

Library Signpost

The Toll of Wealth

By Rev. Benedict Edwards

Rachel Field's last novel before her death has its setting in a field of great social significance—the relation between employers and their factory "hands." Though it was not written as a social document, it points out better perhaps than a tract some of the deeper and more delicate personal phases of this great problem.

And Now Tomorrow, by Rachel Field (The Macmillan Co.)

And Now Tomorrow is a superbly written study. In it Rachel Field draws attention to that grim world where steam whistle and dinner pail are symbols of the hard struggle for existence to many and many a man.

The bitter conflict of values to which industrialism has given rise is clearly appreciated by Emily Blair, the heroine as she recapitulates here the first twenty-five years of her life in Blairtown. Born into a family of wealth and prestige whose pioneering genius has resulted in the Peace Pipe Industries, Emily is still bound irrevocably to the "underprivileged" of her town, the mill workers among whom her own mother had grown up.

The larger struggle between her inclination to champion as her childhood companion, "young Jo Kelly," did the cause of the mill workers against her family—policies as employers, Emily recalls as the background for her personal struggle in the difficult situation which confronted her after a serious illness, the loss of her hearing. All the pessimism of a sudden plunge into the bewildering void where the sounds of life, beautiful and ugly alike, fade from reality to memory, was hers at first.

The outcome of her problem is a happier one, however, than the fate of the Peace Pipe Mills, which succumbed eventually to the trend of the times. Owners unwilling to recognize the right of employees to organize; workers resentful of the company's narrow attitude on principles which would guarantee a man's ability to provide for himself and his family—together they forged the doom of Peace Pipe. Both sides stubbornly resisted compromise and at last the mill passed into receivership, having lost the old, vital spirit which had made "Peace Pipe for Quality" a well-known and respected slogan. So Blairtown, in Emily's eyes, became a ghost town where the faces of restless men, anxious...

great women, and hungry children here and there seem to be fact that against the alleged material benefits of the industrial era the only loss has been more than tipped by the lamentable lowering of human dignity.

Emily Blair's conflict of mind in Rachel Field's novel exemplifies a phase of our industrial civilization which our enjoyment of its material benefits has led us to forget. That phase is the misery of the poor upon whom our mechanized industry is built. This misery of the poor is not a necessary consequence of the use of machinery in man's labor. To make right the ills of our economic order will not demand the scrapping of all machines. But what has been unfortunate, and what will have to be scrapped, is the vicious practice of Big Business which, in its mania for profit, has used the machine as a substitute, and not as a helper for man, has regarded the workers as "hands" to be paid off with an envelope allowance, has jugged the law of supply and demand, has bought cheap and sold dear. In the hands of such an impersonal devil, the machine has been a curse, helping to crush the poor and degrade the lot of man.

Eric Gill wrote in his Autobiography: "We live in a world which is ruled by men of business, and ruled therefore according to business men's notions of what is good. This is a simple fact and it seems to me, and to the few who think likewise, that it is an insufferably monstrous, iniquitous and vile state of affairs. It seems to us incomparably more horrible that men of business should rule us and impose their foul point of view on the world than it would be if the whole race of men and women should rot their bodies with lechery and drunkenness. There is no idolatry so destructive of charity, so desolating, there is nothing which so certainly obscures the face of God as the desire for money—the root of all evil. The root of all evil! Did I make up that phrase? No, it is the word of God to man. . . . And yet we, in our world of commerce and finance and mass-production, regard it as the very flower of virtue. We place those who have successfully amassed money in the highest seats of government and give honor to the rich as to the saints of God. Do I exaggerate? No, it is not possible to exaggerate. No words that the most eloquent could write could make this enormity more enormous than it is. Hence it is that we must go down to the dust disgraced and inlame, with no monument to our prowess but the filthiness of our cheap idols, for even our idols are filthy, having no reason for existence but the money profit of those who sold them."

many tens of thousands of telephone conversations she has conducted in connection with the speaking and writing engagements of the editor, it would be impossible to say. In addition to all that—enough to tax the strength of a more rugged person than she—it was her task to meet visitors; arrange appointments; make sure that the editor did not commit the unpardonable offense of forgetting his obligations; and to attend to a myriad of small things that come up from moment to moment in a busy office such as this.

To do all these things, or a tenth part of them, without becoming flustered or impatient or exhausted would have been impossible for the man who writes the lines, even though in virtue of a priestly vocation he had supernatural resources upon which to draw. In these dozen years I have never ceased to marvel how these good friends and assistants in the Catholic World Office (there are others besides Miss Walsh) manage to do so much with unflinching patience, with never-failing good humor and with such sacred devotion to the cause.

