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WE FIGHT THE BATTLE OF THE PLAIN PEOPLE

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RACIAL EVOLUTION

A few years ago American professors were describing the process by which the New Englander was going back to the type of the North American Indian. It was claimed that the ruddy cheek of the Englishman was becoming copper colored under the influence of the New England atmosphere. Under the same influence the eyes were becoming smaller and the cheek bones were becoming elevated.

This satisfied the Americans for a while. They had something to talk about and they had a theory that looked queer enough to be scientific.

Now another theory has been put forth. It is said that America has become a melting pot for the races in which the Asiatic, Negroid and Aryan races will become fused. This fusion will not produce a new race on the face of the earth. It is claimed that in the fusion the inherited characteristics will be obliterated and the primitive man will reappear.

This theory has a scientific tinge to it and will amuse a great many Americans. In the meantime, French priests are said to have discovered the remains of a man who lived a hundred and seventy thousand years and walked on all fours. We will not venture to predict how some American professor will combine this last fact to form some new and strange theory for the special consumption of the yellow press and credulous Americans.

ON SERVICE

Those who want to be great must learn to serve the needs of their fellow men. When any profession or class of individuals cease to perform beneficial services to mankind, that moment the persons of that profession or class become a dead weight upon the actual workers of the community.

Our present economy is based upon the theory that the good of the individual is the good of the state and that the individual should be given the greatest amount of latitude in pursuing his own good. This idea or theory is not given free play because classes of men gather together to promote their own interests at the expense of the public.

The groups who organize for their own interests do so under the plea that their organization is for the benefit of the public. The advocates form a close corporation and no one can practise law who has not passed certain examinations and has been declared fit to practise. This is done under the guise of preventing ignorant men from deceiving the public and giving bad legal advice. Yet it is the common belief in Canada and the States that the legal combine is detrimental to the true interests of the public and the public to a certain extent is right in its impression.

UNDER THE SPOT-LIGHT

F. C. MEARS

Those who attend theatres know the searching power of the spotlight as it is thrown from an elevated position in the rear of the theatre upon those who perform on the stage. How much more beautiful a pretty actress appears under the benign radiance of the calcium lamp. On the other hand, with what cruelty the same searchlight magnifies the facial discrepancies of an unbecoming girl. It reveals and stiffens every wrinkle and blemish; it makes a cheap performance look very much cheaper; but it makes a laudable act seem an artistic triumph. What a magic influence is contained in the concentration of light upon any point. Though, of course, a good many unthinking objects, such as a brick wall, a slate or the body of an obtrusive person are impervious to the penetrative power of the spot-light (we use the term here in a broad sense) yet the various qualities and characteristics of mankind are ever at its mercy.

There is something suggestive in the nature and use of the spot-light. It is capable of an apt and lucid analogy. We are all actors in the arena, or on the stage of life. Some are making good, and some are bad actors and devoid of those histrionic qualities that make for success and affluence in life. Very few stop to take an inventory of

their assets; they are too busy living and doing. Occasionally, however, the spot-light of public conscience falls upon their actions and the consequences to them are sometimes painful. Things are suddenly and irrevocably revealed that they would like to have kept dark and hidden. To those whose daily life is uniformly righteous revelations can have no terror; publicity rather glorifies their reputation.

Newspaper publicity, since it became a factor in the daily affairs of men, has rendered to humanity immeasurable benefits. The history of civilization in the nineteenth century and in the twentieth century thus far is inseparably bound up with the progress of daily journalism. With its exceptional advantages for disseminating news of the world's doings to a large number of readers almost momentarily, and for penetrating the inner circles of high and low diplomacy and of wide and narrow politics, the daily newspaper can wield and is actually wielding a great influence for the upbuilding of national morality and for the purifying of private activity. The influence a newspaper can exert is commensurate with its fearlessness in attacking the high places of corruption. The most powerful industrial corporations are never immune from its revelations, and the most insignificant, the most inconsequential individual is liable at any time to have his character raked over to see if there be any good in him. Such commercial kings as John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, James J. Hill, Charles Morse and Ogden Armour have long since cultivated a wholesome respect for the daily paper; in one or two cases one might almost be disposed to believe that the respect held is nearer fear than anything else. It is reasonable to suppose that in a short time a considerable addition will be made to this school of newspaper-respecters from the district of Panama, and that President Roosevelt and the Kaiser will very soon modify their conceptions of the influence exerted by the daily searchlights of human action.

