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Why I Quit Being a
Prohibitionist
By Harry Hibschman

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The Moral Code of an Agnostic

Joseph McCabe

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Some months ago I had to sit on a jury at a coroner's inquest, and an obtuse policeman thrust a little bible into my hand on which I must take the oath. It took several minutes to make him understand that I wanted instead to make an affirmation, a thing of which he had obviously never heard before and seemed to regard as akin to a Chinese oath, and he, with puzzled brows, repeated the word to the coroner. That medical gentleman turned severely to me and—illegally, I think—asked: "Have you no religion?" "Not a scrap," I replied cheerfully, and in a voice sufficiently loud to rouse from his slumbers even the policeman at the door. There happened to be a neighbor on the jury, and the sensational news spread along the street. People seemed to begin to understand my many eccentricities, the worst of which was that, though even their servants had been admitted to my shack (and had maliciously given them quite fantastic reports of its splendor), not one of them had ever been invited to cross the threshold. Not a scrap of religion! It lit up the dark places. One sees the poor down-trodden over-worked women—my statistics are not complete, but my provisional conclusion is that they spend two-thirds of the working day gossiping—stand in couples about the street, whispering so rapidly that they seem to spit in each other's faces, occasionally glancing up at my bedroom or study windows. What can you expect of a man, however learned and apparently honored, who has not a scrap of religion?

Some day I may ask these folk to a garden party on my little lawn and lay bare my soul to them. The appalling distortion of their moral sentiments is one of the few things that cause my optimistic vision of the future. Old Schopenhauer hangs on my wall, just where his cynical eyes look into mine as I write, and he seems to accuse me of just in one

respect putting theory before fact, sentiment before reality. These folk who are so concerned about my moral welfare have the moral irresponsibility of children ringed with the malice of a woman at the change of life. The other day a girl of the servant class, the kind these very small middle-class people hire, stopped me on the main road and asked the way to a distant suburb. It was very hot, and she carried a heavy valise, and she said she must walk there. I forced the fare on her without asking questions, for the situation was plain. One of these virtuous women had put her out of doors at a moment's notice, refusing to pay her anything, for some peccadillo. It is the kind of thing they do daily. Roman domestic slaves had a leisurely and pampered existence in comparison with these helpless girls. Their mistresses cheat them, feed them abominably, bully them, and work them, even when they are ill, twelve or fourteen hours a day for about two and a half dollars a week. These women lie glibly, suggest and suspect every kind of misconduct about each other, cheat tradesfolk, and are saturated with petty hypocrisy. Their small-group friendships last a week or two and then turn to gall. They rarely go to church, and I should doubt if there is a bible in the little street. But they are all religious. Few of them read even a newspaper, and most of them take a fortnight to read a novel. I believe that the only thing that could reconcile them to a loss of their hope in heaven would be if someone discovered that there will be no talking on the celestial streets, no tea-parties in the angelic homes.

No, this is not anti-feminism. Most of their husbands are as unattractive in a different way. All that I am trying to bring out is that the most slovenly and ineffective thing in life is the thing which a hundred religions have been giving to the world for the last six thousand years: the code of conduct. Most of these folk amongst whom I condemn myself to live—they would be astonished to know why—would, if properly trained to react to their little world, be quite inoffensive, if not very interesting, men and women. We realize more and more that there is no personality apart from behavior. We are reacting mechanisms, but the most important part of the mechanism is not the daily or hourly stimulations but

the screen of ideas through which that stimulation passes, often instantaneously, before it is converted into speech or act, or even thought. These people have complete sets of what they call moral ideas but they are so chaotic, so disconnected from any clear principle, so false in their accentuation of the important, that they are really mean and cruel when just a little education would make them quite decent folk.

One does not blame them but describe them. A few weeks ago I was subpoenaed to be an expert witness in a case which involved birth control and the Catholic Church. I did not give evidence but heard the case. The jury consisted of men and women of the type of my neighbors, but probably they all practiced birth-control (we have more married folk than children in the street), and that saved the situation. Otherwise a very grave injustice would have been done, for the educational machinery disclosed in the court was lamentable. English judges are always incorruptible and often really stupid in their ideas. This man, a very eminent and most upright judge, plainly (to me) had the odor of sulphur in his nostrils as soon as he opened his papers and saw that it was litigation between an advocate of birth control and a Catholic opponent. An elderly and astute Roman Catholic lawyer had been imported for the occasion from Ireland, and he, apparently, sensed the judge's mood. He was allowed to sneer at "what is euphemistically called birth control": at the "fame" the lady-defendant had won in science and the "notoriety" she got by advocating birth control (not explaining, of course, that she had sacrificed success in science, large sums of money, and the tranquil life she could lead, in order to lessen the burden of poor women). A Catholic witness, a hypocrite to the eye (I longed to ask him how many children he had), was fumbling over his expressions, and the judge helped him out by saying, "You mean you have a moral repugnance to this sort of thing," and looked to the jury as much as to say, "Very right and proper." And so on.

This is one of the scores of types of oracles who still give people the ideas which they mistake for a code of conduct. They are not codes at all. They are something like the jumbles of old law which Napoleon swept aside in Europe to give place to his Code Napoleon: rules of an-

tirely different value from sources which are contradictory to each other. This same judge would probably fully approve the condemnation of a film which we have had recently in London. The Germans have made a film of the life of Luther, and it shows the sale of indulgences by the monk Tetzel. I believe that the picture is conscientiously true in historical facts which are beyond question. But the censorship, at the head of which is a (nominal) Roman Catholic, decided that this scene must be cut out. It would offend a large body of citizens. The judge I am criticizing would fully approve; yet he has not the slightest hesitation in despising another body of citizens, which he thinks to be small, because, it conflicts with his moral ideas. He has been dispensing justice and studying human nature for forty years; and a nineteen-year-old nurse in a birth-control clinic could paralyze him on this subject. The mere figures of the annual marriage rate and birth rate would force him to see that birth control is practiced by the great majority of decent and educated people, who are in England four or five times as numerous as adult Catholics, and the figure of the modern increase of population ought to make all these silly "moral repugnances" look as enlightened as a little girl's fear of a cow.

Everybody has encountered at some time or other the religious person who says: "If you have no religion, why can't you do what you like?" It is immaterial that your questioner probably does what he likes. The point for the moment is that he fancies that religion gives a man a code of conduct, and that there can be no code apart from religion. When I say code I mean a consistent attitude: an habitual reaction that shall not be mean and sordid in some things and just in others, not make a woman draw her fur coat closer when she passes Mrs. —, who is suspected of not being married, and then go home and deny that she borrowed two dollars last week from her servant. Religion never gave this consistent attitude, and it is quite incapable of giving it today. The newest religions are as inconsistent as the old. Conan Doyle some time ago recommended his Spiritualistic faith by a moving experience that someone had given him. A youth had been captured on the street and was just entering the wicked house, when

he recollected that the spirit of his dead mother was near him and could not possibly enter that house. Whereupon another Spiritualist writer, Bradley, scornfully retorted that there was no reason why one's mother's ghost should not still protect one on such occasions. Dr. Millikan would say, I suppose, that his faint and intangible deity quite certainly forbids a man to enter such a house or even give a conspicuous glance at a bathing girl; but H. G. Wells maintains that the God does not take the slightest interest in such trifles. So it has been from the beginning: Paul and Peter, Augustine and Jerome, Luther and Calvin, and so on.

There never was any principle in the matter. I began to speculate on the nature of moral law forty-three years ago, and I have before me now the manual of Moral Theology from which I got my first lessons. There was no agreement from the start amongst theologians as to what precisely moral law was. The theologian cannot accept the popular Christian idea that it is a set of rules arbitrarily imposed on men by a divine will. There must be some meaning in it quite apart from this supposed divine sanction of it. In point of fact, I see that the definition given to me was a compound of the Stoic and the Utilitarian definition. This Jesuit theologian says that "morality consists in preserving the dignity of a rational nature and the harmonious relation of rational personalities." But that definition is a poor sort of hybrid. The harmonious relation of human beings—in plain English, the harmony of social life—can be settled by experience, but who on earth is going to say exactly what the dignity of a rational nature requires? Absolute chastity, say Buddha, and Plato, and Christ, and Augustine: rubbish say Kung-fu-tse, and Socrates, and Luther, and other eminent moralists. So, being already a realist, I clung to the second half of the definition.

It is the only basis on which we have any hope of reaching consistency in our moral judgments. I have worked out elsewhere this social theory of moral law, and, as most of my readers will have read my work, I will not repeat. I want to explain certain aspects and applications of it. First let me say that I dislike the word moral as much as I dislike the words spiritual and religion. It will disappear in the

course of time, because it is too deeply tainted with superstition and mysticism ever to have again a plain meaning. It has become more tyrannical and mischievous than ever in modern times. There is not the least need to give any specific name to what people call their moral sentiments or judgments, and, when they do use that name, they always imply an unsound theory of life. It is in very many modern cases a sanctimonious pretext for cowardice. People talk as if psychologists still recognized a moral sense, a peculiar oracle drawing its first principles from the mystic depths of our "rational nature." The result is that the word is gradually attracting to itself amongst the mass of the people the same derision as old words like devil, hell, and heaven, and the moral obsession of our oracles is such that many imagine we abolish all restraint on our rule of conduct if we drop the word morality. That nothing of importance would really be sacrificed by abandoning the word may be seen from a discussion that has long proceeded amongst teachers on the subject of what are called "moral lessons." Ought they to be direct or indirect? This really means, ought the teacher expressly to say that he is giving children moral rules of conduct or let them gather rules themselves from facts of life and history? Most educationists now incline to the latter view. Even boys sense an unjustifiable dogmatism, a pedantry, a certain obscurantism, in the word moral. Let them learn to be moral without knowing it, is the general conclusion: then why call it moral?

At all events, forty years of experience of life and study of history, with excursions into philosophy and ethics and sociology to see what the high-sounding language of my friends really meant, have convinced me that the less we say about law, and principles and moral codes the better. There are definite modes or kinds of behavior which were recognized long before Aristotle founded a science of ethics. No one needs even a tincture of philosophy to know that there are such things as honesty, justice, truthfulness, kindness, generosity, and humanity: such things as lying, cruelty, meanness, injustice, hypocrisy, and treachery. And very few people need either a religion or a philosophy or a law to know why it is advisable to cultivate the one set of modes of behavior and avoid the other. The ques-

tion has often been obscured by making it too intellectual. We were supposed to take the utility of actions as the test of their advisability, and we were to take our intellectual measuring rods and ascertain the precise material consequences of some act or other. So, in the nineteenth century, it was possible for able men to discuss this question of utilitarianism for decades without coming one inch nearer to each other.

