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Review of the book:
An Eye For an Eye, by Clarence Darrow

Colbron, Grace Isabel

When a sincere radical, a man capable of seeing the Truth and fighting for it, is gifted as well with the power of literary expression, he can become indeed dangerous to throned injustice. Mr. Clarence Darrow, who needs no introduction in his public work to the readers of the Review, as proved in his latest book, "An Eye For an Eye," New York, Fox. Duffield & Company, sold by the Public Publishing Company, that he has this gift of sheer literature, so-called, the power to depict an imaginary occurrence in the way that will make it live.

The character of the book is likely to give it a certain sensational success which will make it a tremendous weapon for justice. Because, appealing as it does to the wide circle of those who read for entertainment, it must of its own power, make some think who even the author himself in his character of fighting radical, could not reach. And it is literary art of the highest too, for it arouses the "scorn of scorn, the hate of hate, the love of love" which the poet must do, if he be worthy of his mission.

No more terrible arraignment of the machinery of justice in our courts has ever been written. And the fact that the author is a lawyer and knows whereof he speaks adds not a little to the force of the blow.

The power of preconceived public opinion, influenced by the luridness of a sensation mongering press, is revealed in illuminating truthfulness. And back of it is the steady glare of a pitiless searchlight turned on wrong economic conditions, on a social system that deprives so many, so sadly many, of the simplest chance in life that ought to come to every man.

The construction and plot are simplicity itself. Jim Jackson has murdered his wife, has been caught after his flight, arrested, tried, sentenced to be hanged. On the eve of his hanging, he narrates the whole story to a friend. His story fills the book, is all it contains. And the story is very simple, told by an unlettered man who lives the life of the

usual day laborer with nothing but the strength of his hands between him and annihilation. Jackson was a switchman in the Chicago train yards, then a peddler.

He rambles on, digressing often, touching on what seem to be unessential events, but which all add to the strength of the picture, to the power of the marvelous directness of his recital. The natural mildness of the man's disposition shines through every word he says, and the humbleness of his philosophy of life is a severer judgment of the injustice of present conditions than many a political harangue.

All he wants to do, apparently, is simply to prove to his friend that he isn't quite as black as the newspapers paint him, and to show how he could have come to do so horrible a thing. The many little things, insignificant in themselves, that lead up to the catastrophe, are convincingly told, as is the story of his flight after the murder.

The power of the following passage needs no comments.

"They said it was awful bad the way I took her off and the place I dumped her, and the newspapers made that out one of the worst things about it all; but I tried to think of something else to do and I couldn't, and there she was dead, and I had to do the best I could. I washed her and fixed her all up before I went away, and if there'd been anything else I could have done I know I would."

The physic insight in it is marvelous. There are so many quotable passages in this book that choice is hard. Just as it is hard to speak of it in terms of calm criticism. One of our Single Tax leaders said once in answer to the usual objection that you couldn't introduce Single Tax until you changed human nature, that in his opinion human nature hadn't had a chance yet anyway. "Brute nature" was about all that had any show as things are now.

The following passage from Mr. Darrow's book is an illustration of the truth of this. Jim is telling of his capture in a southern town.

"Well after the barber got through shaving me, the

marshall took the picture and held it up side of my face, and any one could see it was me. He was so glad he almost shouted. And he told the police judge that he'd got one of the most dangerous criminals in the whole United States, and he was entitled to one thousand dollars reward. I never see a boy feel so good over anything as he did over ketchin' me. He said that he could pay off the mortgage on his house, and get his girl piano lessons and run for sheriff next fall.

"After the marshal found out who I was he treated me a good deal better 'n before. He got me nice fried chicken most every meal, he got me some new pants and shoes and fixed me up quite nice. He came in and visited me a good deal and seemed real sociable and happy. I expect he couldn't help feelin' friendly towards me, because he thought of that one thousand dollars, and that he wouldn't of got it if I hadn't killed her, and in one way a good deal as if I done it on his account. Of course he wa'n't really glad I'd done it but so long as I done it, he was glad I come his way."

This is illuminating for the way in which human nature struggles to keep i*s humanity under a system devised to make brute nature of it.

Grace Isabel Colbron.