

The Correlation of Reforms

Wanted: A Great Mind to Correlate All the Mass of Opinion on Social Reform.

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When Artemus Ward visited Salt Lake City, in the old days of unqualified Mormon rule, he observed of Brigham Young, "His religion is singular but his wives are plural."

Mankind is always forgetting, even for the simplest and most transparent things, that acts are single but that causes are plural.

When anything is done, it is one thing and not more that is done. An act has an essential simplicity and integrity. It is not intricate or complicated. It is that one deed, which can be described, after the legal fashion, in elongated and pompous words, but after all, as every act which comes within reach of the law shows, is just one indivisible act. Indeed, the object of all the cumulation and elaboration of phraseology which a will, or a mortgage, or a summons, or a judicial sentence involves is to display and delimit the essential oneness of the act or fact, and point out that the one legacy, or debt, or crime, or punishment is meant, and not any other or any combination of it and others.

What and Why?

Perhaps it is because of this evident and satisfying simplicity of acts that mankind is so prone to assume that the reasons back of them are of like simplicity. Because the question, "What?" can be answered in a sentence we do not expect that the question "Why?" should require a volume. The neighbors says of the man who has beaten his wife, or written a poem, or left the party, or done any other unusual thing, "Why did he do it?" A perfect medley of replies is given. The number of proffered explanations varies directly with the population of the community concerned. "I know," says one, "it was because. . . ." "Not at all," says another, "it was because of something totally different." "You are both wrong," says a third, "it was because of quite a different reason."

The point is that these explanations appear to be rivals. They are considered to be mutually exclusive of one another. If one is right the rest are wrong. The medley is held to be a discord and not a chorus, nor with any harmonies interwoven. Whereas the truth is that they may all be right. Each may contain some part of the truth, for all may have contributed to the result. Each may be a cause in the sense that if it had not existed the deed had not been done, while no one of them in itself alone could have been effective. The last straw is not the one and only cause of the camel's spinal fracture.

This tendency which we are condemning is very prevalent in social diagnosis. Doubtless it is aided by the concentration of the attention of specialists, each upon his own field. Each student and expert in the misery of the world uncovers so much that is revolting and disastrous in the area which he examines that he is easily led to the conclusion that he has found the root of the trouble, the fount and origin of all social pain and injury. His imagination is overwhelmed by the horror and deadliness of the malign forces he has unveiled. His strength is exhausted in the battle with such titanic and merciless foes. "It is enough," he thinks, "to account for it all."

That is why so many amateurs in practical good-will are bewildered by panaceas. When the doctors disagree who is to tell him what is the matter with the world? Is it drink or competition, land or capital, bad housing or bad milk, poverty or heredity, vice or disease, capitalism, or greed, or power? Almost any book on the subject which he reads selects some one of this catalogue of evils and charges it with responsibility for the sorrows of mankind.

There is no parthenogenesis in the breeding of social evils. Nor is there monogamy. Nor is there polygamy. Nor is there polyandry. It is nothing less than promiscuity. It is like some horde of degenerate savages where all the men and all the women mate indiscriminately, so that no child knows whom his father is nor can be quite sure as to his mother. Poverty, disease, vice, crime, drink, drugs, bad living conditions, bad laws, bad customs, bad heredity, bad environment—all unite in unregulated and incestuous production of the brood of ills which torture and destroy human life.

We need a science of the correlation of social evils. The time must come when some great mind shall be able to comprehend all the facts which all

the experts have disclosed, arrange them in their proper order, balance them against each other, perceive the influence they exert upon one another, and so patiently disentangle and expound this intricate problem. Till he comes our reforms must be done piecemeal and more or less ineffectively.

Not that we are to decry the expert, or the enthusiast, or even the fanatic. Their work must first be done, in order that the synthetic philosophy of social reconstruction may be provided with materials and the human consciousness be warmed to the task of rebuilding society. It is no task for ignorance, nor sentimentalism, nor lukewarmness. Half-way knowledge and half-way purposes fail before this gigantic enterprise like pop-guns before Gibraltar.

The temperance fanatic, for instance, is being vindicated to-day. At last, in the moral seriousness en-

gendered by the war, the great curse of the northern peoples is being destroyed. And whom have we to thank for it? Not the man who "would rather see England free than England sober." Not the man who would confide in liquors freed from adulteration. Not the man of moral suasion. Not any of the rose-water and compromise advocates of moderation. But the out-and-out, the teetotaler, the man of the pledge and the prohibition bill, the man who raged in season and out of season his hatred of alcohol. He has seen public opinion swing around, the doctors (long his enemies) turn completely over, and the legislatures hasten to do his bidding. The temperance fanatic has had a hard life, but he has won his monument.

And so the time is ripening for the greater man, more restrained and deliberate, more scholarly and profound, who will have his chance because the specialists and fanatics have been his John the Baptists. There are more things and worse things wrong with the world than most of us have suspected. The regeneration of the world will be vastly advanced when the present disorder and conflict of social remedies has been transformed into an orderly, comprehensive and convincing programme of cure.

