

Regeneration

This article is a chapter of a book entitled *The Breach in Civilization* which will be published early in the fall by The Macmillan Co. It is preceded by a discussion of the essential faults which have recently developed in the structure and behavior of modern society and it is followed by an attempt to deduce from a better knowledge of human nature a method of individual and social fulfillment.

I

IF there is any truth to the foregoing diagnosis of the sickness of modern civilization, it points towards one promising remedy. Ever since the passing of Catholicism men have searched for a new body of authoritative knowledge which would bind humanity together and save it from falling a victim to its prepossessions, aberrations and distempers. They tried but failed to find it in individual or sectarian interpretations of the sacred writings or in individual or sectarian disquisitions on theology and the church. Those of them who shifted their ground and sought for illumination in the methodical exploration of natural processes and of the relation of man to nature followed a sound impulse in getting away from the sterility of the Protestant sectarian disputes; but in spite of their immense success in reading order into nature, their own contributions to salutary truth are unsatisfactory. Science is not bankrupt, as its Catholic critics have alleged, but it certainly leaves human beings still gasping for a light that doesn't fail. Its achievements have only intensified that moral chaos, of which the war with its barren victory, its peace without appeasement and the ominous Bolshevik menace are different but closely connected expressions. Yet the human mind cannot abandon the pursuit of a truth, the acknowledgment of which will make for human liberation and fulfillment. The search has failed, not because the searchers have known too much or because they possessed too much confidence in knowledge, but because they have known too little and they could not distinguish between knowledge and ignorance. They did not know enough about the object of all their solicitude, which is human nature.

The lack of a method appropriate to its material has always hampered modern scientific inquiry into human nature. It took a century or more of largely futile research to uncover the cause of the futility and to work out the needed instruments of investigation. Not only are they still very imperfect, but there is an intimate association between their imperfection and the want of authority which clings to the existing knowledge of human nature.

They approached the study of human nature

along two different routes. The first of these routes was born of the perplexities and necessities of Protestant subjective individualism. Its travellers were for the most part men whose study of the individual soul was an incidental result of their fundamental interest in rearranging the furniture of the universe from the point of view of Protestant theology. They devoted most of their attention to the metaphysics of personality and the psychology of knowledge and of ethics. They achieved certain permanently useful distinctions in their several fields, but the great value of their work consisted in its convincing demonstration of the sterility of their particular approach to the study of human nature. Trotter has well characterized the cause of its sterility as "the absence of an objective standard by which the value of mental observation could be tested." Their only dependable method was that of introspection; and introspection never allowed them to escape from the limits of a personal report upon what was happening within the walls of to other people an inaccessible house. They tried to generalize these reports; but no matter how much they recognized the need of generalization, their method confined them chiefly to journeys in a circle around the circumference of individual minds.

The students who adopted the second route in the exploration of human nature started under the influence of violent reaction against the sterility of Protestant subjectivism and all its ways. They were interested in man as a part of an out-door world. In studying him, they not only considered him public property, but they believed they could capture the secrets of the human mind by the use of the same presuppositions and methods which they had used so successfully in the study of nature. The presupposition which they had used in the study of nature was that all its processes are completely describable and predictable. The test of knowledge consisted in the ability to utter predictions which the event would verify. Verified predictions indicated the existence of that completely describable and predetermined universe which satisfied the needs of science. They started out, consequently, to discover laws of human nature which account for its past behavior and foreshadow its future behavior. Sociologists, such as Auguste Comte, the early economists, Karl Marx, Herbert Spencer and Benjamin Kidd, all presumed to discover principles which generalized social phenomena and which, in so far as they were true, predicted future necessities of human conduct.

The method and the mistake of the early sociologists were the opposite of those of the early psychologists. The psychologists attributed the value of science to their reports about private journeys through the length and breadth of their consciousness. The sociologists not only disregarded introspection but for purposes of science denied privacy and autonomy to human nature. The individual was swallowed up in a naturalized social process, which deprived him of moral control over his own conduct. The laws of this social process triumphed over the secrecies and the peculiarities of all human minds. It substituted a remorseless and indecent publicity for the sterile but well-behaved reticence of the early psychology.