I do not object to the word utility. Take the most evanescent of virtues, kindness, the impulse to have a kindly feeling or a helpful service for all. It is so vague that it is not mentioned at all in the two ponderous tomes of moral theology which I absorbed in the seminary. It is in fact apt to be regarded as a vice from this orthodox point of view. It would have prevented religious folk from burning or disemboweling those who differed from them or getting up wars with each other, or letting sinners feel how wicked their conduct is. To love one's enemies meant to torture their limbs or darken their lives—for their spiritual or eternal good. Universal kindness was a heresy, and is with most people today. Every idealist body has its own particular hymn of hate. Morality with religion at the back of it drenched the earth with tears and blood: morality without religion at the back of it comes too late in civilization to shed blood but it causes tears enough: the universal generation that is coming will try to prevent even tears being shed. The world is going to trust free discussion, quite friendly mutual education. I am no Tolstolain, and do not believe that here and now you can prevent all evil by argument. A few days ago I read of a man who enticed away a girl of seven.

Had I been the discoverer, I fear he would have reached the hands of the police in a dilapidated condition, so far am I from universal kindness. That, of course, is impulse. What I seriously and on principle mean is that in the present stage of human development drastic action is often necessary. But apart from such cases of unsocial behavior, of injury of a kind that we all recognize, we are extending slowly the principle of toleration over fields where it was never or rarely known before. It is now mainly religious folk and moralists who would coerce others in matters which do not, like

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Twists and Turns of Human Nature

E. Haldeman-Julius

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Strikingly a special note in this modern age is a many-sided interest in the strange phases of personality. From the highest plane of culture down to the level of half-intelligent, at any rate curious, literacy there is an attraction toward what is called "psychology" and glimpses into the hidden—or what sometimes are merely the imagined—places of the mind are eagerly displayed. So much indeed has been said about "psychology" in terms of psychoanalysis and other schools that an opposite movement has asserted itself and we have behavioristic thinkers telling us that we should not strive to look into people's minds but should know their characters by observing their action. As a man does, so is he—and better this way than any other can we tell what he thinks. Yet behaviorism is not by any means an unimaginative or rather a narrowly observing school of inquiry. It takes clever note of the peculiarities that people exhibit and does not make the mistake of classifying all people along conventional lines. Wherever we turn, to whatever school of art or thought, we find a far wider and more curious exploration of personality—a refusal to limit things to the straight and narrow presuppositions of conduct—a realization, not altogether new indeed but strikingly manifested in our age, that "it takes all kinds of people to make a world."

It would certainly be an error to assume that our time is peculiar in this variety and contradictoriness of character and that we have experienced a change in human nature so vast and profound within a half century or so. Human nature was always prone to many surprising twists and turns. Artists and thinkers of the past were not unaware of this truth. There was never a period, however stolid its surface, in which these hidden phases of character were not plentiful to the observant eye. What marks our age is the frank interest displayed in probing below the surface; our boldness in confronting every possible strange turn of personality; our irresistible tendency of literature to

give due place—even, as some critics think, to stress unduly—these aspects of the mind which until recently were, if suspected, discreetly left unmentioned. The truth is that psychology is a new science (or in the way of becoming a new science) and undoubtedly is a new interest of open and popular discussion.

We do a great deal of "psychoanalyzing" and the like which would certainly have seemed fantastic, which really did seem in some respects indecent, to our ancestors when the conventions were scarcely challenged. Not so long ago a mere hint of the bizarre was looked upon with frowns of suspicion; yet there was nothing but what seems tame compared to our modern psychoanalysis. Even Gamaliel Bradford, a thoroughly respectable and delicate characterist, would have appeared to an earlier generation as an exaggerated and not quite decent suggester of forbidden things. We have not invented these things, however, but merely called attention to them and have discovered how very interesting they are and, for all the vagaries that at times defy credence, how very much light they cast upon the study of human nature.

We know now that it is impossible to take any man's character at his own or others' conventional estimation. The face he shows to the world is not to be accepted uncritically, as a true face—or as his only face. We are all more or less actors in the social theater and we play consciously or not so deliberately certain roles that are attractive or advantageous to us. To see ourselves as we really are is difficult, yet the attempt is worth our while; to see others at least carefully and from various significant angles is something we can attempt with the advantage of more objective scrutiny. It is this exploration of the human personality that is remarkably a trend of our later literature, whether in works bearing directly upon psychology or in discussions of politics and social questions or in biographies and the new history or in fiction which above all (though not always most accurately) concerns itself with the mystery and development of character.

Other times have been more reticent in some ways yet, when one is permitted a more close and intimate view, one sees that they have not been so very different after all. Consider the Victorian period about which there has been so much pretentious, misleading literature which has only within recent years been

corrected by more careful critics. We have regarded that period as one of grave and exceedingly proper conventionalism, of singularly flat even though impressive and, in some quarters, noble surfaces; we think of everyone as having behaved in quite the expected way, at least those who were supposed to stand forth as examples of all that was right and proper. There is a great deal of truth in that impression, yet it is far from the whole truth. Underneath there were currents of thought and behavior as perturbed and rebellious as in our own time. While one could fairly say that appearances were then thought more important and a certain solemnity and compliance with moral and dignified rules was demanded of leading men and women, or of all who came readily within the reach of respectable judgment, yet the curiosities of character did not go unremarked and in the more private records of the period we find a plenty of glimpses of what went on below the respectable surfaces of men's minds. The Victorians were less frank in discussing these undercurrents than we are. They were more disposed to deny the possibility of strange depths and conflicts in the characters (especially) of their heroes. There was certainly nothing like the candid, intense, unlimited interest in "psychology" which we see today.

Yet although it was a forbidden field for popular or literary or scientific curiosity, there was none the less a curious and turbulent life. Nor was it so well hidden as to be lost sight of even by those who at this distance write more candidly and with less timid fear and false respect of the worthies who shone in a carefully arranged light for that bygone period. Take Charles Dickens, for example, who has such a tremendous place in the admiration and affection of English-speaking readers. Hitherto the tone of his biographies has been very sedate and respectful, they have written meticulously with an eye upon the old conventions. In the Great Presence it has been proper to remove one's hat, to bow reverentially, to look with a veiled glance of wonder. The good and great Dickens could not be portrayed as anything but a very imposing figure, very lofty and benign, very correct, the model of all that was admirable to the proper English view and to the possibly less strict (in certain gestures and traditions) but still conventional American view. Twenty years ago it would have been condemned in strongly felt

terms as a sacrilege, no less, to show Mr. Dickens in the attitude of a man full of conflicting characteristics, a man of impetuous vagaries, fits of caprice, unhappily opposed inclinations—in short, a man with an inner life that was decidedly in contrast to the ideal of the smooth and conventional.

Lately there has been written by Ralph Straus a more intimate life of Dickens (*Charles Dickens, A Biography From New Sources*) which makes use of material, chiefly in the form of letters, that has not been unknown all these years but that has been suppressed by the polite regard for the more imposing Dickensian legend. A careful reading of Straus' biography impresses one with the extraordinary timidity and the lack of insight of those who prefer a conventional, to a fully disclosed picture of their hero. In the first place, this so-called invasion of the inner life of Dickens does not reveal anything of a scandalous nature which should excite his admirers unduly. There was no secret life of vice. The man was not a villain. His memory is not ghoulishly shamed and blackened by the Straus record. Nothing is set down that is not quite fair and honorable in serving the purpose of a better understanding of Dickens; the biography has helped, not to scandalize, but to analyze the character and life of Dickens. But the hero-worshippers seem not to be satisfied with a biographical portrait unless it is entirely without shades, even the most innocent shades. It is sacrilegious even to reveal that their hero was vain, that he was quarrelsome, that he was restless and more or less at war with himself, that he showed the caprices of the artist and so on—even genius to be worshipped correctly must be given a dull, sober uniformity of outline.

The hero-worshippers are mistaken, too, in that they do not apparently realize how much more attractive their hero is when we see him in full view. Their discreetly portrayed Dickens is very dull indeed compared with the lifelike Dickens, with all his faults and strivings. Speaking for the reader, I can say that not until Straus' revelations has the great man appealed to me very strongly. Now I find myself picturing him more vividly, with a keener realization of his prolific and unique talents, dwelling upon a more delightful view of the man himself. Told with the imaginative significance which reality at its best, his life truly reads like a romance. Truth is better by understanding

a man we shall the better understand his works; and to cry out as good Dickensians have done against any prying into the personal life of their idol is to suggest, unfairly as it happens in this case, the presence of something scandalous that really requires concealment. And the faults, so called, of Dickens are such as we can readily understand and with that understanding have no mood of meticulous justification which implies the thought of possible blame. Like any other man, Dickens, although himself an extraordinary man, had a temperament which he did not create and he developed through circumstances which he certainly did not arrange as an all-powerful, all-seeing agent of Fate. Living today, he would be at heart the same Dickens but with many differences; just as in the time of Queen Elizabeth he would not have written as he did in the time of Queen Victoria.

Principally, however, one is interested in the qualities that gave him individuality—that made him Charles Dickens, a creative genius (for such he was, whatever taste one may or may not have for his performances), rather than just a plodding, unknown anybody. It is certain that the conventional idea of Dickens could scarcely be true of the artist who had real individuality and imagination. Conventional figures may be very good and blameless but they are quite dull. They are (to the common view) reassuringly like their fellows in habits, tastes, and ideas. They do not have a longing for strange things nor do they see matter-of-fact semblances of the ordinary life in a queer, heightened, even a distorted view. Now Dickens, being genuinely an artist and having the artistic temperament, was always what the average man would call "queer." He calls himself a "very queer small boy." From earliest childhood imagination seems to have been a strong element in his character. It was an especially vivid imagination, and an egotistic one, and a theatrical one; the world of make-believe always appealed to Dickens and he had an early and lifelong passion for the stage. His parents and acquaintances, although they did not fully understand this trait of character, encouraged it for their own amusement and added to the child's own conviction that he was quite remarkable; the dining-room table would be used as a stage on which he would recite and go through theatrical motions. Not being very robust and barred from

the more strenuous games of his boyish acquaintances, he was all the more wrapped up in his own world of pretense.

With it all, he observed the world around him and the people whom he met with an extraordinarily acute vision. He had, so to speak, a wonderful pair of eyes which detected and dwelt upon signs that others did not see. We observe the results of this peculiar vision in those wonderful caricatures with which his novels abound. A gesture, a feature of dress, a mannerism in gait or speech, a trick of countenance, an odd or humorous outlook upon life—none of these things went unobserved by Dickens who, even when very young, was continually marking the peculiarities of those about him. Never a profound thinker, he was an unusually close observer. His observations, moreover—or the way in which he selected and dwelt upon certain things which came under his observation—revealed a slant peculiarly his own: comical, theatrical, and often sentimental: a combination that, fortunately for him, proved to be immensely popular when Dickens finally hit upon his place and work.

