

The Coming Age
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II-THE RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE MUNICIPALITY THE GOLDEN RULE MAYOR. AN EDITORIAL SKETCH.

There is probably no more interesting figure in official municipal life in America than that of the Hon. Samuel M. Jones, popularly known as the Golden Rule Mayor of Toledo. Mr. Jones is a Christian in more than the ordinary perfunctory sense. He is striving in his business, social, and official relations to live the Golden Rule, as we shall presently see.

He is a self-made man, and in his life American youths may find another of those helpful examples which nerve the hand, strengthen the brain, and put new courage into the soul during the dark hours of struggle and anxiety which come to so large a per cent of our young men who achieve success in life today.

Mr. Jones was born in Wales on August 3, 1846, but was brought to America by his parents when three years of age. The voyage, which was taken fifty years ago, occupied thirty days, and suggests to us one of the changes which have marked the march of invention during the last half of our wonderful century. Arriving in New York, the parents proceeded by canal boat to the central part of the State, where they located. They were very poor, and the struggle for a livelihood was of that character which calls for true heroism. The little boy when very small had to help in the battle with the wolf. Very pathetic is this observation of Mr. Jones:

"The poverty of our family was so stringent that it was necessary for me to go out and work, and I bear upon my body today the marks of the injustice and wrong of child labor."

When eighteen he determined to go out into the world and battle for a livelihood where opportunities seemed more favorable than at home. At that time the oil fields of Pennsylvania offered a favorable chance for employment to those who were not afraid of work.

Thither the young man turned his steps. He arrived at Titusville with fifteen cents in his pocket, and, as he found work more difficult to obtain than he had anticipated, his small capital soon vanished, and for a short time his position was extremely trying. The sensitive youth, eager for work but without a cent, and with no means of paying for food or shelter, affords one of the most tragic spectacles which enter into every-day life. One thing worried him greatly, — he knew that his patient, loving mother was anxiously awaiting tidings from her boy, but he had no money for the necessary stamp. This fact, however, did not deter him from writing a good, long letter on some stationery kindly furnished him by the keeper of a little hotel. His letter written, sealed, and directed, the young man began to plan some way to obtain the necessary three cents for postage. While striving to hit upon some means of meeting the demands of Uncle Sam, he noticed a man going to the post-office with several letters, and a daring idea came into his head, which he instantly acted on. Approaching the gentleman, he said: "Are you going to the post-office?" "Yes, sir," was the reply. "Will you have the kindness to mail this letter for me?" he asked, as he began fumbling in his pocket for the necessary coins, which were not forthcoming. The gentleman evidently took in the situation, as he exclaimed, in a kindly tone: "Never mind; I'll stamp it." The kindness of the stranger lifted a burden from the boy's heart. With innate courage he set forth again in search of work. This time he succeeded. His energy, perseverance, and application brought their reward. From an employee he became in 1870 an oil producer. His business prospered, and he succeeded in accumulating a fortune. In 1893 he invented some important improvements in appliances for producing oil, and shortly after engaged in the manufacture of the product. Here he came in contact with the labor conditions in a city for the first time. The workmen in the oil fields had as a rule received comparatively large wages, but the amount paid the toilers in the city was very small. "I found," he said, in speaking of this, "men working in Toledo for a fraction of a dollar a day. I began to wonder how it was possible for men to live on such a small sum of money in a way becoming to citizens of a free republic." Mr. Jones refused to listen to the argument that, because other firms required long hours and small pay, it was necessary for all houses to do the same. He shortened the day of those who came to work for him from twelve to eight hours, and while paying excellent wages made each worker a profit sharer, as will be seen by the following form of a letter which

for the past four years has, with a check, been sent to each employee at Christmas time:

Toledo, Dec. 25, 1898.

Mr. John Smith:

Dear Brother—Following our custom for the past few years, we inclose herein our check in your favor for the sum of..., that being five per cent on the amount that has been paid you in wages by this company during the past year. This is not intended as a charitable gift; it is an expression of good will, a recognition of faithful service, and an admission that the present wage system is not scientific, therefore not a just system; further, it is doing the best we know at the present moment in the way of making a beginning that will finally lead us to a condition of life (brotherhood) where the question of what a person shall receive as a reward for his labor will no longer be a mere matter of chance, depending upon the necessity of the one and the greed of the other, as is the case at present, but where justice will prevail, and where every man will be secure in the enjoyment of all of the fruit of the labor of his hands. If in the future there shall appear a better way to contribute to this end, we hope to be as ready to adopt it as we were to adopt this little division of profit.