Of course, I know the answer: these noble Catholic women who do so many things so well and so sweetly draw their strength from a Divine Source. Miss Walsh was a daily communicant, known to the priests of her parish as a "saint." She and others like her in a dozen kinds of Catholic Action have acquired the miraculous ability of carrying the atmosphere of the sanctuary about with them all day and every day. Perhaps instead of saying that they are a marvel to us priests, I should say they are a rebuke to us. "The doors are silent and the work is done"; the talkers—well, often I think that we who are supposed to do the work and to give the example are only the talkers, the pretenders. I count it, therefore, a great blessing of God to have had the friendship and the cooperation of such a one as Margaret Walsh—and by the same token, of those who side by side with her and with me, have worked for what we hope we may call the interests of God in Catholic journalism. They work hard, over-hard, but without excitement or emotional disturbance. In this office there is and has always been serenity, kindness, courtesy, perfect harmony, and all that is gracious and edifying. These good women are the salt of the earth.

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FIVE and TEN Years Ago

—in the files of the CATHOLIC COURIER

From July 8, 1933, Edition

Sister Mariano, oldest member of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in this country and a former director of St. Mary's Hospital, died at the Hospital in the 72nd year of her reception into the community.

From July 8, 1937, Edition

With the Very Rev. John F. Fealon, S.S., president of St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, and provincial of the Sulpician Fathers in the United States as one of the principal speakers scheduled, plans were completed for the tri-county observance of the 25th Anniversary of the Donauville-LaRue Expedition in the Bristol Valley.

Quiz Corner

Should I tell my personal troubles and sorrows to others who would not tell theirs to me? Answer: No, unless they are your confessor.

Don't tell your troubles to others who gossip. If you must advise seek out those who understand and sympathize with you in confidence.

May we ask people not to speak carelessly of the sick and heavily burdened. Be charitable, say nothing of others, even though it be all right if this would make someone feel bad and make life harder for him. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

Do all men receive the same amount of actual grace?

No, some receive more, others less; for God is free to bestow His favors as He likes. We generally are given far more grace than we use and if only we make use of all grace given us we should advance daily to higher sanctity. God desires all of us to become saints and if we do not, it is because by our indifference and carelessness we do not appreciate and correspond with the graces He sends us.

Have priests always worn the same vestments when celebrating the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass?

There have been great changes and developments in the dress worn by a priest when celebrating Mass and other liturgical functions. In the early days no special vestments were worn by a priest when celebrating Mass. He wore the ordinary dress, although during the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice he wore the best clothes.

That is, had he been in the service for the Mass. The vestments which were worn in the fourth century were of a different material than those which were worn in the twelfth century. There was a gradual development in the vestments of the priest.

Is a Catholic free to believe that the General Judgment will take place in the year 1950?

There is nothing explicitly revealed as to how the General Judgment will take place. The only thing a Catholic is bound to believe is the fact that there will be a General Judgment. Catholic Scripture commentators interpret Matthew Chap. XXV and Apocalypse Chap. XXV to mean a manifestation of the world of each one's good and bad deeds so that just public justice may be rendered a man for his personal statement of sin and desired reward for his faith.

Feast Days

- Sunday, July 14 - ST. JOHN GAULBERT
Monday, July 15 - ST. ANASTAS
Tuesday, July 16 - ST. BONAVENTURE
Wednesday, July 17 - ST. BENEDICT
Thursday, July 18 - OUR LADY OF THE CARMEL
Friday, July 19 - ST. ALBERT
Saturday, July 20 - ST. CAMEL

EDITORIALS

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lasting: May the Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ guard and conduct my soul into Life Everlasting! Amen.

SPIRITUAL AID TO SERVICEMEN

Patriotic citizens never forget the material support they give our servicemen. By cheerful payment of taxes, by willing forego of comforts and conveniences, by constant buying of War Bonds and War Stamps, they do their part. Hearty cooperation with the government in its war effort, careful avoidance of loose talk that might endanger the cause, are listed on their daily program.

Religious patriots will add a spiritual side to the support they give our servicemen. That God may protect them and preserve them in the dangers of battle, will be an ordinary daily petition; the prayers of the Missal in the Mass "For Union of War" will be said constantly. But there should be a prayer for them as they go through their training in our camps and navy centers that they may have strength to avoid evil, to keep themselves mentally and morally clear, attentive to their prayers and religious duties, devoted to the highest ideals of the true soldier, will be our daily prayer.

