

THE PEOPLE'S PILOT.

FOR THE FREE AND UNLIMITED COINAGE OF SILVER AND GOLD AT THE PARITY RATIO OF SIXTEEN TO ONE WITHOUT REFERENCE TO ANY OTHER NATION ON EARTH.

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THE COMING REVOLUTION.

The Editor of "The Arena" Discusses Mr. Call's Book in a Striking Paper Dealing with Fundamental Evils of the Hour.

Plutocracy the Product of Special Privilege—The Fallacy of the Survival of the Fittest Theory when Applied to Social Conditions—The Well-springs of Colossal Fortunes found in Privileges Obtained Through Inheritance.

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In "The Coming Revolution" Mr. Call has made a contribution to social and economic literature of the new time of positive value. It is a work which merits a very wide reading. It might be justly characterized a trumpet call to free men; but it is more than this—it is a calm, fair, and masterly survey of social conditions as they exist; an investigation of the underlying causes of the widespread poverty and misery of today, and a bold but reasonable and statesmanlike presentation of measures, which, if radical, are as conservative as any remedies can be, which in the nature of the case are more than palliatives or temporary makeshifts.

The author is a brilliant lawyer; he has been trained to reason logically and to view questions on all sides, but his education has not blinded him to the fundamental demands of justice. He has a charming style, at once lucid and concise; he makes his meaning perfectly plain, while using few words—an art few writers possess; his style is simple, and he has so thoroughly mastered the subject in hand that he finds no difficulty in making his meaning perfectly plain.

So important is this work at the present crisis that it calls for an extended review. As may be inferred, the author does not agree with the conventional economists who owe their popularity and livelihood to their efficiency as sophists in the unsavory if lucrative role of the paid tools or attorneys for plutocracy, and who are ever anxious to silence the discontent of the industrial millions, who are being pressed slowly but remorselessly toward serfdom, through injustice and the essential anarchy of capitalism. He does not believe that it is the will of a Divine Providence that a million should suffer that ten may revel in millions of dollars which have been acquired by the ten, but earned chiefly by the millions.

In his opening chapters on "The Signs of the Times," he says:

"There are those who have come to charge the wretchedness and warfare now everywhere existing among men to their institutions, instead of to any wise or beneficent provision for their future; they deny either the necessity or benefit of the hardships the great mass of mankind now suffer, and demand that these hardships be at once remedied."

He points out the general discontent which exists and the various methods proposed for remedying the wrongs which are becoming too grievous to be borne:

"The condition of the toiling masses may truly be described as a struggle for existence. Hard and constant toil is necessary for the meagre return which clothes body and affords shelter and food, but it is not the ceaseless grind of work which is chiefly responsible for the discontent which is present among the industrial millions throughout the industrial world. Work is not itself unwelcome, but it is the anxiety, poverty, and wretchedness which are everywhere the lot of labor, that cause men to look with sullen dread and revolt upon this struggle. However meagre their subsistence, this is ever precarious; theirs is a contest for very life in which many fail. Each recurring crisis shows how thin are the walls of chance which ever divide success, in this struggle, from failure. Then it is that the merchant and the mechanic fail in business, the farmer loses his farm, and penniless and burdened with debt they together sink into the condition of wage-laborers; meanwhile their ruin has also driven labor out of employment, and the ranks of the unemployed, always full, swollen from these various sources, become now so crowded that all cannot hope to obtain positions; a competition ensues in which some must inevitably fail. However remote the tramp and the pauper of society may seem from their more fortunate fellows, they have but failed in the common struggle."

THE "STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE" FALLACY. But it is urged that the savage struggle for life is seen among the lower animals, that the weaker are devoured by the stronger, and the fittest survive, therefore this brutal struggle is natural. This argument is fatally weak if examined in a candid and impartial spirit, even though we leave all question of morality out of the discussion. For the conditions are not the same. The freedom which obtains among the lower animals is

not present here. The widespread misery today is due chiefly to artificial and not natural conditions. On this point Mr. Call is very strong: He shows: (1) That there is no sound reason for the struggle for existence with man because there is wealth enough for all, and under just conditions no man, woman, or child who chooses to work need fear poverty. (2) That, under the conditions which exist among the lower animals the colossal fortunes of the present would be impossible. These two points are clearly set forth, and upon the establishment of them the popular plea of the apologists for plutocracy falls. Touching the bounty of nature he observes:

"The position of man in the world is far from unfavorable. The world is large enough for all, but everywhere land is unoccupied— withheld from use. It is, too, so beautiful that if labor is allowed to exert itself for a brief season, the cry is raised of overproduction, the markets are glutted, mines must be closed, mills must be shut down, and labor must be turned out of employment because there is no demand for its products. Nor was the labor of man ever more effective than now. Machinery has come to his aid, and with it he can accomplish so much in every branch of production that labor itself is becoming superfluous—a drug on the market; man is crowded out of the field of industry because his labor has become too efficient. Surely, when the world is large enough for all, when its bounty more than suffices for all the wants of man, and when his labor is only too efficient in procuring the satisfaction of his wants—surely, in face of these facts, the position of man in the world can not be held responsible for his woes; want and wretchedness cannot be preached as the necessary and natural lot of man."

