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Why I Do Not
Fear Death
By E. Haldeman-Julius

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In One Solid Volume A Library of Religious History and Criticism

A Review by Isaac Goldberg

THE STORY OF RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY. By Joseph McCabe. With an Introduction by E. Haldeman-Julius. Boston. The Stratford Company. \$5.

I hope, for the sake of America, that this splendid performance becomes a best-seller. Indeed, for the sake of the world, I should like to see this volume translated into all the tongues of man and read from one end of the habitable universe to the other. I know that this is much to say for a book; I am not given, moreover, to easy superlatives. Yet I look my opening statement over in cold blood and decide, without discussion, to let it stand.

I predict that it will be the target of voluminous criticism, pro and con. It will be denounced in pulpit and in the press. It will be shot at sunrise. It will be burned, literally and figuratively. It will be ridiculed, but those who ridicule it will stir uneasily in their sleep. It will be made the subject of censorial suppression. It will be hailed and jeered; around it will wage anew the ancient battle out of which it was born.

And it will triumph over every obstacle that is set in its path, because it is charged with the dynamite of truth-seeking and truth-proclamation.

I know the kind of welcome it will receive from a certain type of liberal whose liberalism masks a sentimental reversion to the past. "What?" will be the cry. "Must we go over all this ground again? I thought we had settled these questions. I thought that we had agreed to consider these militant atheists as so many pests who have a screw loose and make a din with their outmoded rationalism. These fellows are as fanatical as the Fundamentalists," and so on, *ad libitum* and *ad nauseam*.

I am afraid that we must go over the ground again. I am afraid that

there is still room for the militant atheist—that is, for the scientist in the realm of religion and theology—especially since such scientists as Eddington revert to the teachings of their childhood. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, and we have reached a time in the history of science, or, rather, in the history of some scientists, when we must return to the vigil.

It is the special function of Mr. McCabe to guard his public against the emotional defection of the softer scientists. The fact that contemporary science has upset the theoretical foundations by which it has made its steady advance over nature hardly argues for the soundness of the theories by which religion has sought to maintain itself. Science, in its search for truth, sheds its errors as fast as it discovers them; it sheds them voluntarily, without waiting for religion to overthrow them in mortal combat. Religion, on the other hand, clings to its dogmas long after the bases upon which they were erected have been exposed for the rotten structures that they are.

McCabe wears no gloves when he writes. He spares no sensibilities. He knows the religious mind, he knows the organizations through which it functions. He allows no false tenderness to interfere with the completeness of his job. He is at work, in one aspect, upon a surgical operation, and he cuts clean. Only this is an operation in which the anesthesia is removed, not applied.

Yet I would not give the impression that McCabe is malicious. He is not. He is intent upon making a happier world. When he has a worthy enemy in his grasp he toys with him in a spirit of irony, or of satire. He shatters illusions as he proceeds on his way, and it always hurts the illuded to have their images smashed. But what is this hurt, after all, compared with the joys of a clearer and a truer vision. Gods live at man's expense.

Gods die that man may live. McCabe slays the gods so that man may achieve a fuller, deeper, a more spontaneous life. What, compared with these boons, is a myth, a superstition, a dogma, a patent lie, a narcotic fallacy?

"The Story of Religious Controversy" is plainly thought and plainly written. It is factual from the title-page to the index. It does not trade in innuendos, in half-statement, in rhapsody. It has the dates, the data, the names, the places, the references, the citations. It is as cogent as a first-class brief by a first-class lawyer, yet as persuasive as a judge's acquittal. For more than 600 pages McCabe tells his fascinating story without once losing the interest of his reader. That reader, indeed, is won by the simple honesty of the man. Out of a lifetime of study in almost every branch of knowledge he brings back these fruits of unrelenting investigation and a fundamental disinterestedness that refuses to countenance self-deception.

It is, as I say, a long book; yet one may pick it up and start it almost at random, certain to come away from any chapter with a rounded view of the special topic under consideration. It so happened that when I first opened it I hit upon the section devoted to Ignatius Loyola. I hadn't read more than two pages before I said to myself: "This is a good book—a sterling book. Any man who can plunge right into the midst of things so interestingly, so unconventionally, and yet so humanly, knows what he's talking about." I tried him out this way in several chapters and with the same result: everywhere there is humanization of perfectly controlled material. This is mastery.

If "The Story of Religious Controversy" does not become, if only relatively, a best seller, then I am afraid that America is at times a worst-buyer.

Is War Inevitable? Joseph McCabe

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The latest development in the chronicle of warfare is that China and Russia are spluttering threats at each other and have entered upon the preliminary skirmishes which in nine cases out of ten are the initial stage of a war. These are two of the world's newest Republics. They have abolished Emperors and all the dynastic wickedness for which monarchs stand. Government of the people, by the people, for the people, and no exploiters. I am a republican, so you will not misunderstand the gentle shade of irony that comes over me. I mean that if two of the new democracies are to reopen the campaign of blood it is very ominous for our hopes of peace. I was not one of those who thought that war was abolished when the Versailles Conference had completed its disreputable work, or when the League of Nations opened a palace at Geneva, or when the Kellogg pact was signed. I will explain presently that not one of these achievements seems to me to bring the world anywhere nearer the beginning of an era of perpetual peace. But I thought that the flame would break out first somewhere on the forcibly and unjustly rearranged frontiers of Europe, and it is doubly lamentable to find that the chances are most ominous on a remote frontier which has nothing to do with the supposed settlement of international interests by the Versailles Conference.

I am not writing as if war had broken out between Russia and China. As far as I can understand the quarrel it is certainly one that can be adjusted if there is on neither side a determination to try the bloody issue of war. That quarrel I will not discuss. News reaches England from China a little more quickly, it is true, than in the days of Marco Polo, but one wonders if it is more reliable, or informing. As to news from Russia or about Russia, I would not invest a five-dollar bill on any of it. So I leave all this open and trust that there will be no war. My text is that the outbreak of war is just as possible and easy today as it was in 1914 or before the First Hague Conference gave a flutter to the hearts of pacifists. All the machinery that we have created, all the beautiful speeches we have made and the articles we have written, all the millions of dollars we have spent, all the profound proposals of statesmen, have left us exactly where we were.

Is war, then, inevitable? I am sitting on the summit of a cliff on the east coast of England, and the prattle and gaiety of the bathers below come pleasantly to my ears. Almost everybody is half-nude to welcome the rare flood of summer sunshine. A few sour misanthropes and puritans crawl about, half-poisoned with their own venom, but the world at large is glad. Life is not real and earnest, but real and joyous, and such it could be, and will yet be, all the year round, for the majority of folk. That is the first line of my little philosophy of life. The second is that we are moving more rapidly than the world ever moved toward that condition. You know well those articles of my faith,

and I know well the objections to them. Here is one.

Just fifteen years ago, in that terrible summer of 1914, I sat here on the east coast of England and looked down on the same beach-scene: the same bronzed young men oozing out their joy in life at every pore, who a few months later would be shot into red rags of flesh on the fields of France, Flanders, the same little girls who would soon learn to dread the ring of the telegraph messenger, the same naive kiddies who would hear that daddy would come home no more and life must be cheaper and less cheerful. Fifteen years ago, and filled with the most ghastly experience that the race has ever had, and equipped with the most scientific spirit and organization that the race ever had. And we have had leagues and pacts, covenants and treaties and agreements—and *plus ça change plus c'est la même chose*. We are back exactly where we were in 1914. The only difference I know is that in 1914 the world did wait a little before it began to use poison gas. Now, it is said—I hope the report is false—the Russians began at once with a poison-gas attack.

And I further admit that war is the most appalling evil and the most terrible blunder that we suffer to persist. If I were asked to assign, from my broad knowledge of history, one agency which has done more harm than any other to the human family I should say war. The continual break of the continuity of human development, which has caused us to waste at least two-thirds of the so-called civilized period, is essentially due to war, especially imperialistic warfare. In the case of nearly every ancient civilization, perhaps all, it was war that put an end to its achievements, so that some other people, imperfectly instructed in its arts, had to recommence the work of laying the foundations of a real civilization. It was reported recently in the English press that Mr. Ford, the great pacifist, had said scornfully that history had no lessons for us and we might neglect it. One could only conclude that he had very thoroughly followed his own advice and neglected it.

