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Give Light and the
People Will Find
Their Own Way

SATURDAY, MARCH 10, 1934

OLD MAN INTEREST

OLD MAN INTEREST, unlike Old Man River, doesn't merely keep rolling along. He crushes us quickly and will do it again if not kept in reasonable check.

If speculation is curbed—as the administration is trying to do through the stock exchange bill—there probably will be enough investment money in this rich country to supply all that is needed, and more, to legitimate business.

This would tend to bring a lower interest rate and save the country from debt that mounts like a snowball rolling downhill.

The old saw about the penny invested at the time of Christ, which would have mounted to an astronomical figure by now if its interest course were not interrupted, is another illustration of the crushing effect of debt. President Roosevelt saw this clearly when he characterized the alternative, in the case of foreign bonds held by Americans, as one of collecting the principal and cutting down the interest, or trying to collect the interest at 8 per cent and not doing it.

Two British investment experts, J. Maynard Keynes and Owen Hugh Smith, both speaking before life insurance company meetings, foresee low rates of interest in the future. Mr. Keynes, supporting that long-term, gilt-edge securities probably will fall to 2½ per cent or less, said:

"With opportunities for safe and profitable investment abroad greatly curtailed, as much by the unfortunate results of past investment as by diminished opportunities for new investment, Britain and the United States would, if they were to return to full employment of their resources, save sums so vast that they could not possibly be invested to yield anything approaching 3½ per cent."

LIFE'S MYSTERY

THE old, old mystery of life and death—how we hunt for an answer, in books and in poetry and in long, secret communications with our own hearts!

And how often do we run into insignificant human incidents which gleam brightly—if we have eyes to see them—like beacon lights briefly displayed in the limitless darkness.

Here, if you care to listen, is one such incident. It is a thing hardly worth talking about, perhaps; yet it does not take either a poet or a visionary to read it into a hint and a promise touching on this oldest and deepest of riddles.

A man we knew lay dying the other night; a man in his 60's who had been a hard-working printer all his life, who had set some miles of type and lived one of those useful and unsung lives, and who now was leaving the world, in a white hospital cot.

He had pneumonia, and an oxygen tent had been put over him. The watchers at his bedside saw his hands moving fitfully, and lifted a flap to look and see if he wanted anything.

He did not; he was delirious, and he thought he was back on the job—and he was setting type! Deftly his hands moved about in the empty air, tapping invisible keys. Then, a moment later, he died, and went to find out whatever it is that a human soul may learn about this first and last of mysteries.

Now, there is no logical reason why this homely little happening should be so moving. And yet it is. That tried veteran, clinging to his job even in his last seconds on earth, going out into the infinite with his hands still working at the task to which he had given himself—there's something about the picture that makes all our wisdom seem futile and of no account.

For he stands, somehow, for the whole race of undistinguished and faithful men; those men who work hard and steadily from youth to the grave, never knowing precisely why they are doing it, never reaping much of anything in the way of a reward, being faithful and patient simply because faith and patience are put into the human heart—and going out, at last, with their hands still moving on the old job.

It means nothing, perhaps—and perhaps it means everything. Perhaps faith and patience weren't put into human hearts for nothing.

Perhaps there is, for long fidelity and toil, a reward we know nothing of—a place in the great scheme of things bigger than we ever dreamed for the world's eternal workers.

DICKENS' DEBUT

(An Editorial in The New York Times)
OUR neighbor, the World-Telegram, is fortunate in having the opportunity to give to the public the latest work from the pen of a highly gifted writer named Charles Dickens. That he is destined to enjoy a long period of fame may be argued from the fact that he has already done so for very nearly a century.

Charles Dickens' first published piece appeared in the Old Monthly Magazine for December, 1833. It ushered in the "Sketches of Boz," although that signature did not appear until August, 1834. It was called "A Dinner at Poplar Walk" but readers of the collected Boz know it under the title "Mr. Minns and His Cousin." The author was 21 when he wrote it.

Critics presumably will wait until the serialization of "The Life of Our Lord" is completed before deciding whether it adds to or subtracts from the reputation of Dickens. The change in either case can not be very noticeable. That reputation is so gigantic that a little more or a little less can make no perceptible difference.

A new work by Dickens running serially in a newspaper is appropriate for at least two reasons. His genius first broke on the world in instalments. Was there ever a time in the

history of literature when a world of readers waited as impatiently as people did for the immortal monthly "parts" that began with "Pickwick?"

The second reason is even more pertinent for newspaper men. Dickens began his career as a reporter. He worked in the press gallery of parliament from his nineteenth to his twenty-third year, until he set to work on "Pickwick." He was one of the best parliamentary reporters of his day, with an extraordinary reputation for accuracy. He told the New York editors in one of his farewell speeches:

"To the wholesome training of severe newspaper work, when I was a very young man, I constantly refer my first successes."