Of the characters surrounding him in early life, none was more worthy of study than the father of Charles—Mr. John Dickens, a clerk in the navy pay office, who moved about considerably owing to the nature of his work and who had a very superior, albeit hazy and fantastic, idea of himself. In the main John Dickens is immortalized in the character of Micawber (in *David Copperfield*) who was a flamboyant, careless, happy-go-lucky creature, "always waiting for something to turn up," seeing himself as a man destined for brighter things but cheated by the accidents of life, dramatizing himself in many an attractive but empty role. But Dickens' father was a weak, while an odd and no doubt ingratiating (even superficially charming), fellow. He contrived somehow to spend a good deal more money than he earned; at one period, when his work stationed him in the town of Chatham, he had quite a household and scale of living; he imagined indeed that the world "owed him a living" such as would befit a man of his exceptional parts.

But that attitude inevitably led to the hampering if not to total destruction of the dear fellow and in those days running into debt might be a very serious matter leading to the debtors' jail. Such prisoners for debtors would accommodate both the father and son and

his family and there, when Charles was about twelve (the family having moved back to London and settled down to a more modest plan of living than suited Mr. John Dickens) the bland and fickle prototype of Micawber found himself. It was a harsh blow to young Charles, who in Chatham had imagined such a glorious career for himself; who was eager for an education (with a view carefully to that same career); who thought of himself in a bright future as a very great gentleman indeed, living (to make the vision concrete) in a very fine house on Gads Hill near Chatham by which his father used to take him walking. Yes, at a very young age Dickens saw himself great, successful, and a challenging figure. That, one may remark, is not so rare among boys; but in Dickens' case the vision was vivid and persistent and never lost sight of and, in the end, we know that he did realize his dreams.

But at the age of twelve his fate was to toil long hours for a meager wage at the mean job of pasting labels on blacking bottles. He lived in sordid surroundings and felt himself (as truly he was) to be a very abused and neglected child. Evidently his parents cared little about that grand future of his or (seeing that they were not aware of his fine dreams) about giving him a fair start in life. When he should have been attending school, he was pasting labels on bottles—and humiliating circumstance, could visit his parents only in the debtors' prison. Sensitive he kept this latter fact from his workmates, pretending to live with his parents at another address. He always felt resentful toward his parents. "It is wonderful to me," he wrote to his friend and official biographer John Forster, "that even after my descent into the poor little drudge I had been since we came to London no one had compassion enough on me—a child of singular abilities, quick, eager, delicate, and soon hurt, bodily and mentally—to suggest that something might have been spared, as certainly it might have been, to place me at any common school. Our friends I take it, were tired out. No one made any sign. My father and mother were quite satisfied. They could not have been more so, if I had been twenty years of age, distinguished at a grammar school, and going to Cambridge." Although hurt deeply in his most secret, sensitive self he went so far as to demonstrate with his father on this neglect; and it seems that the iron-

sponsible "Micawber" did finally suspect that he had been a little bit negligent. And when he had a stroke of good fortune, a relative dying and bequeathing to him a legacy that restored his rosy view of life, he thought to do the right thing by sending Charles to school. Even then, bitterly for the boy, his mother was in favor of continuing his slavery for a few shillings a week. His mother's attitude was a hurt and humiliation from which the boy never entirely recovered. Long afterward he wrote: "I do not write resentfully or angrily: for I know how all these things have worked together to make me what I am: but I never afterwards forgot, I never shall forget, I never can forget that my mother was warm for my being sent back [to pasting labels]."

Anyway, with conditions temporarily better for the Dickens family, Charles had his wish and went to school; albeit in this particular school, as in the larger school of the world, he pursued the kind of study that more specially appealed to him rather than an officially prescribed curriculum. School offered him a release from drudgery and enabled him to use his mind more agreeably. Apparently a full academic career was impossible for him, if in any case it would have accorded with his desire. He longed very much for the time when he could really enter the world and make his brightly imagined career. Until then, his dreams could flourish in the atmosphere of school and, among other things the chief interest of Dickens' life apart from his literary work (and, suggests Straus, a more personal and passionate interest even than his literary work) could be followed—namely, theatricals. Boyish plays were produced, with Charles the directing genius. Always—boy and youth and man—he threw himself most wholeheartedly into theatrical activities and was never so happy as when busy arranging for an amateur performance of some kind.

And of course Charles, whose genius lay in observation rather than reflection, was constantly using his eyes to receive and store impressions of the world around him. Everything inevitably was grist that came to his mill, and his remarkable memory let slip very little of the material that was daily, hourly, being collected by him.

One thinks, then, of Dickens as a schoolboy who was not notably forward in his regular studies; who was, however, an eager spectator of the show of life and determined, vaguely as yet, to be a considerable actor in that show himself; who had a unique faculty of appreciative observation, a visual trick of seeing and remembering together with an intensity of realization which made even the most commonplace, dull, objects come vividly to life; who without neglecting his observation of the real world loved the shadowy land of imagined beings and dramas and was, with respect to himself and all the world, theatrically inclined to an extreme degree.

Nor was Dickens merely a dreamer, in the sense that he idly dwelt upon attractive fancies without trying laboriously to realize them. When the time came when he was old enough (although still young indeed, for he was famous at twenty-

seven) to become active in the world and to cast about him for that long-dreamed future of glory—Dickens showed a capacity for work that might indeed well commend him to those who conventionally bow to the ideal that industry is a leading virtue. In later years, he was always to engage himself to the performance of too much work and have several projects in hand when one such task would have sufficiently claimed his powers.

But he did not step immediately into his great work which he could recognize as so truly his that he could plunge himself into it with full energy. Upon leaving school, he worked for a time as a lawyer's clerk: diligently enough, but without a sight of special opportunity: his bright future did not beckon in a lawyer's office nor did the work much interest him—his rather poor opinion of law and lawyers is frequently expressed in his novels. What interested him far more than the law at this youthful period was the theater, which he frequented with great enthusiasm, and the amateur theatricals in which he was so delightfully engaged. It is indeed suggested repeatedly by Straus that the lure of theatrical life—of acting, whether professionally or in an amateur sense—was stronger than anything else in Dickens' life.

These theatricals [says Straus] were highly important. Indeed, no fair estimate of Dickens' character can be formed without detailed consideration of their nature. All his life he retained a boyish delight in their preparation and performance. He adored the theater and theatrical folk, and what is often called the actor's temperament was certainly his. In all probability he could have risen high on the professional stage. Already his friends knew what a good mimic he was, and already, I fancy, he was quite willing to "act" outside a theater. Certainly the great success of his public readings was largely due to this talent for acting, brought to perfection, he it noted, only after the most careful rehearsals.

And, to continue here with a very important side of Dickens' life, he was not simply content with acting: in most of these amateur activities he was in charge of the whole show, was manager and producer and stage director and (often) author of the play. Extremely restless, feeling something in himself that was unexpressed, flogged and turned this way and that by "devils" of temperament which he could not clearly understand nor satisfy, Dickens (insists Straus) was perfectly happy and at peace with himself only when he was engaged in a theatrical performance: with some play on his hands to be staged, a group of amateur performers to be directed, a plot to be brought to perfection and himself of course in a leading role, Dickens was in his element and seemed to resolve in harmony all the contradictory features of his personality.

For all his talent in literature, mere writing (with the public unseen at a distance) was not enough for him. Always he was, one way or another, a showman—a resourceful, clever, calculating showman. If he could do nothing else, he could and did continually take his reading public (apparently and to a certain extent) into his confidence, discussing his plans for novels, the fate of his characters, the nature

and aim of his work—in a word, his career was one continual show. He cannot be thought of as the solitary, self-absorbed genius sitting in his study, all but unknowing the great world around him, indifferent to possible readers, wrestling solely with the ideas and figures that his imagination conceived. Work greatly he did and necessarily in privacy rather than in full view on a public stage; but he made up, for this as best he could and consciously acted toward his readers as toward an audience. And as we follow him throughout his career we observe that he is not very long without having some amateur theatricals enthusiastically in hand. He became an institution, a legend, within a few years—he and his works a public play—and he was keenly aware of the fact and knew how to profit by it.

Nor in all this was there insincerity in the worst sense, no hypocrisy, no falsity to the true character of the man: Dickens was genuinely himself and he loved this celebrated, carefully rehearsed role; it was natural for him to make it appear that he and his public were at one, as in a sense they were; where they were humorous, sentimental and "vulgar" so was he: he shared their limitations and prejudices, even as in some of his best qualities he was close to the common heart of humanity. He could not help being an actor and it must be admitted that he was a very good actor and on the whole a conscientious actor, taking stock indeed of the demands of his audience, yet not sacrificing indifferently his own ideas of the art.

The method of publication familiar in Dickens' time facilitated this showmanship. Novels were then produced in fortnightly or monthly parts (in magazine form, as it were) and readers were constantly besieging the author with letters appealing that he continue the story indefinitely, that he punish or reward certain characters, that he would save a loved hero or heroine from an unkind fate and see that the villain got his deserts, and so on most intimately. The author himself, with half of his work published, would have no entirely clear idea of what the ending would be. And, within the limits prescribed by his artistic conscience, Dickens was most good-naturedly of all authors (and even so, calculatingly) inclined to heed the views of his readers. He was, of course, too strong in his own inclinations and convictions—the artistic ego was too assertive—to let anyone or even an army of readers dictate to him absolutely. The truth was that he accepted only such suggestions or pleadings as agreeably suited his own inclinations; and doubtless he pretended a greater desire to be guided by the public than he really felt.

His success was made easier, however, by the fact that in fundamental things he was largely of the same mind as his readers. He was a loyal Englishman of the roast beef and ale description; he was not puritanical but he respected the conventions and was wedded to a morally regular life; his sense of humor and his sentimentality were alike agreeable to most of his readers; his "radicalism," which is to say his sense of justice and his interest in the common people, was popular and of course never went to revolutionary extremes. At first, when his was still a new name, a good deal of criticism of his "vulgarity" was heard in certain very nice quarters; by this was meant his preoccupation with characters and scenes of low life, the humbleness and eccentricity of many of his fictional creations, his portraiture not harshly of bums and wasters but of his inclusion, albeit not approvingly, of altogether too realistic crooks in his plots. This criticism could not long withstand the force of Dickens' rapid and wide popularity. Besides, it was soon realized even by these critics that, after all, Dickens was thoroughly safe. No novel of his would, in the inimitable phrase, "bring a blush of shame to a maiden's cheek." He was "sound" on the fundamental code of life that Englishmen approved. His "radicalism," too, was obviously on a plea for simple humanity, an exposure of the very worst indefensible conditions of his time, and not a sinister attack upon the foundations of social order, the rights of property, or the like. Dickens, in short, soon had the most unimpeachable standing of respectability and that respectability was enough to cover indulgently all of his odd, even low, characters.