War-Time Extravagance

Dress Extravagance Among English Women. What about Canadian Extravagance?

A correspondent to the "Manchester Guardian" is inclined to criticize the women of England for lack of real rigorous economy during war-time. The sketch he gives of prevailing conditions in respect to women's dress is interesting.

"There is every evidence," he says, "to show that in Manchester, at any rate, very little dress economy has been practised by women since the outbreak of the war. Nor does it seem probable that this new appeal will have much effect. Most people are trying to lower their expenditure in some way, but in most cases this has taken the form of cutting down food bills, fewer entertainments, cheaper holidays, and so forth, while the amount of money spent on clothes remains the same. For such luxuries as jewellery, real lace, and elaborate evening gowns there is practically no market, but women's outfitters in Manchester report that in nearly every branch of their business trade has never been better than at the moment.

"There is, for instance, an almost unprecedented demand for expensive and fantastic footwear of various kinds, due to the short skirts now in vogue. Ready made dresses are not being sold as freely as in pre-war days — mainly because there are not now many opportunities for the wearing of them — but several firms says that their customers are willing to give unusually high prices for tailor-made costumes and blouses of all kinds. The same is true of millinery.

"Among women of the lower classes there is a similar extravagance. This sometimes takes a rather curious form. Large numbers of women, with, say, a couple of pounds to spare have not, as they are told they ought to do, bought Exchequer bonds, but have invested their small savings in winter coats. In Nelson, Burnley and other Lancashire towns there are mills devoted to the manufacture of imitation skin and cheap coats generally, and in several cases these have already had more orders for the coming autumn than they can carry out.

"This disregard of the principles of dress economy in war time is due to a variety of causes, chief among them being the fact that the majority of women in the middle and lower classes have quite as much money to spend on personal adornment as in ordinary times, while many have considerably more. Hundreds of women and girls are for the first time in their lives earning their own dress allowance and experiencing the joy of being able to spend what they like without reference to anyone else. Some have found that the dignity of their position necessitates a smart and perhaps extensive wardrobe, while those who are now filling men's places in banks and offices are realizing that the daily journey to and from town plays havoc with out-of-door clothes.

"The changes in fashions which have taken place in the last two years are responsible for much of the unnecessary buying of clothes so prevalent just now. In the very early days of the war, when the cry was all for 'business as usual,' dressmakers in self-defense introduced very marked differences in

fashions in order to prevent women from wearing their existing garments to the last degree of shabbiness, and so throwing thousands of shop assistants, seamstresses and the like out of work. Now, when the whole outlook is changed and the dress-makers and milliners are wanted for work on the land or in munition factories, women who have been spending money freely find it very hard to retrench.

"Probably, too, the average woman does not quite understand how the renunciation of a coveted crepe de chine blouse or taffeta frock will help the nation to win the war. 'Force a woman to economize in dress, and you take away half her fun,' says a member of one of the great drapers' houses in Manchester. This is putting the case rather strongly, but it is a fact that the majority of women with money to spend on themselves find it very hard to resist the temptations offered by alluring shop windows. Each one is, no doubt, prepared to sacrifice 'half her fun' if she realizes that she will be benefitting the country but it is perhaps a pity that the National War Savings Committee did not explain in more detail how great that benefit would be."

These remarks are also undoubtedly true in great part of the women of Canada's urban population. But are the men much more economical? It is an obvious inference that the writer of the extract above was a man, and he carefully avoids touching on men's extravagances. Perhaps the economy of male Manchesterians was above reproach. Not so that of Canadian men. The proximity of our prosperous American cousins and the dangerous and misleading "wartime prosperity" is blinding them to the exigencies of the situation and to the need for a strict policy of retrenchment. In contemplating the purchase of clothing at the present time, the prospective purchaser should face himself with the question: "Am I, by buying this article, being extravagant, or could I no longer get along without it?" That men in numbers of cases are not asking themselves this question is evidenced by the fact that there are, for instance, haberdashers in the city of Montreal who are offering for sale, and what is worse selling, neckties at \$2 and \$3 apiece. In this case, no doubt, the fault lies at the door of the young or the young-middle-aged man, but ones who are older — old enough to know better — are not blameless. They are determined to "keep up appearances" by patronizing the most expensive tailors. In proportion to their income, this also applies to the working class.

Our cousins to the south are setting a swift pace in sartorial vogue, and are ever introducing some new "wrinkle" in men's dress. It is undoubtedly true that men's fashions are changing much more quickly than formerly and thus clothing and haberdashery which are by no means worn out, are relegated to the discard.

The period of depression and financial stringency which will inevitably follow the war is going to necessitate probably greater economy than at present. It would be well if all Canadian men and women would realize this and get used to saving in such matters as dress.

Mr. A

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