The Education of Linton Usher

WILLIAM MONROE BALCH

"I never had any education," says Linton Usher. He means not much school-going, for, unconsciously to himself, he has acquired the greater education through absorption of and absorption into the life of two great American eras—the Civil War and the civilizing of the West.

Not many months ago, in the state of Kansas, the author was handed a faded manuscript and to his surprise found himself reading the sublime conclusion of Lincoln's second inaugural, written and signed by Lincoln's own hand. Sometimes during the days between his second inauguration and his death, the President had written it as a courtesy to Mrs. John P. Usher, wife of his Secretary of the Interior. It is now the property of her son, Linton Usher, who was then a boy of twelve.1 To know Lincoln, to belong to a Cabinet family, and to live in the stimulating atmosphere of war-time Washington, was the goodly beginning of this youth's education.

Back of that, the traditions of high-minded families were the heritage with which he began life. The Ushers were old New England Puritans, dignitaries of state and church, probably derived from Archbishop Usher to whom we owe the marginal chronology of our English Bible. Linton's mother was the daughter of General Arthur Paterson and was descended from the historic Patersons of New Jersey and from the Chambers family, the fighting Irish of Londonderry and Vinegar Hill.

Linton Joseph Usher was born at Terre Haute, Indiana, on December 9, 1852, where his father, John P. Usher, was

1 The author has used the personal papers of Linton Usher and his family. These include interesting correspondence and other matter left behind by his father, John P. Usher, who succeeded Caleb B. Smith as Lincoln's Secretary of the Interior.
a distinguished lawyer. Worth while people were familiar to Linton in his boyhood. For instance, "Uncle Joe" Cannon was then a student of law in Mr. Usher's office, and Linton remembers the wedding of the parents of Booth Tarkington.

John P. Usher presently became Attorney General of Indiana and conducted some of the most important litigations of the day. The Ushers lived in a brick mansion on the outskirts of the city of Terre Haute and there gave almost continuous hospitality to the notables who came on occasions of politics, business and litigation. It was the custom of the time to keep a decanter of whiskey on the side-board from which the guests might refresh themselves at will. Mrs. Usher placed beside it a similar decanter containing tansy-tea. Says Linton Usher: "Sometimes the guests would get some of that d---- stuff by mistake, and then, oh h----!" Mr. Usher's super-expletives, especially such big words as are fully printed only in the Bible, are not delivered as explosives, much less as imprecations. They simply glide along with the even flow of his low and kindly voice and sound altogether winsome.\(^2\)

At this point, meet Linton Usher as he is today at eighty-six. In spite of his many years, he still runs on his own power, rides his own horse, herds his own cattle, shoots his own rifle, rolls his own cigaretts, eats with his own natural teeth, speaks his own picturesque language, and thinks with his own mind. Only a man who relies on his own education can do all that. He is short and sturdy of frame, light of foot, clear-eyed and clear-brained, with a round pleasant face, graphic and easy of speech, alert and friendly in bearing, and built physically and mentally for speed and endurance alike.

In 1862, John P. Usher was called to Washington to become First Assistant Secretary of the Interior. On January 8, 1863, he succeeded Caleb B. Smith as Secretary and entered Lincoln's Cabinet. He became a wise counselor of the President and an efficient administrator of his Department. Mr. Usher seems to have attempted to impart to his boys his own interest in his Department and other public affairs. In July of 1863, he brought Mrs. Usher and their three sons to Washington where they resided on F Street between Sixth and
Seventh. Two or three houses away lived Attorney General Edward Bates, and Secretary Salmon P. Chase dwelt around the corner. Soon after the Ushers arrived there occurred the marriage of Chase’s brilliant daughter Kate to Governor William Sprague of Rhode Island. It was probably the most magnificent wedding that had ever taken place in Washington. Linton Usher saw it boy-fashion—“peeking-in.” But he seems to have been equally intrigued by Sprague’s bobtailed horse and an old “crow-bait” which belonged to a negro living in the alley, which was fed on the bedding of Sprague’s gay steed. As to household matters, the boy was impressed with his mother’s continued serving of coffee when chocolate as a beverage was coming into vogue. She also continued to serve tansy-tea.

