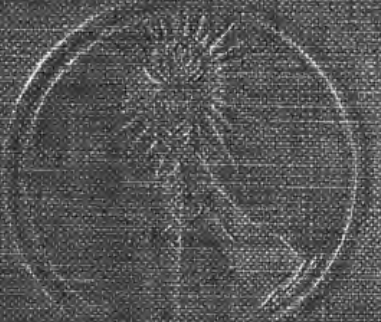
PURITANISM



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To that sorely betrayed and somewhat bedraggled goddess, "Liberty," with whom, however, Puritanism has prevented the author's personal acquaintance, this little book is affectionately inscribed.

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PURITANISM

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS MORALITY?

The association of living forms in groups or communities goes very far back in the annals of life on the earth. Among vegetable organisms association occurs mechanically, inexorably, from the fact of their inability to move from place to place. The offspring of the parent plant are of necessity confined to the same locality, and generation after generation is fixed in the same habitat. It is not apparent, however, that vegetation gains any advantage either of nutrition or defense from the fact of association. One of the chief practical differences between the vegetable and animal kingdoms is the power of free locomotion which belongs to animals. With the acquisition of this faculty, association assumes a voluntary character. The offspring of the parents may remain together in the primal and natural community of the family, or they

may scatter in permanent separation. This alternative implies that if association continues it does so because of definite advantages which it affords in the struggle for existence. And, vice versa, the fact that practically all animal species, outside the prowling carnivora, are gregarious, is ample demonstration of the very real and supremely important nature of these advantages. With the strength given by numbers, defense becomes more successful, the procurement of food surer, shelter better, and the care of the young easier and better performed. The principle of association and mutual aid is, indeed, one of the great laws of life, the condition and cause of success in the contest waged against an adverse environment by the vast majority of sentient creatures.

That conjoint effort is more productive and efficient than individual labor is an economic truism, the practice of which is by no means confined to mankind. The hunting pack which unite in dragging down their quarry, the pair of birds which build their nest together, the herd which sends out scouts to discover the choicest and safest feeding places, all act in obedience to this general economic law. But it is reserved for man to rivet yet more firmly the bonds of his associations, to increase the interdependence of

their membership one upon the other, by the discovery of the further economic principle of the division of labor, in the application of which one man cultivates and becomes adept in a particular art or labor for the benefit of the community. By this special adaptation of his powers his dependence upon the remainder of the group for necessities which he cannot produce is firmly fixed, just as, in turn, is fixed the dependence of the group upon him for his own product. The severance of association means, under these circumstances, the embarrassment of the group, and primeval hardship and probable destruction for the individual. From thence forward man is a social creature by the very terms of his existence.

Even voluntary association implies a sacrifice of personal freedom. Private caprice, wayward desire, selfish advantage must all be subordinated to the communal interest. Without this, the association cannot continue. The application of the principle of association thus engenders a conflict between the interests and desires of the individual, and the interests of the group as a whole. The desire, as well as the immediate interest, of the wolf who has made a kill is to gorge himself, but the interests of the pack demand that he should share his good fortune with

his fellows. Unless he does so, one of the chief purposes of the association is defeated, and its bonds weakened accordingly. So, too, the instinctive desire of individuals between whom a cause of difference has arisen, is to settle the merits of the controversy by physical encounter. But as the group would be rapidly disintegrated by conflicts between its members, the group interest demands that private desire shall be subordinated to peaceable adjustment of the difficulty. "Thou shalt do no murder," is, probably, the oldest law and moral maxim in existence, though it is not thereby meant that no life whatever shall be taken, but only that the cohesion of the group shall not be destroyed by the lawless slaying of its members by each other. In a thousand ways the private wish of the individual must bend to the larger purpose of the social organization.

The perception of the group interest, unlike the recognition of personal interest or desire, is not intuitive. Only the exceptional few of the community have wisdom and experience sufficient to anticipate the remote if far-reaching results of anti-social conduct. For the majority, the realization of public or community needs and obligations must be aided by their formal and explicit statement, while obedience to them is

compelled either by direct coercion or by attaching to their violations penalties, the fear of which effectively supplements the vaguer motive of concern for the general good. Of the rules so formulated, three general classes may be distinguished. First, those which are of such obvious and vital importance that they receive the sanction of physical force exerted by the community for their observance. These constitute laws. Second, those which, though of serious import to the communal welfare, are nevertheless of such flexible application or of such hidden, remote or dubious consequence as to preclude a common consent to their enforcement by physical strength, leaving them to find their sanction merely in public opinion. These constitute morality. Third, those rules which, while having no definite public significance, yet lend grace and facility to personal intercourse and so aid in smoothly carrying forward the communal life. These are enforced by the opinion of intimates, and constitute manners. Morality is thus seen to occupy a middle ground between the institution of law on the one hand, and the institution of manners on the other. Like law, its formulas define and interpret the public good, the group interest; but, unlike law, it is denied the supreme sanction of enforcement by the

sheer physical power of the community. Hence it fails to receive that exact and painstaking statement, that precise and elaborate interpretation and application, which are features of all systems of jurisprudence. Like manners, morality must depend upon the opinion and attitude of others for its coercive emphasis; but, unlike social convention, its importance is of public rather than of personal concern, and obedience to its precepts is induced by much severer reprobation visited upon their transgressor, than upon those guilty of mere ill-breeding. The line between morals and manners, however, remains indistinct, manners, in an effete society, tending to rise to the dignity of morals, while morals, grown obsolete, often persist as social conventions.

Immoral impulses are checked, in the first instance, by the fear of the dislike, aversion, ostracism and contempt which an injured or outraged public will manifest toward the offender. In exceptional instances, this motive may be supplemented by an honest and generous wish to conserve the welfare of the community as defined by moral precept, though usually the group interest affected is so remote or so disguised, or is to all appearances so slightly involved, or loyalty to the group is so tenuous, that the mere

promotion of the general good does not alone furnish adequate motive for moral conduct. Neither of these considerations, however, is commonly regarded, among people in the more primitive stages of culture, as sufficiently potent to insure moral observance, and accordingly it is deemed necessary to secure some additional sanction which shall restrain the wayward and rebellious from moral laxity. The realization of the communal necessities which are voiced in moral precepts, and the formulation of the precepts themselves, being matters requiring unusual intellectual power, foresight and wisdom, naturally fall into the hands of those in the association who possess superior mental attainments and who thus become, as it were, the custodians of morals, possessing not only the privilege of ethical enactment but the duty of exhortation to ethical conduct. Now, with all primitive peoples, these functionaries of superior intelligence are also the priests, the persons authorized to address the gods and to interpret the divine will to men. Very naturally, therefore, an additional and final sanction for the practice of virtue is declared by the custodians of morals to lie in the divine pleasure, which demands the service of righteousness from all those who would please the gods, and which will visit with condign pun-

ishment those who persist in evil doing. Morality thus becomes linked with religion, its precepts are represented as embodying the divine will, and their violation becomes sin, the transgression of the will of the gods, to be visited by the terrors of the divine wrath both in this life and in the life to come. The religious sanction which morality thus acquires is enormously powerful, particularly amongst peoples in the lower stages of enlightenment, whose superstitious minds unquestioningly accept the instruction thus received. So important, indeed, is this religious sanction that it may be regarded almost as affording a distinguishing mark of morality as against mere manners and ceremonial conventions.

The prestige gained by morality when enunciated as a revelation of the divine will operates in two ways. First, it inspires a direct terror of the divine anger and of the punishments to be accordingly suffered, and so furnishes a new and fresh motive for the practice of righteousness, the potency of which is but little impaired by the fact that the fears inspired are imaginary rather than actual. Second, the aversion which the public feels toward the person discovered to be guilty of immorality is, by the religious aspect of the case, intensified to such

horror, loathing and detestation as may fittingly be exhibited toward one who has incurred the wrath of deity and who is numbered amongst the enemies of the gods. The primary sanction of public opinion is thus stimulated, educated and directed until any deficiency which may have originally impaired its efficiency is removed, and it becomes a redoubtable agency in guiding the recalcitrant soul into the paths of virtue.

Morality always presents itself as a conflict between the private impulse and inclination of the individual, and the more remote and abstract but more important interests of the group, clan or class in its collective aspect. And because morality expresses the popular will and opinion, and because it has the sanction of religious teaching, disobedience to its injunctions assumes the guise of rebellion, transgression, sin. The sense of conflict and struggle which ever haunts the spirit of man, and which is primarily a subjective reflection of his contest with an adverse environment, with the buffetings, betrayals and parsimony of oblivious nature, receives an added emphasis from this secondary antagonism of his most rudimentary instincts by the prescribed duties and calculated restrictions of the communal life which is itself formed for the purpose of aiding in the general struggle for existence. This

conception of the battle of good and evil finds expression in endless legends and traditions, from Michael, the archangel, triumphing over Satan, or St. George slaying the dragon, down to the latest civic-righteousness fiction of our popular magazines. And if the good must always prove eventually victorious, it is because the good is felt to be synonymous with the triumph of life, the furtherance of progress, the fulfillment of human destiny. For however irksome moral precept may be, or however fantastically it may be explained or enforced, it must be remembered that while the association continues homogeneous, that is, before the development of private property has given rise to different economic classes within the group having hostile interests and aims, both laws and moral codes really represent the true welfare of the species, and, in most instances, of the refractory individual as well. With the rise of private property, however, and the consequent formation of antagonistic economic classes, a collective common interest, uniform with all members of the group, ceases in large measure to exist, and both law and morality come rather to embody but the interest, prestige and welfare of the dominant, proprietary class. From this on, it is only in a secondary fashion, and when

viewed in the perspective of a long historical evolution, that law and morality can be said to have also ministered to the general progress of the race.

CHAPTER II

CLASS SYSTEMS OF MORALITY

Notwithstanding the naive confidence in the realization of liberty, equality and fraternity which illuminated the beginning of the nineteenth century, he would be a hardy debater who would venture now to deny the existence of economic classes in modern society, or to question the fundamental and irreconcilable nature of their enmities. Still less would any one question the existence of such classes in the past, when the legalized status of master and slave, of lord and serf, made cavil upon the subject impossible. In the slow progress achieved by our barbarian ancestors through the matching of their inventive powers against an adverse environment, tools were created and gradually improved until a point was reached, the most momentous thus far encountered in human history, where, with the aid of tools, a man might produce by his labor not only sufficient for his own needs but a surplus of which he could be despoiled without materially impairing his efficiency as a laborer. At this point a use was discovered for the captives taken in battle.

They became possible subjects of exploitation. In the picturesque language of a contemporary, "Mankind abandoned cannibalism just as soon as it was discovered that more meals could be got from a captive by keeping him alive and working him than by killing and eating him." A profound alteration was thus wrought in the structure of the human association—from the homogeneity of barbarian communistic society to the heterogeneity of the class organization which ushers in the stage of development we know as civilization. Society became split into two hostile economic class—the master or proprietary class which owned the slaves as private property and lived by appropriating the surplus product of slave labor, and the slaves themselves whose labor sustained both them and their masters. The basic fact of this, as of all, class organization was that of exploitation—the fact that a portion of the fruit of one man's labor is taken without recompense by another man under the safeguard of legal and moral protection and approval. And thus arise the radical and fundamental divergence of interests and the profound, implacable and unremitting class warfare, which constitute the key to the interpretation of all the annals and institutions of civilization.

In the new organization of society thus brought about, the "intellectuals," to whose custody law and morality had been perforce committed and who were the priests, the wise men, the jurists, legislators and moral exhorters of the tribe, occupied a somewhat anomalous place. Exceptional wisdom or superior mental equipment is not commonly united with martial prowess, especially when prowess is synonymous with brute strength. The captives, and therefore slaves, falling to the lot of the intellectuals were accordingly few, and insufficient to give them place as members of the proprietary class. Nor were the intellectuals either fitted or accustomed to supply their own necessities directly by manual labor. For, after all, it is only manual labor which effects that modification of material substances which fits them to the satisfaction of bodily needs. Mere intellectual effort, however valuable and deserving, is not directly productive of material goods, and therefore it must always be bartered or exchanged before it yields a livelihood to him who performs it. But in a class society, the exploitation which feeds fat the proprietary class leaves it the only class possessed of the means of purchasing or of compensating intellectual labor, and it is to the proprietary or master class, therefore, that the

intellectual must always turn for a supply of those material goods without which he cannot live. Hence it is that, with the creation of economic classes, the intellectuals, the trustees of law and morals, become of necessity the paid retainers of the master class.

The unity of interest which characterizes primitive communistic society necessarily pales before the internecine struggle which exploitation and the establishment of the class system engender. Even were no other circumstance operative to distort law and morality from their pristine function of enunciating the common interest, the very fact of the existence of a class warfare within the group would suffice to make it impossible that these institutions should continue to embody the true interests of all citizens irrespective of their class allegiance. To do this would require both law and morality to divide within themselves into antagonistic and contradictory codes, one set expressive of the masters' interests, the other, of those of the slaves. But the receipt of income by the intellectuals from the proprietary class which alone can yield it, speedily determines the fate of both law and morals. There need be no illusion about the position of a paid retainer. He must serve his employer's

will, he must promote his employer's interest, or his pay stops. His continued existence, particularly upon the plane of luxury and ease to which he has become accustomed, depends directly upon his subserviency. Law and morals, therefore, promptly become but embodiments of the class concerns of the proprietary class alone, are made to sanctify and defend exploitation and class superiority and control, while for the working class they express but the antithesis and denial of all its true interests. Thus, the obedience of the workers is vital to the masters' safety and welfare, while rebellion only can conserve their own welfare; yet law and morality must always enjoin and enforce obedience and condemn and punish rebellion. So, exploitation is the masters' method of livelihood, while it represents a robbery of the worker; yet law and morality must require the servant to yield the surplus of his labor peaceably to his owner. It may be questioned whether in any class system of morality a residuum can be found which continues to represent the entire group interest independently of class considerations. Even the most elementary maxims take on a class color. Thus, "Thou shalt not kill," comes to forbid only the slaying of a member of the master class, and by no means prevents the master tak-

ing the life of the slave, as in Rome, where a slave might be killed and fed to the master's eels without any violation of law. Nor can such power of life and death over the slave be attributed to his original position as a captive who held his life at the victor's mercy, since the power persisted long after the slave's character as a captive taken in battle had been merged and lost in the general body of slave property. It is explicable only on the theory that the slave, as such, was outside the bounds of class, and therefore of human, fellowship, and because the successful maintenance of the system required that no assuagement of terror should be afforded the slave by the legal safeguarding of his physical integrity. In later times, and in freer and more highly organized societies, indeed, the purely group interests in a measure reassert themselves, as in sanitary laws, and the like. The workers may even be so far recognized as members of the group as to be given a perfunctory protection, such concessions being either dictated by the exigencies of production, or inspired by fear of an insurrection of the laboring class. But in the main, under a class organization of society, the function of law is merely to crystallize into formal statement the dominance of the masters, and to adjust their private differences

peaceably between themselves so that their position may not be imperiled by internal strife, while morality becomes in turn but the fainter yet even more faithful echo of purely class interests.

The business of the male citizen of a barbarian community is that of a hunter and fighter, while the women are employed in household drudgery and the exercise of those primitive arts which are the faint prototypes of the industries of civilization. But the thorough-going communism which marks this era in social evolution prevents the position of women being reduced to that of a true slavery. While their labors are more onerous and persistent than those of their male companions, they are less hazardous, and the universal right to share freely in the communal wealth frees even the female employment from any actual exploitation. The difference between male and female vocation is rather an instance of the primitive division of labor, than the mark of a real servile exploitation of women.

The normal attitude of barbarian communities towards each other is one of actual or at least potential warfare. The member of an alien tribe is perforce an enemy just as the beasts that prowl the jungle are also enemies. The bar-

barian is therefore a warrior. But he is also a hunter, a fisherman, and in later times, a herdsman and agriculturist. Peaceful industries find place among his pursuits. Though a warrior, he has not yet become a professional soldier. With the rise of chattel slavery, however, society crystallizes into a distinctively military mold. A fixed military establishment becomes imperative, both to hold the slave property in subjection, and to add to it by further conquest. At first all males of the master class bear arms. Later, the military becomes detached from the balance of the class as a special caste or occupation. Later still, the legionaries become, like the intellectuals, the mercenaries or paid retainers of the proprietors. But at all times the military organization and habit of life, together with the direct implications of the slave relation itself, determine the conventional morality of the slave society. As the slave property is, for the most part, alien in origin, being composed of the conquered members of foreign tribes and peoples, the support of the system demands first of all patriotism, or devotion to one's own dominant tribe, city or commonwealth, as a supreme virtue. In the southern states of the American Republic before the Civil War, where the distinction between master and slave followed racial lines, this

virtue took the form of pride of race, the denunciation of miscegenation, and the somewhat frantic outcry for the preservation of "racial integrity." In classic antiquity, however, slaves and masters were of the same, or substantially the same, race, and the differentiation proceeded no further than membership in different tribes or citizenship in different commonwealths. Patriotism, therefore, became the characteristic and cardinal virtue of this era. To this were added the essentially military virtues of personal courage, obedience, truthfulness, and the like. As the weapons of that period required great bodily strength and skill for their effective use, athletics and the cultivation of physical prowess and endurance also assumed the role of virtues.

