

over the boy in his childhood and after his ostensible father left Canada never to return, the report became current that Ned had royal blood in his veins, and was in truth the Prince's natural son. Cooper, himself, was strongly of this opinion.

Those who are captivated by veritable

tales of the sea, had better turn to this life of Ned Meyers* for a double record of romance and reality.

G. Pomeroy Keese.

**Ned Meyers, or A Life Before the Mast.*
Edited by J. Fenimore Cooper. Philadelphia:
Lea & Blanchard. 1843.

EDWARD BELLAMY: AUTHOR AND ECONOMIST

In the death of Mr. Edward Bellamy, the world of reform, as well as the world of letters, loses one whose name has been, perhaps, spread abroad more widely than that of any American except Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, and for a reason very similar. For each was the author of a book, which appearing at a critical period in the spiritual history of the race, appealed to a widely-spread, but an only partially recognized sentiment, and developed it into an Idea. That in the one case the Idea immediately blossomed into a purpose, which rapidly ripened into fulfillment, and in the other produced only a sort of temporary excitement, which seems now to have died away, is certainly true. It is partly accounted for, no doubt, by the circumstances of the several cases; by the fact that the abolition of slavery was a reform not only perfectly comprehensible but visibly within the reach of the generation to whom it was preached; and by the other circumstance that there existed a large class of persons who undertook to redress the wrong immediately because they had no interest in maintaining it. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* did not, perhaps, convert a single slaveholder. It will be remembered, however, that Mrs. Stowe does not attempt to formulate any plan for abolishing slavery; she suggests, it is true, the colonisation of the negroes in Liberia, which on the scale necessary to the end to be attained, would have been a measure in the highest degree tyrannical, and very much less practicable than the establishment of Mr. Bellamy's Army of Industry.

To estimate the value of our author as a social prophet, the apostle of a new gospel, would in any case be impossible until after the expiration of a much longer period than has elapsed between the publication

of *Looking Backward* and his death; but it is almost absurdly out of the question at the present crisis, when social reformers are for the most part covering their mouths with their hands and declaring themselves no prophets, but the sons of herdsmen; since it seems an even chance whether the war with Spain will retard our social development fifty years, or precipitate a general European conflagration. All that remains to us, therefore, is to endeavour to apply to his theories the measure of history, to judge whether up to the present moment, the development of society has been strictly along the lines laid down by him; since, where the angle of measurement is so small as that to which we are limited, a very slight divergence will cause it to attain a very different point upon the great circle of the future. And we may also examine the earlier writings of our author for traces of the growth in him of these theories, with which he afterward became identified; and in all love and reverence, try to divine why he so suddenly came forward as a social evangelist, and what this new gospel meant in his own life. Nor is it amiss to state that this will be in truth, pure divination; since the present writer knew Mr. Bellamy only through his books, and had no sort of acquaintance, or even personal correspondence with him.

He was by no means a voluminous writer; though familiar to the literary world for at least a score of years, half-a-dozen books, and a few scattered short stories are all that the student can find by which to estimate him. One can, however, fancy the shy, retiring sensitive sympathetic nature, an alien in the journalistic world in which he "earned his living;" inwardly devoted to the Ideal, but conscious that it had no outgrowth in

the Real, and perhaps aware that for this reason it was dying in his own soul. There is a curious faithlessness and pessimism about some of his earlier writings, combined with a remarkable psychologic acumen; to one acquainted with *Looking Backward* and *Equality* the vivid presentation of the telepathic communication between husband and wife, "At Pinney's Ranch" (a short story published in 1886 in the *Atlantic*) is far more like Mr. Bellamy than his dispassionate permission to the reader at the close of the story, to believe, if he likes, that the affair was only a coincidence.

It is in another short story in the same magazine, "A Blindman's World," and in *Dr. Heidenhoff's Process*, that we come upon what we may justly term the germ of our author's later convictions. In the first, a professor of astronomy, falling into a trance at his telescope, is transported in what our theosophic friends call the astral body to the planet Mars (a world not entirely unknown to literature); the inhabitants of which he discovers to be possessed of foresight, instead of memory; and the advantages of this gift, in contradistinction to the evils attendant upon our blind humanity, are very eloquently worked out. The same thought, the bitterness of remembering, is developed with yet deeper and darker hopelessness, in the little volume above mentioned, in which for the young man once a defaulter, and the young woman once fallen from virtue, forgiveness, whether human or divine, has no value, because to themselves it cannot bring forgetfulness of the shame which the sin has brought upon them. In each case, suicide is represented as the cleansing power; "a certain cold white hand," writes Madeline to her lover, "will have wiped away the flush of shame forever from my face when you look on it again, for I go this night to that elder and greater redeemer, whose name is death." The italics are ours.