The boy Linton in those days received excellent schooling. During most of their Washington residence, he and his brothers attended Bonzaga Academy, an institution on Seventh Street maintained by the Jesuit order. For a briefer period, Linton attended Morrisania Academy, an estimable school in New Jersey. At Bonzaga, their intimates were the young sons of General Ricketts, one of the substantial corps commanders of the federal army. No doubt the Jesuits were good teachers, but Linton seems to be more impressed by the education which he then picked up from the janitor in the “jug” and the boys on the playground. The “jug” was a dismal basement to which the boys were committed for discipline, which to them was rather a lark. There presided the stout Irish janitor with a too-thick stick, and he did not spoil the child. Yet the boys, it seems, remembered him rather kindly. There the Ushers and the Ricketts boys were wont to make effigies of Jeff Davis and pelt them with spit-balls, especially when southern boys were with them in the “jug.” There, and on the playground the boys fought out the issues of the war. Linton was once booked to win the war or lose it by a bout of fisticuffs, but the “copperhead” champion defaulted. The possible explanation of his default might explain something else. It is well-known that most residents of Washington, in those days, apart from those employed by the government, were southern and naturally pro-South, but most of them prudently held their tongues. School-boys speak off the record, however, and the Usher and Ricketts lads found their own loyalty almost unanimously an-
tagonized by scores of their schoolmates. Perhaps that school-
ground was one of the authentic “Mirrors of Washington,”
and, if so, it probably reveals one of the reasons why the
threat of rebel raids on the capital was a haunting night-
mare to the administration.

The writer’s first question to Linton Usher (at least in
point of interest) was this: “What do you best remember about
Abraham Lincoln?” He answered: “The time I saw Mr. Lin-
coln get out of a barouche and get on a train. I thought he
had the longest legs I ever saw.” That is true realism as no
man could have said that except one who had kept faith with
his own boyhood. Then he added: “One time Mr. Lincoln
put his hand on my head and said ‘You’re a fine boy and
will grow up to be a fine man.’” With this my old friend
looked at me whimsically, as though to say “That time the
joke was on Lincoln.” Yet only a fine man could have told
the story in that way. Mr. Usher is never the hero of his
own stories, nor does he embellish them. He seems a little
at a loss to account for his hearer’s interest nor can he be
tempted into inventing a climax where there wasn’t a climax
in the actual unfolding of events. Some of Lincoln’s immortal
jokes were heard from Lincoln’s own lips by Linton’s father,
and hearing them from Linton now makes them seem less like
distance echoes and more like living speech. For instance, Lin-
coln’s incomparable word-picture of Stephens: “I never saw
a small nubbin wrapped up in so many shucks.”

In regard to Mrs. Lincoln, Linton Usher remembers
shaking hands with her at a White House reception, noticing
that her little hand was so fat that she couldn’t pull her gloves
much above her finger-tips. He recalls that he disapproved
of her affectations and doubted her loyalty to the Union. It
roused his spirit when asked whether he remembered Lincoln
at any historic scene. Indeed he did. He remembered the
President as he stood on the balcony of a high window and
reviewed the march of General Ambrose E. Burnside’s Ninth
Corps on the way to battle. He only said about that much
and with no stress of voice, but his listeners heard the drum
beats, the trampling feet and huzzas. After a silence, he
further said: “And I heard Lincoln deliver his second In-
augural.” Then for a while, there was a silence again.

As a boy Linton Usher talked and shook hands with Grant
and Sherman. He remembers also Sheridan, Hooker, Butler,
Stanton, and Sumner (whose pretentious coach seems not to have pleased him). Neither did he like the looks of Burnside. Most of all he admired John A. Logan, and almost equally General Winfield S. Hancock, who continued to be his friend in later years. He saw Johnson's inauguration as vice-president. Several times he saw Congress in session.

There must have been something agreeable about those Usher lads for busy, great men companioned them. Walt Whitman, who never flattered nor favored anyone whom he didn't enjoy, was hilarious with these "kids" and sent them books. Joseph A. Wright, when minister to Prussia, sent young Linton a fine oil painting from Berlin which still hangs in his parlor. Caleb Lyon, art connoisseur and esthete, seemed glad to take the lad to his hearthside and his heart.

Farragut, in the strenuous hours of preparing his fleet for Mobile, found time to befriend him. And thereby hangs a charming tale of that great Admiral out of uniform. Secretary Usher had taken Linton to New York, where he remembers seeing "Ten Nights in a Bar Room," but best of all remembers how Farragut took him over the flag-ship Hartford, which was then fitting out for the attack on Mobile, and proposed to take him along as a "powder-monkey." Returning from the Brooklyn Navy Yard, the Ushers rode an eight-cent bus. An old Irish woman with a basket of vegetables had handed up a dime to the driver and failing to receive her change, began "roaring for it," as Mr. Usher says. The Admiral, in unimposing civil costume, ordered his aide, who was magnificent in full uniform, to go aloft and see that two cents and full justice were rendered to the old woman. Of men long honored, it is good to learn that they may be loved too.

