

Social conditions which afford excuse for charity balls create a bad background for pictures of the old French courts come again.

A daily paper submits this dialogue, ostensibly as a joke:

Professor of Rhetoric—Here is an item of news I would like in the paper.

City Editor (to office boy)—Here, Bennie, rewrite this—fix it up to print.

But where's the joke? Doesn't the office boy really set the standard of literary style for most daily papers?

THROUGH ROSE-COLORED SPECTACLES.

A so-called "philosophy," briefly suggested in the title of this article, is made the basis of an appeal to readers of a little book, entitled "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch," published about two years ago. And the appeal has not lacked response, if the number of times that the book has been reprinted is an indication, and the flattering press notices are to be trusted, and the enthusiastic expressions of approval from those whom we hear discuss it, are a guide.

The "philosophy" of "Mrs. Wiggs," as it is called, is not new; it is only newly emphasized, and more subtly treated, in this little story of the "Cabbage Patch."

As announced at the opening of the book, this "philosophy" "lay in keeping the dust off her rose-colored spectacles." This is not the whole philosophy, but it is the foundation of the whole.

Now a prettily-turned phrase is so powerful to still the mind that many persons adopt and endorse such a phrase without inquiring its exact meaning; and thus often adopt and endorse propositions which they might reject if fully understood. This is also true of many phrases adroitly worked together into books.

Doubtless many who use the phrase here quoted understand no more by it than a purpose to be as cheerful as possible, and to see as clearly as possible the good that life holds; and they question its meaning no further. Possibly many understand the book to teach no more than this, and question it no further.

If this were all that could reasonably be meant by the phrase, and if it were all that the writer of the book gives us to understand by her interpretation of it, there could be no other criticism to make of either than that the phrase says too much and the book too little to be a truthful expression.

Concerning the phrase, however, the full and accurate interpretation involves seeing life by artificial aids rather than by natural means, and seeing it all of one color. And as the writer of the book has worked out the life and character of "Mrs. Wiggs," she has given the phrase this full meaning.

The important question why anyone should wish to see the varied experiences of life by artificial means, and to see them all of one color, any more than they would wish to see an oil painting so or nature itself so, is not raised by the writer of the book, nor apparently by the readers of the book. Yet it is an important question. And it would be interesting to inquire how this "philosophy" differs from that of the "red-light" district of New York, or kindred districts elsewhere; why it is not the same disregard for rightness, or righteousness.

Supposing this to be the right way to look upon life, "Mrs. Wiggs," with her rose-colored glasses well adjusted, is unable to see any relation between the requirements of the body and the varying qualities of food, and regards soup that has been indefinitely watered as still soup,—appetizing and nourishing;—at least, so the writer of the book would have us believe. One of her children makes an objection to the watering process, in the natural way and for good reason—not yet possessing a pair of artificial glasses; but the objection is quickly silenced by the superior "goodness" of her rosy-spectacled elder. The hospitality that offers such soup to others, and the generosity that sends rotten peaches to a friend,—knowing that they are rotten and therefore "cheap," the red glasses being laid aside for the moment,—this hospitality and this generosity look like the genuine things through the rose-colored glasses.

The neighbor who has his dinner at home a little earlier on purpose to come in for a share of her own and her children's scant portion, looks like a genuine neighbor, and deserving of that share.

As we see it, her life needs her, most careful thought;—food is scant and rent unpaid. We wonder that she does not ask herself the natural question why this is so, since she is both able and willing to work, and that she does not set herself to the task of answering this vital question. But her rose-colored glasses, we find, show the rosy light only when turned upon her own miserable life. They work as the eyes of hypocrites work. Turned toward the lives of others they sometimes do, and sometimes do not, show rose colors. So now she sees no need to solve her own problem; she sees nothing wrong with her own life; but looking upon the "Patch" outside of her own poor home, she sees very dark colors. She sees other people's children in sore need of enlightenment, and herself called upon to gather them together in what she is pleased to call a Sunday-school. Without power or qualification in herself to give to them anything adapted to satisfy their natural craving for mental or physical occupation—though she does not see this,—she confusedly thrusts upon them, as a maxim of good manners and of morals, the injunction, "Don't fuss! * * * It's sinful to fuss!" and leads them in the prayer that they may be "made thankful for whatever they've got, even if it ain't but a little." In this petition of course her own gratuitous teaching must be included; for why should bad teaching be examined without the red glasses, if nothing else is to be so examined?

