CHAPTER VII

Our Moulders of Opinion

"There never was a time," says Justice Brewer, in the concluding lecture of a series recently delivered by him at Yale University, "when public opinion was more potent." Possibly the saying is true; but whatever force it may have lies in the application. Public opinion may make for a general passivity — an acquiescence in things as they are — quite as much as for a general strenuousness. Nowhere, for instance, among civilized peoples, is public opinion more powerful than in a quiet and isolated community, held fast to certain habitual modes of speech and action. Only a brave man, or a desperate woman, so environed, would dare defy the tribal customs.

Public opinion in these United States may be more potent than ever before, but the personal attitude which it supports and encourages becomes more and more one of acquiescence in the existing régime. A legislative reaction and a judicial reaction are manifested; and a growing irritation is expressed, as from time to time those rude disturbers of the public peace, the social reformers, come forward with plans for curing imputed evils. Social and political quietism becomes our everyday philosophy. An "air of contentment and enthusiastic cheerfulness . . . charac-

terizes our society," writes Professor William G. Sumner, of Yale, in a recent number of the *Independent;* and though the judgment might be somewhat more accurately worded, he is not far wrong. A keen-eyed observer from Italy, — Professor Angelo Mosso, of Turin, — who visited us a few years ago, gives somewhat similar testimony. The fact astonishes him, as he confesses, since he saw much of political and industrial evil which he could not comprehend a democracy enduring; yet for all that the evidence was convincing.

I

Among the causes making for this acquiescence in existing social conditions, there are three which may be considered here. The first is the one which so strongly impressed Professor Mosso. It is the rage for individual exploitation. The imaginations of most men are fired by the spectacle of the few achieving great fortunes; each believes that a like fortune lies somewhere within his own reach, and with blind fatuity he tolerates conditions which he instinctively feels to be inequitable, simply because he expects himself to master them. "I believe," writes Professor Mosso, "that the desire to become wealthy is so strong and powerful in every American that, in order to reserve the opportunity of realizing such desire, Americans willingly submit to the continuance of laws which allow such accumulations." It is the petty gambler's faith, the conviction that, though everything be against him, he will somehow

"beat the game." And just as the petty gambler's faith is fostered by the runners and "cappers" for faro, policy, roulette, and keno, so the faith of the industrial underling is fostered by a tremendous trumpeting of the ways and means to worldly "success." The preaching of "success" has become, in these last five years, a distinct profession, honored and well recompensed.

A second cause of the prevailing acquiescence in the present régime applies more particularly to social reformers, and to those who, while not actively enlisted as "come-outers," do yet sympathize with the activities of their more aggressive brethren. It is a feeling, born of years of experience in promoting some collective good, of the hopelessness of achievement. Opposed at all points, frustrated at many, there comes a time, sooner or later, when all but the most resolute reformers are forced to admit that little or nothing can be done. Many thereupon fall back into the ranks of the do-nothings and the care-nothings; while others, in whom the fire of purpose is not entirely quenched, reluctantly exchange their radical and comprehensive plans of social changes for more narrow and immediate purposes, — the giving of small charities, the doing of near-at-hand services, and the occasional support of a particular public measure.

II

A third, and perhaps the most important, cause is the continual output from pulpit, sanctum, forum, and college chair, of our professional moulders of

opinion. Now not all of this output, it is freely conceded, makes for acquiescence; but the overwhelming mass of it unquestionably does. From these instructors of the people we learn that conditions, while not perfect, either are reasonably near to perfection, or, if evil, are not to be corrected except by individual regeneration. We learn of the irrationality or the moral obliquity of discontent; the viciousness or fanaticism of impertinent persons who seek to change things; the virtues of obedience; the obligation of toil (specifically directed to those who are doing most of the world's work, for the profit of others), and of the worth, benevolence, and indispensability of our magnates.

The denunciation of discontent becomes more common and more emphatic. A plentiful crop of instances is always forthcoming to any one who cares to look for them. The generation of Rousseau and the following generation of Jefferson set high hopes for mankind on the faculty of discontent. The past generation, compromising between theology and evolution, found in discontent a perpetual factor making for the creation of a better environment. But our present reaction takes us back to the days of the Stuarts. The magnificent invectives of Dryden, voiced in that —

> "full resounding line,
> The long majestic march and energy divine,"

against the sedition and discontent frequently manifested during the reign of Charles II, might serve for a thousand texts for present-day sermons, lectures, and editorials. The thought, common these last hun-

dred years, that discontent is usually the result of privation, wrong, or oppression, is given over; and our modern moulders of opinion revert to the notion that it is fostered by ease and comfort.