If the early sociologists could have agreed in their statements of the laws of social change or if they could have agreed in their predictions of future social events, they might have been hard to refute. But they never reached any such unanimity. Not only did almost all of them give different descriptions of the processes of human conduct, but even those who, like the early economists and Karl Marx, agreed in attributing the same moving forces to human nature, differed radically in their predictions as to the outcome of the movement. Scientists who could not convince one another were not likely to convince the public. Little by little the early sociology suffered from as much discredit as the early psychology; but this condemnation fortunately did not result in the abandonment of the investigation. It resulted in a vigorous criticism of the pseudo-science and in the gradual adoption of a more promising approach to the study of human nature. Psychology moved towards naturalism without renouncing its interest in the individual soul. Sociologists learned the futility of passing imperious legislation about the necessities of human conduct. They came to conceive society as a psychological and in part a logical rather than merely a natural process. They attached great importance to the successful prediction of human behavior, but rather in the hope of subsequently modifying its course than in discovering social laws which determined human conduct.

The newer psychological sociology conceives human nature as the composite embodiment of countless generations of animal life, under increasingly socialized conditions. As in the case of his himal ancestors, man's sensory, motor and emotional equipment functions in subordination to the primary instincts of self-preservation, nutrition and reproduction. But in addition, man is a gregarious animal whose individual safety is dependent on that of his social group. He is extremely sensitive to

social suggestions and obligations. His social sensitiveness, as in the case of the other gregarious animals, is wrought into the mechanism of his impulses, but in the case of man it obtains a unique expression. Man is distinguished from the other gregarious animals by his larger brain and by the immensely wider margin within which he can vary without becoming injurious because of his variations to the safety of his society. As a consequence of his larger brain, his individual peculiarities, the tools which his ingenuity has placed at his disposal and the improved means of communication with his fellows which he has invented and is developing, he has come into possession of a socializing apparatus which modifies profoundly the operation of his primary instincts and their obsequious emotions. A competent understanding of human nature depends chiefly upon a sound description of the relation between these primary instincts, whose operations are frequently unconscious and this apparatus of social adjustment, whose operation is usually conscious yet whose appearances in consciousness are frequently disconcerting and deceptive.

According to the foregoing account, the fundamental ingredients of human nature derive from two main sources. There are in the first place certain instinctive impulses which are in part intensely self-centered and which in part are gregarious, but which in both cases are inherited from the ages in which mankind was occupied chiefly in a struggle to live and carry on life. There are in the second place certain rules and conventions which were formed after mankind became conscious of social relations and obligations and which are imposed on him from his cradle by the varied and powerful machinery of social suggestion. Between these two ingredients there is a conflict, which is the central fact in human nature and which recurs in the life of every individual. "From an early period the child finds the gratification of its instinctive impulses prevented by the pressure of that social environment. Conflict is thus set up between the two forces of instinctive pressure from within and social pressure from without. Instinctive impulses which thus come into conflict with the repressive force are not destroyed but are deflected from their natural outlet, are repressed within the mind, and are ultimately prevented from rising into the conscious field at all except in disguised or symbolic forms." A counter impulse which is "strong enough to contend with an impulse having in it the energy of the sex impulse must itself derive its force from some potent mechanism." The human mind must possess a "specific sensitiveness to external opinion and the capacity to confer on its pre-

cepts the sanction of instinctive force." This specific sensitiveness is the result of its past experience as a gregarious animal and forms the instinctive basis of the operation of the whole apparatus of social control.

