

The Sentinel.

BY LEW. A. CATES.

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MODERN LIFE.

Mr. Norman Hapgood, in a recent book entitled "Industry and Progress," illustrates clearly and forcibly the wonderful material advances the world has made during the past century. Mr. Hapgood has little sympathy for the sentimental fallacy which idealizes "the good old times." He says that if they were pleasantly romantic for the riders of men—for earls and bishops, for dukes and dukes—they were evil, indeed, for the ridden men, the workers.

He quotes a recent London investigating commission as recording that within a half century in the London slums husband and wife sometimes had to sit up alternately to protect their children from the rats which swarmed up from the sewers, and cesspools were often not more than a foot below rooms teeming with families. Even Whitechapel is no longer in the uttermost abyss. It was once lower. It is hardly exaggeration to state that the very outcasts of England are now better provided for than were multitudes of her laboring men some sixty years ago.

In the reformation period in France the peasant lived in his hut "like a hare in his hollow, near the palisaded inclosure of his lord, in want and fear, hardly sheltered and not at all fed, a prey to epidemic diseases; later to go out starved and trembling to see his plot of ground and harvest in cinders; to repair the damage and begin again, with the prospect of another similar catastrophe."

In the time of Edward I. the total belongings of the peasant's family amounted to less than six shillings, and he could earn no more than 12 cents a week.

In the early nineteenth century the agricultural laborers of Sicily and the Lombard plains, the rent racked peasants of parts of the Comarca and Campania, the migrant harvest men whom poverty drove from the Abruzzi to sow the Maremma with their bones, had a lot of hopeless misery, beside which that of the English factory slave or Irish peasant was bright. Machinery is what made the change. "To Adam Smith, for ten men to make 48,000 pins in one day gave food for wonder and surmise. By 1888 three men could produce in a day 7,500,000 pins of quality much superior. About thirty years ago it was estimated that an individual could produce 750 times as much yarn as 100 years earlier.

"In 1870, before the grain cradle was invented, an able-bodied farm laborer in Great Britain with a scythe could reap about one-quarter of an acre of wheat in a single day. Two horses and a man, in the same time, can now cut, rake, and bind the wheat of twenty acres.

"What becomes of this multiplied product of man working for a given time? Partly he has decided to work less and live more, but principally he has increased his consumption, especially in substantial food and clothing, but also in books, newspapers, theatres, furniture, house decoration, kerosene, sewing machines, motors and other articles which, in the opinion of the human animal, multiply the value of his life. Also more creatures can exist."

Mr. Hapgood gives it as his opinion that unrestricted individualism, already modified in 1911, must be still further modified by 2011. Just as now in many instances a high limit has been placed on the hours of work, so in the future must low limits be placed on the amount of wages. He says:

"Democracy seems to make for morals in most of the great departments of our lives: How long ago was bribery respectable in England? Slavery died but yesterday. Not ten years ago rebates were granted and received without question; almost no one realized a sin in the conspiracy of railroad and shipper to murder a competitor. The country needed to be educated to the evil of selling labeled and adulterated food before the pure food bill could become a law. We are only beginning to realize the moral obliquity of inside speculation by corporation directors."

Mr. Hapgood thinks labor unions have come to stay, and looks forward to the time "when the government in city, state or nation will undertake and accomplish the task of seeing that no person of average competence and willingness ever knows extreme poverty."

HABIT.

Habit is like those Liliputians who came in the night while Gulliver lay sleeping and bound him with a million spidery threads. With a touch of his finger he could have broken one of them. With a little exertion he could have broken a thousand. But altogether they held him motionless and helpless upon the ground while the pigmies wrought their will with him. Habit comes upon us like the drop of rose leaves in the dewy twilight. It is like the gaudy insect in the eastern tale which flew in through the keyhole of the door and charmed the student with its green and golden shards; but a little later, when he thought to drive it out, behold it had waxed to giant size and with its talons tore out his heart. "This I will do just for once." Thus sayeth the fool in his folly. He does it once and again, and in the day when he thinks not the habit holds him like the arms of that brazen statue which drew the victim closer and still closer until he perished.

Habit is like that vampire of the Southern seas which stirs a gentle breeze with its wings to lull a slumbering man while it sucks his blood. It stupefies him with perpetual delusion. While it winds and swathes him with silken cords stronger than forged iron, it continually assures him that he can free himself. But let the victim once strain his muscles to the task. Then he shall see the truth. The punishment of evil habits lies in their consequences. These no repentance can avert. Habit and the effect of habit are linked together, not by a chain of steel, but by the incomparably stronger bond of cause and effect. Broken body and ruined mind follow vicious indulgence inevitably. There is no avoiding them. He is a wise man, says Professor James, who in his youth forms habits which shall be his friends instead of his enemies as he fights the battle of life. There are foes enough in the world to keep every one busy without admitting them into his own household.

