

formed that the reason for these arrangements is that all the census statistics of wages heretofore published are false and misleading!

With her military prestige gone—lost upon South African veldts—Great Britain, under the lead of the Salisbury-Chamberlain ministry, is now earning a ghastly reputation for inhumanity and violation of the laws of war. She has abolished civil law in South Africa, and in the name of military law but without its sanction, is killing off the women and children of her enemy in reconcentrado camps and hanging prisoners of war and civilians sentenced by drumhead courts-martial. Her good name is swiftly following her military prestige. As no warlike nation fears her now, no civilized people can much longer respect her. The one redeeming fact about it all is the brave protest and the strenuous opposition of a truly patriotic remnant of her people.

Secretary Gage has at last disclosed the inward meaning of the "sound money" agitation. He did it at the Bankers' convention at Milwaukee on the 16th. Thoughtful men who do not believe in government by a banking ring have long foreseen this outcome, but their prognostications have been laughed to scorn by the thoughtless and the conniving. It is a relief, therefore, to have the purpose of this plutocratic agitation authoritatively revealed. It is nothing less in substance than the reestablishment of the United States bank which once had the American government by the throat and was only shaken off by the vigorous policy of President Jackson.

It is natural that special admirers of one who in dying leaves behind him happy memories of personal virtues, should dwell affectionately upon those characteristics of their departed friend. Though his virtues be in no wise unique, but are exemplified almost universally in the common life

of his time, to his friends he seems to have been their peculiar exemplar. This trait in human nature explains the enthusiasm with which Mr. McKinley's admirers dilate upon his sterling qualities as a friend, a neighbor, a son and a husband. But these admirable virtues cannot keep the late president's memory green in history. Most friends are true to their friends, most neighbors are good neighbors, most sons love their mothers, most husbands are devoted to their wives. Such virtues are too common to distinguish any man permanently. Mr. McKinley's reputation as a character in American history must have a more enduring basis. Future generations, even his own generation at no distant day, will ask, not what kind of husband Mr. McKinley was, but what kind of statesman he was. That is the point toward which Mr. McKinley's admirers should begin to turn their attention.

#### CLASSES IN THE UNITED STATES.

The crusade against free press and free speech which the recent assassination has set on foot, has for one of its declared objects the suppression of discussions proceeding upon the hypothesis that the people of the United States are divided into classes.

That hypothesis is asserted to be false, because there are no classes here; and the discussion to be dangerous, because it raises class against class. How class can be raised against class in a country where there are no classes, is a riddle which stranglers of free discussion may find it politic to unravel.

While they are thus engaged, it may be profitable to the rest of us to consider this question of classes in our country, with some serious sense of responsibility for the future of the republic. Is it true that we have classes here? That is a question which cannot be lightly dismissed.

Pinchbeck patriotism, resting as it does upon the barbarous doctrine that men must stand by the government of their country not only when it is right, but as well when it is wrong, may ignore this vital question of classes. But true patriotism, to

which national glory is of less concern by far than national righteousness, is rooted too securely in the principles of human equality to be indifferent to the possibility of class differences in a republic where all are nominally equal.

That conditions in this country are fostering classes, is one of the signs of the times so plainly written that none but a fool can honestly err if he tries to read them at all. It is true that our class distinctions were more marked in the past. We have had a slave class and a master class. We have had a plebeian class and an aristocratic class. We have had a tenant class and a landlord class. But those distinctions were a satanic inheritance, of which we were ridding ourselves. If classes did exist more distinctly and with harsher edges than than now, they were not fostered. The tendency of conditions and events was, on the contrary, in the direction of obliterating them.

In our time, however, that tendency is reversed. Though slaves, as a class distinguished by birth marks and bills of sale, were swept away in rushing currents of human blood; though there is no plebeian class (save the freedman and his descendants) so unalterably differentiated from the aristocratic class that the line of demarcation is impassable; though tenants now become landlords as plebeians become aristocrats; though the humblest boy may rise to the most conspicuous station—though all the conventional class distinctions of a former age have passed away, essential class differences remain. And events are developing these differences into distinctions not less potent, even if more subtle, than the class distinctions of the past.

This is one of those evident truths which require no argument, with men willing to reflect upon the facts that confront them; but in support of which hardly any argument would be effective, with the unwilling. "If a man oppose evident truths," remarked Epictetus, "it is not easy to find arguments by which we shall make him change his opinions."

Whoever says there are no class differences in the United States is either deceiving himself or trying to

deceive others. If there are none, how shall we account for the expressions of fear already mentioned, that class may be incited to rise up against class? If there are no classes, how could that fear be possible? And what of the perennial chatter about upper class, lower class and middle class? What is the significance of the frequent appeals to the interests of the "business class," meaning the financial class? How shall we explain the constant allusions to "moneyed classes," to "working classes," to the "leisure class," and so on? In these expressions there is an unmistakable even if indefinite recognition of the existence of classes. If classes did not exist, such phrases would not be current.