Most edifying are the continued reports we get from Chaplains and others on the religious behaviour of our boys. Hundreds have returned to the practice of their religion, who were lax when in civil life; regular attendance at Mass on Sundays and Holydays, frequent reception of Holy Communion, a Catholic attitude toward life, are conditions that describe the practice of the vast majority of our men. Many have come into the Church as converts. Our prayers are essential that this religious condition shall be maintained. The boys need our spiritual support as they need our material support. We shall not fail them in either!

BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS

The world today has its fill of false prophets. They began by hiding their real purpose, they came in sheep's clothing. In reality they are ravening wolves. There have been good men who listened to their words, accepted their promises, who have later learned from their works that they are indeed, wolves. These men should have known from the first, that pagan dictators, men who have left God and His teachings, can not bring good to the world. "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" A great war is now being fought to overcome these dictators, to destroy their pagan philosophy, to undo the harm they have wrought among free peoples.

Catholics should find in Sunday's Gospel a warning from Christ not to let their religious practice grow lax. Faith in God is all right, but without works that faith is dead. A man's religion is more accurately gauged by what he does than by what he says. In his adherence to the Church, in his loyalty to the Church's teachings, in his support of the Church, a man's Catholicity becomes known.

How can any man claim to be a real Catholic, who lives a sinful life: who sends his children to irreligious schools when all the advantages of religious schools are his for the asking; whose attitude toward marriage, toward birth-control, toward decency in speech and action, is more pagan than anything else; whose support of the Church and her work is a minus quantity!

"Not every one that saith to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the will of My Father. Who is in Heaven, he shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Our daily examination of conscience should cover this point: Are we real Catholics? Or are we just pretenders? Do we serve God well? Do we support God's cause, do we follow Catholic principles? Is our religion shown in what we do? Or are we depending on our saying, 'Lord, Lord,'—to secure our salvation?"

Sursum Corda

Salt of the Earth

By Rev. James M. Gillis, C.S.P.

I ask the sponsors and readers of Sursum Corda to surrender this space to me today and let me do with it what I will. In fourteen years of writing for this column I have not done what I hope to do now. It is personal and it is a privilege but not, I hope, a presumption.

I have just lost by death a dear friend and co-worker, Miss Margaret Walsh. My secretary for twelve years, has passed away as the result of a surgical operation which we had reason to believe would be a prelude to health rather than a cause of death. Many years ago a famous surgeon in one of the great metropolitan hospitals used to say, "No matter how perfect may be our technique or how conscientious the post-surgical care, the outcome of every major operation is in the hands of God." I have found that statement verified a hundred times, and now its truth comes home to me with terrific force. All was done that could be done and yet the result.

As a relief to my emotions I should like to put here upon paper a few fragmentary words of eulogy which I have been unable to speak to the bereaved office staff or to the family of Miss Walsh.

I would include also a word of appreciation not only for this deeply-lamented personal friend and co-worker but for many others of her type. Behind every editor—especially behind the editor of a Catholic publication—there is usually an individual or a little group of persons of considerable intellectual ability of beautiful character and of high skill in their craft, who, in spite of all these qualifications remain unknown and it is to be feared—in some cases insufficiently appreciated.

Such self-effacing but indispensable coadjutors are to be found not only in editorial offices but in almost every parish. Cardinal Manning makes passing mention of them in his classic "The Eternal Priesthood." "Our people," he says, "may be divided into talkers and doers: the doers are silent and the work is done. Such as these do not demand the limelight; they would be painfully embarrassed if its glare were thrown upon them. They are the remote antithesis of egoists, such as, for example, actors and actresses who posit and are petulant, who sulk or fly into a tantrum if some other member of the company gets a more conspicuous 'billing' than they. The devoted workers of whom I speak have arrived at a state of Christian humility which enables them to accept and to exemplify the maxim of 'The Imitation of Christ'—'Love to be unknown.'"

Such a one was Margaret Walsh. Her duties were many and exacting: she typed almost every article that has appeared in Sursum Corda for twelve years; likewise, every editorial in The Catholic World, and all the radio addresses that came out of this office, whether delivered on the "Catholic Hour" or elsewhere; she wrote at dictation, with great speed and amazing accuracy, a mountainous mass of personal and business correspondence. How