

Jane Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics* (New York: MacMillan, 1907); 137-177.

Chapter V

Industrial Amelioration

There is no doubt that the great difficulty we experience in reducing to action our imperfect code of social ethics arises from the fact that we have not yet learned to act together, and find it far from easy even to fuse our principles and aims into a satisfactory statement. We have all been at times entertained by the futile efforts of half a dozen highly individualized people gathered together as a committee. Their aimless attempts to find a common method of action have recalled the wavering motion of a baby's arm before he has learned to coordinate his muscles.

If, as is many times stated, we are passing from an age of individualism to one of association, there is no doubt that for de- [end page 137] cisive and effective action the individual still has the best of it. He will secure efficient results while committees are still deliberating upon the best method of making a beginning. And yet, if the need of the times demand associated effort, it may easily be true that the action which appears ineffective, and yet is carried out upon the more highly developed line of associated effort, may represent a finer social quality and have a greater social value than the more effective individual action. It is possible that an individual may be successful, largely because he conserves all his powers for individual achievement and does not put any of his energy into the training which will give him the ability to act with others. The individual acts promptly, and we are dazzled by his success while only dimly conscious of the inadequacy of his code. Nowhere is this illustrated more clearly than in industrial relations, as existing between the owner of a large factory and his employees. [end page 138]

A growing conflict may be detected between the democratic ideal, which urges the workmen to demand representation in the administration of industry, and the accepted position, that the man who owns the capital and takes the risks has the exclusive right of management. It is in reality a clash between individual or aristocratic management, and corporate or democratic management. A large and highly developed factory presents a sharp contrast between its socialized form and individualistic ends.

It is possible to illustrate this difference by a series of events which occurred in Chicago during the summer of 1894. These events epitomized and exaggerated, but at the same time challenged, the code of ethics which regulates much of our daily conduct, and clearly showed that so-called social relations are often resting upon the will of an individual, and are in reality regulated by a code of individual ethics. [end page 139]

As this situation illustrates a point of great difficulty to which we have arrived in our development of social ethics, it may be justifiable to discuss it at some length. Let us recall the facts, not as they have been investigated and printed, but as they remain in our memories.

A large manufacturing company had provided commodious workshops, and, at the instigation of its president, had built a model town for the use of its employees. After a series of years it was deemed necessary, during a financial depression, to reduce the wages of these employees by giving each workman less than full-time work "in order to keep the shops open." This reduction was not accepted by the men, who had become discontented with the factory management and the town regulations, and a strike ensued, followed by a complete shut-down of the works. Although these shops were non-union shops, the strikers were hastily organized and appealed for help to the American [end page 140] Railway Union, which at that moment was holding its biennial meeting in Chicago. After some days' discussion and

some futile attempts at arbitration, a sympathetic strike was declared, which gradually involved railway men in all parts of the country, and orderly transportation was brought to a complete standstill. In the excitement which followed, cars were burned and tracks torn up. The police of Chicago did not cope with the disorder, and the railway companies, apparently distrusting the Governor of the State, and in order to protect the United States mails, called upon the President of the United States for the federal troops, the federal courts further enjoined all persons against any form of interference with the property or operation of the railroads, and the situation gradually assumed the proportions of internecine warfare. During all of these events the president of the manufacturing company first involved, steadfastly refused to have the situation submitted to arbitra- [end page 141] tion, and this attitude naturally provoked much discussion. The discussion was broadly divided between those who held that the long kindness of the president of the company had been most ungratefully received, and those who maintained that the situation was the inevitable outcome of the social consciousness developing among working people. The first defended the president of the company in his persistent refusal to arbitrate, maintaining that arbitration was impossible after the matter had been taken up by other than his own employees, and they declared that a man must be allowed to run his own business. They considered the firm stand of the president a service to the manufacturing interests of the entire country. The others claimed that a large manufacturing concern has ceased to be a private matter; that not only a number of workmen and stockholders are concerned in its management, but that the interests of the public are so involved that the [end page 142] officers of the company are in a real sense administering a public trust.

This prolonged strike clearly puts in a concrete form the ethics of an individual, in this case a benevolent employer, and the ethics of a mass of men, his employees, claiming what they believed to be their moral rights.