I should like to conduct Mr. Ford over a few hundred miles of country round the Mediterranean Sea, one of the most pleasant parts of the world to live in. From southern Spain, through Italy and Sicily, Greece and Crete, Asia Minor and Syria, Egypt and north Africa back to the straits of Gibraltar. You have fields on which many millions of the finest men of the finest races have been sacrificed and at least a score of times civilization has been arrested. We talk of our Great White Race but it was this dusky Mediterranean Race, the Dagoes of whom we speak so contemptuously today, who founded civilization, maintained it for three thousand years, and restored it when our Great White Race had blundered into the morass of the Middle Ages. In the island of Crete we have proof that there was promise even of a civilization which should run on the right lines of scientific spirit and freedom of personal conduct as long as three thousand years ago. I have always been strongly inclined to think, though this we cannot prove, that the sudden (as it seems) appearance of the scientific spirit amongst the early Greeks of Asia Minor means that it was in those cities on the coast of Asia Minor that Cretan culture had taken refuge. But Greek

barbarism had almost completely wrecked this early and most promising civilization of Europe, just as Hebrew barbarism checked the development of such portion of it as took refuge in Syria. Nothing is plainer than that war destroyed this most promising of early civilizations, as I have shown in my historical works, and at this stage alone postponed the development of real civilization for a thousand years.

Nor is it less plain that war was the main factor in the destruction of the Greek and Roman civilizations which at last resumed the development of sound culture. It was the Spartan War above all things that exhausted Athens and brought to a close her great creative vitality. It was war that ruined the splendid little Greek civilization in Sicily. It was war, in conjunction with its autocratic and imperialist blunders, that exhausted Persia. It was in the first place six centuries of warfare that sapped the vitality of Rome and prepared it for destruction.

From this point onward, it is true, another destructive factor becomes almost equally important with war. The extraordinary and almost unparalleled collapse of civilization over an area that extends from Britain to Mesopotamia for about a thousand years, during the main part of what we call the Middle Ages, cannot be assigned simply to the ravages of war or of barbaric invasions. I have just covered the whole ground once more in detail in writing a history of the Roman Church and I should say that any historian who candidly studies the facts and is free to state his conclusions candidly will say that at this stage it was the Church that checked the advance or restoration of civilization. War certainly did its share, but for once it was surpassed in injuriousness by religion.

That, however, is another story. We soon come back to the horrid share of war. I will not here go into historical detail as perhaps I may assume that most of the readers of this article will have seen my Key to Culture. I refer only to the broad fact that, while Rome kept Europe in a state of semi-barbarism, the Arabs created a brilliant civilization to the south of it. Every time I cover the historical ground once more my feeling of the contrast between the squalor of Christian Europe and the splendor of the Mohammedan (or in its best elements, skeptical) south is deepened and confirmed. And war notoriously made an end of this wonderful civilization, the finest that had yet appeared in its blend of scientific and artistic culture, of wisdom and sensuousness. The Christian Crusaders in Spain and the Turkish adventurers in the east destroyed the Arab-Persian civilization to its foundations, and again postponed the development of modern civilization. It is little short of scandalous how historians describe all the Renaissance, as they call them, that took place in Europe and fail to notice, or pay most moderate attention to, the greatest civilizing agency, the Arab civilization, of which war and religious fanaticism made a violent end.

There used to be a few historians who made apologies for war and ascribed to it certain services in the development of civilization. I do not mean the "king and country" historians of the last century or the "glory" school of earlier ages. I mean a few serious historical writers who plausibly contended that war

had played an important part in the promotion of civilization. It sounds quixotic but it is well to understand the position. Take the establishment of three of the greatest empires of ancient times: Egypt, Babylonia, and Rome. No one can doubt that the organization of numbers of what had been petty states and of tens of millions of peoples in those empires promoted civilization, and it is just as little possible to doubt that war created these immense organized units, and in those days war alone could have done it. This is a fairly general historical development, and on the basis of it some—and they were by no means mere fire-breathing militarists—have contended that war is inevitable in the sense that it has been an indispensable factor in the creation of high civilizations.

We might be disposed to grant these relative services of war in the past yet point out that we no longer need to create such empires, but I am not willing to yield even this historical significance of war. It is, as far as it goes, an indistinct historical truth that war created great polities which were most effective in promoting culture, but the statement is incomplete. War in almost every case destroyed the empire which it had built up. From the military lines upon which it had entered the nation found it impossible to retire, and the lines led almost invariably to destruction. The more terrific the efforts that an imperialistic people made to paralyze or extinguish the subject races, so as to prevent a violent reaction when the imperialist people became softened by the enjoyment of its wealth, the more swift and drastic was the reaction. The Assyrian people were in this respect the most ruthless known to history; and as a great civilization they were also the shortest-lived and their destruction was so complete that even the ruins were long unknown. The Chinese civilization is now the longest-lived in history, and it was the most pacific of all in its original foundation.

With that other academic defense of war, that is, the military training for it, creates important qualities both of physique and character. I am not much concerned. Let us acknowledge the one-sided truth in it: the truth which Nietzsche had in mind when he wrote his paradoxical saying: "A good war hallows every cause." As to the physical qualities there is no difficulty. You may drill men any time you please without manufacturing a single shell or cartridge. An athletic system will give just as fine a physique as military drill. The only point that one may seriously raise is whether we risk the loss of certain qualities of character if we realize our dream of pacifying.

It is futile to toss this consideration aside with a gesture of impatience. Narrowness of mind in a pacifist is sometimes as mischievous as the narrowness of heart of a militarist or imperialist. It is a matter for discerning psychological analysis, and, fortunately it does not concern us here, because once more there are alternatives in life to the military adventure. The man who needs a spice in life by gambling with death is not in any sense a superior type, but if he wants it he will find plenty of opportunities without war. More admirable is the man who esteems life and its possibilities yet does not cling to it with the nervousness of a miser

catching his gold: who is, for grave reasons, ready to hazard it and fight with all his strength and courage for it. I have, in spite of my passion for pacification, always had a deeper respect for soldiers than for politicians and diplomatists. But, as I said, the difficulty does not really arise. Life gives magnificent opportunities for courage, bravery, and endurance without battlefields which destroy whatever good qualities they tend to draw out. Courage is a relative virtue. It implies a life with evils to be fought and dangers to be surmounted. I believe that the day will come when little struggle and courage will be required of any man: when life will be relieved of all but a few incurable evils or accidents and of most of its dangers. To say that in those days men will be degenerate would be like calling me a degenerate because, while I am excellently equipped in physique for my actual work in life, I have not the muscles of a swimming teacher or the digestion of a sailor. In any case it will be long before my golden age dawns, and meantime, we can, without wars, quite well cultivate the particular courage and adventurousness which the remaining tasks of life require.

In what sense then is war inevitable? Must we go on age after age destroying a tithe of the men we so laboriously make, annihilating in one year the commodities we make with the sweat and blood of millions in ten years? When we take into account the post-war economic waste as well as the war-waste, that was the actual scale of expenditure during the last war. Must we throw up our arms in despair before the tasks of peace and humanity only to find when we come to face the ghastly waste of war that we really had the power over and over again? For instance, in England before the last war the limits of possible national revenue were fixed at something like a billion dollars. We wanted more schools and better education and less heavily burdened teachers. We wanted state-aid of the sick poor, of child-bearing poor mothers, of feeble or ailing or distressed children, and so on. No: the inexorable laws of state-economics were opposed to further expenditure. Economists were agreed with statesmen about it. Then came war, and we found that under its tragic pressure we could, without economic disaster, raise the national revenue nearly tenfold.

I would rather put the economic evil of war in this form. I have shown elsewhere that it is far from true that science has made war more deadly—it has reduced the mortality by about fifty percent—and, though it would require a more complete economic study than I have yet had time to make, I feel justified in saying that it has now made war economically more costly in proportion to the immensely larger resources that it has created. Much that has been written, and not by Fundamentalists (who are rarely pacifists) on science and war has done grievous harm to the cause of peace. Often questions have been put to me after lectures which implied that scientific men were doubly treacherous to the race in lending their cooperation in the last war, whereas a strike of all the professors in Europe would not have shortened it by a single day, and a strike of the workers would have ended it in a week.

