

CHAPTER VII.

THE COMPETITIVE SYSTEM A FAILURE.

THE real impracticable visionaries of to-day are those who imagine that "free competition" can bring prosperity and contentment to the wage-earning masses. Under the present business system, the prosperity of the few necessitates the poverty of the many. It is a capitalistic sophistry to say that "the interests of labor and capital are identical." They ought to be identical, and would be under proper conditions; but every strike and lock-out proves that the present relation between labor and capital is not one of peace and harmony.

Individualism has failed properly to distribute the immense wealth which has been created in the last forty years. It has failed to furnish work for millions of our people. It has failed to reduce the hours of labor for those who were employed. It has allowed loafing schemers to become richer than the princes of India, while industrious and intelligent citizens have become pauperized and outlawed. It has put tiny children in the factory while their fathers sought in vain for work. It has fostered crime, and driven thousands to suicide. It has brought out all the baser passions of human nature, and repressed the nobler, kindlier virtues. The evidences of its failure and collapse are to be seen on every side.

For instance, look at the failure of individualism to manage the coal-mining industry of this country; look at Hazleton, Pa., where two years ago thirty unarmed men were shot down while peace-

fully walking along the highway. Look at Virden, Ill., where thirteen men sacrificed their lives in an attempt to get work and a living wage only a short time ago. Look at our own great State of Ohio. Listen to the pathetic wail of the wives and children of 600 miners at Jobs, Ohio, who had but twenty-two days' work in five months! Can these people be patriotic? Can they sing with any just conception, "My Country, 'Tis of Thee, Sweet Land of Liberty?"

THE PEOPLE BEGINNING TO SEE THE LIGHT.

I think we have reached a period in the history of the world when people are beginning to understand that the cause of our misery, our woe and want, our poverty and crime lies in social injustice. And I am sure that if we have once properly located the cause, we shall not be long in discovering the remedy. We have heretofore been dealing too much with effects. We have talked about the struggle between capital and labor, forgetting that all capital is but labor, that all created wealth is the fruit of the toil of men's hands, that all of the immeasurable value that we call improvement, all the created wealth of great cities, of magnificent buildings, of railroads and ships, canals and highways — all of these are the product of men's hands. Naked man and natural opportunity have produced them all. We are coming to understand that neither the earth nor the great cities of the earth have been created for the benefit of a few men or for a special class. We are coming to understand that all alike are entitled to so much of natural opportunity as they have need of. There is no dispute on the question of air and sunshine, although something of an embargo is placed on the latter by the tall buildings in our cities; so far, we have free access to certain kinds of air — though it is not always of the best; — but man has been fenced off through private ownership from free access to the earth, the land; and as we study the low estate to which many of our fellow-men have

fallen under the influence of the thing we call civilization, we do not have to look very deep before we can find that the cause of a man's wretchedness is generally the denial of an opportunity to exercise the God-given right of working in order to develop and bring out the best possibilities of his manhood. I believe that a government to be worthy the name ought to *guarantee equality of opportunity for every child born in it.*

We have been given to fulsome boasting that we have the best government on the face of the earth. Granted. It does not follow that it may not be made better. A government in which jails, penitentiaries, almshouses and workhouses are filled to overflowing certainly has not realized final conditions in the art of civilizing its inhabitants. We are coming to understand that so much of the thing that we call civilization as we really have, has come in spite of modern industry rather than by reason of it. We have come to understand that a civilized man is a man who cares for the welfare of his fellow-man; an educated man is a man who knows that it cannot be well with him unless it is well for all of his fellows. The old Knights of Labor motto that "An injury to one is the concern of all," is an important fundamental, necessary in the conception of every man who claims to be a good citizen.

THE TRAMP AND THE TRUST PROVE THE FAILURE OF COMPETITION.

Modern society is organized warfare, and there is no hope of escape from these conditions through more warfare. Competition has failed; the competitive system is doomed. It seems like a waste of words to repeat a truth that is so apparent to-day. It is proved by our great armies of tramps, paupers, mendicants and criminals who have been squeezed out of the race simply because of their inability to hold their own, and have fallen into the class known as dependents. Charge them all

up to competition, which is a denial of brotherhood, and you will have found the cause of all of our distress to-day. Now, shall we find the remedy in more competition? Not at all. The only remedy for the evil arising from competition is the antidote that we find in association, and the people, the great masses, seem to be the last to comprehend this fact. The business man, already discerning the signs of the coming storm that is to sweep the competitive system from the earth, is breaking for cover, and hence we see the great organization of trusts that are springing up daily and almost hourly.

As I say further on, in the chapter on "Trusts," we shall not overcome the evil of the trusts by legislating against them, and compelling a dozen companies to do business where one might do the business. There would be no more virtue in a programme of that kind than there would be in the sympathy of a man who should employ his brother man to carry a pile of bricks first to one side of a lot and pile them up nicely and then back to the other side to repeat the operation. It is said that Stephen Girard actually once did this sort of thing, believing that he was philanthropic in doing so. Useless labor is clearly a curse and not a blessing, and instead of trying to destroy the trust and department store, we must organize our society through the thing called government in such a way as to distribute all blessings, distribute the profit, if you please, of the saving of labor where it belongs, among all of the people. The profits of these organizations are only made possible by the fact that society is here, that the city is here, and no man or organization of men has a right to use the city, state, or nation, or even an individual, simply as an instrument out of which he may squeeze profit. We are realizing the inevitable result of competition, which is always monopoly. In any game or test of strength or skill, first there are many, then there are a few, then there is one; and so we have the prospect before us, if we continue our present course, of one gigantic trust and a nation of wage slaves and paupers.

