

Prosperous America.

The richest nation per capita upon the face of the Globe, and how the wealth is distributed.

BY R. F. POWELL.

According to Mulhall, the great English statistician, there are \$64,000,000,000 worth of wealth in the United States and a population of 65,000,000 (at the last census), which gives an average of \$985 per capita, or, counting five persons to the family, \$4,925 per family. The United States census places the average per capita of wealth at something over \$1,000, or over \$5,000 per family. According to these statements the people in this country are literally "rolling in wealth"; are "flooded with silver" and gold also, as well as all other kinds of wealth, for the rankest sound money man does not claim over \$50 of money per capita, so that the other forms of wealth must be equal to at least \$950 per capita. Based upon the above statement of facts, which is undoubtedly very conservative, and taking the statements in Census Bulletin No. 98, in regard to the distribution of this wealth, I have figured out the following details. This Census Bulletin shows the

population to be divided into the following classes (classed according to the amount of wealth they possess):

Class No. 1—Millionaires, .03 per cent. of the population, who own 20 per cent. of all the wealth.

Class No. 2—Rich families, 8.97 per cent. of the population, who own 51 per cent. of all the wealth.

Class No. 3—The well-to-do who own their own homes or farms, clear of all encumbrances, 28 per cent. of the population, who own 20 per cent. of all the wealth.

Class No. 4—The poor families who own homes or farms that are encumbered, 11 per cent. of the population, who own only 5 per cent. of all the wealth.

Class No. 5—Very poor families who rent homes or farms, 52 per cent. of all the population, who only own 4 per cent. of all the wealth.

Now let us get one thousand of these families together who own an average of \$5,000 of wealth, or \$5,000,000 all told, and see how they stand. Three-tenths of a family would represent the millionaires who own 20 per cent. of the wealth equal to \$1,000,000. Eighty-nine and seven-tenths families would be in class No. 2 (rich families) and would own 51 per

cent. or \$2,550,000 of the total wealth. Two hundred and eighty families out of the one thousand would fall into the class No. 3 (well-to-do families who own their homes or farms clear of encumbrance) and would own 20 per cent. of the total wealth, equal to \$1,000,000. There would be 110 families in Class No. 4 (poor families who own homes or farms that are encumbered) and who possess 5 per cent. of the total wealth, or \$250,000. Five hundred and twenty out of the one thousand families fall into Class No. 5 (the very poor who own no home or farm, but must rent the place they call home), and the whole 520 families have but 4 per cent. of the total wealth, or \$200,000 out of the \$5,000,000 possessed by the one thousand families.

To make the above statistics clearer to the ordinary mind, I state the above facts in another form. Estimating that there are to-day 14,000,000 families in the United States, divided into the five above named classes, who possess an average of \$5,000 of wealth per family, we get the following table:

Class No. 1—Millionaires, .03 per cent. of population, 4,200 families who own an average of \$3,333,333 wealth per family.

Class No. 2—Rich families, 8.97 per cent. of population, 1,255,800 families who own an average of \$284,280 per family.

Class No. 3—The well-to-do owning homes or farms clear of encumbrance, 28 per cent. of population, 3,920,000 families who own an average of \$3,571 per family.

Class No. 4—Poor families who own homes or farms that are encumbered, 11 per cent. of population, 1,540,000 families who own an average of \$2,327 per family.

Class No. 5—The very poor who must rent homes or farms, 52 per cent. of the population, 7,280,000 families who own an average of only \$384.40 per family, or \$76.88 per capita, as compared to \$666,666 per capita among the millionaire class.

One millionaire family on the average has as much wealth as 11 7-10 families in Class 2, or as much as 933 3-10 families of Class 3 (the well-to-do), and in Class 4 it requires the combined wealth of 1,432 families to equal the one average millionaire's possessions, while in Class 5 if 8,664 families would bunch all their earthly possessions their combined wealth would only equal the sum possessed by the one average millionaire family. The

per capita of the millionaire class is 8,671 times as great as the per capita wealth of the very poor class. The above, in the opinion of the writer, is in no sense overdrawn.

The comparisons may be "invidious" to the minds of the "I'm-satisfied-with-things-as-they-are" class, but to the millions who feel deep down in their consciousness that "something is wrong" these comparisons mean much more than one can tell.

To those who would like to know the real cause of this monstrously unjust and unequal distribution of the wealth of the nation, I recommend the reading of "Progress and Poverty," by Henry George.