Accompanying this dividend, we hand you a little booklet our fifth annual Christmas greeting, wherein you will find our views upon the subject of social relations somewhat fully discussed, and we commend the same to your thoughtful consideration.

We wish you all always a merry Christmas and a useful, that is, happy New Year. Very faithfully yours,

S. M. JONES,
For The Acme Sucker Rod Co.

This Golden Rule business man next sought to create a spirit of fraternity. His employees were taken with other friends on little summer excursions on the lake, and also became guests in his great home. His large business grew rapidly, and other laborers were required. They received the same treatment, and soon became as interested and enthusiastic as the other employees. Last year he

bought a square of land adjoining his factory. It contained a dozen old trees and several rookeries. The latter were torn down, the land evened, and a park and play-ground laid out, with seats under the shady trees, and swings, a may-pole, and seesaws for the little ones. Here also provisions were made for public meetings and conferences when the weather permitted, and here, to use Mr. Jones's words:

On Sunday afternoons we have our meetings. Not preaching meetings or Sunday schools for just a few, but meetings for the people and all of the people. We have talks upon topics of general Interest, — brotherhood, man's relation to man, the Golden Rule, socialism, transportation, and kindred topics, discussed by people of varied phases of religious belief. At one time we had a Christian minister, a Jewish rabbi, and an agnostic, discussing from the same platform the subject of the Golden Rule.

A hall has also been fitted up for public meetings and conferences when the weather will not permit the out-door gatherings. The little park has proved a source of great pleasure to the people, and it is but one of several things which Mr. Jones has done, and is doing, in his consistent attempt to live up to the precepts of the Golden Rule. Is he discouraged with the result? Far from it. Let me quote his own words as given a few months ago in the *Chicago Tribune*:

It seems to me that I see the beginning of a better day when this declaration of our forefathers shall be realized. Selfishness and greed and love of money, grown rampant, have well-nigh consumed us; but the people, the great people, the patient, loving, waiting people, are thinking, as they never thought before, that the reign of the people is about to begin. The right to live, of every man who is willing to work, must be admitted. The ideal of the republic, which we And in the well-ordered family, must be realized, and soon, if the nation is to be saved and the republic to be permanent. I believe we are coming to this realization at a tremendous pace. The machinery which does the work of the world in one-quarter or less of the time that was formerly required to do it, has made it both unnecessary and impossible to provide ten or twelve hours' work for all of the people. The people will not willingly starve or commit suicide. They have a right to live, because they are willing to work. The Almighty himself promised it at the very dawn of creation, when he said, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."

I advocate the eight-hour day, though not because it affords a final and complete solution of the labor problem, for it does not. It is only a step in the right direction, but its immediate adoption would put at work immediately thousands of men now in enforced idleness, and we may as well admit.— those of us who claim such superiority as to style ourselves "Captains of Industry,"— that these men are our brothers, and that in one way or another they must live. Through our selfish and soul-destroying greed we have driven millions into beggary and thousands into crime, so you see that, when we follow the effect to its logical conclusion and then turn around and look for the cause of crime, we often find the real criminal very near our own door.

People ask me what I would do if we had the eight-hour day universally adopted, and there was not work enough to go around; I reply: Divide the day again; and then, if there should still be unemployed men, divide it once more. This is a perfectly logical, rational, and reasonable programme. That is why I wrote the song "Divide the Day," — because I believe in it, and the simple rules of arithmetic will demonstrate that it must be a success.

To be contented with existing conditions would for me be to blaspheme the sacred name of Christ, and would moreover be treason against the republic itself. I know that the republic cannot endure, and that our mock Christianity must perish from the face of the earth, unless those of us who claim to be both patriotic and Christian are able to demonstrate, by the sacrifice of service, that our claims are well founded, by redeeming our beloved country from the cruel grasp of selfish greed that would destroy, and making it what God designed it should be, — a haven for the oppressed of all the earth.

