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DICKENS'S
"BILL of RIGHTS" for the CHILD,
in the light of
CATHOLIC PRINCIPLES of EDUCATION

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T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

I N T R O D U C T I O N

> Dickens bravely fought the battle against the enemies of the children and helped to win the grandest victories of Christian civilization.(1)
> -James L. Hughes

Among the many wonderful developments of the nineteenth century, properly called the child's century, none are more noteworthy or more full of promise than the world-wide interest in the extension of educational privileges to all classes of society and the progressive improvement in teaching and training children.

The "New Education" is more of a revolution than an evolution. New and more ennobling revelations relating to all that influences man's highest destiny--that of a being created in the image of his Maker--developed into broader and higher ideals regarding the perfect education of the child. New aims, new objectives, new methods, and new organizations have been substituted for the old, all these changes contributing to make the child supreme everywhere:

> To-day the child is paramount. A hundred Acts of Parliament protest its rights, philanthropists, whose name is legion, cry out its needs. Class distinctions, political obsessions, even religious differences, all are forgotten in its service, whose welfare is now the supreme law.

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(1) Hughes, J. L., Dickens as an Educator (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1901), Ch. XVII, p. 319.

And I continue with the words of Crotch, a faithful student of Dickens: "The credit of effecting this bloodless revolution must be given to Dickens." (1)

Again and again this apostle of childhood pleaded, begged, urged, and insisted in his own way on the recognition of the need for universal and proper education.

True, there have been others at work in the child's cause. Comenius already had visions of the underlying principles of the "New Education"; Pestalozzi and Fr bel revolutionized the aims, methods, and principles of education; Mann and Bernard gave the world a system of well-organized schools conducted and maintained by the state. But Dickens was the voice of them all and a very ringing voice. He prepared the way and gave wings to all that is vital in the thought and philosophy of Froebel and in that of his colleagues; he alone had all the gifts to popularize their message. With all the buoyancy of his spirit, with the bravest and most striking blows, and with a hilarious popularity he aroused the attention and the heart of the civilized world to the imperative need of radical educational reforms. He scourged and shamed, lashed and laughed away every kind of cruelty and ignorance towards the child. With Nicholas he cried, "Stop," and the change was instantaneous. None of his compeers have produced

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(1) Crotch, W. W., The Social Reformer (London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1913), Ch. III, p. 43.

such results as he did by a story--a single stroke. When he wrote, men roused themselves; when he spoke, they listened.

Evidently, in his claims for the rights of the child before God and man, implied in what he regarded as weak or wrong in school methods and especially in child-training, Dickens intended to reveal the highest educational ideals. My purpose in this thesis is to show that these ideals as described, indirectly in Nicholas Nickleby and David Copperfield, and positively in The Life of Our Lord, are in harmony with the Catholic principles of education. In doing so I hope to justify the preceding tribute so generously granted by Professor Hughes to Dickens's contribution in the educational vineyard and, thereby, to add a humble claim to his well-deserved recognition in the history of Christian teaching and civilization.

I have attempted to achieve this aim by the following development: (1) by setting forth Dickens's philosophy of life as a basis to his philosophy of education; (2) by studying his religious sentiments as another contribution to his philosophy of education; (3) by identifying this philosophy of education in his interpretation of the child's origin, nature, and destiny; (4) by making a critical examination and validation of his educational process (matter and means) in the light of Catholic principles of education; (5) by revealing his estimate of the contribution played by the different educational agen-

cies in the life of the child.

I hope to present evidence throughout the development of this study--with credentials found in his works--that Christ's life and teachings are his "core curriculum", and religion, an influence in his philosophy of education as well as the inspiration of the rights which he claims for the child.

The foregoing assertions call for distinctions and limitations which will be made in proper time and place in the gradual development of the thesis.

C H A P T E R O N E

L I F E

as seen through the "Magical Spectacles" of Charles Dickens.

> Have confidence, be cheerful; the world belongs to those who set out to conquer it with a sure heart and a good humour.
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> -André Maurois

Every system of education is the outcome of an earnest endeavor to perpetuate a particular philosophy of life. The aims of education are illumined by the aims of life which philosophy predetermines. Hence, to understand Dickens's philosophy of education, one must know something of the wholesome and practical philosophy of life out of which it grows; his aims in life and in education are that of a revolutionist, that of an optimist, as well as that of a humanitarian full of the enthusiasm of Christian earnestness. For Dickens's seemingly miraculous popularity and success as well as the prime element of his message to the world is to be found in his philosophic interpretation of life, in an optimism both national and personal, in his supreme confidence in the destiny of man, particularly in that of the British people, in his sense of the infinite height of the moral horizon of humanity.

> Nothing places him so entirely out of date as his trust in human sanctity, his love of it,

> his hope for it, his leap at it. He saw it in a woman's face first met, and drew it to himself in a man's hand first grasped. (1)

He had a courageous belief in the good, and had an impassioned conviction that in the end good must conquer evil. His childlike faith in man and in Progress, his all-invigorating outlook on life was reflected in his gospel of limitless love and sympathy, of understanding and zeal, of all-round happiness for the little ones of the earth--the children and the poor. His philosophy is one of vital energy; his creed is the heart of his character and it beats as a pulse giving to every stroke of his pen the joyous vigour of coming triumph and happiness in the life of the nation as well as in that of the child.

This optimistic philosophy of life which prompted his claims for the child is a part of the living forces of his age and the direct outcome of his early environment and experience. It is also a part of the warmth, brightness, joy, and refreshment of his own childlike spirit and personality. In a word, he faces life through his own optimistic spirit, that of his people and that of his age.

For there was something about the country in which he lived which sympathized with his system of belief and stimulated him to resolute action and change. He looked upon his age and

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(1) Alice Meynell in her essay, "Dickens as a Man of Letters." as quoted by Theodore Maynard, "Catholicism of Dickens," Thought. Vol. V, p. 104.

found that a leaven of Revolution and reform was in the air--in England as in France,--as well as behind all the books of the nineteenth century. It was the age of the industrial system taking shape, of railways being built, of the increase and wider distribution of wealth; English eyes were greedily turned towards the cotton-mills and the coal-fields. But amid this hurly-burly of industrial emancipation and material progress the "little ones" wandered, neglected and forlorn, bearing the scars and wounds of an unheeding world of strife, stunted sympathies and sterile understandings, the victims of disease, cruelty, misery, ignorance and cynical indifference. W. Walter Crotch gives us a vivid picture of the horrors of child-life in industrial England:

> The England into which he (Dickens) was born had practically forgotten childhood or at least had ceased to think of it as something precious and beautiful, to be cherished and protected whenever possible. The cry of the little ones was drowned in the ceaseless rattle of the cotton-mills whose wheels they pushed with tired puny hands. They were seeking death in life as best to have. Almost alone in England, William Blake continually raised his voice--that of one crying in the wilderness against the abomination of forcing their stunted frames up narrow chimneys to clear away the soot. There was no one to denounce the horror of their naked bodies trembling beneath the cruel weight of the coal truck in the bowels of the earth. (1)

These appalling conditions of the child in the mill went side by side with a similar state of neglect and abuse in

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(1) Crotch, W. W., The Social Reformer (London: Chapman and Hall, 1913), Ch. III, p. 42.

the schools. Arnold bears testimony to this "mean and ignoble ideal" of the English schools in a letter written to Joshua Fitch in 1880:

> I have this year been reading David Copperfield for the first time. Mr. Creakle's school at Blackheath is the type of our middle class schools and our middle class is satisfied that it should be so.

Again, Dickens had inspected the neighbourhood of the Yorkshire schools of which Dotheboys Hall was to be held up as the infamous type so that there seems to be no difficulty in identifying the site of the very school itself. Lord Ashley recognized in Dotheboys Hall his own private school. Richard Cobden claimed to have spent five years at a similar school at Yorkshire. These were "the dark ages" when early Victorian prejudice and insularity upheld the doctrine of child depravity.

But there was also an atmosphere of democratic optimism. Behind this "hard and cruel age" there blew a wind of hope and humanity. It was a hope based on the possibilities of the "Golden Age". This age of marvels having Natural Science, Natural Religion, and Democracy as its most clamorous watchwords, was impregnated by a boundless optimism and hope in the disappearance of suffering, disease, sorrow, poverty--all the old spectres that had so long haunted mankind. There was also a hope in a future of increasing knowledge, of prog-

ress, of bounty, in a picture of perfect happiness culminating into the universal solvents of Liberalism and Freedom. In these riches would be dissolved all the artificial restraints that had produced so much of the horrors of struggling mankind. England may have been full of inhuman institutions but it was also full of humanitarian people; the prevailing idea of the century was that of human equality. Dickens and his school had a hilarious faith in democracy and thought of the service of it as a sacred priesthood. An instinctive sympathy for the fundamental principles of justice went side by side with his firm faith in the people. It was a faith that did not argue; it was all-sufficient to have profound belief and unswerving convictions. He saw that all men were equal in their relations to the common feelings and duties of the race, that in suffering and love, in the visions and longings of youth and old age, there was an eternal equality; on this consideration rested his belief in the brotherhood of man.

It was at this moment of critical development, of change and revolution and of democratic optimism that Dickens appeared as the spokesman of a class of reformers in rebellion against the social, political and educational abuses of the time. He was particularly resentful before the cynical indifference towards the claims of childhood that marked the age. The efforts then on foot to secure educational reform roused

in him the liveliest enthusiasm and eventually found in him an ardent advocate of the cause. The preface to Nicholas Nickleby registers his firm purpose to end, once and for all, the horror of the Yorkshire schools, and to expose the miseries "of the dark hells then masquerading as establishments up and down the country." In this way, Dickens focussed and stirred the movement for reform and brought home to the man on the street the realization that the democratic principle of infinite opportunity and boisterous brotherhood might be applied to that type of education "where a word and a blow were often in company" and the regular answer to an offensive remark.

Furthermore, many of the traits of Dickens's outlook on life come straight out of his own boyish tragedy; he learnt in suffering what he afterwards taught in prose. The fount and origin of his clear and penetrative insight into the lurid pictures of the child-life of his day dated from his own earliest experience--a miserable childhood where he was both victim and rebel--experiences worked into shape and laid securely by. From this store of fresh feelings and impressions there issued brilliant flashes of squalid realism, vivid scenes of the bitter experiences beaten into his young soul. Those early years filled with the sense of neglect and dominated by the sordid conflict with debt, hunger and want, were skilfully woven with the personal experiences of David; in Smike as well

as in Copperfield he seems to be infusing the very sufferings of his own wronged and neglected upbringing.

In fact, his novel, David Copperfield, is one detailed reminiscence of his miserable childhood, a very complicated interweaving of truth and fiction. Dickens is one with the character he describes; he wrote from the heart and under the slightest disguise he pictured faithfully what he had suffered as a child even touching among the domestic troubles of his later life. Almost all the characters depicted in his novels are drawn from relatives, friends or enemies of his and many of David's experiences resemble that of the young Charles. He immortalized his parents as Mr. and Mrs. Micawber. Father John Dickens's happy-go-lucky method of waiting for "something to turn up" eventually landed him in prison and Charles was put to work in a shoe-blacking factory. We then find the young Dickens in the boy "a child of singular abilities, quick, eager, delicate and soon hurt, bodily and mentally" working as a grudge at Hungerford Stairs for a wage of sixteen shillings a week. We may assume that Mrs. John Dickens is to be found in Mrs. Nickleby, that Nicholas was something Charles alone could have been; we recognize Dickens's temperament in the loving son and brother doing his best to maintain his family. On Nicholas was thrown the burden of supporting his mother and sister and the young Boz had also to support his own family.

Everything about Nicholas is suggestive of the author; his "ways", his fashion of speech and his struggles are that of the young Charles. Rochester furnished him not only with the views of life and manners from a boy's point of view but it also gave him his later impressions of prison life. His visits to the King's Bench--he changed it for Marshalsea--corresponds almost to a word or sentence to the memorandum set down by himself. Again, the hero's love affairs--child-wife, her death and David's final love for Agnes--were those of Dickens himself. We recognize Salem House in Creakle's School and Shaw's institution in that of Mr. Squeers.

Dickens tells us that he began to think about the Yorkshire schools when, as a not very robust child, he lingered about the Castle at Rochester. He had met a boy from one of these places who in consequence of having had a "whitlow" lanced by a school master with an inky penknife had a chronic abscess on his finger. This made a deep impression on young Charles. When the chance was offered him, years later, to attack "Cheap Schools", he snatched at it with the greatest enthusiasm. This opportunity was the outcome of accurate analytic observation and close scrutiny of the concrete evils of the cheap boarding schools in lonely places where the unwanted children of the poor were thrust away. Stories of their treatment at the hands of brutal masters sometimes got into the

papers and made his blood boil. In his preface to Nicholas Nickleby he tells us how he observed, how he took stock of the child-life in the institution kept by Mr. Shaw, how he gathered the knowledge he later portrayed in his novel.

It has been shown that Dickens, particularly in the two novels under consideration, is telling of himself, of his feelings and impressions as a child, of his observations on life; the scenes, the incidents and the characters which he paints before us have something in common with history. In these memories were the beginnings of a sense of social wrong, of a desire for redress which later constituted a part of his social and political philosophy. These experiences even influenced his attitude towards religion. Precisely because Dickens himself had endured all the hardships which David and Smike suffered, did he feel the glow of ineradicable compassion for all the weak and oppressed. Into the very depths of his being was woven his love for the poor; on the tablets of his experience were engraved the records of their miseries, their sufferings, their endurance, their utter neglect and hopelessness, their shame and their secret agonies of soul in their crushed ambitions. His personal experience as a child prematurely grown and conscious, putting out his pigmy strength against the world and charged with tasks beyond his power, stirred his manhood to an appreciation of social injustice; all the bitterness of poverty which as a lad he had endured warmed the heart

of his later years to active compassion for misfortune; all the religious tyranny of which he was a victim led him to advocate ardently a more Christian-like way of worship and of life. The hardships of his youth created in him an interest in men that was not merely literary. Dickens was a dreamer in such wise because

> he was a man who had deep-rooted in his nature a belief in all the gentle and good things his life had been without. Bred in meanness and hard dealing this had rescued him to be a man of honourable mind and open hand. Bred in coldness and severity this had rescued him to have a warm and pathetic heart. Bred in a creed too darkly audacious to pursue, this had rescued him to judge not and in humility to be merciful and have hope and charity. (1)

Most of Dickens's life was miserable, but it was miserably happy. Though we might owe to his suffering his long series of portraits of unhappy children, yet his spirit was too buoyant to be permanently saddened and embittered by the sad and dreadful morning of his days. It chilled him momentarily but it did not rob him of his wonderful good spirits, his boisterous gaiety, his exultant energy, his ebullient personality full of child-like glee and generosity with a child's delight in all that future holds. For Dickens's humorous eyes, twinkling merrily at life, are a revelation of a child-soul confident, loving, naïve and simple, fresh and vigorous, possessing all the richness, all the inventiveness,

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(1) Fitzgerald, P., The Life of Charles Dickens (London: Chatto and Windus, 1905), Vol. II, ch. XII, p. 54.

all the gaiety of the Middle Ages. For him, life is

> "a wonderful spectacle"....."because the daily spectacle spread before us is astounding in its gaiety and variety." (For Dickens), "mankind in the midst of a hostile universe should be like Mr. Micawber beset by his creditors and face future with confidence. Mr. Micawber is the ultimate symbol of Dickensianism and the first words of the Dickensian message might run: 'Have confidence, be cheerful; the world belongs to those who set out to conquer it with a sure heart and a good humour.'" (1)

Thus, Dickens may well be recognized as the greatest optimist and humorist of the nineteenth century and the last survivor of Merry England.

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(1) Maurois, A., Dickens, (London: John Lane the Bodley Head, 1934), p. 163.

C H A P T E R T W O

M A G N I F I C E N T O B S E S S I O N

"Perhaps the Roman Catholic is the best? Perhaps it makes one think of God oftener and believe in him more steadily?"

--Dickens

That Dickens's philosophy of education reflects, to a considerable degree, his religious faith would appear to be indisputable. A faith that stems from a belief in God--the first prerequisite in the formation of a sound philosophy of education--seems to be the far-off source of all the rights which his earnest soul claims for the child. From his system of natural beliefs, steeped in his deeply-set Christian conception of God and man, depends the religious tone of the ideals and ends, of the principles and methods, which he would apply to child training and education. This

makes his philosophy of education practical to a certain extent, and, in the main, Christian.

By stating that his profound and religious sentiments underlie his philosophy of education I might be open to controversy. Everybody knows that Dickens remained a member of the Church of England and showed for her a genuine affection. Even the fact that for a few years he attended a Unitarian place of worship did not involve any dogmatic heresy; it only meant that the clergy of the English Church had irritated and disgusted him. He returned to the English Church and to the end seems to have remained a member of it. He could not help coming back; the great humanitarian was no longer able to endure separation or the icy humanitarianism of those with whom he had briefly associated. It would be a libel to say that Dickens clung to the "Establishment" because it was "respectable," but, undoubtedly, he did so, in part because the Church belonged to the ancient and solid order of things in England which he never wished to be overturned.

But the religion of Dickens was never adequately formulated. He seldom spoke directly of it except to say that he disliked sects and schisms or to point to the Founder of the Christian religion as the supreme Master of that compassion which was the most compelling and vital force in his life-work.

However, of his religious sincerity there can be no

possibility of doubt. Though he may have criticized certain manifestations of the Christian spirit, there would appear to be a fair evidence that the Christian spirit itself, he did possess. It has an element in it which is characteristically Catholic. The broad sympathy behind his philosophy of life, fitted to include all mankind, has something of that universality which designates the Catholic Church. So that we may say that if Dickens's Catholicism is not immediately involved in that of his catholicism, ultimately it must be involved; a catholic taste is a Catholic taste. The two things seem to be one in Dickens's heart though his creed may bear the stamp of prejudice, of historical ignorance, of dogmatic bewilderment and deficiency. This would be expected from a man wanting in education who had pushed himself by energy and talent to the position he came to hold. Many of his instincts were Christian and he had much of the Christian doctrine but he was not a Catholic; a Catholic must have Christianity in its integrity. He was a Christian at heart but not in mind.

However, his desperately sincere but somewhat crude radicalism explains a certain purely fortuitous anti-Catholicism. We have here one more instance of the fact that there is frequently in men of genius a conflict between the prejudices they have haphazardly acquired and their profounder instincts.

He wrote to Forster from Lausanne in 1840:

> My sympathy is all with the radicals. (He is referring to the anti-clericals.) I don't know any subject on which this indomitable people have so good a right to a strong feeling as Catholicity--if not as a religion, clearly as a means of social degradation.

