Technological progress and the welfare of mankind.

An overview of the illness of the world, and the path we must take.

Bereft of the noble tasks of our forefathers, cast as nomads upon a concrete desert, and receiving no guidance from the filthy, false neon night, we must somehow undertake to find ourselves, each other, and in so doing fix the broken soul of man. This is no small task. Rather, it is a quest of relentless burden and unparalleled importance. Perhaps then, by merely recognizing the weight of what has been set upon our shoulders, we can take the first step in reclaiming what has been lost....

And, Oh my, what has been lost!

The corner stone of our philosophy must be steel set in granite. We shall build a fortress of thought whose central keep is not any work of man, but instead the mountains themselves. Like a stone with even a hairline crack, any proposition less than entirely and holistically sound will be cast aside, and so shall we become unassailable.

So it begins, humbly:

Technological progress and the welfare of mankind, though they may someday be reconciled with each other in a glorious future, are at present, in no way equivalent. The machine is the great mutilator who has plucked man's head from his shoulders, invaded it with shiny tendrils, and set it, mockingly upon a pressboard cubicle altar - helpless, conquered, staring in submission and thoughtless worship at the master of his own creation. Meanwhile, the body chokes and spasms and bloats and dies in decay. The spine curls and cowers in defeat. Every tumor, every clogged artery, would cry “betrayal!” had they a voice. Lungs that once carried men to heights of ecstasy on their soaring winds now wheeze lifeless, paltry, rasping gasps, as would cause Spanish sailors to throw their horses into the sea. And so the body becomes an undifferentiated mass; a gelatinous blob that is not a servant nor companion of the mind. Now it is a burden: a useless mass requiring excision or incision inevitably, and as hopelessly dependent upon the machine god for its continued existence as the mind which was enslaved firstly.

We are not discussing how man could, or should use technology, but how he DOES use it. The relationship is not defined by moments of transcendent good. Unfortunately, it is defined by the lowest common denominators of human nature. Strength is exceptional. Weakness is commonplace. Men may overcome and excel, but man succumbs to base instinct, at least more often than not, which is decidedly the problem. The lethality of technology is instant gratification.

Result, without struggle, atrophies the apparatuses of struggle, both mental and physical. In destroying his resistance to his own impulses, in allowing his patience and self-control to be broken, man is not moving forward, but backward, into an ever more bestial state. Is this progress? To master your surroundings and lose self-mastery? What consequences does this hold for our surroundings?

As a child, I had a beloved pet dog who chanced to escape from the boundaries we had set for her. We lived in the city, so to keep the animal healthy, it was necessary for us to control and regulate her environment: limitations to simulate the conditions in which the animal's nature had first developed. We provided her with a den and adequate space to run and chase things, even leniency to dig and bury a little. What she was given to eat came in healthy proportion. With her conditions regulated to suit her nature, she lived healthily, though not ideally, for many years. However, upon escaping these conditions, she was dead within a few days. The instincts of the animal did not prepare it for the grotesque abundance of the city. Garbage bag after garbage bag was torn open, and their rotten contents consumed greedily, until she became fatally ill and laid down forever. An animal whose ancient nature led her ancestral species to triumph against scarcity for centuries, brought low and destroyed in days when exposed to grotesque abundance.

All of man's most damaging interactions with technology appear to me as variations on the theme of the gorging dog. His own neurochemistry has deceived him into believing he is facilitating his survival in a bountiful way. Man's environment has changed far too rapidly for suitable adjustments in his instincts to take place. This is a thing that takes generations upon generation of progressive exposure. We eat the high calorie food, that digests most easily (stripped in processing plants of much of its real value) because we are wired, from thousands of years of hunting and gathering, even planting and harvesting, to perceive it as rare and precious. The systems that regulate dopamine don't know what mass production is. It will give us immediate energy, without discomfort, to deal with immediate threats. We have it prepared and delivered to us at the push of a button because this conserves precious time and energy necessary for survival. But what if there are no *immediate* threats? When something is chanced upon that is easy, we must feast, for their will *surely* be faminine, correct? Being able to avoid movement indefinitely, while simultaneously feeding ourselves relentlessly, is not a reality human nature was ever prepared to encounter. The energy that was supposed to help us run from wolves, now becomes a waste deposit that would only slow us down. Eventually, it may even destroy our organs and end us that way. So it begins to become clear that the conditions in which we live, do not suit our natures. We are missing something. We are missing struggle of the proportion and type which we were designed to encounter.

Yes, and similarly on a mental level, the ease and relative dissociation with which we are able to perform so many of our daily tasks has robbed us of much of the substance of life; much of the substance of self. The various actions (and the manner in which we perform them) demanded by external circumstances for our survival add up to the internal circumstances we call identity. It is no wonder then, that modern man suffers from an epidemic of emptiness. His storehouse of skill is populated typically by one learned specialty or innate predilection/talent that he has monetized, and the rest of his relationship with the world is button pushing. His identity is thin. Limited. Never fully developed, because so much ability is left untapped in favour of the pursuit of a single, highly specific sub-class of a sub-set of a particular skill. Do not misunderstand me, I am not saying that

there is anything wrong with having dominant or primary skills, mastered above others, as passions and personality dictate, no. I am saying simply that the hyper specificity of techno-modern occupations benefits the system, but atrophies the individual.

