

ROMANTICISM AND GOVERNMENT.

BY HARDIN T. MCCLELLAND.

OCCASIONALLY as our attention turns to and from the varying vicissitudes of Modern Romanticism we find that one of the striking points of interest, if not one of the most decisive features, is that of its relation to government administration and especially that phase of practice adjudged by romantic morality. Here and now, in an age of greed, extravagance, graft, superficial propaganda, wage-cuts, strikes and industrial strife, political stratagems and industrial jockeying for economic control, it might be said that we have a daily review of the whole situation. But at the less raucous entrance of romantic morality we find the general atmosphere tempered somewhat, whence it gradually becomes more fit for clear-seeing and free breathing, suitable for amiable tournament rather than for the deceptive cunning of stratagems and spoils. It is then that we meet our adversaries face to face in the arena of individual virtue and public morality. Romanticism implies and requires a certain compound of individual freedom, courage and aspiration while Government implies and requires a certain degree of discipline, respect for authority, and allegiance to the group-psychology of social institutions. True Romanticism does not recognize or sanction free-love, risque literature, ugly art or jazz music; neither does a just Government recognize or encourage such things as free-lunch, partiality in industrial disputes, franked campaign propaganda, mercenary tariff discriminations, or plutocratic preferment.

Still, as we know, there are faults on both sides. Administrations are too multiple-minded, too clumsy and top-heavy, to be agile in action, balanced in judgment or uniform in legislative opinion. Likewise also the common character of public amiability is often imposed upon to the extent that the romanticist seeks to

dodge the difficulties of life; he renounces the "wise strenuousness" which Aristotle and Roosevelt prescribed, and takes refuge in the walled city of his dreams. Of course, this departure is not begrudged him if it is not made at the expense of some cunning exploit or public mischief. Indeed, his humble retirement is considered right and exemplary at times, as when we discover that in an ivory-tower sort of existence above the mediocre haunts of common men the bright visions and noble aspirations of a Kierkegaard, a Grieg, Father Tabb, Thorwaldsen or Leoncavello come only when one lives well apart from the clamor and vice, the selfishness and petty cavillings of a sordid world. But then, the times are not always so auspicious, for, as with the double-jointed entrenchments of Rousseau's acrobatic policy, the sordid world comes crashing in and with its ruthless vandal power wrecks the beautiful house of dreams, upsets the dreamer in his easy chair and scatters the papers on his writing desk. Cracks and spots readily show on the peculiar ideal blue of Sèvres ware, and the rich lavender of Kismet easily fades.

No wonder he would then advocate a sensitive morality, knowing both by intuitive anticipation and by an actual misfortune of experience that such an event was possible, even more often than not, a probable incident in this imperfect and blind-striving world. And anyway, such a romantic individual, being only an Aeolian harp played on by all the various winds of Nature and empirical contingency, should expect now and then to have a string broken by less tender fingers. Carducci, the anagogic poet and philosophical critic of premodernist Italy, considered that a *soft* sort of Romanticism and hence not an adequate or worthy mold in which to cast either one's life or one's literary creations. In his famous work on the erotic poets of the 18th Century he repudiates such romanticism altogether and champions a sort of *religio grammatici* return to the classical paganism of old.

I. PHILOSOPHICAL GROUNDS.

The philosophical ground of all this seems to be that Natural Law is quite attractive so long as we conform our conduct to it, but absolutely ruthless and inexorable when we try to fool with it or oppose its stern decisions; while our finite Human Law is apparently harsh but easy to get around and wheedle into favorable readings whenever we think such an arbitrary course is expedient. And it is a similar opposition which exists today between Romanti-

cism and Cultural Education. Romanticism is too often inclined to hazy thinking; it likes to grope along in the ecstasy of the weird, and usually jams in the dry parts of its own mechanism. But Culture, if it is of the real sort which leads on to spiritual development and finds expression politically in a system of socially just Government, is always inclined to be clear and rational, seeking explicit conceptions of things and events, and is certainly always sufficiently lubricated to be in fairly efficient working order. The main trouble with the policy that is advocated by the romantic moralist is that he tries to teach us to be exceptional, superior-to-others, superficially naive, and does not begin to realize that he is preaching a dangerous doctrine until his idols are cast down by a world which seeks only the normal experiences of a rationally balanced life.

Romantic ideas are invariably so much mysticism; its metonymy and magic doors mark them out as mysterious and yet traditional as the yellow-beak birds and Bedouin coffee-pot designs on genuine Saraband rugs. Scientific romanticists, too, are ambitious to gain the Prix Pierre Gusman, but their essays are as abstruse and unpopular as a quantum theorist's technical lucubrations on the future possibilities of a worldling age which learns to harness atomic energy. They are playing for the delight of the elect, so they think, and never ask themselves what lay interest is popularly shown in astrophysics or cosmic phase-orders of existence, nor who, besides certain of their abstract speculator-companions, cares whether there are kinks in time or gaps in space. Less astute minds which are perhaps more honestly Nature-loving know that the plain homogeneous possibilities of motion and duration (Euclidean space and time) do not have to depend upon the exotic fancies and acrobatic rationalizing of intellectual moon-calves for an opportunity to become actual realities.

But howsoever this condition may seem to react against the periodical rebirths of idealism, Civilization will not fall; it will become estranged from simple living and high thought by the seductions of extravagance and pride, it will even be badly broken in the numerous political, industrial, economic and cultural upheavals it is bound to pass through, but it serves one of our favorite hopes to trust that Civilization will survive both the destructive science and the plutocratic government policies of today. that it will survive the hazardous struggle against a pseudo-romantic naturalism and be faithfully with us when we reach our final goal.

