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Union Labor Column.

DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE LABORER

Twenty Years to Come.

I'm sitting here wrapped in the sombre hour of midnight and equally sombre meditation, for although no raven is perched upon my chamber door, my train of thoughts makes me feel dark and gloomy. I seldom think deep, but to-night I've been looking through the wizard's midnight glass at our picture, and I see or seem to see, visions in our social panorama that would intimidate the bravest heart. I see King Capital establishing an imperious kingdom and an unfathomable gulf between the rich and poor; I see all the industries ruled and run by a few monstrous machines; run and ruled by a few monstrous millionaires.

The money in the hands of a few monstrous shyllocks, the land in the hands of a few monstrous corporations, and liberty scattered to the four winds of the earth. There is a grand division in all the avocations of life, departments in each for the Plebeian ranks; departments in each, wherein wealth sits with robe and crown; the schools are only for the rich, the bond men need no education. For hark, ye, the feudal age, the age of barons, has returned, vassalage is established, in the poor man seeking redress of one rich neighbor from wrongs done him by another. The rich have become richer, the poor have become poorer, until the mountain height of opulence and the dead sea level of poverty have been reached.

The life in poverty flickers with a momentary ray, while the sun of wealth is making the nation lurid with its glare. Poverty is become a disgrace in the eyes of those who possess money; benevolent institutions are a thing of the past, institutions for all classes of unfortunate poor are unnecessary, for greed and avarice have swallowed up the human and left the organs of sympathy dead to reign instead. Money is now the God of the rich man; he deems the religion of Jesus Christ beneath him; he has rejected until he has put all enemies beneath his feet. For a dollar the lowly teacher of Galilee who had not where to lay his head, the most merciful type in all the world, is sold; all that is human or divine is sold for money. The price of liberty has placed golden crowns on the heads of capitalists. Freedom has flown from her mountain watch, and her throne sold for money to buy palaces for millionaires. Faith is dead; hope is dead; charity is dead; ambition and incentive are dead.

Another night of medieval gloom is upon us, and the raven is perched on the pallid bust of dead hope above the perials of millions of poverty-stricken bones. Gold has forged the fetters that bind the poor laboring masses and holds them in bondage with the key of liberty in the keeping of an arrogant plutocracy.

Now, there is a picture for twenty years to come. I hope to God it will never prove true, but the very thoughts of the possibility makes one sick at heart. Every breath we breathe is freighted with the balm of liberty. Liberty is interwoven with our very lives, and it is a shame, a sacrilege, a disgrace to the American people to permit so transitory and faithless an agency as the present monetary system to encroach upon the very laws of existence, and now while the gilded wheels of dives are throwing dust over the tattered garments of Lazarus, will J. H. Upton rise and draw a few pen pictures on the gloomy face of twenty years to come.

LODI.

The following sensible little article is taken from the Universal Republic, and has the true ring: "Taxes would be very light if men were wise. More money is spent to support the warlike courts and systems than is necessary, time would be better spent in expending the money on the education of the masses several times over. In this respect we are like our grandfathers who

carried their wheat to mill with a heavy stone to balance it. We sweat and groan under heavy burdens because of our ignorance and prejudice. All the burdens of taxation are due directly and indirectly to a state of warfare between man and man, nation and nation. Money lenders, speculators, etc., profit by the corruption of wars. This is why they and their newspaper organs, are continually talking war—war on the nations; war on the poor and unfortunate; war on the criminals. Let humanity inaugurate peace everywhere, and all the endless ills caused thereby would cease, and mankind could live in happiness and plenty.—Ex. [This would be all right if it were not all wrong. As long as we maintain a system by which people can pile up worlds of riches by the "corruption of wars" just so long will we be at war. The love of money will prompt man to do almost anything, and nothing short of Nationalism as depicted in "Looking Backward," Bellamy's wonderful book, will make the evils less. In fact corruption is certain to increase as the love of money grows on the people.

It was stated on the floor of the present United States Senate, by one of its members that the aggregate indebtedness of the people of the United States is not less than \$60,000,000,000. This was considered a low estimate of the public, corporate, municipal and individual indebtedness. At an annual interest of six per cent, it would amount to an annual drain upon the productive energies of the country of \$3,600,000,000. Reckoning the population of the country at 60,000,000 this would be \$1,000,000,000 for each inhabitant and a yearly interest charge of \$10. The ones who do not labor are the creditors, and the laborers are the debtors, for every dollar is paid by the product of labor.—Ex. [This comes with poor grace from a member of that body, since the origin of this gigantic wrong is directly traceable to that source. The people want a new deal; they have been plundered about as long as they can stand it. The workingman is very tolerant, and would probably produce all the wealth and share it with those who neither toil nor spin without a murmur, but to produce all and own and enjoy nothing is too much for those who stop for a moment's reflection.

Poor Ireland.
The prospect of distress in Ireland from a failure of the potato crop is imminent. Michael McDavitt, who has visited a large portion of Ireland during the past month, reports that everywhere he found abundant confirmation of the report that the crops generally were doomed to failure this year. It is needless after the experience of the years of 1879 and 1885, to inform those who know anything about Ireland that this involves starvation for a large proportion of its inhabitants. For another section it means insolvency, while upon the whole commercial system of the country it will bring a general depression. Another source of disquiet is the probability of a fuel famine. The sun necessary for drying the turf, which is the only combustible available to the Irish peasant for his winter's fire, has been absent. Hence it is that not only have the poor people of the southern and western seaboard the prospects of cheerless hearts superadded to famine, but they have to face the ultimate fatality of eviction, which inevitably comes when the harvest does not yield the rent. In many districts the people are at present burning furze and brambles in their fires, while the turf cut this season, which should now be drying, lies very moist at the bog sides.