With the creation of a master class founded upon the institution of private property came the need of preserving and transmitting this property, and the privileged status it conferred, from generation to generation; in other words, the need of class preservation. To accomplish this purpose it was necessary that the master have a restricted and definitely ascertained progeny in whom the right of inheritance might rest. To effect the first of these objects, that is restriction of progeny, the loose sexual relations of the barbarian period gave place to the mon-

ogamous form of marriage. To carry out the second, that is to insure the identity of the offspring selected to inherit, as indeed the children of the father, the virtue of female chastity, which Balzac mordantly described as "man's greatest invention," was evolved, to be enforced, at least in the beginning, by the cloistered seclusion of the wife. In this way the marriage relation, with its attendant moral conceptions, was fashioned into an effective agency for preserving the master class in assured dominance through successive generations. The conception of male chastity, however, had not yet been formed, that particular virtue being unnecessary for the accomplishment of the purpose in hand. Masters indulged in concubinage, or even more promiscuous relations, without thought of evil, it being, of course, enacted in the laws that the children of concubines should not inherit. Nor was chastity, or even an orderly marital relation, deemed applicable to slaves. The female slave held her person at her master's pleasure, while the male slave was a mere breeding animal. Polygamy, which appeared later, was probably the result of an attempt to give to concubinage a more settled and legitimate character.

As the subjection of the workers under the chattel slave system is secured through the im-

position of sheer physical force and terror and not through any restraint of moral suasion, morality under such a system is held not to concern the workers but to have significance for the masters only. Like the service of the gods, its observance is something too sacred to be contaminated by servile touch. But as the practice of morality was confined to the masters, so the protection of virtuous conduct in others, shielded the master class alone. The slave master of classic antiquity owed no moral obligation of any sort to his slaves. The notion of such an obligation was unthinkable. On the contrary, in order to inspire a subjugating terror in the slaves, unbridled license for cruelty toward them was given the masters, the exercise of which developed that strange and horrible appetite for scenes of physical anguish the tales of which incarnadine the period of Roman decadence. The spirit of cruelty permeated the whole of society, and a callous indifference to bodily suffering or even a monstrous enjoyment of torn flesh and scorching limbs testified to the detestable perversion of normal human feeling which the industrial system had wrought. Add to this the drunkenness, licentiousness, administrative corruption and moral degeneracy which resulted from the extreme concentration of wealth, which, in turn, is

an inseparable incident of private property, and one may form a picture of that pagan world against which the Christian faith hurled itself as a revolutionary propaganda. The criticism which that brilliant philosophic charlatan, Friedrich Nietzsche, launched at Christianity, that it was the morality of slaves, is, in point of fact, as regards the early church, strictly accurate, though few would echo the contempt for it with which, on this account, that pseudo-aristocrat inflated himself. The basic tenet of Christianity, that of human brotherhood, is but the idealized moral phrasing of that principle of association which is ever the counterpoise by which the weak match themselves against the strong. The early Christian communism, reminiscent of its more primitive barbarian counterpart, was and ever has been the answer of the propertiless worker to the exploitation of the proprietor. The Christian detestation of war struck at the very foundation of the chattel slave system of antiquity. Coming as a reaction against the libertinism and debauchery of the time, Christianity saturated itself with the mystical asceticism of the East. Indeed, at every point early Christianity was the revolutionary antithesis of the existing social order, so that it is no real wonder that the Roman state, notoriously tolerant of alien relig-

ious faiths, yet greeted the gospel with the relentless and bloody persecutions which crowned with martyrdom this first of proletarian revolts.

It is an economic maxim that productiveness increases in proportion as the freer constitution of society insures the workers an absolutely larger and more secure portion of the product of their labor. In other words, freer social forms have the direct effect of stimulating production. When, therefore, in process of time, the wasteful and inefficient methods of chattel slave cultivation had exhausted the lands of Southern Europe, and when, also, it became necessary to bring under cultivation the less fertile lands of the North, it grew imperative that chattel slavery should yield to a freer form of industrial organization. The resulting social revolution, being to the interest of the master class, was protracted through centuries of slow and frictionless mutation, became a component part of the dawning Celtic and Teutonic civilization, and, in itself, quite escaped the notice of the superficial historians who, until recently, when history was placed upon a scientific foundation, were the chroniclers of Western progress. The principal industry of the time, the one upon which the vast mass of the people depended for support, was agriculture. The restless migra-

tions of the northern barbarians, our Celtic, Teutonic and Slavonic ancestors, seeking a permanent feeding ground upon the face of the earth, the decadence and dissolution of that mighty fabric of empire, the Roman state, and the disorganization and chaos which followed, all compelled the persistence of the military organization of society—made, indeed, of every freeman a soldier. The unique problem was thus presented of organizing the industry of agriculture upon a military basis, and in such fashion as to give to the workers an increased measure of liberty and security. To this difficult problem the feudal system furnished the ingenious and adequate answer. The slave was transmuted into the serf, the master became the lord. Surrendering his right of absolute property in the body of the worker, the proprietor nevertheless owned the land upon which the laborer was obliged to toil, the land to which he was legally bound and which he could not leave without the lord's permission. But to a portion of this land the serf acquired a right of occupancy and use not unlike that of the modern tenant. For this right he paid certain rents and was subjected to certain exactions the only merit of which was that they were, for the most part, fairly well defined by custom. For a prescribed period, for in-

stance, he labored upon the lands of his lord, but for the balance of the time he was free to cultivate his own small holding. The measure of his exploitation, therefore, while severe enough, had the very great advantage of definite limitation. Moreover, the serf began to have the semblance of personal rights. In exchange for his fealty, his lord engaged to preserve him from injurious violence. The integrity of his family relations was vaguely acknowledged. His tenure of his plot of ground became a conceded and permanent right which received legal protection and could be transmitted to his descendants. Though the relation of lord and serf partook largely of a paternal character, it was also one of reciprocal obligations, fixed by custom, which, on the whole, it was to the lord's interest to recognize and fulfill. Personal liberty for the worker was, indeed, afar off, but security for person and property was slowly gained.

As society remained militant in respect of the proprietary class, that is, as the chief business of that class continued to be fighting, so the virtues of the feudal era remained those reflective of a military organization—physical courage and prowess, obedience, truthfulness, honor and so on. Loyalty to the king took the place of patriotism, but served the same purpose of con-

serving and increasing class cohesion. Trade, commerce and usury or the lending of money at interest, were despised; but war, pillage, piracy and enforced tribute were, as aforetime, highly esteemed. But in two particulars, at least, feudal morality deserves special discussion. First, in relation to marriage. Second, as to the part which came to be played by morality, through the instrumentality of the feudal church, in keeping the working class in restraint.

Chattel slaves had been personal property; and the fluid nature of this property, as well as the rapidity with which wealth accumulated under that system, made the matter of inheritance of relatively less importance than it was later to acquire under feudalism. Feudal property was landed property, and, as such, peculiarly adapted to transmission by inheritance. Besides, the meager wealth of the feudal period required strict conservation from generation to generation, and could not, if it were to sustain the social fabric, be periodically dissipated by distribution to numerous heirs. Again, the uninterrupted continuance of feudal rents and servitudes was essential to the military system, which was one of prescribed levies, and the concomitant status, property and privilege of the nobility must, of course, also be continuous. The heredi-

tary principle therefore assumed a transcendent importance. Not only was class preservation dependent upon it, but the fate of the very system itself was bound up in it. The effect of these circumstances upon the institution of marriage was most profound. The feudal marriage was not only monogamous, but it was the severest monogamy, and the most inflexible and adamantine union, the world has ever known. Once contracted, it was, for all practical purposes, indissoluble. Only one authority existed, the Roman pontiff, who could dissolve it for any cause, and he would not. Side by side with this development of marriage went a corresponding emphasis upon the virtue of female chastity. This was the crowning, and, aside from domestic thrift, practically the only virtue recognized in women. The supreme duty of the married woman was to furnish a legitimate male heir to continue the family name and power. Fecundity to this extent was also a virtue. Aside from this, the woman's life and identity were so completely merged in the husband that she became a negligible quantity. As the chastity of females of the proprietary class assumed so great an importance, the violation of this chastity, carrying with it the utter ruin of the woman's marital prospects and leaving entrance into a nunnery

her sole possible refuge, became a serious offense which her male relatives would not be slow to visit with drastic punishment. A sort of reflex chastity was thus imposed upon the males of the class, with respect to women of the aristocracy. And from this protective attitude toward ladies of the nobility, enhanced by the love of stately ceremonial which lingered as a legacy from a not very remote barbarism, was developed that chivalry and courtesy toward women of aristocratic rank, which constituted one of the finest and most charming traits of the feudal noble. But chivalry and courtesy were reserved for women of the proprietary class alone. Towards women of the working class, the correct noble attitude was one of contemptuous brutality, coupled with a quite unregulated sexual license. Nor has chivalry, in this regard, ever succeeded in rising above its traditional class limitations, as may easily be observed by noting the bearing of the modern gentleman toward the mistress, and toward the maid.

But monogamous marriage alone, even though indissoluble, did not furnish a sufficient restriction upon the number of heirs, to meet the exigencies of feudal inheritance. Not only were illegitimates debarred from the right to inherit, and, incidentally, visited by the most in-

tense disgrace, but only one child of the legitimate progeny, the eldest male, was permitted to succeed to the title of nobility, the family properties, and the rank and power of the sire. The right of primogeniture completed the curious structure of class domination. Under these circumstances, the family relation assumed a social importance which it had not known since the barbarian period. Then it had furnished the basis of the tribal bond, the only form of social organization. But the family which was then important was a contemporaneous group. Under feudalism it was a line of descent. As feudal rank and privilege came from the ancestor, so the ancestor became of immense significance, and both the status and worth of men were determined not by what they were, but by what their forebears had been. Pride of family was added to the other distinctively feudal virtues. The vacuous remark sometimes heard from modern pulpits and professorial chairs, that the family is the foundation of the state, is the aimless ghost of this feudal conception of the class importance of that relation. It is almost needless to add that the super-sanctity of the feudal marriage, together with female chastity and all its other attendant virtues, was enforced with the utmost zeal and rigor by the feudal church.

Notwithstanding the sanguinary persecutions under which the early Christians had suffered, Roman ferocity proved powerless to stem the advance of their seditious doctrines. By the time of Constantine it was plain that a compromise must be effected, or the "kingdom of God," that marvelous utopia of brotherhood, purity and peace which the ecstatic vision of the saints had pictured as replacing the welter of cruelty and licentiousness which enveloped them, would be dangerously near realization. Diplomatic cunning was called in to accomplish what mere bloodthirstiness had failed to do, Christianity was made the state religion, the church became the pensioner of the civil authority, and in return elected to forego its revolutionary character, to abandon its ideals of social regeneration, and to become a subservient prop to the imperial power. Scarcely had this compromise been reached, however, when the entire Roman polity, save in the extreme east of Europe, was whelmed and lost in the chaotic surge of barbarian invasion. In this crisis the church exhibited a fortitude, strength and mastery of events unparalleled in history. By a wonderful missionary effort it subdued to its own spiritual sway these new masters of the world. If the barbarians conquered Rome, it was only a matter of time until

Rome in turn conquered the barbarians. And by virtue of its triumph the church retained the place given it by Constantine, that of a state religion. Nay, more, it wove itself into the very warp and woof of the new feudal society. Its graded hierarchy was a replica of the successive ranks of the feudal aristocracy. Its fantastically splendid and imposing services were but a portion of that general ceremonial observance which adorned the life of the middle ages. In its hands were held from a third to a half of the lands of Western Europe. Of all feudatories it was the richest, the most powerful, the most arrogant.

But this prestige was not gained by the church without a full complement of service rendered. If the religious establishment enjoyed exceptional wealth and privilege, it was because it was in a position to lend exceptional assistance to the proprietary class. With the relaxing of the rigors of the slave relation, and the attainment of a measure of private right by the working class, the continued coercion of labor by the crude methods of sheer physical brutality was no longer feasible. For forcible physical bondage must be substituted the less tangible, yet none the less effective, bondage of superstitious terrors; for the shackle and the whip, the awful dread of

uncomprehended evil, the horror of ghostly doom. To accomplish this became the peculiar office of the church. Its proletarian traditions still endeared it to the workers in Southern Europe, while its communistic reminiscences gave it a ready and trustful acceptance among the serfs of the North. Its hold upon the working class was consequently powerful. Moreover, the near remove of barbarian culture made the priestly traffic in superstition exceptionally safe and easy. Religion and morality, therefore, came to have significance not merely for the proprietors, but for the laborers as well. The serfs were received into the church—the poor had, indeed, the gospel preached to them, but to what an end! Morality now discharged a double function of service to the proprietors, first, by inculcating amongst themselves those virtues which buttressed the existing order, second, by persuading the workers to submit tamely to the exploitation and servitude which supported the social fabric. For this latter purpose, a whole new series of virtues was created, specially adapted to the workers, such as humility, reverence, obedience, patience, gratitude, meekness, and, above all, contentment, which has always been in the eyes of the proprietors, the crowning virtue of the slave. Failure to practice these vir-

tues brought upon the devoted head of the recalcitrant serf the priestly anathema with all its ghostly train of imagined horrors, besides the very real horror of complete ostracism, while for the observance of the same the church held out a mythical reward in that promised "kingdom of God," the locale of which had been cleverly shifted from this world to the next. Finally, the church afforded a way of escape to those more able amongst the workers in whom an enforced servitude would surely have bred rebellion. In return for vows of celibacy, and an undivided loyalty to the church, that institution gave to these the opportunity to achieve within its own hierarchy the power, place and luxury which men of exceptional talents have always demanded, but which, through the caste distinctions of feudalism, were reserved in the course of secular affairs for the nobility alone. It is doubtful if this last named service of the church to feudalism has ever been fully appreciated, though any class system, in order to insure its permanence, must provide in some way a vent of this kind, else the disaffection of the natural leaders of the laboring mass will soon engender insurrection.

In short, the church was the indispensable cement which held feudal society together. It furnished the intellectual sustenance, the moral sua-

sion and stimulus, upon which the system drew for nurture and strength. Never before or since have religion and morality discharged such important social functions, and, it may be added, never before or since has any religion proven so utterly false to its pristine purposes and ideals. True, those purposes and ideals were ever impossible dreams, and whatever practical validity they may have originally had was lost in the barbarian conquest. But that the gospel of the Nazarene Carpenter should have become the chief sustaining power of a class system of exploitation is surely the greatest marvel, as it is the supremest irony, of history. Yet the proletarian, communistic and revolutionary traditions of the Christian faith were never entirely lost. They were continued through the middle ages by the Waldenses, the Anabaptists, the Lollards, and similar dissenting sects, and blossomed with renewed vigor in the Reformation and in the bourgeois political revolution which followed, reaching their full fruition in the international socialist movement of today which is historically, as it is sympathetically, the true descendant of the primitive church.

CHAPTER III

THE ORIGIN OF PURITANISM

The feudal system was essentially rural, being grounded upon the tillage of the soil. Its peculiar form of property was real estate, held in feudal tenure. Its characteristic industry was agriculture, its form of exploitation, rent, its organization, military. In the medieval cities a new form of property—born of the feeble commerce and manufacture of the times and consisting chiefly of money and merchandise, the beginnings of modern "capital"—was gradually creating a new proprietary class having interests widely at variance from those of the feudal aristocracy. Here the form of social organization was no longer military, but commercial and industrial. The form of exploitation was interest on loans (the medieval "usury"), and profits arising from manufacture and trade. The new industrial system did not center in the relation of lord and serf, but, evolving out of the connection between apprentices and wandering journeymen on the one hand and master mechanics on the other, developed into the freer and more flexible wage system of today.

As the growth of the new system exposed its fundamental characteristics and gave it definiteness of form and outline, it became evident that a relentless and dire conflict must take place between the two schemes of social organization. Premonitions of this struggle were found in the persecutions of the Jews, who were the pioneers of the nascent capitalism, by the feudal nobles. The thin disguise of religious animosities is not sufficient to conceal the true nature of these persecutions as the first faint mutterings of those terrific tempests of war and revolution which for centuries were to demonstrate the irreconcilable antagonism between the old order and the new. In this long period of bitter strife, the commercial or trading class, the bourgeoisie, necessarily assumed the role of revolutionist, and, like all revolutionary cults nursed inspiration from noble ideals of social reconstruction. But the particular and peculiar ideal in the name of which the bourgeoisie fought, and enticed the working class to fight, in its repeated onslaughts upon the feudal polity, was that of "Liberty," to the evolution of which we may devote a moment's space.

