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## A Significant Gathering.

A really unique gathering was the trust conference at Chicago, which concluded a four days' session on Saturday. It was convened at the instance of the Chicago Civic Federation, an organization interested chiefly in municipal reform. The call was responded to by about 200 delegates, including some of the foremost public men of the country, besides representatives of the great universities, of organized labor, corporate wealth, socialists, single tax, and apparently every phase of political, social and economic opinion, even to anarchy. Never before has such a convention been held in any country, for the simple reason that the meeting was inspired by conditions which never before prevailed. The trust movement is a growth of the past two or three years, or rather, its growth has become portentous within that brief period, though the forces which now appear to be culminating have been long at work.

The conference, at the very outset, revealed a marked division of sentiment, as was to be expected. The discussion developed three distinct groups: 1. Those who opposed trusts per se, and wished to crush them by law. 2. Those who defended the trust system unreservedly as an advantage to both capital and labor. 3. Those who held that the trust was a natural growth which it would be useless and irrational to try to suppress by legislation, but which was fraught with immeasurable evil if not regulated by the public.

The first of these opinions is expressed in this breezy and emphatic fashion by Dudley Wootton, of Texas:

"We confidently assert that the commercial and industrial bondage being rapidly imposed upon the toil and talents of 70,000,000 of American citizens by the syndicated wealth of a few great corporate monopolies is more dire and dangerous than the slavery that once bowed the heads and burdened the backs of 4,000,000 Southern black men."

Francis B. Thurber, of New York, was one of the few out and out champions of the trust. His views are epitomized thus:

"It is overlooked that corporations are really co-operations; that the number of partners as stockholders in any industry is increased; that anyone can become a partner; and that instead of being concentrated they are distributed. It has been assumed that labor would be oppressed by the organization of capital, but experience has shown that organized labor has met organized capital, and that the largest organizations of capital have furnished the steadiest employment and have paid larger wages than individual employers."

The views of the moderate wing of the convention, made up chiefly of college professors and academicians, was perhaps best put by John Graham Brooks, lecturer on social economics in the Chicago University. His address may be summarized thus:

"The real problem, immediate and important, is how to regulate and guide the new force that stands merely for the latest stage of industrial growth. If the combinations are to work for the public as well as for the private good, three things must be brought about: Absolute publicity of methods and accounts. Every artificial advantage given by the tariff must be removed. Railroad discriminations shall not be allowed to these combinations."

These three quotations indicate the main currents of thought in the convention. Other contributions to the discussion are worth reproducing in brief.

Byron W. Holt, of the New England Free Trade Bureau, held that the tariff laws were alone responsible for the growth of combinations, and quoted the sugar king's (Havemeyer) dictum, that the tariff was the mother of all trusts. Thereupon a protectionist got up and declared that the tariff had nothing to do with it.

Samuel H. Greeley of the National Grain Growers' Association, laid all the evil at the door of the railways. Discrimination in freight rates, he said, was the food that gave sustenance to the trusts. "Without this food," he added, "all others in the commercial world might as well notify the undertaker and endeavor to save enough for a decent burial. I, for one, have no fear for the success of all enterprises of a commercial nature when our merchants can depend upon the same and equal terms in matters of transportation. When freight rates are as stable as postage stamps monopoly will then receive its first blow."

Samuel Gompers, the labor leader, did not attack the trusts, but defended organized labor, and showed why labor unions should not be classified as trusts. He was optimistic about the situation, and averred that prices were going down while wages are going up. This, he said, was due solely to the organized efforts of the wage-earner. He said:

"Perhaps the greatest sufferers

from the wrongs which the combinations have exacted upon any one in society have been the wage-earners, but in spite of this fact we do not close our eyes to actual facts and conditions, nor join in the general howl simply for the purpose of howling."

Louis F. Post, of the National Single Tax League, said in part:

"Trusts are either buttressed by protection or have direct special privileges, or peculiar land advantages. In the last analysis trusts cannot be perpetuated unless they come to own the natural sources of supply and distribution—the land. It is only by forcing them off the land that it is possible to destroy them. Abolish the tariff, abolish all monopolies that can be abolished, take public highways for public use, and collect from land-owners the annual values of their special privileges. Do that, and you put an end to the trust."

Thomas J. Morgan, of Chicago, discussed the trust from the socialist point of view. Among other things he said:

"The trust is the legitimate child of capital, and if it were not for the seriousness of the problem we should be more than amused at the efforts to check the growth and to kill this offspring that are made by those that produce."