> "To what would he on quail and pheasant swell
> That even on tripe and carrion could rebel?"

asks "Glorious John" in satirizing his rival Shadwell. Tripe and carrion did not form the usual nourishment for rebellion. We find the same idea constantly echoed in very recent days; and the demands of organized workmen for better pay are almost invariably regarded in certain intellectual circles as evidences, not of need, but of the pride and rebelliousness engendered by an already attained competency.

Honors are even between churchmen and lay publicists, when it comes to the denunciation of discontent. The pulpit, the stump, the college chair, and the editorial sanctum are alike busied with its condemnation. Perhaps a typical protagonist in the work was the late E. L. Godkin. The thought recurs again and again in his writings. "I must frankly say," he avers in his essay, "Social Classes in the Republic," "that I know of no more mischievous person than the man who, in free America, seeks to spread among them [the workers] the idea that they are wronged and kept down by somebody; that somebody is to blame because they are not better lodged, better dressed, better educated, and have not easier access to balls, concerts, or dinner parties." Whereupon, to make clear his contention, he tells of the following pathetic little episode: —

"Two years ago I was in one of the University Settlements in New York, and was walking through the rooms of the society with one of the members. They were plain and neat and suitable, and he explained to me that the purpose in furnishing and fitting them up was to show the workingmen the kind of rooms they ought to have 'if justice were done.' To tell this to a workingman, without telling him in what the injustice consisted and who worked it if he had not such rooms, was, I held, to be most mischievous."

Even President Roosevelt, doubtless impressed by the modern reiteration of the notion, felt called upon, in his Providence speech (August 23d), to rebuke discontent, and incidentally to identify it with envy. "Not only do the wicked flourish," he says, "when the times are such that most men flourish, but what is worse, the spirit of envy and jealousy and hatred springs up in the breasts of those who, though they may be doing fairly well themselves, yet see others, who are no more deserving, doing far better."

Education, in the modern view, is largely responsible for discontent, and should be restricted. Judge Simeon A. Baldwin, of the Connecticut Supreme Court, and lecturer in the Yale Law School, is quite certain upon this point. His "signed editorial," in the April 9th issue of a New York newspaper published by the Yale lecturer on journalism, expresses a view which is coming to be widely held. Our young men, he notes with great complacency, are obliged to leave school early, in order to go to work; and he thereupon urges that young women

also should clip their education at an early age. "Girls would make better wives and mothers and housekeepers," he writes, "if they finished school at from fourteen to sixteen years of age. As it is, they obtain a smattering of many studies, which in my opinion cannot do them much good. They are possessed by a spirit of unrest to-day, and develop ambitions not compatible with the happiest homes."

Professor Harry Thurston Peck expresses the modern view more succinctly. Professor Peck, it may be stated for the benefit of the unenlightened, is an instructor of Latin in Columbia University. No pent-up Utica, however, contracts his powers; he has courageously sallied forth from his particular domain and has taken all knowledge for his province. Over this province he ranges with unconstrained freedom, noting what he will, and, with something of the "large utterance of the early gods," making known to a waiting world his impressions and beliefs. What a great lexicographer said of an amiable poet may be repeated in present praise: He touches nothing that he does not adorn. Some intellectual limitations it is possible he may have; but as a reflector of certain current views obtaining in high places he is probably without a peer. In his article, "Some Phases of American Education," in the *Cosmopolitan* magazine a few years ago, he put the matter in this way: —

"Linked closely with many other very serious educational mistakes, and from many points of view by far the most profoundly serious of them all, is that curious fancy, which is almost universal among our people, that education in itself and for all human

beings is a good and thoroughly desirable possession. . . . There is probably in our whole system to-day no principle so fundamentally untrue as this, and there is certainly none that is fraught with so much social and political peril for the future. For education means ambition, and ambition means discontent."

But, as Shakespeare's Fluellen remarks, "the phrase is a little variations." All discontent is not the same, and that which stirs in the bosom of Professor Peck must be carefully discriminated from the sort nurtured by plain John Smith. "Nothing so dainty sweet as lovely melancholy," sang Sir John Fletcher; but what is meet for an Elizabethan poet or a present-day philosopher may be most unmeet for a common plebeian. "Now discontent," continues this pharos of the unenlightened, "is in itself a divine thing. When it springs up in a strong, creative intellect, capable of translating it into actual achievement, it is the mother of all progress; but when it germinates in a limited and feeble brain, it is the mother of unhappiness alone."

Dr. Arthur Twining Hadley, president of Yale University, also has doubts. His recent book, "The Education of the American Citizen," might be supposed, from its title, to be a plea for the popular diffusion of knowledge. Such it is, in fact, only the author draws the line at "sociology and politics and civics and finance." "When the plea is urged, as it so often is," he writes, "that they constitute a necessary and valuable training for citizenship, we are justified in making a distinct protest. Except within the narrowest limits, they do harm rather than good.

