

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

Blas as a pattern to a young man earnestly seeking to obtain a respectable position in the world?

This curious criticism of English literature by the Canadian soldiers came back to my mind lately when I was travelling from Cincinnati to Toronto. I had to change trains at Detroit, and in order to pass the time of waiting between the arrival of the train from Cincinnati and the departure of the train for Toronto, I bought a popular American magazine and read it. I was impressed by the fact that the hero of each of the stories, oddly similar in form and theme, was a business man so closely engrossed in his work that he had no time for the consideration of anything but the problems of his employment. The villain, when there was a villain, was addicted to aesthetic pursuits. While the hero studied statistics and trade returns, the villain wasted his mental energies on art. Part of the design against the hero consisted of an effort to lure him from the consideration of Big Business to the consideration of culture. The more despicable of the villains lived in Greenwich Village, or were frequently to be seen in the purlieus of Washington Square holding converse of a subversive character with painters and poets and other varieties of "artistic" people. The heroine, if she were frail, attended at lectures by novelists, sometimes of foreign origin, in women's clubs, and was only rescued in the nick of time from her evil associates by the hero persuading her, just as she was about to give herself to the villainous aesthete, to take an interest in Big Business. The better type of heroine never felt any artistic impulse whatever: her whole mind was bent on Big Business! . . .

By the time my train left Detroit, I had discovered the cause of the Canadian soldiers' complaint against English literature: they were confusing moral indignation with literary appreciation, and were giving their support to a pernicious heresy, very prevalent in America, that the most interesting thing about a man is the job by which he keeps himself provided with food and lodging. If they had their way with our authors, they would very narrowly limit the scope of literature, and when we asked for works of art, they would offer us books of technical instruction. They have fallen into the error of the Puritan who imagines that man is desirable when he conforms to the common standard, the truth being that man is desirable only when he differs from the common standard. A blacksmith is interesting, not because he is a blacksmith, but because he is a man with passions and wayward fancies; and it is the loves and hates and incalculable things about that man which interest his fellows, rather than his occupation or

his identity with the generality of human beings. In a world of good men, the bad man is the only person of interest, not because he is bad but because he is different. Pegeen Mike fell in love with Christy Mahon because he had done something unusual in a place where no one ever did anything, and not because she admired a patricide. We recognize that conformity to the standard is necessary if the multitude of us are to get through this world with any kind of convenience, but in our hearts we admire the man who declines to conform, and wish that we had the courage or the selfishness to emulate his behavior.

Had the complaint against Dickens been that he followed too closely in the footsteps of Samuel Richardson, making his heroes too noble to be tolerable and his villains too wicked to be credible, there would have been reason in it. The problem which puzzled Hamlet, of how a man could "smile and smile and be a villain" offered no difficulties to Dickens. To his way of thinking, a man could not "smile and smile and be a villain": he could only scowl and scowl and be a villain. That is why Nicholas Nickleby is such a tiresome hero and Mr. Squeers is such a preposterous ruffian. It is hard to believe that Nickleby was always uttering exalted sentiments at great length: it is still harder to believe that Mr. Squeers never once kindly patted the head of a pupil at Dotheboys Hall.

We know, most of us, that Nature has so mixed up the elements in man that the villain of one moment is the hero of the next and the pioneer of today is the reactionary of tomorrow; but Dickens will have none of this pandering to Nature: his villains must be very villainous, and his heroes must be pedantically noble; and so, though an excess of villainy is more entertaining than an excess of virtue, there is a danger that Dickens's refusal to acknowledge Nature, even in his villains, will cause the downfall of his work. "She's a rum 'un, Natur'," said Mr. Squeers, and if Dickens had only paid attentive heed to his own schoolmaster, we would not now be lamenting the disrelish with which so many young people regard his books. Queerly enough, in Nicholas Nickleby, Dickens gives evidence against the Canadian soldiers in their argument that a man is of interest only when he is engaged in "some sort of a job." The inference to be drawn from the soldiers' argument is that the more valuable the work is, the more interesting is the man who performs it. But Nicholas Nickleby was far more entertaining when he was in the unproductive service of Mr. Vincent Crummles than he was in the highly useful employment of the Cheeryble Brothers.

The judgment of the world is against the Canadian soldiers, and it is against America. Work is not the chief end of man, nor is he of interest only or principally because of his occupation. There is a limited interest to be derived from reading of the way in which a man can take iron and beat it into shoes for horses and wheels for carts, but there is illimitable interest to be derived from an account of the way in which he wooed and loved and hated and died, and that interest is no less in extent when the man happens to be a tramp instead of the president of a railroad. The complaint made by the materialists who called themselves Puritans was that art was not definitely useful in the sense in which a steam-engine is useful, and something of that complaint must have been in the minds of the Canadian soldiers when they railed against heroes who had not got "some sort of a job." A variation of it is to be found in the argument employed by reactionaries against the education of working-class children in the amenities of life. Will a knowledge of music, they ask, enable a working-class child to earn more wages than it will

earn without a knowledge of music? If not, what is the use of teaching music to it? My relatives in Ulster, when I was a boy, frequently denounced novels on the ground that they were "all lies." The lying character of the novels consisted, not in their falsity to life (which would have been just criticism in most cases) but in the fact that they were avowedly fiction. The materialistic Puritans failed to realize that the purpose of all artistic endeavor is not to make life more convenient or comfortable, although incidentally it may have that effect, but to make life comprehensible. The reactionaries fail to understand that the purpose of education is not to enable a man to earn higher wages, but to get more out of life than he can get in a state of ignorance. My relatives failed to understand that bare truth is not of itself a desirable thing, but is made desirable by the power of imagination to make it a means of illumination. And the Canadian soldiers failed to understand that Man, the creature of impulse, is greater in every way than Man, the servant of necessity.

ST. JOHN ERVINE.

Will Labor Make the Next Move?

THERE are reasons for believing that we are about to see the erection of one of the outstanding landmarks in the history of industry. For the participation of the workers in the management and the administration of production and in the development of a technique for industry, if made both fervent and effective, will undoubtedly cause a larger increase in the output per individual than has resulted per se from either the introduction of machinery or the development of Scientific Management.

The danger of our present industrial situation lies in the well-nigh universal conviction of impending change. Such a ferment in itself may be wholesome, but it implies leadership if in moving our moorings we are to make a real progress. The public shows no disposition to "settle things" much as it has been importuned to do so. Defensive tactics such as are now for the most part engrossing the attention of the employing group are incompatible with constructive leadership. The needed move logically is labor's, if labor can be brought to see it and seeing it to embrace the opportunity.

Perhaps the most prevalent argument for a new organization for industry grows out of an altogether unavoidable conviction that greater freedom in thought and action must be introduced into in-

dustry as it has been into religious matters and to a somewhat lesser extent into our political life. We are becoming more interested in the functions of industry and not quite so much in its institutions. But if industry is to become first less autocratic and then increasingly democratic it will be through the development of the mechanisms of collective action—"collective bargaining" and that which shall come after. Collective action presupposes collective responsibility. Except in a perfunctory sort of way, for individual output labor at present entertains no such responsibility. Labor's attitude is at best only observant. Except as to wages, hours and working conditions, labor yields only "passive concurrence." "The wage incentive and other stimuli such as profit sharing do not make the workers feel fundamentally interested in their tasks. If the full productive capacity which is at this time both consciously and unconsciously withheld from society is ever to be released labor must participate in the conduct of industry."

If we could assume that labor is now receiving at least a "fair share" of any increase in production, we could also assume labor's willingness to participate in building up a more efficient industry, simply because labor has more to gain than any other group in the community through a betterment in status.