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A Weekly Narrative of History in the Making

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EDITORIAL

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The Muckraker.

When Ex-Governor Folk of Missouri said in a recent lecture of his that those who profit by abuses in government are usually loudest in denunciation of those who point out abuses, he explained the wild outcry against "muckrakers."

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Peace at Any Price.

To say that "a well organized army and navy is the best guarantee of peace," as Mr. Choate did say the other night at a "peace society" dinner in New York, is to take some liberties with common sense and a good many with history. Mr. Choate seems to be a peace man at any price—at the price even of war.

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The Problem of the Unemployed

Secretary Straus is reported to have said that "the man who shall solve the problem of the unemployed—which may be insoluble—but if capable of being solved, that man shall earn everlasting gratitude and fame from the entire world." He is more likely, however, to earn a conspicuous place on a scaffold. For the problem is, as Mr. Straus intimates it may be, an insoluble one—insoluble, that is, without destruction to "vested rights."

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"New Idea" Republicans.

In the heart of the Republican party of today, as it was in the heart of the Democratic party

more than half a century ago, there is reviving a democratic sentiment which is hopefully prophetic. It may be identified with individual Republican leaders here and there, men of whom La Follette is the type; but in New Jersey it has taken impersonal form in what its local enemies have in derision dubbed the "New Idea." Here, also, there are personal identifications, of course, but in the public mind it is the idea rather than the personalities that dominate. The movement has brought to the battle front such men as George L. Record, Mark M. Fagan, Everett Colby, Mayor Low of Passaic and James G. Blauvelt.

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Something of the animating spirit of the "New Idea" movement may be seen in this quotation from Mayor Low's address as chairman of the Passaic Board of Trade's memorial meeting in honor of Abraham Lincoln, on the 13:

There is in this land today a system of feudalism which has under control the processes of production and distribution and is just as binding and just as certain a source of menace to the people as any of the earlier systems of slavery. You and I are obliged to pay tribute to this system, which has increased the cost of living forty per cent. in the last seven years, during a period when the necessaries of life could be produced and distributed cheaper than ever before in the history of the world. This condition of things is fostered by corporate control of the government. Government by the people, for which Abraham Lincoln stood, has come to be a farce. The great problem of today is to put the people back in possession of a stolen government. Abraham Lincoln was the great exponent of the "new idea" in politics. Who will take his place in solving the problems of today?

✦

The same democratic spirit moved Mr. Blauvelt (a Republican member of the legislature and author of the pending bill for home rule in taxation in New Jersey) in his address at the Lincoln dinner of the Republican Club of Rutherford, of which we append an extract:

Let us not deceive ourselves. The eternal struggle between right and wrong, of which Lincoln spoke, is still with us. Accustomed to the forms of special privilege, we, in our praise of what is, lose sight of the fact that government from Lincoln's time to now has offered no plan, nor have our statesmen apparently troubled their heads about a plan by which the man who labors and does the toll of the world shall have the product of his labor. It is very well for us who sit here and dine in luxury and ease to talk about the good times and good conditions, but those good times and good conditions which spread to you and me are not general. They are common only to a small portion of the population. While by the use of machinery, while by inventions

and doing our work according to method and system which large numbers permit, the productiveness of man is manifestly greater today than it was a short period ago, yet a meager portion of the benefits that flow from this increased productiveness is brought to the man who labors. It is not enough for us to talk about political rights: we must go farther and beyond that and relieve our present system of those features which permit one man to amass a million dollars or a thousand million dollars while thousands of other men, willing to work, anxious to work, are starving for the lack of the opportunity to work, and when they do work get such a small return for their labor that they are deprived of the ordinary comforts of life. Lincoln and the men of his day removed the fetters both political and material that held millions of men of an alien race in bondage. The question which is presented to you, to me, and to the rest of the people in this broad land today to solve is infinitely greater—it means the abolition of bondage for millions of men of our own race. That is the problem which must be solved, and the quicker we begin to devote our attention to it the sooner we shall reach a solution. The men in Lincoln's day little dreamed when he was elected that within three years the emancipation proclamation would go forth, yet we know that inside of that period emancipation was accomplished, and we may hope that within a reasonable period a solution, or partial solution, or some solution of our present problem, our present injustice to the men who labor may be wrought. I cannot conceive that it is the purpose of a just God to surround man with a land of unbounded provision and prevent man from enjoying it. It must be by some artificial system they themselves have established that men are denied the enjoyment of the bounties of God.

✦

There is no mistaking the spirit of those speeches. No perfunctory rehash they of the mere words of Lincoln, amplified and devitalized. Those are not mere empty echoes that Lincoln set reverberating in connection with a phase now obsolete of the eternal struggle for democracy; they are, in connection with a new phase of that struggle, fresh expressions of Lincoln's ever-living thought.

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Displaced Labor.

By machinery one man can plane as many boards as could have been planed by sixty with hand planes. "Fifty-nine men that the world does not need!" One man can shell as much corn in an hour as a hundred and ten could have shelled half a century ago. "One hundred and nine men that the world does not want!" One man and two boys will turn out as many hanks of yarn as 12,000 men fifty years ago. "Nearly twelve thousand men that the world has no use for!" That is the way Health-Culture puts the problem of the unemployed. But it is all wrong. The world does