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EDITORIAL

Roosevelt's Washingtonian tableau.

"Ten miles from any human habitation, amid the silent towering trees of the great forest," and in "full-rounded tones," ringing "in their low intensity through the woods," while "above in the trees the shrill call of the wood bird to his mate was hushed, and it seemed as if the air had ceased to move," Theodore Roosevelt "on his bended knees prayed for the spiritual welfare of John Hay," as "around him were grouped the members of his cabinet"—together with an eloquent representative of the Associated Press, it would seem, for the above description of the tableau

has been telegraphed to an applauding world. We have here an instance either of a repulsive pose, advertised by request for pious effect, or of a disgusting invasion of President Roosevelt's privacy.

The National Educational Association.

Of the merits of the controversy in the National Educational Association, which came to the surface at the meeting of the National Council of that association at Asbury Park last week, outsiders may not be able to fairly judge. But it is certain that there is considerable bitterness on one side, and on the other a great deal of complacent cynicism—usually a pretty sure sign of good reason for the bitterness.

Margaret A. Haley led the opposition to certain peculiar plans of organization proposed by the university faction. If these plans are adopted, she said, the government of the association will be reposed "in perpetuity in a self-perpetuating dynasty, whose power to rule can be amended only by special act of Congress," and "the most important educational body in America will be withdrawn entirely from the control and influence of the teachers of our country, and vested in a ring which may have only selfish objects in view." If this indictment is true, the danger to democratic education is serious. Should a self-perpetuating ring of plutocracy promoters be allowed to fix themselves in position to speak in the name and with the authority of the great teaching fraternity of the United States, the result would be disastrous to educational progress. It is not college presidents, backed by dependent professors and leagued on the one hand with plutocratic school trustees and superintendents and on the other with "tainted money" distributors, (few among them knowing or caring much for the mental difference between a school child and an educated jack-daw)—it is not such as these

whose educational ideas are most valuable in developing education in a democratic country like ours. It is the intelligent teachers, who come into personal contact with the children of the schools. If the voice of this body is to be suppressed by a scholastic ring, as Miss Haley predicts, the scheme cannot be thwarted too soon. Possibly this suppression of the voice of the teachers is not designed. But Miss Haley, who has a keen and pretty exact scent for plutocratic combines of the respectable sort, is corroborated by a good many circumstances.

Inequalities in wealth.

When Prof. Laughlin insists, as he is reported, that "there will be inequalities of wealth just as long as there are differing industrial capacities in men," and attributes the growing bitterness toward wealthy persons to envy, he mistakes the signs of the times and misses the vital point. Though much of the bitterness to which he alludes doubtless does originate in envy, that counts for little. Neither the envy that would rob, nor the sordidness that would conserve the proceeds of robbery, is an important element in any great controversy; and it does not comport with the dignity of a scholar to refer to envy as the cause of the growing revolt against our plutocracy. Every revolution in the world's history, whether political or otherwise, was promoted by some men who were actuated by envy of those in power; and those in power often confused, sometimes unfortunately for themselves, the envy of the envious with the cause they espoused. Prof. Laughlin does the same thing when he attributes to the envious the rising tide of opposition to present day inequalities in wealth. These inequalities have given us living tableaux of the few revelling in luxury on little oases of wealth maintained by the many, while the many fight for a precarious livelihood in surrounding deserts of poverty. Such

tableaus generate general bitterness. But the bitterness springs not from envy of anyone's honest wages of achievement, however liberal; it springs from a sense of outrage at legalized inequality of opportunity for achievement. There is a difference between industrial capacities that are utilized for looting (whether legal looting or illegal), and those that are utilized for production. To the extent that inequalities of wealth are due to the differing industrial capacities in men who devote their energies to producing wealth, even the envious are silent, and all others are glad. But to the extent that those inequalities exist regardless of the utilization of superior industrial capacity, or in consequence of its utilization for appropriating wealth without earning it, to that extent no honest man, rich or poor, high or low, learned or ignorant, ought to be either silent or apologetic.

