

HOMES FOR THE POOR.

Address of Wm. E. Smythe at the Court House, May 8th.

We are assembled to-day in the State having the smallest population of any in the Union. We are assembled in the only State West of the Allegheny mountains which has ever shown a record of decreasing population. And yet no person who saw your marvelous exhibit at the World's Fair can for a moment doubt that you possess, within the wide range of your natural resources, all the potentialities of a great commonwealth.

If I were a citizen of Nevada I would never rest until the stigma of a decreasing population were removed from the fair name of my state. If I were a citizen of Nevada I would never rest until those eastern editors who assert that your state is deliberately kept small, as a matter of political convenience, were confounded and rendered foolish by the onward sweep of a splendid development. And if any man stood in the way of that consummation, I would never rest until that man or interest had surrendered to the imperious demands of an enlightened civilization.

The time has come when the American people have use for the broad valleys of this favored State. The time has come when humanity cries aloud for more room in which to build its habitations. The time has come when civilization demands new and better economic conditions, which shall guarantee to labor a fairer share of what it produces and give real independence and real equality to the average citizen of the Republic. I hope to show you this afternoon the pressure which is upon our people in the East and how the resources of Nevada are capable of meeting the demands of the times.

DECAY OF THE MIDDLE CLASSES.

The startling fact about existing conditions in the East is not that a comparatively few are standing on the verge of starvation, but that the whole body of our middle classes, which constitute the bone and sinew of our people, is in a gradual process of decadence. Consider the statistics of tenantry. Ours is one of the youngest as well as one of the richest, nations on earth. We had to start with an empire of public lands, and it would seem that we ought to have a larger percentage of land owners than any other country. The truth is that by a swift process we have become a race of tenants. Australia has only 10.17 of tenants to her total population. Canada has 12 per cent, Sweden 18, France 29, crowded Belgium 33, Holland 40 and imperial Germany less than 34. In the United States over 70 per cent of the total population has no proprietary interest in the soil on which it dwells.

The labor difficulties of the past two years have furnished other startling revelations of the condition of skilled laborers. In the case of the great shoe strike at Haverhill, Mass., it was shown by impartial investigation that the workmen averaged but \$250 to \$350 per year—a bare subsistence for the average family—and that their homes were little better than the tenements in the slums of the great cities. The Brooklyn street car strike was supported by overwhelming public sympathy because it was disclosed that the men were actually fighting for the right of existence. The report of the commission appointed by the President revealed the same condition at Pullman. The men were on the verge of starvation and many of them are to-day homeless beggars, although they represent the highest standard of skilled labor.

These are the conditions in the East. What are the conditions of those who labor upon the irrigated soil of Western America?

PULLMAN AND BRIGHAM YOUNG COMPARED.

At a recent mass meeting in Chicago I answered this question by a brief comparison of the industrial systems founded by Brigham Young in the valleys of Utah and by George M. Pullman on the shores of Lake Michigan. Here is what I found: That both men were entitled to be called great captains of industry; that both selected tracts of land practically worthless until they reclaimed them; that both gave large employment to labor, and directed that labor to the production of enormous wealth. But there was a great difference in the methods of the two men, and a wider difference yet in the distribution of the wealth which the genius of each called into being.

In Utah every laborer is a lauded proprietor; at Pullman all are hopeless tenants. In Utah the laborer receives the benefit of the increased land values which accrue from the coming

of a population; at Pullman these increased values are credited to the landlord and lay a new burden, in the shape of higher rent, upon the tenant. In Utah every laborer may become a partner in store, bank and factory, since all are co-operative; in Pullman the laborer is the compulsory patron of store, bank and factory and is made to pay dividends, rather than entitled to receive them. In Utah the laborer practically receives all that he produces, as do the farmers of Carson Valley; at Pullman the laborer only receives so much as suffices for bare subsistence, while the balance of what he produces is credited to increased capital and dividends.

Hence, when the panic of 1893 came the Pullman laborer had nothing to fall back upon. He had worked as hard as his Utah brother, but had failed to receive what he had produced. He did not own the soil he worked, nor the roof over his head. There is nothing for him except to be a beggar and outcast. But in Utah no Mormon laborer felt perceptibly the pressure of hard times. He stood there, the master of his acres and looked the world in the face. No landlord knocked at his door to demand the rent. As long as the earth yields her increase he can coin from his acres a prosperous living.

