

MOST HOPEFUL SIGNS OF TIMES

Wanted—Heroes and Evangelists

Following is a prize essay reprinted from Public Opinion, an English magazine of high standing.

STATE OF SOCIETY

The past century has seen the coming of the industrial revolution, when industries—iron, steel, coal, shipbuilding and a hundred others—have been added to the immemorial trades connected with food, clothing, and housing. With an increased population nations have ceased to be their own main customers; the great industries have become international. This has made life infinitely more complex, the struggle for life all the keener. The weaker go to the wall more quickly. Every class presses forward more clamant in its cry for wealth. The class which aspires to live as "Society" is infinitely larger. The purely drone class goes under in the second generation. The class of workers, without necessarily improving in its work capacity, becomes more insistent on its rights.

SHORT CUT TO WEALTH

The common attribute of all is a seeking after pleasure. There is a widespread tendency to take a short cut to wealth by some form of gambling. The money market has it insidious hold on commerce, disturbing it, juggling with it, exploiting it, not so much the fly on the wheel as the maggot. The financier can check or wreck great industries to fill his own voracious maw. Faith is languishing in classes and masses alike, and even where it is strong it tends to take fantastic, semi-superstitious forms.

If men said in Stephen's day that Christ and His saints were asleep, with how much more force could myriads say it to-day?

For to day it is still force which triumphs, and of all tyrannies the most relentless is the modern tyranny of industrial competition. Governments as at present constituted, weakened as they are by party cries and led away by phantom party aspirations, are powerless in all countries against the mightier force of interests.

AN AGE OF REVOLUTION

An age of revolution seems inevitably approaching; and yet what is the history of revolutions? What is the record of republics? The United States—what kind of a republic or what kind of a democracy is that? Shorn of the better attributes of an aristocracy, with respectable men abstaining from politics as they would from highway robbery or a nefarious commerce, this republic might well replace its star-spangled banner by a blazon of a hunting wolf pack.

Equally, what mockery is the French motto of "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité," when one man eats, drinks, and is merry amid the sumptuousness of Paris and another works passive and unthinking as the ox that pulls his plough. On these models we are invited to commit ourselves to the social republic, the many-headed multitude is to be bamboozled in its ignorance by another cry the cry of an avowed perfection to be carried out by instruments not only imperfect, but devoid of all experience, open to all temptations, at the mercy of all lads and nostrums—seven devils worse than the first.

OUR TWO PARTIES

Again, can either of the historic

parties in this country claim that they will lead their followers to any promised land? The conservatives—not unless they are really conservative in the best sense of the word; free from the support of interests, really preserving or realising that mythic pyramid form of government in which, by some miraculous force the weight of the superimposed pile is not felt by the lowest stratum of its composition. At present they but offer to put us on a level with other countries and that is a prospect of doubtful benefit.

THE LIBERALS

The Liberals—an ungainly brood of separate factions, mistrusting one another, a Bed of Ware in which necessity has made strange bedfellows; let them realise their Liberal ideal, and they may do something for us. But who can imagine either of the great historic parties really living up to their watchwords? Look how even Gladstone allowed great forces to arise and grow unchecked and unnoticed, amid the "political" questions which occupied him. And who in the last century has had the people's confidence like Gladstone?

THE POPULAR INDIFFERENCE

The picture that has been drawn is black, and it may be objected that, after all, the great rivers of national life flow on nevertheless in their might and majesty, that the scum and the sediment are but inevitable parts of the stream; and yet the blackest part of the picture is the apparent indifference of the central parts of the people to the disease, "this strange disease of modern life," which besets and threatens all society. The main current itself is clouded and obscured by the inundation of these our present times, an inundation which must widen the banks of settled society or burst them. The clergy, our spiritual leaders, have no solution to offer. For the most part, they partake of the actual tendency. Their kingdom is very much of this world.

Men of letters, men of learning, men of intellect or capacity for the most part acquiesce in the present situation, accept the ordinary excuses for the various symptoms—unemployment, the hopelessness of the man in the street, the pleasure-seeking of the age, the immorality of competition, the crushing of the small trader. They vote blindly for party, although party is too occupied with paying off vendettas and requiring its allies or compromising between its cliques to attempt any bold or wide-sweeping social reform. We have our Cassandras and our satirists, it is true—Tolstoy, G. B. Shaw, and H. G. Wells point the demerit of our systems.

