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The Practicality of the Brotherhood Idea  
as suggested by  
"The Servant in The House" and "The Melting Pot"-

A T H E S I S

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of the

U N I V E R S I T Y O F M I N N E S O T A

BY

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The two plays, "The Servant in The House", and "The Melting Pot", have as their basic idea, brotherhood. In the former it is applied to the class problem, no solution being given other than to suggest that all men, whatsoever their class, regard each other as brothers and mutually share one another's work. In the latter the application is made to the race problem, particularly in the United States. Here the definite solution is given, that race amalgamation follows closely upon the recognition of brotherhood.

The Mr. Zangwill's problem is a harder one, his solution is simpler for it depends upon sociological principles, while Mr. Kennedy's rests on a supernatural power. To a large extent the problems are the same, for distinction in classes is often due to difference in race.

Both plays are examples of the modern drama at its best. The themes are superb, the treatment dignified.

Our task is to discover the reality behind the romance, to see whether we are willing to accept brotherhood on the dramatists terms.

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Part I.

"The Servant in The House".

I.

"The Servant in The House" gives a picture of a group of people largely animated by selfish motives. Auntie, the wife of the Vicar, works unceasingly for the advancement of her husband. Whatever the cost, she would have him push to the front. As a result of her ambition, she almost forces him to disown his brother, Robert, a drainman, who is uncouth in appearance, degenerate in character, and yet strong, vigorous, elemental. The Vicar is one of those people who is always dependent on some one. He had obtained his education at the expense of his brothers, Manson and Robert, and now is completely under the influence of his wife. Mary, Robert's daughter, has been brought up by Auntie and the Vicar, and knows nothing of her parentage. The Bishop of Lancaster-shire is a hardened old sinner, who, in the name of the church, is robbing the people. Financial gain is his one motive.

Something is wrong with the Vicar's church. An ill smelling odor seems to emanate from its very foundations. The Vicar is disturbed but helpless. Just as the trouble is getting unbearable, Manson arrives, and playing the triple part of Butler, Bishop and Savior, so impresses the spirit of brotherly love on the different characters, that they lay aside their selfishness and start life anew. The Bishop of Lancastershire alone does not yield to the purifying influence. Robert and the Vicar join hands in their attempt to cleanse the drains which prove to be the root of the evil; Auntie recognizes Robert as her brother; Mary sees in him an ideal father, and he in turn, sees the beauty of labor and of love. As the curtain goes down for the last time the Vicar asks Manson, "In God's name, who are you?" and he replies, "In God's name, your brother."

The meaning is apparent. Briefly stated it is this. We are all brothers in the sight of God, hence

there should be no class distinction. All should work together in unselfishness and love.

## II.

The action of the play is crowded into a few hours. In that time tremendous moral crises are reached and passed, characters are revolutionized, a suggestion for the remedy of all our social ills is made. Surely the dramatist has been on the mountain top and caught the vision; he has created a work which has benefited humanity, for under the spell of his play, men have for a few hours at least, ceased to be petty and selfish; the spirit of brotherly love has stirred in their hearts. To have accomplished that, is to have nobly achieved, so that to put the test of practicality to the work, secures <sup>67</sup>effrontery. But this is <sup>8</sup>scientific and pragmatic age, and herein lies the justification of the inquiry.

In the first place all the character development in "The Servant in The House" is due to supernatural influence. It is not in the character of Bishop or Butler that Manson impresses the members of the household, but

it is as Savior. By his divine power he is able to banish selfishness from the heart, to substitute for it love of such strength that the old life is cast aside and a new one begun. His then, is the message of Christ, that we love our brother as ourself. If this could be attained the whole social system would be revolutionized, the world would at one leap acquire a civilization undreamed of.

But even Mr. Kennedy has not complete faith in the power of his solution, for where selfishness is most supreme, he admits that it fails. The Bishop of Lancashire is unmoved, and after a most daring speech in which he allies himself with the murderers of Christ, he rushes out to continue his wicked works. Evidently much is required on the part of the individual, or fixed laws continue to operate.