Commerce and industry are carried on with reference to an ever shifting, changing market. Hence the organization of business and manufacture must be pliable, capable of quick expan-

sion or contraction to meet the opportunities of the moment, the exigencies of varying demand. A fixed and immobile relation between proprietor and worker, a changeless status such as exists in chattel slavery or serfdom, is manifestly impossible here. On the contrary, the employer must be free to assume or discontinue his relation to the worker, to hire or discharge, as the circumstances of his business may require. For the worker, this meant the novel boon of personal liberty. He was no longer the chattel of a master or a portion of the live stock attached to the soil. He gained the first requisite of manhood, independence of movement. He was no longer condemned by birth to a status of servility, but could now voluntarily assume servility through the medium of a free contract. He could as yet know nothing of that subtle economic coercion, growing out of his exclusion from direct and unhampered access to the means of production, which, under the guise of economic necessity, formless, intangible, yet inexorable, was to force him implacably into this "free contract" and hold him beyond escape in the bondage of the new servitude. Nor could he as yet realize that, despite his new-found liberty, he was still the patient subject of exploitation, the lean source of that profit, representing the

difference between what he produced and what he got, which was to fill to repletion the coffers of the trading class. Moreover, the new industries required skilled, that is, educated and intelligent workers, thereby opening to the worker the doors of intellectual development, while personal liberty carried with it the hope that by practicing frugality, that is, by living below the normal subsistence line, the worker might accumulate a capital of his own and so pass from the laboring to the proprietary class. For the feudal serf, therefore, the new industrialism meant a distinct gain both in personal freedom and intellectual enfranchisement, a gain which even the fathomless ocean of degrading poverty and social misery upon the edge of which he stood, could never quite offset.

The long path of rebellion and revolution which lay before the bourgeoisie before it could break the power of the feudal nobility, achieve the control of governments, and complete the remodeling of society, was first entered upon within the confines of that supreme bulwark of feudalism, the Roman church. This wonderful institution, fastened like a gigantic leech upon the medieval world, and grown inexpressibly insolent, greedy and corrupt, was already leading the feudal nobility to consider whether the

services of intellectual retainers might not, after all, be purchased at too dear a cost. Indeed, the enormous drain upon the economic resources of Northern Europe which the maintenance of the institution involved was making it insupportable to all classes alike. For the new trading and manufacturing class, besides, whose novel industries required the aid of the natural sciences to their successful prosecution and for whom, therefore, free intellectual inquiry and untrammeled scientific investigation were indispensable, the bigoted restraints which priestly superstition placed upon independent intellectual activity were economically fatal. In the actual assault upon the church, it became necessary both to invalidate its central dogmas, and in so doing to establish liberty of critical inquiry (liberty of thought), and to discard the ministrations of the eclesiastical hierarchy as mediators between the individual soul and God, thus proclaiming liberty of conscience. Again, there were imposed by feudal laws various taxes, imposts, regulations and restrictions upon industry, trade and banking, relief from which embodied for the trading class, in a very real and practical form, the notion of liberty. Finally, in its further struggles to break the grasp of the feudal nobility upon the powers of government and compel

recognition for itself in civil affairs, the trading class was compelled to adopt the slogans of political liberty and popular government. From all these circumstances arose, for the bourgeoisie, the idea of Liberty as an abstract conception, a vague yet potent and enrapturing ideal, which finds its *reductio ad absurdum* in the anarchistic philosophies of our own time. But this splendid, if thoroughly negative, ideal of Liberty, was, after all, strictly a class ideal. For the bourgeoisie it meant, primarily, freedom of trade, that sacred right of buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market. Next, freedom of scientific inquiry so that the new industrialism might be fully developed. And, lastly, freedom from feudal domination in church and state—freedom of conscience, and such participation in government as a proprietary class has the right to demand. Here the conception of Liberty stopped short. The freedom from serfdom held out to the workers was essentially a delusion, a sharp sundering of the serf from his economic base in his attachment to the soil and a casting of him loose upon the swirling currents of proletarian vagabondage in the glorious liberty to work for the trading class on the terms it might dictate, or else to starve in the streets. Nor had the bourgeoisie any intention of permitting the working

class to share in the powers of government. Residential, educational and property restrictions upon the right of suffrage, systematic deception and misleading of the popular mind, and wholesale bribery of public officials, were the means resorted to to prevent political liberty reaching the proletariat, which had borne the brunt of the battle for its acquisition. To the hue and cry of the trading class after "Liberty," the French proletariat, which for a brief period gained a real ascendency during the French Revolution, added the true proletarian rallying cries of "Equality" and "Fraternity," greatly to the embarrassment of the trading class, which still experiences a feeling of consternation at their reiteration.

In every historic epoch, the dominant class rises to its place of power because of some vast and imperative social work which it is the destiny of that class to accomplish. Thus, the slaveholders of antiquity established an ordered and permanent society, created the territorial state, and began that accumulation of wealth which, as the *sine qua non* of leisure and culture, is the indispensable basis of human progress. After the barbarian conquest, the feudal aristocracy performed, under far different circumstances, a like service for the whole of Europe. In both

instances, the transition was from a wandering, aimless and relatively unprogressive barbarism to a settled, established and progressive social order. Similarly, looking backward through the vista of centuries, we now perceive that the supreme business, the economic function, the "historic mission," of the bourgeoisie has been the accumulation of capital, the heaping together of the immense stores of wealth which presage and make possible the final triumph of man over his natural environment, the ultimate conquest of matter by intelligence. Not that the members of the trading class had in themselves any understanding of the social significance of their labors or their regnancy. Personally, they were inspired by no loftier motive than the commonplace greed of mankind. Yet this greed, in the hidden course of human evolution, worked to an impersonal and cosmic end, which at once necessitated and justifies the capitalistic era.

As the historic mission of the bourgeoisie was the accumulation of capital, so all its morality sprang from and bore upon this aim. The profound change in the social structure from a military to an industrial basis, of course involved the creation of an entirely new system of morals; but the key to the new system lies in the economic function of accumulation which the trad-

ing class was to discharge. The military virtues of the old regime, accordingly, had little or no meaning for the budding capitalists. In place of warlike courage and desire for military glory, they were timid and frankly non-resistant—except, indeed, where their fierce conflicts with the nobility stimulated in them a passing military ardor. The old feudal conception of honor, which was in reality a fine recognition of the obligation imposed by another's confidence, degenerated with the bourgeoisie into a mere fidelity in the payment of commercial debts. In place of loyalty to the sovereign, the peculiar position in which the trading class found itself led it to extol revolution. In place of obedience, came a spirit of personal independence growing out of and fostered by private, disconnected and competitive business interests. In place of truth telling, came the trickery and chicanery of trade. Pride of family the bourgeoise had not, and so affected humility. Courtesy and chivalry were lost upon him. On the other hand, a long series of purely economic virtues, each and all wholly calculated to further the general class business of accumulation, sprang into being. Such were industry, prudence, thrift, frugality, temperance, simplicity, early rising and the like—a wonderful exposition and summary of which may be found

in the essays of Benjamin Franklin. Idleness and dissipation, which hindered personal accumulation, became the cardinal vices. The very term "dissipation" suggests the scattering of worldly goods. Sports and amusements, involving a waste of time which might have been spent in labor and of money which might have been hoarded, were necessarily condemned. An illustration of the new moral temper is found in the changed attitude towards the practice of gambling. For the feudal aristocracy gambling possessed no especial social or class significance, and so was regarded as merely a harmless diversion. With the trading class, however, gambling represented the hazarding and scattering of accumulations without any compensatory prospect of creating fresh revenue for the class, that is, an "unproductive" hazard, and so, being perceived to be a source of class detriment, was promptly branded as a vice. Dueling, drunkenness, lechery, all the enervating and profligate pursuits into the morass of which the decadent nobility had fallen, became likewise the very sum of evil to the grim money-grubbers now aspiring to civil and political dominance.

Moreover, the economic virtues which expressed the class interest of the bourgeoisie when practiced amongst themselves, equally embodied

that same class interest when applied to the wage worker. For the wage worker who practiced them, who was industrious, frugal, thrifty, temperate and the rest, could obviously live on a less wage than his more extravagant and irresponsible fellow, while at the same time yielding a larger product from his labor, and so became a much better subject of exploitation than if he failed in economic virtues. The new morality was accordingly preached to all alike. But the virtues specially devised by the feudal church for the discipline of the working class were far too valuable to be thrown away; and so, with respect to the workers, the bourgeoisie still insisted on humility, obedience, respect for one's "betters," gratitude, patience, meekness, and, above all, contentment, that most pleasing and reassuring to the masters of all the servile virtues. Even poverty itself, of which the new system was to create so much, was sublimated by the more ardent intellectual servitors of the rising capitalist class into a sort of virtue, to be practiced, however, by the workers only. So, too, was preserved from the feudal faith the fulsome promise of an enticing reward beyond the grave, consisting of pearly gates and golden streets and idleness and other luxuries, for those workers who patiently submitted to the depriva-

tion of the necessities of this present life. The legal fictions of political equality and freedom of contract also acted as further anodynes soothing the sacrifice of the workers, as well as disguising the fundamental class division of capitalist society springing from the private ownership of the means of production. The new society, therefore, resolved itself into a general discipline of penury and toil, enlivened by no lighter relaxation than the grim ecstasies of religious devotion or the fury of revolutionary strife.

In complete contrast to the new habit of life, had been the life of the middle ages. As in all barbarian or semi-barbarian epochs, existence in medieval times, while primitive and squalid, was brilliant with color and vibrant with elemental impulse. It was an age of romance and legend, flashing with pageantry, gorgeous with stately ceremonial, weird with the vagaries of undisciplined imagination, responsive with childlike eagerness to all natural emotion. The principal industry of the era was agriculture, which admitted of much leisure to be occupied either in martial adventurings, or in holidays and fetes to which the church, with customary adroitness, supplied an ostensibly religious foundation. Poverty and misery there were, indeed, in plenty, to say nothing of a picturesque brutality; but it was the pov-

erty of simple want, the misery of ignorance, not, as in later times, the poverty resulting from the automatic deprivation of an available abundance, the calculated misery of scientific exploitation, the impersonal and monotonous brutality of systematized greed. . The new industries which fostered, and in turn were fostered by, the trading class, were far more insistent in their demands upon the time and strength of those engaged in them than were the agricultural and military pursuits of the old regime, while the tyrannical necessity of accumulation under which the bourgeoisie labored precluded any possibilities of leisure, amusement or recreation. Poverty may be quite consistent with idleness, with pageantry and games, but the conquest of poverty must be begun in a drab and industrious parsimony. Numerous holidays, therefore, were directly antithetical to the Puritan scheme of existence, and were incontinently abolished,—all but the Puritan sabbath. This most peculiar and chaaracteristic feature of the Puritan polity deserves some special discussion. With its repudiation of ecclesiastical authority, it became necessary for Puritanism to find a substitute source of authority which could be made to sanction its own doctrine, ethics and churchly organization. It found this in the bible, but newly made available

to the commonality by translations into modern speech from the original texts. The Roman church could not well question the authority of the scriptures, since for it also the bible was a holy book, and so was limited to the rather ineffectual plea that the interpretation of the sacred text was its own prerogative; while for the Puritan the bible became, in the hands of skillful and fanatical exegetes, a weapon of terrible power against the accepted faith. In the Old Testament the Puritans discovered the institution of the Jewish sabbath, which they proceeded to mold, in accordance with their own purposes, into a celebration which would have sufficiently amazed the tribesmen of Israel. A weekly rest day was, in fact, necessary for two reasons. First, because absolutely unremitting toil was too much even for the Puritan mind to contemplate with equanimity. Second, because it furnished an opportunity, indispensable in the position of conflict and peril in which the bourgeoisie was placed, for class mobilization, the discussion of class interests, the rousing of class enthusiasm, the perfecting of class organization. For the medieval church, Sunday had been a fete day not materially different from any saint's day or holiday, to be spent, after religious services had been duly observed, in feasting,

games, good fellowship and jollity. For the Puritans it became a rest day on which even rest was pursued strictly as a business. All recreations and diversions which might encourage idleness or profligacy were rigorously suppressed as sinful (profanation of the Sabbath) until even toil itself assumed the aspect of a boon. But, more, as a day consecrated to the promotion of class interests, Sunday become also the period on which the sectaries gathered together for counsel and admonition at the hands of their leaders, administered through endless sermons, while the emotional loyalty and devotion of the assemblage were aroused by sonorous prayers and choruses of hymns. Indeed, for the Puritans, religious fervor afforded that stimulus to class solidarity which under previous systems had been inspired by the virtue of patriotism or loyalty to the king. At these conventicles, moreover, the principles of Puritan morality were expounded, while personal intimacy enabled the members to keep watch over one another's compliance with them. Thus the Puritan Sabbath was, on the whole, invested with a uniquely depressing and devitalizing sanctity, the like of which no religious festival had ever before known. It was inevitable, indeed, that the holiday of a still relatively impoverished trading

class, bent upon accumulation, should be a pinched and sober affair, but the rayless gloom of the Puritan sabbath is fully explicable only in view of the fierce antagonism between bourgeoisie and nobility, and, perhaps, the sharp contrast which Puritanism felt compelled to present to the florid license of the elder morality.

The characteristic form of property of the bourgeoisie was personalty, which could be manufactured, traded in, and made the repositary of profits. Unlike the landed estates of the feudal nobility, this more mobile form of property was not especially adapted to transmission by inheritance since the identity of its particular items was constantly shifting. Moreover, the capabilities of capitalistic industry in piling up wealth were so great that primogeniture, and even a closely restricted progeny, were no longer necessary to the preservation of class dominance from one generation to another. There was no economic reason, therefore, for maintaining the irrefragable character of the feudal marriage. Accordingly, the bourgeoisie introduced and defended the right of divorce, a privilege which has been more and more freely applied as the gigantic accumulations of latter-day capitalism have made the institution of marriage less and less vital to the issue of class

preservation. Certain limited recognition even began to be bestowed upon illegitimates. The subsequent marriage of their parents was allowed, as under the Roman law which was formulated during the era of chattel slavery, to legitimize them. They were permitted to inherit from the mother, and even from the father if formally recognized by him in his lifetime. Undoubtedly the Puritan advocacy of divorce was stimulated, however, by the attitude of opposition towards feudalism in which the trading class was placed. Indissoluble marriage was vital to feudalism—lay, indeed, at the foundation of the system—and hence the marriage institution constituted a convenient point of attack by the new enemies of the feudal order. And it is a curious and instructive commentary upon the class character of modern systems of morality, that the present-day outcry against the divorce "evil" proceeds chiefly from the ritualistic churches, which are themselves the anachronistic survivals of the feudal system. But while practicing and defending the right of divorce and, later, writing it broadly in its laws, the bourgeoisie, no more than any other proprietary class, could afford to dispense with the institution of marriage, that is, with the civil control of the sex relation. Nor could it, any more than

any other proprietary class, tolerate the institution in anything else than its monogamous form. The same considerations which operated to introduce monogamy originally, namely, the necessity of having a restricted and definitely ascertained progency to which could be transmitted proprietary rights and privileges, were still controlling, and monogamy, with its concomitant virtue of female chastity, remained, as before, the established form of the marriage relation, with the right of divorce, under special circumstances, added to it.

But while the rigor of the marriage institution was thus softened, powerful economic motives conspired to develop the entirely novel virtue of male chastity. Under feudalism, the attitude of the member of the proprietary class towards women of his own class was one of chivalry, courtesy and respect; but towards women of other classes, particularly of the working class, was one of almost as unbridled license as that of the master towards the chattel slave. But the necessities of accumulation compelled Puritanism to utterly reprobate all forms of vice and dissipation (except such as held possibilities of profit), including in a marked degree licentiousness, since few forms of dissipation are economically more extravagant or

inimical to accumulation than this. Hence arose the virtue of male chastity, since the chaste man conserved by so much more his worldly goods. The chastity of the male, however, could never attain the degree of moral obligation which enforced the chastity of the female, since the former could never play so important a part in the business of class preservation. Thus came into being that much criticized but inescapable "double standard of morality," which has so perplexed the later Puritan moralists of the gentler sex. With the marvelous heaping up of wealth under full grown capitalism the virtue of male chastity, as might be expected, has lost much of its obligation, though the economic dependence of women upon men has enabled the latter to enforce the more important virtue of female chastity in undiminished rigor. And it is this same economic compulsion exercised by the male over the female, which, curiously enough, in another connection and upon the sinister side of bourgeois life, is used to coerce women to the vice of prostitution. Woman is, indeed, the mere plaything of man's economic interest or his passion, and is "good" or "bad" according to the use made of her.

In its rebellion against the medieval church, the bourgeoisie did not, at first, become irre-

ligious. On the contrary, it founded ecclesiastical establishments of its own—the evangelical churches—and through them and the recovered bible assailed the elder church in the name of a higher and purer religious life. But the leaven of free, critical inquiry, which was essential to and immanent in the bourgeois economy, operated steadily to impair the validity of religious dogma, the authority of religious teaching, and the warrant which religion had previously lent to moral observance. The bonds of faith were constantly weakened, the rewards and penalties of the future life, which had hitherto enforced moral conduct, grew shadowy and unreal, and, losing this spiritual sanction, Puritanism was obliged more and more to turn directly to public opinion for its coercive support. The sectaries became, accordingly, the censors of each other's private conduct and personal affairs. A spirit of censoriousness, of gossipy meddlesomeness, of dictatorial interference with the personal habits, tastes and concerns of others, thus came to pervade the Puritan atmosphere and to mark the true Puritan temper. Moreover, as the religious sanction relaxed and was lost to Puritanism, strenuous efforts were made to substitute therefor the legal coercion of physical force—to enact morality into law. For this, there was

some justification, as well as the inspiration of envy, in the civil jurisdiction wielded by the medieval church and in the fact that, through the intimate union of church and state, the former had been wont to invoke the civil power for the protection of its privileges, doctrines, and general spiritual ascendency. But neither the arrogance nor terror of the medieval church ever mothered such strange legislation as has the centuries-old itch of the Puritan to bring to his moral propaganda the dark aid of the jail, the whipping post and the stocks. That it should be criminal to dance on the village green, to eat mince pie or caress one's wife on the sabbath, records, for Puritanism, the high-water mark of moral aspiration, achieved in the period of its supremest and most characteristic efflorescence. With the decadence of religious faith, morality began, too, to be divorced from religion in critical thought. Ethics and dogma were seen as separate and even as disconnected things, until, in time, was produced what to an earlier age would have seemed an incomprehensible anomaly, the moral infidel. This disseverance of faith and morals induced the search for some new and more rational foundation for moral obligation, the chief fruit of which was the utilitarianism of the nineteenth century, the last word of

bourgeois intellectualism on the subject of ethics.

