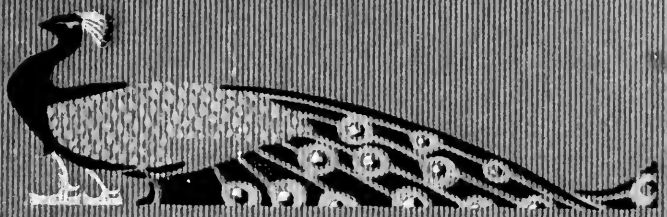

The PASSING of the IDLE RICH

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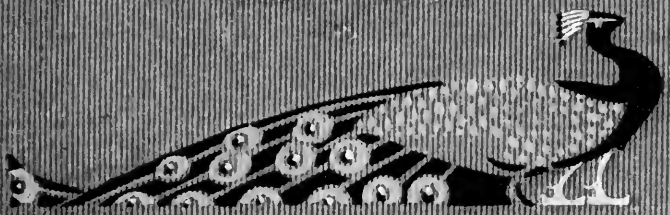

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FREDERICK TOWNSEND MARTIN

GARDEN CITY NEW YORK
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY
1911

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"*The habits of our whole species fall into three great classes — useful labour, useless labour, and idleness. Of these, the first only is meritorious, and to it all the products of labour rightfully belong; but the two latter, while they exist, are heavy pensioners upon the first, robbing it of a large portion of its just rights. The only remedy for this is to, so far as possible, drive useless labour and idleness out of existence. . . .*"

—Abraham Lincoln.

Chapter One

THE KINGDOM OF SOCIETY

I know Society. I was born in it, and have lived in it all my life, both here and in the capitals of Europe. I believe that I understand as well as any man what are the true traditions and the true conditions of American Society; and for comparison, I also know and understand the conditions and traditions of Society in other lands. My honest opinion is that American Society, for all its faults, and it has many, and for all the hideous abnormalities that in these later years have been grafted upon it, stands to-day a cleaner, saner and more normal Society than that of

any other highly civilized nation in the world.

In this nation, the very soul of which is the spirit of democracy, we have evolved a very elaborate and extremely complex society. Like all such organizations, in all the lands under the sun, it is an oligarchy; one might almost say a tyranny. Its rulers for the most part inherit their power and rule by hereditary right. The foundations of this society and the foundations of the power of its rulers were laid in generations now dead and gone. Time has crystallized its rules into laws and formulated its conventions into tenets.

It is not my desire, in writing about Society, to describe in detail its practices, to dwell upon its rules and regulations, to dilate upon its normal condition or its

duties. Rather, I intend to dwell upon a phase of its existence that does not traditionally belong to it, and that is not normally a part of it. This phase or condition I choose to describe in the phrase "The Idle Rich."

If, in the writer's license of generality, I seem at times to deal too harshly with the world of which I am a part, let the reader put himself for a moment in my place. Let him imagine himself a member of a class judged and condemned according to a distorted popular conception based upon a semi-knowledge of the acts, habits, morals and ethics of the very worst of the class; nay, even of men and women who, while aping to the best of their poor ability the fashions, the habits, and the customs of that class, ignore every one of its best traditions, forget every one

of its laws, and break every one of its commandments.

It is hard for me to write with patience of the small class that has done so much to disgrace and discredit the spirit of American Society. For I know that it is true that in the mind of an enormous number of our people, and of the people of other civilized countries, American Society is brought to shame and ridicule by the extraordinary excesses that have been brought within its gates and grafted into its system by the idle rich.

Yet there are excuses. This is the most rapid age in history. In the progress of this nation we have ignored and turned our back upon that process which Tennyson so well described in the happy phrase, "slow broadening down from precedent to precedent." We laugh at precedent.

We choose instead to tumble riotously down from step to step of progress, marking swift epochs with every bump.

Naturally I am a conservative, and I deplore the process by which we sweep away the precedents of the nations. I prefer orderly evolution to disorderly revolution, either in business, in politics, or in the making of a social world; but I cannot change the things that I deplore. The fact, in the face of my protests, is as unblinking as the Sphinx in the roar of Napoleon's cannon. And that fact is that in the making of our social world, as in the making of everything else that goes to make America, we have ignored the traditions of our fathers.

Let me put this a little more fully. For this, after all, is the great cause that explains so much that needs explanation

in the structure of our social world, in the rules that govern it, and in the habits, deplorable or otherwise, which have fastened themselves upon it. Let me speak first of banking, for by profession I am a banker. To-day the English banker and the French banker follow, in the pursuit of business, paths beaten to smooth running by the feet of their ancestors. To-day you will find in the banking world of England and of France the same rules of personal conduct and personal honour, the same principles of business nursing and business repression that you would have found a century ago.

How different it is in this country! Through our early history, if you care to study it in detail, you would have found us pacing step by step the progress of England; but more than half a century

ago, when this nation rejected as unsuited to its ideals the notion of a central bank, our ways divided in the banking world. From that day to this there has hardly been a single important step — until very recently — that has not carried us farther from the traditions of our English cousins. In the matter of currency, we stumbled blindly through a maze of ignorance, piling error upon error, plunging desperately from the early madness of wild-cat State currency into the preposterous and abnormal system which to-day threatens periodically the throttling of our commerce and the disruption of the business world.

In the twin worlds of railroads and manufacturing, too, we blazed out paths entirely our own. Even to this day, in the face of industrial marvels here and in Germany, England clings desperately to the con-

ditions that made her what she is. I would not dare generalize and say that the industrial world of England does not know the idea of centralization and concentration, but I will say this, that if one seek at its best the individual factory, the separate plant, the trade-mark that cannot be bought, the personal name that never can be submerged, he may go look in England for them now and he will find them, just as he would have found them a century ago.

Here a new magic grew. It came not as a heaven-born inspiration to one man's mind, but as an evolution born of the land and the air and the water. I shall dwell upon it more in a later chapter. Here it is enough merely to indicate it. It was that the individual plant and the individual name must be submerged in the combine

of plants and individuals. The personal name must vanish in the trust. The trust in turn must disappear into a greater trust, and yet a greater trust — and so on until, at last, a dozen mighty combinations were gathered together into one great trust of trusts, bringing under one hand the finding, the production, the marketing, and the transportation of the raw material, and the assembling, manufacture, selling, and transportation of the finished product.

So we struck out methods, manners, customs, and traditions all our own. We did it — this marvellous evolution — in half the lifetime of a man. In fact, in the industrial world one might almost say it was a process of twenty years — merely a moment of the nation's history. Well may one say it is a rapid age in which we live. Madly we rush at our great problems.

We did not know — we do not know yet — what the result is to be. There is no precedent to guide us; the road to to-morrow bears no sign-posts. Not yet has our new system been tried by a panic that disturbed the depths of the commercial and industrial seas. Only, we hope for the best, for optimism is the sign-manual of the true-born American.

I dwell upon these matters not because I care to pose or dare to pose as an authority upon them, but because the principles and ideas upon which they rest underlie also the making of the Kingdom of Society of which I would write. For social evolution is, after all, but a part of this same evolution that has given us our own distinctive banking system — good as it is or bad as it may be — and our own industrial system — giant or weakling as it may prove to be.

And if our banking system and our great industrial system were born in a day and a night, what may one say of the plutocracy that in this later day has been grafted upon and has grown to be a part of the American social world? Here, indeed, the traditions of the world of history flashed past us, in our forward rush, as dead leaves fly backward from a speeding train. We saw them as they flew — yet we did not clearly see them. We knew they were, but we could not distinguish them one from the other; and, after all, little we cared for them, and little we care now.

Perhaps, as I write, my mind will carry me back to the days before these new phenomena transpired; and I shall be moved to write of social America in the days of its true glory, before the glitter of tinsel and the tawdry finery of mere wealth over-

laid it. For that is the background against which stand out in all their hideousness the empty follies of the idle rich and the vapid foolishness of the ultra-fashionable in America to-day.

Forty years ago, as a boy, I lived in a true American home. The atmosphere of that home was still under the vitalizing influence of the nation's great struggle for emancipation. Lincoln was a saint. The writings of Longfellow and Emerson, Hawthorne and Washington Irving, were constantly read. The traditions of European Society had not struck their roots deep into the social soil of the United States. We were provincial, to be sure, but there was bliss in simplicity and innocence. Morally and intellectually the life of the family and the life of the State were settled. We knew there was a God. We were posi-

tive as to just what was right and what was wrong. The Bible, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, the fact of the assured greatness of our country, the power of our religious, political, and social ideals to save the world — our faith in these was our Rock of Ages; and to these must be added the absolute belief in the theory that it was the sacred duty of every human being to serve his kind.

Just in how far these fundamentals are now broken and scattered I shall not here attempt to say. But it is simply true that the Bible is no longer read, that religion has lost its hold, that the Constitution and laws are trampled upon by the rich and powerful, and are no longer held sacred by the poor and weak. Instead of Hawthorne, we read Zola and Gorky; instead

of Longfellow and Bryant, Ibsen and Shaw. Among how many perfectly respectable, ay, even religious, people is the name of Nietsche not more familiar than that of Cardinal Newman! I do not know whither we are going, but I do know that we are going.

Come search the records of generations long dead for the seeds of our social system. You will find them planted deep, and long ago. They are the same seeds of class destruction that lay in darkness through the early centuries of Rome's history, to spring to life in the sunshine of the triumphs of the Republic, and reach their perfect flower in the era of plethoric wealth that marked the apogee of the Empire — and then to fall, as full-blown blossoms will. They are the same seeds that for half a thousand years lay buried in simple Eng-

land, to come to tardy life in the afterglow of Elizabeth's triumphs, and reach their fulness in the social glory of the mid-Victorian era.

Less than half a century ago the aristocracy of America worked with its hands, laboured in its broad fields, ate its bread in the sweat of its brow. The cities were small and inconsequential, and the laws of hospitality far overbalanced the traditions of class. Here and there was wealth — but wealth was shackled to the wheels of Opportunity.

Often I have pondered over the startling wisdom of that succinct description of the American ideal written, strange to say, a hundred and forty years ago, by Adam Smith:

In our North American colonies, where uncultivated land is still to be had upon

easy terms, no manufactures for distant sale have ever yet been established in any of their towns. When an artificer has acquired a little more stock than is necessary for carrying on his own business and supplying the neighbouring country, he does not, in North America, attempt to establish with it a manufacture for more distant sale, but employs it in the purchase and improvement of uncultivated lands. From artificer, he becomes planter, and neither the large wages nor the easy subsistence which the country affords to artificers, can bribe him rather to work for other people than for himself. He feels that an artificer is the servant of his customers, from whom he derives his subsistence, but that a planter who cultivates his own land, and derives his necessary subsistence from the labour of his own family, is really a master, and independent of all the world.

That was the America of 1760 — and it was the America that Lincoln knew. In the region that he knew as a boy and a man, there were neither great plantations, great factories, nor combines. The bulk of the

population lived on small farms, toiled with their own hands, and remained in possession of their own products. A few owned and operated small stores or factories for the making of necessities. These could not grow rich. Great riches must be derived from the labour of many. The rich of the Eastern states fifty years ago were the owners of banks, large importing houses, railroads, and factories. These industries, being small, gave rise to fortunes that now seem small. They were riches, but not great riches.

Think, then, of the transition that I myself have seen! Sometimes, as I sit alone in my library reading and thinking about these matters, and reflecting upon the years that make up my brief lifetime, a sort of terror of to-morrow seizes me. I do not need to guess at the facts of my own

world. I *know* the facts that such satirists as Mr. Upton Sinclair vaguely guess, or gather from the gossip of the stables and the kitchen. The miserable excesses of Society are an open book. I cannot blind my eyes or deafen my ears or close my nostrils and forget them. That decay has set in I know; that it has struck deep, as yet I cannot bring myself to believe. And this book is but my feeble effort to prevent it striking deeper, if I may.

"*The wilfully idle man, like the wilfully barren woman, has no place in a sane, healthy, vigorous community.*"

—THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

Chapter Two

THE MADNESS OF EXTRAVAGANCE

I remember very well indeed that bitter period of transition when first the ideal, or lack of ideals, of the newer America began to corrode the old society. I remember with what intense bitterness and chagrin the early excesses of the earliest of the idle rich were condoned by the leaders of society in that day. At first the social world fought hard for its traditions, and the leaders of American Society of my father's day were never reconciled to the changes that came about in the body social. In Boston and Philadelphia, to this day, society maintains its battle against the

invader. Now, as then, society frowns upon the idle men. Only recently one of the leaders of Boston society quoted in the course of a conversation with me that powerful sentence from one of Mr. Roosevelt's speeches:

"The wilfully idle man, like the wilfully barren woman, has no place in a sane, healthy, vigorous community."

That, after all, is as much a tradition of true society as it is of the plains and the fields. I do not yield to any man or any class in America in my detestation of idleness in man or woman. And I believe that the traditions of real American society support me in this attitude.

In spite of ourselves, we drifted into a period in which idleness became the fashion. We did not know just why the thing was true; but we were forced to recognize its

truth. Now, looking back rather than forward over the past quarter of a century, one may see quite clearly how it came about. And I purpose, in the course of this book, to write down, perhaps for the amusement of my own contemporaries, perhaps for the guidance of those who have not yet begun to think about these matters, the causes that gave us this plague of idleness.

First of all, however, I would merely set down in a phrase the immediate cause of it, and then proceed to sketch the phenomenon itself, that one may know the things which are right. It was the magic of gold; it was the poison of idle wealth. It came at first like a little spot upon the body of a man. Quickly it spread from limb to limb, and part to part, until, in the fulness of time, it was a leprosy, following the body of society almost from head to

foot. It was the curse of gold, no more, no less — the same condition that laid in the dust the glory of Athens, that hurled to ruin the splendour of Rome, that brought upon Bourbon France the terror of the Revolution.

Think, if you can, of the swift stages through which we pass. Picture the solid, conventional, Christian, and cleanly society of New York immediately after the Civil War. To think of it now, even as I learned it by hearsay, very likely, brings me a feeling of personal regret, as though I had lost a fine old friend. Picture, then, the beginning of a revolution, small, inconsequent — yet, to the most discerning, portentous of evil and pregnant of disaster. A few young men, sons of society, set up new idols in the ancient temples. They began to ape the habits and to imitate

the morals of that world which, while possessing wealth in plenty, had never possessed the refinement or the ethical standards of true society.

It is a melancholy fact that the impetus toward extravagance, excess, debauchery, and shamelessness came to us from the under-world.

For always, in every country, just outside the gates, there lives a people peculiar to itself. They have wealth equal, perhaps, to that of any in the social world. They have education, it may be, of the finest. They have desires, just as all men have. They have instincts, it may be, little better or little worse than those of the best in the land. The gates are shut against them for reasons that, to those inside, seem quite sufficient. It may be vulgarity; it may be immorality; it may be

mere *gaucherie* of manners; it may be lack of education; or it may be any one of a dozen other reasons that puts them beyond the pale. Whatever may be the reason, the fact remains that they are beyond the pale.

In this class of society, always, in all races, morals, and manners tend to excesses. They are not restrained by sane conventions and laws that regulate society; nor are they held in the leash of respectability or in the chains of religion or of honour, as are the sturdy men and women of the so-called middle class. Constantly they are in rebellion against these laws and these traditions. Ever they are prone to substitute license for liberty, to plunge into immorality, to draw upon the stage in its worst moods for their passions and their pleasures, and to practise in their lives the vices of the decadent nations.

In this stage of our social life of which I write, the manners, the morals, and the practices of this social class crept into even that small section of society which calls itself "the Upper Class." The young men — and unhappily the young women — of the finest families in our great cities began to copy the vices and to imitate the manners of this other class, and to plunge into the same excesses that marked its manner of life.

There is a vast difference between the healthy, wholesome spending of money for amusements, pleasures, and recreations and the feverish searching for some new sensation that can be had only at a tremendous cost. The simple expenditure of money, even in startling amounts, eventually fails to produce the thrill that it ought to have, and when the

man or woman of fortune, with little to think of but the constant hunt for amusement and novelty, begins to suffer from continuous *ennui*, the result is frequently amazing and sometimes sickening.

A wearied, bored group of men arranged a dinner. They had been attending dinners until such functions had lost interest for them. Similarly their friends were wearied by the conventional dinner of the time. Why not prepare a meal, the like of which had never been before? Why not amuse society and astonish the part of the community that is outside of society? They did so. The dinner was served on horseback on the upper floor of a fashionable New York resort, the name of which is known from coast to coast; the guests were attired in riding habits; the handsomely groomed horses pranced and clattered

about the magnificent dining-room, each bearing, besides its rider, a miniature table. The hoofs of the animals were covered with soft rubber pads to save the waxed floor from destruction. At midnight a reporter for an active and sensational morning newspaper ran across the choice bit of news. He telephoned the information to his city editor and the reply of that moulder of opinion was brief and to the point.

"You're lying to me," said the editor.

The most sensational paper in town refused to believe its reporter, who attempted later on to reach the scene of the event, but was repulsed and driven away.

"How much did it cost?" the public inquired interestedly. The man who paid the bill knew. The public and its newspapers guessed, their estimates running from ten thousand to fifty thousand dollars.

The fond owner of a diminutive black-and-tan dog gave a banquet in honour of the animal. The dog was worth, perhaps, fifty dollars. The festivities were very gay. The man's friends came to his dinner in droves, the men in evening clothes and the women bedecked in shimmering silks and flashing jewels. In the midst of the dinner, the man formally decorated his dog with a diamond collar worth fifteen thousand dollars. It contained seven hundred small brilliants, varying in weight from one sixth to one carat. The guests shouted their approval, and the dinner was regarded as a huge success.

The leader of a wealthy clique in a Western city was struck with a unique idea. He was tired of spending money. There was nothing new for which to spend it. He gave a "poverty social." The thirty

guests came to his palatial home in rags and tatters. Scraps of food were served on wooden plates. The diners sat about on broken soap boxes, buckets, and coal-hods. Newspapers, dust cloths, and old skirts were used as napkins, and beer was served in a rusty tin can, instead of the conventional champagne. They played being poor for one night, and not one of them but joined in ecstatic praise of their host and his unusual ability to provide a sensation.

