

THE OBSERVER

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PRIVATE OWNERSHIP

We are working under a system of laws which are founded on the belief that private initiative will give the best service and that the search for profits will benefit mankind.

In practice it is found that the search for profit benefits those who find them but not the great body of citizens.

Private ownership of railroads means that the owners want to make out of the operation thereof. The more profits the better they like it.

Profits are largest when rates are high and labor cost is low. Profits diminish when rates are cut or when wages go up.

Private ownership means large profits for the few. Lord Strathcona is a shining light as to how private ownership does not benefit the people, it means decreased service where the service will not pay itself.

Government ownership, when properly managed, means increased service at diminished rates with good prices for labor.

Government ownership will pay the country.

EUGENE V. DEBS

Eugene V. Debs is the Socialist candidate for President. His name was rendered notorious in connection with the Chicago railroad strike of 1893.

Debs himself was sent to prison for six months for his part in the uprising. His name has been howled from all the responsible papers of the states and today he is acclaimed by millions of Americans as their leader.

Debs' power is that he knows how to suffer for his followers. In 1893 when the railroad men were thinking of striking, Debs fought against the cessation of work.

The little children like Debs. When he goes about the streets of the villages in which he is known the children will follow him about.

Debs himself acknowledges that he is not fit to be president. He is too sympathetic, and too much of an absolute revolutionist.

The very fact that he has gone to prison and has suffered for the faults of an unreasoning railway union endears him to the heart of the working people.

There is a great future for Debs, if he is not landed in jail or killed by the trust leaders before he accomplishes his work.

THE RED SPECIAL

Eugene V. Debs, Socialist candidate for President of the United States, has been travelling over the length and breadth of the land in a special train.

The Red Special has been a great drawing card and has proved to the scattered Socialists that their party is a strong and growing one.

A peculiar circumstance that is drawing attention is the fact that the Socialist party is the only party which can afford a special train for its presidential candidate.

In the West the Special was richly decked, but when the train came East the authorities insisted upon all decorations being removed and put a detective on board to see that the order was obeyed.

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MORE WORKERS WITH LESS PAY

The city of Montreal has had proposed an old scheme for the relief of distress. The idea has been broached that were as so many men are out of work it would be better all around for the city to reduce the price it pays labor and to employ more laborers.

The proposal is a specious one. It would be altogether wrong were it a private corporation which was getting the work done.

When the worker is compelled to labor for a pittance the whole of our civilization becomes deteriorated.

Those out of work might be given work by the city or by the Dominion.

Our civilization is developing grave defects when in a country of three million square miles and but six millions of inhabitants men can stare in the streets or wander over the country hungry and out of work.

Government ownership of railways and public utilities must be by the people and for the benefit of the people.

It is not sufficient that public utilities be possessed by the government.

Government ownership, however, did not benefit a great mass of the people who were slaves.

Government ownership, to be effective, must be for the benefit of the people.

Thoughtful Pointers

The smoother the politician is, the rougher the worker has it.

There may be reason in all things, but there is no reason in all people.

Knowledge is power. Especially the knowledge of how to work the people.

Prejudice never promoted an individual or gave the world any good.

The fellows who tell how noble labor is are laboring hard to work the laborer.

Nine-tenths of the people are born saddled, with another tenth waiting to ride them as soon as they can carry.

A capitalist magazine asserts that "prisons are for those who are caught." The phrase should be amended to read, "for poor people who are caught."

Fifty years ago a millionaire was as great a curiosity in America as he is today in heaven.

Somebody made heredity. If heredity keeps people from living free from want, it is up to us to make a new kind of heredity.

The state of the world is such, and so much depends on action, that everything seems to say loudly to every man, "Do something." "Do it." "Do it."

Wherever we are, there is something for us to do for ourselves and help our fellows. Let us help to make progress, or try to fight leaks, or at all events help those who are working.

Carnegie has made another appropriation for the reward of heroes says the Hamilton Spectator.

Oh! what would the world be to us if the children were no more?

What the leaves are to the forest, With light and air for food, Ere their sweet and tender juices Have been hardened into wood—

That to the world are children; Through them it feels the glow Of a brighter and sunnier climate That reaches the trunks below.

Come to me, O ye children! And whisper in my ear What the birds and the winds are singing In your sunny atmosphere.

For what are all our contrivings, And the wisdom of our books, When compared with your caresses, And the gladness of your looks?

Ye are better than all the ballads That ever were sung or said; For ye are living poems, And all the rest are dead.

The People

The people is a beast of muddy brain, That knows not its own force and therefore stands

Loaded with wood and stone; the powerless hands. Of a mere child guide it with bit and rein;

One kick would be enough to break the chain; But the beast fears, and what the child demands

It does; nor its own terror understands, Confused and stupefied by bugbears vain, Most wonderful! with its own hand it ties

And gags itself—gives itself death and war. For pence doled out by kings from its own store.

Its own are all things between earth and heaven; But this it knows not; and if one arise To tell this truth, it kills him unforgiven.

—Thomas Campanella, 1612.

A CHECKBOOK

Men's lives should be open books, So their good wives expect; And they seem to think each page Should represent a check.

Beware Beware the old oaken bucket, the iron-bound bucket, the germ-covered bucket that hangs in the well.