However yellow the light irradiated by the daily paper may sometimes appear, the indisputable fact remains that were it not for the audacity of the leader-writer and the city editor, many atrocious schemes would have travelled on to a disastrous culmination, civil crimes would go unpunished, political bubbles would go unproved, and the consequent suspension of justice would soon result in the latter's complete abolition. Newspapers are too often heedlessly censured, and the fruits of their influence are liable to be misjudged. Even if they sometimes appear to give undue importance to some crime, or if they seem to have deliberately suppressed the publication of some other item one should not be too hasty in grumbling at them. Rely upon it, they have in a very large majority of cases, the interests of humanity at heart, and the accordance of an appreciative recognition of the sincerity of their intentions would supply much encouragement to them.

SENTIMENT

Sentiment is a great thing. People go to their comfortable churches and listen in ease and have their comfortable souls soothed with kindly words or harrowed with esthetic tales of other people's woes and if their souls have been sufficiently harrowed, they may part with an extra quarter when the collection plate is passed. This is Christian sentiment.

There is a worldly sentiment which is found in the theatre. Delicate people who think their souls so finely textured that they cannot endure the sight of real poverty will go to the theatre, at a dollar and a half a head, and will have their petty feelings harrowed by a shadow of poverty which is played on the stage and which is as far from true poverty as Church Christianity is as from true Christianity.

Sentiment is a luxury for the well-to-do and it is a luxury for which they spend much money. In the coming struggles, which are impending the world over, these poor creatures who revel in sentiment are going to have a tough time. Gigantic forces are at work and unless those forces are given free vent they will be huddled down and compressed to the dangerous point. The present time is not a time for sentiment, the present time is a time for intense and strong activity.

THE BUDDHA

Gautama, the Buddha, the founder of Indian Buddhism, was the son of a prince. He was raised in luxury and was a strong and powerful prince. He had wives and concubines and he had riches and splendor. He possessed all things which could contribute to his material happiness. He was one of the blest of the earth. Nevertheless, like Solomon, he found that all was vanity and vexation of spirit. Like the modern millionaire, who goes deep into the pleasures of life, he found that "Things ain't worth while." He found these things out earlier than did Solomon and he had greater moral courage than had Solomon who could only keep up his style and his over populated harum or house of Lebanon, and kick himself for his own weakness.

When Buddha was about thirty years old he left his wife and heir and palace in the night and started out to find where truth lay. He wandered many years and studied under numerous teachers. He tried asceticism and found that did not pay. And after exhausting all possible sources of information open to him he beat out a doctrine for himself. Taking the same fundamental life facts as did Christ he developed a doctrine of pessimism. He had viewed life at a different angle.

GAUTAMA'S DOCTRINE

Gautama found that life had more pain than pleasure in it. This is the doctrine of an oversurfetted individual. The baubles of this earth were not worth pursuing. Love brought pain; the strivings for position brought disappointment. All the glittering titles of earth, all the delights of the physical senses, all the artistic and poetic beauties of life were not worth the struggle. Existence is a bane and not a blessing and the great end to seek is the extinction of the individual self.

Now when we get into the realm of future states of existence, apart from dogmatic teachings, we are in a realm of pure speculation. Buddha declared that each individual came back to earth in some shape, and that the spirit which now occupied a man might return to earth after death and occupy the body of a dog or ape and the round of existence was eternal.

The only escape from this dreadful round of existence is the subduing of all desire to live. Pain and hope must not be felt. All desires must cease and if a man will so live and train his spirit that he will have no feelings whatsoever, but only lead a dim, thoughtless and feelingless existence, he will have trained his spirit to merge itself at death in the Brahman or the brooding spirit over the world and his spirit will cease to be a separate entity. Self-extinction, therefore, is the final goal of the Buddhist, and the desire for self extinction is based on the doctrine that "Things ain't worth while."