It is only in this bare negative sense that romantic morality is at all constructive and vitally functional as an actual accessory to our cultural progress. Nor yet can anyone deny that it has managed to supply us with many magnificent treasures of artistic literature and has given us exemplary models of what a grand achievement its realized ambition would make. This determinable quality is its one redeeming credential. It allows us to go through with all its vague ramifications of imagery and burlesque, and still come out at the magic door of plastic interpretation with a fairly close guess at the strange meaning of it all. The ultimate significance, however, of the experience is to show us that the highest value that may be attached to romantic morality is its heuristic service to cultural education and just governmental administration. It points out with unmistakable accuracy some of the things we should pursue or avoid for the sake of progress and the regeneration of man's travailing spirit.

Quite possibly there have been exceptions here and there in the general chronicle of humanity's vague aspirations. There is no racial uniformity of emotion just as there is no nationalistic hegemony of control over the means of making romantic pilgrimages to King Oberon's court. While the French romanticists of the older school were alert to almost every form of art and inspiration, their German contemporaries plodded on in perspiration toward their fixed ideal of perfection, and the English joined the Italians in the aspiration to be reasonable about both Nature and Art as they related to human life. But we of today are threatened, by a too loose valuumism in understanding human needs and natures, with losing both our romantic and our cultural heritages in the maelstrom of monopoly, in the narrow nationalism of a moribund mediocrity, and in the weird seductions of would-be "practical" government concessionaries and committee-legislation. Every group of petty libationers drinks to the toast that "Our interests must be served *first*",—economic turmoil and industrial sedition notwithstanding. This is the only morbid Kulturkampf that must be guarded against. And strange to say, it was only that aspect of it which was anticipated as soon to be in conflict with neoclassic traditions that lead M. Francis Eccles, in his recent lectures on "La Liquidation du Romanticism" (1919, London), to deplore its break with the 19th Century *coup d'état* trend of French nationalism, naming it "une déviation de l'esprit français." But, for all we know or care, Romanticism has been the invariable deviation

from every other nation's habitual esprit, especially in those nations whose leaders become patriotic only when bond-issues are discounted and the tariff is revised (upward usually). An international rather than a nationalist perspective of culture and government policy is all that can or ever will be able to accurately and hence adequately liquidate the not-always financial obligations of modern Romanticism.

However much we are forced to attend to the worldly interests of obtaining a livelihood by more or less sordid contact with the grimy wheels of "essential industries", the fact still remains that the evenings and the Sabbath (if not an occasional holiday or vacation-period) are our own to dispose of as we will. There is a great majority of people who put in an admirable day of industrial efficiency and alert devotion to the tasks and duties of the business on hand, but seems to utterly relax at sunset and fritter away the time that is their own in idle pleasure, love of sleep, plots for revenge, or futile dreams of lazy luxury. They try to live on bread alone, and in the last communion expect viaticums to heaven. But it is not likely that they will have anything but the cruel recollection of vain exploits, lots of work, and indigestion. On the other hand, we have that scattered minority who devote their private moments to aspiring thoughts, to those refined feelings which delight the inward frame, and to those exalted motives which demand a nobler vision of the over-world. They are the courageous hearts and creative minds of this poor old mediocre nether-orb. They are perhaps the less conspicuous of the two classes as we observe them at the daily economic grind. "But in the evening is the difference seen", as Elbert Hubbard would have said, and on the Sabbath are their relative values as *men* revealed and verified. You do not have to wait ten years to see what will be the result of their public occupations and the legacy of their private avocations.

Such then, has been the great perennial antithesis, the vital either-or, ever since the world began: whether to seek out the spring of spontaneity and lay our humble festive board beneath the shady trees of a romantic life, swearing allegiance to nought but moral necessity and congenial spirits, or to leave our individual fate in the hands of careless contingency, hoping to balance our own weary days against the bare assumptive control of others' conduct. A certain rhetorical partiality here shows my private choice, but very often I find myself, not idly wondering or superficially contrasting, but actually philosophizing as to which is the more in-

dispensable portion of community's citizenry—its workers or its dreamers, its martyrs to ephemeral industry or its torch-bearers in the eternal procession of culture and religion.

One thing sure, the workers need a thorough education in solidarity, in how to forego personal interests in favor of those more social and justicial; an education in fact which emphasizes brotherly co-operation instead of mere radical agitation to violence. But they must think for themselves the while such enlightenment is in process of taking effect, else much effort be lost to larger and nobler causes. One of Art Young's cartoons shows one of our economic despots carrying away a bushel of corn labeled "Fat of the Land", leaving the husks to the worker whom he advises: "Don't think. Stay on the job." Just that is too much the trouble already. Spoliators and knaves do most all the thinking, and they codify their selfish processes of thought into laws which protect their schemes of ravinage and exploit. For any other sort of people it is nowadays fast becoming a crime to even think (for anyone who thinks cannot help but have the courage betimes to express what he thinks, even though it means trouble); witness the case of the Kansas editor, Wm. Allen White, against the rulings of the Industrial Court. Thought has all too significantly become the anarchy of fools just as thoroughly as words are the counters of wise men.

