

all-absorbing sentiment of fraternal love inspired rational thought and generated rational activity. It was the profound fraternal love which we should call "justice," if it were not that "justice" has been perverted to mean brutal vengeance. In the sense of right relations, of moral equilibrium, of social harmony, the word "justice" more truly than any other defines the love that Ernest Crosby had for his fellow men.

Awakened by Tolstoy to the great realities of the ideal, Mr. Crosby found in Henry George, as Tolstoy had told him he would, the method of social regeneration. From the hour of that awakening, he lived a new life—a life from within outward instead of one from without inward, from himself to others and no longer from others to himself. It was a short life, but none of it was wasted. In essay and speech and poem, Ernest Howard Crosby has left a record of idealistic work that will continue to serve the human race long after the work of the most successful among his sordidly practical contemporaries has been thrust aside as rubbish and forgotten.

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THE PESSIMISM OF OPTIMISM.

"Ernest H. Crosby of New York, who died at Baltimore on Thursday, aged 50 years, was a conspicuous example of the waste of good abilities coupled with great earnestness and zeal in their use. . . . He . . . embraced the doctrine that nearly everything on earth was wrong, that everything which his fellow men did that he did not approve was done from base motives, and that no one could be decent and sincere whose conduct was not governed by his own code of conduct. And so he became a universal fault-finder, whose counsels average people heard with resentment and only that they might do just the contrary to them. . . . He became as a man who passes along a fair street and insists that those in his company shall think only of the sewer under it, or as one who looks upon a stately mansion and insists that the only thing about it worth considering is the garbage can at the back door, or as one who looks at the sun and denies that its light is real because there are spots upon its splendid disk."—Editorial Obituary in Chicago Inter Ocean of January 5, 1907.

Originating as philosophical terms, "optimism" and "pessimism" have passed into current language, the one as a term of condemnation, the other as a term of reproach. Etymologically the optimist is one who hopes for the best, the pessimist the one who expects the worst. Currently the optimist is the apostle of good cheer, the preacher of faith in mankind, the prophet of a better day; the pessimist is the knocker, the kicker, the cynic, the man who is always "agin the government." Yet, like many another word of honorable extraction and established meaning, each term often has been made to perform duties

at variance with its character. So often indeed are they impressed into traitorous service that a discerning person is reminded of the devil stealing the livery of heaven, and in some vocabularies would rather be mentioned as a pessimist than as an optimist.

Starting with the premise that an optimist is one who always "looks upon the bright side," and the pessimist is the muck-raker who always sees the "dark side," the apologists for every existing evil use the words to condemn honesty and varnish hypocrisy, to discourage investigation and condone graft, to prove that whatever is is right, and whoever would suggest improvement is an enemy of society. Wanting in discrimination, they have to resort to metaphors which show how vagabond ideas may masquerade in respectable phrases. For instance, every one has heard such illustrations as these: "The optimist is the traveler who sees the beautiful landscape, and the pessimist is one who keeps his eyes upon the mud in the road;" "The optimist sees the ring of the doughnut, while the pessimist sees only the hole;" "The optimist expects only his country's glory, the pessimist fears its ruin," and so on.

According to such illustrations, the optimist could be entirely without foresight, the embodiment of folly, while the pessimist would at least possess the merit of caution. It might be suggested, in comment upon them, that the pessimist who sees the mud is likely to select the safest course, while the landscape gazer is in danger of stumbling into the ditch; that the hole in the doughnut is more digestible than the ring, etc.

In short, to generalize, the optimist who does not discriminate is worse than the pessimist who does not distinguish. The latter may be disagreeable perhaps, but the former is dangerous because a preacher of false security. Making a concrete application of the terms as used in the unconscious sophistry of those who do their thinking according to good form, the optimist is one who would let well enough alone, a stand patter, a defender of the *status quo*, an opponent of every reform. He looks upon the "bright side," that is, he believes all is going well and he will not listen to criticism of public affairs. He fosters sentiment and creates conditions which make the people easy prey for political grafters and commercial flim-flammers. Ventures of a certain kind he calls "larceny" when represented by dollars, and "business enterprise" when it is in millions. A crime is not a crime if the evidence of it escapes the grand jury. By the same token a pessimist is one who has the discernment to see

and the courage to denounce official corruption and commercial rascality, one who refuses to believe that criminal methods are any less reprehensible because they are prosperous.