CHRIST

Christ came to the world in a different atmosphere from that of Buddha. He was not born in a palace. He was born in a manger and lived in an artisan's dwelling place. He did not have everything he desired, but on the contrary had very little. He had to work for his living and he could base his philosophy of life, if necessary, upon hard experience. He did not marry, but His love for Mary, (for if we believe that He was tempted in all things like unto ourselves we must believe that he endured the passion of human love,) remained but an unfulfilled dream. His whole life, until he was thirty, was the hard lot of a laborer who could not get anything together with which to establish a home of his own. We have thousands of laborers in Canada in the same situation today. He was in the position of never having lived in a palace and his doctrines, however much our ministers or state religions may try to escape the fact, are not for those who live in palaces at the present time.

Christ is the peasant Christ. His call is to workers and to those who are not afraid of hard jobs and coarse work. His doctrine is that things are worth while and that life is good and wholesome, and that the desire for life is a

good thing in itself. With a perfect physical body, strengthened with plain living and hard, healthy labor, He looked out upon the misery of the world and began His mission to reclaim this world here and now as well as for a future state.

ENGLISH STABILITY

England rules the world because of her politics at home. The British Empire is stable because of the instability of the British home politics.

When comes stagnation then comes decay. New needs of life constantly arise and new forms of government and new legislation are needed to answer to the new needs. Great Britain is constantly renewing her political and legislative life.

The well to do Englishman during the past three hundred years has always considered that his country is going to the dogs. The well-to-do Englishman has made the mistake that his own prosperity coincided with the national prosperity of his country and that if conditions arose which made him personally poor those same conditions would also impoverish the nation. In other countries such as France certain classes got hold of all power and held it. They remained wealthy, but the country became poor. In England the contrary occurred. Those who got the power could not hold it. With changing conditions they became poor while the nation became rich. At the present moment, the well-to-do Englishman considers the country is doing to the dogs. Old age pensions, workmen's compensation act, confiscation of whiskey property, are the facts upon which he bases his assertion. The present well-to-do Englishman may be in the process of becoming poor, but the nation itself will prosper and grow rich by their poverty.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE

Charles F. Aked, pastor of the First Baptist Church of New York, is converting many American ladies to the doctrine of Woman Suffrage. It is an old maxim which says, "If you want a thing well done, you must do it yourself." This is true with regard to all persons. If doctors want fat fees they must pass laws and so organize their profession that they will be in a position to exact them from the public. The public will not, of its own free will, hand over large sums for medical assistance. Architects must do the same and they have recently gone about the organization of their profession. Workmen, as a class, must organize unions and demand higher pay if they want to improve their conditions. An occasional workman may find a benevolent boss who will treat him square, but he is the exception. In the same way, women must depend upon themselves if they desire an improvement in their lot and a raising of their present legal status. The law of Germany gives all a wife's property to the husband and she must rely upon him and his caprices for what she wants and even for what she needs. The English law gives one-third to the wife, and two-thirds to the husband. Our Quebec law regards what husband and wife make during life as belonging one-half to each party, but the wife must die to get her share. The husband can sell or even give away the communal property of the wife without her sanction. It is only at death that the property is divided. Women, therefore, if they want justice must depend upon their own efforts and the first step in the right direction is the acquiring of the right to vote.

The workmen of the country villages receive a dollar and a quarter a day in return for their services. With the price of necessities soaring and rents falling due, the workers are supposed to be in a spirit in which they can be glad and happy at this season of the year.

"The poor ye have always with you." is an overworked text. The poor is a relative term and a man can be poor without being starved to death. Our civilization is so built as to automatically starve numerous people every few years.

OUR NEWSPAPERS

The average Canadian when he invests a cent or two in the purchase of a copy of a newspaper does not think he has got value for his money unless he gets a large handful of pulp. Our forests are being depleted to turn out the large editions of our daily newspapers. The newspapers consider they are leading public opinion in the matter of reform. They are agitating for the protection and preservation of our forests and yet they themselves are doing more to bring about the destruction of large forest areas than any other single agency.

In Canada, twelve, sixteen and thirty-two page papers are sold for a cent. In France the principal dailies are sold for four cents and contain but four pages and there is more instruction and news of value in one four-page French paper than there is in a Canadian thirty-two page paper.

Lord Northcliffe and other authorities have declared that American and Canadian journalism must be reformed along the lines of less pulp and more brains. The reform is necessary and should be brought about in the interests of the Canadian public, but it is doubtful whether the Canadian public are in a mood for the reform. The average Canadian swells with pride at the thought of his vast heritage of spacious but empty plains and in the same spirit he is proud of his vast newspapers which are almost empty of brains.