Let me quote from an article, "The Spread of Socialism," by Washington Gladden in the "Outlook" for May 13th, 1899. Dr. Gladden is known as one of the most conservative, most careful, conscientious and just men to-day in the Christian ministry:

Such a gigantic attempt to bind burdens upon the whole community of consumers must provoke a violent reaction. These billions of watered stock are simply a legalized demand upon the people for contributions of their substance to those who have given them nothing in exchange. The feudal lords of the olden time made no more unjust demand. It will not be endured. And there is terrible danger that these injustices will be swept away by a whirlwind of popular wrath. Prof. Albion W. Small, the head professor of sociology in the University of Chicago, cannot be suspected of reckless enmity toward capitalists, but he has just been testifying that the tendencies of which we have been speaking are ominous. "In this age of so-called democracy," he says, "we are getting to be the thralls of the most relentless system of economic oligarchy that history has thus far recorded. That capital from which most of us, directly or indirectly, get our bread and butter, is becoming the most undemocratic, atheistic and inhuman of all the heathen divinities." Professor Small goes on: "I am not thrusting the dust of my library in your faces; but if you heed the symptoms from bank and office, factory and railroad headquarters, and daily press, you have discovered that the very men who have made these combinations are beginning to be frightened at their shadows. These very business men, who claim a monopoly of practical "horse-sense," have involved themselves and all of us in a grim tragedy. They are asking in a quiet way how it is all going to end. Whether they realize it or not, our vision of freedom is passing into the eclipse of universal corporate compulsion in the interest of capital. The march of human progress is getting reduced to making time in the lock-step of capital's chain-gang. It would make infinitely more for human weal if every dollar of wealth was cleaned off the earth, if we could have instead of it industry and homes, and justice and love and faith, than to be led much further into the devil's dance of capitalization.

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP THE REMEDY.

Further on Dr. Gladden says:

Vested rights will be respected, I have no doubt; but vested wrongs may be called to account. It is probable that some new legal maxims will be framed and enforced, and that our jurisprudence will be enlarged and invigorated by

a new application of ethical principles. Whether corporations in any sense private will long be permitted to manage public utilities may be doubted; but if they do, they will certainly be required to govern their conduct by a strict regard for the public welfare. "Universal corporate compulsion in the interest of capital" is the goal toward which, in the estimate of Professor Small, our economic world is moving. Of course, we shall not tarry at that goal; probably we shall never reach it. The swifter and stronger the movement toward it, the more prompt and resolute will be the revolt. When the purpose becomes evident, these vast aggregations of capital will be seized, their holdings will be appropriated, and the properties will pass under the control of the people. Industrial feudalism, when it is finished, will be speedily transformed into industrial democracy. Thus it is that the present tendencies in the business world are carrying us toward Socialism at a plunging pace.

The solution of our problem of what to do with the trust and the monopoly lies solely by the way of public ownership. The properties of the people that have been frittered away through legislation nearly always inspired by, and clearly in the interest of, private business, must be again brought into their own possession. Long before the time for the expiration of the fifty-year street railroad franchises, the people will have awakened to a new conception of morality, to a new understanding of business, to a new idea concerning stealing, and they will say, "Well! we thought that was *business* in the old times, but we find now it was simply stealing," and by perfectly orderly methods they will retake the possessions that are rightfully theirs and out of which they have been robbed.

WHERE PUBLIC OWNERSHIP IS TRIED.

The advantages of citizenship to the average person in the Antipodes, where the principle of public ownership is in the ascendant, is comprehensively summarized by a writer, who, in assuming, for example, that he is a New Zealander, says:

In that case, I live in a country which is governed in the interests of the people, and not in the interests of monopolists, as England is largely governed in the interests of the ground landlord; I live under an equitable system of

taxation, the burden of which, as far as possible, is in proportion to the pecuniary capacity of the taxpayer. If I am anxious to settle upon the land, I can rent or buy it on favorable terms from the government. Owing to the existence of a vast number of freehold properties, I can be certain that no revolutionary measures will have any chance of acceptance, because so large a portion of the population has a direct interest in the soil, and is likely to be conservative in the best sense of the word. As an owner of land or as a leaseholder — assuming that I have carried out improvements upon my property — I can borrow of the government money at a low rate of interest. If I am an urban worker, I have the benefit of stringent laws which protect me from abuses, whether I work in a factory or a shop. Whether I am an employer or a workman, I feel confident that there are not likely to be any violent disturbances in trade, because I am in a country in which, owing to the compulsory arbitration law, there has been no strike or lockout for a period of four years, and all industrial disputes have been amicably settled. If I want to insure my life, I go to the government, and I know that they can give me the best security. When I make my will, I have no friend whom I can trust, no friend whom I wish to trouble, I can put my property with entire confidence in the hands of the public trustee. Finally, if I am living as an upright citizen of my country, though a poor man, I need have no fear of a miserable old age, because, when I have reached sixty-five, the government will give me a pension of seven shillings a week; and in the meantime I shall save as much as possible, in order that my own modest means, as a supplement to the allowance which I shall receive, may enable me to obtain something beyond the mere necessities of life.

SERVICE FOR SERVICE INSTEAD OF THE MODERN FACTORY SYSTEM.

Five years ago I dealt with my associates as “employees,” but I now know that there is a higher relation between men than master and servant. I have come to see that it is due to a mere accident of an unjust system that I am permitted to have a choice in the matter. An accident of another kind might have made one of the employees the master and me the servant. It might have placed him in the office and me in the factory.

Under the existing social order it is impossible to see how any proper conception of justice can be realized in the factory system. The average factory is a place where wealth is made,

and men are unmade. Men are treated as impersonal "hands," not as brothers and fellow-beings. In many cases the employees are numbered like convicts, and locked into the rooms where they work. Overseers watch them with lynx-eyes, and a slight mistake often means an instant discharge. The division of labor makes each worker's daily task as monotonous as the swinging of a pendulum.

The factory system, in its present form, must go. It is too great a strain on our nerves, our health, and our morals. Our better natures cry out against it as an unnatural method of obtaining a livelihood. Whatever is contrary to the spirit of brotherhood must not be regarded as final.

What we call wages is a subterfuge so transparent, when viewed from any just standpoint, that it can only be properly characterized as morally grotesque. The absurdity of the idea that I can organize industry, employ my fellow-man in a capacity that by his labor he makes \$25 a day for me and I fancy that I am dealing with him in a Christian manner or carrying out the Golden Rule because I give him \$3 a day, is too apparent to be worthy of discussion. Not only is service for service the only Christian basis for social relation between men, but it is absolutely the only scientific basis, and dealing on any other basis is an immorality pure and simple, is a wrong, and no amount of patching or compromise will ever make it right.