Upon the shoulders and in the mind of her fifteen-year-old "Jimmy" rests all the responsibility that would have rested upon herself, had she looked through her natural eyes. And while she is doing the artificial thing—playing at Sunday-school—this boy, "head of the family," "with shoulders of a man," "bent with work," "in his anxious eyes the look of a breadwinner who had begun the struggle too soon," and "to whom life had been a tragedy," is selling his coat to help pay the rent.

Upon "Mrs. Wiggs" the responsibilities of life rest, as she says that they rest upon her other boy, "Billy," "lightly as the freckles upon his nose." Why should it be otherwise? How can there be any responsibilities in such a rosy-colored world where "ever'thing * * * comes right, if we jes' wait long enough!"? Therefore she says to the little thinker and truer observer of the nature and relation of things: "Don't you worry so, Jimmy. Mebbe I kin git work to-morrow, or you'll git a raise, or somethin'; they'll be some way."

When the way comes, through "charity,"—which "Jimmy," looking through his natural eyes and hence seeing it for what it really is, had hoped to avoid,—a basket containing less than ten days' food-supply for the actual needs of a family of their size,—"Mrs. Wiggs" sees in it a supply sufficient for the entire "Patch" for nobody knows how long.

With the death of the thoughtful "Jimmy" she lays aside the rosy glasses for a short space and suffers the natural pain of a natural woman. And what relief we feel to find the writer able to give us a true touch of nature!

It is only a touch, however; for further days of extreme poverty follow, and these are lightly passed over. Though they cause the rosy glasses to droop a little on "Mrs. Wiggs's" nose, in spite of herself, as soon as the most pressing physical needs are again relieved through charity, the rosy glasses are again carefully and cheerfully adjusted.

She is now asked, one day, by the bestower of the charity: "Don't you ever worry?" and she answers (with the tendency to forgetfulness induced by the rose glasses), "Some folks goes right under when trouble comes, but I carry mine fur and easy." Under pressure of the questioner the rose color fades a little, and she is brought to confess that she has worried once at least in her life,—to her credit! From her account of that experience we learn that the "worry" consisted in trying to think how she might plan to raise a small sum of money for her little children in the event of her death. But as she didn't die, she reasserts her philosophy, triumphant, and exclaims: "You mark my words, it ain't never no use puttin'

up your umbrell' till it rains." What she means by this remark it is a little difficult to interpret. It may express a confusion of thought between the value of having an umbrella at all and the practice of keeping it raised all the time; or it may mean that after one is dead it is time enough to provide for the helpless ones left here. But if we look with her through her rose-colored glasses we shall see that it means that there is never any need for "umbrells" in this rosy world where it never really rains!—for where it never really rains, of course, no one ever really dies!

Our wonderful philosopher believes in "gittin as much good outen life as you kin;" but adds, "not that I ever set out to look for happiness; seems like the folks that do that never finds it."

Here we have an addition to her philosophy. We learn, now, that not only are we to look through rose-colored glasses, when we look at all, but that for one thing—happiness—we are not even to look! This one thing can be found only by reversing another natural process; to find this we must either not look at all, or find it by looking for something else. To her way of seeing there is, therefore, nothing unmoral or uneconomical in getting by indirect means that which might be had by direct; nor in getting as much as possible of something that you want, without working at all for it; nor in being wholly defrauded of that for which you have put forth true effort.

In response to this wisdom of hers, the little charity-dispenser says to her, impulsively, "You have taught me lots of things; you are one of the best and happiest women that I know." (The little charity-dispenser was very happy just then herself, in the hope of getting at her "Bob" through her visits to "Mrs. Wiggs"—visits which, in the simplicity of mind induced by her red glasses, "Mrs. Wiggs" credits entirely to a disposition to "go clean out of their way to be good" to her!)

And she replies: "Well, I guess I ain't the best by a long sight, but I may be the happiest. An' I got cause to be; four of the smartest children that ever lived, a nice

house, fair to middlin' health when I ain't got the rheumatiz, and folks always going clean out of their way to be good to me!"