As ordinarily taught, . . . they tend to prepare the minds of the next generation to look to superficial remedies for political evils, instead of seeing that the only true remedy lies in the creation of a sound public sentiment."

The term, "superficial remedies for political evils," means, in plain words, social legislation; and it brings up a second matter upon which our moulders of opinion have made a considerable approach to unanimity. We hear legislation flouted on all sides, and appeals made for individual regeneration. The matter-of-fact persons who hold that sixty years of factory acts have had more to do with establishing humane conditions in certain quarters of the planet than nineteen hundred years of hortatory appeals to the individual man, are dismissed with a smile of contempt; and the declaration is made that most legislation is mischievous, and that nothing but character counts. Mr. Godkin was "far from denying that legislation and political changes have been the direct means of great good," though he held that "every good change in legislation or in government has been preceded or brought about by an increase of intelligence, of reasonableness, or of brotherly kindness on the part of the people at large." A conclusion, to say the least, not overfreighted with historical learning, since many and perhaps most reformatory laws have been passed by an earnest minority against the active opposition of many, and despite the stolid passivity of most, and what mankind has heretofore called social progress has been largely due to the reaction of such laws and like institutions upon individual character.

President Hadley differs somewhat from Mr. Godkin. Too much stress, he believes, is laid upon the mechanism of government and of industry, and too little upon the force by which this mechanism is kept at work.

"Not by the axioms of metaphysics on the one hand, nor by the machinery of legislation on the other," he writes, "can we deal with the questions which vex human society. . . . Conscious of its honesty of purpose, it [democracy] is impatient of opposition, and contemptuous of difficulties, however real. It undertakes a vast amount of regulation of economic and social life in fields where two generations ago a free government would scarce have dared to enter. In these new regulations there are many instances of failure, and relatively few of success. We have had much infringement of personal liberty, with little or no corresponding benefit to the community."

In Justice Brewer's recent volume of Yale lectures, also, there is much regard for character, and much even for associated work in bettering the life of the nation. But as to legislation as a means of achieving this betterment, there is a cautious silence. There is the declaration that each man in free America is a ruler — glad tidings to the persons ignorant thereof. There are some original lines, —

> "The moulds of fate
> That shape the State
> And make or mar the commonweal,"

which, though somewhat reminiscent of the good-natured Bottom's lines, —

> "And Phibbus' car
> Shall shine from far
> And make and mar
> The foolish fates,"

do yet body forth the noble summation: —

> "The crowning fact,
> The kingliest act
> Of Freedom is the Freeman's vote!"

But though the freeman's vote is a kingly prerogative, there is no suggestion that he shall use it in initiating or passing upon legislation for the collective good. Rather the plea is for obedience; and the warning is of those violators of the public peace, the labor organizations.

So, too, Mr. Stimson. "The unexpected weakness of democratic government," he writes, "is its belief that statutes can amend both nature and human nature." And he rejoices that the judiciary, convinced, no doubt, that neither human nature nor its manifestations can be amended by statutes, have actively intervened by declaring many laws unconstitutional. He finds, moreover, that the general principle which has caused the adverse action of the courts, is that these statutes have been "restrictive of private liberty, of the right of a free citizen to use his own property, and his own personal powers in such a way as he will, if so be that he do not injure others." A perspicuous and conclusive judgment, no doubt, considering that the very point at issue is the matter of injury to others. He is not satisfied with condemning legislation, moreover, but proceeds

further to a gentle remonstrance with the classes of persons who have urged certain regulative laws. Labor leaders, he discovers, distrust experience, and Socialists detest lucidity — a brace of acute judgments in the face of the fact that the thing actually rated highest in trade-union circles is experience, and that whatever the defects of Socialists or of their system may be, the signal contributions of the best Socialist writers to the study of political economy have been lucidity of thought and definiteness of expression.

So, too, Professor Sumner, Professor Walter A. Wyckoff, the entertaining author of "The Workers," and a host of other instructors of the public, the mere roster of whose names would require several pages of fine print. Of the only two safeguards of the dependent classes against complete exploitation — social legislation and the labor society — our moulders of opinion would seem to have taken the job of demolishing the former, leaving to the magnates themselves the task of attending to the latter.