At another time Linton also visited the flagship of Admiral Meade who showed him a barrel of Ohio River water which had been twelve times around Cape Horn and still was fresh.

It is possible that no one else now living has had so near a view of the seats of the mighty in those days. His father was one of them, and one of the most clear-sighted of them. So the son was enabled to see with his father's eyes, and it may well be that his views are sometimes authentic insights. His estimate of Gideon Welles as a common-place but trust-worthy Naval Secretary, and of Welles' assistant Gustavus Vasa Fox, as one of history's pre-eminent "organizers of victory," is possibly sound, as is his clear recognition alike of
Chase's greatness and great defects, and of the social and political cleverness of the brilliant daughter Kate, the tragic bride of Governor Sprague. When Usher today asserts definitely that Grant, in his Eastern campaign, was hindered from the start by the prejudices of the important eastern generals, save Hancock; when he asserts that those who knew Frémont most intimately gave least credit to Frémont's greatness—then we can say, at least, that the boy made some historical inquiries. Whenever Linton importuned his father concerning the conspiracy that led to Lincoln's murder, Secretary Usher would reply that the ramifications were so far-reaching that it was well that investigations had gone no farther. At that point John P. Usher's lips were sealed. Is there still some unsolved mystery involved?

Another public event on which the Usher manuscripts give us a side-light is the appointment of David Davis to the Supreme Court in 1862. It is nearly true to say that Davis had made Lincoln President, as he was later to refuse in 1876 the opportunity to make another president. His appointment to the Supreme Bench would seem to have been Lincoln's logical course and Secretary Usher had written to Davis offering to urge his nomination. The Davis letter in reply is still in Linton Usher's possession. Davis, who was equally great as a legislator and a jurist, was no less great as a patriot and as a friend. His cordial appreciation of Mr. Usher's confidence is evident, but he rejected definitely all efforts in his own behalf. For many years, Lincoln had been his dear friend and the old friendship must not now be made an added load to the over-burdened President, nor must the claims of personal friendship be permitted to complicate the President's judgment of public duty. The clear script and clear language of this extraordinary letter attest the clear conscience of the writer. To read this confidential letter to a friend about a friend, should give pause to certain contemporary historiographers who are making out that Davis at that time was busily intriguing among the mutual friends of himself and the President to put pressure on Lincoln in behalf of this appointment. It is pleasing to know that a few weeks later Lincoln appointed David Davis to the Supreme Court.

Another event which lives in Linton's vivid memory is General Early's raid toward Washington in 1864. The Con-
federate leader almost arrived. In Washington excitement ran high and hot. All the men and many boys were under arms. Linton Usher himself flourished an old musket which it is unlikely that he or anybody else could have fired. Across the street from the Usher home was the mansion of a notorious pro-southern family. That night every window from basement to garret was blazing with light to give welcome to Early's troopers. It was believed by some that Confederate officers had wormed their way into the city and were in that house that night. Mr. Usher makes the shrewd surmise that Early could have brought his army in, but was smart enough to know that he could not have made his way out again.

On the fourteenth of April, 1865—note that date—Secretary Usher's family moved from Washington to resume their residence in Indiana. The Secretary had gone with them as far as Relay Junction, half-way to Baltimore. There he learned that Lincoln had just been shot. Within a few hours Secretary Usher was back in Washington and had joined Stanton and Welles at the bedside of the dying President. There, through the saddest hours of our nation's history, these faithful friends kept their heart-breaking vigil until in the gray dawn one of them said: "Now he belongs to the ages." John P. Usher could hardly speak freely of those hours. Of the little that the father may have said, the son remembers less, and that no more than some of the statements about the ghastly, physical features that were connected with the deathbed scene.

As is well known, the murder-plot led also to an attack on Secretary Seward that almost caused his death, and to other murderous attempts, and possibly contemplated the massacre of the entire Cabinet. About the fatal hour, mysterious strangers appeared at Secretary Usher's home and it could be that his brief trip to Relay Junction saved his life.

