

The fault lies not so much with individual members of our law-making bodies as it does with our present system of legislative control. The tap-root of all our present trouble and disgrace lies manifestly in the irresponsible power of the law-makers. This power has a tendency to corrupt our representatives. Their votes are now too valuable for their own moral safety.

#### HOW THEY ARE TEMPTED.

Hon. William Flinn, for 12 years a member of the senate of Pennsylvania, recently said: "It is not strange that the average legislator, earning a salary of \$100 per month, or less, would be tempted to be dishonest when he is confronted with a bribe of \$20,000 for a single vote." If under present conditions bribes like this have been given, or may in the future be given, is it not the part of wisdom so to change matters that no bribe will be offered?

How can this be done? The answer is, Remove from the law-makers the final power to enact laws. Do this by restoring that power to the people, and then no bribery will be attempted. No man will pay for goods that cannot be delivered. Give the people an optional veto upon all legislation, and you have solved the vexed problem now under consideration. Direct legislation through the method of the initiative and referendum will do for any of our States what it has done for so many years in Switzerland, and for a shorter period in South Dakota.

In Switzerland the people originally held town meetings, which, when the population grew too great for convenient assembling for law-making purposes, were abandoned for the representative system. After a time that system became corrupt, because of the evils of government by the few, bribery and partisanship being exceedingly prevalent. The condition of Switzerland then was the same as prevails in the United States to-day. The referendum was then adopted, restoring to the Swiss people the veto power; and at once there was an improvement for the better. The members of their parliament now occupy the high position of counselors and advisers to the people. Hon. N. Droz, ex-president of Switzerland, says:

Under the influence of the referendum a profound change has come over the spirit of parliament and people. The net result has been a great tranquillizing of public life.

#### IT PLEASES EVERYBODY.

Prof. Frank Parsons, of Boston, who recently visited Switzerland and conversed freely with all classes, says:

I did not find one man who wishes to go back to the old plan of final legislation by elected delegates without chance of appeal to the people.

Gov. C. N. Herried, of South Dakota, says:

Formerly our time was occupied by speculative schemes of one kind or another, but since the referendum has been a part of the constitution these people do not press their schemes on the legislature, and hence there is no need of recourse to the referendum.

JAMES P. CADMAN.

Chicago, August 3, 1903.

#### ON THE STRENUOUS LIFE.

For The Public.

What is this strenuousness of life of which we hear so much nowadays? Has our youthful spirited President succeeded in giving this old world such a kick with his seven-league boot as to send it whirling on a little faster in space than heretofore? Not too hard, Mr. President, lest you soon be holding that toe in anguish which even the tanned visage of the rough rider may not conceal.

Is the "strenuous life" the vital message for Americans to-day? Has this phrase a magic for the ears of us of 1903, like the watchwords of our revolutionary forebears? Will it press the button and turn on the current from the giant dynamos of patriotism?

Do we kindle, as did the audiences of the demagogue Patrick Henry, at this exhortation of our spirited President? Does this phrase newly coin the golden wisdom which has counseled and cheered generations of men in the long ascent from barbarism?

Was Columbus, when he sailed forth, simply ambitious to lead the strenuous life?

Was Galileo searching into the motions of the planets, doing a stunt to show his strenuousness?

Was Pasteur, toiling in his laboratory past 80 years of age, doing a calisthenic exercise for the sake of strenuousness?

Was Von Moltke planning campaigns, or Garibaldi, or any other real heroes, just taking exercise because they had adopted for their motto the strenuous life? This description of motives fits better the gay Capt. Kidd, for whom buccaneering was a pastime, rather than a serious pursuit of either fame or lucre.

Without wishing merely to be sarcastic, we assert that the "dash up San Juan hill" and the battle of Bunker Hill were not in the same class.

Is it not a schoolboy fancy, that because great men have been stren-

uous, if we say, let us be strenuous, we shall therefore do something great?

Among the celebrities of the past we can recall at this moment only Don Quixote whose ambition was of this very general nature, pining to achieve some great deed, no matter what.

Have not men been great who, along with their inborn strenuousness, dared to ally themselves to great causes? And these same leaders have fired others, not by appeals for gymnastic exhibitions of prowess, but by enlisting them in real battles against real foes.

Are there not causes to be championed in plenty, any one of which would occupy the time of any one of our most gifted patriotic sons to advance by one inch? Behold, let us spend the people's money and build a great navy, and we shall be great. Or let us hypnotize the public by returning to them a fraction of their tribute in the form of public institutions. These are the popular avenues of greatness nowadays.

Some may be misguided by this well-meant appeal to live strenuous lives. Already our national greatness is beginning to suffer because men who reach 50 find their powers failing, and their years of experience hence counting for nothing. In Germany men more often reach 60 and find themselves enjoying the full powers of body and mind. There is many a noted German scientist to-day who is busy with experiments and making discoveries in advanced old age. It is for this reason that old men count for more in Germany than in America. An old man with full powers and his years of experience is a possession that no race can afford to be without. In the long run such races will prevail against one which uses up its men during their immaturity and casts them on the dump when they ought to be in their prime. Of course this fever which possesses our nation as a whole is the result of individual error, rather than public policy; but it does not seem to the writer, at least, that appeals to strenuous living express the real want of the times. Such appeals may indeed apply well to the small class of gilded youth who cut no real figure in our national growth, except as excrescences. And it seems indeed the true explanation of the President's attitude, regarded as a phenomenon, that it is a strictly class appeal, emanating from

one of that class who sees the growing evils of luxury, and possibly overestimates the importance of the gilded youth to the country. It will do no harm, at any rate, to have the jeunesse doree preached to, however little they may heed.

