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THE MORALIZATION OF DEMOCRACY

DEMOCRACY

Among elemental changes going on in our time, there is none of greater importance than increasing dominance of great moral concepts and principles in our common thinking about public life. Data for adequately tracing the course of this process would be difficult, if not impossible to obtain, but it can scarcely be doubted that any general review of the press and platform expressions of our time will lead to the conclusion that the moral and humanitarian aspects of affairs are being more regarded than in former generations. The questions of right and justice and responsibility and fidelity and humanity in relation to the activities of our time are being presented to the comparative exclusion of the questions of policy and expediency and selfish advantage which once had larger place. The public conscience can no longer satisfy itself with the retention of conditions simply because they were established in the venerable past, or with ditions simply because they were es-tablished in the venerable past, or with seeking change simply because it will advantage some class or party. It in-sists that public men shall consider primarily what ought to be, and what is for the highest good of all, and labor towards that as their great controlling objective.

Brotherly Love Is Inherent

And in soite of all human weakness and wickedness there is still commonly in the heart of humankind a large capacity for response to the appeal for the thing that is right, the square deal, the thing that takes thought for one's neighbor as well as one's self, the thing that fundamentally ought to be. Human faith is not always minutely articulated, and it does not always express itself in terms of the historic creeds, but there is abroad a widespread and ineradicable conviction of the eternal value of genuine goodness. Men may seldom say so, but they commonly and ineradicable conviction of the eternal value of genuine goodness. Men may seldom say so, but they commonly believe deep down in their souls in the inalienable validity and permancace of right and wrong. Even among those who go far in evil courses and the following of evil leaders, there is a deep-seated distrust of the luring promises, and a half-acknowledged admission that ultimate failure is their inevitable due. And so our workers and our thinkers do well to emphasize and exit considerations of right, and fidelity, and humanity, for that progress lies towards the full moralization and humanization which shall be the crown of democracy.

democracy.

It is, of course, very easy to be evnical in regard to this matter, to say that talk, is cheap, that evil is still aggressive and unashamed, and that there is little prospect of any satisfying goal being attained in the near future. The answer is that some things have been accomplished, that the presence of moral ideals in the thinking of our necessity presents toward exmoral ideals in the thinking of our people necessarily operate toward excluding lower modes of thinking, and that the thing which men commonly think will inevitably, if slowly write itself upon their natures and upon the relationships and activities of their life. As men consciously or unconsciously test conditions and movements round them by moral standards the effect will be, beyond all peradventure, in the direction of the elevation and betterment of those conditions and movements.

A Gigantic Wrong

A Gigantic Wrong

Thus, when men seeking land to cultivate are seen going, under compulsion, fifty or sixty miles or more back from the railways, subjecting their wives and families to the risks and privations of life in the wilderness, simply in order that heartless land companies may make bigger profits out of what they have managed to corner of the people's land, the conclusion, if one thinks it out to a conclusion at all, must be, this thing is a gigantic wrong. It is anti-social and inhuman. It ought not to be. It must not be. It is up to

us who live in this generation to de-vise such changes that it shall not be. When a government report is issued which presents the statement that 80, 000 families in our land live in one-room homes we are compelled to-think of the situation in terms of health and

of the situation in terms of health and decency and morality and the general well-being not only of this, but of the next generation. And we cannot avoid the conclusion that those children are being done a monstrous wrong, for which the present generation is largely responsible, and this if means are not taken to remedy the evil punishment, in the form of a burden of blighted lives must necessarily fall upon us in the future. Every community, every municipality, every legislature must see to it that steps are taken at once to right the wrong.

to it that steps are taken at once to right the wrong.

When a land sneeulator cheats a man out of \$300 and the law courts to which he appeals demand of him \$400 more in order to clear him of the deal and at the same time allow the speculator to go free with his booty, are we not compelled to decide that we must be done with the kind of thing that is being dealt out to us in the name of justice? With its quibbles and its technicalities and its secrecies and its intolerable fees it has become an utterly discredited thing. It must go and go at once, and must be replaced by something that will vindicate itself in the minds of common and simple minded men as being equitable and right. We must come to the day of a justice that can in no to the day of a justice that can in no degree be bought or sold, justice that gives an assurance of a square deal for every man and big hauls and fat pickings for no man and no class.

Arbitrary Taxation

Arbitrary Taxation

When I buy an implement which happens to have been manufactured on the south side of the international boundary, and the government learning the price I pay, says to one of its officials, "You may add such a percentage as you choose to that price for revenue purposes," and I nay perforce forty per cent or so of the price of my implement largely to oblige and enrich manufacturing companies that are making millionaires of their stock-holders, I am compelled to think that the law is made for the advantage of one class at the expense of another. And I say, "This thing is morally as well as econat the expense of another. And I say, "This thing is morally as well as economically rotten. It must not continue. It shall not continue. By the might of right and the strength of true votes in the hands of true men the plutocrats shall be driven from their place of power. And the common man and the poor man, aye, and their wives and their children, shall come to their own, in this democracy of ours."

When two men agree with each other

in this democracy of ours."

When two men agree with each other that they will exchange the \$1,500 which one has for the plot of land which the other owns, and they are suddenly faced with the proposition that the (mysterious but necessary) expenses of the transfer are sixty or eighty dollars, there arises a natural questioning as to why in the name of common sense and fair-dealing those two should not be able to carry out their bargain without paying any such tribute to anybody. The thing is wrong. It is robbery, and in the day when the square deal is established that kind of thing also will be eliminated.

And so men are concluding that things that will not stand the test of the common conscience and the common sense of common men, things which militate against the square deal to every man, woman and child, things which ought not to be, must not be, and shall not be. Common men and women, ordinary mortals, are in a majority in this country. And in the ballot the common people have power to effect those conditions which the common conscience believes to be right and just and human. It is up to them to make the influence of their lives and the power of their votes tell to this end.—Contributed by W. R. Wood, Neepawa, Mán. And so