With many if not most of these publicists the criticism is delivered not only at protective laws, but at the force behind them — democracy. "Every age," writes Professor Sumner, "is befooled by the notions which are in fashion in it. Our age is befooled by 'democracy.' We hear arguments about the industrial organization which are deductions from democratic dogmas, or which appeal to prejudice by using analogies drawn from democracy to affect sentiment about industrial relations." Many of our moulders of opinion elaborate the argument often made in the writings of

our literary magnates, that only men who are themselves possessed of property should have any voice in the disposition of wealth or the regulation of property rights. To justify this view recourse is had to several recently imported dogmas, fashioned by Mr. W. H. Mallock, author of "Aristocracy and Evolution." All increase of wealth, all advance in knowledge and virtue, contends Mr. Mallock, come from an aristocracy — a word which he defines as meaning the "exceptionally gifted and efficient minority, no matter what the position in which its members may have been born, or what the sphere of social progress in which their efficiency shows itself." Therefore, since the efficient have produced everything above the maximum which the ignorant and unskilled workman can produce without this higher aid, it follows that the efficient should be left in untroubled possession of their holdings. The large assumption among others in Mr. Mallock's argument — that those who efficiently sow and those who richly reap are the same persons — need not concern us here. It is sufficient to point out that his argument has been eagerly taken up by a number of our own moulders of opinion, fostered and even developed to further conclusions.

Professor Peck, for instance, rather heroically improving on the spirit, and not infrequently following the text, of Mr. Mallock, puts the matter in this way: —

"Every really great thing that has been accomplished in the history of man has been accomplished by an aristocracy. It may have called itself a sacerdotal aristocracy, or a military aristocracy, or an aris-

tocracy based on birth and blood, yet these distinctions were but superficial; for in reality it always meant one thing alone — the community of interest and effort in those whose intellectual force and innate gift of government enabled them to dominate and control the destinies of States, driving in harness the hewers of wood and drawers of water who constitute the vast majority of the human race, and whose happiness is greater and whose welfare is more thoroughly conserved when governed than when governing."

The argument that the gifted produce all, and the assumption that the wealthy and the gifted are the same persons lead up to the fervid praise of inequality of condition which in recent years is so often heard. Our literary magnates began the strain, doubtless with the motive of self-justification. Since then it has been taken up by our professional instructors — from what motive is not precisely known — and the result is a mighty chorus of many voices. Says Professor Sumner: —

"If we could get rid of some of our notions about liberty and equality, and could lay aside this eighteenth-century philosophy, according to which human society is to be brought into a state of blessedness, we might get some insight into the might of the societal organization: what it does for us and what it makes us do. . . . If we are willing to be taught by the facts, then the phenomena of the concentration of wealth which we see about us will convince us that they are just what the situation calls for. They ought to be because they are, and because nothing else would serve the interests of society. . . . I often see

statements published in which the objectors lay stress upon the great inequalities of fortune, and having set forth the contrast between rich and poor, they rest their case. What law of nature, religion, ethics, or the State is violated by inequalities of fortune? The inequalities prove nothing."

Professor John B. Clark, of Columbia University, also sees in vast inequalities of fortune the basis of a happy state. Aristotle taught differently, it is true. "In human societies," he wrote, "extremes of wealth and poverty are the main sources of evil. The one brings arrogance and a lack of capacity to obey; the other brings slavishness and a lack of capacity to command. Where a population is divided into the two classes of very rich and very poor, there can be no real state; for there can be no real friendship between the classes, and friendship is the essential principle of all association." But Professor Clark, touched by prophetic fire, pictures a new society in which inequality is the great blessing. "The world of the near future," he writes in his recent article on "The Society of the Future," "will not be one with inequalities levelled out of it; and to any persons to whom inequality of possessions seems inherently evil, this world will not be satisfactory. It will present a condition of vast and ever growing inequality. With a democracy that depends on a likeness of material possessions it will have nothing in common. The rich will continually grow richer, and the multi-millionnaires will approach the billion-dollar standard. . . . If an earthly Eden is to come through competition, it will come not in spite of, but by means

of, an enormous increase of inequality of outward possessions."

We must hear from Professor Peck again — and for the last time. "When men by temper and training," he writes in his recent paper on "The Social Advantages of the Concentration of Wealth," "come to possess the ability to do large things in this direct and simple way [*i.e.*, the characteristic way, of the magnates], they have an immense advantage over those who can work only in committees, or boards, or companies, and they will inevitably dominate them and use them quite at will. . . . This [concentration] means, in the first place and as a first result, the aggrandizement of individuals; but in the end it means the wide diffusion of a golden stream through every artery and vein of our national and individual life. America has already been enormously enriched; yet the actualities of the present are nothing when compared with the potentialities of the future. Timid minds which are appalled rather than inspired by the vastness and magnificence of the whole thing shrink back and croak out puling prophecies of evil. They cannot rise to the greatness of it all because they lack the dauntless courage of the typical American, who, in Kipling's vivid phrase, can always —

> 'Turn a keen, untroubled face
> Home to the instant need of things.'"

III

So much for a consensus of some of our notable instructors of the public on things political and social.

