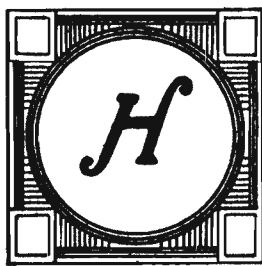


William Maily as a Socialist Type

By George D. Herron



HOWEVER much a man may have done for the advancement of Socialism, Socialism will have done more for him. And no one knows this so well as the Socialist. The more he gives himself without stint, the more will he affirm that he is the receiver rather than the giver. Of course the true apostles and disciples of every good cause, whether historic or forgotten, have felt the same. The revolutions that have opened up the human climb have been the real makers of the men who seemed to make the revolutions. To participate in the onward movement, in the ever-increasing urgency that makes for the world's freedom and beauty, is indeed the individual's supreme opportunity and privilege. The individual is enlarged according to the measure of his relation to this world-movement; according to the understanding and passion with which he embraces it. A man becomes as great as the thing he is related to—or as great as his relation to it. Nothing is truer than the saying that he who loses his life is the one who finds it—finds it in the life of his fellows. It is by this sort of spiritual process that the Socialist movement, in spite of all its internal dissensions and re-adjustments, is producing some of the bravest and purest human types—finer and better than we Socialists yet appreciate.

II.

William Maily was such a type. It is of him as a typical Socialist I wish to write. For twelve years I had known him very intimately, and had watched his intellectual and spiritual development with increasing interest and wonder. We worked together in some of the earliest and bitterest struggles for Socialist unity, and had been together in times of personal stress that came to each of us. It was my privilege to aid him, in some small degree, in his avid quest for knowledge. He shared with me his literary hopes, and I think I know the unique and virile fulfillment that would have been his had he lived.

The career of William Maily is one of life's proofs of itself; and also one of life's good promises for the human future. When I think of him now, of whence he came and whither he was going, the joy of what he was in a measure atones for the sorrow of his passing. Maily's life and labor are a spiritual tonic, a dispeller of pessimism. As we consider what such men as he are, and how they come to be what they are, we cease to doubt the good outcome of the human struggle; we know there is that in man which will enable him yet to conquer his own life; that man's social choice is the law which nature will yet have to obey. We are sure that we shall arrive at something, at last, that more than answers to our fabled Utopia or kingdoms of heaven.

It is a good picture to look at—the coming up of William Maily through his Irish Catholic inheritance; his boyhood as a coal miner and his youthful participation in the strikes and struggles of the miners to organize for their mutual protection; the laying on of Mother Jones' hands and his early consecration to the cause of labor; his conversion to Socialism and his ardent years of heroic service; his buoyant and joyous pursuit of battle—of every battle he could get into! his daily dying, to use one of St. Paul's figures, in behalf of the cause; and the literal throwing away of his life for the world. Again, I say: It is a good picture to look at.

Two or three of Maily's personal traits I would like to dwell upon. One of these was his sublime yet simple devotion to the cause to which he gave his life. No early Christian, in the days when Christ and his idea were young, when it seemed to some as if a real common gladness were coming to abide in the world—no one of these ever gave himself to his fellows with more spiritual naivete and sturdy devotion than that wherewith William Maily gave himself to the Socialist movement. He believed implicitly in the Socialist emancipation of the workers; in the Socialist redemption of the world. Despite the wearing and wasteful internal squabbles incident to the development of a coherent So-



WILLIAM MAILLY

cialist movement, he had not the slightest doubt about the Socialist triumph. His life was one fervor of battle, one joy of energy, to that end. Nothing could induce him to spare himself; he could not think or talk of other things. It was so like him to be finishing his editorial review of the world for the *Metropolitan Magazine* while he lay dying.