A bored individual with a fondness for gems covered as much of his person as possible with diamonds. When he walked abroad, he flashed and sparkled in the sunlight. He, also, became the possessor of a happy inspiration. He went to his dentist and had little holes bored in his teeth, into which the tooth expert inserted

twin rows of diamonds. He had found another way of spending money.

A Southern millionaire purchased an imported motor car. It cost him twelve thousand dollars when it came off the ship. He looked at it in scorn and called in decorators. The car was refitted completely. It was equipped with two diminutive rooms, a living apartment, and a sleeping room. Hot and cold water fixtures were put in and space was found for a small bath-tub. A kitchen with a full equipment of cooking utensils was added, and, when the various tradesmen and mechanics completed their work, the car resembled a complete and luxuriously furnished home on wheels. The original cost of twelve thousand dollars had been brought up to thirty thousand and the owner was temporarily contented.

Very young and very wealthy was the

young man whose attentions to an embryonic actress amused a community a few years back. It was the young man's opinion that he was desperately in love with the lady, who in later years married a publisher of songs. The millionaire youngster showered the girl with gifts. He gave her rings, bracelets, necklaces, and diamond-studded combs for her black tresses until she glistened from head to foot. The very buttons of her gloves were diamonds and her shoes were fastened with monster pearls. The question of taste never entered into the situation. It was simply the spending of money and the bedecking of a coarse, but crafty, stage girl. In three years, she succeeded in throwing away almost a million dollars for the deluded youngster, at the end of which time they parted.

At the conclusion of an elaborate affair in New York City, the guests leaned back in their chairs to listen to the singers. The cigarettes were passed around. Oddly enough, the banquet had not been marked until that moment, and, as the host was famous for the unusualness of his dinners, many of the diners were disappointed. Their disappointment gave way to admiration. Each cigarette was rolled, not in white paper, but in a one hundred dollar bill and the initials of the host were engraved in gold letters. This strange conceit was applauded until the voices of the singers struggled amid the uproar.

A member of the idle rich rumbled along a Jersey highway in his motor car. He approached an excavation where workmen were manœuvring cranes and hoists. At the side of the road lay a dying horse.

It had fallen into a hole and two of its legs were broken. The workmen were waiting for the arrival of a policeman to put the suffering animal to death.

"I'll save that horse," decided the wealthy motorist. His decision was simply an idle whim. When the policeman came, the motorist had already bought the useless horse for a ten dollar bill. He procured an ambulance and had the animal removed to his own stable. He summoned the foremost veterinarians in New York and the crippled work horse was patched up. For weeks it hung suspended in a sling and finally the broken bones knitted and the horse hobbled about. The veterinarians demanded five thousand dollars for their work and were paid without complaint. In his stoutest days, the saved horse was worth no more than a hundred dollars.

A well known metropolitan spender has an annual bill of some ten thousand dollars for shoes alone. His order stands in every manufactory in America and Europe. Whenever a new style of men's shoes is designed, a sample pair is immediately shipped to him. He cannot possibly wear a tenth of the shoes sent to him, but he has the satisfying knowledge that he is never behind the style.

The wife of a Western man owns a pet monkey. The little beast lives in a private room and is constantly attended by a valet. It rides abroad behind its private trotter, has its own outfit of clothes, its dining table, and a bed made of solid ivory, tipped with gold ornaments. All told, perhaps a dozen human beings minister to the comfort of the little simian and the mistress cheerfully pays from ten to

fifteen thousand dollars yearly on this one extravagance. She became dissatisfied with the dining service in the monkey-room of her home, and her pet now eats its meals off solid silver plates.

At a dinner party given by a notorious millionaire, each guest discovered in one of his oysters a magnificent black pearl. It was a fitting prelude to a sumptuous banquet and it contained an element of surprise. It was said that the dinner cost the giver twenty thousand dollars.

A party of engineers were studying the country in a Southern state with an eye to a future railroad. Accompanying them was a tired young man of wealth, who had little interest in what they were doing, and who had gone with them in search of possible amusement. He found it. The party discovered an aged family of primi-

tive negroes living in a wretched hovel on the edge of a swamp. The millionaire was struck by the utter desolation of the house and its occupants. It occurred to him that he might find it interesting to aid the darkeys. He parted company with the engineers, and, with a single friend, he gave himself over to bettering the condition of the coloured family. Carpenters appeared from New Orleans. Materials were dragged through the country behind mules. Decorations were shipped from New York. The tottering shack came down and a splendid country bungalow was reared in its place. The interior was furnished with a lavish hand and with a total disregard for expense. White pillars supported the roof. Old-fashioned fireplaces were built into the walls and plate-glass windows were set into the doors.

The floors were paved with concrete, and a handsome bath room was fitted up for the amazed and awe-stricken family. When he had finished the home, the young man turned his attention to its inmates. He bought them clothes — such clothes as they had never before dreamed of. He provided them with toilet articles and trifling luxuries, and, before he went away, he supplied the larder with enough food to last a year. That negro family is still the talk of the entire state in which it lives and its members regard what has happened as a manifestation from on high. The young man in search of interesting occupation parted from twenty thousand of his innumerable dollars and probably thinks of the whole affair with satisfaction.

An Italian savant and student has visited America. He has set down his opinions

and some of them are interesting. He finds, for instance, that the wife of one of our foremost millionaires wears a necklace that cost more than six hundred thousand dollars. The infant son of this favoured lady reposed, during his tenderer years, in a cradle that was valued at ten thousand dollars and immediately following the birth of the boy — an event that was flashed by telegraph to the furthest corners of the earth — a retinue of servants was formed for the sole benefit of the infant. This corps of retainers consisted of four nurse ladies, four high-priced physicians, who examined the child four times a day, and posted serious bulletins for the information of the clamant press and public.

Another child came to another family, and Fifth Avenue trotted past the birthplace with bated breath and curious eyes.

When the boy came to that stage of his development wherein the salutary bottle could be dispensed with, he was clothed in dignity and provided with a staff of personal attendants consisting of two able cooks, six grooms, three coachmen, two valets, and one governess. He grew in health and strength and to-day he manages a railway with acumen and success.

A gentleman of improvident habits and few dollars packed his meagre belongings in a hand bag and departed for the West. Subsequently, he achieved fortune and fame and came into possession of a gold mine, the ledges of which soon placed his name high in the ranks of America's millionaires. Overcome by gratitude, he gave a commemorative dinner party in the sombre depths of the kindly mine. The space devoted to the festivities was forty

feet wide and seventy feet long. One hundred guests assembled in the bowels of the mine and sat down to a sumptuous feast. The waiters were clad in imitation of miners. They hovered about attentively with oil lamps flaring from their foreheads. Picks and shovels decorated the uneven walls, and the various courses were lowered from the mouth of the mine in the faithful cage that had carried up to the grateful millionaire his many dollars. A band discoursed sweet music and the bill was some fourteen thousand dollars.

A man of common name, but of uncommon wealth, decided to have a home in New York City. He purchased the palace of a friend who had died and paid for it two million dollars, which was popularly supposed to be one half the original cost of the pile. On his garden, to make space

for which he tore down a building that had cost a hundred thousand, the new owner spent five hundred thousand dollars. His bedstead is of carved ivory and ebony, inlaid with gold. It cost two hundred thousand dollars. The walls are richly carved and decorated with enamel and gold; they cost sixty-five thousand dollars. On the ceiling, the happy millionaire expended twenty thousand in carvings, enamels, and gold, and ten pairs of filmy curtains, costing two thousand a pair, wave in the morning breeze. The wardrobe in this famous bedroom represents an outlay of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars and the dressing table sixty-five thousand. The wash stand cost thirty-eight thousand, and the bed hangings, fifty dollars a yard. The chimney-piece and overhanging mantel threw into gen-

eral circulation eight thousand more, and the four doors consumed another ten thousand.

A wealthy lover of music paid the highest price ever recorded for a piano. It was no ordinary piano. Its price was fifty thousand dollars. For a single painting a Westerner paid fifty-five thousand dollars. Another collector, whose name is known in the humblest homes, expended fifty thousand dollars for a silver trinket only four inches high.

An enthusiastic American happened to live in London at the time the North Pole was discovered. For an indefinite period of time the North Pole was seemingly discovered by two Americans. That controversy is ended and dead, but the memory of the dinner given in London by the proud American will live for many years. Thirty

guests accepted the invitations, and, upon entering the home of their host, found themselves in a barren and icy waste. The prow of an ice-bound ship protruded from one side of the wall. Pale electric lights flashed coldly from a score of points. Icebergs towered above the dinner table, surmounted by polar bears. In the centre of the room was a huge oval table to represent a solid block of ice and thereon the brilliant feast was served. The waiters moved about noiselessly in the costumes of Eskimos, hooded in the skins of animals and clad in the white fur of polar bears. The dinner was a tremendous success. It cost the American ten thousand dollars and not one word of criticism was passed, except by the suffering waiters in their heavy furs on a warm mid-summer day.

A wealthy mining man wagered upon

the outcome of an election and lost. He proceeded to pay his bet by giving a dinner in his stables. Thirty-five guests appeared and prepared to enjoy themselves to the fullest. The table was arranged in the shape of a horseshoe, and the waiters were jockeys in silken jackets and long peak caps. During the enthusiastic scenes that followed, the favourite horse of the host was admitted to the banquet room from his near-by box stall and diverted the guests by eating the flowers, with which the banquet table was heavily laden, and by drinking champagne from the punch-bowl. Tiny Shetland ponies trotted and pranced about the diners and the favourite steed became mildly intoxicated from the champagne and was ridden about the room by hilarious men. The entire dinner was the exact opposite

of monotony. It cost the loser of the bet twelve thousand dollars.

A famous ten thousand dollar dinner was given in the heart of the tired old metropolis. The table was laid out as an oval and over its smooth surface costly flowers were spread in deep layers. In the centre was a lake of limpid water, suspended from the ceiling by gold wire network. Four white swans swam about during the progress of the banquet. From various rings in the ceiling hung golden cages containing rare song birds that twittered incessantly and the guests ate fruit from the branches of dwarf trees especially provided and at a cost that might seem staggering to the commonplace man of little wealth.

In Paris, a voluntarily exiled millionaire provided a dinner for twenty-two of his

intimate friends. For each guest was a private carriage with a team of splendid horses, and when the fortunate diners arrived in state, each found before him a whole leg of mutton, a whole salmon, an entire fowl, a basket of assorted fruits, and several bottles of wine. A mysterious bag made its appearance toward the close of the feast and each diner was invited to explore it for a keepsake. The souvenirs consisted of pearl studs, emerald links, cigarette cases of solid gold, inlaid with jewels, diamond rings, and other trifles. Thirty thousand dollars went into the pockets of the Parisian shopkeepers from this single dinner.

In searching for an unusual manner to spend a large sum of money upon a single object, a man of wealth selected a beautiful pair of opera glasses. They were made of solid

gold and the lenses were perfect. The cost was seventy-five thousand dollars, principally because of a lyre which surmounted the top, and which was encrusted with diamonds and sapphires. Without the embellishments, glasses of equal worth may be purchased in any shop for twenty dollars.

What was at the time designated as a tame waste of wealth, drunkenness without conviviality, the amusement of dull and unintelligent society, was a seventy-five thousand dollar feast given a few years ago. Monkeys sat between the guests and ducks swam about in pools contained in ivory fountains. An entire theatrical company journeyed from New York to provide entertainment for the favoured guests.

One of the most prominent band-masters in America was summoned by telegraph

to gather an orchestra of forty pieces. The command came from a woman of vast wealth in whose service the man of music had often laboured. A child had been born to her. She desired to have the occasion fittingly celebrated, and the diligent leader hurried home from the midst of a vacation, selected an orchestra, rehearsed, and eventually serenaded the new-come bit of humanity.

The "freak" dinner takes on many forms. One of the most unusual of this sort was given by a South African millionaire whose wealth had come from the diamond mines at Kimberly. The dinner was given amidst scenes of the Kimberly diggings. Beautiful birds flew about, and a hidden band wafted soft strains upon the assembled guests. Huge quartz blocks surrounded the table and formed the walls.

The floor was inch deep with sand, and a monster tent raised its head in the centre of the space. On the wash stand was a rough board on which were scrawled the words: "Wash your hands before sitting down to eat." It was all very amusing and undoubtedly unique. Veldt carts rumbled back and forth, pickaxes hung suspended from silken cords, and bags of genuine gold-dust, lay scattered about. Turtle soup was served from a cauldron, and two armed Boers paced up and down as sentinels. The dinner cost twenty thousand dollars.

In Boston a man of gold fell ill. From his waist down, he became nerveless and helpless. The time hung heavily on his hands as he lay in a hospital bed, and he determined to provide adequate amusement. His bed was removed to the largest

room in the hospital. An entire musical comedy company was transported from New York City and a popular production of the day was performed for the benefit of the invalid. It cost him three thousand five hundred dollars, and it was probably worth it.

In Pittsburg, workmen went about their task mysteriously. They were constructing a great glass tank. For five days they laboured and finally the affair was completed. It was taken into the banquet room of a hotel and filled with water. A dinner was to be given by the officials of a corporation. As the hours wore on, the diners waxed enthusiastic and happy. The more important and dignified officials of the corporation left. They probably knew what was coming and desired to be absent in view of possible news-

paper investigation. Then came the solution of the mystery. A human gold fish swam about in the tank — a shapely girl, clad in golden spangles and scales. The dinner was very expensive. Those who attended the banquet afterward declined to discuss it with the reporters when questioned about the human gold fish.

Another celebrated dinner that represented the effort of a wealthy man to vary the monotony of life and to provide a unique outlet for his money was the feast that culminated in the appearance of the girl in the pie. A monster pie was carried before the astounded diners upon the shoulders of four servants. The top crust was cut open. A slip of a girl bounded to her feet. A score of birds was released at the same moment.

In Los Angeles the son of a millionaire

mine owner felt the time hanging heavily upon his hands. He wandered down to where the trains rumbled in and out of the station, and an idea possessed him. He ordered a special train of five coaches and informed his friends. Those who cared to go accompanied the young squanderer. For fifty thousand dollars the railway company, which cares little about human emotions or desires, offered to take the young man to New York. Train despatchers cleared the rails. Switches were nailed fast. The young man and his special train were shot across the continent like a flying star. He was buying a fresh experience at a price that in all probability suited him.

A Nebraska individual is the proud owner of a hat that is made of greenbacks. It is rather a costly hat, as twenty thousand

dollars in bills was used in making it. It weighs twenty ounces and it looks exactly like the white hats worn by gentlemen. A young Crœsus grew fond of a lady fair and sought to display a mark of his affection in some extraordinary manner. He commissioned eight of the foremost artists in America to paint a fan. The cost was one hundred thousand dollars.

For five years skilled artisans have been carving a tombstone. The man who ordered the tombstone is still living, but the tombstone is vast in bulk, and the carvers have plenty of space to display their ingenuity. It is the order of the patron that work shall not cease until he is dead, and each year he sends the monument company a check for fifteen thousand dollars to cover running expenses. If the gentleman lives long enough, his tombstone

will be a spectacle worth seeing when it is finally bundled into place over his casket.

One of the most lavish and expensive — probably the most expensive — dinners ever given in America was a hyphenated feast, the record of which is writ large upon the annals of metropolitan society. It endured for six hours and cost fourteen thousand dollars per hour.

But why enumerate any more of these instances? Our papers are full of them. My purpose, however, is larger than gossip and I shall mention other pieces of extravagance wherever they make a point.

"No men living are more worthy to be trusted than those who toil up from poverty — none less inclined to take or touch what they have not honestly earned. Let them beware of surrendering a political power which they already possess, and which, if surrendered, will surely be used to close the door of advancement against such as they, and to fix new disabilities and burdens upon them, till all of liberty shall be lost."

—ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Chapter Three

THE SUBJUGATION OF AMERICA

In the golden days of American Society, as I have said, great fortunes were very rare indeed. The few that there were came mostly from merchandising and trade. The accumulations of John Jacob Astor, John Hancock, and Stephen Girard, in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, respectively, had not been dwarfed by the accumulations of a later era. They remained, up to about 1850, as the typical marvels of the American world of business.

The middle of last century was the harvest time of Opportunity in this land. Agriculture and trade remained the staple

occupations of the race; yet there had grown up throughout the land a wonderful manufacturing industry. Away back in the days of the embargo, a man named Samuel Slater had come over from England and built, from memory, the first American cotton mill. He little knew what seeds he sowed. That little mill set up in Rhode Island was the mother of American industry.

It had grown, this infant, until in every valley of the East there stood factories and mills uncounted. Turning from the little iron mines of New Jersey, the pioneers of our greatest industry had begun to open up the hills of Pennsylvania and even Michigan. In that age, which has been called the golden age of industry, fortune followed swiftly upon the heels of honest labour.

Always, it was free, democratic, independent, this march of the manufacturers. A hundred men manufactured cotton cloths in one small area of New England. No one of them would have listened to the call of combination. They worked out their own destinies, took their own profits, built up their own plants from very small to very large. In the twenty years from 1840 to 1860 the independent American manufacturer became the true American type. In 1850, for the first time, the products of industry surpassed in value the products of agriculture. America came into its destiny.

Often have I heard this tale of the making of America; and I can trace, by hearsay, the evolution of the mighty industrial enterprises of to-day from the puny beginnings of the days of Franklin.

Then, in our nation's youth, manufacturing was carried on in the home, by household industry. In the homes of New England men spun and wove the cotton; or beat the stubborn iron implements of agriculture. Long the battle of industry was fought along these lines.

Then came the change, when, after the War of 1812, the English manufacturers, armed with new industrial machinery, flooded the United States with manufactured goods. In self-defence America took to its arms the hated factory system, realizing that here and here alone lay its industrial salvation. Instead of the scattered household manufacturing, the country developed the gathering and working of all sorts and conditions of manufacturing under one roof. Instead of piece work, paid for as delivered, men began to work for wages.

