

tians who are also men can hardly be blamed for preferring to try to provide for present necessities and prospective old age rather than trusting to luck; and they find, if they deal honestly with all men, that the conditions under which they must make the provision are such as to leave only a very small margin for generosity. Mechanics and Christians who live by their labor must sell it in a market to which the laborers of three-fourths of the world may be admitted free, and spend what their labor brings in a market in which the goods of the whole world have 35 per cent. and profits on it added to their cost by a tariff tax.

And whenever the mechanic or Christian seeks access to natural opportunities for the production of good things at home, or a site for a home near a factory, or shop where he may assist others in such production, he must go to some idler and pay or pledge the profits of his industry to the idler's use for years for the privilege—must pay the profits to a fellow-worm for the use of the earth which God created for the use of mankind. Although mechanics and Christians may not know the economic reasons, their experience teaches them that to disregard their effects is to bring disaster; and many of them of noble and generous impulses are compelled to practice a parsimony distasteful to them in all the relations of life, but particularly so when called upon to help misfortune and suffering.

It may be said that soiled doves or crooks are subject to these same conditions and yet are the more generous. To say so is, in the words of Shakespeare, "To lie like truth." We admit that those who are comparatively young in vice, while its profits are large and before the canker of sin has eaten out the soul and obliterated its finer sensibilities, are more recklessly liberal in charities as in all their expenditures for the reason that they have at the time plenty to be liberal with, and that the future is to them a blank, and for the further reason that there goes with wrongdoing in every form an uneasy consciousness of responsibility that begets spasmodic impulses to do something signally good for the purpose of balancing the evil account.

All mankind, professing Christians

included, are subject to this influence. From its promptings, wealth which has been accumulated by crushing life and hope out of men is donated to build hospitals for the cure of such. Christians subscribe princely sums which they have gathered by extortion and oppression from Christians to send missionaries to convert the heathen Chinese. And the possessors of wealth inherited from the devotees of lechery and debauch, seek to make propitiation by erecting memorial windows ornamented with sad pictures of Christ in fashionable churches. But what proceeds from the gnawings of conscience or from efforts to restore a tarnished respectability are not to be attributed to generosity.

If you would know the true value of this kind of generosity, go to the old harlot whose soul is deadened by sin and whose person, no longer attractive, fails to bring her the revenues of earlier sin; or to the gambler in his age, his eye dimmed with excess and every trace of earlier manhood gone, and you will realize the falsity and hollowness of the accusations of the man with tickets. If his contention were true, all we have to do to bring mechanics and Christians up to the proper standard of generosity is to induce them to become gamblers and prostitutes, but, in this case, you would have a living witness of the folly of "doing evil that good may come."

"A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind," and men who have reached years of discretion and being possessed of common sense, need not grumble, if when they use such arguments, they are suspected of being associates in the pleasures or partakers in the profits with those whom such arguments are intended to excuse. It is high time, that the "mechanics and Christians" of Victoria aroused themselves to the situation and met such accusations with the overwhelming logic of truth; that they refused to permit public officials, entrusted with the guardianship of public morals, to insult virtue with the hypocritical application of the question, "He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone;" that they investigated the causes which compel industry and faithfulness to practice parsimony even to meanness where impulse and conviction alike urge to

generosity, and that with the unsparing hand of truth they plucked these tares from the wheatfield of our national inheritance.

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