
RELATED THINGS

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THE MELIORIST.

For The Public.

One saith, content, "Whatever is, is best;
All evil is a seeming; fear it not,
But see the fruitful good, by good begot,
Throughout God's perfect world where thou art
guest."

One answereth: "Can any soul feel blest
By entertainment where the common lot
Is misery unmerited, and what
Of 'seeming' is brings terrors manifest?"

Another saith: "As hosts not guests of God,
'Tis we should entertain, and haply make
This plot of ours more fit for Him to bless;
Its seeming not such foul unseemliness,
But kept in weedless beauty for His sake,
That buds of hopes shall cleave its trampled clod."

FREDERICK LEROY SARGENT.

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JOHN P. ALTGELD.

Portions of the Oration Delivered by George Fred
Williams at the Dedication, September 4, 1910,
of Memorial Tablets for the Altgeld
Monument.

Only out of hearts which still throb with the memories of a great man could there have been chosen memorial words so apt to describe his life purposes and deeds, as those which these tablets bear. The first inscription tells of the high service he gave to his State; the second, his sense of justice and devotion to Constitutional guaranties; the third epitomizes his defense of the weak, his protest against compromise and the perversion of the instruments of justice; the fourth expresses his mighty faith in the triumph of the right. Out of his own mouth has his history been written upon the tablets we dedicate today, graven with a pencil of steel.

How imposing is the life of a great patriot! The historians laureate of monarchs have not been able to dwarf the figures of those who have demanded justice and liberty for human-kind. The eloquence which survives is that which is brave, human and self-sacrificing. There is no poetry in selfishness, greed inspires no songs, and even religion cannot paint a god-head except in suffering.

It has been too often said that John P. Altgeld was misunderstood. The truth is that he was too well understood. That wonderful and almost superhuman solidarity, the trust of all trusts, which we call Privilege, dreads but few men. It stands in awe only of the man who is armed with

the flaming sword of Truth, and who wields it defiantly, who feels no pain, no wounds, no taunts, no discouragement, and fears not even death.

Such a man was Altgeld, and if his life was darkened by suffering, by slander and defeats, it was the life of his choice; its pathos is but seeming, and its heroism brought the rewards with which only the great can be satisfied.

Wherever wrong uttered its defiance or demanded concession, whether it spoke from the bench, from the political convention or from the Presidential chair, it found Altgeld standing full armed, his back against the wall. Privilege knew him and understood him, and if millions of honest men were misled in judging him it was because Privilege, realizing the destructive capacity of the man, determined that his power must be broken by any means.

Slander and misrepresentation were the contemptible weapons used against the man who had no price for the betrayal of the people. The pity is that he was misunderstood by those he loved; would that they had rallied as one man to a leader who knew no fear, compromise or danger when the oppressed stood in dumb need.

Today we must again put our helpless reason to the everlasting question, "What is such a life worth?" Sacrifice, sacrifice and ever sacrifice that justice may be done! Justice even to those who resist it, as the bonded slave clings to his chains and his rations. At the best we can add to the right not more than an infinitesimal fraction. But the God who gave life to our dust is not indifferent whether we return it pure, life-sustaining, breathable, or corrupted, infectious and destructive.

He is a weak observer who thinks the work of Altgeld is not apparent in the world. If you would know by heart the appeals which patriots are making in the politics of today, read the book of Altgeld—well named "Live Questions," because the questions he asked cannot die. It is the greatest text-book of modern progressive statesmanship. Those utterances of his, seeming like firebrands in their day, are now becoming commonplaces, accepted truths, many of them.

There is much praise of insurgency within a party, but did Altgeld ever compromise with the servants of Privilege in his own party? Was he not the bravest of insurgents? Had not Altgeld spent his life in this insurgency, the soil might yet have been unyielding where the crop of democracy is now smothering the weeds of both political parties.

There is no time so portentous in the life of a man as the day when, by design or accident, he draws aside the curtain which covers the inner sanctuary of Privilege, and sees the high priests at their work; for it is written that no stranger shall enter into their sanctuary. He must be a hypocrite who can worship there after he has seen;

he must be a hero who dares to expose the shams.