How strange, in this day, sounds the warning of Franklin in our ears! At the risk of being tiresome, let me quote a paragraph from his writings:

A people spread through the whole tract of country on this side of the Mississippi, and secured by Canada in our hands, would probably for some centuries find employment in agriculture, and thereby free us at home effectually from our fears of American manufactures. Unprejudiced men well know that all the penal and prohibitory laws that ever were thought of will not be sufficient to prevent manufactures in a country whose inhabitants surpass the number that can subsist by the husbandry of it. That this will be the case in America soon, if our people remain confined within the mountains, and almost as soon should it be unsafe for them to live beyond, though the country be ceded to us, no man acquainted with political and commercial history can doubt. It is the multitude of poor without land in a country, and who must work for others at low wages or starve, that enables undertakers to carry on a manu-

facture, and afford it cheap enough to prevent the importation of its own exportation.

But no man who can have a piece of land of his own, sufficient by his labour to subsist his family in plenty, is poor enough to be a manufacturer, and work for a master. Hence while there is land enough in America for our people, there can never be manufactures in any amount or value. —Writings of Benjamin Franklin: Smith Ed. Vol. IV, pp. 48-49.

This was written in 1761 — just a century before the Civil War! What a transition to our day — and we have but begun! In the days of Franklin, according to our best authorities, less than one out of eight of the population depended for a living on manufacturing, trade, transportation, and fisheries. As early as 1851, it was one out of five. The character of the nation had undergone a complete and sweeping change.

Yet, let me repeat, the American in-

dustrialist of that day was not the serf he is to-day. In every sense, he was a free and independent man. True, he had been forced to leave the household plan for the factory plan; but yet he managed without any trouble to keep the spirit of individualism and independence thoroughly alive. Industry, in the middle of the last century, was carried on in this country in scattered individual plants, each one a little independent republic of its own. The owners generally worked in the factory and the mill. Half a dozen partners, perhaps, laboured side by side with the men in their employ. Men stepped swiftly from the position of wage workers to the independence of ownership. The doors of individual opportunity stood wide open.

I would, if I dared risk tiring the reader with extended comment upon subject mat-

ter that has been handled often much better than I can handle it, dwell upon this happy phase of the making of America. For it is germane to my subject. And then, again, it is gone from us forever — gone with the happy simplicity and innocence of the youth of our nation. In its stead there has come upon us an age of industrial terror, of fierce, abnormal struggle for expansion and wealth beyond the dreams of the fathers.

Often, as the years have passed, I have heard older men talk with affection of the "good old days." I put it down to the failing memory of man, which forgets all that is ugly and repugnant, and remembers best the beautiful. When men in society spoke of the past, they seemed to me to be ignoring the many advantages of the present. As time has fled, however,

I come to realize that they spoke truly. They were thinking of this "golden age," this high mid-day of our industrial history.

They were thinking of the free American, son of the soil, of the factory, as you will, yet free, independent, unafraid. They were thinking of a nation that did not tolerate tyranny, political or industrial, within its borders. They were thinking of that rich America where no man dwelt in poverty. They were thinking of the utter astonishment with which European travellers noted in our cities the absolute lack of beggars, of want, of hunger, and of cold. They were thinking of that happy day, now dead and gone, when evenly and justly the reward of labour fell upon the people, scattered far and wide and sufficiently, like the dew that falls at night upon the fields.

Perhaps you think that Society, as such, cares little about these things. You are eternally wrong. Society is a group of men and women and children. The best of the men and the best of the women think deeply, as the best of men and women think deeply everywhere. Because it is educated, and because it, too, is engaged in an eternal fight for life, Society, perhaps, studies these matters more zealously and more accurately than the rest of the world that makes a nation.

The leaders of the social world in the middle of the last century saw as clearly as any one the tendencies of the time, and recognized as fully as any one the bearing of the conditions of labour and capital upon the purely social problems. They knew that because wealth was evenly distributed as it flowed from the mine,

the forest, and the field, Society had nothing to fear. They knew, too, that, when the division of wealth began to be uneven, danger to the social world began. The lesson of the French Revolution was better understood in those days than it is to-day in high Society — because high Society in those days had, at least, read Carlyle or Junius; while to-day it reads little more than the Sunday editions of the newspapers.

Very few, in that time, were the new recruits in the army of Society. The old laws still lived. The ancient families of New York, Boston, and Philadelphia still held sway. The leader of the social world could afford to speak of her father and her grandfather and even, in some cases, of her great-grandfather, without treading on dangerous ground. The subtle barriers of caste, flimsy as they always are in a new

country, had yet withstood all the puny assaults to which they had been exposed.

Happy, indeed, was Society; and happy, too, were the people of the country. Yet the poison was even then at work within their veins. Already, here and there, rich men were selling out of industry, taking their mighty profits, and moving away from the industrial cities and towns into the great social and business centres. There is no social index to record the exodus; but one may note, here and there, in government reports of the time, strange facts that to-day are all too clear in their meaning.

In the year 1840, at the beginning of this golden period of national happiness and prosperity, there were in this country 1,240 cotton manufacturing plants, with a combined gross output of $46,000,000

worth of goods. Each plant made $37,000 worth of goods. Twenty years later, the number of plants was 1,091, and the output was $115,000,000.

Our fathers saw these figures; but it is not on record that any man, at that time, saw their true meaning. It was simply, to their minds, the working out of the factory system to its completion. It meant economy. It was part of the same system that had reduced the cost of making a yard of broadcloth from fifty cents in 1823 to fifteen cents in 1840.

They could not, naturally, see in it, as we can, the seeds of a revolution that was to make over again the America of that day, to drag the boasted freedom of America in the mire of poverty, to prostitute our political system, to tear and wreck and sweep away the sacred barriers

of Society. It was, in truth, the handwriting on the wall, but America lacked a prophet. If, indeed, there had been such a one, his warning would have been in vain. For evolution is inexorable; and the nation, high and low, rich and poor, poverty and Society — all are but its creatures, brought into life by it, buried at its command.

Let me hurry on to sketch the progress of this wonderful change that was to found in America two great new classes, the Idle Rich and the Slaves of Industry.

I have compiled a table from the census reports, dealing with textile industries alone, because that branch of manufacturing was the oldest and one of the greatest, as it is to-day, and because it illustrates perhaps better than any other the progress of principles, rather than the influence of

special causes, particularly through this twenty-year period of which I am writing:

TEXTILE INDUSTRIES OF THE UNITED STATES

Year	No.	Average Capital	Av. No. of Employés	Product Average
1860	3027	50,000	65	75,500
1870	4790	62,500	57	108,600
1880	4018	103,000	96	144,000

In these few figures all the industrial history of that great period may be found epitomized. The number of plants, instead of increasing as the volume of demand for products increased, was contracted. The leadership of the trade, and, therefore, the making of prices, was taken by the houses of larger capital. The average capital employed in the trade doubled in the twenty years. The output also doubled for the average factory. The number of employés, on the other hand, increased but half. Better machinery, more efficient control over the workers, more drastic industrial discipline, fiercer industrial com-

petition for individual work, did their destiny-appointed task.

Here one begins to see on this broad canvas, but faint in outline, the tracing of the picture of America to-day. The chains began to tighten. Men who had grown to comfortable wealth in the long period of small factories, scattered industries, and free and easy industrial democracy, began to gather together into industrial groups. Little industries were rolled together into big industries. The capital of the factory expanded, doubling, on an average, in the decade. At the same time, by more intense methods of carrying on the trades, the number of employés needed to produce a given value of products was cut down.

Let me turn, for a moment, to introduce a slight record of that industry which has

done more, perhaps, than any other to bring about the creation of the class of whom I write — the idle rich. I have not dwelt upon it in the beginnings of American industry, for it was scarcely existent. I refer to the iron and steel industry.

In 1860 there were in this country only 402 plants manufacturing wrought, forged, and rolled iron. They used an average of $58,000 of capital apiece, produced products worth $91,000 each, and employed an average of 55 men. In 1880 — twenty years — there were 1,005 such plants, with an average capital of $23,000, average products of $296,005, and an average roll of 121 men. Here the evolution of an industry from the small, scattered plants to the concentrated, efficient, and powerful "combine" is unmistakable.

To summarize: In this twenty-year pe-

riod, the value of products trebled, while the number of workers doubled. The wealth-producing capacity of each worker increased from $1,438 to $2,015.

If the tendency toward monopoly was striking in the twenty years from 1860 to 1880, what may one say of the twenty years that followed? In the iron and steel trade, the 699 plants of 1880, with an average production of $419,000 each, became 668 with an average production of $1,203,500 in 1900. The average number of employés per plant rose from 197 to 333. In the cotton mills, the average number of employés in each mill rose during the same period from 287 to 1,185.

Here is the birthplace of the idle rich. Hundreds of men who had owned small manufacturing plants sold them out at good profits in the first ten years of this

era and retired to live on the proceeds. Men who, twenty years before, had built their puny mills on river banks and rapidly developed them into great wealth-producing plants by natural growth, then turned them over to the trusts and combinations at prices that would have staggered the imagination of the fathers of the industry.

The firm gave way to the corporation. Industries that had been for generations family affairs were suddenly capitalized in the form of stocks and bonds, and the owners retired from the active business, hiring skilled men to carry on the work. They themselves sat down in comfort and ease and luxury to draw their sustenance from interest and dividends on the securities that represented the plants.

Into the mighty cities of the East there moved an ever-growing army of those who

had gathered, from the mines of California, from the forges of Pittsburg, from the forests of Michigan, from the metalled mountains of Montana, wealth beyond the dreams of Midas. They had capitalized the products of their own labour, and brought with them the tangible evidences of wealth in the shape of stocks and bonds.

I remember very well the first great march of the suddenly rich upon the social capitals of the nation. Very distinctly it comes back to me with what a shock the fact came home to the sons and daughters of what was pleased to call itself the aristocracy of America that here marched an army better provisioned, better armed with wealth, than any other army that had ever assaulted the citadels of Society.

The effect of these immigrations from the fields of labour to the cities of capital

I shall sketch more fully in another chapter. I would now, instead, touch upon the conditions that they left behind them, the conditions that made possible their own retirement from actual labour to the ease and comfort of luxurious leisure.

It is not too much to say that they left behind them a people reduced to industrial slavery. Gone forever was the free America our fathers knew. Faded into history was the ideal of Washington and Jefferson and Lincoln. From the year 1890 onward the progress of the United States has been the fearful march of manufacturing industry. In that year the products of industry and agricultural wealth were about equal. Ten years later the products of industry were two to one against the wealth gathered from the fields.

Side by side with this conquest of Amer-

ica went the growth of tenant farming, as against the old free tenure farming that had marched steadily into the farthest untilled corners of the land so long as land was free. To-day there is no free land within the borders of the nation, save for a few small tracts hardly worth mentioning. Here, as in the industries, capital did not hesitate to claim and capture all that it dared. Law after law was passed to prevent the centralization of the power of exploiters over great tracts of the West. Law after law was broken, evaded, or laughed at. Once the spirit of exploitation on a large scale was abroad in the land, nothing could stand against it.

To gain its ends, wealth crept stealthily into every seat of power. The law stood in its way; therefore, in legislative halls and in political caucuses, wealth had to

have its representatives. The legislatures, the courts, the press — these were made pawns in the game of exploitation. Wherever possible, the army of exploiters laid profane hands even upon the trusteed funds that guard the poverty of the spoiled and broken, the funds of the savings-banks, and of the insurance companies. Nothing was sacred; nothing was secure.

The raw material of wealth, as I have stated in a previous chapter, is the labour of men. In the days of individual effort, exploitation of labour was not possible, for men shied off from the chains of the exploiter, took to the boundless free fields of the West, and declared over again that they would dwell and labour in freedom, or they would die.

But, in the census of 1900, it is shown clearly that the average employé in this

country produces every year $1,280 of wealth, after full allowance for the cost of the material he works with and all possible running expenses that are paid by his employer. Out of this amount of wealth he gets $437. The remainder, $843, goes into the hands of other men — the capitalist or the exploiter of labour.

That money, nearly two thirds of the wealth produced by the men who labour with their hands and heads, goes to pay interest and dividends on the securities that represent the increment gathered by those who sold out in other days, or who capitalized their plants and settled down to draw their sustenance from the labour of other men.

Hence the idle rich. I do not mean to say that by any means all of the dividends and interest are gathered by the idle rich.

Such a condition as that can exist but once in the history of a nation. It came about in Rome — and it led to the fall. It came about in France — and it led to the terror. Here, in America, it has gone far to be sure, and the tendency is still onward; but it has not yet quite reached a point where one may say: "To-morrow the harvest is ripe!"

"As well might the oligarchy attempt to stay the flux and reflux of the tides as to attempt to stay the progress of freedom in the South. Approved of God, the edict of the genius of Universal Emancipation has been proclaimed to the world, and nothing, save Deity himself, can possibly reverse it. To connive at the perpetuation of slavery is to disobey the commands of Heaven. Not to be an abolitionist is to be a wilful and diabolical instrument of the devil. The South needs to be free, the South wants to be free, the South SHALL be free!"

—HINTON ROWAN HELPER.

Chapter Four

WHO ARE THE SLAVES?

For thirty years, since 1880, we have been piling up wealth in the hands of men who do not work. In almost every year there has been pouring from our mills a steady grist of idlers. It has gone so far that to-day, in every city of the Union, the class of the idle rich has reached proportions that to the thoughtful student of events are alarming. The millionaire habit has spread until to-day men of millions are far more numerous in our great cities than were men of one tenth the wealth twenty years ago.

I do not desire to criticize wealth; for

I am not a Socialist, and I entertain no Utopian dreams concerning the equal distribution of wealth among the people or the public control of all sources of wealth. I agree thoroughly with Mr. Carnegie, and with much older economists, in the opinion that any arbitrary distribution of wealth, or any arbitrary assignment of the sources of wealth, would be but temporary, and would be followed by another period of adjustment which would end with the reappropriation of wealth and the reassignment of the sources of wealth into the hands best qualified by nature to hold them. I take it to be proven by the experience of the world that individual exploitation of the sources of wealth remains as the established basis of the industrial, commercial, and social development of the world.

Yet, I confess, the terrific sweep of industrialism across this land throughout the past century appalls me as I study it from records written and unwritten. I cannot go down through the crowded tenement sections of our great cities without having it borne in upon me that we as a nation pay a fearful price in human blood and tears for our industrial triumphs. I cannot see the poverty, even the degradation, of the wives and children of the wage-working class in many cities, and even in many rural districts, without being visited by the devastating thought that surely, if the principle of the thing be necessary and right, there must be fearful errors somewhere in the application of the principle.

For the grim fact stands out beyond denial that the men who are the workers of the nation, and the women and the

children dependent upon them, are not to-day given the opportunities that are their proper birthright in free America; and that, struggle as they will, save as they may, lift their voices in protest as they dare, they cannot obtain from our industrial hierarchy much more than a mere living wage. And, on the other hand, it is equally true that the wage of capital is high, that the class of idle rich has grown out of all proportion, and that it has taken upon itself a power and an arrogance unsurpassed in the industrial history of the world.

Somewhere there is something wrong. I speak as a rich man. I speak as a representative of the class of which I write, and to which in particular I address myself. We can no longer blind ourselves with idle phrases or drug our consciences with the outworn boast that the workingman of

America is to-day the highest paid artisan in the world. We know those lying figures well. Many a time I myself, in personal argument, have shown that the American workman receives from one and a half to three times as much as his English cousin at the same trade; but we know now that it means nothing. We are learning, instead of envying the American workingman his lot, to pity more deeply that English cousin. We are learning, too, that what we give our workers in wages we take back from them in the higher cost of necessities, in food, in clothing, in medicine, in insurance — in a hundred devious ways all with one tendency — to keep the living margin down.

Many centuries ago two great Greek philosophers, Aristotle and Plato, predicted that the time would come when the

tools of wealth production — machinery — would have reached such an advanced stage of development that it would become unnecessary to enslave anybody for the sake of allowing any one class to devote itself to the pursuit of culture. These great philosophers believed in slavery during that period of the world's development in which they lived, on the ground that only by the exploitation of forced labour could any class be left free to develop the higher attributes of mankind. Yet both looked forward to the time when, in the progress of humanity toward the ideal, the perfection of methods would permit the emancipation of all mankind.

Aristotle and Plato were no visionaries. Their dreams, so far as the methods are concerned, are to-day realities; but, alas, how different the result! Instead of eman-

cipation we have welded about the necks of the people the chains of industrial slavery. It is true that the form of slavery, the direct exploitation of the bodies of men, has been wiped out in every civilized nation; but is it not equally true that since our own great struggle for freedom from the pollution of chattel slavery we have but stepped out of a process of direct exploitation of a few enchained slaves into a process far more expansive and embracing far more people, namely, the indirect exploitation of wage workers for the benefit of capital?

The fruit of the genius of the inventors of the world is plucked not by the hands of the workers, but by the hands of the comparatively small and personally insignificant class who, by virtue of the genius of their fathers, or by virtue of mere

chance, administer the tremendous power of capital.

The evolution of the ages, then, has brought about this strangely ironical condition. Humanity is face to face with a God-given opportunity to acquire and apply knowledge. The wealth producing machinery of the world has the capacity to give to all men the opportunity of enjoying leisure. Knowledge and culture are the proper birthright of humanity to-day. Even in the face of obstacles, knowledge and culture spread among the people. Only one great obstacle remained to block the fulfillment of the prophecy of the great philosophers. That obstacle is the idle rich. It is the leisure class that to-day destroys the spirit of our dream.

It cannot be for long. We in America are moving fast toward social revolution.

Conflicts between labour and capital are assuming the proportions of civil war. The once powerful middle class, which is the safety of every nation, is to-day weak, and is every day declining. Soon, politically it will be a memory, and the battle field will be cleared for conflict.

It is, I know, a hopeless and a thankless task for any man to raise his voice in an appeal for peace. The forces which have been set in motion in the making of America so far must, I suppose, run their allotted course. To-day the class spirit in America is thoroughly aroused, and it is almost with terror that I, a representative of one of the two classes that are to fight this battle, raise my feeble voice in warning to the other members of my class.