Perhaps we shall not take our author too seriously, if we quote from the dialogue between Dr. Heidenhoff and Henry Burr,—a dialogue not unlike in character (though far different as to subject), to the interminable conversations between Dr. Leete and Julian West,—a few sentences illustrative of the philosophy which the book embodies.

"It is the memory of our past sins which demoralizes us, by imparting a sense of weakness and causing loss of self-respect. . . . Acts merely express the character. The recollection of the acts is what impresses the character, and gives it a tendency in a particular direction. . . . Memory is the principle of moral degeneration. Remembered sin is the most utterly diabolical influence in the universe. It invariably either debauches or martyrizes men and women, according as it renders them desperate and hardened, or makes them a prey to undying grief and self-contempt. . . . There is no such thing as moral responsibility for past acts; no such thing as real justice in punishing them, for the reason that human beings are not stationary existences, but changing, growing, incessantly progressive organisms, which in no two moments are the same."

There is a very clear note of *Looking Backward* in the last sentence; since, in the attitude of the twentieth century toward the nineteenth, there is very evident a most curious absence of moral responsibility for the sins of its fathers, or of apprehension lest these should be visited upon that day and generation. A well-founded fearlessness, perhaps, since the age is represented as having put away and outgrown any tendency toward these sins; and doubtless Mr. Bellamy, in his later years would have disowned, at least in part, Dr. Heidenhoff's philosophy, and would have recognised, both that it is only a conscience comparatively void of offense that is capable of agonies such as he describes, but that the office of memory is so to purify the character that it becomes incapable of committing again the sin which has caused the pain; and that when it has thus become a different character, the suffering ceases.

The point with which we are immediately concerned is, however, the profound hopeless conviction of our author that the existing state of things is not faulty here and there, but radically wrong; his state of mind appearing not very dissimilar to that of the French philosopher who said that if he had been present at the creation of the universe, he could have given the Creator a few hints. That we should know the future before it comes, that we should be able to immediately forget and disown the past, is his plan of salvation; failing this, there is no escape from the pangs of memory but repeated sin, or suicide.

At this point in his spiritual history he began writing a story the *motif* of which

should be Socialism, and, as he has told us himself, years ago, in the *Nationalist Magazine*, became a Socialist, and his own first convert, during the process of study and composition. It is readily comprehensible that the theories of Marx, Lassalle and others should have come to him with the force of a new revelation, an irresistible gospel; he had known the times to be out of joint, but now he had found the loose screw. It was not human nature that was wrong, after all, nor was the Creator either unwise or careless in his ordering of the universe, the defect lay in our social system; the simple remedy was to be found in the rectification of the principle of self-interest, in placing the premium upon patriotism and service of the public good, rather than upon selfishness and dishonesty, as at present. This is the foundation stone of Mr. Bellamy's Social Republic, it is the key to the subtle materialism which has repelled many. True, the new gospel came to our author as a gospel for this world, a plan of salvation from sin, sickness and poverty; nevertheless, nothing is more surprising to the reader of *Miss Ludington's Sister* than to find its author creating an Utopia, which, mentally, morally, and physically is tremendously in advance of our present status, while the religious or theological or psychical development is absolutely nil.

Now nothing is clearer to the student of the times and of human nature than that evolution is proceeding quite as rapidly in the domain of psychology as in that of sociology. The popularity of such books as Fletcher's *Mental Healing*, of Hudson's *Law of Psychic Phenomena*, and *A Scientific Demonstration of a Future Life*, is as marked as that of their contemporaries, Gordon's *Christ of To-Day*, and Nash's *Genesis of the Social Conscience*, with its magnificent demonstration that the whole course of history is a record of the evolution or individualisation of "the downmost man."

It is this "downmost man" whose individualisation Mr. Bellamy represents as complete; but Mr. Bellamy is by no means a thorough evolutionist. In fact, even his character drawing is fixed and rigid; no single personage of his creation shows any power of growth, any signs of having been evolved from a lower plane of being. Thus, it need hardly surprise

us to find that however he may recognize in words the evolution of his new world out of the old, however he may trace in words the birth, growth, and operation of the ideas embodied in the Social Republic of A. D. 2000, in practice and in his heart of hearts, he considers our present social order as pure disorder. It is not embryonic, but inorganic to his feeling, whatever his reason may have accepted. There are few of us it is true, who can cast a stone at him in this regard; our social order is to very few a living, though undeveloped organism; and certainly to the casual observer it oftentimes seems pure chaos.