COAL VALUATIONS.

Under the present scheme of classifying Government coal land 56,098,214 acres of withdrawn land had been, on August 1, examined in geologic detail and classified by the United States Geological Survey. The lands found to contain workable coal beds aggregated 16,873,370 acres. These lands, in 40-acre tracts, have been appraised by the Survey at a total valuation of \$711,992,537, in prices ranging from the minimum figure stated in the coal law—\$10 or \$20 an acre, according to whether the land is located within 15 miles of the railroad—to figures of over \$400 an acre where the thickness of the coal beds may aggregate 60, 80 or 100 feet, or even more. The Government valuations accord in a general way with the market values of private coal lands in the West, although as a matter of fact they are somewhat more liberal to the purchaser. Four hundred dollars an acre may seem a high price for Uncle Sam's coal land, which a few years ago might have been bought for \$20 an acre. However, the Geological Survey's plan of classification and valuation contemplates that the government should receive

at least a reasonable return for its coal, admittedly the most useful rock mineral in its possession. When it is understood that an acre with, say, a 40-foot coal bed or seam contains approximately 72,000 tons of coal and an acre with 100 feet of coal contains 180,000 tons, the price asked by the government, instead of being exorbitant, seems, on the other hand, hardly sufficient. On land having a thickness of 80 feet of coal \$400 an acre would be less than 3 cents a ton. In reality, under the Survey regulations which consider depth of the coal, number of beds, quality, and other physical details, the prices asked for many areas containing 80 feet of coal are equivalent to nearer 2 than 3 cents a ton.

At the minimum prices which were in effect before the government withdrawals of coal lands, the 16,873,370 acres above referred to would have been priced at only \$266,652,431, the difference in favor of the public revenue at the new prices being therefore \$445,340,106. Under the provisions of the national irrigation law the proceeds from all sales of coal land are credited to the "reclamation fund," so that government irrigation has, as it were, a considerable trust fund for future operations.

A movement which means much for the home and for morality is now under way in the plan to secure uniform laws of marriage and divorce in the several states. The laws in the different states which have made it possible for men and women to be legally married in some states and bigamists in others have long been a serious reflection upon a land over which one flag waves. These same laws have made children illegitimate in some states, while being born in lawful wedlock in others. It is high time for a uniformity in the law.

The pitch for tuning pianos has been increased from 435 to 438 vibrations. More misery.

If the rural schools comply with the new law, which went into effect on September 1, the "old oaken bucket" will immediately be replaced by a sanitary stone jar with a stone cover.

How can newspaper publishers expect to command public respect for their papers when their conception of what the public demands in the way of information leads them to fill up a column of space under a double-column heading with a nauseating story about Mrs. Reggie Vanderbilt going "crabbing" in her bare feet. Mrs. Reggie should be permitted to go "crabbing" in her bare feet, or bare back, or bare all over, if she wants to. What do the readers of newspapers care about it?

GOOD NEWS.

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W. R. C. Attention.

At the next regular meeting of the Corps, Sept. 9, at 2 o'clock sharp, memorial services will be held in memory of our departed sisters, president Cecilia Grim. Color bearer, Sarah McKibben. Members of the post are invited to attend. The regular work of the Corps will follow, including the election of officers to fill vacancies. Every member is urged to be present. —By order of secretary.

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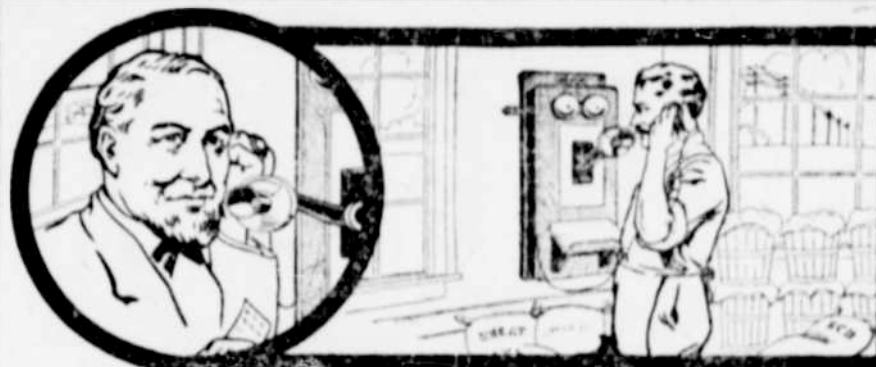


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