There was an infectious boyishness about Maily's devotion to Socialism—a boyishness that was vitalizing to all who worked with him. Goethe has written of the eternal feminine and Ellen Key of the eternal masculine. I wish some one would write of the eternal boy that every devoted man is; of the eternal girl that every wise woman is. Maily was an eternal boy. No cause could ever grow old to those who were of his fellowship. I remember so well an all-night committee meeting in Chicago; by which committee I had been commissioned to try to bring about a certain result; and toward which result Maily labored so eagerly, threatening here, cajoling there, but finally helping to achieve the thing we both wanted. Toward the hours of the morning, as we were debating whether to go immediately to breakfast or to try to snatch a little rest, I suddenly saw Maily's face beaming like a golden moon over the members of the committee and their agreement to agree; and instantly he became to me the school boy, with his pockets full of stolen apples, dividing them among his comrades. He was always full of it—this boyishness so essential to a good man's work or a cause's triumph. And he was always the Irish boy too. How often I have seen his severest criticisms quickly dissolve in uproarious laughter, and the tricks and the crooked ways that he so detested change to hugest jokes. Impulsive and angry as he sometimes was, resentful as he was toward falsehoods or intrigue or compromise, it was impossible for him to believe that anything that was wrong could last; the things

he hated, and hated so justly, would always become jokes in the end; the Socialist movement and the world were alright.

Another trait of Maily's to be remembered is what a mutual friend called his "ludicrous honesty." He simply spilled honesty upon you and you were cleansed and renewed by it. Any sort of concealment or guile was to him impossible. He was irrepressibly frank and explosive. There was no use trying to get him to leave something unsaid because it was imprudent to say it. There was no use trying to get him to compromise. If you tried, you soon found that he really did not know of what you were speaking. He literally had no capacity for dishonesty; for mixed motives, for infidelity toward his faith or his friends. A tortuous course, a twisted principle, a concealment—these he not only loathed; to him they were unintelligible. I wish they were to every leader or worker in the Socialist movement.

It was this same trait that lay behind his immense fidelity in his closer fellowships. There was never a more faithful or pervading friend than Maily. He had a positive genius for friendship. No matter what the friend's crisis was, he was instantly there, taking the crisis upon himself. He sometimes took upon himself the whole burden of his friend's life. And his friends were his heroes. All of us who worked with Maily, who knew and loved him, well know how much larger we were in his eyes than in our own. But it is good to have this sort of friendship; it is good to give it also. It is good for the world to have in it the man who idealizes his friends. The capacity for true friendship is one of the rarest and noblest gifts that come to men; and Maily had this gift to the uttermost.

So William Maily lived and loved and labored, growing in wisdom and stature with the years, wrapping his big heart around the biggest cause that has ever awakened the faith and effort of mankind, reaching his love and loyalty around all his friends, defending them sometimes from each other, as well as from their outer foes. His faith went deep beneath the world's downmost men. He grew in promise and achievement as the cause that was his life grew in promise and achievement—grew unto a man who combined the sturdiest qualities of the fighter with an exquisite refinement of spirit. He was sensitive to the best in art; he learned and loved the best in literature. And, though ever in the forefront of the conflict, he heard the mystic music as well as the battle's bugle.

At first, it is hard to think that he had to lay down his life just at the time when he seemed about finding himself—just when he was beginning the real fulfillment of his years of preparation and apprenticeship. Maily had large literary possibilities. He had learned how to use the English language as few know how to use it. He was developing a style and motive all his own. He was learning how to combine purity and delicacy with virility and ruggedness of expression. And he had things to say, and he was eager to say them. And the things that he had to say, it would have been well for us to hear. The doors of life were opening to him, too. His editorial position on the *Metropolitan Magazine* promised him freedom to do the things he wanted to do. And then he died—just when he seemed prepared to live, in the middle of his years, on the threshold of his opportunity, at the moment when he was ready to set about the work that was to be his self-realization.

But are we so sure that he is dead? Let me confess my faith that he lives. I do not pretend to know, nor do I spend time in wondering, what lies beyond the door of death, or what form we take after we have passed therethrough. But I think that what we are and have of worth continues. Even Haeckel, from the standpoint of the materialist philosopher, now opines that character is stronger than death; that the individual development persists. It is quite possible, speaking but scientifically, that associate man will at last so solve and unfold the problem of life and death that fear and failure must pass from the hearts of men and cease to be. We know so little yet of what we call our natural life; and of the human spirit, of its past or present or future, we know nothing at

(Continued on page eleven.)