"The socialist sees that you are totally impotent to prevent the operations of the trust; you are impotent to interfere with its growth in the states or in the union; it overrides your state and national laws in its progress."

Mr. Morgan's remedy, of course, was the assumption by the state of all productive energies.

Benjamin R. Tuckett, of New York, spoke from the same standpoint of scientific (sic) anarchy, and it was proof of the liberality of the convention that his speech was frequently applauded. Tuckett said in part:

"Anarchy wants to call off the quacks and give liberty, nature's great cure-all, a chance to do its perfect work. 'Free access to the world of matter, abolishing land monopoly; free access to the world of mind, abolishing ideas monopoly; free access to an untaxed and unprivileged market, abolishing tariff monopoly—secure these and all the rest shall be added unto you. For liberty is the remedy of every social evil, and to anarchy must the world look at last for any enduring guarantee of social order.'"

Gov. Atkinson, of West Virginia, in a plea for due regulation of the trusts, touched on the relations of capital and labor in this sensible vein:

"Labor and capital are independent. The laboring men have the same right to organize for their advancement and protection as have the capitalists. So long as the laboring man does his duty and keeps within the limits of the law he will have my sympathy and support. But I have never yet favored a strike or a lockout so long as it was possible to prevent it by just and friendly arbitration; and I have never yet known a strike or a lockout, in all my experience and observation, that did not result in injury to both labor and capital. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I favor arbitration to settle all disputed problems between capital and labor."

Gov. Pingree, of Michigan, was, as usual, picturesque and forcible. He would give the trusts no quarter. He took the previous speakers to task for considering the trust movement from the sole standpoint of dollars and cents. He chose to discuss trusts in another, and what he considered, a more important relation, namely, their effect on national life and citizenship. Here are some of the body-blows he gave the corporations:

"The trust is the forerunner, or rather, the creator of industrial slavery. 'It is better to be forever poor, but independent and happy as individuals, than to lay the foundation for industrial tyranny and slavery.'"

"Personal liberty is rather to be chosen than great riches. 'Equality of opportunity to all men is better than the control of the world's trust.'"

"I favor complete and prompt annihilation of the trust—with due regard for property rights, of course. I care more for the independence and manliness of the American citizen than for all the gold and silver in the world. It is better to cherish the happiness of the American home than to control the commerce of the world."

"The degrading process of the trust means much to the future of a republic founded upon democratic principles. A democratic republic cannot survive the disappearance of a democratic population."

The conference had a spectacular finale in the shape of a platform tilt between Hon. Bourke Cockran, the flamboyant New York orator and gold Democrat, and W. J. Bryan, the idol of the silver Democracy. Cockran's view was that the test, as to the right of capital to combine "is whether the combination flourishes through government aid or without it." There were three ways by which the government could extend such aid, by patent laws, by tariff laws, and by favors extended to the combination by agencies created by the government, such as railways. Trusts, bolstered up by these artificial props, he denounced. But there was another kind of combination of capital, he said, which existed under the law of the survival of the fittest. Such combinations did not seek to live in order to raise prices, as those existing by government aid, but sought to lower prices in order to live. They were not, he declared, organized to stifle competition, but existed because in the competitive race they had distanced all others. They were the result of competition and dominated their competitors because of their excellence. Their so-called monopoly was that of the lawyer who could win the most cases, of the physician who could save the most lives, of the orator who could attract and hold the largest audience.

As long as the lawyer won his cases by his merit and not by favor of the court, and the physician attracted patients by his skill and not by social influence, he was entitled to his domination of the professional field.

Mr. Bryan made a vigorous onslaught on the trusts, and proposed the following scheme of repressive legislation and administration:

"1. Each State should determine the conditions under which corporations, created by itself or other States, should do business within its borders, and if not now authorized so to do should be so authorized. 2. Congress should now pass a law constituting a federal licensing body, from which every corporation doing business in any State other than that creating it should obtain a license. This license should be revocable and should be granted only to companies opening their business procedure to public inspection, issuing no watered stocks, and demonstrated to be neither in fact nor intent monopolies. If such a law should be declared unconstitutional, then the constitution should be so amended as to authorize its passage."

The meeting passed no resolutions.