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**THE RELATION OF SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT TO SPIRITUAL REGENERATION.**

Prepared for and read at a meeting of the New Church "Round Table," held in connection with the eighty-third annual convention of the Church of the New Jerusalem (Swedenborgian), at the Kenwood Parish church, Chicago, June 30, 1903. By Louis F. Post.

If individual regeneration consisted in selfishly trying to save one's own soul from eternal misery, social environment might be excluded from the field of religious concern. The individual problem of escaping some dreadful doom of the damned would be absorbing enough, perhaps, without confusing it with the complications of social laws and institutions. But personal salvation "by the skin of your teeth," is as far away as possible from any true idea of regeneration. In no sense whatever is regeneration analogous to a hair-breadth escape or a lucky rescue. It is a process of orderly growth.

This growth is, indeed, an individual matter. Everyone is confronted with an alternative which distinguishes his manhood from his animalhood—the alternative, namely, of spiritually living forever or spiritually dying forever; and it must be determined by each for himself. Nobody can choose for any of us. Parents cannot give us eternal life as distinguished from eternal death, nor can companions confer it upon us. Pastors cannot put us into that narrow path; church organizations cannot snatch us as brands from a burning; laws and institutions cannot lift us out of the slough of despond. No social environment can turn us away from the darkness that is death and toward the light that is life everlasting. Between the disorderly spiritual process of eternally dying, and the orderly spiritual process of eternally living, the choice must be individually made. It is in the strictest possible sense individual; and genuinely to make this individual choice in favor of spiritual living as against spiritual dying, is to enter upon that process of orderly spiritual growth which we call regeneration. Primarily, therefore, the human requisite for regeneration is alto-

gether a matter of individual volition.

But while it is true enough that the process of regeneration rests throughout upon individual volition, is it not questionable, at least, whether it is affected in its development by the impulses of the individual's life alone? May we not fairly ask whether this growth, like any other growth, may not be retarded, distorted or promoted by influences of an entirely different character from those which determine the individual choice? When we consider the philosophy of the greater man—the solidarity, that is, as well as the individuality, of men—which involves, both here and hereafter, an intimate interrelationship between each individual and the mass of individuals, how is it possible to escape the inference that the processes of individual regeneration are affected not only by the individual life but also by the social life? To me, it seems, at any rate, that the limitations of social environment are as truly matters of spiritual concern to the regenerating man as are his personal limitations of heredity and habit. In his spiritual pilgrimage, they confront him, not only as obstacles to be individually overcome, but also as evils to be socially put aside.

Social environment is to be understood, of course, as the body of laws and institutions that regulates the conduct of individuals as members of civil society. It cannot govern their motives; but it can and does in greater or less degree govern the conduct in which they embody their motives. The slave, for illustration, though he may have angelic motives (which constitute the human requisite for individual regeneration), is "cribbed, cabined and confined" by a devilish social environment that interferes with his developing angelic substance into its best angelic form. While it may be freely conceded that even the most oppressed of men, though their degradation be unspeakable, have all the angelic potentialities, how can we deny that it is impossible for them in this world to realize those potentialities in actual experience? They are like the death-bed repentant, who may be regenerate or may be self deceived. They may be truly repentant, as was the crucified thief, or only badly scared, as—

When the devil was sick, the devil a monk would be;  
But when the devil got well, the devil a monk was he.

Choice of good instead of evil, if made in a social environment which prevents

or obstructs conduct in accordance with the choice, may be spurious.

When it is not spurious, the circumstances are nevertheless spiritually unwholesome. Freedom to exercise choice is normally necessary to growth in regenerative strength. Even if the individual whose choice is genuine does surmount all the abnormal difficulties of his social environment and go on living his spiritual life to its celestial heights, what about the spiritual life of those of us who tolerate, apologize for, and even foster a spiritually unwholesome social environment? Suppose the slave does manage to thrive spiritually in spite of his slavery, shall that count one in the regeneration of the proslavery citizen who conserves the institution of slavery in order to profit by it? Is any one blameless who helps to perpetuate unjust laws, even when the victims of the social injustice do succeed nevertheless in fully living regenerate lives? We should not think so if the question related to physical instead of spiritual unwholesomeness. Even if babies with strong constitutions did live through diphtheria, and grow lusty, we should none the less pass judgment of condemnation upon ourselves if we tolerated the communal propagation of diphtheretic germs. How, then, can we expect to escape our own judgment of condemnation when the germs are those of spritual disease? How can we ourselves be fully in process of individual regeneration if we conserve social institutions and laws that place limitations upon the regenerative potentialities of even the humblest of our brethren? It is not enough that a slave, for example, grows in grace even unto completeness, in spite of the slavery which limits his conduct by the caprice or the greed of a master. Every responsible member of the community who would also grow in grace, must exert his influence in the community to remove the evil institution of slavery. How can any man be making the most of his individual regenerative experience if he does nothing to abolish unjust institutions? Is not that obligation as truly individual as the obligation to uproot his own evil habits?

Let us make no mistake. It is impossible for any influential member of the community—and every writer, speaker, thinker, or gossip, as well as every voter, is an influential member of his community—it is impossible for any such to escape spiritual responsibility for civic inaction where