But lately I have read again a monumental work, written fifty years ago by a

Southerner, in an attempt to turn the minds of his fellow citizens from the fatal error of chattel slavery. The book is called "The Impending Crisis of the South: How to Meet It." Of all the books that I have ever read upon public problems it has always seemed to me to be the most sane and factual. Here is a paragraph taken from it which I marked when first I read the book, and which I have read over and over again with infinite satisfaction:

> The truth is that slavery destroys or vitiates, or pollutes whatever it touches. No interest of society escapes the influence of its clinging curse. It makes Southern religion a stench in the nostrils of Christendom — it makes Southern politics a libel upon all the principles of republicanism — it makes Southern literature a travesty upon the honourable profession of letters. . . . When will the South, as a whole, abandoning its present suicidal policy,

enter upon that career of prosperity, greatness, and true renown, to which God by His word and His providence is calling it? That voice, by whomsoever spoken, must yet be heard and heeded. The time hastens — the doom of slavery is written— the redemption of the South draws nigh.

To-day the author's position is similar to that of Helper, who wrote these words, save that it differs in one important particular. Helper, though a Southerner, was not a slave-holder. I am in every sense a member of the class to whom I write. I do not flatter myself that my words will have any more effect among mine own people than Helper's had among the people of the South, but fortunately my voice is but one of a hundred that are raised to-day to warn the leisure class of the rocks toward which it is drifting.

Hinton Rowan Helper died but a little time ago. Four years after the appearance

of his book he saw the outbreak of the Civil War. In the end of that war he saw the states of his beloved South bent like reeds in a storm, its armies overthrown, its fields laid waste, its homes destroyed, its cherished institutions gone forever. I wonder, as I write, whether it be possible in this age of civilization and advancement that I, too, am but a voice crying in the wilderness. Will our capitalist class, like the old French monarchy, "learn nothing and forget nothing?"

Many a time, while engaged in the manifold activities of social life, at a dinner or a ball, or amusing myself in the country, this question has come to me. I have wondered whether it is all really as it seems. Here are gay hearts, merry voices, lives all brimming with laughter, young men and maidens all untouched by the

sterner things of life, boys with their fortunes to inherit and high positions in life secured, débutantes with every problem solved for them, a formulated education leading to a formulated social routine, stately matrons born to rule their little social world, fine men and women of more ripened years, whose careers have led to what seemed a purposeful goal. It all seems happy and light-hearted, and yet there *must* be shadows, if these men and women are really men and women, and not mere thoughtless, heartless, brainless creatures. Is it, again, "after us the deluge?"

Again, I remember very well an occasion this past winter, when the same thought came to me. I was dining in one of the city hotels. Music and laughter flooded the place as sunshine floods the fields.

Outwardly, the scene had all the appearance of perfect ease and happiness. Looking around, I lighted by chance upon a table where a group of elderly people, all well known to me, were dining. They were people who live well, and who take a large part in the social world as well as in the world of business. I watched them as they talked. I noted an air of gravity, of seriousness, and I wondered what it was all about. A little later, as their table assumed the normal aspect, I went over and exchanged greetings with them. Incidentally, I asked them what had made them so very serious throughout the evening.

One of them, an old friend of mine, told me. They had been discussing a statement that had appeared as a news item during the afternoon. It was part of a speech made in the senate at Washington. It was

an attack upon the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few. It was really a veiled denunciation of the principle upon which Society is founded. These men and women, all part and parcel of the social world, had spent most of their evening discussing that item of news.

A very few years ago such an episode as this would have been dismissed by almost any group of men and women who belonged to Society, with hardly a single thought. Somebody might have introduced the subject; somebody else would have abusively called the senator a demagogue, or an agitator, or a Socialist—and the conversation would have drifted on into the latest sporting news or talk of somebody's ball a month or so away. But now, the older men and women of Society know better. They have learned, in fact, to

distinguish real news from mere sensation. They know a statesman from a demagogue and facts from sensations.

I do not say that it is general, this tendency to take seriously the social, industrial, and economic questions of the day. In my own case, I do know that up to a very few years ago none of these problems bothered me very much. I know that very rarely did I hear the question raised as to the permanence of the conditions under which we lived within our social barriers. Nobody, in my world, considered the problem of industry his own; and every one drifted onward through the years secure in the conviction that in the end everything was going to be all right.

To-day how different it is! To-day we are studying the sources of our wealth, finding out for ourselves the real price

paid by humanity to give us the privileges of the social life which we and our fathers have enjoyed. Excited by curiosity, we go down to inspect the mines our fathers left to us. We watch the men at work, mere pitiful animals, risking their lives in terrible endeavour for a meagre wage, that we, the heirs of time and of eternity, may take our leisure in the palaces of wealth. In the mills of Pittsburg we watch the workers in iron and steel, toiling in the white hot blast of the furnaces that we, who never have toiled, may draw our dividends and spend them on the luxuries we love.

All around and about us are millions of active, industrious human beings. How can we, the rich, longer remain idle? Is it possible that the heroism of the wealth-producing, life-preserving population of the world exerts no influence upon those who

are not forced by circumstances to work? I know from my own experience that those who are worth while in the social and financial world have not only been influenced by the activity of the world's workers, but I can positively state that mere pleasure-seeking idlers are disappearing so fast that it is a question of but a few years more before their extinction is complete.

But a very few years ago we would have visited the mines of Scranton or the forges of Pittsburg, and we would have looked upon the workers there with eyes of pity, perhaps, and we might have talked more or less glibly of the hardships of labour. Yet it would not have been *our* problem. To-day we recognize the relationship between the labour that produces our wealth and the wealth which we enjoy.

"It is quite plain that your government will never be able to restrain a distressed and discontented majority. For with you the majority is the government, and has the rich, who are always a minority, absolutely at its mercy. The day will come when in the State of New York a multitude of people, none of whom have had more than half a breakfast or expect to have more than half a dinner, will choose a Legislature. Is it possible to doubt what sort of Legislature will be chosen? On one side is a statesman preaching patience, respect for vested rights, strict observance of public faith. On the other is a demagogue ranting about the tyranny of capitalists and usurers and asking why anybody should be permitted . . . to ride in a carriage while thousands of honest folks are in want of necessaries. Which of the two candidates is liable to be preferred by a workingman who hears his children cry for more bread?"

—Lord Macaulay, 1857.

Chapter Five

THE AWAKENING OF SOCIETY

Many are the causes that have led to this great change in the attitude of the wealthy classes toward the world at large. First and foremost, in my judgment, is the change in the attitude of the working classes themselves toward the rich. For, more assiduously than anything else in this world, we, the wealthy, seek the praise and admiration of the crowd. It may seem a strange confession from a member of the wealthy class, but it is true.

And the attitude of the people at large toward the rich has been changed indeed. I remember, even in my own lifetime, a

period when the people of this country looked up with admiration and respect to their wealthy classes. It was in the end of that long period of which I have spoken, in which the wealth of the nation was well distributed and had not been gathered together into the hands of the few by means of the exploitation of the masses.

To-day how great the change! How wonderful the transformation! At first a few weak voices told what a few eyes saw. In unheard-of journals of the labour movement, in certain revelations of high finance, corruption of politics, dreadful tales were told — stories long since forgotten. In Henry Demarest Lloyd's "Wealth vs. Commonwealth" we have a strong voice describing what keen eyes clearly discerned. Soon were published

several profound historical studies which aroused the more thoughtful. Then, with drum and trumpet and black banners flying, came the army of the muck-rakers. And their revelations made the nation heartsick.

It is but five years since the white light of the noon-day sun beat down upon the hitherto deeply buried roots of America's industrial and social life, and eighty-five millions knew whence the social fruitage of our age draws its sustenance. Just what, in this connection, has been the effect of these five years upon American opinion?

When the nineteenth century closed, America worshipped great wealth. It sanctified its possessors. It deified the hundred-millionaire. In five years' time America has learned to hate great wealth.

Plutocracy is disgorging, but public opinion is relentless.

Never before in the history of the world has there been anything analogous to the campaign of the American muck-rakers. The progressive forces of French society raged at the monarchy and the Church before the French Revolution. But their propaganda took thirty years to gain power, and fifty years to accomplish its purpose. The work of destruction here seemed to be done in a night. The "pillars of Society" tumbled. From official statements of the President of the United States down to the output of ten dollar a week hack-writers, our publications teemed with the products of the popular trade of exposure. Great commercial and industrial institutions were analyzed. National and municipal govern-

ments were dissected. Universities and churches did not escape the busy seeker for sin. After submerging itself in the story of its shames, the nation turned in disgust to more pleasing visions. But it had answered the question "How?" And the answer is by no means forgotten.

Some day, perhaps in the twenty-first century, some Carlyle, sitting in the shade of elms before an old country house, will head another chapter, "Printed Paper," and describe the war made with words upon the crumbling ideals and ideas of an age. He will tell how a nation from worshipping wealth on Monday learned to hate it on Saturday. He will relate how it came that myriads of poor, blessing the alms giver as they fell asleep in low hovels and crowded tenements, awoke with their hearts full of bitterness and hatred for those whom

they had worshipped. He will humorously describe how the plutocracy itself, alarmed beyond power of expression, sought to disgorge its ill-gotten gains upon the multitude; its primal virtue, acquisition, transformed to the crime, possession. He will recall for the amusement of students of history the frantic endeavour of the demagogue to raise himself in public esteem through decrying the idle rich.

To us, who, through the heyday of our popularity, simply sat in the sunshine and throve and grew fat in happiness, it came as a terrible shock, this change of the popular attitude. At first we laughed at it; then we preached little sermons about it, half jesting, half serious; then we began to talk about it among ourselves; and we held indignation meetings every time we met our friends, and called down the wrath

of heaven on these sharp-eyed and glib-tongued investigators.

Finally — and here lies the heart of the matter — we began to read these outpourings of the popular sentiment very seriously indeed. They came, at last, from sources that we dared not disregard. Instead of mere muck-raking expeditions they assumed the proportions of crusades. Instead of the frantic mouthings of mere sensation mongers there confronted us in the columns of the press and in the more sedate and orderly pages of the magazines the speeches of a President, or sane, sober editorials written by men who knew both sides, and who commanded our respect as well as the respect and admiration of the crowd. We recognized — those of us who thought, and saw, and felt — that instead of being a passing phase, as we had dreamed

or hoped, this change of popular sentiment was the beginning of a revolution.

I hesitate to say how deep this arrow struck. Perhaps I can illustrate it best by telling a story that came to my ears this past winter. A lady of the old school was sending her daughter, a young girl, to one of the preparatory schools here in the East. She went herself to look at the college and to talk with some of the professors. In conversation with the principal, she said:

"I want Estelle, right from the beginning of her course, to get a full understanding of where wealth comes from. I want her year by year to learn of the debt and the responsibility that she, personally, owes to the people that work. Are these things taught in your courses?"

The principal was astounded. She protested that such education was entirely

out of line with the principles and precepts of that college. Very delicately and tactfully she intimated that one of the foundations of a social education was the constant instillation into the minds of the young of the idea of the superiority of the aristocracy over the masses. To teach Estelle that she and her class are really dependent upon the grimy men who labour with their hands would be to turn upside down the curriculum of that college.

The upshot of it was that Estelle today is enrolled as a student in a high school in New York City. Her mother believes that the salvation of the wealthy classes in this country depends upon the coming generation understanding the true relationship between capital and labour.

This is, perhaps, an extreme case, for only a very few years ago that matron her-

self was absolutely immersed in the whirlpools of the most frivolous Society which has a real right to use the term in talking about itself. Always she was a woman of a most active mind, of broad sympathies, of excellent benevolent character; but her mind found its full exercise in the pursuit of social fads, her sympathies found outlet in sporadic raids upon the strongholds of misery and poverty, and her benevolence satisfied itself with much hidden largess to various and sundry charities. She did not really understand any of the problems of the day.

The first awakening of this one woman came about through chance. Bored to death at a summer resort, half sick, and therefore restricted in her activities, a friend who stopped on the piazza to extend her sympathies happened to leave on the

table a book. The lady picked it up and began, half absently, to turn the pages from back to front, as one will. A heading caught her eye. Here it is:

"OUR BARBARIANS FROM ABOVE."

She did not understand it; and her habit of mind led her to investigate. She had lost the page, but she searched until she found it. Then she read the paragraph:

If our civilization is destroyed, as Macaulay predicted, it will not be by his barbarians from below. Our barbarians come from above. Our great money-makers have sprung in one generation into seats of power kings do not know. The forces and the wealth are new, and have been the opportunity of new men. Without restraints of culture, experience, the pride or even the inherited caution of class or rank, these intoxicated men think they are the wave instead of the float. To them, science is but a never-ending repertoire of investments stored up by nature for the syndicates, government but a fountain

of franchises, the nations but customers in squads, and the million the unit of a new arithmetic of wealth written for them.

She read on and on. She finished the book, and turned back to its beginning. She could not read it all; but she read enough to realize her profound ignorance of facts. That night, at dinner, she astounded her husband in this wise:

"Who is Henry Demarest Lloyd?"

"He is a Socialist writer," was the answer, "who amuses himself attacking our class."

"I wish," she said, "you would get me all his books."

From that time on her mind found new occupations, new interests, new ideas. A world that she did not know existed came swiftly over her horizon. She did not rush madly into extremes — she has not to this

day — but her life has changed considerably. We who knew her so little time ago as one of the typical, clever, brilliant, and flashy purveyors of cheer and social joy find her to-day no less charming in the matter of mere entertainment; but we expect, when we meet her, to find in her mind many other and more serious things. She never appears in print, she is not a suffragist, she has dropped her little fads. She is not that strange abnormality of her sex that neglects the old pursuits of women to follow the strange gods of men; but she is, in every sense, a student of the true conditions that surround her. The mists of golden tradition have cleared from her eyes.

To-day she has plenty of company in her own set. She did not convert them. She detests the rôle of a propagandist.

They simply came of their own accord to read and learn. And when the educated classes really become interested, I think they study things more deeply than any other class. Even the most violent and anarchistic of the publications that pretend to portray the facts of the class relationships have thousands of readers among the very wealthy.

I remember a case in point. Mr. Upton Sinclair, a pronounced Socialist of the flamboyant type, was invited to lunch one day, by a mutual acquaintance, with a young man of the most exclusive set in this city. They met in a private dining-room at the Lawyers' Club. In the course of the lunch Mr. Sinclair referred to an article he had published in *Wilshire's Magazine*, a Socialist sheet of the noisy class.

"Yes," said the other, "I read it."

"You read it?" exclaimed Mr. Sinclair, in complete surprise.

"Oh, yes — I always read it," said the other, in a matter-of-fact way.

There are many like him. Five years ago you probably could have counted on the fingers of two hands the men in the wealthy classes who read the literature that comes from below. To-day it is a very common occurrence to hear in the best clubs of New York wealthy men discussing with intense earnestness and real economic sense articles of which they never would have heard five years ago.

It is not that many of us really feel the danger that impends. It is simply that our armour of complacency and self-satisfaction has been pierced, and our pride has been wounded.

"I used to think," said a clubman to

me last winter, "that we were well beloved; but I guess our class is the best hated class in the land. I am only beginning to find out why."

Of course, I do not want to give the reader the idea that the muck-raker wrought this change. As a matter of fact, he is but the skirmish line. The wealthy classes would have weathered his attack without much trouble and gone upon their all-complacent way if he had been the culmination, instead of the mere beginning, of the hard attack. But after him, as I have said, came a great army of sober, sedate, forceful writers, hurling volleys of stinging facts upon our careless trenches. We roused ourselves to meet the real attack. Fiercely it swept upon us. Yet even that we might have met and gone back in the end into the peace and security of our age-

long self-confidence, no whit the worse for the battle.

Worse — or better — was to come. When the pulpit and the press had done their worst — or best— the heavy artillery opened. Senators on the floor of the senate, governors from the chair of office, mighty lawyers before the bar, judges from the bench, and, last, a President from the White House, raked our outworn defences, and even the silliest and most fatuous of men within the walls knew, at least, that we were under fire.

To-day there is a lull. Many of those who awakened to the sound of battle but two or three years ago are slipping back into fancied security. The older heads know better. We see the forces of labour and poverty forming new lines upon the plains and hill sides. We see them lashed

to new fury by the whip of rising prices; we hear the stern, stentorian voices of their tribunes calling them to battle for their lives and liberties; we smell the reek of them as they crowd from the dusty mines and sweaty factories.

We do not flatter ourselves, even those of us most drunk with the strong liquor of power and the sweet wine of indolence, that the forces of attack are weakened or weakening. We know full well that this great lull of renewed national prosperity has been used by the forces of the men that labour to make themselves stronger, cleaner, better caparisoned for the long battle of to-morrow.

In the midst of the peace and calm of high prosperity we hear the rumble of the thunder of war. We read in the papers that a great manufacturing city of the

Middle West has chosen a Socialist mayor. Over the wires there comes to us the news that an anti-corporation campaign in Denver has broken to atoms the organized power of both the great political parties which, for generations, we have used as pawns in mightier games than theirs. An able public servant is openly and publicly branded a thief and a betrayer of trust, because, the people say, he works with the larger capitalists to help their plans to completion. Public clamour and disapprobation greet the plan of one of the richest of men to incorporate his charities in order that they may be more efficient. The people refuse absolutely to believe that there is no ulterior project behind the incorporation.

These are incidents of warfare, not of peace. Here, as in Denver and Mil-

waukee, it is an attack upon an outpost, a skirmish in force. There, as in the case of the Rockefeller Foundation, it is a determined effort to block what the leaders of popular thought believe to be a strengthening of the redoubts of wealth.

Strange, it seems to me, it is that still within the gates of gold there dwells a great host of people barely roused. For I have failed of my aim if I have given the impression that Society is to-day wholly roused, wholly armed, wholly awake to its danger. It is, alas! not true. It is no more true than it was true before the rebellion that the people of the South were all in sympathy with Helper. There were a few, to be sure, but the rank and file of the slave-holders called him a visionary and an alarmist.

So to-day, perchance, the vast majority

of the men of wealth in this and other cities will call me a visionary and an alarmist. I wish it were true. Would that I could bring myself to believe that the things I see about me are but the passing phases of a natural adjustment. I have tried for many years to persuade myself that all is well. I have failed.

