

to epitomize the public attitude towards Charles Dickens in every phase of his career. His novels, following each other in quick succession, show a uniformity of merit rare in so prolific a writer. A trait very evident to any reader of Dickens is his habit of labeling his characters so to speak by triads of manner or turns of speech. Turning to the pages of *Dombey and Son* we may cite in illustration the quaint ascriptions of Susan Nipper and the rambling prolixities of Cousin Tlesie. This novel, preceding the appearance of *Copperfield*, showed Dickens almost at the zenith of his powers and of all the works of his author none has more powerfully and permanently taken hold of the imagination. Paul Dombey, and Florence Walter Gay, three of those wonderful child portraits in which Dickens excels, and pompous, purple-proud Dombey and his fawning toll, Carver, are living, breathing realities. So also are those selfish old worldling Mrs. Skewton and Major Bagstock. Can anything be more consistent than that final glimpse of paley-stricken Mrs. Skewton, "muttering at death the plang of her notes upon him as though he had been the Major," and Bagstock gazing upon this painted ruin with the dispassionate observation of an immortal being.

It would be pleasant to follow Dickens into private life, to mingle with his friends, numbering as they did the most distinguished people of the day, to watch him organizing charades and theatricals for the young folk at Gad's Hill, to partake in spirit of its easy hospitality—but of a life so busy and full we can but suggest the merest outline.

We cannot, however, omit to mention his connection as editor with two periodicals, *Household Novels* and *All the Year Round*. The contributions were criticized without fear or favor. In his editorial capacity he was both mentor and sponsor to many literary aspirants, notably Adelaide Procter, in whom it was his delighted surprise to discover the daughter of his old friend, Barry Cornwall.

Mrs. Gaskell, likewise one of his early contributors, is left us in Cranford a delightful picture of the contemporary reception of Dickens. Who does not recall the controversy between Major Browne and stately Miss Jenkins, whose style has been carefully modelled on *Rasselas* and the Rambler concerning the comparative merits of Johnson and Boy? Staunch to the last, we find her in one of Cranford's concluding chapters still upholding the Johnsonian standard and pressing the Major's granddaughter into her service as reader, but when she lapses into the doze of age, we find the unconverted little lass taking furtive dips into the "Christianity of Johnson and Boy?"

Of the historical novel, Dickens left us two examples: "Barnaby Rudge," which is founded upon incidents in the Gordon Riots, and the masterly "Tale of Two Cities," immortalizing tragic incidents of the French Revolution. He lacked the patience for this form of composition so successfully exploited by Thackeray & Scott, but in another sense he has written history by preserving for future generations vivid pictures of the manners and customs of contemporary England.

We picture him moving from triumph to triumph, laden with those honors, and accompanied by those "troops of friends" wherof Shakespeare speaks, but across the most triumphant progress, beats, sometime, the arresting note of the muffled drum. It came to him across the pleasant fields of Gad's Hill on a golden June day forty years ago.

He dies, as he would have wished, in harness, working almost to the last upon his novel, "Edwin Drood." He had hoped to be buried near Gad's Hill but in deference to a widely expressed wish that the national writer should rest in the National Mausoleum, his family permitted his interment in Westminster Abbey.

It had been his wish that his works should be his monument. "If the books be true in spirit" said he, "they will live, if false, they will quickly perish." Time has vindicated his confidence.

He will always be affectionately remembered as one, through the web of whose genius ran the golden thread of a lofty purpose, in the clear, unobscured tones for the voiceless cause of suffering and oppression; broke many a lance against hypocrisy and oppression; championed valiantly the cause of children and the weak.

And both for him and for ourselves, that we may ever remember what he stood for in the moral uplifting of his race, we beseech you to read the genial, kindly Dickens, his own old prayer:—"Lord! keep his memory green!"

THE NUN OF FICTION AND THE NUN OF FACT

From the Catholic Press, Sydney, N. S. W.

The convent has ever furnished a theme for a tale. In days of old when Lucy broke her heart through a disappointment in love she retired, in fiction, to a convent. And if you glance at a popular novelist's works, found in any Protestant household, where books are read, to this moment, you will meet with that story told once more in modern phraseology. But if Lucy didn't break her heart, if she merely came into a fortune, she went to the convent all the same, against the wishes of her friends, hypnotized by Rome. And occasionally, if the fortune was very large, she was carried off by main force to the Catholic institution.