THE APOSTATE

A Child Labor Problem

BY JACK LONDON

PUBLISHED BY SPECIAL PERMISSION

He took his place in one of many long rows of machines. Before him, above a bin filled with small bobbins, were large bobbins revolving rapidly. Upon these he wound the jute-twine of the small bobbins. The work was simple. All that was required was celerity. The small bobbins were emptied so rapidly, and there were so many large bobbins that did the emptying, that there were no idle moments.

He worked mechanically. When a small bobbin ran out he used his left hand for a brake, stopping the large bobbin and at the same time, with thumb and fore-finger, catching the flying end of twine. Also, at the same time, with his right hand, he caught up the loose twine-end of a small bobbin. These various acts with both hands were performed simultaneously and swiftly. Then there would come a flash of his hands as he looped the weaver's knot and released the bobbin. There was nothing difficult about weaver's knots. He once boasted he could tie them in his sleep.

Some of the boys shirked, wasting time and machinery by not replacing the small bobbins when they ran out. And there was an overseer to prevent this. He caught Johnny's neighbor at the trick and boxed his ears. "Look at Johnny there—why ain't you like him?" the overseer wrathfully demanded.

Johnny's bobbins were running full blast, but he did not thrill at the indirect praise. There had been a time, . . . but that was long ago, very long ago. His apathetic face was expressionless as he listened to himself being held up as a shining example. He was the perfect worker. He new that. He had been told so, often. It was a commonplace, and besides it didn't seem to mean anything to him any more.

From the perfect worker he had evolved into the perfect machine. When his work went wrong it was with him as with a machine, due to faulty material. It would have been as possible for a perfect nail-die to cut imperfect nails as for him to make a mistake.

And small wonder. There had never been a time when he had not been in intimate relationship with machines. Machinery had almost been bred into him, and at any rate he had been brought up on it. Twelve years before, there had been a small flutter of excitement in the loom-room of this very mill. Johnny's mother had fainted. They stretched her out on the floor in the midst of the shrieking machines. A couple of elderly women were called from their looms. The foreman assisted. And in a few minutes there was one more soul in the loom-room than had entered by the doors. It was Johnny, born with the pounding, crashing roar of the looms in his ears, drawing with his first breath the warm, moist air that was thick with flying lint. He had coughed that first day in order to rid his lungs of the lint; and for this reason he had coughed ever since.

The boy alongside of Johnny whimpered and sniffed. The boy's face was convulsed with hatred

for the overseer who kept a threatening eye on him from a distance; but every bobbin was running full. The boy yelled terrible oaths into the whirling bobbins before him; but the sound did not carry half a dozen feet, the roaring of the room holding it in and containing it like a wall. Of all this Johnny took no notice. He had a way of accepting things. Besides, things grow monotonous by repetition, and this particular happening he had witnessed many times. It seemed to him as useless to oppose the overseer as to defy the will of a machine. Machines were made to go in certain ways and to perform certain tasks. It was the same with the overseer.

But at eleven o'clock there was excitement in the room. In an apparently occult way the excitement instantly permeated everywhere. The one-legged boy who worked on the other side of Johnny bobbed swiftly across the floor to a bin-truck that stood empty. Into this he dived out of sight, crutch and all. The superintendent of the mill was coming along, accompanied by a young man. He was well-dressed and wore a starched shirt—a gentleman, in Johnny's classification of men, and also, "the Inspector."

He looked sharply at the boys as he passed along. Sometimes he stopped and asked questions. When he did so he was compelled to shout at the top of his lungs, at which moments his face was ludicrously contorted with the strain of making himself heard. His quick eye noted the empty machine alongside of Johnny's, but he said nothing. Johnny also caught his eye, and he stopped abruptly. He caught Johnny by the arm to draw him back a step from the machine; but with an exclamation of surprise he released the arm.

"Pretty skinny," the superintendent laughed anxiously. "Pipe-stems," was the answer. "Look at those legs. The boy's got the rickets—incipient, but he's got them. If epilepsy doesn't get him in the end, it will be because tuberculosis gets him first."

Johnny listened, but did not understand. Furthermore he was not interested in future ills. There was an immediate and more serious ill that threatened him in the form of the inspector.

"Now, my boy, I want you to tell me the truth," the inspector said, or shouted, bending close to the boy's ear to make him hear. "How old are you?" "Fourteen," Johnny lied, and he lied with the full force of his lungs. So loudly did he lie that it started him off in a dry, hacking cough that lifted the lint which had been settling in his lungs all morning.

"Looks sixteen at least," said the superintendent. "Or sixty," snapped the inspector. "He's always looked that way."

"How long?" asked the inspector quickly. "For years. Never gets a bit older."

"Or younger, I daresay. I suppose he's worked here all those years?" "Off and on—but that was before the new law was passed," the superintendent hastened to add.

"Machine idle? the inspector asked, pointing at the unoccupied machine beside Johnny's, in which the part-filled bobbins were flying like-mad.

The government of Roumania has projected a new liquor law, under which the right to sell drink will pass into the hands of local communal authorities in April next.

Temperance

Ohio is going a vengeance. have held election, at "dry," driving out of business that when the tenths of the co so. It is planned

Temperance

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