President Roosevelt falls into the same error of which Prof. Laughlin is guilty. In his speech to the teachers at Asbury Park, the President called it "wicked folly to let ourselves be drawn into any attack upon the man of wealth merely as such." Incontestably true. But so is it "wicked folly to let ourselves be drawn into any attack upon the man" of education, or of physical strength and beauty, or of high office, or of something else, "merely as such." This is a species of wicked folly that few commit; but so is that which Mr. Roosevelt describes. The animus of the popular attacks upon Mr. Roosevelt's "man of wealth," is not merely that he is a man of wealth, but that he seems to get his wealth without earning it, and therefore at the expense of others who do earn it. This is the indictment, and it is time for the apologists to meet it with candor.

Methods of getting wealth without earning it.

That some delectable specimens of "the man of wealth" get their wealth in defiance or evasion of

the law, is a fact which becomes more and more palpable as disclosures like that of the Equitable (p. 185) proceed. Only a few months ago persons who ventured to expose these "mackerel men" were duly warned not to attack the rich, "as such"; but now we are learning the character of differentiated "industrial capacities," and discovering the grafting methods of "successful" men like the Alexanders and the Hydes and the Depews. They are really types of the modern "man of wealth" whom we are gently urged not to attack, "merely as such." The fact that only the Equitable crew has as yet been found out, makes it none the less important to hold the others under surveillance. Hosts of them are in national and State legislatures, and on the bench, and in high executive offices; but a larger and more dangerous host are in the inner councils of great corporations, at the heads of manufacturing enterprises, in huge mercantile establishments, in spacious lawyers' offices, and in employers' associations; while their apologists flourish most in our universities, our educational associations, and our pulpits.

But the "man of wealth" who is not to be attacked "merely as such," yet occupies a position of hostility to society, is not always nor necessarily at all, a personal boodler or grafter. The most oppressive appropriations of wealth by non-earners from the earners, may be and in much the larger part actually are, effected by men whose personal honesty is justly unquestioned. It is institutional misappropriation of wealth, not personal dishonesty, that counts for most in the spoliation of industry. For that reason we should not merely refrain from attacking the man of wealth "merely as such;" we should subordinate our attacks even upon the dishonestly rich to our attacks upon dishonest laws and institutions and their defenders.

Lawson's remedy for frenzied finance.

In his Kansas speech,—where, by the way, he administered a well-deserved and impudently-invited rebuke to the young Mr. Jerome of New York,—Thomas W. Lawson announced the first step in the remedy for economic maladjustments which he has frequently promised in his Everybody's articles (p. 163) to disclose. This first step strikes us as somewhat difficult if not wholly impracticable. It consists in the people's selling every share of stock and every bond they hold, and placing the money thus realized in banks and trust companies not linked with the System, or, better still, in government, State, and municipal bonds. Mr. Lawson relies upon this course to force the System to cover its hypothecated stocks and bonds upon a falling market and cause its collapse. "There," he said, "is my simple plan—to load up the System with the stocks and bonds distributed among the people, in addition to the stocks and bonds it owns itself; then deprive it of the money of the people; result, the artificial price structure collapses, the stocks and bonds of railways and manufacturers and gas companies all drop to the real cost or values of the properties they represent; then the people (the money owners), purchasing the stocks and bonds, and having only to pay interest on their real values, can reduce rates of fare and freight, and the revolution will be complete."

Since Mr. Lawson stated that his remedy comprehends further steps, which, when the proper time comes he will announce, and that he will then set forth and operate the remedy, his first step as described in the speech cannot be very intelligently examined either for criticism or approval. Its practicability seems very doubtful, notwithstanding Mr. Lawson's assurances; because, unless he has invented some scheme to get the people to act together as one until they shall have forced prices down to rock bottom, the System may play a re-