This was the fate of the nun of fiction with which our grandmothers were familiar, and to-day the identical old plots serve the authors who write for Protestants. "Luicy" may be re-christened, but she is still the nun recognized by women of another day through the medium of books written with a purpose. Of course there are difficulties in the way of the everyday novelist, the journalist, anxious to catch the atmosphere of the Church before penning a line. This is the supernatural life. At the very entrance to that life, the skeptical author is sure to say "aliboloth" instead of "aliboloth," and so he or she never crosses the threshold. And thus it came to pass that Catholic characters in fiction are frequently lay figures collected

from ancient lumber-rooms, and redressed in modern garment. The Protestant world knows very little about Catholic dogma, Catholic practices, but it is well acquainted with certain stock characters as depicted in modern novels, and many a speaker at a meeting is credited with making an attack on the Catholic Church when the truth is he is merely giving a synopsis of a Protestant author's latest novel.

THE MYSTERY OF CONVENT-LIFE

In spite of the clear searchlight of to-day the convent and convent life is still a great mystery to thousands. With women workers in every field of toil, with various phases of women's work, the outside world is tolerably familiar. From week to week it learns how women are endeavoring to better the conditions of life in high and low places, of fresh efforts to help the help-less. Of women's life beyond the fact that some must teach, do needlework, or nurse, the world knows practically nothing. This state of things may be good for the convent. It is certainly not good for the world, and it offers an open field to the false nun pictured by the novelist wherein to wander at will.

THE CASE OF ROSE DALY

When a Catholic girl, Rose Daly, for instance, after much prayer and meditation with her spiritual director, arrives at the conclusion that she has a vocation for the cloister, she acts much in the fashion of a girl equally sure that she is called to a hospital career. Her first steps will be to visit the Superior of the convent of the order which she is desirous of entering. As in the case of the hospital nurse about to interview the matron, the heart of Rose Daly will probably beat just a little faster when the Superior comes into the reception room. The length of the interview will depend on circumstances. Strict inquiries will be made concerning important matters. There is the question of health, character, education, spiritual qualifications. Talents, money, are advantages. But they can not take the place of the essentials often the possession of the poor. . . . Should the credentials prove satisfactory the applicant will probably be enrolled as a postulant with the view of becoming a choir or lay Sister in the future. In a teaching community the choir-Sister finds her duties in the schoolroom, the lay-Sister in the kitchen. But, as Mary and Martha, both will find equal opportunities in the spiritual life. For six or twelve months (according to the rule of the order) Rose Daly will wear a simple gown.

ROSE'S TRAINING

The actual work of training will embrace many lowly duties. And Rose will not always be aware that some defect of character, some ordinary folk, trifling fault is being carefully noticed by the Superior and the mistress of novices; for although Rose may be devout, she may not be giving evidence of that spirit which will enable her to live up to the rule of the order. In different ways her real or imaginary vocation will be tested. Some little thing, such as a thing as any light-hearted, innocent girl may hold dear, may be keeping Rose bound to the world, as with an iron chain. In the discipline necessary in the attainment of the desired detachment, and something held dear must be removed. It may be only the precious gift of a dear friend, a cherished home custom, but it is probably the obstacle standing in the road of spiritual perfection. Is Rose equal to the test? Can she look with a smiling face on an empty place, forget the void in her heart? That is the question, all that is involved, which she alone may answer. Besides fulfilling her spiritual and daily duties to the satisfaction of those in authority, Rose must show that she is happy in the chosen life. A gloomy face, tokens of discontent, are very sure signs of a mistaken vocation. At the end of six or twelve months, when the postulant leaves if she realizes that the honor of serving God in the convent is not for her.

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The "fifty-seven varieties" need not bother one in a search for real socialism, for the "fifty-seven varieties" are not really varieties, but fifty-seven confusions arising from the fifty-seven futile efforts of socialist apologists to evade the difficulties which the simple and driven worker socialism is properly analyzed. Though the fifty-seven confusions are perfectly legitimate targets for criticism and are palpable evidences of a school of mental obliquity which refuses to face the ultimate issue, we may waive them for the sake of charity and simplicity. We will concern ourselves only with fundamentals and their consequences.

THE FUNDAMENTALS

Real socialism, the kind that labels itself scientific, consists of two fundamental hypotheses of Marxian elaboration; these are economic determinism and surplus value. These are the driving forces to the goal of social democracy, whatever that may be, for socialists are poor prognosticators save in terms so nebulous that a London fog would be a transcendent illumination in comparison.