“What do you do for a living?”

The desk-jockey cubicle commuter consumer replies, “I troubleshoot photoshop plug-ins for eight hours of my day to earn digital tokens. I fulfill a need of the system so I can pay for machines that fulfill my needs.”

“And what do you do for a living?”

The pre-industrial revolution homesteader replies, “I live for a living. Week to week, month to month, year to year, my wife and I, we build fences, wash clothes, till the soil, paint walls, sharpen knives, sheer sheep, churn butter, can vegetables, render tallow, butcher meat, brew beer, shoe horses, make furniture, hunt deer, chop wood, plant seeds, knit sweaters, bake bread…..I fulfill my own needs, to the best of my ability.”

Which career holds the stronger sense of self? Which holds the confidence of independence, and which bears the anxiety of dependence? Which one is stimulating in the most complete way?

Which person experiences his humanity, his existence as a living, breathing part of nature, to its fullest and most profound extent, by testing his limitations against the demands of survival?

There are many tasks, once performed with the simplest of tools over a long time, that are now performed in a shorter period of time using much more complex tools. An electric drill does in seconds, what a hand cranked drill does in minutes, but the first hole is the shared work of many men, while the second hole is the work of only a few. What I mean by this, is that many minds contributed to the design and manufacture of the electric drill, such that the end result requires very little effort from the carpenter, but mostly gratifies the engineers and technicians who in various stages brought the electric drill from theoretical schematic to physical reality. A hole was created in seconds, but numerous adjoining skillsets own the result. With the hand drill, the result is owned by, perhaps, two men: a blacksmith and a carpenter. The electric drill asks little, but gives little in return. The hand drill asks much, but in return gives strength, skill, and satisfaction. One contributes much to self-mastery, the other contributes little. Which is better for the advancement of man? In deciding how a task is completed, it is now, perhaps more than ever in history, imperative that we consider not only the speed of the result, but the mental and physical impact the particular operation has upon the individual.

Now, I do not mean, at all, that power tools should not exist, or not be owned, entirely. Certainly there are times when they hold a very real survival value; when their use is the difference between life and death. I will reiterate: It is man's relationship with technology that causes the destruction. We are not blaming the spoon for obesity, and likewise, we will not blame the machine, as a lifeless object, for the death of craftsmanship. That being said, every piece of technology has a networth, and their are many instances where its liabilities exceed any positive value. There are no uses of household utility for a nuclear bomb. It is our responsibility to understand the choices we make and the FULL extent of their rammifications. It is our responsibility to exert will over our impulses, and

cultivate the discernment to know when the chisel or knife is the best option holistically. We must recognize that the will of man was not prepared for the exponential rate of technological change over the past two hundred years, and now even more acutely in the past few decades. In our adjustment and repair of this relationship with our own creation, the work done on our selves is the greatest share, since we ultimately decide what technology exists and how it is used.

Techno-modernity has amplified the evils of self-indulgence upon the Earth to a hitherto unknown extreme, and we have become ill, physically and mentally, because of those evils. Every need and base desire is instantly gratified through appeal to the work of other men. Our need for food, drink, recognition, companionship, sexual gratification, warmth, shelter, clothing, entertainment - it comes to us instantly, mass produced and lacking depth or conviction, through screens and buttons, and leaves us empty, fragile and depressed, because deep down we know we deserve none of it, and are owned because of it. We know we have forsaken self-mastery.

Are we to continue on this course of subjugation forever?

To escape the prison of comfort we have engineered for ourselves, to heal our bodies, but especially our minds, we must go to war with our own corrupt impulses. We must undertake a great pilgrimage, not to any physical location, but in to the past, where mastery lives eternally. We must redefine pleasure to correlate directly and only with effort. We will find the old paths of the hunter, the warrior, and the builder, old as the stars, carved into the firmament above. We go to history in search of wisdom, and from it, we will carry forth the pillars of a new religion - a religion of strength:

“Let he who hath trials rejoice, for in them is the means to strength.”

We must relish the hard road with fervor.

We will make ourselves choose the food we know to be best, not the one we crave.

We will cook it ourselves. Grow it or hunt it if we can.

We will learn to love it for what it does for us.

We will not drive when we could walk, run, or hike.

We will not look for the quick fix, when we could learn a skill.

We will not skim read.

We will not avoid confrontation when their is a wrong we could right.

We will not buy something when we could make it, or do without it.

We must not let things be done for us which we could do ourselves

We must introduce blessed, life affirming physical struggle into our lives, so that we may build ourselves up. We will breathe free air atop Crom's mountain, free from the disorienting smog of mechanized industry. Now is the beginning. The path of re-uniting mind and body starts at the Temple of Iron; the overthrow of technological subjugation begins with discipline.

Let us go forth, shunning weakness and decay, and embrace the one true joy to which a man may ascend - the will to overcome himself.

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