The majority of people today do not seem to have the time, talent nor inclination to contemplate for long any certain problem or phase of their multifarious existence. That is, they do not devote that longevity or sincerity of Thought to any one particular subject which will render it clear and ethically applicable to the almost insatiable requirements of life in a vulgar, selfish world. Thus comes the custom of shallowness and its consequent notion that anything which resembles Thought shall be taboo if not directly libeled and discountenanced with the various epithets of illegitimacy and anarchy. It is really good cause for alarm, and I am beginning to feel that it is a part—and a major part too—of the general debauchery of our public mind and private heart that the modern world is fast losing all honest capacity for effective meditation, and is blindly letting its philosophic functions deteriorate while it is so feverishly occupied with the putrid exploits of avarice, finite interests, unscrupulous adventure, folly and extravagance.

It is now popularly considered a sociological if not a physiological defect if anyone is so unfortunate as to have a brow any

more developed than that of an ape. It is almost impossible to go into an up-to-date bookstore and find anything in black-and-white that is not classifiable as "the latest fiction" or advanced as "a best seller that is different." An oldtimy work of sincerity in science, reverence in religion, profundity in philosophy, or true artistry in poetry is only to be had in the basement or balcony of some back-street store which handles an honorable but unpopular trade in "good though slightly soiled bindings." How could they remain in anything but good conditions, not having been used for years, and then probably by those only who treated them with tender care and choice selection here and there amongst the deckled pages? Even the modern historical, economic, educational and sociological works are inoculated to the very marrow with the specious virus of propaganda and misinformation. And those who read anything nowadays without first taking a generous dose of antitoxin to preserve their normal sanity are bound to become affected and perhaps fatally afflicted with some form of this insidious epidemic.

Thoughtfulness, like Romanticism in a vulgarian age or just government administration in post-war periods, being the habitual application to life of the power to meditate on the deliverances of consciousness and subconscious existence, is accordingly a rare attribute in the human makeup, at least as it is constituted and presented to us today. The exercise of any effectual degree of thinking capacity is as rare and discontinuous as lightning in foggy weather. The loose structure and the arbitrary functioning of our modern mind however should be expected, as they are foregone conclusions in this age of external perfection and internal chaos, smear-culture and spiritual decay, somatic sophistication and soul-atrophy. So it is found to be a sort of vicious circle we are chasing ourselves around in. We are unable to think because we are wage-slaves to sin and folly, and we are ignorant fools because we prove by our mode of living that Thought is one of the lost arts.

The honest exercise of an adequate philosophy of life has provisioned far less houses with happiness than have been mortgaged to meet the demands of creditors. But it is not the philosophy which butters no bread and keeps the proportion in such hopeless minority. It is the sophist folly of people who think (feeble process) that they can gamble on the promises of youth and pay their debts with an early demise or with the inane sloth and in-

cessant regrets of a miserable old age. The history of ten thousand years has many times reiterated the proof that it cannot be done successfully, although for a time we may appear to survive the flood. In the first place, paying attention to what is venal, low-aiming, and ephemeral is not philosophy; it is a morbid pursuit of folly and usually works out as a most fallacious and mischievous occupation. In the second place, anyone who honestly knows how to think will actually study the processes of Thought and Life; he will entertain considerate opinions as to the philosophic measures supporting honest knowledge and just government, and will endeavor seriously to bring his more or less romantic vision of truth down to the bosoms of men that they may live more nobly and with less enfeebling notions about immediate selfish gain.

II. MORALISM, SCIENCE AND RELIGION.

The cerated moralism of hero-worship, with none but ivory apes and peacocks to exemplify the Good, is of little help or inspiration; it is grounded in a fallacy subtle and yet futile as the "horns" of old Carneades. Our age seems wholly mad with lucre-lust and the tarantism of intellectual jazz—our morbid mental stupor and inordinate desire to let others pay the piper while we dance seem quite incurable even by using the so-called appropriate medicinal music of Trotsky's tarantella. Governments are now taking a third dimension of their legislative function. Air routes and rights of way are listed in the new regulations of aerial traffic. Likewise with the recent realization of the necessity for unifying our various means of communicating information and experience we come across Chief Signal Officer (Major-General) Squier's valuable advice on how to so unify and supervise the practical uses of radio, telegraph and multiple telephony as to render them both efficient and unmercenary to criminal purposes. Also there is the new application of screen-art in cinematographic interpretations of scientific theories and discoveries; one somewhat extreme example being the recent filming in Germany of motions and signals demonstrating more or less effectively to laymen the extra-mundane and supra-empirical principles (or at least ideas postulated as principles) in Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity. One scientific fallacy, however, which I suppose the usual lay audience overlooks or which may be merely used through the necessity of material backgrounds to supply balance and familiarity to naive sensory experience, is this: that the hypothetical detached observer requires

no earthly landscape of assumed immobility from which to compare two or more motions or rather the relative course of a third motion of an object passing from one to the other of two diverse moving origins or "grounds." This fallacy is particularly in evidence in the filmed experiments such as that of the light signals from one end to the other of a moving train on a bridge with a mountain gorge for background, or in the imaginary extra-terrestrial view of a ball falling from the top of a tower which of course moves with the rotation of the earth. The ball's real path of motion is parabolic, although an observer anywhere sharing the earth's motion would view it as a straight-line fall.