In its desire to secure for itself a legal status and sanction, Puritanism ran counter to one of the most deep-seated traits of the bourgeoisie, the spirit of personal independence, always developed among small proprietors, and particularly nurtured by the competitive nature of immature capitalism. The endless conflict which morality, as the embodiment of group or class interest, must wage with individual desire, was thus intensified for Puritanism, the more zealous seeking to coerce by law while the more independent resisted in the name of personal liberty.

But the exercise of personal independence in the realm of morals was curbed for the Puritan by a quality of character, the peculiar product of the historical setting and development of the bourgeoisie, which, by supplying the place of emotional stimulus once furnished by the superstitious fears of an earlier creed, gave to the Puritanical code a warrant and urgency which went far towards compensating for the loss of the cruder sanctions of faith and dread. This peculiar quality was the Puritan conscience. Fabricated in the crucible of persecution from without and pragmatical criticism from within, stimulated by a fervid idealism and a stern class necessity, the Puritan conscience became the

finest, and, in some respects, the most irrational element of Puritan psychology. No more striking instance can be found of the moral triumph of class interest over individual egoism than the generation of this noble passion—the sense of duty, the service of the right for the right's sake, the burden of the cause of righteousness to be borne, with no thought of self, in defiance of the sneers of the world, the seductions of the flesh, the wiles and torments of the Arch Fiend himself. For twelve hundred years, ever since the cessation of the propaganda of the primitive church, the world had known no revolutionary impulse; and while the self-abasing loyalty and fanatical devotion which nurtured the Puritan conscience belong equally to any revolutionary era, the growth of this trait of the Puritan character must be regarded, in view of this long lapse of time, as a novel development of human nature. Nor have the revolutionary movements of the present day ever adequately recognized their indebtedness in this regard to the Puritan discipline of life.

Yet while Puritan morality was thus powerfully enforced by the Puritan conscience, the deep and resistless current of bourgeois destiny, the historic mission of accumulation, contrived in many and fantastic ways to set at naught the

admonitions of the still, small voice. From this resulted that Puritan hypocrisy which, in its way, is quite as characteristic of the Puritan mentality as is the Puritan conscience. All class systems of morality which are used in restraining or perverting the natural egoism of the workers must of necessity be grounded in hypocrisy. But the business of money getting upon which the trading class was bent, and the ruthless greed which was its actuating motive, served to broaden and intensify this hypocrisy till it not only pervaded the relation of the trading class to the workers but saturated all its other relations as well. All of the tenets of Puritanism, even those most peculiar and most sternly held, were subject at any time to modification or abrogation in furtherance of the fundamental purpose and function of accumulation. Thus, notwithstanding its laudation of chastity and horrified condemnation of sexual laxity, it was reserved for the bourgeoisie to capitalize the ancient evil of prostitution, to transform its unfortunate victims into true proletarians of vice whose pitiful exploitation could be made to yield luscious revenues to the trading class. Puritan hatred of vice likewise vanished when Puritan incomes could be augmented by forcing, at the cannon's muzzle, the opium trade

upon the Chinese. Puritan ideals of liberty were incontinently smirched, for the sake of dollars, in the African slave trade. The commercial integrity of the Puritan has proven no substitute for penal laws against the vending of adulterated and poisonous foods. Nor did Puritan detestation of the barbarities of slavery ever extend to the even more ghastly barbarities of child labor, of needless mutilation of workers, of underpaid unremitting toil of men and women, inflicted in Puritan mines and mills and factories out of which flowed the golden wealth of the bourgeoisie. Of course, many sincere and earnest Puritans have, as individuals, revolted against these apparent inconsistencies and have sought a consciencious application of Puritan principles to bourgeois affairs, even at the hazard of class interests. But their efforts have been ineffectual to mold the general tenor of the life and habit of the trading class, by which, rather than by the conduct of a protesting minority of exceptional individuals, must be determined the value which time and history will place upon the Puritan system.

CHAPTER IV

THE DECADENCE OF PURITANISM

Ever and always man, the indolent yet uncomfortable animal, matches his ingenuity against the hardships, dangers and niggardliness of his surroundings in the endeavor to gain an increasing amplitude and security of economic resource with less and less of physical exertion. The principal business of all life is living, and the impulse and art of self-preservation are of necessity the mainsprings of all organic activities. But the effort to compass by intellectual subtility the problems of environment, to substitute for brute strength and endurance or fortunate accident, the calculated manipulation of cause and effect, the intelligent modification of adverse conditions in accordance with the suggestions of reason and reflection, marks the commencement of that triumph of mind over matter which it is the destiny of humanity to accomplish. This is not saying, however, that man responds to no other incentive than the desire for material safety and well-being. While material sustenance and satisfaction are perforce the main concerns of human as of all other organic

existence, numerous other motives, such as love, anger, revenge, sympathy, ambition, curiosity, the love of beauty, the love of adventure, the instincts of play and of workmanship, the sense of duty, constantly supplement and in exceptional instances may entirely override the more basic economic motive. This is frequently and strikingly obvious in cases of individual conduct, so much so that it is impossible to predicate with any satisfactory degree of certainty the action of any single person upon the economic motive alone. And, though less common, it is none the less true that the movements of mankind in the mass are at times deflected from their true economic bent by alien sentiments and desires, while in all mass movements these more idealistic sentiments are at least present to give inspiration and sanction to the carrying out of economic ends. But when all proper allowance has been made for the operation of those emotional impulses which are not concerned with material well being, it yet remains true that the fundamental necessity of getting a living and the overweening desire to get it with as little labor as possible, form the relentless prod, the supreme dynamic urge, to human progress, and the great moving and directing force of history.

The substitution which man constantly en-

deavors to make of intellectual ingenuity for mere physical labor in this imperative business of getting a livelihood, leads to the practice of scientific discovery and mechanical invention which in turn lead to the creation of novel tools and industrial processes. The javelin thrown from the hand becomes the arrow propelled from the bow; the crooked stick used to scratch the earth takes form as the plow; the primitive arts of spinning, weaving, pottery and later of the making of bronze and smelting of iron, afford instances of scientific and mechanical achievements which illustrate the general tenor of economic progress. The sum of the industrial processes and mechanical equipment possessed by any given epoch, constitutes the industrial technique of that epoch; and the stage of advancement reached in general industrial technique determines the form of industrial association into which men will enter in carrying forward the general burden of industry. The particular industrial association or relation thus necessitated by the existing industrial technique becomes the industrial system which forms the foundation or skeleton of the social organization of the age. Thus, at a given period in the development of the technique of industry, specifically, the point at which systematic agriculture became

established, the industrial relation naturally flowing therefrom was that of master and slave, the industrial system was that of chattel slavery, and this system became the foundation of the social order upon which, as a superstructure, all social institutions, including military establishments, forms of government, systems of jurisprudence and of morals, as well as the general customs, habits of thought and temper of the times, were reared. Human society was a slave society. Man lived, for the nonce, in an environment of slavery, in a slave world.

But it is of the very essence of our thesis that industrial technique is never stable, and by its slow advance invalidates at length the very industrial system which it once necessitated. As the industrial base of the social organization shifts the system of industry itself and the elaborate superstructure of social institutions raised upon it become decadent, become the shelter of strange abuses and perversions, the citadel of sinister interests, until, either peacefully through the acquiescence of the dominant class in society, or, more likely, in the turbulent clash of warring classes, the old order topples to its fall, and a new industrial system bringing with it new conceptions of government, of law, of morals, and the like, is erected upon and in conformity

with the altered industrial basis of the social life. Thus, as the increasing populations of Central Asia found themselves unable, by reason of the primitive character of their industrial technique, to support longer their teeming hordes upon the restricted area within their possession, they began that human swarming which for thousands of years poured its barbarian floods across the face of Europe, in one epoch rearing the imperial structure of Roman domination, at another overwhelming the Roman state, obliterating the slave system of antiquity and for causes already enumerated replacing it by the unique device of serfdom and the feudal system. Again, the growth of commerce and industry wrought, as we have seen, the downfall of feudalism and the establishment of modern capitalism, though the change cannot be regarded as complete until the debris of the feudal order which still encumbers modern society be swept away. In similar fashion, even before the change from feudalism to capitalism has been fully accomplished, the unprecedented advance in industrial technique witnessed by the present age is already undermining capitalistic society and emphasizing the growing need of a new industrial system and social order which shall conform to the practical operation and give full play to the manifold

potentialities of modern industry. In the light of this established course of social evolution, we have now to inquire how far Puritanism, as the ethical expression and output of the trading class, exhibits symptoms of decadence along with the capitalistic system of industry of which it is the by-product and support. It is true that while an industrial system remains the practical working form of organized society, its attendant system of morals can never become wholly invalid. They must sink, as they rise, together. But before the hour of doom has sounded, while the edifice of the established order still presents a fair and plausible exterior, soundly based and impressive with the serene majesty of the established fact, the critical eye may yet discern in fissured stone and crumbling mortar infallible signs of the approaching end.

The test of decadence in an industrial system is whether, instead of promoting production, its form has become a hamper upon the productive potentialities of the ever improving industrial technique, thus denying adequate support to the population; in other words, whether it has ceased to feed the people. The test of decadence in a moral system is whether its precepts longer solve the problems and enforce the vital requirements of the time. As the economic basis of

society shifts, presenting new needs and new obligations of social or class conduct, the accepted moral precepts, losing connection with reality, cease to develop, and become indurated, formal, technical and inflexible, just in proportion as they are no longer revivified by practical application to the concerns of daily existence. This process of induration is the earmark of all decadent morality. Accompanying it is an over-careful interpretation, an involved and exacting casuistry, which substitutes for the obvious righteousness of common sense, the morbid refinements and endless niceties of a righteousness which exists only as a parody of life. When the learned dignitaries of the church gravely debated whether a bishop should bless with two fingers extended or with three, the end of feudal morality was in clear view. And similarly, when the Puritanism of today laboriously discusses the proper length of a girl's bathing suit or is appalled at the sin of a Sunday baseball game, the fissures in the fair stonework of the façade are tolerably plain. As the process of induration proceeds along with the divorce of the precept from the actualities of daily living, its observance becomes more and more but a barren formality, an abracadabra the meaning of which has been lost in the mists of antiquity, but the traditional

sanctity of which still obtains. And it is this remaining aroma of sanctity still lingering about the mummified body of ancient virtue which not unnaturally misleads the latter-day devotee into the self-indulgent belief that by continuing in the practice of it he fulfills all moral obligations, leaving him free to act in the new, vital and practical affairs of his own day in whatever unconscionable manner best serves his own selfish interests. Thus an all pervading hollowness and phariseeism comes to mark the passing of a decadent system of ethics. The feudal noble of the seventeenth century whose delicate honor could be cleansed only by the bloodshed of the duel, could nevertheless rack-rent his tenants or enclose the communal lands with no thought of shame. So, today, many a sober Puritan serves God by refusing to enter a theater, and himself by lavishly watering the stock of his favorite corporation. Nor is this sort of phariseeism necessarily self-confessed or malicious. It may very well be that no one is more thoroughly deceived by it than the pharisee himself.

Among the more obvious evidences of Puritan decadence is the modern decline in the practice of the pristine economic virtues of the Puritan code. In the evolution of capitalism, the unprecedented wealth acquired by the trading class

through the exploitation of the workers, has long since rendered the observance of these virtues superfluous so far as the capitalists themselves are concerned. Accumulation, instead of depending on personal effort, now proceeds automatically, and at such a rate that no amount of idleness, extravagance, fatuity or dissipation can materially impede it. Accordingly thrift, frugality, industry, temperance, prudence, simplicity and the rest of the Puritan tenets calculated immediately to further accumulation, are now succeeded by indolence, luxury, ostentation, waste, drunkenness, lechery and the general demoralization and cynical indifference to ethical obligation which limitless unearned wealth and easy security of life inevitably breed. Even the task of the superintendence of industry, the performance of which has ever been the buckler of the capitalist class against all sorts of criticism, is now generally delegated to hired managers whose superior abilities make any interference by the capitalist parasites themselves a blundering impertinence. Tasks of any kind have suffered a depletion of ethical merit just in proportion as they have become unnecessary to successful accumulation. But the economic virtues are as desirable as ever in the working class, since by their practice the workers increase the margin

of possible exploitation to which they can be subjected. Hence, thrift, frugality, industry, temperance, and the like are still eloquently urged upon the proletariat, along with patience, humility, obedience, respect for law, contentment, and the other characteristic moralities of class servility. And as the heavenly guerdon formerly promised to the workers as compensation for moral conduct has at length become so dubious, and as the social and economic gulf between the capitalist class and the working class has become so broad and deep that no mere laborer can hope to bridge it, the modern prize held out as a reward for the cultivation of these and similar virtues is a position of superintendence, a prize which, from the necessities of the case, can be attained by only one in a thousand of the workers, and, of course, only by those who develop a stature and strength, both physical and mental, approximating the heroes of the Grecian myths. So, also, the improvement of the conditions of labor, "welfare work," profit sharing, old age pension schemes, emulation of rival concerns, the fostering of an *esprit de corps*, are all resorted to, along with the parade of a possible superintendency, to stimulate loyalty in the workers, to inspire in them contentment and

gratitude, and to render them more submissive and fruitful subjects of exploitation.

It is only the larger accumulators, however, whose increase in substance has freed them from the economic moralities of the elder Puritanism. The observance of these virtues is still of practical significance to the small accumulators, the petty bourgeoisie or so-called "middle class," particularly that portion of it which, by village or rural residence, is preserved from the eroding, corrupting and modernizing influences of metropolitan existence. The snobbish imitation of superiors which, through the general acceptance of the fiction of political equality, has come to pervade all ranks and classes of our American society, has led the urban middle class to discard to a large degree the Puritan restraints in the hope of being mistaken by the uninitiated for the very rich. Extravagance, ostentation, dissoluteness and feminine idleness have thus come to supplant, with the middle class of the cities, the early Puritan formulas only to a less extent than with the masters of capital themselves. But with the bourgeoisie of the smaller cities and villages, which has lagged behind in the general course of capitalistic evolution, Puritanism, mellowed, indeed, by time and quietude, retains something of its pristine rigor and authority. Here, the more

meager resources, the provincialism, the narrower outlook on life, the feebler impact of the currents of change, conspire to nurture and preserve the Puritan tradition and the temper of its earlier faith. Thrift, prudence, frugality, industry, simplicity are still of service and the normal habit of daily life. The horror of vice and dissipation as implying both moral turpitude and economic waste is still fresh and keen. And the enthusiasm for legislation which shall constrain to virtue, if less unanimous than formerly, is still active enough to give a comfortable sense of civic righteousness. And it is from this haven of the Puritan spirit that the sectaries of the modern city, through the steady shift of population to the great urban centers, find their strength renewed in their precarious conflict with an alien culture, a rationalizing criticism, and the enhancement of personal freedom which the city gives.