"Six years ago no proposition to which the great corporation interests of the country were strongly opposed was looked upon as having any practical chance of being realized. . . . The killing and maiming or stifling of bills of this kind in committee was a foregone conclusion, and the only answer to protests was Tweed's old query: 'What are you going to do about it?'"

—Franklin Fabian.

Chapter Six

FOR THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER

I have, in previous chapters, touched very briefly upon some of the vile excrescences that have found a resting place within the gates of our once so fair city of Society. Again, I have sketched in the briefest outline the process by which the idle class was created. I have shown how the seed was planted in the too fertile soil of American industry. I have dwelt, but briefly, upon the simple fact that we of the older orders have come to find out something about that planting and the manner of the growth.

I turn with something like dismay from a sketch of the methods of the culture of

this growth. For it is watered with the bloody sweat of labour and the salt tears of bitter poverty and suffering; and it is fertilized with the dead bodies of men and women outworn in the grim battle of life. Tended and watched it is by a foul horde of underlings, hired judges in the law, panders in politics, prostitutes in the pulpit, lickspittles in college chancelleries, Judases in the press, blackmailers in business, and miserable, time-serving parasites clinging like filthy leeches upon the administrative bodies of the nation.

To my mind, as I have studied this question, there has come a sad conviction: This nation is betrayed. The planting of the seed of our industrial system, whose fine flower has been reached in our class of idle rich, was quite possible without any betrayal of the people. Even its growth

for two decades was possible without a conscious effort on the part of the keepers of the public citadels to throw open the doors to a public enemy. May a thinking man dare to say that the growth of this system since 1890 could have been possible without criminal negligence on the part of those public servants sworn to guard the true and lawful interests of the people of this nation?

For it was perfectly evident, years ago, that the industrial evolution of this country was a process of exploitation. It was the knowledge of this fact that lay behind the Sherman Law of 1890; and again the Interstate Commerce Act, which sought to restrain, to a limited extent at least, the boundless license to plunder which had been taken unto themselves by the railroads. No broad-minded man can read

with an open mind the facts with regard to the Homestead strike, the Pullman strike, the war in the Cœur d'Alene, or the coal strike of very recent years, without coming to the conclusion that no matter who was in the wrong in the immediate circumstances leading to those national catastrophes, the real underlying cause was a revolt on the part of a subjugated people against the hardships of industrial slavery.

Without going into details, let us examine, in the light of history, a few of the cardinal facts that have so far made possible a continuance, indeed, a constant widening and deepening, of this process of exploitation. Let us remember always, as we face the facts, that the primary cause of this condition lay in that evolution, which was probably inevitable, from the house-

hold stage of manufacturing in this country to the stage that is represented by the modern trust. That evolution stands today completed. It was, as a matter of fact, completed on the day when the American Sugar Refining Company assumed the dominating position in the sugar trade. Subsequent developments have been but a repetition, sometimes on a larger scale, sometimes on a smaller, of that climax. What, then, makes possible the continuance of this process in the face of the ever-growing public knowledge of its existence?

The answer is our public shame. This process, openly recognized by the public, thoroughly analyzed day by day and year by year by brilliant writers in press and periodical, exposed again and again in excellently written books by college econo-

mists, has gone on and on through climax after climax for the simple reason that the one power in the world that could stop it — the will of the American people — has been turned from its purpose, defeated in its honest efforts, and betrayed in its administration, through the fact that in our democratic political world the power of mobilized wealth has been sufficient to restrain the hands of our political parties and prevent the striking of the blows that would have put an end to the process. To-day, in America, the people elect their statesmen; but the exercise of the people's power through these statesmen is curbed, directed, and controlled by groups of moneyed interests. This is a statement that many will challenge; it is a statement that cannot be proved or disproved. I give it as my opinion, based upon long,

careful study, and based, too, on personal knowledge.

America, then, is a plutocracy. Always politically, the power of a plutocracy depends upon the maintenance of the *status quo*. It has come into being through the operation of certain industrial or commercial conditions. It lives by virtue of the continuance of those conditions, and by virtue of their freedom from attack by the one power strong enough to destroy them—namely, the people.

To maintain this *status quo* has been the gigantic task successfully carried out by the financial interests of the United States. It is not my intention — indeed, it is not within my power — to go into any complete details of the methods and machinery used for this end. It has not all been accomplished, by any means, through direct

political corruption, though much of it has been accomplished in that way. The few scattered and unimportant instances of conviction are enough by themselves, without going into surmise at all, to establish the fact that in almost every state of the Union, and at the seat of the central government itself, there has been for thirty years past widespread corruption of political parties.

Deeper than this, more sinister even than the most recent example of an administrative officer bound like a slave to the wheel of his master's chariot, has been the indirect subornation of public opinion through a subsidized press, subsidized pulpits, and subsidized public speakers. We have heard a great deal of demagogues and wicked Socialistic leaders of the mob. We do not hear much of that other phenomenon,

the oily sycophant who talks to the people with words of cheer and paragraphs of exhortation, having in his mind always the one single idea how best he may serve the moneyed interests that stand behind him.

It is strange to me, and it has always been strange to other men who have studied these things, that the interests of a plutocracy can be so long maintained; for a plutocracy, of its very nature, is the weakest possible form of government. It lives either by force or by fraud. It lived in Rome before the days of Marius by force alone; and the lower orders of Rome were slaves. It lived in Paris before the Terror, by a combination of force and fraud; and the lower orders of France became fiendish brutes. It lives in America by fraud alone; and what may we say of the people of this nation who permit it to live?

For, strange and incongruous as it may seem, a plutocracy rarely if ever develops a real leader save in the crisis of its lifetime. In Rome, as Ferrero so well points out in his book, "The Greatness and Decline of Rome," Sulla came into his leadership of the plutocracy only after the people in the person of Marius had seized from the hands of the plutocracy all the power of government. In France, the plutocracy absolutely failed to develop a leader. In England to-day, almost in the dawn of a revolution, the propertied classes lack a single person of commanding power. In America, no single man, no group of men, represent in their persons the power of the plutocracy.

It is the tendency of the great and wealthy to divide into rival camps. For some years past, in the one single subdivision of the

world of wealth that is represented by Wall Street finance, there have been at least two great leaders of the golden host, bitterly antagonistic, fiercely at odds, each striving to draw to himself new reinforcements, not with the idea of strengthening the world of money as a whole, but rather with the single idea of building up his own power to break down or destroy the power of other leaders in that world. Today, in this single section of the world of business, there seems to be but one man who stands like a giant among pygmies. Far more nearly than any other in our history does he, in his magnificent personal power and his splendid executive wisdom, approach the magnitude of a real leader in a plutocracy.

In the political world it is physically next to impossible that any man can arise

in a country where the people vote who will be able to assume at once political power as a servant of the people and plutocratic rule as a representative of moneyed interests. In the never-ceasing conflict between the people and their exploiters no man by serving two sides can achieve greatness. Therefore, the wealthy classes of America have never sought, and are not seeking to-day, leaders from the political arena. In that arena, it is true, they have chosen to associate themselves, from time to time, with men who, through their ability or through the public confidence reposed in then, exercise great political authority. In that way, more than by any other, the plutocracy of America has maintained the *status quo;* but every citizen of the United States who in his own mind is persuaded that this is true of any one man

who can be named in the political world despises that man, contemns his authority, and sets him down in the list of a nation's traitors.

It is a losing fight, this struggle of a plutocracy against a people. Against organized political opposition in a free country, where citizens have a right to vote, it must crumble into dust when once the people seriously begin the organization of political opposition. For how different is the position of the people from the position of a plutocracy in the matter of individual leadership! Never in the history of the world, in any but a nation of slaves, have the people lacked a leader. Marius in Rome, Danton and Robespierre in Paris, Cromwell in England, you may multiply the list a hundred fold if you care to study the pages of history. In all ages, leaders like this, when

once they are fired with enthusiasm for a cause, have been able, when they cared to do so, to strike out policies direct and strong, and to lead the minds of the people as they willed. Such lines of political cleavage as these do not transpire easily. In almost every case in history there has been transition only through war, riot, and revolution. We need a leader. He will surely come.

In this country, already, opposition exists. Labour union parties, reform parties, Socialistic parties, have come into being, faded away, and died. To-day, the only independent party working in the political world of the United States is so inextricably bound up with and wedded to a host of economic fallacies that the sober common sense of the American people as a whole, feeling as they do that the

great political parties of the country are hopelessly inefficient and corrupt, will not endorse it.

We have not yet in this country marked out clearly the line of political cleavage along which the mighty rift must be made. Perhaps one may find the first faint tracings of it in the rise of the insurgents in the last session of congress. From what I have learned of the sentiment in the powerful Middle West, which more than any other part of the Union represents an average of the people of the United States, I am more than half convinced that this is true. If it be so, many things may happen within the next few years, and there may be very good reason indeed for the wide spread of uneasiness in the plutocracy.

I am not a politician. I look at this

matter of political power much as any other sober American business man looks at it. Among my own people I seldom hear purely political discussions. When we are discussing pro and con the relative merits of candidates or the relative importance of political policies, the discussion almost invariably comes down to a question of business efficiency. We care absolutely nothing about statehood bills, pension agitation, waterway appropriations, "pork barrels," state rights, or any other political question, save inasmuch as it threatens or fortifies existing business conditions. Touch the question of the tariff, touch the issue of the income tax, touch the problem of railroad regulation, or touch that most vital of all business matters, the question of general federal regulation of industrial corporations, and the people amongst whom

I live my life become immediately rabid partisans.

It matters not one iota what political party is in power, or what President holds the reins of office. We are not politicians, or public thinkers; we are the rich; we own America; we got it, God knows how; but we intend to keep it if we can by throwing all the tremendous weight of our support, our influence, our money, our political connection, our purchased senators, our hungry congressmen, and our public-speaking demagogues into the scale against any legislation, any political platform, any Presidential campaign, that threatens the integrity of our estate.

I have said that the class I represent cares nothing for politics. In a single season a plutocratic leader hurled his influence and his money into the scale to

elect a Republican governor on the Pacific coast, and a Democratic governor on the Atlantic. The same moneyed interest that he represented has held undisputed sway through many administrations, Republican and Democratic, in a state in which it had large railroad interests. Judge Lindsey, in his latest book, "The Beast," has shown in indisputable detail how the corporation interests of Denver played with both great political parties. Truly can I say that wealth has no politics save its own interests.

"Poverty is a bitter thing, but it is not as bitter as the existence of restless vacuity and physical, moral, and intellectual flabbiness to which those doom themselves who elect to spend all their years in that vainest of all pursuits, the pursuit of mere pleasure as a sufficient end in itself."

—THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

Chapter Seven

THE TRIBUNE OF THE PEOPLE

Sometimes an honest man of my class, reading the news of the day, awakes to a sudden realization of the grim political truth. During the time of the public discussion over the late tariff readjustment I remember such an incident. We were three men, sitting together in the smoking-room of an uptown club. One of us had brought in a copy of a sane and honest afternoon paper, containing a quiet, dignified, careful but powerful analysis of the results brought about under the tariff reform measure. He had been struck by the article. He called it to the attention

of the third member of the group, who sat down to read it.

He read it through, while my friend and I talked about trivial things. After quite a long period of silence he handed the paper back to the giver.

"What do you think of it?" he was asked.

His cigar had gone out. He lit it before he replied. Then he said, gravely:

"America needs a Marius, a Pitt, and a Peel. Before long it must get one or all of them, or it will surely breed a Danton and a Robespierre."

It may have been mere epigram, but the two of us who heard it were startled. For the man who said it was a leader of the world of fashion, powerful in the world of business, and descended from four generations of the purest-blooded aristocracy this country owns.

Think, then, of the meaning of this sentiment from such a man at such a time! Marius, a plebeian, led the slaves of Rome to the seats of political power, broke down the age-old barriers of an aristocratic plutocracy, and wrote into the history of the world one of its earliest chapters on the revolt of a subjugated nation held in chains for the benefit of a few. Pitt, Lord Chatham, the "Great Commoner," hurled from office by the combined power of a king, a plutocratic class, and a subservient political machine, was forced back into office by the will of the people, unorganized, in the face of all the banded powers against him, and in spite of a condition of political corruption that made his return seem a miracle. Peel gave the people of England free corn against the banded powers of commercial greed.

And to-day, in America, an aristocrat and a member of the plutocratic class, sitting in a great city club of fashion, reading an editorial from a paper that is published and edited to meet the demands of that very class, gives it as his opinion that in this country we must raise a Marius, a Pitt, and a Peel! And the alternative—the days of the Terror, the bloody hands, the brutish mob, the wild-eyed, frantic leaders of the hosts that stormed the Bastile, set up the guillotine — so runs the mind of an aristocrat and a plutocrat, reading the *Evening Post* in a rich man's club on upper Fifth Avenue!

I believe that he was right. Without referring specifically to the tariff reform — for this is no political document that I am writing — I believe that the catalogue of legislative enactments by our adminis-

trative machine over the past twenty years reveals beyond the shadow of a doubt that the will of the people is subservient to the will of the plutocracy. How can we further blind ourselves to the truth? When such a fact is known as gospel to the people, from Maine to California, published in every section of the press, from the gutter-snipe class to the scholarly review, how may the best educated class in the United States go on upon its careless way ignoring the fact?

The result is perfectly obvious in the light of history. The plutocracy, stripped of the artificial screens behind which it grew to power, stands exposed to-day in the full glare of the search-light of public knowledge. Under such circumstances, even in slave-holding nations, there has never lacked a tribune of the people. So

sprung the Gracchi from the dust to lead the first great battle in Rome. So, even in the dawn of popular liberty, came a Tyler and a Cade, before their hour had struck, it is true, yet, even so, with power to call to their backs armies of men willing to die and conquerable only by accident or guile. So, in the fullness of time, came other greater men, a Marius, a Pitt, a Peel, who led the people onward and upward against the citadels of plutocracy.

To-day we of the class that rules, that draws unearned profits from the toil of other men, know full well that the time is almost here when there must be a true accounting. The fortunes that have been made are made; and that is all of it. The fortunes that are in the making through misuse of political power, through extortionate exploitation of the people and

the people's heritage, through industrial oppression and industrial denial of the rights of man — these must be checked. To-morrow, in this land, the door of opportunity must be again unsealed.

We cannot go back and create more free land to take the place of the millions upon millions of acres thrown away by a lavish, stupid, careless, traitorous government. We cannot fill again the plundered mines of Michigan or Montana or Pennsylvania. We cannot clothe the hills of Maine and Michigan again with pine, or the broad bottoms of Ohio with walnut. We cannot turn backward the hands of the clock, or re-create the economic factors that have been eliminated to make of their fragments the wealth and the social world to-day enjoyed by the exploiters and their descendants.

It is not so that evolution works. That rare civilization of the Aztecs which Cortez crushed can never be restored. Only echoes from the tombs of Lucumons, after the lapse of twenty centuries, attest the fact that once, in Etruria, there existed a civilization distinctive, splendid, brilliant, until the tempest of Sulla's vengeance blotted it from the face of the earth. Only the ashes in the urn of history remain of Pharaoh's Egypt, Athens, Babylon, Persia.

So, too, the golden opportunity of yesterday is gone, never to return within our borders. The lesson of America, however, is burned deep into the records of time. In Canada, such a man as Laurier reads it clearly. In the greater of the Latin republics in South America, they strive today to prevent the very condition we now

find in free America. In this matter of the real substance of rulership, the United States is to-day an example to the nations of a democracy which has deliberately squandered its birthright.

Yet, for all our lost opportunities, much remains that can be done and will be done. It is not my purpose here to sketch the process of salvation that is yet possible. Only, at this point in my writings, I would warn the people of my class, those of them who do not yet think about these things or understand them, that the moment has arrived when the people demand a Marius — a tribune who shall lead them onward into freedom, a man who shall stand before the world untrammelled by the golden chains of wealth, undefiled by the pollution of time-serving politics, filled with the inspiration of the people's will, courageous

to battle to the very bitter end for the rights that the people demand.

Only the morally and intellectually deaf cannot hear the sound of the call of the people. It sweeps from the plains of Kansas in the breath of the rustling corn; it swells from the hills of Montana in the thud of the drill and the rising and falling of picks in the mines; it whirs from the looms of the South and the North, where child slaves earn the bread of labour; it moans from the lofts of New York, in the voice of the slaves of the sweat shop; it shrieks from the forges of Pittsburg, the charnels of Packingtown, the terrible mines of the mountains of coal.

It is a call for a leader to freedom — the freedom we bought with our blood and signed away in ignorance. I care not where you turn, the voices of the people crying

for their rights rise stronger, fuller, more threatening, year by year. Day by day they organize. A meeting of farmers at St. Louis files formal protest against the profits of the middleman, and forms a committee to investigate and report, and puts together a League of Reform. A machine-made politician in New York, in Massachusetts, in Pennsylvania, is crushed by the votes of the people he fondly had dreamed he owned. A firmly entrenched public officer is branded a liar and a thief, no matter what committees may whitewash him. A public document published to clear the skirts of a ruling party of the charge of being in part responsible for the rising prices is laughed out of court by the people themselves.

A daring and preposterous attempt on the part of organized railroad owners to

advance rates to the general public, while holding them down for the "big interests," is met by a storm of organized protest. Chambers of commerce, industrial clubs, manufacturers' guilds, consumers' leagues, spring up all over the country, expostulating, pleading, threatening, hurling legal thunderbolts. A President yields to the clamour, and an attorney-general launches the thunder of Washington against a move that, ten years ago, would have met only the scattered, sporadic, half-hearted, hopeless invective of the private citizen. The railroads yield, and begin the revision of rates "at the top," by making agreements with the big organized shippers, the trusts.

The time is ripe, or nearly ripe; the fight begins. The *status quo* is to be changed. In the political arena all is confusion. Already, from the lips of the old, trained

leaders, who, through long periods, have served the interests of the plutocracy while wearing the livery of the people, come hesitating phrases of fear and confusion. One announces that he will retire after his present term. Another goes down to defeat, fighting to the last for his masters. A third, branded a corruptionist, sees ruin stalking him amid the shadows of the coming day. Another, reading the papers, dubs them traitors, and madly curses them before the eyes and in the ears of all the people.