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An illustration of the optimist statesman is Senator Beveridge, who as a campaign orator preaches the doctrine of "good cheer" and prosperity, and denounces as the enemy of the country one who suggests that the trusts might be curbed or government extravagance retrenched. Senator Beveridge wrote a book called the "Russian Advance," a book already forgotten, but valuable as illustrating the point of view of an optimist statesman observer. He saw the "bright side." He saw the system and organized efficiency of the Russian bureaucracy, but failed to see its galling oppression and intolerable corruption. He saw the peaceful industry of the Russian peasants, but did not notice their squalid poverty and ignorance. He saw the rapid extension of government railroads and construction of frontier fortresses, but was blind to the ravages of recent famine and the seething popular discontent. He would have predicted only an increase of prestige and perpetuation of power for the Russian government as it was, never the disaster in war and the domestic disorder of which the facts gave warning.

This is one example of which many might be mentioned among the moulders of public opinion and exemplars of public morality among preachers, statesmen and editors. In their nomenclature, citizens who complain of graft are, as reformers in their own times have always been, disturbers of the public peace. The prophets always have been stoned, so far as history tells about them. A magazine which exposes some municipal corruption or the unlawful extortions of the beef trust, is a "calumniator of public institutions." If a newspaper publishes the truth about some legislative graft or some embezzlement of trust funds, it is "helping to tear down our institutions" and "destroy the confidence of the unthinking masses in the integrity and efficiency of our government." When a political orator exposes the alchemy by which the nerve and cunning of rebaters and monopolists are coined into millions, he is seeking to "inflammé class hatred" and "array the poor against the rich." Such things are not to be tolerated by well regulated patriotism. The optimist apostles of "good cheer" find it "safer and saner" to condemn evils which are remote, abstract and impersonal. A well groomed and

conventional doctor of divinity explodes in orotund denunciation of the sins of *other* ages; a decorous and discreet statesman harangues about the oppression and injustice which our *forefathers* suffered; a discreet newspaper exposes the blighting corruption of *foreign* nations. It is strictly within the proprieties to condemn without stint the corruption which prevailed in the time of Christ and the oppression of the tyrants of Rome. As to our own affairs, those matters which immediately concern our welfare, we should look upon the "bright side." We must not suspect anybody of anything which might disturb the serene optimism of those who want well enough to be let alone and those who perchance would not otherwise be so prosperous.

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By a peculiar slant in their notion of consistency, the exponents of this purblind optimism are always talking of "progress." It would be as well to call absolutism democracy, slavery freedom, or necromancy science, as to say that such stand patters are "progressive." Progress has always been made over their protest. Improved conditions have always been gained against the violent opposition of those who "look on the bright side," for the simple reason that they can see nothing to improve. The slow and painful steps by which civilized society has attained a degree of freedom, security, enlightenment and physical comfort, have been made slower and more painful by obstructive optimism.

What optimist of the "brighter side" school ever championed the cause of human liberty, ever contributed to the emancipation of slaves, ever aroused the people in defense of justice, ever pleaded for higher ideals? Was ever a great achievement due to such men? A great work of art, literature, philosophy or science or statesmanship? Imagine Pericles, or Franklin or Lincoln as optimists of that school. Imagine one of such optimists delivering a speech like one of Patrick Henry's or John Hampton's. Which one of them could have written a play such as King Lear or Oedipus Tyrannus, or could have added to the world's joy by producing a book like Don Quixote or Tom Sawyer? It would be interesting to list the pessimists who have been the seers, the poets, the philosophers, the reformers and the doers of great deeds. Socrates, the Gracchi, Luther, William the Silent, the Signers of the Declaration of Independence and Abraham Lincoln. Yet all such men were, in a larger view and a better sense,

optimists, though not recognized as such in their day.

If the optimists who saw only the bright side achieved anything in generations gone, the world has forgotten it. We only know they existed because history recounts the mischiefs which they abetted. Chancellor Day had his prototypes in the sycophants of many a royal court, and the forerunners of Beveridge maintained the prestige of many a weak and wicked prince.