Of all Linton Usher's memories and memorials of wartime Washington, nothing is more impressive than the autograph album opening with Lincoln's copy from the Second Inaugural. Following that priceless page are greetings, mottoes, counsels, and endearments, signed by the vice-president, Andrew Johnson; the future vice-president, Henry Wilson; Chief Justice Chase and other justices of the Supreme Court; all of the Cabinet members; Generals Grant, Sherman, Sheri-
Indiana and ten other distinguished soldiers; such naval chiefs as Farragut and Fox; the French minister, Comte de Chambrun; the orator Wendell Phillips; the Senators, John Sherman, Charles Sumner and a dozen more who were then powerful leaders in Congress; such authors as Walt Whitman, Lew Wallace and Albion W. Tourgee; C. A. Dana and J. W. Forney, world-famous journalists—in all eighty-four names and every one of them significant. These autographs were collected by Margaret Paterson Usher, in the early spring of 1863, as an heirloom for her children. It is noteworthy that she did not include the name of any man who had been an antagonist of Lincoln. In spite of such exceptions, it is an adequate dramatis personae of the great American tragedy. A composite biography of these eighty-four men, including their contacts and conflicts, would give much of the story of the Civil War. One may ask if there is anywhere else in the world any collection made at any one time of the signatures of so many men who personify one of the major epochs of history?

A few weeks after Lincoln’s death, Secretary Usher resigned from the Cabinet to become the General Solicitor of the Union Pacific Railroad. Concluding his political career, he resumed the professional career in which he was no less eminent. During many of the ensuing years, he resided at Lawrence, Kansas. He died in 1889, one day before the anniversary of Lincoln’s assassination.

When a schoolboy, Linton Usher went hunting on Staten Island. That was where the West began for him. Or had it begun in the Indian Bureau of his father’s Department of the Interior? At any rate, when the time came for him to go to college he had “another idea.” The other idea was the West. That was the college for him. Out in Kansas was a part of his father’s Wild-West principality—a quarter of a million acres. It had to be surveyed. Linton thought he had to survey it. It was boyhood’s shouting response to the challenge of destiny. In 1867, at the age of fifteen, he enrolled in “Wilderness University.”

The subsequent pattern of his activities traces one of the vital factors in the civilizing of the untamed West. After the youth had surveyed his father’s lands to his liking, he be-
gan to shuttle back and forth over the long Chisholm trail, buying, shepherding, shipping the thundering herds of the dusty Southwest. Down through Ft. Worth to Austin, associated there with the opulent and lordly Driscolls, then from Austin to Tombstone and betimes to old Mexico. But oftener, he went to New Mexico and the Texas panhandle, and from these various places back to eastern Kansas. For some thirty years, Leavenworth was thus his base of operation. With his father, he went to San Francisco while it was still somewhat in the raw. There they visited their friends, the McLaughlins, whose vast cow-ranches and horse-ranches engaged the younger Usher’s eager interest. When offered a fine wheat farm his answer was, “No d—— wheat in mine.”

Back in Kansas again, Linton Usher married a kinswoman of his own fine family stock. For the remaining years of her life, she kept the home-haven at Leavenworth. Then, after her early death and the death of their little son, the Odyssey of the surviving husband and father was still maintained, until, with the years, he had woven his way through every state in the Union save one, and also Canada and Mexico. In 1904, he married Charlotte Dicker of Lawrence, Kansas. They resided first in Oregon, then successively in Montana, Vancouver, and Aransas Pass, Texas. Still he went adventuring far and near, usually dealing in cattle, but occasionally in mines and oil-wells. As late as 1918, he went all over the West in an automobile, looking for a “likely” ranch. In 1923, he settled at last on the old parental lands at Pomona, Kansas. Here he still rides his range of nearly two thousand acres and herds his five hundred cattle. And here the memories of Sacs and Foxes still linger like living presences in his mind.

Such men were indispensable to the constructive achievements of the West of yesterday. What they did could not have been done either by the drifters or by the settlers alone. The settlers had to leave too much behind them. But men like Usher who tied their far-flung projects to an eastern base were the binders of all America. These were the woof, the settlers the warp of the new and miraculous fabric. Thus St. Louis, Leavenworth, and New Orleans, like Constantinople through the Dark Ages, were the anchorages binding the vast frontier country beyond to the social order.
In Linton Usher's "Wilderness University," as perhaps nowhere else in modern times, are we taught the historical significance of the typical man and the typical event. Such men as Linton Usher, whether or not we ascribe to them intrinsic greatness, are historical because they are the living types of the life which is history itself. For instance, in what he calls a "honky-tonky," in pioneer Denver, he saw some women on the stage, half drunk, come dancing down the aisles, singing—"It will all be forgotten in a hundred years." But it will not be forgotten in a hundred years nor in a thousand. Those poor honky-tonky girls could not know that the prodigious life of which they were the bedraggled symbols, is sure to remain an epic of epics for many a hundred years to come. The like of it had never been before and can never be again.

