

VIII.

PLUTOCRACY IN EDUCATION.

Unfortunately the tendency of a principle to expand until it pervades every sphere of human thought and activity is not confined to good principles. The idea of liberty, based upon the doctrine that all men are created equal, has for more than a century been manifesting itself in government, in society and in church organizations, and it has tended to ennoble man and to exalt human rights. But the opposite doctrine has not been entirely dormant. Just now the plutocratic idea is very active. The tyranny of organized wealth in industry is sure to be followed by an increasing influence of money in government, society and the church. Everything will be colored to a greater or less extent by the theory that money is the one thing of overshadowing importance.

The commencement period, when schools are closing and graduating classes are occupying public attention, is a good time to consider the influence of plutocracy upon education. Fortunately Mr. Charles Schwab, the million-dollar-a-year president of the steel trust, has spoken so plainly on the subject that little room is left for conjecture or speculation. In speaking to a class at an evening school in New York a few nights ago, he said:

Let me advise you all to make an early start in life. The boy with the manual training and the common school education who can start in life at sixteen or seventeen can leave the boy who goes to college till he is twenty or more so far behind in the race that he can never catch up. This, however, does not apply to the professional life. The other day I was at a gathering of some forty business men—men in industrial and manufacturing business—and the question arose as to how many were college-bred men. Of the forty only two had been graduated from college, and the rest of the party, thirty-eight in number, had received only common school educations and had started in life as poor boys. So I say, as parting advice, start early.

This is the advice given by the best paid employe in the United States—the advice given by a man who receives a salary twenty times as great as that paid to the president of the United States,

one hundred times as great as the salary paid to a justice of the Supreme Court, two hundred times as great as the salary paid to senators and representatives and more than a thousand times as great as the average salary paid to ministers and school teachers. His advice shows that he misconceives the main purpose of education, and values going to school only as it enables the student to get ahead of some one in the business world.

The principal value of education lies in the fact that it disciplines the mind, enlarges the mental horizon and enables one to view men and things in their proper relations. Education is intended to make a citizen useful to his country as well as successful. It makes its possessor the heir of the ages and enables him to judge of the future by the experience of the past. If a boy is taken out of school at the age of sixteen or seventeen and put to work "making a fortune," he is never likely to have time to study history or political economy and will be apt to accept without question the opinions of those who are a little ahead of him in the race for wealth—opinions which are in turn received from those still farther ahead.

Plutocracy boasts that it is practical; it has no ideals, for an ideal is looked up to, while plutocracy has its face to the ground.

Mr. Schwab's advice will do infinite damage to the young men of the country, but it ought to awaken the thoughtful to the tendencies of commercialism. If we are to have the oppression of a trust system at home and the despotism of an imperial policy abroad, we must expect to see education dwarfed, social intercourse debased and religion materialized.

THE EFFECT OF DIET.

It is reported from Havana that the Cuban commissioners upon their return gave a detailed account of their trip to Washington, including the social attention shown them. Some objection was made to the recording of the entertainment part of the report, but the objection was very properly over-ruled.

The republican leaders have expert knowledge on the effect of diet. In the campaign of 1900 they addressed their arguments to the stomach rather than to the head or heart. They insisted that a full meal was the summit of human hope and their theory