

[This essay of Gordon H. Clark's is the earliest known. It was found in the Clark Library at the Sangre de Cristo Seminary in Dr. Clark's old math textbook. The paper was split into four pieces for the opposite sides' use as scrap paper in solving Algebra problems. Unfortunately, with pieces missing it is difficult if not impossible to make sense of. That the essay was found within a math textbook, mentions the recent war (World War I), and mentions the "University" leads me to believe it is from his undergraduate years at Penn, 1920-1924. - DJD, 19 Oct, 2014]

The Wave of Crime

There is a crime wave. This fact is indisputable, it needs no demonstration. In Philadelphia we, especially, are able to see the truth of the statement, and to see that this same wave has swept the entire globe, only a little reading is necessary. The problem exists, and we must face it.

The first question which logically presents itself is, why is there a crime wave. Divers theories have been expounded each claiming to explain the condition. For instance, to the movies much crime is attributed. Quite frequently [manuscript cuts off]

[manuscript resumes] explanations. And in doing so, we can look at the question from three angles, as a world problem, as a national problem, and from a local or University standpoint.

The very nature of the meaning of the word "mediocrity" immediately makes the majority of the world mediocre. For just as what is "normal" is determined, so also is what is mediocre. Both are relative terms meaning neither the best nor worst, not the extremes, but the average. Therefore, no matter in what condition the world is, this commonplaceness must exist. For were we all to suddenly become [manuscript cut offs]

[manuscript resumes] Hence, crime. True, but is this sufficient?

Reason after reason, theories galore are given, that they are so numerous that we can only consider one of them. And this reason we hear most of all. It is the War. Wars always result in disastrous consequences, crimes always follows war, moral laxity is the natural resultant of wars. This now looks reasonable and is widely accepted, but in reality, war is only the immediate cause and sets the discussion back a step in the question – what caused the war?

The cause, the basic cause of the [manuscript cuts off]

[manuscript resumes]

height during the system of absolute monarchy. Notice Greece and Rome and also note that these were not always monarchies. They too had forms of democracy, and found it disadvantageous. However, you reply, that does not apply here, for the other educated nations are republics [English is in practice] and that would not explain why the republic of the United States of America lacks great men. Materialism then? Yes, but to give it as a reason and then to tell what that is the affect of, are two different things. Omit materializing and look at one other. It is, that sentiment in this country does not fix a rigid enough caste system! If one had to follow his father's

Gordon H. Clark.