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It might be suggested that such are so well satisfied because as a rule they individually and as a class are "well fixed," and can therefore bear with equanimity the evils which only affect other individuals and classes. They can afford to see only the bright side because that is the side they are on, and a little muckraking might tarnish its shining surface. But granting their good faith, the dreariest pessimism is embodied in the optimism of the brighter side preachers. What ideal can uplift one who is satisfied with the sordid reality? What devotion to a worthy cause can consist with a conviction that all is well enough? What room for a hope that the ignorant may be educated, or the sordid made clean, or the toiler rewarded or the public service purified, can there be in the breast of one who persists in believing that everything is the best possible—one who is satisfied with the tinsel and glitter of surface facts, and shuns as muckraking any effort to know the profounder facts affecting the case? It is the optimism of the ostrich which will not see. It is the most hopeless pessimism, because it is without promise and without incentive to effort.

JOHN TURNER WHITE.

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THE SHEEP-DOG.

Ernest Crosby in "Swords and Plowshares."

I believe in the world.

I stake my reputation as a prophet on its future.

I am sure that it will come out all right in the end, and that is the reason why I am forever worrying it and barking at it like a shepherd's dog driving sheep.

If I did not think it would keep to the right road in the long run, I would not trouble myself about it.

The sheep-dog enjoys life, too, as well as any one, but, alas! why is it that the sheep always misunderstand him and his intentions?

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The terrible problem of pauperism began to press on English statesmen as soon as the old English cultivating groups (in which land was collectively and not privately owned) began distinctly to fall to pieces. —Sir Henry Maine.

NEWS NARRATIVE

To use the reference figures of this Department for obtaining continuous news narratives:

Observe the reference figures in any article; turn back to the page they indicate and find there the next preceding article on the same subject; observe the reference figures in that article, and turn back as before; continue until you come to the earliest article on the subject; then retrace your course through the indicated pages, reading each article in chronological order, and you will have a continuous news narrative of the subject from its historical beginnings to date.

Week ending Wednesday, Jan. 9, 1907.

Death of Ernest Crosby.

Ernest Howard Crosby died suddenly of pneumonia in Baltimore on the morning of January 3.

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Mayor Johnson's Traction Victory.

By unanimous decision the Supreme Court of the United States on the 7th sustained the decision of the lower court on the question of the duration of the traction franchises. The decision so sustained (p. 727) was made by Judge Robert Taylor of the Federal court for the Northern District of Ohio, in the Summer of 1905. It held that the franchise on Central and Quincy avenues expired March 22, 1905. The company appealed from this decision to the Supreme Court at Washington, but allowed the appeal to rest until Mayor Johnson began to tear up the tracks on one of the avenues in question. The company then applied for a restraining order from the Supreme Court. This was granted by the court, but an early argument on the whole case was at the same time ordered. Some weeks have elapsed since the argument, and now comes the sweeping decision which sustains that of Judge Taylor and practically ends the long traction fight in Cleveland (p. 943).

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Under this decision the old company has no further franchise claims on two of its main lines, and within three years three-quarters of all its franchises will have expired. The City Council, at its meeting on the 7th, called a public meeting for the 10th to afford an opportunity to the old company to offer a fair settlement. This was in response to a formal communication from Mayor Johnson, in which he said:

The Supreme Court of the United States to-day decided that the franchises of the Cleveland Electric Railway Co., in Central avenue, Quincy avenue and a part of E. Ninth street expired on the 22d day of March, 1905. Since that date the Cleveland Electric Railway Co. has therefore been operating its cars in the streets named without legal right. It is now the duty of the Council to act. In its action the Council should consider two things: First, the convenience of the people of the city, and second, the amount due the city under the promise of the Cleveland Electric in consideration of your forbearance during the appeal to the Supreme Court. I suggest that the Council have an immediate public meeting to which representatives of the Cleveland Electric Railway Co. be invited, and that an invitation be extended to the company requesting the appearance of persons authorized to speak on its behalf and to act for it. At such a meeting the Council should be informed of the plan