.

5. Ibid., pp. 23-24.


7. Ibid., p. 25.

8. Ibid., p. 27.

10. Ibid., p. 28.
11. Ibid., p. 28.
12. Ibid., p. 29.
15. Ibid., p. 31.
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42. Ibid., pp. 62-63.
43. Ibid., p. 64.
44. Cram, Convictions and Controversies, pp. 137-154 passim.
45. Cram, End of Democracy, p. 93.
46. Ibid., p. 94.
47. Ibid., p. 94.
48. Ibid., p. 103.
49. Ibid., p. 109.
50. Ibid., p. 110.
52. Ibid., p. 112.
53. Ibid., p. 113.
54. Ibid., p. 113.

Chapter Six:

2. Ibid., pp. 125-126.
3. Ibid., p. 127.
4. Ibid., p. 128.
5. Ibid., p. 129.
6. Ibid., p. 133.
7. Ibid., p. 134.
8. Ibid., p. 134.
10. Ibid., p. 137.
11. Ibid., pp. 138-139.
12. Ibid., p. 139.
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15. Ibid., p. 141.
16. Ibid., p. 144.
17. Ibid., p. 148.
18. Ibid., p. 149.
19. Ibid., p. 150.
21. Ibid., p. 156.
22. Ibid., pp. 158-168.
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24. Ibid., p. 171.
25. Ibid., pp. 174-175.
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52. Ibid., pp. 234-235.
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2. Ibid., pp. 5-6.
3. Ibid., p. 6.
4. Ibid., p. 7.
5. Ibid., pp. 15-16.
7. Ibid., p. 32.
8. Ibid., p. 34.
9. Ibid., pp. 34-35.
10. Ibid., p. 36.
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15. Ibid., p. 39.
17. Ibid., p. 40.
18. Ibid., pp. 40-42.
20. Ibid., pp. 51-52.
21. Ibid., p. 53.
22. Ibid., p. 55.
Chapter Eight:


2. Rossiter, Conservatism in America, pp. 128-162.

3. Ibid., p. 159.


5. The American Conservatives are discussed to a greater or lesser degree in all the survey books on American Conservatism mentioned in the Introduction. The European Conservatives are mentioned briefly in the same books and their contributions are also acknowledged by Cram several times throughout his works.


10. Ibid.

11. Lora, Conservative Minds, p. 66.


14. For a detailed discussion of this matter, see pp. 50-59 above.

15. The article "Why We Do Not Behave Like Human Beings" is found in Convictions and Controversies, pp. 137-154. For a discussion of Nock, see Ronald Lora, Conservative Minds, pp. 93-106.

16. For a more detailed discussion of Cram's views on education, see pp. 32-38 above. Albert J. Nock's views on Education are contained in The Theory of Education in the United States. Other writers whose views are similar are listed in Cremin, Transformation of the School, p. 385.

17. Lora, Conservative Minds, p. 67.


19. Ibid., pp. 107-123 passim.

20. Ibid., p. 120.


24. Lora, Conservative Minds, pp. 84-123.


27. Ibid., p. 73. For the unabridged version of the six "canons," see Russell Kirk, The Conservative Mind, pp. 7-8.


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