The religious ideals of the man, and the spirit which pervades his work, are well illustrated in the following extract from his fifth annual Christmas greeting to his employees, which accompanied the annual dividend check last Christmas:

Nearly nineteen hundred years ago the angelic voices rang out on the midnight air of Judea's plain, proclaiming the dawn of a new era, for which the world still waits, the era of "peace on earth and good

will to men." Are we idly waiting for the coming of this good time, or are we helping to make it a reality? Nothing is plainer to me than that the mission of Jesus was to establish a new social order on earth, which he called "the kingdom of heaven" and "the kingdom of God." Jesus never once used the term "kingdom of heaven" or "kingdom of God" as meaning a place, but always a condition of mind, a social order in which men (Christians) would love all men as brothers, and live and act toward them as brothers. . . .

If Christ taught anything he taught that men might have this perpetual Christmas whenever they want it. He said, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand," and again, "the kingdom of heaven is within you," and he taught that we might begin to live in it at any time merely by giving up the idea of hating men and giving ourselves to loving them instead. I suppose those people who insist on waiting for some dim and distant millennium have the right to wait, but for my part I prefer to take my share now and here, by living as best I can according to perpetual Christmas rules. A millennium is only perpetual Christmas. . . .

We have not yet learned to be ashamed of a civilization that makes some of our brothers paupers; but we have sound proof that the world is awakening, and before many years we shall awake to see a Christmas when poverty shall be banished from the earth. Shame on us that we have tolerated it so long! The Rev. Heber Newton, of the Madison Avenue Episcopal Church, New York, said in a recent sermon that the kingdom of God was a new order of society, which men themselves should bring about, and from which should be abolished poverty and misery. The time would come, he said, when men would consider it a crime and an outrage that any person should starve to death in the midst of plenty. He for one looked to see poverty abolished in our own generation. So do I. I am looking for a Christmas when every man shall have the fruit of the labor of his own hands, and no man shall, either by the methods of the gambler or the methods of respectable business, have the fruit of the toil of some other man's hands. Then poverty will be a thing of the past, because the real cause of poverty — the man that lives at the expense of other people's toil — will have disappeared.

As Mayor of Toledo, no less than as a large manufacturer, Mr. Jones has sought to carry out his Golden Rule creed. He has been fearless

in his advocacy of that which he felt was for the best interests of all, and deaf to the specious pleadings of those desiring special privileges. In an interesting sketch which appeared in the *New York Herald* of February 19th, dealing with Mr. Jones's work in Toledo, the writer, after discussing the mayor and his labors in general, continues:

In summer Mayor Jones takes his employees and their families out for lake rides, and in many other ways carries out his policy regarding the brotherhood of man, of which idea he is a devout advocate. While little is said about it, he contributes perhaps five times his salary as mayor to the poor of the city, doing it in an unostentatious and quiet way. He is a musician of no mean ability, and has achieved a reputation as a speaker upon industrial subjects. He is continually besought to speak in various cities over the country. He owns what is known as Golden Rule Park, where open-air meetings are held, with good speaking and good music in summer, and Golden Rule Hall, where the same programme is observed in the winter.

The presence of such a man at the head of a municipality cannot fail to stimulate all that is best in municipal and individual life, while the fact that business men are thus stepping out of the old ranks, and carrying the teachings of Jesus into every act of life, is one of the many encouraging signs present in the closing years of our century.

THE RIGHTS OF THE MUNICIPALITY AND ITS OBLIGATIONS TO THE CITIZENS.

CONVERSATION WITH HON. S. M. JONES.

Q. Will you give us some of the principal reasons for favoring municipal ownership of such natural monopolies as gas, electric lighting, street-car service, telephones, etc.?

A. All natural monopolies should be publicly owned, and such monopolies as you mention should be municipally owned, because, in the first place, they cover a class of necessities that are common to all of the people. It may be urged that the poor do not need gas, electric lighting or telephones, etc., but in the most just order of society, into which we are coming, these utilities will be as

accessible to the poor as they now are to the rich. It is no stretch of imagination to say that many a poor person has died simply for want of a telephone to reach a doctor quickly, and the only substantial reason why the poor should not have telephones and other things that are now considered luxuries is found in the fact that they cannot have them. Unjust economic conditions have placed them beyond their reach. I fancy that the time will come when the social needs of a city will be so perfectly understood that the telephone will not only be publicly owned, but publicly paid for, and will be as freely used by all classes of citizens as are now the streets, street lighting, the protection of fire and police departments, and public-school education. Man is a social being. We have not yet begun to take in the profound philosophy of the statement that "no man liveth to himself." If we have prosperity that is real, we all share it; in like manner, whether we will or not, we all share in the adversity which to our short-sighted eyes may seem to affect only a few.

