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#### DR. MCGLYNN'S PESSIMISTIC PHILOSOPHY.

The Rev. Dr. McGlynn is a Roman Catholic Mugwump of a very pronounced type, but he has not hitherto been accounted a pessimistic philosopher. We judge that he must be put in that category if the interview with him in Friday's *Tribune* is authentic. The *Tribune* has been collecting opinions regarding the condition of workingwomen in New York, and the necessary measures for its amelioration. Dr. McGlynn was called upon for his views. They are given in a very methodical way, and are apparently the result of much reflection. They are, we must say, extremely depressing, for at the outset the reverend gentleman throws cold water upon all charitable movements, regarding them as ineffective, sporadic, and illusory. Since no synoptical treatment of Dr. McGlynn's sayings can do them full justice, we reproduce them in the original. He said:

"I have not much sympathy and but little time for any temporary measures for the relief of social distress. You may go on for ever with hospitals and orphan asylums and St Vincent de Paul societies, but with them you can't cure the trouble. They relieve, not eradicate. In a right state of society there ought not to be any hospitals or asylums or charitable societies, or else very few of them. The Women's Protective Association and the few laws which defend wageworking women, and needle-workers especially, are good things in their way, but they are only superficial in their results. They are palliatives in which I take but a languid interest. Let a woman complain justly against an employer who, through his foreman, has withheld unjustly a good part of her scanty earnings, and she gets no more skirts to sew out her life blood on from him, nor from any other like him. She may have gained her case against him, but she has lost her wages for many weeks to come, because she is thrown out of work, and for her vacant place there are scores and scores willing to toil and take their chances in the system of petty robbery by the factory-owner."

There is much more of the same sort. The reverend gentleman does not think that liquor prohibition, or cooperative industry, or labor combinations, or better education, or all together, will help much, since none of these things would raise the rate of wages or prevent a reduction "when the supply of sewing hands becomes far more in excess of the demand than it is now." As for the consolations of religion, he holds them to be quite inappropriate to the discussion. In fact, he sets at defiance the recent

pastoral letter of Archbishop Corrigan, in these words:

"Nor is there much comfort in the condescending advice to the slaves of poverty and oppressed toil to remember even that Christ proclaimed the poor blessed, and bade them hope for reward of eternal happiness. That is not the doctrine to preach to honest laborers of this century. That is not the doctrine which shall increase the belief in God and the followers of the Church. Such practices will not lead men and outraged cheated sewing girls to stop calling out, 'God has forgotten us.' So long as ministers of the Gospel and priests of the Church tell the hard-working poor to be content with their lot and hope for good times in heaven, so long will scepticism increase and 'Bob' Ingersoll have many believers."

Dr. McGlynn's remedy for the ills of poverty is the abolition of private ownership of land. It is not fair to say that he offers no substitute for private charity, prohibition, cooperation, education, etc. He offers Mr. Henry George's 'Progress and Poverty' as such a substitute, so far as relates to the evils resulting from inequalities of wealth in this world. It is his view, apparently, that if everybody could have land who wants it, all those evils would disappear. But that is what everybody can have now. It would not be maintained by him, we presume, that the farmers should be taxed to support all the laborers in cities who are in distressed circumstances, at a time when there is still plenty of land to be had rent free. If that is what he means, we do not understand his logic. Nor does Mr. Henry George's 'Progress and Poverty' help us. When brought face to face with the fact that arable land is still plentiful for the disinherited, sons of men, Mr. George contends that a very short time will see all the agricultural land occupied. This is as much as to say that the bulk of Mr. George's book is crass nonsense, since it is the present condition of society that he seeks to account for by the injustice of private ownership of land, and not a future condition, to be reached when no good land can be had for the asking and taking.

But it is not Dr. McGlynn's bad political economy that calls for examination, but the view he takes of those measures for the relief of human suffering for which his church in all ages and countries has been distinguished. When a clergyman makes light of these agencies, and says that he takes only a languid interest in them, he inflicts the greatest possible harm upon the religion he has espoused, because he enfeebles the highest emotions of the human soul. He tells those who are charitably inclined that what they are doing will not accomplish much good; that relieving the poor and distressed around them is only attacking the evil in spots; and that if they succeed in curing it in one place, it will presently break out somewhere else. Such teachings are

so extremely pernicious that it is hard to characterize them in terms of moderation. They are calculated to confirm and harden all the selfish instincts of human nature. They set at naught the governing principle of the higher life which teaches that man, with the limitations set upon his vision, is responsible only for the right use of the powers that have been given him; that for these he is responsible, and that he cannot escape responsibility for the little evil that he might cure, by contemplation of a greater one that he cannot reach. It is as though we were told that we should take only a languid interest in the army hospital today because there will be another battle tomorrow, and that we should give our thoughts rather to the prevention of war. This is a pessimistic philosophy, as inconsistent with the dictates of common humanity as it is with the religion of Christ. And yet we think that Dr. McGlynn is a better man than his philosophy would make him. He has been upset by what Archbishop Corrigan rightly denominates "a freak of the imagination," viz., Mr. George's 'Progress and Poverty.'