

to level what can never be levelled, that is human ability and character, the wild visions of Utopian communities, the legislating out of existence of distinctions written upon the protozoa, these grotesque forms of Socialism have seriously retarded the wide acceptance of principles which are true and which might be made infinitely helpful. But what great, true principle ever yet got itself woven into human life and history without struggle, without misrepresentation, without harmful and even hideous exaggeration? We Protestants think the Reformation was a splendid onward move, the restoration of individual liberty of belief and, therefore, direct personal responsibility to God; but can we for a moment forget or ignore the great excesses, the wild extravagances, the narrow intolerance, the brutal fanaticism which stain the pages of the history of that great movement. The modern world suns itself in the light of a political liberty never known before in the history of man, but have we forgotten the Reign of Terror, the horrible butcheries, the wild anarchy of the French Revolution. No; there can be no birth without travail. As it was with religious liberty, as it was with political liberty, so it is bound to be with social and industrial freedom, for which the masses of our people are yearning and struggling now. You cannot avoid extremes, you cannot prevent visionary theories being put forward: they are the necessary shadows cast by the brightening and broadening sunlight of any great movement for the advancement of the race. But what you can help, what every earnest and thoughtful man who feels the responsibility of the present hour ought to help, is the miserable cowardice that will allow itself to be pushed back on the do-nothingism of the *laissez faire* policy, simply because of the distorted forms that every great principle must assume ere it can at last get itself made concrete as a forceful factor in actual life. And this brings me to what I may call the practical moral of this article. I believe that a supreme duty lies upon all men who have any knowledge of social questions, all men who look beneath the surface or beyond the present hour, all men who are in any way bound to think for the nation and for their fellow men, a supreme duty, I say, lies upon what is that duty? It is, in the first place, to recognize the evils of the present industrial system and in the next place to search earnestly, bravely, patiently, for a remedy for those evils. Briefly to recapitulate, the evil seems to me to consist in the increasingly uneven distribution of wealth through the operations of industry carried on on that large scale which our great combinations render at once possible and necessary. This plan of conducting industry on a large scale "has multiplied the vicissitudes of trade and made the laborer much more likely to be thrown out of employment." By crushing out small enterprises it has consigned the laborer for all time to the abiding position of being a mere wage earner; it keeps the rate of his wages on the ragged edge of possible starvation; it does this while all the time the education of the masses, the progress of civilization, the increase of general comfort make a higher status an increasing necessity for him, and one which his whole nature and circumstances more and more imperatively demand. And in this view even political liberty becomes more of a mockery than a blessing; "to confer the

status of freedom upon workmen merely to have them overwhelmed in an unequal struggle with capital is to make their freedom a farce."

Such, it seems to me, are the evils with which our Anglo-Saxon civilization is faced. I plead, then, that thoughtful men, men of light and leading, should frankly and fully recognize these evils; and I further plead that they should clearly see that the lower, *mechanical* law of supply and demand must be regulated and supplemented by the higher *ethical* law which lies at the base of socialism; the law that recognizes the mutual obligation of man to man above and beyond all calculation of interest and advantage. The individual has rights, to deny this would be tyranny; society has rights, to deny this would be anarchy. The reassertion along moderate lines of man's social as against his individual rights and obligations, such seems to me the true solution of the vexing and pressing problems of the day. Call it socialism if you like—hard names never killed the truth yet—but if some careful and moderate application of these social principles is not soon found and brought to bear very widely upon our legislation, then I cannot but feel that the gravest danger, aye, it may be even dire disaster, awaits that Anglo-Saxon civilization, which is the common pride and glory of the two great peoples of England and America.

J. D. O'MEARA.

WALT WHITMAN, POET AND PROPHET.

"The hero can be poet, prophet, king, priest or what you will, according to the kind of a world he finds himself born into," says Carlyle.

The past year has taken from us a hero who was both prophet and poet, though many of us perhaps fail as yet to fully realize how true and marvellous a voice is silenced with the passing of Walt Whitman.

There are no gloomy threatenings in this prophetic voice, but promises innumerable, of grand, lofty and glorious destinies, to be fulfilled without failure or possibility of failure. But it is of the hero as a poet we would speak just now.

Poet he was, in the deepest and truest sense of the term; and though sometimes his singing may sound strangely harsh, or passages taken alone appear uncouth and tuneless to unaccustomed ears, yet, listening a little longer and a little more intently, the full power and beauty of the song is heard and understood.

He has earned the title over and over again. It is a poet's voice and none other that sings in "The Song of Myself:"

"I am he that walks with the tender growing night,

I call to the Earth and the sea half held by the night.

Press close bare-bosomed Night—press close magnetic, nourishing Night!

Night of the south winds—night of the large few stars!

Still, nodding Night—mad, naked summer Night!"

And again, where the bird cries out through the night for its lost mate:

"O, madly the sea pushes upon the land, With love, with love.

Low hangs the moon, it rose late,
It is lagging—O, I think it is heavy with love,
with love.

* * * * *
"Shake out carols!
Solitary here, the night's carols!"

Carols of lonesome love! death's carols!
Carols under that lagging, yellow, waning moon!

O under that moon where she droops almost down into the sea!

O reckless, despairing carols.

But soft! sink low!

Soft! let me just murmur,

And do you wait a moment, you husky-nois'd sea,

For somewhere I believe I hear my mate responding to me."

But to be understood, the bird song must be read entire.

It is easy to say, "Let us talk of Walt Whitman," but we might as well say, "Come, let us talk about the growth, gropings, hopes, fears, passions, sympathies, heights, depths and hidden yearnings of a human soul." The one is about as possible as the other. In speaking of his book he says:

"Camerado, this is no book,

Who touches this, touches a man."

Perhaps the charm that is first felt by the reader is our poet's unwavering trust and belief in all that is. His intense sympathy reaches out to the ends of the earth, glorifying the meanest and most sordid things of life. Truly with him "nothing is common or unclean." He believes in man and in the destiny of man. He will have no despair, failure or hopelessness. For him such things do not exist.

"Forever alive, forever forward,

Stately, solemn, sad, withdrawn, baffled, mad,
turbulent, feeble, dissatisfied,

* * * * *
They go! they! I know that they go, but I know not where they go,
But I know that they go towards the best—towards something great."

His belief and love for his fellows enfolds them from birth till death and then beyond.

Though he spoke so often and so lovingly of the great mystery which he has so lately solved, our hero had no morbid yearning for death. While life was his, he revered it as a sacred and glorious possession. He not only lived in the best and noblest sense of the word, but rejoiced and exulted in the power that was within him.

"Joy in the ecstasy of life!

Enough merely to be! enough to breathe!

Joy! joy! all over joy!"

And again,

"It seems to me that everything in the light and air ought to be happy,

Whoever is not in his coffin and dark grave let him know that he has enough."

He was indeed "in love with life and raptured with the world." Yet, with all his praising of this glorious life he seemed to rest upon the thought of something more beautiful, more satisfying, more to be desired. And this was death. It had for him no terrors, nothing but the further unfolding and revealing of a perfect plan. Nothing repulsive, dark or fearsome. He tells us:

"No array of terms can say how much at peace I am about God and about Death."

And,

"Do you not see, O, my brothers and sisters, It is not chaos or death—it is form, union, plan,
It is eternal life, it is happiness."

In speaking to "One about to Die" he ends with the words,

"There is nothing to be commiserated, I do not commiserate, I congratulate you."

It was Sir Edwin Arnold, I think, who