This is a good example of scientific romanticism which is seeking some proportion of control or influence over the way we think about natural phenomena. By virtue of this aim it is in the same category with that phase of didactic moralism which is just now so anxiously concerned in love, sex, divorce, etc. Ethics as a rational science of man's natural affections and relations should take good care in turning over to romantic moralism the social welfare of people not yet able to cope successfully with the problem of evil in a vulgar, selfish and shallow-thinking world. The great furor set up a few years ago over the ascetic attitude toward marriage (which was considered "not a duty but a sin") in one of Tolstoy's last books, *The Sex Problem*, left the present generation no more enlightened on how to spiritualize such intimate relations as puppy love, pornographic courtship, common-law marriages, soul-mate triangles, love-nest scandals, et al. Beyond a sophist mess of specious arguments aiming to medicate and minimize the actual pejorism of the situation, nothing appears to have been really done in the direction of giving spiritual sanction and support to sex experience. Even the fairly representative symposium of Elinor Glyn in the *Photoplay* magazine or that right now (July) being carried on in the Hearst papers simply reflects a practical balance of opinion between variously famous of our contemporary worthies on just what is at the bottom of the human mind and heart when undergoing the equally named ecstasy and complex emotional experience of sex-urge or love, marriage or celibacy, gutter-grief or idealism. The very relevant question of continence or control is apparently overlooked altogether.

All that we can conclude from this is that the sincere initiates of Mrs. Eddy's or Madam Blavatsky's inner circle may possibly be able, with the assistance of compulsory circumstances, to satis-

factorily (or what the New-Thoughters hold is the same as actually) apply their esoteric scheme of asceticism to private life, but not likely the lay dilettanti who still remain absorbed in fleshly vanities and worldly interests on the outside. Monogamy and totemism, problem-plays and phallic worship, risqué literature and pornographic art are by no means as yet purified of a degenerate appeal to the more physical appetites of a vulgar morbid patronage. Romantic morality should have none of such, but saints and sages often have to start reactionary combat before the sluggish government machinery can be properly oiled and fueled for ameliorative legislation. Mormonism is no less culpable of polygamous vices than the Lesbian eclipse of polyandry; the erotic hysteria of gynophily is no more innocent of sex perversion than the naked neurosis of the Rathayatra feast. But we still find them very well to the fore both as subjects of public interest and as items lending zest to our modern love-science. No wonder then that Achmed Abdulla has such little faith in modern continence and chastity as to define them as "but the narrow ribbons on love's chemise." The occasional rechauffes of Agapemonite theory and practice cannot help but vitiate an atmosphere into which nobler souls and more ascetic-minded men try to breathe a sterner discipline. So many men are not seeking *women* for their life-mates, but mere females; so many women are seeking mere males instead of *men*, that the social fabric is becoming faded and ugly and tattered and torn. The bathos as well as the pathos and irony of life is that they usually get what they seek, so that this is the source of much of the world's misery and discontent, although it is clearly a resultant retribution for folly and vice.

Dostoievsky is a peculiar example of the dualistic romanticism of the Slav nature; his religious paradoxes are grounded in the Gadarean compound of angel and beast, Greek Orthodoxy and Tartar bloodlust. His sociology could not have become exalted except on condition that his anthropology and historicism be conceived as the creed and chronicle of an utter depravity; such an expensive mental process does not appreciate the thrift of Puritan ethics nor the stern economics of a just government. Russia is the scene of perennial carnage, the never-decisive conflict between Romanticism and Government. It was only by dint of heroic courage and the endurance of imminent exile that practically all her best literature has been written. The revolutionary realism of Pushkin, Gogol and Turgenev simply passed the flickering torch of half-

infernal enlightenment on. I believe the world was fortunate beyond measure to find it held aloft by those two great devotees of mystic naturalism, Tolstoi and Dostoievsky, even after twenty years of hounding by both Czarists and narodniki.

Religion and Romanticism are most successful while they are mystic and theoretical; so soon as they begin to cast about for proselytes and practical applications of doctrine they begin to grow vulgarized, secular, commonplace and corrupt. Witness how the Quaker-like Sadhus have become demoralized so far as to follow their leader, Sundar Singh, in his violent revolt against any native Indian procedure of self-determination free from Anglican supervision. Witness how thoroughly the first fine brew of Democracy has recently turned to the vinegar of a crass vandalism, a morbid mediocrity of individualism and rhyomistic monopolies. Witness how the absorbing interest of theologians fifteen years ago in Delitzsch's plan to unite the world's three great monotheistic religions is now shifting over to the converse question whether or not the administration of the world's religious faith should be decentralized and given back its supposed freedom of spontaneous expression. During this interval people have found that religious imperialism has been delayed and thwarted more by racial differences and nationalist programs than by interchurch schisms, ritual objections, or lay petitions of secessional criticism. Any external irenic aiming at a possible unification of *all* religions whether pagan or puritan, pantheistic or personal, polytheistic or monotheistic, is a remote vision; its promises have little probability of realization so long as we have all those distinct forms of ritual and reverence, differences of attitude and practice, even their clumsy nominal classification as this or that sectarian group variously styling itself Christianity, Buddhism, Confucianism, Mohammedanism, Judaism, Shintoism, Zoroastrianism, and so forth on down the list.

Mere uniformity of scriptural sense and textual interpretation is not enough; in fact it is useless to lay store on paper unity and agreement so long as a disparity of viewpoints regarding international equality, economic justice, industrial exploitation, co-operative spiritual effort and aid remain to make antagonisms and seditions between the various constituent leaders and devotees. Inspirations of text and ceremony are little more than the lip-service of a vicarious ecstasy; they are seldom deeply spiritual, like true reverence and mystic exaltation, to the degree that they have scope

for social or industrial applications, much less for international aids or interracial brotherhood. The pure and actual application of religious faith and love is seldom sufficiently thorough or innate to endure in new garments, work efficiently in avaricious armor, or take confident action upon those conflicting elements which concern its growth upon exotic shores. Much of every religion's original purity and power of spiritual expression is lost in the maze of subsequent public interpretation and private practice. The simplicity of the Christ ideal is lost in the complex motivation of an apologetic hypocrisy; the direct counsel of Dharmapada is brushed aside by the more ambiguous Vitanda of the Tripitaka and eristic Hinyana; the progressive ethics of the Wu-I or man's five social relations are sidetracked and polluted by the *squeeze* of a corrupt ceremonial practice in China; the *Arsha* revelations of the Koran are smothered under the idolatrous carpet of Kaaba lore; the Torah of Moses (like the original Hebrew and Greek texts trying to survive a half dozen Vulgate translations) is swamped with the vulgar half-vernacular tide of Talmud and Cabala; the Way of the Gods is murky with the smoke clouds of sentimental Zenist pachak; and Zoroaster's Zend of the ancient Kshatragathas in the Avesta is now vulgarized by forced passage through the hundred exegetical gates of Sadda commentary.