That these opinions produce a powerful influence on the mass, no one will deny. The wide respect in which our teachers — particularly our commissioned teachers — are held; the general recognition of their learning, their profundity, their unquestioned liberty to speak what they will, their insulated freedom from the influences arising out of seigniorial endowments, compel a popular deference to their judgments. It is, therefore, with pained surprise that an American reads an uncharitable comment on their ability and learning. Such a comment is that which appeared last February in the conservative and ably edited Paris *Temps*. "It is true," writes its editor, "that American universities pay great attention to social and political sciences. It is no less true that they have at their disposal considerable financial resources for the publication of reviews. But the question is to know what the reviews and teachings are worth. . . . I believe myself sufficiently conversant with the matter. By professional duty I read, not everything which is printed on the other side of the Atlantic concerning these subjects, but a notable part of the work which is considered the most weighty. With a few honorable exceptions — honorable, but rare — I must venture to say that these publications are, for the most part, without originality and without any real value.

"I imagine American professors will be the first to feel surprise at the great honor [the establishment of a French school in America] which it is proposed to do them. They have a very keen feeling of what they owe to European culture. They keep in close

touch with all that is published in their respective specialties in France, Germany, England, and Italy. They profit by such publications, of which their own are sometimes — let us say things as they are — only adaptations or reflections. Many of them have had their intellectual training in old Europe, and had, at their start, no other ambition than to model themselves on their masters and repeat them. The development of social and political studies is immense — on the surface — in the United States. In depth it is not quite the same."

The *Temps*, it may be remarked, is not, on the one hand, radical, nor on the other, anti-democratic or anti-American; and so the reasons for its illiberal and discourteous judgment must be left undiscerned. Its startling declaration, that the sociological pronouncements of our distinguished teachers "are, for the most part, without originality and without any real value," rises to the dignity of a national affront, and rightly calls for emphatic action from our strenuous State Department.

IV

It may be doubted if our commissioned teachers exert so great an influence upon opinion as do our newspapers. "The newspaper to-day," said Archbishop Ireland recently before the National Educational Association, "is preëminently the mentor of the people; it is read by all; it is believed by nearly all. Its influence is paramount; its responsibility is tremendous." There is much truth in this dictum,

though something of qualification is needed. The newspaper, though not "read by all," nor "believed by nearly all," is indeed more widely read than ever before. If the census is to be believed, the circulation per issue of all daily, tri-weekly, semi-weekly, and weekly publications has grown in the last ten years from 38,000,000 to 58,000,000 copies. This is certainly a tremendous showing; but it is doubtful if the newspapers exert the direct sway over men's minds which was exerted in earlier years. The influence effected is due less to the formal expression of opinion than to the color habitually given by them to the news. The eager question, "What does old Greeley say?" which was once so often heard, was a tribute to the power of an individual in whose rectitude and wisdom many thousands put a rarely wavering faith. Many a lesser editor had also his reverent disciples, who believed as he taught and voted as he urged.

But in our day the direct appeal of the newspaper is more hesitatingly obeyed. Frequently it has happened, in municipal elections, that a candidate or candidates have been elected in the face of an almost solid opposition of the press. A newspaper may be patronized for this or that special feature by persons who pay no attention to its editorials, by others who read them merely to learn an opposing view of things, and by others still — a far larger class — who, reading between the lines, choose for themselves what to rely upon and what to doubt. All the larger cities, and perhaps most of the smaller, have instances of newspapers which, appealing to some special interest,

secure a considerable number of readers antipathetic to the political views expressed. It happens that radicals often read conservative publications, and that conservatives sometimes look upon radical print. The faithful devotees of a certain mercurial New York newspaper probably read it as eagerly in 1884, when it supported General Butler for the Presidency, as in 1892, when it supported Mr. Cleveland, or in 1896, when it went over to Major McKinley. But reliance upon editorial opinions is a wavering faith. A wiser discrimination is employed, a more cynical scepticism is maintained. When the New York newspaper which boasts of printing all the fit news publishes in its editorial columns the dictum that "the oversupply of labor in the anthracite region is due to the great attractiveness of the wages and the conditions of work," none but the willing are convinced; and so for all the misjudgments, ignorant or deliberate, that are daily put forth by newspapers of all classes there are scoffers and sceptics as well as credulous believers.