"The poor will not believe that their struggle and want are necessary, so long as they see in contrast with their condition the possessions and idleness of the rich. This is not only the age of paupers, it is also the age of the millionaires; the hovel of the poor is under the shadow of the palace of the rich. However stinted and wretched may be the lot of the masses, they see here no evidence of want; all is, instead, the most lavish luxury and display; everything that wealth can procure to satisfy the wants, or pander to the appetite and pride of man, or astonish the gaze of the beholder, belongs to these favorites of fortune. Yet, notwithstanding all their expenditures, the fortunes of the rich are ever swelling into vaster and vaster proportions; the number of the rich, too, is fast increasing. The hoards and the squanderings of these alike show that the world is filled with abundance; they also show the wonderful effectiveness of labor; for labor, either of the past or present, is, after all, the source of all value, and the means by which all wealth is brought into being."

Thus it will be seen that the "survival" argument is fatally weak in that it is based on false premises. It necessarily assumes that there is not room enough for all, that some must perish in order that others may survive, and therefore that man has a natural right to prey upon his brother. Not only does this popular plea rest upon false premises, but it assumes that man in civilization is accorded at least as fair a chance in his struggle with his fellowman as the lower animals enjoy, and this assumption is false.

"It is not applicable to present conditions, for the reason that the freedom of struggle [there among the lower animals] allowed is here denied. The brute has the free use of all his faculties; to one is given strength, to another cunning, and to each, by the kind provision of nature, is adapted to obtain his living in his own way. This is indeed the cause of his survival: the first law of nature, the very instinct of life, is self-preservation; to preserve his life the brute is allowed the use of every faculty given him; where life is at stake every means to preserve it is justified. But it is not so with man's institutions. Man cannot by his strong arm help himself to the plenty he sees around him; to do so would be trespass or crime. Cunning is the only faculty in free use, and it is allowed to run riot. Manly strength is chained helpless, while low cunning, deft-fingered, passes by and flakes from it.

"Nor is labor allowed in its struggle the freedom of opportunity given the brute. Each brute has free access to the world; man is denied that access by the laws of society, which give the world to the few in each generation and say to all others "keep aloof."

"These few play the "dog in the manger;" and although they may each have enough to support a thousand such as they, society itself stands watch and ward over their possessions, and turns portionless labor away unless it can purchase the consent of these owners by the wages of servitude. Compared with the lot of labor how free that of the brute! Take the most savage and despicable of these, the wolf and the hyena: they each range the prairie or forest in equal struggle, and do not always feel it necessary to war upon and devour

each other; then when they have satisfied their maw from the carcass which they with honest toil have slain, they become almost sociable, and perhaps abandon it to their fellows. If, now, these brutes had reached a high state of civilization, and united into a society giving some few of them, under the name of property rights, the whole world now ranged in freedom by all, and compelling all others to come to them in service or beggary for leave to get food and shelter, how like to the institutions of man they would have attained.

"No! the doctrine of the struggle for existence—brute doctrine though it be—is altogether too merciful to palliate or justify the institutions with which man has cursed himself; it is too honest a doctrine. These institutions will instead be found to have cloaked themselves under names sacred and revered by man, such as "liberty," "rights of property," and the like, and not to have paraded openly in their true colors under any doctrine however brutal, else would mankind have long ago risen in revolt and made short work of them."

It is not in the working of natural law, but in the operation of artificial and unjust conditions that we find the mainspring of the misery of man throughout the civilized world.

"It is not to any lack of wealth in the world, but, instead, to man's institutions which have made this distribution of it, and have given to the few so much, that we must look if we would know why the many have so little."

The author points out the signs of profound discontent everywhere manifested. In our country the violent oscillations of the political pendulum, no less than the desperate struggles of organized labor, are suggestive signs of the times. He shows that a political readjustment must speedily supervene, else will political as well as industrial freedom soon be a thing of the past.

"Industrial slavery cannot long coexist with political freedom. Either the spirits of men will be crushed, as under the tyrannies of ancient times, and they will become unfit to remain free even in name, or they will resent the yoke of oppression, whatever its form, and demand with their ballot that they shall be free, not only in name, but also in fact."

The progress of revolutionary ideas is necessarily slow in gaining popular acceptance, especially among phlegmatic people. The attention must be gained, the reason successfully appealed to, and the people must also be made to see that their interest will be better conserved by the change. Old prejudices have to be overcome, and the influence of opinion-forming organs, which are always largely wedded to conventionalism, have to be neutralized. Frequently the most beneficial reforms are retarded by a false and vicious conservatism which turns alarmist whenever a progressive step is proposed for society. Yet the history of the world's great reformative measures shows that when evil conditions have reached such a point that a noble discontent is everywhere visible, the light of a better day dawns and increases until the darkness which enslaved the brain and lent wings to fear disappears.