And this is the difference, not simply between the systems created by Pullman and Brigham Young, respectively, but the difference between the industrial economy which prevails today in the East and that which is destined to prevail throughout the West.

You are familiar with the history of the successful colonies made on irrigated land at Greeley, Colorado, and in Southern California. The Greeley colonists made serious miscalculations. They estimated the cost of their canals at \$20,000, and they actually cost \$45,000. They expected fruit culture to be their leading industry, but events proved that the locality was unsuitable even for apples. And yet these colonists have prospered amazingly. In the panic summer of 1893, when banks and stores fell like autumn leaves, nature proceeded undisturbed at Greeley. The sun rose, the wind blew, water ran down hill, and the famous Greeley potato crop proceeded as if nothing had happened. Besides a comfortable living yielded by the diversified farms, the Greeley colonists received over one million dollars that summer for their surplus potatoes. I need not enlarge upon the success of several famous colonies in California.

THE NEW PLYMOUTH COLONY.

On February 15th, last, I began in Boston the work of enlisting people for the New Plymouth Colony in Payette Valley, Idaho. This colony was undertaken for a purpose. I desired to demonstrate what character of industrial and social institutions could be developed on irrigated lands by people of small means. The plan had been carefully formulated in association with experienced men both West and East. We selected 5000 acres of land and adopted the 20 acre farm unit. All the colonists will follow the Mormon method of systematically producing what the families consume, thus realizing industrial independence. All subscribed ten dollars per acre for stock, thus providing a capital of \$50,000 for improvements.

With this capital they will establish six small allied industries, such as creamery, cannery, starch factory, pork-packing establishment, cold storage and fruit evaporators. Idaho is importing all prepared foods except flour and these colonists propose to supply in part the vacuum in their production. I believe their prosperity will be five times greater than that of settlers who go out alone in the wilderness without any well defined plan of what they expect to do.

There is a social side to Plymouth also. In the center of the 5000 acres we reserve 320 acres for a farm village or home center. Every person who buys a 20 acre farm receives also an acre lot in the village. We make a park one mile long and 240 feet wide and over 100 of the acre lots, which are oblong in shape, front the Park. We expect to have a good school with a Kindergarten. We will also erect a village hall which will be a reproduction of the Idaho building at the World's Fair.

The lower floor will be used for public meetings and the upper for a library. We expect this will be the center of social life and we hope to develop the musical and dramatic talents of the colony and thus furnish the people with entertainment.

I found that the Plymouth plan appealed at once to the popular imagination. We had no difficulty in enlisting the best class of people, none of whom have less than \$1000. We were careful to select among our colonists a good teacher, and the various trades and occupations needed in such a colony are all represented. We shall employ an expert superintendent to teach settlers the business of agricul-

ture, horticulture and irrigation.

The plan is not co-operative, but rather associative. Each man owns his own place and manages it as he pleases, but many benefits will be gained by acting together in certain matters. For instance, there will be a saving of at least 40 per cent in buying wagons and implements by wholesale from manufacturers. There will be like benefits in marketing products. All public utilities, such as parks, streets, electric light plant, canals and library etc., will be owned and managed by the colony company, but each man will pursue his private business to suit himself.

CAMPAIGN IN THE EAST.

I started out in November to get the co-operation of strong Eastern influences in support of the proposition that the time had come to reclaim and settle the arid West, diverting surplus Eastern population to surplus Western lands, and developing new and better institutions for average people. I sought the support of the press, the Clergy, the colleges and the labor unions.

