THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS. BY ERNEST CROSBY

E have seen that ugliness may become a goad to drive us to beauty. The sight of slums and soot and smoke, of blasted forest and disemboweled mountain, may at last induce us to abjure the useful, unless it come hand in hand with the comely, and to refuse once for all to live in the midst of hideous surroundings. What other acceptable alternative can there be? We must either turn about, or go onward, for there is no "standstill" in human affairs. But what would going onward mean? I was talking the other day with a lady at her home, about a hundred miles from New York, and, speaking of the future of the neighborhood, she said: "I suppose by the time I die, the city will be out here." Are cities then actually to grow forever, until the whole world is one single town, with here and there a park to represent the country? Must every tree fall a victim to the woodman? Shall the whole earth be turned inside out in search of precious stones and metals? Are all our present tendencies to be carried out in their logical direction in arithmetical or geometrical progression? If we travel ten times as fast as our great-grandfathers, must our great-grandchildren travel ten times as fast as we do? Think for a moment what the admission of such a principle, even in a modified and temperate form, would mean. This material development has its seamy side; I would almost be inclined to say that it is all seamy side. It involves the pace that kills; and that means ever, more nervous prostration, more lunatics, more suicides. As cities grow bigger, asylums, hospitals, sanitariums, prisons, grow still more rapidly. Every acre of palaces entails its square miles of slums. The labor-saving machine is a beautiful thing in principle, but what is the goal expressed in its very name, toward which, though it be in the nature of things unattainable, we are pressing hurriedly forward,—what, but a society of multi-millionaires and their lacqueys, served by innumerable slaves of wood and iron, needing to look after them only an occasional foreman, whose brains are perpetually passing over into the machines, and whose numbers are forever dwindling toward the vanishing point? The working class would, in large part, gradually die off, and most of the remainder be absorbed into the ranks of flunkeys, contributing in some personal way to the ease, comfort and
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amusement of their lords. A world of belts and pulleys and wires and rails, studded with electric buttons for every conceivable purpose, and inhabited by two dreary races: the pamperers and the pampered. This is not a celestial picture, but it is the only star to which our wagon is hitched to-day.

Given a world of machinery, with a small class of mechanics and factory hands on one side, and of unstinted luxury and its liveried attendants on the other, what can be done to beautify it? We see around us the beginnings of such a world and the ineffectual efforts to make it fairly habitable. Charity is unable to heal the sources of ugliness, and when it becomes a business and even municipalities hold out their hats for the alms of a library or a picture gallery, there is something sickening and degrading about it. Village Improvement Societies and Municipal Art Leagues can do little but stand aghast at the problems with which they are brought face to face. Meanwhile, the natural and unconscious attempt to improve the looks of things shows itself in the separation of the different aspects of society. Our palaces draw together on Fifth Avenue, and our great corporation buildings on Broadway; while the tenement houses drift to the outskirts of the golden region and spread out into unknown quarters. Luxury and drudgery fly apart by natural repulsion. The stately mansion rarely sights the factory, and would not signal it if it did. Society is polarizing itself as well as it can, and so we say that one-half of the world does not know how the other half lives. It is well that this is so, for it would be intolerable to group riches and poverty—beauty and ugliness—in too close proximity. If the residence of the railway king stood in his blighted freight yards, if his mines emptied their coal before his door, if his employees were huddled into rookeries across the way, if the families of his men, killed by accident without insurance, and discharged as superannuated at forty-five without pension, gathered on his door-steps to beg their bread, what pleasure would there be in wealth, and where would beauty and art and architecture find a foothold? So let us be thankful to Nature which tends to keep the rich by themselves, and the poor by themselves, and to separate the sheep from the goats!