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A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

*It is the little rift within the lute
That by and by will make the music mute,
And ever widening, slowly silence all.*
—Tennyson.

REAL MEANING OF HIGH PRICES

An announcement of a 20 per cent decrease in wages would probably cause the workingmen of the country to instantly arise in revolt. Yet it is fully within the bounds of conservatism to say that the real meaning of the 58 per cent increase in the cost of living since 1896 is a 20 per cent reduction in wages.

Money wages are merely nominal wages. The goods the workingman is able to obtain for his money wages, form his real wages. Since 1896 the purchasing power of a dollar in the United States has been gradually dwindling. Wages have advanced, too, but have not kept pace with prices. "Prices go up the elevator; wages climb the stairs."

What is the result? Workingmen and their families have been gradually but surely forced to a trifle lower standard of living each year. Real wages have been lessened by not less than 20 per cent.

The wages of the British workingman are lower than those of the American workingman, although the difference is not nearly as great as the protectionists assert. Yet the British worker, under free trade, is the highest paid workingman in the world when his salary is measured by its power to purchase the necessities of life. In the report of the United States commissioner of labor for 1903, it was estimated that the English laborer could buy the necessities of life for one year with 205 days' labor, while it would require 225 days labor for an American to do the same thing. The difference must be even greater now, because since 1903 prices have advanced faster in the United States than in Great Britain.

WHO OWNS THE UNITED STATES?

The other day the Wall Street Journal published an analysis of financial control showing that J. Pierpont Morgan is dominant in corporate business that has a capitalization of \$10,000,000,000, or nearly 10 per cent of the entire wealth of the country.

One man out of ninety millions controls 10 per cent of the wealth. Remarkable, isn't it? And worth thinking about by a people whose right to work for wages and to get wages enough to live upon depends upon the character of the control of this wealth.

But that isn't the whole story, by any means. Moody's Magazine, which isn't a "muckraking" magazine and is published for investors, not for socialists, comments thus upon the showing made by the Wall Street Journal: "It is a well known fact that in railroads, industrial concerns and in public utility enterprises the so-called Rockefeller interests represent a larger aggregate of capital than do the Morgan interests."

"And, further than this, these two big interests are themselves quite directly allied and are becoming more closely cemented in both their plans and motives as the years go by."

"And outside of these two great groups are half a dozen other smaller groups of capitalists which between them represent in corporate control easily \$15,000,000,000 more of capitalized values."

"These outside groups are identified, both in interests and other important ways, with either the Morgan or Rockefeller group, and thus we may, in presenting an exhibit of concentrated control of corporate undertakings, fairly state that a capitalized valuation of probably \$35,000,000,000 is concentrated in the hands and under the control of not more than a dozen men."

Thirty-five per cent of the nation's wealth—and that means the people's wealth, because the people created it—in the hands of a dozen men who are closely allied in motives and methods!

Nor does that tell the full story. Moody's Magazine estimates the total capitalization at par value of the country's corporate wealth at \$43,000,000,000. Of this, \$35,000,000,000, or 80

per cent, is in the control of a dozen men who work together. And these men are not philanthropists or patriots, but men greedy of power who are contriving to create—have created, in fact—the greatest power that ever existed in the history of the world.

People laughed at Senator LaFollette when he made a showing not so alarming as this in a speech in the senate, and called him a disturber, a socialist and a populist.

This aggregation of corporate control involves the power of life and death over smaller business activities. It involves the power of life and death over the workers of the nation. It proposes to use this power for the selfish purposes of the few who control it, and it commands the government of the nation to keep its hands off.

Are the American people, who rebelled against the infinitely less irritating tyranny of a stupid king of England, and who rose in arms against the power of a slaveholders' autocracy, likely to submit to having the price they shall receive for their labor, and the price they shall pay for the products of that labor when they need them to keep body and soul together, fixed by the dozen men who have gathered up this terrific power and are using it for their own benefit?

ALDRICH AND ECONOMY

Senator Aldrich said the other day that if he were running the government he could save \$300,000,000 a year, and the amount of comment called forth by his remark probably is far in excess of what he had expected.

Perhaps the neatest is that of the New York Evening Post, which says: "He is."

Aldrich is running the government. He is the Boss of the republic, or rather he is vice regent for the real boss, Special Privilege.

The admission, therefore, that the government could be run at a saving of \$300,000,000 a year is an admission that Aldrich has not been doing his duty to the people; but that is an insignificant matter. He does not owe this power to the people of the United States except indirectly through their negligence in failing to surround him with senators who would take that power away from him, and he owes and admits no allegiance or responsibility to the people.

