

land, where wealth has a monopoly of amusement as well as of power, complaints are made that whenever the poor happen to steal into the inclosures which are reserved for the pleasures of the rich they commit acts of wanton mischief. . . .

No doubt the wealthy English found an explanation of this rudeness in a theory of hereditary inferiority; whereas it was truly, as De Tocqueville implies, an outgrowth of caste. Where caste exists, no theories of racial or hereditary inferiority are admissible. Where caste exists, the superior caste can make no well-founded claims to knowledge of the inferior. They may know their external peculiarities, but nothing more. An inferior caste never reveals itself, its real self, to the superior. That the little white children of the south understand the little black children as well as they understand one another, we have no manner of doubt. But from the day that each discovers the impassable social barrier, from that moment their lives diverge. Thereafter each may know the other as master and slave do, as high caste and low caste do; but no longer as friend knows friend.

The annual convention of the American Economic association, which is serio-comic to the last degree of pathetic humor, closed its sessions at Detroit last week. Most of the members take themselves and one another seriously, which is part of the humor. But the seriousness of Prof. Veblen of Chicago, is open to doubt, as well in his performances in this association as in his admirable book on the leisure classes. Back of his intense seriousness there seems to be a good-natured disposition to make solemn fun of his solemn associates. It was not so, however, with Prof. Frank A. Fetter, of the Leland Stanford Junior university, who read a paper at Detroit on the same day that Prof. Veblen did. Prof. Fetter was genuinely solemn when he led his audience through the mazes of the mystification theory of political econ-

omy. It is little wonder that university students of political economy reason about the subject as if its phenomena belonged to some fourth dimension of space, when they have to work their way through such woolly-edge analyses and tanglefoot logic as professors of the Fetter type spread out before them in the name of "science." The old monkish gymnastics in mystical theology were models of good sense and sound reasoning, by comparison. It is due to Prof. Fetter to say, however, that the muddle which he gives out, he has taken on faith from other muddlers. Since "economics," the abstruse science of fortune getting by individuals, has been substituted in our universities for "political economy," the simple science of wealth getting and wealth sharing by communal aggregates—an idea somewhat roughly indicated by Adam Smith when he called his great book "The Wealth of Nations,"—one can hardly tell whether to be indignant at the fraud whereby predatory economic institutions are thus sought to be justified, or amused at the absurdity of the performance and the childish solemnity of the performers. Perhaps the better course for some purposes is the cynically good-humored one that Prof. Veblen seems to have adopted.

THE NEW CENTURY.

I.

The Monday that ended the nineteenth century and the Tuesday that began the twentieth were not separated by any natural boundary different from what has distinguished Tuesdays from Mondays since those names first came into use. Just as all Tuesdays differ from all Mondays, so and only so did last Tuesday differ from last Monday. Everybody knows this. Yet special significance is attached very generally to the meeting of these two days, because it marked the death of one century and the birth of another.

So subject are men to superstition that great phenomena are often re-

lated to that point in time, as effect to cause. It seems as if there were in some sort a closing and balancing of the books of Fate with the outgoing century, and an opening of a new set as its successor appears. We think of the old century as of something dead and gone, dying it may be in social convulsions which its own dissolution produces, and of the new one as an infant coming peacefully among us to live its life and die amid similar convulsions in regular turn. We think of it much as we thought of old years and new years, but with the circumstances immensely magnified. The French "fin de siècle" was vital with that superstition.

But it requires only the thought of a moment to comprehend that when we speak of old centuries and new, we are naming no point of change in Time's monotonous whirl, but only a point in our own arbitrary devices for measuring his movement by relating events to events. The beginning of a new century, the beginning of a new year, the beginning of a new week, the beginning of a new day, are but the passing of the midnight hour we have marked upon our clocks and calendars.

Yet there is that about the passage of time over one of our points of greater measurement which reminds us of the imperfections of so much of life as has gone before and admonishes us of the possibilities of what is to come. This is a familiar idea in connection with the passing years of individual lives. The first day of the new year is traditionally an individual locus penitentiae—a place for regrets over the past and for good resolutions for the future. Then why not make the early days of the new century a locus penitentiae for the race?

II.

Since the nineteenth century is dead, let it have the benefit as far as possible of the maxim that nothing may be said of the dead but good. But let nobody carry that rule so far as to ignore such of its faults as may be useful monitors to its successor. One may be more generous to the dead by recalling the evils they have done, if for the purpose of guarding against repetitions of such evils, than by flat-