

our speculative eyes upon things that may really happen.

Safeguards for Industrial Democracy

IN his two articles printed in the "Atlantic Monthly," the first in the issue for last January, the second in the current issue, Professor William Z. Ripley, of Harvard, has done good service to others besides investors. Sometimes Americans are represented as being all investors; but there are exceptions. And even among investors there are many who do not always look at public questions from the investors' point of view. There are some investors, moreover, who think of their ownership of stock, not merely as an opportunity to make money, but also as an obligation that accompanies ownership—an obligation to society in general and to employees and customers in particular.

As Professor Ripley points out, the wider the distribution of the ownership of a corporation, the less chance has any one owner of having his voice heard by the management. More than that, in the organization of corporations ownership of the property and management of the business have become to a large extent divorced. Not only are the holders of bonds without a voice in the management, but also owners of great classes of stocks. The ownership of corporations may have passed to Main Street, but the control of corporations seems still to be, perhaps more securely than ever, in Wall Street.

We shall not here endeavor to outline Professor Ripley's articles, or even to enumerate the evils he describes or the remedies he proposes. It is sufficient for our purpose here to say that the principal remedy which Professor Ripley urges is the exercise by the Federal Trade Commission of the powers that it already possesses to secure and disseminate knowledge now generally withheld from stockholders concerning the organization, business, and management of large corporations (except banks and common carriers) engaged in inter-State commerce. What concerns us here is the need of keeping clearly in mind certain distinctions which we think have tended to become obscure.

In the first place, the dangers that

come from divorce of ownership and management or control are not to be regarded as dangers inherent in industrial democracy. We have found some readers of *The Outlook* inclined to dread the distribution of stock-ownership among employees and consumers, on the ground that such distribution creates an interest hostile to corporation control by the Government and indifferent to the evils of irresponsible management so long as dividends are forthcoming. It seems to us, on the contrary, that the more widespread the ownership of corporations, the more general will be the interest in all that pertains to their proper management and control. Indeed, it is significant that among the companies which have the best and most informative reports are to be found some of those with the most widely distributed stock-ownership.

In the second place, it should be borne in mind that the evils attendant upon the wide distribution of stock-ownership are primarily not evils of industrial democracy, but evils of political legislation or administration. Tool users are increasingly becoming tool owners. In the old days the man who handled a plane or wheelbarrow owned his plane or wheelbarrow. Then, when the plane became a power lathe and the wheelbarrow a derrick, he worked for men who owned the lathe or derrick. Now the man who works with the lathe is as likely as not to be part owner in derricks that other men work with, and the man who works

with a derrick is as likely as not to be part owner in lathes that other men work with; and in some instances derrick-tender and lathe-worker may be part owners in their own derricks and lathes. Now this is industrial democracy. It does not necessarily follow that either derrick-tender or lathe-worker will have much or anything to say about the choice of lathe or derrick. Perhaps he ought to have. If so, the remedy lies in the law which creates the corporation through whose instrumentality he exercises ownership.

In the third place, the remedy for irresponsible management will be gained neither by the destruction of big corporations nor by the mere enfranchisement of the stockholder. Indeed, it is doubtful whether the evils of irresponsible management are as great in some of the biggest corporations as they are in many of the smaller ones; and it is quite certain that even if all stockholders were enfranchised they could not, as Professor Ripley points out, have very much to say about corporate management. Although it is the widespread ownership of corporations that has made democracy in industry possible, it is not through the owners of corporations as such that the management of corporations will be made responsible. It will be public opinion acting partly through Government authority but mainly by economic forces that will ultimately see that industry by the people will be industry for the people.

The Priesthood and Materialism

By LAWRENCE F. ABBOTT

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MR. H. G. WELLS has just published a new novel which has created a temporary furor in London because it deals with living personalities. The cable despatches say that it is written with his usual brilliance. He has no usual brilliance—that is to say, if the adjective usual is employed as a synonym of the adjectives uniform or consistent. Sometimes his brilliance is genuine, sometimes it is as shiny as tinsel. An example of Wells's tinsel wit is found in the following paragraph from his new novel:

Were some one to discover some interesting, well-paid employment for ex-priests, I do not know what would

happen to the Roman Catholic Church. I believe it would collapse like a pricked sawdust doll. Its personnel would come pouring out.

Now I hold no brief for the Roman Catholic Church. It has its hard and repellent side. Its superstitious theology is offensive to reason. Its political despotism is offensive to a sense of justice. A terrible picture of its iniquities may be drawn with historical accuracy. What happens when it attempts to assert its vast physical power in conflict with the civil authority may be learned by a study of the Italian *Risorgimento*, the French *Concordat*, and the present unhappy struggle in Mexico. But to say,

as Wells does, that all the priests of the Roman Church are selfish and hypocritical materialists is as extravagant and unintelligent as the most superstitious article which he can find in the Catholic creed. The trouble with Mr. Wells is that he is one of the most superstitious men of the age. He has a childlike faith in crass materialism. He pooh-poohs any belief in the power of spiritual beauty. If he is as logical as he thinks he is, he must secretly cherish the opinion that all artists would like to be linen-draper, that Keats would rather have been a livery-stable keeper than the author of "The Grecian Urn" if Society had only let him follow his bent. But, as Mr. Wells so thoroughly knows, Society, as at present organized, is, next to the Catholic Church, the most cruel and selfish combination in human history!