And again:

> If I were Swiss..... I would be as steady against the Catholic cantons and the propagation of Jesuitism as any radical among'em; believing the dissemination of Catholicity to be the most horrible means of political and social degradation left in the world.

But these outbursts are hasty generalizations arising from Dickens's political sympathies. Europe was suffering from the reactionary aftermath of the French Revolution. Naturally, Dickens was upon the other side. Yet in December of the same year, 1840, we find him writing to Forster: "I am delighted to hear of noble old Stanny. Give my love to him and tell him I think of turning Catholic."

We need not take that too seriously. On the other hand, we should remember that Dickens, in denouncing the Swiss aristocratic party, was reading European conditions in the light of a not-too-accurate conception of feudalism which he confused with the English squirearchy, very properly detested by him. He did not know, he could hardly be expected to know, that the squires had risen in England upon the ruins of the monasteries.

Dickens's incidental and accidental anti-Catholicism was not due solely to the circumstance that, as a radical dem-

ocrat, he thought of the Church as tied to political absolutism. He was in error in thinking so but he did think so. Nevertheless the basis of his prejudice was even more his mistaken guess that Catholicism is a religion of gloom. As all his readers know he loved to depict scenes of uproariously jolly eating and drinking--and Catholics went in for fasts. His imagination was full of emaciated monks and of anchorites who starved and scourged themselves in solitary cells. The story of the five sisters of York in Nicholas Nickleby vividly reveals this prejudice. Moreover, the body of English Catholics in the time of Dickens were a small group, to a considerable extent cut off from national life, and, therefore, somewhat cowed and apologetic. There was an element of the furtive about their religious practices, and they knew that they existed on sufferance. They could not therefore, be expected to manifest the gay belligerence of their descendants.

Dickens's earliest religious training "the religious tortures of his childhood" also helped to determine in a marked way his own religion and his views toward the Church. Dickens's own experience brought him in close contact with the unlovely presentment of Christian dogmas and practices which was offered by the most important part of the nation, the serious middle-class, and above all by its non-conforming

portion. His memories of Chatham Church-going imposed upon him on blind compulsion, of the little Bethel to which he was dragged morally handcuffed, the jocularity of the ranting Baptist schoolmaster and Minister with his endless sermons, the meaningless catechizing, the odious figures and the hateful influence on his training of the "false prophets", Old Peller's allusions to the "New Birth" and the elusive ways of the "devout ladies," the terrifying effect of the ghostly and other gruesome tales in connection with the churchyard compelled upon him by his appalling nurse--all this he hated "with an unbroken hatred" not only of "two hours" but throughout his life. He never forgave those "divines" who had worried his younger self and had forced into his life those sleeping Sundays of his boyhood with their meetings and their services.

For him religion remained associated in his childish mind with meanness, injustice, cruelty, languor and distaste, instead of with unselfish performance of duty, a simple loving service based on profound reverence for and true faith in God. Many years later he will give vent to a bitter complaint of this when he makes his little Copperfield suffer in the same way.

It is not extraordinary that such unwholesome, meaningless interpretation of religion should have had such

results; such an erroneous conception of religion might naturally be expected to develop in a man whose childhood revealed to him only the self-abnegation and the terrors of religion. He had seen God as an awful character of sleepless watchfulness and of vengeance, but never as a Father of loving sympathy and forgiveness; his religion is the result that such training had formed in him. All this early religious tyranny produced in him an ingrained disgust and thorough dislike of the whole system of religion, whether Protestant or Catholic, a disgust which amounted to a religious fanaticism; he detested all formal sects, at least where directed by such individuals as those who had been his tormenters; it made him unreasonably judge the whole by a corrupt portion.

Anything like religious insincerity, whether Protestant or Catholic, moved him to the extravagance of satire. We find him mocking religion by associating it with the starvation of childhood. Religion is made ridiculous in the letter which Squeers read to the unfortunate children in Dotheboys Hall pretending that it had been written by the stepmother of Mobbs:

> Mobbs's stepmother, said Squeers, took to her bed on hearing that he would not eat fat and has been very ill since. She wishes to know by an early post, where he expects to go if he quarrels with his vittles; and with what feelings he could turn up his nose at the cow's liver's broth after his good master has asked a blessing on it.

In fact, there was no more depressing tyranny in the time of Dickens than the tyranny exercised in the name of a rigid and repressive religion:

> The gloomy taint that was in the Murdstone blood darkened the Murdstone religion, which was austere and wrathful. I have thought, since, that its assuming that character was a necessary consequence of Mr. Murdstone's firmness, which wouldn't allow him to let anybody off from the utmost weight of the severest penalties he could find excuse for.

It is this rigid morality and gloom, this hypocrisy and bigotry, which made religion a torment forced into his childish breast by menace or restraint, that Dickens flaunts with furious contempt throughout his books. He attacks the impenetrable prejudices which arise from the narrow outlook, the insular ignorance and the fanaticism of the religious practices and beliefs of his tormenters. He pronounces himself against the bigots who were promulgating their squalid Sabbatarian doctrines with their forbidding austerity and pitiless misery, with their stern and rigidly unnatural habits of observing the one day which we should devote to rational pleasure and needful recreation, as long as the Master, has had his due share of public worship, of reverence and sacrifice; he disliked all restraints on harmless pleasures imposed in the name of a narrow puritanism.

In spite of his "accidental" anti-Catholicism and his deeply rooted anti-puritanism, we still find that the

instincts of Dickens are profoundly Catholic; at heart and rather unconsciously he was a Catholic and his principles of philanthropy are more akin to Catholic teaching than to Protestantism. If Dickens shows so much anti-religious fanaticism it is because as Mr. Chillip says: "I don't find authority for Mr. and Miss Murdstone in the New Testament."

He explains the Puritanism of the Murdstones as a distorted notion of the beneficence of his Creator--a form of selfishness inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity itself and opposed to the example of its Founder on earth.

In fact, during a great part of his life, if he had been asked to what religious body he was nearest, he would probably have replied the Church of England. But the Anglican Church did not satisfy him, and when he attended the Unitarian Chapel he found that this was a move in the wrong direction since it would carry him further away from that one "Figure" in whom he felt that God had been revealed to man. "Felt", because it was a matter of recognition rather than of reasoning and confirmed belief. But it would be shallow to brand this "recognition" as mere emotionalism and a transient feeling. When he is caught at his most deeply stirred and deeply moving moments he has no reservations, and the Incarnation of God becomes for him the central fact of human history; the fact through which alone the meaning of the universe

is brought into focus for the human mind. One of these moments occurs in David Copperfield where he writes of the mother's funeral:

> "I hear the voice of the clergyman, sounding remote in the open air, and yet distinct and plain, saying: 'I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord.' Then I hear sobs, and, standing apart among the lookers-on, I see that good and faithful servant (Peggotty), whom of all the people upon earth I love best, and unto whom my childish heart is certain that the Lord will one day say: 'Well done'."

Another of these moments occurs in Nicholas Nickleby where the author represents his hero's father, on his deathbed, commending his wife and children, "to One Who never deserted the widow or her fatherless children".

With this predisposition, therefore, Dickens might have been powerfully frawn to Catholicism. Many of his letters, some of which are quoted above, reveal in Dickens, "aspirations of a more import that were not less a part of his nature". "They rested," Forster tells us, on a belief which was kept safe "against all doubt or question of its sacredness," and "every year seemed to strengthen it in him". During the years 1843 to 1847 he seems to have undergone a religious crisis which almost upset his Anglican beliefs. From Geneva in 1847 he describes in a letter to Forster his famous "curious dream"; and then, with an unusual self-distrust, asks his correspondent almost anxiously to tell him what he thinks of it. The word "vision", rather than dream, is on the tip of his tongue, but he does not dare to utter it, and indeed I would lay special

stress on this particular and anxious questioning note in the letter itself, for it seems to me one of the really remarkable psychological features of the story.

On a certain night in September 1844, Dickens had been lying awake tormented by a severe attack of rheumatism. After many hours of pain he fell asleep and "dreamed this dream"; Dickens's sister-in-law, Mary Hogarth, whom he had loved and revered as a saint during her life, appeared to him. After some less important question had been asked and answered, the dreamer "in an agony of entreaty" cried out: "Answer me one other question. What is the true religion?" The spirit paused a moment without replying and Dickens "in an agony of haste" lest it should leave him said "You think as I do that the form of religion does not so greatly matter, if we try to do good?" But observing that Mary still hesitated, he asked again: "Perhaps the Roman Catholic is the best? Perhaps it makes one think of God oftener, and believe in Him more steadily? Then, at last in heavenly tenderness the spirit spoke, and the dreamer was so moved that he felt his heart would break--"For you, it is the best". He awoke with tears running down his face and rousing his wife, told her what he had seen and heard four times over so that no detail should be forgotten. Later, with characteristic common sense, Dickens analysed the cir - cumstances that might have been the cause of the dream but

commented: "And yet, for all this, put the case of that wish being fulfilled by any agency in which I had no hand; and I wonder whether I should regard it as a dream, or as an actual Vision!"

This was but a dream and Dickens seems to have forgotten it soon after; but if we keep in mind that the novelist had just chosen a Catholic hero for his Barnaby Rudge, if we remember the distaste he had had of the diversity of Protestant sects during his tour in the United States, and if we add these facts to his letters written at about the same period, we can reasonably interpret this dream as the result of a religious evolution in Dickens--an evolution which might have taken place unconsciously for him and which he might not have been able to explain for himself. It shows that he vaguely anticipated God and the spiritual nature of all things, that he had the desire to attain ever more cleverness in that feeling and to confirm his anticipation. He seems to have spent his life doubting as to what was the true religion with a strong inclination for the Roman Catholic as the best. It is remarkable that some of his fastest friends were Roman Catholics. His last letter to Kent contains a pleasant allusion to his friend's creed. "One of the strongest rumours," Fitzgerald tells us,"was that he had become a Roman Catholic."

There is one more Catholic note in Dickens which must be touched upon: his love for the poor, indeed, his love for

poverty. He did, it is true, amass what was, for a writer in his day, a considerable fortune. He did bend every nerve, killing himself in the end by doing so to make money for his family. As a poor boy, he had looked up at Gad's Hill and made the impossible vow, later fulfilled, that he would one day buy that mansion of his dreams. He did rise in the world as he had determined to rise. But he never valued money except as it would secure his children against the sordid poverty he had suffered during his own childhood.

In this matter, however, we must not look too closely at Dickens's business acumen, but at his art. And what do we find? We never find Dickens marrying his heroine to a duke or his hero to an heiress. Kate Nickleby, marrying young Frank Cherryble, fared better than anyone else--and got, perhaps, one thousand pounds a year, but David Copperfield and Dora run their tiny, cozy household upon a very small income amounting, perhaps, to two hundred pounds a year. It would have been easy for Dickens to have given them footmen and carriages and diamonds. But Dickens instead makes them safe from want--no more.

In all his "charitable and feeling thoughts", in all his good work as a charitable doer, as a healer of the sick, as a consoler of the afflicted and as a pleader for the poor, Dickens introduces a devotional element "giving a cup

of cold water in My name," not on any sentimental feeling insisting that we are not to do it for gratitude or appreciation, but to do it from a sense of duty to God. He really understood the noble Christian sentiment and ideal of charity. The whole idea of Dickens's philanthropy may be summed up by saying that the poor in spirit are blessed not only because their is the kingdom of heaven, but also because theirs is the kingdom of this world. This is a faithful reflection of his deep admiration and love for our Saviour and His teachings.

The simple narrative, The Life of Our Lord, written to answer the questions of the children on faith and religion, is at the same time the characteristic, child-like, yet manly profession of the author's faith drawn from the very depths of the Heart of Our Saviour. The following chapters will attempt to have the reader recognize his instinctive use of the teachings of Christ in the development of the child responsible to his Maker. Religion is the inspiring wholeness and the Life of the natural and supernatural elements of the educational system which the "apostle of childhood" claims for the "little ones" in their acquisition of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness.

C H A P T E R T H R E E

THE IMAGE OF THE SON OF GOD

Thou leav'st Thy print in other works of Thine,
But Thy whole image Thou in man hast writ.
--Sir John Davies: The Dignity of Man

With the first Christmas an Infant appears in the world and creates Christianity. The angels triumphantly declare the divinity of the God-Child; the Wise Men kneel in adoration to their God-King; Simeon, trembling with fascination and joy upholds the Child as a Sign, as a Light of revelation and promise for Israel as well as for the gentiles; and then in perfect content he utters his farewell to life. He sees in the Nativity the symbol of a tender and simple perfection, the promise of a renewed and rejuvenated existence. The Babe before him is the Son of God emerging from eternity to reveal the son of man; He is God reaching down to the child so the child might reach to God; He is the Life by which the son of man becomes the son of God in the most significant sense of the word, having a right to share the most intimate love with the Father as well as a right to His eternal happiness; He is the Light that shows us the child as heaven-centred. He gives us the real Vision of the Child. And ever

since, the Crib has been the hope and joy of "the little ones". The child, up to that time the outcast of society, now takes first place not only before the Christmas tree but also in the deepest solicitude of the most active promoters of education and Christian civilization. "For the advent of the Christian era meant that every man, woman, and child was to be treated in a way more befitting the dignity and grandeur of the human soul."(1) Each man was now looked at, not merely as an animal that could think, but also as an object of Christ's redemptive merits and a possible temple of the Holy Ghost.

And the Divine Master will continue during His years of divine teaching to uphold the child and proclaim his rights before God and man. The slow-thinking disciples who considered His time too important to be taken up with little children and attempted to turn them from Him deserved a frank rebuke which the world has never forgotten. Thus, the Galilean Teacher deftly set the child, amidst the Twelve, and amidst the succeeding generations, as the representative of God before man, as a model of virtue, with a justified claim to a recognition of his dignity, with a special right to the kingdom of heaven, and with an equal right to a loving and sympathetic as well as intelligent guidance in the attainment of his eternal destiny.

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(1) Brennan, R. E., The Image of His Maker (The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee) Ch. 11, p. 266.

The chosen Twelve, in response to the unforgettable rebuke, have faithfully passed on the torch of faith in the God-Child and in that of His representative on earth. All art and all religion have clung wistfully and wonderingly to the majesty and the mystery of the child. All the activities of man's genius have been influenced by this token of eternal rejuvenescence. The realization of Simeon's prediction continued to be evidenced more than nineteen centuries after the first Christmas. Educational reformers like Pestalozzi and Froebel made the child the object of their study. In fact, the grandest movement of the nineteenth century has been the development of more profound reverence for the child. Pestalozzi nobly recognized the child of man as a child of God, with a right to an education in accordance with his infinite career. Froebel shared Pestalozzi's enlightened sentiment but went further by taking definite steps towards the realization of his aims.

This grand tree of belief in the divinity of the child has continued to grow through the centuries, despite the fact that storms and searing blows have broken off branches. The root of the tree still remains and the living sap is the Child-God Himself.

Yet the supreme inconsistency of human experience has been that this vision of the ideal has proved but the

background and the setting of the real and imperfect; children reverenced in sentiment and worshipped in religion lay scattered about the highways of life, forlorn, neglected, bruised, and beaten by contemptuous indifference or hardened brutality. It was in this condition that Charles Dickens discovered them. Arnold and Forster, both contemporaries of Dickens, bear adequate testimony to this fact.

These were the years of the middle nineteenth century when the unscriptural doctrine of child depravity had obtained a firm hold upon the masters and parents of the period. The idea then paramount was that of the Murdstones who would not let David play with any other child because they thought "all children to be a swarm of little vipers", and held that they contaminated one another. Thus was the child, that little outcast of society, regarded as a little malicious, spiteful, lurking sprite, "a presumptuous atom", with his heart filled with corruption, with nothing but evil in all his ways, with a placard of terror and guilt attached to his childish dreams and actions. It is logical that he should have been considered a nuisance to be subdued and kept in a state of bearable subjection by a free use of the rod; beating was the only restrainer of evil as it was the only stimulator to work.

Those were the good old times of "wholesome repression

and punishment and fear" in full keeping with the barbaric spirit of the age. History shows that the birchen rod was the almost universal remedy for the control and the correction of all defects in helpless animals or human beings; the mother used it on her children, the husband, on his wife as well as his children, the philantropist on the insane and weak-minded, the quack trainer on his dog or horse; corporal punishment was then recognised as the leading force to control the wrong and to induce the right; fear was the supreme restraining force of humanity and restraint the only method to prevent evil-doing. Subjection and helplessness seemed to justify all this cruelty and appealed to the hardness of human nature.

This theory had a most depressing influence on parents and teachers of the time. It was not possible to reverence a child as long as he was regarded as a totally depraved thing. In Mr. Murdstone, Dickens pictures the prevailing coercion in the home while he sets Mr. Squeers and Mr. Creakle as typical exponents of an equal tyranny in the school.

The Murdstone philosophy of coercion is emphatically exposed in the words of advice given to David who is sent to work at the Blacking Factory. Mr. Murdstone insists:

> "I say, David, to the young, this is a world for action, and not for moping and droning in.

> It is especially so for a young boy of your disposition, which requires a great deal of correcting; and to which no greater service can be done than to force it to conform to the ways of the working world and to bend it and break it."
>
> "For stubbornness won't do here," said his sister. "What it wants is to be crushed. And crushed it must be. Shall be, too!"
>
> Mr. Murdstone had already applied his ideal philosophy of firmness in his first lesson "in obedience" to David:
>
> "David," he said, making his lips thin, by pressing them together, "if I have an obstinate horse or dog to deal with, what do you think I do?"
>
> "I don't know."
>
> "I beat him".
>
> I had answered in a kind of breathless whisper, but I felt, in my silence, that my breath was shorter now.
>
> "I make him whince and smart. I say to myself, "I'll conquer that fellow; and if it were to cost him all the blood he had I should do it."

David had deserved this lesson because after learning that Mr. Murdstone had married his mother he had gone to his bedroom to relieve the swelling of his heart by crying.

And Mr. Creakle, the master of Salem House and a happy acquaintance of Mr. Murdstone, will keep up the good work of the stepfather, will faithfully reveal himself a "Tartar".

Little David was sent to Salem House because he bit the hand of Mr. Murdstone who was flogging him most unmercifully and unjustly. For this offence, he was obliged to wear a placard on his back on which was written: "Take care of him. He bites."