For the recognition has become general that the average newspaper is owned and operated as a commercial property. As Mr. Brooke Fisher, in a recent number of the *Atlantic*, writes, the days when the editor hired the publisher are gone; it is now the publisher who hires the editor, and the counting-room determines the policy. Advertising is the material mainstay, and the merchants and magnates who have largesse to distribute must be humored. "Publishers," says the interesting census bulletin on "Printing and Publishing," "are depending more on

advertising and less on subscriptions and sales for financial return." Whether it be the sensational "yellows," or the less sensational but characterless "pinks," or the staid and ponderous "grays" of the press, the same rule holds. Even the religious journals make a like appeal. "A superfluity of religious weeklies," says the best-known publication of that class, giving itself a left-handed pat on the shoulder, "with no other basis for existence than sectional or partisan pride, will not be tolerated nor supported by the laity; nor will advertisers much longer fail to discriminate between religious journals that are progressive [meaning, for example, itself] and are reaching well-to-do and intelligent people, and those which are not." Statements of enormous sales, of vast subscription lists, are published in glaring type, and the phrase "greatest circulation in the city," or State, or nation, or world, is trumpeted to the ears of the buyers of advertising space. There is still an appeal to the giver of largesse even when a publication cannot honestly boast of great circulation; the argument is then one of a "select" patronage — of "fit audience, though few," but inferentially of great purchasing power.

The pressure upon editorial policy of this deference to the advertiser is constant and effective, and the result is apparent to most readers. Even the more rampant of the "yellows," which daily shriek against political and social injustice, are affected by it. As mournful a philosopher as Heraclitus might have found food for humor in the manœuvres of the metropolitan newspapers some six years ago during the

agitation for the passage of the Andrews bill. This measure required seats for women workers in all mercantile establishments. Now it happened that the heads of the department stores were in nearly every instance violently opposed to the bill, and it also happened that the amount of advertising from the great stores cut a very pretty figure in the income of the average metropolitan newspaper. To complete the dilemma the bill won great favor from the public. How the masterful purveyors of news and opinions to the people managed to extricate themselves from the difficulty, would make too long a story in the telling. But that they triumphantly surmounted it, is a matter of history.

With the advertiser in so commanding a position, it is not needed that a newspaper shall be owned by a magnate in order that it shall faithfully reflect the special interests of "business." Yet that seigniorial funds are back of many of our important newspapers is a fact which to a person of intelligence needs no proof. The census bulletin, revealing the characteristic optimism of the compilers of the Twelfth Census, will have it that individual ownership is still the rule. The proportion of individually owned and operated publications is given as 63.3 per cent, of partnership concerns as 19.7 per cent, and of corporate concerns as 17 per cent. "These figures indicate," we are told, "the complete absence of the extended combinations and consolidations so frequently encountered in other industries." Yet there are combinations, whether individually or jointly owned,—the Hearst newspapers in San Francisco,

Chicago, and New York, the Ochs newspapers of Chattanooga, New York, and Philadelphia, the Belo newspapers of Texas, and those of the Scripps-McRae concern in the middle West. Only this last summer public announcement was made of a projected combination — under the control of Mr. P. F. Collier, and with a capital of $1,000,000 — of a large number of country newspapers in the State of New York. The project has for the time been given up, but others of a like nature may fairly be expected for the future. Moreover, some of the features of the industrial combinations — identity of product, for instance — are discoverable in the so-called coöperative newspapers, which make use of plate matter or "patent-insides." More than half of all the periodicals of the country are in this class. Finally, the chief commodity of newspapers of all classes — the news — is a trust product, a commodity in which the Associated Press serves the function of gatherer of raw material and manufacturer, and the periodical the function of assorter and retailer.

But the census figures reveal little or nothing to the point. Seigniorial backing, when actually given, is not usually made visible in the form of investment in newspaper stock. It is not to the best interests of the purveyor of news and opinions that it should be; for the public, with a fine sense of its own independence of judgment, requires that seigniorial influence shall be less obviously shown. The odor of Standard oil, the fumes of American tobacco, have proved fatal to more than one newspaper enterprise, and even the taint of railroad support has been shown to be harm-

ful. There is thus the greatest need of discretion in arranging the nominal ownership; and the result is, that in many cases it is easier to discover the actual ownership of a policy game than the actual ownership of a newspaper. The curious can but surmise and wonder. When a chaste and well-ordered daily publication gives to a particular magnate's house-warming the space of a column and a half, while its rivals — even the "yellows," which deal in that sort of thing — consider the event worth no more than a half-column; or when another magnate is persistently "boomed" for a high office, or when for another a franchise grant is skilfully proposed, one may put two and two together, and apply the natural inferences. Inferences, however, are not proof, and the conclusion must remain doubtful.

But whether through the influence of potential advertising or of secret ownership, the magnate, or the magnate class, exercises a large measure of control, and the matter which appears is that which, on the whole, is agreeable to seigniorial minds. The coal magnates may be criticised, but it is not so much on account of their refusal to grant concessions to their men as for their failure to operate in defiance of their men. So, too, the trusts come in for occasional rough handling; but it is the abstract trust that is at fault: the individual trust usually goes scathless. Certain of the "yellows" furnish some exception to the general rule, though here, too, the influence of the great advertiser is shown, and one may vainly read the columns of the most radical of the anti-monopoly dailies for a suggestion that the great

department stores are other than abodes of comfort and joy for all the souls employed therein.