These events illustrate the difficulty of managing an industry which has become organized into a vast social operation, not with the coöperation of the workman thus socialized, but solely by the dictation of the individual owning the capital.

There is a sharp divergence between the social form and the individual aim, which becomes greater as the employees are more highly socialized and dependent. The president of the company under discussion went further than the usual employer does. He socialized not only the factory, but the form in which his workmen were living. He built, and in a great measure regulated, an entire town, without calling upon the workmen [end page 143] either for self-expression or self-government. He honestly believed that he knew better than they what was for their good, as he, certainly knew better than they how to conduct his business. As his factory developed and increased, making money each year under his direction, he naturally expected the town to prosper in the same way.

He did not realize that the men submitted to the undemocratic conditions of the factory organization because the economic pressure in our industrial affairs is so great that they could not do otherwise. Under this pressure they could be successfully discouraged from organization, and systematically treated on the individual basis.

Social life, however, in spite of class distinctions, is much freer than industrial life, and the men resented the extension of industrial control to domestic and social arrangements. They felt the lack of democracy in the assumption that they should be taken care of in these matters, in which even the humblest [end page 144] workman has won his independence. The basic difficulty lay in the fact that an individual was directing the social affairs of many men without any consistent effort to find out their desires, and without any organization through which to give them social expression. The president of the company was, moreover, so confident of the righteousness of his aim that he had come to test the righteousness of the process by his own feelings and not by those of the men. He doubtless built the town from a sincere desire to give his employees the best surroundings. As it developed, he gradually took toward it the artist attitude

toward his own creation, which has no thought for the creation itself but is absorbed in the idea it stands for, and he ceased to measure the usefulness of the town by the standard of the men's needs. This process slowly darkened his glints of memory, which might have connected his experience with that of his men. It is possible to cultivate the impulses of the benefactor [end page 145] until the power of attaining a simple human relationship with the beneficiaries, that of frank equality with them, is gone, and there is left no mutual interest in a common cause. To perform too many good deeds may be to lose the power of recognizing good in others; to be too absorbed in carrying out a personal plan of improvement may be to fail to catch the great moral lesson which our times offer.

The president of this company fostered his employees for many years; he gave them sanitary houses and beautiful parks, but in their extreme need, when they were struggling with the most difficult situation which the times could present to them, he lost his touch and had nothing wherewith to help them. The employer's conception of goodness for his men had been cleanliness, decency of living, and, above all, thrift and temperance. Means had been provided for all this, and opportunities had also been given for recreation and improvement. But this employer suddenly found [end page 146] his town in the sweep of a world-wide moral impulse. A movement had been going on about him and among his working men, of which he had been unconscious, or concerning which he had heard only by rumor.

Outside the ken of philanthropists the proletariat had learned to say in many languages, that "the injury of one is the concern of all." Their watchwords were brotherhood, sacrifice, the subordination of individual and trade interests, to the good of the working classes, and they were moved by a determination to free that class from the untoward conditions under which they were laboring.

Compared to these watchwords, the old ones which this philanthropic employer had given his town were negative and inadequate. He had believed strongly in temperance and steadiness of individual effort, but had failed to apprehend the greater movement of combined abstinence and concerted action. With all his fostering, the president had not attained to a con- [end page 147] ception of social morality for his men and had imagined that virtue for them largely meant absence of vice.

When the labor movement finally stirred his town, or, to speak more fairly, when, in their distress and perplexity, his own employees appealed to an organized manifestation of this movement, they were quite sure that simply because they were workmen in distress they would not be deserted by it. This loyalty on the part of a widely ramified and well-organized union toward the workmen in a "non-union shop," who had contributed nothing to its cause, was certainly a manifestation of moral power.

In none of his utterances or correspondence did the president for an instant recognize this touch of nobility, although one would imagine that he would gladly point out this bit of virtue, in what he must have considered the moral ruin about him. He stood throughout for the individual virtues, those which had distinguished the model workmen of his youth; those [end page 148] which had enabled him and so many of his contemporaries to rise in life, when "rising in life" was urged upon every promising boy as the goal of his efforts.

