

had increased. The homeless, the driven, the outcast, the lawless were more in number; they squatted around the shrine and claimed the sanctuary, asking and receiving alms.

I wanted to tell the Queen of Heaven what I had learned of the pain and sorrow of belonging to the

Holy Family, since I had held the little baby in my arms; but then I remembered that she was a woman, and the mother of the Son of God, and that she must have suffered infinitely more than I. So I made her a silent obeisance. I should have made the sign of the cross, but I think she will forgive me my mistake.

Can Reno Be Cured?

By Paul Hutchinson

IN MY three previous articles I have tried to describe the situation in Reno, and in Nevada, which has gained the attention of the world. I have told of the open vice, flaunting itself more violently than ever it did in the old days of the frontier mining camps. I have told of the grinding of the divorce mill, dealing with the serious issues of family life on the basis of a farcical residential term and a three-minute court hearing. And I have tried to show, in both instances, the working of the underlying profit motive—the sorry spectacle of a state and a community prostituting itself for gain. The details of the picture might have been extended almost indefinitely, but I have had no interest in doing more than to make the main aspects of the situation clear. The diagnosis is now complete. Is there a cure?

Outside Protests Ineffectual

Let me say at the beginning that I do not believe that protests against Reno's course, if made outside the state, will have much influence. There have been, I know, many such protests. During the period while I was in Reno the Presbyterians of California and Nevada, at their synodical meeting, adopted a resolution that included expressions of "extreme embarrassment and hot indignation at the legalized vice and disgraceful divorce laws," that called those responsible "unAmerican and traitors to the best moral interests" of the state and nation, and that extended sympathy to "our fellow Christians who must live and labor to promote morality in Nevada under the unhappy handicap which the moral breakdown of the state presents." Now that, as resolutions go, sounds like a pretty strong one. A better-than-average fabricator of churchly denunciation had been on the job when that particular document was turned out.

But what happens in Reno with a document like that? Precisely nothing. It is printed in the local paper, but that is the last heard of it. If the protest originates in such a body as the international Christian Endeavor society, there may be some comment in Reno concerning the alleged impropriety of "outsiders" interesting themselves in a local affair. If, as in the case of the Presbyterians, there are local interests involved in the protest, it is dismissed with a shrug of the shoulders as just so much more "church

talk"—the sort of thing that churches may be expected to indulge in, but that seldom needs to be taken seriously. The total effect of these protests from outside—and probably of such articles as these in this series—seems to be a stiffening of the determination of the people of Reno to run their affairs as they please, if for no other reason than to show the rest of the nation that they cannot be intimidated.

What Will Put the Lid Back?

Well then, if the expression of the outraged moral convictions of the rest of America will have no effect in closing the door on Reno's wide-open vice, what will? I believe that the only thing that will is our old friend, the red ink at the foot of the balance sheet. The power of the dollar opened Reno to the conquering hordes of the purveyors of vice; the power of the dollar will ultimately sweep this sinister crew off her streets, and bar her city gate again. Economic motives have given, and economic motives will have to take away.

Now that is far from as impossible, or distant, an outcome as it sounds. I grant that a superficial survey of Reno will show the forces favoring the present wide-open condition in practically complete control. Even such citizens as do not support the promotion of vice as a means to prosperity are, as I have tried to make clear in previous articles, pretty well cowed. I do not know how sentiment runs in the outlying reaches of the state, but Reno, as I have said, virtually controls the state, and there is not enough vocal sentiment in Reno now to suggest that the gamblers and the brothel-keepers are in any great danger. Yet the uprising, when it comes, is likely to develop much more rapidly than the present apparent complacency might suggest.

For the truth is that while a certain amount of money is being attracted into Reno by the present catering to vicious tastes, experience is proving that there is far less of it than had been promised when the wide-open law was enacted. And what there is makes its way into a very few pockets. To be sure, those pockets are generally rumored to be in the clothes of men who sit in key political and financial positions, and who, because of that fact, can crack the whip to hold large numbers of their fellow-citizens in line. But cracking the whip will not always

serve in a democracy. The majority can rebel, when it wants to.

Vice Does Not Pay!