All ethical systems prescribe the conduct of the individual, but they may be divided, roughly, into two classes, the individualistic and the social, accordingly as the conduct regulated has to do with the person's private affairs or with his relations toward the group at large. Of these two classes, Puritanism dealt almost exclusively with the individual's conduct of his own personal con-

cerns, remaining quite oblivious to the conception of a direct social obligation. This peculiarity of Puritan ethics arose from the special character of bourgeois accumulation. It began, not as a collective property belonging to the class as a whole, but as an innumerable quantity of separate, private hoards; and it was only indirectly, through the increase of these personal and private savings, that the general class business of accumulation was carried out. The competitive antagonisms is trade and industry of these petty private garnerings of capital, which belonged to the immaturity of the capitalist system and which have now disappeared in monopolistic organization, greatly strengthened the individualistic tendency in morals, as well as in politics and other social institutions. The industrial system, indeed, made society as anti-social as it could well be and remain society at all. All public activities were, and to some extent still are, viewed with mistrust, and that government was deemed the best which governed least. Nor has the ultimate social significance of the capitalistic era, the historic mission which the bourgeoisie was to discharge in the larger drama of racial progress in providing the material equipment for man's mastery over nature, ever been perceived by the capitalist class

itself. Only now, in fact, is it becoming vaguely apparent to the critical opponents of the system. Ignorant, therefore, of the existence of such things as social problems, purposes or obligations, Puritanism blindly yet effectively strove to accomplish an essentially social end, namely, the accumulation of capital, through the regulation of the personal habits and private affairs of the individual members of the trading class. The individualistic point of view thus imposed upon Puritanism, expressed religiously in the doctrines of direct, personal responsibility to God and of personal salvation, a point of view sanctified by centuries of devoted enthusiasm and inwrought into the very fiber of Puritan psychology, becomes the explanation of that ineptitude and pathetic futility with which Puritanism faces the modern world. It can conceive nothing of the individual's responsibility to the public, and on being confronted by a social problem is always hopelessly at sea. It has never had the least understanding of sociology, or of those profound and irresistible economic forces which direct and determine human progress. In the presence of the terrific struggle of contending classes which rends its own social scheme it can only look on aghast, with the pitiful banalities of individual propriety trembling upon its lips. To

this ignorance, and to the unsocial character of Puritan morality, must be attributed the impotence of the evangelical churches in attempting to deal with the vital questions of today. These churches still preach the effete gospel of individual regeneration to a world corrupted to the core by social injustice and clamoring for social reconstruction. And they wonder that the world is not saved! The ritualistic churches, trained in the compact social organization of feudalism, are in a better condition to grapple with social problems, as their larger social activities amply testify. As the turmoil of business competition has lapsed into the calm of monopolistic production, and as bourgeois property, with the prevalence of the corporate form of business enterprise, has taken on more and more a collective character, it might naturally be expected that the moral code of the trading class would show an increasing appreciation of social values. To some extent this expectation has been realized. Some of the more flagrant commercial abuses have received a moral condemnation, and a higher standard of business integrity and a keener sense of civic duty have been insisted upon. But, for the most part, the limitations of the individualistic point of view, so deeply ingrained in Puritan thought, have proven too

strong to permit of any substantial alteration in the Puritan outlook, and the change in the economic structure of bourgeois production has been reflected in Puritan morality, not as a definite recognition of the ethical import of social relations, so much as a dimly perceived lack and vacuity in the Puritan system which its intellectual custodians have not had sufficient ingenuity to fill.

But while the failure of Puritanism to "solve the problems and enforce the vital requirements" of today sufficiently testifies to its decadence, it has not been without at least one heroic effort to deal with a modern social problem, an effort, however, which has only illustrated its inherent incapacity for such a task. The advent of machine industry with its persistent and exhausting drain upon the vitality of the workers stimulated to an unusual degree the consumption of spirituous liquors. At the same time the exigencies of capitalistic exploitation required a high and ever-increasing degree of personal efficiency among the members of the proletariat. Working-class inebriety became a serious menace to capitalistic profits. To combat the drink evil amongst the poor was a prime necessity for the exploiting rich. To this so congenial service Puritanism responded with gusto. The original injunction

of temperance, which meant merely moderation in the use of all creature comforts, proving to be not sufficiently drastic for the new reform, was altered, so far as intoxicants were concerned, to the novel virtue of total abstinence. True to its individualistic temper, Puritanism began its labors by the attempt to reform the individual drunkard. The unfortunate victims of the drink habit were importuned to take the total abstinence pledge, and on doing so were decorated with a blue ribbon. Great movements to this end were inaugurated, eloquent advocates preached the new sumptuary precept, widespread enthusiasm greeted the new "temperance" crusade. In process of time, however, the absence of permanent results constrained the Puritan cohorts to the conviction that the method of reforming the individual drunkard was inadequate. Old drunkards lapsed again with regrettable promptness into bad habits, while the constant manufacture of new inebriates nullified such success as was achieved. Having definitely grappled with a social problem, the impotence of individualistic ethics became disconcertingly apparent. Dimly recognizing the social character of the evil, Puritanism now transferred its attack from the individual inebriate to the liquor traffic, from the drunkard to the saloon. The

"temperance crusade" gave way to the "prohibition movement." But still remaining ignorant of what constitute the terms of a social problem, still preserving with undiminished fatuity its individualistic outlook, Puritanism merely transmuted the personal prohibition against drinking by the drunkard, to the personal prohibition against selling liquor by the saloon keeper. And the old lust for the legal sanction, the enforcement of morality by physical force, reasserting itself, Puritanism clamored for the destruction of the liquor traffic by law. But in this demand Puritanism came into conflict with its own economic base, the business interests of the bourgeoisie. And notwithstanding a disposition on the part of other lines of capitalistic enterprise to make the liquor business serve as a scapegoat for the manifold iniquities of the system, the vast investments involved in the production of intoxicants have successfully resisted the Puritan onslaught and brought it to an *impasse*. The habit of wild carousals is, indeed, disappearing; but habitual drinking and the *per capita* consumption of liquor steadily increase, and must continue to do so until the unbearable strain which modern industry and business put upon human endurance is relieved. To study a social question as such, to inquire into the environment which

leads men to drink to excess, to lessen the long hours of exhausting toil which weaken vitality, to supplement the insufficiency of food and clothing which makes artificial stimulation a practical necessity, to bring color and ease and gaiety into lives corroded with care and drab with the monotony of impoverished misery—none of these things have yet occurred to the anxious minds of the Puritan zealots who assail the drink evil.

But though we may stigmatize Puritanism as a decadent system, unadapted to modern conditions and incapable of meeting the issues of the present, there remain certain superficial symptoms of persisting vitality which should receive examination. One of the most notable of these is the extent to which Puritanism has succeeded in impressing itself upon legislation, at least in the United States. Unlike the feudal nobility, the capitalist class is in the main far too deeply immersed in private affairs to take personal part in the actual administration of government. Yet for its own protection and preservation it must control the machinery of government, to the practical exclusion of the working class. Add to this the fact that bourgeois governments are more or less popular in form, and the problem of governmental control is not so easy of solution. It is met, in the first instance, by restric-

tion of the suffrage by educational, residential and property qualifications; by the systematic deluding of the electorate through the manipulation of the sources of popular information, the creating of meaningless party labels and enthusiasms, and the solemn warnings and adjurations of the intellectual retainers of capitalism; by fomenting national and racial animosities; and, latterly, by direct economic coercion of the voter. In the second place, resort is had to bribery of legislators and governmental officials. Bribery thus becomes an integral feature of our system of government. But bribery cannot be avowed. on the contrary must always remain clandestine, because of the fear of popular indignation. The most elementary prudence requires that it be ostensibly condemned and an appropriate punishment fixed for it. Now, nothing furnishes a more available cloak for legislative corruption than the simultaneous passage of Puritanical laws. No scandalous "deal" with the "business interests" but can best be masked by an anti-saloon or Sabbath observance law. No venal legislator but is thirsting for a vindication through his vote in support of an anti-cigarette measure or a bill making "crap-shooting" a felony. In this way the statute books become loaded with Puritanical legislation which there is

no attempt or expectation of enforcing, but which enables the Senator Sorghums of our state capitals to proudly defy criticism of their records. "Surely, that bribery story must be false. Did not the good man vote to close all the moving-picture shows on Sunday?" Indeed, no "Praise-God Barebones" of the Cromwellian revolution can have surpassed in fulsome devotion to Puritan ideals the American legislator in whose capacious pocket slumbers the pecuniary reward of the betrayal of the people's trust.

The show of life lent to Puritan morality as a covering for or a reaction from the corruption of legislation is, of course, spurious and misleading. But within the last decade or two there has taken place in American life a real recrudescence of true Puritan sentiment due to the momentary eruption into politics of the petty bourgeoisie or middle class, under the guise of various "insurgent," "good government" and "reform" movements. This political activity of the middle class has been compelled by the ever increasing pressure upon it of adverse economic conditions. Fundamentally, its tribulation arises from the fact that it still employs an archaic industrial technique, adheres to obsolete business methods, is, in a word, the pensioner of a dying industry. The nice economies and high efficiency of the vast,

intensely modern, perfectly equipped industries and enterprises of the larger capitalism are impossible to it, and competition with these giant instrumentalities of production is for the middle class merely a lingering process of extinction. Add to this the increasing resistence to unlimited exploitation manifested by the working class, and the middle-class producer not inappropriately prefigures himself as macerated between the upper millstone of the trusts and the nether millstone of the labor unions. Moreover, as private monopolies attain to an effective control of the market, they put in practice a monopolistic overcharge which operates as a true exploitation of the petty bourgeois, and which directly depletes his already too meager capital whenever his needs compel the purchase of the monopolized product; as, for instance, when in the capacity of a shipper he must buy transportation of the great railroad consolidations. A steady syphoning of his resources from his pockets to the coffers of the larger capitalism, the consequent persistent loss of economic position, the impairment of his standard of living, the dark portent of bankruptcy, the dread of sinking into the unwholesome waters of proletarian misery—all these conspire to inflame the little capitalist with a desperate resolve to dare and do, even though

he have no very definite idea of what is to be done. In this frame of mind, with a true bourgeois confidence in the omnipotence of law, he betakes himself into the political arena. Feeling that the political issue is, for the moment, of even greater urgency than the personal conduct of his business, he enters politics in person rather than through a political agent. Here he finds opposed to him the political agents of the larger capitalism, who as old party politicians and office holders, as members of a political ring or machine, or as lobbiests and legislative corruptionists, serve the interests of the great overlords of capitalistic enterprise. Bribery, at times coarse and open, more often subtle and indirect, he discovers to be the approved method by which his large competitors, now become his exploiters, retain their mastery of government. At this point, he becomes a purifer of politics, a smasher of political machines, an advocate of "good" government, a relentless prosecutor of bribe givers as well as of bribe takers. Later, having gained some temporary success, he seeks by various reactionary laws to smash the trusts, to restore competition, to modernize, in short, by legal enactment his archaic and obsolete industrial processes. Also, he propounds various ultra-democratic measures, such as direct legislation,

the recall, and so on, with the object of restoring government to the "people," meaning thereby his own section of the capitalist class. Steeped in the ideology of capitalism, believing in it and its economics, morals, laws, with a faith far more implicit than that which he accords his religious creed, himself an archeological remnant of the infancy of the capitalist world, and yet appallingly and even wilfully ignorant of the true structure, development and destiny of the capitalistic system, the petty bourgeois can no more conceive of a social reconstruction in which private capital (and with it all temptation to bribery) should disappear, in which his own problems should vanish, in which humanity, emancipated and exalted, should stand supreme master of its material habitat, than can the fish in the depths of the salt sea conceive of the world of forest boughs musical with the cries of a thousand birds.

The small capitalist, or middle, class is, as we have seen, peculiarly the repositary, at this time, of Puritan morality, as well as the exponent of the Puritan temperament. With the advent of this element in politics comes, perforce, a stream of Puritan legislation and regulation, through which the "reformer," with perfect sincerity and a childlike ingenuousness, seeks to improve soci-

ety. Believing that the course of human progress can be turned back by law, it is not unnatural that he should believe that people can be made virtuous by law. And, not daring to assail the vices of his "betters," it is also natural, as well as vividly illustrative of the Puritan habit of mind, that the ban should fall most relentlessly upon the lean and meager pleasures of the poor. The revival of Puritanism incidental to the intrusion of the petty bourgeoisie into politics can last no longer than the phenomenon itself is attended with some measure of practical success. And that its success must necessarily be ephemeral is decreed by the very conditions which called the movement into being. The ceaseless absorption of the property of the middle class and smaller capitalists by the larger capitalism, persistently impairs the political power and prestige of the victims and renders them politically impotent. Property is power, and loss of property spells the inevitable ruin of political hopes. It would be an unheard of anomaly, did an economically dying faction progress to political supremacy. With the recession of middle-class insurgency will end the brief episode of Puritan reanimation. Two vast and somber hosts, the larger capitalism and the working class, will then confront each other, the first of which has

lost its Puritan heritage, the second of which has never assimilated Puritan standards or ideals.

A further temporary reinforcement of Puritanism comes with the entry of women into politics and public affairs. In the early days of the bourgeoisie, woman was still, as under feudalism, the home and housekeeper, was still engaged in the labor of those household arts which, by since gravitating to the factory in obedience to the improvement of industrial technique, have compelled women to follow them into wage industry. As a member of the family of which the male was the head, woman received her support through him, and, notwithstanding the great desert of her labor, was thus placed in a position of dependency upon the male, with whose fortunes her own livelihood was bound up. In this position her entire economic interest was embodied in the observance of Puritan standards by the male, as she was thus assured of kindness, fidelity and, above all, adequate economic support. Under the tutelage of this situation, the feminine mind became an immense and inexhaustible reservoir of Puritan preconceptions. That men should be industrious, prudent, frugal, thrifty, and so on, and that they should shun those vices and dissipations which impaired their economic efficiency, became the Alpha and Omega

of feminine morality. Women thus became the moral monitors of the male sex, from which fact has arisen the popular illusion of their superior virtue. As women have followed their jobs from the kitchen into the factory and have thus gained economic independence of the male (though substituting therefor the general class dependence of the workers upon the proprietors) they have borne with them all of their Puritan prepossessions, and, as their new found part in industry leads them inevitably to press into politics and demand the full panoply of citizenship, they still carry along this Puritan morality, which now becomes their guide in their fulfillment of the novel civic functions and obligations they insist upon undertaking. It is only as the new industrial circumstances in which woman finds herself gradually school her to a recognition of the paramount importance to her of her interests as a wage worker, over her lost and abandoned interests as a feminine dependent of the male, that her Puritanism may be expected to become subordinate to the larger, more fundamental and more urgent social and economic issues upon the successful solution of which her own fate has at length come to depend.

As the test of the decadence of a moral system is whether it longer solves the problems and

enforces the vital requirements of the time, so an evidence of continuing vitality is found in the ability to recognize and compel obedience to new duties which develop in the course of social growth. Besides the invention of the virtue of total abstinence from intoxicants, there is one other instance in which the trading class has devised a new virtue, or, rather, has attempted to revive a very old one, in the endeavor to buttress its position and prolong the exploitation of the working class. This revamped virtue is that of patriotism, the labor of inculcating which Puritanism has cheerfully undertaken. Patriotism is not a distinctively Puritan virtue. On the contrary, the early record of the trading class was one of persistent and eventually triumphant rebellion against constituted authority both in church and state. But the seizure of political power by the bourgeoisie has, in modern times, transformed that class into the due object of patriotic devotion, while the overmastering need of foreign markets and the increasing solidarity and growing discontent of the working class have made a revival of militarism, which always attends on patriotic fervor, of the utmost importance to capitalistic profits. The irresistible advance of the capitalist system of industry has transformed the civilized world into a vast fac-

tory, in which national distinctions have been all but obliterated. The seemingly interminable combats for territorial acquisition which disturbed the middle ages have at length ended in what is a relatively fixed delimitation of national boundaries. The easy and rapid methods of communication of our day have facilitated acquaintance, understanding and sympathy between the most diverse peoples. Group antagonisms grow daily less and less. On the other hand, with the spread of capitalist industry, the antagonism between capitalist and proletarian, between proprietor and worker, between employer and employe, which is inherent in the system, becomes of ever increasing moment, sweeps over national boundaries, brushes aside racial distinctions, and assumes a world character. Capitalists and proletarians alike have effected international organizations. As national and racial animosities pale before the rapidly intensifying issues of the international class struggle, the desirability of keeping them artificially alive in the interest of the proprietors has become clear to the astute minds of the intellectual retainers of the capitalist class. By reviving the dead or dying sentiments of national and racial hostility, by preaching a flatulent, jingo patriotism, the workers of the world may still be divided and disorganized,

may be set to the barren labor of destroying each other in armed strife, may be fired by a spirit of loyalty to flag and country which are, for all practical purposes, the oligarchs of capital themselves. That this attempted resurrection of militarism and the aimless slaughter of innocent millions which it implies are utterly antithetical both to the letter and spirit of the gospel of Jesus, has not prevented the Puritan sectaries from touting it enthusiastically. Even the corrupting of the minds of children is complacently undertaken. Laws are enacted requiring the national colors to be displayed over school houses; churches organize their little ones into military cadets; the fires of racial jealousies are energetically fanned; conservative newspapers contain dark hints of coming wars; nations vie with each other in the scandalous waste of useless armaments; military establishments are diligently fostered. In this last item the capitalist class reaps, also, an incidental but very real and practical advantage. Large and efficient military establishments are of use in stamping out the flames of proletarian rebellion at home. Soldiers are valuable in case of strikes.

On the whole, therefore, while there are unmistakable proofs of ineptitude and decay in the texture of the Puritan system, we cannot say of

it that it is wholly moribund. It still seems fairly clear that the last degeneracy, the putrescence which follows dissolution, has not yet been reached by Puritan morality. This closing stage in the annals of any ethical code is arrived at when the general corruption which attends a period of social decadence rises till it engulfs the very custodians of morality themselves, who, becoming wholly and confessedly venal, proceed to barter righteousness to the desiring purchaser as any marketable commodity might be sold. The basic function of morality, that of restraining the individual in the interest of social or class welfare, is thus abandoned for the sordid lure of a price. The individual may buy his moral justification as he buys his clothes. Such a point was reached in the history of feudal morality when the sale of indulgences roused the flaming denunciations of Luther and ushered in the protestant reformation in Germany. Such a point had previously been reached in classic history when the predictions of the Roman augurs became a matter of purchase and of jest. Much of Puritan morality has been discarded by the *haut noblesse* of capitalism. The individualistic point of view of Puritanism has been antiquated by the increasingly co-operative character of industry and the social problems it presents. There

is a widespread indifference to all matters of religious and moral significance which makes it doubtful if the approbation of the custodians of the accepted morality would even be deemed worth purchasing. But there is no very cogent evidence that it has yet become the subject of individual sale. And still, in view of the sober assertion that seven men in the United States control the industrial and commercial activities of ninety millions of people, the inquiry how long Puritanism can resist the insidious yet overwhelming potency of concentrated wealth may well give concern to those who are interested in preserving its integrity.