When it is considered that the same persons who thus recognize classes vehemently deny that there are classes, the only inference consistent with respect for their intelligence and honesty, is that they mean not that there are no classes, but that there are no class distinctions; that they mean merely that status has been abolished, and that men may lawfully pass from one class to another by paying the initiation fee.

As a distinguished financier puts it: "Under our government it is possible for every man to succeed, and those who fail to do so are the ones who have neglected to work for that which they desire to possess." He implies that there are no classes because men of a lower class may work their passage into upper classes. But even this abolition of status is more nominal than real. Success is indeed possible, as the financier we quote asserts, for every man who works for what he desires. But only in point of legal form. It is not possible for everyone in point of fact.

Would not the financier from whom we have quoted begin to "hedge," were he asked if it is possible under our government for every man to succeed who works for what he desires, if what he desires is the presidency? Everybody can't be president, no matter how faithfully everybody may work for it. Yet this financier's words imply the contrary. And success in minor degree, in the sense in which he uses the term "success," is only somewhat more possible than

success in winning the White House chair. Indeed, for everybody, it is not more possible. While fortunes consist in part of tribute, as fortunes now do, it is no more possible for everybody to be rich than for everybody to be president.

When analyzed, the sapient remark of our distinguished financier is equivalent to the absurd proposition that it is possible for everybody who runs fast enough in a race to win. The truth, and all the truth, that his remark contains is that in the race for success in life it is possible in this country for every man to enter. Not only is it not true that everybody who enters can win, but it is not true that everybody who tries to win is allowed to start fair. Our laws give advantages in the race to some, which in greater or less degree they deny to the others. This makes class differences. And those differences are differences still, though members of the privileged classes often fail and members of the unprivileged sometimes succeed.

The notion that everybody can win success if he works for it is only a version of the theory that there is plenty of room at the top. Yes, there is plenty of room at the top; that is true. There always has been and always will be. But room at the top can never rid us of classes. We shall not be rid of classes until there is plenty of room at the bottom.

It is the moiling crowd at the bottom, fighting for a bare chance to live, that makes class differences. So long as the right to make a living is reduced by law to a privilege which some are permitted to control, and for which others must work—working not alone for their living, which is according to nature, but for the right to earn it, which is against nature—there will still be plenty of room at the top with no room at the bottom. Upper servants like Mr. Schwab, will be in steady demand; but of the hopeful Schwabs who fail and of plodders ambitious only to live in comfort, there will always be a superabundant supply. And the struggle of some to get to the top, and of the great mass to keep from sliding off their slippery little ledges down into the yawning gulf of pauperism, will keep up the

sociological action and reaction which maintains a rich class of leisure and power and a poor class of ignorant drudges. Between these extreme classes, there must of necessity be a series descending from highest to lowest, and larger in number the nearer it approaches the bottom class. That is indeed the condition in our country even now.

If we would realize that there is in truth already a separation into distinctive classes, we have only to consider some of the statistics of poverty.

The official statistics of Italy, which report that 100,000 people go mad in that country every year from hunger alone, and that thousands upon thousands are so poor that their principal food is acorns boiled in a broth of clay, may be passed by without comment, since Italy is a class country where the masses are expected to work and starve for superior classes.

But Great Britain is more like our own country. Yet in London we find upon the authority of Charles Booth, who recently made a sociological census of that city, that only 18 per cent. of the inhabitants are in easy circumstances, while 31 per cent. are in some degree dependent upon charity. Some 51 per cent., though self-supporting, maintain themselves upon the verge of poverty. And taking the population of the British isles, we have the authority of the Financial Reform Almanac of Liverpool, upon the basis of official reports, for saying that 92 per cent. of the population possesses less than one-third of one per cent. of the wealth.

Though these startling figures of class differences come from a European country—one, however, which boasts almost as freely as we do about the possibilities of success—our own country makes but a sorry showing, so far as encouragement to believe that we have no classes is concerned. Our official statistics indicate, according to Shearman, Holmes and Spahr, that about 90 per cent. of our population possess only about 25 per cent. of the wealth. And Mr. Spahr, one of the editors of the Outlook, testifies that in the state of New York, out of every four men who die

above 25 years of age, only one leaves property enough to get his estate into the probate court.

Standing alone, those statistics might be doubted, as all statistics should be. But they confirm the results of common observation, and are in harmony with the reports of charity organizations. The splendor of our charity is thrilling. But let it not be forgotten that there cannot be splendid charity unless there is appalling poverty.