It was partly the working out of this, his subjective belief in the inorganic nature of human society, partly the necessities of a novel, that caused Mr. Bellamy to elaborate the details of his Utopia to such a degree that probably no two persons could easily be found able to agree heartily as to all of them. This is at once the weakness and the strength of *Looking Backward*, and its sequel. The main features of the re-organised society: the centralisation of the means of production and their operation by an Army of Industry; the equalisation of incomes, and the requiring of public service from every member of the community,—these are not original with Mr. Bellamy, but form part of the accepted socialistic programme. But in the working out of this plan many very serious problems and perplexities are sure to arise, which the sceptic cavils at, and asks what the reformer means to do about such and such things. The truest answer is, as a matter of course, that the age which is forced to deal practically with these problems will have a better opportunity of solving them than we can possibly have, before the event; but few teachers have the sincerity or the courage to give a reply which places them at such heavy disadvantage; and we have, in consequence, any number of alleged solutions, in which nobody believes, not even those who offer them.

But as has been said, its fullness of detail is also the strength of Mr. Bellamy's presentation. The new republic is set before us not as a proposition but an accomplished fact; and the wealth of information concerning its organisation and governance, its common weals, its

department of unskilled labour, its red ribbons, its universal umbrella, its this, that and the other, so lavishly poured forth by the author, unquestionably lend it verisimilitude, so that the wayfaring man, though a fool, is able to believe in it and to fancy, at least that he understands it. Speaking psychologically, one might say, that a subjective (or imaginative) presentation of any idea, because it reaches the subjectivity of the reader, is often effective when argument fails; since we are convinced, not through the reason, but the imagination. Hence the novel is often powerful when the thesis leaves us of the same opinion still.

A novel, also, appeals to a wider circle than does an argumentative pamphlet, for example; yet all these considerations fail in a measure to account for the tremendous popularity of *Looking Backward*. Very nearly half a million copies sold in the United States alone, with the accepted average of five readers to a copy, besides translation into more languages than one can easily remember or enumerate, means simply that our author has laid his hand upon what is closest to the heart of the people; that he has touched the deepest note which the heart-strings of humanity are as yet tuned to sound. It is not alone that he has set forth the evils of our present "system" or stage of development, as it may more accurately be termed; not alone that he

has offered us the contemplation of an ideal which even those who condemn it as impracticable are willing to admit is, at least in its broad outlines, beautiful and uplifting. Other writers have done these things; and the note of brotherhood, of the solidarity of humanity, of human interdependence, has never ceased to echo since Paul of Tarsus wrote, "We are members one of another."

Mr. Bellamy's great and distinctive merit is that by clothing the Ideal in the apparel of the Real, he inspired us with a hope of its speedy attainment. It was this note of hope, the hope which his gospel had brought to his own soul, that took the world by storm; for who would not find his own burden light, in the belief that his children should be delivered from it? And it is for this message of his that we hold Edward Bellamy in loving remembrance as a teacher and prophet. Whether the evolution of society will be as rapid as he believed or along the lines that he has indicated, does not touch the truth of his prophecy; that it will be the outgrowth of the spirit which inspired him is already, despite obscuring circumstances, perfectly evident. For the spirit of brotherhood is, after all, the spirit of the age; and the spirit of this, or of all the ages, is, as our author once said in a private letter, "very like what we mean by the Holy Ghost."

Katharine Pearson Woods.

A NOTE ON MR. CABLE'S "THE GRANDISSIMES." *

To sit in a laundry and read *The Grandissimes*—that is the quickest way of reaching the strange city of New Orleans. Once upon a time, however, I took the other route, drawn to the adventure by love of Mr. Cable's stories, and before I knew my way about the St. Charles Hotel (not, as Mr. Cable would explain, the St. Charles of *Dr. Sevier*, but its successor), while the mosquitos and I were still looking at each other, before beginning several delightful Creole ladies

had called to warn me. Against what? Against believing Mr. Cable. They came singly, none knew of the visits of the others, but they had heard what brought me there; like ghosts they stole in and told their tale, and then like ghosts they stole away. The tale was that Mr. Cable misrepresented them; Creoles are not and never were "like that," especially the ladies. I sighed, or would have sighed had I not been so pleased. I said I supposed it must be so; no ladies in the flesh could be quite so delicious as the Creole ladies of Mr. Cable's imagination, which seemed to perplex them. They seemed to be easily perplexed, and one, I half think, wanted to be a man for an hour

*From advance sheets of *The Grandissimes*, with an Introductory Note by Mr. J. M. Barrie, through the courtesy of the English publishers, Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton, London.