Economic determinism, or the materialistic conception of history, is the first original of Marxian socialism. It is nothing more than an eviscerated Hegelian formula strained through Feuerbach's materialistic speculations. It is Hegel's dialectic of history emptied of the Hegelian idea. The idea (I am not here concerned with the truth or falsity of the Hegelian speculation) unfolds itself in human history and proceeds by its own inner necessity to a self-recognized goal through the various stages of development, which are characterized by the German philosopher as the thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Feuerbach threw the idea out of the window, but retained the dialectic; in other words, he got rid of Hegel's ideology and reduced the dialectic to a purely materialistic basis. Marx wrapped himself in Feuerbach's mantle. As Engels, Marx's friend and collaborator, puts it: "The dialectic of the idea became itself merely the conscious reflex of the dialectical evolution of the real world, and therefore the dialectic of Hegel was turned upside down, or rather, it was placed upon its feet instead of its head, where it was standing before." (Engels, "Feuerbach, The Roots of Socialism," translated by Lewis, pp. 90.) We will let Engels tell us in brief what is economic determinism, the fundamental proposition of the Communist Manifesto.

"That proposition is that in every historical epoch the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange and the social organization necessarily following from it form the basis upon which

trammelled is free to give out the fragrance of love to God and good will to man.

WHY SISTER GENEVIEVE DOES NOT "ESCAPE"

One day towards the end of the long course of training, Sister Genevieve reaches an eminence from which it is possible to obtain a clear view of the road by which she has been led. The time is near the taking of the final vows. In some orders, annual vows only are taken for quite a number of years before perpetual vows are accepted. Sister Genevieve in the white veil is still free to return to the world. But a strange thing has happened, just one of the things over which the ordinary Protestant is apt to stumble. The doors are open, yet Sister Genevieve does not take a step towards the door. In the process of training the soul of the novice has become detached from the earth. Neither a daisy chain nor a chain of roses binds her to the world. Father, mother, sister, brother, are still loved dearly, but that love is not strong enough to stand between her soul and that intimate communion with heaven, which is so often found in quiet places, set apart from the world. The taking of the final vows, an act which excites a spirit of distrust in the Protestant community, is for her only a passing out into a larger room. Since she entered the order as a postulant she has been given every opportunity to "know herself." In numerous searching ways her vocation, or assumed vocation, has been tried while she wore the frock of the postulant, the veil of the novice. If at the end of the prescribed probationship the nun does not stand on firm ground in arriving at a decision, a practical person might be pardoned for speaking of her as a fool.

If a Government official ever does inspect convents he may come across Rose Daly, or rather Sister Genevieve. When he offers to set her free "she will very sweetly answer 'No,' with a smile. The Government official, if a Protestant, will probably be mystified. He will not understand "such lunacy." But Sister and the other nuns, and even Reverend Mother will not understand the kindly offer either as worth the price. Even on the road to heaven it is possible to misunderstand and be misunderstood.

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It is built up and from which alone can be explained the political and intellectual history of that epoch; that consequently the whole history of mankind (since the dissolution of primitive tribal society holding land in common ownership) has been the history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes." (Preface to Communist Manifesto, 1888)

NOT FAR ENOUGH

Mr. McMahon, in his article in the *Tribune*, has done well to reduce to a slighter emphasis that the theory of economic determinism is the fundamental law of socialism. I acquiesce with no less emphasis. I grant that this is the foundation of socialism; but I take exception to the foundation—it is not true. . . .

I take it that any socialist statement or argument is for the purpose of elucidating its doctrine with the ultimate intention of persuading or converting some one to its benefits. A possible convert naturally only wants to know the fundamental principle of a system, but to what that principle leads. In a principle are potentially its consequences, and it is the consequences that count in practical life. I have no quarrel with Mr. McMahon over his statement, as far as it goes, of the fundamental law of socialism. It is incomplete. After stating that the fundamental and dominant force is the prevailing economic system, he avers that "on this economic basis has been built by a superstructure of law, religion, ethics, art, politics, all the showy paraphernalia of life." This is not an imagined as derived from abstract ideal sources. Not from the clouds, but from a necessary economic environment have these legal, ethical and other ideas chiefly come."