When we shall for service render
 Service of an equal worth,
 Then will all mankind be brothers,
 Heaven will then have come to earth.

Service for service is the divine law, and we plead for public ownership of common utilities because it leaves out the idea of profit. Our people need no padrones to take care of their wages and manage their affairs. They are quite intelligent and moral enough to conduct their own business activities without the dangerous assistance of any capitalist.

During the flurry in the stock exchange in New York in the winter of 1898-99, one man was known to make (?) a million dollars in a day, though we all know that he did not make a thing even of the value of a tooth-pick; while another man, made of the same kind of clay, spent the day in the vain search for an opportunity to work to earn bread for himself and those dependent upon him, and found himself reduced to such extremity that at midnight he stood in a waiting line of hungry men to receive a loaf as a gift of charity at Fleischman's bakery. Such frightful extremes of wealth and poverty indicate more eloquently than words the truth of the popular admission we hear on every hand, even from superficial thinkers, that "something is wrong," that we have not realized the ideals of the founders of this government who declared that "all men are created equal and entitled to * * * life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

THE FALLACY OF THE COMPETITIVE INCENTIVE TO PROGRESS.

As King C. Gillette says, in his remarkable book, "The Human Drift:"

There is no greater fallacy in the minds of men than that competition is the life of trade or an incentive to progress. It is just the reverse. It is the most damnable system ever devised by man or devil. It is the cause of every injustice in our social atmosphere, and is the only cause of all ignorance, poverty, crime and sickness. By its maintenance as a system, the world of progress loses the greater part of its brain power; and the whole system is a waste of material and labor beyond calculation. It is responsible for all fraud, deception and adulteration which enters into every article of consumption. It is a system of chaos which no man can reduce to order. It is a complicated machine which has a thousand unnecessary parts to every one that is necessary, and every unnecessary part is a loss of power and labor. No one understands its working, and it grinds out poverty to some, wealth to others and crimes indiscriminately to all.

If I believed in a devil, I should be convinced that competition for wealth was his most ingenious invention for filling hell; but not believing in that much-abused individual, I must conclude that competition for material wealth is maintained simply through ignorance. Competition for wealth or individual power has been the basis of all civilized governments, and, by resulting

oppression, the cause of their final disintegration or destruction; and no government can stand until material equality is secured to the individual, and intelligence and progressive thought are made the only basis of competition.

With competition for wealth, selfishness is born; for material wealth is not divisible without loss. But knowledge is divisible to infinity, and it suffers no loss; and the giver is made richer thereby, for it returns to him increased a thousand-fold.

Private wealth can only be accumulated at the expense of human misery and suffering. The attainment of knowledge deprives no one of his individual rights or happiness, but benefits the individual and humanity. Under a system of control by the people of the production and distribution of the necessities of life, the whole brain power of the people, instead of being concerned in this insane struggle for wealth, would be turned as by magic into the channel of scientific progress. It is impossible for the imagination to conceive what a power for good this change would mean.

The whole world is an arena, and human beings are combatants in constant struggle for existence. The gain of one is the loss of another. Success means luxury and ease; failure, poverty and despair. The weak are trampled under foot by the strong, and their cry for help is unheeded by those who tread them down. It is every man for himself against the world. Crime flourishes like weeds in a tropical bog, and finds its home with both rich and poor. Wealth is the material God of man. With it he can satiate the selfish passions of his nature, which grow in strength with its attainment; for selfishness is the natural sequence of material possession, the result of competition.

Do you still maintain that competition is the life of trade? If you do, you cannot deny its only possible, logical conclusion — the final control of production and distribution by one individual, one company, or by the people, the last being final, naturally; for no one will suppose that the people, as a whole, would submit to the dictation of one man or one company, unless such company were controlled by the people and for the people.

Instead of being based on human nature, competition is contrary to all the better part of our nature which has been developed in the last hundred years. It is human nature that cries out against it.

PRECARIOUS NATURE OF ALL BUSINESS.

Business to-day is a haphazard thing. Success comes generally either by unprincipled craftiness or by pure luck. We are going along in a planless, reckless fashion.

Thousands of business institutions are like water-logged row-boats, with the gunwale only a couple of inches above the water. Most of the income is swallowed up by expenses, — advertisements, clerk hire, rent and so forth.

There never was a time when so much merchandise had to be handled to make a dollar. The large stores and factories set the pace, and the smaller ones have to tear along like bicyclists in a six days' race.

At any moment the death of a millionaire financier, or the failure of a large business institution, may throw investors into a panic. There may be at any time a "Black Friday" around the corner. The average business man feels like a worker in a fulminate factory, — he never knows when an explosion may take place. No one can foretell what the great money-kings will do next; and their pathway is marked with the broken wrecks of their competitors. How is it possible to establish "confidence" in the midst of such conditions? A feeling of alarm and panic is in the air. Anxiety is chiseling grooves in the faces of business men and laborers alike. If poverty were less terrible, uncertainty would bring less fear; but every man realizes the horrors of being moneyless in a nation whose deity is Gold.

Profit, not morals, is the purpose of business. The saloon is run for the same purpose that railroads, stores and factories are, — to make profit. Some of us assume to separate ourselves from our fellows, and say, "I am holier than thou," but are we? If we analyze the source of our wealth, none of us will have to go very far to find that we are all mixed up in an interminable and almost hopeless tangle with the present unjust social system.

Our merchants who sell jewelry, silks and satins to the woman of the street ask no questions as to the source of her income, but quietly pocket the money. Our prohibitionist grocers accept orders from saloon-keepers without the slightest compunction; and no church makes inquiries as to how the money was earned which it receives upon the collection-plate.

All this simply shows us that all life is one, and that the only way we can save one is to save all. We cannot divide our lives up into sections, and label one part religion and one part business and one part home life. The endeavor to do this has led us into a thousand hypocrisies and pretences, and caused us to lead insincere Jekyll-and-Hyde lives, devoid of true peace and satisfaction.

THE GAMBLER AND THE MERCHANT AT THE SAME GAME.

No class of people should be regarded with more pity, not to say contempt, than the gamblers; yet how can we draw a clear line between the gambling that is illegal and the common processes of ordinary respectable "business?"