The essential conflict which psychologists have discovered in human nature is not, however, a conflict between two divergent groups of instincts, one of which is selfish and the other social. It is a conflict rather between the whole body of inherited human instincts which are partly egotistic and partly gregarious and the conscious apparatus of control whereby these instincts are adjusted to one another and to the necessary conditions of their contemporary social expression. Yet essential as the affirmation of this conflict is to the understanding of human nature, it would be a fatal perversion of the truth to describe it as irreconcilable. The conflict is a permanent but not an irretrievable fact. There is no way of avoiding the systematic repression of the instinctive impulses. The abandonment of the social censorship would result in the dissipation both of the individual and society. But the censorship must recognize its limitations and opportunities. It is quite incapable of eradicating the instincts which it is obliged to repress. It can only divert them into other channels of expression. The fulfillment both of the individual and of society depends upon the nature and the abundance of these alternative outlets. If the repression is too drastic and prolonged, the compensating expression tends to be violent and distracting. Even if the discipline is no more drastic and prolonged than is required by the conditions of its success, society needs in the interest of its own well-being to use every precaution in providing sufficient alternative outlets. In so far as it fails to do so, the smothered impulses will break out and demand compensation in an abnormal and rebellious instead of a well-behaved and adjustable expression. Thus while the conflict is permanent and intrudes itself under varying forms into the lives of all individuals and all societies, it forms an inexorable condition of individual and social fulfillment rather than an insuperable obstacle to it. It becomes an insuperable obstacle only when the censorship is malevolent and stupid instead of being considerate, humane and flexible.

The significance of the foregoing general conception of human nature from the point of view of the present inquiry is manifest and critical. For one thing it justifies the phrase "human nature" as descriptive of something more real than either the individual or society. The individual is a social product. The conversations in which he participates

through the agency of his own consciousness and within the privacy of his own soul are only the subjective echoes of a process of social adjustment. It is a social logic which determines their meaning. But the process of social adjustment itself is one which, if it is not to go astray, must be reflected and affirmed by the individual mind. This human nature which is both individual and social is incomplete and in the making. It is essentially composite and essentially mobile. It is always moving in some direction or other. Its movement is always conditioned by the conflict between its primary impulses and its consciousness of the limitations and the opportunities under which at a given time they must obtain expression. If those limitations are drastic and the counter-opportunities obscure and insufficient, it is thrown back on itself and feeds for a while, cannibal-like, on its own substance. But it can never travel far in this in-growing direction. Eventually, by some act of violence, it breaks out, forces a readjustment of conditions which offers new opportunities of movement, and for a while resumes its march. Its ability to move forward always depends on the self-confidence, the alertness, the flexibility and the opportunity of this mechanism of conscious adjustment.

Those who deny the mobility of human nature commit the mortal sin against its integrity and its promised fulfillment. For its chance of integrity and fulfillment is tied up not only with its mobility but with its consciousness of mobility. In so far as the mental attitude of an existing society makes no allowance and no preparation for mobility, human nature is for the time being thwarted. It tends to become the victim of some ruling passion or vested interest which fears change and which seeks to erect barriers against the loss of its own domination. The ruling special interest secures the allegiance of other individual and social interests as the tributaries of its sovereignty. Interests which it cannot enslave it seeks to destroy. Its very survival comes increasingly to depend upon the creation within human nature of a special kingdom of its own—one which is really equivalent to a conspiracy on behalf of the aggrandizement of one particular interest at the expense of human nature as a whole. The conspiracy always fails. Human nature must move. It destroys conspirators against its integrity with inexorable certainty. When they are too well established to be destroyed in any other way, it first makes them mad and provokes them to destroy themselves. But in so far as it occupies itself merely with destroying conspiracies against its integrity, it is not moving towards its own fulfillment. It moves towards its own fulfillment only by virtue

of studying the obstacles in its path and of using its insight in order to lay out its course in the interest of its own harmonious growth.