One of the most potent factors is the environment. As our life long surroundings, physical and social, have made us, so shall we be. Mr. W. J. Locke gives a most delightful, whimsical example of the unrelenting force of

this law, in "The Beloved Vagabond". Transplanting is a difficult matter, adaptation a slow process.

This leads us to suggest that the Vicar, who had known no physical exposure, would undoubtedly meet his death in his attempt to help Robert cleanse the drains; that Robert, long accustomed to lower class life, would grow weary of existence in the Vicar's home, and that Mary, brought up to appreciate culture and refinement, would soon chafe under her father's crudity. Unless the power which changed these people was stronger than sociological principles, the ideal could not be attained. J.M.R.

Again, man is primarily selfish. He is a bundle of wants. An impelling force within makes him struggle for their satisfaction, so that, as soon as the primary wants - food, shelter - clothing are supplied, he rushes on to attain aesthetic desires. Thus there is ever an un-reached goal ahead of the individual, the class, or the race. All society shares this warfare. The ruling class strive to keep the power it already possesses, the subject class to attain that which it has not. Motives

grow so strong that methods cease to be regarded; brotherhood is forgotten.

### III.

Such are the natural laws which bind us, but as may appear at first glance, they do not decree that we be totally selfish. Quite the reverse. Beyond our desires for ourselves lie our desires for the advancement of first, the smaller groups, then the larger, of which we are members, so that egoism in its broad meaning, approaches altruism. A natural evolutionary process which makes certain ultimate advancement is thus mapped out.

We see evidence everywhere of the working of this law. Philanthropists for example, who have satisfied their own primary and secondary wants, search for further gratification of desires in doing good to the community, state or nation. In fraternities, lodges, churches, political organizations, the welfare of the group is the thing considered. Communistic schemes have long been known. The fact that they have failed, argues little against the under-lying principle. The disaster has



been due to the dependence upon the outside world with its commercial relations, and to the inability of man to shake off his class jealousy and hatred.

In a recent number of the World's Work, Mr. Fredrick Van Eden gives an interesting account of his own experiences in the communistic field, in Holland. He failed for just the reason suggested. Undaunted however, he is going to try again in South Carolina, hoping the United States will be more sympathetic to such a movement. He has studied humanity and seen that rich and poor alike are unhappy. He believes with Mr. Kennedy that salvation lies in mutual sacrifice and helpfulness, and to inspire that spirit is his aim. Whether he wins or fails in the worldly sense, he will succeed spiritually, and the world will be better because he has lived.

Brotherhood is the cry of the socialists. "One for all, all for one", is their ideal. No man can be truly prosperous while another suffers. This is Mr. Kennedy's idea, but the point of approach is different. They say preaching is of no avail while conditions are evil. En-

vironment is the strongest human influence, and it must be sane and wholesome. The first thing to do then, is to reorganize the industrial bases of society. It has long been our popular belief that Socialism means redistribution of property. This is not the case at all. It does not concern wealth now in existence, but has to do with that which the Socialists propose to create. The main factors in Socialism are (1) common ownership of material elements of production, (2) common management of production, (3) distribution of income by the common authority. Socialists vary in their idea of the last. Some would distribute according to mechanical equality; some, merit; some, need; some equality of income in value.

To the rich this is not an attractive plan, for the surplus wages, now allotted to interest and profit would be divided among the producers. Gradually then, equality would be attained. The servant class would pass away and personal service would be demanded. Individual extravagance would become well-nigh impossible, and in its place would come public expenditure.

Whether we agree or disagree with the socialistic idea, matters little for our purpose. It serves only as one of the many examples of the practical power of the brotherhood idea, which it is evident, underlies a large number of our institutions. Steadily it has made our civilization advance, but never in defiance of law. This is where we differ from Mr. Kennedy and stand with the socialists, believing that he should have combined with his solution of the problem, the influence of environment.

Part II.

"The Melting Pot".

I.

David Quixanos, a Russian Jew immigrant, with musical genius greater than Rubenstein's has caught a vision of America's future. He sees the many races that have flocked here, welded into one, the result being a race of supermen. He dreams of the time when the past shall be forgotten, when old world feuds and vendettas shall be cast aside, and he pours out his soul's inspiration in a divine symphony.