That a large poor class exists, in this country as well as in Europe, is simply indisputable. And while it may please the vanity of the rich class, and of that class of parasites who have been irreverently though not inappropriately labeled "penniless plutes," to blame the poor themselves for their poverty, this explanation is not consistent with the facts. Intemperance, for one thing, is no more a characteristic of the poor than of the rich. For another, the poor are as thrifty as the rich. And they outdo the rich in useful industry. Measure them up, side by side, per cent. by per cent., and personal reasons accounting for the wealth of the wealthy as a class and the poverty of the poor as a class will not be discovered.

They are all of a kind. In morality, natural ability, love of industry, aversion to drudgery, inclination to thrift, selfishness, generosity, both classes are simply men. Their differences of condition as classes are attributable to no superior virtues of the few, but to superior privileges. The many are poor, that is to say, because the few are rich, and the few are rich because the many are poor. These conditions are mutually related as cause and effect.

There are, then, two great classes in this country as in every other. They are the rich whose fortunes rest upon privilege, and the poor whose poverty lashes them on to make and maintain those fortunes. No wonder the privileged cry out that there are no classes, and in the same breath that it is anarchistic to excite class hatreds. They are hysterical about their privileges.

This kind of hysteria has always been characteristic of privileged classes. They always were in mortal

terror of a class war. It was so with the old slaveholders. What they feared was a servile insurrection, but that is the same thing as class war. Such fears are traceable to the same quality of our common nature which makes all of us fear those we wrong.

The least of all things that slaveholders had to fear was servile insurrection, and the John Brown raid proved it. Yet they feared it above everything else; for down in the depths of their subconsciousness there lurked a feeling that their institution wronged the slave, and they knew that the natural fruit of such a wrong is servile insurrection. They knew, too, that if conditions were reversed—that if they were slaves instead of masters—there would certainly be a servile insurrection.

Likewise with the privileged classes of our day. A class war is the last thing they need fear. Nothing could be less menacing to them than the "class conscious" agitation of some socialists. If class were raised against class, whether with bullets or ballots, a preponderance of the unprivileged would fight or vote, as might be, for and with the master class. If evidence of this be required, let the recent steel strike tell the story. Every other great strike has the same story to tell. It is not the masters who defeat strikes; strikes are defeated by "scabs." If class were raised against class, the privileged class would win because great bodies of the unprivileged would vote for it and if need be fight for it. Such contrary tendency as they might at first exhibit would be overcome with promises of "a full dinner pail."

Most abundant are the indications that the unprivileged class cannot be raised up in a war against the privileged. Yet the privileged are in terror of just that improbable and almost impossible thing. Why? For the same reason that the old slaveholders feared a servile insurrection. Somewhere in its sub-conscious regions, the privileged class feels that it flourishes by wrong and oppression, that its gains are others' losses, that its superiority is not a noble superiority of merit, that it is a despicable superiority of privilege.

Out of the cowardly fears of the

privileged class, born of this vague consciousness of guilt, come the pleas it makes for the sanctity of property.

Observe that privileged classes never stand for the sanctity of righteous property only. Like pinchbeck patriots who are for their "country right or wrong," privileged classes are for property right or wrong. It was so with the slaveholders, who asserted property rights in black men. These men were their property under the law, and whether just or unjust made no difference. It is so with our privileged class, who assert property rights in legalized methods of exacting tribute. The tribute and the methods by which it is enforced—for instance, rights of exclusive dominion of the earth—are property under the law, and whether just or unjust makes no difference. They do not stand for justice. They do not stand for just property. They stand for property. The nearest they come to making an ethical argument is when they urge that an assault upon unjust property is an assault upon all property; and that is the argument of thief and hypocrite combined. It is transparently false. The only possible legal security for just property is the legal abolition of unjust property. Yet it is not just property that the sanctimonious apologists for privileged classes defend. It is property.

Here we can see what Blackmore meant when in Lorna Doone he made one of his characters say:

Robbers, more than others, contend for rights of property.

He referred to the robber Doones who were great sticklers for property rights in the earnings of the peasants whom they plundered. The Doones were robbers by prescriptive right, and it is to the interest of such robbers to contend for property—merely property, property in itself, property without an ethical adjective. They would dispossess themselves if they contended for just property.

Precisely so with the privileged class of our time and country. It must contend for property. Not for righteous property, not for just property, but for property as property. Else it would lose its privileges and have to work for a living instead of being worked for.