II

Readers may turn away from such an account of human nature as an old and platitudinous story. So it certainly is. It is at least as old as Christianity and as platitudinous as the average sermon on the Resurrection of Christ. But familiar as it may be, the great majority of men and women who are engaged in doing the world's work consistently ignore it in their behavior. They have never ignored it more completely than during the past few years. Civilization consists substantially of a laborious and endless effort to persuade human beings to understand and to act on this conception of the mobility in its relation to the integrity of human nature. The effort is endless as well as laborious, because whenever any success has accrued, its special beneficiaries have always proposed to stop moving. Success is the signal for another conspiracy by some new vested interest against the flexibility of human life and some new attempt to surround the conspiracy with all the sanctions of social order and religious truth. States, churches, ruling classes, creeds, philosophies, religions, traditions and customs, all at some period, and many at all periods, of their careers are the favorite instruments of these conspiracies.

The perpetrators of the worst crimes against humanity have justified their behavior by general theories of human nature which expressly or tacitly deny the preceding platitudes. The ascetics of all ages, perhaps the most destructive of social pervers, risked human salvation upon a perfectly arbitrary prostitution of vital human impulses to an inhuman censorship. The fanatics of all ages could never have driven their wedges into human life if they had not convinced their fellows of the ultimate morality of purification by sacrifice or extermination. The persecutors of all ages have proclaimed in defiance of manifest psychological truth that the free movement of the intelligence was the enemy rather than the indispensable friend of the integrity of the human mind. The militarists and the policemen of all ages have promulgated with impunity the false report of some irremediable perversity in human nature which made regimentation the only road to redemption. The rich of all ages have justified their own aggrandizement by attributing without warrant to the poor a fatal disability which disqualifies the majority of human beings from learning and deserving the material conditions of human liberation. The successful races have presumed to impute their success to some virtue of

blood which authorized them to rule over their inferior competitors.

Modern history abounds in these attempts to justify the temporary success of a nation, of a group of nations or a class by crowning it as a necessity of human nature. The most flagrant and conspicuous of these essays was that of the Germans in imputing their temporary preponderance of power to a racial superiority which bestowed upon the triumphal procession of German industry, science, politics and militarism the awful sanction of an irresistible cosmic tide. Now that the Germans are prostrate and their downfall has exposed the absurdity of this particular anthropological theory, their conquerors yield to the temptation of proclaiming and acting on the opposite of the German pretension. They impute to their vanquished enemies an essential and permanent moral inferiority, which justifies the victors in considering the German nation as an outlaw and in subjecting it to permanent political disability. Germans are not like other human beings. Their untrustworthy disposition constrains their victorious enemies systematically to discriminate against them.

This justification for the chief provisions of the Treaty of Versailles is more closely associated than at first appears with the general theory of the immutability of human nature. It depicts the Allied statesmen, not as free men who were able to act in obedience to certain declared principles of right, but as bondsmen, constrained by something inexorable in their human make-up, to fall back on the law of primitive justice and compensation. "Let no one suppose," says the Round Table in its issue of June, 1919, "that its (the Treaty's) mixture of motives could have been avoided even by the most disinterested and far-sighted statesmen in the spring of 1919. The world has been torn and embittered by the ravages of war for four and a half years and statesmen have to deal with human nature *which is always what it is.*" (My italics.)

The foregoing passage expresses in its ultimate form the most respectable and stubborn obstacle to the understanding, the liberation and the fulfillment of human life. Human nature, they say, is always what it is; it is not that which it has the power of becoming. Because it is what it is, its leaders must yield to the particular passions, grievances, animosities and interests which happen to prevail at any one time. These passions and interests must run their course, no matter what counter-passions, animosities and grievances they provoke. After they have run their course and have created at the end, say, of ten years of peace a new set of grievances similar to those created by the four and a half

years of war, human nature will still be what it is. The new grievances will be kept alive by the powerful group of special interests which profit from them, which will resist any remedial efforts and which will defend their resistance by some new application of the theory of human immobility. The victorious and successful party always discovers a sufficient excuse for ignoring the claims of its vanquished competitors as human beings. It acts on the excuse, circumscribes their lives at the bidding of its own feelings and interests, provokes on their part a passionate sense of wrong and an enduring desire for retaliation, and so sets the stage for some new trial by combat and some new confusion of vindication with victory. Such is the tragedy of a civilization which wanders helpless in the wilderness of moral subjectivism and wilful ignorance of human nature. It is distracted by apparently irresistible impulses to contrive out of special parts or phases of human life neurotic conspiracies against human life as a whole.