Time, energy and patience are required, but these forces have been largely enlisted in our support. There was really no serious objections raised. Prominent socialists in New York objected on the ground that the revolution they dream of is fore shadowed and that a proposition to furnish labor and homes for millions might postpone it. But I merely thanked them for furnishing me with the strongest argument which could be brought to bear upon the friends of the present system of society. The sociological class at Harvard University said they had been taught that society was divided into three classes, (1) those who would work, and these all have jobs; (2) those who won't work, and they would be as incorrigible in one place as another; (3) those who cannot work, and their disability could not be removed by a change of climate. The divinity students said there was no trouble with economic conditions, but only with the moral atmosphere, the people needing more character. They begged to be told how this could be improved by a removal from enlightened Massachusetts to the God forsaken West, which they understood to be a dreary waste of bar-rooms and gambling houses. One of the typical Boston women you read about complained that I would attract all the young men and leave the surplus women worse off than now. She also said that people who are perfectly sane in New England go West and become raving maniacs on the subject of free silver coinage. She hardly thought it good policy to send New England people out West "that they may turn and rend us". But these obstacles were not serious. In Boston, Edward Everett Hale, the greatest living citizen of New England, put himself at the head of the movement and the strongest elements in the community followed him.

THE COLONIAL CLUBS.

My work was divided into three parts, the first of which was the making of Plymouth Colony. Then came the formation of Colonial Clubs, which has been well begun. This is a sort of Chautauqua system, except that the people will study the industrial and social opportunities of the West rather than the history of Ancient Greece. Swarms of young men and women, who have their careers to make, daily throng the great public library of Boston. Among all the treasures of literature and of art which they find there, there is not a book or a picture to tell them anything about that half of their country which offers the best opportunities for them to get ahead. The Colonial Clubs will furnish books and pamphlets at cost of production which will constitute good literature on this subject. Nevada will have a chance with the rest to tell the story of her climate, soil, productions, mines, cattle industry and other attractions to men and money. We hope to supplement the literature with permanent exhibits in Chicago, New York and Boston next Fall. These two things constitute the basis of a broad educational plan.

LABOR COLONIES.

The Eastern masses are hungry for homes. Some of them have small savings, but many can offer nothing except their labor. I maintain that the best bulwark of our institutions will be a great class of landed proprietors. It has been

well said that no man ever shouldered a musket in defense of a boarding house. While the country needs free coinage of silver at a ratio of 16 to 1 with gold, it needs even more than that, free coinage of homes and of land owners at a ratio of 16 to 1 with tenements and landless paupers. Capital is idle as well as labor, and both are today in search of jobs. Can we devise a plan by which these two forces can be joined on terms that will be satisfactory to both? We must find a principle and method capable of indefinite expansion, for we want millions of men and millions of money.

I believe that in our public lands and waters we have the basis of security sufficient to furnish the capital which, with human labor, will create a civilization upon our voiceless deserts. To illustrate, suppose we have one hundred families who have merely enough money to reach Nevada, and who would require \$500 to enable them to start and be sustained until the land was productive. If they take 40 acre farms and give security upon the land and water the liability would be \$12.50 per acre. Is that good security? Remember that besides water and land, human industry and the hunger for independence stand behind it. Are there any improved irrigated farms for sale today in Carson Valley for \$12.50 per acre, or double, or treble that amount? According to the census of 1890 the average value of improved irrigated land in Nevada was \$41 per acre. Throughout the arid region the average was \$83 per acre. I believe we can make colonies on the Plymouth plan which will be very attractive, and will rally tens of thousands of good citizens to our support. I believe we can furnish security that will command the confidence of capital. If we can make one colony on this basis we can make one thousand.

MAKE A COLONY IN NEVADA.

I am ready to co-operate with your people in planting the first labor colony in Nevada. On the basis of \$500 per family and five members each, one hundred thousand dollars would make a colony of two hundred families or one thousand people. With one million dollars we could make homes for two thousand families, or ten thousand people. New York City spent last winter twenty-two million dollars for charity, every dollar of which was given in a way to make men dependent rather than independent. Today New York City is utilizing vacant city lots and teaching the poor to raise potatoes as a means of support. The city pays \$15 per acre merely to fertilize these lots. The same investment would make prosperous homes for these people in Nevada. I believe we can colonize ten thousand acres here if your people will lend me their co-operation. I believe such a colony would inaugurate a new chapter in your history. I should aim to obtain native born Americans of the sturdiest sort, who have been crowded down and out by our modern industrial forces. In Massachusetts alone labor saving machinery is doing the work of one hundred million men. Do you wonder that there are people who need labor and homes? The Canadian has driven the native New Englander from the cotton mills. The Italian has supplanted him in the shoeshops. That is why the native New Englander is ready to come West and lend his Yankee head and hand to the work of making another New England under the shadow of the Sierras.