What is many a stock company but a large nickel-in-the-slot machine? What is many a real-estate office but a place where bunco-steering has become a respectable profession? How much superior is many a legal battle in the courts to a game of poker or baccarat? What essential difference is there between the morality of the stock exchange and the morality of a gambling dive?

Is not the greater part of business a species of "gold brick" game? Is not every one endeavoring to get as much as he can for as little as possible? Are we not all striving to obtain something,—merchandise, money, or labor, without rendering an equivalent? What is profit but getting something for nothing?

The manufacture of useful, genuine articles, and the exchange of these for other useful, genuine articles, would be real business. We do not call a skilled sculptor a business man, so remote is our idea of business from what it should be. A "business man" is not supposed to be a producer, but a trader, a schemer, a clever exploiter of other men's labor, an appropriator of the product of other men's hands, a speculator, or in short — a gambler.

Can you imagine, for a moment, Jesus as a modern successful business man? Can you imagine Him foreclosing mortgages, or hiring men for \$1.50 a day when their labor was worth \$4 to Him?

Is there not a "great gulf fixed" between His teachings and the daily transactions of commerce?

Almost every evil that curses society to-day can be traced directly to the fact that we are living under an economic system which is unfair, dishonest and oppressive. All of our business, reduced to its last analysis, is simply a warfare upon one another. It is the striving of the cunning and the strong so to arrange and order their lives that they may live in idleness and luxury by the toil of others.

But the iniquity of the system does not stop here. While the many are doomed to work long, wearisome hours, to occupy what are called servile and mean positions, utterly destructive of any conception of brotherhood, on the other hand others are condemned to lives of enforced idleness, absolutely denied the God-given right to work.

It is not corrupt politicians that have brought disaster, so much as corrupt business men. The trouble is, that the methods of business have got into our politics, and have adulterated our whole national life. Business, by appealing to the lowest and most sordid passions, has made us worshippers of the golden god of success, with the result that we have a country in which a few are enormously wealthy, more are in what might be called circumstances of reasonable comfort, the masses are on the verge of poverty, and millions are in absolute and hopeless pauperism.

According to Spahr's tables of the distribution of wealth in the United States, about one-half of the families in our country own practically nothing, seven-eighths of the families own a little over one-seventh of the wealth, and 1 per cent. own 59 per cent. of the wealth.

In a country that is rich beyond the dreams of avarice we are confronted by this appalling condition. Our wealth has passed into the hands of a small clique of financiers, not because they

have been more useful or intelligent or industrious or thrifty, but because they have obtained special favors from government, or were allowed to form combinations for plunder.

We have built up a social system in which we have assumed that it was possible for all to succeed, when the success of a few can come only from the failure of the many. Such a suicidal policy can only lead to "confusion worse confounded." Business is a chance game, in which the skilled players use loaded dice. The rules of the game favor the strong. They are more unfair and merciless than those of the prize-ring. A pugilist will give a man ten seconds to get up, but in business there is not a moment's respite for the fallen. All our natural American instincts of fair play rebel against the methods of trade.

APOLOGIES FOR COMPETITION.

A few very able and helpful writers have made the serious mistake of supposing that without competition human liberty would be curtailed. They cannot conceive of government without coercion and corruption. To their minds Socialism means a gigantic, stupid and tyrannical bureaucracy, under which business would be obstructed by knots of red tape, and individual enterprise would be impossible.

One of the cleverest writers who opposed state co-operation was Henry George,— the sturdy opponent of land monopoly, and one of the noblest spirits the social reform movement has known. In his last book he declares modern socialistic reforms to be a result of German thought, and contrary to the American spirit. To apply the principle of public ownership to private industries, he thinks, would be to develop a type of civilization similar to the communism of the ancient Peruvians.

Mr. George underestimates the growth of the democratic spirit. He does not see that such a paternalistic nationalism as that of Peru in the time of the Incas would be impossible in these

days, and especially in this republic. In Peru the Inca, or king, owned practically all the property in the country, and provided work and wages for every one of his subjects. There was no starvation, but there was no liberty. Every man had enough for himself and his family, but he had no voice in the affairs of the state. The right to work was acknowledged, but not the right to vote.

Of course such a civilization would not satisfy American citizens, and there is not the slightest danger that public ownership would lead us to such conditions. Political reforms will keep pace with industrial reforms. The public ownership of industries will not lead to governmental despotism, but to a more complete and all-embracing democracy than the world has ever yet known. The word "paternalism" has no place in an American dictionary. It is appropriate in the monarchies of Europe, but the proper expression in a republic is "fraternalism."

Our so-called "representative" government, which has for years failed to represent the great, useful, honest body of the people, will be replaced by a system of direct legislation. All laws will spring from the people, and be referred to them for their approval.

Government ownership will undermine the power of the political bosses. The professional politician, like the professional courtier, will pass into ancient history. Our citizens will begin to take a keen interest in public affairs as soon as government begins to exercise its proper functions, and the senseless partisanship in politics which blocks progress to-day will gradually disappear. We shall commence to vote for measures, not for party triumphs.

It is private monopoly which threatens to establish an objectionable paternalism, and destroy the liberties of all save a few employers. Public ownership is the only escape from this danger.

It is co-operation, not competition, which is the mother of freedom. All strife, whether military or industrial, leads in the

end to victory on the one side and defeat on the other, while co-operation benefits all without injury to any.

Already the greater part of our business is organized into great national trusts, and public ownership simply means that the benefits of this organization shall, like the sunshine, be extended to all. Government in the future will mean the management of things, rather than the coercion of individuals. It will become simply the means by which we do our work together.