And, meantime, we need a Marius, a Lincoln, a strong man of the people, in whose hands will be the threads of political destiny. Events are opening to this strong man the gates of mighty power. When he comes (and he is sure to come), he will hear the clear, unmistakable call of

destiny to its chosen. Can he help but heed? History supplies the answer. Go read it, you who rest secure within your flimsy barriers of self-interest, self-confidence, and gold. When another Lincoln comes, we shall know him.

"*Of all the cankers of human happiness none corrodes with so silent yet so baneful an influence, as indolence. Body and mind both unemployed, our being becomes a burthen, and every object about us loathsome, even the dearest. Idleness begets ennui, ennui the hypochondriac, and that a diseased body. No laborious person was ever yet hysterical. Exercise and application produce order in our affairs, health of body, and cheerfulness of mind; all these make us precious to our friends. It is while we are young that the habit of industry is formed. If not then, it never is afterwards. The fortune of our lives, therefore, depends on employing well the short period of youth.*"

—THOMAS JEFFERSON.

Chapter Eight

FIGHTING FOR LIFE

The very first direct result of the growing consciousness of conditions throughout the country is a sudden growth in the volume of money devoted to charity, and a sudden and quite extraordinary increase in the personal interest shown by the wealthy in the matter of reform.

It is perfectly natural that this should be so. In every nation, in all periods of history, it has been true. Sometimes this impulse toward charity and reform, which grows out of real personal study of the problems of poverty, goes very far toward saving a nation from ruin. No student

of political economy can afford to ignore this impulse toward charity, and sweep it away as most thoughtless writers to-day are inclined to sweep it away, as though it were merely a conscious effort on the part of the rich to buy their way into the kingdom of heaven, to escape the accusing finger of the poor, and to avoid the payment of a debt to humanity long overdue. One must recall that, in the twenty years from 1742 to 1762, an impulse toward charity, based really on conditions very similar in their nature to our own, went far toward saving the nation of England from almost certain ruin. The rich at that time had forsaken religion, had plunged into immorality far deeper and far more general than the wealthy classes in the United States to-day, and come to sneer at purity and fidelity to the marriage vow,

and openly boasted of their profligacy. The poor, on the other hand, had sunk to depths of ignorance and brutality absolutely unknown in this land of ours. The tremendous growth of manufacturing towns was the cause that widened the rift between these two classes. It was, in fact, exactly our phenomenon, differing only in degree. Society had come to live in deadly fear of the masses, so that the statute books of the land were filled with laws dealing death upon the poor for the most trivial of offences. It was a capital crime to cut down a cherry-tree; it was a capital crime to steal.

Mark well the sequel: Society was forced in its own defence to begin the study of the problem of wealth and poverty. Men and women who, through all their earlier years, had been carefully and sedulously trained to regard the poor as a different

species, and to look with scorn and indifference upon their suffering, went into the streets of the industrial cities to learn. Ministers of God who had seen their churches empty year by year went out into the lanes and alleys of England to seek their flock. Hence sprung Whitfield and John Wesley, and hence the Methodist Church, which, whatever any one may think of its doctrine, could have justified its existence in the world by the work it did in the first twenty years of its lifetime.

A very little later, as a result of this same impulse of charity, growing out of a fight for life on the part of the higher classes, Mr. Raikes, of Gloucester, founded in England his system of Sunday schools, the very beginning of popular education. Hannah More, a noble woman of the time,

devoted the better part of her life to laying bare the horrible conditions of agricultural labour. Out of the same movement came Clarkson and Wilberforce with their tremendous anti-slavery campaign that was in the end to lead England to a peaceful if expensive emancipation. Before that era John Howard was a quiet country gentleman, wealthy and happy, and blindly ignorant of poverty and crime. At the end of it he took his place at the top of the list of the world's great reformers; and the prisons of England, from that day to this, have never sunk to the depths of ignominy and shame in which they lay when John Howard first was moved to study them. Hospitals sprang up all over the land. Organized charity began in England. The poor of England, from that day to this, have at least been con-

sidered human beings, instead of mere beasts that perish.

Therefore, let me repeat, it is fatuous to dismiss the present tendency toward charity and reform as if it were mere time-serving. It may be, indeed, that it is one of the greatest economic facts in America to-day. It may be that, as it spreads and grows and brings into the battle thousands upon thousands of devoted men and women, hundreds of millions of dollars of hoarded wealth, social reform upon social reform, it will act as a check and an offset to the tremendous industrial discontent that is spreading over the country. It may be that, as in England, it will bridge the chasm between the rich and the poor, or, at the worst, prevent its widening to the point of open war.

I hesitate to undertake any extensive

review of the great charities and reforms that have sprung out of this new impulse that has moved the rich to study the poor. I hesitate not because there is dearth of material, but because of my own knowledge. I know that the facts of record are but a very small part of all the facts in the case. The tremendous benefactions of a Rockefeller, a Carnegie, a Mrs. Sage, do not begin to measure the organized and unorganized charities that have been inaugurated by the wealthy within the past ten years.

Personally, I do not think very much about the forms of charity that are to-day most prevalent amongst the wealthy. Millions of dollars every year are poured indiscriminately into all sorts of hoppers here in New York, in the vain hope that they will help to bring about better con-

ditions. Money-charity, if I may call it so, seems to me a beautiful thing if it is really done in a spirit of helpfulness — but, alas, how vain it is! I do not know but that, in the case of more than half the recipients of charity of this indiscriminate sort, it does more harm than good. This I do know, that, according to the best estimates obtainable, from eighteen per cent. to twenty-five per cent. of the people of New York State accept charity every year. This is a matter of record. How many more are the recipients of unrecorded charity I do not know, but I should not be surprised if forty per cent. of the population of the greatest state of the Union are the beneficiaries of charity, of one sort and another, in such a year as 1908, for instance.

Professor Bushnell, in an estimate made

some years ago, estimated that nearly two hundred million dollars a year was spent upon the maintenance of abnormal dependents in the United States. Think, then, of the amount of money that must be lavished upon the thousand and one indiscriminate charities extended to people who cannot be classed as dependents at all.

Charity, beautiful as it is in many instances, is a hopeless answer to the questions of the day. The wonderful growth of it in the past three or four years in the social world to which I belong is hopeful, not because of the actual good it has accomplished or can accomplish, but simply because it is another index of the times, another indubitable sign that the wealthy men and women of Society are really throwing their hearts and minds into the mighty problem of adjusting the relationship

between the classes which are so rapidly drifting apart.

Of all the charities I know, I think that the sanest, the most far-sighted, and the most surely pregnant with good is the Sage Foundation. Perhaps my opinion is little more than conceit. I myself have given so much time and effort to studying the causes of the growth of poverty in this country that perhaps an institution founded with a tremendous fund of money behind it to carry on an exhaustive and scientific research into the causes of poverty strikes me as the most intelligent of all the charities I have ever seen, merely because it fits in with my own personal ideas, and is the very charity I myself would have founded had I had the disposition toward charity and the means to put it into effect.

I cannot speak with authority of the

actual work that the Sage Foundation is doing; but I fancy, if one could to-day take an inventory of actual results accomplished, he would find that the foundation has barely been begun, and that these artisans of the millennium have not yet even drawn tentative plans for the superstructure. I have, however, read with extreme interest a report made by the trustees as the result of an investigation of the living conditions in families in New York City, and I do not hesitate to say that, in the compilation of that report alone, the Sage Foundation has accomplished a work of great practical utility.

People of my class, when they read a book, seldom write to the author and give him their impressions. In all human probability the compilers of this report do not know whether any one in the wealthy class

of New York Society has read the book. I can assure them that it has been excellently read. One night, in a company of about a dozen, I mentioned it. All but two in the party had read extracts from it in the newspapers, two had read it in full for information, and one raised a laugh by saying that his secretary had tried in vain to buy it at four book stores.

This work, in my opinion, will bear a tremendous crop of fruit. We need facts, and we need them very badly. Frankly, we are afraid of such estimates as those contained in Mr. Robert Hunter's "Poverty," full as it is of vague, loose, and inaccurate statements, academic estimates in round millions, and glittering generalities of all sorts. We cannot find knowledge in the Socialist libraries, for we distrust the Socialist propaganda intensely. We

must have sane, clear, dispassionate analysis of the situation, or we shall stumble blindly on as we are stumbling to-day, wasting our millions on foolish charities, debauching honest men and women by unnecessary gifts, pandering to laziness, and actually increasing in this land of industry the army of dependent paupers. I hope that the time will come when the Sage Foundation will be, as it were, a guiding light upon the sea of charity.

I can hardly pass from this subject without a word of praise for the work in behalf of the public health. The active, intelligent labour of such men as Professor Irving Fisher on the propagandist side, and Doctor Flexner and Doctor Stiles on the practical side, cannot be praised too highly. It is made possible by charity. Both Messrs. Rockefeller and Morgan, ad-

mittedly two of the greatest of our capitalists, have given millions to this work. Every year other uncounted millions pour into it from men and women in every city in the land. The work is spreading, growing wider, drawing into itself better medical talent, greater surgical skill, and deeper and deeper devotion on the part of its backers. Help of this sort does not debauch the masses, for it does not lessen the self-respect of its recipients. The hospitals that are springing up all over the land, built and supported by private capital, are milestones in the march of progress, and I would give full honour to the men that plant them.

In my own circle I know a good many people who think that they are charitable; and I know a few charitable people. It is a habit of my mind to ridicule the fads

and fancies of my class; and I am sorry to be obliged to admit that, in the vast majority of cases with which I come personally in contact, the charity of my class is one of two things: it is either simply a fad, with little real genuine spirit of helpfulness behind it, or else it is, as it were, a sop to fear. A good many people seem to think that it is up to the rich to distribute largess to the poor, whether the poor want it or not. They ignore the economics of the matter, if indeed they know them. They have come to be afraid of the growing pressure from below, and they think that by indiscriminate charity they can lessen it.

So they give ships of corn to the masses. You remember, perhaps, that, in the later plutocracy of Rome, after the triumph of Sulla, it came to be a regular habit,

when frenzied mobs of Romans or would-be Romans threatened death and ruin to the plutocrats, for various and sundry men to buy shiploads of corn in Egypt and distribute them gratis to the Roman *plebs*. It is true that, in all human probability, the plutocracy of Rome prolonged its life for more than half a century by just such means. If a mob of slaves is hungry, and you give them something to eat, they will go home and eat it; and, in the meantime, if you happen to be a Roman senator with plenty of money, your hired thugs may be able to find the leaders of the delayed revolution and put them beyond any possibility of raising further trouble.

You forget, when you try the process in America, that the *plebs* of America are not slaves, and that their leaders, of whom

there is a host, are pretty nearly as well educated, are certainly as shrewd, and are probably as strong, legally, as you are. I fail to see how in this land charity of this sort can have any real effect. I am sorry to say that there is far too much of it. Let me pass on to the second weapon of defence. High society is becoming a rampant reformer. It will reform anything on a moment's notice. When I read in the papers, and heard in the club, that a dozen women of great wealth were standing along Broadway handing bills and encouragement to the girl shirt-waist strikers of last winter, I was not a bit surprised. It is just what you might have expected. Nowadays I can hardly go to a reception or a ball without being buttonholed by somebody and led over into a corner to be told all about some wonderful new reform. It is

perfectly amazing, this plague of reform, in its variety, in its volume, and in the intensity of earnestness with which it is pushed.

Not long ago a professor of economics in a great university, lecturing on "Social Reform," openly advocated almost every imaginable variety of labour legislation. I do not believe he understood exactly what he was saying when he gave as a reason for such advocacy that the support of such legislation by the wealthy classes would tend to check the spread of certain vague but dangerous movements amongst the people, which he did not describe in detail, but which, to any intelligent man, simply meant the widespread Socialistic movement. I wonder, does that college professor really think that the enactment of all sorts of legislative reforms for labour would have any such tendency?

Give Lazarus crumbs, and he will crawl for them. Give him nothing, and he will demand bread, and then a steady job. After a time we will be visited by Mr. Lazarus, walking delegate of the labour union, requesting an eight-hour day and higher wages for his constituency. Dives will probably answer by building a church and a museum for Lazarus, and forcing Mrs. Lazarus to turn over her garbage to the public scavenger. After that you may be sure of the result. Every Lazarus in the land will demand to be made a co-partner in the business of the nation. That college professor may know quite a bit about economics, but he couldn't hold a job for a week handling a bunch of half a dozen railroad navvies on a construction job.

It is the same old story. There are too

many among the idle rich who jump at the first obvious conclusion. They see the strange phenomenon that I have noted as arising out of our industrial evolution, and they say to themselves; "The nation, indeed, faces a crisis. We are in danger of falling. The world should continue as it is. It is pleasant to be booted, spurred, and in the saddle. No oats for the horse, and we shall be thrown down. The mob must be appeased. Feed the hungry and we shall be saved. Cure Society of its most evident disorders and the public mind will forget the rest."

So said the plutocrats of Rome. So argued the hangers-on of Louis of France. So Charles the First of England fell. You may find a good many other illustrations, if you like, in Athens, Italy, and Russia. I challenge any gentleman to instance a

single case in history where petty reforms and petty charities thrown indiscriminately to the mob have ever established any permanent betterment of social conditions, or failed to be followed in the end by a terrific reckoning.

It is true that, amongst the wealthy, many men to-day are honestly advocating and honestly working for real, deep-planted, permanent reform.

It is almost astounding to read a paragraph like the following signed with the name of Andrew Carnegie:

Whatever the future may have in store for labour, the evolutionist, who sees nothing but certain and steady progress for the race, will never attempt to set bounds to its triumph, even to its final form of complete and universal industrial coöperation, which I hope is some day to be reached.

By industrial coöperation Mr. Carnegie

explains that he means the slow process of selling or giving actual ownership of manufacturing industries to the workmen. He claims that they began this experiment in this country when the Carnegie Steel Company took in from time to time forty odd young partners, none of whom contributed a penny of money, the company taking their notes payable only out of profits.

A dozen other instances could be adduced, beginning with the United States Steel Corporation itself, the giant among the trusts. There is no doubt whatever that this reform is spreading. What is more, I believe it is an honest reform, and that most of the men who have introduced it into their companies have done it from an honest belief that it would elevate the workingman and solve in each separate

instance the most dangerous of our industrial problems.

I am not myself a manufacturer, and I do not feel competent either to praise or to criticize this particular solution of particular industrial problems. I know that John Stuart Mill in his "Political Economy" vaguely hints at some such ultimate evolution of the wage-worker; and I know also that in many cases the coöperative idea, in actual practice, has succeeded very well indeed. In my own mind, knowing the habits of a plutocracy, I cannot help doubting whether widespread coöperation between wage workers and capital, particularly between the lower orders of the wage workers and the larger masters of capital, would not simply afford to dishonest, disreputable, or unprincipled captains of industry a fuller

opportunity than they now enjoy to hold down the wages and profits of wage workers.

Yet I would but express this doubt as a personal feeling of my own, rather than as a conviction founded upon research or upon broad knowledge of the subject. It is not germane to my theme to enter upon a detailed discussion either of this possible reform or of any other. I would simply point out as illustrations two or three of the greater reforms that I hear month by month discussed more and more among the people of my class.

Personally, I am a bit tired of reform; for Society, as I have said, will plunge *en masse* through any door that has a reform label sticking on it anywhere. Often, as I think of the long list of reforms advocated by distinguished individuals, churches,

educators, civic associations, politicians, and societies, I wonder what would happen if they all succeeded. I won't be here to find out; but if, in some future existence, no matter what my destination, I hear that it has come to pass, I am quite sure that I shall be glad to be away.

In passing from this subject I cannot refrain from reiterating the note of warning contained in an earlier paragraph. To my charitable friends of the upper classes whose heads are full of reforms and almsgiving I would say, give not at all if, in giving, or in supporting reforms, you hope or expect thereby to gain the favour of the mob. Remember that in Rome the masses were a race of parasites who could be fed or crushed as the occasion demanded. In America, on the contrary, the masses are the producing elements of the nation,

and you are the parasites. Between the cry of the Roman multitude for coin and the demand of the working American for wages there is an intensity and seriousness as much different as between the humming of the mosquito and the thunder of an earthquake.

"When the public deliberates concerning any regulation of commerce or police, the proprietors of land never can mislead it, with a view to promote the interest of their own particular order; at least, if they have any tolerable knowledge of that interest. They are, indeed, too often defective in this tolerable knowledge. They are the only one of the three orders whose revenue costs them neither labour nor care, but comes to them, as it were, of its own accord, and independent of any plan or project of their own. That indolence, the natural effect of the ease and security of their situation, renders them too often not only ignorant, but incapable of the application of mind necessary in order to foresee and understand the consequences of any public regulation."

—ADAM SMITH.

Chapter Nine

THE SOCIAL NEMESIS

I have shown, in the previous chapter, how futile and empty are most of the struggles toward charity and reform carried on by the wealthy class. This brings me, in my train of thought, to one of the most melancholy reflections that can be conceived. It has come to me very often, under all sorts of circumstances.

The fact of the matter is that wealthy Society in America, as everywhere else, is pursued by a demon of futility. It does not matter what we do, whether we work like any other man or woman, whether we play like normal men, whether we study,

whether we idle, or whether we work as other men, or fritter away our time in idleness; whether we spend our money on charity and reforms, or throw it away in the pursuit of pleasure; whether we study hard and seriously, or merely regale our minds and appetites with frivolous novels and salacious plays; whether we play or whether we don't — nothing seems real, nothing seems earnest, nothing has any result. Too often our lives are empty of anything permanent, anything honest, anything simple and human.

We live in a world of dreams, peopled with passing phantoms — men and women that come and go and leave in our hearts no trace of real affection, no honest, sincere, and heart-felt impulse of friendship, no lasting shadow of reality. It all seems sham and pretence. It cloys in time, and often in sheer desperation we plunge into

extremes for which we have no genuine taste, no real desire, no inborn impulse at all.