It is the first day of school. Mr. Creakle has just ended his opening address:

> When this dreadful exordium was over, Mr. Creakle came to where I sat, and told me that if I were famous for biting he was famous for biting, too. He then showed me the cane, and asked me what I thought of that, for a tooth? Was it a sharp tooth, hey? Had it a prong, hey? Did it bite, Hey? Did it bite? At every question he gave me a fleshy cut with it that made me writhe.....a large majority of the boys (especially the smaller ones) were visited with similar instances of notice, as Mr. Creakle made the round of the schoolroom. Half the establishment was writhing and crying before the day's work began; and how much of it had writhed and cried before the day's work was over I am really afraid to recollect, lest I should seem to exaggerate.

The cruelty and coercive tyranny of Dotheboys Hall is still more brutal and heart-stirring. Smike, who has been starved and ill-treated almost to the point of imbecility, and made the drudge of the institution, has run away. He is brought home in triumph by Mrs. Squeers, bound like an animal, and flogged before all the boys as an example. Dickens describes the scene for us:

> ..."further strengthened by an extra libation"..... "and a fearful instrument of flagellation, strong, supple, wax-ended, and new"....."Squeers caught the boy firmly in his grip; one desperate cut had fallen on his body--he was whincing from the lash, and uttering a scream of pain--it was raised again, and again about to fall--when Nicholas Nickleby suddenly starting up, cried: "Stop!" in a voice that made the rafters ring."

These were the experiences of thousands more children who cowered under the cane; thousands of parents and teachers

were fashioned after the model of Murdstone, Creakle and Squeers in the real homes and schools of the generation. It was perfectly logical that their theory of child depravity should develop into some form of contemptible coercion. This Protestant doctrine was the origin of almost all the evils found in the education and training of the child: imperfect instruction, pernicious neglect, repression of all forms of spontaneity and freedom of childhood, lack of humanizing enjoyments.

Yet, the prophecy of Simeon set the child as a Sign which would be contradicted, but contradiction does not blot vision.

Dickens had the real Vision of the Child. This novelist had perhaps a keener sense of the individual human soul than has been shown by any other English writer; Shakespeare, for instance, was interested in outstanding characters but he had little compassion for the multitude. Dickens saw that the value of the individual human soul--that of the child as well as that in the grown up--is the logical basis for the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation. His Christian sentiment gave him a new outlook on the nature of the child whom he believed to be made to the image and likeness of his Creator. He saw it reasonable to look for a revelation of God in that which is nearest to God; he realized

that the child, as much a human being as the adult, is a person endowed with an intelligence that can penetrate to the secrets of truth, and a will that can hold fast to an ideal of good; it is in regard to these things--his mind and his will--that he has been created in the image and likeness of his Creator, and has been given a supernatural destiny. This interpretation of the human soul is in accordance with the doctrine of St. Thomas:

> He (man) stands at the meeting ground of time and eternity. He is related by his intellect to the angels and by his instincts to the animals. Truly, he is a citizen of two worlds. Though his reason lifts him up to heaven, yet he is not a pure spirit. Though his passions pull him down to earth, yet he is not merely an animal. (1)

The Church again speaks through its theologians:

> Original sin deprived man of preternatural privileges, bodily immortality and perfect control of desires. But human nature is not essentially deprived as Calvinism holds. The Catholic Church has never taught either in theory or in practice that man with all his actions is essentially bad. (2)

This, Dickens fully understood. He had no belief in the doctrine of the Murdstones. How he hated it! Froebel and Dickens did not teach that a child is totally divine, but they believed that every child possesses certain elements of divinity which constitute selfhood or individuality. Dickens

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(1) Ibid, Ch. 1, p. 39

(2) Redden, J. D., and Ryan, F. A., A Catholic Philosophy of Education, (The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee), Ch. V, p. 145.

admitted that child depravity exists but he claimed that it can generally be explained by the "unchristlike" methods of education in the family, the school , or the community. He believed that the highest and holiest powers in the child are the cause of his swiftest deterioration when misused, perverted or neglected. He saw the child as pure and good; he did not think that the traces of heredity should blur the image of God in his soul if he is judiciously trained, and has a free life of self-activity, a suitable environment and truly sympathetic parents and teachers. With an insight at once more keen and more effective than that of his predecessors, he realized the beauty and promise hidden in the heart of a child. Dickens always pleaded for more faith in children.

> Doctor Strong had a simple faith in him that might have touched the stone hearts of the very urns upon the wall... He appealed in everything to the honour and good faith of the boys, and relied on their possession of those qualities unless they proved themselves unworthy.

With this appreciation of the natural dignity and the supernatural end of the child, with this understanding of the aspiration of the childish heart lifted up to God and heaven-centred, Dickens shares the true estimate of spiritual values which is the common heritage of Christendom. He was the most distinctive champion in the defence of childhood and the first great democratic teacher to overthrow the social values of the day, to storm English homes and schools through literature,

and to hold unswervingly that the child had equal rights with man before God. For every child he claimed the right to be recognized as a God-product (not totally divine, but not totally depraved) and to be treated as such; he continually pleaded for a trusting faith in the child and a profound reverence for the divinity in his soul, for an enlightened training and education of his distinctive soul as his precious right of individual selfhood. All this was to be done through love, understanding, and sympathy that would result from a close study of the child.

This apostle of childhood evidently accepted, as his supreme duty, the responsibility for securing a free childhood for children. His philosophy of education which Professor Hughes sums up in the phrase, "It is a crime against a child to rob it of its childhood", comprises the greatest aim of education as far as the individual is concerned. With the Church he believes that the child, like his elders, is a person, a rational being, and an individual "undivided in itself and divided from everything else". For the child as for the adult this

> ...means that his being is a shrine and a holy of holies which is strictly his own, into which no one, except his Creator, can enter. It means that he has rights that no one can take away from him, neither the war lords of the world with the might and force

> of their arms, nor the dictators with their lies, threats and political intrigues. It means that all the states and all the governments on earth do not have the value of a single person. For, why do states and governments exist except to nourish and protect the rights of the individual? It means entrance into the order of spirit and light, and liberty, and freedom from the shackles of matter and darkness and slavery. It means that man is an autonomous being, a creature apart, a thinker to his own name, a doer in his own right. It means that man is able to take himself in hand and to use or abuse his talents as he pleases. Finally, to be a person means that each man is held answerable for his own conduct, charged with the substance of his own soul, committed to a destiny that does not stop when the life of the body ceases, but goes on till it reaches the judgment seat of eternity. No other creature on earth can lay claim to such distinctions. At the same time, no other creature bears such a terrible burden of responsibility in the depths of its being. (1)

Dickens had a keen understanding of all these meanings. In his doctrine the dominant ideals of "repression, punishment, fear, trembling" give way to the new and true gospel of "stimulation, happiness, freedom, and creative self-activity." He praised the free life of the gypsy children in Nicholas Nickleby:

> Even the sunburned faces of gipsy children, half naked though they be, suggest a drop of comfort. It is a pleasant thing to see that the sun has been there; to know that the air and light are on them every day; to feel that they are children and lead children's lives; that if their pillows be damp, it is with the dews of heaven, and not with tears; that the limbs of their girls are free, and that they are not crippled by distortions, imposing an unnatural and horrible penance upon their sex; that their lives are spent, from day to day, at least among the waving trees, and not in the midst of dreadful engines which

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(1) Brennan, op. cit., Ch. 1, p. 270.

> make young children old before they know what childhood is, and give them the exhaustion and infirmity of age, without, like age, the privilege to die. God send that old nursery tales were true, and that gipsies stole such children by the score!

He insists on substituting freedom for coercion in the training of beings created to God's image. For him, true freedom--physical, intellectueal and spiritual--are of vital importance in the culture of the individual child. He pleaded for that blessed, free, rich childhood that "ripens into childhood". In Doctor Strong's school "we had plenty of liberty". And Father Brennan ratifies his judgment: "If youth is eternal so is the hope and trust that we put in it."(1)

To procure freedom for the child was his aim in all he wrote against coercion and wrong methods of training children, particularly in his most vigorous attacks upon two types of characters in their tyrannical treatment of children; he struck his bravest blows against the brutal corporal punishment of Squeers and Creakle in the schools, and that of the Murdstones in the homes.

These principles of liberty are in harmony with the teachings of the Divine Teacher. Jesus, whom we all from innermost conviction consider our highest ideal says: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God." (2) Do we not in this, as in all that Jesus says, recognize the voice of God: "Forbid them

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(1) Ibid, ch. 1, p. 1

(2) Mark X, 14.

not, that is, do not stand between the child and God. Do not check the free life given him by the heavenly Father which is still in them; its free unfolding is still possible with them. This divine reverence, both for the rights and the possibilities of the child as for that of man, is essentially His character. The method He follows throughout His Palestinian career adheres always to the principle that the will of man is not to be coerced. The only Being who has absolute right to compel human beings is also the only Being that completely respects their liberty. Jesus always insisted on an inner willingness to be taught by God; Heaven is for those who freely choose it. Neither Christ nor the system He advocates make man good or happy; they only offer the means to make him so. The education of each individual remains his own concern. The Divine Master holds out new helps and points to finer achievements but it depends upon each one of us to make use of this aid and guidance. In all the phases of Christ's teaching, whether in His patience, in His permission of evil, in His permission of choice, or in His restraint in the amount of revelation which he adapts to His hearers, we find His fundamental method of safeguarding man's freedom. And when I say man, I have a particular thought for the child for whom the Divine Master has shown "special tenderness and affection" when in His "sublime ex-

pression of love" he identified Himself with the child, "Whosoever shall receive one such child as this in my name, receiveth me. (1)

The Divine Teacher who safeguarded the dignity and free will of the child is, in Himself, the safeguard of the child's present freedom. Professor Hughes likes to call Dickens the "John the Baptist and the Paul" of the revelation of the gospel of true reverence, of faith, and of loving sympathy for the child.

This chapter has shown that Dickens's conception of the child is that of "man whole and entire" in harmony with that set forth by Pope Pius XI:

> In fact it must never be forgotten that the subject of Christian education is man whole and entire, soul united to body in unity of nature, with all his faculties natural and supernatural, such as right reason and Revelation show him to be; man, therefore, fallen from his original estate, but redeemed by Christ and restored to the supernatural condition of adopted son of God, though without the preternatural privileges of bodily immortality or perfect control of appetite. There remain, therefore, in human nature the effects of Original Sin, the chief of which are weakness of will and disorderly affections." (2)

The following chapter will show how Dickens's educational process is a natural sequence to the postulates which he admits concerning child nature: the conception of man "whole and entire," the freedom of the will, and the doctrine of original sin.

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(1) Mark IX, 35.

(2) Pius XI, The Christian Education of Youth, (New York: The America Press, 1936), pp. 19-20.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE IMAGE GROWS CLEAR

> The proper and immediate end of Christian education is to cooperate with Divine grace in forming the true and perfect Christian, that is to form Christ Himself in those regenerated by Baptism. (1)

The great, and would it be too much to say, the sole, purpose of Catholic education is the development of other Christs. Such is the sacred responsibility which the Divine Master has placed in the hands of the Christian educator, whether parent or teacher,--the most noble task of forming little children into the fulness of the Christ-like image and the completeness of the Christlike life. Year by year, if parents and teachers do their work, the image of the Son of God appears more clear in the child under their hands. The image of the Infant-God becomes more and more vivid in the little babe as, under the influence of the kind and wise Christian parent he learns to obey, to pray, to love, to be kind, and to be polite after the model of the Child-Jesus. The image of the boy Christ grows clear in the young lad, as year by year he comes to think the thoughts of Christ, and performs, by a more finely

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(1) Pius XI, The Christian Education of Youth (New York: The America Press, 1936), p. 32.

cultiv ted instinct, the actions of Christ, as he sets the ideals and standards of his youthful conduct by the lovely law of Christ. This image clarifies and deepens in the adolescent. He has come to know much more of the way in which Christ handled the problems of His young manhood. He looks a little more like his elder brother. He moves through the youthful world in the light of His presence. And if the young man continues his education, the image comes into fuller proportions. He studies Christ's philosophy, dee in the secrets of His divine and human wisdom. He is different from any other young man who walks the earth; he is carefully shaped, he is the painfully rounded replica of the saviour of the world who has developed according " to the measure of the age and stature of Christ."

The Chritian educator would not be worthy of his divine call if he were not inspired and lifted to heights of ambitious achievement by this lofty and enlightening ideal. Yet, he would not be human if he did not shrink before such an assignment, as dreadful as the reverence which is due to the child, as noble as the end which he has in view, as broad and deep as the nature of the educand "man whole and entire", which calls for development.

For when the Christian educator turns out a finished product, the resultant of Catholic education, he is offering in his pupil another Christ who must "display it in all his actions: That the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh."(1) This means that the general purpose of family and school instruction is to advance the all-sided development of the child and the complete unfolding of his nature:

> For precisely this reason, Christian education takes in the whole aggregate of human life, physical and spiritual, intellectual and moral, individual, domestic, and social, not with a view of reducing it in any way, but in order to elevate, regulate, and perfect it, in accordance with the example and teaching of Christ.(2)

This is the lofty program for which the Christian educator is made responsible--a program formulated in accordance with the highest conception of the nature of the child and his destiny, a conception which in turn shapes the ideals and controls the educative process; he is obliged, during such time as the child is under his control, to have him acquire the art of living in time in such a manner as will adapt him for living eternally. This makes teaching a great spiritual adventure; it becomes manhood forming instead of knowledge mongering; it makes life natural and supernatural the central thing in education. But the enlightened child trainer also recognizes the fact that the

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(1) Loc. cit.

(2) Loc. cit.

process of education is exercised on material that is not completely sound but is tainted with original sin; he has before him a child whose intelligence is less able to acquire truth, a will horribly weakened in its impulses to good, a nature more inclined to shameful tendencies and evil. These effects of original sin must be overcome and make way for the realization of that "alter Christus".

> Folly is bound in the heart of a child and the rod of correction shall drive it away. Disorderly inclinations then must be corrected and good tendencies encouraged and regulated from tender childhood.(1)

With the story of Adam and Eve education was transformed from an "idyll of love into a tale of woe".

However, we must not forget that if grace does not destroy nature, yet, it assimilates and completes it. There is the belief and the hope that the child which has once been made the object of a special mercy at the hands of his Creator, can now depend on the help of grace for the restoration and renewal of his special beauty; the image blurred by the taint of original sin can be cleared up again. When the Son of God has condescended to appear in the form of a Child, He, at the same time, elevated and spiritualized the child, set up for him a high ideal, assured him of the necessary supernatural aid.

> . . . . and above all the mind must be enlightened and the will strengthened by supernatural truth

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(1) Ibid, p. 20

> and by the means of grace, without which it is impossible to control evil impulses, impossible to attain to the full and complete perfection of education intended by the Church, which has endowed so richly with Divine doctrine and with the Sacraments, the efficacious means of grace.(1)

The truth, consequently, is that the child faces life with two sets of tendencies--the one based on nature enfeebled by original sin, the other having its origin in divine grace received at baptism. A right education is one which systematically fosters and guides the unfolding and growth of the good set of tendencies rooted in his supernature; its function is to seize on everything that contributes to his mental and physical growth and to use all these opportunities to favour the development of the supernatural tendencies. This is the positive side. The negative aspect, and the more tenacious, comprises the subordination of his lower impulses to the higher, with their thwarting and sublimation.

Education is therefore an evolution of the individual from the big, blooming, buzzing confusion at the beginning of life, to the organized, unified integration of the full personality, the measure of the fulness of Christ. It is the development from the original nature of the child with his disorderly tendencies, urges, and drives repressed and formed under the control of principles conceived in ac-

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(1) Ibid. p. 20.

cordance with the highest conception of his nature and his destiny. It is a transformation from a "divine image" to a "divine likeness".

The above exposition of the Christian ideal in education contains everything and indicates all that parent and educator, teacher and school, should be to the boy as example and precept during his years of formation. It behooves us to remember these standards of life's values, both in theory and practice, for correct orientation and continuous guidance, as we continue the interpretation of Dickens's claims for the child in the light of Catholic principles of education.

His principles of education are based on a recognition of the child's true nature interpreted in terms of his eternal destiny. Though he may commonly be recognized as a trainer more than as a teacher, and as one who subordinates knowledge to character, still he reveals, negatively more often than positively, every phase of what is called the "new education" and takes into account the "whole aggregate of man".

For the child whom he recognizes as "man whole and entire" whose soul is made to the image of God, as a creature put into this world to serve his Maker in joy, and to live happily with Him in heaven--for every child, poor or rich,

Dickens claims the right to an education, which, through the revelation and development of his individual possibilities and highest powers, leads to constructive physical, social, intellectual, moral, and religious training, in order that he may achieve successfully and happily the highest destiny for himself and for the British nation. This plan of education comprises the widest conception of life; nothing human is alien to it.

Dickens became one of the grandest apostles of the "New Education" when he wrought into his novels the wonderful plots which reveal incidentally the most advanced educational standards. He has volumes of protests, in a hundred hideous forms, on the evils resulting from the ignorance and tyranny of adulthood in dealing with childhood. He exposed all those characteristics to condemn them, with the set purpose of making his readers and the world so thoroughly hate the wrong in education and child training as to lead to definite practical reforms. Every evil has its share of condemnation and contributes indirectly to inspire the ideals of Dickens regarding the proper attitude of the educator towards the educand. All suggest a program for a better education for the child. With Dickens the reader admits the need for the parent and teacher to study the child in order to recognize the divinity in his soul

created to the image of God; he demands an attitude of true reverence, of faith, of love, of real sympathy, and understanding for the individual selfhood of the child, in those who are to act as God's coadjutor over youth; he realizes the importance of joy and happiness, the advantages of religious consolation, the influence of proper nutrition, and the benefit of play and exercise in the development of true, strong character and personality. These points are most ably driven home to the mind of the reader in the vivid pictures of the thwarting of individuality effected through neglect, dwarfing firmness, harshness, will-breaking, religious tyranny, brutal flogging, through all the cruelties practised on helpless infancy kept in chill and timid reserve, in fear and trembling. Such evils reveal a clear recognition of the need of a right early training in true freedom and self-activity if the child is to acquire the highest development in individual power and character.

Dickens also applies this principles of freedom and self-activity to the intellectual field when he stresses the value of an imagination rich in fancy and a childhood fertile in childhood experiences which go to enrich the feeling and thought of the child. When he criticizes the ideal of fact-storing and the cramming system, he aims to suggest the

true method of systematic intellectual training that leads to real knowledge, to real wisdom, to real "philosophy".

He also shows the need of practising the fundamental law of cooperation and the sharing of responsibility and duties for the true comprehension of the law of community.