The theory that human nature always is what it is usually assumes the form of some iron law of human frustration. Usually but not always. As we have seen in our discussion of liberalism, humanitarian enthusiasts gave expression to a natural law of human conduct which was also a natural law of human fulfillment. But it was a precarious and a fugitive enterprise. No matter whether we place the Garden of Eden at the beginning or end of the process, it never wears for long an aspect of reality. It ignores the permanent part which conflict plays in the drama of human life and the necessity of authoritative knowledge and conscious direction as the one means of overcoming the conflict. These natural laws of human conduct do not for long bear an interpretation which is both honest and optimistic. They fasten attention on some immediately important expression of the conflict, immobilize the victorious interests and consecrate the useful pretense as a pious reality. But the conflict continues. No particular interest is victorious for long. Those who grasp the logic of the process are finally driven to the alternative of downright pessimism. If they are honest they fall back on some theory of original sin, which characterizes human nature as totally depraved. Assuming that human nature always is what it is, total depravity is the only trustworthy description of its ultimate reality and some miracle of purgatory or grace the only means of escape from the deep damnation of its natural delinquency.

Surely in this instance, if in no other, ideas are capable of modifying facts. People who believe that human nature is always what it is deprive themselves of any sufficient reason for acting as if

it were capable of becoming different and better. Because they will not act as if it were something different and better, they tend by their behavior to condemn human nature to remain just what it is. They perpetuate a helpless attitude in human beings towards their own shortcomings which ends by enabling those shortcomings to maintain a reputable existence. On the other hand, those to whom human nature is fundamentally and victoriously what it is capable of becoming can never put up with the Round Table's excuse for particular misdeeds. Their refusal to abjure will not avail by itself to regenerate human nature in the same way that the connivance of liberals in the Treaty of Versailles tended to keep it stagnant, but it will at least vindicate the state of mind which under happier circumstances can direct and move human nature toward its better fulfillment. Whenever those who proclaim that human nature is at bottom what it is capable of becoming are in a position to act on their conviction, they, too, will by their behavior tend to create the kind of human nature which corresponds to their belief.

Consider in this connection the Treaty of Versailles. Let us suppose that the Allied statesmen had framed a document wherein the victors practiced and covenanted thereafter to practice the same admirable principles of national renunciation and international good behavior which they imposed on the vanquished Germans. Suppose they had tried and succeeded in excluding from the Treaty all provisions which vested in one class or in one people an exclusive interest in impairing or suppressing the lives of the other people. Then suppose they had submitted this document to public opinion in their several countries and dared its enemies to reject it. Its enemies would have been stiffnecked and powerful. They would have accepted the challenge. They might have defeated the proposed Treaty. But whether they defeated it or not, the Peace Congress by acting on a conviction of the better possibilities of human nature would have contributed enormously to the realization of those possibilities. They would either have ensured the adoption of a more humane system of public law which would mitigate the power of some of the most stubborn obstacles to human liberation, or they would have proclaimed a fighting creed which would subsequently become the test and the victorious weapon of aggressive liberalism. They would have helped liberals to escape from the impossible position of always choosing between being the opponents or the accomplices of the foreign policies of their governments. They would have developed an international program which, unlike that of the

Socialists, did not demand the destruction of the national governments, but which sought to moralize national behavior. There would have resulted a prodigious increase in the reality and self-confidence of liberalism. Liberals would have become the human agents of a clearly justifiable cause, which was born of the essential liberal aspiration for the enlightenment of power by humane knowledge. If they failed eventually to secure the acceptance of such a Treaty, they would fail, not as at present, because liberalism is untrue to its own aspirations and divided against itself, but because evil was temporarily stronger than good. But in any event the fight for a Treaty which unequivocally embodied humane ideals would have developed in those who fought on its behalf the very quality of moral educability which is essential to human liberation and to which an immobile human nature cannot attain.