Naturally a foundation is for the purpose of upholding a superstructure, and it is equally natural to believe that the superstructure depends upon the foundation. It is also of moment to note—and this is a cardinal tenet of the socialist theory; in fact, its essence—that the character of the superstructure depends upon the nature of the foundation below. But what is of most moment to us, whose house rests upon the present economic basis, is what will happen to our house when that economic basis (and this is the goal of socialist exert) is swept away. Mr. McMahon does not paragon his idealism with the actualities of the world, but he shocks the bourgeois mind (the other mind than the socialist) steeped as it is in traditional ideas. But the house that Jack built is rather to our liking, and we even regard it as an institution somewhat worth the while. It becomes a bit serious when we come to understand that the purpose

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of socialism is to abstract our foundation.

DISPOSING OF FAMILY AND RELIGION

There are two institutions, the family and religion—"shabby paraphernalia," in the socialist vernacular—in whose fate we do ven to be interested. Mr. McMahon leaves us to surmise only what he chooses of us. But a more serious does not always satisfy the bourgeois mind, especially when it comes from Missouri. Let us plod our way for a few moments in Missouri fashion and we may arrive at the illumination which Mr. McMahon so inconsiderably cuts off. In the first place, the family (or the none I confine myself to the family) is a bourgeois institution built upon the economic foundation of capitalism; its economic basis is to be knocked from under; ergo, down comes Humpty Dumpty, and all the king's horses and all the king's men cannot set Humpty Dumpty up again. The logic is irrefutable; if the present social organization depends absolutely on its present economic basis—and socialism iterates it ad nauseam—and if the family is a part of the present social organization—and socialism reiterates it—and if you destroy the present economic basis of the social organization—and socialism insists upon the process—then you, of course, destroy the present social organization and all its works; ergo, you destroy the family. The same series of Missouri prologues will apply to the question of socialism's ultimate effect upon religion.

QUARREL IN THE RANKS

Mr. McMahon, in response to his own question whether socialists are bound to observe the laws and ethics of to-day? answers: "Yes. These laws and ethics are valid for the present, if not for the future." Mr. McMahon is not here in agreement with all his fellow socialists. William D. Haywood, who has recently been elected to the national executive committee of the socialist party, emphatically answers "No." In a brochure written within the last year, I believe, and shortly prior to Mr. Haywood's election to the national executive committee, he declared that the workman who thoroughly understood and accepted the fundamental tenets of socialism was not bound to respect the laws of property, and yet Mr. Haywood was elected to the national executive committee.

It is a pretty quarrel and a fundamental one. Without wishing to take sides—for it might be straining the etiquette of the situation—I will merely venture to remark that while Mr. Haywood enjoys the local advantage Mr. McMahon clearly appreciates the exigencies of the socialist propaganda. While we admire the courage and honesty of Haywood's logic, we fully understand the expediency of McMahon's fessure. Mr. McMahon evidently realizes the embarrassments of a socialist workman who would refuse to abide by "the laws and ethics of to-day," when capitalism is in the saddle.

UNFAIR INDICTMENT

The social indictment of the present social organization is concentrated blackness. There are of course many existing evils, some remediable, some mitigable, but many of them with their roots in human nature itself and only to be expunged from under this vault of heaven when nature is in her final death agony. Socialism however, refuses to admit that there is anything wrong at all in human nature; human nature is only wrong, but socialism has eyes for the evils alone. It searches the highways and the byways for the lame and the halt and the blind, and gathering the motley crowd cries aloud: "Behold what capitalism has done to poor humanity!"

It frequents the hospital, the morgue, the almshouse, the asylum, and reiterates its denunciatory wail with increasing and menacing vehemence. It shouts aloud from the housetops in turbid rhetoric that socialism is the only panacea for the ills that afflict us, and that as long as the present social organization endures humanity can only go from bad to worse.

The picture is immensely overdrawn, is limned with pitch, radically falsifies the perspective, and is a reckless calumny to boot. Abuses there have been, abuses there are, under the pres-

ent social organization, but many have been rectified, others are being rectified, and more will be rectified. Child labor is one of the abuses which socialism is ever harping on, but socialism is constantly forgetful to state that the abuses of child labor have within the last ten years been immensely modified, minimized and rectified. Prostitution is another favorite socialist point of indictment against capitalism (I use the term capitalism here in no invidious sense as the socialists do, but simply to indicate the present social order). Socialism is fond of predilating its dis-

appearance under social democracy. This is both innocuous abroad and innocuous at home. Sex irregularity is as old as human nature and as perennial. There is only one way of ridding the world of it, and that is to put millions about the necks of all the females and throw them into the Pacific, and millions about the necks of the males and throw them into the Atlantic. If it should ever come to a choice between this course and socialism, the happier way for the race would be the millions and the deep sea.—Catholic Columbian.

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