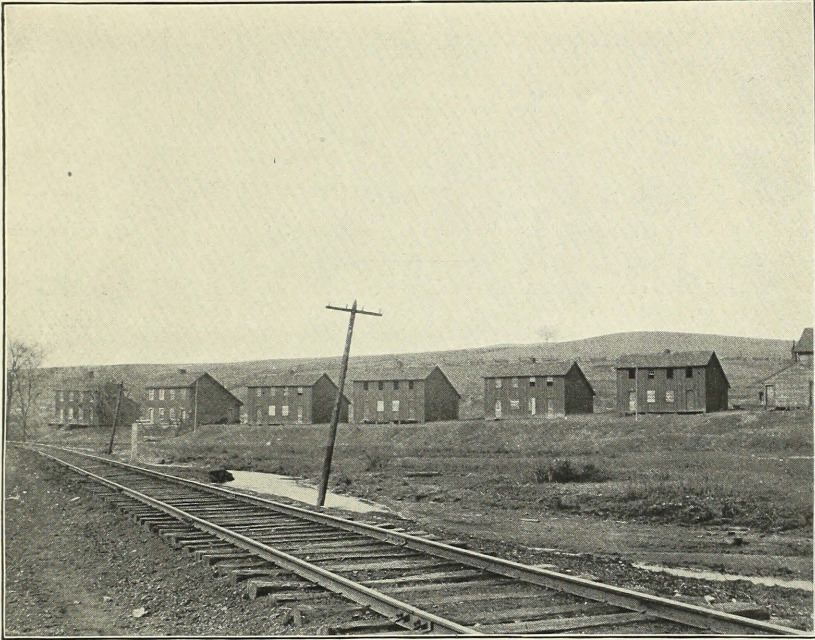
FREE LAND NOT ENOUGH.

In a just order of society, private ownership of land would be as impossible as private ownership of air. The land was given as a free gift from the Creator, just as water, air and sunshine, and no man has any right to barter or sell it. There would be just as much justice in plotting Lake Erie, and charging the steamers a toll for running across each lot.

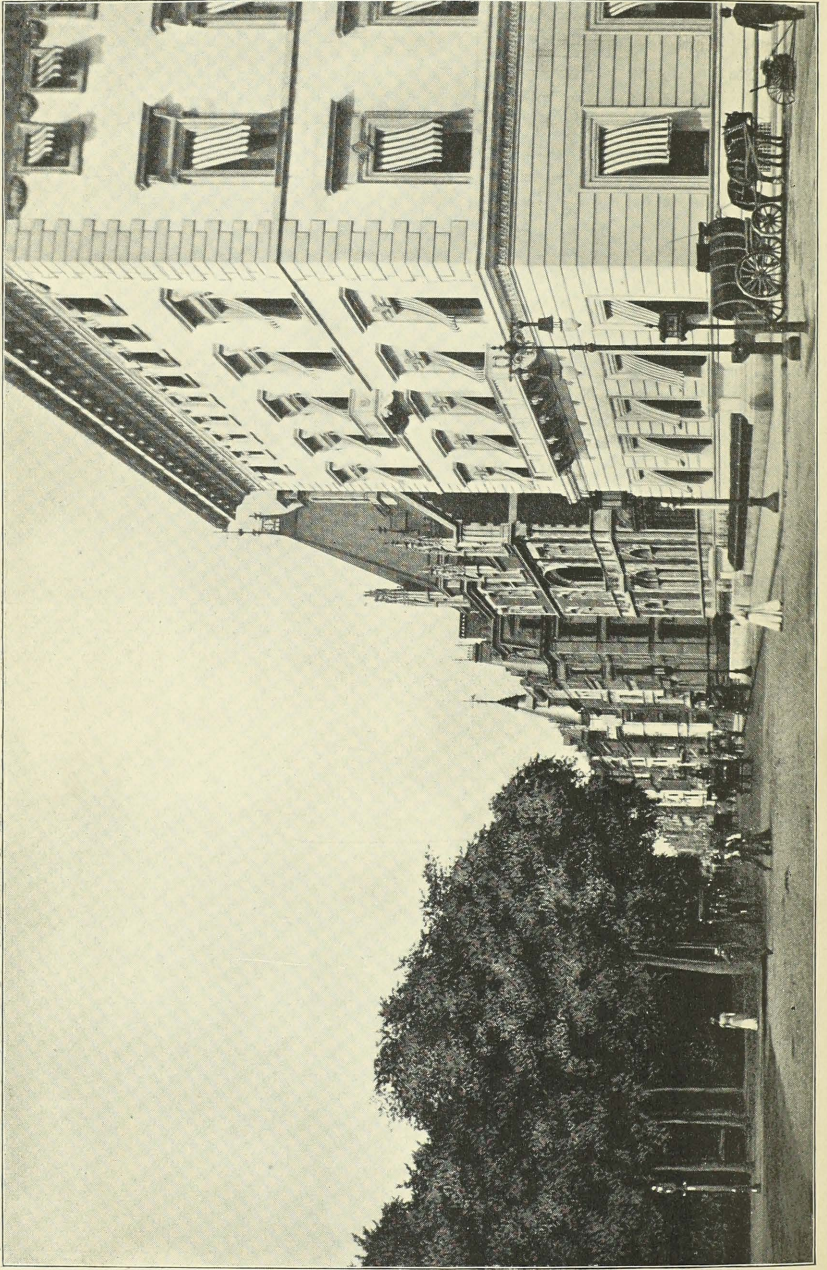
We should respect the wishes of the dead, but we should also consider the welfare of the unborn. If we cover the earth with trespass signs and barb-wire fences, what will the next generation do?

The English nobility own probably more land in America than all the wage-workers put together. How can we expect people to be loyal to their "native land," when they do not own a square foot of its surface? We have become a nation of renters and floaters. No civilization can rest upon a stable and enduring foundation where the majority of the citizens have become detached from the soil. A rented flat can never take the place of a home; and not even a public park can atone for the loss of a little grass plot and garden of your own.

Henry George is unanswerably right in demanding that the "unearned increment,"—the value which population gives to the land,—be turned into the public treasury instead of into the private purse of a landlord. That which is created by society



HOMES OF THE WORKERS EMPLOYED BY H. C. FRICK COKE COMPANY,
NEAR SCOTSDALE, PA.



A MILLIONAIRE RESIDENCE SECTION, FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.

should belong to society; but land is not the only property which is in its very nature social and not individual.

Were not the millions of Rockefeller, the Standard Oil magnate, as much created by nature and society as the millions of Astor, the New York landlord? Is not machinery a social product,—the result of centuries of experiment and invention? In short, is not our whole civilization essentially a social product? Back of every inventor stands a thousand others who made his invention possible. Back of every enterprising capitalist stands the entire nation, without which not one of his schemes could succeed. The day of Robinson Crusoes and Daniel Boones has gone by. No man can point to his pile of gold and say: "Alone I earned it." What is called Socialism is not a visionary plan for remodelling society; it is a present fact, which is not yet recognized in the distribution of wealth.