In his Russian home David had witnessed the massacre of his whole family by the Russian aristocrats. The face of the leader has haunted him ever since. When memory rushes in too strongly, he looses control of himself, and in horror and revulsion, vows eternal vengeance. So, though all his ideals favor an America, uninfluenced by ancient tyranny, he himself is the victim of an old world tragedy.

He lives in an attractive Jewish home. His great

aunt, Frau Quixanos, is a typical Jewish woman who speaks Yiddish, practices all of the Jewish customs, and continually grieves over the way the younger generation has cast them aside. The struggle waged around her is tense and interesting. It pictures the eternal truth, that the old cling to their life long habits, while the young quickly adapt themselves.

Mendel, her son, is torn by conflicting emotions. He is still young enough to yearn for the new, but old enough to hold to the past. He too, is a musician, but the conventions have bound him so long that he fails to see that David in violating the rules, rises above them.

When the test comes, each Jew is true to his race instinct. David's love for Miss Revendal is at first not strong enough to conquer his Russian hatred, and he turns back to his Jewish home, but the case is scarcely typical of racial antipathy. A man could not be expected to marry the daughter of his most bitter enemy without a struggle, even though the same race blood ran in his veins.

Miss Revendal is a beautiful Russian aristocrat, the daughter of the man who led the massacre. Because she was a liberal in spirit, she had rebelled against her father, left Russia, and taken up settlement work in New York. There David met her, and in spite of racial difference they became engaged, vowing that nothing could ever separate them. But when David faced her father and saw in him the man upon whom his life long hatred had been centered, he forgot all about his dreams of an America in which old world feuds were to be buried; he became first, a man hating the murderer of his loved ones; second, a Russian Jew hating a Russian Christian. In his agony he cast off Miss Revendal, and rushed back to his Jewish family as though he had just escaped contamination. Vera was left alone, rebellious against her father, hating her birthright, but loving David, and through him, his persecuted race.

Dramatically the last act is comparatively weak. The struggle is over, the final union alone remains. We have known that this would come, for the love of David

and Vera is pictured as the strongest force in the play. We are not surprised to find that David is unhappy even though his Symphony has been successfully produced; nor that Mendel, who originally had been so bitterly opposed to his marriage with a Christian is urging it: nor that Frau Quixanos has cast aside many Hebrew customs in favor of American.

The curtain goes down upon the usual happy ending. In this case however, its meaning is deep, for in it is embodied Zangwill's idea of the solution of the race problem in the United States.

## II.

Even a simple review of the story reveals the fact that Mr. Zangwill has given us in "The Melting Pot", a thesis play which deals with a live theme and which glows with intensity of feeling. Ideally he is pleading for the fusion of the races in the United States; realistically he is the apostle of the Jews, and it is for them that he is entreating our sympathy. If, however, his theory is to apply to one race, it must apply to many, so we hear David saying: "Germans and Frenchmen, Irishmen and Englishmen, Jews and Russians - into the Crucible with you all. God is making the American. \* \* \* The real American has not yet arrived. He is only in the Crucible - he will be the fusion of all the races, the coming superman".

This reveals the fact that Mr. Zangwill is taking a broad stand, the result being an American eulogy which stirs our patriotism and broadens our human sympathies.

Mr. Zangwill is a student of Hebrew conditions. He knows the race as it is, at its best and at its worst.



He has given many pictures of the lowest types; he does not foolishly believe that a whole race of developed Davids is knocking at our doors; but he has faith in his people and in the power of evolution; he has found in the Jew elements of greatness which centuries of abuse have been unable to stifle, and which centuries of opportunity would unfold into something exceptional. And yet - it could not quite be done alone, it demands the assistance of the other races.

