

DOUBTS ABOUT HERESY

BY MAX MCCOY

THE grand amusement of drawing rooms in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, if we may trust the evidence of contemporary comedy, was scandal. Recall merely Lady Teazle and Congreve's *Millamant*. In the twentieth century scandal is rather out of fashion—not so much boo as passé. It is not only or chiefly that we are more charitable than our ancestors, but that we have discovered a more exhilarating diversion. The recreation of all really smart drawing rooms today is heresy.

Let me not assume a hypocritical tone of superiority: I too have a weakness for heterodoxy. When after dinner some clever person questions a doctrine, derides a custom, or assails an institution which I have never before heard questioned, derided, assailed, my inclination is to hail his sally with enthusiastic delight. My pleasure is, I suspect, akin to that with which Sir Benjamin Backbite and Lady Sneerwell greeted a quite fresh insinuation against some fair one whose character had thitherto escaped detraction. And as Lady Sneerwell and Sir Benjamin did not greatly care whether their insinuation was truth or calumny, so my friends and I are not concerned to consider too narrowly whether we can really accept and endorse this new morsel of radicalism. We take our heresy, as they took their scandal, for its own sake. And of all this, though I may sometimes be a little ashamed, yet on the whole I am inclined to be proud: I am keeping up with the new generation!

And yet—apparently it is no use. These youngsters who have made their debut in drawing rooms within the last ten years are too much for me. They go a step beyond what I can accept even as wit. For these new lads and lasses are not content to subvert dogmas and institutions. They appear to despise also what seem fundamental human virtues. God, marriage, and property (please note the climactic order) I can give over to them; but

when they speak with contempt of courage, kindness, and duty, I draw back. Concealing my displeasure and dismay, I make cautious inquiries. I should like to get this new point of view. Perhaps these things, too, are idols to be tumbled down!

But I find the doctrine perplexing. There are evidently distinctions. As for courage, what I may call daring still stands—the courage of adventure, battle, exploit. Youth can never, I suspect, give that up. But what my generation chiefly praised as courage was something more philosophical: fortitude, endurance—yes, if you like, submission. The acceptance of the human lot, including suffering and death, and going through with it, as we used to say, bravely. More specifically, the maintenance of an inward peace and an outward cheer, and meeting our fellow men and doing our work in the spirit of that peace and cheer, in spite of the tragic futility of man's destiny. "My head is bloody but unbowed"—and all that sort of thing.

As nearly as I can make out, this kind of courage is now regarded by the up-to-date as silly—or perhaps obtuse. The boys and girls seem to think that we old fellows never knew unrest or that we never noticed the facts of misery and mortality. They themselves—poor things—are fairly wild with their restlessness, their rebellion against all the circumstances of life. It is continually on their lips, in their novels and free verse, and, more poignantly, in their eyes. It is undoubtedly the incentive of their somewhat riotous pleasuring and their equally riotous utopianism. But if one talks of "acceptance", of "serenity",—a great word that, in our day,—of "finding peace in one's heart", in short, of any brand of stoicism, Christian, Socratic, Aurelian, or merely Horatian, one but stirs the coals to brighter flame. The thing to do, it appears, is just to go on being restless and blank and desperate, to lament and bewail, to rebel in one's heart and then rebel some more.

And kindness! My generation, too, overthrew certain virtues, or ideals which our fathers accounted such. One of them was reverence, which we denominated superstition. Another was one kind of modesty, which we denounced as prudery. And—heaven forgive me!—I still think we were right, though I am not quite so sure as I used to be. But I think none of us ques-

tioned kindness. To be courteous, considerate, sympathetic, charitable; to spare feelings, to share griefs, to enhearten, and of course, when one could, to relieve suffering—all this we accepted without question as part of our code. Nay, I think that as we turned away—angrily or sadly—from Faith, we were inclined to stress Works if anything more than our elders had done. We were great on practical religion, organized charity, all kinds of amelioration. We even experienced in kindliness a sort of transcendental, cosmic superiority. The heavens were empty, but Man had somehow discovered love and in the practice of it excelled his origin.