But of all the futile things in the world none is more futile than wealth itself. If you rest on the things you have won, and set yourself down in idleness to enjoy them, they turn to ashes on your lips. They are flat, tasteless, like fruit picked long ago. I remember an incident in which I took a part, not very long ago, that showed me the opposite results in all its horrid semblance.

I was at a very brilliant social function in the London social world. I met at that reception a woman whose name I had heard as a household word in Society for many years. She was esteemed a brilliant woman; she was reckoned a leader in the most splendid Society of the world. She was

wealthy beyond all human need. She occupied a powerful place in a political world where everything human had its part. She was a companion of princes and the equal of peers. We were talking alone, immediately after our introduction, when she said:

"Oh, Mr. Martin, you are an American. You are a Wall Street man. You could help me to get some of your American gold!"

I was astounded, and I showed it in my answer:

"Why, my dear lady, surely you have gold enough. If I am not mistaken, you rank amongst the wealthiest women of the nation. Why should you want gold? Moreover, you have social standing and are famous throughout England. Of what possible use could more gold be to you?"

I can still see the haggard face, the quivering lips, the blazing eyes of this great Society woman as she answered me.

"Oh, Mr. Martin, you do not know me — I am almost ashamed to confess the truth. I dream night and day of gold. I want to have a room at the top of my house filled with it — filled with gold sovereigns. I would like to go into that room night after night, when every one else is asleep, and bury myself in yellow sovereigns up to my neck, and play with them, toss them about, to hear the jingling music of the thing I love the best!"

Think of it! Picture a woman, wife of a man, mother of splendid children, born with the beautiful instincts innate in her sex, sinking to such a depth as that! Think of the awful shallow emptiness of a life and a training that bore such fruit as this!

Yet, it is all so very natural. Most men and women in this world are kept clean, sane, and normal in the pursuit of little things. The trivial household joys that fill so full the happy life of the normal woman, the little business triumphs that keep alive in the heart of the normal man the spirit of personal ambition, the human lust for a fight, the ever-changing, ever-interesting, ever-luring struggle for advantage — these are at once the burden and the safety of mankind. In them is true happiness; in them is true humanity.

The class of which I write has lost them in its very birth. The mother of a boy in the middle class looks forward with delight to the day when that boy will go forth into the world to battle against circumstances. From his earliest childhood onward he learns the necessity of labour,

he comes to regard it as his birthright. With eagerness he prepares for it. The little triumphs of boyhood, the trivial victories of college days, are joy unbounded to his mind, because they are but steps in that long climb toward greatness, renown and wealth, that are his birthright; and when at last he goes forth from college halls, from labour on the farm, from some little clerical position that he has held in his adolescence, to strike out for himself into the great open world, to blaze out paths of his own choosing, his life is filled in its every moment with new thrills of excitement, of happiness, of accomplishment — of life, real life, not imitation.

Look at the other side. Think of the boy born, as they say, with a golden spoon in his mouth. Perhaps, in his infancy, he does not know that he can have everything

in the world for which he asks. Perhaps his parents are humanly wise — for many of the wealthy are; yet, even in his very tender boyhood, the truth will come home to him. He will learn before he is ten years old that there is a difference between him and other boys whom he sees at play in the park. He will discover that the difference is money. He will discover that his parents can get whatever they like, spend as much as they please, waste fortunes on their pleasures, throw gold away as though it were dross. He will learn, on the other hand, that the children of the poor can have no expensive toys like his, that they cannot be dressed as he is dressed, that their parents must win every dollar that they spend by some hard work, while his own parents, apparently, receive as much as they want and more without any labour whatever.

That boy will be more than human if, by the time he is a young man, he has not passed the entrance to the paths where the true happiness of life is to be found. Either money will mean nothing to him, and he will have settled down to be one of the idle rich, simply taking what the gods send him and doing his best to enjoy it, or else a most unholy lust for gold will have taken possession of his soul. Eliminate the necessity for struggle, and you remove from money all its true value. It becomes either dross, to be thrown away for other things better worth while, or it becomes an idol, a god, the very sum and substance of the world's desire.

I know, of course, that there are marked exceptions. I have in my mind as I write a young man of a Western city, born to an enormous fortune, married to another,

and trained and nurtured in the lap of luxury. Almost everything conspired to make him either an idler or a money worshipper. He is neither. It is an accident. In his early youth he became an invalid, and was sent out by his father to live on a ranch. The ranchman's wife was a real woman, and instinct taught her how to handle that boy. He was put to work. At first, when his father learned through his letters that he was spending his time mending fences, feeding pigs, watering horses, and milking cows, he objected strongly. He wrote to the ranchman to this effect. The ranchman rebuked his wife, and set the boy to work at other gentler things.

A week later the boy wrote an indignant letter to his father to the effect that he was coming home if he couldn't go back

to real work. The father saw a great light; and free permission was given to the ranchman's wife to do whatever she liked with the boy. When he went home a year and a half later he was the makings of a real man. To-day his father is dead, and he has succeeded to the command of a mighty estate. He holds his place in the best Society of the land, but he holds, too, his place amongst the workers. At the age of twenty-eight he had twice refused political office, and has refused also the presidency of a bank which he controls and of which he is a director, on the ground that as a director he will not vote for the appointment of a dummy officer. He is a deep, clear-headed student of events, and money, to him, has been but the lever to move the world.

The same is true to a certain extent of

the daughters of the rich. Some of them, in spite of their wealth, are splendid women, but too often wealth has destroyed in them the clear and beautiful springs of life. Either they worship it as a god or they despise it, throwing it away like water. Of the two vices, I do not know which is the worse. I do not know, in sane and sober judgment, whether I, as a man of wealth and fashion (and yet a man of business and of some knowledge), despise more deeply the outright worshipper of Mammon, or the reckless, extravagant, and foolish idle rich. Thank God, I am not obliged to choose my friends from either, for still within the barriers of gold there lies a little leaven of the old Society.

And if futility clings very closely to the very gold that is the basis of our class and our estate, it clings, too, to almost every-

thing else that we do. Come with me to a fashionable restaurant or the dining-room of a great hotel. At the dinner hour it is crowded with hundreds of people. One might think that they are hungry and that they come to eat. It is hardly so. They come to hear the orchestra, to talk with their friends, to play with food and drink of a kind and a quantity far beyond their needs. Dinner is but an excuse. The whole occasion is a diversion, nothing more. Contrast an occasion like that with the homely gathering of a few choice spirits out in a simple country home, or in the middle-class city home if you like, and note the marvellous difference. It has been my good fortune, on far too few occasions it is true, to be admitted as a friend into what I might call a middle-class home — the home of an author, not by

any means rich. I will simply say, without going into details, that every time I went there it made me homesick, and I stopped it for that reason. I do not think I could say more if I wrote a book about it.

Of all the melancholy travesties on fun, I think that the sports and games of the wealthy young men and women of our day are the finest parody ever written or acted. Drive through a country district to a fashionable out-of-town club. At half a dozen places on your way you will see groups of boys and girls playing ball, flying kites, paddling, rowing, or doing something else in the natural human way. You will hear shouts, quarrels perhaps, signs of intense and natural rivalry. When you come to your journey's end you will find other groups of pleasure seekers. Go join the groups of young men and women

in beautiful summer costumes playing golf or tennis; or sit on the piazzas over the sea and watch a game of bridge. Listen for the shouts of joy such as you heard down the road, and you will hear the cawing of the crows. Catch the drift of the conversation. In a very great number of cases the subject matter of it is that it would be a lot more fun to do something else at some other time in some other place. The dreary pleasures of the idle rich, yachting, horse-racing, golf, tennis, hunting — these are not sports; they are schemes devised to keep us from being bored to death by the mere fact of living.

I met a man down town the other day who told me he had bought a farm in Alberta. For a great many years past I have met him at all sorts of functions in all the big cities of the East, in London, and in

Paris. I asked him what in the world he was going to do with a farm. At first he wouldn't reply, afraid that he might hurt my feelings, but finally he told me.

"I'm sick. There isn't much the matter with me, but I have simply got to have a change. My nerves have gone all to pieces. Playing bridge gives me the "willies." I'd sooner pick rags than go to another dance. Golf — the way we play it in the summer — is worse than ping-pong. Late suppers have got on my nerves. The races are a horrible bore. I'd sooner go to Hoboken than Paris. I've got to do something or I will die. Last winter in London I made friends with a young fellow twenty-one years old who last month got into disgrace and was banished to Alberta. Last month I heard from him — and that

settled me. He swears he has found the antidote. I'm going out to try it."

He went. I don't suppose he'll stay there, because he never stayed in any place in his life for any length of time, and I presume before long he'll come back and spend a lot of money on manicures and make his hands look as if he had never worked before he plunges again into the same Dead Sea: but, sometimes, I wish I had the nerve to follow him, or to buy his farm from him when he grows tired of it.

If our wealth, and our pleasures, turn at last to nothing and weary us beyond expression, no less in the more sacred things of life — real life, I mean — does this same miserable demon of futility pursue us. As the world has read these past two or three years the low, horrible, de-

praved story of the marital relationships of scion after scion of one of our wealthiest families, the world has turned with disgust from the paltry record of intrigue, vile lust, dishonour, and shame. That story is but one of many. It is true that in this, the dearest and tenderest of all the relationships of life, we are haunted by futility. Our young men and maidens marry in honour and hope in a world of hope, lighted by the eternal fires of love. Too often, alas! romance becomes tragedy, or comedy, if you look at it that way.

It is the same old story. Everything is far too easy. All the comforts, all the luxuries, all the pleasures for which normal men and women have to work, drop, like over-ripe fruit, into their waiting hands. There is no struggle to hold their minds together. There is no common ambition

to fill their hearts and souls with a desire for mutual help. It is all empty, frivolous, and vain. In time it is easy to slip away from the paths of convention into habits of looseness and even of vice. The old-fashioned religion is dead among us, and so one great protector of the home has passed and gone.

I cannot find it in my heart to condemn as strongly as I should the lapses of the idle rich from the paths of virtue; for I know exactly how it is. It is futile. It is empty. It is a restriction of freedom. It is a chain about your neck. You try, at first, to loosen it; at last you determine to break it. Then the patient world is treated to another tale of infidelity, of misery, of little picayune human weakness — a tale to laugh at, or to weep over, according as you will.

I am not going to dwell upon this theme; for it is a beastly thing. I have only mentioned it because it is a logical climax to this chapter on FUTILITY. And I regard futility as the real nemesis of Society. It turns our lives to nothing; it makes of our fairest garden a desert; it robs us, in our very cradles, of our lives, our liberties, and our happiness. It leaves us groping about in a world of shadows, longing for the substance, dreaming of realities we never can know, wishing always for change, sighing always for worlds that are out of our reach. Of all the grim jokes that ever were perpetrated, the grimmest of all, in my estimation, is the time-honoured coupling of the words wealth and happiness in the formal blessing of a new-made bride.

"*If the wealthy classes so often come off second best in a struggle with the democracy, the cause is generally to be found in their disinclination to submit to leadership. It has always been a failing of rich and educated men to have too high an opinion of their own abilities. The prospect which faced the Roman Conservatives at this moment* (88 *B. C.*), *when the Revolution, in the person of Marius, had made itself complete master of the State, was indeed dark enough to close up the party ranks. Yet it was only by accident that they discovered in Sulla a fit champion for their cause.*"

—FERRERO.

Chapter Ten

THE DEATH KNELL OF IDLENESS

As I write, I am, myself oppressed by this nemesis of futility. Half a dozen times while I was writing this book I stopped to reason with myself to the effect that it wouldn't do any good, that the rich will not read it, and that, even if they do, it cannot pierce through the armour of self-conceit, vanity, and arrogance. Yet I have persevered, in the hope that perhaps some few will read and understand, and, instead of setting me down as an alarmist and an agitator, will at least consider me honest, and perhaps set to work for themselves to find out the truth about these things.

That grim truth is that we as a class are condemned to death. We have outlived our time. It is not necessary, as it was in the earlier ages of the world's history, that the mass of the people should be enslaved to give leisure to an upper class in the pursuit of luxuries, of refinement, of the factors that go to the making of civilization. Instead of being the roof and crown of things, the wealthy class in America to-day has sunk to the level of the parasite. The time has come when the producing classes are about to bring it to judgment. In fact, to-day we stand indicted before the court of civilization. We are charged openly with being parasites; and the mass of evidence against us is so overwhelming that there is no doubt whatever about the verdict of history, if indeed it must come to a verdict.

The Death Knell of Idleness

Idleness is doomed as a vocation. Of that I am perfectly certain. Even in the social world it is becoming unfashionable. Not so very long ago, in the fashionable world of New York, it was considered bad taste, in fact, it was a decided breach of etiquette, to inquire amongst the men of your acquaintance what anybody did for a living. Within the past five years there has been a very decided change in this respect, and I constantly hear that very question asked, without rebuke, in the most fashionable clubs of the city.

A man whom I know pretty well, himself a member of the highest social order, but a man of indefatigable energy, recently put very neatly this fact that many of the quondam idle class are now engaging themselves in useful pursuits. On the street one day he met a young man, a confirmed idler

of long standing. He exchanged the time of day with him, and was told that he was about to go to Europe to join in the social season of London. He congratulated him and said he thought it was a good thing to do.

A few nights later, talking to me about him, he said:

"I feel sorry for Charlie. He seems so lonely. He can't find any one to play with him!"

In a measure, that is true. The confirmed idler of the social world is slowly coming to be despised instead of envied. He still infests a few of the up-town clubs, but even here he is more and more relegated to the bottom of the social list. It is harder and harder every social year to fill up the ranks for social entertainment. A dinner or an early reception can be man-

aged very well, for the young men who work will go to such functions, perhaps as freely as they ever went. It is far different with the late dance or the late reception.

If you could go down into Wall Street and call the roll of the bond houses, it would astound you to discover how many young men of the highest social class are working very hard right at the bottom of the ladder of industry learning the financial business. A friend of mine, a fairly well-to-do man of a small city in the Middle West, sent his son to me a year or so ago with a letter asking me to introduce him in Wall Street with a view to his learning the bond business. He had chosen that as his vocation in life, and he had taken a special course in college as a preparation for it. I sent him, with personal letters, to half a dozen friends of mine, partners in

various houses. I told him simply to look around, at first, and to talk freely and frankly to these gentlemen about the chances for a young man in that line of business.

He came back to me in the course of a week, considerably crestfallen. He had looked forward to earning his living in an honourable way. He found the conditions in this labour market most deplorable from his point of view. According to his story, every one of these big bond houses announced itself able to get all the apprentice labour that it needed at from five dollars to ten dollars a week. His report interested me so much that I went around myself to some of my friends to learn the causes of this strange condition.

In the case of one bond house I discovered that it had one very skilful and very high

paid man selling bonds at retail throughout the city. Working under him were three young men learning the bond business. I knew them all, personally, socially. They belonged to one of the best of the younger sets. Two of them went out a good deal, and the third had a reputation as something of a student. One of them I knew to be the happy possessor of four automobiles and a small stable of horses. Both the others owned automobiles, and belonged to some of the most expensive, as well as the best, of the up-town clubs.

One of these young men — and none of them was so very young at that — received the salary of fifteen dollars a week. The other two were getting ten dollars apiece. All three were college men. My friend in this bond house told me that two of them were making good; but the third has the

"ten o'clock in the morning habit," and will not last very long. Of course, none of them can begin to live on the money he receives for his work. I do not think that any one of them could pay his tailor and haberdashery bill with his salary, and even the bond house clerk has to eat, you know.

Further investigation showed me that there is a perfect flood of these young men turned loose each year upon the financial districts of this country, not only here, but in Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, and St. Louis. They go to work for trivial salaries, because they care little or nothing about the amount that they receive. They are not working for wages, but they are working for emancipation. They do not want to be idlers, because they know that in these days idleness is doomed. They

pick out Wall Street, particularly, I think, the bond department of Wall Street, because that is recognized as a world of real work that is fitted to the tastes and abilities of a well-educated but not too rigorously trained young man.

These young men are by no means effete dilletanti. They are strong, vigorous young men, and they plunge into what they know to be a competitive field with a full knowledge that they are not likely to go very far unless they earn their way. For in these same offices, and working in the field in hot competition with them, there is still an army of young men from the provinces, so to speak, who actually do live upon the proceeds of their work. It gave a real personal joy to discover that, in several of the banking houses which I looked into, the poor young man who starts

out into the world in competition with these scions of the wealthy aristocracy is paid a better salary at the beginning than is his moneyed competitor, and has at least an equal chance for advancement. Indeed it is recognized that the wealthy young man has a marked advantage through his personal acquaintance with men of money, and more is expected of him in return from his training than is expected of the self-supporting clerk. As a rule, however, the real workers are given outlying districts of the country to canvass, while the aristocracy of the profession does its work in the city.

I sketch this phenomenon in some detail, because I think it is a very significant thing in its bearing upon the subject of this book. Perhaps more than any other one outlet it is an avenue leading toward hon-

ourable labour, suited to the capacity and the taste of our wealthy young men. That the market is crowded to-day, and has been crowded for five years past, more than it ever was crowded before in the history of the financial profession, speaks far more eloquently than I can speak of the change of sentiment amongst the wealthy.

In the Harvard Club, of a Saturday afternoon in winter, you will find groups of young men sitting around and talking, just as you would have found them fifteen years ago. There is one marked difference. Fifteen years ago they would have been talking about social events, the sports, and various other trivial things that went in those days to make up the sum and substance of a fashionable young man's career. Nowadays many of these groups are earnestly discussing finance, not in its relation

to their own private fortunes or misfortunes in the stock market, but in its broader aspect. You hear such phrases as "gold supply," "premium bond," "overproduction of securities," "diversion of money from the legitimate market," "intrinsic value," "investment outlook," etc. They are, in fact, talking shop; and I do not think I have ever met any other class of men more addicted to the habit than these novitiates of the financial game.