Theories about human nature are the expression of practical attitudes towards human life and are inseparable from such attitudes. Those who believe it to be immobile and consequently condemned to total depravity are not determined in their belief by scientific motives, no matter how scientific an appearance their theory wears. The belief is the expression of a wilful craving for mastery rather than of a disinterested search for truth. The immobilizers of human nature are really seeking to dominate it, to prevent its escape from their grip, to confine it to the business of working for them and their fellows and to thwart some essential part of it without any scruples about compensation. They are rationalizing a vested interest by incorporating its prestige and continued victory in the constitution of mankind. They do not succeed by means of such propaganda in perpetuating for more than a brief period the favored interest. Their particular version of the general theory of human immobility and depravity may not win any more scientific approval than did the Prussian theory of German racial superiority. Its utterances may in the end contribute to the downfall of the arrogant interest as it did in the case of Germany. But its downfall and the discredit which may substantially attach to that particular application of the general theory of human immobility and depravity does nothing to discredit the prestige of the theory in general. The vitality of the theory depends on the vitality of the disposition in society to subordinate knowledge of human nature to power over it. As long as statesmen and political agitators and business men act on it and as long as the Christian ministry compromises with it, the people will continue to believe in it as a truth about human nature

which paralyzes the conscious search for human liberation. The German conviction of racial superiority could not create racial superiority, but it could play its part in keeping human nature in bondage to an inexorable law of compensation. Is there any science which can emancipate human nature from bondage to the body of this death? Is there any way in which those who believe in the living truth about human nature—the truth that it is mobile not in the sense of being fluid but in the sense of being open to religious education—can succeed in propagating their belief?

Not surely by the means which are sufficient in other regions of science. In spite of the encouraging increase in the available fund of trustworthy psychological and sociological knowledge and in spite of the excellent use which statesmen, agitators, clergymen and business men could make of this knowledge, few of them are acquainted with it or show any disposition to get acquainted. This knowledge will not, like knowledge of physical processes, secure acceptance by its own incontestable truth. Books have been written for the purpose of bringing the knowledge which has been accumulated by psychologists into touch with the actual problems of present civilized life, but they have not and will not accomplish their object. Investigators who possess useful knowledge about man and want the powerful to understand and act on the knowledge, are not distributing a kind of truth whose unfamiliarity and intrinsic difficulty are the chief obstacles to its acceptance. The people whom they need and hope to convince are not in this respect disinterested. They are opposed to the growth of moral psychology or to the vindication of its truth. Most men of affairs have the best of reasons for rejecting the results of disinterested inquiries into human nature. Consciously or unconsciously they are themselves acting on a theory of human nature which suits their special needs and which is not and cannot be disinterested. By acting on their own theory they adopt the one perfect method of confirming its truth. By acting on the disinterested psychological knowledge, which depicts human nature as essentially mobile, as dangerously contradictory but as possibly redeemable if its mobility is made tributary to its integrity—they are untrue to their own particular interests and so far invalidate the theory of human nature with which particular interests have always fortified their domination.