In Reno, the majority is not making much money out of the open vice. The solid citizens who conduct the dry goods stores, the meat markets, the drug stores do not make much off the tatterdemalion crew of tin-horn sports who line the curbs in front of the gambling clubs. These citizens, whose tax bills constitute their most carefully studied political reading, are beginning to question whether the "prosperity" that the wide-open regime is supposed to have brought is a reality, or a mirage. They see that the actual license receipts from the gambling halls, the brothels and the race tracks and prize fights have not been large. Twelve thousand a month is not much of an addition to municipal income when your police force has to be expanded to several times its former size.

The time has not yet come when "respectable" Reno is ready to force a casting up of its balance sheet on this matter of open vice. But it stands to reason that the horde of riff-raff that I found shuffling along the city's streets will, in a little while, cost the community more than it can possibly be worth. And this cost will come not only directly, as in the case of the increased police force. It will come indirectly, in the ever growing nervousness over the presence of such irresponsible elements. If the streets become unsafe for women after dark, Reno will lose attractiveness as a place of residence. Even many divorce seekers will hesitate to visit it. Mothers will become increasingly solicitous concerning their children. All these factors will make their influence felt in a declining real estate market.

Reno as a Student Center

There is one point at which it seems certain to me that the city will suffer economically from its catering to vice. That is in the attendance at the state university. The University of Nevada is located within a mile, or less, of the most hectic district in Reno; it seems to me inevitable that parents outside that city will hesitate a long time before allowing their children to be exposed to the dangers of such a condition. There has not yet been any marked effect on the total enrolment of the university; the drop from 967 students a year ago to 945 this year can be easily enough explained on other grounds. But the decline in the size of the freshman class, from 359 in 1930 to 291 in 1931, seems to me more indicative of what is coming. If the university enrolment should show a marked and prolonged falling off, Reno would feel that in every avenue of trade. And the result would be a hastening of the uprising against the political elements that have established the present order of affairs.

That uprising, I repeat, is surely coming. It is coming just as soon as a few more hundred of the citizens of the town become convinced that there

is more money to be made in a decent than in an indecent city. Who the political leader will be who heads the uprising, no one can as yet predict. Nor does it matter. When the economic disillusionment of the community is far enough advanced some politician, perhaps moved by no higher motive than to unhorse Mr. George Wingfield, the present republican boss, and take over the distribution of the federal patronage, will come along to make the issue of putting the lid back where it was until last May. And he will win. My expectation is that that uprising will take place before the end of two years. It may come sooner.

Future of the Divorce Industry

When one asks, however, what the outcome in regard to the divorce industry is to be, it is much harder to answer. The trouble in this respect, as I suggested last week, is that there is no important body of moral conviction in Reno itself as to the wrongness or indecency of the present situation. In the case of the wide-open vice conditions, for example, you can count on the active support of most of the members of most of the churches for any campaign to change things. But if the issue were a change in the divorce laws, hardly a corporal's guard of church members (unless the Catholics proved an exception) could be counted on to fight for a different status.

To the average citizen of Reno, divorce is not a moral issue at all. Instead, it is simply a legitimate business enterprise, conducted under state auspices. And as long as this business enterprise is beset by the competitive risks that affect business enterprises in general, Reno means to conduct it on such a basis as to insure control of the market. They might well hang across the doors of the Washoe county courthouse the motto of a department store that operates a block away from where I am writing: "We will not be undersold!"

The economic argument will not function successfully here. Or perhaps I should say that it functions altogether too well in support of the present state of affairs. For not only do the divorce seekers who flock to Reno provide a good living for the three hundred members of the bar (in a town of 18,000), but they fill expensive hotels, apartment buildings, furnished bungalows, or nearby dude ranches; they scatter their money up and down the pretentious shops of Virginia street; they make the place a happy hunting ground for automobile salesmen. Reno is undoubtedly making money out of the divorce racket—and perhaps that has something to do with Reno's failure to perceive that there is any moral issue involved.

If the grinding of the Nevada divorce mill is ever to be stopped, the influence, I am convinced, will have to come from without. I do not mean that the passing of resolutions, or outside exhortations to repentance, will produce the desired end. But I can foresee another way by which this end might be

reached. If the public opinion in the majority of the states could be focussed on the need for uniform divorce laws, it would not be impossible to secure practical uniformity across the nation within a few years. This is a field in which the weight of the churches would quickly be felt.