Higher than heaven they sit,
Life and her consort Law;
And One whose countenance lit
In mine more perfect awe,
Fain had I deemed their peer,
Beside them throned above:
Ev'n Him who casts out fear,
Unconquerable Love.

Ah, 'twas on earth alone that I His beauty saw.

But now the code of those who think new thoughts and are to do the world's work for the next forty years is not kindness but hardness. Kindness is weak, sentimental—"slave-morality". If you are a superior person, you put it from you. (Not a difficult thing to do, ye superior ones!) You do not trouble to be courteous, to spare sensibilities. You say what you think (or feel), and say it with a tang. As for a word of cheer—down with Pollyanna! And charity and amelioration are no good; they help to maintain the *status quo*, to postpone—what? The millennium, I judge, when apparently kindness will be quite unnecessary.

And, finally, Duty—

Stern Daughter of the voice of God!

That was not written in our generation, and we had some trouble with "God"; we made private footnotes of interpretation. But I think that nearly all of us thrilled to that line and to the whole of the poem that follows. It was—and remains—a little diffi-

cult to explain what the sanctions and imperatives are for duty or for specific duties. We made much of "enlightened selfishness". But the point is that the word "ought" remained in our vocabularies and we did a good many hard and tedious things because we "ought" to do them. And, looking back, most of us feel that those things were good for us and are glad we did them and hope we may do a few more of the same kind before we pass out.

But nowadays—why should anyone do anything not motivated by pleasure or immediate self-interest? It is difficult to argue with any tough-minded person who gets this idea into his or her head; and I have already confessed that rationalistic sanctions for duty are exceedingly abstract and elusive. Only I cannot for the life of me see how not merely our present civilization (for which I hold no strong brief), but any kind of human life, and least of all any Utopia, can possibly carry on without quite a lot of "ought" in it somewhere.

Well, having set down the new point of view, the new attitude towards life, as well as I can, I stand off and look at it. I am genuinely anxious to see the good in it, the truth of it. It is almost a point of honour with me to do so; for it has been my life-long hobby and private pride to be "open to conviction", to be able to see all points of view. But this is too much for me. I cannot see it—and I cannot even laugh at it. I am concerned, for the sake of the integrity of my own mental and spiritual life, to formulate my objections to it—at least the grounds of that instinctive and almost contemptuous distaste with which I find myself regarding it.

Is this merely the prejudice of middle age—the result of hardening arteries and the herald of approaching mental death? Very likely it is; yet I must speak. For I have found the underlying ground of my dislike for the whole of this new attitude towards life, namely, that it is weak. These young men and women think they are hard. I tell them they are soft.

No doubt they will answer me with scorn. "Your generation," they will point out, "had a pretty easy time of it! You grew up in a period of peace and plenty and superficial altruism. You had nothing to do, when you were our age, but read books and talk about your souls and courage and kindness and duty.

We came up into the World War. We served in the trenches in France, or at any rate practised stabbing with bayonets in training camps; or we sent our lovers away to do these things, expecting never to see them again. You were safely married, of course, so you stayed at home and tried as civilians to 'hold out'. We make no objection to that. It was up to us to do the fighting, and we did it. Only don't you talk to us about softness!"

Of course I am somewhat abashed. I admit that I and my coevals were most fortunate in our youth, and that you have been more sinned against than sinning. Also that your generation performed most nobly the terrible task that was set it. But this point of injustice as between you and us does not alter present facts. And so I repeat that I find you soft.