This is the reason why in "The Melting Pot", he presents the exceptional character, the genius, rather than the street pedlar or pawn broker: He would win our love, would stir the spirit of brotherhood within us. With his eyes fixed continually on the Jewish problem, with his faith in the Jewish character, with his firm belief that assimilation is inevitable, and that there is no race antipathy, he does not hesitate to offer amalgamation as a solution of the problem. The mere fact that the play has succeeded so well shows that we are not entirely antagonistic to the idea. As a people we long

for a common brotherhood, and yet, before we are swept too much away by the dramatist's vision, it will be well for us to pause to see what race elements would be brought into this fusion.

### III.

Since 1820, 25,000,000 immigrants have come to the United States from Europe. During that time the character of the influx has greatly changed. A quarter of a century ago our immigrants were two thirds Teutonic or Anglo Saxon; now less than one sixth are. While Germany used to contribute one third, in 1907 she sent barely one seventh. The Slavic and Oriental peoples have been taking the place. Of the 1,250,000 immigrants in 1907, 900,000 were from Russia, Austro-Hungary, or Italy. Mr. W. Z. Ripley says, "We have tapped the political sinks of Europe and are now drawing large numbers of Greeks, Armenians and Syrians".

In comparison with America, all other countries seem ethnically pure. Even from the first there has been a great mixture here. Dr. Maurice Fishberg asserts that five Jews came into America with Columbus, that by 1826, there were 6000; by 1840, 15000; by 1900, 1,058,133. New England and Virginia were originally Anglo Saxon; Pennsylvania and New York were Dutch; Delaware was Swedish;

the Carolinas, Scotch Highlanders, Hugenots. In 1671, one fifth of the population of the colonies could not speak English. Today the foreign born with their children constitute one third of our population, almost one half of the white population, while the proportion for cities is very much larger.

Chicago gives a striking example of the situation. There they have newspapers in ten languages, church services in twenty, and fourteen languages spoken by ten thousand people each. It is the second Bohemian city in the world, the third Swedish and the fourth Polish. New York is the largest Jewish city. It is a larger Italian city than Rome. There are as many Irish in Boston as Dublin. In California there are from 45 to 50,000 Japanese. San Francisco alone contains 12,000, Los Angeles 6,000.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich has given his view of the situation in the following lines:

"Wide open and unguarded stand our gates,  
And through them presses a wild motley throng-

Men from the Volga and the Tartar steppes,  
Featureless figures of the Hoang Ho  
Malayan, Scythian, Tenton, Kelt and Slav  
Flying the old world's poverty and scorn;  
These bringing with them unknown rites,  
Those, tiger passions, here to stretch their claws.

\* \* \* \*

O Liberty, white Goddess! is it well  
To leave the gates unguarded?

\* \* \* \*

For so of old

The thronging Goth and Vandal trampled Rome  
And where the temples of the Caesars' stood,  
The lean wolf unmolested made her lair".

It is no longer true that our gates stand "wide open  
and unguarded" but they are still enough ajar to admit a  
motley throng, and it is for us to discover what elements  
they are bringing with them.

As has been said, the early immigrants were largely

Teutonic or Anglo-Saxon. These people came into our midst practically assimilated, but with the shifting of immigration, we face a new problem. We have left behind Protestantism and education, and encountered Catholicism and illiteracy, while races that doubtless have never mingled before, are being associated.

The Italian came here largely because of economic conditions. Throughout Southern Italy and Sicily land tenure and rates of living are exorbitantly high. Food alone costs the peasant eighty-five per cent of his wages. This is why the United States has one-half million Italians. In New York City alone there <sup>are</sup> 500,000. These represent the lowest Italian life. This is shown in their social and moral standards. They are subservient to superiors, and worst of all, they support the Black Hand. Even the industrious, honest working man lends his aid, either cowed into it or willingly acquiescing. When we consider that in the last twenty-five years, 50,000 criminals have come here, we see how serious this is. Though Italy is a farming country, comparatively few Italians

farm in the United States. Market gardening is engaged in to some extent, but the predominance of the Italian population is huddled into the squalid "Little Italies" of the great cities. On the whole our Italian inheritance is unpromising.