Where the admission is going to hurt, however, is with the party which makes Senator Aldrich's power possible. It has had full control of the government in all its branches for practically forty years. It has had nothing but its own will to hinder it from doing its full duty. But it has been so busy doing the errands of Special Privilege that it hasn't had time to be economical. So it is possible for the man highest in power in that party to say that the government is wasting \$300,000,000 a year.

Curiously enough, that amount is about what the government gets out of the tariff. The tariff costs the people ten times that much each year, but the government only gets 10 per cent of what it costs. Sometime it might be worth while to figure out what the government could do with that tax of \$2,700,000,000 a year if it got into the public treasury instead of into the treasury of Special Privilege.

As might have been expected, Senator Aldrich's innocent remark hasn't set well with his republican colleagues. The Washington correspondent of the Philadelphia Record reports this incident: "Later in the afternoon Senator Hale took Aldrich off in a remote corner and gave him the largest piece of his mind that the Maine senator has ever donated at one time. He told Aldrich he had made the most stupendous blunder of his public career, and that his words would be hurled from the stump with telling effect during the campaign. He said the declaration made it seem that the republican party had squandered billions of dollars during the period it has remained in power, if the present ratio of useless extravagance is \$300,000,000 a year. Hale was mad through and through, and it was a fierce scolding he handed out to his associate in bossing the senate."

It is rather awkward. Here is a campaign coming on, and the chief figure in the administration's party generously gives the enemy for campaign material the admission that the republican party is squandering \$300,000,000 a year of the people's money. The tariff, as we have said, costs \$300,000,000 a year. Of that amount \$2,700,000,000 is worse than squandered; it is taken from a needy people and given to an organized Special Privilege that already is burdened with more wealth than is good for it or for the republic. The remaining \$300,000,000 goes into the public treasury; and Senator Aldrich, who ought to know, says that it is squandered.

Surely here are matters worth thinking upon.

"SAVING THEIR OWN SKINS"

"I was sacrificed so that the big men might save their own skins," declared Otto Spitzer, the sugar trust's dock superintendent, just after he had received his two years' sentence for complicity in the \$2,000,000 underweight frauds.

Spitzer deserves punishment, of course. He was an underling in the job. But the owners of the trust were the greatest criminals. They would have pocketed the \$2,000,000 had not their crime been discovered. Therefore they

should be punished more severely than Spitzer, who was merely one of their tools, which they ran away and left cold-bloodedly when the arm of the law reached toward them. Spitzer and a few \$18 a week checkers have been torn from their families and sent to prison, but the men "higher up" have not even been commanded to appear at the bar of justice.

The "big men" are managing to "save their own skins," exactly as Spitzer said. And some day the public may learn how they were able to do it.

In The Halls of Congress

BY TAV.

Special Washington Correspondence.

After Colonel Roosevelt is safely home and the shouting has died down, the nation will naturally look to him to choose his company as between the standpatters and the progressives. President Taft and Senator Aldrich are symbols of the reactionary group, while LaFollette and Clapp are representative of the progressive element of the republican party.

If the ex-president disowns Mr. Taft, it will be accepted by many as an admission of the oft-made charge that he enticed the American people into electing as president a man wholly unfit for the office.

If Roosevelt places his approval on the Taft administration it will be accepted as a slap in the face of the progressives and progressive sympathizers.

It would appear that whatever course Mr. Roosevelt takes, he will come in for criticism. But it may be that he has already mapped out an ingenious "policy" that will enable him to meet the vexatious situation with a minimum amount of irritation to all concerned.

There is as wide a difference of opinion among Washington newspaper correspondents as to what Roosevelt will do, politically, upon his return, as among the politicians.

Frank B. Lord, Washington correspondent for Norman E. Mack's National Monthly, sums up the situation this way:

"Depend upon it, Roosevelt will make no move unless he sees beforehand that he can win. Even though he may desire a renomination as president, he will say nothing until he has sized up the situation carefully and can see victory ahead. Therefore, Roosevelt's first active stroke for a renomination will signalize the defeat of Taft. If Roosevelt is convinced that the stand-pat element of his party can not be routed, he will not show his hand as to wishing another term in the White House."

"Come home, come home, brave Teddy, come home,
I have troubles enough and to spare,
Don't leave me to blunder, forlorn and alone—
You can hunt in the canebrakes for bear."

"Pinchot and Glavis, those watch dogs of your,
They have Ballinger up in a tree,
Pinchot's loud barking I could not endure,
For I knew he was barking at me."