Of the code of social ethics he had caught absolutely nothing. The morals he had advocated in selecting and training his men did not fail them in the hour of confusion. They were self-controlled, and they themselves destroyed no property. They were sober and exhibited no drunkenness, even although obliged to hold their meetings in the saloon hall of a

neighboring town. They repaid their employer in kind, but he had given them no rule for the life of association into which they were plunged.

The president of the company desired that his employees should possess the individual and family virtues, but did nothing to cherish in them the social virtues which express themselves in associated effort.

Day after day, during that horrible time of suspense, when the wires constantly reported the same message, "the President [end page 149] of the Company holds that there is nothing to arbitrate," one was forced to feel that the ideal of one-man rule was being sustained in its baldest form. A demand from many parts of the country and from many people was being made for social adjustment, against which the commercial training and the individualistic point of view held its own successfully.

The majority of the stockholders, not only of this company but of similar companies, and many other citizens, who had had the same commercial experience, shared and sustained this position. It was quite impossible for them to catch the other point of view. They not only felt themselves right from the commercial standpoint, but had gradually accustomed themselves also to the philanthropic standpoint, until they had come to consider their motives beyond reproach, Habit held them persistent in this view of the case through all changing conditions. A wise man has said that "the consent [end page 150] of men and your own conscience are two wings given you whereby you may rise to God." It is so easy for the good and powerful to think that they can rise by following the dictates of conscience, by, pursuing their own ideals, that they are prone to leave those ideals unconnected with the consent of their fellow-men. The president of the company thought out within his own mind a beautiful town. He had power with which to build this town, but he did not appeal to nor obtain the consent of the men who were living in it. The most unambitious reform, recognizing the

necessity for this consent, makes for slow but sane and strenuous progress, while the most ambitious of social plans and experiments, ignoring this, is prone to failure.

The man who insists upon consent, who moves with the people, is bound to consult the "feasible right " as well as the absolute right. He is often obliged to attain only Mr. Lincoln's "best possible," and then has the sickening sense of compromise with his best convictions. He has to move along [end page 151] with those whom he leads toward a goal that neither he nor they see very clearly till they come to it. He has to discover what people really want, and then "provide the channels in which the growing moral force of their lives shall flow." What he does attain, however, is not the result of his individual striving, as a solitary mountain-climber beyond that of the valley multitude but it is sustained and upheld by the sentiments and aspirations of many others. Progress has been slower perpendicularly, but incomparably greater because lateral. He has not taught his contemporaries to climb mountains, but he has persuaded the villagers to move up a few feet higher; added to this, he has made secure his progress. A few months after the death of the promoter of this model town, a court decision made it obligatory upon the company to divest itself of the management of the town as involving a function beyond its corporate powers. The parks, flowers, and fountains of this far-famed industrial centre [end page 152] were dismantled, with scarcely a protest from the inhabitants themselves.

The man who disassociates his ambition, however disinterested, from the coöperation of his fellows, always takes this risk of ultimate failure. He does not take advantage of the great conservator and guarantee of his own permanent success which associated efforts afford. Genuine experiments toward higher social conditions must have a more democratic faith and practice than those which underlie private venture. Public parks and improvements, intended for the common use, are after all only safe in the hands of the public itself; and associated effort toward social progress, although much more

awkward and stumbling than that same effort managed by a capable individual, does yet enlist deeper forces and evoke higher social capacities.

The successful business man who is also the philanthropist is in more than the usual danger of getting widely separated from his employees. The men already have the [end page 153] American veneration for wealth and successful business capacity, and, added to this, they are dazzled by his good works. The workmen have the same kindly impulses as he, but while they organize their charity into mutual benefit associations and distribute their money in small amounts in relief for the widows and insurance for the injured, the employer may build model towns, erect college buildings, which are tangible and enduring, and thereby display his goodness in concentrated form.

By the very exigencies of business demands, the employer is too often cut off from the social ethics developing in regard to our larger social relationships, and from the great moral life springing from our common experiences. This is sure to happen when he is good "to" people rather than "with" them, when he allows himself to decide what is best for them instead of consulting them. He thus misses the rectifying influence of that fellowship which is so big that it leaves no room for [end page 154] sensitiveness or gratitude. Without this fellowship we may never know how great the divergence between ourselves and others may become, nor how cruel the misunderstandings.