In order to intelligently appreciate the subject, it will be necessary to notice somewhat at length: (1) The condition of society today. (2) How that condition has been produced. (3) Whether the producing causes admit of remedy. (4) The nature of the remedy required. (5) The application of the remedy. (6) The effect of the remedy. (7) How the revolution is to be accomplished. It is to these subjects that the author devotes his succeeding pages, which are written in an easy, fluent manner, affording interesting reading even to those who read little, and so lucid that the dullest intellect and those most unused to philosophical reasoning will find no difficulty in following the author in his comprehensive survey of conditions, his searching analysis of popular fallacies, his concise portrayal of major producing factors in present evil social conditions, and his statesmanlike discussion of fundamental reforms which alone can secure equally of opportunity or establish just conditions which can reasonably meet the requirements of society today.

Frequently the employer is placed in as trying a condition as the employed, both being virtually slaves to a few who have acquired great landed interests or other form of wealth. The real masters of both employers and employed are the owners of the world's soil and its wealth.

"These owners fix the terms not only for the toilers, but for that of the employers also, and rob from both. The dependence of labor does not mean accepting the wages of another; if a man have the choice whether to do so or not, he may accept them and still be free. It is the denial of this choice to both employer and employee—the conditions which give all the footholds and means of life to the few, and enable these to say

to dispossessed labor, 'This world is ours, and whether ye toil for day's wages or otherwise, ye can have no right to labor; or place or means upon which to labor, except by our leave and upon our terms'—that constitutes the dependence of labor. It is this dependence that makes toil so grinding and existence so precarious, and that makes labor debt-ridden in spite of all its hardships. Were it not for the fact that the debtor is allowed his legal exemptions, and that our laws no longer tolerate imprisonment for debt, at least three-fourths of the race would be even now at the absolute mercy of their creditors."

THE CONDITION OF THE WAGE EARNER TODAY.

While it is true that the theory of the survival of the fittest when applied to man is fundamentally false as well as inhuman, it is true that owing to unjust conditions, which flow from special privileges, a few are enjoying the fruits of the industry of the millions with the appalling result that the masses today are forced into a fierce and pitiless struggle for existence which is at once essentially debasing to the moral nature, enervating to the intellectual faculties, and destructive to free government and enduring progress.

"Whether we take the wage-worker, the farmer, the mechanic, or the business man, the position of each, and his existence even, are secured only by a fierce and competitive struggle. Not only is that struggle intense, but it is also precarious, as seen in the condition of the wage-laborer when he loses employment, of the farmer when, unable to hold his farm, he loses it under mortgage, or of the mechanic and the merchant who fail in business and are ruined."

Very impressive is the extended notice of the dependent condition of the wealth-producers of the world and the bitter struggle, the forlorn battle, which they are waging for the right to earn a little more than a bare livelihood. The toiler looks out upon a bountiful world, but "knows full well that of all this wealth he has no right to so much as a crust of bread to keep from starving, except he earn it by his labor. Nor even to labor has he any right, except by the consent of the owners of this wealth; for upon the soil or its fruits all labor must be exerted; he must have the use of these, and of machinery and tools, and must enter the employ of these owners, who are thus his masters."

INVENTIONS WHICH SHOULD HAVE BLESSED HUMANITY ARE MADE A CURSE TO THE MILLIONS.

The growth of labor-saving machinery, which should have proved an unalloyed blessing to the race by reducing the time required for manual labor and giving to the children of men ample time for cultivation of brain and soul and for wholesome recreation, has proved a curse rather than a blessing to the toiling millions, putting them ever and ever more completely in the power of the few who are in reality the masters of the millions.

The servant machinery makes the servant man superfluous. That such is the effect of machinery is self-evident, from its labor-saving, labor-dispensing power. That labor shares no part of the gain is certain: and why should it? itself a mere commodity, it has no part in the material, the machine, or the product; it sells its services when it can, and receives its pay, and that is the end so far as it is concerned. That labor, however, loses its employment is no less certain, for if capital have a new servant that cheaply can do so much, what folly it would be to employ the old! let capital now give employment to all the labor that offers itself, and the world's markets are at once glutted. Hence labor is tramping the country vainly for work, and daily losing employment, because no longer required."

The condition of the farmer boy is scarcely less pitiable; and another startling fact which is well worthy of notice, is that with each recurring panic or financial crisis, those engaged in other lines of industry and in business are being carried with irresistible force toward the condition of the mechanic and the farmer.

"We are, it is said, a nation of debtors; and pre-eminently is this true of the business men of the country. Scarce one in a hundred but is doing business on credit, purchasing on credit, selling on credit. It is impossible for any one of them at any time to say what they are worth. When collections are good and they are able to pay their bills, they seem to succeed; but in adverse times, when their debtors cannot pay, they are brought face to face with the fact that ruin ever impends. Many of them fail with almost each recurring crisis, only to again attempt rising to their feet; others, by the most desperate exertions, are barely able to maintain their credit; few, indeed, rise into the ranks of wealth and independence. For one that really succeeds, there are, in all the walks of toil and honest industry hundreds who fail."

THE PRIVILEGED CLASSES.

In a chapter dealing with the privileged classes