NO EVANGELIST

But we have had no evangelist since Zola preached his clouded gospel of work the saviour, and work is the saviour for the idle, not for the over-worked and under fed, under paid. We have no Victor Hugo to point to high humanity, no Lincoln to stand steadfast against abuses, no Dickens to show them in their true light by the mirror of humour, no Wesley to inspire, no Beethoven or Mendelssohn to charm to forget this life in the universal. What are the best hopes for the future? Well it may be that,

"While the tired waves, slowly breaking,
Seem here no feeble inch to gain
Through creek and inlet silent making,
Comes slowly flooding in the main."

SIGNS OF PROGRESS

If we look back on the past, we do at any rate see an advance. This last century has seen, for all its defects, great advances. The slave trade has been abolished. America has wiped out the slave-blot in streams of blood, though it has left a dire scar of its presence in the negro quest on. The factory acts and the efforts of Lord Shaftesbury for children remain a noble monument of mid-Victorian humanitarianism. But one great European war has raged in the last half of the nineteenth century.

The franchise has been immensely extended, and a beginning made of an education which should finally train men in the use of the franchise.

THE NEW COUNTRIES

Greatest of all, the facilities of emigration have given millions a new start in a new country. Canada, with her resources and her climate and properties which force her sons to lead a natural life; Canada, without the sinister gift of fuel or iron; Australia, with her huge, undeveloped plains, which science may yet fertilise; New Zealand, with her happy land of moderation; the Argentine, with its wealth of cattle—these countries may solve the problems which have so far proved too complex for the hide-bound old world.

GROWTH OF INTELLIGENCE

Nearer home the most hopeful signs are a spread of intelligence and a spread of civilisation, some faint streaks of culture and love of art among the nations at large. On its strictly lay side, civilisation is advancing. Education progresses in a hundred ways. Not only in the schools and universities, where, indeed, as regards the study of social problems America holds up a bright and shining light—but also in numerous occupations are educative in themselves; electricity, automobilism, the pursuit of science, agriculture by modern methods, engineering, navigation, all are a partial education in themselves. Man must become more thoughtful.

THOUGHT AND POLITICS

As yet there is little application of that thought to the actual and necessary politics of life. In the United Kingdom and Germany, perhaps, it does show itself in municipal politics. It is also evident in the disinclination of the workers, shown through their representatives, to commit themselves to those struggles which politicians pre-empt and prepare for, struggles such as the much-talked-of prospective Anglo-German Kampf, perhaps the prospective American-Jap struggle.

THE FUTURE

This growth of intelligence, common as it is to all the foremost nations of the world, may presage and hereafter shape a wiser policy, wiser than the party, wider than nationality. It may even show the folly of this struggle for riches, and for a future, but vanishing, time of pleasure. A higher cultivation may teach men as a whole to seek their pleasure more in intellect, in a temperate and mellowed life, for which some of the bodily forces at present used up may be preserved. There may be a future even for aesthetics, and the American conqueror may look for other triumphs than a mad waltz with his womankind around Europe.

Lastly, the present narrow and fantastic renaissance of religion, together with the decline of atheism, violent and arrogant, may evolve in a more genial wider, more embracing faith. And this is the great want, spirituality and that sympathy which is at the bottom of all true religion, which is part alike of the Conservative and of the Liberal ideal.

"That man to man the world wide o'er,
Should brithers be for a' that."

THE COMING HEROES

If these tendencies grow, if the world overcomes these growing pains which at present afflict it, there is no doubt that peoples strong, hearty, sane, and vigorous will produce in good time those great ones, those heroes, by whom alone great advances are made, who, with seeming magic force, redress our woes, set right our miscarriages, and bring the world once more into harmony and peace.

MECHANICAL NOTES

Items of Interest to the Mechanic and Farmer.

To make carbon ink dissolve real India ink in common black ink.

A color resembling pewter may be given to brass by boiling the castings in a cream of tartar solution containing a small amount of chloride of tin.

A German mechanic has built the smallest motor in the world. It is used as a scarf pin and is run by a battery in his pocket. He keeps it in constant operation.