And she sums up her life to the time when we parted with her, under the same old shanty roof where we first made her acquaintance: "An' they're going to get married (referring to the two lovers who have 'gone out of their way' to dispense charity to her while in search of each other), an' Billy's got promoted, an' Asia's got a place, an' Chris'll have a new peg stick. Looks like ever'thing comes right in the world, if we jes' wait long enough."

There is no direct improvement in her own life, and no addition to her own purely individual happiness; but this does not offend her sense of justice, nor raise a question in her mind. And here we have subtly impressed upon us a further characteristic of her philosophy,—that self-abnegation is right and beautiful and necessary; that we should find our happiness entirely through the happiness of others. This fits in perfectly with the second characteristic of her philosophy, already noticed.

But seeking happiness for ourselves through seeking happiness for others is still seeking happiness for ourselves. "Mrs. Wiggs's" pretense thinly masks the truth. And seeking happiness through seeking happiness for others is an indirect, uncertain, and often costly pursuit, with as often an unsuccessful issue; this is well illustrated in "Mrs. Wiggs's" own life. Further than this, if we close our eyes to our own needs what guide have we to the needs of others or they to ours?

"Mrs. Wiggs" has not been trained to use her natural powers of observation and comparison and judgment, and is unacquainted with her own power of reason. She has been trained to suppose that she sees only roseate hues through the glasses that have been imposed upon her, and has been taught to accept "without fussing" and with "thankfulness" whatever has come her way—red glasses and the instruction accompanying them, included,—as she prays the Lord to "make" her Sunday-school children do.

Yet she has in reality not looked at all through rose-colored glasses, but through smoked

glasses;—glasses darkened by all the errors of the past.

If the simplicity of ignorance is philosophy, then this is worthy of the name.

Such a philosophy could not fail to affect her religion, unless indeed the religion should be held responsible for the philosophy. Seeing as she sees, juggling superstitiously as she juggles for happiness, pretending to ignore herself as she pretends, how should she know God as a God of law, and order, and justice, and as "no respecter of persons?" She does not so know Him. Though she has been taught by word of mouth to give Him these attributes, she has been taught more effectively by the practices of her teachers and by the practices of her own life to see Him as erratic; as arbitrary; as unrelated to her directly, but related to her through "chosen ministers," human beings like herself; she sees Him resolved not to give happiness where it is worked for, but where it pleases Him to give it,—for apparently He gives nothing as a reward for labor; she sees Him bringing everything out "all right" if you "wait long enough" and "make no fuss," and when all goes to those who do nothing, and all is withheld from those who toil, this is the "right" that satisfies her.

Transplant "Mrs. Wiggs" to Phenicia, and she would worship Moloch as readily as she now and here worships a being whom she is taught to call God. It is indeed Moloch whom she does worship, though she does not know it.

That all the want, and misery, and joylessness of her life should appear "right" to her is due to the fact that she has looked through the eyes of the "scribes and pharisees;"—those teachers, preachers, kindergartners, high priests of special privilege,—under whatever name they go as busy now as ever, who, charging others to "be content" and "not to fuss," thus "bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on other men's shoulders."

The demand for patience under wrong has ever come from those interested in gaining or in retaining unfair advantages over their fellows.

The patient acceptance of

wrong has never been endured by an enlightened man or woman.

One unspoiled stamp of nature is indeed revealed in "Mrs. Wiggs." She loves joy. But her false training makes her do that which honest men and women have been unable to do,—ignore the fact that the social order in which she lives, by restricting her freedom to employ herself usefully and naturally, and by meanly rewarding her toil when she labors, has denied to her the just grounds for joy. It has made her consent to wear a mask instead of her true face.

For "Mrs. Wiggs's" life is not the happy one that she and Miss Hegan pretend that it is. The best pages in the book give proof enough of this to satisfy the careful and sympathetic reader, and to remove the false mask.

Yet in harmony with the false teaching of the whole book Miss Hegan attempts the deception that in this "mud and scum of things" "Mrs. Wiggs" did actually "sing!"