ANOTHER ORDER WANTED.

The time has arrived to establish peace and good-will in business. We have tried to build up a nation on competitive lines, and we have failed. We have built up a few private fortunes at the expense of the nation.

If a nation exists for the enrichment of a few, then competition has been an unparalleled success, for since the world began no fortunes were ever piled up so fast and so high as were the fortunes of our millionaires. But if the happiness and prosperity of the average citizen is to be considered, then a new industrial system must be evolved.

"Every man for himself" is a motto which originated in the dead centuries of war and hate. It is as barbarous as the thumb-screw and the rack. It might appropriately be written in the museums above the war-clubs and spears and stone-axes of pre-historic times; but it has no place in a civilized community.

Our civilization has become so complex and highly organized that it will not stand the uncertainties and rude shocks that are

inseparable from a competitive system. "Each for all and all for each" is the motto of the present and the future.

No reform, not even the single tax, will banish poverty and monopoly as long as we have a system that makes every man's life a scramble for dollars. Until we have an orderly and brotherly way of making and distributing our goods, the shrewd and unprincipled will continue to make wage-slaves of their simpler fellow-men, and parasitism will flourish.

There is no fear that America will lapse into a condition of Peruvian feudalism, or, like the Chinese nation, lose the instinct of progress. We have nothing to fear from democracy. "The voice of the people is the voice of God." We have had enough of strife and "smartness," and in a few years more, at the present rate of enlightenment, our people will be prepared for new business arrangements, which will guarantee every man the right to work and the right to be a partner in the industry of the nation.

No well-regulated, loving family would give one of its members a special franchise to make profit from the labor of the other members; neither would any member of the family desire any such franchise, but he would find his delight and pleasure in rendering such service as he could for the benefit of all, realizing by his experience that service brings its own reward.

The family ideal may seem visionary to those who have the dust of the streets in their eyes. Generations may come and go and be forgotten before it is a reality. You and I may never even see the morning star of that brighter day. Yet as surely as the world rolls, it is coming, and, as *I* believe, coming soon. If we can be but the foundation stones of the new structure, sunk in the mire and unremembered, we shall not have lived in vain. Others before us have labored, and we have entered into their labors.

FAIR COMPETITION AN IMPOSSIBILITY.

An absolutely free and fair competition is an impossibility. Men and women are unequally endowed from birth. One is

born with a strong and sturdy constitution, while another is as frail as a lily. One is by nature pushing and self-assertive, and another is modest and timid. One is born a genius, and another is born a dunce.

These are common, every-day facts, and ought to be recognized in political economy. Even allowing that wealth should be the reward of merit, we should distinguish between merit and the accident of birth.

The differences which nature creates are sufficient, without being emphasized by human law and custom. Instead of saying that the cleverest should be the richest, I should rather say that it is the clever who can best do without riches. If nature has already made them rich in intelligence they can afford to be poor in material things.

Government should be the science of compensation. It should endeavor to even up social inequalities instead of creating artificial differences.

To say that the swiftest and strongest and shrewdest should be rewarded by ownership and authority is to place men on the same plane with tigers and wolves. The rule which should regulate human society is this,—“He that would be great among you, let him be the *servant* of all.” Life as it was in the forest was a struggle for existence; but life as it should be in our American cities is a co-operation, an education, an opportunity to learn, and help, and love.

Besides the inequalities which are hereditary and unavoidable, there are many others created by environment and partial legislation. One baby is born in a mansion, heir of the family millions. The cradle in which it is rocked costs as much as would pay a workingman's rent for a year. The cushions and covers were bought for a sum that would be sufficient to clothe an entire family for six months. Servants wait upon the child, and when it grows older, professors and private tutors are at its service.

The tiny infant is foreordained, by human law, to untold wealth and irresponsible authority over the lives of thousands of men and women. All this power and privilege come to it not because of merit or thrift or moral worth or business ability, but because of birth alone.

On the same day in which the baby mentioned above is born, another one also sees the light of day for the first time, but under different circumstances. Its father is an unemployed laborer and its mother is a scrub-woman. It is cradled in an old soap box, which has a scrap of carpet in the bottom to make it soft.

The curses of its father and the harsh and bitter retorts of its mother first instruct it in the art of language. It is often left alone for hours, to stare at the dirty walls, and cry itself to sleep with the pangs of hunger. It knows no kindness, no kisses, no love. It has come where it is unwelcome,— where it is regarded as a nuisance and an expense.

As soon as it is strong enough, it is cuffed and beaten. It lives in an atmosphere of terror, and soon learns to oppose force with cunning, and tyranny with falsehood. When it is able to walk it escapes from the dingy room to the street, and there, in the cobblestone kindergarten, it learns the A B C of crime and vice.

What about "free competition" between these two babies? Who will dare to say that their chances are alike in the business world? One is predestined, by human decree, not divine, to be a millionaire, to whom every door is open; and the other is predestined to be a criminal, to whom every door, save that of the jail, is shut.

Take a man with the brain of a Webster or a Shakespeare, put him on the streets of New York without a cent in his pocket, compel him to tramp from factory to factory in search of employment, meeting contemptuous refusals at every office, stand him in the line of hungry outcasts that wait every night at Fleisch-

mann's bakery for a half loaf of bread, allow him to live by charity and free lunches in saloons for six months, and to be shoved here and there by policemen, and both genius and manhood would perish.

DEGRADATION OF ENFORCED POVERTY.

We tie a balloon to one man, and a saw-log to another, and then declare that they have an equal chance to rise in the world. It sounds well in poetry to advise the poverty-stricken laborer to

Break his birth's invidious bar,
And grasp the skirts of happy chance,
And breast the blows of circumstance,
And grapple with his evil star.

But it may be generally noticed that those who give this advice are not doing any "breaking," or "breasting," or "grasping," or "grappling." They know little or nothing about the mind-killing influences of the factory and tenement. They do not understand that the poverty of to-day breaks a man's spirit and stupefies his intellect. It is quite a different thing from the "plain living and high thinking" which is so highly commended by poets and philosophers.

