

The Crane Classics

Adventures in Common Sense

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THE CURSE OF POVERTY

THERE is but one calamity—poverty. There is but one thing to be desired—riches.

Any kind of poverty is bad: material, intellectual, emotional, spiritual.

Every bodily disease is due to bodily poverty: of the blood, of nutrition, of elimination, of co-ordination.

Malignant germs abound everywhere. But they are snobs. They do not attack the rich-blooded, the richly functioned; they pounce upon the anemic. A health-rich boy can have a million pneumonia microbes in his mouth and not be hurt.

Money poverty is bad. You do not have to be a money worshipper to believe that you cannot lead a decent life without income enough to get you comfortable clothing, wholesome food, a sanitary habitation, and the saving bits of culture and leisure.

It is perfectly right for us to want money enough to secure a reasonable independence. Any one who is not investing regularly a portion of his earnings is a fool. Thrift is just as sterling a virtue now as it was in the days of Ben Frank-

lin. Any child not trained to save is wronged.

The newspapers are full of the news of domestic scandal. It is due to poverty of love, and poverty of character.

The richest rich people on earth are they who have plenty of love.

And how terrible and far-reaching are the effects of mind poverty!

The people are like "dumb, driven cattle," herded by shrewd political bosses. Their children are stunted, their homes are cramped, their rights are denied them, their food is poisoned, they are insulted, despised, pillaged, and swindled, simply because they are ignorant, they are victims of intellectual poverty, they don't know what to do.

Duly train just one generation of children and see what a tremendous silent revolution would ensue!

It is the great army of the ignorant who stir up violence, follow fatuous enthusiasms and bring defeat in the battles of the people.

It is the moral poverty of the money-rich that renders them pests.

It is the spiritual poverty of the Church that makes it ineffective.

It is the artistic poverty of the People that gives us ugly cities, dreary streets, stuffy flats, hideous advertising plastered over street cars and billboards.

It is artistic poverty that produces poor theat-

rical shows, wretched, musically poverty-stricken comic operas, idea-poverty-stricken plays.

It is moral impotence that causes the dearth of honest men as great leaders.

Yet reformers hawk preventive remedies. Prohibit this, stop that, curb the other! Humanity needs the bit, the brake, and the restraint of its too powerful forces!

Stuff and nonsense! The one thing mankind needs is more force, more fire, more steam, more riches.

Never more than now. Democracy needs a thousandfold more money than royalty. Freedom needs more brains than serfdom. Virtue needs more energy than vice. Love is aseptic in proportion as it is potent. Real religion is only in surcharged souls; watery and timid souls can have but Pharisaism.

Give us riches! Rich hearts to love mightily, rich brains to think boldly, rich hands to work skilfully, rich bodies to live wholesomely, riches of culture to keep us out of the bogs of barbarism, riches of music, of sculpture, of architecture, riches of spirit to grasp the majesty of moral laws, and riches of money to secure our personal independence.

The great man is the man of full life.

"And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth fruit; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."