"Mrs. Wiggs" is unfortunately a fairly true character, or true in the main lines. Hers is the life of a slave to traditional errors of belief that fasten her down to poverty with chains which she alone cannot rend.

She is, moreover, a slave who does not know that she is a slave. This is her additional handicap. This prevents her from taking that individual part in the progress of mankind which is given to every man and woman to take,—and even to the little child—the part of natural protest. Because of this, she acquiesces in and so supports wrong. The spirit of revolt, which Mr. Ernest Crosby, in his splendid verse, has called "the spirit of life," is dumb in "Mrs. Wiggs."

Had the writer felt the degradation of such a life as this which she has, not without some skill, painted for us; had she known the degrading power of the ideas which were responsible for it; had the need for truer and higher ideas dawned upon her mind, and had she known the possibility of the redemption of such a life through freedom and justice, she might have given us a book which would have been worthy to stand in the

company of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and "David Copperfield." But there is no hint that she sees either the life to be degraded or the ideas to be degrading.

Has she not been wearing other people's glasses, and very old people's at that?

This little story, we are told, was written "simply to amuse." It has been advertised as "a sure cure for the blues;" as "full to the brim of wit, wisdom and humanity." The publishers are said to have received a much-worn copy of the book from a Sunday-school missionary in the Colorado mining district, who believes that the writer "deserves to be ordained as a minister of the Gospel!"

But if we look for "Mrs. Wiggs" in actual life,—and we shall find her if we look—and if we are capable of discriminating between the things which tend to the uplifting of human life and the things which tend to its degradation, we shall see even less cause for laughter in the life held down by such bonds as hold "Mrs. Wiggs," than we find in the victims of the unfree institutions of the era of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and of "David Copperfield."

The gospel of the "Cabbage Patch" is not the gospel of truth, or of love, or of light; but the gospel of sham, and artificiality, and unrighteousness. It offers a righteousness superior to Nature's righteousness; and how many have fallen victims to its tinselly glamour!

Red glasses and "red lights" are both intended to deceive. There can be no righteous substitute for our own natural sight if we would know the true nature of things, and so learn how to deal with them.

To consent to wear the mask of happiness is to degrade truth. There is no better reason for pretending that we are happy, than for pretending we are rich, or virtuous, or anything else that we are not. And none who are prevented from receiving their just share of the provisions of nature, through the excessive appropriation of others, should in righteousness be content until they have compelled a restoration to themselves of their rightful share. But this compulsion should be the compulsion of the power of truth. It should come

through the education of ourselves and others in the knowledge of the cause of the unequal distribution of the resources of nature. Let our "Mrs. Wiggsses" be educated in this knowledge, rather than encouraged in an ignoble content with injustice, and they will soon cease to bar the way to their own and the general progress.

To allow ourselves to believe that "happiness is the one door which to him that knocks is never opened;" the one thing which, if we openly and directly seek, we shall never find, is to distrust the natural order and to let ourselves into a quagmire of sophistry. We may seek for happiness and miss it by seeking it through the acquisition of things which have no power to impart it. This does not prove, however, that we must not seek it; but that in order to seek it successfully, we must know what things have power to impart it.

To imagine that we must efface self, that we must put ourselves out of our own thoughts, or put ourselves last in the order of thought, is to take from under our feet the foundation stone of service to others. "Know thyself." "To thine own self be true." "As ye would that others should do to you." These maxims of wisdom call for the profoundest self-consideration, to the end that we may justly and truly consider others.

If intelligently read and consciously indorsed, therefore, no book is better adapted to retard the progress of the world than this seemingly "little" story of the life of "the Cabbage Patch."

LIZZIE NYE NORTHROP.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

Washington, Dec. 12.—In the search for a Democratic presidential candidate the eyes of Democrats have, at last, been turned towards Rhode Island. To-day's New York Times, Louisville Courier, Journal, and other newspapers state that Governor Garvin's name has been under serious consideration for several days by a number of Democratic Congressmen and that the speech of Congressman Granger, of Rhode Island, yesterday was but part of a plan to formally launch a boom for Governor Garvin.

The reasons publicly advanced in his favor are:

First—"He is the only Democrat, except Judge Parker, who has carried a

Northern or Eastern State since Bryan was first nominated for President."