The requirements of disinterested scientific research into human nature are more exacting and varied than the requirements of a disinterested scientific research towards nature which is not human. In the investigation of physical processes,

an exclusively scientific motive and method are sufficient and indispensable. The only object is truth; all investigators accept a common test of truth; and its achievement is an expression of human domination over things and processes to whom domination is no offense. In this region knowledge is not any less knowledge because it may lend itself to the purposes of power. But a disinterested scientific attitude towards human nature works differently. It requires on the part of the investigator a consciously moral relationship towards the object of his investigation. In this region, as in the other, truth is still the only object; but science possesses no common and certain test of what truth is. Different investigators act, as they think, on valid reasons for dividing truth up and for preferring one particular truth to another. The truth which will set one man or class or nation free will fasten bonds on another man or nation or class. What the investigator takes to be knowledge is constantly modified by purposes of power; and these purposes of power often betray the investigator and refract his vision of the truth. Indeed, the purposes of power are certain to betray the investigator unless he adopts an heroic precaution against the danger. The heroic precaution consists in *consciously affirming as an indispensable introduction to the knowledge of human life the independent and intrinsic value of all human life*. He who seeks to know the truth about human nature must begin by testifying that the only truth about human nature which he will accept as true is one which renounces the special purposes over human beings and seeks to liberate all men and the whole of man.

In other words there is no authentic knowledge of human nature without reverence for human nature. In so far as we begin the study of human life by reverencing the object of the study we attain to a knowledge of human life which is governed by a common test, which equalizes, liberates and fraternizes all human beings and which human beings reject at their own cost and peril. We attain a salutary and objective knowledge of human nature only by refusing to entertain any alleged knowledge as true which does not consider human nature sacred.

We must not, however, confuse the reverence for human nature, which is the indispensable approach to a knowledge of it, with an amiable disposition to believe nothing about it which is not agreeable and consoling. No matter how sacred the investigator may consider human nature as a whole, he will adopt an attitude towards the truth of all particular scientific theories and facts of human history and behavior as dispassionate and as ruth-

less as the attitude of an astronomer towards a proposed law of planetary movement. As we have already noted, conflict is a condition of human life. Civilized human beings may overcome particular phases of the conflict, but other phases will succeed and conflict itself will survive as long as life survives. The successful handling of particular conflicts demands an understanding of their peculiar character which can only be acquired by ignoring what we want to believe and by accepting without flinching the verdict required by the evidence in the case. It is most unfortunate that those human beings who have shown themselves most disposed to consider human life as sacred have also shown a disposition to sentimentalize or ignore that which is ugly and perverse in its composition. A yielding to this disposition is precisely the weakness against which trustworthy sciences of psychology and sociology should protect religious spirits. But it is also true that those sciences cannot and should not confine themselves to studying the conditions of the conflict and the means of temporary victory for one or another party to it. Soft-minded religious humanitarians are not the only people who believe what they want to believe about human nature. The realistic men of affairs and the sceptical observers of human life have always erred and sinned most flagrantly in this respect. Hypnotized as they were by their own special interests they had no vision of individual and social life as a whole. The interpretation of individual and social life as a whole requires reverence for the object of the interpretation. Such reverence is no less a part of the disinterested knowledge of human nature than are the results of the most exact, exhaustive and dispassionate study of the origin and behavior of particular interests and emotions. In this sense both psychology and sociology are moral sciences.

The phrase moral science has never stood for any very competent or trustworthy body of knowledge. Physical scientists have regarded its speculations with something like contempt. The actual achievements of moral science have justified the contempt. They did not lead to an authentic rule and method of individual and social life. No intellectual ingenuity, effort and insight could introduce moral order into a world distracted by Protestant subjective individualism. But if religion consists in the fulfillment of human life and if we can reach an authoritative knowledge of human nature which will help religious spirits to attain their end, the phrase moral science will gain a certainty of meaning which it has lacked since the fall of Catholicism. Men will know how to be good. Moral shepherds will no longer advise their flock

not to be too ardent in their devotion to the faith. The dominant ideology will bring with it a sufficiently developed method of realization which can be put into immediate practice. We can inscribe on the altars of churches or the sign boards of lecture rooms and assembly halls as well as on the desks of business men the victorious phrase, "Do It Now."