A second and perhaps the best reason why these monopolies should be publicly owned is found in the fact that private ownership of a public utility is a public immorality. No legislative body has a moral right to farm out a privilege granting certain individuals the right to rob the people while pretending to serve them. Perhaps the word "rob" may be extravagant in this sense: but I mean to say that no moral right is lodged in any legislative body to grant a privilege to a corporation to make profit from the people by providing a social necessity, when this class of service is the manifest duty of the people. According to any just conception of democracy, it is one of the imperative functions of government. To evade it or avoid it by granting franchises or leases of privileges of that kind is a shirking of responsibility on the part of the leaders amounting to nothing less than a crime against the people.

Q. Do you believe that it is wise and proper for municipalities to make reasonable preparations for free lectures, free music, baths, and other agencies which tend to elevate and dignify manhood and minister to the healthful condition of the mind and body of the citizen?

A. If it is wise for the state to provide for a system of free education, which has been done, then all the reasons that have been urged for

that form of socialism may be brought forward in support of a proposition for free lectures, free music, free baths, free playgrounds, free gymnasia, etc. We are beginning to see that we have been making a narrow use of the word education; a whole lot of stuff has been called education that did not educate. We have separated life into fragments, and the fundamental fact is ever before us that life is a whole, and we are coming to accept the doctrine of the absolute unity of the entire race. This is because of our better conception of democracy and brotherhood, and as this idea of unity takes possession of us, we see the necessity of having every social unit as nearly complete, as nearly perfect, as the socialized energy of the municipality, state, or nation can make him.

The acceptance of the idea of democracy involves a dismissal from the mind of any thought of class or classes, and this degrading notion has always hindered the progress of the world. The idea that a few of us are endowed with the "divine right of kings," and are especially fitted to govern or rule what we have called the lower classes, is undemocratic, as well as unchristian and of course unbrotherly; and worst of all, it is unscientific. Emerson says that "the entertainment of the idea of depravity, — that is the last profligacy and profanation; there is no atheism but this."

If we are a democracy, we must believe in the people: there is no escape from that conclusion. If we believe in the people, we must believe that we are going to be saved altogether or lost altogether, and it is my belief that we are making progress toward nobler ideals of democracy and brotherhood than we have ever yet dreamed of. I see the promise of this in the growing desire to enlarge the functions of government in ministering to the social necessities of the people; and as we have long since recognized the importance of one part of the thing called education — what is taught from books — and have practically made that as free as the air we breathe, so I believe we shall enlarge our conceptions of what constitutes education, and make such things as baths, gymnasia, playgrounds, music, lectures, etc., as free to all as the common school now is.

Q. Is it not reasonable to suppose that the city would, in the long run, save far more than the amount expended, in the reduction of expenses required for courts, jails, almshouses and the service of physicians, if more attention were given to the moral well-being of

the people and to more effective sanitary measures?

A. There is no room to doubt that fifty per cent of the sum now expended in so-called restraining and charity methods would,— if expended in any reasonable way along socialistic lines, so as to enlarge the privileges of the people and to provide opportunities for them, — within twenty-five years place our almshouses, jails, penitentiaries, and prisons very largely in the domain of the relics of a hideous past. To appreciate this truth, we first have to understand that the source of our wealth is in "hard, bone labor," all fine-spun theories about brain-work and capital to the contrary notwithstanding. Let me illustrate: We might wipe off from the face of the earth all created wealth, all property, manufactured goods of every description, and if we have a healthy, educated, and socialized people ready to work for the good of all, we may reasonably expect to restore in a short time all of these material things. I think this will help us to see the relative importance of health and wealth, and, along with it, the necessity and duty of providing opportunities for people to be healthy. Then, when with our socialized energy we shall provide opportunities for them to work, it will follow as a perfectly natural consequence that they will be wealthy.