JUDGE FLORENCE E. ALLEN

HER own state denied her a legal education, but she is now to be a member of the United States circuit court of appeals.

She was not permitted to study law at Western Reserve university because she was a woman; but she was nominated by President Roosevelt to the circuit court because, after all, she had become one of the country's outstanding members of the judiciary.

Judge Allen's success, based as it is strictly on her ability and achievement, can not fail to gratify women who are seeking to demonstrate in their own lives that intelligence is not limited to one sex.

But for the rest of the country the appointment has a wider significance. Judge Allen's service on the Ohio supreme court showed that she was the kind of person needed on the federal bench. The law, as she sees it, is not a dead hand grasping at life today to stay its progress. She is able to see it as a living thing which must be interpreted by the requirements of social and economic progress.

Appointments of this kind hold real hope for the future of America's law.

CHILDREN SUFFER

FATHERS and mothers are important people. Far more important, in the lives of their small sons and daughters, than they sometimes think. Recently, among the spangled signs that illuminate Broadway's make-believe world, the name of a heart-breaking tender, human play swung against the late winter sky. "Wednesday's Child" it is called.

Wednesday's Child is a little boy . . . a huggable, tousled, yellow-haired youngster . . . whose father and mother stopped loving each other and loved other people instead.

They were fond of Bobby. But they had so many new interests, and Bobby was so unhappy in his shattered little-boy world, that they decided to send him to a military school. Of course they came to see him. That was rather hard.

You see, they weren't "acting" parents any more. Just—people to be polite to. After a while they would stop coming, Bobby's roommates told him. That would be easier. They put huge sums of money in the head master's safe, instead of bringing presents, although Bobby and his schoolmates were limited to 25 cents a week. Funny, isn't it, how parents sometimes forget to think?

Bobby and his roommate, who also had four parents, decided that they could get along without fathers and mothers since fathers and mothers could get along without them. Just knowing that helped.

Certainly no two people whose love has met a disenchantment are asked to face each other with gallant nonsense across a perennial dinner table. Children are sensitive. They know when love's banners trail.

But there are certain elements of decency—good taste, if you please—which no parent has any right to violate. Bobby's mother forgot. She kissed her lover surreptitiously in dark places and Bobby's playmates saw and taunted him about it.

He also exposed the savagery in the charity schools of England in "Oliver Twist," and this led him into a consideration of the evils of the whole English educational system. He pointed out the inadequacies of educational opportunities among the poor children, and in his immortal "Nicholas Nickleby" he presents us with an unforgettable picture of the disgraceful treatment of children in English schools of his time. No other writer has ever succeeded in making so ridiculous the absurdities of the punitive theory of education.

In his "David Copperfield" and "Little Dorrit" there are appalling pictures of prison life which never can be erased from the mind of any reader. They helped more than anything else in English fiction to bring prison reform to the fore in England. Dickens' novels must be rated along with the work of John Howard and Elizabeth Fry in putting an end to the worst forms of prison savagery in Great Britain.

They should make friendships. Psychologists tell us that the early years are the formative years. If playmates fail one, as Bobby's did, the drums play more slowly and the march is never again so brave and fearless. Nor is it so easy to establish older intimacies.

Sinclair Lewis, writing about another boy, in his new novel, "Work of Art," laments the fact that his parents gave him so many hotel duties that he had no time to swim and hunt and grow comradely with his schoolmates. That is bad enough. But Bobby's plight was worse.

He was ostracized. The importance of his mother's kiss has nothing to do with the torture which was inflicted upon the child. Her lack of finesse and consideration were pretty bad.

Wednesday's Child is full of woe, the old nursery rhyme tells us. Bobby didn't know about that. Just that he didn't feel hungry any more and it was sort of hard to run fast.

OVER THE HILL

CORSE PAYTON, matinee idol of a generation ago, used to make thousands whoop when he played a lead role in the melodrama "Over the Hill to the Poorhouse." The real story of his death the other day would make more thousands weep if such little tragedies were not commonplace in every city in the United States. The once wealthy and popular actor died at 67 in the charity ward of a Brooklyn hospital.

Congress can, with little expense, write happier endings to the life dramas of 500,000 or so aged poor of this rich country. The poorhouse way has been abandoned in theory by twenty-seven states and two territories. By passing the Dill-Connelly bill granting federal aid to old age pension states, congress would encourage all of the forty-eight states to offer small but honorable annuities to the poor who have passed the age of 65. For the first year or so this federal aid would cost no more than \$10,000,000 annually, and never would it cost more than the price of a battleship.