Shingles are usually 16 in. long and a bundle of them is 20 in. wide and contains 24 courses in the thickness at each end. A bundle of shingles will lay a course 80 ft. long. When shingles are exposed 4 in. to the weather 1,000 will cover 107 sq. ft.; 5 in., 132 sq. ft.; 6 in., 160 sq. ft.

The soundness of a piece of timber can be ascertained by placing the ear close to one end of the log, while another person delivers a succession of

blows upon the opposite end. The vibration will indicate to an experienced ear the degree of soundness. If only a dull thud meets the ear, the timber is unsound.

Since 1902, when the Federal Reclamation Act was passed, the government has added 5,000,000 acres to the country's habitable land, and these, added to the 7,200,000 reclaimed from the desert before that year, make an increase of 12,000,000 acres in the country's habitable area; an average of 2,000,000 acres per year.

A sawmill, which will undoubtedly be one of the largest in the world for cutting railroad ties, is being constructed on the Island of Hawaii by a company which have a contract to furnish 1,000,000 ties a year to an American railroad. It is expected that the mill, which is located near the Kilauea volcano, will turn out 1,000,000 ft. of ties per day. Four ties will be sawed at a time, while additional saws will take the surplus timber and convert it into lumber.

HUMORISMS

Amusing Stories to While Away the Lighter Moments

"Why did Binks' widow feel so indignant at his funeral?"
"The members of his volunteer hose company sent him a floral fire-extinguisher."

"But," protested the wayward son, "You should make allowances for the follies of youth."
"Huh!" growled the old man. "If it wasn't for the allowance you get there would be less folly."

Mr. Tellit: "A woman can dress well on a sum that would keep a man looking shabby."
Mr. Doit: "That's right. The sum my wife dresses on keeps me shabby all year 'round."

"I suppose, Bridget," said Miss Woodby to the new maid, "you think it strange that one who plays the piano so perfectly as I do should practise so much."
"Yes, mum," replied Bridget, "shure, if 'twas me I'd give up in disgust."

"They tell me you're workin' hard night and day since you were up before the magistrate for pushin' your husband about. Mrs. Robinson."
"Yes. The magistrate said if I came before him again he'd fine me forty shillings."

"And so you're workin' hard to keep out of mischief?"
"What?—I'm workin' hard to save up the fine."

Fred, who was four years old, visited his uncle on the farm. When he came home his father asked him what had pleased him the most.

"Oh, I liked the geese. I had such fun chasing them, and we had a great big goose for dinner one day."

"Well," said his father, how can you tell the difference between a goose and geese?"

"Aw, that's easy," said Fred. "One geese is a goose and two geeses is geese."

The Washington Star repeats a story of old Hiram Doogittle. Hiram made his wife keep a cash account. Every week he would go over it, growling and grumbling like this:—"Look here, Hannah, mustard plasters, fifty cents; three teeth extracted, two dollars! There's two dollars and a half in one week spent for your own private pleasure. Do you think I'm made of money?"

"A young lady desirous of buying a silk gown in one of the new 'shot' veils recently asked a dry goods clerk to show her such silks. She did not see the coloring she wished, and said to the clerk: "Will you show me something shot with red?" The man looked somewhat disconcerted for a moment, and then placidly replied: "They ain't shootin' them with red this year, ma'am."

The captain-surgeon: "What's all that excitement on deck?"

The interne: "A seaman fell overboard, sir. But his comrades got him out."

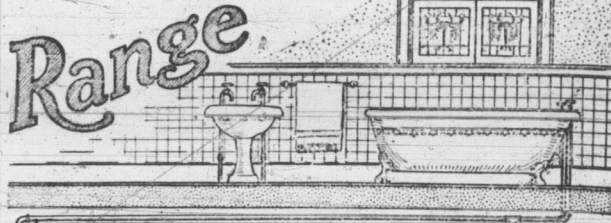
The captain-surgeon: "Who is the man?"

The interne: "His name is Daniel Riley, sir."

"Daniel Riley, eh? Let me see my order book. Yes, yes, Daniel Riley will have to be disciplined."

"What has he done sir?"
"I ordered him not to take a bath until eleven o'clock."

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