Such is the newspaper bias, and the product of the hired writer must conform. Whether editing news or writing opinions, he must recognize the divinity that hedges in the magnate class. It was a savage, and in some respects extravagant, picture of the function of the hired newspaper worker which a brilliant journalist, now deceased, gave to the world a few years ago: —

"There is no such thing in America as an independent press, unless it is out in the country towns. I am paid for keeping honest opinions out of the paper I am connected with. Other editors are paid similar salaries for doing similar things. If I should allow honest opinions to be printed in one issue of my paper, before twenty-four hours my occupation, like Othello's, would be gone. The man who would be so foolish as to write honest opinions would be out on the street hunting for another job. The business of a New York journalist is to distort the truth, lie outright, to pervert, to villify, to fawn at the feet of mammon, and to sell his country and his race for his daily bread, or for about the same thing, his salary. We are the tools of vassals of the rich men behind the scenes. We are jumping-jacks. They pull the strings, and we dance. Our time, our talents, our lives, our possibilities, are all the property of other men. We are intellectual prostitutes."

But though in certain respects extravagant, it has yet faithful and accurate touches which are recognizable by every undeluded person who earns his

living in the employment of the daily press. Perhaps, indeed, there are not many of the undeluded; for the recoil upon themselves of the character of their tasks does not, to say the least, sharpen the edge of conscience, and the service of a few years is generally believed to be effective in indurating the finest sensibilities.

It is not, as has been said, so much through their editorial expressions as through their coloring of the news that the weeklies and dailies mould the opinions of the mass. A growing scepticism averts the former influence; but against the latter there is no prophylactic. News is assorted, pruned, improved, to accord with a predetermined policy. From an anti-imperialist publication one gets small notion of other happenings in the Philippines than devastations, rapes, battle, murder, and sudden death; and from an administration organ one may learn only of Peace piping her "languid note," of the diffusion of education, and the progress of industry, varied only now and then by slight outbreaks from a few ladrones. In the far more important matter of the irrepressible class conflict here at home, like influences color the news; and as ninety-nine out of every one hundred periodicals support, in greater or less degree, the existing régime, the impress upon the public mind is overwhelming. Some of the "yellows" set up a bar to the universal pervasion of this influence; and the activities of the social reformers, through their weekly journals, their tracts, and their public discussions, somewhat affect it. But, on the whole, these effects are but a ripple on the deep and

powerful stream that fertilizes the opinions of the public.

V

Our laudatory stump orators have their measure of influence on social thought, no doubt; but it is one that surely declines, and the subject may be passed with but scant mention. Likewise, the heterogeneous small fry of seigniorial retainers in the various walks of life, whose business it is, in season and out, to glorify the prevailing régime, may be noticed and dismissed in a sentence. The influence of the pulpit, however, is a subject that requires some attention. This influence, while greater than that of either of the groups just mentioned, is unquestionably less than that of either the editors or the professional lay publicists. Among practical men in the upper orders there is a widespread prejudice against pastoral interference in social and political matters, unless it be directed solely to seigniorial justification. The shoemaker should stick to his last, runs the adage; and no less it is urged that the pastor should stick to his text. He should, furthermore, discriminate and sort his texts, making careful avoidance of the ethical precepts of Jesus. For these are needlessly disturbing to the code that prevails in commerce and politics, and both politicians and magnates resent their citation. A future "popular" version of the Bible may eliminate them, and thus do away with a fertile cause of discord; but until that is done the better part of pastoral valor will continue to lie in discretion.

The sentiments of the politicians and the magnates

toward the pulpit filter down to the common mass of the laity, and still further weaken pastoral influence. But weakened as it has been, it is yet felt by the magnates to be an instrument of social control which by proper use can be made to perform a needed service. A constant pressure is, therefore, brought to bear upon pastoral utterances. It is the "safe" men who are in most request to fill pulpits; and it is the "safe" men who draw to their churches the largest endowments. Under the influence of this pressure there has gradually been developed a code of pulpit ethics, outside the limits of which no prudent minister will dare range. The minister may be "long" on spirituality, but he must be "short" on social precepts. He may preach faith, hope, and charity, and also the future punishment of the unregenerate, so long as unregeneracy is depicted in general terms; but he must avoid, with the nicest delicacy, the mention of tax-dodging and stock-watering as punishable sins. He may denounce violence, and for a modern instance he may cite the occasional riotous conduct of striking workmen; but let him at his peril cite such venial backslidings from grace as the blowing up of a competitor's refinery, the seizure of a street for track-laying, or the employment of armed mercenaries for a private purpose. Political evils may be denounced in the abstract, and the bribery of voters in the concrete. The latter is an offence usually committed by irreverent ward politicians, and may justly receive, without injury to the State and to society, the scathing anathemas of the pulpit. But he that in a moment of inadvertence miscalls by the