But it is poor consolation that we do not spend more on war in proportion to our net resources than

our grandfathers did. These new resources are the priceless means of relieving the distresses of our civilization, and in four years we cast into the pit enough of them to relieve a vast amount of suffering. With the cost of the last war (up to date) England could, wherever necessary, have been actually rebuilt and a considerable revenue left over to subsidize the new life. If war is not inevitable, it is the most ghastly folly conceivable; and it is by no means inevitable.

I used to say—it is thirty-two years since I wrote my first book against war and militarism—that the problem was one of the easiest of our social problems. I still maintain that in theory it is. The twin giant problem of modern civilization is poverty, and the solution of that is by no means theoretically easy. Even in theory you have to balance the requirements of humanity and efficiency. In regard to war the difficulties are entirely practical. If one thing is clear in the whole business it is that if the majority of the people of, say, six of the leading nations of the world were agreed in an effective demand for absolute and permanent demobilization, it would certainly be carried. It still seems to me, after thirty years' consideration of the subject, that total disarmament is the only way to prevent war. When I say total disarmament I leave open the question of an international military police, formed of national contingents, but under international control. Whatever may be the conditions in America, there is in the Old World still a fringe of semi-savagery, from Morocco right across the map to the Philippines, which raises this question of a permanent international police. It is a secondary question: a very small matter in comparison with general disarmament.

It seems to me, then, to return to my main point, that the primary requisite is to secure the willingness of the majority of the people of six great modern civilizations to submit every external quarrel (not internal) to arbitration or a definite international court and thus demobilize armies and navies as out-of-date implements. Let me explain more in detail what may seem at first sight too simple and naive a proposal.

I say that it is necessary to secure the good will of the majority of only about six nations partly because their moral prestige and economic influence would sway the others and partly because, if the race could secure this tremendous advance, it could afford to let impulsive or badly governed smaller polities waste themselves in war: not regarding this with indifference by any means but taking up at once the gradual education of the smaller peoples. There would, however, almost certainly be a general eagerness to enter the new comity of nations, just as there was to enter the futile League of Nations. Companionship in it would become a recognized mark of modern civilization, and very considerable economic and financial pressure could be exercised by "the big six." And for my six I propose the United States, the British Empire (which includes Canada, South Africa, etc.), France, Germany, Japan, and Argentina. I omit Italy only because in its present condition its government is not representative of the nation, and the same applies to Russia; and I include Argentina on account of its position in South America. Normally the big six would be America,

the British Empire, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia. They could lead the world, and minor wars, which do not threaten civilization, would gradually cease. Indeed, economic or financial pressure could be devised for fire-eating people like Mussolini, whose latest coup is to get his friend the Pope to draw up an untruthful indictment of British policy in Malta: one of the customary preparations for war.

Experience has shown that it is possible at any time to induce these and any number of powers to sign pacts, and hitherto the experience has invariably been that the pact was futile. I wrote my first book against war at the time of the First Hague Conference, thirty years ago. I displeased my humanitarian friends by contending that the international agreement reached at the Hague was futile. How, gray-bearded enthusiasts asked, could a youth just fresh from a monastery know more than they about it? I can now point to thirty years of horrid history. It was the same with the League of Nations. I turned friendly acquaintances into enemies by declaring that it was futile, except in the sense that all these organizations bear witness to the growing world-demand for peace. Professor Gilbert Murray, the famous Hellenist and Humanist, took me up on behalf of the League, but when I quoted the essential clause of its charter, which requires unanimous agreement of the Council on a quarrel, he said no more. Any member of the League that for any reason wants to go to war can very easily secure one or more dissentients on the Council, and it can then go to war without violating its loyalty to the League; though there would be no penalty if it quitted or defied the League.

The Kellogg Pact is in exactly the same position. There were before 1914 important international jurists in Europe who said that a power signed such a pact always with a reserve. It meant "unless there be a material change in the circumstances." Others said that to sign such a pact was an invalid infringement of the sovereign rights of a state and so it might sign merely out of policy and with a reservation of its rights. There is no need even for this casuistry. It is a first principle of statesmanship that the right of self-preservation of a nation cancels any other obligations, or even that consideration of a nation's honor rises above all other things, and statesmen are the judges of the matter. However, I appeal to facts. No agreement on paper has ever yet restrained nations from war. It will not be surprising if the present Russo-Chinese trouble is settled in the name of the Kellogg Pact. That pact really only comes into force on the day on which I write this, and American statesmen will move heaven and earth to save their faces by preventing a war before the ink is dry on the paper. If they fail we may once for all cease to trust pacts and leagues. But even if they succeed we must not be too sanguine. Russia and China flew to arms without a moment's hesitation.

Therefore I conclude that war will certainly not be abolished as long as the nations retain armies and navies. Through the whole history of these attempts to inaugurate a better era there is an idea which has effectively blocked the way to reform. The statesmen and diplomatists to whom we have entrusted

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How We Can Live Happily

A Practical Rule of Life
E. Haldeman-Julius

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What is Epicurus to me? the average man may inquire. He thinks of philosophy as subtle and remote, an intricate game of thought not touching upon the practical conduct of life. It is true that a good deal of philosophy is of theoretical interest only; that is the kind of philosophy which by a difficult feat of abstraction constructs a system within the rigid dimensions of which life is to be fitted more or less arbitrarily; but there is another and wider sense in which philosophy may be taken—namely, the search for general principles of wisdom that may guide us amid the realities of life. Our most thoughtful conclusions about the meaning of things may thus be called philosophic.

It is, at any rate, a very comprehensible and human philosophy that we find associated with the name of Epicurus. It is not merely an intellectual system of belief, peculiar to this Greek thinker, which we might study only curiously or cooperatively. When we discuss Epicurus, we perforce discuss a question that is very much alive today; a question that many philosophers, many thinkers, many artists have dealt with variously: a question indeed that has (though not always in the nature of deliberate and sustained thought) been commonly of close interest and of not a little confusion and vexation to men. It is a broad, universal question. Epicurus and his period furnish a historical point of inquiry, an identifying center of thought, from which our reflections spread throughout the centuries and throughout the human world. Perhaps it would be better to say that in studying the thought of Epicurus we are studying what our own attitude toward life shall be at this moment. For in this Greek philosopher we find a consideration of the very fundamentals, perennially interesting, concerning the main object of life and the kind of behavior that will lead to the attainment of that object.

Although Epicurus was a man of wide intellectual activity, what interests us here is his belief—simple enough when stated in its bare terms—that pleasure should be the chief, deciding aim of life and that we should measure our actions by the pleasure or pain that they involve. It is, said Epicurus, the part of an intelligent man to seek agreeable sensations and to avoid painful or disagreeable sensations. He should try to live happily and wisdom and virtue are only valuable insofar as they contribute to happiness. He did not believe this merely as an interesting abstract theory but as a very sincere, personal, practical rule of life. He did not believe in an abstract or absolute moral law handed down mysteriously from above. The extreme doctrine of the Stoics that wisdom and virtue were ideals, supreme and compelling in themselves, absolute ends to be sought rather than possible means of a happy life—that doctrine was dogmatic and rather elusive too in contrast with the more human Epicurean view; although, as Joseph McCabe says, Stoics and Epicureans could sensibly reconcile their ideas in practice, the former stopping short of asceticism and the latter not confusing happiness with an idle, indiscriminate selfishness. Of course, sensible men always accommodate theory to practice and are not as far apart as they seem to be.

