

and fish and returned to our camp.

We have not been down to the Mora River in the past two years. After the second trip there, as after the first, we vowed that we would not enter the canyon again, but this coming August, while vacationing in New Mexico, I know that I shall want to return to the Mora. My father has in his letters indicated that he also has a yearning to fish that nearly forbidden water again.

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Social Democracy in a Small Town

Adel Fochtman

In a broad sense it can be said that social democracy has progressed, if we think of the government—instituted social reforms for the masses. But what about our flourishing intra-community snobbery and bigotry? Only when a crisis appears are the residents of the community prompted by their innate sense of the equality of men. In the meantime there is no thought of the hurts and injustices that are caused by narrow-minded thinking.

Consider, for example, Smalltown, Illinois. It is a mining town of about one thousand people of modest means. Their social life consists of visits in each other's homes, occasional movies, and church gatherings. This community is divided into two factions—the German merchants, laborers, and retired farmers, who are Protestants, and the Polish and Hungarian miners, who make up the Catholic element. There is a constant undercurrent of antagonism between these two groups and no intercourse of socialibility. But one day there is an accident in the mine, and a call goes out for volunteers to rescue several trapped miners. The strong, burly Germans rush in and work tirelessly until the last Hungarian or Pole has been brought to safety. Women who have ignored each other for years comfort each other. For the moment all bigotry is forgotten.

Not only are these townspeople ordinarily prejudiced in religious matters, but also in matters of race. Never has a negro been permitted to loiter momentarily. On occasion the men have been known to mass and literally drive out any negro who dared

to move in. As a result, many colored vagrants have lived as best they could in shacks on the bank of a nearby river. During a spring thaw this river flooded more than usual, and the stilts of the shacks were inadequate protection against the rising water. When the negroes were driven from their homes, the community speedily collected food and clothing for the victims; a farmer offered his barn as a refuge; no discrimination was made in the distribution of the food and clothing; color lines were momentarily forgotten.

This general antagonistic attitude is also inflicted on individuals. Here it becomes more vicious and hurtful. Misunderstood incidents are twisted and bloated by evil minds. Mrs. Anderson, who is a hardworking, generous person with three small children, has been deserted by her husband. A neighbor, a good-looking bachelor, often lends a willing hand to gather fire wood, spade the garden, or take the family for a ride in the country. The local tongues wag. By the time the latest bit of gossip reaches the other end of town, a mere incident has become escapade. The people are intent on breaking Mrs. Anderson's spirit. But, undoubtedly, should some calamity strike her house, petty gossip will be forgotten until the emergency is cleared.

Perry, in his **Alleged Failure of Democracy**, points out that in time of great emergency, political democracy must necessarily abandon its processes to preserve its ideals. In contrast, social democracy reaches its peak of perfection in time of stress. All barriers are momentarily levelled. After the period of distress is over, political democracy resumes its quest for equality and of opportunity for mankind; and Smalltown, Illinois, again wraps itself in its cloak of prejudices.