To reveal these ideals was the aim of his lifelong warfare against the bad old methods of education; this was the defined purpose of his forthright attack directed against Squeers and all the cruelties practised on children in the "private schools" as exemplified in that of Greta Bridge; this was the basis of his merciless lashes against the Murdstones and the Creakles.

Further illustration and evidence for the above assertions on Dickens's concepts of education will be presented with an added development of the elements as revealed in his writings. These elements, interdependent in themselves, are treated simultaneously in his novels, but for convenience and for clearness in study they will be discussed separately in this work.

This leads us to estimate what Dickens considers as the "essential hierarchy" in the capacities and powers of the body and soul. It may be said generally that, for him, the purpose of home and school instruction was that

it should be, first of all, a place for the formation of character, and next, a place for learning and study as a means for the attainment of the higher end. Discipline and guidance were in his view still more prominently the business of an educator than t he communication of knowledge. Father W. Farrell approves Dickens in his enlightening statement:

> While the intellectual virtues perfect a man in this or that way, develop this or that capacity, it is the moral virtues alone which perfect the whole man. If the attainment of the goal of life is man's one reason for living, if his partial happiness here and now is measured in terms of his approach to that goal, and his eternal happiness by his attainment of that goal, then there is nothing, humanly speaking, in this present life of ours outranking the moral virtues in importance. Their whole genius is the effective dealing with the goal of life and the approach to it.(1)

Pius XI stresses the same truth when he declares that the educand is "man whole and entire soul united to body in unity of nature, with all his faculties natural and supernatural, such as right reason and revelation show him to be".(2)

Both of the above excerpts show that nothing counts so much in life as good character; it has reference to the end of man; by it man's fate is decided. It is by a right life in this world, both in its personal and social

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(1) Farrell, W., A. Companion to the Summa (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1939), Vol. 2, p. 192.

(2) Pius XI, The Christian Education of Youth (New York: The America Press, 1936), pp. 19-20.

aspects, that, normally, a man secures a right life in the world to come. To live manfully is the normal way of preparing to die. Christ came not merely to teach us the way to die but to teach us the way to live. The educated individual is the one who has learned how to live--to do the right thing in the right way.

But man has two goals to achieve: the first is natural--wordly happiness and success; the second, supernatural--eternal life with His Maker. Even these two goals are interrelated, for the kind of happiness and success that are universal, secure, and lasting are based on habits of goodness; and habits are good when they lead to the last end. The successful man is to be judged ultimately on the quality of his character and the true aim of education is happiness through perfect virtue.

Consequently, the good life consists in discerning what is right and conforming one's conduct unflichingly to it. Man, being endowed with a conscience and a free will, is responsible for his conduct, the norms of which are predetermined by the eternal principles of the moral law. Every act, habit, and power--physical, intellectual, spiritual, or social, with the will and religion acting as a catalyser, must be shaped to this purpose.

The culture of the natural virtues will produce

good character but only the practice of supernatural virtues will produce a Christian character. So that there is no way of Christian living except in imitation of Christ, the Son of God and the most perfect of men; it is through Christ, His example and His grace, that we make our way to God.

Dickens shows exceptional insight in his appreciation of the above assertions based on Catholic philosophy of education. In The Life of Our Lord he puts before his children a model for a Christian life molded according to the virtues emphasized by the Teacher of Galilee. In the motives and ideals which he sought to develop and strengthen in his little ones we find a deep faith and love in God and man; these feelings inspire habits of prayerfulness, a spontaneous, childlike service towards God and a rich and efficient sense of duty to others, particularly to the weak and the helpless. His comments and appraisals of the words and deeds of Our Lord are meant to foster an admiration for love of righteousness, for patience and humility, for valour and generosity, for pity and forgiveness, for repentance, for self-denial and self-effacement, for all that makes the true and tender hearts; his comments, likewise, deftly foster a scorn of what is untruthful, mean or base in daily action. He believed that humanity in all

its forms--kindness, gentleness, goodness, and mercy--were the best qualities of man; friendship, confidence, tenderness, tears, he considered the sweetest experiences of life. For Dickens, "He only has lived, he only is a man who has wept over the remembrance of a kindness done or received". These precious values, he sets and measures in terms of eternity before his dear ones.

> Remember!--It is Christianity TO DO GOOD, always--even to those who do evil to us. It is Christianity to love our neighbours as ourself, and to do to all men as we would have them do to us. It is Christianity to be gentle, merciful, and forgiving, and to keep those qualities quiet in our hearts, and never make a boast of them, or of our prayers or of our love of God, but always to show that we love Him by humbly trying to do right in everything. If we do this and remember the life and lessons of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and try to act up to them, we may confidently hope that God will forgive us our sins and mistakes, and enable us to live and die in peace.

We have before us the qualities which make up Dickens's ideal child. All are distinctive and characteristic of Christian teaching; all are virtues necessary for life with the Trinity in the soul, both in this world and in the next.

We find the same virtues exemplified and extended in the practical life of the children of his fancy found in his novels. In David Copperfield and Nicholas Nickleby he perpetually emphasizes good-will, courage, and fortitude

in performance of duty, blithe and steady persistence in work, a sane and cheery outlook on life, endurance under difficulties. These are the elements of character which he regarded as most essential to success in life, and which he puts into the words of David Copperfield:

> I will only add to what I have already written of my perseverance at this time of my life, and of a patient and continuous energy which then began to be matured within me, and which I know to be the strong part of my character, if it have any strength at all, and there, on looking back, I find the source of my success. I have been very fortunate in worldly matters; many men have worked much harder, and not succeeded half so well; but I never could have done what I have done without the habits of punctuality, order, and diligence, without the determination to concentrate myself on one object at a time, no matter how quickly its successor should come upon its heels, which I then formed. My meaning simply is, that whatever I have tried with all my heart to do well; that whatever I have devoted myself to, I have devoted myself to completely; that, in great aims and in small, I have always been thoroughly in earnest. I have never believed it possible that any natural or improved ability can claim immunity from the companionship of the steady, plain, hard-working qualities and hope to gain its end. There is no such thing as such fulfilment on this earth. Some happy talent, and some fortunate opportunity, may form the two sides of the ladder on which some men mount, but the rounds of that ladder must be made of stuff to stand, wear and tear; and there is no substitute for thoroughgoing, ardent, and sincere earnestness. Never to put one hand to anything on which I could throw my whole self and never to affect depreciation of my work, whatever it was, I find, now, to have been my golden rule.

Thus spoke David Copperfield; thus thought Charles Dickens.

To this plan for character development, Dr. Strong's training would add politeness, courtesy, and consideration for the feeling of others:

> About five-and-twenty boys were studiously engaged at their books when we went in, but they rose to give the Doctor good morning, and remained standing when they saw Mr. Wickfield and me.
>
> "A new boy, young gentlemen ", said the Doctor; "Trotwood Copperfield."
>
> One Adams, who was the head-boy, then stepped out of his place and welcomed me. He looked like a young clergyman, in his white cravat, but he was very affable and good-humoured; and he showed me my place, and presented me to the masters in a gentlemanly way that would have put me at my ease if anything could.

What a picture of manful, intelligent, loving, co-operative, and reverent submission to authority!

Betsy Trotwood adds precious inspiration to character training when she kindly advises "Trot" to live up to his dignity and responsibilities:" be a credit to yourself, to me, and Mr. Dick, and Heaven be with you!" Her noble motto: "Never be mean in anything; never be false; never be cruel, is worthy of the sincerity and honesty of her life-work.

In Agnes we have the ideal of the generous, unselfish soul with a giving rather than a getting outlook on life. This is shown in her kind service to her father and to David full of self-sacrifice and loving devotion.

The above illustrations are typical of the positive

inspiration for character training which Dickens sets before us in his writings. However, in his vivid descriptions of bad training, much more numerous than that of good training, he makes the reader conscious of the corresponding opposites. The wrong training of Steerforth calls for a development of self-control through a disciplined will, aided by the formation of proper ideals, correct attitudes, and right habits; Uriah Heep and his father were never trained to true humility, to noble, enlightened, sincere obedience and to real respect for authority; Little Emily lacks mature judgment, self-assertion, and an enlightened strength of will.

Again, Dotheboys Hall is the revelation of a series of dwarfed ideals; in the "young noblemen" we find weak, false, servile, negative, passive "don'ter's", when we should find strong, true, free, positive, active "doers". The "darkness" should be light, the "vicious-face" a reflection of purity, the "leaden" eye a tender look.

If we sum up the ideals of true character formation illustrated in the preceding paragraphs we find that the scope of Dickens's morality should set the child right in mind and will, in relation to his Creator, to the material world in which he lives, to his fellowmen, and to himself; his whole attitude would be based on a proper knowledge of God, life, and immortality. Dickens's conception of educa-

tion included within its scope, not merely the processes by which man earns a living out of all human efforts and satisfactions, not merely the meaning of life in its material sense, but everything that pertains to life in its widest sense--the general problem which comprehends very special problems in the right ruling of conduct.

In Catholic education these very fundamentals are given constant expression and application by keeping before the child the example set by Jesus Christ, the model of true character, the ideal and the concrete manifestation of what is true, what is good, and what is beautiful. This is genuine and true living religion; all religion is to know and love God through Jesus Christ as revealed in the story of His life. To love God is to know His character and to reproduce it in one's conduct. This makes religious training a part and parcel of moral education; there can be no true moral formation that is not founded primarily on religious education; the principles of conduct necessarily flow directly from religion; religion must enter directly into every phase of life because it alone gives a purpose to live and offers "the way, the truth, and the life" to guide man to his ultimate end; a religious humanism should be at the centre of a liberal education.

> In fact, since education consists essentially in preparing man for what he must be and for what

> he must do here below, in order to attain the sublime end for which he was created, it is clear that there can be no true education which is not wholly directed to man's last end and that in the present order of Providence, since God has revealed Himself to us in the Person of His Only Begotten Son, who alone is "the way, the truth and the life," there can be no ideally perfect education which is not Christian education.(1)

Religion, besides being the only norm for right conduct, brings light and life, consolation, and support, and an ideal in life; it gives a language to things human as well as to things material, imparts true significance to all teaching and learning, to all knowing and doing. Like Froebel, Dickens believes education to be a process of integration of the individual--"a harmony in feeling, thinking, willing, and doing". All these elements, unified by self-control and by a perfect faith, are realized in Christianity. Steerforth is a disappointment because his character formation did not make for moral integrity. In his upbringing, which made for social efficiency and personal well-being, the training of the will, the control of emotion, and the cultivation of Christian ideals were utterly neglected, ignored, and excluded. Such education is sterile. This principle of moral integration which Dickens aims to reveal, is in keeping with the teachings of the Church:

Due attention must be given to the physical,

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(1) Pius XI, The Christian Education of Youth (New York: The America Press, 1936), p. 3.

> the social, the intellectual, the aesthetic, the spiritual, in order that all man's powers, his body, his sentiments, his emotions, his intellect, and his will may be so harmoniously blended as to form a truly Christian character and personality.(1)

Again, Dickens like Froebel is in a peculiar sense a religious teacher; religion had a great deal to do with the tone and teaching of his literary work. His deep love for the Saviour, the profound religiousness of his nature, the solemn sense of duty which coloured the whole of his acts and thoughts, gave him that sense of the seriousness of life and the responsibilities of Christian manhood. All these religious tendencies colour his teachings throughout his novels. His letters prove that he draws more than moral principles from religion; they show that he remained in contact with God and that religion is for him a source of comfort and consolation, a source of vitality, of energy, and of persistent force. His own attitude towards religion is reflected in the reverence, the instruction, and the care which he gives to the religious tendencies of the young minds who are under his power either as a father or as a writer. For every child, he claims the right to the benefits of early and proper religious guidance and training which leads to a thirst for God's love, and a hunger for divine wisdom and guidance. With these

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(1) Redden, J. D., and Ryan, F. A., A Catholic Philosophy of Education, (The Bruce Publishing Company, Malwaukee) Ch. V, p. 144

ideals would he replace the dread of religion which the sour austerity of the Murdstones had inculcated in David's young bosom. How often was the child denied the advantages of religious consolation, when he was compelled, every evening, to go to the same apartment at the same time to listen to the same monotonous, meaningless prayers. Dickens endeavoured to give to religion a tone which should influence the mind, the heart, and the emotions of his children. He wished to produce in their young hearts a religious enthusiasm that should preside over their decisions, their evaluations in life, and their purposes.

He considered a religious atmosphere in the home and the influence of paternal love as most vital factors in the process of religious education. He believed that the instinctive religious sentiment found in children should be fostered, strengthened, and nurtured very early in the life of the young child. He saw that the best religious influences are those of early childhood, that the religious spirit and fervour which is to be made reliable in dangers and struggles, in times of oppression and need, in the joys and pleasures of later life, must come to man in his infancy.

Dickens hoped to arouse and to strengthen a true religious sense in his children when he raised them to the Christian religion taking the life of Jesus as a source of

inspiration; his clever adaptation of the New Testament was written for this purpose. He presents religion not merely as a system of truths, as knowledge for the intellect to be attained through instruction and study, but rather as a saving religion, an ideal to be lived, a way of life to be followed; his dogmas of faith become dogmas of life. When he presents to his little ones what seemed to him the essential portion of the New Testament--and it would greatly have pleased him could such a volume have been used for the instruction of the poor--he aimed to lead them "to have, to know, to think, to feel and to live" the essentials of faith. This synthesis of religion, as far as it goes, follows the fundamental truths of the Catholic faith; it contains a true concept of God and of His Divine Son, a true explanation of life and of immortality. The inclusion of the fact that God became Man, that Jesus is both God and man, serves the most practical functions; this belief helps him to explain man and man's destiny in life, gives a reasom for respecting the dignity of the individual, supplies motives for serving God and neighbour, for preserving personal freedom and happiness, helps to solve the problem of sin, suffering, sorrow, despair, and death and gives a true meaning to grace and prayer.

This is the religious teaching full of charm, of significance, and of richness, which Dickens advocated in

place of the church catechism and other absurd formularies and subtleties which had made a part of his own upbringing. He hoped to avoid for his children the disgust found in the religion of the members of the denominated schools who thought all religious training impossible without the formal, abstract teaching of creeds and tenets of their respective sects. He did not think that the best religious training is effected by compulsory enforcement of theological dogmas. This is seen in his little New Testament where he leads his children to the gradual and free acceptation of the belief in Jesus as the Son of God; his amount of revelation increases by degrees as the knowledge on the character and deeds of Jesus becomes more and more enlightening to the young minds. In this he follows the example set by the Galilean Teacher who

> ...allowed time for one truth to take root before he revealed another"... He adjusted the amount of revelation to the needs of the particular time and to the capacity of the audience. Jesus deliberately held some things back from the apostles until the proper time: "These things, however, I did not tell you from the beginning, because I was with you." Even as He spoke this sentence, He still held other points in reserve: "Many things yet I have to say to you, but you cannot bear them now." (1)

The manner in which the character of Jesus is portrayed in The Life of Our Lord furnishes sufficient evidence to convince the child that Jesus is divine and eternal, to have

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(1) Russell, W. H., Jesus, the Divine Teacher (P. J. Kenedy and Sons, New York), Ch. VI, p. 422.

the eager little mind accept readily that our Lord is God and Saviour, the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Nor did he think that faith should be frittered away piecemeal into "harrowing" intelligibilities and associated with weariness, languor and distaste; if the abstract truths were to serve as inspiration and stimulation, he rightly thought that they should be presented to the child in such a way as to warm his imagination and spur his will; he happily found all the truths of religion clothed with flesh and blood and made concrete in a living, breathing human being who realized in his life the ideal and perfect life; in Jesus he found a revealer of God, a living expression and model in the practice of true faith. He used this model to promote in his little ones a sublime reverence for the Divine Will of God, as taught and exemplified by Jesus Christ, who in His own word states: "I am the way and the truth and the life". He presents them a living picture of what is true, what is good and what is beautiful. He also shows them the need of a mysterious Hand to help them in their renewed human efforts towards their eternal destiny; he believes in the spiritual assistance of grace through prayer; he deftly includes in little booklet the divinely modelled "Our Father" besides two other prayers specially written for his children. These prayers are adapted in style

and thought to interests and needs of a child. How much more meaningful, interesting, stimulating, and loving religion becomes when it is presented in this way to the young mind.

Dickens has always been Bible minded and when he alludes to Christian precept or makes mention of the Teacher himself, it is with simple reverence very beautiful and very touching words which come from his o wn heart and go straight to that of the reader. In David Copperfield he pictures Traddles receiving "a caning and six chapters of Greek Testament for refusing to confess" that he has eaten the crab which made him ill; he aims to ridicule bitterly the common practice, then in use, of cultivating a loving reverence for God by using the Bible as a means of punishment. He always considered it a great blunder and a greater crime to make children commit to memory selections of the Bible for such a purpose.

The Church approves Dickens; it also educates the child through the teaching and example of its Founder; it also draws the loftiest truths of religion and the highest forms of morality from the life of Him who has synthesized the theory and practice of faith in His own living.

But moral and religious training alone do not porduce "the true and finished man of character"; the "image"

which hears the taint of original sin has lost a part of its intellectual power which must be regained. Consequently, education of the intellect comes in as a potent factor in the formation of our "true Christian", who "thinks, judges and acts constantly and consistently in accordance with right reason illumined by the supernatural light of the examples and teaching of Christ".(1) A well-enlightened and well-disciplined intellect must serve as a rational guide to conduct; a healthy mind and heart must preside over strength of will and strength of body if the latter are to be rightly used for the ends of human life. Nobody can escape the duty of being a man. In the mind disintegrated by original sin, the senses and the reasoning, the imagination and the intellect do not work interpenetratively; all the powers are at odds with one another. Therefore, the business of intellectual education is to devote proper attention to the methodical training of these powers to make them apt instruments of learning and thinking. It must also aim at forming a mind well stored with necessary knowledge and well guided by a group of true principles from which alone right life can proceed. For a Christian mental formation is meant to be a training of life by thought--by the right ordering of the child's knowledge, by the amendment of his desires, by the formation of good habits of mind and

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(1) Pius XI, The Christian Education of Youth (New York: The America Press, 1936), p. 32.

soul. The educator has the unique function, therefore, not only of influencing the process of the child's intellectual development, but also of enlightening and training the powers of his intellect to function with the purpose for which they are created. He must see that right ideas be formed and clear thinking be made possible through well-ordered judgment and sound, logical reasoning.

Knowledge, the object of intellectual education, is the necessary material by which desirable changes are produced in the intellect, and learning is the process by which the child acquires that knowledge which contributes to the development of his various capabilities and powers.