But Epicurus was not the first nor the last man to think of happiness as the possible aim and justification of human life. He embodied an old and an irrefragable, although not always a well-understood, tendency in a clear statement of principle. If Epicurus had never lived and if his philosophy had never been stated so explicitly, still it would have run as a significant motif through the history of human thought and effort. One way or another, most great thinkers have been interested by the question how men can live happily, not with fear or hope respecting another life, but entirely in the realistic features of this life. Some have emphasized the question from a social point of view, others have leaned more toward the personal side, and of course there has been a variety of opinions as to the means of happiness. But something of Epicureanism, whether so called or not, whether quite clear in its affirmation that happiness is the true end that our actions should serve, has permeated like a bright human essence the reflections of all thinkers who have dealt very closely with life. The love of ardent and agreeable life is of course expressed abundantly in literature, in poetry and romance, in the description of human nature, as well as in the more earnest discussions concerning the conduct of life. Even Christianity offered an eternity of bliss (albeit not very attractive in its vague and cold outlines) as a reward for a

narrowly pious life on earth. Moral idealists have sometimes tried to show that their stern and difficult (or their lofty but not very humanly practicable) codes would insure a more dignified, a more pure and angelic, kind of happiness; or that these codes would protect men from certain pests and degradations.

And where culture, where literature, where social life has been brightest and most hopeful we find this philosophy of happiness assuming a greater importance. On the other hand, under conditions of low culture men have not looked upward to any supposedly higher ideal than happiness, but they have lived more as animals and have taken their pleasures stupidly and coarsely. Civilization extends our opportunities for enjoying life, while at the same time it encourages a greater refinement in our tastes. However, the idea that happiness (whether or not the idea is clearly formulated) is the most intimate, realistic, continuous aim of life was known long before the time of Epicurus and has persisted naturally enough without the necessity of support by direct reference to his philosophy. It is, after all, the idea that has been recognized in great reforms, schemes of human welfare, proposals for more just and felicitous arrangements of human relations. When we turn aside from cloudy abstractions, we find indeed that the only sound and sane rule of behavior is that our actions shall result agreeably for ourselves or for society (which includes ourselves). The Good, the True and the Beautiful—they must be judged by the concrete terms of pleasurable, effective living into which we can translate them. Ideals must have issue in something real; and no ideal is worth while unless it is a means toward happier living.

It is surprising that there should be any dispute about such an entirely reasonable view of life. It is not a theoretical view. Observing human nature, one perceives that the universal, animating aim of life is to live—and that means, of course, to live successfully and enjoyably. Our finest ideals, our greatest plans, our most wonderful achievements and hopes of progress can have no other real meaning save to increase our opportunities for living. To speak of any other possible aim in life save that of making life more interesting, more pleasurable, more worth while in every respect is to turn from real life and depart into the shadows of vain mysticism. When anything is proposed to us, in the shape of a belief or a course of action, we wish to know what purpose it serves. What end is to be gained? It must be a human end within the scope of our desire and appreciation. It must have for its object the better understanding or management of our lives, not in behalf of some abstract ideal or pious dogma, but so that first and last life shall be more agreeable.

It is a truism that self-preservation is the strongest urge of living things; and, stated more broadly, this means that the one great object which can never be forgotten safely is that of adjustment to life. It is so throughout nature and it is not different with man, excepting that he has a more lively, intelligent consciousness and can use more deliberately, thoughtfully planned measures to insure his well-being. It is most natural that all creatures should try to avoid discomfort, danger and pain; and the outstanding effort of man's progressive life has been to minimize the chances and threats of nature. It is amazing indeed that any form of life should seek pain and avoid pleasure. These aberrations, true enough, have been peculiar to man, when his natural instincts and his common sense have been corrupted by fantastic notions of good and evil. Chiefly through religion we find that man has been led into crazy behavior which was not a triumph over nature but an unhappy repression of nature which could not be successful but was avenged by pains and fears, by emotional and physical ills, that man thus foolishly brought upon himself. Science is the management of natural forces; its object is not to thwart man's natural impulses but to enable him to enjoy them more securely and fully. But religion has led its devotees to inflict pain upon themselves, pretending a virtue in this madness; and it fostered the forbidding doctrine of repression, arbitrarily insisting that there was a virtue in self-denial. Yet the plain counsel of wisdom, as well as the plain urge of nature, has always been that we should live a happy life.

In all those actions in which we are simply natural and are not trying to follow an ideal or obey a doctrine laid down for us by other men, we demonstrate that the primary effort of life is to maintain a balance in favor of pleasure—as against pain. In our very clinging to life we show a healthy objection to death, albeit the Christian believes that death is the moment of sublime triumph and escape for his "soul." Even when we are unconscious in sickness, nature struggles within us to gain freedom from pain and to win back to a strong, pleasant condition of health. We are careful to supply ourselves with food and drink so that our body-machines can be kept going comfortably; and we go farther and make

a pleasurable art of eating and drinking. We refuse to endure fatigue beyond a certain point, and seek that rest which is at such times the greatest pleasure and which, of course, is essential to our future pleasures. We seek relief from the extremes of weather and it is inveterately our habit to save ourselves from all unpleasant efforts and all dangerous chances; when a man does make an unusual effort or embrace risks that ordinarily are avoided, it is with the object of gaining something that is greatly desirable; or it is the thrill of a game in which strength and wit are pleasurable, even though riskily, exercised.

The things that are commonly and indisputably valued by men all point to the soundness of the pleasure motive. It is not, after all, necessary to argue whether Epicurus was right or wrong but simply to observe men in action. We know that universally men prefer health to disease; and health is obviously the first condition of pleasure. Men everywhere seek, if not wealth, at least comfort and security—economic well-being; they dread poverty, not because they think it is a disgrace but because they know it is a painful condition. Love is likewise a universal desire and men seek it because it is a joyous experience; here too they are pursuing the true and common aim of life, which is happiness. Universally men seek action (even the laziest man cannot be entirely inactive) because it is pleasurable thus to find an outlet for our energies; but ordinarily we resist any excessive demands of action and, after a certain point, seek rest in pleasure. We may go from one extreme to another, and we may embrace willingly many chances and changes, but throughout we are animated by the pleasure motive; we are not always intelligent about it—we often pay too heavily for pleasure in excess—but that is another question; the truth to bear in mind is that, while we are sometimes mistaken as to the means, the end which we commonly have in view is happiness—pleasure—comfort—safety—agreeable adjustment to the conditions of life.

This is true on the higher levels of civilized effort and desire. Through culture and scientific progress man aims, not at some abstract or non-human goal of idealism, but practically at a more joyous, sensitive, securely abundant life. Man learns indeed to take pleasure in knowledge for its own sake, although we are clear enough as to its usefulness in enabling him to manage his life more successfully. His emotional life is more developed and refined, there are subtle possibilities of feeling and appreciation that he cultivates, but all this of course is pleasurable inspired. We are thrilled by beauty in nature and art; and with respect to all the arts our appreciation is due to a combination of natural and cultural sensations of pleasure. Our social ideals are explained by the wish that we should all be happier in a happier world.

Although civilization seems to us the most desirable state of men; we may admit that, as it brings greater possibilities of happiness, so it introduces new and subtle elements of unhappiness: our capacity for experience, both painful and pleasurable, is enlarged. We have more sensitive reactions, imagination outruns reality, we desire more than we can always have. Our problems are more complicated; and the contrast is very great indeed when we consider the condition of primitive people or of very simple people in our own society who are well content if they can satisfy the most basic natural needs. Dreams do not disturb them and they are not too impatient of restrictions. Are such people happier? Well, in the sense of following a placid, unexcited, uncomplicated existence, so are animals happier. But one may take it that such an "ideal" of happiness is not exactly alluring to most of us. Few men would think of exchanging civilization for a primitive mode of existence.

Anyway, we must look at the question of happiness with a realistic eye. It is the practice to speak of happiness as some fine, remote, superhuman ideal; and it is often said that no one is ever happy—meaning that they are not happy in this complete and perfect way. That, to be sure, would not make it the less important for us to be as happy as we can. "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die"—certainly we do not let the knowledge that inevitable death will end our careers keep us from enjoying life while we have breath and hope and desire. We can enjoy what this day offers without worrying excessively about what tomorrow or next week or next year will bring forth.

It is not likely that any man can be perfectly content for long. We have our contented moments. Passing pleasures give a real thrill, even though they are followed by boredom, by reverses, or by reflections of uncertainty about the future. It is fortunate that, for all of us, there are apparent trifles of satisfaction that we can appreciate even when things are not altogether the best with us. We can be grateful in summer for the cool breeze and in winter for the warm hearth. It is rarely possible for a man to despair while he is in normally good health. And just as there is a limit beyond

which the greatest pleasure appears to bore us, so there are limits of unhappiness and we cease to feel so keenly what at first seemed an almost unbearable blow. It is well for us that we can forget the sting of past disappointment rather quickly and that in looking toward the future we are more apt to hope than to be fearful.