Another lesson of the "Wilderness University" is that the spirit of adventure is a main factor in the making of security. If stable civilization depended wholly on the stabilizers it could never get started. In two remarks of Mr. Usher, he was the unconscious spokesman of history. When asked in the fall when he would go South for the winter, he answered: "I don't know. Some day when I feel like it, I'll go right then. I've always been that way." The West could not have been made without the men who were ready for sudden journeys and unpremeditated projects. Only men who loved to take themselves by surprise could have done the deeds and won the results that are now the wonder of the world. Those who wait till they know why they are going, and how they are going, and where they are going, are not the men who change the unknown into the known.

Linton Usher remarked that he had never cared to get rich but only to see life. To him and his kind, getting money seems to have been part of life, but keeping it wasn't. There is your counter-poise to the dogma of economic determinism. Why did the Goths raid the Roman Empire? Historians are wont to say that it was because the Goths coveted the wealth of Rome. But the "Wilderness University" should teach them that those young Goths, like Linton Usher, Jedidiah Smith or Kit Carson, wanted most of all to experience life, perhaps to "live dangerously." Did Lindbergh fly the Atlantic because he had business in Paris? Did Peary and Amundsen go to the Poles because there was something there that they wanted
to get? To economic greed add both missionary zeal and a
statesmanlike foresight, and did the three of them constitute
a greater factor than the spirit of adventure in the making
of the West?

Usher, the old plainsman, seems disinclined to narrate
the more adventurous of his adventures. He tells no tall
tales of killing deer, bear and bison. Nevertheless his fish-
ing and hunting trips sometimes took him into the remoter
wilds. And still he hunts and fishes with his old time ardor.
He admires the fighting adventurers, though he does not pose
as one of them. Yes, he knew Buffalo Bill: "When Bill was
a young fellow he worked for my father, and years after-
wards he gave me tickets to his show. And those fellows really
were crack shots." The stories of their marksmanship are
not much exaggerated. Linton Usher saw them shoot. "Wild
Bill Hickok? Saw him a hundred times. He was an over-
bearing fellow. But he dug like a Trojan the time we buried
that poor fellow down by Fossil Creek."

Here is the Fossil Creek story—One day "The Old Gen-
eral" (not named) and "Old K——," an unpopular railroad
president, with Linton, were traveling by private coach, es-
corted by a cavalry squad. On approaching Fossil Creek, in
Western Kansas, they saw a white man near his cabin ex-
changing shots with Indians in the brush by the creek. The
Indians dispersed when they saw the soldiers. The white
man explained that his brother had gone to the creek for water
and that the Indians had killed him there. He begged for aid
to recover his brother's body. Old K—— was well scared,
and at his demand the soldiers were forbidden to go. But Lint-
ton went with the living brother. They found that the victim
had not been scalped, though a gash had been made on the
side of his head. They lifted him across a long musket and
brought him home. Linton found himself smeared with
blood. By that time, a stage had arrived and its guard was
none other than the famous Wild Bill. Then it was that Bill
served as the vigorous grave-digger and remarked while dig-
ging: "If that old K—— had been on my stage, I'd have made
him pay $500 or I'd have threwed him to them Indians." When the journey was resumed, the mules drawing the coach
could hardly keep pace with the cavalry horses. The fright-
ened railroad magnate took the reins, whipped the mules till
he drew blood, and at the journey's end had whipped and
driven some of them to death. The double inhumanity, to the squatter at the creek and to the poor beasts, got rumored about and the Old General was blamed for it, and was hailed before General Hancock's court-martial. Then it was that the old friendship of Hancock with the boy Linton whom he had known in Washington became the means whereby the truth of the matter came to Hancock and the Old General was promptly acquitted.

Dick Wooten was another adventurer whom Linton knew. Wooten had made a bridge at Raton Pass and held it as well as Horatius held the bridge in the brave days of old. Neither man nor beast got through the pass without paying heavy toll. But by and by the Santa Fe railroad came through and the curses of many cattle-men were fulfilled—Dick Wooten was “busted.”