Most important of all we should, by practicing a reverence for human nature, not only teach salutary truth about human life but we would learn much more rapidly what human nature is capable of becoming. If we do not know very much about the particular contours of human nature, it is partly because there is not at present enough to know. An inhuman and callous civilization which complacently permits life to feed on life has discouraged the novel development of human nature. In so far as development has occurred, it is disorderly, wasteful, distracted and subject to wholly unnecessary chances and casualties. But once let the conscience of mankind accept as a matter of religious conviction the mobility of human nature and once let it use scientific methods to find out how the movement can tend towards fulfillment rather than disintegration, and once let religious people act immediately and courageously on what they have learned, then human nature would unfold itself with unprecedented momentum. Then the successful fulfillment of human life and the true interpretation of human life would become the supplementary expressions of the desire for religious salvation which has always been the essential passion of civilized mankind.

HERBERT CROLY.

Concerning Heroes

MANY months ago, there was an account in the Manchester Guardian of a conversation which the writer of it had with some Canadian soldiers on the subject of English literature. The soldiers said that certain classical authors, "particularly Dickens and Thackeray," ought to be scrapped because they wrote only of heroes who "can't earn their own livelihood and spend nearly all their time hanging after some old woman to get her money." They added to this condemnation of English authors in general—and of most authors of whatever nationality—a particular condemnation of Thackeray on the ground that "there are only two heroes in his books" who have "some sort of a job." One of these heroes, probably Henry Esmond who had the mental outlook of a pre-war footman, was held in little esteem by them. They said that he was a "dud" or, as Mark Antony described Lepidus,

a slight unmeritable man,

Meet to be sent on errands

Here's a pretty test for heroes, said I to myself, when I read the views of the Canadian soldiers. What hero, I demanded, when weighed in that balance will not be found wanting? It seemed to me that the Canadian soldiers' knowledge of Dickens's heroes must have been singularly slender, for if ever a man earned his bread by the sweat of his brow and his brain at long labors for small remuneration that man was Nicholas Nickleby. And surely it is no distortion of language to say of David Copperfield that for a part of his life he was a wage slave? Most of Dickens's heroes, indeed, like Dickens himself in his youth, were employed for a while in sweated industries.

What hero would survive the demand made by the Canadian soldiers that he shall be engaged in "some sort of a job?" How little of honest toil there was in the life of Hamlet to commend him to these rigorous critics, in whose eyes he must seem no more than an idle, moony youth who shilly-shallied over his love affair to such an extent that Ophelia went out of her mind and drowned herself. He could not even kill his stepfather with any sort of skill, but must needs go and get killed himself in the doing of it! Don Quixote must appear a sorry, feckless fellow to our Canadians—a poor, witless gentleman who never did a day's work in his life. What a loafer was Gil Blas! How seldom did Tom Jones consider the problem of improving his position in the world! Lord Orville, the good young man in Fanny Burney's *Evelina*, had as little industry as the bad young man, Sir Clement Willoughby. Indeed, the only seriously industrious hero in literature of whom I can think at the moment is the Devil in *Paradise Lost*. Many of these heroes—most of them, in fact—were not only idlers, but were also immoral. When one searches the work of Smollett, Fielding, Richardson, or that of the Comic Dramatists, Congreve, Wycherley, Vanbrugh, Farquhar, Beaumont and Fletcher, or of the great master of us all, Shakespeare, or goes abroad to Le Sage or Cervantes or Balzac or any other great writer whose name comes immediately into the mind, do we not find that the hero, in the majority of instances, is a loafer and a drunkard and a glutton, a gambler and a rake and a very quarrelsome fellow? Mr. B., who may, I suppose, be regarded as the hero of Richardson's *Pamela*, had no other object in life seemingly than the seduction of Pamela. The heroes of Congreve's comedies were bad men, employing their time chiefly in some sort of lechery. Gil Blas—how incredibly wicked a young man was Gil Blas! Could any friend of the late Dr. Samuel Smiles hold up Gil