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NEW YEAR'S GREETING.

Welcome, welcome,
New Year's morning,
Eastern skies
Lend their adorning;
Gilding every dome
And steeple—
Bringing joy
To all the people!

Last year's record
Closed forever—
This year's promise
Fresh endeavor,
Wrongs forgotten—
Foes forgiven—
Foretaste sweet
Of love and Heaven!

Last year, aged,
Bent and broken;
Not fond "good-bye"
No word spoken—
Went and closed
The gate behind him—
Gone fore'er where
None may find him!

But the young year,
Dimpled, smiling,
Fills his place,
All hearts beguiling;
Quite ignoring
Sighs or weeping,
Takes our lives
Into his keeping.

Spite of winter's
Frosty weather,
Loving kinsfolks
Meet together.
Little flocks
Of youngsters bringing,
While the bells
Are gayly ringing.

Welcome, welcome,
New Year's morning,
Eastern skies
Lend their adorning
Gilding every dome
And steeple—
Bringing joy
To all the people.

SOCIAL ECONOMY.

THE IDEAL SOCIETY.

We have hitherto, says the Australian Democrat, devoted ourselves to showing how much our present state of society is out of harmony with natural conditions, and how anti social and anti-human the whole fabric is. Anyone who reflects upon the problems of to-day, will have reached a similar conclusion. But it were sorry amusement to note these things, or indulge in jeremiads against all creation, were no hope to shed its gladdening rays over the waste of gloom. It were poor consolation to collate facts and figures about pauperism, crime, lunacy, and the thousand other things that curse this fair world, did no remedy present itself. "Is there no balm in Gilead?" asked the Hebrew prophet; and then, anticipating an affirmative answer, he further queries, "Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" The same question arises in anxious moan from the world's toiling and careworn millions to-day, and as it ascends above the hum of machinery and the din of busy cities, it formulates itself into the one all-commanding and urgent query—Is there no message of hope for humanity in all the wondrous inventions of the ages? Is civilization worse than barbarism? If the brain of man has given power to two hands to provide bread for a thousand mouths, why do millions merely subsist instead of live; and why, in the midst of abounding plenty, do human beings actually starve?

It was to solve this problem that the prophet of San Francisco addressed himself when he entered upon his gigantic task, from which he returned bearing in meek triumph that message of peace and good will to men, embodied in the book of the century, "Progress and Poverty." That messenger has gone around the world, and in the ears of kings and peasants alike it has echoed afresh the words of Him who "spoke as never man spake." To some, the messenger came as an idle tale of some deluded "dreamer of dreams." To others it came with warning and fearful portents of coming doom, should its message be obeyed by mankind. To others it was as the balm of Gilead, or as the antidote that would turn the bitterness of life's waters into sweetness. But there were those to whom that message came as the trumpet-call to battle, or, as George himself puts it, "with all the force of a new propaganda."

It is a gigantic task such propagandists have laid upon them. How vast it is they begin to realize as they view well nigh impregnable fortresses they must storm and level, and entrenchments, behind which are marshalled the hateful hosts of the federated foes of human liberty and progress. It is not against persons, nor even classes, that the battle must be waged, but against ignorance, prejudice, superstition, selfishness, and all the allies of these demons that "move to and fro and up and down in the earth." Yet when such a summons comes and addresses itself to the man who is wedded to truth, there is no refusal possible.

Throughout the past ages of the world's history there have been seers and prophets who either dreamed of a past golden age—now lost—or looked forward to one as the culmination of man's highest aspirations and most ardent hopes; and even in our own day, such writers as Edward Bellamy have pictured a possible "new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." But we are called upon now to dream no longer, but to work in order to bring that ideal state of society into existence.

Without an ideal, towards the realization of which all our energies are to be directed, no unity of action or hope of attainment could long be maintained, hence we must have a definite grasp of some of the main characteristics of such a society, in order that everything that conduces towards accomplishment may be favored, and every impediment as far as possible removed.

Mr. Herbert Spencer has done the world splendid service by his writings on social subjects, and even should he himself evade the ultimate conclusions of his reasoning as his second childhood sets in, he cannot obscure the truth in the conveyance of which he has been the vehicle. Truth is mightier than man, and while man is changeable and mortal, truth is unchangeable and immortal. He sums up his elaborate enquiries re-

garding the principles that should govern conduct in a state of society where Liberty and Justice were embodied in the laws that determined the relations of man to one another, thus: "Each man is forbidden to deprive his fellow of life or liberty, inasmuch as he cannot do this without breaking the law, which, in asserting his freedom, declares that he shall not infringe the 'equal freedom of any other.'" For he who is killed or enslaved, is no longer equally free with his killer or enslaver." Again, he says, "it is manifest that no one, or part of the whole, may use the earth in such a way as to prevent the rest from similarly using it, seeing that to do this is to assume greater freedom than the rest, and consequently to break the law. Equity, therefore, does not permit property in land." In a recent article in the Nineteenth Century, he says, "There results an a priori system of absolute political ethics, a system under which men of like natures, severally so constituted as spontaneously to refrain from trespassing, may work together without friction, and with the greatest advantage to each and all." Briefly summarized, this principle may be formulated thus: "The equal rights of each, bounded only by the equal rights of all." This is the goal we desire to reach.

INDUSTRY AND THRIFT, And Other Things.

"The fashion of bedecking pet dogs with diamonds and other jewels is on the increase in fashionable circles. A well known society lady's pet carries £250 worth of diamonds round its neck—English paper. Some thoughtless people would assert that it is wicked to waste £250 in the ornamentation of a poodle, but this is obviously a mistake. If the reckless and improvident creatures who live in London slums, and earn 1d per hour at artificial flower making, had this money, they would waste it in the purchase of foreign shoddy, pauper produced American flour and Dutch gin.