CHAPTER V

PURITANISM AND ASCETICISM

The history of human progress has been the history of the slow triumph of intelligence over its material environment. This triumph is won through the study of material things, their constitution and their laws, and the devising of means to modify and control them; in other words, through scientific discovery and mechanical invention. But for countless ages, this direct contest between man and nature was in a measure postponed for the more important work of peopling the globe. During the vast tribal migrations which accomplished this latter purpose, and the state of constant warfare which accompanied them, but little opportunity was allowed for that settled culture which alone could form the basis of scientific research. It is not surprising, therefore, if the more ambitious minds, those in which enthusiasm for intellectual and spiritual progress burned strongest, should attempt to construct what might be termed a short cut to the complete victory of human intelligence over its material encasements. To this end, various occult and mystical philosophies were

framed, trances and ecstasies practiced, and, what is more to our immediate purpose, a systematic warfare entered into against all bodily comforts and desires. The body, which is the most intimate material phenomenon the mind encounters, and which fixes those primary physical limitations which it is the business of culture to transcend, became also the type and personification of that vast and vague hostility which it was felt material nature expressed towards the spirit of man. Spiritual, and also intellectual, progress was therefore conceived as made against the body, in despite and defiance of it. Man split himself, in his own thought, into a dualism of flesh and spirit, and "the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh." Certain bodily desires, indeed, such as those for food and sleep, could not be wholly set at naught without incurring the penalty of personal extinction. Yet, by fasts, vigils and the like, their satisfaction could be successfully minimized. Of the physical appetites which might be entirely suppressed without costing life, by far the most powerful was that of sex. Hence the contest resolved itself largely into a battling against the sexual impulse. Celibacy, and the suppression of all sexual desires, became the pathway to spiritual excellence.

Asceticism is very old. In the dim barbarisms of the past, before specialization had occurred in the field of intellectual endeavor, when all matters of intellectual pursuit were committed indiscriminately to the priests, the practices of asceticism were merged with religious rites, and religion has ever since, as the custodian of spiritual things, regarded asceticism with favorable eyes. Particularly has this been the case with those reform or revolutionary religious cults which arise as reactions to the general profligacy of the times. Thus primitive Christianity, and again Puritanism, representing reactions against eras of moral license and social corruption, were powerfully impregnated with the ascetic spirit. In the case of Puritanism, moreover, asceticism found a sound economic basis in the splendid aid it rendered to capitalistic accumulation. Indeed, nascent capitalism must have been ascetic if for no other reason than the necessity of facilitating the accumulation of property. The virtue of frugality was even more an economic imperative than a religious discipline. And in this fruitful soil of economic necessity the seeds of the ancient ascetic teachings bourgeoned luxuriantly. With, however, this difference. In the older and, one must believe, wiser religions, such as Buddhism and feudal Christianity, special

provision was made for the ascetic by the establishment of monkish orders. The practice of asceticism was not a popular obligation, but only a special means of grace. Only those whose "vocation" it was were constrained to undertake its self-immolations. But with the sects of the protestant reformation the case was otherwise. In the first place, the exigencies of capitalist accumulation required the practice of the ascetic virtues by all members of the rising bourgeoisie. In the second place, the monkish orders had become among the strongest buttresses of the feudal church, and in its historic antagonism to that church protestantism was constrained to denounce and repudiate all monkish institutions. Hence it came about, for the first time in human history, that asceticism became of universal obligation. All were constrained to practice abnegation of the body, for the double purpose of saving the soul and of saving money. The perversions of asceticism having become universally binding, the only escape from a perverted world back to a normal life was through sin, which thus became healthy, normal and peculiarly alluring. All that was glad, all that was gay, colors that pleased the eye, songs that caressed the ear, the idle dalliance of love, the wine cup and the kiss, fine raiment and delicate food, the jewels

of earth and the heavenly jewels of art, everything that made up the web and woof of the joy of life, became sinful because involving the expenditure of money and of time which could beget money, and because pandering to the lusts of that supreme enemy of the soul, the sadly abused body. Pious existence became a somber gray, a monotone of industry and frugality, varied only by auto-hypnotic religious ecstasies and frenzies more suggestive of bedlam than of a sane and happy earth. It is no great wonder that, put to the test, the world as a whole has chosen sin.

The parsimony of the trading class, which, at the beginning, was its chief method of accumulating wealth, had already dictated the observance of chastity as a virtue. The ascetic discipline so eagerly welcomed by Puritanism, and which had for its most important object the utter eradication of the sexual impulse, finding itself measurably justified by the economic needs of the bourgeoisie, flamed into the most lurid, fantastic and absurd excesses in the matter of sex repression. Not content with condemning sexual irregularities, all natural and perfectly normal sex instincts and desires were placed under ban. Sex itself became evil. Anything which suggested sex was of the devil. The

beautiful processes of generation and birth became disgraceful and degrading, and the divine handiwork was unhesitatingly ascribed to the machinations of Satan. This attitude required that any and everything in which the most prurient fancy could find the remotest suggestion of sex should be prohibited. The immemorial amusement of dancing, once dignified as a religious rite but which was already under suspicion as involving a waste of time and energy which might be devoted to toil, was discovered to pander in some way to carnal desires and was summarily forbidden. All matters of study or reflection which touched upon the subject of sex became taboo, and could not be mentioned. All exercises of the creative imagination were subject to censorship and condemnation. That a man should kiss his wife on Sunday was accounted a crime. And as the prohibitions multiplied, so, by a familiar psychological law, did the suggestions (since prohibition is itself a suggestion) until Puritanism found itself involved in a welter of pruderies and pruriencies which made it the most astonishing spectacle, not, indeed, of sexual indulgence, but of sexual viciousness the world has ever seen.

With a surplus of material necessities at hand, arising either from his own labor or the exploi-

tation of others, man finds in the period of consequent leisure he enjoys, opportunity for obedience to those desires other than his animal wants the possession of which sets him apart from other animals as destined to spiritual growth and excellence. Among these are the love of beauty and the instinct of craftsmanship, the motives which lead to artistic creation. In this material surplus, therefore, lies the economic foundation of art. But it was precisely upon this surplus of material wealth that the bourgeoisie laid hands for the purpose of capitalistic accumulation. From the point of view of the trading class, the devotion of this surplus to the sustenance of art was sheer waste. Science, indeed, drew likewise upon the same surplus for support, but science the bourgeoisie needed in its industrial and commercial enterprises and was willing to pay for. Not so with art. Art was needless, was hence an extravagance, a luxury, the costly product of energies that had much better be spent in material production. Puritanism, therefore, looked askance at art. But point and venom was given to this latent hostility by the ascetic content of Puritanism. Without essaying a formal definition of art, it may be said that its chief business is to create beauty by imitating, repeating or harmonizing the lavish beauties of

the world of phenomena in which we live. Now, in all this phenomenal world which is the subject matter of artistic effort, next to the necessity of preserving the individual life and the economic facts attendant thereon, by far the most important things to all vital organisms, including the human race, are the function of reproduction and the attendant facts of sex. Hence it is manifest that no art can discharge its sacred function, can justify itself or be worthy of the name, which does not fully and amply recognize sex, with all its beautiful and terrible implications. For Puritanism, however, such recognition is of the devil, and all art which suggests or admits the possibility of sex is of diabolic origin. Sculpture, painting, poetry, fiction, music, all were either emasculated to suit the Puritan taste, or, better still, were incontinently damned without a hearing. The more truly they mirrored nature, the more thoroughly were they reprobated. The assumed innocence of sexless infancy became a standard of moral purity by which all artistic values were measured and to which adult men and women were expected to conform. Fiction must be written with an eye single to the blushing cheek of Thackeray's terrible "young person." Statues and paintings depicting the human form must be duly draped

to escape the anathema of Puritan criticism. Music was confined to psalm-singing, and poetry to the dismal resonances of Paradise Lost. But while Puritanism viewed all art with disapproval, it was against the theater that its animosities were particularly directed. Here the condemnation was complete and irrevocable, for not only must the drama, as the mirror of human life, feature sex so strongly, but the art of the theater is, of all the arts, economically the most expensive to support. With the fabulous accumulations of wealth which the trading class of today has achieved, and its consequent indulgence in a more lavish expenditure for non-economic ends, it has altered to a great degree its attitude toward the arts, even toward the drama, and has become their fairly liberal patron; and though no truly great and noble art can be coddled to maturity by select patronage but must draw its nurture from the fecund bosom of that mighty mother, the people's self, still the paralyzing effect of the earlier Puritan hostility has been in large measure overcome. Now and then, indeed, a faint though acrimonious protest against the stage still rises from some evangelical pulpit, but without meeting with serious consideration or popular response. The woeful business of capitalistic accumulation having been at length com-

pleted, the deep instincts of the human heart for beauty and for skill in labor reassert themselves, with resplendent promise of the achievement which the new stores of wealth make possible in art.

And asceticism itself is slowly yielding to a healthy sanity. For with the increase of scientific knowledge, and the mastery over nature which discovery and invention increasingly confer, is dawning the perception that man's material environment is not to be conquered by bodily abnegation and abuse, but by the fairer means of investigation of nature's secrets, of study and experiment, by which understanding of her laws may be gained, control over her forces secured, and insight reached as to the ultimate meaning of man's existence. Labors of this sort are only hindered, not helped, by the ascetic discipline. For the more a normal bodily appetite is thwarted or repressed, the more insistent it becomes, the more attention it compels, and the larger part it plays in the total life experience of the individual. Asceticism thus defeats itself. Instead of freeing the spirit from the shackles of bodily desires and limitations it but strengthens them and welds them more firmly. Not until asceticism is carried to a point where it exerts a definitely lethal effect, where the life of the body

is substantially impaired, where, in short, the ascetic becomes a quasi-suicide, does it accomplish its end of minimizing the strength of the physical appetites and needs. And then only in proportion as it has worked the death of the body. Surely of all the weird creations of barbarian fancy, of all errors into which the fathomless ignorance of nature has led mankind, the belief that excellence of any sort could be attained by the defeat of life, by the refusal of life's experiences, by the breaking and marring of the exquisite functions of physical existence which have been built up through eons of nature's slow evolutionary processes, is the most strange. And as it is the most strange so, in all rational thought, must it be accounted the most evil. For unless philosophic pessimism is right and creation itself is evil, there can plainly be no greater wickedness than deliberately to set oneself against the course and majesty of natural development. Nor can there be any greater impertinence of the finite intellect than thus to deny the validity of what nature herself has ordained. For those to whom life is good, and earth is fair, and the travail of the phenomenal universe is justified, asceticism must ever rank as the supreme blasphemy.

In our own day, where the western edge of the American continent dips beneath the warm green waters of the Pacific, is being completed that mighty pilgrimage upon which, from their ancestral home in Central Asia, the Aryan races, ages ago, before the era of recorded history, set forth toward the empty and alluring West. Begun on foot, or with the laborious ox-cart, this vast migration, sweeping over Europe and America, is being completed with the steamship, the steam railroad, the trolley and automobile. In its course, great civilizations have risen, flourished and decayed, industrial progress has again and again refashioned the Western world, religions and philosophies have waxed and waned, and, withal, a marvelous store of culture, of scientific advancement and mechanical triumph, has been won as a permanent possession of the race. In this long conquest of the virgin lands, the struggle to subdue to human service the endless, mysterious forest, the forbidding mountain chain, malignant swamp and tempestuous sea, was borne by hardy adventurous spirits whose grim toil left neither leisure nor fruitage sufficient to support a cultural development beyond their primitive needs. Only in the more settled communities to the eastward, where the period of frontier struggle had been outlived and

where increasing wealth and broadening commerce had laid the foundation of leisure and intellectual opportunity, could science, art, literature, invention, philosophy grow to commanding heights. In any given period, therefore, the advancing frontier of Aryan migration has been compelled to look backward toward the East for light and knowledge. While the territorial progress has been westward, intellectual and spiritual progress has been won in the East, and having been first achieved there reaches the West later as an importation. Thus the civilization and enlightenment of Greece was drawn from Egyptian and Assyrian sources, the culture of Rome came from Greece, that of Spain and Gaul from Rome, that of Latin American from France and Spain. Similarly, Northern Europe drew its culture from Rome and medieval Italy, and transmitted it to Anglo-Saxon America, where it spreads ever from east to west. Now, the true antidote to Puritanism, both as a formal code of conduct and as a spiritual bias and deformity, is precisely this scientific comprehension of nature and of human history, and its concomitant philosophical illumination, which culture brings. Not in license, not in abnormal indulgence of the appetites or unrestrained practice of the vices which Puritanism condemns, is to be found the

true corrective of asceticism and of the Puritan ordering of life. These but breed Puritanical reactions, which aggravate the fundamental ignorance and evil. Only in the superior wisdom which correctly appraises the worth of the body, which divines the true intent of nature, which perceives the ultimate worth and strives for the sacred fulfillment of joyous, resurgent, all-victorious life, can the grim distortions, the dark agonies, of the Puritanical and ascetic obsessions find solvent and healing. And this superior wisdom, this culture and illumination, arise first in the East, while Puritanism, and the Puritan habit and temper, linger in the West—in America rather than in Europe, in the country rather than in the city, in the minds of the elder generation schooled in the narrow ignorance of age, rather than in the aspiring candor of youth. And the fear of youth, of what it may adventure and of what it may determine for itself, is, like the fear of enlightenment, a characteristic of the decadent morality.

Nor can the true Puritan be reached by criticism. As the custodian of the secret of holiness, the seeker after heavenly glory, though his feet be torn and bruised by the flints and thorns of the narrow way, to admit criticism of method or final aim would be to admit defeat through

the fathomless tragedy of misdirected effort. Only great souls could have the courage to do this, and great souls are no longer Puritans. It cannot be supposed, therefore, that the ethical creed of Puritanism will ever be voluntarily submitted by its present day adherents to critical revision. Nor even that the inveterate habit of its attempted imposition upon others will ever be abandoned by them. Only can we hope that the number of these adherents will grow ever less and less until Puritanism ceases to be a factor in modern life, has, indeed, given full place to a newer and more perfect moral system. Not to futile argument with the prepossessions of age and provincialism, nor to a criticism which must fall pointless before the unassailable armour of self-righteousness, can we look for emancipation, but rather to youth, to the East, to the dawn.

CHAPTER VI

PURITANISM AND THE PROLETARIAT

As in the heart of the feudal world the trading class gradually arose, bringing with it a new industrial system, new social forms and new moral conceptions, so in the modern world of capitalism, born of the capitalist system itself and growing with its growth, a new industrial and social class arises, bearing with it new ideas of social organization, new aims, new ideals, the harbingers of capitalistic overthrow. This new class is the proletariat—the working class, not in its broad historic aspect, but as modified to the peculiar forms of capitalistic exploitation. The chattel slave had, in his day, been property, and as property a reciprocal obligation existed between him and his master that he should labor, indeed, but that he should also receive support. Even when incapacitated from labor his right to support persisted and constituted for him an assurance of access to the means of life, the semblance of a property right. With the serf, this assurance of access to the means of production and the consequent certainty of a livelihood was even greater and more secure. The serf was

not only, in a qualified degree, property, but as a condition of his status he also had property. If the serf went hungry it was only because there was famine in the land, never because of some intricate maladjustment of his social relations which cut him off from food in a time of plenty. But when, for purposes of capitalist industry, the serf was "freed," the chief practical result of this freedom was that he was stripped, that is, "freed" in a decidedly sinister sense, from precisely this sure access to the means of production and his consequent security of livelihood. Stripped of property rights, "freed" from the land that was their guaranty of a living, the serf and peasant assumed that propertiless character which marked their entire severance from the means of production and constituted them true proletarians. Henceforth "free" labor could live only at the mercy of some employer and on such terms as the employer chose to grant. The new capitalist class, monopolizing all the instrumentalities of production and engrossing all opportunities of employment, stood, an insurmountable barrier, between the propertiless worker and the means of life, through which he could pass only in accordance with the terms of the "free" wage contract dictated by the employer. To this contract he must submit or starve. The

shackles of implacable economic necessity held him bound in the toils of the new slavery far more firmly than the iron chains which clanked upon the limbs of the chattel slave. These might be broken and escaped. Economic necessity, the gnawings of hunger, the chill of winter winds, cannot be escaped.

