

**THE
COMING PEOPLE**

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The Coming People by Charles F. Dole

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BY *Fitzell*
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INTRODUCTION.

I SUSPECT that certain readers may complain of this book, that it is too boldly optimistic. It seems therefore fair to say something in advance about the personal point of view from which I approach the subjects here considered. I am not in any way an optimist by temperament, but quite the reverse. I am accustomed to think of the sad and sterner aspects of life. I know by experience the facts and the moods that tend to make men pessimists and even cynics. If I am an optimist, my optimism has not come to me easily; it is not one-sided, or negligent of

facts. It is not the product of fortunate and exceptional circumstances. It has been bought with a price; it has been urged upon me through all the varied lessons of life. It is not merely the outcome and summary of my religion, but it is the net result of the questioning and the thought of a naturally sceptical mind. I have endeavored to test and try it. I have never feared to bring strain and pressure upon it. In my case it is no mere ardor of buoyant youth, but the growth of years.

I have watched the working of this bold optimism in a considerable number of other men's lives, under different forms of faith, and in some instances even where its possessors, being somewhat shy of religious terms and pious phraseology, have hardly been aware that in their habitual

attitude of good temper, friendliness, unwavering honesty, disinterested and unselfish activity, they have been living precisely as intelligent men would live in a good universe, and have been illustrating in their lives what veritable religion is, more than their words would allow.

I have also tried other ways of thought, and found them to fail altogether. I have observed that, while optimism is always challenging and urging us to be consistent and thorough-going in our faith in it, pessimism, on the contrary, can never be consistently applied; but in all the highest moments of life the pessimist must act like an optimist, must face the way of hope and progress, must trust in truth, in duty, in love, and in goodness, as if they were indeed eternal. I have observed that the agnostic cannot remain

evenly balanced on the narrow fence of hesitating doubt. He must act and live on one side or the other, toward evil or toward good. Is it not evident that his best and most successful action is at those times when, like the boldest optimist, he goes heartily over to the side of good?

If my optimism seems bold, it is not presumptuous. I have no merely personal word to utter about it, or I should not venture to speak. My courage to speak arises wholly out of the conviction that my message is not my own, but is rather the great and universal message to all lives. I am sure that, if I can face the problems of the world with hope, any man may learn the great happiness of doing the same. I am equally sure that, if we can venture to take the ground of optimism at all and in any particular, we may

as well be bold enough to trust that it will altogether bear us up. If, on the whole and in consideration of all the facts, I am constrained to be an optimist, that is, a believer in good, while I desire always to be modest and undogmatic, I can see no intellectual merit in being ashamed of my best conclusions, or timid and distrustful in using and uttering them.

I believe that Jesus was quite philosophical in the instinct with which he habitually insisted that men should choose which master they proposed to serve, and should straightway begin to serve that master with all their hearts and minds and strength. The purposeless life runs with narrow and sluggish flow. If men do not dare or wish to serve evil, if it is intolerable to live as if the world were the sport of evil, let them take the only