It is almost incredible to read how those characters (and Dickens through them) captured the love and compellingly dwelt in the imagination of the reading world. In England and America no man was so well known, so eminent and appealing a figure, as Dickens when he was not yet thirty years of age. Once his face was turned in the right direction, he quickly, within a few years, reached that shining height of fame and fortune which had glittered in his dreams when he was "a very queer small boy." Sam Weller, Mr. Pickwick, Micawber, Oliver Twist, Fagin, Nicholas Nickleby, Dick Swiveller—all these characters were better known to the hosts of English readers than were any real living persons. Other shows might come and go, but the greatest show of all and a continuous show

was that of Dickens and Company. His trip to America was a triumphal tour such as had never before been witnessed in this country. Every day while he was in America, and every night, Dickens was the leading actor in a clamorous, garish, pushing show; although the conditions were not altogether to his liking and he heartily wearied of the trip, glad to be once more in England where he could more suitably manage his own Dickensian drama.

Yet for all his talent in showmanship, for all that he knew what he was about and carefully conducted his career with an eye to impressing a well-understood public, Dickens had troubles in his career and many of them were due to the deficiencies of his own temperament. He was always full of plans that he could not possibly carry out, undertaking work and then having to beg out of it, quarreling with his publishers, asserting himself egotistically and at times unfairly, breaking into quick, sharp fits of temper with his best friends. One incident is recorded when, at dinner in his own home, he became so enraged that he ordered his closest friend, Forster, to leave the house. A man of very attractive and interesting personality, at best very genial indeed, at heart good-natured, just and generous, still Dickens was erratic and irritable. He was far from the type of stolid, conventional, flat-surfaced citizen who has no great extremes of emotion either good or bad. He was no model of smoothness, regularity, and dignity never ruffled, stiffly British pose never relaxed: on the contrary, he had, as Straus observes, the actor's or the artist's temperament: his was a restless nature and the impression is strong that he was continually fighting with dissatisfaction in himself.

It is a trite enough phrase, but it is true that Dickens often seemed like a man who was trying to escape from himself. No matter how genuinely interested he was in his work—and he was forever trying to do more work than he was physically able—there was something lacking. He traveled, not in the spirit of easy pleasure or diversion, but restlessly. He tried new work, even heading an ambitious scheme of a London daily paper with himself as editor: a job which soon proved too much for him and indeed with which he was quickly wearied and bored, as indeed his friends had forewarned him. He was, says Straus, "at the mercy of some queer tyrant within him, forever forcing him to seek new excitements and new distractions." One thing that troubled him was that he had not sufficiently indulged his desire and applied his talent for showmanship. From Italy he journeyed back to London to read aloud *The Chimes* to a group of friends (a favorite practice with him); then there were amateur theatricals; and there was a new Dickens publication—"The Cricket"—announced but speedily forgotten.

On a more personal side, Dickens' life was unhappy. He and his wife had drifted apart. He wanted more freedom and there is no doubt that the atmosphere of the respectable British home—of his home, at any rate—was very irksome to him. For a moment the sweetheart of his youth, who had for awhile reduced him to despair by not marrying him, came after many years within his range of vision and he played with that image, even enmeshing some letters of vague tenderness; but a meeting with the lady, who in middle life was unromantically fat and had lost all of the charming qualities that lured the young man, dispelled this half-dream. Eventually a separation was arranged; and that was followed by scandalized talk, even though Dickens' position was secure enough to withstand any rumors. Still, it was astonishing that the great Dickens, who stood for all that was pure and settled and respectable (how little his admirers knew of his restless inner life!) should deliberately part from a wife who had borne him ten children, that he should break up his home (that bulwark of morality), and—worse—that he should be drawn into a public quarrel about the matter.

In fact, Dickens had shown to a friend a letter or statement giving his version of the separation, which statement was to be shown privately to a number of his friends' in his own justification. The friend to whom the statement was given proved indiscreet and it was published in America and thus Dickens' domestic trouble became a topic of the hour. He did not let well enough alone and maintain a dignified silence; but he wrote voluminously in his own defense, attacking his wife (the blanket charge seeming to be that she had neglected her children and home), and in all making an unpleasant matter worse. It was indeed the counsel of his best friends that he keep silent. But Dickens took himself very seriously—was he not a public institution so to speak?—and told his public how badly he had been used and how wrongly talked about: a good deal of this may have been true, but it revealed Dickens for once as a tactless showman.

Probably the greatest factor in this as in other troubles of Dickens was the unhappy temperament of the man himself; his was an irascible, domineering nature; he was, moreover, afflicted with the continual restless urge of the artist and life

was never for him what imaginatively he conceived that it might or ought to be. He realized to the full, indeed, that brilliant future of which he had dreamed in childhood and youth. Fortune and fame came to him abundantly. He was the greatest actor in the greatest show of his time—the show which we may call Dickens and Company. Millions loved and worshipped him. His name and the names of his world-famous characters were talismans of a strange new kind of romance. Literally the world was at his feet—but he was not satisfied.

Nothing could be farther from the truth than an image of Dickens as a staid, contented British householder going his daily rounds dutifully and methodically, fulfilling the ideal of the model citizen. He was not quite satisfied with himself as a public figure nor was he happy in his private life. He worked tremendously—always he had an extraordinary capacity for work—but that did not bring him peace. He could write, albeit in his exaggerated style, that he was "as nervous as a man who is dying of drink and as haggard as a murderer"—this after he had finished his story, *The Chimes*.

There were, to be sure, excuses for his nervousness. He always attempted too much; for a literary man he lived too much as a public figure, was too exactly the showman. He did not claim for himself (he did not want) the favorable atmosphere of isolated creativeness that the literary man should have. And then he was always burdened with his family: his father and his brothers, for whom he had to provide and who at the very outset of his career fastened themselves as none too amiable parasites upon him.

And beyond this, Dickens had an exaggerated sensitivity to the truth that nothing in life comes up to one's expectations. There is always the sad, nostalgic feeling of something lacking. Dickens' life was a romance if ever any man's life was, yet in the intimate heart of it tragedy lay, at any rate a disappointment and bitterness and emptiness that a man might be pardoned for identifying with tragedy.

He could only go on, playing ever more dramatically and imposingly the role that he had set for himself. The climax of his showmanship was his finally going upon the stage, not indeed as an actor in the usual sense, but as a reader of passages from his own writings. The great crowd of Dickens lovers flocked to hear their idol read in person about the death of Little Nell and Oliver Twist's asking for more and the adventures of David Copperfield (Dickens himself) and there is no question that as a reader Dickens was unsurpassed. He added to his fame if that were possible. He made much money. Yet literally he killed himself by the excessive drain upon his never robust constitution and (only 58) he died very suddenly at the Gads Hill home which as a boy he had dreamed of. He was not happy—but, one might ask, why is? At any rate, he was the great, though not the tamely and calmly conventional, Dickens.

A Window on Europe

A Weekly Letter from an Englishman About Europe
John Langdon-Davies

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ENGLAND BECOMES STATUE-CONSCIOUS. London is really not fortunate with its public statues; and once more the papers are full of violent protests against an example of the sculptor's art. Some time ago I spoke of the possibility of compiling a collection of Anglicana to go with Menckens' Americana: the letters to the *Times* and the press comments on the proposed statue to Lord Haig would make an excellent chapter.

Some time ago Jacob Epstein constructed a memorial for W. H. Hudson, the naturalist and writer; it was called Rima after one of Hudson's creations and is to be found somewhere in Kensington Gardens. It was a typical Epstein work, Assyrian in style, quite unnaturalistic, and the retired colonels of Kensington were particularly annoyed with the size of Rima's hands. Questions were asked in Parliament and opinion seemed to be divided upon political party lines: a student of social psychology should be able to write a Ph. D. thesis on why the conservatives attacked and the socialists defended a modernist work of art. Somebody painted Rima green, and it had to be afforded police protection from the sort of person who sits and admires the Albert Memorial to be found in the same park.

No sooner had the trouble about Rima begun to die down than Epstein once more stirred up the retired colonels. This time it was his statue representing Night and decorating the big new offices of the Underground in Westminster. All sorts of respectable people wrote to say that they could not abide it and demanded that it should be removed. And now comes the Haig memorial about which more fuss is being made

than about the other two statues combined.

A well-known sculptor, Mr. Hardiman, having been commissioned to produce an equestrian statue of the British commander in chief during the war has completed a preliminary model. It is in the style of a Roman equestrian statue: the horse is thick and heavy and quite unlike a modern thoroughbred and Lord Haig is not exactly like Lord Haig. Apparently there is a symbolical meaning expressed in the work and the very natural distaste for the war and for all war which the sculptor probably feels in common with all reasonable people has found its way into his lines and masses. A photograph was published in the *Times* and immediately letters began to pour in at the rate of several hundred a week: generals, Royal Academicians, humorists, artists, lords and ex-soldiers have all published their "plain-man" views about public art. That witty modernist Richard Sickert wrote to suggest that a committee of soldiers of all ranks having gone through the late war, supplemented by a leading light of the British turf, Lord Lonsdale, and "a couple of vets" should be formed to assist the sculptor to get a better model of both horse and man. That was of course a legitimate piece of satire, and it is hardly to be believed that certain people took the suggestion in deadly earnest; but a day or so later the *Times* published a letter signed by Lord Galway which suggested in all seriousness that "the committee for the selection of the statue could be two well-known sportsmen who know what a well-bred charger and what a rider's seat should be, two officers to make sure that details of uniform are correct, and two of those who served with him during the war to ensure a good likeness."

"I believe," Lord Galway goes on, "Earl Haig's favorite charger is still alive, either in the Royal Mews or Royal Paddocks. What could be better than to have a correct likeness of this horse for the statue? Every Englishman would feel ashamed if fifty years hence people should think Earl Haig could have ridden such an underbred animal as the horse shown in the issue of July 24, or that the Field-Marshal himself could be so careless about his uniform."

Lord Galway also wants the statue to have a pair of field glasses in one hand; and others of the same school are worried about the exact length of boot, the absence of cap, the straps of the uniform and what not. To satisfy those critics I personally suggest that we should wait until the charger mentioned by Lord Galway dies and that it should then be stuffed and have mounted upon it in an appropriate position a wax model of Haig clothed in khaki made by the best military tailor.

A second school of thought objects not so much to the details not being utterly realistic, but to the spirit symbolized. It would do well enough for Tamerlane, one writes, or for Hindenburg and "the spirit of the German people at that time," but it is "a libel on England and the spirit of the Empire" as much as a "caricature of Haig." Several generals have sent nice photographs of Haig actually sitting on a horse; but a third group seem willing to give up the horse altogether seeing

that Haig actually did his work at a staff-table and with plans before him.