William Maily as a Socialist Type

(Continued from page five.)

all. We have a spirit of science, or at least the rudiments of such, but we have no science of spirit. Nor can we truly begin to search or know the human spirit or whence it cometh or whither it goeth until other things are first done—by the doing of which we shall prove our capacity for the vaster knowledge. There must be born into the world the social will to do—the will that shall make the world's best and all the birthright of every babe. Through social action first, not through philosophy, shall we reach a ground of spiritual understanding; reach the spiritual truth we do not know, though obeying the social truth we do know. When human society learns to do the uttermost right by everyone of its members, then the fuller vision of life will open. Yea, the question of bread must be settled before the question of the soul can even be properly stated. Economic freedom from the struggle for physical existence—these must precede any common spiritual wisdom; these are the heavenly highways that man must prepare for men. The knowledge of the soul's immortality, if such knowledge is to be ours will come when man has earned it by making the world in which he lives a fit habitation for such knowledge.

But, having admitted our present ignorance, and speaking as one who profoundly accepts the economic interpretation of history, I would still affirm my faith in the soul's persistence. If we die, we also live. Wherever William Maily has gone, he is proceeding with his labors; he is still our living comrade; his self-realization will not fail.

III.

But no valuation of William Maily would be true that did not give the first praise to her whose hand had most to do with shaping him. Maily had been fortunate in his wonderful Irish mother! and few men are as fortunate as was he in the wife that destiny gave to him. My wife and I had known Bertha Maily, both before and after her marriage, as an exceptional woman. And after her marriage, we knew that hers was a wifeliness rare among women. She understood her man, and knew what to do with him, and how to do it. Herself a

woman university-bred, a woman of the finest grain and culture, she had the wisdom to value and take Maily as she found him, and to tend the flower of him in such way that it should unfold unhurt and unhindered. Of course, every woman is mother to the man that she truly loves. And in the highest and most discerning sense was Bertha Maily mother as well as wife to her loyal and exuberant husband. With a deftness of touch and self-effacement that was little short of miraculous, she watched over him, yearned over him, and nourished his intellectual and spiritual being. It was a rarely mutual and beautiful life these two lived together.

But the divine discernment with which she cooperated with her husband, Bertha Maily carries into her fruitful and constant labor in the Socialist cause, forever doing good deeds by stealth, speaking here a needed word, giving there the needed help. There are few workers in the great cause who accomplish so much, and accomplish it so invisibly, and with such a happy self-effacement. No one save Algernon Lee, knows how much the Rand school owes to her high quality of devotion. A woman of this sort will not be beaten by death. She will make the beautiful years of her life with her husband an ever-present possession and inspiration. She will not cease from her gracious ministry; she will not let the passing of William Maily be a catastrophe, but a consecration. The wisdom that has gone into all her service will but increase, healing and rejoicing the hearts of her comrades.

IV.

I have written of William and Bertha Maily, in this intimate way because I regard them as Socialist types; because in such as these are the potencies making for the better human future. It is good that we who are workers together in the Socialist movement should appreciate our fellow-workers more than we do. It would be better for us if we had a little less of the genius for criticism, and more of the genius for appreciation. Despite the play of miserable and petty personal ambitions despite the cross-purposes and harsh misunderstandings, no historic movement has developed stronger and finer types of men and women than ours. In no other historic movement have men and women labored so self-effacingly, with so little thought of any kind of personal reward; labored for benefits which could only accrue to those who came after them—even after their children's

children. The tangling and rending of banners, the disputes and devices of leaders, the clashings of economic and party creeds—these are on the surface; behind and beneath is a great army of martyrs who are noble indeed—martyrs whose names are in no calendar of saints, but whose unknown lives are the best and bravest the world affords.

It were better, I say, that we Socialists should oftener pause to recognize those who live and labor so nobly among us. Who, for instance, among the old Hebrew prophets lived with more constant vision, labored with stouter faith in his vision's fulfillment, and with a kindlier heart withal, than the veteran Socialist whom so many recently followed through the streets of New York to his tomb—dear old Comrade Jonas? Nor does Greek mythology present a more heroic figure than the August Bebel of today, fighting with his last breath for the integrity of the Socialist faith—fighting, too, what may prove to be, alas! a losing battle. And where is there a better human type than that of the professor of philosophy who left his academic chair to serve the workers of France—whom each of the passing years finds more radically determined in his fight for the workers' freedom? I mean Jean Jaures, of course. And what more splendid example of fidelity does one want than that of Henry Mayers Hyndman, the noble old British Socialist—whom some one has happily called a youth of seventy years—renouncing the high positions that were easily his, spending his years and fortune in the service not only of the proletariat of his own land, but in the defense of the oppressed peoples of lands that his England exploits and rules? Or take our own Debs, giving himself so lavishly always; none among men are worthier of admiration and praise; none have served their fellows with a deeper yearning, with a swifter understanding, with a greater splendor of soul. Boundless are his sympathies also; for, though demanding the right of the worker to what he produces as the first essential of society, of freedom and spiritual decency, yet bears he the world in his heart. Surely, whatever our own blind generation may do, are this man's life and labor a precious possession that other ages will prize.