This fact proves how strong is the tendency of men to seek happiness; when we are most unhappy—or when things seem most discouraging—we still hope and get some pleasure out of the promising shadow when the substance is not there. Under the most forbidding of circumstances men will show surprising resourcefulness in extracting some pleasure, some comfort, some assurance from the materials they have at hand. We do not ordinarily go and commit suicide because we are disappointed in love or because we do not make a fortune or because this or that ambition turns out less rosily than we had hoped. We learn to expect these compromises with life and to make the best of things, an excellent attitude within reason.

We do not, to be sure, want to sink into a supine philosophy of resignation nor to fall back upon that kind of satisfaction which is sloth and inertia. It is better to be alive with plans and desires and to demand the utmost we can from life, always having that adaptability which enables us to enjoy what we obtain even though it is less than our desires. There are two extremes that we should wish to be spared, the extremes of inertia and fretful discontent. For the one extreme narrows the possibilities of pleasure while the other increases needlessly our feelings of pain and worry.

Even so, one quite realizes that not every man by merely taking thought and recognizing the merits of this counsel will or can follow it. Some are by nature, it seems, incorrigibly given to worry and resentment. Only a showering of the most opulent stores of fortune would please them—and perhaps even then they would find something to complain about. And the man who is sluggish, unambitious, insensitive—well, poor fellow, he doesn't know what he misses and no doubt he enjoys life in his own way. He at least has care for his animal satisfactions although he has no vision of more cultured and adventurous pleasures.

Here, then, is another thing we must keep in mind—that we do not all find happiness in precisely the same way. Indeed, what some people regard as happiness would bore others to cheerless death. Take that rather large class of people who desire nothing better than to live a quiet, comfortable, commonplace existence, who are limited in vision to the downright simple life, who may pass through life without knowing any great intensity of experience either in pain or pleasure. There are many who would rather die at once than know themselves condemned to such an unadventurous, unthrilling existence. They want rather to tread the bright, active, colorful paths. They want contrasts, even though risk and some unpleasantness are part of the livelier game. There are other differences: some are not at ease unless they have the approval of their neighbors as to their beliefs and conduct, unless they fit conservatively into their immediate social background, while others are indifferent to popular judgments and go serenely their own way.

Nor can we say that when a man has reached the so-called age of discretion he has a perfectly free choice. He already has a strong impetus in certain directions and the marks of his early training will remain. And, again, nature does not give all of us the same equipment. We have at bottom the same emotional and physical kinds of necessity, of course, but there are individual variations, distinctions of temperament and training and circumstances, in our satisfaction of these needs. So far as early training goes, it is very often if not as a rule an unfair handicap in the game of life. Fears and prejudices are implanted, that make it difficult—sometimes impossible—to enjoy life in a wholesome, natural, unfettered spirit. Many roads of pleasant experience are barred by the tight-drawn lines of false teaching.

Yet, however inhibited he may be, a man will have the same end in view as his more free-minded fellows: namely, happiness insofar as he is able to see it or dares take it. He may not as frankly admit it, as he will not as fully, freely seek it, but within the limitations that are imposed upon him that is nevertheless his object; perversely enough or curiously, even when he sacrifices happiness to some false principle of imagined virtue, a man will contrive to snatch some pleasure from his attachment to this principle; a feeling of superior virtue is very pleasant to some moralists and others find a certain thrill in self-pity. These, however, are clearly very undesirable attitudes and it is best to find pleasure in wholesome expression of our natural impulses—guided, to be sure, by intelligence. Anyway, the fact that pleasure may be fragmentary and episodic in its occurrence, the fact that happiness as a perfect ideal may be rarely or never

achieved, does not invalidate the Epicurean principle that pleasure is the true object of life and that by the same token wisdom lies in avoiding painful things. That broad principle shades into many details of judgment and decision, but as a principle it is sound and there is no other valid, convincing principle. One thing is certain: the advancement of mankind has proceeded in response to the idea of happiness and by scientific vision and technique we have increased the possibilities of happiness; or we may say that a broader and finer and more social (as well as personally more liberal) idea of happiness has been evolved. The question whether man may have been happier under savage than under civilized conditions is not worth discussing; it is not a practical question for us to decide; the fact is that we would not be attracted by any picture of savage age felicity; we are children of civilization and we are glad of it. Accordingly, the points of historical significance which we admire are those which are associated with the improvement of the lot of man, by little or in large, in one branch or another of human effort. Where there has been any intelligent vision or genuine forward movement, the object of it has been the increase of human happiness; the object of it has been to make the world a better place for man.

Men have struggled for freedom—because men are happier when they are free. Men have fought against economic inequalities, fought to gain a larger share of the world's wealth—because thus could they enjoy life more fully. Men have rebelled against the harshness of religious bigotry and moral repressions—because these aspects of tyranny interfered with a happy life. Men have sought knowledge—because knowledge makes life more interesting and more manageable. Men have evolved social sentiments and laws—because thus could they live more safely and pleasantly.

Invariably the object, the very meaning and starting point of progress, has been Epicurean in the broad sense. And whenever men have been led astray by any dogmas of morality or by ideals that were in conflict with the happy possibilities of human nature, they have suffered and have been cheated by their yielding to such folly; such mistaken ideals have impeded the true progress of the race and have served for a while to obscure the one sensible ideal that men should have always before them—namely, the ideal of making life more livable.

Nowadays, although we have enough problems that cry for solution and we are not quite within sight of Utopia, it is nevertheless true that we have spread before us a wonderfully enlarged field of living, varied beyond description in the possibilities of happiness. The scientific genius of man has won great triumphs over nature, has learned to use the once secret and neglected forces of nature for the assistance of human aims. When one sums it up, the wonder of our age is that it has shown men the way to a better life and has added variety, safety and pleasure to the race. There could be only one good reason for scientific progress and that is the improvement of the means of living and the facilitation of our efforts toward that universal object of happiness (or the various objects of happiness), a pursuit which is common to us all and rightfully so. It would mean nothing that science had achieved such wonderful discoveries and inventions and filled the world with light and power if it were not that these achievements have practical results that are beneficial to life. The wealth of the world has been enormously increased and that means wider fields of pleasure for men; and modern economic radicalism looks, not toward a reduction of this wealth—not toward an anti-materialistic program—but toward a better distribution; meanwhile poverty, the oppression to a mere animal level of existence, is not the familiar specter that it was a century or more ago. With greater intelligence and the spread of the means of civilization, social manners have improved and men live more tolerably together and human rights are more respected; and democracy, for example, should pride itself not upon its wisdom or virtue but upon the fact that it has raised the condition of the average man.

In our judgment of any feature of this modern life, our standard of measurement must always be the furtherance of human desires. Progress is not rationally measured otherwise than in terms of added happiness. Where life is most rich, significant and pleasant, there life is most civilized and progressive. In studying backward periods of history, we find that they are branded as retrogressive because they had miserable effects upon the life of man. We look with condemnation upon the Middle Ages simply because during those dark centuries men were forced to lead wretchedly unhappy lives; because the pain outbalanced the pleasure; because we recognize in such a social condition the violation of the true principle of human activity; there was a most tremendous holy structure of scarifying theology, but it only served to blind men to their real interests. A good deal of philosophy is likewise condemned because it was indifferent to human

welfare and busied itself with speculations that were utterly removed from life, not because quite fanciful in any case. And Bacon was speaking with the spirit of Epicurus when he insisted that the only justifiable aim of wisdom was to elevate the condition of mankind, to discover ways of alleviating or preventing pain and increasing pleasure, to provide facilities whereby man could accomplish more in making a human world; knowledge, said Bacon, should justify itself by being useful; and from that protest against empty scholasticism and mysticism stems the scientific spirit and aim of modern life.