Austro-Hungary sends almost as many immigrants to our shores as does Italy. These are the product of a jumble of warring races. Closely united geographically, they are far apart in instinct and kind, and they bring with them their factions and their feuds. The main peoples represented are the Germans, Slavs, Magyars, Latins, Jews, but these in turn are subdivided. They differ in religion - the Greek, Roman Catholic and Jewish, all existing. Ralph Connor gives a good picture of the situation in "The Foreigner". He shows the foreign settlement in Winnipeg, vividly displays the fact that the feuds are brought here, and that the social standards are desperately low even though the soil is American.

The Jews are the largest single element in New York City. Ninety per cent of the clothing business is theirs,

one-half of the newspapers, they control the greater part of the wholesale and retail trade and dominate the theater and opera. They are lawyers, doctors, scientists teachers; in fact, everything. We at once see that we are dealing with better material than here-to-fore.

Jews are easily assimilated if they do not live in the Ghetto. Even when they do, they join settlement clubs, use free libraries, baths, gymnasiums. They are honest, hard working, shrewd, often brilliant. They are by far the best class of immigrants coming to us now.

In California we face the Mongolian problem, which is quite unlike all others. The Japanese and Chinese are driving out Americans in some parts of California, so the situation is serious, the more so as each people brings its distinct qualities. The Japanese are dishonest according to our standards. It is impossible to do business with them on a contract basis, for they utterly disregard contracts. As our whole business system is on such a basis, it is impossible for us to cope with them. They have even been known to prune orchards in such a way as



to make them cease to bear, so that they might get possession of them at a reduced price. But they are genial and good natured, they adopt American clothing and customs, and move up town. These characteristics hardly off-set the others however. They are far more dangerous than the Chinese, for to do business with them we must sink to their level. On the other hand the Chinese regard absolutely a contract. Conditions within Chinatown are horrible; the Chinese are in no sense American citizens, and their one conformance to our standards is in their business relations. But Restriction Laws have so limited the Chinese immigration, that we have little more to fear from them.

We have now mentioned the main races within the United States, and have seen that as immigration now exists, we are receiving elements decidedly inferior to our own.

#### IV.

The fact that four-fifths of our foreign born citizens live in foreign districts of cities indicates that there will not be racial assimilation. In a colony of from ten to fifty thousand foreigners there is need for little contact with other nationalities. Even though the English language gains entrance, there is little need for physical contact. There is in Chicago a Czech colony where 48,000 children have both parents Bohemian and only 799 have one parent of that nationality.

Assimilation and amalgamation are distinct questions. The former is the union of mind and will, and is a process of individual training; the latter, is a mixture of blood and is apt to follow upon the former. Scientists, such as Gumplovic, Fishberg, Ripley, are taking the stand that though there is always a barrier to break down between races, there is no race antipathy. They say the distinction is on a religious or economic basis. If this is true, amalgamation is almost sure to follow assimilation. Statistics seem to support the theory for certain races

where the stock is not entirely different, but beyond that there is little evidence.

Jewish mixed marriages are more common than is generally supposed. In the northern part of the United States, five percent is the maximum but in the south it ranges from twenty to twenty-five percent. Among the Irish and German; the German and English; the Irish and French Canadian marriages are very frequent. The Italians also intermarry readily, because of the large proportion of male immigrants, and because change in environment often leads to change in religion, language, politics and social standing. These things, and the fact that our nation is mobile, moving from place to place, point to a weakening of the barriers. Brander Mathews says that "sooner or later the foreigners are made over". It is true that the English language has penetrated the foreign settlements, that old religions have changed. The immigrant himself is rarely made an American, but his children frequently are. The fact mentioned before, that four-fifths of the foreign born live in the foreign dis-

tricts of cities, still indicates that assimilation is not near.

A careful survey of the races flocking here, has revealed characteristics which we may hesitate to take unto ourselves. Perhaps Mr. Zangwill does not err in urging amalgamation of the Russian Jew and Russian Christian, or even the Russian Jew and American, but we are not willing to grant that a superman would come from the welding of the races within the United States. So diverse are the stocks, that scientists even speculate on the reversion to an original type. At any rate, the American as we know him now would have nothing to gain and much to loose by such a union.

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