Torn from the soil, hurled in vast masses into the new urban centers of production by the exigent demands of industry, the "freed" laborers found themselves compacted into a ghastly federation of misery by the sheer force of the novel industrial processes. For the factory system and the later machine industry required "hands," not the single deft pair of the individual craftsman, but hands in multitude, carrying forward in a collective mass the complex processes of production, so that the men themselves became at length symbolized as "hands." Propertiless, cut off from independent resources, individually helpless under the will of the "boss," the very coercion of their impotence and wretchedness forced upon these "freed" laborers the principle of mutual association and aid. This principle, which, more than any other, far more than the famed "struggle for existence," has been the dynamic of evolutionary progress, is always the ultimate refuge of those whose case is des-

perate. For the proletariat it is the secret of salvation. Manifesting itself in the trade union, in co-operative industry, and, politically, in the international socialist movement, it forms the basis of that strength, the source of that education, the inspiration of that devotion, which are looked to to attain the final emancipation of the working class from its age long bondage. And in the social reconstruction which shall proclaim the accomplishment of that emancipation, it is, again, this principle which shall form the framework and guide the destinies of the new society. Nor will the aim of this new society be like that of any previous order of civilization. No longer will the social purpose lie in the accumulation of wealth or the maintenance of class dominance, but rather in a conscious, intelligent collaboration with nature in the long upward trend of evolutionary development toward the ideal of human perfection. How little significance for this new-visioned proletariat the old morality may have, is manifest.

The economic virtues which formed the substance of Puritan morality depicted with entire accuracy the class interests of the bourgeoisie, and in a larger way were consonant with the historic purpose of accumulation, that sad but necessary episode in human progress, which the

annals of that class divulge. But in a narrower and more concrete sense, from the proletarian standpoint, these virtues were not virtues at all, but most dangerous and pernicious vices. The reason is simple. The wealth which these virtues helped the bourgeoisie to gain, was wealth accumulated from the unrecompensed labor of the proletariat. Thrift, frugality, abstinence, prudence, industry, simplicity, when practiced by the worker, redounded not at all to his benefit but only enriched his master. Each of these, representing the deprivation of material necessities and comforts, the consequent impairment of vitality, and the sacrifice of pleasure, ease and gladness, and of intellectual and spiritual growth, was, for the worker a gratuitous self-abnegation the profit of which, whether present or remote, lay in the coffer of his employer. For by the practice of these "virtues" the worker voluntarily lowered his standard of living, thus inviting a reduction of wages—an invitation which the master enthusiastically accepted. Selling his labor in a highly competitive market in which the lowest bidder got the job, the worker had no means of keeping the profit of these virtues for himself. For him any lessening of consumption, any sacrific of leisure, was a complete and irreparable loss. That here and there an

exceptionally shrewd and capable worker succeeded, by the practice of these virtues, in realizing a small secret hoard by which he was eventually able to lift himself out of his class into the ranks of capital, argues nothing here, since we are now concerned not with the exception but the rule. And the rule is that the practice of these virtues was and is an obvious and indisputable detriment to the working class. Nor is the case helped by the fact that in the abstract, and apart from the collisions of antagonistic class interests, certain of these virtues might, if not pressed to excess, be good, or be matters of ethical indifference. The value of virtues must be estimated, not by their abstract content, but by their practical effect when operating in society as it is. Nor, again, is it material that the free lands of the frontier, or the trade union, or the unexampled productivity of modern methods of production, have tended to modify the rigor of the "iron law" of wages, or to elevate in some degree the laborer's standard of living. It still remains true that the practice of the Puritan economic virtues by the laborer amounts to a voluntary relinquishment, *pro tanto,* of that standard. For the laborer, under the circumstances of capitalistic exploitation, these economic "virtues" are wholly evil.

But if the economic virtues of Puritanism are pernicious to the worker, the servile virtues especially designed for his guidance and correction, are deadly. That the propertiless, impoverished proletarian, condemned to a life of devitalizing physical drudgery and intellectual blight and disintegration, should be taught patience, humility, contentment, is surely absurd enough. That he should believe and follow such teachings is monstrous. Yet the vast and crucial importance to the bourgeoisie of the practice of these virtues by the workers is plain enough, and the industry, skill and adroitness with which they have been inculcated by press and pulpit and school, even while arousing indignation, challenges admiration. One of the latest and most thoroughly characteristic measures devised for the propagation of these virtues is the "boy scout" movement, where, under pretense of getting the pale, anemic children of the city workers out into the woods and fields, the old anesthetics of loyalty, reverence, obedience, and the rest are duly adminis tered. For the proletarian, each particular one in the long catalogue of the servile virtues—patience, humility, contentment, loyalty, reverence, obedience, respect for law, the hope of reward after death—is a most contemptible, demoralizing and destructive vice. Each one is the dastardly

betrayal of every interest, whether of person or of class, which the worker can possess. Every instinct of self-preservation, of love of family, of class solidarity, demands the repudiation of this base, treacherous and ridiculous ethic. For the worker, not patience but a consuming impatience with wrong and injustice, not humility but defiance, not contentment but burning discontent, not loyalty to the employer or constituted authority but loyalty only to class interest, not reverence but insolence, not obedience but rebellion, are the true virtues. Through these only can he realize such manhood as may be in him, by these alone can he hope for liberation from his economic bondage. Nor will the worker, if he be less than imbecile, be longer tricked and fooled by the hypocritical promise of a compensation beyond the grave, for the labor and privation of his earthly existence. Rather he will emulate the courage of his exploiters who cheerfully run the risk of eternal damnation if they may have a riotous abundance of good things in this life. Cant of this sort is, indeed, becoming encouragingly rare, and a healthy spirit of critical inquiry, of independence and insubordination, is spreading amongst the proletariat.

The improvement in the technique of industry, which is the fundamental dynamic of social

change, has proceeded from the simple hand industry of the single craftsman, through the increased division of labor of the factory system, to the collective machine industry of today. Modern production is carried forward in great plants, full of mighty and complex machinery, operated by thousands of workers whose labor is co-ordinated into one vast engine of manufacture. Upon the continued operation of these giant plants, sometimes constituting an entire city, not only the workers but the public at large depend for subsistence. The private ownership of this vast social enginery of production, and its use for purposes of private aggrandizement, is today clearly seen to be a vicious and indefensible anachronism. Ownership must follow use and assume a public and collective character. With the public ownership of the means of production, the capitalist class will be stripped of its powers of exploitation, will lapse and merge into the general body of workers, class distinctions will cease, the long and bitter struggle between proprietor and worker, between oppressor and oppressed, with its horid story of ages of violence, cruelty and misery, will come to an end, and human society will once again, as in the dim ages of primitive culture, become homogeneous, stable and at peace. In this reconstructed

world, it is manifest, the old ethics, born of class struggles and designed to minister to and promote class supremacy, will have lost all service and significance, will have ceased to answer any human need or render any aid to human progress. Growing out of the new industrial system of co-operative labor, supporting its organization and mirroring its ideals, will come a new ethic, formulated by the workers, the logical development of the working-class aspirations of today, in which but faint trace of present day canons of moral conduct are likely to be found. Let us look for a moment at what we may fairly take to be the promised ingredients of this new morality.

Emerging from uncounted centuries of exploitation, it goes without saying that the emancipated working class will regard parasitism, the appropriation of the product of others' labor without just and complete recompense, as a most despicable offense. While those who are physically or mentally incapacitated for labor, whether by youth or age or invalidism or otherwise, will unquestionably receive to the full that care and nurture to which all dictates of human feeling entitle them, the wilful idler who refuses or fails to bear his fair proportion of the social labor, the shirker, the beggar, the sponge, will

doubtless be looked upon as a social pariah and outcast. The nobility of useful labor, which today in the mouths of the paid retainers of the idle exploiting class is merely a windy hypocrisy, will in the new society become a pregnant truth. The old identification of labor with servility and exploitation, and with the ignorance, feebleness, and poverty of the working class, having lost its validity, and labor, either of hand or brain, furnishing the only avenue to personal independence, it follows that the due performance of labor will be a source of pride, the necessary price of the respect of one's fellows, while the needless acceptance of an unearned bounty, such as marks the idle rich of our time, will carry with it the stigma of general contempt. Even now this sentiment exists, in rather vague and rudimentary form, in the ranks of the proletariat and, indeed, amongst the entire mass of common people, side by side with that quite opposite sentiment, the sycophantic reverence of the rich. With the disappearance of private incomes derived merely from proprietorship, and of the power and place which private wealth confers, reverence for the rich, however, like reverence for the god Thoth, will become a matter simply of antiquarian interest, and respect for those who do their meed of useful labor, and aversion

for those who do not, will become the just rule of social valuations.

From the interdependence occasioned by the division of labor, and intensified for the proletariat not only by intimate personal association in industry but also by the deeper fellowship of a common oppression, exploitation, injustice and misery, arises that sense of mutual dependence and identity of interest, and that quickened sympathy, which are beautifully summed up in the one word, "brotherhood." Nor is this principle of brotherhood marred for the proletariat, as it unavoidably is for the bourgeoisie, by the clash of personal interests and the personal rivalries, jealousies and hostilities arising from private possessions and the competitive system of production and exchange. Held upon an approximately dead level of a common poverty, which can be alleviated only by the actual practice of mutual aid, that is, of brotherhood, the proletariat finds itself schooled by the very circumstances of its origin and existence in that lofty idealism of love and sacrifice which was first formulated and taught as the vital principle of the conduct of life by the Carpenter of Nazareth. And it is upon the principle of brotherhood, in practical realization of the altruism of Christ's teaching, that the new society will be

founded. In fact, the system of co-operative industry, based upon the collective ownership of the means of production, involving the disappearance of economic classes and class antagonisms, is the only social form in which the true spirit of Christianity can prevail amongst men or become the practical guide of life. To importune men to follow the gospel of Jesus in a capitalistic society is to beseech them to accomplish the impossible. But in the reconstructed society, the realization of the inspired vision of the "kingdom of God" which charmed the rapt sight of the great Jewish seer, will depend upon no sickly sentiment, or twinge of a not fully indurated conscience, but being implicit in the industrial system itself, will be interwoven in the very warp and woof of the social organization. Nor will the practice of brotherhood be limited by age or race or nationality or sex or faith. Even today the advance of capitalist industry tends more and more to eliminate national boundaries, to amalgamate all races of the earth into a common humanity, and to place women upon a plane of economic independence equal with men. In the co-operative commonwealth these tendencies will work out to full fruition. And with the final emancipation of women from economic dependence upon men, and their admission to equal

copartnership in the conduct and rewards of industry, prostitution, that haunting shadow of civilization, must finally and forever disappear. But, further, in the light of the revelations of biological science as to the essential unity of all living organisms and of the similarity of sense and structure between man and all of the bright, darting, bounding, beautiful creatures of air and land and sea, the practice of brotherhood cannot even be narrowed to the confines of humanity but must be extended, in exquisite sympathy, tenderness and protection to the whole animal world. The old theological deduction that because these little furred and feathered cousins were supposedly without souls, therefore they might virtuously be given over to the careless indifference or savage cruelty of man, has, fortunately, been forever exploded by the advance of scientific research. Nor is this the only instance in which science has furnished us with a far nobler ethic than has religious dogma.

The ownership of property confers political power. Conversely, property must always attach to itself political power to insure its own preservation. In a class society, therefore, founded upon the private ownership of the means of production, the form of government, whatever may be its theoretical exposition, must

always be in fact either an oligarchy or an autocracy, from participation in which the propertiless masses are excluded. But with the abrogation of the institution of private property in the means of life, and the consequent relative equality in ownership which follows therefrom, the only feasible governmental form is that of a pure democracy. The improvement and extension of the means of intercommunication enable this form to be applied over an indefinite area and to embrace widely separated and divergent groups. But democracy is something more than a mere governmental form. Just as the class organization of society engenders a patrician spirit which reacts powerfully upon all social institutions, ethics, manners, art, social conventions, so the democratic spirit, the spirit of equality, with its demeanor of personal independence and dignity, its respect and consideration for others, its intrinisc candor, fairness and justness, its comradery and good will, must infuse these social institutions and remold them into its own likeness. With the disappearance of class distinctions and of their concomitant habits of mind, will go arrogance, pride of place, patronage, on the one hand, and sycophancy, servility, and shame of place, upon the other. This is not, of course, to say that the new society will not

have its men of exceptional ability, its acknowledged geniuses and leaders, whom it will appropriately honor; but with the abolition of the purely adventitious superiorities of income-producing wealth, the man of inherently superior powers will personally earn his position by holding his gifts at the service of all. The "superman" who should dedicate his unusual prowess to his private aggrandizement, would meet with short shrift before the combined power of the whole, intimate, human association.

Freed from the privation of millenniums of unrequited toil, with the wealth and wonders of the world at its command, it is fairly certain that the emancipated working class, still wan from its centuries of service and sacrifice, will take great joy in repudiating, finally and forever, the fallacies and aberrations of asceticism. Whatever may be the future attitude towards religious faith as determined by science and philosophy working together, it is clear that the silly notion of attaining spiritual perfection through the denial of life, the courtship of physical death, must be relegated to the limbo of barbarian superstitions. Not the denial of life, but the laudation and triumph of life will be the keynote of the new ethics. The lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life, will become

sacred formulas, holy and pure in the light of the perfect development of the whole man, and of all men, to which the race will dedicate itself. Whatever may be the hidden destiny of those who pass from mortal sight through the low portal of the grave, it is certain that the best and only sure preparation for that exit lies in the exhaustion of all life's experiences, the fulfillment of all life's possibilities. The fasts and vigils, the sexual repressions, the spiritual wrestlings, agonies and ecstasies, the morbid introspection and meticulous casuistry, of the ascetic and mystic are, fortunately, exercises in which the working class has had scant time or humor for indulgence. All this rubbish will be swept away by the sane and healthy interpretation of nature which science has made possible. But this does not mean that humanity will lapse into a quagmire of abnormal sensuality. Such a condition is possible only where there is no work to do, where unearned wealth or irremediable pauperism enervate and corrupt the soul. In the new society leisure will be but the well earned recompense of labor, the time for expanding knowledge and recruiting strength. The uncomprehended infinite possibilities of science, the even vaster potentialities of artistic creation, the profundities of philosophy, the worship and pursuit

of beauty and joy, the final conquest and command of the phenomenal world, all these avenues of effort and storehouses of things accomplished will be opened to all mankind, wherein each may labor and garner as he will. Sanity and health, reason and experiment, the natural instincts and desires, labor and rest, achievement and service—these, with the ever present and ever increasing illumination of man's pathway by the clear light of science, will be the guides to right conduct, the tests of successful living.

With the establishment of co-operative industry, and the consequent economic dependence of each individual upon the successful carrying forward of the collective labors, will come a profound change in the sense and estimate of public obligation. Under the capitalist regime the state, indeed, is but another of the many agencies for supporting class supremacy, and has been well characterized as the "executive committee" of the ruling class. But the state, also, through its powers of taxation, has been made to operate as a direct agency for the accumulation of wealth which was later appropriated by the capitalist oligarchy for whose benefit the state was maintained. The public treasury is, therefore, looked upon as the legitimate object of loot, contracts with the public are but the formal means of

plunder, and civic obligation consists chiefly, for the bourgeois citizen, in "getting his." But with the assumption by the public of the general business of production and distribution, the state will lose its character as an instrument of repression, political, class government as we know it today will disappear, and the state will become instead the general agency of industrial and social administration, the organic expression of the collective will, in the due and successful operation of which every citizen will be immediately and vitally interested. Robbery of the public, under these circumstances, instead of being condoned as at present as at most a venial transgression, will be deemed one of the worst of crimes, since it would no longer buttress the existing order, but would disintegrate and destroy it. With the advent of collectivism may be expected the development of that civic conscience which present-day reformers have verbally anticipated. The discharge of public obligations will become but a part of the daily labor, a feature of the common routine. The sacredness of private obligation, which is featured as an item in bourgeois commercial morality, will suffer dilution as private obligations themselves become trivial and unimportant, while the sacredness of public duty will be increasingly recognized as public duties become paramount.

The question of the status of marriage in the new society is one of extreme importance since it is here that reactionaries of all sorts center their opposition to social reconstruction. It is both idle and disingenuous to assert that marriage as a legal and civil institution is not likely to undergo profound modification. In two respects, at least, the present foundations of the institution will unquestionably undergo grave changes. First, with the abolition of private income-producing wealth, the vanishing of economic classes, and the lapse of the right of inheritance (except as to mere personal mementos), it is clear that marriage will forever lose its character as an instrumentality for the preservation from age to age of class dominance. The artificial perpetuation of the marriage tie, therefore, in the face of the disinclination of the parties involved to continue the relation, will cease to be a matter of public concern, or the occasion of state interference. The dissolution of the marriage relation will become as purely a personal and private affair as is the assumption of the relation now. Some sort of registration may be required for the purpose of vital statistics, but the disgraceful, brutal and demoralizing divorce trials of our own day will become but evil memories of the past. Nor will this relegation of the termination

of the marriage relation to private choice do violence to the rights and safety of the progeny of the marriage. Aside from the question whether the interests of the children themselves are not better subserved by a separation of parents who have grown distasteful to each other and whose continued association could be productive of nothing but wrangling, ill-temper and mutual hatred and contempt, creating an atmosphere which is hardly ideal for child culture, it is probable that the public will assume, through public nurseries, creches, kindergartens, schools, playgrounds, medical supervision, children's hospitals and the like, so many of the labors of child nurture and rearing, that even the loss of parental association, where such became imperative, would have far less ill effects than the reactionaries prefer to believe. It is often forgotten, in the heat of argument, that if parental nurture is to be of value, the parent himself must be fit for the obligations of the family association. Of course, too, the state would retain and probably greatly increase its present powers of supervision over parental custody and the discharge of parental duties. The second of the changes in the foundation of the marriage institution, and affecting, indeed, the whole matter of sex relationship, is the economic emancipation of women. As long

as woman is economically dependent upon man, as long as she derives her material necessities through him, she must make of her sex charms, in one way or another, a matter of merchandise. Moreover, her dependence prevents her having equal voice either in the assumption of the marriage relation or its termination. Propriety forbids her to propose it, since this would be but a veiled request for material support. And her dependence upon the husband often leads her to protract the relation even beyond the bounds of physical endurance and long after every conceivable consideration would argue its severance. But with economic freedom assured to her by direct and indefeasible access to the means of production and by being accorded her equal and independent place in the business of the collective industry, all this will be changed. Woman will exercise as much choice and initiative in the assumption of the marital status as man, and its continuance will be quite as much at her pleasure as his. Moreover, freed from economic constraint and enabled to dictate the terms upon which she will submit to sexual associations, we must assume that woman will abandon the promiscuity of prostitution, unless, indeed, we are so obsessed by the theological dogma of original sin as to believe

that through some inherent depravity she will prefer an abnormal and perverted sexual life. Besides, it is probable that, instead of devoting its energies to riveting the bonds of unendurable marriages, the state, relegating the matter of divorce to private choice, will exercise much more care than at present to aid in the formation of successful marital unions. The marriage of the physically unfit should and doubtless will be prohibited. Adequate instruction of the young in sexology, eugenics and the responsibilities of parenthood, and the general elevation of personal relationships flowing from the spirit of democracy and the practical equality of the sexes, may be expected to further the formation of successful and happy unions.