Now, this modern life is finer simply because it is more pleasurable; we cannot justify it or find any intelligible definition of it in the antiquated terms of "spiritual" life nor have we fulfilled any great moral destiny nor have we brought ourselves into harmony with any divine plan; but we have learned how to live more intelligently and on a larger, more significant scale. It is a fact that many old fears have been cast out—imaginary fears brewed by superstition; and the actual perils of life in the pre-civilized world have been removed; as for our morality, we know that justice and kindness and toleration are far more the rules of social life than formerly they were—even the very conception in many instances is entirely modern—and we have common human rights and protections that were not dreamed of a few centuries ago. It is a brighter, pleasanter, more hopeful world that we live in. We are better fed, better clothed, better housed; we live more cleanly and healthfully, with better safeguards against disease; the hand of man has filled the world with new beauty, security and dignity. We are not only far more advanced in respect of physical comforts, but we have easily accessible and magnificent means of amusement; we are able to dwell in imagination at least upon the wonders of the whole world, no longer bound stupidly and unknowingly to a few square miles; we have art and knowledge that immeasurably add to the happiness of life in mental, emotional ways.

All this progress we have—and what meaning can we find in it save by turning to the Epicurean principle? It serves no other intelligible purpose except that of widening and making more secure the opportunities for a happy life. It is good—this progress, this civilization—not for any "spiritual" reason but for a quite sound material reason: because it lightens our burdens, facilitates our movements, multiplies our pleasures. Our age is righter, more powerful, more enlightened, more humane—and all to the sum-up end that it is a happier age. That is the one criterion which all other criteria must subserve.

Due to a confusion about good and evil, made especially disturbing

by the stringent doctrines of Christianity, men have been led to regard pleasure in an unwholesome light. One of the chief misfortunes of history is that men were so long distorted in conscience by the notion that a stern, self-denying life was the ideal of righteousness; that pleasure was synonymous with a low kind of self-indulgence; that for one to be attracted by the delights and ambitions of worldliness was to be sinful. That Christian doctrine has been badly shaken in recent years and there is no forthright, extreme opposition to pleasure in itself; yet there is still an ultra-moral tone, a breath of suspicion, in Christian commentaries on pleasure; and it is still thought to be rather shameful and insidiously against good morals to say that pleasure is the object of life. In great part, this is because of the old tendency to confuse pleasure with profligacy and to believe that no man can well devote himself to the enjoyment of life without becoming loose in his attitude toward moral obligations.

Here, of course, is precisely the first mistake that such Christian moralists make—arbitrarily defining pleasure in the very lowest terms. We have been told by Mr. McCabe how Epicurus was libeled, how his philosophy was misrepresented, and he was made to appear a counselor of unrestrained self-indulgence; when as a matter of fact, the man lived in a far simpler way than most moralists who condemn him would be willing to live; as McCabe says, Epicurus' manner of life may well seem severe to us—his pleasure was chiefly mental. And for centuries, under the influence of Christianity, pleasure was regarded as appealing to the weaker side of human nature. It was called worldliness, vanity, self-indulgence, and the like condemnatory names. Epicurus was flagrantly misunderstood. It was not understood that the philosophy of pleasure was consistent with an intelligent standard of morality—that pleasure included not merely the so-called "sensual" indulgences but all things that delight man—that to avow the principle of pleasure as the end toward which our actions should tend was not the same as to pronounce judgment about the means or limitations of pleasure. In dislike of the principle itself, moralists did not take the trouble to follow it to an intelligent conclusion and to define pleasure sensibly both as end and means. These moralists failed to see, as Epicurus saw clearly enough, that means which were passingly pleasurable might lead to an end that was far from pleasurable.

Now, when one says that pleasure is the object of life one does not mean to lay down narrowly a certain program of pleasure and insist that all men shall follow it. Obviously, we cannot all enjoy life in just the same way; pleasures do not

(Please turn to page four)

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Is War Inevitable?

Joseph McCabe

Continued from page one

the negotiations always make one reserve. They believe, in fact, that they are expressing the sentiment of their nations when they say that they are willing to submit every dispute to arbitration except disputes which touch the nation's honor; and, naturally, each nation judges for itself what affects its honor and what may be submitted to an international court. This reservation used to be openly expressed in discussions of peace. Now it is tacit, but every agreement that has been made really contains it.

Many would agree to such a reservation, but it completely destroys the hope of peace, even the hope of curtailing war in the future. Was not the American Civil War concerning an issue that touched the honor of both Federalists and Secessionists? Has there been a single

war since in which each combatant did not claim that its honor was involved? Even the smaller powers which were bribed by the offer of territory to enter the war of 1914-1918 stoutly maintained that it was a matter of national honor to get back territory which had once been theirs. That is the reason why the diplomats and statesmen at Versailles left a loop-hole in the charter of the League of Nations. Not one of them would have consented to submit questions affecting the national honor to a foreign court; and every question that may provoke war is easily converted into a question of national honor.

I doubt if statesmen do fully represent the sentiment of modern nations in this plea of theirs about national honor. A very large minority of us in every nation now feel that we can trust our national honor to a court just as we can trust our personal honor. Statesmen are, like the political machine, medieval and anarchistic. They are in the frame of mind of a hundred years ago, which still lingers in parts of Europe and South America, when a man felt a quite sacred obligation to vindicate his honor with his sword. To submit it to a civil tribunal seemed to him an outrage.

We smile today at this code of the duelist, yet our statesmen apply it to the conduct of the gravest, because the largest, of all our concerns, our international differences. Hence, to get a step farther, the immediate need is by education to make larger the quite large minority in every modern nation which takes this sane and consistent view of international life. It must be brought under the same control and order as individual relations. There must be a court with an executive force behind it and a compulsory appeal to the court. As long as nations wear swords and pistols (or have armies and navies) as individuals once did no code of politeness on earth will effectually restrain them. At present indeed one can understand their feeling, for there is no international guarantee of justice. It is always the bully who prefers combativeness to a court of justice. We need to educate the nations in this scientific and humane attitude toward international life. It is a less showy program than the devising of an agreement, the signing of which will put a score of statesmen in the limelight they love so much. It may mean a longer task, though one wonders if the majority of people have any deep objections to remove. What we have to remove is their present childlike trust in pacts and leagues and conferences. I am convinced—I can speak for England at all events—that today the great majority of people loathe war and do not acutely dread it only because they think that the League of Nations or some other futile arrangement makes it at least a remote possibility. A great educational campaign on this subject, provided it be not a vague attempt to stir emotions but have in view a definite schedule like complete disarmament, might prove the beginning of a more serious effort to improve this stupid life of ours.

Some years ago a wealthy American offered a large sum of money for a very short paper making the best suggestions for the abolition of war. A friend begged me to compete, and I wrote a sketch on the lines that I indicate here: an educational campaign culminating in each nation, or a strong minority in each nation, directing its statesmen to call an international congress of a type never known before—with representatives of science and business and labor as well as politics and diplomacy—for the candid and practical discussion of the proposal. My paper was contemptuously ignored—the bureau did not condescend to acknowledge receipt of it—largely, I think, because I ignored the League of Nations. Now my scheme may have been foolish or futile or impracticable, but this is what I would invite the reader to consider: what were selected as "the three best schemes" were published, and they are already waste paper. They were just printed, read, and pigeon-holed by officials. Not one single practical step has been taken or ever will be taken, on the strength of them. I am afraid that is typical of the history of this reform. Since Robert Owen, the great British Rationalist and reformer, first created a demand for pacification on a very extensive scale—for the demand itself goes back to that great humanist Erasmus—more than a hundred years ago we have exhausted floods of idealist passion and spent millions of dollars, and I say coldly that we are no nearer the effective abolition of warfare. The only plausible contention that my optimistic friends make to me in private is that we are making war more difficult and presumably rarer. Does the history of the last thirty years confirm that? And as to the next thirty years it is merely an act of hope, which is the easiest and most mischievous virtue of enthusiasts.

It seems to me that I am building strictly on facts, as I always try to do, when I say that the efforts of the last thirty years have been misdirected. We have aimed at agreements to arbitrate. We must aim at the abolition of armaments. It sounds a far more formidable proposal, but an effective education on the cost of armaments and wars, on what could be done in civil life with the wasted resources, on the standing danger of war as long as the apparatus of war is maintained, could bring about a very large movement in its favor.