Liberal Viewpoint

By DR. HARRY ELMER BARNES

This is the second of two articles by Harry Elmer Barnes, Ph. D., on the social reform activities of Charles Dickens, noted English author. Interest in Dickens is being revived because of the fact that Dickens' "Life of Our Lord" is being published in The Times.

DICKENS never tired of emphasizing the point that stubborn opposition to social justice and a fair deal for all men was the chief cause of revolution. This is reiterated time and again, especially in his "Tale of Two Cities," which recounts in part the stirring times of the French revolution.

Just as in our own day we have had to abandon and combat the "rugged individualism" of the Republicans and Mr. Hoover, so Dickens vigorously assaulted the individualism of the factory owners and the economists of his time. The latter persistently maintained that we would have to trust to natural forces and the benevolence of employers in order to bring about prosperity and social well being for all classes.

Looking about him, Dickens could see how such a philosophy actually worked out in practice.

He saw the miserable factory towns, the long hours of labor, insufficient wages and the ruthless oppression of women and children. His whole personality revolted against this narrow and selfish philosophy.

In approaching the social problem Dickens was a confirmed believer in democracy. He once wrote: "I take it that we were born and that we hold our sympathies, hopes and energies in trust for the many and not for the few. Nothing is high because it is in a high place; nothing is low because it is in a low one. . . . I believe that virtue shows quite as well in rags and patches as she does in purple and fine linen."

But Dickens was realistic enough to know that democracy means nothing unless it passes from phrases to practice. Therefore he worked tirelessly for political reform which would give the masses the right to elect their representatives to Parliament and would give the House of Commons a dominant position in the government.

Dickens believed that reform should start with the people as their just birthright and not be handed down to them as a condescending sop from the aristocracy. Like Mr. Roosevelt, he proceeded from the conception of the interest of the community as a whole.

He never allied himself to any narrow or special type of social reform program, such as socialism. He was against every form of evil and oppression and desired to attack it with every available means. He was, as one writer observed, "the prose prophet of the cause of social reform itself."

THE worst forms of misery and oppression in Dickens' day were to be found in the working conditions in the factories and mines of England. In a famous passage in "Martin Chuzzlewit" he asked what chance one has for life and decency under such conditions.

"Bethink yourselves that there are scores of thousands breathing now and breathing thick with painful toil who have never lived at all, nor had a chance of life? Go ye, teachers of content and honest pride, into the mine, the mill, the forge, the squalid depths of deepest ignorance and uttermost abyss of man's neglect and say can any hopeful plant spring up in air so foul that it extinguishes the soul's bright torch as fast as it is kindled."

Such a passage as this reminds us strikingly of the novels of today. For example, Jack Conroy's "The Disinherited," which reveals the misery and blasted lives of the victims of the old deal which broke down in 1929.

Dickens' indignation was also aroused by the evils of usury. If we have our troubles with the "money changers" the England of Dickens' time had to reckon with avaricious and extortionate "money lenders." They were relentless in their collections and had no hesitation in throwing their victims into prison or turning them out homeless into the streets. In Dickens' mind is the sending of representatives to Parliament and a dominant position in the government.

Dickens subjected these vultures to devastating satire. His attacks upon the evils of usury played a leading part in modifying English laws in this field and in relieving the oppressed from one of the most indefensible types of extortion.

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The law was helpless at his feet, then Lady Luck did grin, The Tucson cop got a lucky break and they did lock him in.

"He's not so tough, we handled worse," these lucky cops did say. "Send your killers to the west, with us they're mere child's play."

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"He's not so tough, we handled worse," these lucky cops did say. "Send your killers to the west, with us they're mere child's play."

For Johnny's flew the coop again, they just can't keep him in. Twenty thousand men just can't stop his life of sin!

He fashioned him a wooden gun and hid behind a smile.

And waited for the time to come when he could leave in style.

He swiped the sheriff's newest car, red light and siren, too.

A Negro chauffeur for to drive, the guards around were few

When started out to play this "catch me if you can,"

In fact, the guards were snoozing when he took it on the lam.

The cops, they say they'll get him, that he won't get away with it. But I'll bet he's laughing at their antics all the while.

'Cause he knows that talking doesn't bring him closer to that last mile.

In the meantime cops can trail him, a reign of terror he will spread

With his trusty tommy gun spits out a molten stream of lead.

"What's the use to catch him," say the wise ones with a grin.

"For it doesn't seem that there's a jail that the law can keep him in."

By M. E. Clark

A gangster went to jail one day

And heard the sheriff smile and say,

"No trouble do I contemplate,

When this boy goes through the gate."

A model prisoner you will see,

But Jack's half smile and half a sneer,

"I will get out if given a year.

My friends will come and rescue me just wait a while and you will see."

Alas, one day when the sheriff awoke

And was informed the jail was broke,

She cried, and then her hair she tore,

The captain fumed and then he swore