Now sooner or later, I suppose, we shall get a statue of some sort and another parking place for motor cars will be curtailed; but the really interesting thing is that over this question the whole of England seems to be taking sides. Whenever wealthy old folk have retired for August holidays, whether abroad or at home, Haig's statue makes apoplexy even more of a possible danger; and the stenographers homeward bound are irritated by a proposed piece of bronze or by its critics; everybody has an opinion, and most have deeply stirred emotions. The Englishman who never shows his feelings, vide all American portraits of the typical Englishman, is so moved that a lieutenant-colonel actually writes: "the truth is that Mr. Hardiman's monument is too early on the scene; Lord Haig too recent; the matter too poignant for anything but the 'very spirit' to be readily tolerated. Nevertheless the symbol is right, and the statue for future generations, rather than for the one now flickering to its close. We, a tale that is told, must, I think, be resigned and forbear to inflict on the future a man and a horse in preference to the driving force of an idea which expresses forcibly and with clarity the veritable spirit of Haig." I do not think I know quite what he means, but at least he has deep feelings for a stolid military Englishman.

What does it all mean? I do not think that it means that the English are once more showing themselves passionately anti-artistic. The last thing which excited us as much as this was the question of the New Prayer book: and that was certainly not because we are passionately religious. Perhaps these sudden outbursts are due to the need for breaking down once and again the humdrum reserve of every day life. Perhaps they are examples of that greatly to be desired thing, a moral equivalent for war. We get mobilized suddenly behind some idea and we fight violently in the press and there is no conscription to coerce the few sensible folk who dislike war so much that they do not need a moral equivalent for it.

At least it is worth noting that these same people who become violent about a statue at which they will never look; who become eloquent about a Prayer Book they will never use; keep their tempers in a General Strike and organize football games between strike pickets and police.

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The Moral Code of an Agnostic

Joseph McCabe

(Continued from page one)

rape or theft, properly belong to the social life: who are bitter and vindictive against folk who do not follow their own sectarian code of behavior. A vast amount of suffering has gone from the world by that discovery or extension of the humane spirit.

Yet this kindliness is, as I said, so evanescent a virtue that it is never counted a virtue, because what would be the corresponding vice, cruelty or bitterness, was held to be perfectly justified in the interests of virtue. I do not, of course, forget the precept, "Love one another," but as an inscription set across the history of the reign of the Christian religion that would seem the most ironic epitaph that any man could imagine. It was always psychologically impossible and was so hedged with limitations as to be ridiculous. One of the many Popes of the Middle Ages, some of them "saints," who had volcanic tempers which they never attempted to control, excused himself, when a cardinal ventured to protest, on the ground that in the Old Testament God has explosions of wrath in nearly every chapter. He need not have gone so far back. Hell and the Inquisition would do just as well. But the command was itself pitched in language that made it ludicrous. I refuse peremptorily to love a great many people. They may have kings in their brains or defects of their glands which explain their meanness, vindictiveness, or dishonesty, but that is no reason why I should have any affection for them. What my virtue of kindliness demands is that one shall help on the spread of wisdom, the scientific control of life, until the spirit of mutual respect and helpfulness does not encounter such checks as these. It may come to pass in the end that there will be only one virtue, this kindliness. As I call it, which the religions could not call a virtue. Dreadful prospect, isn't it?

At all events it is clear that when we speak of a utilitarian code or ideal, to be settled by the intellectual ascertainment of the advantages or disadvantages of any act, we are by no means leaving sentiment out of account. In effect we are in most cases considering the emotional consequences of acts. What one objects to in the sentimental theory of virtue is the notion that a feeling that an act is moral or immoral ought to be taken by any man as a rule of conduct. Sentiments of that kind are very apt to be of no more value than the feeling of the man who will not sleep in room No. 13 or set out on a journey on a Friday. Its genuine causes may be events or thoughts of an earlier age that have no value for us. Let me take another example from a recent case in court, since these aphorisms of judges, respectfully broadcast by the press, have a very considerable influence, and I presume experience is in this

respect much the same in America as in England.

A painter of some distinction and much audacity recently had an exhibition of his pictures in London. The police closed it, carried away a few of his paintings, and prosecuted the manager of the exhibition for obscenity. I have not seen the pictures, but we may take it for granted that there was no question whatever of indecency in the strict sense, for it is understood that the police would not permit that in a public exhibition. It was a question of nude limbs and torsos, of postures of female forms. It does not matter, in any case, for it is the criterion used by the eminent judge which deserves comment. He laid it down that any work of art which inspires sexual feeling "instead of spiritual sentiments" is obscene. Such ideas are completely anachronistic. Any dozen of us may not agree on the exact limitation we would impose on a painter, sculptor, or novelist, but that a work of art has to inspire spiritual sentiments is ludicrous; and that it must not be exhibited if, however beautiful it may be, it causes some sexual feeling is a piece of sheer moral dogmatism with no justification whatever in those social interests on which law is supposed to be based. I could imagine a genuine sociologist pleading that since in our modern society much trouble arises—so the experts claim—from the relative sexual coldness of women, such artists rather render a social service. Joking apart, however, the judge was merely acting on one of those moral repugnances which are too often admitted without a proper scrutiny of their ultimate sources.

This is precisely where the function of intellect in moral matters finds its place. The old utilitarians like Jeremy Bentham were scorned by moral philosophers as mechanical, calculating, coldly intellectual. Their campaign was really one of sentiment. The callousness was on the side of the moralists and theologians. It was these who formulated abstract intellectual principles or laws, and no bruising of human hearts was of any consequence in comparison with the mechanical observance of their laws. Bentham's supreme ideal was to eliminate pain from the planet and to provide as much happiness as possible for as many human beings as possible. It was one of that school who prettily said that children are the guests of humanity; and it has led to a colossal improvement in and humanization of the rearing of children. You do not confront your guest with a set of iron laws and a rod. It was from that school that a more enlightened policy in dealing with criminals was inspired: that the long overdue idea of justice to women arose; that the great modern demand for peace and arbitration chiefly came. The broad humanitarian movement which really distinguishes our age historically originated in the sentimentalism of the men who were scorned as intellectual, mechanical, and unspiritual. It was a discovery of the virtue of kindliness, which theologians had masked under the impossible precept of universal love and had themselves savagely violated.

That is where critics of what is called the utilitarian theory have generally failed. I should disdain to notice the common criticism that

there is something inferior or commercial in determining the quality of acts by their consequences. There is no aspect of human conduct that is more important: no lesson in selfishness more valuable than teaching men to look to the consequences of their actions. The truth is that moralists were conscious that some of their own laws caused a great volume of unnecessary suffering so they disliked the question of consequences. But the chief defect of such criticism is the unjustifiably narrow meaning that is given to the word utility. If some act of mine could make six people happier than they were . . . That word happiness always makes me hesitate, as if I were using an ancient and uncritical term, but I can put in very plain English what I mean. If some act of mine lessened the pain or discomfort or weariness, and increased the pleasant feelings, of six people, without injuring any other person, I should regard this as a utility of the most desirable character. The word simply means that we must judge behavior, not by some law set up without consulting human interests, but by its useful or injurious, its pleasant or unpleasant, consequences to other people. It is not a bad way of putting it, though rather pedantic in form, to say that we must test behavior by the amount in which it contributes to "the harmony of rational personalities." I take that from a Jesuit; and the same Jesuit then goes on to denounce utilitarianism.

I have explained elsewhere that it seems to me an affectation, a pose, to ask why we should adopt this kind of behavior which the utilitarian recommends. The question is asked only by sophisticated people who have not quite grasped the fact that we are not attempting to introduce a new code of laws. I was once, in Australia, asked to speak in a supper club which regarded itself as extremely unconventional and in that respect superior to all other societies. I must not accept the invitation. I was told, unless I was prepared to let any member interrupt my speech with "Liar," "Fool," "Bunk," or whatever he chose to say. It was an affectation. I often wish that we speakers could have remarks from our listeners as we proceed, but there is a very obvious reason why it is not the custom. Nine listeners out of ten would have their interest in one's remarks spoiled by the interruptions of the village idiot.

Apart from these quixotic people who complain that we are making a pink tea of civilization—I wish we could—I have, in thirty years' experience, not met the man or woman, looking for a new attitude toward life, who did not see the sanity of what is called the utilitarian view. It is not, on its positive side, a law. The young man who asks why he should help to reduce pain or suffering in the world may be at once assured that he need not, if he has no inclination. But . . . I remember a young doctor once assuring me that he cared not one jot for uplifting, helping, or advising any other human being. Let them look after their own interests, as he looked after his. And a few nights later, as we walked the streets of New York at midnight, we ran into a couple of men quarreling; and one had seized a heavy iron bar. My selfish friend forgot

his creed and, at some risk, persuaded the litigants to confine themselves to the use of their tongues.

Life is a great game in which none can literally play a lone hand. Carlyle exaggerated, as usual, when he said that if he cast a pebble from his hand the disturbance would ripple out to the very bounds of reality. We need not look so far, but from almost every act ripples go out to others, and the ripples they cause come upon our lives. It is as well for all of us that the sensations they cause should be pleasant. It is scarcely a law, scarcely, an ideal, just a sensible way of believing. Some day it will be the spontaneous and quite general way of behaving, but so little reason has been given to men for their behavior until our time that unsocial conduct has come to be regarded as a cunning evasion of a tariff law. The ten commandments had come from the top of a mountain, not from the heart of the city. It will make, and is making, a vast difference when men see that they are only the rules of the game.

Again let us think realistically. We have publicly identified the greater matters of the old moral code with social rules. Justice was too important a thing to be left to divine commands and clerical exhortations. We have made a civil law of it. Physical injury, slander, theft, dishonorable violation of contract, are no longer ethical matters. These things are creating a familiarity with the human meaning of justice. We may, if we choose, be unjust to each other in whatever way the law still allows, but most of us are quite content with the unwritten social compact. Most of us, yes, but, you may ask, what about the others? The corrupt broker, politician, shopkeeper, etc. Well, what about them? Talk to whoever is responsible for their education in behavior. The man who asks me for a code of behavior which everybody will at once observe is asking for what never was under the sun. It is not the code that matters but the spirit in which you accept it. I say only that most of us who are familiar with the humanitarian view of life do not feel tempted to cheat and rob. Men as a rule hesitate to cheat their friends. We have a larger circle of friends. We are more conscious of the social unity. When this sentiment is genuinely embodied in the education of all perhaps we shall see a steady improvement of behavior. Mutual cheating is not, to my mind, so much immoral as silly; and where it occurs it is generally mutual. The politician who takes graft is cheated by his tailor or butcher. We really may hope to grow out of this well-vested state of things without returning to the belief in paradise.

Take a more severe test, lying. Civil law generally attends to it in its more injurious forms, and, as to white lies, since even the moralist classes them as minor offenses, people naturally escape inconvenience by telling them. But mutual lying, again, is a form of social behavior that we really have a hope of outgrowing. There is a distinct "utility" in mutual confidence, and the task of education is to enlarge that mutual confidence beyond the family circle or the group of intimate friends. No sort of ethical education gives so much promise of achieving this as social or humanitarian education. Even Emerson would, I

fancy, have repudiated the idea that he was an entirely truthful and honorable man only because it was written in some transcendental region that lying was immoral. We build a type of character, for ourselves or others, that finds it increasingly repugnant to lie or deceive. The liar makes every effort to avoid detection even when his immediate object in deceiving has been successfully attained. It is not because there is a moral law against lying but because the act betrays an inferiority of character that he does not care to confess. The people who ask you why they should not lie if there is no God themselves fear the eye of man much more than the eye of God.

