

will be but a feverish sensation if it does not get us beyond charity, whether public or private. Laws should be enacted and funds appropriated to enable the school authorities to offer a nourishing breakfast and luncheon, along with free text books, to every pupil of the public schools. It must be done upon the basis not of personal destitution, but of civic necessity; not because the pupil is poor, but because he is a public school pupil. This is no more socialistic or communistic or paternalistic than is the public school system itself. It is in fact a logical, and as now appears in Chicago, an essential, feature of public education.

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Nor will it be enough to provide free meals and free text books so that all public school children may be upon an equality of opportunity in the school system. The lesson of the Chicago disclosure goes deeper. If thousands of school children are discovered to be starving, there must be other thousands who have not yet been discovered, and thousands more under school age, and thousands more above school age, and thousands of adults who are in the same dreadful plight. In other words, this disclosure of starving school children is but a disclosure of the outer edge of a condition of poverty that puts our civilization to shame. Whatever may be done with reference to this condition for individual relief, nothing will have been done unless the cause is ferreted out. We have no intention of naming that cause as we see it. To do so might only excite futile controversy. But every one must agree that inadequacy of employment explains the situation and gives a clue to the cause.

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To that explanation there are only two objections. One is that the cause is drink rather than inadequate employment. But those who explain the poverty of the poor by drink must explain the wealth of the rich, for there is more drinking in high life than in low life. Indeed, the drunkenness of the poor is better explained by poverty than is poverty by drunkenness. At the most, drunkenness will explain only the poverty of the drunkard and his family; it does not explain the poverty of the industrious and thrifty. Another objection rests upon the assertion that there is plenty of employment for the exceptionally competent. This objection is as weak as the other and not unlike it in substance. If the more competent now get work by displacing the less competent, the latter would keep their places if they were not less competent; in which case it

would be the others, and not they, who would be workless. Incompetency, like drunkenness, only affects cases of individual poverty by determining which of two workers shall be workless; it does not account for poverty as a social condition from which some could not escape, however competent and sober they might be.

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There is really no disputing the explanation of poverty, that there isn't work enough to go around. Yet this is anomalous. How can it be that there isn't work enough to go around when everybody's capacity as a consumer, and consequently as a giver of work, exceeds his ability as a producer or doer of work? In the nature of things there must always be more work than workers. But if that were so there would be no impoverishment for lack of employment. There would be work even for the drunkard in his intervals of sobriety, and for the inefficient. How comes it, then, that there is such lack of employment as to make a perennial condition of poverty? Must it not be that in some way production and consumption fail to meet? But why? Is it in the nature of things, or are we victims of institutional obstructions to industrial cooperation? Along that line of inquiry the cause of poverty may be found.

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President Roosevelt and the Steel Trust.

The steel trust has been called Mr. Roosevelt's favorite trust. There seem to be reasons for this accusation. President Roosevelt himself admits that J. Pierpont Morgan asked permission of him to consolidate its only competitor, the Tennessee Coal and Iron Co., and that he granted the indulgence. He defends his having done so by saying that the Tennessee company was only a small competitor. Mr. Roosevelt ignores the fact that competition may be more a matter of margin than of magnitude. Even if the product which he says that company supplied was only 4 per cent of the whole, it might have been quite as effective a check potentially upon Mr. Morgan's big combine as if it had produced 50 per cent. At any rate Mr. Morgan wanted to rid his combine of the competition, and President Roosevelt consented to his doing so. What did this consent mean? It meant that no prosecution under the anti-trust law would be made during his administration nor under any succeeding administration which he could control. He argues—no, he states, not argues; Mr. Roosevelt seldom argues—that the consolidation was not in violation of the anti-trust law. But Mr. Morgan

must have thought it was, or he wouldn't have asked the indulgence. Most lawyers who have considered it are said to think that it was, and Mr. Bryan avers that it was and gives reasons. At any rate, if Mr. Bryan is elected the courts will be asked for their opinion; whereas if Mr. Taft should be elected the courts will not be bothered about it.

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Somnambulistic Sense.

One of the really good jokes of the Presidential campaign is the criticism by a leading Republican paper, the Omaha Bee, of the tariff plank of the Republican platform. The point of the joke lies in the fact that the Bee, talking in its sleep as it were, mistook this plank for an excerpt from one of Bryan's speeches. Thinking it was cutting into Bryan's vitals, it in fact attacked with energy and sound sense a sentiment which Bryan strenuously rejects, but which the Republican party (including Mr. Taft) officially adopts. The Republican plank so criticised was the one which declares that—

In all tariff legislation the true principle is best maintained by the imposition of such duties as will equal the difference between the cost of production at home and abroad, together with reasonable profit to American industries.

And this is the eminently sensible way in which the somnambulistic Omaha Bee of the 3d criticised that plank—supposing it to be one of Bryan's utterances:

Nothing prettier in the catch-all line has been offered in this campaign. The most hide-bound standpatter in the country can accept that as satisfactory and the rankest free trader can find delight in it. The declaration means simply nothing. An attempt to legislate along that line would simply open the way to interminable wrangling as to what constitutes "a reasonable profit," for hair-splitting on wages on one industry, price of raw materials in another, rebates and drawbacks in a third and so on through the list of thousands of articles that are now on the tariff revision, at Bryan's direction, would serve only to halt industrial and commercial progress and keep business unsettled during his term of office.

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Peculiar importance attached to this excoriation of the Republican doctrine of tariff and labor, because the editor and owner of the Bee, Mr. Victor Rosewater, is a member of the national Republican executive committee and head of the bureau of publicity. Mr. Rosewater denies responsibility for the embarrassing editorial. He says it was written by one of his hired men in his absence from the sanctum. But that really makes the matter worse. It implies that the office force were under general instructions to shy bricks at Bryan

at every opportunity, and that one of them by mistake picked up a boomerang for a brick. This gives us a look behind the Republican newspaper curtain, and shows us how much the newspaper attacks upon Bryan really amount to. It is to be noted also that Mr. Rosewater's paper has not yet shown the fallacy of its hired man's criticism. The fact that the criticism was written under a mistaken impression as to the authorship of the sentiment criticized is indeed a joke on the Bee; but it is only a joke. The serious part of the matter is that the criticism itself is unanswerable. It completely exposes the hollowness of the Republican tariff-labor plank. Whatever discredit this Republican editorial writer may have incurred in the Bee sanctum for confusing Bryan with the Republican platform, and exposing the latter under the impression that he was belaboring the former, is more than offset by the credit he has earned outside as a common sense political economist.

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The Business Bribe.

The promise of plutocratic manufacturers to raise the wages of their employes, if Taft carries the election, is both criminal and mean. It is as clearly a bribe as was ever a two-dollar bill at the polls. It is besides as certainly a fraud as was ever a three-card monte game at a county fair. If manufacturers can be sure of raising wages after election they can raise wages now. If they cannot raise wages now, they cannot be certain of raising them after election. What they are at is trying to influence hard working and poorly paid voters to vote against labor interests by offering them bribes that are never to be paid.

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Robert Baker's Compliments to Mr. Van Cleave.

We call attention especially to ex-Congressman Baker's open letter to Mr. Van Cleave in this week's issue of The Public. It recalls his "full dinner pail" letter (p. 473) of last August. As that letter punctured the claims of the Republican party to being the creator and conservator of American prosperity, so this one punctures Mr. Van Cleave's pretenses with reference to "business" men and workingmen.

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The Business Ideal.

"Do you like Demosthenes?" asked the old village pastor of the butcher's son who was home for vacation from the academy to which he himself had gone in his youth. "No, sir," the bud-