I see only one real difficulty, on the assumption that a sufficient number of big nations would simultaneously disarm to protect each of them from an invasion of its defenseless (save for the international military police) peace. This difficulty is not, as many of my friends imagine, in capitalism. Without discussing the theory of Marx on which they rely, I say confidently that in no nation in Europe does capitalism want or even contemplate equally the possibility of another war. The economic aspect of war has completely changed. On serious reflection I should say that only a few thousand small capitalists of England, France, or Germany, are richer for war, while hundreds of thousands are poorer. The few are the cunning folk who foresaw or suspected the post-war economic depression, sold out at once, and reinvested in non-industrial securities; and even these in England will throughout their lives be taxed to the extent of something like fifty

percent of their incomes. The big concerns lost heavily. The coal-owners and engineers (munition-makers), the great profiteers, have been nearly ruined; in Germany many of them actually ruined. In short, a modern war is a colossal waste, not a colossal gain, to capitalism.

The real difficulty is that so many European powers control provinces of alien nationality that a dozen nations swear they will never disarm until they have liberated their "subject brothers." It is useless to remind me how hollow the claim is. During the great war in Europe I incurred much odium by saying, wherever I was permitted to say it, that France ought to leave Alsace-Lorraine to settle its own fate by a plebiscite. The French were outraged. Alsace and Lorraine (where four-fifths of the population never learned to speak French) were so thoroughly French that it was quite unnecessary. I merely wondered: and the experience of the last ten years has fully supported me. For years Alsace-Lorraine has given France perpetual trouble, though France has been very careful to keep it out of the world's press. It demands autonomy, not wishing any longer to be the tennis ball of a Franco-German game. This is the largest of the difficult fragments, but all over Europe we have the same situation. When I left Budapest for Belgrad I was astonished to find the immense mass of Hungary that had been allotted to Serbia: on the ostensible ground that some brigand of the Middle Ages had once planted the Serb flag in those provinces on the real ground that Serbia, like Rumania, had to be heavily bribed to draw off the Austrian forces. The Conference of Versailles knew well that it was sowing the dragon's teeth in Europe.

The first step, and in reality the most formidable step, in the pacification of the world is to secure a general recognition of the principle of the self-determination of provinces. Let no enthusiasm blind us to the difficulties of this. If you ask me as a Britisher what I have to say to the control of Egypt and India I reply that I have never defended the forcible detention of Egypt and India and have always felt that the sincere difficulties of Britain as regards Egypt can be met. Most Americans probably do not realize, for instance, how anxious the Australians are for England to retain control of Egypt, since the Suez Canal route for the British Fleet is regarded as vital to themselves. Disarmament would remove that and many other objections.

I am saying these things rather in a prophetic mood. No one will adopt my suggestion and I therefore need not bother about going more closely into detail. It is unnecessary as long as most people believe that other machinery will do the work. The essence of my belief on the matter is that agreements to arbitrate will never prove effective barriers to war once the press has aroused the violent passions which usually precede a war. "We never anticipated such a situation as this" will be the cry. However, estimates of human nature easily go astray. I prefer to be guided by facts. I say that there never will be real peace, or any serious diminution of warfare, until armies and navies are abolished and the nations cannot go to war. My estimate of human nature is that nations will continue to go to war as long as they have weapons to fight with. The weapons must be relinquished before, not after, an agreement to submit quarrels to a court. That the world will eventually organize international life as it organizes life within the frontiers of each nation—that there will be a permanent court for international differences with an executive, a small international army and navy (as long as this may prove necessary), to prevent nations from fighting out their quarrels out of court, or a set of drastic and reliable economic penalties for offenders, seems to me a platitude of sociological forecast. War is no more inevitable than dirt. We lack the will to be clean.

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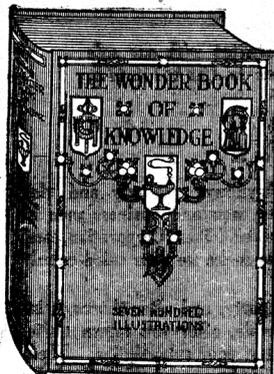
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How We Can Live Happily

A Practical Rule of Life

E. Haldeman-Julius

Continued from page two

equally attract us and our capacities for indulgence are not equal; and neither our temperaments nor our opportunities are the same. It would be impossible and a foolish task indeed to offer a pretentiously complete list of the things men should and should not do and flatter ourselves that we have quite solved for all time the associated problems of pleasure and morality. We can only deal intelligently with general principles and trust that men have common sense enough to apply these principles: if not, the effects of our behavior will inevitably teach us, whether we have the resolution to follow that teaching or not.

Anyway, it is clear that pleasure and dissipation are not interchangeable terms. Dissipation may indeed be carried on with the means of pleasure, but the dissipation lies precisely in the excessive use of these pleasurable means. For every use, as we know, there is an abuse. No one would be so idiotic as to denounce eating as a vice; yet gluttony is a familiar excess which certainly leads to suffering. Sex is a great natural urge, a wholesome and delightful thing, yet sex can be carelessly and excessively indulged; sex behavior can be sordid, and it can be cruel; and in saying this one does not have in mind the conventional notions of morality but rather the practical results, for good or ill, of various kinds of sex behavior. Drunkenness, again, is undoubtedly a serious injury to the man who habitually and excessively indulges in alcohol; to be a little drunk a few times in one's life will not, of course, be very serious and one may agree that the balance is in favor of pleasure; while certainly to enjoy stimulating drinks in moderation—to partake of the cheerful glass without impairing one's senses and undermining one's health—is a practice that will be censured only by fanatics. We must remember too that men have unequal capacities for enjoying the pleasures of sex and drinking, so that what would be sensible moderation for one man, leaving no very serious nor lasting injury, would be unwise excess for another man. The error of the moralists is that they are too sweeping in these matters.

But we do know that excess is had in principle and practice and that continued excess is ruinous. We need not call it immoral—we can do better and say that it is painful and provides its own punishment. In a word, the man who acknowledges pleasure as his object in life will, if he is wise, be careful not to abuse the means of pleasure. Such abuses are not necessarily the business of other people; but they are worth consideration by the individual if he really wants to have in his life the greatest possible pleasure and the least possible pain. In the first place, excess brings in his train sickness and misery and, in

the long run, wreckage; and again excess dulls the fine taste of pleasure and one loses the pleasurable response which, if things are taken in moderation, will endure throughout life. It is, you see, not a moral question in the old-fashioned sense. It is a very practical question. We do not want to have all our pleasure in one way nor to have it all in a day; we wish to live so that pleasure will be always possible to us; although, even so, a man may be perfectly right and logical from his personal point of view in deciding to enjoy fewer years at a faster pace. Generally, however, in judging our course of action we have to ask the question: Is the pleasure greater than the pain? Epicurus did not think it immoral to be a glutton and a drunkard and the like; he thought it foolish. But those who especially (though with poor reason) call themselves moralists are not satisfied to judge behavior on the ground of its pleasurable or painfulness; they insist upon branding certain kinds of behavior as immoral *per se*, as offending some mystic principle of virtue.

It is this mysticism or this moral dogmatism that has been responsible for the misunderstanding of the Epicurean philosophy. And, as we saw with regard to sex, so with regard to the whole question of pleasure and morality this confusion of mind has been largely fostered by Christianity. Under Christian influence, men were misled by the notion that the pleasures and interests and ambitions of this world were contaminating; that the poison of sin was concealed in the heart of pleasure; that there was something shameful about natural impulses and we should therefore put forth painful efforts to repress these impulses even though we could not destroy them; that there was a peculiar virtue in self-denial. That viewpoint, however, was strictly theological in its nature and pretended justification. It did not arise from a consideration of cause and effect, of practical morality, of social interests. The Christian idea—and the idea of many moralists who were not Christian but were metaphysical—was that there was an absolute, innate, superior moral law that men must obey, dogmatically as a matter of course. For Christians, this was represented as the will of God; for the metaphysical moralists, it was the moral law although actually it was but the reflection of prejudices and as a rule in announcing the law they were only confirming custom. Conscience, said Shakespeare, makes cowards of us all; and talk about conscience is apt to make sophists of us—what we have been taught conventionally, what our temperaments incline us to favor, what we emotionally wish to believe we are apt to confuse with conscience.