WHAT CONSTITUTES NEWS?

The question what constitutes news necessarily arises, and the average newspaper answers it in a very disappointing manner. Murders, thefts, robberies, suicides, burglaries and other crimes make a part of the news. The more revolting the crime, the more it appears the details must be given to the public. Little city doings, gossip of the day which a person would not stop to listen to if it were told by a neighbor, occupies another large portion of the daily press.

With the necessity of filling our huge sheets, trifling news must be given to fill up space. It has been said that the man of few books who ponders them well is the one who succeeds, and the influence of the large daily sheets in teaching men to read carelessly about trifles has been declared by many educationalists to be most detrimental upon public manners.

Civilizations wheel in circles, but constantly with an upward twist after the fashion of a spiral. It is the function of the newspapers to assist this upward trend and to help the advance of civilization. A large quantity of present news could be suppressed to the benefit of the public. And more news of an optimistic trend and of an upward lift could be given with advantage.

CHRIST'S DOCTRINES

Humanity is ever swinging off at a tangent from true principles. People are struggling for power. Christ taught the dignity of labor and the blessedness of the lowly. New life is based on physical needs and labor is one of them. When men rise they trample other men down. They may carry a few men up with them but the majority find their lot more hard by the exalting of a few.

The doctrines of Christ have been monopolized by the wealthy through the ages. The wealthy have put their own interpretation on what Christ taught and they are doing it today. But simply because Christ came as a peasant and taught doctrines for the lowly we have Christ continually to the front in the history of human progress.

Each dominant class wants to monopolize Christ, or rather each class wants to put its own construction upon the teachings of Christ. Thus in slave days in the South the southern planters declared that Christ approved of slavery. In the middle ages the feudal lords considered themselves as the representatives of Christ upon earth and consequently whatever they did was backed up by Christ's authority.

But Christ's doctrines are for the workers and the lowly in spirit and we

venture to say that our modern civilization as represented in our big cities and by our modern governments is as far away from the true spirit of Christ, compared with our present means and facilities, as were the governments and civilization of the middle ages with their industrial opportunities.

GET OFF THE EARTH

William H. Taft during his presidential campaign, was asked what a man was to do if he were out of work, no job in sight and starving. William H. Taft replied, "God knows." William H. Taft might have truthfully answered "get off the earth." The out-of-work in a large city might as well go and hang himself as to continue to live a life of absolute misery. His clothes become thin, he goes hungry, he gets the rheumatism and becomes consumptive. He becomes unfit to work and can only drag out a useless existence doing odd jobs for a dime and spending his days looking for work which will never be thrown his way.

In all large cities, rents are rising. Society is horrified at the tales of overcrowding in the slums. But out-of-work and even those who work for a dollar and a quarter a day cannot expect to choose large houses as a place of residence where their children can play in a private yard with real green grass.

We are so busy making money and hoisting the price of necessities in order that our neighbors may know how rich we are that we forget that our wealth is another man's poverty. The other man is shoved down and out and night as well get off the earth for all the ordinary business man cares.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

A Merry Christmas to all our readers.

Christmas day is a day of rejoicing. Yet the rejoicing over our own lot is more or less selfish as long as one human being endures a lot of misery.

In olden times men used to starve because of famines. Now our beautiful nineteenth century civilization causes men to starve even when our harvests are abundant.

We smile as we read the reports of parliamentary proceedings. In fact we have given up reading them. Our government members, Laurier and all of them are children in economics. The Conservative opposition is just as bad.

Whether it be through the moral uplift of the individual or whether it be through the growing idea of the brotherhood of man, all should work for the day when each man, woman and child shall reach a state of physical perfection based upon personal and social virtues.

At this glad Christmas time the nations of Europe are prepared to fly at each other in mad warfare. And this is at the end of nineteen hundred years of Christian preaching. Where lies the blame?

Parliament will reassemble on January twentieth and will go through their old mummeries of pretending to rule the country in the interests of all the people. The ordinary people get the siftings while the special interests get the sifted flour.

In a government of the people, by the people, for the people, there should be no special interests which need protection against the rest of the people. Yet we see vast companies under our laws rolling in great wealth upon a few favored individuals. The individuals try to make out that they grow rich by their greater brain power, but the ordinary man believes that they grow rich by favors from the governments of the people.