During a recent strike of the employees of a large factory in Ohio, the president of the company expressed himself as bitterly disappointed by the results of his many kindnesses, and evidently considered the employees utterly unappreciative. His state of mind was the result of the fallacy of ministering to social needs from an individual impulse and expecting a socialized return of gratitude and loyalty. If the lunch-room was necessary, it was a necessity in order that the employees might have better food, and, when they had received the better food, the legitimate aim of the lunch-

room was met. If baths were desirable, and the fifteen minutes of calisthenic exercise given the women in the middle of each half day brought a needed rest and change to their muscles, then the increased cleanliness and the increased bodily [end page 155] comfort of so many people should of themselves have justified the experiment.

To demand, as a further result, that there should be no strikes in the factory, no revolt against the will of the employer because the employees were filled with loyalty as the result of the kindness, was of course to take the experiment from an individual basis to a social one.

Large mining companies and manufacturing concerns are constantly appealing to their stockholders for funds, or for permission to take a percentage of the profits, in order that the money may be used for educational and social schemes designed for the benefit of the employees. The promoters of these schemes use as an argument and as an appeal, that better relations will be thus established, that strikes will be prevented, and that in the end the money returned to the stockholders will be increased. However praiseworthy this appeal may be in motive, it involves a distinct confusion of issues, and in theory deserves the failure it so often [end page 156] meets with in practice. In the clash which follows a strike, the employees are accused of an ingratitude, when there was no legitimate reason to expect gratitude; and useless bitterness, which has really a factitious basis, may be developed on both sides.

Indeed, unless the relation becomes a democratic one, the chances of misunderstanding are increased, when to the relation of employer and employees is added the relation of benefactor to beneficiaries, in so far as there is still another opportunity for acting upon the individual code of ethics.

There is no doubt that these efforts are to be commended, not only from the standpoint of their social value but because they have a marked industrial significance. Failing, as they do, however, to touch the question of wages and hours, which are almost invariably the points of trades-union effort, the employers confuse the mind of the public when they urge the amelioration of conditions and the kindly relation existing between them and their men as a reason for the discontinu- [end page 157] ance of strikes and other trades-union tactics. The men have individually accepted the kindness of the employers as it was individually offered, but quite as the latter urges his inability to increase wages unless he has the cooperation of his competitors, so the men state that they are bound to the trades-union struggle for an increase in wages because it can only be undertaken by combinations of labor.

Even the much more democratic effort to divide a proportion of the profits at the end of the year among the employees, upon the basis of their wages and efficiency, is also exposed to a weakness, from the fact that the employing side has the power of determining to whom the benefit shall accrue.

Both individual acts of self-defense on the part of the wage earner and individual acts of benevolence on the part of the employer are most useful as they establish standards to which the average worker and employer may in time be legally compelled to conform. Progress must always come through the in- [end page 158] dividual who varies from the type and has sufficient energy to express this variation. He first holds a higher conception than that held by the mass of his fellows of what is righteous under given conditions, and expresses this conviction in conduct, in many instances formulating a certain scruple which the others share, but have not yet defined even to themselves. Progress, however, is not secure until the mass has conformed to this new righteousness. This is equally true in regard to any advance made in the standard of living on the part of the trades-unionists or in the improved conditions of industry on the part of

reforming employers. The mistake lies, not in overpraising the advance thus inaugurated by individual initiative, but in regarding the achievement as complete in a social sense when it is still in the realm of individual action.

No sane manufacturer regards his factory as the centre of the industrial system. He knows very well that the cost of material, wages, and selling prices are determined by [end page 159] industrial conditions completely beyond his control. Yet the same man may quite calmly regard himself and his own private principles as merely self-regarding, and expect results from casual philanthropy which can only be accomplished through those common rules of life and labor established by the community for the common good.