That dogma of an absolute moral law, which was so long very little disputed (although it has always been questioned by a few wise men) has been finally rejected by the intellectual culture of our time; although the notion still has its stubborn or thoughtless advocates. We refuse to admit the validity of any mystic, absolute rule of morals—any principle of innate vice or virtue—for that assumes some lawgiver supernaturally above the world

of men. Morals are simply rules of human behavior, which have a human origin and a human purpose, and which are to be judged only in the light of practical results. They may be good or bad rules, depending upon whether they serve to facilitate wisely—and to make more pleasurable—the business of living. Such rules must prove their value by definite advantages in individual or social relations; they must serve a definite human end, and, first and last, they must serve the end of pleasure. In other words, a moral rule that reduces the extent of human pleasure, broadly and fairly considered, is a bad moral rule; that moral rule which enables men to live more fairly and pleasantly together is a good moral rule. There is no dogmatism about it, no mysticism, but it is simply a question of common sense.

When we say that we should broadly and fairly consider the moral question, we mean of course that social interests as well as individual desires must be kept in mind. Epicureanism, that is to say, does not mean anarchism—that the individual shall be left to do entirely as he pleases, regardless of the effects of his behavior upon his fellow. He has a perfect right to injure himself, although in doing so he is not truly applying the philosophy of Epicurus; intelligently understood, this philosophy of pleasure would exclude those actions which are harmful to society, not only because they are anti-social, but because they do not usually result in a balance of pleasure for the individual himself. It is enough to say, however, that the individual's pursuit of pleasure must not be carried so far or in such wrong directions that it makes life painful for his fellows. Pleasure is not only the right of one man, but of all men. And of course common sense tells us that we can have a quite pleasurable life, we can satisfy our natural impulses, we can win for ourselves a well-rounded experience without robbing others of a similar opportunity.

It is the weakness of moralists that they have railed against pleasures that are precisely matters of personal choice and that do not in any way involve the demands and obligations of social welfare. They exact self-denial unreasonably, arbitrarily, religiously as a virtue in itself; they demand prohibition whereas the wise man counsels temperance. We have, for example, fanatics who carry on a campaign against tobacco and would have this means of pleasure put down oppressively by law; yet no man can say that the use of tobacco is an anti-social vice or that it is anything but a matter of personal taste; like all things, it may be indulged to excess and probably many could not pleasurably indulge in it at all—but that is not a social issue, nor is it a moral issue. Not so many years ago dancing and the drama were denounced as immoral and we can see plainly that there was never any sensible justification for that attitude; it was dogmatically religious and nothing more; God was supposed to disapprove, but now we have left God out of it and regard dancing and the drama quite humanly as excellent means of amusement and culture.

And to look at the personal question, it should be obvious to anyone who has read thus far that Epicureanism does not imply a heedless, indiscriminating anarchy of conduct. To recognize pleasure as the true object of life does not mean that one is without a code. On the whole, because it is necessary and because we have had it impressed upon us from childhood as a civilized principle, we behave with fairly due regard to the interests of society; the ordinary man, with a decent background and decent opportunities, does not outrage that essential part of the social code which is established beyond dispute; his behavior may be offensive to the moral notions of some of his neighbors, and in individual cases it may be unjust or unkind, but it does not constitute a social menace or problem. More and more, however, kindness and fair dealing guide us in our relations with others, quite apart from the compulsion of law; and we find that such a code is more pleasant; certainly it is more agreeable to live in mutual kindness and honor than in an atmosphere of malice and suspicion. Our behavior is only covered by law in its main points; for the most part, the force of custom and our own personal code determine our conduct; there are many unpleasant, mean kinds of behavior that are not prevented by the law and that are equally permissible by custom so that one maintains an air of respectability. Custom, for that matter, is a mixture of good and bad influences; it does not as a rule try to enforce a high standard of ethics; its main demand is for conformity and respectability. After all, the greater part of our behavior rests with us to decide and, if we are social-minded, that decision will not be narrowly selfish; for that matter, intelligent selfishness will assure us that behavior which is marked by consideration for others is in the long run the safest and most agreeable kind of behavior for ourselves; we are apt to be paid back in the same kind of coin that we give to others, and a pleasant way toward others is

rewarded by a pleasant life for ourselves.

We have to recognize also, in the spirit of fair and candid realism, that we cannot always consider our own desires (or rather our first and most selfish desires) even though in one sense of the word that might be the pleasurable course. Here, too, we must think of behavior in its widest implications and we must keep in mind the essentially social character of our life in the midst of civilization. It is clear that if each person were to consider only his first, unreflective, uncomparative impulses—if, in a word, he were to act as if he were living wholly unto himself—we should have a very wretched and unsafe social life; and so that sort of unconsidered conduct proves to be contrary to the Epicurean principle of pleasure. And most of us, having civilized sensibilities, could not pleasurably follow such a selfish course of action; the immediate pleasure would not pay for the loss of self-respect in violating principles that we cannot but recognize as just; a man brings pain upon himself when he goes contrary to his code.

It will be seen that pleasure is a far broader question than merely plunging heedlessly into a life of dissipation and selfish behavior that has no thought for others nor for the possibilities of the future. Epicureanism does not mean a wild life nor an irresponsible life. Certainly, for most of us such a life would be impossible or would lead only to extreme pains and penalties; such a life would not be considered for a moment by anyone who set for himself intelligently the object of pleasure in life. We have our work to do in the world and even if the thought of shirking it is sometimes pleasant, on the whole we realize that the greater and more pleasurable rewards will be ours if we apply ourselves reasonably to our labors; and if we are fortunate our work will be pleasant in itself, for idleness is a very depressing and tiring condition. We have responsibilities and commonly we find that it is pleasant to fulfill these responsibilities; anyway, from a social point of view we know that a responsible code of behavior is safer and therefore pleasanter for ourselves, for if we act honorably and dependably we expect the same kind of action from others; it is a question of mutual benefits; other responsibilities and duties are toward those whom we love and certainly it is a pleasure to fulfill these obligations.

On the other hand, we must not forget that the question of duty must be judged in a realistic light and must not be confused, as formerly it most grievously has been, by a religious and moral attitude which has no just, reasonable sanction. A large proportion of what men formerly considered duties were nothing but superstitions; and while the wholesome philosophy of pleasure has been gaining within recent years, there are still current many notions of duty and self-denial and self-sacrifice which have no justification in a rational view of life. This question of duty is, after all, on a level with the question of social morality: when it has any real bearing, it is simply a matter of agreement to insure the mutual safety and pleasantness of life. We are, in a word, social beings and we cannot pleasurably, as we cannot justly, behave with disregard of this condition.

Finally, it is not a claim of the Epicurean philosophy that life can be all roses and pleasant paths. We have to be realistic and recognize both pain and pleasure as inevitable features of life. Our object should be to strike as good a balance as we can in favor of pleasure; that is what most of us ordinarily try to do, excepting when we are misled by dogmas of religion or morality; it is curious that any man should willingly deny himself pleasure because of a superstitious ideal of righteousness, just as it is strange that any man should deliberately submit to pain or dissatisfaction or a barren way of life under the superstitious notion that thus he will purify himself "spiritually"—but, for the most part (at least today), people do not as a rule follow in practice these painful notions.

When we say that we wish to live as pleasurably as we can, it is the same as saying that we wish to live as intelligently, as carefully, as we can—that we shall be wise to embrace pleasant opportunities and to avoid unpleasant and disagreeable and dangerous possibilities. Inevitable death lies in wait for us, so what better philosophy can we have than that which bids us enjoy life fully while we may? To be sure, we cannot expect to have life perfectly unclouded, without chance or mishap. Pain, sickness, sorrow, disappointment we must learn to endure. These things we cannot absolutely prevent although we can study to reduce such hazards—our scientific civilization has reduced them in many directions—and certainly it would be foolish to seek them. And these uncertainties of life make it all the more important that we should be ever ready to seize the certainty of pleasure in each passing moment; and to guide our lives, on the whole, by the broad principle of pleasurable experience. Live wisely and live well—this is the gospel according to Epicurus and endorsed by all sensible men.

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