And there are those two special friends of Maily's, Algernon Lee and Morris Hillquit, who have

(Concluded on page twelve.)

The Coming Nation

PUBLISHERS

J. A. WAYLAND. FRED D. WARREN.

EDITORS

A. M. SIMONS. CHAS. EDW. RUSSELL.

Entered as second-class matter, September 26, 1910, at the postoffice of Girard, Kansas, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

By mail in the United States, \$1 a year. In all other countries, \$1.50. Bundles of ten or more, two cents a copy.

Stamps must be inclosed for the return of manuscripts. The COMING NATION assumes no responsibility for manuscripts or drawings sent to it for examination.

William Maily as a Socialist Type

(Continued from page eleven.)

wrought so well and wisely for the Socialist movement, and who are so often unjustly assailed. Since I, whose present lot is that of the onlooker, am afar from the fields of battle and of party dispute, I may be permitted to speak in praise of these two men. Though they are still in the middle of their years, and I trust that a generation may pass ere they follow Maily into the unknown, are not we Socialists better for recognizing them now? If there be a man of more chivalrous type, of finer integrity than Algernon Lee, I do not know where to find him. Astonished will he be to have me call him an example of the early Christian; but, so far as his attitude toward life goes, such he truly is; thinking never of himself, crediting to others his own endless labors—a man in whom there is indeed no guile, but rather a sweet and stalwart wisdom. And of Morris Hillquit—who of us who know and love him can say enough of his fidelity to the cause he serves; of his fidelity to the cause's servants as well? Setting aside our often-differing opinions as to Socialist doctrine or party procedure, my knowledge of Hillquit is that of the truest type of Socialist and man. In the days when we worked together in America, we not seldom disagreed as to what was next to be done, as perhaps we now are looking, he and I, at opposite poles and methods of Socialist approach. Yet is Hillquit always fine and gracious in the presence of dispute or defeat; always anxious to understand those who oppose him; ready to serve if occasion offers, a relentless opponent. Hillquit not only preaches brotherhood; he practices more than he preaches it. Some of us know how many turn to him in want and sorrow and stress, and know they do not turn in vain. I have never known him to speak unkindly of a foe, much less of

a friend; and I doubt if he thinks unkindly of a human being. The virtues which all the philosophers and religions have preached—these are his daily life, the color and quality of his service in the Socialist cause. Hillquit's influence in the movement, and the misunderstanding and hostility toward him, are alike due to sheer service—and to nothing else. It is his very effort to be wholly fair to everyone, to do the uttermost right by every man and measure, to try to give each voice a sympathetic hearing before judging it—it is this effort of his to be at once just and kind, that causes him to be called opportunist in a sense in which he is not opportunist at all. He is but seeking a synthesis—a co-ordination of all the motives and modes of action within the movement. Among Socialist leaders, there is none nobler or purer or wiser than Morris Hillquit—none with a more discerning patience, a keener or

loftier sense of honor, an abler grasp of the ends and issues of Socialism.

I have advisedly made the passing of William Maily the occasion of a preachment about appreciation. And, though frankly belonging to the revolutionary wing of the Socialist movement, and considerably in sympathy with the syndicalist position, I have spoken my knowledge and experience of men who occupy a different position. I have purposely dwelt upon spiritual rather than intellectual qualities. It is time, I think, that we begin to practice, in both debate and action, something of the brotherhood we are promising to the world when Socialism has been accepted. In our reaction from the old hero-worship, we have gone far to the other extreme. We sometimes seem bent on depreciating our ablest and faithfulest servants—depreciating them not only in the eyes of the movement, but in the eyes of the world. And how