But, it will be objected, this campaign for uniform state divorce laws would get nowhere in Nevada. Probably not. Very well; leave Nevada to her own devices for the time being. Concentrate on securing practical uniformity throughout the rest of the nation. What will happen then? Nevada will wake up one morning to find that her divorce decrees—already under attack in many states because of the flimsy

basis of residence on which they are secured—are recognized practically nowhere else. The holder of a Nevada divorce will hardly be able to marry again outside the borders of that state without being in danger of arrest for bigamy. A sufficient extension, by this method, of the area in which Nevada decrees have no value would soon put an end to the lucrative incomes of Nevada divorce lawyers, no matter what it did to Nevada divorce laws. In time, it would change them.

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This is the concluding article in the series by Mr. Hutchinson on present conditions in Reno and Nevada.

B O O K S

Christianity and Social Philosophy

THE SOCIAL TEACHING OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES. By Ernst Troeltsch. Translated by Olive Wyon. 2 volumes. The Macmillan Company, \$15.00.

ONLY a German scholar could (or would) have assembled the mass of erudition and the bibliographical detail that are contained in these two massive volumes, and only an historical and social philosopher of the first rank could have organized and interpreted this material with such mastery. The work is now for the first time made accessible to English readers in this unabridged translation—a translation, by the way, of excellent literary quality and one made with a wise regard for the differences between German and English syntax—but it has been known for twenty years to so much of the scholarly world as is interested in Christian history and can read German in thousand-page lots.

The modern problems of religion "lean to the side of ethics." Since Christianity is first and foremost a matter of practice, its main problems lie in the sphere of practical life, and it is there that its most complicated difficulties and contrasts arise. This basic belief was not an assumption on the part of the author but the outcome of prolonged research in historical and contemporary Christianity. From this originated the project of tracing the sociological problem through the whole history of the church. This is designed to lead to a description and evaluation of the church's present social attitudes. The sociological formulations cannot be considered apart from the theological problems. This is not only true in fact but is especially true in Troeltsch's views, since for the most part he finds social ideas governed by religious ideas, rather than the contrary. In the case of Luther, for example, "religious ideas were not due to the reflex action of social, or even of economic, changes"; the latter "were based essentially upon the religious idea, which alone gave rise to the social, economic and political consequences." It need scarcely be remarked that this position is radically at variance with the emphasis which has become popular in recent years. Troeltsch himself, indeed, does not maintain it with complete consistency, for elsewhere social conditions are shown reacting upon religious ideas.

The treatment, period by period, is rich in informing and

suggestive material. There is space to mention only, as high spots, such points as the argument that the literature of early Christianity contains no hint of any formulation of the "social" question and that the ethic of Jesus makes no attempt to lay down either a code or general principles for society as a whole; the interpretation of Paulinism as recognizing the legitimacy of the existing social order while urging a certain detachment from it; the distinction between the "church-type" and the "sect-type" of religious community, the former aiming to include within itself all people and to superimpose its special religious requirements upon the common and secular order of life, the latter to set up a voluntary society of the regenerate whose conduct should be governed not by nature but by grace.

Yet two facts limit the usefulness of the treatise to a point somewhat below the expectations that might be aroused by the title.

The first is that it deals almost exclusively with the social and political philosophy of the church, and to only the slightest degree with specific events or activities. The consideration of the "sociological effects" of religious ideas is confined almost entirely to the discussion of effects upon the structure of the church itself, its relation to the state, and types of ethical and social theory. It would be easy to prove by the citation of sentences, and even paragraphs, that this statement is not true without reservation, for such topics as slavery, property-holding, and war are not passed over without mention but the treatment of all such specific issues is brief and sketchy.

The second is that it stops at the brink of the modern age. Having got through the eighteenth century, the author arrives (on page 1010) at the crucial problem: "What has become of the original question from which we originally started?—the question of the significance of Christianity for the solution of the social problem of the present day?" But he is then within three pages of the end of the second volume, and there is no room to answer it. "The social problem is vast and complicated"—certainly too vast and complicated to be solved in three pages. So he makes some illuminating comments upon it, and lets it go with "the conclusion that all Christian-social work is in a problematic condition"—which nobody will deny.

So the author never arrives at the objective toward which his long journey seemed to be directed. But along the way