But knowledge is not power. Knowledge becomes power when its acquisition aids in the development of man's executive tendencies, when it is woven by self-activity into the individuality of the child who, through his own efforts, subject at all times to the control of constituted authority, achieves the full measure of self-realization in accordance with his true nature, and that of the society in which he lives. The being created in the image of His Maker is the real selfhood of the child and the motive power of all his realizations. Knowledge is transformed by the soul which gives it new form, colour, and tone.

> Biology and the social sciences are splendid in themselves, so are history, art, literature,

> and religion. But none of these things has much meaning until it is placed in its proper context which is human nature; so that if it is to be liberal knowledge, in the sense of making us free, it must be looked at in the larger perspective of what man is in itself, in his nature, in his innermost being.(1)

Knowledge is but the material by which the mind is enlightened and the spiritual nature enriched.

Both experience and activity educate; through self-activity, learning becomes more definitely a part of the child's own life, giving him an operative hand, a directing brain, and a hopeful, improving, progressive, executive power. This is the true knowledge which will give the child the tendency and ability to do his part independently in the work of the world. Every child should get into his consciousness the idea that he is expected to do his share in the improvement of his environment. There are too many men who have good power to gain knowledge from books, who can reason soundly in regard to the knowledge they have gained, but who, nevertheless, are of little use neither to themselves nor their fellow-men nor to God. They are of the practical, negative type, lacking force, energy, and definiteness of purpose. These characters have no true faith in their own powers--they do not even recognize them; they shut into themselves and fail to influence the society, the Church or the life of the nation of which they are a part. The world has

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(1) Brennan, Robert Edward, The Image of His Maker (The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee, 1948), Ch. 1, p. 3.

not changed any for their having lived in it. Such knowledge is idle and can positively be a bane unless it is made an instrument of right living as well as that of professional efficiency. In this type of learning the need of an authoritative, wise, systematic fostering and guidance cannot be overestimated if the educator wishes to insure the development of proper knowledge and information, habits and skills, attitudes and appreciations; education would be at a great risk if experience were the sole method of acquiring knowledge and determining the validity of truth.

Catholic education, which embraces a complete overview of the child, his true nature and last end, includes, as one of the desirable features of "progressive education", the method of "learning by doing" with a clear understanding of its limitations as well as its advantages:

> Learning is not a mere process of passive assimilation, but rather a process of purposeful activity and effort on the part of the learner. It is self-development, self-realization by means of self-activity.(1)

This principle is well in harmony with the divine law of God; though He created us from His own free will, yet He exacts our willing and free cooperation in the pursuit of our salvation. Consequently, a truly progressive educational program emphasizes the importance of self-activity as educational instrument and employs methods to promote such activity in

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(1) Redden, J. D., and Ryan, F. A., A Catholic Philosophy of Education (The Bruce Publishing Company), Ch.VI, p.230

its various forms according to their essential values.

The principle "learning by doing" did not always make a part of the ideals of the educator. We read an enlightening passage on the subject in one of our popular histories of education of the nineteenth century:

> In the early part of the century teachers taught and pupils were supposed to listen. If they did not do so they were punished. If they did listen, while their teachers talked and told them facts or explained principles and had memories capable of retaining the matter stored in them, they were approved as good scholars, and went out from colleges and universities to be surpassed in the practical work of life by the men who had received no collegiate or university education. They were trained to be mere receivers and producers of knowledge, and therefore, their executive power was dwarfed by lack of opportunity for its exercise. The only executive training afforded by schools, colleges and universities was the training of the playground.(1)

Pestalozzi and Froebel have deftly revealed to the world the fallacy of the old principle "Knowledge is power"; their principle of self-activity, so much grander and more inspirational tham the old ideal, was a valueless contribution to the development of the nineteenth century in educational aims and methods. The influence of their life-work effected most important advances, in this department of education, towards the middle and the second half of the nineteenth century. Hughes and Klemm give us the other side of the picture:

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(1) Hughes, J. L., and Klemm, L. R., The Nineteenth Century Progress of Education (Linscott Publishing Company) Vol. XXIII, P. 5.

> Gradually through the century the pupil has been emancipated; he has become more than a vessel into which fads and principles are poured by his teacher. Slowly but surely, teachers are "learning to teach less that pupils may learn more", and not learn more, but develop more powers of intellect and characters--teaching has passed from the "telling stage" to the stage of "self-activity" of the pupil.(1)

With this true comprehension and intelligent practice of the law of self-activity, the child with his powers of judgment and reasoning has been made the focus of teaching instead of the knowledge to be communicated by the teacher; he has been trained towards more independent thinking and investigation.

In this wonderful transformation of ideals Dickens has put in his abundant share of condemnation and inspiration. In Froebel's writings he studied the methods of cultivating the mind of children as a basis for character development. Although he devotes much more attention, especially in David Copperfield and Nicholas Nickleby, to methods of training than to methods of teaching,yet,he pictures the latter sufficiently to make the reader recognize some of their defects; the two lessons which he pictures--that of Squeers and that of Mr. Murdstone--are sufficient to make the reader conscious of the claims which he establishes for the child in the intellectual field. He keeps in mind the child's true nature and destiny when he pleads for a proper rational

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(1) Loc. cit.

and stimulative methods of teaching which arouses the child's self-activity instead of repressing it, when he shows the importance of furnishing the child with knowledge that is related, easily available, as a basis for character development and a preparation for life.

To this effect he launches the most vigorous attacks against the evils of wrong methods in that spelling lesson that becomes a series of definitions, in that "practical philosophy" that is made to contribute to the "internal economy" of Dotheboys Hall and the utilitarian aims of Squeers.

Nicholas was not particularly enthusiastic about Squeers' model lesson given to the pupils who, unluckily, did remain in the school. His abstractedness and indifference is a silent but effective criticism of the wrong methods in Squeers's teaching. Through the eyes of Nicholas, Dickens shatters Squeers's system with a ridicule, stinging and strong enough, according to Crotch, "to wring the withers even of a County Council Inspector". The Lesson begins:

> "Now, then, where's the first boy?"
> "Please, sir, he's cleaning the back-parlor window," said the temporary head of the philosophical class.
> "We go upon the practical mode of teaching, Nickleby; the regular system. C-l-e-a-n, clean, verb active, to make bright, to scour. W-i-n, win, d-e-r, der, winder, a casement. When the boy knows this out of a book, he goes and does it. It's just the same principle as the use of the globes. Where's the second boy?"
> "Please, sir, he's weeding the garden," re-

plied a small voice."

"To be sure," said Squeers, by no means disconcerted. "So he is. B-o-t, bot, t-i-n, tin, bottin, n-e-y, bottinney, noun substantive, a knowledge of plants. When he has learned that bottinney means a knowledge of plants, he goes and knows 'em. That's our system, Nickleby; what do you think of it?"

"It's a very useful one, at any rate," answered Nicholas.

"I believe you," rejoined Squeers not remarking the emphasis of his usher.

"Third boy, what's a horse?"

"A beast, sir," replied the boy.

"So it is," said Squeers. "Ain't it, Nickleby?"

"I believe there is no doubt of that, sir," answered Nicholas.

"Of course there isn't, said Squeers.

"A horse is a quadruped, and quadruped's Latin for beast, as everybody that's gone through the grammar knows, or else where's the use of having grammars at all?"

"Where, indeed!" said Nicholas abstractedly.

"As you're perfect in that," resumed Squeers, turning to the boy, "Go and look after the horse, and rub him down well, or I'll rub you down. The rest of the class go and draw water up, till somebody tells you to leave off, for it's washing-day to-morrow, and they want the coppers filled."

If we criticize this lesson in the light of the prime purpose of intellectual education--that of leading the pupils to observe intelligently and to think independently--we can easily give the true meaning to Nicholas' shrug of the shoulder which left Squeers in doubt as to the appreciation of his assistant teacher on the lesson just observed.

In this lesson, Dickens laughs at language cramming, the popular method of the time, and vividly portrays

the weakness of all educational systems and methods that regard fact-storing as the chief aim of intellectual education. He exposes the absurd and deforming habit of giving definitions of abstractions to children, and expecting them to understand the method by which the word is given before the thought.

The "very long, very numerous, very hard--perfectly unintelligible lessons" which made the "grievous, daily drudgery and misery" of David were not more productive. David could not remember facts and dates, could not be crammed successfully.

> The very sight of these two (the Murdstones) has such an influence over me that I begin to feel the words I have been at infinite pains to get into my head, all sliding away, and going I don't know where. I wonder where they <u>do</u> go, by the bye?
>
> I hand the first book to my mother. Perhaps it is a grammar, perhaps a history, or geography. I take a last drowning look at the page as I give it into her hand, and start off aloud at a racing pace while I have got it fresh. I trip over another word. Mr. Murdstone looks up. I tumble over half a dozen words, and stop.

He even had a dull head for figures, and as a matter of fact burst into tears when he was asked--by the mental process--to give the "appalling sum" of "five thousand double-Gloucester cheeses at fourpence-half-penny each." This plainly indicates not only the bad effects of cramming on the nervous system but also all the harm that can be done

to the mental power by the "hard mathematics" and other subjects when they are taught according to the Murdstone pedagogy.

The exhaustive and exasperating practice of accumulating arrears of work, so closely related with cramming--necessarily a part of this process--is also exposed for the reader's condemnation. When David has undergone a series of unsuccessful and shameful attempts at his recitation his mother thinks best to shut the book, and put it aside "as an arrear to be worked out" when the child's other "tasks" would be done.

> There is a pile of these arrears very soon, and it swells like a rolling snowball. The bigger it gets, the more stupid I get. The case is so hopeless, and I feel that I am wallowing in such a bag of nonsense, that I give up all idea of getting out, and abandon myself to my fate.

What conventionality, what narrowness can induce an educator to use such mechanical and unintelligent method of teaching, to leave out the best results of intellectual discipline and moral training, to estimate fact storing so much and character forming so little? Only a faith in the doctrine of child depravity and in a system of philosophy which holds that the overflow of the inner selfhood of the child must be checked.

When Dickens attacks all these evils, he aims to

plead for a right intellectual education for the child. He has learned from Froebel to consider education as the development of human power in harmony with its best culture and enrichment. He has also learned from him that the preservation and development of the tendency to transform this knowledge into power must be a part of the most fundamental aims of true education if the educand is to be rendered capable of adding his part to the sum of human knowledge and power. The essential function of the school, therefore, is not so much to teach and to communicate a "book after book" variety and multiplicity of things as to give unity to all things and to life. Froebel advocates teaching of principles as opposed to the teaching of insolated facts and rules.

In David's study of "words" and facts, and in Squeers's lesson of abstract definitions, he wishes to show the absolute need of correlation of studies, of apperceptive centres of feeling and thought to which shall be related the progressive enlargement and enrichment of knowledge throughout the life of the child. He is conscious of the fact that we see and hear and understand in all that is around us, only what corresponds to what we are within, and that the power to see and hear and understand increases as our inner life is cultured and developed. He clearly saw that the child's studies must be correlated if the knowledge presented to him is

to be clear and easily retained. Whenever words are given before the idea or in place of the idea and without a definite relationship to the thought already in the mind, they lie in the mind, as unrelated and therefore unavailable knowledge.

The correlation of meanings is, according to the author of "A Catholic Philosophy of Education", the kind of intellectual training which gives true wisdom to the child:

> The virtue of knowledge.....is concerned with truth; that is, it concerns itself with truth that can be shown through demonstration. The truth spoken of here is that truth which is deduced from principles of facts (data).
>
> The virtue of wisdom is concerned with order. It seeks beyond facts, beyond data, into meanings. It seeks relationship and meanings among facts. It demands ultimate explanations, and hence the final truth, the ultimate goal. (1)

Father Farrell in "A Companion to the Summa" calls this wisdom philosophy when it is applied to human wisdom and adds: "Its possession can make the ignorant washerwoman very wise, its defect makes the learned professor very stupid." (2) No wonder that Nicholas should find Squeers's "practical philosophy" more useful than wise.

All such processes that attempt to educate from without inward, instead of from within outward, are in the last analysis cram. The selfhood must be active in going

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(1) Redden, J. D., and Ryan, F. A., A Catholic Philosophy of Education (The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee, 1942), Ch. VIII, P. 284.

(2) Farrell, W., A Companion to the Summa (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1939), Vol. 2, P. 186

out for the new knowledge. The child must himself be originative, directive, and executive in the learning process if cram is to be avoided completely; this is the only sure way to secure perfect apperception. Without apperception the new information is dormant in the memory until it disappears. Leen includes this aim in his definition of a true education:

> It is not enough for the mind to know things; it cannot serve the purpose of right living unless it is able to think things. It must be in possession of the truth about things, if it is to make a right use of them. (1)

Chesterton in his characteristic paradoxical judgments dares to put in a chapter, "The Rehabilitation of Mr. Squeers", in which he finds a plus sign for the master of Dotheboys Hall:

> The modern educationalist would surely hold him in some honour for, if I am not mistaken, Mr. Squeers laid down the principles in which modern education is more and more grounded. As will be seen, I do not altogether agree with these principles but they are being steadily put in practice, and there is a good deal to be said for them. The main principle is that education should be practical as well as theoretical..... better than diligently committing tomemory innumerable lists of plants, stones and animals. (2)

Dickens would have skill in action imparted by practice, but he never makes skill, as such, an object of educational activity; he deemed skill of value only whem it serves insight; he would indeed have doing but always as ex-

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(1) Leen, Edward, What is Education? (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1944), Ch. 3, p. 71

(2) Chesterton, G. K., Dickens, A Critical Study, (London: Methuen and Company, 1912), p. 137

pression of thought and feeling. Induction is a superior method of investigation to deduction; namely, that one should first gather facts before making conclusions; it is a more natural and rational system of procedure permitting the child's mind to "expand like a flower"--naturally, and as Dickens wanted it.

Reverend William H. Russell in one of his tributes to the Divine Pedagogue acknowledges Jesus' free use of the principle of induction:

> All good teachers correlate and enable their students to arrive at theunknown through the visible. The Nazarene aimed not only at enlightenment through His correlations, but at spiritual elevation. Materialism is bleak indeed and is readily discarded by anyone who listens to the living Teacher. "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him bears much fruit." (1)

This theme of related knowledge and executive training is often suggested in Dickens's works. We find Ralph Nickleby reminding Nicholas, "The old story--always thinking and never doing." Mr. Murdstone reminds David that, "This is a world for action." Steerforth is portrayed as a character who is learned but who is not educated. David (Dickens) himself is a self-made man.

Didkens has played his part in the progressive revelation of the great fundamental principles of methods where

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(1) Russell, William H., Jesus The Divine Teacher (R. J. Kenedy & Sons, New York), Ch. VI, p. 366.

teaching has changed from telling to guiding on the part of the teacher and from passivity as listener to self-activity in investigation and in operation on the part of the pupil; the child has become independently active instead of responsibly active. To what extent the pendulum swings over to the other side, this subject would furnish matter for discussion.

For this very reason, Dickens claims for the child a childhood rich in the experiences of real life and in that of creative fancy. He realizes the foundation and need of a fertile, creative, well-trained imagination in this process of related knowledge and self-activity which calls for careful planning and foresight in meeting new situations in an intelligent and productive manner. That wonder power is a strong stimulus to mental and spiritual effort, the source of all true interest and the child's beacon flame in his work of productive investigation.

The culture of dream and fancies has a vital function in the education of the child. Education is life, we have said, and experience is the material out of which it is made. Imagination bridges the gap between the broad experience of the race embodied in the social inheritance, and the narrow limited experience of the child. Racial inheritance is not available as real experience; it is available as a symbol. Through his keen power for imagery, the child can be lead to realize the symbolic

and the ideal and make it a part of his own culture. The very remoteness of these experiences blends with the vague hopes of the child, expands his heart and soul, strengthens his mind, and unfolds his life.

Besides, what a source of mental refreshment and recreation of richness and joy, the imaginative power can procure for the young mind. Children have the gifted habit of using their imagination in a most vivid way; it helps them to make little things seem big or to make unreal things seem real. This "play imagery" enlivens the more or less drab events of childhood with the overflowing richness of their creative fancy. How pitiful it is to think that children should be shut out from the wealth of dreamland and poetry--of the land of make-believe with its pygmies and giants.

It is interesting to note how the Divine Teacher who followed all the rules of artful teaching made a free use of the pictorial language to assist the illiterates as well as the literates to grasp his meanings. Those who were accustomed to guard sheep knew what He meant when He said: "Beware of false prophets who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves." (1) "Enter by the narrow gate" was a picturesque introduction in the days of walled cities. Even though we might know little of the

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(1) Matt. 7, 15.

rainy season in Palestine or the manner in which houses were constructed we can visualize His meaning when He says:

> Every one therefore that heareth these my words and doth them shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came and the winds blew: and they beat upon that house. And it fell not, for it was founded on a rock.(1)

The effective and abundant use of the parable seems to be one of the dominant features in the pedagogy of the True Teacher; he knew that it was especially adapted to the imaginative intellect of the Orientals. These functions of the imagination show that it can be either a help or a hindrance in the pursuit of human ideals and in the attainment of the human goal. If it is pure and intact, if it is filled with all forms of magnificent ideals and rich fancies, if it presents life as bright and sunny, then it fosters great and effective projects for the future and becomes the source of optimism, happiness, and freedom. On the contrary it can become, if neglected in its training, the most effective factor in perversion and depravity in a life full of pessimism and melancholy. It is the tool of imagery for good or bad.

The Church, consequently, shows the need of a wise training of the imagination as one of the important objectives in the intellectual field of education:

Training of the imagination must be subject

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(1) Matt. 7, 24 and 25.

> at all times to those principles which are derived from a correct interpretation of the true nature of the individual. Such principles both direct the proper expression to be given to the imagination, and, at the same time, emphasize the need for careful guidance and supervision, to prevent distorted development and undue exaggeration of this power. It is only by the application of such principles that the imagination can function in ways which are wholesome, ennobling, and which tend to further its right development in the total work of intellectual education.(1)

Dickens warned his readers against neglect in the culture of the rich imaginative power and fancy in which the soul of the child overflows. He believed that without its vital factors, the imagination and the feeling, education becomes a vain, wearisome routine and a dead thing--a narrow, severe, mechanical system like that of the Murdstones or of Squeers, full at the best of emptiness, at the worse of incomprehensible, meaningless facts stored in the young soul. These facts, the child could not apply to himself or relate to each other, but, if they were sprinkled over with the golden touch of imaginative delights and fancies, they would fall into order and transfer into life.