But the privileged class, now as aforetime, fears the anger of the unprivileged. Therefore it protests that there are no classes. Therefore it paints bright pictures of the success that awaits all who "say nothing, but saw wood." Therefore it explains that everybody can have a retinue of servants if he works hard enough—everybody! Therefore it deplures speaking and writing which may arouse non-existent poor classes against non-existent rich classes. Therefore it goes into hysterics when a brooding victim of the privileged class loses his balance and with the fatuity of a mad man slays a chief officer of the law. Therefore it forgets the struggles for liberty that gave birth to this republic, and proposes abandoning republican institutions as a failure and putting press and platform under censorship. Therefore it would silence all talk about classes, all comparisons of rich and poor, all discussions that might weaken the underpinnings of the legal privileges which empower it to plunder the masses who have no privileges.

Its apologists know, as many business men have learned and more are learning, that success in business has ceased to be possible without a monopoly. Therefore they are solicitous for monopoly, for privilege. So they become sticklers for property. They stickle for property as the Doones did. Not for property righteously acquired, but just for property—for property right or wrong.

Against the legalized depredations of this class, the voice of every honest man must be raised, even though he be a beneficiary. Against these depredations the vote of every patriotic man, beneficiary of privilege though he be, must be cast. And that votes may be cast with intelligence, platform and press must be kept free for the untrammled discussion of the question of classes in our country and of the legal privileges that produce them. If madmen are inspired to kill because sane men speak and write and vote against privilege, let the blame rest where it belongs; not upon those who denounce privilege but upon those who maintain it, not upon those who champion the principles of the republic but upon those who are

undermining the republic, not upon those who plead the common cause but upon those who plead the cause and promote the schemes of predatory class interests.

## NEWS

There are no further developments in Afghanistan consequent upon the death of Ameer Abdur Rahman, of which we told last week. The dispatches from India report a peaceful recognition by the people of Habibullah as the late ameer's successor. But Russian dispatches have a different color. From St. Petersburg an outbreak of civil war in Afghanistan is reported as certain; which means, if there is any basis for the report, that the Russian government is more than willing. Reading between the lines of the dispatches from India, the Russian predictions of an outbreak seem to be not inconsiderately made. British authorities in India are evidently disturbed by the situation.

Under cover of martial law, proclaimed over all Cape Colony as reported last week, Lord Kitchener appears now to have inaugurated a shocking and pitiless policy of murder. The full extent of this policy is not yet known, for he has stopped the publication of local newspapers and allows no news to get to the outer world which he does not approve and can suppress. It is known only that two Boer leaders, Lotter and his lieutenant, prisoners of war, have been tried by British court-martial and under Kitchener's orders shot. Another leader, Scheeper, has been captured, and it is supposed will suffer a like fate. Reprisals by the Boers are probable, and a war of merciless slaughter, to the point of utter extermination, looms up. Kruger's words of warning, that Great Britain might crush the two South African republics but it would be at a price at which the world would stand aghast, are taken seriously now.

In the field, the British are still baffled. Though they reported Botha in a trap at the beginning of the week, they now concede that he has escaped, with his little army, and is at large in the Transvaal ready for another of his swoops. It is evident from the dispatches also that the two battles, Itala and Moerwill, recently reported

as dearly bought British victories, were in fact victories for the Boers.

Exasperated by the continuance of the war, which Lord Roberts declared a year ago to be at an end, the British people have criticised the ministry until Mr. Broderick, the secretary for war, stung by these criticisms, has made a public statement. He makes it in the form of a letter to Sir Charles Howard Vincent, which appeared in print in London on the 10th. In this letter Mr. Broderick declares that the total number of men now under arms to conquer the Boers is 300,000—100,000 in training at home and 200,000 in South Africa. There are also in South Africa 450 British guns. Supplies are being provided by the war office, he says, for 314,000 persons, directly or indirectly connected with the war, and 248,000 horses and mules. During the first six months of the present year, he adds, 61,000 fresh troops were sent out to Lord Kitchener.

American sympathy with the Boers in the present crisis has been expressed at two public meetings in Chicago, one presided over by Judge Edward F. Dunne and the other by Edward Osgood Brown. More of these meetings are to be held. Resolutions were adopted at both calling upon President Roosevelt to intimate to Great Britain that the American people are indignant at the barbarous and cruel mode of warfare her army has adopted in South Africa. The second meeting further declared that—

by the evidence submitted it is conclusively shown that England, in her attempt to subdue a nation fighting for her liberty, has waged and is waging warfare upon innocent women and children, and has been and is guilty of unfairness, inhumanity, and violation of the laws of civilized warfare.

It also called—

upon all who sympathize with the women and children herded in the concentration camps of South Africa, to do their utmost in contributing money and influence to bring relief to the victims of Great Britain's barbaric methods.

These American expressions of sympathy with the Boers, however, are offset by British statesmen with references to the American war in the Philippines, which they cite in justification of the British procedure in South Africa. In fact, the American