Even their sisters, nurtured in luxury, and taught, as they still unhappily are, that elegant idleness is the proper portion of the sex, are beginning to rebel. They are seeking knowledge eagerly, sometimes in places and under circumstances that promise not the best of results. More particularly during the past five or ten years there has been the really extraor-

dinary propaganda amongst the women of the younger set in our great cities looking toward the strengthening of the body and the building up of a vigorous and buoyant health that would have been considered actually vulgar in the generation that preceded them. Health, in fact, in many of the younger sets, has become almost a religion, a sort of fetich. They study hygiene, biology, and the mystery of life. Perhaps they are coming to know too much at too early an age, but in excuse let it be said that it is far better to know too much than to know too little.

On the other hand, I have already written of the tendency of the fashionable young women of the day toward charity and reform. They follow fads madly, working as hard and using up as much nerve force in this pursuit as any young woman of the

middle class gives to her household work, or even to her bread-winning activities. I could name a dozen young women of the finest families in New York who within the past twelve months have actually thrown themselves into this sort of function with such fiery ardour and zeal that they have either totally neglected their social activities or broken down completely under the strain of double labour. Such instances are more numerous year by year. I do not know that I fully approve it, but I set it down here for the judgment of the world.

So, on the one hand, the ranks of the doomed class are being swiftly depleted by what I must call rank out and out desertion. The idle rich, particularly the younger set, are depleted year by year by squadrons of young men and women who

go over to the army of workers. I do not know that there is any one single sign in the world in which I live that gives me greater hope than this. The dishonour of inactivity, sloth, and idleness is coming to be widely recognized in the very best classes of Society. Old prejudices are breaking down under the demands of the younger men for something to do. Even labour with the hands is not beneath them. As I pause to think, I could name at least half a dozen young men of my own set who within the past two or three years have gone into the railroad business, carried chains with engineering gangs in the field, or done other real manual labour. To-day the son of one of the oldest and noblest families in New York is superintending the laying of sewers in a New England town under a municipal contract.

If actual desertion is thinning the ranks of the idle rich, there is another and even greater cause which will tend in the future, as it is tending to-day, to limit the number of this class. It lies much deeper than the mere phenomenon of desertion. It is, in fact, nothing more nor less than the removal of the means of making gigantic fortunes through the exploitation of men.

I do not intend to dwell upon this phase of the passing of the idle rich to any great extent, because its effects are necessarily slow. Indeed, they will not be felt for many years to come. Yet I would point out one or two phases of this question that seem to me to be intensely interesting and vastly important. In the first place, the opportunities for the making of gigantic fortunes are being limited more and more by

the world-embracing activities of those who already possess gigantic wealth.

Let any man discover in the mountains of Mexico, in the forbidding ridges of Alaska, or on the plains of the Yukon, great new deposits of iron, or coal, or oil, and immediately, almost before the news of such discovery has reached the world at large, a dozen secret agents rush to investigate. They represent the Pearsons, of London; the Guggenheims or Morgans, of New York; the Rockefellers or the Rothschilds, of New York or Germany. They are the first in the field; they preëmpt, for fortunes already far beyond competition, the opportunity of making a tremendous fortune out of the new discovery.

Think of the raw materials of commerce — sugar, meat, oil, iron, coal, copper, cotton, wheat, corn, lumber — is it not

absolutely true that in the manufacture and exploitation of this tremendous mass of the raw material of wealth the possibility of amassing enormous fortunes is almost hopelessly limited by the activities and the world-girdling power of capitalist groups already far beyond the reach of competition?

The free land of America is gone. All these great staples that have been in generations past the vehicles in which men have been carried upon the road to lordly fortunes are already in the hands of a few hundred families. This fact, sinister as it undoubtedly is in its broader aspect upon the economic conditions of the country, must certainly tend to eliminate more and more the possibility for the creation of additional gigantic industrial fortunes in this country. In so far as this is true it

is a very important item indeed among the forces that tend toward the elimination of the idle rich.

More than this, as I have pointed out already in a phrase, the growing knowledge on the part of the people of the ways and means by which they have been exploited for the creation of wealth will surely prevent any further long-continued growth of this same process. Men are being sent up to congress year by year sworn to break up and destroy the coördinate political machine that has made possible the growth of the power of the trusts. Earnest fighters like La Follette may well be watched, for though no little of his work and his talk is based on fallacy, yet in this at least he represents the temper of the whole United States, that he is a bitter and an ardent enemy of the concen-

tration of wealth. The agitation over the Guggenheim claims in Alaska, the bursts of popular acclaim over land-fraud prosecutions in the West, the sardonic joy of the people over the retrieving of enormous coal land areas stolen by railroads, the warm enthusiasm of the West for government reclamation, conservation, and preëmption — these are signs of the times all pointing in the one direction.

They do not mark the end of the idle rich, to-day existent. They do point unmistakably toward the prevention of a new crop of great American fortunes won through exploitation of government property and popular rights. If you couple with them the ever-growing movement toward Socialism, and the hundred and one private propaganda along strange and often faulty economic lines, you cannot help

but feel as I feel, that even if there were a revolution, in a hundred years, when the present great fortunes of America are subdivided, split up, and scattered among a thousand heirs, the wealth of America will certainly not be held ninety-five per cent. in the hands of five per cent. of the people and five per cent. in the hands of the rest of the people. And it is self-evident that since the gathering together of wealth in the hands of the few gave us the idle rich, the natural scattering of that wealth into more and more hands as the years go on must tend in the other direction.

The days of the idle rich in America are as a tale that is told. To-morrow in this land there will be one of two things, either an evolution or a revolution. . . . The class I represent will again be merged into and assimilated by the body of the nation. . . . We shall reënact in this land some of the most terrible tragedies of history.

Chapter Eleven

THE END OF THE STORY

We have come to the end of the story. The days of the idle rich in America are as a tale that is told. To-morrow in this land there will be one of two things: either an evolution or a revolution. Either by one of those characteristically swift and marvellous changes for which the history of our race is noted, the class which I represent will again be merged into and assimilated by the body of the nation, as it was half a century ago, or we shall stand face to face with the forces of anarchy, Socialism, trade unionism, and a hundred other cults that either do represent or claim to represent

the spirit of this mighty people, and we shall reënact in this land some of the most terrible tragedies of history.

I donot believe a middle course is possible. I know, of course, that the rank and file of the class I represent are blind and careless. I know that many of them, if they read this book, will lay it aside with a smile, calling it hysterical, calling it untrue. Wealth never yet in history has recognized its true position in the world, and I suppose it never will. Yet I am bound to say the things I think, and I can only trust that some few at least will be impelled to study facts and come before the tribunal of public opinion within the next few years armed and prepared for their own vindication.

I have written in vain if I have not made it clear that while the class of the wealthy

has been increasing steadily during the past five years, faster than it ever increased in a similar period before, that growth in numbers has been accompanied also by an ever-increasing knowledge on the part of the wiser heads in the social world, by a serious, sober, and careful analysis of the real conditions among the wealthy themselves, and by a genuine adaptation of the minds of the wealthy to these new conditions as they come home to us. This is the one hope of American Society. It is not conclusive, but at least it points the way toward the future of America.

I do not want to be considered an alarmist or to cry panic from the house tops. Yet, in the light of facts, and in the face of the terrific changes that must take place within the next decade in our social and business structure, I cannot see how the

business world of America can long escape a reckoning that has for years been overdue. There has to be in this country an adjustment that will shake the financial and business world to its foundations. It is possible, though not probable, that the necessary social changes of the next decade could be accomplished without a cataclysm; but with the concurrent business changes, the necessary shifting of the bases of our industrial system, the inevitable scaling down of the extravagance to which the nation as a whole has become accustomed, it is, I should say, utterly impossible that we can go through without an industrial disturbance that will strike far deeper than any we have known since 1893.

For the poison of gold has debauched and corrupted American Society, it has brought within our gates new armies of

parasites, it has led to a degree of ostentation and of luxury, and even of vice and profligacy, comparable with that of the Roman Empire under Heliogabalus. I said in a former chapter that the middle class in America has almost if not quite lost its power. One of the most vital reasons for this fact is that much of that middle class has become confused with the lower fringes of the wealthy class, has learned to ape its habits and its luxuries, has come to live with ostentation and display, and has given up its traditional habits of frugality and thrift to waste its substance on a riotous form of living that is, as it were, but a faint and unworthy imitation of the habits of life of the wealthy.

In the process of adjustment that is unavoidable this drunkenness must pass. The great professional class, which in all

ages has produced so many thinkers, writers, and makers of a nation's history, must come back into its own; it must learn again the lesson of thrift and providence which it has learned so well in France and Germany, and which, forty years ago, were the most striking features of its character here in this land. If, as is true, the class I represent has very much to learn, I take it to be equally true that every other class in the land also has its lessons to learn. The process of learning is not to be an easy one. It may be that we as a nation will be tried in the fiery furnace of adversity, immersed in the gloomy depths of business depression, and crushed beneath a load of debt and repudiation before we have learned the first small principles upon which the newer order of things in America must be founded.

It is not my business, however, to talk

to the people of America at large. I am addressing this book to Society, to the men and women whom I know, to the boys and girls who are to take our places in the social world as years go by. To them, in all sincerity, I am preaching a sermon of warning. I am calling them to gird themselves for battle — a battle the like of which has never been fought in this land before — a battle for life.

My appeal, if it were merely an appeal to save ourselves, would be sordid indeed. For it is ours to think of saving others. The bugle of the assured destiny of our race should quicken us to the service of a great and holy cause. The call is the call of the future, and the cause is the cause of humanity. I covet for you, my friends and members of my class, a higher destiny than the mere panic-stricken flight to safety. I

am aware not only of your views, but of your virtues. Never before has there been such an opportunity for real service to mankind. You have the means, you have the power, you have the position, you have all, save only the will. I feel confident that if you give the matter study, and do not throw away this book as mere idle talk, the will to serve will come to you.

I know that the great bulk of Society can be reconstructed only by one agency, and that is death. To-day, in the South, there linger here and there many old men and women who never yet have ceased to call down curses from heaven upon the head and memory of Lincoln. It is perfectly self-evident that in this other cause of which I write, and that has come to be so near to me, the army of the unreconstructed must remain for many years

tremendous. Particularly is this true of the newer recruits within the golden gates of the city of wealth. You may note that we are still enjoying the company of the first generation of the captains of industry. The second generation marches swiftly upon us. It will not be satisfied, it will not be sated, until it has reached the mellowness of age. It will follow the will-of-the-wisp of society to the bitter end. It is more stubborn, I think, than even that ancient culture of Boston and Philadelphia. Most certainly it is much more offensive to the public at large. In fact, more than any other specific subdivision of the army of wealth, it flaunts its glaring banners in the faces of the people.

I often think, as I watch the young men and women of my class trying to enjoy

themselves, what a terrible problem we have bequeathed to them. I am no longer young; even my friends call me middle aged. At any rate, I have reached a stage in life where I can stop and weigh the facts, and come to a conclusion unbiased by the mere joy of living. Therefore I am moved to pity as I watch the very young of my class at play. For I am positively certain that three out of four of them will face, in the fulness of their lives, many bitter and heart-searching problems. Already the shadow of impending events falls heavily upon them. Many of them, even in their very tender youth, have learned that they belong to a hated class. How different is their lot from mine! For I, as a boy, was taught to consider myself the heir of all the ages. I was taught that I belonged to a class loved

and respected for its virtues, envied and looked up to for its opportunites. I was taught that the women of my class were models and examplars to all the world. I was taught that the men were the uncrowned kings of America, leaders of thought, leaders of action, masters of destiny, masters of business.

To-day, in New York, the girls of our class cannot read the newspapers without learning the fearful lesson that their fathers are despised by the people and their mothers are suspected by the women of the nation. Ridicule, slander, sarcasm, and obloquy are poured upon us day by day. I sometimes wonder how the class can survive it. It is a fearful thing for a young girl to be brought up to womanhood in an atmosphere like this. It must breed either careless, heartless indifference, or a spirit of dis-

content. I hope it is the latter, but, alas! I very much fear it is more likely to be the former.

What are we going to do about it? I wish I could answer the question in one great, sweeping generality. Unfortunately, I do not believe it can be answered so. I know that the author of "The Trust: Its Book" has found an answer in a Utopian partnership between capital and labour. I know that Mr. Carnegie has found the answer in coöperation. I know that such skilful writers as Lloyd and Wells have solved the riddle by Socialism. I know that many thousands of the hardest thinking, hardest working citizens of this country are pledged already to the doctrine of government ownership of the sources of wealth. I know that Danton and Robespierre thought that they had found it

when they set up the guillotine in Paris. I know that the Terrorists of Russia have worked out their own solution. I know that the Rockefeller Foundation, the Sage Foundation, and a thousand other mighty charities are intended as an answer. I know that Samuel Gompers and John Mitchell think that the extension of trade unionism will solve it. Above all, I know that many of the seasoned leaders of the social world believe that it will swiftly solve itself. I believe that Mr. Morgan and his wonderful group of associates thought they had taken a long step toward the solution when they threw the entire money power of the United States into the fight against panic in 1907. They believed that they had earned from the people of this country undying admiration, endless devotion, and an end of all war-

fare, because they thought they had stepped between panic and its victims.

Yet I cannot believe that any one of these solutions is the right one. No permanent change in the social structure of this nation can be accomplished except by a revolution or by the process of evolution, at which I have vaguely hinted here and there throughout this book.

Education must go on. The professional reformer, the sycophant who bows before us, the parasite who eats our bread and dispenses the wisdom of the ages in return, harp upon this theme. Only, to their mind, education means simply the training of the lower classes into a traditional habit of mind that will permit the continuance of the present conditions. To me education has no such meaning. More

than any other class in the United States, we, the rich, need it. We must get it.

We must learn the truth about ourselves, our strength, our weakness, our true position in the world. We must learn the truth about our nation, our political institutions, our laws, our misuse of special privilege, our brigandage of the people's rights at Washington and at every state capital in the land. We must learn the truth about the people, their rights, their wrongs, their power, and their weakness.

And, as we learn, we must act. We must ourselves eradicate the worst of our faults. We must ourselves condemn to death the idle rich. We must see to it that as our young men and women grow to maturity they learn to condemn and to scorn the sort of ostentatious display, the miserable vices, the degenerate luxuries,

and the positive moral crimes that to-day are so rampant among us. We must, if we are to save ourselves and the world that we inherited, go back to the traditions of our fathers. We must reestablish in the social world of America the Spartan principles that marked that world in the days of Lincoln.

The age of arrogance is ended. That is a hard lesson. The idle rich of America, with the bitter voice of poverty and the deep tones of science alike ringing in their ears challenges of their existence as a class, may well tremble at the tones of that other voice which, though seeming silent, yet speaks aloud. The nation's greatest builder, Lincoln, built as unto liberty. That temple from which he drove the idle driver of slaves, for these long years dedicated to the uses of Mammon,

yet looms large in the visions of the disinherited.

Above all else that we may do on the positive side there remains the privilege of putting our study to practical work in the amelioration of the conditions that exist and the prevention of the recurrence of the phenomena that gave us these conditions. As a class we are, to-day, obstructionists. It is our class conservatism, you may say, that impels us to look with suspicion upon the rising of the people against, for instance, such a political debauch as has ruled Rhode Island for so long. We, on the contrary, should stand in the front ranks of such a battle as that. First of all, we, the people of this country, should detect political corruption, we should recognize the symptoms of the palsying touch of gold — and we should stand out

before the world as the sworn champions of justice, equality, and honour.

For I do not believe that the march of progress in this land is to be turned backward. I cannot believe that the nation as a nation is to sink into the depths as England sank in the middle of the eighteenth century. I take it for granted that the wiping out of the idle rich is to be one of the first steps in a programme of national advancement, greater, more splendid, and far more universal than any other period of advancement and progress in the history of the nation. The idle rich are an obstacle in the way; therefore they must be eliminated or destroyed. Whether we, all the rich, as a class, are to share with them in that destruction depends upon whether or not we too set ourselves up as an obstacle in the path of the nation's development.

As I have said, I cannot name a panacea, or dispose in a few rounded paragraphs of the problems that confront us. Personally I am convinced that many measures to which my class is to-day unalterably opposed will within the next few years take their places as laws upon our statute books. I am persuaded that sooner or later the solid opposition of the Eastern states to a graduated income tax will be broken down. I fully expect to see before I die the inauguration of inheritance taxes and legacy taxes in this country that will tend at least to level in the course of time the tremendous discrepancies that have grown up under our present system of taxation.

I do not expect to see a general triumph of pure Socialism. It may be that ultimately we shall experiment with govern-

ment ownership of railroads and public utilities, but I should look forward with terror to any such experiment. It may be that in the remedying of the defects of our civilization we as a nation shall be impelled into excesses of this sort for at least a brief period of our history. If it be so, the nation will be quick to remedy its mistakes when once it has tried them out and found them wanting.

I do not expect to see the great industrial consolidations destroyed. I do expect to see in the very near future a period in which the wholesale exploitation of the raw materials of wealth — both labour and the products with which it works — will be curtailed. I do expect to see a very decided limitation placed upon the growth of tremendous industrial fortunes.

Granting such limitation, and granting

patience upon the part of the people, I know that many of our defects will cure themselves. It is an old saying in this land that it is but three generations from shirt-sleeves to shirt-sleeves. That phrase is no mere generalization. It is based upon scientific data. Twenty years ago, in the old city of Worcester, Massachusetts, Mr. Joseph H. Walker carried on an investigation along this line. He discovered that out of seventy-five manufacturers in that city in 1850 only thirty died or retired with property; while of the sons of these manufacturers only six, in 1890, held any property or had died in the meantime in possession of such. In 1878 there were one hundred and seventy-six men engaged in the ten leading manufacturing trades of that city, and of these only fifteen had inherited the trade that they were carrying on.

Give us time and we shall solve all the problems of the age. The makers of America to-day are almost without exception men who have made themselves. That is an American tradition that we shall carry on throughout the ages. I cannot help but hope, even against the evidence of my own eyes and ears, that this plutocracy which to-day threatens the very life of the nation can be passed into American history without an epoch-marking revolution. Only, we of the wealthy class have many things to learn, and we must learn them faithfully, sitting at the feet of the historians.

THE COUNTRY LIFE PRESS, GARDEN CITY, N. Y.