He gives his aim, in one of his speeches, for including the culture of the imagination and the emotions as an essential factor in the true intellectual, as well as highest spiritual development, of the child:

As the utmost results of the wisdom of men

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(1) Redden, J. D., and Ryan, F. A., A Catholic Philosophy of Education The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee, 1942) Ch. VI, p. 235

> can only be at last to raise this earth to that condition to which His doctrine, untainted by the blindness and passions of men could have exalted it long ago, so let us always remember that He set us the example of blending the understanding and the imagination, and that following it ourselves we tread in His step and help our race on it to its better and best days. Knowledge as all followers of it must know has a limited power when it informs the head alone; but when it informs the head and the heart too, it has a power over life and death, the body and the soul and dominates the universe.

It is almost inevitable, therefore, that Dickens should claim, for the child, the right to have his imagination made freer and stronger; the absolute necessity of child freedom, which he stresses in his novel, includes the ideal of the culture of the imagination.

In David Copperfield he tells us of little David's readings in the early home where he made acquaintance with the books that had so much influence on his later life. The spirit of these books reappears again in his novels lighted up by the magic wand of his own brilliant fancy and buoyant cheerfulness.

> From that blessed little room, "Roderich Random," "Peregrine Pickle," "Humphrey Clinker," "Tom Jones," "The Vicar of Wakefield," "Don Quizote," "Gil Blas," and "Robinson Crusoe", came out, a glorious host, to keep me company. They kept alive my fancy, and my hope of something beyond that place and time,--they, and the "Arabian Nights," and the "Tales of the Genii",--and did me no harm; for whatever harm was in some of them was not there for me;

Then he continues to tell us how these striking characters haunted his imagination "for a week together", how he went about the house living their deeds over again in his fancy, dramatizing the parts and imitating the heroes in their acts of bravery. These, he relates, were his "only" and his "constant comforts":

> When I think of it, the picture always rises in my mind, of a summer evening, the boys at play in the churchyard, and I, sitting on my bed, reading as if for life. Every barn in the neighbourhood, every stone in the church, and every foot of the churchyard, had some association of its own, in my mind, connected with these books, and stood for some locality made famous in them.

David's frequent and childlike returns to his crocodile book in his later years are also full of charm and revelation.

Dotheboys Hall is more than a picture of physical neglect and brutality. We have the colourlessness, the forbidding bleakness, the exacting routine, the deadening atmosphere produced by a remorseless repression of the imagination and the individuality of its scholars. The cramming system has failed to arouse and liberate the mental energy of the child. We find the heart of infancy withered up, and coming manhood morally as well as physically dwarfed and helpless.

It is a classroom where lessons lag heavily on, where the dreamings and fancies have been stopped to make

place for the facts of practical philosophy, where the only intellectual awakening comes from the cane and the ringing household word: "Look Sharp". It is a system devoid of all amusements, story books, fairy tales, where the children hear no stories, have no fairies or genii in their lives. How belittling!

Nor did David fare any better. How relievingly would he have stolen to his "blessed little room", where his only friends were, had he not feared the bitterness of the stepfather. Eyed too closely to enjoy imaginative play, and prohibited to read fiction or poetry, he awaited, empty-minded, the rote-storing facts and the dull arithmetic lesson of the morrow. And on the morrow, the young mind who, as Professor Hughes states, "was made a wonder and a problem finder by God is made a problem solver" by the Murdstones. His wonder power, made to increase through his life, is dwarfed and substituted by a most unnatural and irritating activity. What a depreciation! What is there left in the child whose imagination has been dwarfed? Where is his power to feel, to think, and to appreciate beauty? Where is his power to see God and understand Him?

The idea of a perverted imagination filled Dickens with alarm. For children do not all, like David, have access to hidden treasures with which they can people their empty

minds, enliven their imprisoned fancies and broaden their fields of play and experience. He recognized with great clearness that the imagination, sweet, wholesome, and ennobling, when properly trained, can be rendered devilish and degrading if it is crushed or neglected. Some of that festering bitterness and uncleanliness resulting from lack of proper training is suggested in the "vicious-faced boys" of Dotheboys Hall with their "leaden eyes, like malefactors in a jail".....in the "childhood with the light of its eye quenched". Steerforth's unbridled imagination pulled him down to degradation. The education of Little Emily's imagination fitful and soft, had been ignorantly, though lovingly, neglected.

Throughout Dickens's works we feel this recognition of the inestimable value of the imagination in bringing richness and joy to the life of the child and the importance of fostering its free, wholesome development through proper reading and free play.

He knew that by being the connecting link between the threads of daily experience, the present interests of the child and the new elements of culture presented to him in school or home, the imaginative power becomes a potent agency in sustaining and developing a natural and therefore productive interest. Neither did Smike under Squeers or

David with the Murdstones enjoy their study with living enthusiasm. They had none of the vital interest and energy connected with independent thought, none of the intellectual brightness and inspiration found in successful study, none of the happiness and satisfaction that is found in a hopeful constructiveness and self-activity, none of the elements which make for the transformation of the divine image to divine likeness; for the child is most like God when he is putting into effect, through his own free will, the projects of his won creative personality to good purposes. On the contrary, in such dens, we find stupidity, a nervous irritation, and the distressing anxiety of a timid, broken-spirited child whose selfhood is blighted and checked as he works, under compulsion, at a dead matter of study. David would have remembered his history, geography, and grammar if he had been interested, if his mind had not wandered and wondered at the "number of yards of net in Miss Murdstone's cap or the price of Mr. Murdstone's dressing-gown, or any such ridiculous problem that I have no business with, and don't want to have anything at all to do with." When, with Nicholas, we observe Smike "poring hard over a tattered book, with the traces of recent tears still upon his face"..... "patiently conning the page again and again, stimulated by no boyish ambition", we again find Dickens attacking the

evils of uninteresting instruction and study. He taught that whatever knowledge is good and reasonable for the child to know should be made interesting and stimulative to him. It should arouse his self-activity instead of repressing it. That teacher, he thinks, is very incompetent who cannot guide the interests of the pupil towards constructiveness, who cannot, by beginning with the easy and attractive, lead him forward, develop all his powers and make him master of himself and of the knowledge which forms a part of his education.

Summing up, if I had to make an inevitable choice between Dotheboys Hall and the Rookery parlour as a place of education, I would, paradoxically as it may seem, make an option for the former. Squeers is the picture of the hopelessly happy-go-lucky type of teacher who is slovenly in his methods so that none of his pupils learn anything. The Murdstone system, narrow and severe, mechanical, and highly organized is a greater failure. With the old system as represented in Squeers's teaching, the children had been cynically disregarded and allowed to run wild (so that in some cases they picked for themselves like David some precious crumbs of knowledge) while under the Murdstones their personal interests were checked and squeezed to a curriculum that could not possibly excite interest and stimulative effort. Such teaching

is useless. To submit a child to so severe and so merciless a teacher as that of the Rookery would produce results still worse than that effected through Squeers's ignorance and brutality.

We have seen that the aim of the intellectual, moral, and religious training of the child is to fill his mind with good thoughts and his heart with good feelings as a basis for good conduct. Although the culture of these spiritual powers takes first place in the order of importance, yet, the physical powers are earliest in the order of nature. The forcefulness of mind and will that the school seeks to instil into its pupils should not be divorced from bodily strength; vigour of body is a most useful auxiliary to vigour of mind and soul. The child who is strong and energetic will succeed much more easily in "conquering" his "passions" and in "subduing" his "appetites", than the child whose physical system, and consequently his neurological system, has been deteriorated. Life is a struggle in which matter plays its part. A good physique has its role to play in the formation of the "true and finished man of character".

These facts have not always been understood by educators. Up to the nineteenth century, the schools dominated by the ideal of child depravity and knowledge-giving were the sources of physical deterioration. Towards the end of

the century, however, a group of intelligent teachers, who more vividly and distinctly apprehended the nature and the dignity of the child and more clearly saw the requirements of true humanity, began to recognize the fact that the communication of knowledge is only a very small part in the development of human power. Juvenal's dictum "a sound mind in a sound body" became commonly accepted as the basis of intellectual, vocational, and moral efficiency.

Dickens must be placed in the first rank of those wise leaders in education who justly claimed, for every child, the right to a strong, energetic, well-developed physical system, acquired through the help of a proper diet, fresh air, as well as by the innocent and humanizing enjoyment of free play and proper exercise. All these gifts, he thought, would be to the great advantage of the moral energy and racial vigour of the English child. He always considered it a crime against childhood to deprive it of the care, rest, and recreation that befits its nature.

The need of proper food, proper care, proper clothing, proper sanitation--all are pointed out in the picture of the "internal economy" of Dotheboys Hall. Dickens rightly placed nutrition as the first requisite in the development of human existence and gave it its importance in the development of children, physically, intellectual, and morally. In

Nicholas Nickleby, he reveals with clever ridicule, the mean selfishness of adulthood toward childhood and the ignorance of the commonly accepted idea of that time, that children do not require good food because they are young and do not work hard.

When Nicholas arrived at Saracen's Head he found Squeers breakfasting the five hungry little boys before their long ride to Yorkshire in cold weather. Squeers was just helping himself to "a small measure of coffee, a plate of hot toast, and a cold round of beef".

> "This is twopenn'orth of milk, is it, waiter?" said Mr. Squeers, looking down into a large blue mug, and slanting it gently, so as to get an accurate view of the quantity of liquid contained in it.
>
> "That's twopenn'orth sir," replied the waiter.
>
> "What a rare article milk is, to be sure, in London!" said Mr. Squeers, with a sigh. "Just fill that mug up with lukewarm water, William, will you?"
>
> "To the very top, sir?" inquired the waiter.
>
> "Never you mind that," replied Mr. Squeers.
>
> "Serve it right for being so dear. You ordered that thick bread, and butter for three, did you?"
>
> "You needn't hurry yourself," said Squeers; there's plenty of time. Conquer your passions, boys, and don't be eager after vittles."

The waiter has just come in with the bread and butter, and the milk. Squeers, tasting the milk and water, is about to give Nicholas a model lesson on character formation.

He has the mug of milk in hand:

> "When I say number one," pursued Mr. Squeers, putting the mug before the children, "the boy on the left hand nearest the window may take a drink; and when I say number two, the boy next him will go in, and so till we come to number five, which is the last boy. Are you ready?"
>
> "Yes, sir," cried all the boys with great eagerness.
>
> "That's right," said Squeers, calmly getting on with his breakfast; "keep ready till I tell you to begin. Subdue your appetites, my dears, and you've conquered human nature. This is the way we inculcate strength of mind, Mr. Nickleby,"..... and the little boys, dividing their gaze between the mug, the bread and butter (which by this time had arrived), and every morsel which Mr. Squeers took into his mouth, remained with strained eyes in torments of expectation. "Thank God for a good breakfast," said Squeers, when he had finished. "Number one may take a drink."
>
> Number one seized the mug ravenously, and had just drunk enough to make him wish for more, when Mr. Squeers gave the signal for number two, who gave up at the same interesting moment to number three; and the process was repeated until the milk and water terminated with number five.

The children were then eating ravenously of the bread and butter when the horn announcing their hasty departure was heard. "...put what you haven't had time to eat in here, boys!" said Squeers, "you'll want it on the road." And off they went.

Again, on the way, at Ston Slocomb, the adults were served to "a good coach dinner" while the five little boys were put to thaw by the fire, and regaled with sandwiches.

When Snawley had tried to persuade Squeers to take

his stepsons for "twenty pounds per annewum", he had called the latter's attention to the fact that "they were not great eaters". Squeers had rightly said that they didn't "consider the boys' appetites" at Greta Bridge Hall. We find further proof that they did not in the distinguished meals presented to the boys, in the "diluted pincushions without the covers and brown bread", in "the stir-about and potatoes", in the "psysicking of brimestone and treacle" dosed regularly not only to prevent any "ailments" which might give "a world of trouble" to the Squeers household but also as the cheapest way of cutting the children's appetite. Squeers "apprehension of having unintentionally devoured some choice morsel intended for the young gentlemen" is explained by the "popular rumour in the neighbourhood" that "Mr. Squeers, being amiably opposed to cruelty to animals, not unfrequently purchased for boy consumption the bodies of horned cattle who had died a natural death".

Dickens pictures Smike, made almost an imbecile through starvation, besides neglect and cruelty, to show that food has an effect on the spirit as well as on the body. He was but one of the "pale and haggard faces", "lank and bony figures", children "with the countenances of old men", "deformities with irons upon their limbs", boys of "stunted growth", and others whose long "meagre legs would hardly bear their

stooping bodies".

And the lack of proper food equally contributes for the mental effects produced on the boys, "with every young and healthy feeling flogged and starved down, with every revengeful passion that can fester in swollen hearts, eating its way to the core in silence".

In these revelations Dickens wished to direct the attention of his readers to the fact that the food supplied to the children in the boarding schools was absolutely insufficient to build up strong, energetic, well-developed children. He has succeeded all the more when he set up all these little "scarecrows" against the picture of Master Wackford Squeers, fattened to profusion, and kicking his way among them.

In David Copperfield he reveals an equal meanness in the adults of the homes who were frequently careless in feeding children. David does not like living on his own account; his "exclusive breakfasts of a penny loaf and a pennyworth of milk", his bargain of the "stale pastry" put out for sale, all his privation during his stay at Murdstone & Grinby's and during his journey to Betsy Trotwood's: all these experiences eloquently proclaim the child's right to proper food.

But, our true interpreter of childhood knew that youth does not live on bread alone. He knew that without the honest, healthful fun of free play, the life of the youngster

would be colourless, cheerless, and barren. He believed in the child and therefore in the child's pleasures; he accepted them as healthful and admirable, and even called for them as a requisite in the full growth and development of childhood. He kept in consideration the fact that a full life is possible only where the child is enabled to develop his powers to the utmost through self-revelation and self-activity. He saw that games afford an outlet for the imaginative plans of youth and lead it to form new worlds of its own. These activities are adapted to the interests of the child's stage of development. In them he becomes the creator and the focus of executive influence. The activity found in games, Dickens thus considered as spiritual and typical of human life. He also thought that games educate for life by awakening and cultivating many moral and social virtues.

Wholesome, physical, and mental recreation, noble games out of doors, full of joy, freedom, and contentment, under the guidance of wise and adequately trained teachers is a remedy which Nicholas would likely suggest, if he dared to do so, as he observes the "silent" and "sad" boys, of the "den" where he finds

> ..... none of the noise and clamor of a schoolroom; none of its boisterous play, or hearty mirth. The children sat crouching and shivering together, and

> seemed to lack the spirit to move about. The only pupil who evinced the slightest tendency towards locomotion or playfulness was Master Squeers, and as his chief amusement was to tread upon the other boys' toes in his new boots, his flow of spirits was rather disagreeable than otherwise.

Master Squeers was never trained, through the benefit of play, to the virtue of justice, moderation, self-control, brotherly love, consideration and sympathy for the weaker and more delicate. He took all his defects from his father who, himself, had never had games to teach him justice, truthfulness, loyalty, and strict impartiality.

But Squeers, Creakle, and the Murdstones, consumed with the passion of remolding human nature after their own plan, firmly exclude joy and laughter, light and fancy, from their curriculum. With them the child has not the right to be joyous, has not the right to be free. This ideal of the Murdstones is vividly pictured in David's controlled, calculated walks in the Rookery garden under the chilly eye of Jane Murdstone, in his envious watch from his prison cell of the boys playing in the churchyard, in his sitting wearily "in the parlour, day after day, looking forward to night, and bedtime".

> What irksome constraint, I underwent, sitting in the same attitude hours upon hours, afraid to move an arm or a leg lest Miss Murdstone should complain (or she did on the least pretense)

> of my restlessness, and afraid to move an eye lest it should light on some look of dislike or scrutiny that would find new cause for complaint in mine! What intolerable dullness to sit listening to the ticking of the clock; and watching Miss Murdstone's little shiny steel beads as she strung them; and wondering whether she would ever be married, and if so, to what sort of unhappy man; and counting the divisions in the moulding on the chimney-piece; and wandering away, with my eyes, to the ceiling, among the curls and corkscrews in the paper on the wall!

All these pictures show the relentless, equally unimaginative, equally evil and disastrous formation which does not permit a child to be a child.

At Salem House, the pupils were often kept indoors in case they might disturb Creakle at his work. Only at Dr. Strong's school did physical education receive due attention. Only there were the boys permitted to indulge in free play and wholesome recreation.

Dickens, as leader in the department of sanitation both in homes and in schools, brings in also the element of cleanliness, as an essential factor in the development of mind and character. He stresses vigorously the need of proper health rules for Dotheboys Hall. Before going to bed Squeers kindly promises Nicholas that he will give him all necessary information in the morning:

> "I'll come in myself and show you where the well is," said Squeers. "You'll always find a little bit of soap in the kitchen window; that belongs to you"...

> "I don't know, I am sure," he said, "whose towel to put you on; but if you'll make shift with something to-morrow morning, Mrs. Squeers will arrange that, in the course of the day. My dear, don't forget."
>
> "I'll take care," replied Mrs. Squeers; "and mind you take care, young man, and get first wash. The teacher ought always to have it; but they get the better of him if they can."

The next morning the pump was frozen so Nicholas had to submit to Squeers's further directions:

> "You can't wash this morning"..."so you must be content with giving yourself a dry polish till we break the ice in the well, and can get a bucketful out for the boys."

This episode is a good match with another when on "brimstone morning"Mrs. Squeers "presiding over an immense basin of brimstone and treacle, of which delicious compound she administered a large instalment to each boy in succession"..."out of a common wooden spoon which widened every young gentleman's mouth considerably: they being all obliged, under heavy corporal penalties to take in the whole bowl at a gasp" till "physicking" being over Mrs. Squeers in her hurry choked the last boy, "tapped the crown of his head with the wooden spoon to restore him"..."called up a little boy with a curly head, and wiped her hands upon it." Such maternal care bestowed upon a group of boys "attired in motley, ill-assorted, extraordinary garments" together with the "foul appearance of dirt, disorder, and disease, with which they were associated" in filthy, poorly-ventilated, poorly-heated room-

such a painful picture so cleverly exposed before the reader is a powerful challenge and a plea for better sanitary conditions for the child.