As the chairman announced, it was not a trust conference or an anti-trust conference, but a conference to seek and shed light. It is doubtful whether it added a new idea to a question which has been voluminously discussed in the press and on the platform for months, but it has at least aided in focusing public attention on the problem and has by so much been an educative factor. If we may add our own opinion, we should say that Professor Brooks struck the keynote to which we hope public intelligence will eventually be pitched. Prevent over-capitalization, railway discrimination and tariff favoritism, and the claws of the trusts will be cut. It is disappointing to see Mr. Bryan so lukewarm on the tariff question, and preferring the illogical method of trying to crush the trust system by process of law, instead of attacking the conditions that foster monopoly.

Mayor Jones, of Cleveland, who is now an independent candidate for the Governorship of Ohio, replies to those who think him a crank for advocating the application of the Golden Rule to social and political questions. Mr. Jones says:

"As to the general charges, dreamer, visionary, impracticable, etc., it is better to have pleasant dreams occasionally than to live in the perpetual nightmare in which many of our fellow citizens, both rich and poor, are compelled to live on account of the violation of scientific principles of government, of righteousness and justice—by the pestiferous and wholly useless institutions known as political parties. I am contending mainly for the application to the affairs of everyday life of the doctrines preached by the founder of Christianity. That is my first contention. If they are not practical then the governor's quarrel is with Christ, and not with me. I submit, however, that the people of Toledo believe that playgrounds for the children, games, instead of clubs, for the policemen, music in the park for the people, the eight-hour day and love instead of hate as a governmental policy, are all practical reforms, capable of being realized just as soon as the political parties stop teaching the people to hate one another and make room for them to express their love for one another."

AN OLD LADY'S WARNING.  
 Mrs. Kendal was once playing at Dublin, the role being Galatea. Paying attention, it will be remembered, has that unusual domestic accessory, a jealous wife. During the temporary absence of the wife, Galatea was about to throw herself into the arms of Phryllion, when an old lady in the audience called out warningly: "Don't do it, dearie, the Dreyfus affair has thrown a light, almost blinding in its sudden brilliance, over this truth. The world is getting smaller and the world is getting better. The obstacles are great, the work to be done greater, but all earnest men can put their hands to the task with joyful confidence, since this is but to ally themselves with a power, unseen, sleepless, all-conquering, which is always working in the hidden realms of thought for man's advancement."

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## What Others Say.

A Venomous Wish.  
 [Chicago Tribune.]

England is playing a transparent game. It is trying to secure the Transvaal by intimidation, under cover of claims of supremacy which it abandoned fifteen years ago. If intimidation fails England will be likely to resort to force. The bullying civilian will step aside to give place to the soldier. If England does resort to that last argument and the redcoats cross the border the outspoken wish of Americans will be that—"Every turf beneath their feet may be a soldier's sepulchre."

Justice not to be balked.

[Toronto Globe.]

If law does not establish justice anarchy will. If reformation is balked, revolution finds a way for the advancement of truth. The chief thought which the Christian religion has imposed upon the world is the value of a man. Commerce and war and patriotism give him a value, but religion declares that the individual is of infinite worth in his own sake. The Dreyfus affair has thrown a light, almost blinding in its sudden brilliance, over this truth. The world is getting smaller and the world is getting better. The obstacles are great, the work to be done greater, but all earnest men can put their hands to the task with joyful confidence, since this is but to ally themselves with a power, unseen, sleepless, all-conquering, which is always working in the hidden realms of thought for man's advancement.

A Highland Hero.

Col. Macdonald, the hero of Omdurman, whose Sudanese brigade, some believe, saved Gen. Kitchener from defeat, is said to have received orders to go to South Africa. This fact is interesting on account of the colonel's experiences in the Transvaal in 1881. He was with Gen. Colley at the Majuba Hill affair, and the following story is told of him: "The assaulting force had been cut to pieces, and the Boers were retreating. Macdonald was at last disarmed, and, resorting to his fists, sent two Boers who attacked him reeling backward, then a third was about to cook his rifle to put an end to the Highland officer. 'No,' said another Boer, 'don't do that. This is a brave man, and we shall spare him. Let us take him prisoner at all hazards.' So they did, and that was perhaps the most humiliating thing in his whole life. Macdonald may yet have a chance to make amends."

Plutocracy's Training Schools

[New York Journal.]

A professor in the venerable University of Cambridge, England, is reported some time ago to have written to a Chicago friend:

"It is difficult for us to understand the situation in the United States with regard to your university professors. There is no heritage we prize more highly and guard more jealously than English freedom of thought and speech. We tolerate at our universities any caprice, any eccentricity, some degree of incompetency even rather than tamper with the liberty of professors."

That was written at a time when more than one of our great colleges laid down the rule that a professor of economics must teach one doctrine

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