The poverty of our grandfathers was an entirely different thing from the poverty of the city slums. The poverty of the farmer's cabin in the pioneer settlement developed the sturdier and worthier and more self-reliant qualities of manhood and womanhood. There were in those industrious little communities an ambition, an intelligence, and a conscience which are not at least very conspicuous in the slum districts of New York and Chicago.

There was no stigma attached to poverty in the earlier days of this republic, and thus lack of wealth was no bar to advancement. It was possible to go "from log-cabin to White House,"—from splitting rails to the highest honor which the nation could confer. There was "room at the top" in those days, but by

some inexcusable legislative blunder we have knocked down the ladders by which it was formerly possible to climb. There never was a time in the history of America when there were so few people and so much money at the top, and when there were so many people and so little money at the bottom.

The poverty of the modern slums is degrading. It does not cultivate the self-reliant virtues, but rather develops the spirit of mendicancy and dishonesty. It destroys self-respect. It makes refinement all but impossible. It transforms hope into a bitter and sullen resignation. It is squalid, unhealthy, and morally poisonous.

There is not the slightest similarity between the poverty of Diogenes, Socrates, Buddha, and Thoreau, and the poverty of a workingman who is out of a job. The whole structure of our civilization is built without any regard for the feelings or the rights or the life of the moneyless man. Life to the poor is an obstacle-race from the start; and an American laborer might almost as well hope to become the heir of a European monarch as to be one of the czars of finance in New York.

COMPETITION THE DEATH OF TRADE — AND OF BROTHERHOOD.

No, what we need is not the restoration of "free competition." The rotten old hulk is too unsafe to be repainted and sent to sea with another generation on board. We have given it a fair trial, and it has dashed us on the rocks. We have proved, not once or twice but always, that competition is the death of trade, and what is infinitely worse — the death of brotherhood.

Men are unequally endowed from birth with brains, energy, and wealth. Competition means simply the *massacre of the weak and timid* by the strong and impudent. It inevitably leads to the capture of all property by an unscrupulous few, who combine against the interests of the nation.

Competition leads to monopoly as surely as the river seeks the sea. All systems of warfare and force end in the centralization of power in a few hands. Militarism produces an Alexander, a Caesar, a Napoleon; and industrial competition produces the trust-emperors of New York. You cannot have a lottery in which every one receives a prize; you cannot have a race in which every one wins; you cannot have a fight in which no one is ever defeated.

That is why competition is condemned by the new spirit of democracy. As Whitman says: "I will have nothing that all cannot have their counterpart of on equal terms." So long as this capitalistic system of rent, profit, and interest lasts, industrial democracy is impossible.

It is held out as a prize to all of us that if we accumulate enough money, we can quit doing any useful work and live by the toil of other men and women. What we call an "independence" means nothing else than that we have become dependent upon others for our support.

This system compels us to be either hirelings or parasites. It injures both those who lose and those who win. It obliges us to pile up profits either for ourselves or for other men. We must either wrong or be wronged.

Even if competition were perfectly fair, and all were equally well-armed for the contest, it would be none the less immoral and unworthy of a civilized nation. It would be none the less war and enmity and fratricide. A fair fight is better than an unfair one, but *why should we fight at all?*

Look at the roses saluting each other;
Look at the cattle at peace on the plain;
Man, and man only, makes war on his brother,
And laughs in his heart at his trouble and pain.

When man had to fight nature with his bare hands; when, as in the days of the cave-dwellers, food and clothing were more

difficult to obtain, then competition might have had an excuse for its existence; but it is in these days unnecessary, wasteful, criminal, and absurd. Our bonanza farms, our immense factories, our railroads, our mastery over steam and electricity, our unequaled machinery, and all our scientific discoveries, have made it at last possible for every one of us to have enough. All necessity for scrambling and jostling and grabbing has gone, yet we continue to struggle as if a seven years' drought were upon us.

After thousands of years of slow evolution and discovery, we have reached the banquet-hall of a new civilization. The feast is spread before us, and there are plates enough and to spare; but we have not yet been able to overcome the old instinct of strife, and we are upsetting the tables and trampling on the food in our mad haste to get our share. The old instincts of the forest survive in us still; but they are becoming less and less powerful, and we are gradually learning to trust the higher motives which we have hitherto confined to the narrow sphere of the home. We are learning the wisdom of extending the spirit of family life to the state and nation.

The defeated and disinherited millions are coming to understand the source of their misery. They are realizing that government has been acting as a father to the rich, and as a policeman to the poor. They have discovered that the granting of special favors must inevitably make paupers of many of us. They are no longer feeling personally responsible for their misfortunes, as they formerly did. The blame is being gradually centered where it rightly belongs.

SYSTEM CAN BE MENDED ONLY AS MORALS ARE MENDED.

We shall mend our business system only as we mend our morals, and we shall never get it right until we have established collective ownership of every public utility, whether municipal, state, or national. This alone will eliminate profit-making, and require every man to render personal service to his fellows, in return for

what he obtains from the public store. Private, competing capital must be replaced by public, co-operative capital; this is the ultimate and only satisfactory remedy for our social evils.

During the days of chattel slavery there were many kind-hearted and worthy men who were slave-owners. They sought by various schemes of checks and balances to eliminate the evil from slavery; some of them who were especially kind made provision for the sickness and old age of their slaves; and others, by coercive legislation, compelled cruel masters to be more lenient; but all this did not relieve us from the curse of slavery.

The trouble was with the institution itself, and not until the foul blot was wiped from our statute books and Constitution by the Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment did we begin to get rid of the evils of an infamy some of the effects of which still pollute our civilization.

We must deal with the question of monopoly just as we dealt with the slavery question. We can gain nothing by delay and hesitation. We have tried in vain to regulate. We have demanded the non-extension of trusts, and we have been laughed at by the giant monopolies. In this matter our courts seem to be impotent. They can deal with trade-unions, and enforce injunctions against strikers, and send the unfortunate tramp or drunkard to jail, but the monopolist is too big for them. They have no nets to catch whales, so they spend their time catching and punishing the small fish.