Q. Inasmuch as a republic depends on the character of manhood, do you not believe that it is the sacred duty of the state to promote, so far as lies in her power, habits of industry and to maintain self-respecting manhood?

A. It most assuredly is the sacred duty of the state to promote habits of industry and to maintain self-respecting manhood, and the imperative necessity of this hour is that the city, state, and nation shall organize in its collective capacity so that the citizens of this growing commonwealth may live self-respecting lives. We provide for free education. Through the manual-training schools, we even teach our children how to work, and then we turn them out into a scrambling, fighting, quarreling mob (the competitive system), where every man is struggling for himself in a "grab all," "catch as catch can," "devil take the hindmost" game, foolishly expecting that they will win success; they are helpless babes pitted against trained fighters. After having taught them the art and beauty of work, and how to work and how to make beautiful things, we fail to give them

an opportunity to work. We deny them the right to share in making and building a country that we ask them to love, a country that they want to love, and this is where the colossal failure of the present system reveals itself in its most hideous proportions — in the ever-increasing army of the workless, in the growing numbers of those who bear the curse of the wandering foot, and go from place to place vainly seeking and begging and pleading for the right to stand upon the earth, and the right to participate and share in the glory of the work that is going on about them. But all this is to be changed: the air is filled with signs of promise. The manifest destiny of these United States is to save the great peoples from the impending doom that the narrowness of a few would bring down upon them. Our future is to be heroic, spiritual. We are to be a great people, — great in quality, not in mere bigness. We are to manifest our greatness by our love for each other, and in a recognition of the rights of our fellow-men in providing opportunities for every man, — for even the weakest child to live the best possible life that is in him. We are to realize the ideals that the founders of the government forecast in the Declaration of Independence, where they set forth that "all men are created free and equal, and entitled to certain unalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." There is but one place where real happiness can be found, and that is in being useful to some fellow human being. Ruskin has said that "the wealth of a nation may be estimated by the number of happy people that are kept employed in making useful things." Some day we shall take account of stock in that way. We shall not go to Lombard street or Wall street; but, pointing to the happy people who are constantly employed in making useful and beautiful things, we shall say, like the mother of the Gracchi, "These are my jewels."

Q. You have recently come out in favor of the rights of men to work. Will you give us your reasons for the position you have taken?

A. For the past four or five years it has been gradually dawning upon me that every man has a natural right to work. Here are a few reasons why I believe there is such a right: First, work is a necessity for the well-being of man, and the more useful the work that contributes to the building up of the physical nature the more human the man will be. I do not think there is room to doubt this. We know we may make mere bone, muscle, and sinew by providing artificial work, such as is found in every well-equipped gymnasium;

but I do not believe that that sort of work brings in return the satisfaction of having contributed to the material world about one, as does the knowledge of having participated in making useful things, in adding to the beautiful and the helpful, and to the sum total of the comfort of our fellow-men. My sympathy, in my earlier studies along this line, went out entirely to the poor, the workless, the wanderers who are begging for work; but, as I have taken a broader view of the situation, I confess that today it is equally divided between these unfortunates and the unfortunates at the other end of the line, the sons and daughters of our well-to-do people, who are living artificial lives of practically enforced idleness. "An idle brain is the devil's workshop," is an old saw and a true one, and to my mind it is equally true whether the idler is rich or poor. God never made a place for drones in human society. God never provided a plan whereby a human being could be happy and be idle. Work is the normal condition of a healthy man or woman, as play is that of the healthy child, and a social system that enforces idleness and non-productive life, on either rich or poor, is as unscientific in theory as it is vicious and wrong in practice; and I hail with delight the signs that I see of the dawning of the day of industrial freedom, when every man and woman shall be as free to exercise the right to work as they are today to exercise the right to vote or worship.

Let me not be misunderstood. In the juster order of society that is coming, the right to work will not involve slavish drudgery for eight or ten hours a day, but the right to participate in creating the world about us and the right to such a conception of art as that of which William Morris gave us a definition when he said that "art is the expression of man's joy in labor." That is the kind of work that all have a right to share in: that is the kind of liberty that we are yet to know through the larger recognition of social obligation that is coming to us, and coming with whirlwind speed in these closing years of the nineteenth century.