As far as these matters are concerned there is no serious object in asking "why." The question is how we are going to educate people into a reader observance of rules of the game which we all in theory recognize; and the answer to that is to point to the disastrous sort of mis-education, on these matters, that we still give people all over the world. The only critics for whom I have respect are those who plead that there are certain fine qualities of behavior which, they feel sure, could not be developed or maintained on a purely social theory of morals. Much of this also is bunk. I remember one such gentleman who makes this claim with great eloquence on public platforms and is regarded as wisdom incarnate by hundreds of ladies. He is not a hypocrite (like more than one other of the same class that I know) but he surely lacks a sense of humor. On one occasion he was so rude to me that other members of a body with which he is associated proposed to have him censured; and the reason privately given to me for the rudeness was my association with and defense of Ernst Haeckel, a man of finer character than himself but of anti-philosophical views which this man supposed could not lead to fine character. It is often a muddle of bunk and superstition, but there are many men and women who genuinely feel that, as one of them said, we can on social principles certainly teach people to avoid the police but not much more.

Well, what more do we want? Or, to avoid the verbiage of these people, what precise ideas do we need to adopt? Let them come out of their musty studies and look broadly at life and history. I have pointed out before that the teachers of men whom these ethical highbrows generally select as inadequate, men like Haeckel and Buckner, had in every sense as fine a character as one could wish. I have attended one of these congresses of religions which of themselves prove that in our day the decay of religion has led to an improvement of character: since the Jesuit professes that he no longer wants to burn Calvin, or Calvin to burn Servetus. Setting aside what one might call professional religious types, there were in the congress, let us say, a hundred men and women of high character, and there was not the least agreement in their reasons for cherishing it. They would say that they all had religion, but the word did not mean the same thing to any half dozen of them. Some were agnostics and denied that religion must at least include a belief in the spiritual; and those who insisted on the spiritual were too imperfectly

educated to know that three of the most esteemed moral teachers—as they would say—in history, Kung-fu-tse, Buddha, and Zeno, flatly denied that a man need trouble his head about the spiritual. In fact, the more crazy about the spiritual these people were, the more limitations there were, as a rule, to their fineness of character, and the more sheer verbiage there was in their remarks. I have just, an hour ago, read in my daily paper an article by one of these folk on our generation and its "lack of faith." In God? No, the gentleman is not even honorably mentioned. Then faith in what? In words, as usual; and the Pharisee scorns those who do not bow to his rapid phrases.

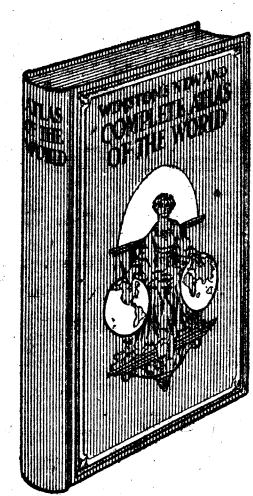
This minority of real highbrows we might ignore. The world about which they are profoundly concerned and are planning to win for Virtue will never be aware of their existence. If you want to answer them, it is quite easy, ridiculously easy. Tell them it does not matter the toss of a coin whether their lofty qualities perish or not; and you will find their transcendental philosophy give place at once to an eloquent utilitarian proof of the human desirability of those qualities. But I am thinking here of your flesh-and-blood neighbor who, in the office or the club or the easy chair at home, says that he really doesn't see how you can have consistently decent behavior without some creed or other. The obvious answer is, as I have shown elsewhere, that the general character improves as the creeds decay, but your neighbor may be drenched with sermons from pulpit or press, about the increasing wickedness of the age, and we will take it otherwise.

Take plain daily folk like ourselves. Probably, like me, you often wonder what some of our moralists are shrieking about. A friend of mine at one time compiled what he called a human bible and spent much zeal on a human religion. In his bible there is a chapter about "moments of temptation," which suggest that every now and again we are all inclined to do something dark and desperate and we need a sort of substitute for the image of the Virgin to look to and give us strength. What the devil is he talking about? It is true that I occasionally feel disposed to punch the head of some ill-behaved fellow but it costs me no violent effort to refrain. I never feel the least inclination to steal or cheat. I might get rid of a bore by telling him, untruthfully, that I had a pressing appointment, but the heavens won't fall because we all do that. I like wine but am not tempted to go far enough to have a thick head and a rotten stomach tomorrow. I am not tempted to be dishonorable but positively like to be honorable in all things. I loath cruelty and hypocrisy, and my only lapse from virtue is that I like to make hypocrites, liars and cruel people squirm; in which I follow in the footsteps of Christ, my great exemplar—as well as render a distinct service to society. I admire refinement and delicacy of character (properly understood) and do not feel a lot of devils pulling me in the opposite direction. I swear occasionally but quite deny that there is anything inferior in saying damn instead of drat. What are these "dark hours" that my friend puts in his books and discreetly, and very

modestly, refers to in his lectures? Let me examine my conscience, as we used to do in ancient days. I forget when I last told a lie; and it must have been a harmless little thing. I can't remember anything in the way of meanness, cheating, dishonesty, cruelty, injustice. . . . If my moral friend reminds me of my pipe, my steak, my bottle of beer, my occasional swear-word, my love of violent sports, I recommend him to be converted to these things. It is this anemic, ascetic, acidulated code of life, which has nothing excellent or admirable about it, that chokes people off from moralists. Even the moralists are not agreed. Is there one more refined than Maurice Maeterlinck? I believe he likes boxing, and I know he likes beer and "bacco." If he came to London, I fancy he and I could go off arm in arm to my favorite football ground at Chelsea, and prime ourselves with a pint of bitter in the nearest pub, and roar with delight when the little wing man flings himself at the six-foot back and knocks him over—clean work, mind you, using the shoulder only—and then go and chuckle over a revue or a musical comedy. Perhaps my anemic friend means that he is tempted at times to do these things. Let yourself go, my friend. Those about you will be happier ever afterwards.

Seriously there is only one dispute in these matters: sex. My temptation-friend means that when he goes to the coast in summer or when he walks along Broadway the sight of some gracefully-rounded and neatly-clad figure, some piquant face or saucy eyes, makes him think about sexual matters. How dreadful! My belief is that no one thinks so much about sex as the puritan: just as no one thinks so much about hooch as the prohibitionist. We are sorry if it hurts their feelings; but they would be wiser to get rid of the feelings. There is much dispute about sex, but there ought not to be any dispute about the fact that the ancient idea about "committing lust in one's heart" is a sheer superstition. You can even covet your neighbor's wife in a perfectly honorable sense: the same sense as that in which you may covet his money if he has more than you. You wish you had it but are not tempted to steal it. You would despise yourself if you pocketed a five-dollar bill he left about and forgot. The rules of the game sort themselves out in regard to sex just as easily as in regard to property, if you first make a serious study of current moral standards. But I have just written eight books on the subject and have nothing more to say about it. Even when we recognize rules we shall not get perfect observance of them for ages. People have been so accustomed for centuries to have irrational rules thrust on them that the impulse to evade them has been carefully educated in the race, especially by Christianity. The mothers who make rebels are those who draw the chalk-marks in the wrong place. We have not yet begun to give the mass of men an elementary instruction in the true meaning of behavior and its social restrictions. When it is given, probably most folk will, like you and me, feel a strong natural bias to the straight and honorable and smile at the temptation-people.

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The Moving Finger Writes

Informal Comment on Developments of the Week
Lloyd E. Smith

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BROWSING

Some bookshops are delightful places. They urge the passerby to come in and "browse around." If you follow the suggestion, you saunter in and wander about, seemingly without purpose. A bright cover attracts you, and you pause to look. A title catches your imagination—again you look. A favorite author's name leaps into your ken; more looking. Strange subjects; new ideas; fetching jackets; beautiful craftsmanship—and perhaps you buy a book.

Not always is one near a bookshop where he can drop in and browse around. But did you ever try browsing through a catalogue of the 1,500 different titles in the Little Blue Books? To be sure, there are no brightly colored jackets to attract your eye—but there are alluring titles, famous authors, and subjects galore.

Few readers realize how many Little Blue Books are exclusive in the series. That is, Little Blue Books which contain material that is not available in any other edition anywhere. The majority of the Little Blue Books are copyrighted by the Haldeman-Julius Company; this alone indicates original material, specially prepared for the pocket series.

Pick up your latest catalogue (one will be sent anywhere free, if you ask for it) and browse through it. Let's try it together, and see what unusual material we can find.

Charles J. Finger, himself an adventurer, went through a bunch of old books and magazines and gleaned several stirring accounts of real episodes, which he put together in *A Book of Real Adventures* (Little Blue Book No. 516). You will find there, vividly described, a battle with snakes, the whale that destroyed a ship, treacherous quicksands, and so on. It is a strangely compounded book: admirable for whiling away listless leisure.

Something peppy? Try *A Book of Broadway Wisecracks* (Little Blue Book No. 1191), edited, with an introduction, by Clement Wood. "Every race of men," writes the wittily flippant Mr. Wood with the parenthetical addition of "and the men increasingly embrace the women, old dears," and goes on, "every race of men has its own brand of wit and humor. The guffawing Negro jokes, the canny Scotch wit, the shrewd Jewish jokes, the big-hearted Irish bulls—these are well known. New York's Broadway, ranging from the Wall Street offices downtown to far Washington Heights, but centered in the White Lights Region, the Frivolous Forties—has evolved the 'wisecrack,' the youngest baby among brands of jokes, but a hale, hearty, and popular infant already."

Max Beerbohm's *Happy Hypocrite* (Little Blue Book No. 595) is a fascinating story about a fellow by the name of Hell. Max defends paint and powder in his *Art of Cosmetics* (Little Blue Book No. 649), an odd little treatise you'll enjoy reading.

One of the finest original compilations in the University in Print is *Oscar Wilde's Letters to Sarah Bernhardt* (Little Blue Book No. 664), edited by Sylvester Dorian. Sarah's voice so intrigued Oscar that he compared it to "singing stars." This friendship between the actress and the poet is but little known among admirers of them both; the correspondence which ensued is enjoyably characteristic—and this Little Blue

Book offers 64 pages of unique reading. There are also three halftone portraits of the great Bernhardt.