Here, Altgeld did not swerve, and here his miseries began.

I am not willing to review the injustice and suffering which Altgeld endured without entering some protest against the conditions which caused them. It is a scandal of our civilization that one cannot today speak for human rights as against property interests without incurring social, political and financial penalties. If his enemies will not now give him credit for sincerity, it is because they will allow the people's true advocates not even the peace of the grave. The time will come, if our Republic is to survive, when wealth must answer at the bar of justice for its stolid resistance to the rights of man, its indifference to civic righteousness, and its persecution of those who protest against its injustice.

Altgeld brought against property interests the indictment that in the name of the law itself it defended its tools against the penalties for violence and even murder. With abundant testimony, he proved that the police of the city of Chicago had, without legal justification, broken in upon lawful assemblies of men and clubbed them or shot them to death in the name of the law; that these murderers had not been prosecuted and condemned and were continued in office to repeat their barbarities. Yet when he pardoned men who had been falsely convicted under forms of law, he was followed by the agents of wealth with misrepresentation and persecution that have not had a parallel in the history of our country. When he released the so-called anarchists, he discarded the request of thousands of leading citizens that they be pardoned because, "assuming their guilt, these men had been punished enough." His answer was that if they were guilty, no punishment under our laws could be too severe; and I am glad that there stand today upon these tablets his memorable words, "They did not have a fair trial" and "the evidence utterly fails to connect the unknown who threw the bomb with the defendants."

It is not important now to review his masterly discussion of the evidence in that case, the bias shown by the court, the packing of the jury, the probability of personal revenge as a motive, and the doubts of the prosecutors. He took his responsibility like a brave man and refused to yield his conscience to popular clamor. His mortal offense was that his denunciation of wrongs included the ferocity of courts and police. He deemed the life of the citizen to be as sacred against perverted legal procedure and the brutality of the guardians of the public peace as against the misdeeds of perverted men. In the moment of calm judgment, who will today assert that if Altgeld was convinced that the guilt of these men was not proven, he should have refused to pardon them?

The keynote of Altgeld's conduct was duty, inspired by love. It would be futile here to review all the controversies into which duty so inspired led him.

In his debate with President Cleveland upon the sending of United States troops into Illinois, when he as Governor stood ready to suppress domestic violence with the forces of the Commonwealth, he fixed his eyes upon the Constitution and doggedly demanded that its guaranty be observed.

He resisted with fiery eloquence the use of the injunction by courts of equity against the laboring masses, banded to improve their condition by setting the organization of men against the organization of capital. Since Altgeld's death, the tentacles of the law have wrapped themselves closer about the trade union, but his protests still constitute the most eloquent appeals made by human voice against this menace to liberty.

In extolling the memory of Altgeld, it is not necessary that he should be proved right in all his judgments. From holy writ, from human reason and experience one truth shines clear above all doubt; it is that human conduct should be judged according to the heart purpose which actuates it. Altgeld may have been mistaken in his judgment of policy, but he never was mistaken in the motives of his act. He judged all things and all men in accordance with the dictates of a pure and righteous conscience, and of weak man no more can be demanded.

But, nonetheless, as this man's opinions and utterances are studied, we must marvel at his sagacity and prophetic vision, for in his eclectic radicalism we find the outlines of policies which are even now gaining daily in public approval.

Spreading through the West and now even bedded in the constitution of our most Eastern State is this truth he long ago uttered, "Each age furnishes a weapon for the people; the weapon of this age is the Initiative and Referendum through which we can restore democracy."

The idea of municipal government by commission, which now promises to purify our city politics, is at least as old as 1890, when Altgeld advised to "do away with governing boards of councils, with their division of responsibility, and have one man at the head of each department who feels that he is accountable to the people for the conduct of affairs."

The extension of the social function of government, now rapidly progressing, was foreshadowed by him thirteen years ago in the words: "Today, if asked whether the government will take the railroads, or establish the referendum, say you do not know, but that every step which may become necessary to save free government and restore happiness in this land will be taken. Say that if necessary to do so, the government will not only take the railroads, but every monopoly and

concentration of property which interferes with either the rights or the welfare of the people."

