

In my **younger** and more **vulnerable** years my **father** gave me some **advice** that I've been **turning over** in my mind **ever** since.

"**Whenever** you feel like **criticizing anyone**," he told me, "just **remember** that all the **people** in this world **haven't** had the **advantages** that you've had."

He **didn't say any** more, but we've **always** been **unusually communicative** in a **reserved way**, and I **understood** that he meant a great deal more than that. In **consequence**, I'm **inclined to reserve** all **judgements**, a **habit** that has **opened up many curious natures** to me and **also made me** the **victim** of not a few **veteran** bores. The **abnormal** mind is quick to **detect** and **attach itself** to this **quality** when it **appears** in a **normal person**, and so it came about that in **college** I was **unjustly accused** of **being** a **politician**, **because** I was **privy** to the **secret** griefs of wild, **unknown** men. Most of the **confidences** were **unsought** — **frequently** I have feigned **sleep**, **preoccupation**, or a **hostile levity** when I **realized** by some **unmistakable** sign that an **intimate revelation** was **quivering** on the **horizon**; for the **intimate revelations** of young men, or at least the terms in which they **express** them, are **usually plagiaristic** and marred by **obvious suppressions**. **Reserving judgements** is a **matter of infinite hope**. I am still a **little afraid** of **missing something** if I **forget** that, as my **father snobbishly suggested**, and I **snobbishly repeat**, a sense of the **fundamental decencies** is **parcelled out unequally** at birth.