When the gin was drunk and the bread eaten nothing would be left, whereas by keeping the diamonds on the poodle's neck industries receive a great impetus. And what is still more important, the money is kept in the country all the time, and at regular and stated intervals the slum dwellers can actually see the diamonds circulating—round the poodle's neck.

AIR, WATER, SUNSHINE, LAND.

Rev. Tyman Abbott, in a recent speech in Chicago, which created a great sensation, painted in eloquent words the picture of the laborer watching over the deathbed of a wife or daughter, dying because of the deprivation of these four gifts. He closed the picture with these words: "Denied pure air, denied pure water, denied the radiance of the sunlight, the soil a dream only, she wastes and dies in the stifling room in the heart of the melting city, and the cradle becomes a coffin and the bed a bier. Do not wonder that men grow desperate, the blood grows hot and they rage at a wrong they cannot right and do not understand."

Rest assured, fellow-workers, that the rage will be turned to reason, when they begin to understand that the great wrongs which now strain at their heart strings are based upon remedial causes, and that principal amongst these is the continued robbery of their rightful inheritance—the land from which and upon which they must live.

The fire in Beauchemin's buildings on St. Gabriel street, on Wednesday evening, was, without doubt, the worst that has occurred in the city for some months. It was not completely subdued at 5 o'clock last evening. The firemen worked all night, keeping four streams playing upon the smouldering embers. The tons of debris caused by the falling roof and ceilings, covering up large piles of paper, formed a material in which the fire would smoulder indefinitely, and the difficulty of extinguishing it was greatly increased by the freezing of the water, which formed an almost impenetrable shield over the debris. By six o'clock in the morning the worst was over, and some of the firemen were allowed to seek a well-deserved rest. Two streams were kept still playing on the mass up to five o'clock Thursday evening. Then they desisted, but a watch was kept and on-stream was kept in readiness in case of a fresh outbreak. The buildings presented a strange appearance Thursday evening, being all coated with ice. Icicles hung from every projection. The firemen deserve great credit for the way they worked. Every man did his duty, but it must be borne in mind that they had to fight under great difficulties. Some of the men were on duty steadily from the outbreak of the fire, about 9.15 o'clock, until 5 o'clock Thursday evening.

DRAINING THE MORASS.

General Booth, in an outline sketch of his proposed scheme for the reclamation of the "mud-sills of society" (to use an American term) makes use of the suggestive phrase, "We must drain the morass."

A Herculean task truly. The filth of accumulated centuries of social disorders lies rotting there—ten thousand sewers green and ghastly with the growths which corruption breeds, pour their sluggish currents into the putrifying mass, and the noisome exhalations spread far and wide to corrupt and destroy.

Of the inhabitants of that region what can be said?—they are those who (as Charles Kingsley declared) are "drunkards from the breast and harlots from the cradle, physically—socially, and morally damned before they are born." Such and such only could survive in such an atmosphere. And worse still, every day and every hour see starving wretches who have held on with clinging fingers to hope and virtue, until all hope failed—forced over the brink of that pit.

Over and over again has there been similar talk "about the necessity of doing something" to remedy this state of affairs, but so far all has ended in talk.

Some attempts have certainly been made to deodorize that region by means of swinging centers in which burn divers compounds, counted in olden times to be of special virtue. But while such temporary deodorization might be grateful to the nostrils of those who afar off on the upland heights, had shuddered at the tainted breeze swept by, still, no substantial good could be done by any such process, whilst the social garbage still accumulated, and the sewers poured in their black and foetid slime.

More than ever to-day is this hideous social question forcing itself to the front, and now a born leader of men, perhaps the best organizer that this century has seen, as well as the most fervent religious enthusiast, has essayed the task—not of mitigating, but of abolishing this horror from our civilization; not of deodorizing, but of draining the morass.

But even more than that requires to be done to purify our great cities. It is of no use removing the decaying garbage of past centuries, if the process of accumulation is to commence afresh. It will be of little avail to drain the social morass, if the sewers of evil habit and custom continue to pour in their slimy foulness. The conditions which produce this state of things in all our great cities must be removed, and those very conditions are the same which bring into existence the class who, at the present time, are loudest in their approval of General Booth's scheme. When the royal and ducal patrons of the Salvation Army realize that the abolition of the idle poor necessarily implies that the idle rich must go also, it is questionable whether or not then their words of approval may not be silenced, or changed to indignant remonstrance. It is impossible that so shrewd and capable a man as the founder of the Salvation Army, can help realizing the fact that as long as the Duke of Westminster can draw £100 per hour out of the earnings of the struggling starving workers of London, so long must they struggle and starve, and crowd one another down into the mire of crime and beggary. The problem of a great city's misery; what is it, but the universal problem of the nineteenth century? It is the riddle of the Sphinx which we must answer or perish; and every fresh advance in the production of wealth, every fresh discovery of science, brings us nearer to the crisis. When the equal rights of the child of the costermonger of Whitechapel, and the Duke of Westminster's eldest son to live upon the soil of England, are recognized, then, and not till then, will the era of real reform commence. If General Booth will go down into the depths of "Darkest England," and whilst not sparing to attack the sins of the people, will also proclaim the gospel of the people's rights, and denounce the wrongs by which they are degraded and enslaved, then the Salvation Army's mission will attract the attention, and meet with the warmest approval of—not Czars, and Emperors, and Royal Patrons; but of all those who, in whatever fashion, work for the "Kingdom of God on earth."—The Democrat (Australia).

The boy who felt in his stocking and found it empty now knows the meaning of the expression, "the vasty deep."