Outside of and surrounding these smaller and most significant efforts are the larger and irresistible movements operating toward combination. This movement must tend to decide upon social matters from the social standpoint. Until then it is difficult to keep our minds free from a confusion of issues. Such a confusion occurs when the gift of a large sum to the community for a public and philanthropic purpose, throws a certain glamour over all the earlier acts of a man, and makes it difficult for the community to see possible wrongs committed against it, in the accumulation of wealth so beneficently used. It is possible also that the resolve to [end page 160] be thus generous unconsciously influences the man himself in his methods of accumulation. He keeps to a certain individual rectitude, meaning to make an individual restitution by the old paths of generosity and kindness, whereas if he had in view social restitution on the newer lines of justice and opportunity, he would throughout his course doubtless be watchful of his industrial relationships and his social virtues.

The danger of professionally attaining to the power of the righteous man, of yielding to the ambition "for doing good " on a large scale, compared to which the ambition for politics, learning, or wealth, are vulgar and commonplace, ramifies

through our modern life; and those most easily beset by this temptation are precisely the men best situated to experiment on the larger social lines, because they so easily dramatize their acts and lead public opinion. Very often, too, they have in their hands the preservation and advancement of large vested interests, [end page 161] and often see clearly and truly that they are better able to administer the affairs of the community than the community itself: sometimes they see that if they do not administer them sharply and quickly, as only an individual can, certain interests of theirs dependent upon the community will go to ruin.

The model employer first considered, provided a large sum in his will with which to build and equip a polytechnic school, which will doubtless be of great public value. This again shows the advantage of individual management, in the spending as well as in the accumulating of wealth, but this school will attain its highest good, in so far as it incites the ambition to provide other schools from public funds. The town of Zurich possesses a magnificent polytechnic institute, secured by the vote of the entire people and supported from public taxes. Every man who voted for it is interested that his child should enjoy its benefits, and, of course, the voluntary attendance must be [end page 162] larger than in a school accepted as a gift to the community.

In the educational efforts of model employers, as in other attempts toward social amelioration, one man with the best of intentions is trying to do what the entire body of employees should have undertaken to do for themselves. The result of his efforts will only attain its highest value as it serves as an incentive to procure other results by the community as well as for the community.

There are doubtless many things which the public would never demand unless they were first supplied by individual initiative, both because the public lacks the imagination, and also the power of formulating their wants. Thus

philanthropic effort supplies kindergartens, until they become so established in the popular affections that they are incorporated in the public school system. Churches and missions establish reading rooms, until at last the public library system dots the city with branch [end page 163] reading rooms and libraries. For this willingness to take risks for the sake of an ideal, for those experiments which must be undertaken with vigor and boldness in order to secure didactic value in failure as well as in success, society must depend upon the individual possessed with money, and also distinguished by earnest and unselfish purpose. Such experiments enable the nation to use the Referendum method in its public affairs. Each social experiment is thus tested by a few people, given wide publicity, that it may be observed and discussed by the bulk of the citizens before the public prudently makes up its mind whether or not it is wise to incorporate it into the functions of government. If the decision is in its favor and it is so incorporated, it can then be carried on with confidence and enthusiasm.

But experience has shown that we can only depend upon successful men for a certain type of experiment in the line of industrial amelioration and social advancement. [end page 164] The list of those who found churches, educational institutions, libraries, and art galleries, is very long, as is again the list of those contributing to model dwellings, recreation halls, and athletic fields. At the present moment factory employers are doing much to promote "industrial betterment" in the way of sanitary surroundings, opportunities for bathing, lunch rooms provided with cheap and wholesome food, club rooms, and guild halls. But there is a line of social experiment involving social righteousness in its most advanced form, in which the number of employers and the "favored class" are so few that it is plain society cannot count upon them for continuous and valuable help. This lack is in the line of factory legislation and that sort of social advance implied in shorter hours and the regulation of wages; in short, all that organization and activity that is involved in such a maintenance and increase of wages as would prevent the lowering of the standard of life.