Among the many adventurers known to Linton none was more picturesque than Colonel Stanley, who had commanded a South Carolina regiment during the Mexican War. Subsequently, he had been the comrade in arms and trusted confidant of the romantic and now almost mythical filibusterer, William Walker, “the gray-eyed man of destiny,” who had made himself President of Nicaragua and later was shot by a firing squad in Honduras. Stanley seems to have walked in the ways of Walker-worship to the end of his days. In his old age, when Linton Usher knew him, the Colonel was still revelling in the vanity of dreams. The veterans of Walker's private-crew had made up some kind of a tontine-pool which would enormously enrich the last survivor of their band. Stanley was waiting in the impatience of hope for two or three other old men to shuffle off, and he was the last one to die.

In the same “Wilderness University” was to be learned anew the old historic fundamental that spontaneous law and order are the normal prerequisites of established institutions. Without the former, the latter can be created only with difficulty, if at all. Mr. Usher tells of big Dan Donahoe who emerged from a grog-shop and remarked casually: “I saw there was going to be a fight in there, so I knocked ’em all down and came out.” From such crude beginnings evolves the policing of the world.

It was in 1869, that Usher discovered Denver. There was one modest brick structure in the town, and not very many frame buildings. Some of the latter were not modest.
Saloons and worse were everywhere. He was shown the cottonwood tree which served for a gallows. Some prisoner broke jail. Bells rang like a fire-alarm. The vigilantes rallied from everywhere. They overtook the prisoner not far from town, shot him through the leg, tried him in lynch-court and decided not to hang him. That negative marked distinct progress in the long evolution of public order. It may conserve our historic slant to note that on the same trip Linton Usher saw thousands of buffaloes through the car windows.

Such primitive policing as that of Dan Donahoe and the vigilantes, with its background of primitive society, indicates why the "constituted authorities" were so often ineffective. Usher says that the United States Marshals "were d—— thieves." Be that as it may, they and other limbs of the law were not of the natural growth of western life and could not be grafted upon it without a lot of another kind of "grafting" and various sorts of misfitting.

Another historic principle re-evinced in Linton Usher's West is the necessity of temporary compromise with disorder in the uncompromising struggle for the permanent and better order. It seems now to readers and hearers of old western tales that nothing was doing then but gambling, drinking and shooting. At a Deadwood gambling-joint, for instance, Usher saw a "bushel of gold, anyhow half a bushel, poured out on the table." His comment is something to think about. "You didn't have to gamble if you didn't want to, and it was their own money anyhow, and the shooting wasn't going on all the time." The Wild West would tolerate gambling, booze, and several kinds of rough stuff. Nevertheless, it had its code of unpardonable sins—such as jumping claims to lands or mines, fraudulent cattle-branding, cheating, cowardice, lack of generosity, and mistreatment of decent women or helpless children. Suppose that all the decent adventurers had taken time out to abolish all the vices of their world—the West would have remained indefinitely a world of scenery, buffalo herds, Indians, and vices. They chose rather the way of tolerance for the time while they pursued their destined adventure in making another kind of world.

In every history of "new worlds" for "old" there arises the hard problem of the beaten men and the beaten races. Linton Usher had little trouble with Indians. His plan was the simple one of doing them favors and making friends
with them: "If you take care to make all the friends you can, they will take care of the few who won’t be friends. Try to treat them as well as they think you treat white men. Don’t try to bluff them and don’t let them bluff you." The worst in Indians, he has always believed, is due mostly to the worst in white men.

This is what Linton Usher has learned and taught in the school of the great West: that the enterprisers who worked both East and West were the weavers of the national fabric; that the typical rather than the great men and events should be the essential substance of history; that the adventurers, as truly as the settlers and investors, have been makers of the West; that spontaneous law is the deep basis of the social order; that temporary compromise is necessary to consistent progress; that some men at least have found it practical to befriend the beaten races.

With all his restless coming and going over the American world, Mr. Usher has somehow found time for education through books. He has a large library. He has been an appreciative and discriminating reader, and knows history and politics in a rather masterly way. Old as he is in years, he is not mentally old, and, in politics, he seems to be rather progressive with possible leanings to the left. After all, he is so distinctly himself that he is hard to classify. His old age (if that is what it is) is appropriate to the precedents of his long life. He follows the seasons regularly, and sometimes the urge of his interests, all over the map. When at home in Kansas, he lives in a dignified country house, Mrs. Usher, their children and grandchildren forming a congenial domestic and neighborhood circle. He is the head of an unfallen House of Usher.