But the old dread recurs. With the loss of the economic sanctions for monogamy, will not the monogamous marriage itself vanish in a vague polygamy or a general and irresponsible promiscuity, and will not the institution of the family, with all of its sacred and tender associations disappear? For the broad effect of the establishment of collective industry and of the abrogation of economic class distinctions will be that the sex relation will be purged of its sordid economic content and limitations. No longer will the desire of transmitting private wealth and

aristocratic position to a restricted and definitely ascertained progeny actuate the man in enforcing monogamy and female chastity, since neither private wealth nor aristocratic position will longer exist for transmission. No longer will the woman's economic dependence constrain her to submit to masculine rule in the regulation of the supremely important function of reproduction. What, if anything, then, remains to insure a normal reticence and restriction in sexual indulgence, a responsible parenthood, and an orderly and established family life? Of course, this question still echoes the old dogma of original sin, still assumes that without artificial restraint man will inevitably plunge into limitless depravity. It might be sufficient to say that this assumption is itself utterly contradicted by the long epic of human progress upward from the brute, and that a spiritual aspiration and intellectual ingenuity which were capable of creating the artificial restraints suggested in the past by economic ends, would, when these had lapsed, be equally capable of creating newer and better sanctions of sexual discipline. We may also pass by the suggestion of Engels that the numerical balance between the sexes indicates monogamy as the natural form of marriage. The true and effective answer to all these doubts lies, not in more

or less futile argumentation, but in a very real and positive fact, a social force of marvelous power and intensity released by the bourgeoisie itself. This is the passion of romantic love.

It is exceedingly doubtful if romantic love was known at all in savagery, and even in the stage of barbaric culture it seems to have been the exceptional experience of demi-gods and heroes. In the era of classic antiquity and in the feudal era romantic love figures only as the inspiration of illicit connections, never as a recognized basis of marriage. Under feudalism, particularly, romantic love and adultery were indissolubly bound up together. Feudal marriages were concluded on quite other grounds, chiefly the amalgamation of estates and the increase of family power and prestige. It is to the eternal credit of the bourgeoisie that it first asserted romantic love to be the ideal basis of the marital union, thus legitimizing it and giving it a valid place in human experience. But the bourgeoisie has, nevertheless, always been prevented, by the institution of private wealth, from realizing this ideal in actual practice. Considerations of property, of position, of class distinctions, have persistently dulled the arrows of Eros and stained his wings with earthly dross. The typical figure in bourgeois sentimental tragedy is the young girl whose

heart is torn between greed for wealth and romantic love. The height of present-day magazine romance is reached when the young girl falls in love with a quite unknown young man, who, however, must eventually turn out to be one of her own class and station. With the advent of collective industry, and the vanishing of private, income-producing wealth, and of the social distinctions it creates, it is plain that these hindrances to the full play and consummation of romantic love in marriage will be removed. Freed from her long economic dependence upon the male, woman need recognize no other motive for marriage than the longings of her heart. Romantic love must become not only the supreme but the sole occasion, the indispensable justification, the sacred inspiration of the union of the sexes. And romantic love is essentially and implacably monogamous. Moreover, the tie created by romantic love in marriage will be intensified by the very fact that the preservation of the marital union no longer depends upon the adventitious aid of legal or economic coercion, but only upon that fidelity, considerateness, chivalry, and tender devotion which preserve love itself. Further, with a methodical sanity of life substituted for the irregular, dissolute, nerve-wracking life of the upper classes of today,

and with the meager and cruelly uncertain subsistence of the poor replaced by an ample and assured livelihood, most of the occasions of marital unhappiness and disagreement, most of the temptations to sexual irregularities, must disappear. Far from collective industry destroying the home or leading to animal promiscuity or a carnival of licentiousness, it is much more likely to result in the permanence of the home, the idealization of marriage, the cure of sexual abnormalities and perversions, the healthy, intelligent and general fulfillment of the duties of procreation, and a purification of the moral atmosphere and elevation of the moral tone of society at large which will be immensely refreshing after the aberrations of the bourgeois regime.

As has been the case with all other moral systems, the morality of the new society will be enforced by the pressure of public opinion. But in addition to this, as the co-operative industry which will form the basis of the new society will render that society homogeneous, free from classes and class antagonisms, and will directly involve and reflect, in its successful prosecution, the interest of each human being, a new motive for conforming both to the ethical and juridical regulations of the new order will be found in what has been termed "enlightened self interest."

Heretofore, when class systems of morality were concerned, enlightened self interest indeed actuated the master class in conforming to the precepts of their moral code, since by doing so they promoted their class interests and through these their private welfare. But this was true only of the masters. The enlightened self interest of the working class, had there been such a thing, would at all times have dictated the overthrow of the class society, and incidentally thereto the painstaking repudiation of the class morality of the proprietors which upheld it. That this was not done is due precisely to the absence amongst the workers of any clear and intelligent understanding of their own interests, and, also, of course, to the great difficulty of intercommunication and organization. But in the co-operative commonwealth, the termination of working class exploitation and the elimination of class antagonisms will make the welfare of the community and the promotion of the social order the mirror wherein each will see his own greatest benefit. There is, perhaps, a third motive which may operate as a sanction for the new morality. The mental attitude of each individual is largely a reflection of the opinions and emotions of those about him. Anger begets anger, vengeance begets enmity, kindness inspires gratitude, forgive-

ness occasions repentance, love engenders love. Even the most hardened sinner responds to the touch of human sympathy. With the profounder understanding of the psychology of the transgressor which the study of crime and evil as social phenomena brings, the passing of the spirit of vindictiveness from the social attitude toward the offender, and the general amelioration both in the criminal administration and in the subtler punishments of ostracism and contempt which visit moral laxity, it is not too much to expect that a corresponding pliancy and amenability to reformative influences will be developed in the breasts of the erring ones themselves. This is, indeed, one of the most insistent teachings of the Christian faith. "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." And if, as has been beautifully said, "To understand all, is to forgive all," it is not fantastic to hope that an assurance of material safety and satisfaction which will make the predatory impulse no longer conducive to self preservation, an intelligent, sci-

entific and tender nurture of those prone to err, and a boundless and inexhaustible sympathy and compassion, may yet banish evil from the world.

CHAPTER VII

ABSTRACT MORALITY

A final problem remains for elucidation. If, as we have seen, systems of morality are but the reflections, the secondary effects, of the development of industrial technique and of the social order which in any given age grows out of the stage of industrial progress then reached, and if these moral systems arise and decay with the changing social order out of which they spring and of which they form so essential and characteristic a part, and if, moreover, their only sanction lies in the force of public opinion which itself is but the creature of the moment, the mirror of a passing necessity, what, then, becomes of the claims of conscience, of ultimate moral obligation, or, in other words, why should any one believe himself inwardly constrained to a course of moral conduct at all? What is there in any given order of society which can successfully demand the allegiance of moral observance, and, if one chooses to pay the price of public censure, or to take the risk of successfully concealing his offenses and so escaping it, why should he, on any rational ground, hesitate, or experi-

ence a conscientious qualm, before anything he may be inclined to do? When moral precepts are viewed as divine commands, they find an abstract sanction in obedience to the divine will. When they are viewed as principles productive of the greatest good to the greatest number, or as resulting in the largest sum total of happiness, they find an abstract sanction in the spirit of benevolence and good will. But what abstract sanction may be found for moral precepts which are but the formal rules for the support and maintenance of a social order which is itself only a passing phase in human history, which is, more often than not, founded upon the basic injustice of exploitation, and which, if we be of the working class, our supreme self-interest would lead us to overthrow? Why, for instance, should a worker, to whom the institution of private property in the means of life is the very term and condition of slavery, to whom the social order founded upon this institution is a veritable living inferno, and to whom the destruction of this institution represents the only hope of freedom —why should he nevertheless respect private property sufficiently to refrain from theft or fraud? Has not our very definition of morals shown morality, at all events class morality, to be but a superstition and delusion?

The problem is thus variously stated in order that there may be no misunderstanding of its gravity or charge that it has not been frankly met. Essentially, the problem is to find an ultimate, abstract, and therefore permanent sanction and rational justification for moral conduct, the particular rules and canons of which shift and change from age to age. And the answer lies in the change itself, in the fact that it is not a meaningless and chaotic catastrophe, but a part of a systematic and orderly evolutionary progression.

The theory of evolution has touched the mind's eye like a magic ointment, and disclosed, as yet uncertainly or in momentary flashes, a vista of cosmic growth so transcendent that the thought turns from it appalled, refusing to grasp or measure its immensities. The imagination, stimulated by this hypothesis, dimly discerns the flaming nebula, rotating in the dark abysm of space, which, uncounted eons ago, summed up the promise of the solar system, as yet unborn. Thence, down the path of the tireless ages it follows the slow congealing of this amorphous fire mist to a whirling orb surrounding itself with successive rings of lagging matter, which in turn become planets developing satellites of their own. At length the cosmic lava condenses

to glowing rock, congealing under the ocean torrents which pour from the boiling heavens. Then the waters find footing in the scarred and blackened gorges, through thin rifts in the fathomless mists above appear faint glimpses of the sovereign father of all, the parent sun, and in the tepid seas the first faint sparks of life, organisms of a single cell too minute for human sight, are mysteriously engendered. With the coming of life the ground clothes itself with verdure, land, air and sea are tremulous with living forms, and at last, as the product of this titanic drama, there burns along the pathway of the sun this exquisite jewel of heaven, our mother, the earth, the flashing blue of her oceans, the soft green of her continents, the snowy ermine of her polar regions giving back to the vast and vague recesses of space, through veiling mists, the starry revealings of her supernal splendor. But the tale which evolution has to tell of our mother is not yet ended. From history it passes to prophecy, a prophecy of hoary eld, of gaunt lifeless lands and vanished seas and the clear unutterable cold of space. What is the meaning of the colossal tragedy? We do not know.

Or if we turn to the story of life upon the earth we meet again the same broken yet pregnantly suggestive narrative of growth and change.

These microscopic unicellular organisms of the primeval seas begin their wonder-tale of slow development. Through the countless beautiful and terrible forms of life, upward to man, yea, perchance, beyond man, birth upon endless birth, the stupendous fabric of the organic world is wrought. And all to what purpose? We do not know. Or, again, if we follow the development of consciousness, from the machine-like tropic response to external stimuli of the simplest organisms, up to the heaven topping creative genius of Phidias or Shakespeare, the same panorama of change and growth, of progression toward some unknown, perhaps inconceivable goal, is opened before us. In the history of the development of human society, it is no different. The primitive horde, unorganized, uncaptained, of the crudest, most remote savagery, gives way to the gens and the tribal organization. Barbarian culture succeeds to savagery. Then slavery appears, and with it the institution of private property, the territorial state, orderly government, the institution of kingship. The incomparable triumphs of Greecian art and literature, as well as the grandiose pageantry and might of Rome, rested upon the scarred back and bowed loins of the chattel slave. Then spreads before us the feudal world, a recrudescence of

barbarism superimposed upon the antique culture, out of the ruthless warfare, the colorful life, the fantastic thought, the romantic spirit of which, modern civilization slowly emerges. Modern civilization! What boasting and what irony, what wretchedness and what hope, resound within the phrase! The illumination of human understanding which science has wrought, the mastery which man has gained over the adverse conditions of his environment, the dominion which has been won over the secret and awful forces of nature until the most terrific come and go at a child's touch, the fabulous, heaped up wealth which gluts and cloys the arrogant proprietary class while the workers, its creators, starve in the streets, in a word the marvels, both of achievement and failure, which make up our modern life—what are these but the vestibule to that spacious mansion which future humanity shall build as the fit home of the soul of man? Again we read the inexplicable drama of progress, onward, upward, to an end unknown.

But though the ultimate purpose, the final goal, of the evolving universe be hid from us, though we may not even guess at "that far off divine event towards which the whole creation moves," the evolution itself, the ordered change, the systematic growth, the upward urge of all

phenomena, cannot be gainsaid. Here science has spoken, authoritatively, determinatively. The evolutionary process is a fact, the basic and supreme fact of all our knowledge, though its purpose be unguessed. And of this evolution, in its social aspect, each successive industrial system and its concomitant social order, are ranged steps in the stairway of human progress, each of which must be duly traveled in the unfolding of human history. And each of the succeeding moral systems and codes, growing out of the industrial system and mirroring and sustaining the accompanying social order, is but the staff wherewith humanity for the moment assists itself in the long ascent of those unnumbered stairs the top of which reaches above human ken, into the realm of the eternal. For those of us who believe in the ultimate validity and basic righteousness of the cosmos, each of these moral systems must, in its due place and time, partake of this transcendent validity and must find therein its cosmical justification and obligation. Duly, in its place and period, it must be obeyed as the law of a social evolution the dominant note of which is the upward urge of life. In this way the religious sanction returns to morality; not, indeed, in the old guise of *post mortem* rewards and punishments, but rather as an opportunity

for the conscious ordering of conduct in harmony with the divine purpose of "the loving Laborer through space and time."

"Duly, in its place and period!" Yes. But what if the conventional moral system be found decadent, be found formal and barren and outworn, be found without any sure word or clear leading in the turgid rush of social change? What if the social order itself, grown too narrow for the expanding powers and needs of human life, grown foul with vermin and open to all the winds of heaven, like an inhospitable house, be found no longer possible of human habitation? In an era when the supreme business of man is to refashion society, when the destruction of the old is his highest duty, just as the building of the new is his most onerous labor, what validity or binding obligation shall be claimed for moral laws which have become but echoes of an intolerable past, which are the requirements of a cultural integument from which humanity must, at its peril, escape? Here we enter upon a field of casuistry prolific of disputation and of little else. In a general way, the rule may be laid down that so long as the social scheme remains fairly intact, as a practical working system, its morality, in so far as it does not conflict with or impede the coming of the new order, is to be

obeyed. But the duty of conformity ceases the moment social change may be facilitated by the disregard of conventional canons of conduct. Thus the workingman of today, though suffering unbearable injustice and wretchedness from the institution of private property in the means of life, is nevertheless not a thief, for thievery does not assail the institution of private ownership but merely substitutes one private owner for another. Yet this same workingman is held bound by every impulse of right conduct, as well as by every instinct of self-preservation, to further in all reasonable ways the confiscation of private property by the working class, since in this way he both achieves his own freedom and advances the progress of the race. For that same transcendental sanction which, springing, as we have seen, from the orderly unfolding of the universe, supports each moral system in the heyday of its usefulness, equally demands, in parturient eras like our own, not merely a passive acquiescence in the work of social reconstruction, but rather that each one, inspired by the holy spirit of revolt, should labor and agonize and freely offer himself for the speedy perfecting of that work. The duty of the present is not that of patient obedience but of indomitable rebellion, a rebel-

lion which also, in its "due place and period," fulfills the sovereign purpose of the world.

As to a final morality, wrought out of a stable, just and perfect social order, which shall once and for all pronounce upon all our conduct, whether it be good or ill, we cannot speak. Such a perfect ethical comprehension, such a final and unalterable valuation of each act and deed of man, may be reached in that unified and homogeneous society which shall be reared upon the basis of co-operative industry. Or it may be that, so far as specific moral precept is concerned, finality will ever remain unattainable, that shifting human relations will ever require new statements, fresh formulas, new admeasurements of conduct. Nor is it particularly necessary that this question should be determined. For us, with our partial vision, moving in the half light of a still semi-barbarian culture, in the presence of vast, clouded, and as yet alien vistas of life, must remain as truth the summing up of the great master of English verse:

> "Our little systems have their day;
> They have their day and cease to be:
> They are but broken lights of thee,
> And thou, oh Lord, art more than they."

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