A large body of people feel keenly that [end page 165] the present industrial system is in a state of profound disorder, and that there is no guarantee that the pursuit of individual ethics will ever right it. They claim that relief can only come through deliberate corporate effort inspired by social ideas and guided by the study of economic laws, and that the present industrial system thwarts our ethical demands, not only for social righteousness but for social order. Because they believe that each advance in ethics must be made fast by a corresponding advance in politics and legal enactment, they insist upon the right of state regulation and control. While many people representing all classes in a community would assent to this as to a general proposition, and would even admit it as a certain moral obligation, legislative enactments designed to control industrial conditions have largely been secured through the efforts of a few citizens, mostly those who constantly see the harsh conditions of labor and who are incited to activity by their sympathies as well as their convictions. [end page 166]

This may be illustrated by the series of legal enactments regulating the occupations in which children may be allowed to work, also the laws in regard to the hours of labor permitted in those occupations, and the minimum age below which children may not be employed. The first child labor laws were enacted in England through the efforts of those members of parliament whose hearts were wrung by the condition of the little parish apprentices bound out to the early textile manufacturers of the north; and through the long years required to build up the code of child labor legislation which England now possesses, knowledge of the conditions has always preceded effective legislation. The efforts of that small number in every community who believe in legislative control have always been reinforced by the efforts of trades-unionists rather than by the efforts of employers. Partly because the employment of workingmen in the factories brings them in contact with the children who tend to lower wages and demoralize [end page 167] their trades, and partly because working-men have no money nor time to spend in alleviating philanthropy, and must perforce seize upon agitation and legal enactment as the only channel of redress which is open to them.

We may illustrate by imagining a row of people seated in a moving street-car, into which darts a boy of eight, calling out the details of the last murder, in the hope of selling an evening newspaper. A comfortable looking man buys a paper from him with no sense of moral shock; he may even be a trifle complacent that he has helped along the little fellow, who is making his way in the world. The philanthropic lady sitting next to him may perhaps reflect that it is a pity that such a bright boy is not in school. She may make up her mind in a moment of compunction to redouble her efforts for various newsboys' schools and homes, that this poor child may have better teaching, and perhaps a chance at manual training. She probably is con- [end page 168] vinced that he alone, by his unaided efforts, is supporting a widowed mother, and her heart is moved to do all she can for him. Next to her sits a workingman trained in trades-union methods. He knows that the boy's natural development is arrested, and that the abnormal activity of his body and mind uses up the force which should go into growth; moreover, that this premature use of his powers has but a momentary and specious value. He is forced to these conclusions because he has seen many a man, entering the factory at eighteen and twenty, so worn out by premature work that he was "laid on the shelf" within ten or fifteen years. He knows very well that he can do nothing in the way of ameliorating the lot of this particular boy; that his only possible chance is to agitate for proper child-labor laws; to regulate, and if possible prohibit, street-vending by children, in order that the child of the poorest may have his school time secured to him, and may have at least his short chance for growth. [end page 169]

These three people, sitting in the street car, are all honest and upright, and recognize a certain duty toward the forlorn children of the community. The self-made man is encouraging one boy's own efforts; the philanthropic lady is helping on a few boys; the workingman alone is obliged to include all the boys of his class. Workingmen, because of their feebleness in all but numbers, have been forced to appeal to the state, in order to secure protection for themselves and

for their children. They cannot all rise out of their class, as the occasionally successful man has done; some of them must be left to do the work in the factories and mines, and they have no money to spend in philanthropy.

Both public agitation and a social appeal to the conscience of the community is necessary in order to secure help from the state, and, curiously enough, child-labor laws once enacted and enforced are a matter of great pride, and even come to be regarded as a register of the community's humanity and enlightenment. If the method of public agitation could find quiet and orderly expression in legislative enactment, and if labor measures could be submitted to the examination and judgment of the whole without a sense of division or of warfare, we should have the ideal development of the democratic state.

But we judge labor organizations as we do other living institutions, not by their declaration of principles, which we seldom read, but by their blundering efforts to apply their principles to actual conditions, and by the oft-time failure of their representatives, when the individual finds himself too weak to become the organ of corporate action.