"Those fiery insurgents here from the west,
They do not like Aldrich, nor Joe,
Because I have favored the latter more than the rest,
Those insurgents are tramping my toes."

"I tried them with laughter and broadest of smiles,
I showed them the size of my fist,
Each shot I have fired, missed them a mile,
But angered the game that I wished."

"I do not believe in your lecturing in France,
While I have so much to endure,
Altho' I am a trifle too large for your pants,
I cannot keep step in your shoes."

In his annual message to congress at the opening of the present session, President Taft asked that there be no congressional investigation of the \$2,000,000 sugar trust underweight frauds, as it might interfere with the prosecution of the men "higher up" in the crime. Three months have passed and the government has taken no step toward prosecuting the men "higher up." Therefore, Representative Fitzgerald (N. Y.) has introduced a resolution asking that the president "inform the house what facts, if any, exist which makes inexpedient a thorough examination at this time" of the sugar trust's misdeeds. If the president does not reply within a reasonable time, there will be further developments, no doubt.

The real explanation of the antagonism of the corporate interests of the United States to the corporation tax is the publicity feature of the measure. They are willing to pay a tax that will make up the deficit in the government's finances, according to a statement made to the president by Charles F. Brookner, republican national committeeman from Connecticut, but are bitterly hostile to being required to allow the government to learn their business secrets.

Minority Leader Champ Clark was asked to say something about his presidential boom. "My

position is something like that of former Speaker Tom Reed," said Clark. "Reed once had a boomlet, and someone asked him for an expression on the subject, 'My position,' said Reed, 'is that they might go further and fare worse, and I think they will.'"

It costs the people \$35,000 annually to keep up the White House stables. And when the president goes out for a ride, it is always in an automobile.

REFLECTIONS OF A BACHELOR

To most people respectability is nine parts clothes and one part manners.

Some men are so lucky that when an umbrella is stolen from them they get a chance to steal a better one.

Remember that two quarters in your own pocket jingle more merrily for you than two eagles do for you in another man's.

A man is cross with his family at breakfast, so as to strike a fair average on how amiable he was with his friends at supper the night before.

A woman can have more sentiment aroused in her by stopping to look at a baby cap in a shop window than by going to the most thrilling play that ever was acted.

POINTED PARAGRAPHS

It's easy for a busy man to keep out of mischief.

Some people waste a lot of valuable time by hustling.

Ever notice how few people are related to their friends.

This old world looks pretty good to the healthy person.

The wise man tries to acquire sense as early in life as possible.

A man is apt to call it "hard luck" when he gets what he deserves.

And most married men do as they please—when away from home.

The meanest of all men is the one who makes capital out of a calamity.

Anyway it isn't a matter of record that an old hen originated the shell game.

Mind your own business and some day you will be minding a business of your own.

But women can put it all over men when it comes to looking interested when they are not.

What kind of wings do you expect to get for the pennies you drop into the contribution plate?

It might be well to remember that other people have just as much right to their opinions as you have to yours.

After listening to a pessimist for half an hour a man is apt to feel the way he does after taking a dose of bitter medicine.

MORNING SMILES

Colonel (1910)—So you lost half your forces in ambush?

Lieutenant—Yes, sir! The enemy rigged up a cannon to look like a moving picture machine, and the boys just fought for a chance to get right in front of it.

"Do you think a college education helps a man in business?"

"Sure. I've had two college boys here work in' for me durin' the last year, and I was afraid to discharge either of 'em for fear they'd find fault with my grammar when I done it."

"Before we were married," said Mr. Meekton, "I showed my affection for Henrietta by serenading her."

"I suppose you neglect any such attentions now?"

"Yes. I show my affection now by respecting her desire that I shall not try to sing."

"Times has certainly changed," observed an octogenarian dandy in Alabama. "Befo' de wah it was only de slaves dat was sold, but only de udder day I hears a genulmen state dat an old mastah was sold at auction in New York for a whole lot o' money. Times has cert'n'y changed."

"How's your son making out in business?" asked the first capitalist.

"Very well indeed," replied the other, "he's got a quarter of a million."

"Why, you started him with a million, didn't you?"

"Yes, and it's two months now since he started operations in Wall street."

Tramp—Could you give me a little vinegar and a rag to put on my foot?

Housekeeper—I'm sorry. I haven't any vinegar, but I can give you a little brandy.

Tramp—Thank you, that will do very well—and I shan't need the rag.

"Oi'll work no more for that man Dolan."

"An' for why?"

"Shure, 'tis on account av a remark he made."

"An' what was that?"

"Says he, 'Casey,' says he, 'ye're discharged.'"



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