In 1896 he said, "Our people are beginning to understand that making money scarce makes money dear; that dear money means low prices for property, for the products of the earth and for the products of labor." This was Altgeld's statement of a fact which was denied in 1896 with vitriolic vehemence, but which is now admitted and restated by the journals not only of Wall street but of the whole world.

He was not a zealot upon woman's suffrage, but his judgment on this question went back to the foundations of justice. "There is no man," he says, "who holds a commission which authorizes him to sit in judgment on the rights of woman. She has as much right to sit in judgment on man and limit his sphere and his actions as he has to limit hers. Therefore, any attempt by man to deny woman independence or equality of rights is simply the assertion of brute force."

Of war he asserts, "The business of killing men is a brutal and degrading profession which must brutalize those who engage in it to a greater or less degree. Even the man who delights in killing the lower animals gradually changes; he becomes coarse; his finer and nobler feelings are blunted, and he finally partakes somewhat of the nature of the fierce brutes whose conduct he imitates." But he adds, "There is no nobler spectacle than that of a great body of citizens taking up arms in defense of liberty. To establish liberty for mankind is the highest mission on earth."

I loved this man, and approached this memorial service in a spirit of sorrow; but not long could this spirit survive under the radiance of inspiration from his life and words as they passed before me in review. I have come into the glory of his achievements as I have seen him, bruised and bleeding, throw himself fiercely upon the barbed wires which greed had thrown up between humanity and the fair field of God's harvest; unmindful of his wounds, beating away his precious strength to rescue the weak, carrying new scars each day, ever at the forefront, as if the blood he shed were the measure of his service. As the mother would rush into the flames to rescue her child, so he was blind to consequences when he saw before him his human brother struggling in the grasp of injustice.

We know what solace to him was the love of her who comforted and sustained him in his hardships; we know, too, that however precious they would have been to him, children of his body were not the need of a man to whom all humanity was as the offspring of his soul. We were his friends. Here at least a loving judgment may be rendered upon his life. Hatred beats in vain against his memory, fear is relieved, envy is silenced by death, love alone may now utter its tribute of affection and review the scenes of his life.

In the murky atmosphere of graft and greed, like a burst of glorious sunlight is the memory of this man. No price could buy away the services of Altgeld to humanity. I speak not of the vulgar sale for money, but of the more subtle bribes of social preferment, of comfort, luxuries, peace, honors, kind words and looks, the flattery of the press and the powerful, the deck of the yacht, the place of honor at the banquet and of power in the state. Oh, beloved, wonderful man! how did you put aside all those cherished things which come to subservient talents, and rack your tired and painful body with strivings for the weak who could give you nothing, and who even turned their faces from you in the hours of your best service? What mattered to you the criminal, the diseased, the sweaty workman, the unjustly condemned! What were the distant Boers to you for whose life and liberties you were pleading when the shaft of death entered your aching heart! You cannot answer us, but we know that your life was given to us as a benediction, and now beyond our ken we believe it has become a part of the eternal power for good. You have said it to us. Let now our love repeat to you: "We hear the rustling of a wing; we feel a breath from the other shore; we do not know where, but are sure we shall meet over there."

BOOKS

SCIENTIFIC LIVING.

Euthenics. The Science of Controllable Environment. By Ellen H. Richards. Published by Whitcomb & Barrows, Boston. 1910. Price, \$1.00. Postage 7 cents.

Long on the teaching staff of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Mrs. Richards is known also to many devoted readers through her former books, such as "The Cost of Living" and "Sanitation in Daily Life." By "Euthenics," as is told in the foreword, the author means "the betterment of living conditions, through conscious endeavor, for the purpose of securing efficient human beings"—"a term proposed for the preliminary science on which Eugenics must be based."

The book is a hearty word of encouragement for men and women in their home making, a plea for the prompt application of modern science to the problems of housekeeping. "Knowledge of labor-saving appliances," writes Mrs. Richards, "is to-day everywhere demanded of the successful establishment, except of the family home. . . . If the housewife would use wisely the information at her hand to-day, it is safe to say that in six cases out of ten she could cut in half the housekeeping budget and double the comfort of living."

Two little tables quoted by the author as ex-