Second—"While Rhode Island's electoral vote is small, if Governor Garvin is satisfactory to the State he may be supposed to be satisfactory to New York and other Eastern States," and it might be added that the Democrats have never before carried Rhode Island twice in succession.

Third—"He is conspicuously identified with the issue of anti-graft, and if the Democratic campaign cry for next year is 'Turn the rascals out,' he will be a platform in himself."

Fourth—"He has always been regular and should be satisfactory to the West and the South."

It could also with equal truth be pointed out that both in 1902 and this year when he was the Democratic candidate for governor he ran way ahead of every other candidate, last year receiving 4,000 more votes than the candidate for lieutenant governor, 5,000 in excess of the candidates for treasurer and for attorney general, 6,000 in excess of the candidate for secretary of state, and 4,500 more than the combined vote of the Congressional candidates in the two Rhode Island districts.

It is gratifying to observe that at last attention is being directed towards him as the logical candidate. The issues that L. F. C. Garvin has made his own in Rhode Island are those which should particularly commend him to the so-called conservative element of the party. His fight has been one against the shocking debauchery of the suffrage which has made Rhode Island almost a by word, while he has also exposed the grossly unequal and unjust apportionment under which the legislature of that State is elected.

If the conservatives really want a "safe" candidate it would seem that Gov. Garvin should fill the bill. In the extremely conservative State of Rhode Island (whose conservatism is shown in the failure of the people to rise as one man and unanimously demand that its infamous apportionment which continually nullifies the popular will shall no longer continue), he has been elected either to the Assembly or the Senate 13 times, was the Democratic candidate for Congress on four successive occasions, and has finally been twice elected Governor.

On the other hand, L. F. C. Garvin having for a score or more years upheld in season and out of season the standard of human liberty, of equal rights, and of opposition to special privileges, would be a candidate whom every progressive Democrat in the nation should feel proud to work for, conscious that if he were elected a steady progress would be made towards the ideal which radical Democrats have in mind—the complete extirpation of monopoly through the repeal of every statute law which favors the few at the expense of the many and

denies the Jeffersonian principle of "equal rights to all and special privileges to none."

It would seem the latter class in particular should be delighted at the consideration which is being given to Gov. Garvin as the Democratic presidential candidate, and should be willing to do all that is possible to acquaint the people of their respective communities (by letters to their leading newspapers and by enlisting the support of prominent Democrats of their locality—all of whom want a candidate who has demonstrated his vote-getting capacity) with his characteristics and his record, laying special emphasis upon the fact that his opposition to the grosser forms of political corruption and debauchery has in two successive years brought to his support thousands of men who did not vote for any other Democratic candidate. The defeat of Tom L. Johnson, in Ohio, discouraging as it was, will not have so depressing an effect on progressive Democrats when they realize that the governor of Rhode Island, an exponent of the same principles, is seriously considered as the Democratic nominee for the presidency.

That many people are groping around to discover the means of reserving for actual home seekers the small amount of the public domain which the great land and cattle companies have not yet fraudulently acquired, is shown in a bill introduced by Senator Hoar (by request), providing for the appropriation of a billion dollars and the setting aside of one hundred and forty million acres of the best public land to "provide homes and employment for the homeless poor and to make them self-sustaining home owners."

Meritorious as the purpose of the bill is, it discloses an entire lack of comprehension of the reasons why, even in so called good times, hundreds of thousands if not millions of able bodied men are unable to find work. At the same time it exhibits the paternalistic instinct to a remarkable degree, the author evidently being imbued with the idea that the government must act as a stepfather to everyone desirous of establishing a home on public lands. Nor has the author any doubt of his ability to arbitrarily decide in advance what proportion of the 140,000,000 acres should be devoted to various uses. With wonderful prescience he has determined that exactly three-fourths of this land must be of the best quality arable lands; 32,000,000 acres (not 33,000,000 or 35,000,000) must be of the best timber land; 1,000,000 acres (no more nor less) to contain coal deposits sufficient to supply 20,000,000 people (no more nor less) with coal forever; an equal number of acres to supply "stone" forever, and a third million acres to supply all the needed "metals" forever.

That the homeseekers could deter-