

Complimentary Dinner
of the
Harvard Travellers Club
to
Mr. Charles W. Eliot

January 17, 1913

Boston, Mass.

JOURNEY OF MR. CHARLES W



ELIOT AROUND THE WORLD



Man by primal instinct is a traveller. In most of us this instinct is subdued and we become tethered to a spot, make a home, and grow up as city dwellers or serfs of the soil. In others it is simply held in check and ready to spring forth whenever the cry of the distant and unknown is strong enough to snap its bonds.

It matters not from what viewpoint we consider travel—be it one of anticipation, realization or reflection—there is ever a sense of joy which at times may develop a kind of excitement that thrills the very soul.

Perhaps the element in travel that gives the greatest degree of pleasure is that of reflection—with its storehouse of inestimable treasures, its picture-gallery of impressions, and its collection of epics, dramas and lyrics. These memories, moreover, seem to have inherent in them a force that urges the owner to share with others their charm. Perchance this very attribute of unselfishness is the real font of the traveller's joy.

To seek change and adventure is a yearning felt by both young and old. Only those who realize it can know how the power and strangeness of the unfamiliar fascinates the mind, sets free the imagination, and starts an insatiable craving for more.

Nor is the sense of disappointment in not getting a glimpse of the fairer valley on the other side of the hill or the fresh enchantment a little further on the road, always a keen regret; for do we not anticipate seeing them on a future journey.

Travel itself does not seem to appease this nomadic instinct. In our need we are obliged to call on its vast literature. Nearly all the great epics are stories of travel and adventure in the unmapped and trackless regions. The "Iliad," the "Odyssey," the "Aeneid", "Orlando", "Paradise Lost", and many others are dominated by this trait. The great novels of the world "Don Quixote", "The Three Guardsmen", "Tom Jones", many of Scott, the best of Dickens—all are treatments of the wandering theme. In short the mass of literature on adventure and exploration is so great that it almost seems as if it is foreign to the nature of man to remain rooted in one place.