The living flame of ancient wisdom illumines the dark paths of the modern world with an occasional flash of inspiration for truth and virtue, and shows its devotees how to know and practice the best in life. But the superficial anecdotes, parallogisms, dogmatics, economic sops and external statutes of priest and potentate are soon lost to the inexorable erosion of time. They are largely the illegible modern scribblings of fools in the endless chronicle of man's transfiguration anyway, so why should they be treasured or mourned over. They emphasize and seek the profits (not the prophets, Upton Sinclair shrewdly tells us) of the world's pristine religious faith, knowing but never informing others that even the supposititious divinity and parthenogenesis of Christ are but subsequent refinements of linguistic fancy staking largely on substitutions or mistranslations of ancient texts. A false note of delusion gave the vital lie to their pseudo-romanticism and there was no superior critical faculty from which to render judgment or law covering the assumptive situation.

III. THE PROPER BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT.

Turning to the more recent marplots of contemporary events I cannot help but see that much of the current criticism ridiculing and opposing government interference in the operations of Big Business is but so much economic evasion and political flapdoodle. If the would-be innocent bourgeoning of capitalism and financial prestige into a mature octopus clutching at industrial and economic control were to be justly and resolutely restrained, the business world would not come to an abrupt end nor dash into the chaos which alarmist sopthrowers so excitedly prophesy. It would simply *divide up* the vast unearned surplus, the multiple turnover of what its meekened press-agents like to call half-of-one-per cent. Steel magnets, 100 percenters, Wall Street patrioteers, and other plutocratic despots would not be able to shut down their profitless (?) industries in prospect of turning their investments elsewhere under an efficient and justly administered government. No, for the same restraints on excess profits and corrupt political practices would be effective elsewhere also; there would be no Hooversque commission to review tearfully the situation and put an extra margin on the lump-load price of coal.

Generally speaking, however, the political reformers of today are too much given to the *static aspect* of government policy and its title to state sovereignty. They attach too great an importance to the immovable type of political power, and this becomes the persistent ideal of all their aims and efforts. But we, in taking a few philosophical observations around and beyond their finite position, can readily see how far they fall short of framing any adequate plan with or by which to replace the present form of government so popularly in force in practically every nation throughout the world. To be sure they rightly attack our fallacious system of governing peoples by the fast and loose manipulation of industrial and economic power; but what other means can reach everyone who lives on a physical plane of existence? We are not trying to administer government in the astral world. And why is the present system found fallacious, if not because there is physical misery, material injustice, and worldly *nerf-ferure*? Why then are practically all our reformative measures so sadly inadequate, so culpably inapplicable and inert, if not because we seek to change the plan of life by talking to the workmen instead of going to the architect and the boss of the job? Like all the other processes of

livelihood and experience, government policies are (or should be, if not autocratic and tyrannous) motive and plastic; there is no static absolutist element in them except as we read it there and fall into doubt and disaffection over its possible solution.

Nowadays, and especially since the skeptical and materialistic times of Hobbes and Locke, Comte and Malebranche, modern society has become bafflingly complex as well as quite self-determinate and insubordinate to any feasible control by the old tattered codes of our predecessors; it is too high-g geared for slow-coach travel. Hence the consequent difficulties of readily analyzing and interpreting any particular phase or problem of its present condition render any prospect of an adequate solution exceedingly but not hopelessly distant of realization. As T. V. Smith shows in the *Open Court* for June, experimental criteria cannot readily get at systems which rely on an absolute and infallible authority; I wonder then how the authority of scientific control can replace that of either the individualist or the group (State) without ceasing to be purely peirastic and assuming even *that* measure of infallibility. No sufficient assurance seems to be given that those in the directors' private chambers will continue to be honest scientific seekers or experimenters and not soon degenerate into mere puppets of some more ruthless source of authority and control. I can readily recognize the necessity of departing from the individual kingship as well as the representative (?) group-rule sort of government, but cannot find the courage and nobility in human nature that is today necessary to even set up, much less maintain, a strictly experimental democracy which could secure equality of opportunity to all, industrial peace, economic justice, virtuous coal barons or honest oil promoters.

In any plan of scientific control over our social or political affairs we would have, first, the numerous vagaries and anomalies of individual temperament to deal with, seeing as we do that it is practically useless to try to draw up any set code of rules or static series of criteria as to what *is* good government procedure, when no two critics or advisors or cabinet members can agree on what constitutes the best legislative policy, the surest (if not most just) control, the true social welfare, or the most roundly efficient administrative mechanism. Second, there is the perennial obstacle of false valuation in every politically organized society which appears most often in the Orphean mask of selfishness and involves human turpitude all the way from insatiable greed up to maniacal

illusions of personal freedom and utopian destiny. And third, we have to spend time, so otherwise precious, accounting for and trying to dissolve the ethical gall-stones of domestic strife, poverty, commercialism, class-wars, plutocratic prestige, industrial or economic monopoly, and the thousand other variations of anarchy and social malevolence.