NEVADA'S OPPORTUNITY.

The people of Nevada are too meek and modest. In the very attractive book you sent out at the time of the World's Fair it was stated that you suffer by comparison with California. The fact is that California is under overwhelming disadvantages compared with Nevada. It is true California has vast amounts of land under irrigation and for sale, but they are held at prohibitory prices, and far beyond the reach of our industrial masses. Men who can pay one hundred dollars per acre for land, and then wait six years for fruit trees to come to bearing, will not move out of their brown stone fronts in the East. Nevada can offer today the cheapest lands in the West. This advantage is of supreme importance, and ought to enable you to turn a great tide of people into

the State. It is worth more than all the palms and magnolias of California.

When it comes to productions, the apples of Nevada are superior to oranges. The world eats apples and the orchards which have supplied them are passing away from old age. Neither is your climate unfavorable by comparison. It is the climate in which the Anglo Saxon has always made his great civilizations. As Bob Ingersoll says, "Never was there a great people who could use the blue sky for a blanket all the year around."

Nevada has been libeled by those who have represented her. They lift up their voices and assert that you are nothing but a silver state, that you are prostrate because of the crime of 1873. My friends, you are prostrate because of the crime of 1895,—the crime of sitting supinely in these valleys, with all your wealth of water and of land, while humanity is hungry and athirst for homes and independence. To say that Nevada has nothing but silver mines is a slander upon a State whereon omnipotence has lavished its choicest blessings.

Mines are desirable. They will be reopened in time, and the more they are developed the better will equilibrium be maintained between production and consumption. But after all mining is not your greatest interest. From the mines of Nevada there has been taken the stupendous sum of one thousand million dollars. Where is it? Gone to build palaces in San Francisco, New York and London, and to recruit the jaded fortunes of broken down foreign princes. Where are the five hundred millions wrung from the irrigated soil of Utah? Gone to sustain a great home population in prosperous thrift, to build factories, railroads and telegraphs, to capitalize stores and banks, and to rear temples whose graceful turrets pierce the opal sky.

This is the time of opportunity for Nevada. The East is ripe for the advance. You have at the head of your administration for the next four years a Governor who possesses a record of loyal service to irrigation and settlement. It was his report to the Denver Irrigation Congress which attracted me here in search of a place for a colony. You have in Governor Jones a chief magistrate who can be depended upon to fight this battle through to a glorious triumph in the next four years.

Many people have told me that it is no use to try and do anything for Nevada. They say you have no home market. Well, there are thousands of people in this country, who have a large and growing home market in their stomachs. The other night I dined at a little hotel in the neighboring village of Genoa. We had a sumptuous repast. No man needs anything better, either as to variety or quality. I would to God that every unprosperous man in my country could be assured of three meals like that every day of the future. Does Susan B. Anthony promise any such result from woman suffrage, William McKinley from protection, or Henry George from the single tax? No, but in behalf of the West I guarantee it for irrigation. For everything upon the dinner table at Genoa was produced in Carson Valley and can be had upon any 40 acre irrigated farm, while water runs down hill and mother earth yields her increase. I say everything, except tea, which I was careful to decline, in order that I should consume nothing that did not come from irrigated soil in this valley.

Other critics of our colony plan say railroads are against you. In spite of that fact I never saw more prosperous farmers in my life than I found in Carson Valley. Furthermore the way to get more railroads is to first get people. When, Kansas had no people, she had no railroads. When the tide of population flowed in railroads came and gridironed the prairie. This is the history of all countries. You take care of the people and the railroads will take care of themselves. All the elements of a complex industrial life will follow swiftly in the train of settlement.

BEAUTIFUL CARSON.

I have ridden all over Carson Valley, and it is one of the garden spots of the earth. It ought to sustain a dense population, living on 40 and 80 acre farms, reinforced by numerous little industries to transform the raw products into marketable goods which you now import. Carson City has been a surprise and delight to me. I have scoured the outskirts of the town to find a single home which looks squalid and poverty stricken. I have not found it. New England boasts of the thrift and cleanliness of her small towns. From Maine to Connecticut I know no cleaner, brighter, more inspiring town than Carson, from the white blossoms in her door yards to the white summits of her eternal mountains.