George M. Husser's business is to see that other people are not duped or defrauded, for he is manager and director of the Kansas City (Mo.) Better Business Bureau, one of the oldest organizations of its kind in the U. S. Mr. Husser, and those associated with him in the work, have been making it harder for fakers to succeed ever since 1916. That is why Mr. Husser's *Crooked Financial Schemes Exposed* (Little Blue Book No. 1339) is so valuable. This little manual tells you how to safeguard your investments; its cost, to be sure, is only a nickel (when you order at least 19 other Little Blue Books at the same time, making \$1 worth), but here is one book, certainly, which should prove its worth many times over in dollars and cents (I was tempted to write "sense," but decided it was an old pun).

Speaking of puns reminds me of that *Book of Interesting Puns* (Little Blue Book No. 1093), collected by George Milburn. There are some real curiosities between the blue covers of that book. It even contains the "Visit to the Asylum," by Oliver Wendell Holmes; a description of an hilarious visit to an asylum for aged and decrepit punsters!

Poems of Evolution (Little Blue Book No. 71) is a collection that you do not find elsewhere. It contains that peculiarly catching bit of verse beginning, "When you were a tadpole and I was a fish," by Langdon Smith. Not the soundest science in the world, perhaps, nor yet the finest sentiment—but oddly captivating, nevertheless.

If historical romance is your fancy, try *The Mystery of the Man in the Iron Mask* (Little Blue Book No. 34), a brochure written by Theodore M. R. von Keler. Who was that mysterious Frenchman who was supposed to have worn an iron mask, to conceal his features, after

he was imprisoned? Dumas made something of it in one of his novels; Douglas Fairbanks made some more of it in one of his pictures!

Do you remember the movie which starred Jackie Coogan, some years ago, in *The Boy of Flanders*? That story was Ouida's *Dog of Flanders*, which is available complete as Little Blue Book No. 391. (Ouida is one of the strangest pen names ever used by any writer; her real name was Louise de la Ramee, 1840-1908. I do not know where she derived the name "Ouida." I must remember to investigate it sometime.) She wrote that famous novel, *Under Two Flags*, which was also made into a movie some years back. And *The Nerrnberg Stove*—a colorless enough title for a really original yarn about a journey in an old stove (Little Blue Book No. 392).

As to detective stories, whether you like them or not you'll get several huge laughs out of Mark Twain's *Stolen White Elephant* (Little Blue Book No. 931), which is a humorous detective story. An elephant is stolen, and—but you must read it. (Of course you know that Mark Twain is also a pen name—of Samuel Langhorne Clemens, 1835-1910. "Mark Twain" was a memory from the humorist's boyhood days on the Mississippi; it was the call of the leadman, sounding the water's depths, for two fathoms.)

Three (at least!) biographies of Ambrose Bierce have appeared in the last year. The peculiar fascination of this cynical genius has borne fruit. Ten Little Blue Book collections of Bierce's best work are available, let me remind you, and perhaps the most characteristic, in concentrated form, is his *Devil's Dictionary* (Little Blue Book No. 1056)—a lexicon of devilish definitions that will amaze, convulse, antagonize.

A museum could be filled with the oddities that human beings have committed. One of the strangest corners of such a museum would

be that devoted to legal foibles and follies. Harry Hirschman has made a Little Blue Book out of such: *Curiosities of the Law* (No. 1437). Contradictory laws, queer whims of our law-makers, stupid enactments, futile regulations, and so on, make up the contents of this book.

There are plenty of other curiosities. *Curiosities of the English Language* are offered in Little Blue Book No. 1350. Edward Condon has compiled an interesting array of *Curiosities of Mathematics* (Little Blue Book No. 876), supplemented by Clement Wood's *Mathematical Oddities* (Little Blue Book No. 1210). Russell R. Winterbotham (on the H.-J. editorial staff) took his fling at odd facts and contributed *Curious and Unusual Deaths* (Little Blue Book No. 1419) and *Curious and Unusual Love Affairs* (Little Blue Book No. 1428)—not his own, Russell hastens to assert!

Perhaps that is enough browsing for a while. But I must add a word for those essays—strangely delightful you will find them, I assure you!—of Alexander Harvey's which masquerade (yes, that is the right word in this instance) under the mild titles of *Essays on Jesus* (Little Blue Book No. 532) and *Essays on the Friends of Jesus* (Little Blue Book No. 533). Those two volumes are surprise packages! Include them in your next order and see for yourself.

* * *

MURDERS

Scenes for murder problems vary with the whims of detective-story writers. Originality is not easy to achieve: the methods of committing murder are obviously limited. Possibilities of variation are chiefly in the weapon used—some unusual knife or blunt instrument; some rare poison; some mechanical trap or other—or in the scene of the crime, as an old mansion, a high cliff, a deep cave, or what have you? Then, too, the attendant circumstances permit of almost infinite

variation. The various elements are not new, but the possible combinations are endless.

So it was not strange, perhaps, that the League of Nations investigation into white slavery a few years ago should have inspired a detective story. The white slave traffic has always been story material, but J. J. Connington has used the data with, I think, more than usual accuracy and telling authenticity in his latest murder problem, *Grim Vengeance* (\$2.15 postpaid). I do not like the story, as a story, so well as his *Case With Nine Solutions* (\$2.15 postpaid); it is more on a par with *Mystery at Lynden Sands* (\$2.15 postpaid), which was spoiled by a highly melodramatic climax.

But, you ask, are not all detective story climaxes highly melodramatic? Yes, relatively speaking. But in the preceding paragraph I was speaking relatively to other detective stories.

J. J. Connington, though his yarn cannot be as convincing as a fast account, nevertheless may help to spread useful warnings against "white slavers." If you are interested in facts, without the glamour and the recognizable unreality of fiction, read Basil Tozer's *Story of a Terrible Life* (\$2.65 postpaid)—which tells the truth about white slavery today, without gloss or hesitancy.

THIRTEEN

Judith Paul is a dame of just thirteen years—thirteen fair summers, as the sentimental novelists used to say. She writes a long letter full of the enthusiasm of irrepressible youth, to the Editor himself, as follows:

"I have long cherished a wish to write to you. I am thirteen years old," she says. "My father likes you. That means he likes your articles, your Little Blue Books, etc. My highbrow brother rather grudgingly admits he likes you. And me, I like you for many reasons. When I was eleven years old I happened to come across your *Agnostic Looks at Life*. It converted me into a non-believer. My father and brother are confirmed atheists. My mother admits she is skeptical. None of them ever taught me to believe as they do. . . . And those priceless Little Blue Books. I'm saving up a dollar to get certain books. Some of them will help me in high school.

"Please tell Joseph McCabe that his *Key to Culture* is the most valuable treasure I possess. Some of his volumes on scientific subjects gave me a deep interest in science, particularly medicine. Practically all of his volumes helped me in school. Why, men have written volumes on just one lone subject and just couldn't express the point. McCabe, with just a few words, thoroughly masters and explains a variety of subjects. Mr. E. H.-J., make him write many, many scientific books for you!"

That is very generous of you, Judith. Write us again some time. But please remember that it is a good habit to acquire, to sign your name and address. You remembered your name but forgot your address—which would be important if you wished a reply.

"VIOLENCE" ARRIVES

Violence is here. Copies of the first edition just arrived. *Violence*

is "a novel of LOVE and JUSTICE in the Central South," by Marcet and E. Haldeman-Julius. The effective jacket is buff in color, with a fan of red topped by the red word VIOLENCE: the fan is the rebound from a downwardly exploded automatic, giving at once the keynote of the book, which opens with this dramatic sentence: "Dr. Philemon K. Jordan, pastor of the First Methodist Church of Rockworth, raised his revolver and fired."

Violence is beautifully bound in a light-brown heavy linen cloth, with lettering in red. It is printed on fine white paper; the top is stained bright red. There are 374 interesting, compelling pages.

On the front flap of the jacket appears this blurb:

"Although *Violence* is primarily a story, it is also intended by its authors as a charge to that far-flung jury, the people of America.

The action, laid in the imaginary central southern state of Texarkana, starts with a fatal bullet-shot from the revolver of the Reverend Phil Jordan, servant of God—and squire of dames. The preacher-murderer is blessed not only with eloquence, good looks and an ability to deceive himself, but also with a fortunate pigmentation. His acquittal, by a jury of his (white) peers, stands in dramatic contrast with the fate of Skip Early, the mulatto boy who murders fourteen-year-old Sue Jean. Skip's narrow escape from the faggot and kerosene can is again contrasted with the Judge Lynch justice handed out to the halfwit Negro, Mose. . . . Back of this bloody triangular dramatization is a portrayal of the life, at once barbaric and decadent, of the town's middle and younger generation whose bodies and passions ripen early."

On a flyleaf appears this statement:

"Between Arkansas and Louisiana, Texas and Oklahoma, is the beautiful state of Texarkana. In its Northeastern part are the green-wooded Cherokee mountains. In the South and West lie vast sweeps of plain. A glance at the map will show you its exact location. You will see, too, that still farther to the East of it are Tennessee and Mississippi. From these six states Texarkana draws its traditions, its ideals and its prejudices."

On the back flap are tributes:

"Marcet and E. Haldeman-Julius have together put the town of Girard, Kansas, on the map of the literary world. Mr. Haldeman-Julius is internationally famous as the Henry Ford of book-making and the F. W. Woolworth of book-selling. Through the millions of Little Blue Books pouring from his gigantic presses at Girard he has brought literature to the great democracy. This experiment and what has been learned from it are described in his fascinating book, *The First Hundred Million*. . . . In addition, he and his wife, Marcet, edit jointly a weekly and a monthly, publications wielding an enormous influence. But both, it may be said, are more interested in creative writing than in journalism or publishing. A few years ago this busy couple found time to collaborate on a novel, *Dust*, which received critical and popular acclaim. They are now working on a new novel which is to bear the provocative title of *The Best People*.

Mrs. Haldeman-Julius is a good deal more than the wife of a famous husband. She is a niece of Jane Addams and in addition to considerable dramatic experience, has to her credit a brilliant record as a journalist and a big game interviewer."

All of which is to make you want to read *Violence*, which is published at \$2.50. Haldeman-Julius Publications will send a copy postpaid to any address on receipt of \$2.50, the publishers' price. (The book comes out under the imprint of The Inner Sanctum, Simon & Schuster, New York.)

Dust can be supplied, also, at \$1.35 for the clothbound edition, or \$39 for the paper cover edition. *The First Hundred Million*, clothbound, published at \$3, will be sent to any reader of these columns for \$1.98 postpaid.

ODDITIES

There are some advantages in conducting a mail order business from a postoffice in a little town like Girard, Kans. The "Address your mail to street and number" admonition of the Postoffice Department is without significance. Just Haldeman-Julius Publications, or Little Blue Books, or The University in Print, or simply "Book Publishers, Girard, Kansas" is enough—all such addresses have been used, and mail so addressed, and beyond a doubt intended for us, has been promptly delivered to us. We even get mail addressed to Haldeman-Julius Publications, but with the wrong state, or even the wrong city and state, on the envelope—so ubiquitous is the fame of the Little Blue Books *et al.*

Not that I recommend careless addressing, for I certainly urge everyone to address letters correctly to Haldeman-Julius Publications, Girard, Kansas—even to adding U. S. A., if you live in some other country. But people forget, and people are careless (they forget to sign both name and address—their own—to their orders all too frequently), and since we are the only publishers in Girard, we get the mail all right.