Although these are largely negative relations of fact, still they achieve telling results in their active opposition to whatever possible political philosophy we try to establish. We must take up positive weapons against all wickedness and folly, because negative attacks only give us "the feeling of security without the security itself, and at the same time cause us, in the enjoyment of the feeling, to neglect the attainment of genuine security in the only way possible, through intelligent and far-sighted control." (Smith, *ibid.* page 343). We know also that any political philosophy that is worthy of the name will aim and attempt to set up a reasonably practical code of control which not only guides present social conduct aright, but shall romantically qualify the temper of restraint so as not to too harshly discipline the creative works of true genius on the one hand, and shall so safeguard our justicial methods of control that no legal loophole will be allowed through which anyone viciously disposed can discount or evade the penalties provided in the code. Stated simply then, the true business of Government is properly that of supplying its subjects with a good and fair standard by which to live, an honorable and equitable means by which to preserve that standard from subversion or corruption, and an ideal in the bosom of which they will be glad, not coerced, to respect and help maintain the law and order thus established. Sumptuary and punitive measures are always in season to restrain the extravagant and segregate the wicked; but they should not unfairly be made to apply only when the transgressor is poor or friendless, else the only romantic element in public justice be rendered sterile, cast out and wholly alienated from the hearts of men.

According to this simplicity of conceiving it, the proper business of Government appears largely to be a masterly handling of the moral forces and an impartially scientific control of the economic, industrial, social and educational handicaps obtaining within the domain of its jurisdiction. Dealing with relations external to this proper domain should not be a government function at all, being as it invariably is, nothing but a postponement and evasion

(if not a traitorous controversion) of the immediate responsibility. Because most all our international intercourse and diplomacy (usually called statesmanship) is practically a rhetorical pastime for those in high and honorary but non-essential offices, such efforts have little directly to do with the domestic business of control.

It is easy then, to see what becomes of a government's political sovereignty when it seeks to base its operations or administrative functions on any but primarily moral grounds, on ethically just measures of control. The oldtime systems of governing by divine right, dynastic inheritance, religious imperialism, hand-me-down authority, minority-prestige, class-privilege, and kept-press tactics have been seen to fail time and again. And we are right now witnessing the failure of various more or less sincere attempts at arbitrating strikes, adjudicating wage revisions to meet (?) a far more buoyant cost-of-living, financing a soldier's bonus with *any* but a direct and confiscatory tax on unreasonably excess war-profits, and a myriad other schemes all in the mood of governing the nation according to the fallacious political philosophy of industrial hegemony, financial prestige, and mandatory economics. What about that old maxim about "pride goeth before a fall?"

If the political code is biased one way or the other, or even when only thrown out as a sop to the demands of any self-seeking clique which happens to have a powerful voice in making or breaking that code, then how can we expect the public, the subjects under that code really, to see in it any right to claim patriotic allegiance or consent to any other form of political sovereignty? But if the political philosophy adopted and enforced by a government provides honorable means of livelihood and adequate protection over all useful and worthy activities, enjoining those which overstep the ethical limits of personal liberty, and so interpreting and administering the just aids toward preserving the common weal, then and only then will it have any honest claim to sovereign power. The people will respect it and endeavor to live up to its secure and noble patterns, knowing that it guarantees to carry on its proper functions in full recognition of moral right and ethical justice, having confidence in and devotion to that decalogue of principles which can never be abrogated with impunity.

One of the world's worst fallacies in governmental theory is giving itself specious reasons and ill-founded hopes in the very face of the numerous hazards and presumptions of paternalism, whether nationalistic or agendic, industrial or educational. It is pseudo-nationalistic paternalism which is now leading Premier Nitti to

sublimate and medicate the feeble results of the Genoa Economic Conference; the same thing which led Giolitti (formerly premier and the Iago-Macchiavelli-Caillaux of Italian politics who renewed Italy's membership in the Triple Alliance) to become a dramatic deceiver with a perfect art of vicious casuistry and an ambiguous assumption of power. Likewise it was a fallacious turn of internationalist paternalism which caused both the Allies and the Central Powers to fail to preserve the integrity and economic rights of smaller nations, just as they failed both during and since the war to adhere to the given principle that "all government should be carried on only with the consent of the governed"—a principle good enough for all but vicious and refractory groups. However, Bernard Shaw and the Fabian Society struck a few conciliatory points for international government relations when they gave secondary notice to the patriotic pride of nationalism, but sanctioned the priority of properly using combined international force to compel the equitable decision of justicial issues, and suggested that some rational form of cosmopolitan culture and understanding might well be used as a guide-book to our social evolution.

Here were some anticipations of Randolph Bourne's heuristic suggestions of an impending twilight of idols, a stern irenic for terminating the numerous intellectual conflicts relating to the decisions of war in the particularly American assumption that they should be, primarily if not ultimately, carried on for the sake of international freedom and democracy. But the only *Demos* that has survived is that of a sophisticated vulgarity, a popular corruption of morals which holds us in a bog of mediocrity and pot-boiling, in a perennial mood of mercenary motive and ambitious monopoly. The supreme American fallacy in governmental theory is the assumption of an absolute, even incomparable, fund of administrative ability whereby even the pluralistic functions and relations of international co-ordination are considered to be in dire need of the would-be benevolence of a self-appointed guardianship and a reciprocally calculated but ill-balanced formula of economically sustained political hegemony. Surely anyone with half an eye can see in much of this the same old \$incere Octopus\$ reaching out his slimy tentacles to grasp and stifle the world. Else why do our profiteering potentates (so well exemplified by their predecessors, the war-lords, speculators in food-stuffs, and other so-called dollar-a-year men) reveal such an utter and lead-menacing fear of their very lives when anyone mentions Bolsheviki, I. W. W., Farm

