

have shown that there is no diminution in the number coming upon the Poor Laws.

Note the grim brevity of that conclusion. Of persons below fifty years of age "there is no diminution in the number coming upon the poor laws." Notwithstanding free education calculated to qualify for opportunities for employment and higher remuneration—*no diminution* of pauperism! But why should any diminution be expected while the benefits of labor power go not to Labor but to Monopoly?

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VOLUNTARY POVERTY.

Old Gathergold is certainly having his day of triumph. The populace is flocking to his Automobile and acclaiming him the one of the Great Stone Face.

True, we are hurling our anathemas against those who cause us to feel the pinch of poverty; but the cry is not without a taint, to say the least, of sour grapes.

There is a struggle between the Haves and the Have Nots, a struggle to leave the Have Nots and to join the Haves.

Success is most often measured on a dollar and cents basis. Even the proposed reforms of the day that get more than a passing popular notice are those which promise a more general prosperity, a more universal distribution of the "goods" of this world.

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If there is anything that stands discredited and cordially hated by the public, it is the condition known as Poverty. To it we ascribe most of the evil of the day, comfortably telling ourselves that the millennium will be ushered in just as soon as there is a more equitable distribution of the wealth of society. Yet the fact remains that there is but lukewarm public support of measures proposed by thoughtful men for the amelioration of present unfortunate conditions.

Why?

Certainly if the fact of Poverty would cause the public to support movements calculated to give all an honest return for labor, there should be no lack of hearty endorsement of many of the reforms now before us. As there is no such mass movement, it would seem there must be some powerful deterrent.

Probably there is more than one cause for the general apparent lack of interest, but I wish to suggest that the very popular Spirit of Plutocracy is playing a large part in the slow progress of Reform.

Thousands are enduring the terrible curse of enforced poverty. Nevertheless, many of them are just as plutocratic in spirit as the veriest multimillionaire. They with other multitudes in slightly more comfortable circumstances are in no urgent hurry to see the present regime destroyed, especially if it is to be done at the expense of destroying the opportunity to "get rich." They live in the secret hope that some day they will "strike it rich" themselves.

This plutocratic spirit is instilled in the public at large from all quarters. It is most profitable for the Haves to foster this spirit. Just so long, however, as the Spirit of Plutocracy obtains, we can expect movements for juster economic conditions to fare badly at the hands of the public, no matter how patent the fact of poverty may become.

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Discredited and scorned as involuntary poverty is, I wish to present for thoughtful consideration a somewhat kindred estate—Voluntary Poverty.

Kindred in thought, perhaps, but as far removed in power for blessing or cursing as the east from the west.

It is to be feared we have carried our scorn for enforced poverty over to the condition of man common to the major portion of those the world has come to honor as its great ones. Permit me, then, a word of definition: Voluntary Poverty is that condition wherein there is the willing surrender of riches and the attitude of mind that does not esteem them the goal of human endeavor. It is the state wherein we pay our way as we go, free from the thralldom of Things.

A goodly army of us are in this class so far as the material facts go. The trouble is we have the plutocratic attitude of mind, and are too often the weakling when it comes to the question of a pronounced stand for better conditions. It is safe to say that few things will make more of a coward of the average man, be he rich or poor, than the plutocratic spirit. The terrible fear that goes with riches masters most men completely.

Does society wish a moral heroism comparable to that known in some of the more warlike periods of history, there remains the almost virgin field of Voluntary Poverty. If it does not develop the heroic to practice Voluntary Poverty in these days of Mammon's triumph, it is difficult to know just what will draw out the sterner attributes of our character.

We sorely need just this type of men these days. For of such is the Army of Progress.

More than one fair attempt to bring larger life and opportunity has died an ignoble death because its advocates depended upon the patronage of wealth. "Influence" easily snuffs out such movements, do they but become threatening to the interests of Privilege. What a strangle hold has Mammon on this fair race of ours!

Many powerful spirits are ardent devotees of the Golden Goddess. Thousands of others are held in terrible bondage because of the devious and questionable doings of these "great ones." Other thousands, beholding, have been blinded by the glitter and are rendered dissatisfied and unfit because of the festering desire to *have*. Still other multitudes are kept quiet through a haunting fear of losing their "job."

Need we wonder then if movements to change the present plutocratic regime have rough sledding?

But there is ever that saving remnant, the heroic few who will do and dare for the welfare of humanity. And just now there seems to be a large demand for them to do, in preaching more widely the benefits and power resident in Voluntary Poverty.

IVAN H. BENEDICT.

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PROSPERITY.

In "Hard Times," Mr. McChoakumchild, the school master, says:

"Now this school room is a nation. And in this nation there are fifty millions of money. Isn't this a prosperous nation? Girl number twenty, isn't this a prosperous nation and ain't you in a thriving state?"

And in telling the story Dickens makes girl number twenty, the daughter of a circus clown, say that she doesn't know whether it is a prosperous nation or not and whether she is in a thriving state or not, unless she knows who has the money and whether any of it is hers.

Is America prosperous? Is it in a thriving state?

No.

True, the coffers of some are overflowing, but they are overflowing with the portion of those plunged in the depths of adversity—the denizens of our jails, our workhouses, our houses of prostitution, our slums, and our sweat shops, unprosperous, unlovely, degraded in the midst of industrial prosperity and commercial glory.

We, the well-housed, may be content with our comfort and security, with our prosperous condition and our thriving state; we may boast of our

national industry and prosperity; we may preach and condemn and punish from behind our bulwarks of laws and constitutions and institutions; but until the unnatural sloughs of adversity are made dry by the leveled mountains of unearned prosperity, the nation will never be truly prosperous.

SCOTT NEARING.

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PAUPER WALL PAPER.

Now that the election is well over and we are all comparatively calm, it may be in order to ask a few questions of the two great authorities on wall paper.

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Governor-elect Dix.

He will be too busy to think about wall paper after the first of January, so perhaps he had better take it up now.

Does he think the present tariff on wall paper is too high, or too low, or is it just right? What is the reason for a tariff on wall paper? Is it to cover the difference in cost of production here and abroad? What is the difference? And so forth.

Never mind about that old company of which Mr. Dix knows nothing, but give us up-to-date information as to present conditions.

The Governor-elect must realize that he owes at least part of his vote to people who were chiefly trying to hurt the feelings of the Hon. Theodore Roosevelt, in which attempt they apparently succeeded. If Mr. Dix makes a good Governor they will readily forgive and forget anything he did as a wall paper manufacturer. But in the meantime such a flood of light as he could throw on the wall paper question would be deeply appreciated.

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The other authority, of course, is the Hon. Theodore Roosevelt. When he recovers consciousness, will he kindly let us know what *he* thinks of the present tariff on wall paper?

Is it too high, or too low, or just right? Why is there a tariff on wall paper? Would he like to have a commission appointed to find out all about the wall paper business—among other things whether the Hon. Theodore knows anything at all about it?

It is rumored that the Colonel's silence is the result of a freak election bet. He agreed, if frazzled, to keep quiet a reasonable time. Whether this be true or not, it cannot be doubted that the Colonel will be heard from sooner or later. We