Today there came in the mail a letter addressed as follows: "Astronomy for Beginners, Girard, Kansas." With perfect composure the postal clerk sorting the mail put it with the H.-J. allotment. *Astronomy for Beginners*, indeed, is Little Blue Book No. 895! It is probably an established rule of thumb in the Girard postoffice for the clerks to send us everything that is not clearly addressed to anyone else!

Occasionally the rule sends mail awry. Just the other day we had a postcard with a message written in French. We struggled—the handwriting was poor—to translate it, and could make out only that someone was planning to move his furniture somewhere else. The card came from Canada. The man was not on our mailing list. It seemed a mystery—until we examined the address on the face of the card. It was addressed to an individual, to a strange street address, a town beginning with G (that looked, first glance, like "Girard"), and the state of—careful inspection revealed that the "state" was FRANCE! A Canadian had written a postcard to a friend or relative in France, and we had received it; we returned it to the care of the U. S. postal organization.

A chap in Worcester, Mass., bothered us endlessly with requests for sample copies of *The Debunker*. We are glad to send a sample copy to anyone who requests it, but this fellow sent as many as seven postcards in one day, worded identically! He must have thought that our mail was much huger than it is—huge though it is—that we should not have noticed such duplication. Day after day, for a week or more, came his requests—several each day. We have learned his racket by now, and the girls who handle such requests ignore him. Sorry, but what does he think we are?

Another chap, this time from San Francisco, had a goodly supply of blue and red pencils, and used them to decorate postcards with elaborate calligraphy. He criticized articles in the various periodicals, and signed himself always, "Frisco Slim, the Dishwasher." He entertained us for some time with these messages; some of them were addressed to various writers, in our care. But he seems to have abandoned his unique sport.

There was a preacher—New York City—who set out to convert E. H.-J. and his associated heathens. Every day for a month, this minister sent a closely typewritten letter, phrased to convert the most recalcitrant of the godless. Yet he failed. We read his letters with amusement at first, but they grew monotonous. Even with God on his side, he did not convince any of us of the truth of his arguments. God apparently was not aware of his probably well-meant efforts.

There are tricksters who delight in sending bogus orders for Little Blue Books. They take one of the numbered order blanks and make odd designs with circled numbers. A fake name and address is signed; but there is no money, so the books are not sent. And requests for remittance bring no response!

When *The Key to Culture* (now \$3.95 postpaid for 40 volumes complete) was young, many subscribers paid for it at a dollar a month. Several thousand people secured *The Key to Culture* under this plan. One Unknown in New York City (of

course, he had to be in the most densely populated area) owed us, after some months, \$1 balance. He received a notice or two, and one day there came a dollar bill, without name or address. We held it to await complaint from a customer—the envelope was one of our printed returns, and was postmarked New York. In another month, the subscriber received another bill—for we had no way of identifying him to credit his account with the remittance. Shortly afterward came another dollar, with a few words saying that he had already paid it but since it seemed to have been lost, he would pay it again! But no name or address. A month later, while we were still holding two dollars to his credit, he sent a third dollar, with this bald statement: "This is the third dollar I've sent to pay this account. You're a bunch of crooks out there—but here's this dollar anyhow. Please cancel the bill against me." It sounds incredible, but he still failed to sign his name and address! (Later we did get the remitter's name and address and straightened out the tangle.)

NEW SERIES

Plans for a new set of books, uniform in style and format with *The Key to Culture* and *The Key to Love and Sex*, have been completed. This new series is to be "a biographical history of the world," and it will be called *The Story of the Human Race*. Henry Thomas is to write it especially for Haldeman-Julius Publications; Henry Thomas, you may recall, is the author of *Cleopatra's Private Diary* (\$2 postpaid), a delightfully piquant imaginative conception of how Cleopatra might have written her diary if she had been a modern observer of ancient life.

The Story of the Human Race will be in five volumes of 30,000 words each, as follows (do not order this set; price will be announced later when the books are ready):

(1) The Childhood of the Human Race: The story of the early prophets, priests, and fighters, from Moses to Alexander.

(2) The Parade of the Sword and the Cross: A book about ancient heroes, philosophers, conquerors, and cutthroats.

(3) Christian Savagery in the Middle Ages: Charlemagne, Peter the Hermit, Dante, Gutenberg, Columbus, etc.

(4) The Awakening of Europe: Luther, Shakespeare, Spinoza, Frederick the Great, Voltaire, Washington, Napoleon, etc.

(5) The Beginning of Real Civilization: Goethe, Metternich, Mazzini, Marx, Darwin, Lincoln, Tolstoy, Anatole France, Lenin, etc.

PERSECUTION?

H. H. Lewis, Cape Girardeau, Mo., sends me a letter he received from Bruce Calvert, who publishes that free-minded magazine, *The Open Road*, Mountain View, N. J. It seems that a reader of *The Open Road* is appealing for help for a friend of hers, one Mrs. Rosa E. Christopher, Pomona, Howell Co., Mo., who has been arrested for burglary—on a trumped-up charge, her friend believes, because Mrs. Christopher is a freethinker.

If anyone lives near Pomona, and knows the facts, and it really appears to be a case of religious persecution, they should send the details to the American Civil Liberties Union, 100 Fifth Ave., New York City.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

In an article in the Louisville *Herald-Post* of August 29, advocating the assistance of local authorities in the enforcement of the Federal Prohibition laws, purporting to have been written by Mabel Walker Willebrandt, formerly of the Department of Justice of the United States, the following appears:

"The people of America—I agree with the anti-prohibitionists on this—do not want and will not permit an army of officers of the Federal Government to enforce law and order in local communities. Nothing is more contrary or repugnant to the basic principle of our form of government. Monarchies enforce their King's will by the use of an army under centralized autocratic control. But democracies do not work that way. Local self-government and law enforcement are the basis of our republic."

"Local self-government" includes the right to adopt only such laws as are passed by local legislative or law-making bodies, without which, clearly, the government is not "local." If a law is not acceptable to the citizens of any locality, it is immaterial to them by whom it is sought to be enforced and, unless it is a local law, the amendment or repeal of which lies immediately with them, their opposition to its enforcement will be actively shown regardless of whom the enforcing officers are.

The local officials, of course, are well aware of this and where opposition to the enforcement of a Federal law by Federal officers exists, it is probable that they will attempt to overcome the objections of their constituents, upon whom they are dependent for reelection, by rendering aid to the Federal officers?

If, however, the writer means that, with the aid of local officials, the Federal government can, by force, overcome that opposition, what becomes of that democratic principle of which she writes: "Local Self-Government"?—Garner Clark

LAST CALL FOR DOLLAR DEBUNKER SUBSCRIPTIONS

Joseph McCabe's Indictment of the Roman Catholic Church

[From Joseph McCabe's Introduction to *The True Story of the Roman Catholic Church*.]

This work which I here commence is the history of the most successful imposture of the whole period of civilization. It is the story of a Church which pretends to have enkindled in the heart of the race new sentiments of tenderness, brotherly love, and humanity, yet imposed itself upon a reluctant world by violence and has in the maintenance of its power slain more millions of men and women than all the other religions of the civilized era put together. It is the story of a Church that still tells the world that it brought with it a revelation of purity and holiness, yet its authorities have supinely surveyed, and have shared during long periods, a sexual and sensual license in their holiest institutions to which you will find not even a remote parallel in the history of any other civilized religion. It is the story of a Church that professes to have been founded by the Jesus of the Gospels, who scorned ritual religion, yet it became—and remains the most weirdly ceremonious religion the world has ever seen. It is the story of a Church that claims to have been instructed from the first to take the side of the poor and the weak, yet it has until our democratic age allied itself unflinchingly with those who despoiled the poor and laid their feudal tyranny upon the weak. It is the story of a Church that is supremely arrogant in its claim to have the exclusive possession of truth, yet it has attained power by an unparalleled series of forgeries, kept ninety percent of the people of the world illiterate for more than a thousand years that they might not discover its fraud, smote with its blood-stained croziers the mouths of millions who sought to utter the truth, impeded for ages the progress of science and culture, and is today of a cultural poverty out of all proportion to its mighty wealth and jealously confines its members to a literature which is saturated with untruth.

Every phrase of this indictment has been deeply and coldly considered and will be fully vindicated in the twelve parts of this work. For the men and women of the Catholic Church, who have from infancy been educated in its mendacious literature, I have entirely friendly and sympathetic feelings. It is one of the most welcome symptoms of our time that they at last perceive or suspect the real purpose of the priest-made law, that they shall not read criticisms of their Church. But they must not expect me to write with courtesy of that system. It will be a sufficient justification of my irony and disdain if I prove to the letter the justice of this indictment of it; and at every critical or contested point I shall appeal to the original as well as the best modern authorities and give thousands of explicit references to these. The non-Catholic reader will find here the complete answer to every untruth and an exposure of every fallacy in the great controversy of our time. And I repeat that this grave charge will be substantiated, not by a pretense of making discoveries or by strained personal interpretation of evidence, but by a properly balanced and complete presentation of historical facts which you can verify in the expert authorities on each of the periods I successively review.

Joseph McCabe has been in the Catholic Church. He was for twelve years a monk in a monastery (read his "My Twelve Years in a Monastery," Little Blue Book No. 439). Since leaving the church, he has spent years in investigation and research. McCabe KNOWS the inside facts about the Roman Catholic Church. He does not have to imagine data; it does not need to fabricate; there is no necessity to hurl philosophical innuendos or metaphysical arguments at Roman Catholicism. Joseph McCabe simply takes the historical record, down to and including the present day, and gives you the FACTS. You can draw your own conclusions. You cannot blink your eyes to TRUTH—supported by Catholic authorities. These articles are truly devastating in their exposure of this astounding religious machine. Send your subscription today—be sure to start with the first of these dozen sensational articles.

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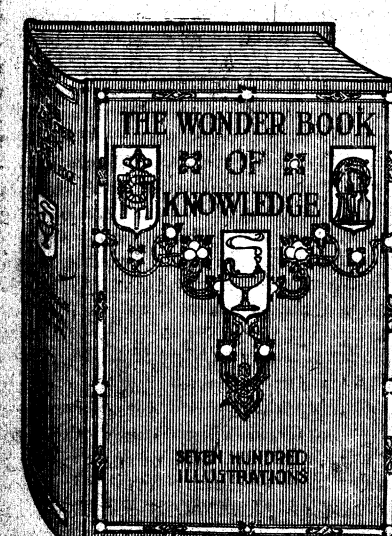
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