Bloc, Non-Partisan League, Social Equity, etc.? Great concern is entertained for ship subsidies, compensation for broken ship-building contracts, railroad financing, guarantees of various industrial dividends, but they have used their Congressional puppets to recently show with conclusive certainty that they do not relish the idea of relinquishing the smallest part of their share in another great American fallacy (*\$ervice*) even to the extent of financing a tax-free and discount-free soldier's bonus out of their astounding hoard of war-profits, not to say out of the equally greedy post-war "velvet" overlaying an economically well-trimmed world.

It is the business of honest and socially efficient government to disapprove and forestall any such national and international thievery, such direct and unscrupulous ethical anarchy, for such culpable conduct by either individuals or corporations or corrupt politicians is always preventable or controllable if in some just and adequate way they are held accountable to those who make and directly administer the laws. Even the most divergent contingencies of a nation's life may be effectively controlled by means of reactionary publicity and resort to popular moral action, if not by the more positive agencies of prosecution, imprisonment, segregation or exile of all who controvert our highest ideals, all who would corrupt the goods of life. One of the worst things that can befall a nation's administrative government is for it to function unfairly, giving ease of protection and luxury of ready exploit to *big* thieves and using its punitive powers only to hound the poor or improvident, the misfit or unemployed. Thus is bred the spirit of revolt, not against the laws or personnel of government particularly, but against the injustice, tyranny, special privilege and protected exploitation of the caste-wise malfeasance. Witness Ireland, Egypt, India, Russia, post-war Germany and the Fascisti-phase of the recent Italian economic transition toward a social democracy. Even in our own ribald, high-gearred, loud-labelled (but really mediocre, muddied-eyed) America we have far too much newspaper democracy, and not enough of the real, actual, pulsating people's government, of, by, and for themselves, not as selfish individuals who use their government as a cloak, but as a nation nobly organized for the best welfare of all and faithfully living up to the full requirements of its program.

However, the workaday business of government must be supplemented very often by the heroic efforts and courageous sacrifices of a few unselfish men. Like Lowell once said, the safety and en-

lightenment of the many always depends upon the courage and talents of the few. Like the ideal supplied in Royce's philosophy of loyalty, it means that one of the richest services a man can render his country is to make his intellect and capacity for moral distinction bring searching and constructive criticism to bear on the bettering of its customs, laws, ambitions, industries and other social institutions of national development. Every country or community is always in need of men with true and high ideals of life, men who also have the courage and the talents necessary to push their ability to the front so as to realize their worthy ideals in the affairs of both the smaller world about them and the larger world of international brotherhood and cosmic destiny. One of the encouraging facts is that any man who really has such ideals on the threshold of his ethical vision will do all in his power to amplify his neighbor's viewpoint of life, his contemporaries' ways of thinking, and exalt their worthier aims toward political reformation and true sovereignty.

In this sense, governmental reform is a far more gradual process than that of other less secular affairs, romantic morality, art, or religion, for example. Even while largely an inert mass of officialdom performing perfunctory duties, the cycle of political growth, flourishing and decay is usually pretty well marked off if we recognize its two perennial conditions; one holding that the static appearance of economic, industrial, financial, or judicio-social codes of government is really the fixed label of motive functions making up the so-called progressive character or purpose of our modern political system; and the other or dynamic aspect (field of active causal principles, the structure of both theory and practice) of those ethical action-patterns which give us any government at all holding that this field is really an everchanging expression of what is or should be morally static and ethically structural, the very soul of every just organization, free communion and uniform social improvement. This amounts to a rational, rather than a merely romanticizing, conception of the purposes and functions of good government.

Thus it must be said and, even in contradiction to the position adopted by many of our contemporary reformers, proved that taking it at any point of historical time human society can honestly be called organized only when the motives of organization and the functions of its self-preservation are morally good, when the activities of such life and ambition as it may show are vitally con-

structive rather than destructive, ethically co-operative rather than selfishly conflicting. We know that political power is proverbially changeable and arbitrary, lucre-loving and corrupt; but any government by moral hegemony and any just administration of adequate and inexorable laws are the only kinds that can give *all* the people security, for they stand ever ready to assist the fallen, they are accountable and responsible for what they do, they are enduring and conservative of the national welfare, both public and private probity being the featured virtue. It is, then, the proper business of governments to see that they have this hegemony, that they administer just and effective laws, that they guarantee equality and security to all, that their most durable value is constructive of social-good, and that their conduct is always accountable and responsible to the people who acknowledge their guidance and benefit by their protection. Bare reliance on the integrity of personal conscience is not enough, and the motto of *pas trop gouverneur* resounding through Waldo R. Browne's political symposium ("Man or the State", Huebsch, 1920) should have been somewhat more stringent and historically accurate.

