THE EDUCATION OF T. C. MITS

Drawings by
HUGH GRAY LIEBER

Words by
LILLIAN R. LIEBER

NEW YORK

W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.
PREFACE

This is not intended to be free verse.
Writing each phrase on a separate line facilitates rapid reading, and everyone is in a hurry nowadays.
# CONTENTS

**PREFACE**

**INTRODUCING THE HERO—T. C. MILLS**  
5

**Part I—THE OLD**

1. FIFTY MILLION PEOPLE CAN BE WRONG  
17
2. DON'T HIT THE CEILING  
22
3. TISSUE-PAPER THINKING  
32
4. GENERALIZATION  
43
5. OUR TOTEM POLE  
51
6. THE TOTEM POLE (Cont.)  
61
7. ABSTRACTION  
74
8. "DEFINE YOUR TERMS"  
81
9. A WEDDING  
90
10. THE OFFSPRING  
101
11. A SUMMARY OF PART I  
114

**Part II—THE NEW**

12. A NEW EDUCATION  
123
13. COMMON SENSE  
129
14. FREEDOM AND LICENSE  
138
15. PRIDE AND PREJUDICE  
153
16. TWICE TWO IS NOT FOUR!  
168
17. ABSTRACTION—MODERN STYLE  
183
18. THE FOURTH DIMENSION  
187
19. PREPAREDNESS  
200
20. THESE MODERNS  
212

**THE MORAL**  
7
INTRODUCING THE HERO—T. C. MITS

This introduces the Hero:

T. C. MITTS
the an hite

e leven ere
ebe e
er a
t ed
ted

T. C. is born and gets
an education of some kind—
perhaps college,
perhaps "the school of hard knocks."
in any case
he tries to figure out
now best to "get along."
he picks up a lot of
contradictory information:
"The past is antiquated, you must be progressive."
"The past is wonderful, the new-fangled fads are a sign of decadence."

"Science will save us from Superstition and Fraud."
"Science is the greatest menace yet invented by man."

"Fifty million people can't be wrong."
"Some races are always wrong."

"Be practical, learn a vocation, don't waste your time on Mathematics and Art."

"Why be a narrow, practical farmer all your life, get out and learn some theory, and find out how to do things in a better way."

And so on and so on.

He is naturally confused by all this, and very much hemmed in. He becomes not only Mits in name,
but has mits on his fingers
and mits on his toes,
and is generally "mitsified"
in the brain.

This book is an attempt
to get a bird's-eye view
of T. C.'s predicament,
and to look for
a possible egress.

To do this
VIVIDLY,
we use pictures whenever possible.
And
to do it
CLEARLY,
we use the clearest language
man has invented:
Mathematics.

Oh, we know you do not like
Mathematics,
but
we promise not to
use it as an instrument of torture,
but to show
what bearing it may have
on the contradictory advice
mentioned above,
as well as on such things as:

Democracy
Freedom and License
Pride and Prejudice
Success
Isolationism
Preparedness
Tradition
Progress
Idealism
Common Sense
Human Nature
War
Self-reliance
Humility
Tolerance
Provincialism
Anarchy
Loyalty
Abstract Art
and so on.

Now and then we shall point out
a "Moral."
But please do not think
we are being didactic
and preaching to the reader:

the fact is that we are really
talking to ourselves,
for we, along with millions of others,
are T. C. himself.
PART I

THE OLD
I. FIFTY MILLION PEOPLE CAN BE WRONG

Let us begin with a very simple question: suppose you had the choice of the following two jobs:

**Job 1:** Starting with an annual salary of $1000, and a $200 increase every year.

**Job 2:** Starting with a semiannual salary of $500, and an increase of $50 every 6 months.

In all other respects, the two jobs are exactly alike.

Which is the better offer (after the first year)? Think carefully and decide on your answer BEFORE TURNING THIS PAGE.
Did you say Job 1 is better?
And did you reason as follows?
Since Job 2 has an increase
of $50 every 6 months,
it must have an annual increase of $100
and therefore it is not as good
as Job 1 which has
an annual increase of $200.

Well, you are wrong!
For, examine carefully
the earnings written out below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st half of year</th>
<th>2nd half of year</th>
<th>total for the year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job 1</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job 2</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>1050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job 1</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job 2</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>1250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job 1</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>1400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job 2</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>1450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job 1</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job 2</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>1650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>etc., etc., etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that:
(1) Job 1 pays $200 more each year
than it did the previous year.
(2) Job 2 pays $50 more every
half-year than it did during
the previous half-year.

All this is in accordance with
the promises originally made,
and yet
Job 2 brings in $50 more every year
than Job 1 does.
And you can easily see that
this will continue to be true
no matter what number of years
is considered.

You are probably surprised.
But don’t be discouraged,
for you are in plenty of
good company.
Try it on your friends,
and you will find that,
unless they have heard it before,
they will probably make
the same mistake that you made.
Fifty million people CAN be wrong!
And this is entirely normal.
But please do not come to
the conclusion that
Democracy is no good!
For fifty million people
do not HAVE to be wrong!
They may be wrong when
they are too hasty and
jump at conclusions,
as you saw in the problem above.
So do not make a similar mistake again
by coming to hasty conclusions about Democracy.
We are coming back to Democracy later.

In the meantime, please remember that you can fool
"ALL of the people SOME of the time
but NOT ALL the people ALL the time."

And since you are one of the people yourself,
and don't want to be fooled if you can help it,
you must be prepared to think straight.
And, incidentally, don't fool yourself either
by thinking that this can be done without any effort at all on your part.
Perhaps this little book will help to smooth the road for you.

The Moral: Don't be a Conclusion-Jumper.