McDavitt closes his statement of the horrors in store for this distressed people, with a stirring appeal for aid from America. To no other land can she look with so much hope of relief, as to the country that has exhibited so many such noble evidences of generosity.—Ex.

The K. of K. on Education.

We boast of our free schools and talk vauntingly of the advantages of education being open to the child of the humblest citizen, but it is too often the case that when the poor man has paid the tax upon his small possessions he finds it a heavy imposition to purchase the necessary books and school supplies for his family of children. So greatly has the cost of school books increased and so frequently are they changed by the school authorities. This is a delicate subject and I shall go no deeper into it than to say that there is an abuse here susceptible of remedy. Anyone who has ever held the office of principal or superintendent of county schools can certify to the unusual percentages on the sales of school books offered by their publishers. It is a sad commentary on existing methods that in this day of cheap books the cost of an average set of school books is much higher now than the price of a similar set twenty years ago, while the cost of handsomely bound and elegantly printed volumes of all other descriptions is scarcely one twentieth of the same. Teachers, school officers and friends of education, can not we do something to prevent the poor man who is struggling to support as well as to educate his children from being robbed of his hard earnings to enrich unscrupulous school book agents no matter in what guise they may appear? Let us try. Again, our common schools which we proudly claim are nurseries of freedom and cradles of republican institutions are in danger of losing that distinctive feature. A school is a republic in miniature wherein each tiny citizen stands on an absolute equality with his fellows and is entitled to be judged alone by his own conduct and to have his standing gauged by the worth of his own work and character instead of by the station of his parents or the opinion of his classmates. But how often does it happen especially in the smaller towns and villages where there is usually a small clique of people who for no discernible reason arrogate themselves special excellencies and who appear to live in anxiety lest the world at large should not discover and acknowledge their social merit (a state of feeling too often transmitted to their children) that the republican form of government becomes merged into that of a limited aristocracy with its privileged class, its favorites and its proscribed citizens.

It is the reproach of the profession that so many teachers lend themselves to the perpetuation of this un-republican form of school government and by a servile recognition of the rights of the pretended nobility of the school room deal untold injury to all the subjects of their little republic. Partiality is a destructive vice in any teacher, but when, as is usually the case, its objects are the children of wealthy and influential parents, or relatives of members of the school board or of the political magnates who must be consulted in the employment of a teacher, then this unjust discrimination becomes not alone ruinous to the school but destructive to the teacher's independence and influence. Regard for the integrity of the profession should lead the teacher to set up a higher standard of rule. And although there are schools in which no teacher not known to possess this subservient spirit can find employment, yet the honor of the profession should be held greater than individual success. The faculties of the children unfold an atmosphere of love and comfort as flower petals expand in the sun. The dwarfed and stunted plant, deprived of light and nourishment drooping on its wasted stem, will grow into a hardy shrub and become a beautiful flower under the stimuli of light and sunshine. So the little child, shrinking under neglect and harsh treatment, if brought from the environment of chilling poverty into the peaceful atmosphere of a school-room warmed by love and ruled by

justice, will develop a true and kindly nature and repay a thousandfold the hand that nourished it. Shrink not then from the repellent insignia of poverty, the patched or ragged garments, the smudged hands and the dirty face. They cover a soul that weighs as much in the scales of humanity as any of kingly birth, and it is sad indeed when little ones are thus early made to feel the inequalities of station and to learn by cruel object lessons the false estimates the world places upon wealth and position. Earth has no sadder sight than the children of sorrow, who must begin life's pilgrimage low down in the scale, feeling that the weight of a parent's misfortune or wrong rests upon their slight shoulders. Touch the first lesson imparted by the teacher should be that his life is all his own to live for himself that in the standard of the school room he will be adjudged by no extraneous circumstances of dress or birth or position; that in our schools of boasted freedom, the child of the outcast, the unworthy, the wretched and the unfortunate is just as welcome and has as just a right to respect and kindness as the child of the president. Such a lesson will develop self confidence and self respect, the two main foundation stones of character and success. And the life that under the blighting influences of scorn and unkindness would seek the dark places of crime and obscurity will be livid in the daylight of contentment and happiness.

Nor will any sensible patron of the public schools for those who object to the democratic equality of the free schools. Then let no harsh word or sneering look convey to the sensitive mind of the child of poverty and neglect the thought that he is lower than his fellows in the estimation of his teacher who is the highest embodiment of authority in his small world. Convince him that he stands on a perfect equality with his mates, and that there is but a single rule of justice for them all; then impress him deeply with the fact that nothing but his own misconduct can disgrace him and lead to a forfeiture of the esteem in which he is held. This lesson well learned and the boy is half a man. This principle ingrained in life and character and the man becomes a knight, ever valiant for the truth and with knightly scorn of a base action moving among his fellows with strong and helpful hands. Teachers, how high and noble a task is yours. Your materials are imperishable and your work is for eternity. Then strive to complete your task in such a manner that the finished work may receive the commendation of the Great Master Workman.

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