IV. CONCLUSIONS.

Therefore, there are many facts and fancies, truths and lies, to be met with in those two hemispheres of human conduct and control. A certain tonic effect is to be had from looking things squarely in the face, even though such disillusion to the clever camouflage makes us oftentimes pessimists and skeptics. In a fairly close survey of both Romanticism and Government I find that we live in a world of masqueraders, in an age of artifice and delusion, in a group-mood of mediocre mimicry and inert hero-worship. There is loud argument as to destiny and tradition, but any supposititious sense of effective discipline or co-operative interest is given an inaudibly small voice. Destiny is but the soft lining of tradition's coat; it is the raised nap of a dirty rug that has been sent to the cleaners. Traditions start, so Froude tells us, in the miracles of saints and the heroic exploits of supermen. But when once these have passed into the blear retrospect of ages less visionary, mediocre minds then read into our future a destiny commonly open to all humanity. The unique genius of those more talented and heroic is assumed as animating those still ignorant and cowardly. The survival of tradition, then, requires a certain respect for things venerable but irrelevant; the survival of man (i. e. the destiny-ideas of

such a future) requires a certain susceptibility of mind to visions of personal preferment, affective prestige, possessional merit if not also that peculiarly human appetite which craves *more life, more love, more pleasure, more luxurious ease, more everything*. Were so many of us not set on the vain career of realizing a fickle and illusory success in life we would not be prematurely grasping after destiny, the imaginary rewards hereafter; instead of this there would be far less error and misery, and far more progress and happiness in the world. Man's happiness philosophy is all askew with false ambitions and his life is grown corrupt; his ethics seem to have only a possessive case and his neighbors feel insecure.

The vulgar seek happiness in fads and cults, in wealth and luxury, in the specious prestige and egotism of a consciously directed influence over others. This is a vain and vacillating procedure; it is neither sure of its aim nor secure in its acquisitions. It is the worldling's faith in material perfection and argues a rhyomistic philosophy on the bourse of life. Such fools invariably miss the proper discipline of experience—nay, they also miss the joy of true living by controverting the normal interests of life into base means for self-assertion and self-service. They murmur in self-pity but know no sweet relief; they lead pinched lives, making no public sacrifice and seeing no lesson of justice in their private suffering. It is not always an adverse environment, not altogether an external defect, which can be marked down as the cause of wasted lives. It is rather the growing despond of spirit too innately feeble to wage a successful struggle; it is rather the emptiness of heart giving expressionless concessions to caducité; it is the sickening thud of souls falling into perdition. Mad purchases of murky pleasure, raucous pursuits of risque delight, are the functions of decaying souls; they are the inevitable symptoms of a gradually degenerating moral issue.

Resurgent souls, on the other hand, are more sternly set on righteousness and truth, more clearly conscious of Man's nobler pilgrimage toward the shrine of beauty and reality. But it is not a procedure wholly romantic, nor yet wholly ascetic and restricted; neither is it exactly patterned after our historical evolution, for that (as Huxley says) would be too "unutterably saddening." Progress is spiritual growth if anything; it is that specific ennoblement, enlightenment and advance which guards against both atavism and false culture, which secures us in a world neither brute-selfish nor foppishly ignorant. The element of rebirth in souls which populate

a good world precludes all base illusions of private gain, all fear of material loss, all barren toil and futile grief, all vengeful malice and undeserved rewards. The wicked are invariably conservative in their creed of vice, the spoliator is an inveterate toastmaster to his own debauchery. But saints and sages see the true romantic cycle of progress, the meliorism of bare human deeds and dispositions; for all of fact or fancy in our human world is always subject to either debasement or ennoblement, whichever we choose to put into effect. We would do well to be generous and good instead of stingy and degenerate, were it for no nobler purpose than that of our own ultimate welfare. We should make practical interpretation of the affective power of art, such for example as that wizardry possessed by the second century Chinese painter Liu Pao whose *North Wind* made people feel cool, whose *Milky Way* made them feel hot, and whose *Ravens* were like the 24 Filials of antiquity. We should appreciate Milton's advice in the sonnet and be like Cyriack Skinner's grandsire "on the royal bench of British Themis" pronouncing laws of writ and wrath, the while he let no solid good pass by nor cheerful hour disdained. We should so live as to honestly read into Southey's *Scholar* our own biography of friendly converse "with the mighty minds of old", gaining humble instruction from partaking their moral either-or. Thus could we derive substantial government and a valid political philosophy from our realistic romanticism and Nature-love. Thus also would we know why Shelley said that "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world."

True artistic temperaments are more mute than voluble except in viewing things deformed, unjust or vile. The esthete, like the connoisseur of the exquisite and romantic experiences of life, is in perennial ecstasy and rapture through his sense of beauty, good and truth. He is the genuine apostle of the poetic imagination, but can yet speak strongly in terms of emphatic vernacular when the violence of vandal power or the folly of fickle postichees come crashing in upon him. Any honest devotee of art dislikes to have anything—empirical or contingent, affective or industrial—disrupt the serenity of his refuge. And yet he lives no peacock life, his treasures are of the humble, they are not housed precariously aloft in the ivory tower of an exclusive existence. His very genuineness of heart and talent keeps his life exemplary and tangible to others; his very heroism of soul and livelihood keeps his enthusiasm social and his firewood dry. No proud company of the world's elect can

claim priority to his membership, for he was already a genius and a creator of good taste when the tribal instinct first took root in man. Benevolence, justice, integrity and cordial deeds of daily expression are constant companions to the soul of romantic art as well as to the intellect and moral tools of a good government. No hate or grudge, no spoils or umbrage is held against or taken from what others do, because artistic genius is in nowise narrow or provincial. A certain darkened outlook on life is necessary for umbrage to be either given or taken, and romantic souls are too clear seeing to be vexed with trifles and imaginary wrongs. Dull sorrow and care may drag the common folk down and sadden their days, but in the sanctuary of romantic art the sunshine of happiness, remembered joys, and the ideal contact with relics of past glory are ever the vigilant sacristans of the shrine set up in governments of Beauty, Nature, Faith and Love.