It may be, in fact, that this is partly, perhaps wholly, the result of the War. For on no point was General von Bernhardt more grievously in error than in maintaining that war hardens the morale of the men and women who participate in it. The aftermath of all wars teaches just the opposite lesson. To face imminent death is undoubtedly more acutely terrible than to face life; but it does not follow that the effects on the intellectual processes, on the point of view (to say nothing of character), are more beneficial. Is it not obvious that war shatters, loosens, weakens individuals as well as States? If one is expecting to perish within a few days or weeks, it may be thought or felt to matter little how one spends the brief interval. At any rate one does not have to work out a code. The necessary soldier's code is simple and already clearly formulated and quite sufficiently enforced.

You see, my generation, though it did not face death, did have to face life. The only alternatives we saw were suicide (which few philosophers, however disillusioned, seem to consummate) and going through with it, presumably for a period of years which seemed to us then very long. We did have to work out a code, a *modus vivendi* with ourselves and our fellow creatures, and we had to make provision for enforcing that code upon ourselves. And that is how, perhaps, we came to fall back on those old virtues. Courage in the philosophic sense, meaning a sort of blind, willed serenity in the face of a long vista of tasks,

tediums, and griefs, culminating inevitably in the same supreme catastrophe which you have faced; this the *modus vivendi* with oneself—and the thing which most of all, it seems to me, you lack and need. Kindness, as the most tolerable attitude (tolerable for oneself) towards all those about one, from lovers to enemies. And duty, however justified, or even if without justification, in lieu of the Articles of War, to put oneself self-respectingly through the things one has to do.

And will even you maintain that these old ideals are not solidier and harder than the new ones which you seem, by negation at least, to adopt? Serenity than restlessness and bewailing; self-restrained and purposeful kindness than slapping and kicking or passing by; and duty (whatever it may mean) than pleasure and drifting?

No, I cannot believe that these ideals are to pass like the mere dogmas and customs and institutions which I am willing enough to join with you, seriously or sportively, in questioning. Looking back over many ages, one does not find that these have changed. God has been interpreted in countless ways already, and doubtless many more glosses are to follow; the sex relation has taken several different forms in other lands and ages, and marriage as we know it is not so ideal that we need hesitate to consider other possibilities; and private property with the present implications of that phrase is not the only method of economic distribution that men have tried with some success—it may be open to further modifications. But wherever in history thus far we encounter men and women whom we account strong and noble and enlightened and—within human limitations—happy, these ideals that I have named are in evidence and seem, at least, to have been the basis of whatever greatness and felicity we find. I think the best you will be able to do—you young ones—is to rediscover them. If you can give them new names to make them sweeter to your souls, so much the better. But I think the things themselves will have to stand.

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TORNADOES AND OTHER STORMS

BY BRIGADIER-GENERAL S. E. TILLMAN, U. S. A.

METEOROLOGY in the most general sense includes a study of all the phenomena due to the earth's atmosphere and its constituents. A better conception of the causes and operations of the tornado, as now understood, is facilitated by a general comprehension of terms and of certain atmospheric conditions and motions now fairly well determined; accordingly these will be briefly stated.

The earth's atmosphere extends from the surface to that ill defined region generally designated as interstellar space. It consists in the main of approximately 98 per cent of oxygen and nitrogen, mixed in nearly the proportion of one of oxygen to four of nitrogen: the remaining constituent gases in the order of amounts are, vapor of water, argon, carbon dioxide and minute quantities of ozone and ammonia; there is also very generally in suspension in the air certain non-gaseous matter, microorganisms and dust particles, the last named being always present in the lower air and having an important action in meteorological phenomena, being instrumental in cloud production and very materially affecting the colours of the sky and atmosphere.

All natural motions of the atmosphere are called "winds"; that branch of meteorology dealing with winds is termed aerodynamics, and involves problems of great difficulty and complexity. So many factors are involved in these motions that it has not been possible to account for them by deduction from simple fundamental laws applicable in all cases.

The dynamical action of the air herein especially considered is the tornado; it is of so much more frequent occurrence in the United States that it has frequently been called an American storm, seldom occurring in other countries, the reason for which will subsequently appear.

As we ascend from the earth's surface the air becomes less