There is no solution save public ownership. Retain the admirable organization of the trusts, but administer them for the benefit of all the people. Grant no more profit-making franchises to individuals, *but give every man a franchise which will entitle him to steady and remunerative employment.*

No man can walk straight on a crooked street, and no individual can preserve himself untainted from blame in a civilization that is unjust and oppressive. Individual purity in an unclean

world is a monkish dream. It is better to lift your whole city up an inch than to pull yourself up to the skies. Our conception of social reform must be more comprehensive than the old endeavor to rescue an individual here and there.

To-day we are demanding nothing less than the salvation of all the people,— nothing less than the remodeling of our whole industrial structure. In the heaven on earth which we seek to build, no one will be left outside.

We look upon society as a living organism, not as a heap of stones; therefore we seek to act upon society as a whole, by means of legislation and education, striking at the root of social evils, and not merely cutting off a few withered leaves. We are not battling against the church, against institutions, or individuals; but against a social system that has gone to seed, and outrages every conception of justice. To fight individuals would be as futile and childish as was the ignorant rage of the savage, who shot his arrow at the lightning. All individual leaders and rulers are only the representatives of ideas and principles. Overthrow one leader and another will take his place, so long as the idea which created him remains in the minds of the people.

Thought and sympathy are the parents of reform. We cannot do better until we *are* better. The main thing at present is to point out the evils which inevitably result from the competitive system, and explain the possibility and necessity of a higher system in which one man shall not grab the food from another's mouth. Truth and love, like murder, will out, and when our people realize the suicidal effects of competition, it will not take them long to act. There is no doubt about it, the monopolists and special-privilege people must let go. The rising tide in favor of liberty for *all* the people is gaining strength every day and is bound to sweep this country from ocean to ocean within the next ten years.

Almost every man to-day knows something is out of gear in

our industrial machinery. He can see that things are not running smoothly, but he is so busily engaged in scrambling for a living that he has not had time to study out the causes of the trouble.

Before long, some financial panic or industrial tie-up will force the question upon every citizen; and when our people once clearly see into a thing, they are not long in taking action. In these days of the cable and telegraph and daily paper, social changes can take place with startling rapidity.

America has taken two great steps already for humanity's sake,—first, when she wrote the Declaration of Independence, and second, when she proclaimed emancipation to the four millions of colored people. I believe the time is at hand when America will take a *third step*, longer than either of the others, and establish the Co-operative Commonwealth, in which the business of the nation will be organized and managed not to make profit for a few employers, but to serve and benefit all the people.

We cannot come nearer to a just system of production and distribution than by adopting the creed of St. Simon — “From each according to his ability; to each according to his needs.”

SOCIAL IGNORANCE MUST BE DISPELLED.

The distress and suffering of the workers, or what is known as the masses of people, is not necessarily due to the venality of the classes; it is not because of aristocrats or plutocrats or bosses that we are in a social and industrial misery: it is because of our own ignorance. I am not an advocate of any system by which a lightning transformation is to be effected. I am simply an advocate of the people, one who believes in all of the people, and one who sees no possible hope for better conditions for all of the people except and alone through a process of education upon the important foundation principle of right social relation. I believe in the brotherhood of man — all men. The correct family relation is the one social ideal

through which we can attain peace. Believing all men to be my brothers, under existing conditions I have no reason to complain of being "short" on poor relations; wherever I go I find lots of them, and there is no prospect that the supply will ever be diminished while the present social system shall continue. "The poor ye have always with you" is and will always remain a safe proposition as long as is kept in motion our social machinery that denies equality of opportunity and annually makes thousands of worthy and willing workers unwilling poor or paupers.

I want to be careful not to make a statement that is not entirely borne out and supported by the facts, and with this preface, I deliberately charge failure against the present social order known as competition. Until we shall speak of competition by its shorter name of WAR, we shall not be able properly to appreciate this statement. Competition has so thoroughly and fully failed as a business system to-day that it is not practiced to any extent except by small traders, and the great army of producers known as the working people; and to this one fact is due that while the classes have abandoned the competitive war as a mode of gain and livelihood, the masses of workers still adhering to this antiquated system of slowly destroying each other, are made the tools of the cunning, the unscrupulous, and the strong in the political world in order that they may be used to perpetuate a system that for centuries has bound them in chains.

Let me repeat: our denial of brotherhood, with its consequent social injustice, is due to the great crime of ignorance; and as there is one great cause, so there is one great remedy; the never-failing antidote for ignorance is education. By education I do not mean at all that thing that is popularly referred to as such; I use the word in a broader sense, and by it I mean a knowledge of the proper relation with your

fellow-men, and when the working people understand their true relation to society — that is, to all people — they will no longer be made the dupes and tools of the cunning, the unscrupulous, and the idle, who now live from the fruit of their toil.

TRUST THE PEOPLE.

The demand for public ownership is not a grumble from the idle and shiftless; it is not a growl from the vicious; it is a desire for a more just and kindly system of industry, and it comes from the great body of the people. I believe Lowell was right when he said: “I have no fear of what is called for by the general instinct of mankind.”

If we cannot trust the people, what agency is there that we can rely upon? Does the “divine right of kings” still inhere in a few of us, and are we to impart virtue to the people by coercion?

As Lincoln said in his first inaugural,—“Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate wisdom of the people? Is there any better or any equal hope in the world?”

This great movement towards equality is taking hold upon the hearts of the people, and at last the toilers, who produce all and who have so little of the product of their hands, are awakening to the fact that they themselves must throw off their chains by united action; that they must no longer be used as mere pawns to play into the hands of those who would enslave them; that the cause of their slavery is, as I have said, their own ignorance, and the one way of escape lies in united action in a step forward and upward to a higher plane and a more intelligent appreciation of the purposes of life.

THE FAILURE ADMITTED.

The failure of the competitive system to provide a way whereby all who are willing to work may live, is now admitted by all thoughtful persons, and patriotic men and women everywhere

are eagerly looking for an improved social order, that instead of destroying the many in order to build up the few, will provide a plan whereby all who are willing to work may live in a manner becoming self-respecting citizens in a republic of equals; that thus the dream of the founders of our government may be realized and we may hasten the day when we may become what we are surely destined to be — a republic of free and truly happy people.