The fact is that the Roman Catholic Church has a beautiful side which appears to be wholly beyond Mr. Wells's comprehension. I happened upon, the other day, a charming little aquarelle in the New York "Sun" which in a few simple strokes reveals this spiritual beauty:

The girl had spent last summer in the south of France, visiting old churches and gazing out over the blue Mediterranean. A longing to be back there grips her occasionally. She sighs for the lovely peace of the evenings, when she watched the peasants coming home across the fields and along the shaded roads, and saw their heads bend reverently at the sound of the Angelus.

Last Sunday, a glorious day, clear, cool, with deep-blue skies, lazy white clouds, and leaves shimmering in the sun, she spent an hour up at the Cloisters on Washington Heights. Amid the ruins of the old French abbey and in the sweet, quiet walled garden she lived again the serene spirit of life as she had experienced it last summer.

Outside the Cloisters she wandered along the road. The river was blue, blue as the Mediterranean, and across rose the Palisades, purple-black, brooding, majestic.

Two big houses were set back from the street, surrounded by lawn and trees. Nuns were walking softly across the grass. In the front yard stood a large statue of the Gentle One with outstretched hands. An old woman with a white handkerchief on her head stopped before it, made a deep genuflection, crossed herself, whispered a prayer, and then went on down the hill.

The girl smiled. Here was a bit of the Old World. An old abbey, blue water, and peasants praying at a wayside shrine.

This recalls an experience of my own. Many years ago I was leaving Milan on a very early train. Desiring to have a last glimpse of the Cathedral—which, in spite of its bizarre exterior, has one of the most beautiful interiors in Europe—I left my hotel soon after sunrise and stepped inside the great church. The early morning sun-rays piercing the superb stained-glass windows filled the mysterious building with a truly "dim religious light." As I stood just inside the great entrance, listening to the intonations of early mass coming from the distant chancel, an old man, evidently of the peasant class, entered, holding a small boy of nine or ten years by the hand—probably, I thought, his grandson. The man was of the tall, spare, finely chiseled Italian type. His clothing, old and evidently mended here and there, was scrupulously neat and clean. He took out a red bandanna handkerchief, spread it on the stone floor to protect his carefully cherished garments and those of his equally neat charge, and showed the boy how to kneel. I was the spectator of a first lesson in reverence. As I stepped out into the *piazza* to return to my hotel, I left the old man and his grandson kneeling there with bowed heads bathed in delicately tinted sunlight and in the faint strains of the distant organ. Mr. Wells would perhaps call this a pitiful display of superstition. But I have remembered it, and often thought of it with benefit, as a manifestation of that irrepressible belief of mankind that there is a mysterious spirit in the universe which elicits our recognition, adoration, and loyalty.

Longfellow, certainly not a Romanist, has described a similar experience in a beautiful sonnet which he prefixed to his translation of Dante's "Inferno:"

Oft have I seen at some cathedral door
A laborer, pausing in the dust and heat,
Lay down his burden and with reverent feet
Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor
Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er;
Far off the noises of the world retreat;
The loud vociferations of the street
Become an undistinguishable roar.

So, as I enter here from day to day,
And leave my burden at this minister gate,
Kneeling in prayer and not ashamed to pray,
The tumult of the time disconsolate
To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
While the eternal ages watch and wait.

It is this belief which has produced some beautiful characters in the Roman Catholic priesthood whom no other "interesting, well-paid employment" could have diverted from their faith and works—St. Francis, Cardinal Mercier, and Father Damien, for example.

At the risk of making this article too long, I venture to offer another illustration of the influence which the Roman Catholic Church has had in the cultivation of an appreciation of spiritual beauty. It may be found in the autobiographical reminiscences of François Millet, the French painter, whom no one, I think, would undertake to call conventional or superstitious:

This I remember hearing about my great-uncle, who was the brother of my paternal grandfather. He had been a laborer in his youth, and had become a priest rather late in life. I think he had a small parish at the time of the Revolution. I know that he was persecuted at that time, and I have heard how a party of men came to search my grandfather's house, when he was hidden there. They prosecuted their search in the most brutal fashion; but being of an ingenious turn of mind, he managed to make a hiding-place which communicated with his bed, where he took refuge when his enemies came. One day they arrived so unexpectedly that his bed had not yet time to get cold, and when they were told that he was gone, they exclaimed, "He was here just now; the bed is still warm, but he has managed to escape!" And all the while he could hear them talking. In their fury they turned the whole house upside down, and then went away.

My uncle said mass, when he could, in the house; and I have still the leaden chalice which he used. After the Revolution he lived on with his brother, and held the office of Vicar of the parish. Every morning he went to church to say mass; after breakfast he went to work in the fields, and almost always took me with him. When we reached the field, he took off his cassock, and set to work in shirt-sleeves and breeches. He had the strength of Hercules. Some great walls which he built to support a piece of sloping ground are still standing,