The very blunders and lack of organization too often characterizing a union, in marked contrast to the orderly management of a factory, often confuse us as to the real issues involved, and we find it hard to trust uncouth and unruly manifestations of social effort. The situation is made even more complicated by the fact that [end page 171] those who are formulating a code of associated action so often break through the established code of law and order. As society has a right to demand of the reforming individual that he be sternly held to his personal and domestic claims, so it has a right to insist that labor organizations shall keep to the hardly won standards of public law and order; and the community performs but its plain duty when it registers its protest every time law and order are subverted, even in the interest of the so-called social effort. Yet in moments of industrial stress and strain the community is confronted by a moral perplexity

which may arise from the mere fact that the good of yesterday is opposed to the good of today, and that which may appear as a choice between virtue and vice is really but a choice between virtue and virtue. In the disorder and confusion sometimes incident to growth and progress, the community may be unable to see anything but the unlovely struggle itself. [end page 172]

The writer recalls a conversation between two workmen who were leaving a lecture on "Organic Evolution." The first was much puzzled, and anxiously inquired of the second "if evolution could mean that one animal turned into another." The challenged workman stopped in the rear of the hall, put his foot upon a chair, and expounded what he thought evolution did mean; and this, so nearly as the conversation can be recalled, is what he said: "You see a lot of fishes are living in a stream, which overflows in the spring and strands some of them upon the bank. The weak ones die up there, but others make a big effort to get back into the water. They dig their fins into the sand, breathe as much air as they can with their gills, and have a terrible time. But after a while their fins turn into legs and their gills into lungs, and they have become frogs. Of course they are further along than the sleek, comfortable fishes who sail up and down the stream waving their tails and [end page 173] despising the poor damaged things thrashing around on the bank. He-the lecturer-did not say anything about men, but it is easy enough to think of us poor devils on the dry bank, struggling without enough to live on, while the comfortable fellows sail along in the water with all they want and despise us because we thrash about." His listener did not reply, and was evidently dissatisfied both with the explanation and the application. Doubtless the illustration was bungling in more than its setting forth, but the story is suggestive.

At times of social disturbance the law-abiding citizen is naturally so anxious for peace and order, his sympathies are so justly and inevitably on the side making for the restoration of law, that it is difficult for him to see the situation fairly. He becomes insensible to the unselfish impulse which may prompt a sympathetic strike in behalf of the workers in a non-

union shop, because he allows his mind to dwell exclusively on the disorder which has [end page 174] become associated with the strike. He is completely side-tracked by the ugly phases of a great moral movement. It is always a temptation to assume that the side which has respectability, authority, and superior intelligence, has therefore righteousness as well, especially when the same side presents concrete results of individual effort as over against the less tangible results of associated effort.

It is as yet most difficult for us to free ourselves from the individualistic point of view sufficiently to group events in their social relations and to judge fairly those who are endeavoring to produce a social result through all the difficulties of associated action. The philanthropist still finds his path much easier than do those who are attempting a social morality. In the first place, the public, anxious to praise what it recognizes as an undoubted moral effort often attended with real personal sacrifice, joyfully seizes upon this manifestation and overpraises it, recognizing the philanthropist [end page 175] as an old friend in the paths of righteousness, whereas the others are strangers and possibly to be distrusted as aliens. It is easy to confuse the response to an abnormal number of individual claims with the response to the social claim. An exaggerated personal morality is often mistaken for a social morality, and until it attempts to minister to a social situation its total inadequacy is not discovered. To attempt to attain a social morality without a basis of democratic experience results in the loss of the only possible corrective and guide, and ends in an exaggerated individual morality but not in social morality at all. We see this from time to time in the care-worn and overworked philanthropist, who has taxed his individual will beyond the normal limits and has lost his clue to the situation among a bewildering number of cases. A man who takes the betterment of humanity for his aim and end must also take the daily experiences of humanity for the constant correction of his process. He must not only [end page 176] test and guide his achievement by human experience, but he must succeed or fail in proportion as he has incorporated that experience with his own. Otherwise his own achievements become his stumbling block, and he comes to believe in his own goodness as something outside of

himself. He makes an exception of himself, and thinks that he is different from the rank and file of his fellows. He forgets that it is necessary to know of the lives of our contemporaries, not only in order to believe in their integrity, which is after all but the first beginnings .of social morality, but in order to attain to any mental or moral integrity for ourselves or any such hope for society. [end page 177]