name bribes the "gentle rewards," the "gratuities," as they were known in Bacon's time, which magnates frequently bestow upon legislators and judges, had best resign his pastorate and seek some other field. Nor must any slight be thrown upon any of the conventional practices in the ordinary daily conduct of "business." These are hallowed by custom, and are beyond criticism. Such a declaration as that of a certain minister in a recent number of the *Christian Endeavor World* — "What we call Napoleonic genius in business is sometimes simply whitewashed highway robbery on a gigantic scale" — verges closely upon contumacy. It is relieved slightly by the qualifying "sometimes," — much virtue in your "sometimes," as the immortal bard would remark, — but for all that, it is a dangerous utterance, and one apt to cause its enunciator grave trouble.

But pastoral pronouncements on social questions are permitted — nay, welcomed — if only they properly rebuke the occasional discontent and unquiet of the masses and the aggression of those foes of order, the labor unions. Such a pronouncement, for instance, is that of the Rev. Lyman Abbott, put forth in his recent philosophical disquisition, "The Rights of Man." "Trades-unions . . . are ruled over generally," he declares, "by a directory scarcely less absolute than that which governed the revolutionists in the day of Mirabeau." This is unexceptionably decorous, and runs no risk whatever of seigniorial censorship. The recent coal strike brought forth a large number of pastoral utterances of a like character, which must ultimately redound to the great

glory of the declaimers. The good Bishop Potter, in his address before the Diocesan convention in New York City, September 24, felt called upon to rebuke envy and hatred and to deny the existence of social classes in the republic: "Wealth is unequally distributed, we are told, and the sophistries that are born of envy and hatred are hawked about the streets to influence, in a land which refuses to enthrone one class above another, the passions of the less clever or thrifty or industrious against those who are more so." The eminent Dr. Ethelbert Talbot, Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Central Pennsylvania, according to his public letter of September 28, saw in the coal strike only a demand upon the part of the miners "that the operators shall no longer manage their own business." "How can the question of whether a man has a right to conduct his own business," he asks, with painfully defective forethought for what subsequently happened, "be submitted to arbitration?" The no less eminent Rev. Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis, in his recent address before the Chicago Society of New York, demanded a wall of bayonets from Washington to Wilkesbarre. The Rev. Dr. Minot J. Savage of the Church of the Messiah also called for arms instead of arbitration, and the Rev. Dr. W. R. Huntington of Grace Church echoed the good Bishop Talbot's opinion, and "from the point of view of simple justice" could not see "that we have any reason to blame the mine-owners for refusing to allow the management of their own business to be taken out of their hands." From Calvary, too, — or at least from the Calvary Baptist

Church of New York, — came a further demand for soldiery. "These labor leaders," declared the Rev. Dr. R. S. MacArthur, "with their large salaries, are forcing the men to be idle. They are more tyrannical than the Czar of Russia." These are but samples of the "safe" utterances on social questions — the kind that involve no penalties, but on the contrary, reap sure harvests of glory and recompense.

Occasionally from too close and exclusive reading of the synoptic gospels, with their recital of Jesus' specific teachings on social matters, a young and ardent minister loses his perspective, and seeing overlarge the industrial and social evils of his time, seeks to remedy them. Usually, however, the mood is but transitory, and a few months, or at most a few years, witness the reaction. Renunciation of heretical doctrines follows, and ultimately the errant is restored to the fold of the "safe." But let no one imagine that in seigniorial halls his sins are remembered against him. On the contrary, there is more joy over the recovery of one strayed sheep than over ninety and nine that remain faithful.

Sometimes, it must be conceded, there are to be found those who refuse to be forced or cajoled, and who hold their intrepid way in defiance of power. The World assails them, in the words of Matthew Arnold, with its perpetual challenge and warning : —

> "'Behold,' she cries, 'so many rages lulled ;
> So many fiery spirits quite cooled down.
> Look how so many valors, long undulled,
> After short commerce with me fear my frown.'"

But they fear not her frown ; and they teach the

social precepts of their Master regardless of material consequences. What those consequences are, the average man knows full well. They are ostracism, a reduction, sooner or later, to the poorest livings; a hemming in and constraining to the narrowest fields of effort and influence—in a word, the full sum of the forceful rebuke which it is possible for the magnate class and its retainers, in the present state of society, to deliver. In the more developed state of the future the rebuke will be yet more emphatic; for the influence of the pulpit, whatever it may be in degree, must in kind be confirmatory of the right of the magnate class to rule.