When David appears to make his first impression before his aunt, ragged, hungry, dirty, exhausted, suffering, crying, and giving his reasons for running away: "I have been slighted and taught nothing, and thrown upon myself, and put to work not fit for me", he also appears before the Murdstones of the world who would bring up their children in similar neglect and cruelty. Here, again, the Church approves Dickens in his urges for the proper physical development of the child. It approves him for believing that neither religion nor education will make its way in polluted homes with a program of malnutrition, improper sanitation, and lack of personal hygiene. Of what avail is it to talk of faith, of truth, of ideals, of good conduct, of social living to a child condemned but to exist (and not to live), to work and to suffer, with every sense bestowed upon him for health and happiness turned into a torment? To what inspirational feeling, to what childhood's enriching experience will the teacher refer in his process of true related knowledge and self-activity? Is it to the memory of his flogging, of his starvation, of his neglect? Is it to his hopes for the future happiness in this life and his latent hopes of immor-

tality? How can the child, embedded in material filth, crushed in all his aspirations and hopes,--how can that little soul rise to the contemplation of great truths of religion? Just give him a glimpse of heaven through a little of its light and give him water; help him to be clean, lighten the heavy atmosphere in which his spirits flag with proper care, fresh air, happiness, and free play in contact with nature. In these conditions will the basis for a sound intellectual, moral as well as social education be laid.

Father Brennan, in The Image of His Maker, has a passage which brings light and confirmation to the above assertion regarding physical education:

> In the compounding of human nature and in the wonderful economy of life, the body has just as essential a part to play as the soul. It is impossible for us to think a single thought or conceive a single ideal, or put a single resolution, into practice, until the body has prepared the way for the soul, or until the spirit, which is our life and being, has been wed to matter.(1)

But our "finished man of character", if he must be a true citizen of two worlds, that of the city of man as well as that of the city of God, must also qualify for social responsibility. His worthiness to enjoy happiness in heaven will depend upon the measure in which he has made earth heavenly for his fellow-men. Pope Pius XI adds the domestic and social elements in his plan of Christian education "which takes

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(1) Brennan, Robert Edward, The Image of His Maker (The Bruce Publishing Company) Ch. III, p. 40.

in the whole aggregate of human life". As man can arrive to his full personal good only as a member of the Mystical Body of Christ, the supernatural society, in the same way, only as a member of the state, the perfect natural society, can he attain to the highest temporal good. If all the gifts and attainments of his liberal education are not consecrated to the public welfare, or do not find expression in his contact with other men in his various duties, as a citizen, as a father, as a neighbour or as a worker, man becomes essentially ego-centred when he should be God-centred.

Dickens has a most profound and practical consciousness of the responsibility of every man for his brother. Fitzgerald, when stressing Dickens's sympathy for the poor, gives his personal appreciation of the great novelist's achievements as a member of society:

> It is only when we begin to think it over that we see that he was not only a great worker and conspicuous philanthropist; that he devoted a large portion of his talents and his time not merely to the entertainment of his fellow-creatures, but to the amelioration of their condition, to the reform of abuses, and, as I have shown, to the relieving of the poor, and promoting a thing that was nearest to his heart. He did not merely write powerfully on these matters, but he gave his time and labour cheerfully, and <u>did</u> a vast deal. He worked, he investigated, and pleaded with extraordinarily successful results; so that it might be said that had he not been a great writer he would have been celebrated as a great and charitable <u>doer</u>. (1)

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(1) Fitzgerald, Percy, <u>The Life of Charles Dickens</u>, (London Chatto and Windus, 1905), Vol. II, Ch. XVII, p. 205.

This is the personal example of real social living which he sets before the world and before his children. In his comments in The Life of Our Lord we find several passages where he encourages his children to be of service to others.

In Mr. Wickfield who thinks only of his affliction and forgets the world about him, Dickens shows us how a rich personality can be dwarfed to uselessness:

> Weak indulgence has ruined me. Indulgence in remembrance and indulgence in forgetfulness. My natural grief for my child's mother turned to disease; my natural love for my child turned to disease. I have infected everything I touched.

Again we find Little Emily on the boat devoting herself for the passengers to relieve her swollen heart, heavy with sorrow and degradation:

> But theer was some poor folks aboard as had illness among 'em, and she took care of them; and theer was the children in our company, and she took care of them; and so she got to be busy, and to be doing good, and that helped her.

Steerforth's failure as well as that of Ralph Nickleby suggest that they have not added much by their life to the general good of society. Such characters as Dr. Strong, Agnes, Nicholas, however, have left the world better because they have lived in it. The same can be said of the Cherryble Brothers.

In David's relations with the Peggottys, Dickens

exposes another phase of social living. He thunders at the class distinctions which destroy the spirit of brotherhood proper to mankind. We find the child enthroned in a humble society which only as a man he recognizes as being humble. The Murdstones object to David's kitchen company and instruction. They forget that David is having the best of lessons in human dignity and equality; if a child has had due respect for a kind and capable woman of the lower classes, he will respect the lower classes forever. They forget that the best way to overcome the wrong in class distinctions is not to denounce them as they are doing, but to ignore them as David does.

In the preceding pages I have tried to prove how Dickens's optimistic philosophy of life, including his religious sentiments is the basis of his true conception of the child's nature and destiny, of the aims of education, and of the educational process by which these aims are fulfilled. It may be said that the same philosophy of life has suggested him the contents of the curriculum which is to help in the realization of the true development of the child. I have also shown that Dickens believed education to be a means of producing intelligent cultured men of character, and exemplary citizens socially responsive and morally good. This is the very Catholic interpretation of the meaning of education and

and the basis of all that which makes for happiness in this world and in the next. More of a trainer than a teacher he but incidently mentions reading, grammar, history, and geography as subjects of study; his true curriculum, however, as may reasonably be presumed, can be found in the beatitudes which are supposed to have been his constant object of admiration and study. All his ideals of education may be summed up in these laws of happiness made real and concrete in the exemplary life of Our Lord. These are, Dickens rightly thinks, the laws which would make the child the happy master of the kingdom of heaven as well as of the kingdom of this world. The novelist seems to consider these eight proclamations as the eight qualities which the "true man of character" should possess as rules of conduct to lead him towards the main goal of life--happiness. The Life of Our Lord is the curriculum which he presents to his own children as well as that of the poor and the lowly of the world; he presents this little book as a living picture of the beatitudes, the secret of the Master's joys, and the rules which they are to follow into their discovery of the real Christ-like joy.

The educand that would follow Dickens's curriculum would live happily loving God as his Father and his playmate as his brother; he would also be on the true road to eternal

happiness. But Dickens had no faith in a mere mechanical mastery of the kingdom; he believed that the child must have the mind of Christ and Christ's seemingly paradoxical conception of true happiness--that of finding joy even in suffering. This he states in a letter to a clergyman:

> My observation of life induces me to hold in unspeakable dread and horror these unseemly squabbles about "the letter" which drive "the Spirit" out of hundreds of thousands.

Although he patronizes the poor, the meek, and the holy, the mournful, the coerced, and the persecuted, still he does not pity them. He might almost be said to have envied them, as much as he did the pure of heart, the peacemakers, and the merciful. And his threats for the rich and the proud are not less menacing than his laws for happiness are inspirational.

For the beatitudes, as for the New Testament, he has a most "profound conviction" of their "all-sufficiency" in solving man's problems. His definition of Christianity in The Life of Our Lord is really a concrete expression of the beatitudes in prose and in life.

This applicability of the beatitudes in all circumstances of life is exemplified in David Copperfield and Nicholas Nickleby.

To the materialistic England of the nineteenth cen-

tury, to the miserly Ralph Nicklebys, and the utilitarian Murdstones he would give the law: "Happy are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

In the humble life of the Peggottys he exalts the second beatitude: Happy are the meek, for they shall possess the earth.

Before the pain of hunger and cold, the loneliness and the cruel treatment endured by the "hollow-eyed" inhabitans of Dotheboys Hall, Dickens exclaims: "Happy are they who mourn for they shall be comforted."

Against Squeers's and Creakle's partiality and injustice he would oppose: "Happy are they that hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied."

Betsy Trotwood exalts the "merciful"; Little Emily's childlike simplicity and innocence of her early years is an enviable concrete expression of the "pure of heart"; Dr. Strong would happily be placed among the "peacemakers" and the "children of God."

And Little Copperfield, buffeted in life, as well as Smike, afflicted by heavy burdens, hold before the reader and the world, the eighth law of happiness: "Happy are they who suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

In fact--and in this the novelist has often been ac-

cused of exaggeration--Dickens's victims and heroes bear their afflictions with a resignation which has some of the spirit of Christian wisdom; Smike and David are striking examples.

For Dickens, as for the Church, the beatitudes are, therefore, the divine guides and the embodiment of the whole educational process which enables the "little ones" not only to progress effectively towards their final destiny, but also to find, meanwhile, the earthly happiness and peace which the divine Child has brought with the joy of the first Christmas.

C H A P T E R F I V E

T H E I M A G E,

A PRODUCT OF THE CHILD'S ENVIRONMENT.

"He ordered me like a dog, and I obeyed like a dog."
--David Copperfield

"I was driven to do it,"
--Nicholas Nickleby

"If they are bad, think that they would have been better if they had had kind friends and good homes, and had been better taught."
--Life of Our Lord.

In his delineation of character Dickens revealed the child as a product of his environment, physically, intellectually, morally, socially and spiritually--a product of the formal as well as the incidental agencies which form a part and parcel of his education. He also taught that the real personality of the child is often destroyed by education; that ignorant, thoughtless parents and teachers often blame and punish children for being what they made them.

In Nicholas Nickleby and David Copperfield we find a whole gallery of studies of child-life suggestive

in every shade of benignant as well as malignant environment. All are indicative of his creed regarding the influence of these agencies in the education of the child, for the good or for the bad. All illustrate the old adage: "You reap what you sow." Sow the seeds of education in an atmosphere of hatred, harshness, cruelty and flogging; you harvest hardened, dwarfed souls, blighted selfhoods, meanness, falseness, negative enslavement of the personality--the meanest products that can be made from beings created in God's image. Infect the child with the habit of turning out facts, definitions and systems; product, good memorizers rather than good thinkers--mechanical products of a mechanical system. Steep the waxen soul of the youngster into a loveless life of starvation and neglect, stinted of the very necessities of life, of the regular pleasures of childhood, and of the normal possessions of youth; your finished product springs out, the very picture of lovelessness, cruelty, crime, brutality, bestiality, utterly barren in true emotions, youthful in nothing but in age. These negative pictures of boyhood are man-products.

On the other hand, surround the child with the broad, productive sympathy that feels with the child, with a word of kindly interest and encouragement, with reverence for his personality and faith in his powers, with the rich

productive love of parent and teacher, with blessed opportunities for sacred service in his happy hours of play and work; you will develop a boy filled with hopeful dreams of success and triumph, fortune, and happiness, with a soul more responsive to learning, with an increase of physical energy, with a true strong character using fully his selfhood in the freest possible way for God and his fellowmen. Supply for the child an environment suitable to his progressive stages of development along purposeful, ennobling productive lines of self-reformation and self-regulation, encourage his self-activity as a rational process of training the will; you reap free, independent, energetic leaders, triumphant, creative representatives of God. Here you have God-products.

Dickens's child-portraiture carries with it a definite purpose and a definite method. He paints for us the world of his little ones as a place where good and evil influences go side by side, often battling with each other in their struggle for the mastery. So we follow the life-course of his children with feeling and continued interest, out of misery into happiness as David or Smike, now into sombre places of storm and stress, as Steerforth and Emily, and then back again into bright havens of serenity and peace in the company of Agnes and Dr. Strong.

Steerforth was a failure and a disappointment. He had all the qualities that gave him the privilege to be the focus of attention in whatever circle he found himself whether at Salem House where he was the cock of the school or in his family circle where he was the idol of his mother and the envied object of Rosa Dartle's love. He exercised an exceptional ascendancy and an influence over David. He won the admiration and respect of the humble Peggottys. He drew to himself all those who came in contact with him as the magnet draws the iron filings. He possessed by nature every advantage of person and ability to make him a strong, true, and very successful man. All his potentialities should have culminated into a full, rich personality and an asset to his nation. We realize, however, as we follow Steerforth's life-course, that his very qualities have been distorted to his own undoing; we find him a product of the system of training under which he was brought up. He has grown up to be a type of young egoist who warms to all who lionize him, but is capable of infinite and heartless disregard for the rights and well- being of those who cross his self-indulgent nature. He was one of those unstable men who have good abilities but who do not use them persistently in the accomplishment of any one purpose, who never seem to find the sphere for which they are fitted, who fail to recognise the responsibility for the good in their

nature. His emotional and sensitive nature has never been tamed and brought under control of reason. He is a totally disintegrated personality.

When they are visiting Mr. Peggotty of Yarmouth, David finds Steerforth in a moody and sad disposition, guilty of immoral conduct towards Little Emily; sick of mind, Steerforth struggles hopelessly in a rebellion of impulse against reason, of emotion against will. He attributes his miserable state to the way he has been trained.

> "David, I wish to God I had had a judicious father these last twenty years!"
> "My dear Steerforth, what is the matter?"
> "I wish with all my soul that I had been better guided!" he exclaimed. "I wish with all my soul, I could guide myself better!"

Mrs. Steerforth must answer, according to Dickens, for her son's moral degeneracy and ruin, even though she did it through whole-hearted love and maternal devotion. In the first place, he blames her for having made her son vain and frivolous, by keeping his attention directed towards social superiority. In answer to Rosa's inquiry about the nature of the humble Peggottys, the son reveals the mother's opinion towards class distinctions:

> "Why, there's a pretty wide separation between them and us," said Steerforth, with indifference.
> "They are not expected to be as sensitive as we are. Their delicacy is not to be shocked or hurt very easily. They are wonderfully vir-

> tuous. I dare say--some people contend for that, at least, and I am sure I don't want to contradict them; but they have not very fine natures, and they may be thankful that like their coarse, rough skins, they are not easily wounded."

She failed to have him realize that man's rank in society does not come from his wealth, his talents, or his position but from the stirring truth that God is his Father and that, in this respect, all men are equal.

Rosa Dartle will stress the same terrible responsibility of the mother for the kind of training she has given her child. Steerforth, after eloping with Little Emily, and abandoning her, was drowned and brought home. Pointing to a scar on her lip, made by a hammer thrown by Steerforth when he was a boy, Rosa addresses Steerforth's mother:

> "Do you remember when he did this?" she proceeded. "Do you remember when in his inheritance of your nature, and in your pampering of his pride and passion, he did this and disfigured me for life? Look at me, marked until I die with his high displeasure, and moan and groan for what you have made him!"

In spite of David's entreaty for her to be silent, she continues:

> "Look at me, I say, proud mother, of a proud false son! Moan for your nature of him, moan for your corruption of him, moan for your loss of him, moan for mine!"
>
> She clenched her hand, and trembled through her spare, worn figure, as if her passion were killing her by inches.

> "You resent his self-will!" she exclaimed. "You injured by his naughty temper! You, who opposed to both, when your hair was gray, the qualities which made both when you gave him birth! You, who from his cradle reared him to what he was, and stunted what he should have been! Are you rewarded, now, for your years of trouble?"
>
> "Miss Dartle," said I, "if you can be so obdurate as not to feel for this afflicted mother--"
>
> "Who feels for me?" she sharply retorted. "She has sown this. Let her moan for the harvest that she reaps to-day!"

Mrs. Steerforth also trained her son to despise work:

> "Help yourself, Copperfield!" said Steerforth! "We'll drink the daisies of the field, in compliment to you; and the lilies of the valley that toil not, neither do they spin, in compliment to me--the more shame for me!"

She forgot that hard and sustained work reduced to habit by self-control and self-discipline has a strengthening effect on the will.

Nor does he think her less to blame for having given her son the wrong conception of authority, obedience, and freedom. She sends her son to Salem House, not because it is proper place for him, but because she knows that Creakle would yield to Steerforth since his mother was wealthy.

> "It was not a fit school generally for my son," said she; "far from it; but there were particular circumstances to be considered at the time, of more importance even than that selection. My son's high spirit made it desirable that he should be placed with some man who felt

> its superiority, and would be content to bow himself before it; and we found such a man there."

Steerforth is the product of maternal love degenerated into pride and admiration, of indulgence that allows for selfishness and caprices, that fails to distinguish between license and liberty, of a mother who centres the life of her child, on materialistic aims and on class distinction. In Steerforth's aristocratic exterior and engaging manners we find the germs of that moral stagnation so obviously manifest in his mother and her companion, Rosa Dartle.

If we follow David's pathway of life we are aware of the battling, opposing influences, tending now to mar and now to mould the budding life of the child.

We first find him in the warm nest of love in which his vain, fond mother and her quaint, kind servant cherish him. With this last, he plays in the garden, he watches her at her sewing in the warmth of the cheerful hearth, he reads her the natural history of the crocodiles. He is perfectly happy. His life is rich, free, wholesome. His lessons are a path of flowers. When he is alone with his mother he is "apt enough to learn, and willing enough" when she teaches him "the alphabet at her knee". He is "cheered" by the "gentleness" of his "mother's voice and manner all the way." These lessons recall no feeling of disgust or reluctance.

His mother marries a second time and everything is changed. The stepfather, Mr. Murdstone and his sister Jane are severe, methodical, stony. Poor little David is continually hurt by their harsh remarks. He is afraid to say a word or to stir for fear of making trouble for his mother; the chilly looks of these two members of the family weigh him down. When he withdraws into himself and keeps to his room he is charged with being sullen:

> "I will have a respectful, prompt, and ready bearing toward myself," he continued, "and toward Jane Murdstone, and toward your mother. I will not have this room shunned as if it were infected, at the pleasure of a child. Sit down."
>
> He ordered me like a dog, and I obeyed like a dog.

David studies mechanically the lessons set him under the influence of the Murdstones "which was like the fascination of two snakes on a wretched young bird". He is so afraid that he shall not learn that he cannot and is sent away in disgrace. David gives us himself the effect of such treatment: "The natural result of this treatment, continued, I suppose, for some six months or more was to make me sullen, dull, and dogged."

When, after one of his unsuccessful lessons, he is flogged like a dog, he responds likewise by biting Mr. Murdstone's hand. He is shut up alone on bread and butter. He is afraid of himself, tries to convince himself that he is

naughty and he cries. This picture of a sensibility harshly used and of an intelligence so unmercifully quenched is in sharp contrast with the stimulating and productive effects of David's first true, joyful, unconventional, home feeling. "It is the story of a delicate plant, flourishing in a warm air and under a genial sun, transplanted at once amongst snow and ice, fading and withering."(1)

We then find the boy at Creakle's School where he makes acquaintance with Steerforth and Traddles, two powerful influences in his life; he will be capable of resisting the leading of Steerforth only later when he will be disciplined to self-control by the later griefs of his entrance into manhood.

When David's mother died, her annuity of a hundred guineas a year ceased and Mr. Murdstone did not send him back to Salem House. The boy was allowed to wander about the lanes and the house pretty much as he desired until he was sent away to the bottling store at Murdstone and Grinby's to herd with common boys little better perhaps than street Arabs, so that he can say:

> I know enough of the world now to have almost lost the capacity of being much impressed by anything; but it is a matter of surprise to me, even now, that I should have been thrown away at such an age.

This was his first harsh schooling in life. Contra-

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(1) Perkins, F. B., Charles Dickens (New York: G. P. Putnam and Sons, 1870), p. 260.

rily to other boys, he went from the world to the school; he had seen life at its coarsest before he began his training for it, probably knew the coarsest words in the English language before the best. He was sent to be prepared for a world which he had already seen. The coarseness of the whole thing, the work, the rooms, the boys, was a sort of bestial nightmare. With these experiences and with the Marshalsea scenes he might easily have slid off into the criminal class. However there was always in David, as there had been in Dickens, something heroic in the way he confronted such trials and the discipline had infinite effect on his character.

We follow our hero through the panorama of experiences and influences of character along the Dover Road to the neat, orderly home of dear old Betsy Trotweed on the cliff. Every little episode of her half-austere, half-eccentric yet tranquil and tender care on befalf of the neglected boy makes for a sane unbringing which will counteract the evil effects of David's preceding experiences.

Or again we go with him to Canterbury where he is committed to the care of the scholarly, kind, and cheerful gentleman in Dr. Strong and to the humanizing effects of Agnes Wickfield's radiant presence and advice. These are ideal conditions for development; all things thrive with joy and love, apparently without effort.

Dr. Strong "was one of the gentlest of men," said young Copperfield, "full of amiability and sweetness"..."he was the "idol of the whole school." His school was

> an excellent school; as different from Mr. Creakle's as good is from evil. It was very gravely and decorously ordered and on a sound system; with an appeal, in everything, to the honour, and good faith of the boys,

David again gives us the effects of such training. He tells us that this faith "worked wonders":

> We all felt that we had part in the management of the place, and in sustaining its character and dignity. Hence, we soon became warmly attached to it...and learnt with a good will, desiring to do it credit.

There, he has found happiness and success.

> I am growing great in Latin verses... Dr. Strong refers to me in public as a promising young scholar. Mr. Dick is wild with joy, and my aunt remits me a guinea by the next post.

He has lived up a credit to the good influences in his training and has overcome the bad.

Smike and his fellow-students cannot say as much; they are the typical products of such a vile institution as that of Greta Bridge, of such unloving guardians as Mr. and Mrs. Squeers, of such a worthless master as Mr. Squeers himself. Those writhing ghosts, those heaps of moral, mental, and physical pollution are a direct outcome of a life spent in that grim and squalid home, devoid of all means of decency and health. No other picture could be found in a pupil submitted for life to the dia-

bolical grin of a teacher who is the picture of low, cunning avarice, block-headed ignorance, imposture and brutality, who is bent on gratifying his passion for dominion, for lust, and for cruelty.

Smike, a boy nineteen years of age, and the drudge of the institution, speaks for them all. When he accounts for his running away from the place with the words, "I was driven to do it", he summarizes the ill effects of all the wrongs he has endured under such a teacher and guardian. He means, "You have driven me to do it by depriving me from kindly sympathy and affection from my birth, by starving and flogging every young and healthy feeling out of me, by making me the "pig-headed, brutish, obstinate, sneaking dog of Mrs. Squeers, by driving me to the latent shame and sense of degradation felt in struggling through my dull, painful, hopeless, attempts at infant lessons." Smike is one of the most awful pictures of the deterioration resulting from giving no real childhood to children. He is a striking example of the arrest of development and the sacrifice of power and life which arises from poor homes, poor schools, poor teachers, poor parents or guardians.

The contrast between the harshness and cruelty of the guardians and the encouraging sympathy of Nicholas effectuates the same contrast in the conduct of Smike.

Nicholas clings to the wretched boy, treats him kindly and hopes for him. Smike, attaches himself to Nicholas in pure confidence, becomes his devoted servant and finds real happiness in his service of love.

Uriah Heep's knaveries are revealed to point out the natural product that can arise from the false teaching of a spurious humility and depreciation of selfhood. He is considered as one of Dickens's most successful hypocrites. Uriah gives us a sample of his training:

> "Father and me was both brought up at a foundation school for boys, and mother, she was likewise brought up at a public sort of charitable establishment. They taught us all a deal of umbleness--not much else that I know of--from morning till night. We was to be umble to this person, and umble to that; and to pull off our caps here, and to make bows there; and always to know our place, and abase ourselves before our betters. And we had such a lot of betters! Father got the monitor medal by being umble. So did I. Father got made a sexton by being umble. He had the character, among the gentlefolks, of being such a well-behaved man that they were determined to bring him on. It was what was always being dinned into you and me at school; it's what goes down best. "Be umble," says father, 'and you'll do!' And really it ain't done bad!"

David gives a different estimate of this kind of "umbleness".

> It was the first time it had ever occurred to me that this detestable cant of false humility might have originated out of the Heep family. I had seen the harvest, but had never thought of the seed. I had never doubted his meanness, his craft and malice; but I fully comprehended now,

> for the first time, what a base, unrelenting and revengeful spirit must have been engendered by this early, and this long, suppression.

Agnes's deep love in the service of her kind-hearted father gave her many excellent chances of reaching true womanhood. When she got the opportunity for the revelation of character she had character to reveal and to use for the benefit and happiness of others. Homes and schools with such training are centres of great power.

Traddles who was trained by Mr. Creakle says: "I have no invention at all, not a particle. I suppose there never was a young man with less originality than I have." He is a victim of a system that addresses hundreds of boys exactly in the same manner; a product, strangely devoid of individual traits except that of being a skeleton artist.

Dickens held very strongly that the poor were products of their environment nor did he point to them as a class apart to be disdained for their wickedness and inertia. He believed that the state more than themselves was to be blamed for their condition. He explained the ignorance of the poor by their very need and by their lack of opportunity in life, the fact that they are ignorant and helpless calls for more consideration on the part of the better informed. Dickens's works reveals the novelist's solicitude to extend the blessings of education to the poorer classes

as well as to the rich. He excuses Little Emily more readily than he does Steerforth for his misconduct.

His vivid description of the humble delights enjoyed in the home of the hearty and noble-hearted Daniel Peggotty is a revelation of the reverence of the author for the homes of the poor. With David and Steerforth the reader enjoys the comfortable quaintness, the simple welcome, the bright hues of the happy fireside scenes. In the simple and pure affections of young David and Little Emily, in the unselfishness and true devotion of the rugged Peggottys we find an exaltation of the strength and value of the family virtues bred among them.

Dickens was right. The life of Jesus, the poor Man, does show that true greatness can be achieved without worldly prestige, without wealth. Jesus did not owe His greatness to material environment, to family connections, to class distinctions. He was to teach us that greatness lies within a man and is achievable by the poor, the unprivileged, the unknown.

In such wise did Dickens reveal for us the manifold ideal and varied nature of the environment that should favour the development of the child. The ragged, starveling victims of the ignorant, greedy, brutal, savage Mr. Squeers, and the crushed, barren victims of the positively sycophant Creakle

claim the right to a sympathetic understanding, honest-hearted, intelligent, duty-loving, adequately-trained teacher, a most reverent student of children, a child psychologist--a teacher like Agnes Copperfield and Dr. Strong who carry with them a radiant gleam from the Truest of all Teachers.

Pope Pius XI makes the same demand for the child:

> Perfect schools are the result not so much of good methods as of teachers who are thoroughly prepared and well-grounded in the matter they have to teach; who possess the intellectual and moral qualifications required by their important office; who cherish a pure and holy love for the youths confided to them,...(1)

The protests against Squeers and Creakle are not so much an attack upon the individual or upon a type as upon the State which allowed such schools to exist. In harmony with the claims of the Church he believed that:

> ...the State can exact and take measures to secure that all its citizens have a certain degree of physical, intellectual, and moral culture, which considering the condition of our times is really necessary for the common good. (2)

By revealing the blighted victim of the cruel, treacherous, pettily-malignant, greedy Murdstone as well as the spoilt son of the snobbish Mrs. Steerforth, he claims for every child the right to be raised in a decent home, free

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(1) Pope Pius XI, Christian Education of Youth (New York: The America Press, 1936), p. 30.

(2) Ibid, p. 15.

from the conditions which tend to thwart the development of the child, physically, mentally, morally. He wants a home where youth can find a happy unconventional and true freedom--a wholesome life that produces a true home feeling and true feelings for home. He insists on the need of an affectionate, sympathetic, as well as intelligent guidance of parents. Here again, Catholic philosophy approves Dickens:

> ...education as a rule, will be more effective and lasting which is received in a well-ordered and well-disciplined Christian family;;"(1)..... "Parents are under the grave obligation to see to the religious and moral education of their children as well as to their physical and civic training as far as they can, and moreover to provide for their temporal well-being.(2)

The various forms of abuse, neglect, hazard, exploitation, which his characters undergo, especially David, all go to prove his unconscious submission to the rules of the Church regarding the necessity of proper environment for the child.

> It is no less necessary to direct and watch the education of the adolescent, 'soft as wax to be moulded into vice,' in whatever environment he may happen to be, removing occasions of evil and providing occasions for good in his recreations, and social intercourse. (3)

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(1) Pius XI, Christian Education of Youth (New York: The America Press, 1936). pp. 23-24.

(2) Cod. Jur. Can., c. iii., as quoted in Pius XI, Christian Education of Youth, p. 10.

(3) Ibid., p. 31.

The influence of the different educational agencies in the development of the child are drawn with such masterly precision of detail as to show the novelist's clear recognition of the importance of surrounding the child with a favourable environment. However, Dickens does not seem to keep sufficient account of the inherited equipment of the child, including the evils of original sin--all that which makes for individual responses to the same environment and educative process.

Whether Dickens, as a social reformer, stresses but the one aspect of the subject to the point of exaggeration, for the sake of emphasis--this is a concession which might be credited to his account and would prove that he has achieved his aim through his usual genius.

C O N C L U S I O N

Singularly blessed as he was with a happy home, our novelist was accustomed to do much of his literary work in the room with his children around him. They became the magic well of his genius. To give the child his proper place amidst the beauty of our humble affections and our domestic humanities--this noble aim seems to be the strongest motive underlying Dickens's ardent defence of the great cause of the Child versus Tyranny, Cruelty, Injustice, and Deprivation. The following poem, found in his desk after his death, seems to crystallize the master-passion of his life. It is at the same time a beautiful summary of the main topics developed in one form or other in the preceding chapters:

When the lessons and tasks are all ended,
And the school for the day is dismissed,
And the little ones gather around me,
To bid me "good night" and be kissed;
Oh, the little white arms that encircle
My neck in a tender embrace!
Oh, the smiles that are halos of heaven,
Shedding sunshine of love on my face!
And, when they are gone, I sit dreaming
Of my childhood, too lovely to last;
Of love that my heart will remember
While it wakes to the pulse of the past--
Ere the world and its wickedness made me
A partner of sorrow and sin;
When the glory of God was about me,
And the glory of gladness within.
Oh, my heart grows as weak as a woman's,
And the fountains of feeling will flow

When I think of the paths, steep and stony,
Where the feet of the dear ones must go;
Of the mountains of sin hanging o'er them,
Of the tempest of fate blowing wild;
Oh, there's nothing on earth half so holy
As the innocent heart of a child!
They are idols of hearts and of households,
They are angels of God in disguise,
His sunlight still sleeps in their tresses,
His glory still gleams in their eyes.
Oh, those truants from home and from heaven,
They have made me more manly and mild,
And I know now how Jesus could liken
The Kingdom of God to a child.
I ask not a life for the dear ones
All radiant, as others have done;
But that life may have just enough shadow
To temper the glare of the sun;
I would pray God to guard them from evil,
But my prayer would bound back to myself;
Oh, a seraph may pray for a sinner,
But a sinner must pray for himself.
The twig is so easily bended,
I have banished the rule and the rod;
I have taught them the goodness of knowledge,
They have taught me the wisdom of God...
When the lessons and tasks are all ended,
And Death says "The school is dismissed,"
May the little ones gather around me,
To bid me "good night", and be kissed!

These tender thoughts and feelings, the secret power of Dickens's genius, set the child as the fulcrum of his social message to the reading world. His great object was to help to sweeten and lighten the atmosphere of his own time. He used the child as a medium of ethical appeal. He believed that the unspoilt perception of youth as well as its untroubled and discerning vision could often be taken as sure and reliable guides in life. The common and humble

affections and sympathies of childhood were, for him, potent levelling factors in society; he thought that the evils resulting from class distinctions could be cleansed by its purifying stream. This seems to be the source of his peculiar genius. And the regenerating and rejuvenating power of it all has its origin in the magical memory of his own childhood which exercised to the last a dominant and determining influence over his life. This inspiration, which makes one turn back and observe his own childhood to keep his soul fresh and warm in eternal youth, lies in the words of Jesus: "Become as little children".

It is not surprising, therefore, that Dickens should keep a very tender place in his heart for children, that he should invest them with so much sensibility and innocence, that he should describe them as such frail and lovely rosebuds so delicate and fresh from the hands of God, so pure in the blue of their eyes. It is not surprising that he could not bear to see them crushed under the rough hands that seek to deal with them, that he should have had the courage to revolutionize men's habits of thought and to build his kingdom on his love for the child. Could one wonder at his becoming the chief English apostle of childhood in claiming a just, intelligent, and considerate recognition of its absolute rights? It is most

natural for Dickens to set the child as the centre of all industrial, social, and spiritual revolution. Throughout his incessant wars against humanity, he shows the full, rich sympathy of his own childlike heart for the whole race of children unjustly and unreasonably criticized by forgetful and ignorant adults. He is the leading champion at the head of the army of his little children marshalling his artillery against every variety of foe, in terrible earnest, to kill all the giants that prey on the rights of the child in the home, in the school, and in the community. He battles against the prevailing wrongs of injustice, cruelty, oppression, ignorance: against every kind of heart-breaking absurdity. He brings to the task every weapon in his command. The brigade he turns on the enemy is charged with ridicule that kills, with powerful strokes of murderous satire, and with the strength of his whole gallery of characters which cling to us and tyrannize us--characters whom we could not forget if we would. Thus the huge Trojan Horse of fierce invective makes its way, from adventure to adventure, against the background of innocence, love, jostling life, exuberant mirth, and the make-believe of Dickens's little people. Or, again, it may find itself amongst the simple griefs and flowing tears of suffering childhood. Joy

and sadness blend charmingly in Dickens's style. This great lord of laughter and tears adds his distinctive power of charm to all these weapons by touching them with the magic wand of his own childlike spirit which lived in him to the end and colours his child-portraiture. The same childlike joviality and spontaneity pervade his soul and his works. The sweet, sparkling humour which is behind his delineations has something of the elfin sensibility and the delicate tenderness that marks the exuberant gaiety of children. His satire is tinged with the same compassionate forgiveness which marks the man. The imaginative creatures of his novels are invested with the creative, fancy and invention of the author himself. Even the magic touch of exaggeration which he applies for emphasis and for fun's sake has something of the childlike spirit which lived in him to the end. The strong souls are seen through the glorious haze of illusion. When we say that his characters are true to life, we must stress that they are true to youth. All the characters are a little larger than they really are, for Dickens is looking up to them as a child would. He sees and feels with the child, not merely for him.

The child in Dickens seizes your imagination, evokes laughter or tears, awakens your love, your kindness, your scorn for untruth, pretension and imposture, your

tenderness for the weak, the poor, and the oppressed, No heart can resist Dickens's plea for sympathy; he made thousands more sympathetic with children. Tears for the children of his fancy were to save the lives of real ones. The deep, strong feeling for the child gives permanency and propulsive force to his great thoughts in education.

With Smike and David came the first pathetic pictures that filled the world with pity for what cruelty, ignorance, neglect may inflict upon the young. The world hates Squeers, Creakle, and the Murdstones and pities Smi e, David, and Traddles--and this to the limit of its power to hate and pity.

In these few inspired chapters, Dickens's compelling genius has proved supremely triumphant and has rendered reform irresistible. His titanic efforts won a signal and complete victory. The world approved and still approves Dickens. The epoch-making exposure of the Yorkshire schools has discredited and swept away the cramming system and corporal punishment of Dotheboys Hall. The effect was electrical. Squeers and Dotheboys Hall became household words. Parents rebelled against sending their children to half-starved, underpaid assistants employed by ignorant greedy brutal men. This was also the first step towards the provision of real education for the mass of the people by the establishment of free schools in England.

Through the eyes of David, Dickens also looked into the very soul of the Murdstones of the world and reminded them of their terrible responsibility. He broke down, once and for all, the gloomy and dreadful doctrine of child depravity which wrought countless evils upon the English homes at the beginning of the century. Parents as well as teachers are now severely punished by the laws of civilized countries for the offences against children, that were approved by the most enlightened educators at the time when Froebel and Dickens began their noble work.

This was the plain message which Dickens "thundered into the ears of the sleeping giant of British democracy" in the name of the child whose dignity he recognized and set up again in the midst of the social world. Such, I take it, is the service rendered by Dickens to his race and to the world. This liberation of frozen sympathies for the child in the revival of confidence for his individuality is the sustenance of the highest hopes for the future of our homes and schools in our march towards higher civilization. His ardent pleas take the high moral tone of Christianity when he urges the Christian world not to ignore any longer Christ's teaching about the little ones.

May the foregoing pages be sufficient to maintain Mr. Hughes' recognition of Dickens as a liberator of the in-

nocent young. Though he may not be a Catholic, yet, he did contribute to the development of Christianity, and his good work should be recognized by Christian educators. The world should read David Copperfield and Nicholas Nickleby in the light of Wyzewa's interpretation of Dickens's Christian soul. In his critical study of one of Chesterton's works on the author, this well-known critic adds a note to Dickens's genius and attributes the author's widespread popularity and influence to a life spent in intimacy with God, as a student steeped in admiration for the "hero of the New Testament".(1) Wyzewa sees in Dickens the greatest Christian novelist of his age and of all ages.

With Hughes the world should remember the greatest achievement of Dickens:

> Dickens bravely fought the battle against the enemies of the children and helped to win the greatest victories of Christian civilization.

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(1) Wyzewa, T. de, "Un nouveau livre sur Charles Dickens". Revue des deux mondes, XXXVII (Livraison du 15 février, 1907, p. 937.

> "Une puissance d'action aussi étendue et aussi diverse ne saurait s'expliquer par le seul génie littéraire: elle n'a été possible qu'à un homme qui vivait "en contact avec Dieu", à un homme qui s'était imprégné, jusqu'au fond de l'âme de la parole et de l'exemple du 'héros du Nouveau Testament'."

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